

NEWS RELEASE
STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FOLK ARTISTS, LOCAL CITIZENS
ATTEND SNCC FOLK FESTIVAL IN MISSISSIPPI DELTA

GREENWOOD, MISSISSIPPI, JULY 8 -- Some 200 local citizens welcomed nationally known folk singers and visitors from Georgia and Tennessee here on July 6 in the Delta's first integrated public gathering.

Folk singers Theodore Bikel, Bob Dylan and Pete Seeger joined the Freedom Singers, a group of field secretaries of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, in freedom songs on the grounds of a farm outside Greenwood. City police, parked across highway 82, watched the proceedings.

Robert Moses, director of SNCC's Mississippi voter registration program, said that two days prior to the Festival, police had put up two "no parking" signs just a few feet from the farm on both sides of the road.

John Lewis, SNCC chairman, said in a speech to the crowd, "This is the first time in the history of the Delta that black and white are standing and singing together. We are going to work here in Mississippi until this becomes a commonplace event, and until all citizens of the state have equal rights."

Four carloads of whites and Negroes from Haywood and Fayette counties, Tenn., attended the Folk Festival. SNCC field secretaries, working in Jackson, brought a busload of persons, most of whom had been arrested in demonstrations there some weeks ago.

Dylan sang two songs he had written, one of which, "Blowin' in the Wind," is "the fastest selling single in the history of Warner Brothers Records" (N.Y. Times, July 6). Bikel told the crowd that as a refugee from Hitler, "I've been in this movement with you since the day I was born."

Earlier in the afternoon, a white worker with the Committee on Appeal for Human Rights, a SNCC affiliate in Atlanta, was picked up and questioned by Greenwood city police who threatened to kill him. Julius Samstein, 24, was later released.

That evening, Anna Jo Weaver, 20, another white COAHR worker, was picked up by police as she was walking from the SNCC office to the home in which she was staying. She was lectured by police that she "was breaking God's law" by associating with Negroes, and then released.