

Only in America?

No. But Chicago's Democratic convention is an exposure of a terrible reality: our society and its politics.

By JIMMY BRESLIN
Special to The Star

CHICAGO -- He was running with his body too far over and he had no control of himself so he kept stumbling into the cops in the street and the cops chopped down on his head with their clubs.

Here was this young kid running with his legs out of control and his eyes closing and hair flying each time a club came onto his head. All the way from the front entrance of the Conrad Hilton Hotel to the corner, running, stumbling, running, staggering and then going down on his face in the middle of Michigan Avenue in the city of Chicago, the cops ran up and kicked him.

A few steps away, in the gutter under the street light, doctors leaned over somebody who was hurt and the crowd in the street stood with handkerchiefs over their faces in the tear gas and they screamed at the cops: "Pig."

"Seig heil, seig heil, seig heil."

"Come on, mothers, come on, mothers."

"Pigs, pigs, pigs."

The police gathered into groups and then ran into the kids. Cops with bare arms swinging in the television lights while they went for the head with their clubs, or for any place below the belt they could

reach. Chicago cops. Cops running into young kids and beating them as these police have been beating people all week.

They gather in groups under the lights, those cops. "Get these bastards over there," one of them says. "Let's get 'em."

"No, no, now wait a minute, wait a minute. Over there. There. See them?" "Get them."

And they ran with their clubs and ran into the kids who are young and unarmed and had, for the three hours that you had watched them, done nothing to start any trouble except to infuriate the cops with their youth and their dress and their manner of talking, which is completely too literate for cops. hit that boy seven times." The kid goes down. Dr. Myers, in a medical smock, starts out into the street to look at the boy.

A cop gets in front of her with his club.

"Take one step more and I'll put your ass in the wagon."

"I'm a doctor, I must help that boy."

The club jabs at her. "Get your ass back," the cop says.

Another doctor makes it to the kid. But the cops get to the doctor and they make these, short chops with their clubs, and the doctor staggers back toward

the curb, the cops throwing him along, and the doctor's head is split open and blood is all over his face and an index finger hangs limp because it is broken in two places.

"Get out of here," the cop shouts, and swings his club for below your midsection.

And the tear gas is everywhere and people run into buildings with their hands over their mouths.

Then Peck got on the loudspeaker and told the crowd of 4,000 to break up into small groups and just walk out of the park.

And the kids went into Michigan Ave. and captured the whole street and began shouting slogans at the hotel. Harmless slogans. A sign of health, really.

And on the sixth floor of the Conrad Hilton last night, while the nominating for the presidency went on, nobody watched it on television. They hung out the windows to see the troops and police lining the street. And a young kid sat in a chair with his face in his hands. Somebody had brought him in from the street where he had been tear gassed and he was emotionally upset.

"He's just upset," a woman said. "Probably the first time for him, you know. It's a strange experience."

But the kid sobbed: "It won't be the last time."

A tear in Hubert's eye?

A Chronicle of Chicago's Savagery

"Viet Protesters Beaten, Gassed, by Chicago Police", was the lead headline of the August 29, Toronto Daily Star.

Another story on the same page began: "He fell -- the cops kicked him."

The articles referred to police action, directed by Mayor Daley, which was taken to deal with the ten thousand peace demonstrators who assembled in Chicago concurrently with the Democratic National Convention.

Both inside and outside the convention hall, American public opinion over the war in Vietnam had created an almost irreconcilable political division. But it was with almost complete unanimity that Americans condemned the show of horror foisted upon them by Chicago's political Mafia.

American political conventions have always been planned to display a carnival atmosphere of birthday-party support for candidates proposed as presidential candidates. The Chicago convention was different. The carnivals went unnoticed. The birthday party was over. Americans were being forced to witness the reality of their political life.

This, of course, was not the aim of the convention. Mayor Daley prepared months in advance to erect a plywood wall to seal off ugly visions of Chicago's slums. Convention delegates were to be driven to and from the convention in special bullet-proof buses, along certain specified routes. Policemen and National Guardsmen had been hand-picked long in advance to ensure that the wheels of American democracy would not be interrupted in their operation. But something went wrong.

The first sign of the emotional dimensions of the situation came when a cater-

ing company refused to supply ice cubes in soft drinks for fear that they might be used as weapons by the democratic delegates. And the intensity of the spectacle escalated further when television viewers watched incredulously as an ABC newsman was beaten up by policemen on the floor of the convention hall itself.

More incredible still was the blatant unconcern with which the convention organizers treated what millions of Americans were viewing. Police weren't squelched; they were encouraged. Six more newsmen were attacked. And without the slightest hesitation, delegates who opposed the great Chicagolian Mayor were not only denied speaking rights and access to certain parts of the hall, but were beaten and kicked within easy range of innumerable television cameras.

Inside the convention hall, Senator Ribcoff, nominating Senator McGovern, said that if McGovern were president, "We wouldn't have to have Gestapo tactics in the streets of Chicago." Mayor Daley rose to his feet, and his delegates led a round of boos and hisses which lasted for several minutes.

A few moments later, Ribcoff remarked, "How hard it is to accept the truth." The noise renewed.

Delegates from several states repeatedly attempted to propose an order of adjournment, but could not achieve recognition from the chair. One senator who attempted to speak to the Chairman on the platform was roughly turned back by convention police. Meanwhile, outside the Conrad Hilton Hotel, police were "responding" to the "violent and unruly" mob, which was at the time sitting on the grass chanting "fascists", "pigs", and "gestapo, seig heil".

Mayor Daley, in the actions of his police both within and outside of the convention hall, left a distinct impression on the facade of American politics.

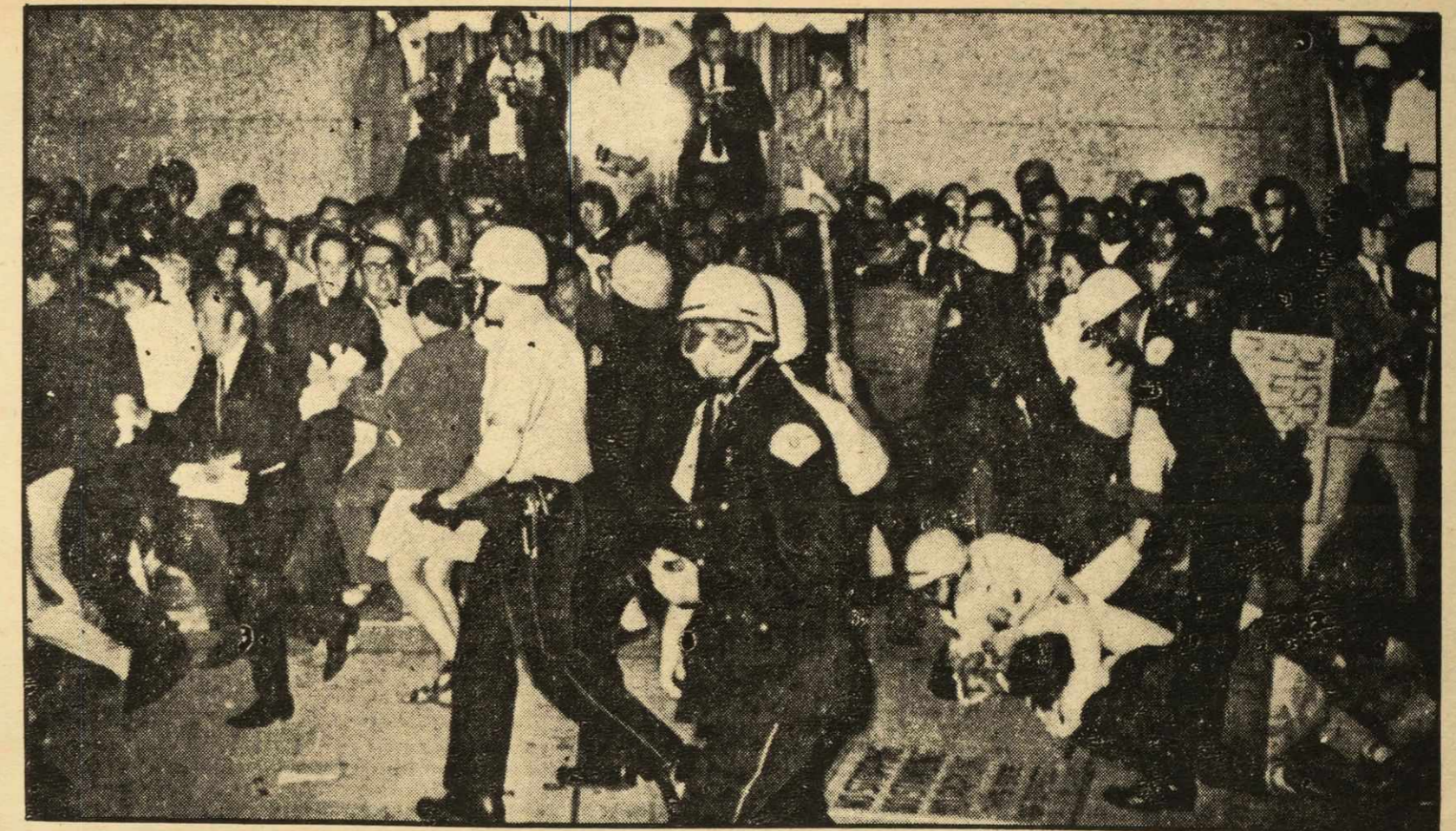
What is most amazing is not the manipulation and intimidation which the viewer saw, but the fact that organizers like Daley think that American society has progressed to the stage that such blatant acts of violence will have no particular effect on the power which is theirs to sell to the highest bidder.

And in one sense at least they are right. While Hubert Humphrey, Daley's chosen candidate, wept over "mob violence and police brutality", he hardly made any attempt to disown the political force which had assured his easy victory.

The dramatics of the incidents in Chicago are really an exposure of the nature of the American political machine. It is ironic that the issue of Vietnam would force such an exposure.

But we should not look upon Chicago's convention as a horrible misadventure and perversion of American Politics. For it really is American politics. Chicago only made the back room's determination of convention strategy and policy more apparent.

The 1968 Democratic convention should shatter for all time the myth that the United States is really a democratic country. People like Daley have been manipulating both parties for many years, and will undoubtedly continue to do so. They represent the interests of the small sector of American society which really has power; the extremely conservative, moneyed, war-minded class of Americans which indicate the political and economic mode to a nation of 200 million. (Kim Cameron)



They lowered flag, then blood flowed

By ROY SHIELDS
Star staff writer

CHICAGO -- The kids who were so brutally routed by a frightening force of police and soldiers in Chicago are the real victors in a saddening spectacle under the name of democracy.

What took place here last night resembled a slow-motion enactment of a new American Revolution. While delegates to the Democratic convention fought before the television cameras at the International Amphitheatre, hippies were battered by callous cops.

Watching it brought ironically to mind the rag-tag American revolutionaries taking arms against the red-coated British troops -- except the police wore blue.

In Grant Park, opposite the Conrad Hilton Hotel in downtown Chicago, site of the convention's smoke-filled rooms where the wheeling and dealing takes place, helmeted, policemen stood shoulder-to-shoulder in the grand tradition of the Thin Red Line.

They had surrounded nearly 4,000 so-called Yippies, the kids whose uniforms are tattered clothes, bare feet and peasant head bands and whose cause is peace.

Arrayed against the satire-minded Yippies were policemen and soldiers eager for the signal to get rid of their frustrations and spill a little blood -- which they did, with club-swinging abandon.

The incident that began it was the lowering of an American flag. For that crime, the police fired tear gas, waded in and cracked skulls.

Two middle-class suburban Chicagoans who witnessed this echoed the over-riding sentiment here. "DIRTY, IMMORAL"

"What happened is dirty and immoral," said a plump man with a camera. "I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't been here. Look at that kid with the blood pouring down his face. What did he do? Nothing. 'I'm a Republican, I wasn't even against the war in Viet Nam. But look at this.'"

A woman beside him was crying: "It's just Goddamn disgusting."

Overhead police and army helicopters circled. Sirens wailed, Red Cross attendants went running. The police stood stolidly at attention.

A hefty sergeant waddled by his policemen, barking orders like an army commander.

"You will be the arresting officer," he said. "And you will take them and put them in that truck."

"Yes, sir," replied a policeman.

"WHITE NIGGERS"

A young Chicagoan and his girlfriend walked by on

the crowded street. The young man gestured with disgust at a busload of fresh police.

The police struck their heads out the bus windows and laughed. "Poor loser," one called, and the rest roared.

Now the kids were being addressed by two celebrities -- writer Norman Mailer and Dick Gregory, ex-comedian who is a write-in candidate for president.

Mailer excused himself for being unable to join their marching ranks because he had a deadline to meet.

"You're beautiful," he called out over a microphone.

Gregory brought cheers with his dedication of the protesters as "white niggers."

"Welcome to Chicago," he said derisively. "Welcome to Prague. Listen, how do you know what you doin' is right? I'll tell you. By the number of police and soldiers you can see around you, you know."

"Look at them police. Why, if they spent even half their time tending to the crime syndicate here, the prostitutes and the dope peddlars and the loan sharks and the corrupt politicians, why this might be a decent place to live."

"This is a sick, insane nation, but I tell you something, I'd rather see you kids killed than Americans killing them poor foreigners over there in Viet Nam."

"I know you're going to have trouble, but believe me, if you was black, why the police would already have rolled into this park and whupped your ass..."

Later police clubs failed and blood ran in the streets of Chicago. The scenes you saw on television may have appeared deplorable, to witness them live was to be disgusted and sickened.

Meanwhile, hippie kids handed out leaflets to delegates and visitors in front of the Conrad Hilton.

Many of these were far-left and most angry.

There was, for example, the challenge, called "the revolutionary newspaper," being handed to passerby, on crowded Michigan Avenue.

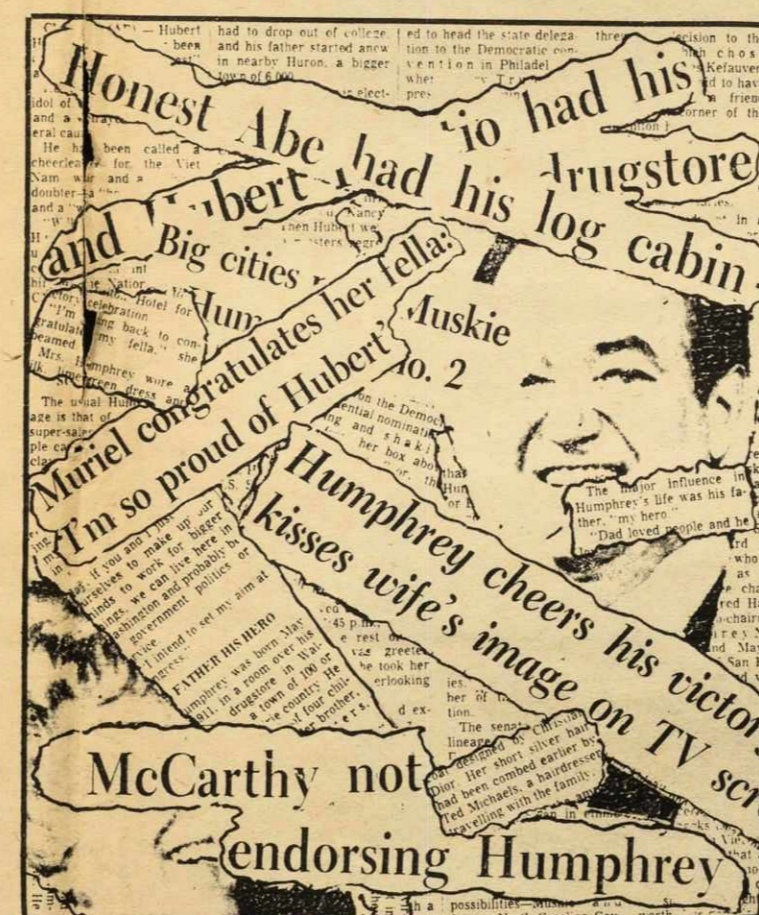
It began: "Millions of Americans who oppose the U.S. war of aggression in Viet Nam and thousands of us demonstrating U.S. genocide in Viet Nam, have forced the rulers to hold their convention behind a wall of guns..."

Cadre, the Chicago draft resisters' bulletin, began: "We oppose the U.S.S.R.'s criminal invasion of Czechoslovakia as we have opposed and resisted the American invasion of Viet Nam..."

The convention's Daily Ramparts Wall Poster said: "The furious new assault by Chicago police was part of a scene of deepened intensity in the confrontation between cops and young whites in Mayor Daley's 'shoot-to-kill' town."

For such protests, kids in Chicago from all over the United States were clubbed and beaten. But they didn't lose.

The kids bled and a nation bled with them.



Daley's Believe it or else . . .

Special to The Star

CHICAGO -- Chicago police continued their assaults on newsmen yesterday, attacking at least seven during melees at the Democratic convention.

A Chicago Daily News photographer suffered a broken hand and multiple bruises when he was attacked and beaten by several policemen who were dispersing anti-war demonstrators.

"They clubbed me as I was showing them my credentials," said Paul Sequera. 29. He had just taken a picture of a national guardsman beating a teenager with a club.

Five other newsmen were assaulted by police at dem-

onstrations near Democratic headquarters in the Conrad Hilton Hotel. Five were arrested but released later without being charged.

Mike Wallace, a Columbia Broadcasting System reporter, was punched in the face by a police captain, who then ordered Wallace's arrest just off the convention floor.

Wallace was caught in a melee of reporters, delegates, and security forces after about a dozen New York delegates were herded off the floor in a dispute.

Commander Donald McLaughlin said Wallace slapped him in the face after Wallace refused to obey orders to leave the area.