

## Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

You are a member of the newly organized Philadelphia chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). Like many young Black people in this country, you were inspired by the 1960 sit-in movement. You believe it's time to use more confrontational tactics to win equality — in both the South and the North.

While much of the focus has been on the South, Black people in Northern cities like Philadelphia face a housing, employment, and educational crisis that needs to be addressed. After World War II, Black people began moving to Philadelphia as part of what became known as the “Great Migration.” Meanwhile, white families were moving out of the city taking advantage of a racist partnership between the federal government, wealthy housing developers, and corporations.

Levittown, Pennsylvania — a Northeast suburb of Philadelphia — is an example of this. In the 1940s and 50s, developer William Levitt began building “Levittowns” in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. The Federal Housing Authority agreed to finance these suburban housing developments on one condition: The homes could only be sold to “members of the Caucasian race.” When the Myers, a Black family, managed to purchase a home in 1957, a mob of several hundred white men, women, and children threw stones at the house for three straight nights. White people painted the letters “K.K.K.” on the side of the house and the Myers received ongoing threatening phone calls. Police had to be placed as a round-the-clock guard on the Myers house.

While white families fled Philadelphia for suburbs like Levittown, many industries also left Philadelphia with them. U.S. Steel, Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing (3M), and many other corporations opened new factories in the Northeast Philadelphia suburbs during the 1950s. Because of racist housing policies, Black families could not move to the suburbs to take advantage of these jobs and so Black workers were forced to compete for limited job opportunities in the city.

In Philadelphia this meant that Black people came into conflict with the racially discriminatory practices of the local labor unions. The construction trades — the electricians, steamfitters, plumbers, roofers, ironworkers, and sheet metal workers — all had racially discriminatory membership practices that kept Black people from gaining jobs in the construction industry. The city claimed to be against this and passed a ban on discrimination in city contracts, but they continued to allow all-white construction companies to build city buildings.

In 1963, you and other CORE members had had enough. You decided to begin a sit-in at the Mayor's office demanding the city government address the discriminatory practices at the new city building under construction across from city hall. Within one day, the Mayor agreed to conduct an investigation of the hiring practices on the work site and CORE suspended its protest.

But when the Mayor announced that “nothing can be done to remove discrimination on current city contracts,” you returned to his office and sat-in again until the mayor agreed to halt construction. The mayor gave in and pressured the unions to hire one Black electrician at the work site. Although, only one Black person was hired, it showed that protest could break the discriminatory practices of the unions. You

joined with the local NAACP to start similar protests at other construction sites that won more jobs for Black workers throughout the city. Soon after the Philadelphia construction demonstrations, President Kennedy issued Executive Order 1114, which required employers on federal construction projects to take “affirmative action” to desegregate their workforces.

You also joined with the local NAACP and the group of 400 Black ministers to protest segregated and substandard Black schools in Philadelphia. Schools were segregated in Philadelphia because Black people were not only kept out of suburban neighborhoods, but you were also kept out of certain city neighborhoods through racist restrictions similar to those in the suburbs. Ten percent or more of the teachers at majority-Black schools were substitutes — twice the rate at majority white schools. The teachers who weren’t substitutes were often the least experienced teachers in the city. Through a combination of direct action and lawsuits against the Philadelphia School Board, you and others in the community have been protesting these conditions for the last several years, but little has changed.

Now you’re headed to Washington, D.C., to meet with activists from around the country. You want better schools, better housing, and most of all, better job opportunities. For decades the government has had racist policies that benefit white people — it’s time for them to pass some anti-racist policies that stops the harm they’ve caused.

## Albany, Georgia

You are a young member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) from Albany, Georgia. With names like “Terrible Terrell,” “Unbearable Baker,” and “Unworthy Worth,” southwest Georgia counties are notorious strongholds of white supremacy. In the middle of the region sits Albany, a city of 60,000 and roughly 40 percent Black. Albany tries to cultivate an image distinct from the white supremacist lynchings and beatings that characterize the rural counties that surround it, but officials strictly enforce Jim Crow segregation. Restaurants, parks, pools, libraries are all segregated.

In October 1961, SNCC members Charles Sherrod and Cordell Reagon traveled to Albany to help organize the Black community. They led nightly workshops in churches on nonviolent tactics. You and several other high school and college students attended.

By November, you and other students decided to test an Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) ruling that no bus facility, bus, or driver could deny access based on race. As the nine of you walked into the bus station, Black community members came out to watch from the lunchrooms, pool rooms, and other public facilities. The bus station was full of police with guns and billy clubs. When they ordered you out, you left the station and filed an immediate complaint with the ICC under the new ruling.

Following this defiance, the Ministerial Alliance, NAACP, Federation of Women’s Clubs, the Negro Voters League, and SNCC formed a coalition: the Albany Movement. Although your goal was to end all segregation and discrimination, you first focused on desegregating travel facilities.

A few days before Thanksgiving, three young people from the NAACP youth council and two SNCC volunteers from Albany State were arrested for a sit-in at the Trailways terminal. While the NAACP youth council members were released on bond, the SNCC volunteers declined bail. They remained in jail over the holidays to dramatize their demand for justice.

On the day of their trial, police arrested you and more than 250 high school and college students when you refused to disperse from a protest outside the train station. You and others chose to remain in jail rather than paying bail. The next day, about 200 demonstrators marched to City Hall. They were jailed for parading without a permit. Police Chief Laurie Pritchett told newsmen, “We can’t tolerate the NAACP or the SNCC or any other n----r organization to take over this town with mass demonstrations.” At this point, arrests had exceeded 500 and the Georgia governor sent 150 national guardsmen to Albany. But the movement also attracted the attention of national Civil Rights leaders. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. traveled to Albany in December telling a mass meeting “Don’t stop now. Keep moving. Don’t get weary. We will wear them down with our capacity to suffer.”

King then led hundreds of Black citizens, including you, on a protest march. All of you were

arrested and charged with parading without a permit and obstructing the sidewalk. Inside the jail activists faced police brutality. When visiting the jail, Marion King, the pregnant wife of one of the movement leaders, was knocked unconscious by a deputy sheriff. A few weeks later, the Dougherty County sheriff caned attorney C. B. King. “I wanted to let him know,” the sheriff remarked, “I’m a white man and he’s a damn n----r.”

Soon after Dr. King was arrested, city officials and Albany Movement leaders agreed that if King left, the city would comply with the ICC ruling and release jailed protesters on bail. But after King left, the city failed to uphold its agreement and protests continued.

After repeated requests by Albany Black leaders for support, President Kennedy finally responded, urging Albany officials to negotiate a settlement in August of 1962. But this didn’t move white leaders in Albany. Although Albany remains segregated, there is a new sense of pride and organization. In fact, some of the songs that came out of the protests in Albany like “Oh, Freedom!” and “Ain’t Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me ‘Round” have become national protest anthems. You’re heading to the March on Washington to bring the spirit of the Albany Movement.

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