

Rebellion in Newark

munity leaders "to act with dispatch to putting to rest false reports that sometimes touch off violent transgressions."



The Occupation

"AN OBVIOUS open rebellion," asserted Governor Hughes after his tour of Newark at 5 A.M. Friday. From that announcement until Monday afternoon, the black community was under military occupation. More than 3000 National Guardsmen were called up Friday morning from the surrounding white suburbs and southern Jersey towns. Five hundred white state troopers arrived at the same time. By mid-afternoon Friday they were moving in small convoys throughout the city, both clockwise and counter-clockwise, circling around seven parts of the ghetto. Guardsmen were moving in jeeps or small open trucks, usually led or followed by carloads of troopers or Newark police. Bayonets were attached to the Guards' .30-caliber M-1 rifles or .30-caliber carbines, which they carried in addition to .45-caliber pistols. Personnel carriers weighing as much as eleven tons,

and trucks mounted with machine guns, appeared here and there among the jeeps and police cars. The presence of these vehicles was designed, according to Governor Hughes, to build the confidence of the Negro community.

Confidence in what? Hughes defined the issues over and over in television, radio, and press interviews, as well as in meetings with community leaders. "The line between the jungle and the law might as well be drawn here as any place in America," he announced shortly after arriving. On Saturday he talked again of the line between society and the jungle, adding that the Negroes "had better choose sides" because the "side of law and order has joined this to the finish."

Certainly the police and much of white America agreed. In the carrying out of the Governor's week-end definitions and policies at least 20 Negroes died, nearly all from police shooting, another 1000 were injured and 1000 jailed; as many as 100 Negro-owned businesses were attacked by police and troopers; and hundreds of apartments were fired into along the ghetto's streets. The average white citizen was convinced that these things had to be done in order to halt what Governor Hughes called a "criminal insurrection." The troops, the public was told, had to be brought in to put an end to the looting, burning, and sniping. *But did the troops really carry out these purposes?*

The police themselves reported that looting was on the decline when the troops arrived: "the police radio

which put out alarms at a frantic pace Thursday night," said Saturday's *Newark News*, "was less hectic last night, but a majority of calls were for sniping." Most of the looting was at an end. When Hughes spoke of the "funeral of the city" Friday morning, he referred to the visible fact that most of the ghetto's stores were destroyed by that time. Certainly, this was true of those stores that contained merchandise that could be carried away. Nearly all the damage had been done in twelve hours Thursday night. If the troops had been concerned to prevent looting, they could have grouped themselves so as to protect the business districts downtown and in white neighborhoods. If they had wanted to protect the remaining ghetto stores, they could have stood in small teams with machine guns in front of these stores, but the fact is that they were patrolling aggressively against *people* inside the ghetto.

If the troops were supposed to prevent stores from burning, they were not needed. A motoring caravan of troops cannot prevent people from setting a building on fire, nor are troops equipped to fight blazes already set. Nor could they do much to shield firemen from missiles that are thrown, dropped, or fired. Moreover, the facts show that arson was insignificant in the Newark riot. Although the fire department reported 110 alarms from Thursday afternoon to Friday morning, it later admitted that most of the alarms were false; and a drive through the city on Friday morning showed evidence of no more than twenty-five

fires throughout the ghetto. There was a clear reason for this: most of the houses are wood-frame firetraps, and Negroes live above most of the stores that were looted. Burning would have risked the lives and property of black people. At the end of the riot, the fire department figures showed only ten "major" fires.

But the major justification for the use of troops, especially as looting and burning diminished, was the need to counter the attacks of snipers. There were 3000 National Guardsmen, 1400 Newark police, 500 state troopers, and several hundred firemen who were standing and riding in the open during the riot. They were exposed, it was claimed, to a "withering sniper fire." With a pistol, or certainly with a rifle, a single amateur sniper could have killed several policemen. But only one policeman and one fireman were killed, both *after* the troops were brought in. The circumstances of their deaths are unclear. Both were described as sniper victims, although they were caught in the middle of police fire, and no one knew even the direction from which the snipers were shooting. But even if we assume they were sniper victims, two killings from Wednesday to Monday, in an area swarming with troops, suggest that the sniper fire from Negroes was far more limited than was claimed.

Life published an interview with a sniper who said that few whites were killed because the snipers were shooting in the air in order to distract the police from looters. If this was so, the officials who reported direct and heavy fire on police cars, ambulances, fire trucks,

jeeps, and armored cars were being less than accurate about a very important issue. A shot in the air can be distinguished from withering fire aimed at human targets or vehicles.

No snipers were killed. No one was arrested in the act of sniping. Many people in the community knew that guns and ammunition were around, but only a tiny handful of people did any shooting. Some of these were isolated individuals, some operated in small groups. However, it must be emphasized that it was impossible for the snipers to initiate the riot. In the judgment of those who were present at the crucial incident on Wednesday, July 12, none of the people who could be considered "organized snipers" were even on the scene. They only began to emerge on Thursday after large numbers of young people had made their decision to riot. It is entirely possible that the riot would have been over if the troops had not entered the community on Friday afternoon. The snipers were the pretext used by officials to commit thousands of violent acts against the whole Negro community. If the Governor was concerned about snipers, people in the ghetto said, then he should not have sent in the troops who served as targets.

But the troops came flooding in. John V. Spinale, an assistant to the Governor, stated that they had been instructed to act with the "utmost restraint" and to "shoot only when necessary, primarily in self-defense." The reality was very different.

In the heavily looted Clinton Hill area (to take one example), the troops arrived early Friday afternoon. Parking their tank, armored cars, and jeeps in a lot ordinarily used by shoppers, the troops made their way up and down the avenue brandishing rifles and bayonets. Hundreds of people were on the street before they came, mostly people looking in wonder at the shattered remains of stores. When the troops arrived, however, young people and men came to the avenue in larger numbers than before. To show the troops that securing the area was impossible by military means, several youths set fire to a store the soldiers were "guarding." Several fire engines and troop reinforcements rushed to the scene, drawing thousands of people onto the street. Periodically squads of soldiers would march down the street driving people away with outstretched bayonets. But when the clearance was over, the people returned.

As dusk came, about fifty Guardsmen and troopers took up positions on the four corners of Clinton and Hunterdon. Several of them stood in the center of the street directing pedestrian and automobile traffic. Along Hunterdon Street people lined the stoops and stood in front of their homes. About thirty men, mostly young, stayed around the corner, alternately talking and arguing with the troops. The troops were all white, a fact that was not lost on one person who shouted that her son was in Vietnam.

At one point a car bearing Newark police drove down Hunterdon. A curse was uttered at the car by a

man on the stoops, and the policeman slammed to a halt. The driver backed the car up to where the man was standing, stopped, got out, and approached the man wrapping the leather cord of the nightstick around his wrist. "What did you say? What did you say, Mister?" the club grazing back and forth over the motionless black face. "Do you want this over your head? Well, get back inside. Do you hear me, get back inside. Get inside your house!" The policeman's eyes were bulging and his voice was trembling. The man backed up to his porch, the policeman backed up to his car. Two hundred people had formed into a quiet audience.

When the police drove away, the young men went back up Hunterdon to taunt the Guardsmen. The soldiers marched toward them, bayonets pointing. The kids kept coming, a few spreading out into the street or behind the cars. Face to face, ten soldiers with guns against twenty-five kids with two bottles. The Guardsmen pushed the kids back with their bayonets. One bayonet went too far through the shirt and the victim turned around screaming into the soldier's face. Quickly the troops circled around him, and the rest of the kids moved into a wider circle. With the bayonet jabbing his skin, the young man continued yelling. Down the street troopers rushed with pistols and clubs swinging. The soldiers opened their circle to allow the trooper to crack the captured one across the back. Two blows and he fell to the street, and twisted in a convulsion. Rocks and bottles flew at the

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troops and four black men ran up to the writhing body. They sat on the victim to prevent his body from snapping. At the corner all the Guardsmen were in a square formation pointing their rifles at people along the street and in their houses. They marched around in a tight step. The people retreated into homes and alleys. The street fell silent except for the soldiers' footfalls. A neighborhood worker, encouraged by the police to cool people off, put down his bullhorn and swore. "If they're going to do this, fuck it. I can't do anything." After a moment he picked up the bullhorn and started speaking: "Please, people, take your little children inside, take your children inside. Someone is going to get hurt out here."

IV



The Terror

WE WILL NEVER know the full story of how these troops and the police hurt the black people of Newark. But there is now sufficient evidence to establish the main features of their behavior.

The military forces called in to put down the black rebellion were nearly all white. Virtually none of the 250 Negro Newark policemen took part directly in the violent suppression. Only 1.2 per cent of the New Jersey National Guard is black and, according to columnists Evans and Novak on July 22, the organization is "highly social in nature—much like the local chapter of the Moose or Elks. Few Negroes ever try to join." There are five Negroes among 1200 New Jersey state troopers, and many of the white majority are from conservative South Jersey towns where the troopers act as local police. It was understandable that these men would bring into the ghetto

racist attitudes that would soon support outright sadism. A captain who commanded helicopter-borne infantry told a *New York Times* reporter on July 14:

They put us here because we're the toughest and the best . . . If anybody throws things down our necks, then it's shoot to kill, it's either them or us, and it ain't going to be us.

On Saturday the 15th, troopers charged up the stairs of the Hayes Homes, shouting, "Get back, you black niggers!" There was shooting up each flight of stairs as they charged. Later, an officer pumped more than thirty bullets into the body of a fallen teen-ager while shouting, "Die, bastard, die!" A Guardsman asked a witness, "What do you want us to do, kill all you Negroes?" A Newark policeman chipped in, "We are going to do it anyway, so we might as well take care of these three now."

These are not isolated examples, but a selection from innumerable incidents of the kind that were reported throughout the riots. From them, we can draw three conclusions about the soldiers and the police.

Trigger-Happiness Because of Fear, Confusion and Exhaustion: Many of the troops were assigned to round-the-clock duty. During that duty they were under conditions of extreme tension. They were kept moving about by incidents or reports of looting, burning and shooting. They drove at speeds of more

than 50 miles per hour; they ran continually along the streets after people. They were surrounded by unfamiliar and hostile faces. There were no foxholes or other shelters from attack. The troopers and Guardsmen knew little or nothing about the terrain. They often were unable to tell the direction of shooting. The *New York Daily News* of July 20 summarized:

Reporters in the riot area feared the random shots of the guardsmen far more than the shots from snipers . . . Once a frantic voice shouted [over the radio], "Tell those Guardsmen to stop shooting at the roof. Those men they're firing at are policemen." . . . "They were completely out of their depth," said one reporter. "It was like giving your kid brother a new toy. They were firing at anything and everything."

In a report on police behavior for the *New York Times* July 20, Peter Khiss quoted the police radio on Sunday night to this effect:

Newark police, hold your fire! State police, hold your fire! . . . You're shooting at each other! National Guardsmen, you're shooting at buildings and sparks fly so we think there are snipers! Be sure of your targets!

Khiss adds: "After these appeals, there seemed to be a decrease in sniper alarms."

General and Deliberate Violence Employed Against

the Whole Community: On Friday night 10 Negroes were killed, 100 suffered gunshot wounds, 500 were "treated" at City Hospital, and at least as many were arrested or held. By Sunday night another 10 were dead, at least 50 more had gunshot wounds, and another 500 were in jail. People were stopped indiscriminately in the streets, shoved, cursed, and beaten and shot. On Thursday, Joe Price, a veteran of the Korean war and an employee of ITT for fifteen years, was beaten on the head, arms, stomach and legs by five Newark policemen inside the Fourth Precinct. He had protested police harassment of neighborhood teen-agers earlier in the day. Later, Jerry Berfet, walking peacefully on a sidewalk with two women, was stopped by the police who told him to strip, ripped off his clothes, and forced him to run naked down the street. No charges were entered against either man. A Negro professional worker was arrested while driving on a quiet street after the 10 P.M. curfew, beaten unconscious, and then forced to perform what his lawyer describes as "degrading acts" when he revived in the police station.

Troops fired freely and wildly up streets and into buildings at real or imagined enemies.

On Saturday before darkness fell, three women were killed in their homes by police fire. Rebecca Brown, a twenty-nine-year-old nurse's aide, was cut nearly in half as she tried to rescue her two-year-old child by the window. Hattie Gainer, an elderly twenty-year resident of her neighborhood, was shot at

her window in view of her three grandchildren. Eloise Spellman was shot through the neck in her Hayes apartment with three of her eleven children present.

A child in Scudder Homes lost his ear and eye to a bullet. A man was shot while fixing his car as police charged after a crowd. When another man told police he was shot in the side, the officer knocked him down and kicked him in the ribs.

The most obvious act of deliberate aggression was the police destruction of perhaps a hundred Negro-owned stores Saturday and Sunday. One witness followed police down Bergen Street for fifteen blocks watching them shoot into windows marked "soul brother." Another store owner observed a systematic pattern. On his block three white-owned stores were looted Thursday night; no Negro stores were damaged. There were no other disturbances on his block until well after midnight Saturday when he received calls that troopers were shooting into the Negro-owned stores or were breaking windows with the butts of their guns.

Was it because the police hated black people indiscriminately? Was it because the police wanted to teach middle-class Negroes that they must take responsibility for what "criminal" Negroes do? Or because the police wanted to prevent Negro-operated stores from gaining an advantage over the looted white merchants? Whatever the reason, the result was summed up clearly by Gustav Heningburg, a Negro who is a lay official of the Episcopal Church. He

told the Newark *News* of July 17 that "the non-rioting Negroes are more afraid of the police than the rioters" because the police were retaliating instead of protecting.

Governor Hughes said on Sunday that all reports of excessive behavior would be handled by the troopers' own investigative unit. If charges were proved true, "and after all the police are only human," the Governor was sure that "justice will be done." As for himself, "I felt a thrill of pride in the way our state police and National Guardsmen have conducted themselves."

Cold-Blooded Murder: An evaluation of the deaths so far reported suggests that the military forces killed people for the purposes of terror and intimidation. Nearly all the dead were killed by police, troopers, and Guardsmen. The "crimes" of the victims were petty, vague, or unproven. None were accused by police of being snipers; only one so far is alleged to have been carrying a gun. Several of the dead were engaged in small-scale looting at most. The majority were observers; ten, in fact, were killed inside or just outside their homes. Many were killed in daylight. Nearly all the dead had families and jobs; only a few had previous criminal records. Seven of the dead were women, two were young boys. Of those known to be dead, 5 were killed between Thursday night and dawn Friday: 1 in a hit-and-run car, 1 allegedly shot by mistake by a sniper, 3 others

by Newark police. On Friday and Friday night 9 were slain; 9 between Saturday afternoon and late Sunday; 1 on Monday night. All but one or two of these seemed to be police victims.

The July 28th issue of *Life* magazine carried a photo-essay on the death of William Furr. On Saturday afternoon Furr and a few others were carrying cases of beer out of a store that had been looted the previous night. Furr appears in the *Life* photos in the act of looting. The *Life* reporter even shared a can of stolen beer, and was warned by Furr to "get rid of it and run like hell" if the police appeared. Suddenly the police raced up with their sirens off, jumped out of the car with shotguns. Furr, according to the *Life* article, had "part of a six-pack in his left hand." With the *Life* photographer's camera shutter snapping, William Furr ran halfway down the block before two shots from behind dropped him. He died almost immediately, and a twelve-year-old boy, Joe Bass, was severely wounded while standing at the end of the block. A few minutes before Furr had told the *Life* reporter, "When the police treat us like people instead of treating us like animals, then the riots will stop."

The killing of nineteen-year-old James Rutledge will not soon be forgotten in Newark. On Sunday afternoon, he was inside a looted tavern with several other teen-agers hiding from the fire of troopers and police. According to a witness, the troopers burst into the tavern shooting and yelling, "Come out you

dirty fucks." James Rutledge agreed to come out from behind a cigarette machine. He was frisked against the wall. Then:

The two troopers . . . looked at each other. Then one trooper who had a rifle shot Jimmy from about three feet away . . . While Jimmy lay on the floor, the same trooper started to shoot Jimmy some more with the rifle. As he fired . . . he yelled "Die, you dirty bastard, die you dirty nigger, die, die . . ." At this point a Newark policeman walked in and asked what happened. I saw the troopers look at each other and smile . . .

The trooper who shot Jimmy remained . . . took a knife out of his own pocket and put it in Jimmy's hand.

Shortly after three men came in with a stretcher. One said, "they really laid some lead on his ass" . . . He asked the state trooper what happened. The trooper said, "He came at me with a knife" . . .

[We remained where we were] for about fifteen minutes, then I got up and walked to the window and knocked a board down. — and — came over to the window. One state trooper and two National Guardsmen came to the window and said, "Come out or we are going to start shooting" . . .

A National Guardsman said, "What do you want us to do, kill all you Negroes?" I saw a Newark policeman say: "We are going to do it anyway, we might as well take care of these three now." I saw the Newark policeman go over to —, point a pistol at his head and say: "How do you feel?" Then he started laughing . . .

For anyone who wonders whether this is an ex-

aggerated youthful horror story, the photographs of James Rutledge's chest and head are available from his mother. There were forty-five bullet holes in his head and body.

Clearly the evidence points to a military massacre and suppression in Newark rather than to a two-sided war. This was not only the conclusion of the Negroes in the ghetto but of private Newark lawyers, professors of constitutional law and representatives of the state American Civil Liberties Union. They have charged that the police were the instrument of a conspiracy "to engage in a pattern of systematic violence, terror, abuse, intimidation, and humiliation" to keep Negroes second-class citizens. The police, according to the lawyers' statement, "seized on the initial disorders as an opportunity and pretext to perpetrate the most horrendous and widespread killing, violence, torture, and intimidation, not in response to any crime or civilian disorder, but as a violent demonstration of the powerlessness of the plaintiffs and their class . . ."

Thus it seems to many that the military, especially the Newark police, not only triggered the riot by beating a cab-driver but then created a climate of opinion that supported the use of all necessary force to suppress the riot. The force used by police was not in response to snipers, looting, and burning, but in retaliation against the successful uprising of Wednesday and Thursday nights.

The action of the troops was supported by civilian

authority, which turned the legal and judicial process into an anti-riot weapon. "New Jersey will show its abhorrence of these criminal activities and society will protect itself by fair, speedy and retributive justice," the Governor declared. Not counting hundreds of Negroes swept up by police, held for hours, and released without being charged, 1400 altogether were arrested and detained in jail. Of 829 adults and 144 juveniles interviewed in jail by lawyers during the riot period, more than 80 per cent were charged with looting. Nearly all the other arrests were for minor offenses such as curfew violation. Almost none were for shooting, bombing or arson.* Only 85 "dangerous weapons" were confiscated, according to final police reports, and of these only 51 were guns. About 675 of the arrested people—not quite half of them—were reported to have criminal records. But *Life* magazine

* An earlier, preliminary, breakdown of arrests revealed the following: 473 arrested for breaking and entering (looting, larceny); 50 for curfew violation; 47 for possession or receiving stolen goods; 40 for concealed weapons or possession of weapons; 12 for assault and battery on police, troopers, or guards; 14 for assault and battery (presumably against civilians); 9 for disorderly conduct; 14 for loitering; 3 for failure to give good account of self; 3 for resisting arrest; 3 for resisting arrest after curfew; 1 for unlawfully eluding police; 3 for auto theft; 3 for malicious damage; 3 for possession of marijuana; 2 for failure to obey a policeman; 1 for shooting wife; 1 for impersonating a member of the armed forces; 1 as a material witness; 1 for possession of a gas bomb; 1 for attempted armed robbery; 1 for discharging weapon; 3 for attempted arson; 1 for arson.

called this figure "somewhat loaded" since city officials admitted that in half the 675 cases the "criminal records" consisted of arrests but not convictions. The evidence is that most of the prisoners were adults with jobs and families; holding them for several days created serious problems for each.

High bail prevented prisoners from being able to get out of jail. Minimum bond was set at \$1,000 for curfew and loitering charges, \$2,500 for looting, \$5,000 for possession of a gun, \$10,000 to \$25,000 for other weapons charges. Chief Magistrate James Del Mauro, replying to criticism of the high bail cost, declared in the July 14 *Newark News*: "If they can't afford it, let them stay in jail." As Henry diSuvero of the state American Civil Liberties Union pointed out, this had the effect of detaining people before a judicial proceeding could determine their guilt or innocence. It also kept them out of their homes, and away from their jobs.

During this mass detention no one with the exception of about 150 juveniles, was fed until Saturday and many not until Sunday, even when food was brought to the jails by friends and relatives of the prisoners. As the court pens filled up, prisoners were sent to the Newark Street Jail (condemned as uninhabitable in the 1930s), federal detention facilities, a state prison, and the armory where Hughes and the troops were headquartered. Some of the prisoners were beaten in their cells.

Prisoners were not permitted to receive visitors or make telephone calls for legal assistance, nor were they allowed to notify friends and relatives. The right to preliminary hearings was denied. This right, provided for in New Jersey law, compels the prosecutor to demonstrate to the judge there is "probable cause" to hold the accused; it permits the defendant to discover the state's case against himself as well. Thus, merely the word of the arresting officer became sufficient to hold people without determination of probable cause.

Municipal Court judges started arraigning prisoners at round-the-clock sessions. One prisoner passed through court every three minutes, according to the *Star-Ledger* of July 16. Pleas by attorneys for the reduction of bail were ignored except in rare instances.

Starting Monday two Grand Juries heard felony charges and returned, by week's end, some 500 indictments. With the handing down of an indictment, which itself is a finding of probable cause, the prisoners lost forever their right to preliminary hearing. Thus, by agreeing to rush presentations, the Grand Jury acted more as a rubber stamp for the prosecutors' requests than a body to ensure an objective check on evidence. The ACLU charge that Hughes was using the judiciary as a weapon to restore order is supported by this post-riot statement the Governor gave to *US News & World Report*:

The full measure of the criminal law should be exacted in these cases. I have insisted on that from the beginning. I went to the extent of arranging with the appropriate courts for the immediate impaneling of grand juries and presentation of cases to them.

But the attitude of the courts was perhaps better indicated on July 21 when Newark's Chief Magistrate Del Mauro rejected the attempt by cab-driver Smith's attorney, Harris David, to file criminal complaints against the two police who arrested Smith. According to the *Times*, Del Mauro's words were:

In these times of stress, with all the havoc and destruction, a policeman killed, a fireman killed, more than twenty people killed and \$15 million of damage, *I am not accepting a complaint against the police.*

It was this particular man, if I recall from reading the papers, that originally caused the rioting, when he was arrested and rumors swept through the colored community that he had been killed. He has been paroled . . . he is alive and there is nothing wrong with him.

"Mr. Smith," the *Times* reported the next day, "wore a six-inch-wide bandage wrapped tightly around his rib cage" and declined any comment on the advice of his lawyer.

One of the riot's lessons was that the white community, at the highest official levels, gave support to

this entire military operation. The Governor stated the necessity of "drawing the line" for all America in Newark; the Governor commented he was "thrilled" by the performance of the troops; the Governor dismissed police brutality charges as "standard operating procedure." City officials were just as implicated. The *Washington Post* of July 24 reported: "There was massive destruction of property—but no deaths—until Newark Mayor Hugh J. Addonizio instructed the city police to use any means necessary to put down the riot . . ." During the height of bloodshed, when Richard Taliaferro was shot in the back on South 8th Street Friday night (the police claimed Taliaferro exchanged shots with them), the Mayor told a *Newark News* reporter: "That's a good show of force in quick time." From the streets to the court room, Negroes' rights were secondary.

In the aftermath of the riot it became clear that substantial citizens of Newark were aware of the magnitude of the police brutality issue. A Committee of Concern, including the Episcopal Bishop, the dean of Rutgers' Newark branch and the dean of Rutgers' Law School, the vice-presidents of the Prudential Insurance Company and of Newark's largest department store, declared that one of the major causes of the riot was the feeling among Negroes that the police are the "single continuously lawless element operating in the community." The solid citizens agreed that this Negro view had merit; indeed, they

said "independent observers" agreed with it. Since their statement implied a prior awareness of the problem, the question could be asked why they had taken no action previously to solve the problem. If *Life* magazine could express worry that the Negro community did not turn in the snipers in its midst, would it not be proper to worry why the white community never turned in the violent element in its midst?

The riot made clear that if something is not done about the police immediately, the fears of white society will be transformed into reality: whites will be facing a black society that will not only harbor, but welcome and employ snipers. The troops did not instill fear so much as a fighting hatred in the community. Many people, of every age and background, cursed the soldiers. Women spit at armored cars. Five-year-old kids clenched bottles in their hands. If the troops made a violent move, the primitive missiles were loosed at them. People openly talked of the riot turning into a showdown and, while a great many were afraid, few were willing to be pushed around by the troops. All told there were more than 3000 people arrested, injured, or killed; thousands more witnessed these incidents. From this kind of violence, which touches people personally, springs a commitment to fight back. By the end of the weekend many people spoke of a willingness to die.

Jimmy Cannon was one such person. He was the uncle riding with ten-year-old Eddie Moss when the

Guardsmen shot through the car and the young boy's head was ripped open. Jimmy put the car, blood, bullet holes and all, into a private garage as proof of what happened. Then he was beaten on the street-corner by police who found him there. Jimmy learned how to fight during four years in the Marines. "I don't hold any grudges against you," he told a white person who interviewed him. "I'm just for rights, not for violence. This thing is wrong. I've faced a lot of things, but this is bad, and I just don't care anymore. I am to the point where I just don't care."

By Sunday the crisis was nearing a new stage. If the occupation of Friday and Saturday was going to continue, the community would have started to counterattack in a real way. "Why should we quit," one kid wanted to know, "when they got twenty-five of us and only two of them are dead?"

Perhaps some fear of this trend led Governor Hughes to pull the troops out Monday morning. Perhaps he could see what another three days of occupation would bring. Perhaps, on the other hand, he had no choice. The troops were tired, riots were spreading to other cities of the state, a railroad strike was beginning, and there were all those political engagements awaiting a man with large ambitions. It may also be true that the Governor knew the situation all along but knew as well that 90 per cent of New Jersey is white and frightened. In this view, the Governor took a tough line of support for the troops

at the beginning so that withdrawal would be politically acceptable to his white constituency later on.

As late as Sunday night a top state police official was concerned that his men would consider him "chicken" if a pullout was discussed openly. Hughes gave another hard-line speech at a 4 A.M. press conference only hours before the troops left the city.

Does it matter what Richard Hughes believed? Whatever it was, the consequences are what matter finally. The average view of Negroes as "criminals" to be suppressed was reinforced throughout the suburbs of New Jersey. The Negro community learned more deeply why they should hate white people. The police remain a protected and privileged conservative political force, the only such force licensed to kill. With all this coming to pass, few people were joyous as the troops went home on Monday.

V



From Riot to Revolution?

THIS COUNTRY is experiencing its fourth year of urban revolt, yet the message from Newark is that America has learned almost nothing since Watts.

Of primary importance is the fact that no national program exists to deal with the social and economic questions black people are raising. Despite exhaustive hearings over the last five years on problems of manpower and unemployment, anti-poverty programs and the urban crisis, there is no apparent commitment from national power centers to do something constructive.

During the height of the rioting in Newark and Detroit, Congress discussed gun-control laws, voted down with chuckles a bill for rat extermination, and President Johnson set up a commission to do more investigating of the crisis. The main emphasis of governmental remedial programs seems likely to be on

ending the riots rather than dealing with the racial and economic problem. President Johnson made this clear in his televised July 28 address on the "deeper questions" about the riots:

Explanations may be offered, but nothing can excuse what [the rioters] have done. There will be attempts to interpret the events of the past few days, but when violence strikes, then those in public responsibility have an immediate and a very different job: *not to analyse but to end disorder.*

When it moves past riot-control to discussion of social programs, Congress is likely to lament the failure of past civil rights, welfare, and anti-poverty programs, rather than focus on the need for new ones. As with foreign aid, white politicians (and their voters) tend to view aid to Negroes as a form of "charity" to be trimmed wherever possible, or as a means of eliminating surplus food, or a way to enlarge urban patronage roles. Negroes more than likely will be instructed to "help themselves."

But unlike the Italians, Irish, and Jews, black Americans have always faced a shrinking structure of economic opportunity in which to "help themselves." If sheer effort were the answer, the black people who chopped cotton from dawn to sunset would today be millionaire suburban homeowners. Self-help does not build housing, hospitals, and schools. The cost of making cities livable and institutions responsive is greater than any sum this country has ever been willing to spend on domestic reform. In addition, the very

act of spending such money would disrupt much of the status quo. Private interests, from the real estate lobby and the construction unions to the social work profession, would be threatened. Urban political machines would have to make space for black political power. Good intentions tend to collapse when faced with the necessity for massive spending and structural change.

This political bankruptcy leads directly to the use of military force. When citizens have no political way to deal with revolution, they become counter-revolutionary. The race issue becomes defined exclusively as one of maintaining white society. Holding this view forces the white community to adopt the "jungle attitudes" that they fear the Negroes hold. "Go kill them niggers," white crowds shouted to Guardsmen at 7 o'clock Friday morning as they rode into Newark. During the riot, a *New York Times* reporter was stopped at 2:30 A.M. in Mayor Addonizio's west side neighborhood by a pipe-smoking gentleman carrying (illegally) a shotgun. He explained that a protection society was formed in case "they" should come into the neighborhood. Rifle stores in white neighborhoods all over the east coast are selling out. In such way, the society becomes militarized.

A police "takeover" of local government is not necessary to declare war on Negroes. All that is necessary is to instill in the white citizens the idea that only military force stands between them and black savages. The civilians merely turn over the problem to the troops, who define the problem in terms of

using arms to maintain the racial status quo. A typical military attitude in the wake of the riots was offered in the July 29th *Times* by the commander of the New York State National Guard, who said that a greater commitment of force might have prevented rioting around the country. He recommended the use of heavy weapons including hand grenades, recoilless rifles and bazookas. He blamed indecisive civilian authority for making National Guard units operate "with one hand behind their backs" in riot areas.

This military orientation means that outright killing of people is condoned where those people cannot accept law and order as defined by the majority. The country is not moved by the deaths of twenty-five Negro "rioters."

News of a Negro's death is received at most as a tragedy, the inevitable result of looting and lawlessness. When a picture appears of a policeman over a fallen victim, the typical reaction is framed in the terms set by the majority: the dead man is a sniper, a looter, a burner, a criminal. If history is any guide, it is a foregone conclusion that no white policeman will be punished for murder in Newark.

Even many white sympathizers with the Negro cause, and Negro leaders themselves, believe that disorder must be stopped so that, in Roy Wilkins' words, "society can proceed." The question they do not ask is: whose society? They say that Negro rioting will create a backlash suppressing the liberties needed to organize for change. But this accurate

prediction overlooks the fact that those very civil liberties have meant little protection for civil rights workers and ordinary black people in the South, and nearly as little for people in the ghettos of the North. The freedoms that middle-class people correctly feel are real to themselves have very little day-to-day meaning in the ghetto, which is more like a concentration camp than an open society for a large number of its residents. But in order to protect these liberties, many civil rights leaders take part in condemning the ghetto to brutal occupation. Even where "excessive force" is deplored, as Roy Wilkins deplored it in Newark, the assumption still remains that there is a "proper" degree of force that should be used to maintain the status quo. Top officials welcome this liberal support, and agree that any "excessive" force is regrettable and will be investigated. Thus most of the society becomes involved in organizing and protecting murder.

However, the use of force can do nothing but create a demand for greater force. The Newark riot shows that troops cannot make a people surrender. The police had several advantages over the community, particularly in firepower and mechanical mobility. Their pent-up racism gave them a certain amount of energy and morale as well. But as events in the riot showed, the troops could not apply their methods to urban conditions. The problem of precision shooting—for example, at a sniper in a building with forty windows and escape routes through

rooftop, alley, and doorway—is nearly as difficult in the urban jungle as precision bombing is in Vietnam. There is a lack of safe cover. There is no front line and no rear, no way to cordon an area completely. A block that is quiet when the troops are present can be the scene of an outbreak the moment the troops leave.

At the same time, the morale fueled by racism soon turns into anxiety. Because of racism, the troops are unfamiliar with both the people and structure of the ghetto. Patrol duty after dark becomes a frightening and exhausting experience, especially for men who want to return alive to their families and homes. A psychology of desperation leads to careless and indiscriminate violence toward the community, including reprisal killing, which inflames the people whom the troops were sent to pacify.

The situation thus contains certain built-in advantages for black people. The community is theirs. They know faces, corners, rooms, alleys. They know whom to trust and whom not to trust. They can switch in seconds from a fighting to a passive posture. It is impressive that state and local officials could not get takers for their offer of money and clemency to anyone turning in a sniper.

This is not a time for radical illusions about "revolution." Stagnancy and conservatism are essential facts of ghetto life. It undoubtedly is true that most Negroes desire the comforts and security that white people possess. There is little revolutionary con-

sciousness or commitment to violence *per se* in the ghetto. Most people in the Newark riot were afraid, unorganized, and helpless when directly facing the automatic weapons. But the actions of white America toward the ghetto are showing black people, especially the young, that they must prepare to fight back.

The conditions slowly are being created for an American form of guerrilla warfare based in the slums. The riot represents a signal of this fundamental change.

To the conservative mind the riot is essentially revolution against civilization. To the liberal mind it is an expression of helpless frustration. While the conservative is hostile and the liberal generous toward those who riot, both assume that the riot is a form of lawless, mob behavior. The liberal will turn conservative if polite methods fail to stem disorder. Against these two fundamentally similar concepts, a third one must be asserted, the concept that a riot represents people making history.

The riot is certainly an awkward, even primitive, form of history-making. But if people are barred from using the sophisticated instruments of the established order for their ends, they will find another way. Rocks and bottles are only a beginning, but they cause more attention than all the reports in Washington. To the people involved, the riot is far less lawless and far more representative than the system of arbitrary rules and prescribed channels which they confront every day. The riot is not a

beautiful and romantic experience, but neither is the day-to-day slum life from which the riot springs. Riots will not go away if ignored, and will not be cordoned off. They will only disappear when their energy is absorbed into a more decisive and effective form of history-making.

Men are now appearing in the ghettos who might turn the energy of the riot to a more organized and continuous revolutionary direction. Middle-class Negro intellectuals (especially students) and Negroes of the ghetto are joining forces. They have found channels closed, the rules of the game stacked, and American democracy a system that excludes them. They understand that the institutions of the white community are unreliable in the absence of black community power. They recognize that national civil-rights leaders will not secure the kind of change that is needed. They assume that disobedience, disorder, and even violence must be risked as the only alternative to continuing slavery.

The role of organized violence is now being carefully considered. During a riot, for instance, a conscious guerrilla can participate in pulling police away from the path of people engaged in attacking stores. He can create disorder in new areas the police think are secure. He can carry the torch, if not all the people, to white neighborhoods and downtown business districts. If necessary, he can successfully shoot to kill.

The guerrilla can employ violence effectively dur-

ing times of apparent "peace," too. He can attack, in the suburbs or slums, with paint or bullets, symbols of racial oppression. He can get away with it. If he can force the oppressive power to be passive and defensive at the point where it is administered—by the caseworker, landlord, storeowner, or policeman—he can build people's confidence in their ability to demand change. Persistent, accurately-aimed attacks, which need not be on human life to be effective, might disrupt the administration of the ghetto to a crisis point where a new system would have to be considered.

These tactics of disorder will be defined by the authorities as criminal anarchy. But it may be that disruption will create possibilities of meaningful change. This depends on whether the leaders of ghetto struggles can be more successful in building strong organization than they have been so far. Violence can contribute to shattering the status quo, but only politics and organization can transform it. The ghetto still needs the power to decide its destiny on such matters as urban renewal and housing, social services, policing, and taxation. Tenants still need concrete rights against landlords in public and private housing, or a new system of tenant-controlled living conditions. Welfare clients still need a livable income. Consumers still need to control the quality of merchandise and service in the stores where they shop. Citizens still need effective control over those who police their community. Political structures belonging

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to the community are needed to bargain for, and maintain control over, funds from government or private sources. In order to build a more decent community while resisting racist power, more than violence is required. People need to create self-government. We are at a point where democracy—the idea and practise of people controlling their lives—is a revolutionary issue in the United States.

Appendix:

The Dead and Brutalized

AS OF THIS writing there are twenty-four reported Negro deaths. Additional reports are being investigated. To give an indication of the kind of stories that private attorneys and other independent observers are checking, here is part of a statement from an eyewitness:

I was standing at the corner of——and——. The National Guard were shooting up towards a building. There was a lady on the first floor in her apartment who was screaming. There was someone shooting from the roof of an apartment building. Three trucks came and about thirty National Guard went into the building. I saw them bring out the lady who was dead, and a man came out carrying a dead baby. They told the man to stop. I heard him say, "You've killed my family, and

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you'll have to kill me if you want me to stop" . . . When the lady was brought out a crowd gathered and they arrested about thirty people including me. Those without a bad record, including myself, were released at around 6 A.M. My children were left alone all night long.

There are rumors in part of the Newark white community where policemen socialize that forty or forty-five victims would be a more accurate count. This possibility is indirectly supported by the statement of a Negro doctor, E. W. Vernon, who assisted in the care of patients at Martland Medical Center throughout Saturday night, July 15, and who witnessed three dead bodies—all Negro—brought in between the hours of 7:30 and 10:30. "At about midnight and past they were coming in so fast and furious it was impossible to take an accurate check on what was going on," Dr. Vernon said. Incidentally, he supported the statements of a number of witnesses, described earlier, when he indicated that he felt that "a large percentage of the victims were innocently involved as attested to by the two young Negro women who were dead on arrival with history having been given that they were shot through their windows."

The Dead

What follows is a brief case-by-case reconstruction of the killings, based on police accounts, eyewitness

The Dead

stories, and interviews taken by newsmen and other fact-gatherers.

1. ROSE ABRAHAM, forty-five, 42 Blum St., employed as domestic, married, six children. Mrs. Abraham was awakened late Friday night by the sound of shooting, and went outside to look for her kids. A bullet killed Mrs. Abraham as police shot into a crowd running up Blum Street off Springfield Avenue. Mrs. Abraham was not operated on for six hours after her husband brought her to Martland Medical Center. She died twenty-four hours later. Her sixteen-year-old son fell into a state of shock for several days.

2. ELIZABETH ARTIS, sixty-five, 38 Prince St. Died of a heart attack Sunday, July 16, in her house. Mrs. Artis had had a heart condition for the last four years. During the riot she was in a neighborhood where shooting was extremely severe.

3. TEDOCK BELL, twenty-eight, 411 Bergen. Killed by a bullet in the early hours of Friday. Bell was with relatives and friends, observing wreckage of a bar in which he was employed. He told the others not to run if the police started shooting, because they were not doing anything and might be hurt if seen fleeing. Police fired shots up the street; one person says several shots hit Bell. County Medical Examiner reported Bell was killed by a .38-caliber bullet, the kind police use. Bell was married and had four chil-

dren, worked as a full-time machinist in addition to bartending, and was a former basketball star.

4. **LEROY BOYD**, thirty-seven, 322 Belmont. There are conflicting accounts of Mr. Boyd's brutal death. His son told the *Washington Post* that he was in the company of his father near the corner of Belmont and Avon on Friday evening. Police were dispersing people on the street, and put Boyd to the wall for frisking as they did many others. They found nothing. The son said a Negro man shot his father at close range while trying to kill a policeman. However, a funeral home director said Boyd had six .38-caliber bullets in his body, and the Essex County Medical Examiner said he died from a blow delivered by a blunt instrument.

5. **REBECCA BROWN**, twenty-nine, 298 Bergen. Mrs. Brown was killed when police or National Guardsmen fired into her apartment and many other nearby buildings on Saturday evening. She was attempting to snatch up her two-year-old daughter Delano, who was standing near the window. Mrs. Brown was a nurse's aide at Orange Memorial Hospital. Her husband, who is a construction worker, and four children survive her. A police report said that a "possible bayonet wound" was being investigated, and also that sniper fire may have killed Mrs. Brown.

6. **MARY HELEN CAMPBELL**, thirty-one, 380

Hawthorne. Police claim Mrs. Campbell was killed while sitting in a stationary car which was struck by a fire engine early Friday morning (about 5:30). Others believe Mrs. Campbell may be the woman who was run down by an official—fire or police—car on 17th Avenue about the same time.

7. **RUFUS COUNCIL**, early 30s, 1 Prince Street. Mr. Council was eating a chicken sandwich in a steak house at Wickliffe and South Orange Avenue Friday evening. Newark plainclothesmen were seen to drive past, stop, shoot Council as he stepped out of the restaurant, then drive on. This may have occurred shortly after Detective Toto was killed.

8. **ISAAC HARRISON**, seventy-four, Brooklyn resident. Mr. Harrison was walking to a car from his apartment at Scudder Homes Friday evening when witnesses say a police bullet brought him down. His stepson, who is an officer of the Washington Urban League, said: "The police said they were firing at snipers in the upper stories of the building and I asked them why they were firing at ground level."

9. **JESSIE MAE JONES**, thirty-one, 255 Fairmount. Mrs. Jones was sitting on her porch early Friday morning after a night of shooting all around her neighborhood. Police report that a Negro man, Mr. Eybind Chandler, 33, was throwing rocks at cars passing along the street. A white motorist in a