

# Summer '68 -- Color It Questionable

By JOHN R. SULLIVAN  
(NC News Service)

The summer of 1968 could look a lot like that of 1967, when scores of cities were hit by rioting, disturbances, looting and widespread unrest on the part of Negro slum residents.

And then, maybe they won't.

If that sounds inconclusive, so is the attitude of the citizens, white and black. Paradoxically, if there are civil disturbances of any size in 1968, they will be caused in large part by that same inconclusiveness of thought and hesitancy to act.

Neither, however, has stopped the question from being asked — often and fearfully. Nor do they stop answers from being given. Most often the answer is, "Yes, there will be riots, if nothing is done."

But the answer begs the question of what must be done? Or, is what is being done the right thing? To those questions nobody knows the answer except, perhaps, the President's National Commission on Civil Disorders, which is due to issue its report — and programs for action — by March 1.

These programs, even if adopted, may not take effect soon enough and may not raise Negro hopes far enough to halt a recurrence of last year's disasters.

Much depends on the mood of the people, white and black.

And in an attempt to assess that mood and the actions since the riots which have affected that mood — for good or bad — NC News Service asked its correspondents and other sources in five large cities — among them Newark and Detroit — to report their findings.

Here is their assessment for the future:

## Detroit

"This is a city to watch in 1968," reported NC correspondent Don Hagerty. "And if you believe what you hear from leaders in the city, it's a city to stay away from in summer, 1968."

"Trouble is expected to follow last summer's riots," he added ominously. "Big trouble."

Hagerty singled out statements from the right and the left as evidence. Right-winger Donald Lobsinger, leader of Breakthrough, has recommended that white citizens arm themselves and learn to protect themselves in the event of new riots.

From the left come rumors of a plan to murder suburban white children (thus drawing vengeance) parents into the ghetto to spark wide-spread bloodshed. The Detroit police department has purchased a large store of new riot-control weapons.

There is other, more solid, evidence of a black-white break. Shortly after the first of the year, the Rev. Albert Cleage, Jr., black power advocate and chairman of the Federation of Self-Determination, turned down an offer of \$100,000 in Ford Foundation funds made through the coalition New Detroit Committee. The rejection could spell the end of the committee which was named by Mayor Jerome Cavanaugh in the wake of the 1967 riots.

The Michigan state legislature turned down an open housing bill in a special session called specifically to consider it. A fight is expected when the regular session of the legislature convenes.

A Detroit open housing law did gain passage. But it may never be enforced, due to the efforts of a conservative group to collect signatures on a referendum petition.

Hagerty, however, also found signs of hope in the thoughts of Al Denmore, editor of the Michigan Chronicle, the city's largest Negro newspaper.

Denmore, in turn, sees hope in political action — the kind that put Negroes in the Mayor's office in Cleveland and Gary, Ind.

"If there is any progress in either of these two cities," said

Denmore, "Detroit's young activists will see that more ground can be gained in the political arena than in riots and demonstrations."

## Newark

Newark in 1967 was prelude to Detroit. Both, according to sources in the city — priests, local newsmen and black leaders — could be prelude to Newark, 1968: a bloodier, more costly outbreak.

The problems: "Lack of imaginative leadership," reports one local newsmen. "Business leaders are at odds with government officials. The local anti-poverty agency is being reorganized not really because now it will be more effective, but because the old organization antagonized city hall."

On the plus side are emotional exhaustion in the Negro ghetto — the fury of the 1967 riot may just have burned out the sense of outrage necessary to spark another outbreak; defeat of a proposal to set up a Canine Corps to patrol the Negro areas, and better community relations efforts on the part of the "public housing authorities."

The Church, too, has stepped up its efforts, most notably by announcing plans for several low-income housing developments in the city. A half-dozen parishes in the inner-city have continued to exert strong influence both in and out of the black community — but that was true before the 1967 riots as well, noted one priest.

Whatever efforts are mounted suffer from one common failing in Newark — a lack of coordination and communication with the outlying suburbs. Residents there — most of whom work in the city — are fearful at best. Some have apparently had second thoughts about their earlier feelings of good will and have dropped out of active involvement with the Negro's situation.

## Cleveland

This city, which experienced outbreaks in both 1966 and 1967 — much smaller ones than those of Newark or Detroit — has experienced a new feeling of hope since last November.

At that time Negro Carl Stokes defeated Seth Taft for the mayoralty and, while his administration has gotten off to a slow start, it has now won the help of industry, community leaders and the Church in establishing his program.

NC Correspondent Jim Flannery reports, however, that while Stokes may be able to mount an effective drive on ghetto conditions, "the main thing expected to cool the fires of riots is that this city elected a Negro to its highest office."

"That," Flannery says, "has given the Negro a new respect for himself and a new pride in race" — both factors whose absence has been important in starting riots in other cities.

On the flip side of that is another observation: "The presence of a Negro in city hall may not mean much to a jobless man in the heat and filth of a slum apartment in the summer," said Flannery.

Stokes, in addition to spurring private and government efforts in education, job training and housing — the Catholic diocese is now sponsoring the largest rehabilitation project in the Negro Hough area — has also shaken up the Cleveland police department. His aim, in which he apparently succeeded: "To get more protection for Negro residents of Hough and to crack down on prostitution and other public vices."

All of this might be, Flannery reports, "enough to instill hope where before there was none."

But the city got a warning on another issue related to race from an inner city settlement house worker.

Morris F. Jeff, Jr., executive director of the Plymouth Settlement House, Louisville, Ky., said Negro fighting men returning from Vietnam may turn their military skills toward fighting for their own freedom.

Mr. Jeff said both black and



Kansas City, Mo.—An informal panel discussion on race problems during conference at Rockhurst College in Kansas City, Mo. Larry Wilson, a regional vice-president of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), makes a point as a nun listens. Mr. Wilson predicted "more riots next Summer and the Summer after next." Other Negro leaders expressed optimism that a change in white attitudes will come in time to prevent violence. (RNS Photo).

white troops have learned in the Vietnam war the price that the United States apparently places on men's freedom wherever they may live.

They may feel, he said, that an all-out fight for freedom is official U.S. policy, and is as applicable to Watts, Newark, Detroit and Cleveland as it is to the jungle villages of Southeast Asia.

"What guarantees do we have that the military violence taught the Negro soldiers will not be used to fight for his own freedom of the Vietnamese?" he asked.

A regional official of the Congress of Racial Equality, addressing a Roman Catholic-sponsored conference on racial problems, warned of increased violence in the Negro civil rights struggle.

Larry Wilson, a regional vice-president of CORE, told the meeting:

"To change attitudes you must change institutions. The only way it's going to happen is

violently bigoted, but says, "I haven't a thing against Negroes, but why do they want to move out here in my neighborhood."

## Milwaukee

This is Father James Groppi's turf. While it suffered from a small outbreak in 1967 — still — by imposition of strict curfews and other police restraints — it has hardly quieted down since then.

If anything, race is a bigger issue than ever, thanks to the daily marches by members of the NAACP Youth Council — which Father Groppi advises — through predominantly white areas.

It has remained an issue too because the city has five times rejected an open housing ordinance proposed by Mrs. Vel Phillips, the city's lone Negro alderman. Passage of the ordinance has been the price for stopping the marches.

NC Correspondent Ethel Gintoft noted, however, that "there is more that is thorny in the civil rights field in Milwaukee than open housing." The other thorns include police-community relations, school segregation and jobs. The segregation issue which loomed large several years ago has been largely superseded by that of housing.

More and more jobs for Negroes have opened up — but education, the lack of it, has kept Negroes out of even more positions. Volunteer efforts at remedial education have accomplished much, however.

The open housing marches, while they have not resulted in a city open housing ordinance, have had their effect — seven suburbs have passed laws in the past year and several more are in the offing.

"The demonstrations had more than a visible effect, too," reports Ethel Gintoft. "They have surely stimulated awareness among all citizens of the racial problem."

"Others have said that Father Groppi's total identification with the Negro has saved the Church for the Negro. Not that other priests haven't worked hard, but Father Groppi's actions have revealed the antagonisms of some segments of Milwaukee's people. And he has become a symbol of the Church in the Negro community."

Father Groppi has also forced the clergy — even Archbishop William E. Cousins — to take a stand. Whenever his name comes up, you have to make a choice — for or against the man.

"When pressure mounted to silence him, the archbishop had to make that choice — and he chose for Father Groppi," reports Mrs. Gintoft.

The general tone of the city is that 1968 could bring more riots. The issues in Milwaukee have been laid open, there is a goal being sought and a strategy designed to reach that goal.

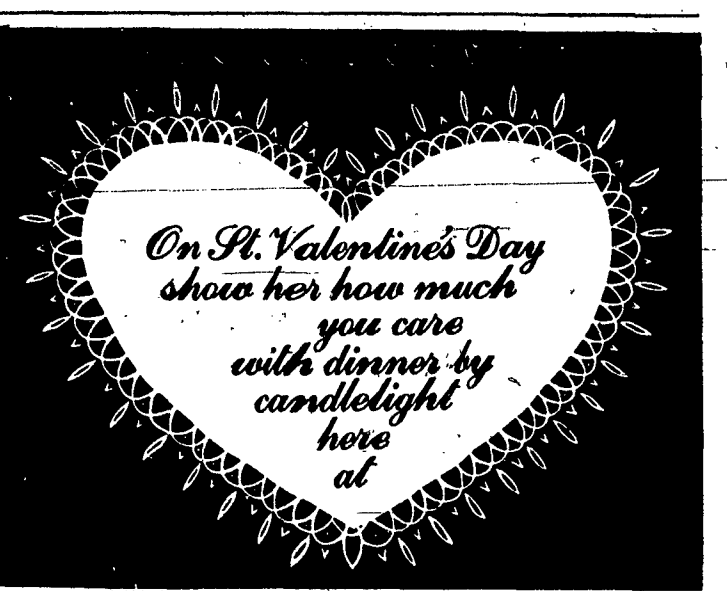
## Chicago

After the Watts riots of 1965 nearly every American who had an opinion said Chicago would

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