

SNCC Is Losing Support of Atlanta Negroes

By Robert E. Baker
Washington Post Staff Writer

ATLANTA, Sept. 10—This was the week that Atlanta declared unconditional war on the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. By the end of the week, Black Power, SNCC style, was reeling from the assault.

SNCC's leader was in jail. The Mayor was a hero. The police force was riding a wave of praise. Negroes were revolting against SNCC's brand of revolt and were threatening SNCC with violence.

"A national conspiracy to destroy us," cried SNCC.

This first battle was a defeat for SNCC. But it was a battle and not the war.

The spark that set off the war came last Tuesday, the day after Labor Day, with a white-cop and Negro-suspect incident, the same kind of spark that has set off a score of riots in Northern cities over the past few summers.

But Atlanta's riot was different. It was smaller by far than the Watts and Harlem riots. No looting, no shooting, no Molotov cocktails.

And Mayor Ivan Allen Jr., a Southern liberal, went to the scene and mixed with the crowd, trying to talk to angry people. The police used no firearms, wielded no billy clubs.

And unlike the Northern riots, where agitators are generally blamed but unnamed, Atlanta put the finger of blame on Stokely Carmichael and his wild

signs of image-smashing. It had changed its own image. No longer was it the idealistic integrated youth movement struggling to change society's institutions to let the Negro in. Now it is virtually all black, with a Black Power slogan, apparently convinced that society's institutions must be brought to earth and rebuilt, and that each concession by the whites only delays the day.

In July, a SNCC sound truck toured the Vine City slum area where Hector Black, a white, Harvard-educated slum worker, has a following of Negro poor, blaring: "What has your white Jesus done for you today?"

In August, Carmichael led a Negro crowd that surrounded a policeman issuing a traffic ticket to an Alabama SNCC worker.

SNCC workers stormed the Atlanta Army Induction Center to protest the war in Vietnam.

"The Viet Cong never called me nigger," said one veteran of the war.

Last Tuesday, after policemen wounded a Negro who they said was a fleeing car-theft suspect, Carmichael was asked to organize a protest demonstration. He and

ten other SNCC workers arrived with a sound truck.

Speakers harangued the crowd with cries of Black Power and charges of police brutality. One speaker said a white cop had murdered a black brother. Another said the Negro was shot while he had his hands held up high. Another said he was shot while handcuffed.

A Negro policeman on duty at the scene arrested William Ware, a SNCC speaker, and the riot began as Ware was being hustled

off in a paddy wagon. Altogether, 1000 Negroes were involved. Three police cars were damaged, a dozen persons were injured and police fired tear gas before calm was restored.

Mayor Allen and Police Chief Herbert Jenkins immediately said Carmichael and SNCC were responsible. Nearly everybody else joined in.

Eugene Patterson, editor of the Atlanta Constitution and member of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, called SNCC a "violence-

prone little band of racists."

The Summit Leadership Conference of Negro leaders here warned Negroes to "refrain from cooperating with those who would make you the tools and victims of violence."

By Wednesday night, SNCC was on the run. In Vine City, a SNCC storage center with its pamphlets on Black Power, Vietnam and police brutality was burned after calls by Negroes threatening to burn them out.

In Summerhill, where the riot took place, Negroes formed "Good Neighbor Clubs" and people there tore up SNCC pamphlets and threw them back at the SNCC workers.

Carmichael talked back at a street rally on Thursday: "Racist Mayor Ivan Allen is framing the black people of this city . . . the revolt is against the bestiality of a racist Mayor and his corrupt police department . . ."

But only a few people gathered around. It appeared SNCC had suffered its greatest defeat.

But Atlanta wasn't through. Just before midnight Thursday, police arrested Carmichael at his office and charged him with inciting a riot and creating a disturbance. He was hauled off to jail.

To many Atlantans, Negr

and white, this was a mistake in tactics, fearing it may provide a cloak of martyrdom for Carmichael. To official Atlanta, this was a gamble worth taking.

SNCC vowed to fight on. Said its Cleveland sellers: "The only way this country can kill SNCC is to kill all black people."

White liberals, SNCC's avowed enemy now, began pointing out that, after all, SNCC was not responsible for bad housing, crowded schools, inadequate job opportunities and the fact that Atlanta leadership seems to respond only to crises.

"Only by our own default will any outside group gain control of the destiny of Atlanta," said the Atlanta Council on Human Relations.

So Atlanta, all out to defeat Carmichael and SNCC, was beginning to take another look at itself and the conditions that made a riot possible.



IVAN ALLEN

. . . Atlanta Mayor declares war on SNCC



STOKELY CARMICHAEL

Photos by UPI and AP

And unlike the Northern riots, where agitators are generally blamed but unnamed, Atlanta put the finger of blame on Stokely Carmichael and his wild SNCC crew who were on the scene as big as life.

The showdown between Atlanta and SNCC was bound to come. Atlanta is obsessed with its image of progress and SNCC is obsessed with smashing images.

That Atlanta is a city of comparative racial progress cannot be doubted. Such progress has been hammered out by its white power structure and its Negro leadership, operating through the Summit Leadership Conference coalition.

The city sends racial liberals, by all Southern and most Northern standards, to Congress. Its Negroes vote. Integrated high school football games are played without incident. Fourteen community schools for poor people are operating at night. Atlanta's antipoverty program has been praised as a model.

For a quarter of a century, the mayors of Atlanta—first William Hartsfield and now Ivan Allen—have been moderate to liberal, racially. Mayor Allen supported the 1964 Civil Rights Act and now supports the 1966 one.

Allen has a nearly daily habit of riding to work by way of Atlanta's slums, several relatively small pockets of shacks, and harassing his department heads to clean up streets. He had a study made of all available Federal aid and goes after every penny he can get.

Yet there is another side to Atlanta. Racial progress at times has been grudging. Eight Atlanta hospitals are under a Federal ultimatum to stop discrimination by next Thursday or face withdrawal of Federal funds.

Allen and Atlanta were able to swiftly clear a slum and build an \$18 million municipal stadium for the baseball Braves and football Falcons to clinch the status of a Big League city, but don't seem able to clear other slums and provide decent housing as swiftly or with the same determination.

For all its progress and shining image, Atlanta hasn't been able to reach down yet to the poor Negro who, as in other cities, has poor housing, poor jobs if jobs at all, and poor schools.

SNCC had been showing