

MEMOIRS OF A
SOUTHERN GENTLEMAN



26 year old Julian Bond was recently re-elected to the Georgia Legislature from Atlanta. Previously, the legislature had denied him his seat because of his views on the war in Vietnam. His case is now being heard by the U. S. Supreme Court.

by Julian Bond

FOR THOSE NORTHERN STUDENTS who came South in the early '60s, their part of the Movement began with a television picture of neatly-dressed Negro college students stoically enduring the taunts and cigarette burns of scruffy, t-shirted white hoodlums at a lunch counter in Richmond or Raleigh or Nashville. The Negro faces showed a new fight. Bob Moses remembered a 1960 newspaper photo that showed a new determination. "This was their Movement" and Bob, like the others, wanted to be a part of it.

For me the beginning was a morning chapel-cutting session in a drug store across the street from Morehouse College on the third or fourth day of February 1960.

To a great many people, the Southern Negro college resembles a Catholic school Amos & Andy style; with social rules fit to control a community of buggerers and nymphomaniacs, a student-faculty relationship resembling the one between a soft-hearted drill instructor and his charges, and, frequently, an academic level which makes one wonder if higher education will ever save the race after all.

But these same colleges—and they are all not entirely like that—have kept a steady stream of flesh moving into the parts of the Southern Civil Rights Movement that are "Negro" and "student."

From the first sit-in at Greensboro on February 1, 1960 (how peeved we were to discover that the students had acted on the urgings of a white store-owner rather than as a result of the all-midnight Ghandi reading sessions which the New

York Times mooned over in its annual "how it all began story") to the days of Black Power, the drive and push have come largely from Washington's Howard University, Nashville's Fisk and Tennessee State A. & I. University, Atlanta's Morehouse, Clark, Spelman and Morris Brown Colleges, Atlanta University and the Interdenominational Theological Center.

These schools went through stages like wine coming of age, and all but Howard and Spelman have soured.

The cue for action in 1960 came from Greensboro; from Ezell Blair, the leader of the Greensboro four, from James Lawson, who challenged and went down before Martin Luther King Jr. and the conference where the Temporary Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee was formed on Easter weekend, from King himself and from Ella Baker who was pushed out as the Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker came in to re-establish a dying SCLC as the central force in the national Civil Rights Movement.

In Atlanta, it came from a newspaper, I sat in Yates & Milton drug store at Fair and Chestnut streets, across Fair from Clark and Morehouse Colleges and Atlanta University, on Chestnut a block from Spelman.

Yates & Milton, called "the corner" by those students who made it what a student center would have been if the colleges could have conquered their pride and built a Center-wide center, has seats on a main floor and booths on a raised platform in the rear. It was a place to go to cut daily chapel, then required at all of the colleges.

As I sat cutting chapel, a stocky, football-player-gone-soft type approached and thrust an ink-smearred copy of the Atlanta Daily World, the oldest Negro daily in America, in front of me. A right-hand headline read something like "Greensboro Students Sit-in For Third Day" (which means the date of the paper must have been February 5th since the World is always two days late with wire news).

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"Have you been reading this?"

I had been slowly overcoming the fear of my geography—I had declined a downtown shopping trip when I first moved to Atlanta in 1957, because I had a Northern Negro newspaper view of the South, which meant that lynchings, beatings and other abuses became daily occurrences in downtown Atlanta in my mind. I envied my classmates who were born and raised in Atlanta; they had what then seemed to be a courage I lacked; they worked as waiters on weekends under vicious racists and laughed to tell about it; they stood outside and gave the finger to passing white motorists or picked out a fair-skinned girl and embraced her there, trying to cause an incident.

"Yes, I have," I said.

"Don't you think something like that should happen here?" he demanded.

"It probably will," I said, hoping to dismiss him.

"Don't you think someone should make it happen here?" He had begun to stutter.

"Someone probably will."

"Let's make it happen!" He squeezed into the booth across from me. "You take this side (indicating a row of booths) and I'll take the other. Invite everyone to a meeting at noon in Sale Hall Annex."

I was disturbed. I imagined that the others in the drugstore were—like myself—interested in other things. I thought an appeal to meet about something that had happened in Greensboro (which at that time I thought was in Virginia) would be like asking everyone to strip nude and march on the state Capitol.

But we got a good response. About 30 students met in Sale Hall Annex, a concrete block building on the Morehouse campus where I was a sophomore. We talked, as I remember, about what to do. Send a telegram of support? Have a larger meeting? Sit-in ourselves?

The meeting was dominated—in a democratic way—by the student who had approached me in the drugstore. His name was Lonnie King, Jr., one of the almost ten unrelated Kings who were to pop into the Movement across the South in the next five years. He was a Navy veteran, Morehouse football star, and for the next three years was to lead and direct one of the largest, most aggressive

student movements in the South.

That meeting turned into other meetings. Inter-school chauvinism forced the invitation of other schools—each student body afraid that the other was taking over.

We planned first for sit-ins at all of Atlanta's dime stores, and Lonnie King and myself were detailed to survey the scene. We stood at each row of white-only lunch counters, pad and pencil in hand, counting seats. Some stores had nearly 75 "white" seats, often in two sections on opposite sides of the store.

Salespersons bristled and solicitously asked if they could help us. Men who looked like store detectives followed us around.

We met for nearly two weeks, daily, the group steadily growing. Each of the student body presidents joined—except for one on a state scholarship—and faces began to become people.

The Atlanta Movement foundered on its own success. Lunch counters and movie theatres integrated, Lonnie King off to law school, the Movement had nowhere to go. *To be continued*

Testing in Tahiti

France plans to test an H-BOMB NEAR TAHITI I PROTEST

Gerald M. Feigen

Startled San Franciscans took a second look at the giant billboards which blossomed in the city's downtown area in 1963: "FRANCE PLANS TO TEST AN H-BOMB NEAR TAHITI. I PROTEST. G.M. Feigen." Dr. Feigen, Ramparts' travel editor and a frequent visitor to Tahiti, was outraged at France's nuclear ambitions in that unspoiled area.

Neither Dr. Feigen's sentiments nor France's plans have changed appreciably since then. Dr. Feigen's latest trip to Tahiti was made last summer during France's 1966 bomb tests.

Q WARM IN THE WINDLESS, humid air, drowsy from a bottle of Hinano, the dark quenching Tahitian beer, I took a cab along the Papeete waterfront, along the Quai Bir Hackeim. The harbor was jammed with freighters and French Naval vessels; the warehouses were overflowing with test supplies, and the wharves were crowded with stacks of lumber and piles of materials labelled "secret." One enormous white tourist ship, the Sandefjord, lay at anchor, umbilically connected to the quai by thick yellow haw-

sers. Closer in, the inevitable assortment of motor sailers, commercial fishers, and untidy yachts were more reminiscent of yesterday.

I had six more days before I was scheduled to leave for Bora Bora. My first task was to find the right driver. It takes a heap of serendipity to locate a good driver—a man who is curious and unafraid, competently bilingual, touched with cupidity, politicality, and aggression. I found him. His name was Chave. Half Tahitian and half Filipino. He was short, even in high-heeled boots; he wore cowboy pants and a flowery shirt. I played with the word "scoundrel" until I saw him smile, openly, ingenuously. He charged too much, even without figuring the exchange of 87 Polynesian francs per U.S. dollar, but he proved to be worth it.

We cruised around the docks and the districts for two days, stopping to talk to people, as if accidentally, while shopping or asking directions. On the Rue Paul Gauguin there was a sign on a store window praising de Gaulle; it was mutilated and covered with graffiti. I went in. The proprietor was a middle-