

The Effects That The Sanitation Strike
Has On Memphis

The Sanitation Strike has placed a temporary curfew law in Memphis; it has caused people to become fearful and violent; it has caused some lives to be lost; it has caused many persons to be injured and most of all it has caused Memphis to ~~lose~~ its reputation as a clean city. I have witnessed the curfew, the violence, the dirty city, the marches, and the fear of Memphis citizens.

Although, Memphis was a peaceful city in which to live, Thursday, March 28, 1968, it became a city of fear, violence and corruption. The civil rights leaders had planned a peaceful march, but because of uncontrollable circumstances it was cancelled. Because of the cancellation, tension arose in the city by the citizens of Memphis. When the 28th came and the march began citizens released their "locked-up" tension. I witnessed some of the violence,

the fear, and the corruption.

On March 28, I saw citizens who were kicked, pushed, stumped, and feated up. While I was marching down Beale Street, I saw people throwing bottles, sticks and bricks. These objects hit the windows of businesses all up Beale Street. People began to run, and some began to loot the stores. This was the beginning of a young riot.

I talked with my sisters about the attitudes and reactions of the teachers and students at the schools in which they student teach. The teachers at Orleans Elementary were nervous, tense, and afraid, but the white teachers were more tense and afraid than the Negro teachers. They asked questions about what was going on. About 10:10 o'clock, parents

began to come to the School after their
 children. About 10:30, the parents were
 upset. Parents started coming by the
 tens. The School was in an up-pour,
 all classes had stopped and everyone
 was looking out the windows and
 listen to the intercom system. The
 telephone was ringing every few seconds.
 One parent came in a taxi cab with a
 rag on her head, an overcoat, and
 a great big stick in her hand. Another
 parent came speeding down the street.
 He parked on the wrong side of the
 street and ran into the School
 to get his children. About 11:00 strange
 characters began to come into the
 building. The teachers and principle
 heard that the rioters were coming
 to Orleans at 12:00 to destroy.
 The principle then dismissed all
 the students. The students began to
 run, push and scream. About 11:15

there was not a child in the building, except those waiting on parent-teacher.

The situation at Cummings Elementary School was quite different. The teachers appeared to be calm, although they were somewhat tense. The parents came after their children, but they ~~so~~ seemed to be fairly calm. All the students were dismissed at 1:00 o'clock.

I interviewed some old people as well as some young ones. My Grandmother lives in Binghampton on Filmer Street. The old people in that neighborhood are very fearful. They will not leave the house after 6:00 o'clock. My Grandmother does domestic work. She said "My white lady is afraid to come to pick me up and I am more afraid to get out and go to work."

When I interviewed a friend of mine that lives on Ashor Street, she was so terrified

that she and her family were about to pack their bags and leave town. I talked to France Mc Intyre on Friday night, March 29. They were burning down some businesses on both corners of her street. State troopers were all around. She was afraid they would burn her house in the night, therefore she began to pack her bags to leave town. Nevertheless, she did not leave town.

The only fatal casualty in the march was the death of Larry Payne, a sixteen year old boy, who was shot and killed March 28, 1968. I received the body of Larry, Sunday, March 31, at Ford

Funeral Home.

I believe that the situation in Memphis will get worse before it gets better. The citizens here tense "bottled-up" in them. The tension has to be released. The citizens released this tension by rioting and looting.