

Blacks Liken Kent Slaying to Own Oppression

By THOMAS A. JOHNSON

Balancing a worn cloth shopping bag on her lap, a middle-aged black woman who works as a domestic rode the No. 10 bus north to Harlem late yesterday and told a stranger:

"They're starting to treat their own children like they treat us, aren't they?"

The woman, Mrs. Mattie Evans, held a newspaper that recounted the killing of four students by the National Guard at Kent State University in Ohio and of the subsequent school disorders across the nation.

"My goodness," she said, "I never thought I'd live to see the day they'd treat their own like they treat us."

Several black Americans interviewed during recent days had similar reactions.

"If they're turning against their own, then Lord help us," said Mrs. Sheila Tucker, an administrative aide with Operation Bootstrap, a skills training program in the heavily black and poor central Los Angeles area.

"I suppose this means we blacks had better look out for the gas ovens," she added.

Less Than Human

Mrs. Tucker said blacks in America were "abused because whites look at blacks as less than human and they [white Americans] are angry now at their children because white kids are doing things that make the older people ashamed."

Charles Evers, Mayor of Fayette, Miss., and brother of the slain Negro leader, Medgar Evers, predicted that "this is only the beginning of what will continue in America because of white racism."

"God will not allow this country to continue to be blessed while they systematically oppress blacks, poor whites, Indians and Mexicans,"

he said. "Kent State was a terrible tragedy, but only the beginning of America's terrible tragedies."

"We're striking at Columbia," said a bearded black student near the Morningside Heights campus, "but we blacks are striking for Orangeburg, S.C., and for three black students killed there by police in the winter of 1968."

Making no attempt to control his bitterness, the student said: "The difference is that there was no national uproar when this kind of thing happened to the black students."

Others interviewed remembered the scores of deaths of blacks during racial riots in Watts, Newark and Detroit and

in the dynamiting of black churches in recent years. Invariably there was much less of a national uproar after these deaths, they noted.

Criminal Court Judge William H. Booth, the former chairman of the New York City Human Rights Commission, said the events should prove to whites the extent of racism against blacks in America.

"Whites always considered narcotics a black problem," Judge Booth said, "until it reached into their own homes. Now they must begin to see that the National Guard can kill whites as well as blacks."

A computer systems analyst in Battle Creek, Mich., James G. Barnes, said recent events

were "only more evidence of the importance to this country's power structure to perpetuate their affluent society no matter what the cost in human lives."

A Harlem legal secretary, Mrs. Vivian Jones, was one of several black people who saw the Ohio killings as "crossing racial lines."

"I'm a mother and I know how any mother would feel losing a child," she said. "It's one thing when your child goes into the service—you kind of expect the danger and you fear a sudden heartbreak. But you don't expect it when he goes to college. It was horrible and it was shocking—I know how those four mothers felt."