

SCCLC

SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

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THE TERRIBLE COST OF THE BALLOT

By

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Tears welled up in my heart and my eyes not long ago as I surveyed the shambles of what had been the Shady Grove Baptist Church of Leesburg, Georgia. I had been awakened shortly after daybreak by my executive assistant, the Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker, who informed me that a SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) staffer had just called and reported that the church where their organization had been holding voting clinics and registration classes had been destroyed by fire and/or dynamite.

Lee County is one of the three southwest Georgia counties where for years an attempt to register to vote has been tantamount to inviting death.

As I stood there sensing the intense heat from the smoldering remains, there came to mind all of the protestations of the segregationists, the conservative whites, the liberals, and many, Negroes who have not yet grasped the meaning of nonviolent direct action.

Their reservations on "Sit-Ins" and "Freedom Rides" do not all sound the same, but they total the very same attitude: "There must be another way for the Negro to achieve his civil rights. He should seek redress through the courts", or "Lunch counters and schools should not be the emphasis. The Negro should register and vote", and on and on.

Unfortunately, when the nonviolent movement is at full peak as it has been in Albany, Georgia over the past summer, there seems to be a greater temptation for detractors and *some friends* to discount the nonviolent technique as a legitimate method for a minority people to secure the guarantees of the Constitution. They do not understand that the massive insistence of the Negro community through nonviolent direct action forces the lawless segregationist to a compromise position where

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Ralph Abernathy Views Ruins of the Shady Grove Baptist Church

THE CONGO, U.S.A. Albany, Georgia

By Wyatt Tee Walker

Albany, Georgia is the most controversial city in America. In many ways it is the Congo of the United States. Where there is the most desperate need for integration, there seems to be nothing but *disintegration*.

Albany's likeness to the Congo does not end here. The heartache and sorrow of the Congo is the bitter fruit of the white man's seed sown centuries ago. And that which makes Albany what it is today is no more than the southern racist's "sowing the wind and reaping the whirlwind."



wyatt tee walker

Fortunately, the analogy ends here. The Congo, internally seeks its solution through arms and soldiers and violence—the instruments of war. In Albany, the solution has been sought, tenaciously, and against tremendous odds, through nonviolent direct action. The former is *destructive*; the latter is *constructive*. Only the preceptive see that the end of what the Albany Movement seeks is reconciliation and not victory.

Above and beyond—and underneath the practical objective the Negro community seeks under the leadership of the young osteopath, Dr. W. G. Anderson, are intangibles that, paradoxically, are the only realities.

What does a Federal court decision for the desegregation of public schools mean when there are only forty-one sets of parents in progressive Atlanta who successfully implement the decision. What meaning has a court order to desegregate the library in Albany if the Negro *psyche* remains so chained and shackled that nobody will really feel comfortable using its facilities?

This points up the real meaning of Albany. The nonviolent direct action movement has accomplished what the Emancipation Proclamation did not accomplish in 1863; the Negro had a freed body, but not a freed soul. In Albany, Georgia the bodies may not yet be free, but Thank God, their souls are free.

It all began in Albany with a handful of Negroes who decided to break the bonds of custom, inferiority, segregation, yea, even laws. Their witness was

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MONROE, N. C. SITE OF EXPANDING CITIZENSHIP SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Citizenship personnel of SCLC's staff welcomed a group of young civil rights workers from Monroe, N. S. to its 11th monthly training workshop. Along with this group was a bus load from the Mississippi Delta and a number of persons from South Carolina.

Shown with the group below are Mrs. Dorothy Cotton, (left) Educational Director for SCLC; The Reverend Andrew Young, Program Director (3rd from right) and Mrs. Septima P. Clark (2nd from right). Mrs. Clark, Supervisor of Teacher Training, returned to Monroe with this group and has worked for many weeks there in an effort to bring about a spirit of reconciliation through nonviolent means. She sought conferences with officials there in order that the white as well as the Negro community might recognize the need for a continuing education program and lend their support. With good communication lines opened through such conferences and the Citizenship Education program growing



Group from Monroe, North Carolina Citizenship School

COST OF BALLOT (From P. 1)

he howls (as he is doing at this moment in Albany) "Seek your rights through the courts and not the streets and we will obey the law."

However, in Lee County, there was no lunch counter issue, no requests for talks with the City Commission, no insistence on compliance with the ICC ruling on November 1, 1961, no omnibus suit pending — there was only a handful of the plain and simple people of the land who sought to equip themselves to vote as American citizens. They were being helped by student volunteers of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee who barely existed on subsistence pay of \$40.00 a week. Yet, the site of their voter rallies and registration clinics was now in ashes. Why? Why? Why?

The naked truth is that whether the object of the Negro community's efforts are directed at lunch counters or interstate busses, First Amendment privileges or pilgrimages of prayer, school desegregation or the right to vote—he meets an implacable foe in the southern white racist. No matter what it is we seek, if it has to do with full citizenship, self-respect, human dignity, and borders on changing the "southern way of life," the Negro stands little chance if any, of securing the approval, consent or tolerance of the segregationist white South.

Exhibit "A": The charred remains of the Shady Grove Baptist Church, Lee County, Georgia. This is the terrible cost of the ballot in the Deep South.

with the participation of such groups as these, we look forward to enlightenment of all citizens and thereby the establishment of the "beloved community" which SCLC's President, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. works for all over the South.

DIS 'N DATA

On Wednesday evening, September 26, during the SCLC Conference, Dr. W. G. Anderson, leader of the Albany Movement, will receive the first annual "Rosa Parks Freedom Award." Dr. Anderson gained nationwide acclaim in his debut on "Meet The Press" as a substitute for Dr. King during Dr. King's arrest and jailing in Albany.



Dr. Anderson

Have You Read . . . ECHO IN MY SOUL by Septima Poinsette Clark (E. P. Dutton & Co.)? Mrs.



Septima Clark

Clark, a veteran of civil rights activity and presently Supervisor of Teacher Training for SCLC's Citizenship Education Program tells a warm and intimate story of a native Southerner's creative work in the human relations arena of the Deep South. This autobiography is a must!

Have You Seen . . . CBS *Eyewitness to History*: Special Report — Albany? Now available for civic and educational groups on a loan basis. Write: CBS News, 420 Lexington Ave., New York, N. Y.

Have You Heard . . . *Freedom In the Air*, a documentary hi-fidelity recording on the struggle for full citizenship in Albany, Georgia? This creative enterprise to raise funds for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee is produced by Alan Lomax and Guy Carawan. May be ordered directly from: SNCC, 135 Auburn Ave., N.E., Atlanta, Ga.

Atlanta SCLC Prexy Jailed in Albany with 75 Religious Leaders

The Rev. John A. Middleton, Pastor of Atlanta's Allen Temple A.M.E. Church and local leader of SCLC, was among the 75 religious leaders arrested late last month in Albany. The church men and women represented ten states and included nine rabbis, eight Catholic lay members and 45 Protestant clergymen of the Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Episcopal, Unitarian, Disciples of Christ and United Church of Christ denominations. The churchmen were segregated by race and placed in jails in Albany, Leesburg and Newton, Ga. All were similarly charged with "disorderly conduct",



Rev. Middleton

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SCLC PROFILE

Tallahassee's Fighting C. K. Steele

The Reverend Charles Kinsey Steele, pastor of the Bethel Institutional Baptist Church has had an exciting and fruitful career as a community leader. He is president of the Inter-Civic Council (SCLC affiliate), adviser to Tallahassee CORE, president of the NAACP in Tallahassee, board member of the State Conference of NAACP and a Mason.

Reverend C. K. Steele is one of the founders of SCLC and serves presently as First Vice-President. He was projected into national prominence as



Rev. C. K. Steele

leader of the bus boycott in Tallahassee that followed closely on the heels of the Montgomery protest in 1956. He has been jailed four times, his home stoned and the windows blasted by gunfire.

A native of Bluefield, West Virginia, he attended the secondary schools of Gary, and thence to Morehouse College. He has served pastorates in Alabama and Georgia prior to his tenure in Florida.

He is married to the former Lois Marion Brock. They have six children, five sons and a daughter. Mrs. Steele, though a graduate of Florida A. & M. has been unable to find permanent employment because of her husband's deep involvement in the social struggle.

Recently, Rev. C. K. Steele demonstrated his mettle in Albany, Ga. immediately following Dr. King's jailing on July 10th. The next morning, Rev. Steele led two score Freedom marchers to join King and Abernathy, remaining in the Camilla (Ga.) jail for seventeen days. He was featured in the CBS *Eyewitness to History* documentary on Albany. We salute Tallahassee's Rev. C. K. Steele.

THE CONGO, U. S. A.

(Continued from Page 1)

compounded by the frustration of 99 years of hypocrisy and deception, and to date more than 1200 arrests have taken place, thousands of man hours invested and millions of ergs of energy have been expended in the name of freedom. In that glorious process, the souls of the black people of Albany have been set free.

I do not know what moment or day or week or year we shall have a just resolution of the grievances of the Negro community in Albany, but whenever it is, there will be Negroes who step forward with confidence and assurance and implement every privilege constitutionally declared.

These are they whom the naive and the unenlightened call "law-breakers". This is the favorite cliché of one Chief Laurie Pritchett who in some instances has been made the darling of the press because he has abstained from police brutality. In his role as Chief of Police, he is as villainous as the system in which he is hopelessly caught. Granted he is a cut of man who sincerely abhors police brutality and will not allow it. But he is also a peace officer committed to fulfill the solemn oath that hangs upon the wall of his office: "As a law enforcement officer my fundamental duty is to serve mankind; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation and the peaceful against violence or disorder; and to respect the constitutional rights of all men to liberty, equality and justice (italics mine). The "lawbreakers" are they who hurl the accusation: Mayor Kelly, the City Commission, Chief Laurie Pritchett *et al* who deny aggrieved citizens, by chance Negro, their constitutional guarantees under the First Amendment.

Thus the hue and cry of the racists that the Communists and the "outsiders" have taken over their town falls a little flat on the ears of the nation and the world when their deeds are contrasted with their words. That which really strikes fear in the hearts is the prospect that the example of Albany, Georgia will produce 25, 50 or 100 "Albany's". "Mistuh Charley" knows he is about to lose "a good thing".

In Albany, as nowhere else, the paraphrase of the old plantation song is startlingly true. It is the song of the new Negro, the New Albany, perhaps the new South and nation.

"I'm coming, I'm coming'
And my head *ain't* bending low.
I'm walking tall, I'm talking strong
I'm America's NEW BLACK JOE!"



Jackie Robinson and Wyatt Tee Walker looking at the ruins of Mt. Olive Baptist Church

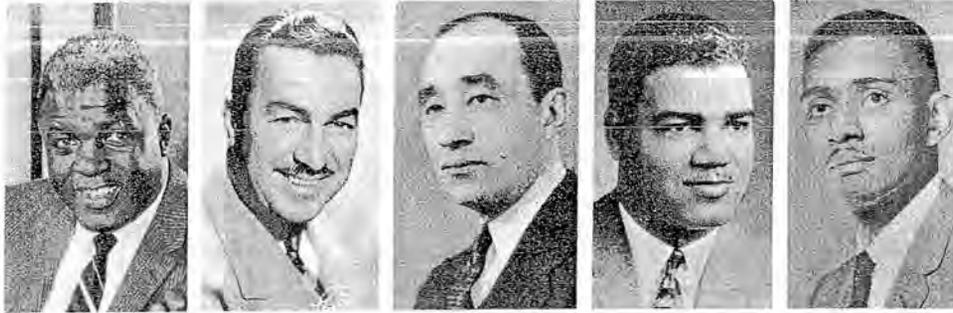
JACKIE ROBINSON HEADS SCLC DRIVE TO REBUILD BURNED CHURCHES

Jackie Robinson, former major league baseball star responded willingly to Martin Luther King's suggestion that a national fund drive be started to rebuild three churches in southwest Georgia that were completely destroyed by "night-riding" arsonists. The Shady Grove Baptist Church in Lee County was rocked by an explosion (see Page

1) and then burned August 15th. The other two churches were swept by early morning fires September 9, the same Sunday Mr. Robinson was scheduled to address a voter registration rally of the Albany Movement. Following his arrival in Albany, he accompanied Wyatt Tee Walker (investigating the tragedy for Dr. King who was on the West Coast at the time), to the scene of the holocausts. At the Mount Olive ruins where some of the church still

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SCLC CONFAB BOASTS GALAXY OF CIVIL RIGHTS STARS



Jackie Robinson Adam C. Powell William S. Nelson Whitney Young Otis Moss

Birmingham, Alabama, "the worst city in the South" will be the scene of SCLC's Sixth Annual Convention, September 25-28. The convention occasions bringing together some of the "best" people. Beginning with the First Annual Freedom Dinner at which the wives of the "Freedom Fighters" will

be honored, the top personalities identified with the Negro struggle in this generation will share the speaker's dais. Jackie Robinson, former Brooklyn Dodger all-time great and newest entry into Baseball's Hall of Fame will serve as principal speaker at the dinner. The convention schedule includes major presentations by Congressman Adam Clayton Powell; Wiley Branton, Director of SRC's Voter Education Project; Dr. William Stuart Nelson of Howard University; one of the country's foremost authorities on nonviolence; the National Urban League's crusading Whitney C. Young; Anne Braden, militant white Southerner and Field Secretary for SCEF (Southern Conference Educational Fund). Ralph D. Abernathy, keynoter and President King round out the roster of principal speakers. The Reverend Otis Moss, leader of the Atlanta Sit-ins will deliver the closing message on Friday. The host affiliate for the annual meeting is the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights headed by the Rev. Fred L. Shuttlesworth.

JACKIE ROBINSON *(From P. 3)*

burned an hour before sunset, Mr. Robinson commented, "It makes you want to cry, deep down in your heart." He then pledged to do whatever he could do and pledged the first \$100.00 to the fund. Within a week's time, Mr. Robinson had money and pledges for nearly \$10,000.00. At press time, Governor Nelson Rockefeller "as a Baptist layman and concerned American citizen" had pledged to Dr. King and Mr. Robinson an unspecified amount equal to one-third the cost of constructing the three churches. Mr. Robinson said the total cost could be \$30,000.00 or more.

Those wishing to contribute may do so by sending their contributions to Mr. Jackie Robinson, 425 Lexington Avenue, New York, New York or Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 334 Auburn Avenue, Atlanta, Georgia. Because of tax purposes, the fund is officially named the *Mt. Olive Baptist Church Building Fund* with the understanding that each church would share proportionately in all monies raised.

DIS 'N DATA *(From P. 2)*

"creating a disturbance" and "congregating on the sidewalk". Upon his release from jail, the Rev. Mr. Middleton commented, "The system of segregation has been placed squarely where it should have been all the time—on the front door-step of the Church."

The "Pilgrimage of Prayer" to Albany came as a response to a call from SCLC's president, Dr. King. Chief coordinators were the Rev. Ralph Lord Roy of Grace Methodist Church, New York City and Rabbi Israel Dresner, Temple Sharay Shalom, Springfield, N. J.

CONTRIBUTIONS

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