

REPORT ON NASHVILLE

Beginning on April 8, 1967 black students from Fisk University, Meharry Medical College and Tennessee State College rebelled 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 tried to lay 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.

A few weeks ago in Nashville, the students announced that Stokely Carmichael, SNCC Chairman, was going to speak on the black college campuses in that area. 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."

On Saturday, April 8, a Fisk campus restaurant owner called white cops to arrest one black student, whom 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. As squads and squads of white police moved in, the crowd grew larger; 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. Several onlookers retaliated 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 men's dormitories 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." 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 in jail; over 50 people had been injured by police gun-fire and billy-clubs. Three SNCC workers (Ernest Stephens, George Ware and Simmuel Schutz) 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 also taken to jail.

On Monday, April 10, reports from Nashville indicated that the black section of Nashville was like an occupied war zone. A 6:00 p.m. curfew had been imposed on the students; they were not allowed to leave the area, and other people were not allowed to enter. Tear gas was used against a group of 300 students who sought to assemble and protest.

During the Nashville "riots," about 100 people were arrested, including the two SNCC workers. All have been released. On April 21, a complaint will be filed to bring federal suit against all the officials of Nashville in the name of several students and the SNCC workers. This suit will seek an injunction against the use of such statutes as inciting to riot and disorderly conduct, on the grounds that they are used as retaliation and to prevent students from demonstrating. A similar suit was brought in Atlanta, Georgia, a few months ago and proved successful: a significant development for the movement. New Yorkers may be interested to know that the daughter of Assistant Chief Inspector Lloyd Sealy, this city's highest-ranking Negro police officer, was one of the students involved and has been asked to sign the complaint.

OTHER CAMPUS DEVELOPMENTS

Houston, Texas: On March 29, about 400 students of Texas Southern University (about 4,000 students, mostly black) blocked doors and disrupted classes to protest the school administration's refusal to recognize a Friends of SNCC group as an on-campus organization and the discharge of Mack Jones, faculty sponsor for the Friends of SNCC group. (Mr. Jones was on a one-year

contract; on the same day the SNCC Friends group was banned, it was announced that Mr. Jones' contract would not be renewed.) Three persons were jailed following the protest: Rev. W. D. Kirkpatrick, Lee Otis Johnson, and Franklin Alexander of the DuBois Clubs. Charges were: blocking students, blocking the streets, using loud and vociferous language. Bail was \$1000 each.

Orangeburg, South Carolina: Since late February, student protest demonstrations have been taking place at South Carolina State College. They were sparked by Administration refusal to renew the contract of a professor, Dr. Thomas Worth. Three students were expelled for their involvement in the protest; this led to further demonstrations. Six carloads of agents from a special unit of the Governor's troopers moved onto the campus on March 2. Students conducted a 90% boycott of classes. The administration has attempted to link the Student Action Committee with SNCC, and attacked SNCC as subversive (there were no SNCC workers at the College in that period).

And Stokely Carmichael marches on; ^{the SNCC Spring Caravan} ~~he~~ spent much of March and almost all of April on a tour of Southern college campuses (see News of the Week, NEW YORK TIMES of Sunday, April 6). Response has been tremendous. Copies of two of his campus speeches are now available; a record is being prepared with a selection from various speeches.

SUNFLOWER ELECTION ON MAY 2!

The historic new election for offices in the town of Sunflower (Sunflower County, Mississippi) is scheduled for May 2. At a primary on March 15, the following candidates were nominated:

Mayor: Otis Brown, Jr., age 21. Former SNCC Project Director in Indianola and Sunflower. Now President of the Sunflower County Freedom Democratic Party and President of the Sunflower Improvement Association. Taught in freedom school, built an outstanding community center in Sunflower.

Alderman— 5 positions open:

Mrs. Annie May King, 63. Former chairman of Sunflower FDP, Board member of Sunflower Women's Association. Now volunteer resource teacher in Indianola Headstart Program which is being continued with local support and despite denial of federal funds. She has raised 15 children, all of whom finished high school. Her platform includes: create jobs by bringing industry to Sunflower and developing workable federal programs; integrate schools, compulsory education for

children, more adult education and literacy programs; improve sanitation, lighting, get full-time doctor at clinic.

Mrs. Lela May Brooks, 46. Vice Chairman of the Sunflower FDP. Picked cotton for 36 years. Advocates better education and welfare; more doctors and nurses for clinic; free-lunch and recreation programs; better roads, sewers and homes; federal programs. Proposes to get funds for these needs by federal grants and by raising taxes (this would largely affect white landowners).

Mrs. Willie May Smith, 59. Farmed all her life; raised 14 children. Platform is better and integrated schools; paved streets, more lights, sewers, houses; another field director for Welfare program; changes in law enforcement. She has stated: "We are not working for one mankind but all mankind."

Mose Griffin -- sharecropper, carpenter and painter. He has stated: "I see where there is a lot of things we need and not getting. Our people are taxpayers and have always asked for the things we need in the community. What we have gotten is always what was left. Now, we can get equal treatment if we are elected. What we need is paved streets, better housing, sanitation, schools and jobs. These are the things I will work for and whatever else people tell me people need. I think the children are going astray on the streets and we need some kind of system to help them."

There are two other male candidates for aldermen -- Loney Echols and Elvin Gibson. No information on them available at this time. Gibson may withdraw (only 5 can be elected aldermen) in order not to split the ticket.

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Total population of Sunflower: 800. Registered Negroes: 211. Registered whites: 175. There is real excitement and hope about this election.

Charles McLaurin of SNCC has been working on the election as well as on the county-wide registration and organizing for the November, 1967 elections.

Manhattan Borough President Percy Sutton spent the weekend of April 22-23 there, when a statewide MFDP meeting was held in Sunflower to rally support for the elections. 500 persons showed up for that meeting, in this town of 800. Protection to avoid intimidation and fraud on election day is being sought; a delegation headed by Bayard Rustin will call on the Attorney General soon. EVERYONE IS WELCOME ON ELECTION DAY, MAY 2.

In another Sunflower County town, Morehead, elections will also be held: Mayor and 4 positions on the City Council. Because registration is 400 black, 564 white, there is less hope for Morehead.

Voter registration and political organizing will continue in Sunflower County through the summer and fall. THIS ELECTION IS ONLY THE BEGINNING!

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Copies of Stokely Carmichael's speech of April 15

at the Peace Mobilization are available at the

New York SNCC office.

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