

Freedom Singers: Woke up this morning/ With my mind stayed on Freedom/ I woke up this morning/ with my mind, Lord, stayed on freedom/ I woke up this morning/ with my mind stayed on freedom/ I pray, I pray, I pray, Hallelujah Radio host: [singing continues in background] Revolution in Georgia: The Negro

Struggle for Franchise. Produce for radio by Larry Rubin, a white Antioch student, who worked for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in the Southwest Georgia voter registration movement.

Freedom Singers: Stayed on freedom/ I woke up this morning/ with my mind, Lord, stayed on freedom/I woke up this morning with my mind/ stayed on freedom/ I pray, I pray, I pray, Hallelujah

Larry Rubin: Tonight, I would like to describe the Negro community in which I worked. I'll attempt to analyze it a bit in order to try to explain why the civil rights movement exists in the first place. First of all, the southern system is called segregation, but this is a euphemism. The real system is one of exploitation and exclusion. This is summed up as a story that an elderly woman told me. She said that when she was a little girl, the white people that live next to her would come to her mother and asked her mother if she could come out and play with their children, and she went out and played, and the way they played was this: the white children would be under the water pump. The Negro little girl would have to pump the water for them, and was not allowed under the water pump, and the woman said it was hot out and she wanted to get under the water, but she wasn't allowed. She had to serve the white children. It's a system of exploitation. Sharecroppers and day laborers earn maybe \$15 a week picking cotton, peanuts. There are no unions, and most of the land is owned by huge plantation owners. The people that live on these plantations are totally isolated from the rest of society, and meanwhile the people who own the plantations are making quite a bit of money. It's a system of exploitation, sexually. It's common knowledge, and it was proven in the Kinsey Report, that most white men in the South – I think it was 90% – have their first sexual relations with Negro women, and yet the white Southerner claims is that the reason he's against integration is that it brings on miscegenation. I feel that the reason he's against integration is that it might bring on intermarriage, which is not sexual exploitation but sexual relations on equal basis. All their lives the Negroes that I work with are called boy. One elderly man expressed it this way, he said until he was 60 he was called boy, and now he's called uncle. He said that when he was a child he went in with—to a store with his father, and the storekeeper called his father boy. This leaves scars. As an example, here's Charles Wingfield, who describes what happened when he went to try to register to vote.

Charles Wingfield: Its always dangerous when a Negro come down to register because [unsure: (0:04:38-0:04:44)]. Something was making him very uncomfortable, just the idea of him coming down there, you know? Larry Rubin: [unsure]

Charles Wingfield: Yeah, and they look at you like you are guilty or dirty, or just wondering, you know what, what, what are you doing in here, and when you tell him you come to register, most the

time he'll actually try it. He'll say, what you say? What you, what you want, boy? You say, I came down to register. You came down to what? Just the way he talk, you know? He, he act like shocked when you, when you tell him you came down to register, and he'll say for what? I looked down, and he say, what you want boy? I said, I came down to register. He said what, for the Army. You know, is the first thing he said, the Army. And I said no, I registered for the Army already. I came down to register to vote today.

Larry Rubin: the Negroes in the community in which I worked constantly expressed to me of the seemingly arbitrary power of life and death held by the white man. Here, Dr. Anderson, who is the head of the Albany movement, describes incidents that have created this fear.

Dr. W.G. Anderson: I can yet remember so vividly, and it hasn't been too long ago the Negro was shot down on the courthouse steps in Baker County, and who is tied to the back of an automobile and dragged around. I can remember very vividly, as early as last year, a Negro who was in jail in Bainbridge, Georgia because he said he would vote against Marvin Griffin if he was out of jail and could vote, was beaten and died. [unsure] commit such dastardly crimes, and be given a license to do it, [unsure: (0:06:38)] down in Baker County, to lynch Negro and be elected to office the next year. Zeke Matthews can walk into a church where a voter registration meeting is going on and disrupt the service, create chaos and confusion, and the license to carry that pistol and still be the sheriff in the same county.

Larry Rubin: however, if the southern way of life does not provide fair wages for the Negro, it does provide a custom by which the white people for whom he works will give him their old clothes and small loans when needed. This is a system that I would call paternalism. Many white people whom I spoke to justified the southern system by saying they take care of their Negroes. But I observed, the Negroes who got the castaway clothes were in fact the white people's Negroes. They had to grin and scratch and say "Yassa Boss" in just the right way, and they could take part of any civil rights or human rights activities. The system of paternalism is a great enemy of the movement because people are afraid to give up getting these cats we close in order to gain something that is not immediate like the right to vote. This is my paternalism also can be very vicious. A good example of this occurred after church was burned down near Terrell—in Terrell County, near Dawson. The white community of Dawson decided they would rebuild the Negro church. They got a lot of publicity about it nationwide, praising them for this act. But this was just the old system working again because, in order for the whites to rebuild the church, the Negroes had to give up their deed to it, and they had to give up all right to use the church as they please. They cannot hold any voter registration meetings there from now on. Here Jack Chatfield, a SNCC worker, talks about this. He's explaining the situation to the people in Terrell County, who are meeting in a tent which is on the site where another church used to stand. It too was burned down.

Jack Chatfield: And, course you, you why, I think you know, probably heard a story about I Hope, we may have mentioned I Hope last week, didn't we? That, the white man with using the insurance money, and all of, all, all, all of the building funds. There are all kinds of rules, things like [unsure]. He refused to allow us the church at all and, see, coupled, refusing to do anything to enlarge the church [unsure: (0:10:01)] more money, unless I help. There is going to be donated labor, which means of course, the boss man will say, I donated my boys for Saturday.

Means they're going to work on Saturday to rebuild the church. This is, this is a, this is almost as worse: what is going on now is just about as worse as burning down a church. It's really just, it's a—it's the type crime that's been committed down here for centuries.

Larry Rubin: And the crime that has been committed for centuries is essentially this: a whole people have been robbed of their right to determine their own lives. A young Negro man growing up in the South is faced with a situation where he soon learns that he has very little control over his own actions or his own destiny. He learns that all power is in the hands of the white man. He learns that there's very little he can do, no matter how smart he is. No matter how motivated he is, there is very little he can do to advance himself. Any people overcome the system individually in the traditional way: in bars. The Negro family in the South is largely maternalistic. It's the woman who is the stable part of the family. She's the one that takes care of the kids. Also she's the one who mostly has steady employment. It's a lot easier for a Negro woman to get a job as a maid and has steady work than for a Negro man to get work, let's say in the fields. In order for Negroes to get the benefits from what I have previously called paternalism, they not only have to give up their claims to human dignity, they have to work with the whites against other Negroes getting human dignity. For example, twice in the South I was arrested on the complaints of Negroes. Once—this is a typical example in both cases—three of us were canvassing in Bronwood, Georgia and we went into a store that was managed by a Negro. As we were in the store the deputy sheriff came and he, he gruffly asked the store owner if we were bothering him, and he asked him, didn't he want to press charges against us for trespassing. The Negro replied in the way he's been taught to reply to the things white people say, Yassa boss. And all of this happens in a society which teaches that anyone can make it, which teaches the Great American dream of rugged individualism and of individual achievement. The closest resemblance that I could find to the southern way of life as it applies to Negroes is a passage from a book called *Survival in Auschwitz*, which is written by a man who was an inmate in the Auschwitz concentration camp and who survived. He said that the Jews there didn't hate the Nazis. They didn't, they didn't hate their situation. They simply accepted it because they knew that there was no hope. They, they felt they were being punished, they felt that they were being assigned a way of life, and once you give up all hope you simply adjust the best way you can to the situation. You try to live in any way possible. Negroes adjust by saying, Yassa boss. By arresting civil rights workers. In this context, going down to the courthouse and registering to vote takes on tremendous significance because it's not only Negroes demanding their rights to citizenship—and the rights of citizenship, but it is, it is Negroes claiming that they are humans. It is Negroes going to the courthouse and facing this white man, but most of the people that I met feel resentment, and understand that they are in fact not inferior. Charles Wingfield, the Negro high school student to whom I referred previously, visited New York and wrote a letter back to Lee County, which was read at one of our mass meetings.

Unidentified man reading letter: dear Lee Countians...

[end of audio]