

Inter-Citizens Committee, Report on Birmingham

Birmingham, Alabama, 1963.

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INTER-CITIZENS COMMITTEE, INC.
BOX 1443
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA
REPORT ON BIRMINGHAM

SEPT. 20, 1963

DEAR FELLOW-HELPER,

Many months have passed since I wrote you about the progress of the Committee. The reason is that the work load has become so heavy, particularly since The Demonstrations last Spring, that it is impossible to keep up with all of the rights violations.

The savage, brutal, murderous, and ungodly bombing of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church on Sunday morning Sept. 14 [*sic*], has revealed to the whole world the evil of racism. Those few terrifying moments of the blast said what we have been trying to say to the nation for years, that there exists in Alabama the most unconscionable disregard for man and God on the part of some. If white supremacy consists in the wanton and brutal destruction of worshippers of God in the very house of worship, then I must confess that the church bombers are the most supreme murderers and cowards the world has ever seen. Only the diseased mind can aspire to reach such depths.

On the morning of the bombing I stood across the street from the church behind carbine bearing policemen and watched as the covered bodies were placed into waiting ambulances. Policemen drove a small crowd off the street. I got on a nearby porch. Women seeing the covered bodies being brought from the church cried and screamed without restraint. I could not bring my mind to believe what my eyes saw. It still seems like a tale from some distant land where people know nothing about freedom and democracy.

On Sept. 19, 1963 I sent a telegram to President Kennedy cataloging some of the horrible incidents which have afflicted and continue to afflict our city and our citizens. I share that list with you.

1. March, 1963 – a Negro home destroyed by a bomb.
2. May 11, 1963 – the A. G. Gaston Motel bombed.
3. May 11, 1963 – the home of Rev. A. D. King bombed.
4. August 14, 1963 – a tear gas bomb dropped in Loveman's Department Store following desegregation of eating facilities.
5. August 20, 1963 – the bombing of attorney Arthur Shores' home.
6. Sept. 4, 1963 – the second bombing of Arthur Shores' home, injuring his wife.

7. Sept. 7, 1963 – the fire-bombing of the home of Dr. A. G. Gaston.
8. Sept. 15, 1963 – the bombing of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, taking the lives of four girls and injuring several.
9. June 27, 1963 – the fatal shooting of Blain Gordon Jr. (16), a mentally ill youth, by Birmingham policemen.
10. August, 1963 – the fatal shooting of David Scott by a Birmingham policeman.
11. Sept. 4, 1963 – the fatal shooting of John Coley (20) by Birmingham police following the second bombing of attorney Shores' home.
12. Sept. 15, 1963 – the fatal shooting of Johnnie Robinson (16) by Birmingham police following the bombing of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church.
13. Sept. 7, 1963 – the shooting of Charles Gray by Birmingham police.
14. Sept. 5, 1963 – the shooting of a mentally ill youth Sylvester Alexander by Birmingham police.
15. Sept. 4, 1963 – the shooting of Lyman Thomas, who was near John Coley when he was killed by Birmingham police.
16. Sept. 15, 1963 – the shooting of Billy Charles by Birmingham police following the bombing of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church.
17. Sept. 15, 1963 – the beating of Ben Bolden on Sunday night by Birmingham police.
18. Sept. 15, 1963 –the injuring of George Benjamin Sr. on Sunday night by Birmingham police.
19. Sept. 15, 1963 – the shooting in the head of Charles Lane by State Troopers.
20. Sept. 15, 1963 – the firing of 12 shots into the home of Francis Garrett by Birmingham police attempting to make people get off the street and into houses.

Your continued interest and support is again solicited.

Sincerely yours,
Rev C. Herbert Oliver
Secretary

Notes: