

THE STUDENT VOICE

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They Lived In The Counties

Churches Burned, Nightriders Attack SNCC Staff In Southwest Georgia Voter Registration Drive

TERRELL AND LEE COUNTIES, GEORGIA -- SNCC workers from North and South spent a summer here in these rural counties living and working with the people to increase voter registration.

For these young students, the summer was one of threats, beatings, jailing-- and inspiration.

They worked on SNCC's Southwest Georgia voter registration project under the leadership of Charles Sherrod, a field secretary who first came to Albany in October, 1961, and was a participant in the original demonstrations which touched off the Albany Movement.

One half of the Southwest Georgia project was located in Terrell County -- called "Terrible Terrell" by local residents. This county was the scene of the first prosecution of voting violations under the Civil Rights Act of 1957.

There Ralph Allen, a white student from Massachusetts, was arrested for vagrancy along with Sherrod when the two brought a group of Negroes to the Terrell County Courthouse to register.

Allen and Joseph Pitts, a young man from Albany, were beaten by whites as they went to speak to Negroes in Dawson, Ga., about registering. Allen was unable to secure warrants from police authorities in order to prosecute his assailants.

On July 27, as Sherrod and other SNCC workers held a meeting at Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Sasser, Ga., Terrell County Sheriff Z. T. Mathews entered with several gun-toting, swearing deputies and threatened the crowd. In a front-page story, New York TIMES reporter Claude Sitton quoted the Sheriff as saying, "We want our colored people to go on



JOINING HANDS IN PRAYER Albany citizens and SNCC voter registration workers stand at smoking ruins of Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Sasser, Ga. hours after it was set on fire. SNCC workers, from left to right: Jack Chatfield, Ralph Allen (fourth from left), and Prathia Hall (extreme right).

living like they have for the last hundred years."

In Lee County, a group of young women lived and worked. They were Penny Patch, a white student from Swarthmore College, Kathleen Conwell, a Skidmore College student, Peggy Dammond, now at Boston University, Prathia Hall, a theology student from Philadelphia, and Joan Maxwell, a student from Albany, Ga.

They canvassed door-to-door, spoke to local citizens urging them to register, took them to the county courthouse, and had weekly meetings in county churches.

Miss Patch was threatened several times by local

whites and police officials who said they would "throw her in the swamp." She and Joan Maxwell were stopped numerous times by police and intimidated in the midst of their canvassing work. Peggy Dammond reported threats to bomb the home in which she and other girls were living.

Miss Patch later attempted to register at Albany State College (a predominantly Negro school) but was refused because of previous civil rights arrests. She had been arrested in Albany, Ga. when an interracial group attempted to receive service at Albany's Holiday Inn, and once in Maryland on a

sit-in.

For weeks the students depended on cooperation with local Negroes in order to eat. At times they picked squash and cotton to earn money for food. They painted houses and ran errands.

They wrote up a special issue of The Student Voice for distribution in the Albany-Terrell-Lee communities in which they described their plight:

"We do not have the money to pay for gas or wear and tear. We can see no other way out than to attempt to raise money by washing cars, dishes, floors, and windows, cutting grass, or

Southwest Georgia

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any other chore around the house. We do not have money for transportation in general, into and from these counties. Then there is the problem of room and board for about twelve people as the summer progresses.

"But then, problems are to be solved. We ask for your prayers and a strong conviction to act as a Christian must. We are not supermen. We are only young people with a determination to be FREE and to be FREE NOW!"

In August, four Negro Churches in the area were burned to the ground, including the Mt. Olive Church in Sasser. SNCC pledged aid in rebuilding the churches, and donated a tent which was used for meetings in place of the destroyed buildings.



PRATHIA HALL (left), points to bullet holes in front screen door of Mrs. Carolyn Daniels' home, where shooting occurred in Terrell County. At right, Jack Chatfield (foreground) displays bandaged arm. Sitting next to him is Chris Allen, a student from Oxford, England, who was also grazed by bullets.



At the end of the month and in early September, nightriders shot into the homes of those involved in the voter registration drive. James Mays, a Lee County teacher who had been fired from his job for his participation in the voter re-

gistration drive, reported 24 bullet holes in his house. Jack Chatfield, a white student from Connecticut, was shot twice in the arm. Christopher Allen, a student from Oxford, England, and Prathia Hall were both grazed by the bullets.

But local Negroes and the SNCC workers who remained at the end of the summer vowed to continue the drive despite the terror and the intimidation.

Sherrod commented, "We met in a tent on ground which has been cleared off for the rebuilding of the church. We had about fifty people from Albany. Six months ago, maybe less or more, you couldn't have paid these people of Albany enough to come to Dawson, Sasser, or anywhere else in Terrell County.

"But something has happened here in Southwest Georgia which has a good chance of becoming the pattern for our grand strategy in the South. And so we go about our way feeling in the darkness for the best way, always to curtailed by lack of funds. And the world listens and looks on, wondering."

Registration Efforts In Mississippi Continue Despite Violence And Terror

CLEVELAND, MISSISSIPPI—A wave of terror has swept Mississippi in the wake of Negro citizens' attempts to register to vote.

Robert Moses, field secretary for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, reported that voter registration drives were taking place in Ruleville, Cleveland, Greenwood, Liberty, and other strongholds of segregation.

And in these places, attempts to register were being greeted by violence.

On August 17, Samuel Block, Luvaghn Brown, and Lawrence Guyot -- all field secretaries for SNCC -- had to flee over the roof of their office when a crowd of white men, armed with guns and ropes, surrounded the building. Calls were made to the F.B.I. but no agent appeared.

Two young Negro girls, both students at Jackson State College, were shot by nightriders in Ruleville as they sat in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Sisson, both prominent in the registration drive, on Sept. 10.

Both were taken to the hospital, one reported in critical condition from head wounds.

Moses reported that economic reprisals had begun against Negro registrants in Ruleville. Two cleaning stores operated by Negroes were closed down for alleged "building violations." Seven others have lost their jobs.

Ruleville is in Sunflower County home of Senator James O. Eastland, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. The county has a Negro voting age population of 13,524 (out of a total of 22,309) and has 161 Negroes registered to vote.

Moses and others were arrested in Indianola, Mississippi at the end of August for "distributing handbills without a license" when they were publicizing a voter registration meeting that evening. All were released on bond.

The Chief of Police of Indianola told James Forman, SNCC executive secretary, and James Bevel, of the Southern Christian Lead-

ership Conference, that "We don't need no outside agitators coming in here, stirring up the people, and confusing their minds so that they can't think straight."

An unidentified Negro man was killed in Goodman on Sept. 10 and found in the Big Black River four days later in a cloth sack weighted down with 100 pounds of rock. He was never identified and buried in Potter's Field.

The murder occurred 45 miles south of Greenwood, and near the Tallahatchee River where Emmett Till's body was found in 1956.

Though no evidence was found that the murder was part of retaliation against the registration drive, it was felt that this contributed to the atmosphere of terror pervading the state. Holmes County, where Goodman is located, has a Negro voting age population of 64.7% of the total and yet only 41 Negroes are registered to vote.

Forman said, after the murder, "This is another

instance of lawlessness designed to protect the segregated power structure and to intimidate voter registration workers and potential voters."

CBS presented a network program on the Mississippi voter registration efforts on Sept. 26 entitled "Mississippi and the 15th Amendment." Moses, who aided the CBS teams in the production of the program, and other SNCC field secretaries, were shown accompanying registrants to local courthouses.

Despite the attacks on voters and registration workers, efforts to register Negroes in the State of Mississippi were not halting and would continue.

Tallahatchee Injunction

Hearing Set For Oct. 8

TALLADEGA, ALA., -- Hearings begin here Oct 8 to determine whether a temporary injunction prohibiting "illegal" demonstrations issued last April 28 will become permanent.

A battery of seven lawyers will defend those named in the injunction, a list which includes Robert Zellner, SNCC field secretary, Carl Braden, field secretary for the Southern Conference Educational Fund, the Talladega College student body and faculty, and others.

More Than A Documentary

Freedom In The Air "An Inspiring Album," Says Chronicle

FREEDOM IN THE AIR is the name of a documentary album, produced by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, which tells the story of Albany, Georgia in the voices and songs of the participants themselves.

The San Francisco Chronicle of Sept. 23 called it an "inspiring album," and the Chronicle reviewer went on to say:

"I know of no more moving statement of the situation in Albany, in all its horror and its glory, available today than this album produced by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee."

But FREEDOM IN THE AIR is even more than a documentary, even more than a living document to the faith and courage of the Negro citizens in Albany, Georgia. It represents to us the means by which we will be able to continue our program in the South.

As you have read in this special STUDENT VOICE, we are engaged in voter registration and direct action programs in the hard-core areas of the Deep South, where fear and terror are real, and in places like Maryland and Southern Illinois, where the oppression is just as real.

Our field secretaries do not receive "salaries." They get "subsistence" funds, which range from \$40 per week to \$15 -- when this is available.

They have picked squash, cotton, washed windows and painted houses -- not only to be good citizens, but to eat.

We are not asking for munificent funds for lavish equipment: we are asking for funds to feed and clothe those students who believe in mankind's best dreams enough to risk their lives every day.

As you have seen on these pages, our field secretaries have been beaten, jailed, threatened, stabbed, intimidated, shot at -- and some have had to flee their own offices to avoid being lynched.

The Georgia churches they met in were burned down, one by one, so they are now meeting in a tent on the rubble where the buildings once stood.

They will continue to work to change the South, so that in turn the whole country may be changed.

But, they need your help.

FREEDOM IN THE AIR, a SNCC documentary, with original idea and field work by Guy Carawan, and produced by Carawan and Alan Lomax, can be obtained for a minimum contribution of \$3.98.

Each contribution entitles you to a subscription to THE STUDENT VOICE, which tells of our work in the South and the work of other student and action groups.

We are asking you to help us, not for us, or for you, not only for today -- but for tomorrow, and future tomorrows, so that all of humankind can walk free, stand upright, and live the way human beings CAN live.

FREEDOM IN THE AIR
 a documentary on **ALBANY, GEORGIA**
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 ORIGINAL IDEA & FIELD WORK -- GUY CARAWAN PRODUCED BY ALAN LOMAX & GUY CARAWAN

STUDENT NON-VIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE SNCC-101

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This is a high fidelity long playing record processed with the most advanced of electronic engineering techniques. It is playable with any cartridge, monaural or stereophonic.

Manufactured by
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Demonstrators Tear Gassed, But . . .

Cairo Nonviolent Freedom Committee Wins Opening Of Public Facilities In City

CAIRO, ILLINOIS--Police sprayed tear gas into a crowd of 200 Negro citizens here on Sept. 27 who were protesting three successive days of arrests of young people picketing Banks' Wondermarket for fair employment.

About 58 demonstrators were arrested for "parading without a license." Seven of these remained in jail after demonstrations on Sept. 24-27. One of these, a young white man, Jim Peake, a paraplegic in a wheel chair, went on a hunger strike to protest the arrests.

This incident was the latest in a civil rights battle

here which began last June after the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee voted to make the elimination of segregation in Southern Illinois a Summer Project. Early in the spring, four SNCC staff members were denied service in Southern Illinois enroute to Chicago.

Demonstrations have occurred steadily since June. At least 42 students were arrested throughout the summer, and all public facilities opened to the entire public.

Yet in the past weeks of demonstrations water has been sprayed on the pro-

testers and several have been beaten.

On June 22, Mary McCollum, field secretary for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, went with a group of Negro high school students to get service at Mack's Barbecue, a local restaurant. When an angry onlooker threatened a Negro youth, Miss McCollum tried to intervene and was slashed on the thigh. She received twelve stitches.

The Cairo Nonviolent Freedom Committee tested restaurants, the swimming pool, a local bowling alley and roller rink.

For several weeks the CNFC kept up picket lines at the T-Wood Roller Bowl and several were arrested there. The rink finally closed.

Trials for these arrested during the summer were supposed to have taken place on August 31 but were then continued indefinitely.

A week later, the roller rink opened to all customers, regardless of race.

In August, two Negro juveniles who had taken part in demonstrations here and



MARY MCCOLLUM, a former student at Southern Illinois University, who worked as a SNCC field secretary with the Cairo committee this summer.

therefore had, allegedly "violated parole," were imprisoned in state reformatories.

Joyce Gilkey, a 16-year old, was handcuffed and taken to Geneva State Reformatory. For 24 hours her whereabouts were unknown. The other teenager, Ernest Williams, 19, was held in Joliet Reformatory after he took part in demonstrations at Mack's Barbecue.

Observers here reported to SNCC that the summer had been one of defeats and victories. While demonstrators had been tear gassed, all facilities in Cairo had opened their doors to everyone regardless of race.

THIS SPECIAL ISSUE OF THE STUDENT VOICE gives a brief summary of events which occurred during the summer. We have been unable to come out with a regular monthly issue since June because of lack of funds. In order to come out on a monthly basis, we need your contributions, which also entitle you to a subscription to THE STUDENT VOICE. Please send your donations to SNCC, 799 1/2 Hunter Street, N.W., Atlanta 14, Georgia.

NOTE: Voter Registration efforts of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee were prominently featured in the lead article of the Sept. 7 SATURDAY EVENING POST. We urge that you obtain a copy.

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