

Jackson State Remembers in Anger

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JACKSON, Miss., May 14 —

It was near 10 P.M. and they walked slowly through the quiet Mississippi night holding candles that flickered in the darkness.

There were close to 2,000 or them at the start last night, and they came up Lynch Street and through the campus, retracing the path that the police used on this night a year ago.

They came to the front of Alexander Hall, the women's dormitory, and there they sat on the concrete street through the coldest Mississippi night in 60 years.

It was here at Alexander Hall on the campus of Jackson State College a year ago that the police fired shotguns and automatic rifles into a crowd of black students, killing two and wounding 11.

Now as the temperature hovered near 40 degrees, the students sat in the street huddled in blankets, sweaters and jackets and in their way said that they had not forgotten.

The Shooting Erupts

Many had been here on that night a year ago and watched as the shooting erupted, leaving James Earl Green, a 17-year-old senior at Jackson High School, and Phillip L. Gibbs, 21, a married student at Jackson State College, mortally wounded.

Gregory Antoine stood on the fringe of the mass of students who sat in the street. He stood and watched for a long time.

"Could you imagine everyone of them dead?" he said to no one in particular. "That's how it was. There were bodies laying all over."

Mr. Antoine, 20, is a tall, handsome junior from the small gulfport town of Pass Christian, Miss. He hopes to go on to medical school.

Last May he was standing just a few yards from the police when they opened fire. Afterwards, he was to tell; newsmen that he had heard no sniper fire and had seen no provocation.

"When they stopped firing," Mr. Antoine said then, "the first thing they 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.'"

Like the other students gathered, Antoine ignored the weather. The cold did not matter. He listened as the students began to sing. They sang freedom songs and then the ageless spirituals that their parents brought out of old Negro churches here.

Across the street he could see the spot where Mr. Gibbs

the students had erected, marked had been killed. There was another on the other side of the street where Mr. Green had been killed.

"Singing won't do it," Mr. Antoine said. "We've been singing for too long."

Anger and bitterness were in his voice, and the frustration that he felt came through, too, as he talked. He was not alone. The anger and the frustration are evident all over this campus of 5,000 students, most of whom are black.

They feel that little, if anything, has changed since last year, although a Presidential commission that investigated the shootings found them to be the result of an "unreasonable, unjustified reaction" by the police.

All this week the students have marked the anniversary of the tragedy with memorial services. But they have also been conducting workshops that they hope will eventually bring about some plan of action for solving their problems.

They say, though, that there is a long way to go; few are optimistic.

Through the week, their efforts were primarily directed at working together, hoping to build a unified student force. Once organized, they plan to reach out to the black community that surrounds the campus.

While they charted their course, they kept newsmen off their campus. They wanted to be left alone. They wanted no distractions.

State-Supported School

They invited a few outside speakers and they welcomed students from other colleges, including Kent University in Ohio, where four white students were killed last year by National Guardsmen.

A white professor from Kent who visited Jackson sympathized with the black students. "There is no comparison between Jackson State and Kent," he said. "Everything here is so different. I know what they are talking about."

Jackson State College is a state-supported school, and its existence depends almost solely on the generosity of the state of Mississippi. The students, for the most part, are the products of poor black families from across the state.

"They don't give a damn about us," the students say of the basically white power structure that controls the state. "They don't even want us here."

Charles Evers, the black Mayor of Fayette, Miss., and now a candidate for Governor spoke to the students in a memorial assembly.

He put the blame for what happened here a year ago on the President of the United States and on the Governor of Mississippi and the mayor of Jackson, and he told the students that to bring change they must become the system themselves.

"You can't talk it any more," Mr. Evers said, "You gotta act it."

He told the students that they had to become political activists.

"It is time for you to take over," he said.

He urged them to go out and organize and to tie themselves in with the blacks and the concerned white people of the larger community.

"You cannot be isolated from the community," he said. "You have got to be a part of it."

Meanwhile, student leaders were busy prodding their classmates, attempting to get them involved.

Sandra McClairne, the newly elected president of the student government, was one of the optimists.

"If anything can be done," she said, "we are going to do it. We're going to get these students together, one way or the other. If it takes spoon feeding, that is what we'll do."

In an editorial in a memorial issue of the student paper, Frank Melton, an associate editor, took the students to task for their attitude.

"We don't own a thing, we don't control anything and at the rate we're going, we never will" he wrote. "We should have at least learned that this is a time for seriousness."

The memorial issue contained articles on the shootings that had been published in newspapers in Mississippi and elsewhere in the country.

Mr. Melton said in his editorial that some of the articles were only half true, some had no truth at all and that none represented the whole truth. He said his assessment of the articles reflected the student attitude toward the press.

Pres Is Barred

The barring of the press was one of the most visible differences between the memorial services here and those at Kent State, where about 400 reporters covered the activities. The area papers here said little or nothing about the services.

In analyzing the problems that face Jackson State, Karl Griffin, a senior who is an economics major, conceded that student apathy was a problem. He said it was partly the result of the type of student that came to Jackson State.

"Nobory is turned away here," he said. "Jackson State has to take everyone."