

1963
REVOLUTION IN GEORGIA #1 - The Movement

✓ ---THEME AND ANNOUNCEMENT

✓ *--LADY: ALL I WANT IS MY RIGHTS

Southwest Georgia is peanuts, pecan, and cotton country. It's in the Black Belt, so-called either because the majority of the people are Negro, or because of the black earth. I've heard both reasons, and both are true.

Negroes outnumber whites more than 2 to 1 in ~~xxxx~~Lee, ~~xxxx~~Terrell, and Sumter Counties.

~~xxxxxx~~

All political and economic power is firmly controlled by the minority of whites.

Before the Civil War, this was slave plantation country. Today, a lot of the land is still owned by the grandchildren of the slaveholders, and worked by the grandchildren of the slaves.

The special report published by the United States Civil Rights Commission in 1961, and entitled VOTING, deals at length with Lee County: The average Negro in Lee County has gone to school only 3.2 years, the average white, almost ten years. The average white person earns \$1,571. ^{annually} The average Negro, \$479 a year. //

*and to be paid
in his job* A Negro field hand often is paid only \$15 a week during the crop picking, and as automatic pickers are replacing human labor, jobs are becoming scarce.

The Commission's report says that
A Out of close to 4,000 Negroes living in Lee County, ^{in 1960} less than 29 were registered to vote, although ^{for example} most of the 2,000 whites were registered.

Reverend Charles Sherrod, the head of the ~~Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's~~ Southwest Georgia Voter Registration Project of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee told me that there were only two classes of people in S.W. Georgia - the owners, and the share-croppers and day laborers. In other words, wealthy whites and poor Negroes. There used to be some poor whites, but most have migrated to the factories. ~~xxxxxx~~

Georgia to work with the ~~Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committees~~, S.N.C.C.,
~~Voter registration~~ ~~xxxx~~ project. Reverend ~~Charles~~ Sherrod, the head
of the ~~Project~~, drove me through Lee County and Terrell County.

He showed me piles of rubble that had once been churches. They had been
burnt down by irate whites because Negroes were using them for voter
registration meetings. He showed me the field where a Negro body
turned up last summer - riddled with bullets and castrated/

In Lee County, Sherrod showed me the tree where ~~xxxxxx~~ several
years ago a white mob had lynched five Negroes. ~~xxxxxx~~ That tree
stands as a remand~~r~~ to Negroes of the white man's power.

Sherrod introduced me to the leaders of the local voter registration
movements ~~in both counties~~. They showed us the bullet holes in their
walls. White night riders had shot into their homes. I was overwhelmed and fr

I asked one of them if ~~xxxxxx~~ the police had caught the people who shot
into the house. He laughed. He had contacted the sheriff the first
time ~~his house was shot into~~ ^{At} ¹¹ The sheriff ^{had} ^{was to} accused him of shooting into
his own house.

Since the shootings involved intimidation of people trying to
register to vote,

Justice Department officials and F.B.I. agents investigated, but
it seems that they only person they questioned was the ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{house owner} leader
himself. ~~They~~ As yet, they have brought in no suspects.

*Still in
country* Sherrod turned the car off the black-top road. Most of what passes
for "roads" in Lee are just ruts cut between the pecan and cotton fields.

for ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Sherrod explained that most of the poor~~er~~ people lived
back here. This is where SNCC begins its work.

we were visiting Mrs. Annie Raines, one of the first
people in Lee County to organize her friends to register.

Mrs. Raines ~~xxxxxx~~ is a good example of how the Negro people in the
South are changing.

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... had been a nurse and midwife. ^{She has} Everybody calls her Mama Dollie. She helped bring most of the white women in the County give birth, and has nursed many white children. She was a "good nigger". ~~Thaxwhiz~~ She had gained the "love" of the whites. They would give her their old clothes, and give her small loans, and sell her goods on credit. But as soon as she ~~first~~ ^{to vote} registered and began encouraging others to do likewise, she lost the whites' paternalistic affection. She lost her nursing job, her credit. She became ostracized by a large part of the Negro community, who had been warned by their bosses to stay away from her. Her home was attacked by night riders. //

A former mayor of Dawson, in Terrell County, ~~xxxxxx~~ said, "This is a feudalistic system. But I don't know how or if it will be changed."

And At first, it might appear that it would be impossible to start any kind of movement at all in Lee County. It is a large County in area, but its ~~2,000 whites and 4,000 Negroes~~ ^{people} live widely scattered. There are no urban centers.

Ever ~~since~~ ^{During} slavery days there ~~are~~ ^{had} been sporadic rebellions against the system, ~~and there have been many individuals who from time to time have stood up against the white power structure~~ ^{and there have been many individuals who from time to time have challenged the segregation system}

~~One of the leaders, James Mays, said his father and brothers had tried to vote several years ago. They couldn't because whites carrying guns threatened to kill them.~~ ^{but it wasn't until}

~~the summer of 1962 that a coordinated, mass movement began.~~ ^{the summer of 1962 that a coordinated, mass movement began.}

The Negroes of Lee and Terrell County were inspired by the mass anti-segregation demonstrations in the nearby city of Albany. They adopted the methods used in the city to their own needs, and began a movement to improve the conditions of the schools, and to register to vote.

Here is Doctor W.G. Anderson, a physician, and ^{past} head of the Albany Movement, exemplifying the explosion of Negro feeling.

Our main jib was to go from shack to shack and talk to people. We would talk about the importance of registering to vote. With the vote, Negroes for the first time since Reconstruction could have a voice in how their government was run. We ^{Talked} ~~told them~~ about their rights under Federal law. About the fact that people, oth white and ^{Negro} ~~and~~ all over the country were supporting them. We invited them to the weekly mass meetings. We explained how Negroes were getting together in near-by Albany, and how ^{conditions} ~~things~~ were getting better there.

Every Sunday all SNCC workers would ~~go to the various churches in the counties, and if the minister was friendly, and invited us to talk, we spoke about voter registration.~~
We worship^{ed} ~~with~~ ^{we} ~~met~~ new people, and, if the minister was friendly, and invited us to talk, we spoke about ~~a New South,~~ and about voter registration.

In the past, ^{reports of} ~~police~~ brutality, lynchings, and discrimination were suppressed by local authorities. ~~Whenever these~~ ^{occurred,} ~~our job was to get~~

^{But now,} ~~Whenever these~~ ^{occurred,} ~~our job was to get~~ the story to the national press, and to contact the Justice Department and F.B.I. ~~Farther~~

We also started literacy classes.

^{As a white,} ~~As a white,~~ my main job, far from taking people to the registration polls, was to somehow ^{work to break} ~~break~~ barriers that have existed for hundreds of years. Most Negroes reacted to me as they have been taught to react to all white men - with a subservient "yassuh boss".

We talked about anything - the weather, crops, local ^{religion} ~~news~~, anything to gain confidence.

Sometimes I had a little transistor tape recorder with me. Some of the children ^{on the} ~~got a kick out of it.~~ ^{Notice the rooster crowing in the background of this tape:} ~~While we~~

^{While we were} ~~talking to the kids~~ ^{at a farm near Brunswick, which the} ~~the local Deputy Sherriff~~ ^{was} ~~was~~ parked outside the house. He arrested us later in the day.

V4 - TAPE OF KIDS

It was hard for me to overcome those characteristics within myself that caused ~~this reaction in others~~. I discovered that ~~xxxxx~~ I had many traits that were ~~peculiarly white~~, and I had to have a full understanding of these before I could be effective. Traits such as paternalism, or over-reacting and trying to "prove" that I wasn't like other white men. I had to overcome self consciousness, I had to learn those traits which are basically human and universal, and give up many traits which I considered part of my individuality, but which only served to alienate myself from the people with whom I worked.

(2) All SNCC workers in Southwest Georgia live in the homes of local residents. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ They ~~have~~ ^{we had} very little means of support outside ~~xxxxxx~~ of the food and shelter people ^{gave them}. Sometimes, we received small amounts from the ~~main SNCC~~ ^{SNCC} main office in Atlanta. ^{And houses at} ~~xxxxxx~~ are so spread apart that automobiles are absolutely necessary to the work, ~~and these cost money to operate~~. Many times during my experience in the South we had to decide ^{we} between food for ourselves or gas ^{line} for the cars, ^{and} gas always came first.

Sherrod assigned myself and ~~a~~ John O'Neal, a graduate of S.I.U. ^{with the movement} to work with the voter registration in Lee County. We lived with ^{those} Mama Dollie. ~~During the period I was there~~, John and I helped pick crops, and helped Mama Dollie do the farm work in order to get food and help ends meet.

Very close feelings develop between SNCC workers and the ~~people who support them~~, and with whom they work. ^{Here in} Prathia Hall, a field secretary in Terrell County, ~~she had been away from Terrell for several months~~, ^{who} she had gone home to Philadelphia for several months and was returning for a visit. She later came back to work in Terrell.

V5----- PRATHIA HALL

Of course, anybody who houses SNCC workers has to live in constant danger. All the houses that have taken workers in have been shot at, ~~by night riders~~. There were shot guns in every room at Mama Dollie's. Just in case

One of the most active ~~men~~ ^{men} was a day-labourer, and a deacon at a Sumter County country church. He convinced his congregation to open the Church for voter registration meetings. ~~Last October (check date)~~
 He ~~was~~ ^{came} ~~arriving~~ home from fishing, and found his house burnt to the ground, and his two little girls ~~have~~ ^{gladly} frozen to death ~~in a nearby ditch~~. He had lost everything. When he told us about it, he said "Yes, there I stood with good fish and no place to cook it."

His little girls told him ~~that~~ ^{that} white men had done it. He and the girls were questioned by the local sherrif, by ~~the~~ agents from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, and from the F.B.I. They ~~came~~ away with the story that the two girls did it. Reverend Charles Sherrod explained the story at a mass meeting:

✓ 6 *****SHERROD'S BURNING HOUSE STORY

Shortly after this happened, ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{and} Porter was staying with a friend, ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{Mr.} ~~he~~ ^{called me and asked if I could go to see him.} He said that the Sheriff told him he ~~was~~ ^{that} a Sherrod would be arrested if they held another meeting in Sumter. Porter ~~said it just a matter of fact~~ ^{just wanted me to know} so that we should be aware. He was standing for his rights, and of course would go to the meeting ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{xxxxxx}

✓ 7 XXXXXSHERROD'S GRANDMOTHER STORY.

When we ~~went to~~ ^{went to} work in Lees and Sumter, we received threatening phone calls. Our car was followed where ever we went, Some times by teenaged kids, sometimes by the sherrif, sometimes by men with guns.

The first thing we did when we moved into a small town was ~~to walk~~ ^{with} down the main street,

~~order to try to allay the white persons' fears that we were operating~~ ^{after people - that we} as all the papers said. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ^{as the first} The town had ~~only one main street~~ ^{only one main street} with high wooden sidewalks, and an awning that stretched from one end of the street to the other, ~~(like the towns you see in cowboy movies)~~ ^{like the towns you see in} We walked down the street; and decided to get a coke from a gas station on the other side. There were three of us, ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{xxxxxx} Jack Chatfield, a white worker, Chico Neblett, Negro, and myself. As we walked across we noticed that the group of men who inevitably hang around all Southern gas stations, and spend half their lives there, were coming toward us. One man came toward us, and tried to shove us, in order to provoke a fight. It later turned out that he was the mpy r of the town, ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{xxxxxx} Several days later, he issued a warrant for our arrest, claiming that we trespassed on a corner of a field he owned, which is pssible because he owned most of the fields in town. Anyway, he came toward us and told us not to come to his station. We politely said all right and turned to go back across the street, where we saw another two men staring at us. We simply walked toward them, looking down so as not to provoke an incident, and simply walked away from the direction from which we came. They shouted after us, cursing. "you Red S.O.B.s"

It really isn't until you're in the
~~Violence is a daily occurrence in the work.~~ *It's a* Fear, the hard, tight
feeling in the ^{pit of} stomach, ^{it} became a part of life.

Where ever we we t, we constantly hartassed by the police.

In Albany, I was picked up twice on sus¹picion of stealing the car I was driving. It takes several hours for the pallice to "prove²to their own satisfaction that the car has not been stolden, but in the mean time they let you sweat it out and ask you questions about the next move the voter registration movement will make. In Dawson, in Terrell County, there is a corner where a new stop sign had been

put up, but the Cqty obviously forgot to take the old onw down, so there are two stop signs, one about five feet from the other. If a person wokking for the Movement doesn't stop twice, he's likely to be slapped in jail with a fine.

One n ght, the home of Caroline Daniels, ^{in Dawson} in Dawson, was shot intor by whites. ^{Everybody knew in Dawson - knew} The knowledge was wide spread that she was housing white SNCC workers. ~~Jack was standing in the~~ Jack was standing in the living room and got shot in the arm. He showed~~m~~ me the shirt that he was wearing, and the holes were just a fraction of an inch from his chest, Jack had just come to work in Terrell, in fact this was the first time he had ever been n the South, ^{and} He had only been there ^{in Dawson only} forty five minutes ~~in the South~~ when it happened. ~~Jack~~ The police were called to help, but listen to Jack describe ~~their~~ attitudex when they drove him and another SNCC worker to the police station for questioning. He also said that the doctor who had been called in threatened to kill him if he ~~didn't~~

didn't leave Terrell.

✓ -----JACK CHATFIELD STORY

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This is probably the most significant experiment,

in the Civil Rights Movement are chastized as Communists, and in Southwest Georgia this isn't necessary. All the press has to do is indicate that whites and Negroes are living together. To the whites with whom I came into contact, this was lewd, dirty, filthy. When the Movement first moved into Terrell, all the local paper had to do was publish a picture of a Negro worker standing beside a white female worker. The next several days several churches were burnt down.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

When Rev. Sherrod and two other SNCC workers first came to Southwest Georgia, they ~~xxxxxx~~ intended to begin the voter registration project in ~~xxxxxx~~ Terrell County, ~~xxxx~~ It's called "Terrible Terrel" by local residents, and ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{its police authorities} reputation of being one of the ~~xxxx~~ most oppressive

However, Terrel County Negro leaders were very cold to the Movement. Most of ^{the} ~~the~~ ministers would not let SNCC (or as it is called, SNICK) use their churches to hold voter registration training eetings. Other leaders spread rumours about SNCC people.

SHERRODNEE then came to the conclusion that possibly the Negro Community of Terrell was not ready to be the pilot voter registration project. They had to see successes elsewhere in order to overcome their doubts and fears. So SNCC moved from rural TERRELL ^{County nearby,} to the relatively larger city of Albany.

As a result of ~~direction~~ anti-segregation demonstrations organized and carried out by Negro youths of Albany, working with SKCC workers, ~~many~~ ^{the} ~~several~~ ^{and} ~~Negro~~ ^{and} ~~professionals~~ the adult Negro community were moved, and organized the Albany Movement, headed by Dr. W.G. Anderson, a Physician.

The Movement spread ~~back to the rural~~ and ~~many~~ residents organized ~~the Terrell County movement~~ their own movements in Terrell and Lee Counties.

In Lee, a high school student, Charles Wingfield, had been expelled for presenting to school officials several demands for improvements in the schools, and for encouraging people to register to vote. Lee County ~~xxx~~ Negroes organized a boycott of the schools, keeping their children home, and demanding that Wingfield be reinstated and that his demands be met. In the midst of this boycott, several residents invited SNCC workers into Lee County/

MASS MEETING TAPES (4 minutes)

SONG (different from original
~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~)

PRAYER

WELCOME TO HOME OF THE BRAVE

WE SHALL OVERCOME

(Freedom Singers - end of #2)

This is a mass meeting in Terrell County.

site

It is in a tent on the same where a church had stood, The Church was burned down last summer.

Remix The people of the counties are huddled around a small kerosene stove. They look nervously at the tent opening every time there's a noise outside. Twice the County Sheriff has broken up the meeting.

But they have faith that they shall overcome.

leading right from "We shall Overcome":

THEME

Next week: Roots of Discontent, etc.
Give credit to the Freedom Singers.

add: Tee-shirt demonstration (bills)
→ short bit