

place for gang leaders; and the WSO newspaper may fairly be called inflammatory in its constant and exaggerated preaching against the police for alleged brutality.

In the SCLC offices, many of the staff members wear buttons bearing the legend "Anybody But Daley," and many of the local rights leaders joining hands with Dr. King are people who spend their lives trying to undermine the Daley machine politically.

In these surroundings, Dr. King's non-violence becomes, at the best, confusing—to the white community and to the Negroes. Dr. King came into the city and took over a rights movement in which many of the activists had carelessly talked brutality and violence for too long. That talk had its effect and is still having it.

Thus the riot clarified the argument over black power. The rioters knew that riot is the negation of civil order, but they have now found it is also the dissolution of all power, political, moral and economic. The trophy of riot is destruction; but, when Dr. King rightly tells the residents of the ghetto that they have little stake in this society, he cannot easily convince them they should not destroy it. That is the logic of events, and it has caught Dr. King out, along with the rest of Chicago.

Riot's triumph is death. Almost miraculously, there was little death in the riot here. Two—or three persons—died, killed by stray bullets. One was a man from Mississippi and the other was a 14-year-old girl whose baby was stillborn as the mother died.

Considering the amount of shooting for three days, this toll is small. There were snipers everywhere. Wednesday night there was random shooting from the windows of a high rise city housing project, some of it aimed by neighbors at neighbors. Thursday night there was a spectacular gun battle between the residents of another high rise and the police. There were gun battles up and down streets. The mere number of weapons being used on both sides seemed incredible.

Has the white community started now to arm itself against such another battle? No one will guess. Police officials keep a tight lip on the subject, saying they do not want to indulge in psychological warfare. The youth gangs, both Negro and white, are superbly armed, but there is no evidence that they were conducting the gun battles. One is left with the uncomfortable notion that the citizens in general are well supplied with the instruments of death, and that the temperature of violence has risen sharply all over the city as a result of the riot.

It is certain that the riot has frightened both

Negroes and whites. The wide publicity given locally to the youth gangs—most of it enormously exaggerated—has terrified the old Negro leadership and many of the Negro church and community leaders. The same publicity, and the violence of the riot, have produced a noticeable rise of hostility among whites against the Negroes and against the civil rights drive. The politicians, even if they had decided to make some concessions to Dr. King toward racial integration, are now severely constricted by their constituencies.

#### **Innuendo and Rumor**

In the search for causes of the riot, meanwhile, everyone seems to be trying to ignore the solution to the great problems. They continue to rely on accusation, innuendo and even rumor as an excuse for not doing what must be done. The youth gangs are blamed, and there is talk of subversive groups, without any reflection that in a well-ordered society a subversive group has not much of a chance, but that in a riotous situation it has every advantage.

The politicians are blaming Dr. King for stirring up trouble, but they know he is voicing real grievances; they just cannot believe there is not some kind of conspiracy at work, but they have little evidence for one. It may be said fairly that they despise the man who has troubled their consciences.

Dr. King blames the politicians for raising Negro hopes and then not fulfilling them, but he himself has been singularly maladroit in finding ways to cooperate with them while allowing them to save face. He has deliberately ignored the fact that the politicians are elected by the white majority as well as by Negroes, and that the majority ranges from timidly liberal to solidly reactionary, that it can be led, but not pushed.

#### **Hard as Marshmallows**

Perhaps the only people who found their views and themselves justified in the riot were the teenage gang leaders who will tell you bluntly that all the adult leaders on both sides are empty, greedy and devious, and about as hard as marshmallows.

If the people of the ghetto are looking for a purpose and the youths are looking for a hero—as one suspects they are—an honest man would have to tell them to look elsewhere; for the rocks and bullets and clubs that destroyed windows and buildings also demolished a whole structure of plaster saints, black and white.

Without the saints, we are left with human beings to deal with the gut issues. The heroes remain to be made out of the violence and chaos.