CLOSE-UP / JULIAN BOND, A MILITANT INSIDE THE SYSTEM

by JOHN NEARY

When you first meet him, it is virtually impossible to believe that, standing here before you in that casual, insouciant slouch, is the very same young man, Horace Julian Bond, who electrified the nation at the Chicago convention.

Yet here he is, 28 years old, a reedy six feet one and a half inches tall, 175 pounds, so fair he once had to show an identification card to prove he should be refused service in a Georgia coffee shop, the descendant of an emancipated slave and her former owner, a child of the civil rights movement, a published poet with a hole in his shoe, a member of the Georgia House of Delegates by virtue of a landmark Supreme Court decision and, by any yardstick of forensic measurement, the clearest, sanest, and one of the most responsible voices from the New Left—which, by the way, he helped to start.

In Chicago, Bond handled himself with the level-headed self-assurance of a veteran and won acclaim not only for his victories there but for the indomitable cool
A celebrity at the convention (left), Bond returns to Atlanta and tours a slum near his district.

Out of the South,

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But the Virginia college shop, the descendant of an emancipated slave and her former owner, is still a child of the civil rights movement, one of the clearest, sanest, and one of the most responsible voices from the New Left—which, by the way, he helped to start.

In Chicago, Bond handled himself with the level-headed self-assurance of a veteran and won acclaim not only for his victories but for the way he handled them. He handled them with the coolness with which he took them, handling them not only for his victories, but for the new era—"... the era of a nation that can face—"... the era of a nation that can face—"... the era of a nation that can face—"... the era of a nation that can face—"... the era of a nation that can face—"... the era of a nation that can face—"...
His cool and jaunty manner was honed by prejudice.

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Bond and his band of Georgia irregulars triumphed over the hand-picked crew of the griddle-chef turned governor, Lester Maddox, winning half of Georgia's 42 'floor seats' and helping defeat the unit voting rule that had stifled dissent at so many previous conventions. This victory and his poised demurrall when he himself was nominated for Vice President all marked him as a comer, perhaps the prototype of a whole new breed on the political scene—young, articulate, well-educated and determined Negro politicians who must be included in the political equation from now on.

Bond began developing his determination and control early. As a boy in Pennsylvania, where his father, Horace Mann Bond, was president of Lincoln University, he first ran head-on into race prejudice. When his family moved to Atlanta, young Julian had already developed an abiding fear of Southern whites. Then racism seared him deeply at George School, a Quaker prep school in Pennsylvania, when, as a senior, he was ordered by the headmaster to leave his school team jacket in the closet on the occasions he took his white girl friend along with him into Newtown for a date. "That was just like somebody stopping you and slapping you across the face."

But he learned to conceal his hurt and his outrage behind a facade of cool that he began consciously to erect around himself as a teen-ager. Bond's cool was hardened, tempered and finally burnished to a deceptive patina in the heat of the South where he went to work as a civil rights worker.
In 1966, was bound to end up in the movement, he said, from Montgomery to the Selma march to the jail cells of New York’s Rikers Island. Bond, who had been involved in civil rights work in Philadelphia, was inspired to join the movement by the success of Julian Bond, who had been a leader in the student movement.

As a boy he had wanted nothing more than to be a movie director; then as a youth, listening alone to jazz, he chose to become a writer, a poet. By the time he was a senior in high school, he was already writing poetry, and his work was published in several newspapers and magazines. He went on to attend college in Alabama, where he began to write about the Civil Rights Movement, and in 1960, he became a leader in the movement, working with other young people to bring attention to the injustices of segregation.

Bond’s parents were not happy with his decision, and they tried to discourage him from becoming involved in the movement. But Bond was determined to continue his work, and he began to organize and lead protests and demonstrations. He also became a speaker and writer, using his platform to raise awareness about the injustices of segregation and to encourage others to join the movement.

In 1966, Bond was elected to the Georgia House of Representatives, where he served for many years. He continued to work for civil rights and to speak out against injustice, and he became a prominent figure in the movement. He was awarded the NAACP Image Award in 1994, and he has been a vocal advocate for civil rights ever since.

Bond’s efforts have not been in vain. Today, the Civil Rights Movement is stronger than ever, and many of the issues that Bond fought for have been addressed. But there is still work to be done, and Bond continues to speak out and to fight for justice.
As a Snick official, he saw the sit-ins begin—and end

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awaken the country and finally change its laws

He chose instead, when the choice presented itself one day in a drugstore, to enlist. A football player named Lonnie King showed Bond a newspaper headline about sit-in demonstrations in Greensboro, N.C. As Bond recalls it, King said, "Don't you think that's great—don't you think something like that ought to happen here?" and I said, 'I'm sure it will,' and he said, 'Don't you think we ought to make it happen?' and I thought, 'Why me?'

Swallowing his misgivings, Julian Bond joined King and each took a row of booths in the drugstore, telling the other Morehouse students that there would be a meeting outside one of the dorms. Thus they began the Committee on Appeal for Human Rights, one of the grassfire civil rights groups that were soon to coalesce into the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee—"Snick." The group had its first sit-in on March 15 and Bond was arrested for the first and only time, so far, in his life: he led the group of demonstrators into Atlanta's segregated city hall cafeteria. By the time COHAR, as the students called it, melded with Snick, it had become a month. He and his brother James, five years his junior, handled Snick's public relations, a job Julian despised—"I felt like a whore, or a pimp"—feeding tapes to radio stations, handouts to reporters, tearing around the South in Snick's distinctive whip-antennaed Plymouth Savoys. ... "This is Zero-one, calling Zero-two; I'm 50 miles from Sunflower, and coming in, VAROOM!" There were midnight chases by the police, with daring "moonshiner turns"—lights out, a do that—I can do it faster.' And she does it, and so this girl says, 'Well, hell, I'll never learn how to type if this chick is going to come down here huntin' and peckin' and by the end of the summer, she'll whip back up to Vassar and I'll still be here, huntin' and peckin'.'" Resentment grew—along with fear of terrible violence by white racists provoked by the "outsiders."

The final put-down was felt acutely by black civil rights work-

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The FDP rejected the offer defensively, as the cause of their better education. "I don't see a Negro girl just meaning you'd see a Negro girl just because you're black—" says Humphrey, who had previously been willing to work with whites and within the movement who had so often gone up to the muscle button. A high Pen- tagon official called a delegate to withdraw her support; the White House leaned toward the impending loss of a job; California Governor Pat Brown said that his state would have to come out and take the gun. Southern whites, and the whites in the South, are growing to work with whites and within the movement if the FDP cause that party chieftain Lyndall Dixon for Human Rights, one of the civil rights groups that had its first sit-in on March 15, 1960, is one of the groups that will make the movement grow. The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, in a move to keep overparty politics alive, embraced its own delegates to the Atlantic City convention of the Democratic Party, in a move similar to Bond's own successful efforts last summer, had selected its delegates from all over the country, and as they came down to that Southern Negroes came up against the Mason-Dixon line that is so much a part of the United States, in- ...
Now he is working for a power base—
for himself and his race

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the Vice Presidency. "For a lot of people," Bond says, "that was just the end. Political liberals in the party that Snick had always counted on for support under that kind of pressure just couldn't stand up to it. They wilted away, and that was the last straw. People said, 'Well, we're not going to get it in politics; you can't count on white people; they'll fink out at the last minute'; and that was it."

Embittered as he, like his friends, was by Atlantic City, Bond nevertheless chose to stay within the "system," and in 1963 ran for a new seat in the Georgia House that had been created by the Supreme Court decision on reapportionment. It is this very fact that Julian Bond did not quit the game in disgust, that he chose instead to become a politician, still a militant but one alone, outside militancy, and able to recognize the politician's necessity to compromise, that makes him so perplexingly interesting. With some help from Snick, he won the primary by a resounding margin, and six weeks later the general election, drawing 82% of his district vote. He seemed headed for a seat in the very legislative chamber from which he had been ejected just three years earlier when he tried to integrate its visitors' gallery.

But then Bond endorsed a position statement by Snick that condemned the war in Vietnam, and compounded the political damage by applauding the courage of draft-card burners. House members got up petitions against his seating, feeling no doubt a good deal like Huck Finn's father when he met a "free nigger from Ohio." Old Pap recounted, Mark Twain tells us, indignantly: "And to see the cool way of that nigger—why, he wouldn't'a' give me the road if I hadn't shoved him out o' the way. I says to the people, why ain't this nigger put up at auction and sold?"

A special committee recommended against permitting him to take the oath of office; and on Jan. 10, Bond watched with blurring eyes as the big electric tote board recorded the house vote—184-to-12 against seating him. Up in the gallery, his wife told him later, she had barely been able to keep from screaming, and his father said not long ago, "I didn't know he had in him when they had that kangaroo court; I was sitting up there getting furiouser and furiouser, but he kept his cool."

Bond took his case to federal court and lost and then, on Dec. 5, 1966, the Supreme Court granted Bond, the third member of his family in three generations to be a plaintiff before the high court, his seat, declaring the legislature had no right to stifle the voice of a member. (Bond's grandfather in 1908 had been, as a member of the board of trustees of Berea College, a co-plaintiff in a case that unsuccessfully attacked a Kentucky law requiring separation of the races in school. In 1954, his father helped prepare the brief in the historic case that struck down the notion of "separate but equal" schools.)

In the House, a legislative body where, says Charles Morgan, lawyer for the American Civil Liberties Union in Atlanta, "Hitler would be a middle-of-the-roader," Bond admittedly has not been notably effective. But he still prefers his job to that of, say, being mayor or of a city ("What will Lindsay be able to say at the end of his four years; what will he point to? I can point to little sidewalks—maybe in 50 years, they'll call it the 'Julian Bond Memorial Sidewalk'"). And while his 1965 campaign platform of a minimum wage law, elimination of right-to-work laws and the state's capital punishment law remains unfulfilled, Bond, unopposed in this year's election, plans to stay in the House for another four years. By then, he hopes, his congressional district will have been halved and he expects to be carried into the United States in a way, although he hasn't written a couplet in years, Bond is continuing with his poetry, but now it is a verbal kind of troubadouring, using his poet's imagery and language to deliver, in his deceptively languid, hoarse, soft, smoker's voice, an admonishment, a cajolery, a stern warning to his audiences; as poets can sometimes do, he is roaming the country spreading the unpleasant news that America's future is now.

Julian Bond doesn't hand out any aspirin to either whites or blacks. He sees "just a lot of turmoil from now on," terrorism, black sabotage of power plants, white police brutality, sees a country which is deciding now which of two ways it will go: toward concentration-camp-like ghettos or "brotherhood, peace and light." He sees the election as "two road shows on tour, speaking from the same script. The title of this year's extravaganza is Law and Order, or, How to Sell Out to the South without Once Saying 'Nigger.'" The answer, as Bond can best see it, is for "those least affected, least involved, the great mass of black and white middle-class Americans, to involve themselves . . . that action replace slogans, that rhetoric be replaced with reality."

Dividing his time between a raft of speaking engagements and political guerrilla missions down South and around the country; he frets that he has no immediate hope of using the impetus he gained at Chicago and that he has so far not developed any political power base of his own. This he will try to remedv in time to run for Congress in 1972 and has plans as well to help other Negroes in the South build the organizations...
Julian Bond took his case to federal court. And this time, the Georgia Supreme Court agreed with Bond's argument that his First Amendment rights were violated.

Despite this sudden attention—where once John's muscular style and obvious passion for justice and equality were recognized with enthusiasm, the voices of vitriol and boycott that have surrounded him are growing louder—Bond remains unfazed. He has always been a man of the law, and he knows that the road ahead will be long and difficult. But he is undeterred. He is determined to continue his work, to continue to fight for the rights of all people, black and white, rich and poor.

"My hope is that we can come together as a country, and that we can work towards a better future," Bond said.

He is hopeful that the tide is turning, that people are beginning to see the importance of unity and cooperation. And he is committed to doing his part to bring about that change. He knows that it will not be easy, but he is willing to do whatever it takes to make sure that our country moves forward in a positive direction.

Bond is a man of great principle, and he is dedicated to his cause. He is a true leader, and he is a true example of what it means to be a man of integrity and dedication. He is a man who has dedicated his life to the struggle for justice and equality, and he is a man who will not be deterred by the challenges that lie ahead.

"I will continue to fight," Bond said. "I will continue to speak out, and I will continue to work towards a better future for all people."