

Newsletter

Volume 1

July, 1963

Number 10

At Crisis End...



Negro leaders announce settlement by biracial committee to end racial strife in Birmingham during news conference on May 10. Facing, from left: Rev. Shuttlesworth, Rev. Abernathy, and Rev. King.

Birmingham...How It All Began

BY MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Birmingham will surely mark a watershed in the history of the nonviolent revolution in America. No civil rights thrust of the Negro community in our nation has so completely captured the attention and sympathy of public opinion.



Rev. King

No single instance of nonviolent direct action has prompted such widespread parallel activity, particularly in the Deep South. Never before has the Federal Government evinced the serious concern it now manifests in its first serious grappling with the American dilemma of race and color prejudice. No moment of history has focused its attention on the Negro as the key figure on the American scene today, "Faith 7" notwithstanding. How did "Birmingham" come to be?

When you consider the tragic history of Birmingham, Alabama in race relations on the one hand, and on the other hand, consider the choice of Alabama's largest city as a "target city," the decision seems almost foolhardy. In the last twenty-two months, there have been *twenty-four* bombings of homes and

churches; it has the longest and thoroughly documented record of rampart police brutality; it is not an uncommon occurrence for Negro women being accosted by city police, forced to submit to criminal assault, and their lips sealed under the threat of death to the members of their family; its use of police power to suppress the Negro at every level of his experience has gained for it the infamous reputation as being the "Last stop before Johannesburg, South Africa."

Three critical factors persuaded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to choose Birmingham as the site for the launching of its next nonviolent campaign against segregation: first, Birmingham is the home of our strongest affiliate, the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights, led by the most courageous civil rights fighter in the South, Fred Shuttlesworth; secondly, Birmingham represented the hard-core, recalcitrant, seg-

(Continued on Page 4)

BIRMINGHAM ISSUE

SET RECORD REGISTRATION FOR BIRMINGHAM VOTERS

By Rev. Andrew Young

Almost two thousand students came out of Birmingham jails and under leadership from SCLC staff descended on the community with a new assault on the barriers of segregation. Seeking to solidify the gains made through Direct Action with a solid political foundation, they succeeded in leading 1,539 adults to the Voter Registration Office during the month of June.



Rev. Young

This is one of the most successful Voter Registration efforts ever conducted in the State of Alabama during a one month period, and we are anticipating an increase as the summer progresses.

The sprawling industrial metropolis proved an ideal testing ground for the sincerity and dedication of the High School youth of Birmingham. They proceeded to divide the community according to school districts, and the same leadership which organized and recruited students to go to jail in April, now organized mass activity in voter registration canvassing.

An SCLC Staff team of Dorothy Cotton, James Bevel and Andy Young transported 75 of the outstanding leaders of the drive to our Dorchester Training Center where they were instructed in the art of politics, the methods of community organization, and the nature of the Negro Freedom Movement, Past and Present. The staff continues to give guidance and direction to the energies and enthusiasm of these young people.

Rev. Charles Billups of the Alabama Christian Movement, serves as the Drive coordinator.

This program has been so successful that plans for similar programs with young people in other cities are underway. (See photos page 7)

SCLC Newsletter

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DIS 'N DATA

Have You Heard . . . about the \$100-A-Plate Dinner honoring the four SCLC leaders, Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph Abernathy, F. L. Shuttlesworth and Wyatt Tee Walker, on June



Noel M. Marder

18 in the main ballroom of New York's Park Sheraton Hotel? The hugely successful "black tie" affair was sponsored by Back Our Brothers, Inc., an interracial group, chaired by Yonkers, N. Y. Publisher Noel M. Marder. Co-chairmen were: Jackie Robinson, Rita K. McClain, Bernard Singer and Catherine Basie.

Did You Know . . . that Dr. Martin Luther King's latest book, **Strength To Love** (Harper & Row) is now in the book stalls at your local book stores? Or if you don't find it there, you can get a copy by writing SCLC headquarters, 334 Auburn Ave., N.E., Atlanta, Ga., and enclosing a money order or check for \$3.50. It's must reading!

Have You Seen . . . the printed copies of Letter From **Birmingham City Jail** by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.? If you haven't, you can obtain a copy by writing to SCLC headquarters in Atlanta. Excerpts from it have appeared in *The Christian Century*, issue of June 12, 1963, and in *Renewal*, edition of June 4, 1963.

BIRMINGHAM MANIFESTO

The document below was made public on April 3rd. The initial day of the nonviolent campaign in Birmingham. It succinctly states the Negro community's decision to act.

The patience of an oppressed people cannot endure forever. The Negro citizens of Birmingham for the last several years have hoped in vain for some evidence of good faith resolution of our just grievances.



Rev. Shuttlesworth

Birmingham is part of the United States and we are *bona fide* citizens. Yet the history of Birmingham reveals that very little of the democratic process touches the life of the Negro in Birmingham. We have been segregated racially, exploited economically, and dominated politically. Under the leadership of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights, we sought relief by petition for the repeal of city ordinances requiring segregation and the institution of a merit hiring policy in city employment. We were rebuffed. We then turned to the system of the courts. We weathered set-back after set-back, with all of its costliness, finally winning the terminal, bus, parks and airport cases. The bus decision has been implemented begrudgingly and the parks decision prompted the closing of all municipally-owned recreational facilities with the exception of the zoo and Legion

Field. The airport case has been a slightly better experience with the experience of hotel accommodations and the subtle discrimination that continues in the limousine service.

We have always been a peaceful people, bearing our oppression with super-human effort. Yet we have been the victims of repeated violence, not only that inflicted by the hoodlum element but also that inflicted by the blatant misuse of police power. Our memories are seared with painful mob experience of Mother's Day 1961 during the Freedom Ride. For years, while our homes and churches were being bombed, we heard nothing but the rantings and ravings of racist city officials.

The Negro protest for equality and justice has been a voice crying in the wilderness. Most of Birmingham has remained silent, probably out of fear. In the meanwhile, our city has acquired the dubious reputation of being the worst big city in race relations in the United States. Last Fall, for a flickering moment, it appeared that sincere community leaders from religion, business and industry discerned the inevitable confrontation in race relations approaching. Their concern for the city's image and commonweal of all its citizens did not run deep enough. Solemn promises were made, pending a postponement of direct action, that we would be joined in a suit seeking the relief of segregation ordinances. Some merchants agreed to desegregate their rest-rooms as a good faith start, some actually complying, only to retreat shortly thereafter. We hold in our hands now, broken faith and broken promises. (Continued on page 4)



New York fund-raising \$100-a-plate dinner, sponsored by Back Our Brothers, Inc., was tremendous success in honor of four SCLC leaders. Shown (from left) are: Rev. King and Rev. Abernathy (seated) and (standing) Sen. Kenneth Keating, Jackie Robinson, Wyatt Tee Walker and Rev. F. L. Shuttlesworth.

PROFILE OF THE MONTH

In a manner of speaking, Rev. James Bevel, a field secretary for SCLC, with his wife, Diane, could be called a roving



James Bevel

to set up programs to help educate the illiterate and train unemployed Negroes with underdeveloped skills for job opportunities.

Few were aware of his crusade in the cause of freedom until the Birmingham crisis. It was a day when some 3,000 grim-faced, sullen Negroes stood massed in the city streets, inwardly fomenting oaths against the city police and firemen who had turned vicious dogs and high-pressure fire hoses on non-violent demonstrators against segregation. They stood angry and silent, refusing to be budged by the dog and hose tactics of firemen and police.

Able To Move Crowds

Suddenly, like a genie from nowhere, Bevels was moving among the sullen mass, exhorting them to go home. "Go home!" he shouted repeatedly, moving in and out of the crowd. "Go home! You're not helping our cause now." Within minutes the huge crowd of Negroes were gone. And as suddenly as he had appeared, the diminutive Rev. Bevel had disappeared.

But he had left his mark. Justice Department aides who had witnessed the scene and learned of Bevel's commanding powers over crowds, later made certain that he was notified of any major decisions being made.

Bevel's chief role in Birmingham was to organize and recruit students. To this end he devoted his energies and abilities, and in short order he had the students mobilized, attending nonviolent workshops and dedicating themselves to the cause of freedom. His task, although a difficult one, was carried out with dispatch and excellency.

Jewish In His Thinking

As a Baptist minister, he scarcely fits the stereotype. Instead of black suit and black hat, he wears dungaree jacket and pants and a skull cap known as a Jewish Yarmulke. The latter, he says, is because "I'm very Jewish in my thinking. Christ was a Jew, and all of my heroes who stood for decency, equality, justice and human dignity in the past were the Jewish prophets."

The next stop for Rev. Bevel and his Chicago-born wife is Washington, D. C. Both are busy lining up Southern volunteers to join those of the North in a proposed "March on Washington," where he vows he will pitch his tent on the White House lawn with his family. "This will not be a pilgrimage," he declares, "but a 'stay-there'. This is a sick country, and we've got to cure it."



James Bevel, Field Secretary for SCLC, shown with students who attended one of the nonviolent direct action workshops in Birmingham.

An Excerpt From 'Birmingham Jail'

(Editor's Note: Martin Luther King's Letter From Birmingham City Jail has been hailed across the nation as one of the historic documents of American history. Many knowledgeable observers agree that it is a profound statement of the meaning of the non-violent revolution in America and as Birmingham signals a turning point in the race relations fortune of the American Negro, so the jail letter reflects the temper of a changing mood in the Negro community in America. The excerpt reprinted below evidences the legitimate rationale the Negro has for his "Freedom Now!" cry.)

"I guess it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say wait. But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policemen curse, kick, brutalize, and even kill your black brothers and sisters with impunity; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her little eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see the depressing clouds of inferiority begin to form in her little mental sky, and see her begin to distort her little personality by unconsciously developing a bit-

terness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five-year-old son asking in agonizing pathos: Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?; when you take a cross-country drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading 'white' men and 'colored'; when your first name becomes 'nigger' and your middle name becomes 'boy' (however old you are) and your last name becomes 'John,' and when your wife and mother are never given the respected title 'Mrs.'; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tip-toe stance never quite knowing what to expect next, and plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of 'nobodiness';—then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into an abyss of injustice where they experience the bleakness of corroding despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience."

Join The
NAACP



Students run voter registration clinic in Birmingham church.

All Participate In Workshops

Every one of the more than three thousand freedom fighters of Birmingham, Alabama participated in the nonviolent workshops conducted throughout the campaign. Workshop leaders included James Lawson of Memphis, Tennessee, Andy Young of Atlanta, James Bevel of Cleveland, Mississippi, C. T. Vivian of Chattanooga and Bernard Lee, all members of the SCLC staff. Prior to the massive demonstrations that finally broke the back of the resistance, those mentioned above intensively trained local Birminghamians among them William Douthard, George C. Scott and Lester Cobb. The nonviolent dialogue developed between staff and volunteers accounted directly for the well-disciplined and precise execution of the largest demonstrations in the history of the nonviolent struggle. The facsimile Commitment Blank (below) is an exact replica of those used during the Birmingham campaign.

Commitment Blank

I HEREBY PLEDGE MYSELF—MY PERSON AND BODY—TO THE NONVIOLENT MOVEMENT THEREFORE I WILL KEEP THE FOLLOWING TEN COMMANDMENTS:

1. *MEDITATE* daily on the teachings and life of Jesus.
2. *REMEMBER* always that the nonviolent movement in Birmingham seeks justice and reconciliation—not victory.
3. *WALK* and *TALK* in the manner of love for God is love.
4. *PRAY* daily to be used by God

in order that all men might be free.

5. *SACRIFICE* personal wishes in order that all men might be free.
6. *OBSERVE* with both friend and foe the ordinary rules of courtesy.
7. *SEEK* to perform regular service for others and for the world.
8. *REFRAIN* from the violence of fist, tongue or heart.
9. *STRIVE* to be in good spiritual and bodily health.
10. *FOLLOW* the directions of the movement and of the captain on a demonstration.

I sign this pledge, having seriously considered what I do and with the determination and will to persevere.

NAME _____
Please print neatly

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

NEAREST RELATIVE _____

ADDRESS _____

Besides demonstrations, I could also help the Movement by:
(Circle the proper items)

Run errands, Drive my car,
Fix food for volunteers, Clerical work,
Make phone calls, Answer phones,
Mimeograph, Type, Print signs,
Distribute leaflets

ALABAMA CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
Birmingham Affiliate of SCLC
505½ North 17th Street
F. L. Shuttlesworth, *President*

MANIFESTO

(Continued from Page 2)

We believe in the American Dream of democracy, in the Jeffersonian doctrine that "all men are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these being life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Twice since September we have deferred our direct action thrust in order that a change in city government would not be made in the hysteria of a community crisis. We act today in full concert with our Hebraic-Christian tradition, the law of morality and the Constitution of our nation. The absence of justice and progress in Birmingham demands that we make a moral witness to give our community a chance to survive. We demonstrate our faith that we believe that the beloved community can come to Birmingham.

We appeal to the citizenry of Birmingham, Negro and white, to join us in this witness for decency, morality, self-respect and human dignity. Your individual and corporate support can hasten the day of "liberty and justice for all." This is Birmingham's moment of truth in which every citizen can play his part in her larger destiny. The Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights, in behalf of the Negro community of Birmingham.

F. L. Shuttlesworth, *President*
N. H. Smith, *Secretary*

HOW IT BEGAN

(Continued from Page 1)

regationist South, a veritable bastion of injustice and immorality; thirdly, the loss of vital industry coupled with the ugly image created by the Bull Connor philosophy of race relations had thrown the South's largest industrial center into an economic demise from which it was struggling to survive.

Thus it was felt that with a strong base in the Shuttlesworth-led forces of the Negro community joined with the vulnerability of Birmingham at the cash register would provide the leverage to gain a breakthrough in the toughest city in the South. If Birmingham could be cracked, the direction of the entire nonviolent movement in the South could take a significant turn. It was our faith that, "as Birmingham goes, so goes the South." The late summer of 1962 saw us turning our sights toward developing what proved to be the detailed plans of "Project C" — Birmingham's *confrontation* with the demands for justice and morality in race relations.

is Told In Headlines And Pictures

The Clarion-Ledger
NEW YORK

Mississippi's Leading

Advertiser

Amsterdam News

NEW YORK JET

Los Angeles Sentinel

American

New York Post

IN THE STREETS OF BIRMINGHAM

Bull Connor's
1st Stand

totally responsible for the ruling which ripped the city during the past two weeks.

Birmingham,
led into th

Yet in many ways Bull Connor is just another southern politician riding the weary segregation horse the hope that it might still win one more race.



Women were also overpowered and handled roughly.



Demonstrators line up quietly to go to jail in Sheriff's wagon.

A loaded police wagon hauls away another group of demonstrators.



A jailed child peers through link fence.



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Settlement Reached After Five Weeks

May 10th was an historic day in Birmingham and in race relations. The solid wall of segregation had been breached after five weeks of non-violent campaigning led by Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph D. Abernathy and Fred Shuttlesworth. The following is a portion of the settlement delivered to the nation by Rev. Shuttlesworth outlining the Birmingham Settlement.

"Responsible leaders of both Negro and white communities of Birmingham, being desirous of promoting conditions which will insure sound moral, economic and political growth of their city, in the interest of all citizens of Birmingham, after mutual consideration and discussion of the issues relating to the recent demonstrations in their city, have agreed to the following:

"1. The desegregation of lunch counters, rest room, fitting rooms, and drinking fountains in planned stages within the next 90 days.

"2. The upgrading and hiring of



Birmingham youth take adults to register in Birmingham bus purchased by the Boston Freedom Rally.

Negroes on a non-discriminatory basis throughout the business and industrial community of Birmingham. This will include the hiring of Negroes as clerks and salesmen within the next 60 days, and the immediate appointment of a committee of business, industrial and professional leaders for the implementation of an area-wide

program for acceleration of upgrading and the employment of Negroes in job categories previously denied them.

"3. The movement has made arrangements for the release of all persons on bond or their personal recognizance. Our legal department is working on further solutions to this problem.

"4. Through the Senior Citizens Committee, communications between Negro and white will be publicly re-established within two weeks."

Boycott Aids In Birmingham

A better than 90% effective boycott contributed much to the demise of the hard-core resistance in the South's worst big city in race relations. The reproduced survey chart below indicates speed with which boycott was primary objects of the economic withdrawal at least twice daily. The chart's statistics are those for the three days prior to Easter. Considering the fact that the nonviolent campaign was launched on April 11, 12, 13th, the response of community was fantastic. The Federal Reserve figures reported that business during the Easter season

was off 40% as over against a 10-12% increase in other major southern cities. Coupled with the Negro community's indignation over police brutality and the illegal arrests, the complete saturation of neighborhoods through the churches and door-to-door leaflet distribution did much to produce a highly successful economic crisis in the business community of Birmingham. More than 500,000 leaflets were circulated and with readability averaging four times for each printed piece (see below) it is estimated that more than 2 million direct contacts were made.

Boycott Timetable

STORE	DAY			TOTAL (3 days)	AVERAGE
	Thursday	Friday	Saturday		
Britt's					
A. M.	2	2	—	11.2	3.7
P. M.	0	1.2*	6		
Pizitz					
A. M.	3	6	—	28	9.3
P. M.	6	3	10		
Loveman's					
A. M.			—	13	4.3
P. M.	2	1	10		
Woolworth's					
A. M.	2	—	—	8	2.6
P. M.		2	4		
Kress					
A. M.	1	4	—	20	6.6
P. M.		5	10		

Overall average number of shoppers for three days preceding Easter 4.6

*Checked more than once, averaged out to figure indicated.

A Call to Faith and Freedom by Martin Luther King, Jr.



Men, women and children have been quickened to pray, to march, to suffer imprisonment—even to face death—for the ideals and beliefs preached by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Now, in his new book, Dr. King shares the convictions that guide his life and are inspiring a second revolution in America today. Don't miss this "Emancipation Proclamation" for our time.

**STRENGTH
TO LOVE**

\$3.50

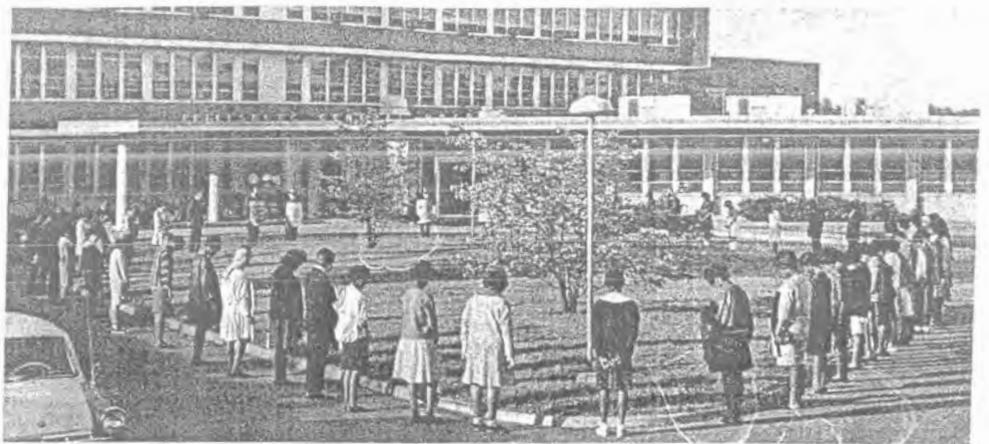
HARPER & ROW, Publishers

With the Affiliates . . .

Nashville, Tennessee: Under the leadership of Kelly Miller Smith and J. Metz Rollins, Nashville, the "Athens of the South" forged ahead of many southern cities and dropped the racial barriers in downtown motels, hotels and restaurants after an intense and determined nonviolent campaign for an "Open City" . . . **Savannah, Georgia:** Following the ten days of non-violent direct action campaign that climaxed with a mass march of six thousand on June 13th, Savannah Chamber of Commerce recommended total desegregation of all public accommodations. When city fathers ignored the Chamber's requests, Hosea Williams, president of the Southeastern Georgia Crusade for Voters, called for massive protests to begin again. Over 500 arrested to date. . . . **Washington, D. C.:** Bishop Smallwood Williams, local president and Walter Faun-



CORE Field Secretary Isaac Reynolds, assigned to Birmingham by National Director James Farmer, is shown with Miss Willie Mackey, an SCLC Secretary.



Protesting discrimination at Petersburg, Va., General Hospital, members of SCLC affiliate, Petersburg Improvement Ass'n., form ring around entrance grounds in prayerful attitude.

troy Regional Representative played key leadership role in mass march on White House and Department of Justice that resulted in a promise of open occupancy law and wider job opportunities for the Negro community in the nation's capital. . . . **Edenton, North Carolina:** The Edenton Movement with F. H. LeGarde at the helm served notice on city fathers that Negro requests have moved beyond token demands. Full community support including endorsement of NAACP, civic and voters group have lined up behind call for complete desegregation. Golden Frinks reports 18 applicants already filed for school transfers. . . . **Lynchburg, Virginia SCLC:** This mountain city under Virgil Wood's skillful leadership announced recently the desegregation of lunch counters in 10 drug stores, the dropping of race barriers in the 10 top restaurants, two bowling alleys and one theatre. Struggle for the life of twice-convicted, Thomas Wansley, continues. . . . **Gadsden, Alabama:** Sparked by Birmingham drive, Gads-

den Christian Citizens Committee is sustaining bid for desegregated public facilities, publicly or privately owned. At press time, more than six hundred had submitted to arrest despite the use of tear gas and electric cattle prod- ders, Joseph Faulkner, local leader, flanked by SCLC's Bernard Lee and CORE's Marvin Robinson, vows fight to the finish.

CONTRIBUTIONS

I wish to contribute to the work of SCLC and the social struggle in the South.

NAME

ADDRESS

(street)

.....

(city & state)

Amount of Contribution

Send to: SCLC
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Atlanta 3, Georgia

SCLC *Newsletter*

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