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The Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee (Sncc) is organizing a Voters Registration Drive down here in Albany and surrounding Lee and Terrell Counties in Georgia. We are coupling this main activity with a solid effort to gain equal job opportunities. This area is typically "rural south" -- the main economy is plantation orientated. Albany sits (or sleeps) amidst the largest pecan and peanut growing area in the U.S. The cotton and corn crops are of secondary monetary importance.

There is a large group of wealthy planters here. The white business men and small professional class are well established and secure. One has to look sharply to see the very few "poor whites". The negroes by and large are plantation workers and domestic workers. There are a small number of independent negro farm owners who have achieved a certain measure of personal security. There is also a small "negro elite" -- a few doctors, a few lawyers and many ministers, (all Baptist). From this group comes the leadership of the Albany Movement, an organization dedicated to equal rights for negroes through non-violent action. The Albany movement was organized primarily through the urging and pressure of SNCC.

The negro ministers hold a unique and responsible position in the negro community. They are looked up to and held in the highest esteem by their adult flock. May preach, but few are ordained. Reverend Wells, the foremost leader in the Albany movement, a pastor of four churches, earns his livelihood as a sand-blaster. It is the militancy of the younger people that has forced the ministers as a whole to support the struggle ~~of the younger people that has forced the ministers~~ for rights. The ministers must help in this fight or else they would be left behind.

A few words about separate but equal school facilities. The local High Schools for the negro children are rightly named Negro Training Schools. The youngsters are trained to be "niggers". It takes a long time and lots of training for the proud, conscious youngster to know his place, to learn how to grin and shuffle. These accomplishments are so difficult to learn and require so much practice that there is no time for reading, writing and arithmetic. The heart-breaking truth is many graduates are in fact, illiterate.

My work in this area, against such a background is divided into two general areas -- registration of citizens for voting at the polls and job opportunity for negroes.

We spend days at a time visiting negro homes in the back country. We talk, we talk and w talk. We are met with all grades of enthusiasm from very faint to very sincere. All negroes down here live with Fear. Some, the Fear makes strong; some, it weakens. We arrange meetings where the people are encouraged and also taught to pass the literacy tests. The ministers are a great help. Their churches are the meeting halls.

The battle for job opportunity is fought mainly through two strategies. One, a boycott of down-town merchants and secondly by demonstrations. The boycott of the white merchants is very effective as far as the negro consumer is concerned. The negro clergy actively support and encourage this movement. The demonstrations are very difficult manoevers. Some time ago, a local ordinance was passed outlawing picket lines, carrying signs, and walking back and forth. Also the leadership of the Albany movement pledged to the City Council that there would be no more demonstrations. So now, instead of signs, sweatshirts are worn with the message of Boycott Cowntown and Midtown printed on them. Instead of marchers, we have walkers who dare not stop or talk or even halt, because imprisonment would result. These unstoppable, courageous walkers are the young high school kids. 13 to 18 years old. These campaigns must be effective, for recently in the City Weekly, there was a full page advertisement signed by the (white) Ministerial Council addressed to the negro people. saying "Why can't we talk it over in a nice, friendly fashion". These are the same ministers who caused many negro Baptists to be arrested when the darker skinned Christians attempted to pray in the churches outside of their own neighborhoods.

Another activity on which we spend much, too much time is writing reports. We fill out daily activity charts, weekly activity reports, evaluation and analysis reports. Every minute of every day must be accounted for. A tiresome task but a necessary one. I was grateful for this system of reports when headquarters learned of my arrest for "trespassing" within an hour of the event. About jails and sheriffs--we are careful not to be picked up. We are very polite to the minions of Law and Order. We take all kinds of precautions not to get arrested and we do not believe in bravado because that would intertupt the important work that we are doing.

There is also another minority group down here, a very small minority, the Jews. This city, Albany, was originally settled by a group of Jewish merchants a generation before the Civil War. The vision was to create an industrial metropolis in the Deep South. This never took place, although Albany did become a freight and cartage center. The Jewish families remained, prospered and took root. The Jews consider themselves Southerners first, (Stonewall Cohen, Abner Israel) but also consider themselves above the problems I have been writing about, and do not take a public stand either way. There is very little anti-semitism among their neighbors who consider the Jew as an oddity, rather than a menace. Among the negroes, there is a feeling of recognition for the Jews as another oppressed people. Many of my friends have told me that they are given better treatment when employed by Jewish businessmen.

I would like to close this report on a note of hope for the future of the South. For myself, I have been given much, much more than I could give, I have learned more than I have taught. I have seen courage and have learned the taste of Fear. There is Goodness and there is deep, abiding Evil. There are many to love and some to hate.