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A RIOT OR "CRIMINAL INSURRECTION"

A RIOT NEEDS NO DEFINITION. IT IS AN UGLY, UNCONTROLLABLE MOVEMENT OF HUMAN EMOTIONS; CREATING MISERY, HUNGER, BLOODSHED, DEATH AND MASS DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY. IT IS NOT A DISEASE. IT IS WHAT EMILE DURKHIEM CALLED "SOCIAL CURRENTS." "THUS THE GREAT MOVEMENTS OF ENTHUSIAM, INDIGNATION, AND PITY IN A CROWD DO NOT ORIGINATE IN ANY ONE OF THE PARTICULAR INDIVIDUAL CONSCIOUSNESS. THEY COME TO EACH ONE OF US FROM WITHOUT AND CAN CARRY US AWAY IN SPITE OF OURSELVES.--- THUS, A GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS, MOST OF WHOM ARE INOFFENSIVE, MAY, WHEN GATHERED IN A CROWD, BE DRAWN INTO ACTS OF ATROCITY."

SOME GOOD PEOPLE HAVE BEEN CAUGHT UP IN THIS RIOT. THEY HAVE BEEN SUFFERING FOR A LONG, LONG TIME WITHOUT ANY RELIEF EXCEPT BROKEN PROMISES, WITHOUT ANY FUTURE HOPE EXCEPT THE RAT RIDDEN DECAYING SLUMS, IN WHICH THEY NOW LIVE.

"CRIMINAL INSURRECTION" NEEDS A DEFINITION. INSURRECTION AGAINST WHAT? POVERTY, SLUMS, DOUBLE STANDARS OF JUSTICE, POLICE BRUTALITY, POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY. IF THE TERM IS APPLIED TO THE ABOVE CAUSES, THEN I MUST PARTIALLY AGREE; BECAUSE THESE ARE SOME OF THE PRIMARY CAUSES OF THE PRESENT RIOT IN NEWARK.

FIRST, LET US EXAMINE THE CONTRIBUTING CAUSES. EVERYBODY WITH ANY INSIGHT KNOWS THAT NEWARK HAS BEEN SITTING ON A POWDER KEG FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS. THE MAYOR AND HIS ADVISORS KNEW IT; BUT THEY SEEM TO BE INSENSITIVE TO HUMAN NEEDS AND IGNORANT OF HUMAN EMOTIONS, IF THEY HAD NOT BEEN THE PRESENT RIOT COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED. THEY WERE SO BUSY ADVANCING THEIR POLITICAL CAREERS, UNTIL THEY COULDN'T FIND THE TIME TO LISTEN TO THE CRIES OF SUFFERING PEOPLE.

THIS RIOT WAS PROVOKED, AND IN FINAL ANALYSIS MUST BE LAID ON THE STEPS OF CITY HALL.

THE FIRST GRIEVANCE AMONG THE DISINHERITED IS THE WAY THE POVERTY PROGRAM HAS BEEN HANDLED. FROM THE BEGINNING POLITICS ENTERED THE EQUATION. MANY OF THE CITIZENS FELT CHEATED.

THEY WENT ALONG WITH THE PROGRAM BECAUSE THEY WERE POWERLESS TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

THE SECOND CONTRIBUTING FACTOR, WAS THE MEDICAL SCHOOL. THIS STIRRED THE EMOTIONS OF ALL THE NEGROES IN NEWARK WITH ANY FEELING TOWARD HIS FELLOWMAN. WITH ALL THE WASTELAND IN NEW JERSEY, THE ONLY PLACE THEY COULD FIND TO BUILD, WAS 50 ACRES OF NEGRO HOMES IN THE CENTRAL WARD. NEGROES VIEWED THIS AS A DIRECT ATTEMPT TO SCATTER THEIR VOTING STRENGTH, SINCE A NEGRO RAN VERY WELL DURING THE LAST ELECTION, AND FORCED THE MAYOR IN A RUN OFF ELECTION.

THE THIRD FACTOR, WAS THE SCHOOL BOARD SECRETARY. A \$22,500 JOB. THE MAYOR'S POLICY WAS THE BEST MAN FOR THE JOB. THE MAYOR WAS BACKING HIS FRIEND WITH A HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION. A NEGRO WITH A MASTER'S DEGREE FROM CORNELL UNIVERSITY AND ALSO A C.P.A. WAS ALSO RUNNING FOR THE JOB. IT SEEMS THAT THE MAYOR HAD THE VOTES, AND THE NEGROES RAIDED THE MEETING AND PREVENTED THE VOTE FROM TAKING PLACE. EVEN NEGROES WHO COULD NOT READ GOT THE MESSAGE; AND THEY FELT THEY KNEW JUST WHERE THEY STOOD IN THE CITY OF NEWARK, THE EMOTIONS WERE REALLY STIRRED FROM THE PULPITS TO THE STREETS, AND THE CITY WAS RIPE FOR A RIOT. IT JUST NEEDED A LEADER OR SOMEONE TO STRIKE THE MATCH TO LIGHT THE FUSE.

THIS CAME BY ACCIDENT ON WEDNESDAY NIGHT WHEN JOHN W. SMITH, A CAB DRIVER WAS ARRESTED FOR TAILGATING TWO POLICEMEN. INSTEAD OF GIVING HIM A TICKET, IT WAS REPORTED THAT HE WAS BEATEN AND THEM KILLED. THIS WAS THE STRAW THAT BROKE THE CAMELS' BACK. THIS SET IN MOTION A RIOT THAT HAS LEFT THIS CITY IN SHAMBLES. THE PHYSICAL STRUCTURE CAN BE REBUILT; BUT I AM WORRIED ABOUT THE HATRED, THE SENSELESS KILLINGS, BLOODSHED, HUNGER, MISERY AND PAIN WHICH IS THE AFTERMATH OF EVERY RIOT.

IT WILL TAKE MEN OF COMPASSION, GOODWILL AND INTEGRITY TO RESTORE PEACE AND TRANQUILITY TO THIS TROUBLED CITY. } THIS IS NOT A RACE RIOT. IF, ANALYZED FROM AN EMPIRICAL OR DIALECTICAL POINT OF VIEW. IT IS A RIOT AGAINST POVERTY, INJUSTICE AND INHUMANITY.

THE NATIONAL GUARD AND THE STATE POLICE WERE SENT IN AFTER THIS CITY HAD BEEN DESTROYED. SOME OF THESE MEN WERE GENTLEMEN AND SOME OF THEM WERE NOT. DURING THE WANING HOURS OF THE RIOT THESE MEN ACTUALLY DID MORE DAMAGE THAN GOOD. I SAW WITH MY OWN EYES AND LISTENED TO THEM PROVOKE INNOCENT PEOPLE. THE STATE POLICE WERE RUTHLESS.

I DO HOPE THE POWER STRUCTURE HAS LEARNED THAT POLICE BRUTALITY, SYSTEMATIC SEGREGATION AND OPPRESSION BELONGS TO THE ANTIQUE HALLS OF JUSTICE, AND THE DISINHERITED NEGRO HAS NOTHING TO LOSE BUT HIS LIFE, WHICH IN HIS PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES DOESN'T MEAN VERY MUCH TO HIM ANYWAY. ALTHOUGH, THE POWER STRUCTURE CONTROLS THE MEANS OF VIOLENCE, THE HOODLUM ELEMENTS MUST BE ELIMINATED AND THE POLICE MUST BE A SYMBOL OF PROTECTION FOR ALL THE PEOPLE.

NEWARK WILL BE A BETTER CITY BECAUSE IT CAN'T GET ANY WORSE. MEN OF KNOWLEDGE AND GOODWILL WILL BE FORCED TO GET TOGETHER AND REBUILD A CITY BASED ON BROTHERLY LOVE INSTEAD OF POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY HATRED AND BRUTALITY. IT IS TRUE THE RIOT SOLVED NOTHING AND THE PROBLEMS REMAIN AND ARE MULTIPLIED. IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT WARS SOLVE NOTHING AND ARE DESTRUCTIVE, BUT THE ONLY MAJOR CHANGES BOTH SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CAN BE TRACED AS THE AFTERMATH OF WAR. THE FREEDOMS WE ENJOY WERE PAID FOR WITH THE PRICE OF BLOOD. CHRIST PAID FOR OUR SALVATION WITH THE PRICE OF BLOOD. LET US HOPE THESE DID NOT DIE IN VAIN.

Thomson M. Smith

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