

How Chicago's Police Regained Support of Officials and People

CHICAGO.

THIS is Chicago. Here's where, during 1968's Democratic Convention, police were called "pigs" by a lot of people who should have known better.

They know better now.

Following the street violence which disrupted the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Chicago police were accused of everything from overreaction to calculated brutality.

Through TV eyes, which strangely ignored the attack and concentrated their stare on the counterattack, it appeared that policemen were clubbing unarmed protesters mercilessly.

Days later hospitals reported that 101 demonstrators had been injured, 192 policemen had been injured. But by then the professional troublemakers and their press-row parrots had maliciously maligned police per se and Chicago's police in particular.

EVEN as the facts were clarified, even after it was apparent that agitators had purposely sought just such a confrontation, even after Mayor Richard Daley stood nine feet tall in his defense of the Police Depart-



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ment, the slurs and the epithets in headlines and the unerasable pictures of young skulls spurting blood left the police badge tarnished in the public eye.

Then, two years later, on July 27, 1970, Chicago witnessed the same situation in reverse.

Thousands of young Chicagoans converged for a public concert in Grant Park.

Only a handful of police were assigned, as a "vote of confidence in our young people."

When a delay in the performance provided an excuse for the disrupters to start disrupting, the police on the scene were overwhelmingly outnumbered.

Some of the young stripped their clothing, climbed onto the stage; others began throwing rocks and bottles.

WITHIN minutes a full-scale battle was under way; thousands of violent young people overturned and burned police cars, pelted police with anything throwable, ripped up sidewalks so they could break up the cement for additional ammunition. Others had come equipped with chains, knives and firearms.

Subsequently they surged from the park down Michigan Avenue and into the Loop; they smashed store windows and stole merchandise and beat up anybody who got in their way.

After three hours and 165 arrests — the mob dispersed.

By then 135 were injured; 65 of those were policemen.

But this time, if the police lost a skirmish they won the unanimous support of the responsible public and of all city officials.

The police, by courageous self-control and a conspicuous sacrifice of their own safety even beyond what makes sense, demonstrated the dangerous potential of limitless leniency.

THIS IS UTTER CRAP. THOUGHT YOU MIGHT WANT IT.

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