

U R G E N T

January 25, 1968

(The following is an urgent release from the National Headquarters of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in Atlanta, Georgia.)

N A S H V I L L E : A B L A C K C O N C E N T R A T I O N C A M P !

(NEWS BLACKOUT ON NASHVILLE POLICE REIGN OF TERROR!)

ATLANTA, GA. (SNCC) There has been a complete and total news blackout on the events which have occurred within the past week in Nashville, Tenn. The events (outlined below) make it very plain that the white bosses in this country have chosen Nashville as a dress rehearsal in preparing for the coming arrests and jailing of all black folks who are or appear to be militant in their efforts to free our people from this brutal system which has stepped up its program to crush, confine and destroy US. We urge all black people and other groups who face the same danger to take note of these facts, see that the word is passed around in your community, and begin to ORGANIZE people immediately to FIGHT FOR OUR LIVES---FOR OUR VERY LIVES, OUR SURVIVAL IS AT STAKE!

We remind you that the U.S. government has created special laws and special committees for the purpose of picking up any person they label "subversive" arresting us without bail, holding us for an indefinite period of time without legal counsel or communication with the outside world, and then sending us away to "detention centers" (in Germany they were called "concentration camps.") They can keep us in these camps as long as they want to---because they have the power to do so! What is happening in Nashville is just around the corner in your city!

HERE ARE THE FACTS!

1. On Wednesday, January 16, two policemen were shot in Nashville - 1 killed, the other wounded, following an incident which is still not very clear. The Nashville press has reported that 5 black men were involved in the shooting incident, and that "black power" literature was found in the car. The 5 men were reported to be from Cincinnati, Ohio.
2. Starting the next day, the press in Nashville immediately began to carry headlines and stories blaming SNCC and Stokely Carmichael for the shooting. One headline said: "SNCC Starts Murder Campaign;" on the front page of one Nashville daily it was falsely announced that "Stokely Carmichael is in Nashville." Stories and headlines such as these have continued all week.
3. The infamous Nashville Police Chief Sorace has used the white press attack to convince the Nashville community that it is necessary for white folks to arm themselves against the "murderous" black militants, and that the police must get more and better riot equipment to deal with US.
4. Police, armed with "riot" weapons, have flooded the North Nashville black community and completely taken control of the area. They have picked up over 70 black people, including 30-40 students from the Fisk and Tenn. A&I campuses. They are also picking up anyone who "looks" militant, who wears their hair natural, or anyone they just take a notion to pick up.
5. These brothers and sisters have been taken to the police headquarters or jails, and "questioned," without benefit of legal counsel, and without being able to communicate with anyone. They interrogation lasts anywhere from a few hours to a day, with the cops getting a complete run-down on the personal life and political views of those questioned and their friends.
6. It is known that one such victim to be questioned was horribly beaten during his "visit" with the police. Another, a former SNCC Chairman in Nashville, was taken from the jail to the prison farm, where his "Afro" hair style was cut and then he was released.

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7. Using these tactics, Police Chief Sorace has succeeded in frightening the Nashville black community and is adding names to his "list" of black folks that he labels "subversive."

We remind black folks in this country that it was Sorace who went to Washington to testify with his stories and reports on SNCC, Stokely Carmichael, "black power advocates," and the liberation school in Nashville. The government is using this "testimony" to build their case against SNCC and against all of US. We remind you that certain lawmakers from Tenn. have asked that Stokely Carmichael be deported from the U.S. or tried for treason.

We would also remind you that Nashville is only one example of what the man is doing to us from New York City to Oakland, California, from North to South, and all around. TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT WHAT HAS HAPPENED THIS PAST YEAR:

1. Rap Brown, SNCC Chairman, was placed under house arrest on Manhattan Island, thereby restricting his freedom of movement and speech.
2. Huey Newton, Chairman of Black Panther Party for Self Defense in Oakland, Calif., now sits in the Oakland County jail on trumped-up charges of murder, kidnapping and others - as a result of cops shooting him this past October 28.
3. LeRoi Jones, respected Black Poet, is now serving a 2½ year sentence which the courts just clamped on him - as a result of his brutal beating suffered during the Newark rebellion.
4. Reies Tijerina, militant leader of the Mexicans in New Mexico, and 20 of his followers now sit in a Santa Fe jail - as a result of several trumped-up charges, including "murder."
5. Eddie Oquendo, a Puerto Rican black, was found "guilty" of refusing the draft, sentenced to 5 years, and is now under house arrest in New York.
6. Dr. Benjamin Spock, a moderate, white pacifist, and several others were indicted on charges stemming from his activities in the Peace Movement.
(THIS IS TO PREPARE PEOPLE FOR THE MASS ARRESTS AND DETENTION OF BLACK FOLKS !)
7. Clifton Thurley Haywood, a Muslim from Georgia, was found guilty of violating his religious objections to the Vietnam War, sentenced to 20 years in jail and fined \$10,000 -- not to mention the well-known stiff sentence handed out to Muhammed Ali.

These cases are but a few examples that have somehow been publicized. We could not begin to list the countless thousands of black folks and other folks considered to be "enemies" of this country who have been subjected to the same false arrests, phony convictions, and are now serving prison terms, filling up America's jails. Because so many of these political prisoners are not connected with any organization or do not have the means to get public attention, they become another number, another nameless victim of the American police state.

WE REPEAT! What is happening in Nashville is a testing rehearsal for what will soon happen in your city, in your community. It is up to you to get our brothers and sisters together. We must ORGANIZE and fight for our very survival! The interrogations, arrests, and pick-ups have begun, the jails are filling up, and the concentration camps are ready and waiting! Where will the full-scale attack come next? Your city? Mine? And who will it be? You? Me?