

# On Every Side There Was Rage

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CHICAGO, Aug. 31—It was a grand party, the likes of which the town hasn't had since Bath House John and Hinky Dink were the aldermen of the old First Ward and the only way you could campaign down there was with a loudspeaker strapped on top of an armored car. It was a great, head-bashing frolic that big Bill Thompson, Chicago's brawling Mayor of the Harding era, would have enjoyed, the skull-splitting politics of Richard Daley's youth.

By the end of the week here, however, there were few people who were willing to put the four days of rioting policemen and battling young people in any sort of perspective. On every side there was unspeakable rage.

Daley was bellowing about hippies, newsmen, assassins and Communists. The cops were wiping the blood off their night sticks and looking around for anybody else who wanted a crack on the noggin. The calmest of the liberals were telling the joke about the Jewish delegate who said to a co-religionist, "Whatever you do, if they tell you to take a shower, don't!"

The accusations of communism and fascism make what happened on the streets of Chicago exceedingly difficult to understand. It makes it appear to be a

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unique grudge fight between Mayor Daley and the McCarthyites, the news media, the hippies and the free-floating, radical left.

In fact, what some people are now calling "the Chicago police riot" isn't unique. Many cities have had them. The most bloody have been the Century Plaza fray in Los Angeles last spring, the Oakland battles of the fall, and the melees in Grand Central Station, Washington Park and Whitehall Street in New York City.

Historically, the police have always been used for political and social control but in the past they have done their work with almost unanimous support from the middle and upper classes. Now this is not so. Among the thousands who stood across the street from the Conrad Hilton Hotel in the world's first political be-in were some of the richest people in America.

### Children of Rich

The children of the rich and the suburban well-to-do make up most of the amorphous cultural entity that is called the New Left.

The character of the demonstrators thus goes a long way in explaining the furor over what the police have done. They are not blacks or factory workers fighting in obscure parts of the city, but the sons and daughters of influential people battling downtown.

Furthermore, they do battle, usually in a non-violent fashion, but sometimes not, if they have the cops on anything like equal terms. These are rough kids from the suburbs, brought up on plenty of orange juice and



Chicago Daily News

A Chicago policeman identified as Lt. Carl Debrich, right, sprays Mace at Chicago Daily News photographer Paul

Sequeira, who made this picture as demonstrators clashed with police Wednesday. Credentials had been shown.



in superb physical shape. Anybody who thinks they're a bunch of cowardly draft dodgers will change their minds after they've had an encounter with them like the bleeding Chicago cop who took a tremendous left hook on the jaw and was heard mumbling, "If they could get those bastards in the Army, they'd end the war in six weeks."

Despite the number of beatings and clubbings, the police action has been relatively moderate though more conspicuous than when the fighting goes on in the ghettos. No one was killed, which is not to say it won't happen in the future as new clashes between youth and police occur.

Several attempts were made to burn buildings during the spring Columbia revolts and there were unconfirmed but believable reports that some of the crazies under police siege in Lincoln Park last week were armed. Increasingly, American youth is coming to hate policemen for a variety of reasons that are as much cultural as they are political.

Kids like to hang on street corners and on the sidewalks of suburban shopping centers; the police are suspicious of any gathering of people, but particularly of the young. Kids often dress and wear their hair in ways that lower middle class policemen consider immoral. All week long the Chicago police emergency radio referred to the demonstrators as hippies: "A group of 500 hippies are marching north on State Street . . . A band of 75 to 100 hippies are moving south on the 300 block of Dearborn Street, etc., etc."

Kids hate policemen for taking their pot away and arresting them, just as they hate them for enforcing curfews.

The police are often called on to enforce youth's disenfranchisement from ordinary political processes. When Mayor Daley would not give them a parade permit or tickets to the convention, it was the men in the baby blue helmets who had to back up these decisions on kids angered out of their heads at having tried to work "within the system" but who felt they had been cheated out of their primary victories.

The Mayor and his Police Department see it differently. They are lower middleclass Irish with a strong streak of puritanism who find the language and sexual behavior of upperclass kids from the better universities unforgivable. In times past, the Chicago police have protected Negro demonstrators singing "We Shall Overcome" from white mobs although they didn't like to do

it. But the taunts and chants of the kids were simply too much.

At one point several thousand of them in front of the Hilton began chanting, "f . . . you, LBJ, f . . . you, LBJ." Time and time again you could run up against young people singing out even worse obscenities.

Harpers and Atlantic Monthly now regularly print some of the more vivid four-letter words of the English language; they have come into increasing use in ordinary conversation among the youth of the upper classes (This is part of their love affair with the language and culture of the black ghetto), but for the Irish and Polish, such behavior is more immoral, more indecent, more infuriating than the Vietcong flags that were waved in the faces of the police. And Daley is the chief ethnarch of Chicago, a prototype of the lower middleclass.

Not that these groups don't use such language. Daley shouted something up to Abe Ribicoff while the Connecticut Senator was blasting him from the convention podium. But a man of Daley's stripe does not use obscenity on a microphone. Here is a man who has a daughter a nun, goes to church regularly and probably has lace antimacassars on the living room furniture.

He was fighting cultural class warfare, responding to public obscenity. Some of his opponents knew he would, and bet they could bait him into overkill by flashing those words in front of him and his police. So Abby Hoffman, one of the chief yippies and top socio-political needlers, walked around with an obscenity painted on his forehead. He was arrested and said, probably accurately, that he was beaten at the stationhouse.

It is the cultural content of what the kids were doing that explains the exact character of much of the police behavior. "They're killing the best kids in America!" Mary McGrory, the much loved columnist of The Washington Star, wept when she saw the bloody heads of the McCarthy kids whom the police had sapped in their hotel rooms. They were not killing them, they were punishing them. You could look at much of what happened as mass spanking, administered unhappily by men whose rage was savage and almost sadistic.

So far municipal officials who've tried to keep the police somewhat in check have not fared very well. Mayor Lindsay in New York is regarded as hippy by his own Police Department who are in open revolt. Here in Chicago, the Police Commissioner was rebuked for leniency by the Mayor during the April riots. As a consequence, the man was so badly undercut he was in no position to restrain his subordinates during convention week.

The police are hardly well suited by background to

deal with the shaggy, mind-blowing political agitators who have come to the fore in the late '60s.

They are in ingrown order of men who tend to stick together on duty and off; their occupation makes them slightly paranoid for they habitually see man at his worst; since much of their work is putting people in cages they make other people nervous, even people who know some individuals richly deserve to be put in cages. In the depression police work offered security, a relatively good wage and often a means of social advancement. Now this is no longer so except for blacks and other impoverished minority groups.

Most whites will not be a policeman for any amount of money with the result that police departments may have to recruit men who should be in some other line of work. (It is interesting to note that there were very few complaints of brutality made against black policemen.)

People are leaving town guessing how young people are going to react to what happened. They are saying there will be disillusionment, that they will ultimately swing to Humphrey or Humphrey to them, that the fourth Party is now in business, that the radicals are reaping up bushels of new, horribly angry recruits for a wholesale autumn campus onslaught. All or none or some of the guesses may be correct, but what is unarguable is that there will be more shooting across the generation gap.