

## THE MONTGOMERY SITUATION

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Local and State officials and newspapers have made a great show of indignation over the references to Alabama in a full page ad that appeared in the New York Times March 29, 1960. The advertisement was placed by the Committee To Defend Martin Luther King Jr. and The Southern Struggle for Freedom in the South and was signed by such nationally known figures as Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Harry Emerson Fosdick and Roy Wilkins.

In the fumes of indignation, about the only specific inaccuracies that the officials and newspapers cite were in this paragraph from the ad:

In Montgomery, Alabama, after students sang "My Country 'Tis Of Thee" on the State Capitol steps, their leaders were expelled from school, and truck loads of police armed with shotguns and tear-gas ringed the Alabama State College Campus. When the entire student body protested to state authorities by refusing to re-register, their dining hall was padlocked in an attempt to starve them into submission.

The Montgomery Advertiser (April 7) terms this "Lies, lies, lies..."

Factually, there are two inaccuracies in the excerpt from the ad quoted above: First, there is little that the "entire student body" at the college ever does though the majority of the students did engage in various protests and many of them for a few days refused to register for the new quarter that was beginning at the time. The college dining hall was never padlocked though at the beginning of the new quarter, meal tickets were denied to students who had not registered. This was not the usual practice and obviously was intended as pressure. Fellow students brought food to hungry ones in the dormitories and others were provided for by friends in the city. Some of the Negro churches took up collection for students who needed food and for those who were expelled from the college.

The slight mistakes of the ad do not in any degree exaggerate the atmosphere of intimidation and humiliation that has enveloped the students and faculty of Alabama State College and the Negro community at Montgomery since February 25, when some

thirty-five young men from the college quietly entered the lunchroom of the new Montgomery County Courthouse and politely asked to be served. Since no law was broken, nobody was arrested.

When the news reached the Governor of the State, according to the leading front page story of The Montgomery Advertiser the next morning, he telephoned Dr. H. C. Trenholm, the college President, demanding that he expell the students involved; warning if the college did not do so, he would call upon the State Board of Education to take such action. A little later that same day, the Governor "summoned" President Trenholm to his office and "threatened to cut off State funds to the college unless immediate action" was taken. Governor Patterson said further to Trenholm: "The citizens of this state do not intend to spend their tax money to educate law violators and race agitators and if you do not put a stop to it, you might well find yourself out of public school funds."

In response to the Governor's orders, President Trenholm was quoted as saying, "I have no alternative but to comply." Thus a Negro leader as college president for 35 years, was reduced to a cipher and was ordered about as a hired hand.

Both the city's Mayor and Police Commissioner rushed forward with angry statements. Commissioner L. B. Sullivan, red-faced, eyes blazing and mis-pronouncing the word Negro, declared over TV:

We do not intend to permit outside forces to create, provoke or otherwise incite any racial incident here in our city.

The Montgomery Police Department is under instruction to enforce existing laws and to take whatever action that is necessary to suppress agitation and prevent violence....

... I want to assure the citizens of Montgomery that we are prepared to take whatever actions that might be necessary to maintain and preserve the time-honored traditions and customs of the South. (Montgomery Advertiser, February 26/ hereafter cited as M.A.).

The Mayor's statement, since he was out of town, was read for him over radio and TV and printed in the newspapers, no one apparently noticing or bothering to correct

his verbal error:

I wholeheartedly endorse Governor Patterson's stand that College President Trenholm investigate the incident and expel any of the college students involved.

We shall make every attempt to maintain law and order in Montgomery but I feel that I must warn the Negro people of this community that the tempers of the white citizenry of our city is sic/being pushed beyond their power to control. (M.A., February 26).

In response to the words of the Governor, Mayor and Police Commissioner, the Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy, President of the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), charged that, "Certain statements by public officials that were made over TV and radio, and reported in the press, could be easily interpreted by lawless elements as an invitation to violence. Public officials, whose sworn duty it is to maintain order impartially, cannot afford to give the fringe element a green light to take the law into its own hands." (MIA press release). Likewise, the students, under the leadership of Bernard Lee, issued a press release (M.A., February 26) explaining that they were law-abiding, non-violent and that "we only wish to gain our rights as guaranteed us by the Federal Constitution and the Bill of Rights. All we did was request some food service in a public building which was built by the taxpayers' money."

Almost immediately, the college campus became a target for police action. Policemen on their motorcycles, riding two abreast, and in their prowl cars, continuously rode through the campus--night and day--making noisy gestures of intimidation with their motors and cut outs. They stationed themselves on the streets leading to the college and began handing out tickets to faculty members and other passing motorists, calling everyone by his given name and making vulgar and profane remarks. Some of the traffic violations were imaginary; most of them were minor. For the first time in history, traffic tickets were given to students for jay-walking at the street corner entrance to the campus. In all parts of the city, Negro citizens were harassed and insulted, their automobiles searched and any Negro out in the late hours of the evening was almost certain to be stopped, questioned rudely, frisked and

possibly arrested.

The college students continued their anti-jim crow campaign. On Friday, February 26, for the second day, they visited the courthouse. The target this time, and not announced, was the courtroom where a fellow student was on trial. Several hundred students lined up and marched from the campus to town and filled the courtroom (others remaining outside). When the trial was over, they marched back to the campus in such good order that only one student could be arrested for jay-walking against the traffic light (Alabama Journal, February 26,/ hereafter cited as A.J.). The student on trial had attempted to register as a voter. When he came to the question on his application form: "Have you previously applied and been denied registration as a voter?" he was confused as to the correct answer. He knew that he had previously applied but did not know that his application had been turned down since he had not heard at all from the registration board. Accordingly, he answered, "no". For this, he was convicted of "attempted perjury."

The rumor spread through the city that on Saturday, February 27, the students would visit the downtown lunch-counters of the five and ten cent stores. Abernathy's prediction, about the response of the lawless elements, seemed to be coming true, for white men, singly and in groups, patrolled the downtown area armed with midget baseball bats. Photographs of these men appeared in the Sunday morning paper, February 28, including one priceless picture of one of the men in the very act of swinging his bat to the back of the head of a Negro woman who was having a scuffle with another white man. Even though the cut line under the picture identified the bat wielder by name, he was not arrested at the time or later. The photographer and a newsman insisted that police were near the scene of the incident and that the crash of the bat against the skull of the woman could be heard for half a block. Indignant editorials and letters to the editors appeared in the daily papers; still, blame was placed on

the Negroes for starting things in the first place (see for example, M.A., MARCH 1). In the course of a long editorial on March 2, the Advertiser in criticizing the anger of the Police Commissioner over the publication of the picture of the man hitting the woman from behind with the bat, said: "Sullivan's problem is not a photographer with a camera in his hand. Sullivan's problem is a white man with a baseball bat in his hand."

The Rev. Fred L. Shuttlesworth, an alumnus of Alabama State College and leader of the integration movement in Birmingham, characterized Governor Patterson's order to expell the students as "totalitarian in spirit." (A.J., Feb. 26). The student leaders in a press statement echoed the same sentiment, saying: "We deeply resent the humilisting treatment to which the Governor has subjected the President of our College."

By Monday, February 29, public stories softened the Governor's directives to Dr. Trenholm, saying now that what the Governor had said to the college president was "in the nature of advice" and that he only meant that the "ring-leaders" should be punished. He denied that he had threatened to cut off funds to the institution. He went on to praise "Montgomery authorities... for the manner in which they handled themselves" and white citizens for their "tolerance and restraint." The Governor refused to comment on the bat-carrying men, saying "that was a matter for city officials" (A.J., February 29).

On Tuesday, March 1, about a thousand of the students (over half of the student body) marched to the steps of the State Capitol. It was Mardi Gras Day, which strangely is a legal holiday in Protestant Montgomery that has none of the pre-Mardi Gras carnival spirit of New Orleans or Mobile. Near the spot where the statue of Jefferson Davis stands, one of the coeds sang "The Lords' Prayer" which was followed by the singing of the "Star Spangled Banner" by the whole group. They subsequently, marched back to the campus for a brief rally where they chanted: "Can't go to Bama, we go to Auburn." Translated this meant that if the students were expelled from the



all-Negro Alabama State College they would enroll at one of the all-white institutions, such as Auburn University. The newspaper accounts mentioned the orderliness and discipline of the students' actions. State's Attorney General, MacDonald Gallion, termed the march of the students to the Capitol as "highly dangerous and inflammatory," making no comment on the right of the students to assemble and demonstrate peaceably.

The MIA sought without success to discuss the local racial situation with the City Commission.

On Wednesday March 2, the State Board of Education, on the Governor's motion, ordered the expulsion of nine of the Alabama State Students who had been involved in the courthouse-lunch counter incident of February 25. Twenty others were placed on probation. None of them was given a hearing. President Trenholm's recommendation to the Board, that no student be expelled but all should be placed on probation, was brushed aside. (M.A., March 3).

The students in a mass meeting that night, voted to remain away from classes until the nine who had been "kicked out" should be re-instated. The Rev. Mr. Abernathy of the MIA termed the Governor's orders: "one of the greatest blunders in the history of education in Alabama."

The MIA pledged support to the students and condemned the police department, its Commissioner and Chief "for permitting white men with bats to patrol the streets without being arrested"; also urging that a bi-racial committee be set up "to curb violence and solve the many problems between the races." (M.A., March 3).

The American Veterans Committee asked U.S. Attorney General William P. Rogers to look into the Montgomery situation.

In an editorial on March 3, the Montgomery Advertiser referred to the students who had voted to strike as "rash, misled young Negroes" and attacked the nine students who had been expelled as "joining with white thugs to menace the public safety

in Montgomery." The Alabama Journal called the students "misguided," "puerile," "reckless" and "childish"; continuing then, to its usual attack upon the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy as the instigators and guides of the protest.

The beginning of the students' boycott fell on the first day of the winter quarter's examinations. After much pleading and reconsideration, they voted to suspend the strike until the exams were concluded, resolving instead, not to complete their registration for the ensuing quarter until further notice came from their leaders. As part of the pressure to "persuade" the students to complete their registration, the college abandoned its usual practice of permitting everyone to continue to eat during the first week of the new quarter, which was known as the "week of grace". Accordingly, the college issued temporary meal tickets that were given only to those students who had begun the process of registration and who would pick up them that Saturday, March 12, the first day after the Winter Quarter ended. All students who did not pick up their meal tickets-- because of their loyalty to the boycott or because they were off campus that day or found it inconvenient to stand in the slow-moving line most of the day-- just did not get any meal ticket at all until the permanent meal books were issued about three weeks later. This meant that approximately 300 students were excluded from the dining hall for this period and had to feed themselves. College administrative officers appeared to be particularly indifferent to students even when they had their receipts in hands but had applied for their temporary meal tickets after the designated date for the ticket pick-ups.

The college also insisted upon a technicality, that may had been upon the books for some time but no one could remember when it had ever been enforced before: that is, requiring a "credential" sheet before permitting the registering student to pay his bill. Again the slow processes of the college and frequently the mis-information given out by the clerks caused some students to mis getting under the wire.

On Friday night, March 4 at one of the numerous student mass meetings, the Rev. Mr. Abernathy announced that the congregations of Negro churches would march to the capitol steps at 1:30 p.m. Sunday for a prayer meeting (M.A., March 5). The next afternoon, Commissioner Sullivan countered this, stating: "In view of the situation that exists in Montgomery, if the Negroes persist in flaunting their arrogance and defiance by congregating at the Capitol Sunday, the police will... take whatever action that might be necessary to disperse them." (M.A.-J., Mar. 6).

The Negroes did not cancel their plans. State, County and City Police were out in force long before the appointed hour for the prayer service. Negroes were not permitted to assemble on the capitol grounds but whites were. Thus, the former would have to oust the latter if the original plans were to be followed. Accordingly, the Negroes first assembled in the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, which is adjacent to the capitol grounds and then made their move to march across the streets. They were lead by Father Robert E. DuBose and the Rev. Mr. Abernathy. The Negro marchers were met by a police cordon in the center of the street and pushed back on the sidewalk and steps of the Dexter church. Meanwhile, fire ~~trucks~~ were driven up and their hoses (but no water) were turned toward the Negroes to hold them back.

When the white crowd attempted at this point to break after the Negroes, the police held fast and pushed the white crowd back. This act of impartial protection served as the rallying point for most elements in the white community. The State, County and City officials, editors, writers of letters to papers--all praised the police for maintaining law and order though in fact, the Negroes had been prevented from having their meeting on the capitol grounds and only by sheer determination had carried out their exercises on the steps and sidewalks of the church. Previously, Negroes as well as whites had held Sunday mass meetings on the capitol grounds. For Easter, 1958, ex-Governor Folsom had his state troopers present in order to protect those who had assembled there from would-be molesters.



Numerous eye-witnesses attest to the use of police power to break the Negro demonstration and that there were many cars filled with whites and which bore license tags from various counties of the state --and a few from out of the state. There was a large number of whites (But No Negroes) who were deputized and some others who were apparently self-deputized. As one letter to the editor put it: "there were carloads of people from Jefferson, Tuscaloosa, Tallapoosa, Lee and Elmore counties and they were not there for their health." (M.A., March 9).

Thus an identity of interest of the law enforcing agencies and the white crowd was realized and further suggested in the plea of the chief law officer that "we do not need your help."

While city, state, and county officials congratulated each other, white persons and civic organizations did likewise. The Negroes were condemned. One headline read: "MAYOR JAMES FLAYS AGITATORS."

On March 8, the Montgomery Advertiser had two editorials on the great Sunday affair. In one of these it had the principal facts wrong and on the basis of these errors ridiculed the Rev. Mr. Abernathy for inviting State Safety Director, Floyd Mann, to the pulpit so that he could tell the frightened Negroes how to slip out of the church and get home. The truth is, Mann's conversation was not with Abernathy, but with Father DuBose and came on Mann's initiative. DuBose did not invite him to take the pulpit, but to come to the front of the church if he had anything to say to people there. He declined this invitation, choosing instead to pass on his suggestion to Father DuBose that the people should leave the church in small groups rather than in one big march.

The other Advertiser editorial was fulsome in its compliments to "Police Commissioner Sullivan, Sheriff Mac Butler, Public Safety Director Mann."

The articulate white community now was re-united. The split over the bat-men was now closed. The power of the law enforcing agencies and the press could be

concentrated on the students, who would increasingly get a bad press. The state, county and municipal police would be mobilized fully. The white mob, all agreed, "would not be needed."

Monday, March 7, began the student boycott of registration and classes. The situation may be confusing to outsiders in that pre-registration takes place during the previous quarter and many students were already at some point in the labyrinthine process. However, it was clear that a large number of students were not in any hurry to get back in school. On the other hand, the administration, understandably, was attempting to force the defiant and reluctant undergraduates by warnings and pressures of various kinds. The majority of the students appeared to be listening more to the expelled students leaders than they were to the administrative authorities.

On Tuesday morning, March 8, the students made another move. They began to march about the campus with placards, prior to marching off to one of their mass meetings at a church about three blocks from the campus. The superintendent of buildings and grounds at the college, with the support of one of the campus guards who fired into the air, forcibly stopped the campus parade. Only the dedication of the students to non-violence save the superintendent from being manhandled. When he pushed one of the coeds it was difficult to restrain some of the young men. Finally, the superintendent said: "if you want to demonstrate, get off the campus, go over there, across the street." After a few moments of consultation among themselves, this was what the students did, deciding to march on with their signs to their meeting. Meanwhile, the police had been called (it is thought by the superintendent).

Accordingly, no sooner were those in the forefront of the parade a half block from the campus when they were intercepted by police, who blocked off the leaders with with the placards from their followers. As the fifty-odd young men and women

stood, quietly obeying the orders of the police to move back from the sidewalks, etc., one robust officer, in his shirt-sleeves, raised his club at the students and said: "I want the meanest nigger in the crowd to step out." He repeated it. Suppose someone had taken up this insulting challenge?

In a few moments the whole block was filled with state, country and city police. They came in squad cars, official cars, on motorcycles and brought along special equipment. Some were armed with carbines, sub-machine guns, cans of ter gas and two with drawn rifles. The city police, of course, had their regular clubs and pistols. A passing stranger who might had come upon this scene would have assumed that the nation's "public enemy number 1" had at last been cornered. Had the criminal element of the area been more alert, it could have very easily robbed the banks in the downtown area, for the full force of the law was directed toward a few college students who were carrying banners that read: "1960 not 1860," "9 down, 2,000 to go" and the like.

After a while, the patrol wagon, known as the "Black Maria" rolled up. The male students were frisked, called a few names and loaded up. The placards were loaded too. Then a policeman called out, "Five of you nigger gals git in here," pointing to the back seat of one of the police cars. A woman teacher at the college, standing nearby, said to the girls: "Don't all of you pile up on top of each other. Let them get another car for you." She was promptly arrested.

While the arrests were being made, the campus superintendent who was quite chummy with the police, took the loud speaker and spoke to the students, some of whom had been stopped as they were following their leaders. He said: "You know you have done wrong; broken the law, get back on the campus." The police were there to enforce his order and the students retired just across the street to the school grounds, remaining in numbers—the whole student body being out by now.

The police lined themselves up, shoulder to shoulder, across the street opposite the campus, occasionally darting after a student who, coming up from the city and not knowing what was going on might by chance go through "no man's land" between the State campus and the streets. One young man, who passed and happened to have a brief case, apparently walked too close to the police line. For this, he was accosted, termed "a smart nigger" and made to open his briefcase for searching.

Unfortunately, cameramen of the TV networks were not on hand to capture the scene of the might of Alabama Law pitted against the Students of the college. After a while, the collegians began to sing their song: "We Are Not Afraid."

After a half hour or so of this stalemate, the cops began to disperse, the students laughing or applauding the blue coats as they made some awkward move or their exit.

Who were the heroes of this encounter? The next morning's headlines read: "CITY POLICE ARREST NEGRO AGITATORS FOR DEMONSTRATION."

On Wednesday, the next day, the police were fully prepared for the larger student challenge that was expected.

The Law enforcing agencies augmented their strength by assembling in Oak Park, about 5 blocks from the campus, a small army of regular and deputy forces, including horses, trucks, and other equipment. This outfit was discovered by students and photographers. When the white newspapermen attempted to get a good look at this extraordinary force and take pictures of it, they were prevented from doing so. "Five cursing, club-bearing men from the group of about fifty" surrounded two cameramen and a reporter, roughed them up, threatened with pistols and snatched a camera out of the hands of one of the photographers. A police sergeant sat in a car nearby, indifferent to the pleas of the newspapermen for help. (A.J., March 9). Nevertheless, one picture

of the assemblage was made through the windshield of a car and did appear on page two of the A.J., March 9.

The Oak Park mobilization was made to appear ridiculous, for the students called off their scheduled demonstration for that day, either deliberately or because of the inclement weather.

One day later, the students put on their demonstration. This time they carved about the campus without interference from the Superintendent, who by now, was the most unpopular man at the college. The police, however, quickly came up and took their places across the street from the school, ready to intercept the demonstrators and their placards the moment they left State property and set foot in the city. The students would impishly march up to the very end of the campus as though they were going into the city street and then abruptly column right or column left, laughing at the police, who had braced themselves for the encounter. After an hour of this, everybody gave it up and some of the policemen began to see the humor of the situation.

Apparently, the continued demonstrations and the taunting defiance of the undergraduates was most annoying to those in power. The afternoon paper for March 10 read: "SULLIVAN REQUESTS CLOSING OF ASC." In response to this, the Gov. asked the State School Superintendent to ~~make~~ a "full investigation of the school, faculty and students." Apparently, the inquiry had already begun, for State investigators, for the past two days, had been moving in and out of offices on the campus; stopping and questioning students and taking pictures of them. These detectives attended all meetings--student or otherwise--even those that were held in churches off campus. The college administration never gave the faculty and students any explanation as to their rights and obligations with reference to the investigation. Some of the student leaders explained to their followers that they did not have to answer to the questions of every white Tom, Dick or Harry who came on the campus with a camera and a notebook.



Complaints against all this were not only heard on the campus but throughout the Negro community. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who had come back to the State in connection with his indictment on a charge of perjury in making out his State income-tax returns, wired President Eisenhower (March 9):

"A reign of terror has broken out in Montgomery, Alabama. Gestapo-like methods are being used by police and city authorities to intimidate Negroes who have been pursuing peaceful and nonviolent techniques to achieve their moral and constitutional rights. While students of Alabama State College were convened in an orderly protest on their campus, city officials and police launched an incredible assault, and infiltrated the college campus with police armed with rifles, shot guns, and tear gas. Yesterday they arrested more than thirty-five students, a faculty member, and a physician. Today, they had numerous trucks parked not far from the campus with the threat of arresting the entire student body.

"Police are parading in front of churches. They inhibit the holding of meetings and religious services. They have actually physically intruded themselves into these religious services. Yesterday, a bishop was conducting a church meeting when police invaded the meeting in a raid. Telephones are being tapped and telephone lines of Negro leaders are left disconnected so that they cannot make nor receive calls. This calculated and provocative conduct of the police backed by the municipal and state authorities leads inescapable to the conclusion that they are trying to incite a riot in the hope that the responsibility for the injuries and deaths that might result will be fastened on the Negroes.

"The Negro community and students cannot permit themselves to be intimidated. They will not turn away from their pursuit of justice. They must and will pursue their righteous and nonviolent course. Lest bloodshed stains the streets of America we ask that the American people through you be made aware of the brutal and flagrant violation of constitutional rights.

"Mr. President, we appeal to you to intervene by instructing the Attorney General to take immediate action in your name to restore law and order to the Capital of Ala. We are prepared to go with the Attorney General into the federal court for injunctive relief. We appeal to you to urge the city authorities to put down their guns, to garage their vehicles of aggression. We are unarmed and dedicated to nonviolence. Though determined to resist evil, we pray that no harm may come either to our people or to those who oppress us. Though it appears that the aggressors may unleash worse violence against us no matter how restrained our conduct, may God help us to maintain our endurance against provocations. We are conscious of the many pressing duties of your office, but we feel this terror which grips a whole community in an American city violating elementary constitutional rights requires immediate federal emergency action. Our concern for the honor of the nation which we love despite our suffering, impels us to make this public outcry and appeal for justice and human decency."

Martin Luther King, Jr., President  
Southern Christian Leadership Conf.

The Advertiser (March 11) buried at bottom of page two, the requests by Congressman Charles C. Diggs and Roy Wilkins that the federal government investigate the violation of civil rights in Montgomery. Diggs told Atty. General William P. Rogers that:

Local law enforcement agencies are helping to create an atmosphere of tyranny and terror through police-state methods... The objective of these agencies seems to be to prevent peaceful assembly of Negro students and other people interested in non-violent protest demonstrations against the denial of civil rights.

Wilkins said in a telegram to President Eisenhower that Montgomery Negroes "are suffering arbitrary deprivation of their rights in a climate of terror.... Freedom of speech, and assembly and of peaceful redress of grievances all have been ruthlessly suppressed by Alabama authorities from Gov. Patterson on down to local constables."

On Thursday night, March 10 at a mass meeting on the college campus into which the State investigators intruded, the students called off their boycott of registration and classes. The next morning, there was a rush to complete registration. It was now the administration's turn to show that it could drag its feet. Moreover, it insisted upon "credentials." Thus, some 200-odd students were not able to make it under the wire. This was most unusual because in normal times students were admitted to classes as late as a month after the registration period had closed.

On Friday, March 11, began the trials of the thirty-seven students and one teacher who had been arrested on the previous Tuesday. The public was barred from the small city courtroom.

At the trial, the students attorneys argued that the prosecution had to establish definite action on the part of each individual who was charged with violating the law. However, the court ruled that as long as it could be shown that the defendant was a member of a group that violated a law, he would be responsible for the violation. Under cross-examination it was argued that the police, even with the

notes and the photographs that they used in a side room to "refresh their memories" could not be sure as to which student said what or carried what particular placard. Keeping a straight face, some of the students corrected the policemen by saying: "no, I did not have that placard, but this one; no, I did not say 'Remember Jesus Christ, Mahama Ghandi and Martin Luther King' but I did say 'Who's president of ASC, Governor Patterson or Dr. Trenholm.'"

The decision of the court fell heavy upon the defendants. Aside from the two students who happened to be sitting on the front porch of the house in front of which the demonstrators were stopped, all were found guilty of both charges, disorderly conduct and refusing to obey an officer, given a lecture and fined two-hundred dollars and the costs of court. Since it was clear that the teacher who had been arrested was not a party to the demonstration, she was let off with a token find of ten dollars and her husband, who had been arrested when he appeared at the police headquarters to see about her, was fined one dollar.

Interestingly, the prosecution asserted that the police had told the students to "disperse" and when the students failed to do so then they were arrested. Observers wondered if the word "disperse" was in the vocabulary of the policeman who appeared in court. Eye-witnesses who were within twenty-five or thirty feet of the arresting scene, testified that they heard no policeman say "disperse" or its equivalent to the students; rather the cops simply stopped them, pushed them back to the sidewalks and when the Black Maria arrived, loaded them up. Moreover, when one of the witnesses testified that the police Captain in shirt sleeves, pointed his club at the students and said: "I want the meanest nigger in the crowd to step out," the captain, who was in court, seemed to nod his head as though he was saying "yes, I said it". Nobody challenged this. Nobody reprimanded the Captain. He was not reassigned, for a few days afterwards, he was moving about on the periphery of the campus as was before.

In a letter to the editor, a Mrs. R.L.C. asked: "who is to run the schools— education officials or misled, emotion-fired students?" The placards of the students raised the same question and inferred a different answer: "Patterson or Trenholm."

Throughout the city the complaints of harassment increased. A twenty-two year old Negro airman was accosted at a bus station one morning at 4:45 a.m. The Alabama Journal, giving the version of the police, reported that he was asked what he was doing there at that hour and replied, "none of your damn business," attacking the policeman, knocking his gun to the ground, grabbing it and firing it. Another officer came along and arrested the airman as he was in a booth telephoning. The next morning's paper added the significant line that after the airman had been booked, he resisted and had to be subdued (MA. ~~XX~~, March 10). Actually, the airman had to be hospitalized. At his trial, he testified that five policemen beat him and that another one said to him: "You're a luck nigger. They should had done more to you."

In the Alabama Journal, March 9, was a vicious attack upon Negro leadership, students and Alabama State College. It called for the dismissal of President Trenholm, charging him with sympathy for the "Negro student agitators" and called for his replacement by someone "who will make his students obey Alabama laws." This lengthy letter to the editor was signed by "John Q. Citizen" and was evidently put together by a well informed person.

A white professor of local Huntingdon College and a Negro man were arrested early one morning in the same car. The professor explained that he was taking the man home from a party at the professor's house where the Negro had served as a butler. Apparently, the police were unconvinced.

The Alabama Journal for March 16, printed a story that enrollment at ASC was down by 300. Most of these were students who failed to make the deadline after the student strike had been called off.



The general mobilization of forces to crush the student challenge continued. A staff writer for the Montgomery Advertiser reported, March 17, in a feature article that: "SELMA'S MOUNTED POSSE READY". In order to prevent there, "what happened in Montgomery", some fifty-two horsemen, re-inforced by twenty-five others on call and by five-hundred special deputies. The television news programs showed the mounted posse riding about the city.

The Alabama Journal of March 21, reported that: "EXPULSED ASC STUDENT CHARGED AS VAGRANT." This was Bernard Lee, who according to the news story, was arrested "while he was in a car with the wife of Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy." Moreover, Lee was a part-time worker in the cleaning and pressing business of his father-in-law and was just a few weeks out of school.

Others of the expelledes were constantly watched, followed where ever they went; often stopped and searched and occasionally arrested by the police. Two of them reported that the policemen would not only call them insulting names but would attempt to provoke them by kicking their heels or stepping on their feet or bumping and pushing them about.

Such physical harrassment was not confined to the college. The Negro community generally was under such pressure. For example, one evening Lawrence Johnson parked his car on a downtown street in front of a news-stand bookstore in order to pick up papers and magazines. When he came back ot the car, two policemen stopped him, searched him, made his wife get out of the car and serched it. One of the policemen told him that when a policeman stops you, you're suppose to take out your license and show it. Johnson answered that "you did'nt ask me for it." This irritated the officer who called Johnson "a smart nigger" and used other vulgar and profane expressions. Johnson pleaded with the officers: "to respect my wife wven if you don't respect me." One of them answered: "I don't respect any niggers."



On the night of April 11, the Rev. B. D. Lambert was having a Holy Week Service at the Maggie Street Baptist Church. Policemen came up and searched his and several other cars that were parked outside of the church, questioned persons who were leaving the services and after the Rev. Mr. Lambert started home he was stopped and both he and his wife questioned.

A professor of Sociology from Tuskegee, Dr. Lewis Wade Jones, visited Alabama State College. Near the campus, he was stopped by policemen, made to get out of his car while it was being searched. Meanwhile, one of the policemen commented continually. He asked Jones if he had any fire arms in the car, adding that he hoped nobody would be foolish to bring any guns in. He went on to say that when he was a student in school, whenever he was absent, he had to bring a written excuse. After the search was concluded, Dr. Jones felt that he ought to make some reply, so he ventured the mild observation that: "The purpose of a college is to teach." The policeman thundered back: "Teach what?—Communism!"

About this same time, a group of Negro women were having their club meeting at 1806 Cleveland Avenue. Just as the chaplain opened the meeting with prayer, a policeman, who had come up the steps on the porch, stuck his head in the door and took a slow look around at things and without saying a word to anybody, closed the door and left.

Several houses had been shot into, usually with BE guns.

A headline in the Alabama Journal, March 22, reported that "CITY ADOPTS 3 ORDINANCES TO KEEP PEACE" with the sub-lead: "Power To Curb Demonstrations Given Police." One of the new laws prohibited all demonstrations, parades, processions, etc. except funerals. The second law authorizes owner and managers of eating establishments to evict "trespassers". The third broadened the definition of disorderly conduct to cover almost every imaginable possibility of individual or group action that may be remotely interpreted as a breach of the peace.

While the city commission was working out the new laws, the students struck again and at a new target: several of them went down to the University of Alabama Center in Montgomery and applied for enrollment; four more came the next day and before the week out, a total of 13 had filed. At first the school authorities called the police but sent them away, perhaps confident that this new challenge could be disposed of without the brutal rawness of the scenes that the city had recently witnessed.

The Alabama Journal for March 23, announced that siren loudspeakers were placed on several of the city cars "to be used for crowd control in event of civil disturbances."

An editorial in the Alabama Journal for March 24, denounced Negro students and teachers, such as the ones at ASC and Tuskegee, and Negro preachers but praised "friendly," "upright" businessmen.

About this time, a phony, so-called Negro Organization, SANE (SENSIBLE APPROACH OF NEGRO EFFORTS), called for an investigation of ASC and implicitly asked for the firing of a teacher who was said to be a member of CORE (COMMITTEE ON RACIAL EQUALITY). Some observers felt that perhaps the same person who composed this statement had composed the "John Q. Citizen" letter.

The State Board of Education that met Friday, March 25, "demanded the firing of any faculty member of Alabama State College who encouraged student protests." This action was taken on the motion of the Governor who commented further that Dr. Trenholm "must straighten out the situation at Alabama State or the school board will find someone who can." The State Superintendent reported that his investigation had revealed "at least 11 member of the faculty have not been loyal to the school" and three of them "participated in the demonstration near the capitol Sunday afternoon, March 6." The Governor added that pamphlets (of CORE) instructing students in the conduct of sit-in demonstrations, had been distributed on the college campus. No-

body on the campus could be found who had seen any such pamphlets. The next morning's paper covered the same story under the double column lead: "STATE BOARD ORDER: TRENHOLM PLANS PURGE OF 'DISLOYAL' FACULTY."

About the same time, a hundred students who had not met the registration deadline of March 14, and had been still negotiating to remain at the college, were ordered from the campus. Their fellow students stage a one-day boycott of classes for this. However, the issue was not sharp since most of the 100 students had not been very active in the student protest movement.

On March 31, Professor R. D. Nesmith and ten of his students in Sociology from Macmurray College, Jacksonville, Illinois were visiting Montgomery as a part of their annual field trip.

As the students with their professor, his wife and their two and a half year old baby were chatting over a lunch of fried chicken with Rev. S. S. Seay, Executive Secretary of the MIA., Rev. E. B. Dubose, Episcopal Minister, Rev. Ed. King and several Negro college students. The Montgomery chief of Police, leading a dozen or more city policemen, plain clothes detectives and state policemen invaded the premises of the Negro restaurant and hauled the (20) diners down to the city jail. Mrs. Nesmith's baby was taken from her and handed over to a jail-house matron when the mother and father were locked up.

Immediately after the arrest, inspectors appeared at the restaurant and found that it was a health hazard and closed it down. A few days later, its liquor license was lifted. (A.J., April 9).

The next day when the defendants were brought to court, they had to face charges of disorderly conduct, "calculated to breach the peace".

Everybody was found guilty. Most of the whites were fined fifty dollars and costs while most of the Negroes one-hundred dollars. All of the convictions will be appealed. Some of the white students have declared that they would rather serve jail

sentences than pay a fine for doing what they consider within the rights of all American citizens.

The total lack of appreciation of an academic field trip was expressed by the Mayor who termed the visit of the group: "outside interference", advising the class to visit, instead, "Philadelphia, Detroit, New York or Chicago, where their efforts would be more fruitful."

During this period, the Union of South Africa was shooting down, beating up and arresting native Africans by the wholesale. Editorials in the Alabama Journal sided with the Government and white people of South Africa and criticizing the statements of Great Britain and the U.S. State Department as "butting in."

By this time, other national leaders were aroused about conditons in Montgomery. For example, Walter P. Ruether, well known labor leader, requested President Eisenhower "to instruct the attorney general to take immediate action in your name to restore law and order in Montgomery, Alabama." (M.A.-J., Mar. 13). N.A.A.C.P. Roy Wilkins again wired President Eisenhower, asking him to step in to save Negro citizens from abuse and mistreatment. (M.A., March 14). On April 13, the Montgomery County [white] Citizens Council held a "SALUTE TO LAW AND ORDER" in which the police commissioner's other high officers were honored. On the other hand, the Alabama Journal had almost daily, most extreme and personal editorial quips on Dr. Martin Luther King and Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy.

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