

## PRESS RELEASE

# NAACP LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATIONAL FUND

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### THURGOOD MARSHALL CALLS FOR CLOSER COORDINATION BETWEEN CIVIL RIGHTS ORGANIATIONS

NEW YORK. -- Thurgood Marshall called for closer coordination between groups now active in the civil rights field, lest they injure their common purpose with "duplication, wasted effort, and inter-organizational rivalries."

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund boss was speaking on Thursday to an interracial audience, including many recent Freedom Riders, at the 18th Annual Race Relations Institute at Fisk University in Nashville, Tenn.

Marshall praised the Freedom Rides, stating that "the demonstrations helped expose the evils of segregation in American society." He called the attack on segregation in interstate travel the most important new development in the civil rights battle.

He pointed out, however, that in Jackson, Miss., where most of the freedom ride activity was centered, 5 organizations were operating with little coordination or contact between them. He warned that such unorganized activity can hurt the civil rights battle, "for southern state attorneys general are meeting regularly, coordinating their activities, and have plenty of money. My good sense tells me," he said, "that when unorganized demonstrations meet organized opposition, look out."

Marshall offered the services of the Legal Defense Fund for any Freedom Rider convicted in the recent demonstrations, pointing out that his lawyers had filed federal suits in Montgomery, Ala. and Jackson, Miss., asking the District Court to enjoin local officials from enforcing segregation of interstate and intrastate travel.

After Marshall's speech, he asked for suggestions from the floor concerning greater efforts toward coordination, pointing out that his remarks should not be construed to indicate opposition to any group,

"for there is room in the field for everyone, as long as they are working toward the same goal."

Several of the Freedom Riders, including John Lewis, who recently were released from jail in Jackson, Miss., indicated that there was confusion involved in the legal advice they had received in Jackson.

"If you need help, here is my telephone number," Marshall stated as the audience roared.

"Many of the students feel that the older organizations seek to control their efforts," the Legal Defense Fund chief pointed out. "We don't wish to control the efforts of any student group. Remove this fear from your mind. We only want to help. But we must have coordination to be effective."

In an evening session, Marshall reviewed the accomplishments of the Legal Defense Fund during the last year. He said that "though I am not frustrated, I am by no means satisfied."

He pointed out that massive resistance has been buried but it has been replaced by token compliance. As illustration, he cited the integration of 4 out of 55,000 Negro children in public schools in New Orleans. "And this is typical," he said.

"The good people in this country are buying gradualism," he said, "and some Negroes are buying it, too. The good people must represent the conscience of this country, and Negroes must make the move toward desegregation. Negroes aren't doing this. If they don't, most people in this country will think Negroes don't want their constitutional rights."

As for recent charges of "aggravation and provocation" against the Freedom Riders, Marshall stated that "if you don't push, what happens? You're just as bad off as before, unless you can prove that by doing nothing you can control the other side."

"We just can't sit on the sidelines and cheer the Freedom Riders," he stated. "We must participate ourselves; if not in the freedom rides, in some other activity which helps break down racial segregation."

"What do Negroes want? he asked. "They want all their constitutional rights -- and now."