

# RAMPARTS

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## THE SOUTH AT WAR



A SPECIAL REPORT ON THE CIVIL WAR TODAY

FIVE BATTLES OF SELMA

BATTLE OF THE BRIDGE ✕ SHOW OF FORCE

THE INFILTRATION ✕ CHARGE OF THE BIBLE BRIGADE

THE SHADOW BRIGADE

# *The South at War*

## INTRODUCTION: THE YELLOW ROSE OF TEXAS



It is no mere coincidence that virtually the last battle of the Civil War took place in Selma, Alabama, since the latest battle of Selma is in reality a continuation of the Civil War begun in 1861. In that year the Southern states claimed they were in secession, and over this a war was fought. The South is still in secession and the Civil War still goes on.

President Lincoln's sole purpose in prosecuting the first phase of the Civil War was to preserve the Union, and union cannot countenance secession. The War then was fought over the principle of the primacy of union, and the continuation of the war today strives to achieve the same objective.

But built into the principle of union is the essential ingredient of justice. Therefore, when the Union was preserved, the citizens of the United States, now including millions of Negro Americans, could reasonably and legitimately conclude that justice would be extended to all citizens of the Union. Tragically, this was not to be; justice left the American scene.

The 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments, as well as all of the Reconstruction statutes, which were intended to grant national citizenship to Negroes, were allowed to lapse, victims of the political ambitions of Northerners and Southerners alike. The choice that faced the political manipulators in the 1870s and '80s lay between full integration of the Southern states in the American political and economic community, or federal insistence on the rights of Negroes. The South presented the rest of the nation with this choice, and the rest of the nation abandoned millions of Negroes to the Southern way of life.

The South lost the War, but it won the peace.

The South once cried for secession; now it cries for "States Rights." In both instances the desired end has been power to control the Southern Negro. "States Rights" is the South's indispensable bargaining tool in negotiating national policy with the rest of the country.

Once the promise of justice had been withdrawn by the Federal Government, Negro Americans living in the Southern states were returned to their masters who once again possessed the power of life and death. But now, instead of cutting off a man's hand for attempting to learn to read or write, his dignity was excised by constructing the grotesque institution of "separate but equal" institutions, whose sole purpose was to destroy the humanity of its victims. The final thrust lies in the additional fact that Negro Americans are required by both Federal and State law to help pay, through taxes, for their own debasement.

When the Reverend James Reeb lay dying in an Alabama hospital, the victim of the Southern way of life, the President of the United States sent a bouquet of yellow roses to his room as a symbol of Presidential concern. But the yellow rose of Texas was not and never will be the answer to the question that is tearing this country apart. Instead of flowers standing on a bedside table beside an unconscious and dying man, there should have been federal presence in Selma the day before the Reverend Reeb was struck down, just as there should have been federal presence the very first moment when the first Negro American was denied his right to live as a dignified human being and as a citizen of the United States.

Whereas President Lincoln used every means at his command to forthrightly and directly hold the Union together, compromising nothing to this objective, President Johnson and his administration can only be described as a "friendly power" observing the battle from a distance. But more important is the failure of the President, and all the Presidents between Lincoln and Johnson, to use every means at his command to preserve the Union. The South is in secession and has been for a century. As if to mock the "friendly power" in Washington, Southern Capitols fly the flag of the Confederacy over the flag of the United States.

So grotesque is the national situation that the true capital of the Union forces is now in Atlanta, Georgia, which contains the headquarters of the two main armies of the Union, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. The President of this Union is Dr. Martin Luther King. The capital of the Confederacy continues to be Montgomery, Alabama, and its President is George C. Wallace.

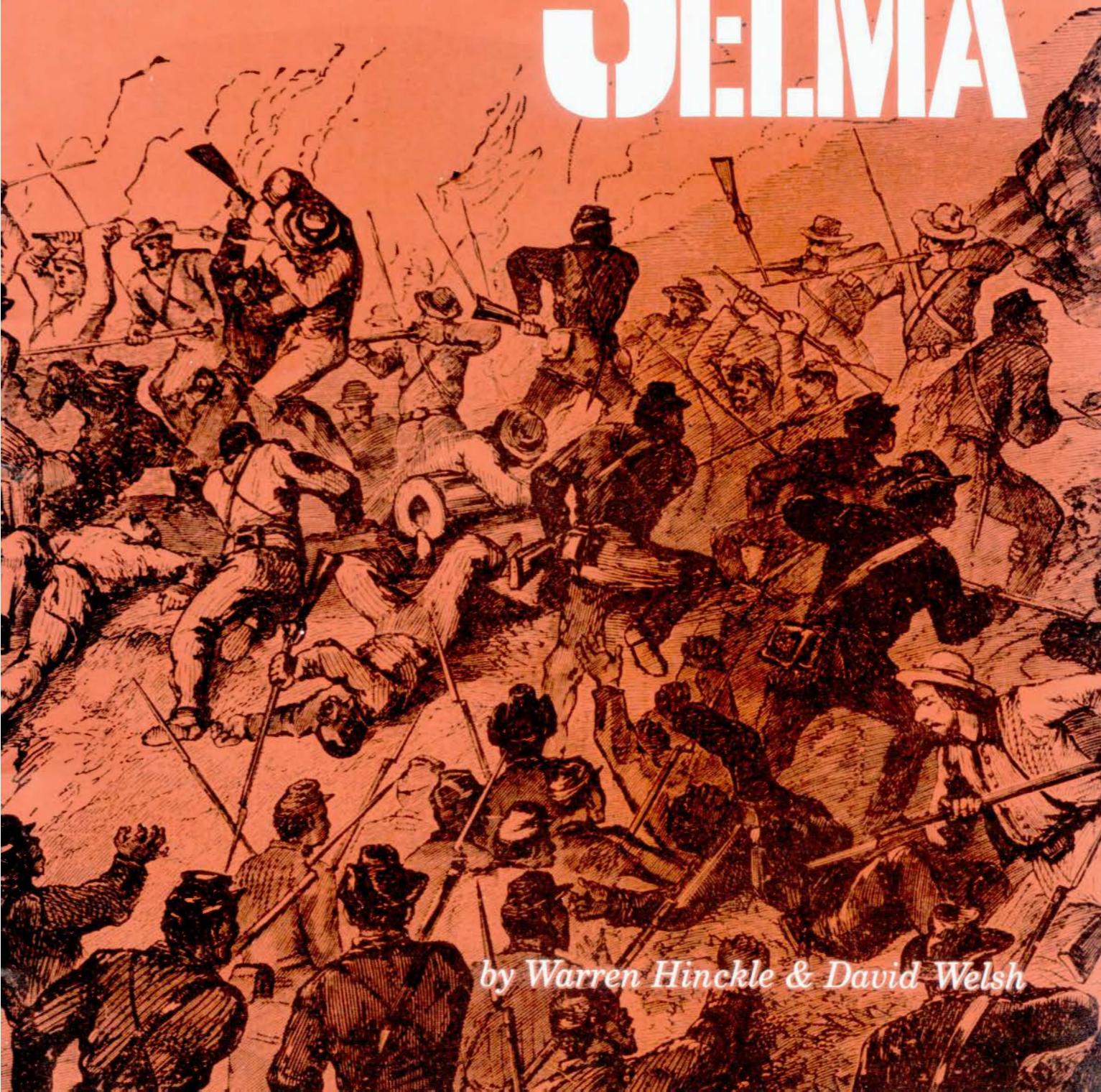
And yet, this is a unique war when we realize that it is being prosecuted by the Union forces in non-violent terms. The Confederacy, knowing the reluctance of the friendly power to intervene, meets this non-violent resistance with traditional military means.

The President of the friendly power has said that he and its legislature plan to intervene in the bloody contest to grant the indigenous people the right to vote. But the friendly power decreed similar rights a century ago. How then, can one expect deliverance now? What has the friendly power done in the past that would induce belief in its modern pledge? But even if this pledge is redeemed, what new Selmas must there be before this friendly but distant power will safeguard educational opportunities and all of the other aspects of life that constitute citizenship in this country? Must the indigenous people always man the battle lines alone? How much more murder will be tolerated? How much more suffering?

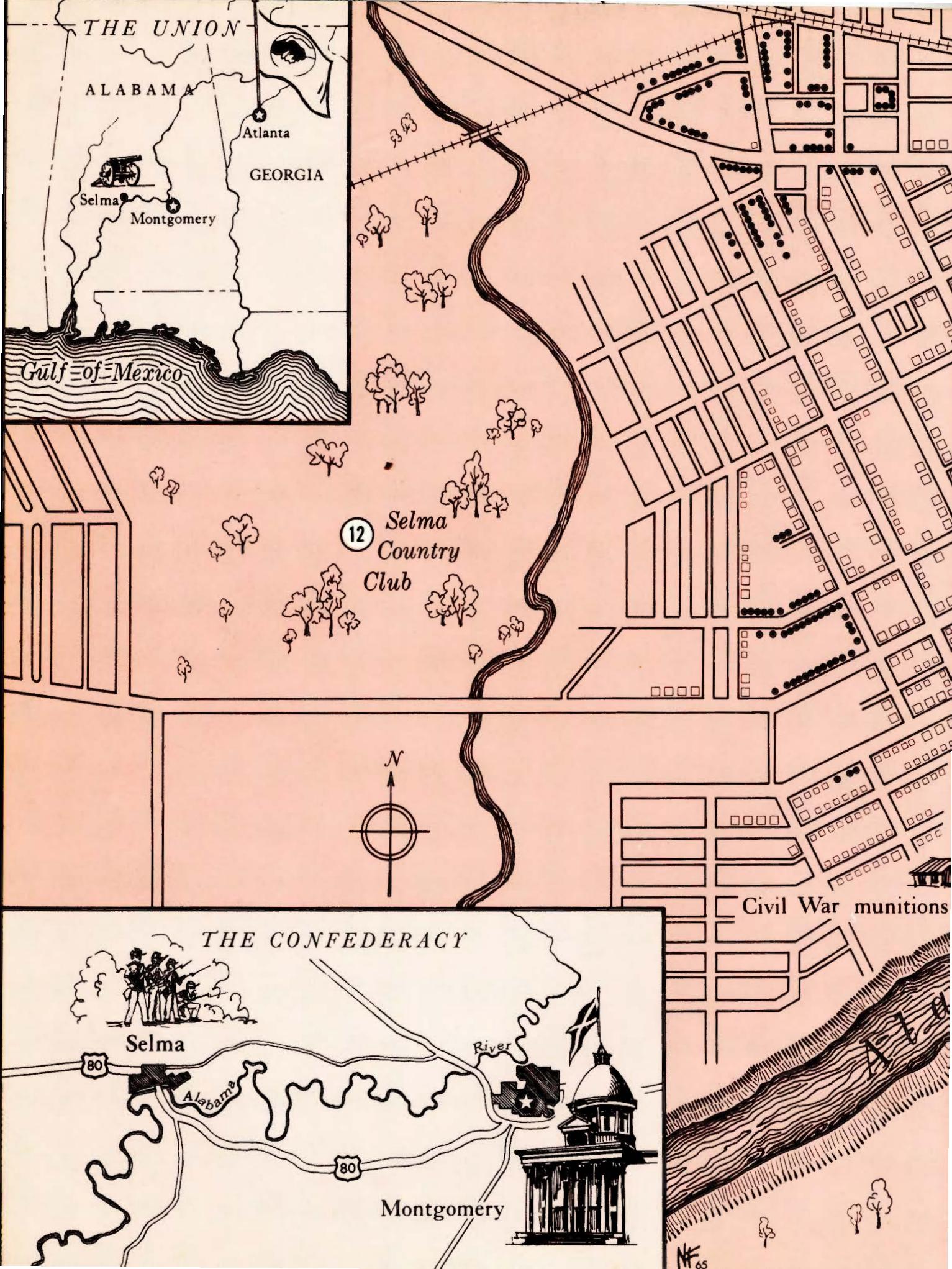
This friendly power *follows* the game of life and death and justice; it doesn't *lead*. All this makes a mockery of the concept of Union. The question before the people of this country is the question of 1861: will this nation ever be the *United States of America*?

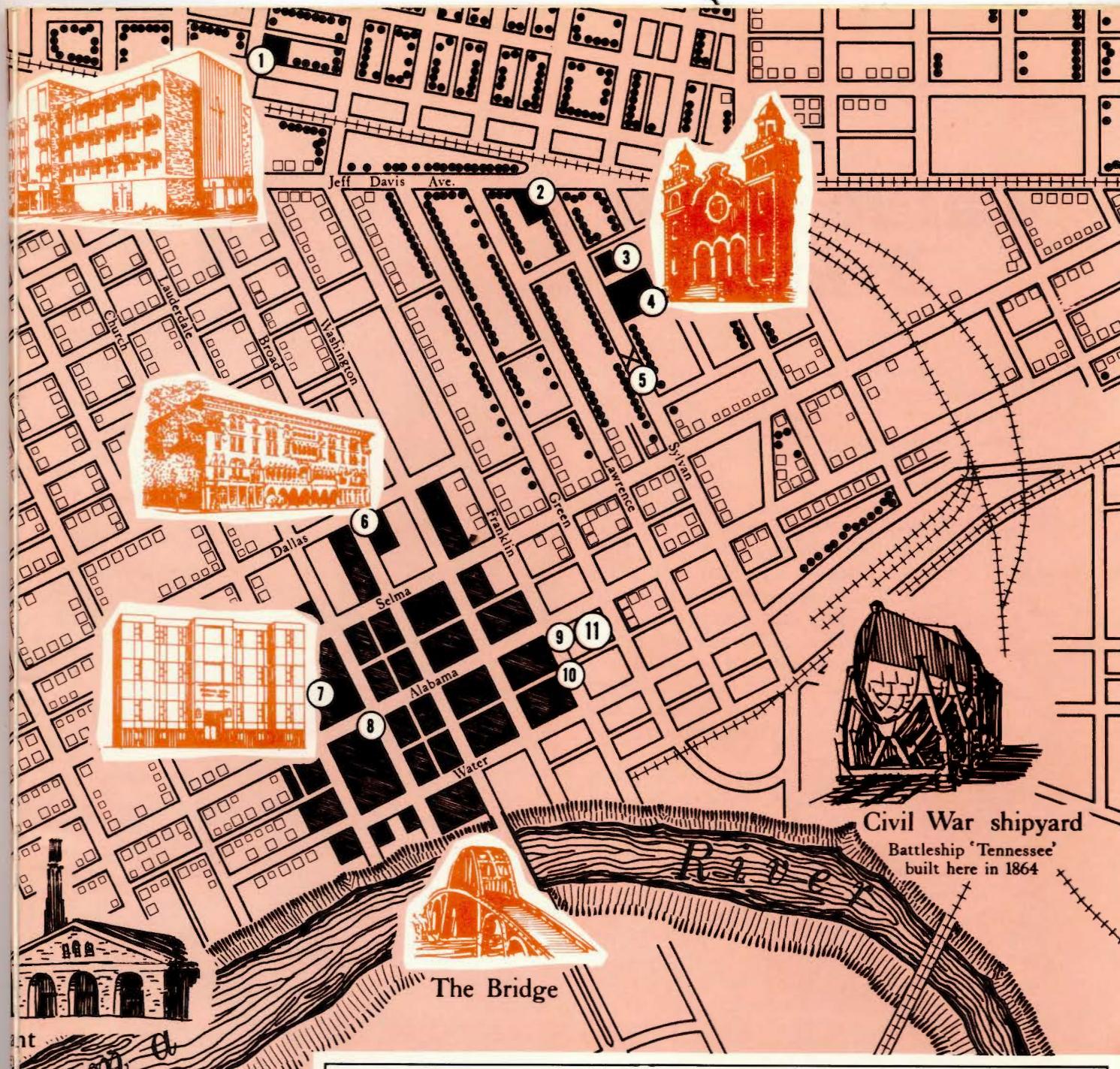
—Edward M. Keating

# FIVE BATTLES OF SELMA



*by Warren Hinckle & David Welsh*





### LEGEND

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1 Good Samaritan Hospital  | 7 Dallas County Courthouse                    |
| 2 First Baptist Church     | 8 Federal Building                            |
| 3 Brown's Chapel Parsonage | 9 SNCC Headquarters                           |
| 4 Brown's Chapel, A.M.E.   | 10 SCLC Headquarters                          |
| 5 The "Selma Wall"         | 11 Selma City Jail; Sheriff Clark's Apartment |
| 6 Albert Hotel             | 12 Selma Country Club                         |

● ● ● Negro Residences \*

□ □ □ White Residences \*

(\* Source: Official Zoning Map, courtesy Alabama State Planning and Industrial Board.)

**1.**

# **Battle of the Bridge**

**T**HE LEGAL-SIZE MIMEOGRAPHED FORMS were deadly complete—name, address, next-of-kin, authorization for representation by counsel. Everyone who marched had to fill one out in case of arrest, injury or death. But there weren't enough forms to go around Sunday morning when the marchers came in from Boykin and Jones and Marion, from Atlanta and Chicago and New York. They came to Brown's Chapel—the red brick church towering over the red brick apartment buildings of the George Washington Carver Homes housing project in the Negro section of Selma.

Brown's Chapel was the assembly point for the planned march over U.S. Highway 80 through the swamps and hills and white racist strongholds of rural, black belt Alabama to the ornate colonial capitol at Montgomery, where the dual flags of the Confederate States of America and the Sovereign State of Alabama hung together limply in the still air around the capitol dome.

The girl handing out the forms said she needed more. A Negro boy ran down unpaved Sylvan Street, which intersects the federal housing project, and turned right on Alabama Street toward the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) headquarters located three blocks uptown. He went to the top floor of a three-story, rickety Negro office building with unlighted hallways and atrophied doors set in warped door-jams. From the Selma City Jail directly across the street, police watched the young Negro go into the dreary building and come out a few minutes later carrying a freshly printed pile of registration forms. They knew he was going back to Brown's Chapel, as they knew most everything else about the movements of Negroes in Selma. Dallas County Sheriff Jim Clark, the tough front-man of the Selma racists, lives with his wife in a jail building apartment. He amuses himself in the morning by spying, with high-powered binoculars, into the SNCC offices. Sheriff Clark is an early riser.

This kind of police state activity is accepted as routine by Negroes. Selma is a tough town. It was a slave trade center in the *ante-bellum* years. Lynchings are an ingrained part of local custom. It is a dangerous town for "uppity" Negroes and civil rights "agitators." Sheriff Clark commands a hand-picked band of over 200 "volunteer" possemen who ride horseback about the



*Sunday, March 7: beaten and gassed Unionists struggle to aid their fallen.*



## The South at War

state, curing with bull whips, clubs and guns any social disturbances involving labor union organizers or civil rights activists. The birthplace of the Alabama white Citizen's Council, Selma proudly numbers among its native sons such eminent, modern Southerners as Birmingham Police Commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor. Only one per cent of Selma's 15,000 Negro citizens have dared to register to vote.

This historic Confederate city on the banks of the muddy Alabama river is a citadel of Southern resistance to integration. Only in the Trailways bus station do Negroes and whites mix. This is why SNCC, in 1963, selected Selma as a prime target for its organizing activities. The Confederate establishment immediately began to skirmish with the civil rights invaders, and when Dr. Martin Luther King and his Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) joined forces with SNCC in Selma early this year, the Confederate "police action" escalated into a conflict of military proportions not seen in the South since the Battle of Selma nominally ended the Civil War in April of 1865.

Like all wars, this one became deadly serious after the first casualty. Jimmy Lee Jackson, a 26-year-old Negro woodcutter, was gunned down by an Alabama State Trooper during a racial demonstration in nearby Marion. When he died eight days later in Selma's Negro Good Samaritan Hospital, he was a war hero. The Montgomery march of Sunday, March 7, was called more to honor Jimmy Jackson than to seriously petition Governor George Wallace (the titular President of the Confederacy) for the redress of racial inequities he has sworn to preserve.

Wallace had ordered the march squashed. On that quiet Sunday morning all the loyal military forces of the white police state of Alabama were organizing for an overkill.

As the young Negro left the SNCC offices with a fresh supply of registration forms, his progress was reported to the Confederate Command Post operating in Sheriff Clark's Dallas County Court House offices in downtown Selma. "The nigger's leaving there now . . . he's goin' back down Alabama Street . . . carryin' papers . . . back to the church . . ." The intelligence came over the two-way radio in thick, surly Southern tones. A middle-aged woman wearing rimless glasses, a Confederate flag pinned to her white blouse, sat on a stool, her legs crossed, writing everything down. A large sign near the doorway of the first floor suite read "Quiet Please, We are Trying To Monitor Three Radios." The woman leaned over and handed the message to the Sheriff's deputy, an attractive brunette, who sat with perfect posture behind a grey metal desk. She was constantly occupied with telephone and two-way radio, relaying information to the Confederate forces massing outside the

Selma city limits. Excellently groomed and coolly efficient, she wore her brown sweater and brown skirt like she knew the uniform concealed a faintly plump but nonetheless classic Southern figure. A gold deputy's badge was pinned above her bosom. (Selma wags say that Sheriff Clark demands the best in horseflesh for his posse—and the best in womanflesh on his office staff.)

This demure deputy was important to the morale of the Sheriff's office. She represented the "other side" of Selma: the life of good manners and traditional Southern gentility; the life of the exclusive "country club" set. The Selma Country Club rests on gracefully sloping hills just outside the main business district, as far removed as possible from the weather-torn, decaying shacks lining the unpaved streets of the Negro residential section and the high-roofed, wooden-front stores operated by Jewish merchants in the Negro shopping district. Also far removed from the slopes of the Country Club are the factories which manufacture locks and bricks and lumber and cotton oil and produce the profits which enable the substantial citizens of the "other Selma" to live comfortably, often luxuriously, in fine homes of classical architecture and to order the right things from the Neiman-Marcus catalogue.

These elder families of Selma are at the apex of a pyramided racial and socio-economic structure based on the suppression of the Negro—but the "good citizens" never engage in violence to maintain it. Instead they leave the beatings and the whippings and the terrorizing to lower middle-class whites. But they condone and applaud these activities and without this approval from the top, the systematic repression of the Negro would collapse into directionless violence. The 22-year-old deputy, daughter of one of Selma's better families, well understood this delicate relationship. Because she was privy to the secret Confederate battle plans for Sunday, she had driven the 50 miles into Montgomery the day before to have her hair specially done. She knew this was going to be a memorable, victorious day for the South. She wanted to look her representative best.

**O**NE OF THE COMMAND POST RADIOS CRACKLED: "There's three more cars of niggers crossing the bridge. Some white bastards riding with them. Heading for Brown's Chapel." The bridge was the Edmund Pettus Bridge, a stumpy concrete edifice stretching between the debris-lined bluffs of the sluggish Alabama River and linking Selma with Highway 80 (the Jefferson Davis Highway), the road to Montgomery. This was the bridge the marchers would have to cross. At the other end the Confederate forces were massing for the kill.

It was early afternoon. The State Troopers were preparing to block off traffic on the heavily-traveled thor-

oughfare. They moved their patrol cars into position on both sides of the divided highway, facing the north. It was from the north that the Union forces would come.

Sheriff Clark's good friend, Colonel Al Lingo, head of the Alabama State Troopers, sat in an unmarked car at the side of the highway, watching his men prepare for battle. The generalship of the Confederate forces was Lingo's responsibility; Sheriff Clark's deputies and his possemen took orders from him this day. It was not the first time that Lingo and Clark had combined forces to defeat insurgent Union troops. They had worked together to quell demonstrations at Birmingham and Tuskegee, Gadsden and at the University of Alabama. But today was something special. Clark and Lingo, at the request of the Confederate Commander-in-Chief, Wallace, had worked out battle plans that would not only scatter the Union forces but make their defeat an object lesson. Blood was in the air. The white citizens of Alabama had grown weary of "moderate" handling of the Selma voter registration demonstrations led by Dr. Martin Luther King. Selma's Public Safety Director, Wilson Baker, had insisted on mass arrests to control the demonstrators. Now the Confederate leadership wanted something more effective. Selma city police were told to stay out of the march break-up. The State Troopers and Sheriff Clark's deputies would handle things in their own fashion. "If the Negroes refuse to disperse, we shall not make mass arrests," Colonel Lingo

said. He said it the way a general says his side will take no prisoners.

Lingo and Clark had gone to ingenious extremes to make sure their troops were adequately supplied with the proper weapons to fight the unarmed marchers. They issued two-foot-long cattle prods (battery-charged, devilish instruments about the thickness of a half-dollar with a point at the end which sears human skin when it touches). Lingo also laid in a complete supply of tear gas with wide-nozzle guns capable of spraying gas over a broad area, circular tear gas bombs, and tear gas shells shot from special guns. Each man had a gas mask and long billy club (some of the more dedicated had weighted their clubs by drilling holes and inserting metal rods). In case the Union forces fought back, both sheriff's deputies and troopers had carbines and shotguns in their cars. Many of Sheriff Clark's possemen carried long bull whips. These were personal property, not state issue. The men wore riot helmets emblazoned with Confederate flags. Colonel Lingo is partial to the red, white and blue flag of the Confederacy. When he assumed command of the Alabama Highway Patrol, after Wallace was elected governor, he changed the name of the patrol to *State Troopers* and ordered Confederate flags affixed to the front license plates of trooper patrol cars.

Colonel Lingo was satisfied with the military preparations. He leaned back and waited, looking toward the bridge and the north.

*As tear gas billows around them, a masked trooper aims a knee at a blinded Negro woman.*



## The South at War

**F**ILLING OUT A MARCHING FORM at Brown's Chapel was 16-year-old Viola Jackson of Selma (no relation to the late Jimmy Lee Jackson.) *Have you ever been arrested? NO. Have you ever been beaten? YES. Do you have any ailments that should be checked before the march? NO.* She handed in the paper and went outside where the marchers were forming.

The detailed form was typical of the style of military organization that the SNCC people and Dr. King's lieutenants adopted for the Selma campaign. The march itself was planned in military style: participants were to line up two abreast, grouped into squads of 25 people, and then into companies of four squads each. The leaders of the march—John Lewis of SNCC and Hosea Williams of SCLC—had originally planned to organize the squads on paper. But the last minute influx of marchers made that impractical, so everyone was ordered outside to the playground behind Brown's Chapel and told to line up in pairs. Forty-five minutes later, six companies were ready to march.

The Union leadership had, in its own way, prepared for the expected confrontation with the Confederate forces: four ambulances were parked on Sylvan Street; ten doctors and nurses, mostly from New York, had flown to Montgomery and driven to Selma the night before. They were volunteers of the Medical Committee for Human Rights. When the march started, they followed in the file of ambulances at the end of the line.

Viola Jackson found herself in the second company, first squad. Standing in front of her was a young Negro wearing a sweatshirt. His marching companion was a tall white youth wearing a blue windbreaker jacket, blue cap and carrying a round knapsack on his back. They introduced themselves. The Negro was Charles Mauldin, an 18-year-old junior at the R. B. Hudson High School, Selma's Negro high, and President of the 1500-member Selma Youth Movement. Slight of build and articulate of expression, he was polite and friendly. The white was Jim Benston, an unsalaried member of the SCLC Selma staff. Benston is 20 and blond and has a scraggly yellow beard. He is from Arkansas and is hated by the cops because they consider him a double traitor: to the South and to his Caucasian race. He became a prime target for clubbing.

The march began without heraldry. Viola Jackson and Charles Mauldin and Jim Benston walked close together as the three-block-long line moved slowly down Sylvan Street and up Water Avenue, through the Negro business district, to the bridge. Groups of Selma citizens stood in sullen, compressed groups on street corners and watched. The marchers passed the Selma Radiator Shop. A white man taunted Viola: "Black bitch. Got a white boy to play with, huh?" As they reached Broad

Street—the main street of Selma that leads onto the bridge—a white woman driving a green pick-up truck tried to run down Benston. He leaped out of the way. Police had refused to direct traffic for the marchers, except to halt cars as the long line turned onto the bridge at Broad Street. So the marchers had to be wary of white citizens with cars. The last thing Viola and the two boys saw as they walked onto the bridge was the troopers and possemen stationed by the Selma Times Journal building, waiting patiently. They knew the marchers would be coming back.

**T**HE VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDE of the Pettus Bridge—looking toward Selma—was less than inspiring. The old brick buildings that line the bluffs above the slow-flowing river were gradually falling away. The sloping bluffs were spotted with bricks, discarded building materials and decaying underbrush. Viola Jackson and Charles Mauldin and Jim Benston could look back at the river bluffs and the long line of marchers behind them on the bridge, but they couldn't tell what was happening ahead of them on the highway. All they could see were police cars, State Trooper cars, sheriff's cars—a silent, stationary armada filling all four lanes of the Jefferson Davis Highway. Viola whispered that she had never seen so many police cars in one place in her life. A large, surly crowd of Selma white citizens—hooting, snorting, like spectators at a bull fight—stood on the trunks of parked cars or jammed the frontage area of roadside businesses, seeking ring-side seats. Newsmen were herded together in front of the Lehman Pontiac building some distance from the marchers and assigned several troopers for "protection."

State troopers, headed by Major John Cloud, lined the highway three deep. Colonel Lingo watched from his automobile parked near Lehman's Grocery. As the marchers approached, Major Cloud hailed them: "This is an unlawful assembly," he said. "You have two minutes to turn around and go back to your church." The leaders of the march were now within several feet of the phalanx of troopers who held their clubs at the ready. Major Cloud took out his watch and started counting. The silence was total. Exactly one minute and five seconds later Major Cloud ordered, "Troopers forward." The blue-clad troopers leaped ahead, clubs swinging, moving with a sudden force that bowled over line after line of marchers. The first groups of Negroes went to the ground screaming, their knapsacks and bags spilling onto the highway. The white spectators cheered.

The marchers, pushed back by the billy club attack, grouped together on the grassy, gasoline-soiled dividing strip in the center of the highway. They knelt and began to pray. The troopers rushed in again, banging heads,

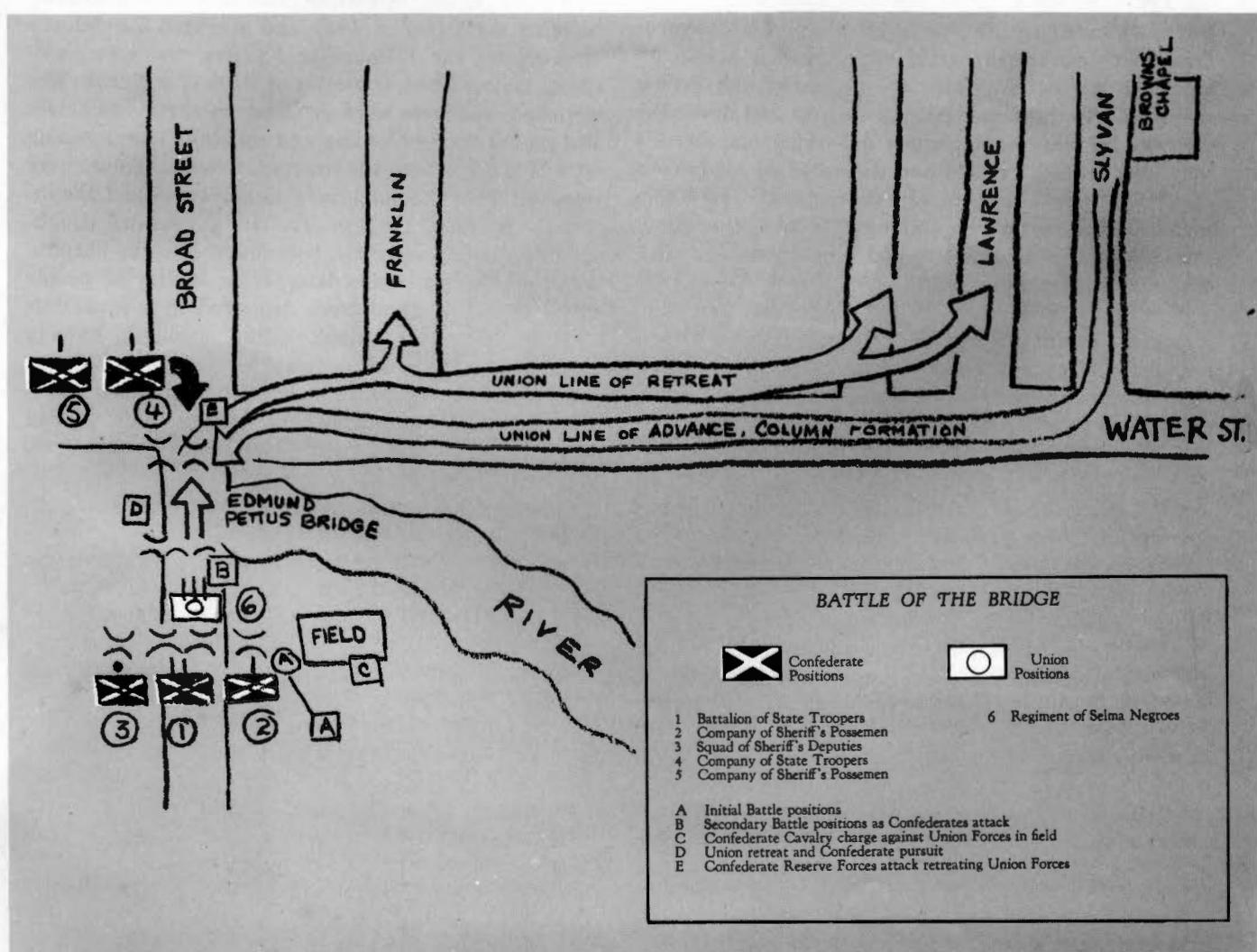
and then retreated. Viola and the two boys knelt together. For two minutes, a tense silence was broken only by the sound of the Confederate forces strapping on their gas masks and the buzz-buzz-buzz of the cattle prods. Sheriff Clark ordered his possemen to mount up. "Get those god damn niggers—and get those god damn white niggers," he said.

As the troopers heaved the first tear gas bombs into the praying Negroes, the crowd of several hundred white onlookers broke into prolonged cheering. "Give it to the damnyankees. Give it to the niggers." The first were feeler bombs; the marchers coughed and gagged, but didn't move. Then the troopers let loose with a heavy barrage of gas shells. Several bombs landed near Viola and the two boys, and then they couldn't see each other anymore.

For Charles Mauldin, it was like a quick visit to hell. "The gas was so thick that you could almost reach up and grab it. It seemed to lift me up and fill my lungs and I went down." Some of the marchers panicked and ran. They couldn't see where they were going and they ran into cars and buildings. A young girl collapsed inside the treads of a tractor. Mauldin pulled her out. Marchers scrambled over a barbed wire fence, tearing

their clothes and scratching their stomachs, and ran down blindly toward the muddy river. The troopers, protected by gas masks, moved through the gasping, fainting Negroes and beat them with clubs. When Mauldin finally staggered in retreat back onto the bridge, a posseman on horseback rode by and hit him across the neck with an eight-foot bull whip. "What do you want, nigger, jump off the bridge? Well, go on, jump." The troopers and the possemen herded the fleeing Negroes across the bridge with cattle prods, clubs and whips. Those who were too young or too old to move fast enough got hit the most. When they got to the Selma end of the bridge, the possemen and deputies who had been patiently waiting there attacked them anew with clubs and whips and chased them through the streets down toward the Negro quarter.

For Jim Benston, it was worse. After the first tear gas attack, he lay on the ground trying to breathe. He looked up and a trooper was standing in front of him, staring down through the big goggle-eyes of his gas mask. The trooper slowly lifted his tear gas gun and shot it off directly into Benston's face. "I was knocked out for maybe five minutes. When I woke up I was in a cloud. I couldn't breathe and I couldn't see. I was



coughing and I was sick. It was like the world had gone away. I laid there on the grass for a few minutes and then I felt around me, trying to see if anybody else was still there. I couldn't feel anybody. They were all gone. I was the only one left." Benston staggered off to his right, through a used car lot, and collapsed in a small field. A dozen or so other marchers lay there, bleeding, coughing, trying to catch their breath. Then Benston heard horses, and shrill rebel battle yells. The possemen were charging the band of prone marchers. All the posse had clubs and some of them had whips and they struck out at anything they could see. "They tried to get the horses to run over us," Benston said. "They came charging through where we were laying on the grass and tried to hit us with the horses, but the horses had more sense. One posseman tried to get his horse to rear up and land on top of a man near me, but the horse wouldn't do it. Horses have more sense." The marchers got up and ran toward the bridge. The possemen rode in front of them and set off tear gas bombs in their path, forcing them through the new pockets of gas. On the bridge, Benston was clubbed at least 25 times. As he ran down the narrow pedestrian sidewalk, possemen would take turns, galloping by, clubbing him, laughing. He pulled his knapsack up to cover his head and neck. "That knapsack saved my life," he said. Some of the possemen, crazy with excitement, tried to force their horses up onto the narrow walkway to run down the fleeing marchers. As the possemen galloped up and down the concrete bridge, swinging clubs and whips, one sheriff's volunteer leaned forward and screamed in his horse's ear, "Bite them, bite them, bite the niggers." The possemen chased Benston's group for two blocks into Selma, until the streets became crowded. Possemen don't generally whip people in public.

For Viola Jackson, it didn't last long. She was knocked down on the dividing strip and dug her fingernails into the ground. The thick tear gas hung like heavy cigarette smoke between the blades of grass and curled around her fingers. She managed to get up and tried to run, but she couldn't go on: Her breath came shorter. Then she couldn't see, and she fell down onto the ground and didn't get up. More shells fell nearby, and the gas covered her fallen body like a blanket.

The police at first wouldn't let the waiting Union ambulances onto the bridge to pick up the wounded. When they did, finally, the volunteer drivers and doctors and nurses worked frantically, loading the injured and racing them to the Good Samaritan Hospital.

Sheriff Clark's possemen chased the Negroes down to

the housing project, but were stopped by Selma Safety Director Baker. Baker said he had his city police surrounding the project area and saw no need for further force. The Selma Times-Journal quoted Clark as replying to Baker: "I've already waited a month too damn long about moving in."

In the ensuing thirty minutes before the possemen and the troopers cleared out of the housing project, the First Baptist Church on Sylvan Street was raided by Confederates. They fired tear gas into the church, then went inside and threw a Negro teenager through a devotional window. They also tear-gassed one of the Negro homes along Sylvan Street and chased children through the project with their horses. Some of the younger Negroes began to throw bricks at the troopers, and, in a few moments of extraordinary juvenile passion, the troopers picked up the bricks and threw them back. The angry, shattered marchers crowded into Brown's Chapel where John Lewis of SNCC told them (before he went to the hospital for treatment of a head injury), "I don't see how President Johnson can send troops to Vietnam. I don't see how he can send troops to the Congo. I don't see how he can send troops to Africa and can't send troops to Selma, Alabama."

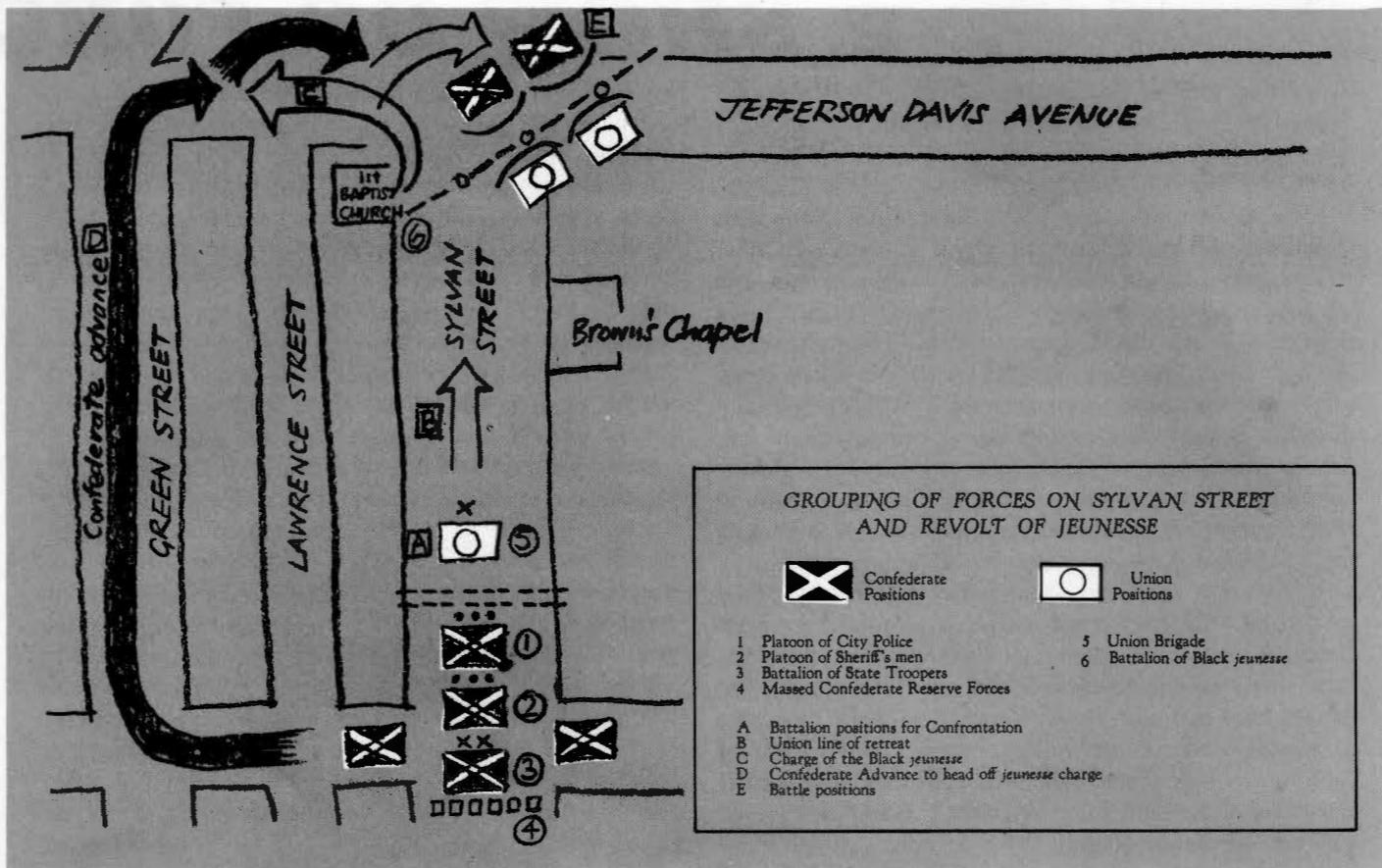
At the Good Samaritan Hospital, a modernistic building dedicated in 1964 and operated for Selma's Negroes by the Edmundite Fathers, the emergency rooms looked like a scene out of *Birth of a Nation*. The wounded marchers were propped on carts and tables and on the floor—bleeding and sobbing. The sickening odor of tear gas filled the emergency rooms. Tables were removed from the employees' dining room and the injured were laid on the floor. The tear gas victims, coughing and gasping violently, overflowed into the hospital corridors. Several hours later, most of the 84 people taken to the hospital were deposited in a makeshift recovery area—the lounge of the hospital's nursing home—to await friends or relatives. Seventeen were injured seriously enough to be admitted for treatment—fractured ribs, fractured wrists, head wounds, broken teeth. Among those admitted was Viola Jackson, 16, "for extended treatment of tear gas effect and hysteria."

After the Negroes in the project were forced indoors, Sheriff Clark's posse rode uptown, looking for more Negroes. They yelled at Negroes walking on the streets and beat with their night-sticks on the hoods of cars with Negro drivers. "Get the hell out of town. Go on. We mean it. We want all the niggers off the street."

By dusk, not one Negro could be found on the streets of Selma.

## **2. SHOW OF FORCE**





**A**LTHOUGH THE CONTEST IS UNLIKELY ever to be held, Jim Clark could win, hands down, the title of best-dressed sheriff in the Black Belt. He owns 74 shirts and 12 pairs of boots, and Wednesday afternoon, as the Confederate forces were lining up before the national television cameras for a massive show of force on Sylvan Street, the dapper, segregationist Sheriff was at his resplendent best. His boots were spit-polished ("white spit," Clark told an inquiring reporter), the crease on the pants of his dark business suit cutting-edge sharp, the alabaster purity of his crash helmet broken only by a painted Confederate flag. In his lapel was the symbol of Clark's philosophy of law enforcement in Dallas County, Alabama: a round white button bearing the single word "NEVER." This is Clark's rejoinder to "We Shall Overcome," and it appeared "Never" would be the order of the day as the armed forces of the State of Alabama assumed battle formation a half block down from Brown's Chapel on dusty Sylvan Street. State Troopers, sheriff's deputies, city policemen, Alabama Soil Conservation officers, even Alabama Alcoholic Beverage Control officers, lined up in two and three squad car rows on Sylvan Street, flanking in reserve to the right and left down Selma Avenue and filling yet another block of Sylvan Street beyond the boundaries of the Negro housing project. The Mayor of Selma had said the Union could not march today and the troops were here to see that they would not.

This huge assemblage of police cars and troopers was good tonic for Sheriff Clark. He moved in between his deputies' cars, playfully snapping the rawhide hanging from his billy club at the khaki-clad buttocks of his possemen. He didn't act at all like a soldier who had just been dressed down by his commander-in-chief.

Governor Wallace had summoned Clark to his capital offices the day before and told him to call off his posse and their whips and horses. Jim Clark has been Sheriff of Dallas County since 1955 and has used his posse to handle labor organizers and to crack the heads of Negroes with complete impunity, and this was the first time he was ever called on the carpet. He stood on the coffee-colored rug in the Governor's office and stared at the pale yellow walls of the executive suite as Wallace, who seemed concerned about Alabama's image, upbraided Clark for the posse's Attila-the-Hun tactics on Sunday, before the lenses of television cameras. The Governor wasn't really mad about the whips, but he was mad as hell about the television cameras. When Clark left, red-faced and angry, he had instructions to keep his men out of the omniscient television eye. The Sheriff was also told that Wilson Baker would call the shots in Selma and he didn't like that, either.

But Clark's possemen were out today, armed only with clubs and guns (no horses or whips), to join the massing of the Confederate forces, and the Sheriff felt good. The Union forces planned a forbidden march to

the green-stone-front Dallas County Courthouse this Wednesday afternoon. The march was an open secret. There were few strategic secrets on either side because these days of racial crisis in Selma were covered by some 200 members of the press as if it all were a national political convention. Newscasters had broadcast reports of the planned Courthouse march early that morning.

Clark has a special feeling for the Courthouse. It is his duty as Sheriff to protect it. The Sheriff is a man of descriptions. He calls the Courthouse "the temple of justice." He does not like Negroes defiling the temple. Clark looked down Sylvan Street toward Brown's Chapel where the Union forces were holding a meeting inside. He calls Brown's Chapel the "church of thieves." He glanced toward Wilson Baker, whose city police were holding the front line of the Confederate forces. There is no public record of how Sheriff Clark describes Baker and that is just as well because it wouldn't be a nice description. Clark hates Baker's guts.

Wilson Baker, a big man with mild mannerisms, leaned against a squad car and puffed on a cigar through a brown plastic holder. He is the Director of Public Safety of Selma. For public safety director, read police chief. "Public Safety" is a strange phrase but it is a big thing in the Confederate State of Alabama. Across from the gold-domed capitol at Montgomery there is a large foreboding building that houses the state's Department of Public Safety. This is Alabama's Pentagon. It is the headquarters of the State Troopers and is undoubtedly the most elaborate highway patrol office in America. Another of Colonel Lingo's titles is State Director of Public Safety. Mr. Baker, however, is one of the few police officials in Alabama who does not make the title ludicrous by his actions. He thinks like a dedicated cop and not like a storm trooper. In Alabama law enforcement, when it comes to dealing with Negroes, this is an unusual sort of thinking. He would rather cajole or, at worst, arrest civil rights demonstrators than beat them. This moderate approach has alienated him from Sheriff Clark. "Those two have been at it all month long like two dogs in a pit," a Justice Department observer in Selma said. In the last two months of racial demonstrations, Baker's tactics have kept the lid on this troubled and tense town. Massive violence came only once—Sunday at the bridge, when the Clark/Lingo coalition took over.

Baker has been criticized recently by Selma white townspeople—both racists and "moderates." They feel the demonstrations have gone too long and too far. But Baker is the kind of tough cop who does his job without regard to public opinion. This is not to say that Baker isn't a segregationist. He is. But he is a segregationist who seems to have some feeling for the Negro's struggle for human dignity. "If I was a nigger, I'd be doing just what they're doing," he once said.

**T**HE UNION DEMONSTRATORS boiled out of Brown's Chapel. They stood in the street, chatting casually, as if they had just come out of a regular Sunday service, then began to form ranks under a worn chinaberry tree. There were some 500 of them, a good sixty per cent of them white and most of that number ministers and nuns. Baker strode forward to the front echelon of Selma police officers who were lined up across Sylvan Street. Beyond them, the Confederate forces stretched in a flow of color worthy of a *Camelot* set: first, more city policemen in white helmets and dark blue uniforms; then, several hundred feet back, stretched in a solid mass from the end of Sylvan Street, the sheriff's deputies, in dark brown uniforms; then the sheriff's posse, distinguished by their obesity and irregular dress of khakis and blue denims; behind the posse, the ranks of Alabama Soil Conservation officers, nominally Game Wardens, with green cars and green uniforms and green helmets; then several battalions of State Troopers wearing blue helmets with Confederate flags painted on them, light blue breeches and boots, dark blue blouses. The troopers' unmarked cars, the metal Confederate flags affixed to the front bumpers, filled adjoining streets in an impressive display of Alabama's military might. Jets from nearby Craig Air Force Base streaked overhead, but nobody looked up.

The marchers formed up four abreast and started down Sylvan Street toward the line of police a half block away. When they got within 12 feet, Baker stepped forward and raised his big left hand in a lazy arc, the cigar still between his fingers: "Reverend Anderson, you cannot march today." Standing beside Baker was Joseph T. Smitherman, Selma's young and nervous Mayor. The Rev. L. L. Anderson, a Selma Negro leader who was heading the marchers, made his reply directly to the Mayor:

"We are asking your Honor to permit us to march to the Courthouse. We are not registered voters but we want to be; it is our God-given constitutional right. We shall move like the children of Israel, moving toward the promised land."

The Mayor blinked. The streets were jammed with spectators. People stood on nearby rooftops. The omnipresent television cameras were trained directly on him. Newsmen shoved microphones under his nose. He was the Mayor: 35 years old, a former appliance dealer, a close political ally of Governor Wallace. It was his decision to ban any further demonstrations or marches outside of the Brown's Chapel area. And he had the heritage of the Mayor's office to uphold (one of his predecessors, ex-Mayor Chris Heinz, was the founder and head of the Alabama white Citizen's Council.) He cleared his throat, twice, and folded his slender arms in front of the dark business suit which looked like it belonged on someone a size larger. "You have had opportunity after opportunity to register your people to vote," he said.

## The South at War

(The Dallas County Courthouse is open two days a month to register new voters.) "We have enforced the laws impartially . . . we expect to see our orders obeyed." The Mayor said this like a man who knows his rhetoric doesn't have to be convincing when he has several-hundred troopers with clubs in their hands waiting just up the street.

The Mayor stepped back to the sanctuary of the squad cars. The newsmen crowded in around Baker and the Rev. Anderson. "I would like to introduce some people of good will, who have some statements to make," said Anderson. "You can make all the statements you want, but you are not going to march," replied Baker. A Negro nun from St. Louis, Sister Mary Antona, was called toward the waiting microphones by the Rev. Anderson. "I feel privileged to come to Selma. I feel that every citizen has the right to vote," she said. When Anderson called a second speaker, an Episcopalian priest from Greenwich, wearing a brass-buttoned black cashmere blazer, Baker turned and walked away from the police line. "Wait, I have a statement to make to you," a minister said. "Make statements to the press, I'm not accepting any," Baker snapped back.

They did just that. The nuns, ministers, priests, rabbis, lay church leaders and the Negro leaders who made up the majority of the marchers, spoke to the press for the next ninety minutes while the youngsters in the housing project played and giggled on the sidewalks. The tremendous contingent of Confederate forces sat in their cars or stood on the road and scratched themselves, smoked cigars, drank coffee and ate sandwiches delivered in a small green pick-up truck from the Sheriff's office. There were 35 speakers, all chosen by nomination and voice vote during the meeting at Brown's Chapel, as representatives of groups from 30 states who had come to bear witness in Selma. "The symbols I see here are foreign symbols. I see a foreign flag painted on those helmets. I thought we were Americans together," said one Negro minister, the Methodist chaplain at Howard University. "One can't help thinking that there are better ways to spend the money it costs to keep all those hundreds of troopers between our humble group and the Courthouse," said Rabbi Everett Gendler of the Jewish Center at Princeton University. "We are here to share the suffering of the Negro people of Selma," said a representative of the Freedom Democratic Party of Mississippi. "The question is," he yelled over the broadcasting company microphones, covered like golf clubs with a sock of black felt to cut wind noise, and directing his words at the rows of police standing with clubs in their hands, "The question in my mind is, am I in Selma or am I in hell?"

As the speakers talked on, damning Selma with all

the moral fervor at their command, it became evident that only their fellow marchers and the newsmen were listening. The spectators walked idly about on the sidewalk; children chased each other in between the rows of brick apartment buildings; the troops broke ranks, stood in small groups chatting, sipping cokes, slipping their riot helmets back to let the sun on their foreheads. Mayor Smitherman picked up one of the sandwiches and fiddled with the wax paper wrapping for a moment before he opened it. A gold wedding ring hung loosely on his finger. He looked unhappily at the crowd of demonstrators. "I don't understand it," he said. "Martin Luther King can walk into the White House any time he wants for conferences with the President, but the Mayor of Selma can't even get an appointment. I sent the President a telegram asking for a meeting, but some sort of fifth assistant answered it."

"King? Where is King?" a man asked. "He's in town," said the Mayor. "I don't know why he isn't here."

**M**ARTIN LUTHER KING wasn't there because he was in trouble in his own movement. His absence explained the absence, also, of the usual throngs of Selma teenagers who gave life and spirit and rhythm to every mass Negro meeting in Selma, and of the tough, militant SNCC workers who had been in Selma for two years now. King wasn't there because he was afraid he would be publicly booed by his own people. The teenagers of Selma and the SNCC people weren't there because they were disgusted with King—and were tired of praying and speechmaking. They wanted to march.

Dr. King was at the home of a Selma Negro dentist, Dr. Sullivan Jackson. It was there, early Tuesday morning, that the pajama-clad Nobel Prize winner met with former Florida Governor, LeRoy Collins, now head of the Federal Community Relations Service and President Johnson's unofficial Ambassador to the Union forces. Collins had been sent by special jet from Washington to work out a compromise that would avoid repetition of Sunday's bloodshed on Tuesday afternoon, when another attempt at the march to Montgomery (this one led by Dr. King) was scheduled to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge. A federal judge had issued a temporary restraining order against the march and Dr. King was in a quandry. His organization prided itself on never violating the law—or a court order; yet, he had pledged to lead this march (King was absent Sunday), and civil rights workers and ministers from all over the South were gathering at Brown's Chapel. They all wanted to march. Collins offered a typically Johnson compromise: He had conferred with Colonel Lingo and obtained a pledge that the marchers would be unharmed

if they turned back a small distance down Highway 80. Lingo had even drawn a rough map, showing where the Union forces must halt. Collins handed the Confederate map to King: this way, he said, both sides would save face—and King would have a dramatic moment. King hesitated, then took the map. He sent a message to the crowd at Brown's Chapel: "I have decided it is better to die on the highway than to make a butchery of my conscience."

There was, of course, no danger of butchery. The plan worked. The marchers were halted, knelt, said a prayer and turned back. The deal became obvious to SNCC people when Colonel Lingo, in a mild Southern doublecross, pulled his troopers back, leaving the highway to Montgomery open as King rose to lead his followers in retreat to Selma. The move was meant to embarrass King and it did. King later called the second march "the greatest confrontation for freedom" in the South. The youth and the SNCC people called it a sell-out. King was accused of "betraying" the movement and collaborating with the enemy.

King's fall from favor was only momentary. The diverse elements in the Union expeditionary force were united later that week by the death of the Rev. James J. Reeb, a white Unitarian minister from Boston, who died of wounds from a night-time beating at the hands of some Selma white citizens as he left a restaurant in the Negro district. But though momentary, King's disgrace was significant because it illustrated in dramatic fashion a long-standing split in the Union leadership.

It was the same split that divided the Abolitionists in the 1850s and the 1860s over whether to support Lincoln and work within the Republican party for their goals or to continue to take outside, radical social action. It is the old polarity between action and negotiation, between politics and revolution. It is the struggle between those who would work within the Establishment and those who reject the Establishment policies of compromise and consensus, and agitate for more direct solutions. This division is evident in the methodology of the civil rights movement, from the NAACP on the right to SNCC and then the black nationalist groups on the left.

In Selma, the SNCC people, who were there first and Dr. King's SCLC, which became active in Selma early this year, are divided on certain broad goals—primary among them SNCC's support for a third, independent political party in Alabama, modelled after Mississippi's Freedom Democratic Party. SCLC would rather the Negroes register in the existing political parties. SNCC wants Selma's people to develop their own leaders; SCLC is inclined to have them follow the leadership of Dr. King, his assistant Rev. Ralph Abernathy and other SCLC officials. Despite these differences, the two Abolitionist organizations have developed an effective working organization in Selma. They realize they need each

other in the jungles of the Black Belt.

The coalition dissolved—for a while—that Wednesday afternoon. Many SNCC people stayed away from the march. The Selma youth, the black *jeunesse*, took things a little more seriously. They revolted.

*Black jeunesse: idealists and hipsters.*



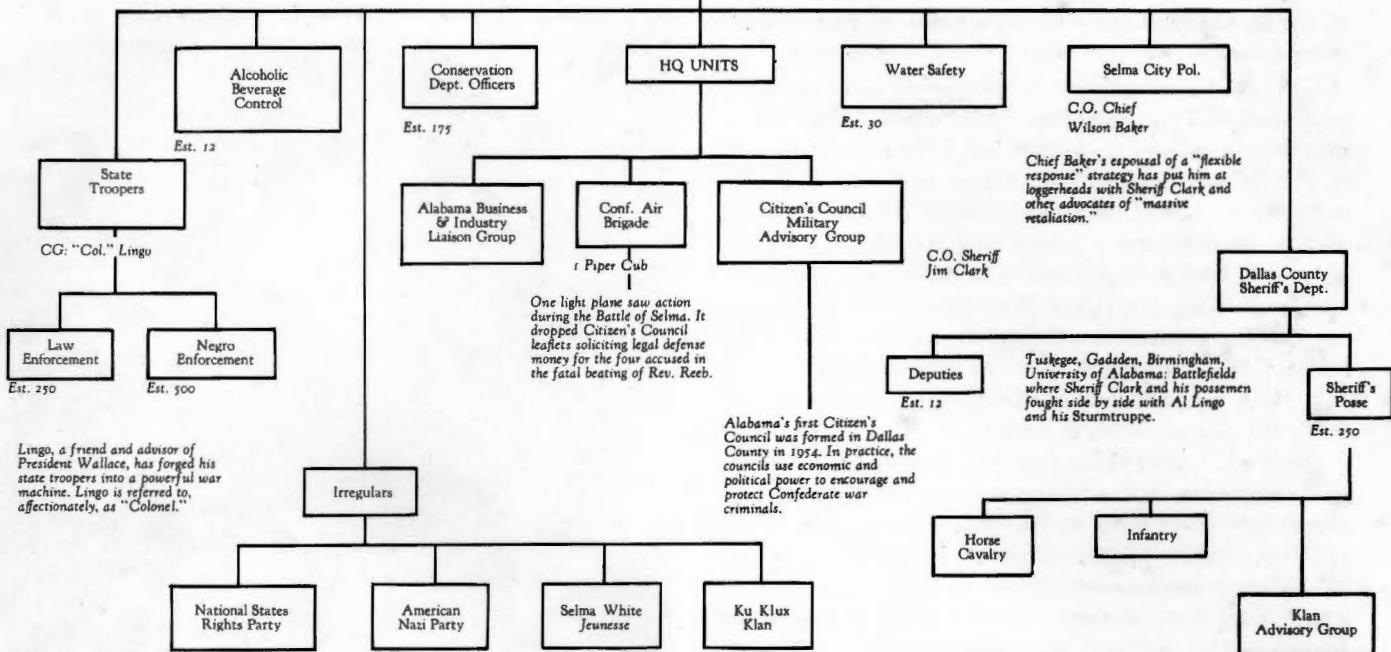
## CONFEDERATE FORCES As deployed in the Battle of Selma

Capital: Montgomery, Ala.  
Field Hq.: Dallas County Courthouse, Selma



Confederate President: George Wallace  
(Governor, Sovereign State of Alabama)

President Emeritus &  
Ambassador without Portfolio: Ross Barnett  
Commanding General:  
"Colonel" Al Lingo  
Field Commander:  
Sheriff Jim Clark



Confederate POW compounds: Old Armory on Franklin Street, City Jail, County Jail, Camp Selma (county prison farm).  
Weapons: Cattle Prod, Billy Club, Sidearms, Teargas, Carbines, shotguns, riot guns. Equipment: Gas Masks, Horses, Helmets, Squad Cars.

**T**HE REVOLT WAS FORMING while the demonstrators in the street finished their speeches and were told by Baker, again, that they could not march. So the ministers and the nuns and the priests and the disparate volunteers knelt on the ground and said the Lord's Prayer—the Protestant version—and then turned and walked back to Brown's Chapel, their arms locked, singing "We Shall Overcome."

Meanwhile, in the First Baptist Church a half block away at the corner of Sylvan street and Jefferson Davis Avenue, the black *jeunesse* were meeting. They decided to go to the Courthouse. Despite the leadership compliance with the city ban, in the elemental impetuosity of youth, they went.

These teenagers are the marrow in the backbone of the Selma movement. They had the staying power and the vitality that kept the demonstrations going. In all-night vigils which began Wednesday, they kept the rhythm, singing and the chanting at a level of constant vivacity that amazed veteran observers of civil rights demonstrations. These kids are a contradictory mixture of hipster and idealist; they are rebels with a cause.

The clerics, in a mildly self-congratulatory mood after their long session of denouncing the evils of Selma, settled back in the battered pews of Brown's Chapel. Suddenly, the absence of the teenagers became obvious. It was like being at a Wagnerian opera and soon realizing that the drums were gone from the orchestra. A man rushed to the front of the church with a frantic message. The ministers and priests ran outside and down Sylvan Street to where the teenagers and the police were massing ranks. They just about got there too late.

The kids made it two blocks—almost half way to the Courthouse—before an advance guard of State Troopers pulled in front of them. The Union-blue uniformed Confederates got out of their Southern gray cars and began to push the kids back down Jefferson Davis Avenue with their clubs. A few teenagers got bloody heads, and one or two got their teeth cracked. They were taken into the first-aid station in the First Baptist Church. Baker drove up in his white Chrysler. As he got out of the car, the *jeunesse*, some 300 of them, equally mixed boys and girls, were massing in the intersection, ready to charge the Confederates and run through and over

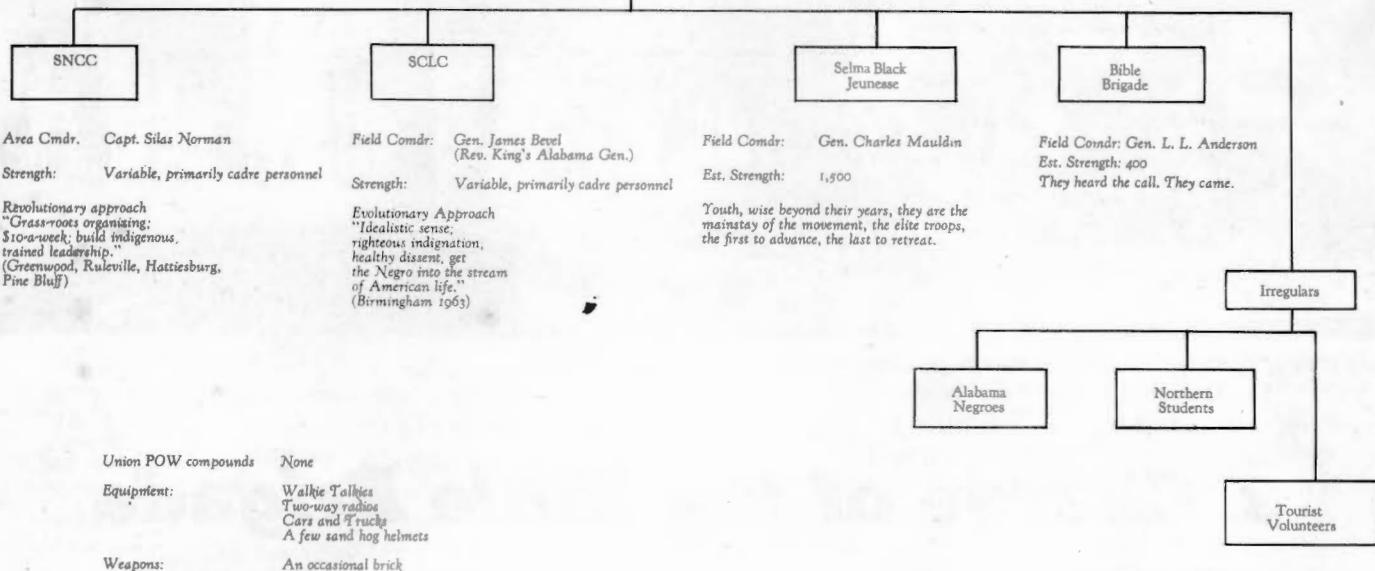
## UNION FORCES

### As deployed in the Battle of Selma

Capital: Atlanta, Ga.  
Field Hq.: Brown's Chapel, Selma



#### Combined Union Expeditionary Forces



their cars if need be to get to the Courthouse. More and more cars of city police and State Troopers pulled up on Jefferson Davis Avenue. The troops got out and made a solid phalanx across the intersection. Baker waved the press off to one side, pulled out a bull horn and told the kids to disperse. But more of them came running down the street. The youthful brigade was surging at the corner, chanting, undulating, ready for action.

The ministers, breathless, ran between the cops and the kids. With hands linked they formed a human chain in an attempt to edge the *jeunesse* backward, but the kids would have none of it and pushed against the ministers. More Confederate cars sireden up. The clerics looked worried, scared. The teenagers eyes were shining as they pushed the cordon of ministers, inch by inch, towards the Confederate lines, and sang: "Ain't gonna' let nobody turn me round, turn me round . . ."

Jimmy Webb, a short, vivacious Bible student, with green collegiate cardigan and the speaking style of a cheerleader, stood in front of the chanting youths and yelled: "You want to go to the Courthouse. I want to go to the Courthouse. We all want to go to the Courthouse.

#### Union President:

Martin Luther King, Jr.  
(Head, Southern Christian Leadership Conf.)  
John Lewis (SNCC)  
Ralph Abernathy (SCLC)  
Andrew Young (SCLC)  
Gen. John Lewis (SNCC)  
Gen. James Forman (SNCC)  
Gen. C. T. Vivian (SCLC)  
Gen. Hosea Williams (SCLC)

#### Vice Presidents:

#### Joint Chiefs of Staff:

But this is not the way. Let's wait till Bevel gets here (James Bevel, the overall-clad minister with shaved head and Iranian skull cap, who heads SCLC's Alabama project) and we'll plan what to do."

One boy spit on the ground. "Plan! We were half-way to the Courthouse and some pseudo-leader stopped us and said we should regroup and plan our approach. Then the cops came. If we hadn't of planned we'd be at the Courthouse right now."

The ministers kept pushing the youths backward, their arms still locked in a solid row. The police were also in a row formation, holding their clubs out horizontally. The clerics managed to begin moving the *jeunesse* back up Sylvan Street, toward Brown's Chapel. Stragglers were shoved along by the police. "We'll go inside the chapel and talk this over," one minister said.

A young Negro boy was leaning, defeatedly, against a battered tree near the corner and in one quiet remark to a companion he expressed all the complexity and the shattered idealism of the division in the Union forces. "I don't know," he said softly. "I just dont want to go back to that church and pray some more."



Under the glare of troopers' headlights, Unionists stand in the rain on muddy Sylvan Street.

### **3. Charge of the Bible Brigade**

**I**N ONE OF THOSE EXTRAORDINARY coincidences that can move men to memorable deeds, millions of East Coast television viewers on the evening of Sunday, March 7, saw the movie "Judgment at Nuremberg" immediately following the spectacle of troopers and possemen gassing, beating and whipping the Selma Negroes at prayer. The hideous parallel between Auschwitz and Selma was obvious, even to the insensitive. Were it not for this accident of programming, Selma, Alabama, might just have been news, but never history. The pictures from Selma were unpleasant; the juxtaposition of the Nazi Storm Troopers and the Alabama State Troopers made them unbearable. A high tide of revulsion crossed the nation that evening and by morning exceptional things were happening.

People literally rushed into the streets to express their outrage in cities from Washington, D.C., to Toronto. In Chicago, sympathetic Selma demonstrators clogged rush-hour Loop traffic; Detroit's Democratic Mayor and Michigan's Republican Governor marched together to demand Federal intervention. In Atlanta, Dr. Martin Luther King announced that he would personally lead another march on Tuesday and called for help from people of all faiths. The response from Jewish, Protestant and Catholic clerics was rapid and astonishing. Never, in the history of the United States, has organized religion collaborated to such an extent on an

issue of social justice. The clergymen did not merely exhort—they led the way.

California Episcopal Bishop James Pike flew from New Orleans; Methodist Bishop John Wesley Lord from Washington; The Rev. Dr. David R. Hunter, Deputy Director of the National Council of Churches, from New York. The United Church of Christ, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the American Baptist Convention, the Lutheran Church in America, the Rabbinical Assembly, the Disciples of Christ, the Roman Catholic Church—all had representative delegations en route to Selma, from St. Louis and Chicago, from Cleveland and Tampa, from Los Angeles and New York.

Even more significant was the participation of hundreds of Catholic priests and nuns. Their arrival in large numbers in Selma shocked both white racists and Negroes; it also shocked some of the priests' and nuns' superiors who, when it was all over, were still wondering how it happened. Although the Catholic bishops of America have made two strong statements condemning racial prejudice, they have been slow to involve themselves or their priests in the civil rights movement. The Catholic hierarchy has tended to caution priests against getting "too involved"; in some dioceses, Los Angeles for instance, Catholic priests and nuns are forbidden to take part in civil rights demonstrations. The list of clergymen jailed and beaten in the South is long, but

almost devoid of Catholic priests. Before Selma, a nun marching and singing "We Shall Overcome" was unthinkable.

The shock of Selma hit the Catholic hierarchy in two ways: In St. Louis, liberal Cardinal Joseph Ritter gave his blessing to priests and nuns headed for Selma. St. Louis "landed" the first contingent of demonstrating nuns in the Deep South. In Baltimore, Sister Cecilia Marie was teaching her sixth graders geography when the bell in the classroom loudspeaker tinkled. "Sister Cecilia, do you want to go to Selma?" Sister Cecilia wanted to go. She dismissed the class, walked to the convent, "took \$50 of novitiate money and went."

The story was different, however, in other dioceses where a combination of accidents, confusion and outside pressures operated to unleash priests who had been frustrated in their desire to demonstrate as early as Birmingham in 1963. The situation in the diocese of Washington, D.C., was typical.

**A**RCHBISHOP PATRICK O'BOYLE, of Washington, D.C., a conservative but realistic man, spent Monday morning weighing the problems of prudence and public relations. Many priests had telephoned his office, requesting permission to go to Selma. Nuns were calling up who wanted to picket the White House. Archbishop O'Boyle had previously forbidden nuns to participate in any demonstrations, including the March on Washington in 1963. The Archbishop himself, after some hesitation, joined that march. There he encountered John Lewis of SNCC and afterwards let it be known that he had no use for Lewis's brand of militancy. He disliked the idea of his priests being exposed to the Lewis philosophy in Selma.

On the other hand, if he denied permission to the priests, the bad publicity could be disastrous. The Council of Churches of the Greater Washington Area had chartered a plane to take Washington clerics to Selma. *The Washington Star* and the wire services had called early that morning to ask if any Catholics were going on the flight. Prudence, the Archbishop felt, might well forbid his priests going; but prudence also would allow it. He made his decision: the priests could go, providing they stay away from reporters and from SNCC; the nuns could picket, "just this once," if their superiors approved.

Many Catholic priests were happily amazed. They rushed to the airport hoping to take off before something happened to change the situation. Some priests didn't even stop to pack a bag. Their concern was prescient. The subtle pressures of church politics quickly built up resistance to the Selma adventure. Conservative prelates objected. It was pointed out to Bishop O'Boyle's aide, Auxiliary Bishop John S. Spence, that

Bishop Thomas J. Toolen of Mobile (whose diocesan area includes Selma), was in Washington and nobody had even asked him his opinion. (Bishop Toolen's opinion would not be difficult to predict. He is a Southern bishop. Priests in his diocese do not take part in racial demonstrations.) The Auxiliary Bishop frantically told a secretary to call the airport and stop the Washington priests. But the secretary deliberately scrambled the phone call and the plane left—the Catholics aboard. No attempt was made to bring them back. When word of rescinding the permission leaked out, priests who had not yet left didn't answer their telephones. They all made it to Selma. (When the priests returned, Archbishop O'Boyle congratulated them; if he were younger, he said, he would have considered going himself. At the same time, the nuns who had been picketing in Washington were "strongly urged" by Auxiliary Bishop Spence not to participate in a Sunday memorial service for the murdered Rev. James Reeb. This was a reversion to form, in a diocese where Auxiliary Bishop Philip M. Hannan wrote a congratulatory note to Dr. Klaus Herrmann of American University for his insights into SNCC. Dr. Herrmann had told students that SNCC was Communist-infiltrated and "substantially under control of the Communist party." Bishop Hannan wrote Dr. Herrmann: "I regret the delay in heartily congratulating you upon your wise action in counselling the students concerning the SNCC. Your action was wise and courageous. God bless you." Such are the vagaries of hierarchical politics.)

The clergymen who got to Selma early Monday night got their first exposure to what they considered radicalism. Many of them didn't like it. Mario Savio, the rebel leader at the University of California at Berkeley, his bushy head popping in and out of the pews in Brown's Chapel, talked to demonstrators, agitating for more forceful action the next day. Some of the clerics—



Union President Martin Luther King, Jr.

## The South at War

Protestants, Catholics and Jews—became concerned. They had come to Selma to help Martin Luther King, but wanted nothing to do with Mario Savio. They sent a spokesman to one of King's lieutenants who assured them that King would be calling the shots. They seemed greatly relieved. Yet these same men, by Saturday, after five frustrating days of facing the Confederate forces, were to develop an elemental radicalism of their own.

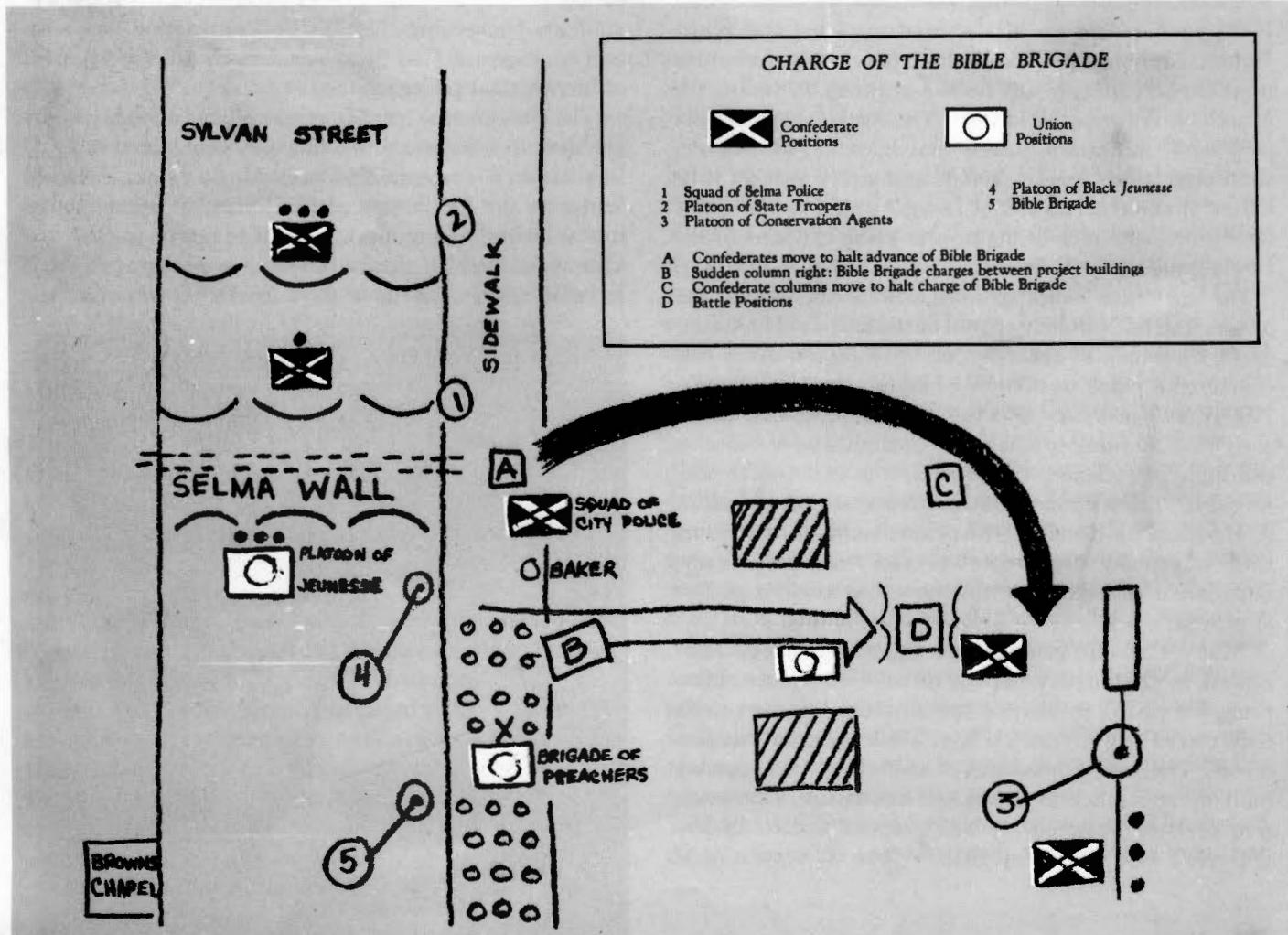
**T**HE RAINS CAME to Selma on Thursday. It was the second day of The Vigil—a vigil maintained day and night in Sylvan Street for the dying minister from Boston who had come to Selma, like all the others, to give witness to the justice of the Negro cause. Confederate troops blocked off both ends of Sylvan Street on Wednesday afternoon. The Union forces were entrapped in the ghetto and they elected to camp on Sylvan Street, day and night, playing a waiting game with the Confederate leadership.

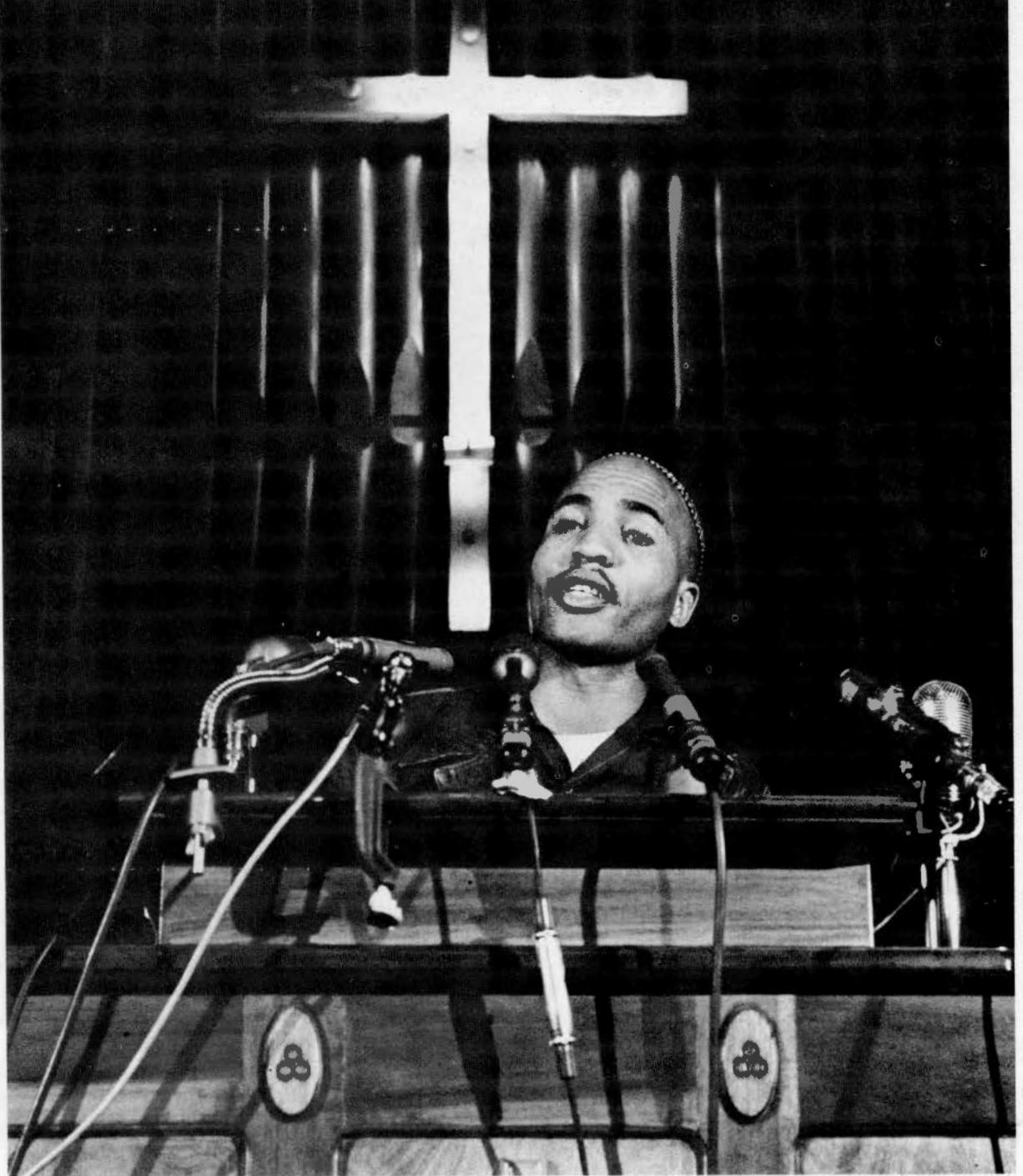
As the sky darkened into dusk the downfall became

heavy and cold. The umbrellas, cardboard boxes and newspapers that protected the demonstrators came down, replaced by a makeshift tent of canvas and watertight tarpaulins. The supporting poles protruded from the mass of black and white humanity huddled together for warmth in the muddy street. As the final strains of light played out, the Alabama sky appeared a deep, heavy purple that moved down to smother the wet red brick buildings of the project. Selma police had strung an ordinary household clothesline across Sylvan Street several hundred yards up from Brown's Chapel. This was the point, dubbed the "Selma Wall" by the *jeunesse*, beyond which the demonstrators could not move. The *jeunesse* troubadours sang impromptu songs to the thin strip of cotton hemp. Among them, to the tune of Jericho:

"A clothesline is a Berlin Wall,  
Berlin Wall, Berlin Wall,  
A clothesline is a Berlin Wall,  
In Selma, Alabam'."

Rev. Reeb died that night of massive head injuries. When news of his death came to Sylvan Street, a low moan went through the crowd. It could be heard outside the tent, through the heavy rains, by the Confederate forces sitting in their cars on the other side of the rope.





*Before a lighted cross, SCLC's James Bevel speaks in Brown's Chapel.*

Killed in Action: The Rev. James J. Reeb, second fatality of The Battle of Selma. If some of the clergymen had begun to wonder why they were there, on a wet, unpaved street in Alabama, standing under an absurd-looking shelter, facing the steady headlights of a solid wall of police cars extending for blocks, they had their answer in the anguished cry of pain and fellowship coming from the Negroes. A man of God, a white man, had died trying to help them. There, in a moan, was the Gospel; and this—the reality of wet shoes and cold feet, black and white hands clasped together, bodies clinging to each other for warmth—this was giving witness.

The encampment continued through the night and round-the-clock through Friday and Saturday and Sunday. Finally, on Monday, by a federal judge's order, the Confederate cars pulled back and the Union forces marched to the Courthouse.

The rains stopped Saturday, and the clergymen who had spent two days staring down the Confederate forces decided to end the waiting game. At a mass meeting in the First Baptist Church, they voted to advance to the Courthouse. The Bible Brigade was ready to charge.

A Negro in a green Army parka shouted instructions

## The South at War

to the Union force of 300 assembled at the Selma Wall: "Only marchers in this line; everybody else get off the street."

The demonstrators tensed up. The advance line of Confederate forces moved in closer. Baker picked up the radiophone in his white Chrysler and called for more troops. Mayor Smitherman, looking nervous, blinked at the organizing Union forces. He chewed gum and fumbled with a cigarette. The city, in a sudden burst of public relations consciousness, had distributed to newsmen a copy of a sympathetic telegram sent to Mrs. Reeb from the Selma City Council. It was a nice telegram and the Mayor was worried that the press would ignore it if the Union forces charged over the Selma Wall.

The Confederate forces were lining up several men deep across Sylvan street, ready for a frontal attack, unprepared for the flanking movement the crafty clergymen were about to attempt. Some 80 Catholic priests, 12 nuns, and 30 ministers and rabbis, walking three deep, came marching down the housing project sidewalk. Baker saw the Bible Brigade approaching and rushed to block the charge. Five policemen ran with him.

**A**T THE HEAD of the black-garbed brigade was one of King's generals, the Rev. C. T. Vivian, and Father John Cavanaugh, former Notre Dame University President. Vivian, a short man with a small mustache and a long brown over-coat, took the offensive. He called a halt to the long line of clerics and nuns and hailed Baker. "We wish to go to the Courthouse and pay homage to our fallen brethren. Do you recant of the opportunity of letting ministers go to pray?"

Baker planted his 250-pound frame firmly on the sidewalk. "You do not have a permit to parade."

"Mr. Baker," Vivian said, "You have three choices: you can let us pass or you can beat us or you can arrest us, but we are going to go on."

Baker didn't get a chance to answer. Vivian swerved on one foot and abruptly the brigade did a column right and jogged doubletime between the brick apartment houses. Confederates leaped out of their cars. Baker and his men dashed down a back street, and came abreast of the charging clergymen in a small clearing between the rectangular apartment buildings.

Baker and Vivian found themselves face to face. Vivian tried to push forward; the priests around him pushed against policemen; the policemen pushed back. There were yells and oaths and the sounds of scuffling feet. Baker was outraged. "Stop pushing me," he yelled at Vivian, his strong voice loud so the crowd could hear.

"A man of God pushing me. I can't believe it. A minister defying the law. A man of God committing violence."

Vivian ran to the right, attempting to duck between another row of buildings, the clerics moving *en masse* behind him. Again police cut them off. There was more scuffling. "Put on record that the violence here was by the ministers," Baker snapped at the throng of newsmen who crowded into the small housing project garden area. A nun reached up and tapped a burly trooper on the shoulder. "The flowers," she said, "you're standing all over these poor people's flowers."

A Soil Conservation company moved into position on Lawrence Street, directly behind the project. State Troopers stood rows deep on each side of the clearing. City police moved in from the rear. The Bible Brigade was surrounded.

The clergymen stopped moving forward. They lined up and held an impromptu prayer service for Rev. Reeb. The second story windows of the project buildings were jammed with women and children looking out at the strange confrontation in their yard. Cameramen scrambled to rooftop vantage points.

Vivian told the clergymen to face down the Confederates blocking the path. Baker ordered newsmen out of the area. "I declare this to be an unlawful assembly," he said. "If it is not disbanded in 60 seconds, I will arrest Vivian." Vivian exploded into Baker's face: "You would arrest a Negro, but not a white. This is an example of your racism. Why else would you arrest a Negro? If one of us is wrong, all of us are wrong. This is the injustice of Alabama."

Baker looked bemusedly at Vivian. The clergymen began to chant "All of us, all go, all go, arrest us all." They locked arms and stood their ground.

Baker laughed. "Oh no," he said. "Not all of you. I'm not going to arrest all these priests." Again Vivian berated him. "You're putting on a good show, Vivian, but you're not faking me," Baker said. He ordered his policemen to turn their backs on the Bible Brigade. The confrontation settled into a standoff. The nuns and the ministers sang "We Shall Overcome" and "Glory, Glory Hallelujah." A band of *jeunesse* joined the clerics and sang "Ain't gonna let Captain Baker turn me round, turn me round." Baker winked at Vivian; the minister smiled back. Thirty minutes later, the Bible Brigade disbanded, retreating to Brown's Chapel. It was not, however, a moment of goodwill. As the Confederate forces pulled back, one of the green-clad Soil Conservation Officers said to a comrade: "Boy, would I like to beat the head in of one of those agitating nuns."

A week later, a lone picket paraded in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Manhattan. He carried a sign that said: "How can Catholic priests defy a police line? How can they disobey the law?"

In the unreal world of Selma, Alabama, it seemed very reasonable for men of God to break the law of man.



View from the bridge: Selma, as seen from across the Alabama River

## 4. *The Infiltration*

*"We are on the one yard line . . . do we let the Negroes go over for a touchdown . . . or do we raise the Confederate flag as did our forefathers and tell them, 'You shall not pass'?"*

—Eugene "Bull" Connor,  
to the Selma white Citizen's Council.

**T**HE GOON WITH THE PAINT-CAN laughed a lot as he sprayed green paint on the white girl's hair. He was aiming toward her neck, trying to get the paint to run down inside her blouse, when the spray faltered and then stopped. He shook the can and pressed hard on the button, but it was out of air. The container made an empty clatter as it hit the sidewalk.

Negroes were there—many of them—but they made dull targets. You could get a nigger anytime. But here was a white girl, cowering with the small group of Negroes against the plate glass window of the Selma Chevrolet Agency. She was irresistible. Her green-spattered hair now matched the face of a little Negro

girl, the goon's second victim. Now he was opening a can of black motor oil, to darken the white girl's legs. That was what she deserved, coming uptown on a Saturday afternoon with all those niggers.

The Chevrolet Agency is on Lauderdale Street, next to the Dallas County Courthouse. It was a very bad place to be for the 17 Negroes and the white SNCC girl. They had infiltrated uptown from Sylvan Street in twos and threes, regrouped several blocks from the Courthouse, marching triumphantly the rest of the way. But possemen moved in and prodded them with clubs towards the auto agency.

Over 100 white citizens of Selma stood on the sidewalk opposite them, silent, staring, abrasive. After months of demonstrations, and the long, frustrating week of rebellion on Sylvan Street, the hourglass measure of patience of these people had played out. It was the talk of the town: the police were getting soft. They weren't doing their job. They weren't cracking Negroes' heads. It was a mob reaction.

The goon was joined by several compatriots on the

## The South at War

perimeter of the small band of infiltrators, now kneeling in prayer on the grease-stained concrete. The gathering mob across Lauderdale Street looked on, morbid.

Brown-shirted sheriff's deputies, led by Chief Deputy L. C. Crocker, stalked up. A deputy shoved his club under the throat of a young Negro girl and the group stopped praying. The warring command posts of Wilson Baker and Jim Clark have a status of forces agreement in Selma: the Courthouse was in the Sheriff's domain. That was why it was a very bad place for the Negroes and the white girl.

The goon and his friends listened intently to the dialogue between Crocker and King's assistant, 18-year-old Jimmy Webb. They liked what they heard.

Webb asked the Chief Deputy to escort the small group through the hostile streets of downtown Selma, back to Sylvan Street.

"I'm not going to give you any protection," Crocker answered. It was late afternoon. Soon it would be dark. The whites smiled.

Webb pressed the Chief Deputy on the issue of equal justice under the law—and prayer. "I don't have to pray for anybody I don't wanna'," Crocker said.

"You've got to learn to love before you can pray," the white girl with the green hair said to Crocker.

His head snapped up. "You just pray for your little niggers—and you leave me alone."

One white, giant slug of a man stood almost in the center of the little group. His head craned slowly back and forth between Crocker and Webb. As he made a studious effort to follow the conversation, he whistled mean and low.

"I can't do anything for you," Crocker said. "I don't have enough men to provide protection. If anything happens to you, fill out a form and file a complaint and then we'll look into it. And I'm not going to block you off or arrest you. I'm just going to leave you here and let you fend for yourself."

The Chief Deputy and his assistants turned their backs and walked away, leaving the infiltrators to the townspeople of Selma.

More whites moved in to reinforce the goon and his friends. At the intersection, a patrol of Selma's white *jeunesse*—tough kids from the white high school, complete with sideburns and razor cuts—pulled up in an open convertible. The sidewalk line of whites stretched from corner to corner.

"I'm going to take that little nigger over there to the barbers and give him a haircut—right down to his neck," said one of the whites. "What do you want, freedom?" You black pig asses got more freedom than you deserve," said the goon.

It was a very tense moment.

**S**UDDENLY, A WHITE CHRYSLER stopped in the middle of the street. Wilson Baker got out. He pushed his way into the center of the quiet band of infiltrators. He looked very worried.

Webb asked Baker for protection. The Public Safety Director looked at the line of whites across the street. Then he looked at the loose circle of toughs forming around the Negroes.

"I don't know how I'm going to give you protection," he said. "I will try to get you back to the rest of your group and you'll have protection there." Baker told them to walk to the corner, quickly, and turn right onto the street that led through town, back to the housing project.

The infiltrators held a conference. They were young and indecisive. They had come this far, got all the way uptown. Now they didn't know what to do. "Maybe we should stay here and pray," one boy suggested.

*Come on,*" Baker said. "For Christ's sake get *out of here*." His urgent tones startled the patrol. Then, for the first time, they realized the dimensions of the white crowd across the street; they understood the meaning of the goon with the spray can. They were scared. They moved awkwardly down the sidewalk and began to sing, weakly, hesitantly, "We Shall Overcome."

Baker ignored the whites. He didn't say one word to them. But his presence silenced them. The goon and his friends followed on the heels of the retreating infiltrators. The mob across the street moved also. People who had been watching from parked cars started their engines. The white punks in the open convertible double-

Negroes for sale—1858.

**Chancery Sale  
OF  
EIGHT LIKELY  
NEGROS**

In pursuance of a decree of the Chancery Court for Robertson county, at its Dec. term, 1858, in the cause of P. B. Roberts and wife, Artemissa, Drucilla McIntosh and J. W. R. McIntosh vs. Jerome L., Tifford D., Polly C., Sylvanus and Farmer McIntosh and G. H. Mason, I will sell to the highest bidder, on Saturday the 4th day of January, 1859, at the residence of Mrs. Drucilla McIntosh, near Barren Plain, Robertson county,

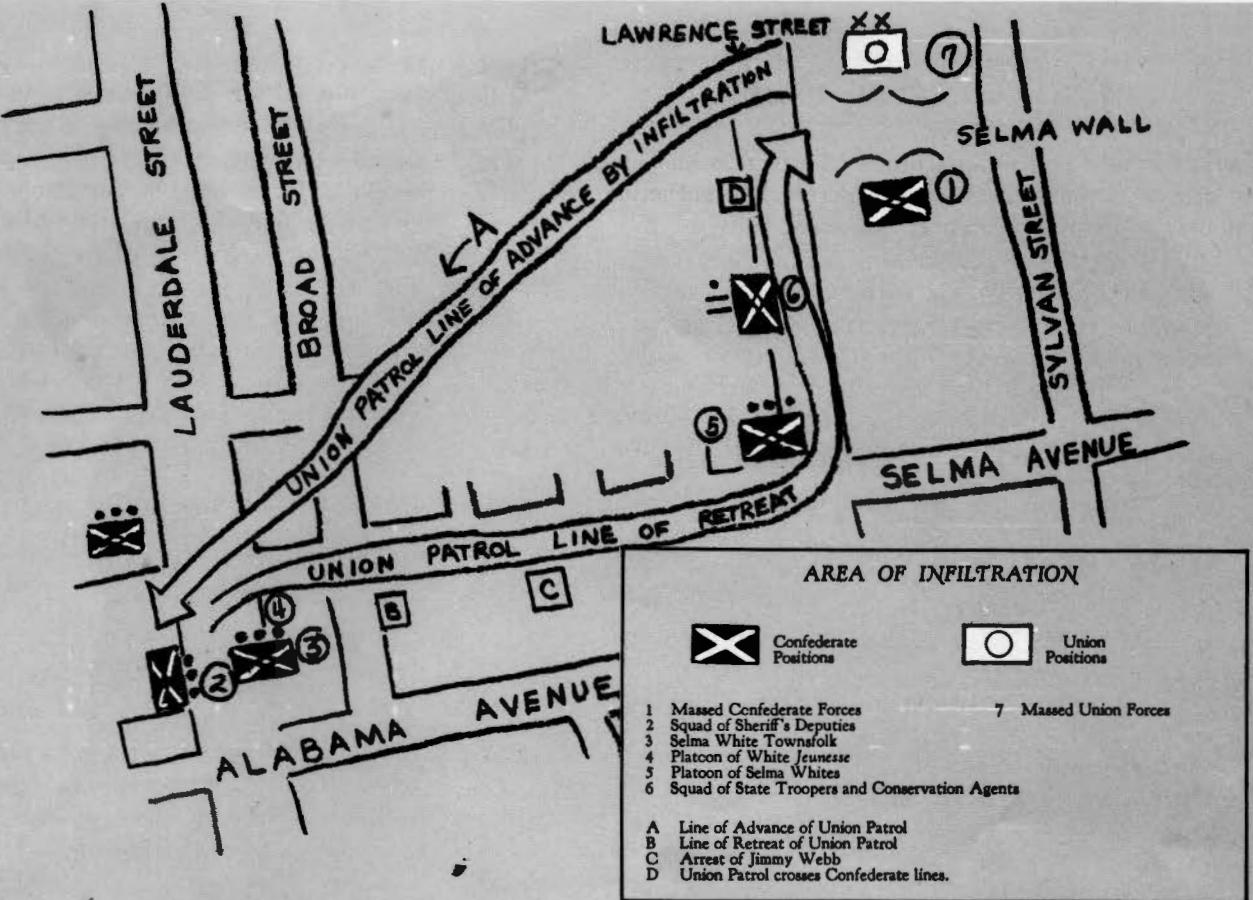
**8 LIKELY NEGROES.**

Consisting of 3 likely young girls, from 13 to 14 years of age; 1 likely boy about 16 years old; 1 stout likely man, about 25 years old; and 3 likely young boys.

These Negroes will be sold on a credit until 30th November, 1859, purchaser giving bond and two good securities.

Dec. 8th, 1858.

MILES S. DRAUGHON, C. & M.



parked where the infiltrators would have to pass. "Come on," said the patrol's one-man escort, "move faster."

The Negroes and the white girl, still indecisive, slowed down. They took short, casual steps, like they were window shopping. Baker urged them: "I don't have all day. You know what's going to happen to you if I leave you here alone."

Still, the infiltrators moved devilishly slow, back toward Sylvan Street. The group of whites walking behind them was larger now. A long line of cars, led by the white *jeunesse*, kept apace on the street.

The unreal procession passed a Selma billiard parlor. The whites inside pressed angrily against the window—their faces gargoyles of hatred. They were shocked and furious to see Negroes uptown in a group. Some of the players put on their coats and rushed outside to join the white mob.

Beads of perspiration came to Baker's forehead. "Please, move on . . . you know these cars behind you are unsafe."

infiltrators moved sluggishly, taunting the whites, testing them, teasing Baker.

Finally, the even-tempered Public Safety Director lost his composure. He threw up his hands. "All right, I've done all I can. If you want this trouble, I just can't keep you from it." He stepped into the street and hailed the white Chrysler that had been driven alongside by an aide. He got in and the car sped away.

The white *jeunesse* in the convertible raced up, parallel to the Negroes. The punks who were walking behind closed in, menacing, insulting. "Marchin' the cows back home." "Bunch of brown-nosed niggers, makes me sick." One white teenager ran up behind a frightened Negro and hit him, hard, on the head. Another sent a fast kick toward the groin of a small Negro boy. The goon with the motor oil threw a rock at the white girl's neck. A block behind, a mob about 50 strong closed in.

But Baker came back. He had changed his mind. He knew that only he could save the infiltrators. "Knock it off," he yelled at the whites. He was angry with the white punks, even angrier with the snail-paced Negroes.

Jimmy Webb, who was setting the provocative pace, sneered at Baker's exhortations to hurry. "We can take a leisurely walk if we want to," he needled.

More brawny teenagers joined the young whites in the open car. They sat on the trunk, grinning, watching. A white punk on a motorcycle joined the caravan.

**S**TURDAY SHOPPERS WERE EN ROUTE HOME. Their cars slowed down as they passed the Negroes. A woman cursed. Hate stares abounded—from the passing cars, from people in parked cars. Still, the infil-



Webb halted the infiltrators at a corner. "Let's take our time crossing." This was too much for Baker. "Are you trying to get these kids killed?" he asked. Then he grabbed Webb's green cardigan and motioned the Chrysler over to the curb. Webb was shoved inside. "You're under arrest, Jimmy. You can take your time going to jail." The project was still two blocks away.

The infiltrators balked at the corner. "We won't move until Jimmy is released," the girl with the green hair said. Baker grabbed her arm firmly, and took her across the street. Then he hustled the next Negro across the intersection. A detective began to grab the Negroes and rush them across the street. He started roughing them up. Baker touched his arm, motioned for him to take it easy.

The back entrance to the project was now a half block away, and the mob, fearful of losing its prey, moved almost on top of the young Negroes. Baker begged them to keep moving. They faltered, disorganized, drifting aimlessly toward the project. One of the whites kicked a Negro girl in the back.

Baker's face was taut. He was thoroughly exasperated with the Negroes. "You can't do anything when you're dealing with fools." The retreating group hesitated to cross over to Lawrence Street, which runs in back of the project. The white punks raced by in their

open convertible, making obscene gestures at the Negroes.

Another mob—about fifteen hard-faced, rough white men were grouped in front of a grocery store near the Lawrence Street corner. They shouted threats as the infiltrators walked by—some of them shook their fists and ran up to the Negroes. "So you want to mix with the white folks."

"Don't you know enough to stay where you belong?"

"You'll get your freedom at the bottom of a river." This was the first time that week a mob of whites gathered outside the project; it was a bad sign.

The town was in an ugly mood.

Confederate forces encircled the entire housing project. A solid line of State Troopers and Conservation Agents parted, allowing the infiltrators to enter the sanctuary of Sylvan Street. Once inside the project, the Negroes broke into a run, rushing to tell their friends about their exciting patrol.

Baker's relief was visible. His shoulders dropped an inch. He looked very tired. Norris McNamara, a *Time* photographer who had been covering the Selma demonstrations for many weeks, went up to him. "Mr. Baker, that was a very decent thing you just did."

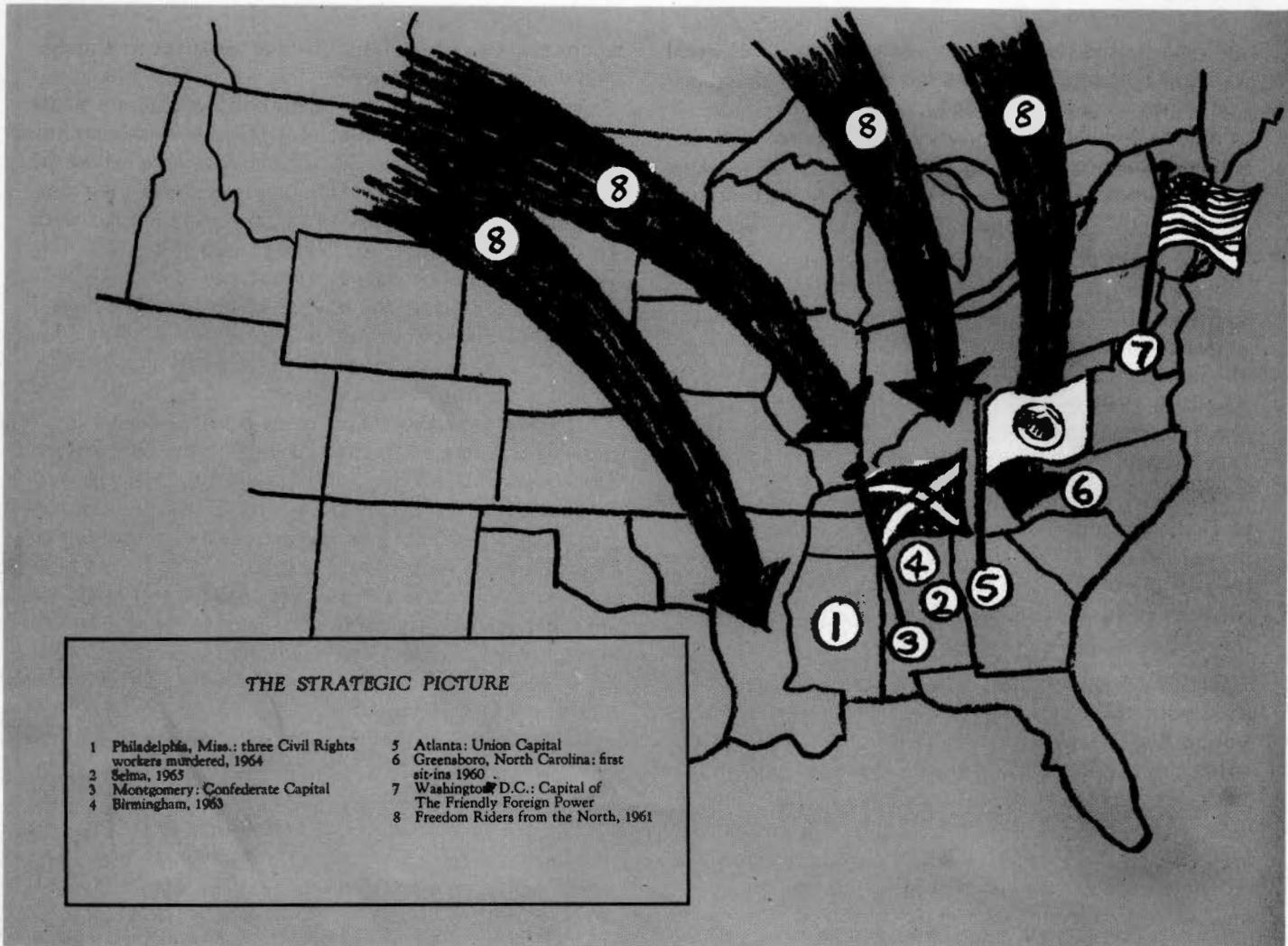
Baker looked at the photographer. He was surprised and a little embarrassed at the compliment.

"The niggers don't appreciate it," he said.

Selma Public Safety Director,  
Wilson Baker.



Union forces stand in  
the rain, tired, cold,  
hungry—waiting.



## 5. SHADOW BRIGADE

**F**ROM THE WINDOW of the U.S. Attorney's office in Selma, on the third floor of the gray-stone Federal Building, observers representing the United States of America have an excellent view of the Dallas County Courthouse across the street.

It was from these windows that FBI agents, as long ago as October 1963, watched as Sheriff Clark's deputies beat and arrested two Negroes for taking food and water to friends who had been standing all day in line in the vain hope of registering to vote.

And from these windows, beginning January 18, 1965, observers from the United States Department of Justice witnessed the blatant, triumphant and brutal violation of the constitutional rights of some 3,000 Selma Negroes who were cursed, beaten, spit upon, kicked and arrested by officials of Dallas County, Alabama. Their "crime" was their pitiful attempt to gain the franchise to vote.

The laws of the United States of America give power

to federal officers to make immediate arrests when, in their presence, a person's right to vote is abridged or a person seeking to fulfill that right is intimidated.

Yet, despite the bloody view from the Federal Building in Selma, no arrests were made. Instead, the federal representatives remained in the strict role of observers,—watching, taking notes, transmitting horror stories to Washington—remaining in the background just like the observers of a "friendly foreign power" should in a country that is experiencing serious internal strife.

In terms of direct intervention by Washington, Selma might just as well have been Switzerland. The Negroes who were being beaten and kicked for trying to vote asked only that Washington act in Selma as it had acted in Saigon. After all, they said, Selma was closer to home.

But Washington remained distant. A few more observers were sent to Selma, work was begun on a new Civil Rights Bill and Attorney General Nicholas deB. Katzenbach explained to a *New York Times* reporter

why the government could not send a platoon of Federal Marshals to Selma: This would be possible, Katzenbach said, only if Washington had "three or four days notice" of what was going to happen and assurance that the Marshals would be needed for "not longer than seven or eight days." It is not recorded whether Mr. Katzenbach subsequently requested Sheriff Clark and Colonel Lingo, as Southern gentlemen, to do the honorable thing and inform Washington four days in advance the next time they planned to gas and beat Negroes.

Katzenbach also said that he "hoped and prayed" the Washington government would not have to grant the urgent requests from the Union forces to send federal troops into Selma. Sending troops, Katzenbach said, was a "very serious step." He said the primary job of law enforcement "rests and should rest with the local authorities." Local authorities like Sheriff Jim Clark and Colonel Al Lingo.

When the Union cause was abandoned in the South toward the end of Reconstruction, the Confederacy was left free to have "local authorities" regulate Negroes as they saw fit, regardless of the law of the rest of the land. That law, administered by Southern officials, becomes something entirely different in Albany, Georgia than it is in Albany, New York.

But the Attorney General, unlike his predecessor Robert Kennedy, did not deny that the Federal Government had sufficient powers to intervene to protect the life and limb and American citizenship rights of Negroes in Confederate States. Katzenbach came right out and said the government had the powers, all right. But he said it didn't want to use them.

Meanwhile, President Johnson was busy running the war 5000 miles away and didn't hear the battle cries at home. Only after *Bloody Sunday*, March 7, did the fact that the South was at war again assume a measure of reality for him.

The fifth—and in many ways, the most significant of the Battles of Selma—was the campaign that was waged to align the "Shadow Brigade"—the might of the "friendly foreign power" in Washington—on the Union side.

It was a battle that was fought on many fronts.

## The Selma Front

THE MAIN FRONT, OF COURSE, WAS SELMA. The Union forces there knew exactly what they were doing: they were creating a crisis; they were capturing the imagination of the country; they were reviving the sagging momentum of the civil rights movement. But most of all, they were asking Washington to act.

The plaintive requests for action—for legislation, for

troops to break up the conspiracy against freedom maintained in the Confederacy—came out of Selma in many ways: from the diminutive nun, her habit crowned with a makeshift cellophane rain bonnet, who kicked up her sensible black walking shoes in a demure gesture of defiance as she chanted "We want freedom, we want freedom," from the enthusiastic Negro *jeunesse*, who stood in the rain for three days and two nights serenading the Confederate forces; from the elderly rabbi who stared in disbelief at the block-upon-block of Alabama police cars massed at Sylvan Street saying over and over to himself, like a cantor in the Synagogue, "Insane, insane . . ."; from Cager Lee, the 82-year-old grandfather of the murdered Jimmy Lee Jackson, who walked in the front line with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the Great March to Montgomery, and said "Yes, it was worth the boy's dyin'"; from Mrs. James Reeb, who stood bravely in front of a battery of microphones in the Birmingham hospital where her husband had died and told the Southern reporters that the cause of equality was so important, that if her husband had to die for it, she accepted his death.

## The Altar Front

THE FIFTH BATTLE OF SELMA was fought also from the pews and pulpits of the nation. Not all clergymen came to Selma, but there were few in those black days of shock and crisis after *Bloody Sunday* who did not talk about it. Many of the ministers and priests and rabbis who went to Alabama found themselves surprised at their own militancy. Even more surprising, perhaps, was the very tough talk in the sermons and statements of clerics across the country. They thought Selma was inexcusable. They thought the Federal Government should be doing something about it. They said so. The prayers and the petitions, for the most part, weren't directed against Governor Wallace. They were directed to Lyndon Johnson. They demanded action.

One of the gentlest of the Negro leaders in Washington, a holy man, gave a measure of the new militance when he said grimly, upon hearing that the Rev. Reeb had died: "If the President and the Attorney General had done what we asked them to and sent marshals to Selma on Monday, Jim Reeb would have been walking safe on the highway to Montgomery. I can't help saying it, they're partly responsible for his death. Not just Wallace."

Two ministerial delegations arrived at President Johnson's oval office to demand that troops be sent to Alabama. They were blunt in their questioning and scornful of many of the President's answers. Johnson, shocked by their militance, took to reading them passages from his old civil rights speeches to show he really

## The South at War

was on the Negroes' side. The clergymen went away openly dissatisfied.

Young ministers and priests were outspokenly skeptical of Johnson's new voting bill. They questioned the willingness of the Administration to face down, with force if necessary, the "wicked exercise of fascist power" in Alabama, in enforcing the bill. One minister made the analogy to last year's Civil Rights Bill: "The new Civil Rights Law lets a black man get a room in a motel—so he can lie awake all night and wonder when the bomb is going off."

Clergymen who had been to Selma returned to their pulpits to tell their fascinated congregations bleak stories of brutality—and inspiring tales of human dedication. Through all the sermons and the prayers ran one constant theme: brave people are bearing witness, why isn't the government doing what is necessary to protect them? Administration officials, visited by irate clerics, found themselves on the defensive. And President Johnson, for the first time, found himself under attack from the pulpits. Typical was the comment of Dr. Duncan Howlett of All Souls Unitarian Church in Washington, D.C., a church where the Rev. Reeb was once assigned. Dr. Howlett blasted Johnson for meeting with Confederate President Wallace. Johnson might just as well spend his time receiving "a delegation from the Communist Party," the minister said.

## The Street Front

IN HIS THIRD FLOOR OFFICE in the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters' headquarters in Harlem, Bayard Rustin turned thumbs down on the idea of a second "March on Washington," in protest over Selma. "If I've learned anything," the organizer of the historic Washington march said, "I've learned that you don't repeat yourself." He said this with the particular poignancy of a man who had staged an enormously successful school boycott in New York City one year, then followed it with a complete flop the next.

The place for a Selma protest march, Rustin said, was Harlem. The Negro leaders in the room agreed and proceeded to plan a Sunday afternoon demonstration that brought 15,000 people out into the Harlem streets.

They picked wordings for signs: "We Demand Federal Registrars"; "We Demand Federal Marshals"; "Let Black Men March in Selma." (The word "Negro," Rustin said, can get you into trouble in Harlem; you've got to say black man.) Someone suggested a sign that said: "Back King in Selma." Rustin anticipated protests over that: "Now I know that some of you are going

to point out that SNCC was in Selma long before King was, but we ought to realize the situation and realize the importance of keeping Martin's name up on top." Nobody said anything. The sign stayed.

Rustin's secretary came into the room. She reported, in icy tones, that President Johnson had sent yellow roses to the Birmingham hospital bedside of the dying Rev. Reeb. "Flowers instead of marshals, that's what they give us. That's really big of him," she said.

A Negro leader nodded. "It couldn't have been worse with Goldwater. At least, not much worse," he said.

Rustin himself, speaking on Sunday during the mass march in Harlem, expressed the impatience and criticism that was being directed toward the White House from similar rallies all over the country.

"Oh President Johnson, don't make us black folks any more angry, please," he said, in measured tones.

And across the nation, from Casper, Wyoming, the birthplace of the Reverend James Reeb, to Philadelphia's Independence Hall, the birthplace of the nation, vigils and protests, marches and mass meetings, were being held, day and night—an unprecedented national burst of empathy with the beleaguered Union forces in Selma. Demonstrators walked in fountains in San Francisco, fasted for 30 hours in Albuquerque and marched 50 miles in sub-freezing weather in Wisconsin.

In San Mateo, California, the 19-year-old son of a Jewish couple who had escaped the ovens of Germany during the Second World War, left a note for his parents explaining why he had to go to Selma:

"Dear Mom and Dad:

"Why must I go? I feel it necessary to explain—to you—to you who must bear the burden.

"If I were to dedicate my life to anything—it would be that no man would ever have to suffer these tortures of lesser ones. No, they aren't killing 6,000,000 in Selma—but if they kill six is it any less of an indictment? Is it more excusable?

"If Joe Brown is told he is inferior and his rights denied him, are we any less guilty for closing our eyes? I think not.

"I cannot allow the world to forget your parents—it is this I dedicate myself to. Let each man stand with his head high and then let us talk of a 'Great Society.'

"Why Selma? It is time the President moves. We've had enough stalls—enough evasion.

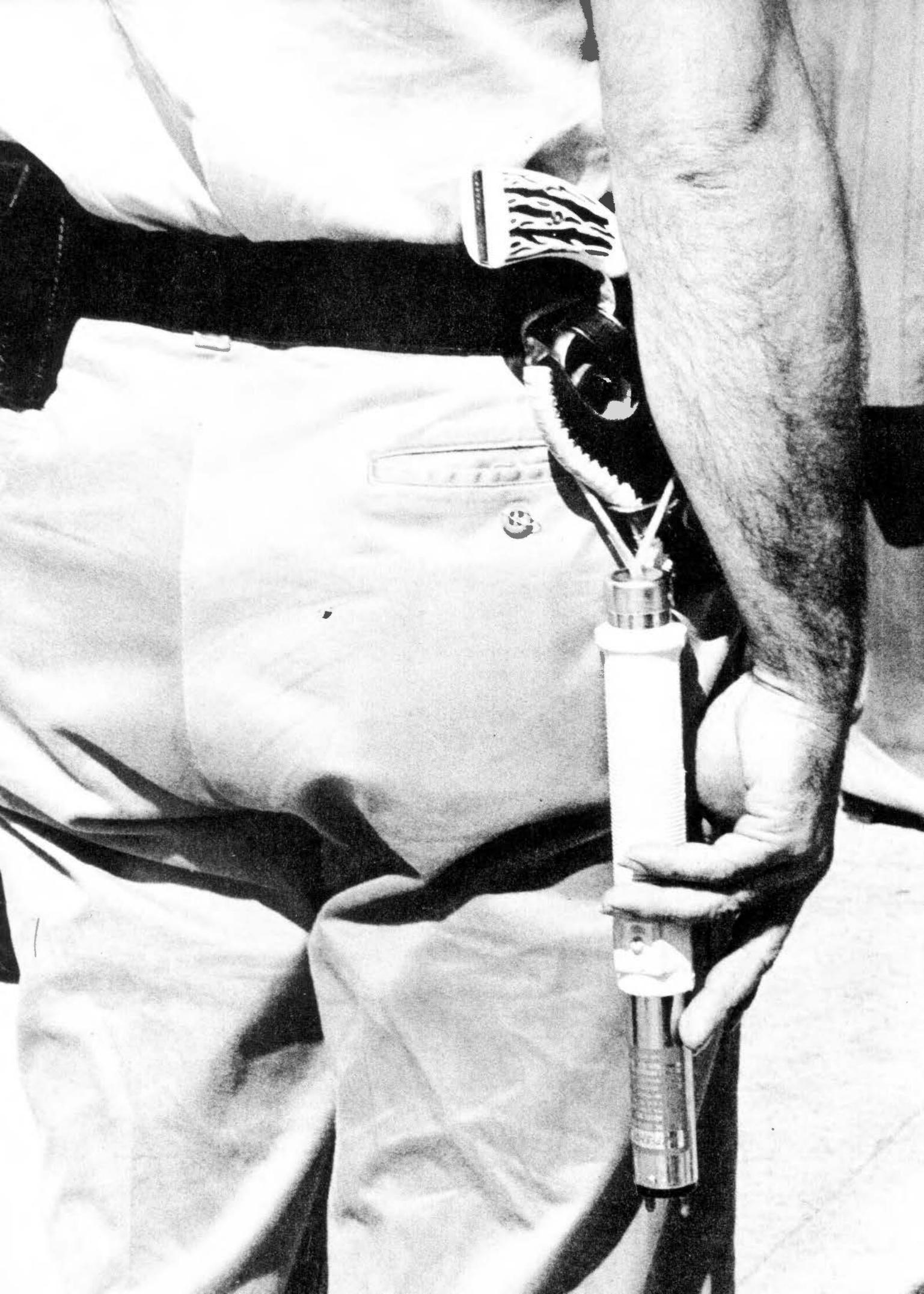
"The time has come for man to stand and be proud. Now! 1965. Not 1990!

"Now! Selma is the start of making 1965 that year. If it does not start successfully—it will fail. If we fail—then we will all bear the shame.

"Whatever I can do to help—I will. Make an attempt not to worry. Remember I am doing what I must do!

"Please, try to understand.

With all of my love  
Your son—David Landsberg."



## The International Front

THE BATTERY OF WAR CORRESPONDENTS who sat in Selma's majestic Albert Hotel and dispatched millions of words about the South at War opened a front that the Confederates hadn't counted upon. Their reports angered the conscience of the nation—and of the world.

There was sympathy abroad for the Confederate cause during the Civil War one hundred years ago. But the war waged by the South in 1965—the war against the Negro—provoked different reactions, reactions that Washington took note of:

*From Rome*—"The plague of intolerance toward Negroes continues to be the central most difficult problem in democratic America, something which is a bad example . . . for other countries. Intolerance infects most sectors of white America and makes ex-colonial peoples mistrust Washington's policies, with the result that they turn to Communist powers whose oppressive methods are protected by silence. America will only be the moral as well as political leader of the free world when its 20 million Negro citizens have the same rights as whites . . . rights now being fought for in Selma, Alabama."

*From Rio*—Everyone agrees that the United States is giving itself a terrible reputation with underdeveloped countries.

Johnson is showing, by his recent statements concerning sit-ins at the White House, that he is more interested in the Negro vote than in the Negro problem.

Rio's daily "journal do Brasil," usually pro-American, was exasperated with the events in Selma. They published a front page picture of a Negro being beaten and dragged across a Selma street by the jacket. The newspaper commented: "It always ends the same way."

*From Cambodia*—Ramparts' correspondent Robert Scheer found an ironic reaction: This country is so worried and preoccupied with events in Vietnam, it has no time for expressions of concern over the war in Selma. United States forces in Alabama cannot divert her attention from the United States military adventure in Southeast Asia.

*From London*—First reaction in Britain towards the news of violence in Alabama was one of anger. This was expressed in a *Manchester Guardian* leader drawing attention to the supreme brutality of club and truncheon and asking whether the ability of the Negroes to refrain from violence can last much longer. The "Guardian" criticised America's use of "tools of the jungle" against peaceful marchers.

Union forces again march  
on Montgomery.



## The Washington Front

ONE OF THE YOUNG SNCC WORKERS who saw the President on the Saturday following *Bloody Sunday* had the audacity to rebuke Johnson for worrying over the sleep that Luci and Lynda had lost during the unprecedented civil rights demonstrations at the White House.

"A lot of people in Selma didn't sleep last night, either," the SNCC worker said, "and your daughters can just stay awake until the troopers stop beating us up in Selma."

This shocked Lyndon Johnson. But it was just one in a series of shocks in a week when the President learned that he is going to have an extremely difficult time arriving at a government by consensus if some of the people contributing to that consensus are racists and white supremists.

Lyndon Johnson, the master manipulator, had made perhaps the greatest political miscalculation of his political life: he underestimated the speed and intensity of the nation's reaction to Selma.

People were horrified. They were grieved. They were angry. They sought a cartharsis. They looked to the White House—but they found nothing. No call for a day of contrition and mourning, no statement of outrage, no personal presence in Selma, no symbolic arrest of Sheriff Clark or Colonel Lingo. Nothing, but an announcement that there would be a new voting rights act as soon as the lawyers could finish drafting it. Wait calmly, please.

This cold reaction, mixed with the hot feelings about Selma, caused a storm over the capital. The White House had its first sit-ins. Pickets marched up and down Pennsylvania Avenue. The capital was in a ferment.

Slowly, cautiously, the "friendly foreign power" in Washington began to exercise the powers of its omnipresent Shadow Brigade. Alabama was, after all, within its sphere of influence.

At the Justice Department, where demonstrators were sitting-in in the hallways, Attorney General Katzenbach borrowed an enlarged map of Alabama from the Agriculture Department and spread it out on his red carpet. John Doar, who has the civil rights desk at the Justice Department, was in Selma and kept his boss posted on developments by two "hot" lines that fed into an office squawk box. Leroy Collins, a man the administration can trust to slow things down when it is desirable, was dispatched to Selma as Johnson's Ambassador to the Union forces. (The Civil Rights Commission, which conceivably could become spokesman for the Civil Rights Movement, as the Commerce Department is for business, is not trusted by the Administration.) Justice Department attorneys were dispatched to plead the Union case for the right to march the 50 miles to Montgomery, in federal court.



## The South at War

The Washington government responded, in a half-way fashion, to the impassioned request for troops. Johnson put some 700 soldiers on alert in the early morning shortly after the Rev. Reeb was fatally clubbed in Selma—but it was too late to save the minister. The troops were never sent. And Johnson, after a Summit Meeting with the petulant Confederate President George Wallace, nationalized the 1,863 Alabama National Guardsmen and sent them—along with 1,000 U.S. Army troops, 100 FBI men and 100 federal marshals (the marshals had four days notice, this time)—to guard the Great March to Montgomery, finally made by the Union forces.

This United States intervention followed a pattern of clumsy moves by the "friendly foreign power," which only served to aggravate conditions. On Tuesday, when Collins bargained with the Confederates for the stand-off at the bridge, presumably to help Union President Martin Luther King, King ended up with a damaged reputation and split forces. On Wednesday, Collins worked late into the evening at Brown's Chapel parsonage and effected an agreement with Selma officials, which would have allowed Union forces to march to the Courthouse. But Mayor Smitherman balked—then tore up the script.

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President Johnson, the great legislator, sees a law—his voting bill—as the answer to the pickets and the demonstrators who have been disturbing the domestic tranquillity of the 'Great Society.' The voting law is strong, and if enforced could be effective, but it is only offering the Negroes what they were tendered 100 years ago but never really received.

The lesson of the Battle of Selma is that laws alone, will not "get the Negroes out of the streets." In 1963 Negroes went into the streets over public accommodations and President Kennedy thought a public accommodations law would get them out. Instead, Negroes in Selma went back into the streets over voting rights. Now President Johnson thinks a voting rights law will get them out. But next the Negroes will go into the streets over jobs. And housing. And getting the schools *really* integrated.

That is the strategic lesson of the Battle of Selma. The Union forces don't want limited victories; they want unconditional surrender: they want *all* their rights.

Until the Federal Government understands this, and assumes the leadership to give Negroes their full rights of citizenship, there will be more Selmas.

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## THE SOUTH AT WAR: A RAMPARTS SPECIAL REPORT

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