

(BOOK, from page 9) →

resistance to change in the South.

He took on the assignment. He wanted to be able to reveal what happened on that night in June just a year ago; he wanted to understand what kind of people Mickey Schwerner, James Chaney and Andy Goodman were; he wanted to rip the mask from the men who murdered them, from the community which appeared to sanction their brutal murder.

Huie went wherever necessary to get the story; he interviewed those who had taught, had known, had worked with — and even those who had killed the civil rights workers.

It is difficult to comprehend the nature of those capable of killing three defenseless human beings, or of burning an empty church, or of dynamiting a family home, or of brutalizing another human being. In the first chapter, we are introduced to just such types. And it becomes even more frightening. It is easier to accept the notion of monsters than it is to accept the idea of a seemingly hard-working, seemingly law-abiding citizen whose race hatred and religious prejudice triggers such action.

Perhaps even more striking an indictment is drawn against the community which Huie charges

allowed terrorists to "handle" those who sought equal rights for Negroes. "When terrorists murder despite the best efforts of the police and of a society, then only the terrorists may be guilty. But when terrorists murder with the complicity of the police, and when a society supports and cannot condemn them, then the society—or the state itself—may be guilty."

"This was Nazi Germany's crime at Auschwitz; I was to discover that it was Mississippi's crime at Philadelphia."

Huie reconstructs the crime in all its chilling detail. He has written the most moving, and, I think, objective account of the three civil rights workers who were the victims. He has shown the hypocrisy and the mendacity of some of the respected leaders of Mississippi — particularly during the period when certain of these individuals were calling the disappearance of the trio "a hoax." There is no question that the white supremacy underground knew and had passed the word of the murder.

Will the murderers go unpunished? Chances are they will. Huie believes that a federal anti-terror law might have a deterrent effect. Such a law would make it a federal crime for anyone to interfere through threats or violence with the exercise of Constitutional rights

which the states are supposed to protect.

Did the victims die in vain? Huie thinks that "it can be said truly that the white supremacy society of Mississippi has been shaken. Murder helped to shake it. . . . I believe that most men of goodwill will

agree that James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner did not die in vain. Their deaths served the cause of freedom for all people, white and Negro, in Mississippi, in the United States, and, hopefully, throughout the world."



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