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Friday, September 9, 1966

The Atlanta Riot

Georgians respect and admire the cool courage of Atlanta Mayor Ivan Allen, who walked fearlessly into the midst of a rioting Negro mob in an effort to bring order out of chaos.

Even the wildest of the SNICK crowd, even the most bloodthirsty, recognized the bravery of Mayor Allen. And even the most irresponsible of white extremists, who would condemn all Negroes for the Atlanta riot, must have admiration for the mayor.

It is not difficult to figure out what happened. SNICK had been losing prestige and contributions had fallen off dramatically. It is said that suddenly the civil rights organization found itself in the money again. But it was tainted money: possibly from Havana or Moscow or Peking.

In any event, key SNICK people were in Atlanta, spoiling for an excuse to blow the town apart. Demonstrations before an Army induction center failed to capture the

imagination of the young Negroes needed to demonstrate. Then a white policeman shot a known Negro criminal seeking to escape. Quicker than you could say, "Black power," SNICK went into action.

A mindless mob gathered and, like sheep, followed the admonitions of SNICK professionals. People and cars were stoned. A great deal of damage was done. Mayor Allen climbed to the top of a car to ask for peace, and was shaken off. Police had to use tear gas and fire into the air to regain control.

Just as it is not hard to understand what happened, so it is not difficult to predict what will happen in the future. There will be other incidents used as excuses for riots and destructive demonstrations.

These must be put down and order restored as quickly as possible. But responsible Negro citizens must help in this, and white people must understand that this help is badly needed.