

THE SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE SANITATION STRIKE

The more than 1,000 striking sanitation workers have been sitting along the sidelines six or seven weeks watching the big battle that is being waged in their behalf. They are seeing things that they never witnessed before --- boycotts, marches, protests rallies and other implications that go to make up a power battle.

The boycott on downtown stores is paying off. Hundreds of people have stopped taking the two daily papers. Some neighborhood grocery stores are being boycotted and this has brought a loud cry from Chinese grocers; this incident is being pointed out to them that they are as guilty as whites when it comes to calling Negroes by their first names.

Thanks to Roy Wilkins, Executive Secretary of the N.A.A.C.P. and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who rushed in when the strike was at a low ebb and pumped new energy into Negro citizens.

The strike spotlight however, has been taken by a group of militant ministers headed by the Rev. James M. Lawson Jr. While Mayor Henry Loeb continues to say NO to a union dues check-off... garbage trucks and workers continues to roll and make curbside pick-ups.

Meanwhile, the uninvolved strikers just sit and wait watching their bills grow high, but apparently enjoys all the fuss that is being made over them.

Despite the sanitation sufferage, the strikers are receiving food stamps from the city of Memphis and are getting some financial food help through the union from most local churches and schools.

As a result of this march lead in and/or for the behalf of the sanitation workers; for the first time ever in the city of Memphis, what was to be a peaceful march (non-violently) turned out to be one of the most chaotic animosities ever to be witnessed by a black or white citizen in Memphis a riot.

This was a riot that involved and/or resulted in the destruction of private property, cruel police brutality to the innocent as well as the guilty, injured and killed people, and the city's young generation (the teenagers).

In conclusion, I only regret that it took the sanitation workers to open the eyes and minds of the unconcerned white people in Memphis, as well as the entire nation.