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Racial violence closes Centennial



AFTERMATH Ken Stratton, counselor for the Champaign School District talks to black students at Centennial High School after a racial incident this morning. The white students were kept in the school until the buses carrying black students left.

By James Kroemer

Of The Courier A clash between white and black students at Centennial High School this morning left at least five students injured, and forced the closing of the school for the rest of the week. Reports said the confrontation was started by a large group of white students who were waiting on the school lawn when two busloads of black students arrived. Supt. Marshall K. Berner said he was told the group of white students formed around 8 a.m., was dispersed by administrators, then re-formed on the lawn at the south end of the school. Champaign juvenile officer Ken Griffin said there were two other incidents with racial overtones earlier this week, and there had been rumors that a confrontation might occur today. He said he was driving past the school this morning when the trouble started. The group of white students was estimated at nearly 200. One report said the black students might have thought the large group of whites was a walkout that had been discussed by students earlier as protest against opening lunch hour, and walked over to join. Others said the group of blacks from the two buses were trying to walk through the crowd to get into the school when the fighting broke out. Griffin said the two groups clashed and the fighting began. He immediately radioed Champaign police headquarters, then got out to help school officials break up the fight. He said the original clash lasted about five minutes. The students from both groups continued to mill about, and occasional clashes between smaller groups flared up. Approximately 25 Champaign police officers were dispatched to the school to help quell the disturbance, but by the time they arrived most of the physical confrontations had ended. Verbal battles continued, however, and police and newsmen came in for their share of abuse from angry students on both sides. Griffin said he helped put four students in ambulances. All were white, he said, but he did not know their names. One black girl was seen with a cut over her left eye, and blood stains on her blouse and jacket. She said she had been struck by a white student with a belt, but declined hospital treatment. Of the four students taken to hospitals, Chuck Langlois, 18, was the most seriously injured. He was taken to Carle Hospital with a possible broken nose and skull fracture. But hospital officials said he was treated and released. Others, all with mainly cuts on the head, were Gary Jelly, 16, taken to Carle, and Kent Weeks, 17, and Brad Wells, 16, both taken to Burnham Hospital. Berner said several teachers and staff members were struck but not seriously hurt. Shortly before noon today, Champaign police arrested four students on city charges of disorderly conduct. They said the four were seen breaking a window of an auto in the parking lot. Berner said the school would remain closed today and all day Friday. He said school was to closed at noon Friday anyway because of a half-day teachers' institute. "During the interim," he said, "students, parents, teachers and administrators will meet and try to establish better communications." Today's blow-up apparently had roots in a confrontation Monday that led to the suspension of two students, one white and one black. Both students were to have returned today. Officials said the black and white student fought after the black student was accused of harassing the white student's girlfriend. During the scuffle, the black student reportedly bit the white

the next day, friends of both boys reportedly got into a verbal altercation, though there was reportedly no physical confrontation. "The administration, which reportedly had trouble deciding if the school should stay open today, came in for criticism from several city and police officials, including Chief Harvey Shirley. "There's something wrong in the school system somewhere," Shirley said, obviously upset with the trouble. "You'd think they could control their students. I'll tell you, I for one do not like the idea of uniformed officers patrolling the halls of the schools in this city." There were fears that the trouble at Centennial might spread to other schools, including Jefferson Junior High, which is located next door to the high school. Several officers were reportedly sent to Central High School late this morning to be on hand in case trouble broke out there. Some officials also feared there would be more trouble in the predominantly black North End. Their fears partially materialized soon after the school closed today when a group of black youths reportedly chased a mailman out of the area.

May restore bond funds

Springfield (AP) The Illinois House Republican majority today voted in on May 7 as the target date for enactment of Gov. Richard B. Ogilvie's \$200 million antipollution bond program. This despite the fact that Senate majority Democrats cut \$120 million out of the program and House Democrats Wednesday objected to a speedup in House attempts to restore the

GI tells of calling artillery on 2 villages

Washington (AP) A former Marine corporal told an informal congressional hearing today he personally directed the destruction by artillery of two peaceful North Vietnamese villages which resulted in the death of at least 20 villagers. Former Army S. Sgt. Dan S. Nolley told the ad hoc panel he witnessed a handful of soldiers from Lt. William Callahan's old brigade systematically unemotionally shoot down 30 unresisting and children more than a year after the My Lai massacre. "I used everything I could to kill everything that was there. I called it in for several hours. I destroyed everything in that village." "About 20 or 30 people dropped to the ground and I only saw about one or two get up and run to shelters. . . . Therefore I estimated about 20 confirmed kills." Campbell said on the following day he spotted a similar village and directed a similar fire mission against it. "Again this was cleared through my battalion, through regiment, through division," he said.

N. Viets making peace advances

Paris (AP) North Vietnam offered today to open immediate negotiations with the United States on a date for an unconditional withdrawal of all American forces from South Vietnam. The proposal, made by Hanoi negotiator Xuan Thuy at the 11th weekly session of the Vietnam peace talks, was the first offer to "negotiate" a withdrawal date. Previously, North Vietnam and the Viet Cong have invariably demanded that the United States unilaterally set a date for its total withdrawal before negotiations can begin. Thuy said Hanoi and the Viet Cong were ready to open negotiations "today, tomorrow or any day of your choice" on fixing an unconditional American withdrawal date. These talks, she said, would be followed by negotiations on the security of withdrawing forces and the liberation of prisoners. At the same time, Viet Cong Foreign Minister Mrs. Nguyen Thuy Binh put forward what seemed like a trial balloon offer of an unconditional cease-fire with American forces. In her speech, Mrs. Binh at one point, as though possibly by oversight, omitted the phrase "opposed to the war." Her sentence, read out in context, thus became an unconditional proposal for a cease-

fire. At other points in her speech, Mrs. Binh also referred to the requirement for American troops also to "oppose the war" in order to benefit from the cease-fire offer. "At the very moment when the Nixon administration refuses to put an end to the war," she said, "the South Vietnamese population and its armed forces are prepared to cease firing on American soldiers who do not undertake any hostile action against them." At the end of the closed session, a spokesman asked Thuy whether Mrs. Binh's offer applied to North Vietnamese forces. Thuy replied that North Vietnamese forces were responsible for defending North Vietnam, but added: "Mrs. Binh's proposal concerns the liberation of the South Vietnamese people and the American forces. The proposal demonstrates the Vietnamese people's humanitarian feelings and sincere desire for peace." U. S. chief negotiator David K. E. Bruce, asked to comment on Mrs. Binh's statement, told newsmen: "She did not truly propose a cease-fire or anything else that was new."

Hirschfeld files bill to abolish higher board

Lindsay-Schaub News Service Springfield Rep. John Hirschfeld of Champaign made good on his promise to try to abolish the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Hirschfeld, Republican freshman legislator, put his bill in the House hopper Wednesday. A frequent critic of James B. Holderman, executive director of the higher board, Hirschfeld has charged that the higher board is not only failing to fulfill its purpose, but is duplicating already efficient educational governing processes in the state. A member of the higher education subcommittee of the House Education Committee, he leveled a blast against the higher board two weeks ago and promised a bill to abolish the board would be forthcoming. Hirschfeld has spent much of his time in the House on matters concerning the University of Illinois. He has come out in favor of fellow Champaign representative Charles Clabaugh's bill curtailing voting rights of U of I students. He has also voiced his opposition to the proposed expansion of the U of I College of Law,

IBI tactics in raids criticized

By Richard H. Icen Lindsay-Schaub News Service Springfield Commercial television crews should not have accompanied Illinois Bureau of Investigation agents in a raid last week in Southern Illinois, Gov. Richard B. Ogilvie said today. Critics of the IBI have seized on the raid as an example of how the agency's director, Mitchell W. Ware, is attempting to plan raids and arrests to attract headlines. Ogilvie told a press conference that he had discussed his distaste for the publicity practices of the state Department of Law Enforcement and Ware's boss. A bill to abolish the IBI was introduced Wednesday in the Illinois House by Rep. Roland Tipsworth, D-Taylorville. IBI agents would be reassigned to the State Police. Ogilvie said today he would veto the bill if it passed the General Assembly. Tipsworth said it is "very important that the law enforcement agency not be reassigned to political but also free from the mire of ulterior motives." "The agency and its methods must not themselves become the center of attention," Tipsworth said. "The IBI has failed this crucial test." The measure would give the state police detective section authority over investigators of general's office. It would expand this force to include 170 men and upgrade hiring and promotion

Death toll up in Brazil

Salvador, Brazil (AP) Light rain fell on rescue workers today as they dug through the rubble of collapsed houses in search of persons touched off by three days of torrential rains. Officials said 85 bodies have been found after the worst disaster in memory of this city in northeast Brazil. They predicted the death toll could go as high as 140. More than 2,000 persons were hospitalized with flood-related injuries, and an unknown number were missing.

Cool

Champaign County - Fair and cool tonight with scattered light frost and low of 36-40. Mostly sunny and a little warmer Friday, high 65 to 70. Wednesday's high 55, low 43, mean 49, overnight low 40, 7 a.m. temperature 40, with 80 per cent humidity. No precipitation. Monthly total 0.70 inches. Degree days to date, 5,565. Year ago 5,884. Record high, 86 in 1952, record low 32 in 1928. Sunset 7:45 p.m. Sunrise 6:55 a.m.

ILLINOIS FORECAST

Frost warning north and central portions tonight. Tonight fair and colder with frost likely north and central portions, chance of some scattered light frost south portion with lows 26 to 34 north and central and 33 to 40 south. Friday mostly sunny and a little warmer with highs in the 60s north and central and in the upper 60s and lower 70s south.

Today's Courier

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Lon Nol gives up

Phnom Penh (AP) Diplomatic sources reported today that aging Premier Lon Nol has given up efforts to form a new cabinet to replace the one that resigned April 20. The informants said that Lon Nol, who can work only an hour a day while recovering from a stroke, sent a letter to this effect to the chief of state, Cheng Heng, following the refusal of Deputy Premier Sisowath Sirik Matak to serve again. Earlier informants said four elder statesmen were trying to line up a Cabinet but that their progress was hindered by the premier's brother, Col. Lon Non. The statesmen were reported to have recommended Sirik Matak as one of the key Cabinet members.

Kotouc cleared of maiming

Fl. McPherson, Ga. (AP) A jury of seven career Army officers acquitted Capt. Eugene M. Kotouc today on charges that he maimed a prisoner after the 1968 raid on the South Vietnamese village of My Lai. The jury, all but one member of which were veterans of Vietnam, deliberated slightly more than an hour. Kotouc, an intelligence officer at the time of the assault, stood stiffly at attention as the verdict was read. He and relatives in the paneled military courtroom cheered the verdict. Outside the courtroom, surrounded by family, the round-faced balding officer told newsmen he would remain in the Army. "It's the best damned Army in the world, I'll tell you," said Kotouc. "I'm very happy," he said. "I'm pleased to be living in a country where we have a system of justice like the one we have here." "What can I say at this time? Today is my day to be happy and not critical. I'm going out to be with my family." Kotouc is the third American soldier to be acquitted on charges arising from the My Lai assault and its aftermath. Acquitted earlier were Corporal Ernest Medina, 34, Montrose, Colo. He is charged with murder and is awaiting trial at McPherson. Pretrial proceedings in his case are to begin late next month. Sgt. Charles Hutto, of Tallulah, La. His acquittal followed the conviction of Lt. William L. Calley Jr. on murder charges, arising from the assault. Still to be tried on criminal charges in the assault is Capt. Ernest Medina, 34, Montrose, Colo. He is charged with murder and is awaiting trial at McPherson. Pretrial proceedings in his case are to begin late next month.