



THE BATTLE OF BIRMINGHAM

The Story of Official Terror And Violations  
of Constitutional Rights Involved in the Sou-  
thern Youth Legislature and the Arrest of U. S.  
Senator Glen Taylor of Idaho.

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## *Civil Rights*

### **Southern Negro Youth Congress**

*[Cover title]: The Battle of Birmingham: The Story of Official Terror and Violations of Constitutional Rights Involved in the Southern Youth Legislature and the Arrest of U.S. Senator Glen Taylor of Idaho*

Birmingham, Alabama: Southern Negro Youth Congress [1948]

\$3500

First (only?) edition. Quarto. 14, [1]pp. mimeographed in stapled yellow mimeographed wrappers. A few corrections in ink, two horizontal folds, some light soiling and staining, staples a bit rusted and a little pulled, an about very good copy. Report issued by the Southern Negro Youth Congress about their 8th (and last) All-Southern Youth Conference held in Birmingham in 1948 which culminated in Glen Taylor, a U.S. Senator from Idaho being physically assaulted by Birmingham police and arrested on the order of Chief of Birmingham's Department of Public Safety Bull Connor, when Taylor attempted to enter the Conference through the "Negro Entrance", based on Section 859 of the General City Code of Birmingham on Separation of the Races - a copy of which is printed on the inside rear cover. *OCLC* locates a single copy (NYPL) attributing the date to 1954, which seems unlikely, as the group had disbanded in 1949 under pressure from the FBI, and nothing in the text suggests that this was written at any substantive distance from the events of the Conference. Rare primary source report of an early and important event in modern Civil Rights. [\[BTC#425984\]](#)

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In an effort to start the first meeting, at least, by nullifying the efforts of police "sneaks", some of whom even tried to register as delegates so as to gain desired information, small strips of paper carrying the name and address of the church were quietly passed to all registered delegates as they came into the office. Delegates were instructed to go to the tabernacle in two's and three's. The public announcement of the meeting place was given to the press just as the first meeting opened so that as an added precaution, newspaper reporters could be present throughout all sessions.

### THE FIRST SESSIONS BEGINS

Even before the devotional period, Section 859 of the Birmingham Code was read slowly by Dr. Edward K. Weaver, Congress president. Judge Joseph H. Rainey of Philadelphia, who had been scheduled to speak on Friday evening, delivered the main address. Two white persons, one speaker and one delegate, were present at this meeting. The morning passed without incident.

### DANCE HALL WITHDRAWN

During the morning<sup>5:45</sup> officers received a letter stating the Conference dance could not be held. "This check is refunded you on account of orders coming down from Mr. Kelley's office, who advises that he had received a telephone message from City Hall that there could be no dance allowed under any circumstances tonight. For that reason we are refunding the amount paid by you for this dance."

### ARRESTS ARE MADE

As the afternoon session opened, Dr. James A. Dombrowski, of New Orleans, director of the Southern Conference Educational Fund, Inc., Doris Senk, secretary of the American Youth for a Free World, and Edward Forrey, a National Maritime Union delegate from Mobile were present. Swarms of uniformed police and detectives arrived, swaggered up and down the hall and through the main residential section of the structure, stationed themselves at all doors, and patrolled the sidewalks adjacent to the church, which stands on a corner.

United States who believes in and practices democracy, and a group of Alabama "supermen" who hardly know how to spell the word.

Taylor was carried to the Southside jail which earlier in the day had been signally honored by the presence of four others arrested at the conference. A professional <sup>bondsman</sup> provided the \$100.00 bond for the Senator's release. Three days later he was convicted on three charges: interfering with an officer in the line of duty (because he attempted to enter the front door); disorderly conduct (because he was said to have used profanity); assault and battery (because, as witnesses said, he was seen crouched and "coming up from the ground with his fist balled up); although he was held securely by at least three powerful officers. He was fined \$50.00 and given a suspended sentence of six months. Thirteen prosecution witnesses were paraded before City Judge Oliver Hall and a packed courtroom of spectators, in approximately equal number of Negro and white. The city attorney cleverly skirted injecting the charge of breaking Section 859 of the Birmingham Code, although Taylor had been stopped at the "Negro Entrance" by an officer who insisted, "We have laws in this town to be obeyed."

A transcript of the remarks of the Judge prior to sentencing Taylor would give America and the world a choice exhibit in the "Master Race" mentality. He gave the audience an airtight and "foolproof" formula for securing equality in America when he said, "It can be done by bringing the white people down to the level of the "Nigras."

#### REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY

As is the custom during southwide meetings of the SNYC, no meetings were scheduled during worship hours so that delegates could attend local churches. A special invitation had been extended the delegates by the Rev. B. T. Cartwright to attend the St. Luke AME church. After worship there, many delegates went with Birmingham SNYC members to the funeral of a former member of SNYC, 19 year old Marion Noble, who had been killed by two Birmingham policemen earlier in the week. A thousand teen-age classmates and friends mourned this latest

GENERAL CITY CODE OF BIRMINGHAM  
1944

Sec. 859. Separation of races.

(a) It shall be unlawful for any person in charge or control of any room, hall, theatre, picture house, auditorium, yard, court, ball park, public park, or other indoor or outdoor place, to which both white persons and Negroes are admitted, to cause, permit or allow therein or thereon any theatrical performance, picture exhibition, speech, or educational or entertainment program of any kind whatsoever, unless such room, hall, theatre, picture house, auditorium, yard, court, ball park, or other place, has entrances, exits and seating or standing sections set aside for and assigned to the use of white persons, and other entrances, exits and seating or standing sections set aside for and assigned to the use of Negroes, and unless the entrances, exits and seating or standing sections set aside for and assigned to the use of white persons are distinctly separated from those set aside for and assigned to the use of Negroes, by well defined physical barriers, and unless the members of each race are effectively restricted and confined to the sections set aside for and assigned to the use of such race.

(b) It shall be unlawful for any member of one race to use or occupy any entrance, exit or seating or standing section set aside for and assigned to the use of members of the other race.

(c) It shall be unlawful for any person to conduct, participate in or engage in any theatrical performance, picture exhibition, speech, or educational or entertainment program of any kind whatsoever, in any room, hall, theatre, picture, auditorium, yard, court, ball park, public park, or other indoor or outdoor place, knowing that any provision of the two preceding subdivisions has not been complied with.

(d) The chief of police and members of the police department shall have the right, and it shall be their duty, to disperse any gathering or assemblage in violation of this section, and to arrest any person guilty of violating the same.