

# Blacks Start Wide Protest On Jackson Student Deaths

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## Promise Armed Defense

By ROY REED

Special to The New York Times

JACKSON, Miss., May 17—  
Angry Negroes have begun a broad protest, including formation of an armed defense league and a statewide boycott of white-owned businesses, because of the police killing of two black students here Thursday night.

Those moves have the support of organizations considered moderate that have long advocated nonviolence and racial brotherhood.

Meanwhile, an investigation of events that led up to the fatal barrage of police gunfire indicates that the deaths at Jackson State College had little or no connection with the nationwide campus protest movement, the war in Southeast Asia or reaction to the Ohio National Guard's killing of four Kent State University students.

Blacks here see the Jackson State shootings as almost entirely a Mississippi phenomenon, the latest in a series of racial killings by the white authorities.

Students who saw the shootings insist that the police did not have sufficient provoca-

## Georgia March Planned

By THOMAS A. JOHNSON

Special to The New York Times

AUGUSTA, Ga., May 17—  
The Rev. Ralph David Abernathy announced today that a 100-mile mass march would be conducted through Georgia's Black Belt to combat the "browning repression" of blacks and students in the state and in the nation.

The announcement was made during the funeral for one of six black men shot to death by the police in a night of rioting here last week.

Mr. Abernathy said the march would begin on Tuesday in Perry, Ga., and would end in Atlanta on Saturday. A mass rally will be held at the conclusion.

Mr. Abernathy, the chairman of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, said that he hoped the march and rally would have the "representative quality" of the 54-mile Selma-to-Montgomery march in 1965. That march was made by thousands of persons both "Our entire S.C.L.C. staff has been mobilized for the march in order to address ourselves to the 'shoot and kill mentality' of the Lester Maddoxes of this country," Mr. Abernathy said

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# Georgia March Is Planned to Combat 'Repression' in the Nation

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in a reference to the Governor of Georgia.

He charged that there was a "national climate of fear and repression which has been created by a national Administration in pursuit of a racist political Southern strategy and a militaristic foreign policy."

The Atlanta rally, Mr. Abernathy said, will coincide with mass marches planned in Chicago and in Los Angeles to protest the policies of the Chicago police and of Gov. Ronald Reagan of California.

## Allegations Over Arrests

Perry, Ga., a town of 11,000 people, 26 miles south of Macon, was chosen as the jumpoff point because of intense civil rights activity there. The activity is centered on the dismissal of two black school teachers and reportedly segregated classrooms. Two weeks ago some



The New York Times  
**Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy**

black demonstrators were arrested in Perry. In telegrams to the National Association for

the Advancement of Colored People and to the Justice Department they charged that they had been beaten by the police, gassed while trapped in police buses and the incarcerated at the Dooly County Prison Farm, which had previously been closed as unfit.

Hosea Williams, a chief organizer for the S.C.L.C., said here today that the organization planned to make Georgia a major battleground for the protection of the rights of black Americans.

"It's not so much a matter of gaining rights today," Mr. Williams said, "but of making certain Nixon and Maddox don't take them from us. We won the right to march years ago and we will march."

He said this state had been chosen because "black people in the black belt of Georgia are busting loose like they did in the black belt of Mississippi in 1964 and in Alabama in 1965 and 1966."

The Georgia march, Mr. Williams said, will have coffins on wagons pulled by mules. He said they would represent "the four killed at Kent State, two at Jackson, Miss., and six in Augusta."

## Funeral for Youth

Mr. Abernathy and several staff members flew to this North Georgia city this afternoon from Atlanta and attended one of the six scheduled funerals. This was the funeral of Sammy McCullough, 19 years old, who like the others was apparently shot in the back last Monday night.

Speaking briefly during the ceremonies at the Antioch Baptist Church, Mr. Abernathy told 300 mourners that it was vital that we, "as a nation, mourn to redeem ourselves to the high moral principles on which this nation was founded."

He said that the "repression of the Black Panthers," the Kent State killings as well as those of black college students in South Carolina two years ago and in Mississippi last week, were examples of that repression.

At one point in his 10-minute talk, Mr. Abernathy was interrupted by the church's assistant pastor, the Rev. Grady Brown, who objected to the discourse. Mr. Brown called out from the floor, "We are conducting a funeral here." But Mr. Abernathy finished his talk.

Questioned later, Mr. Brown, who is white, said: "We were conducting a funeral. It's as simple as that." He said remarks on civil rights at the time were "out of place."

Meanwhile, the 9 P.M. to 5 A.M. curfew remained in effect here and close to 1,000 National Guardsmen continued to patrol the city streets.



tion to open up with wholesale gunfire. The police in turn insist that they had been fired on by snipers.

Negro leaders, who have been meeting throughout the weekend to discuss an appropriate response, are supporting a statewide boycott of white businesses to impress upon what they see as an unconcerned white community the depth of the blacks' anger.

They are calling for stern prosecution of the Mississippi Highway Patrol members who apparently did all the shooting that resulted in the deaths of two young men and the wounding of nine other black persons, including several coeds.

The Mississippi United Front, a coalition of the leaders of some 30 civil rights and anti-poverty organizations, sent a telegram to President Nixon and Attorney General John N. Mitchell last night denouncing the scheduled speaking appearance Tuesday of Mr. Mitchell at the annual meeting of the Delta Council. The council is an organization of planters and businessmen in the Mississippi Delta; the United Front called it "racist."

"His appearance at this time," the telegram said, "gives sanction to the murderous acts of the racist establishment in Mississippi. The murder of the black youths at Jackson State College could happen only because they are consistent with racist speeches being made by national leaders, including the Attorney General."

#### Mass Demonstrations

The United Front said there would be mass demonstrations if Mr. Mitchell appeared before the Delta council.

The United Front announced that it would move to provide protection for students and other Negro groups across the state.

Dr. Aaron Shirley, a prominent black physician in Jackson, said, "We are determined that from now on when we suspect that law enforcement officers are hell-bent on killing some black folks, they'll be doing it at some risk to their own lives."

Dr. Shirley is a co-chairman of the United Front along with State Representative Robert Clark, the first Negro to sit in the Mississippi Legislature since Reconstruction.

The fact that leaders such as Dr. Shirley and Mr. Clark were taking such positions was viewed as a startling development. Most of the 30 organizations represented in the Front are considered moderate.

"We know it's a new position to take," Dr. Shirley conceded, "but we've seen too many of our people killed and nothing done."

Details of the defense apparatus the Front intends to establish were not disclosed. But it was learned that black members of the coalition met in a private caucus yesterday to discuss the possibilities.

While Dr. Shirley did not give any specifics, he said the Front had decided that "if our students are going to protest, we are going to provide them with some protection."

Speaking of the killings at Jackson State, Dr. Shirley said, "There is no doubt in our minds that certain segments of police officialdom were told to kill someone at the slightest provocation." He did not elaborate.

Dr. Shirley said that the feeling in the coalition was that "if black folks have to die, they ought not to die so peacefully." However, he added that "while we will no longer go around preaching nonviolence, we will not preach violence, either."

Black self-defense groups are not new in the South. Several years ago, in Louisiana, blacks organized defense groups known as the Deacons for Defense and Justice. Some of the units still operate in smaller towns across the South, but it was pointed out that many organizers of those groups were never committed to nonviolent redress.

#### United Front Advocacy

The Front has not only long advocated nonviolence, but it is also composed of organizations that include many white members.

An investigation by this reporter and by Earl Caldwell and Jon Nordheimer of The

New York Times uncovered confusion among both black and white sources as to what led up to the killings of James Earl Green, 17 years old, a senior at a Jackson high school, and Phillip L Gibbs, 21, a married student at Jackson State College.

Jackson State is known in Mississippi as one of the least politically oriented black schools in the state. The students have been increasingly restless over racial grievances during the last year or two, but they have not been nearly so likely to demonstrate or break into violence as have black students at other Mississippi schools such as nearby Tougaloo College.

A band of black youths walking on Lynch Street, which bisects the Jackson State campus, began throwing stones at passing cars Wednesday night, 24 hours before the shooting. Whether the youths were students or nonstudents is disputed.

One black source said the first stone was thrown, more in mischief than in racial anger, at a parked car that happened to be occupied by a police officer out of uniform.

The source said that the officer dressed down the youths and asserted his authority as a policeman and that this angered the youths, prompting them to step up their rock throwing.

The same source said that later Wednesday night the youths dragged a white woman out of a car and ripped her clothing. This apparently enraged the white policemen who had been called to quell the disturbance.

The police said that they had no report of either incident.

The rock-throwing reportedly spread from Lynch Street to the Reserve Officers Training Corps Building of Jackson State, where windows were broken. This was the only hint of a political motivation in any of the violence.

Whatever the cause, several score city and state policemen were sent to Lynch Street Wednesday night and again Thursday night.

#### May Have Heard Guns

Thursday night began quietly, and reporters on the scene said they expected no trouble. Then something caused the rock throwing and shouting at the police to erupt again. One cause might have been the false rumor that Charles Evers, the black Mayor of Fayettee, Miss., and his wife, had been killed. Mr. Evers is a hero to the students of predominantly black Jackson State, and one of his daughters is a student there.

Both black and white sources agree that the rumor inflamed the students.

A dump truck near the campus was set afire, and when a city



fire truck came to put out the blaze, the firemen were harassed.

Jerry DeLaughter, a reporter for The Memphis Commercial-appeal, said he thought he heard guns being fired at the fire truck but could not be certain.

The Jackson State Band gave a concert Thursday night, and student couples began returning to the dormitories from that event before midnight. As young men left their dates at Alexander Hall, the women's dormitory, many of them lingered in the yard outside and shouted epithets at the police who were posted on Lynch Street.

What happened next is sharply disputed.

The police said afterward that snipers began firing at them from the dormitory and from somewhere across the street.

M. B. Pierce, chief of city detectives, said, "I can't say whether one specific incident prompted them to fire, but immediately prior to that time they had been receiving fire; there was certainly a tremendous amount of sniper fire."

No snipers were found or arrested. Among dozens of students interviewed, not one was found who said he had heard sniper fire.

Da Watha McIntyre, a black student from Vicksburg, Miss., was in her room in the dormitory when the police firing began. Her room is on the third floor of the five-story building and in the tier of rooms nearest the streets where the action occurred.

#### Heard No Firing

If snipers were shooting from the dormitory, their best vantage point would have been in the vicinity of Miss McIntyre's room. She said that neither she nor her roommate had heard any firing before the police guns opened up on the street.

She said she was watching from her window as the police marched up Lynch Street toward the group of about 100 students standing in the yard. She said her roommate told her, "Girl, you better get out of that window—they already said they're going to fire tear gas if something happens."

She said that as the police advanced, she could hear other girls in the dormitory yelling to the young men gathered below.

"I could hear the girls from the other windows saying, 'Please run, please run, you don't have anything to fight with,'" she said.

The students on the lawn began running frantically when the police opened fire, she said. "I stayed long enough to see one guy shot and fall to the ground," she said. "He just—he attempted to get up and he was shot again. He just fell back and laid there."

"A girl ran out of the dorm

and they shot her. I didn't know she was shot. I thought she fell because she was crying."

Karl Griffin, a husky, 21-year-old student from Jackson, said that he was one of the students in front of the dormitory when the police began shooting.

"A bottle splashed in the street," he said, "and they opened up." He said that the students in front of the dorm attempted to race into the large and most of them could pound but the group was too not make it.

#### 'They Open Up'

"We started to run," he said. "I was on the end and I noticed some of the guys were falling and that some were crawling."

He said they raced toward another entrance and "they [the police] were shooting all the while." He said that when he reached the dormitory "one boy was laying there on the floor in a pool of blood was just coming out of his mouth."

"We tried to get some towels and things to help this boy," he said. "When we started back outside, we saw that the ground was covered with people who had been shot."

Mr. Griffin said that just before the shooting started, a police officer held up a bullhorn to talk to the cluster of students.

"But I couldn't hear what he was saying," Mr. Griffin said. "I wasn't very far away, I could see his mouth moving, but I couldn't hear anything. Then he took the bullhorn down and the shooting started."

Warren Buxton, president of the student government association, said that he was directly in front of the police before the shooting started.

"I saw him raise the bullhorn," he said, "but he didn't say anything. He raised the horn and it got quiet. We were waiting for him to speak but the next thing you knew they were shooting."

At least three newsmen have said they heard what sounded like small arms fire directed at the police and newsmen before the police began shooting. None was able to say where the firing came from.

#### One Student's Story

Gregory Antoine, a 19-year-old student from Pass Christian, Miss., said he was in Lynch Street a few yards from the police when the incident began.

"Somebody said they heard a gunshot," he said, referring to the alleged nonpolice firing. "I didn't hear anything and I have good hearing. The next thing I knew, the sky lit up with gun blasts. When the firing stopped, the first thing they [the police] did was reach down and pick

up their shells. I heard that big fat highway patrolman, he got on his radio and said, 'You better send some ambulances, we killed some niggers.'"

Newsmen counted more than 140 bullet marks on the dormitory and on a dining hall across the street. The firing lasted about 30 seconds.

Several students said the police did nothing to help the wounded and dying. The National Guard, which had been stationed nearby, moved in with ambulances and gave first aid, they said.

It is widely believed in the black community that the police went to Lynch Street Thursday nights. How they happen.

Mr. Antoine told a newsman that he had heard a policeman tell his fellow officers before the shooting, "If they stick their heads out of the window, shoot 'em."

The students agree that neither the city police nor the National Guard did any shooting. About 500 Guardsmen were nearby but had not been called to the scene before the shooting broke out.

The State Highway patrolmen, who apparently did all the police shooting, had been called out both Wednesday and Thursday night. How they happened to be called to duty was not clear, and no one in the Highway Patrol would speak to newsmen about any aspect of the incident.

Mayor Russell C. Davis of Jackson, a racial moderate who appointed a biracial committee to investigate the shooting, said he telephoned Gov. John Bell Williams Wednesday night to alert him that a rock-throwing band of Negroes was creating a disturbance. He said he did not recall specifically asking for the help of the highway patrol.

"I advised the Governor we had trouble brewing and it might get worse," he said.

Chief of Detectives Pierce said that in racial confrontations inside the city it usually was the role of the Jackson police to take charge of the situation with the highway patrol used as a reserve force. At the incident at Jackson State, the roles were reversed with the highway patrol moving against the demonstrators while the city police played a secondary role, he said.

#### Armored Truck

He also confirmed that the city's armored truck, which was custom built for riot control and was capable of carrying 10 men and firing tear gas, was on the scene but was not used to break up the crowd.

"We've had lots of training and our boys are proud and disciplined," he said. "They don't do anything in a tense situation except when given a command."

He said that Jackson police-

men were under standing orders that in any situation when they are compelled to use weapons, they must fire one warning shot in the air and another in the ground before shooting at a person.

There seems to be little doubt in the white community here that the violence was caused by black snipers and that the overwhelming police response was proper.

The Jackson daily newspapers have emphasized the police insistence that snipers fired first.

The main headline in The Jackson Daily News in its report on the killings read, "Dormitory Sniper Blamed in Fracas."

Blacks take the position that the question of snipers is irrelevant and that the police response was out of proportion to any real or imagined provocation.

#### Mitchell to Meet

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 17 —

Justice Department aides said today that Attorney General Mitchell would meet tomorrow with Mayor Davis of Jackson and Dr. John A. Peoples Jr., president of Jackson State.

The Attorney General had previously scheduled visits to Greenwood and Cleveland on Tuesday, and decided to confer with Jackson officials about racial turmoil during the same trip.

Mr. Mitchell will arrive at Jackson about 3 P.M. tomorrow in an Air Force Jet. He will meet privately with Mayor Davis and Dr. Peoples at the Heidelberg Hotel in Jackson and will then fly to Greenwood for a dinner party that night with friends. He will speak to the Delta Council in Cleveland at 1:30 P.M. Tuesday.