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Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.

—Thomas Jefferson

The Second Battle Of Atlanta

The Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee may still have public supporters somewhere outside the extreme fringe of the civil rights movement and deep within the ghetto, but they will be hard to find after the incredibly blatant job of incitement to riot its leadership pulled off in Atlanta last week. The organization's very name is now a bad joke, as the Atlanta disgrace demonstrated. Sending a sound truck into an area to whip up a mob against the police and the city administration can be put in many categories, but "non-violent" is not one of them.

There is apparently no end to the lengths SNCC will go in order to create a suitable climate for its operations. First its workers went to great effort to eject whites working to alleviate poverty from Negro areas in Atlanta, using the sound truck technique to smear a dedicated man they contemptuously referred to as a "white Jesus." Then they helped whip a mob into the streets, culminating with an attempt to maul Atlanta Mayor Ivan Allen as he sought to disperse the group. Mayor Allen responded in the only possible way, instructing the Negro and white police to break up the hoodlums with whatever force was necessary.

IT IS bitter irony that SNCC should now choose Atlanta as the target for deliberate creation of civil disorder. No city is perfect, and behind its image of progressivism Atlanta has troubles like any other municipality. But again and again it has been demonstrated there that Negro and white leadership could work out accommodations acceptable to both sides. Mayor Allen himself was one of the few Southern politicians to testify in favor of the civil rights bill.

But SNCC does not like to see change proceed in this way. It must be able to claim complete credit. Anything done by others is categorized as sell-outs by Uncle Toms and "Whitey." Peaceful change must be converted into snarling anarchy.

There is only one answer to that kind of approach. Mayor Allen utilized it by telling the police to crack down. Many more responsible Negroes also understood what damage was being done and worked against SNCC on the street corners.

Mayor Allen is right. If Carmichael and Company want to make Atlanta the new battleground, the fight should begin now. The time is past when open invitations to chaos can be tolerated, in Atlanta or anywhere else.

Revelation