

## STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE!

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BLACK STUDENTS IN NASHVILLE VICTIMS OF POLICE SET-UP

This past week-end black students from Fisk University, Meharry Medical College and Tennessee State College were forced to rebel against the brutal tactics of the Nashville police force and white power structure of that city. The real story of what happened in Nashville has not been reported in the press, instead the white newspapers, radio and television have obviously tried to lay the blame for the campus rebellion on the students and surrounding black community, by calling them "roving mobs," "guerilla forces," and constantly referring to the fact that bricks and bottles were thrown at white cops. BUT THE PRESS HAS NOT REPORTED THAT THESE STUDENTS WERE THE VICTIMS OF A CALCULATED "SET-UP" AND "FRAME-UP" WHICH WAS PLANNED AND BEGUN A FEW WEEKS AGO IN NASHVILLE RIGHT AFTER THE STUDENTS ANNOUNCED THAT STOKELY CARMICHAEL, SNCC CHAIRMAN, WAS GOING TO SPEAK ON THE BLACK COLLEGE CAMPUSES IN NASHVILLE. The white press and white groups in that area immediately stated that riots would break out if Carmichael came to their city, this prediction was publicized again and again. Reports indicate that the police department ordered special "riot equipment," prepared themselves for battle, and went on a "riot alert." The fact is that Stokely Carmichael went to Nashville, spoke to several student groups there, and then left for a speaking engagement in another city--with no trouble breaking out. But---the white powers-that-be in Nashville could not let their prediction fail to materialize. After all, they had prepared for a so-called riot and had told everyone that there would be such a "riot." So they quickly went into action to create a situation which they knew would force the black students and citizens of Nashville to act and defend themselves. Then, they could call it a "riot" and put their gestapo-like tactics into action.

On Saturday, April 8th, a Fisk campus restaurant owner called white cops to arrest one black student, who he claimed was not welcome in his establishment. Because other students and onlookers felt that the arrest was unjust, they began to protest as the police dragged him away. At this point, the police called out the riot squad, which was fully prepared and waiting for such an excuse to move in and take control. As squads and squads of white police moved in, the crowd grew larger as everyone wondered what was happening and what had this student done to deserve such treatment. Police began to push and shove their way into the crowd, using billy-clubs against anyone who dared protest, which resulted in several onlookers retaliating by throwing rocks and bottles. This was the



only means they had to defend themselves and register their indignation. The riot squad began shooting, they claimed they were shooting in the air; however, bullets ricocheted into the girls dormitories causing several girls to be wounded by this gun-fire. Police broke into the mens dormitories by breaking through windows. When students at nearby Tennessee State College demonstrated in a sympathy protest, more riot squads moved into that area, again claiming they were "shooting into the air"--however, two students were shot in the neck, several were wounded in the arms and legs. The riot squad then surrounded the entire black campus area and drove around with guns and riot equipment ready for use. Several homes and apartments were raided.

By Sunday evening, over 100 black students and citizens were arrested and in jail, over 50 people had been injured by police gun-fire and billy-clubs. Three SNCC workers who happened to be returning to Nashville from another city were stopped in their car and questioned by the riot-cops who had taken control of the entire area. When police spotted SNCC literature in the car, they arrested two of the SNCC workers on charges of "Inciting to Riot" and they were placed under \$2,500 bond each. A third SNCC worker was charged with "Vagrancy" and taken to jail.

On Monday, April 10th, reports from Nashville indicate that the black section of Nashville is like an occupied concentration camp, 6 P.M. curfews have been imposed on the students, they are not allowed to leave the area, and other people are not allowed to enter. Tear gas has just been used against a group of 300 students who sought to assemble and protest.

The black people and students of Nashville are angry, they have seen what "is going down" in their city and they now know that riot squads are not only ready to move into the poorest black ghettos of America's cities, but are now moving against black students and colleges--as they did last week at Texas Southern University in Houston, Texas, and as they did at South Carolina State College in Orangeburg, South Carolina a month ago.

It is now ~~very~~ dangerous to be a black intellectual in the United States. It is dangerous to think for yourself, and it is dangerous to protest the violence and humiliation which white cops have heaped on black communities in the past and are getting ready to heap on us in the coming months. We in SNCC fully expect the white press, politicians, and powers-that-be to blame SNCC and Stokely Carmichael for what is happening in Nashville. The black people in that city know better, and we hope that the rest of our black brothers and sisters throughout the country will also know better, that they will not believe the lies and tricks which the white press puts forth, that they will think for themselves, and come to realize that this same thing can, and probably will, happen to them--- wherever they are---and whoever they are.