On August the 16th a year ago, a drive to encourage Negroes to register to vote was begun in "Belleville, Mississippi. During this past year, the Negroes in Belleville have run the gamut from verbal threats to shootings. It has been a year. On August the 16th of this year, the Negro people of Belleville invited the voter registration workers in the Mississippi Delta to come to Belleville, and celebrate with them a year of activity. This brief article is my salute to their efforts.

About the time 3500 field secretary Sam Dick was running across a roof in Greenwood, Mississippi, in order to escape from a white mob, in a little town of not quite 3000 people, another escape was being effected.

Belleville, Mississippi, "scoot in Sunflower County - the heart of the delta - home of Senator James O. Eastland, Purchman's constituency, and birthplace of the White Citizens Council. Where we year ago, to speak of voting to a black man, we to ask him to risk job, family, and life. Where even today, there are only thirteen Negroes registered to vote. A town where 11 black people voted this year for the first time since reconstruction.

Reportedly, the Mayor of Belleville once said: "We don't need no one to teach our niggers how to vote." But a year ago, Negroes could have said "yesah" to that. However, the black man's revolution sweeping the south and the country, and the world, has reached even tiny Belleville, and spread through the rotting houses on the rutted roads, and a rural sharecropper can now say: "I'm in the 3 class now; I'm gonna be here till it's over"; or a lady can stand up and say: "He'll go down (to the circuit clerk's office to register to vote) by himself, to show him we're just not satisfied." Despite the threats, harassment, economic pressures, and shootings, change has continued in Belleville, "Mississippi."
Finally, one year later, in this little Mississippi delta town, one finds NAACP dropped over the pulpit in a rural church, and FREEDOM tacked on the wall, as the people honor "our boys" in song and food. The "boys", the "co-workers", somewhat embarrassed at finding a tear trickling down, and a voice cracking as they sought to express, not their glory, or their heroics, for as one of them put it, "we can go home at anytime, but you are the ones who are fighting, the ones who will be here", but their inexpressible joy at what the people of Ruleville have shown three hundred thousand black people in the Mississippi delta. Even though out of the corner of an eye, one could still see the police frantically circling (unable to intimidate), as works of freedom sung to tunes of despair and hope combined to inspire, drifted out of the window and across the flat ugliness of a delta cotton field dotted with hunk black bunks broken and bent by sun, age, and oppression, one knew that the next day, or week, or year, it was going to get outside of that little church, and reach down into that cotton field, and into all the cotton fields across the delta, until everyone realizes that the only place and thing large enough to contain the courage, hope, determination, and love being expressed, is the whole world.