

How New York 'Night Of Terror' Was Checked

In order to provide the nation's and the world's press with a reliable report on the events during this city's catastrophic blackout, New Solidarity International Press Service is summarizing here a chronology of the actual political battle which took place during and immediately after the power failure which began on the evening of June 13.

The following report documents the efforts of Rockefeller-linked agencies to use the blackout to provoke race riots, and the success of Mayor Beame and others - including New York City's police force - in preventing the realization of that threat. The investigative journalism in this report reflects direct intelligence gathered by NSIPS in collaboration with honest police and elected officials and community leaders throughout the five New York boroughs.

In a statement issued today, the U.S. Labor Party's national chairman Lyndon H. LaRouche congratulated Beame, City Council President O'Dwyer, and others who under extreme political pressure avoided "police brutality" and other incidents dangerous to the lives of the citizenry.

Night One: July 13

****From 9:35 p.m. July 13 through the early hours of July 14, radio reports carried over WINS, CBS and other stations depict a constantly escalating pattern of spontaneous "terror" - pointing to massive looting, arson and arrests throughout the city. CBS radio broadcasts sympathetic interviews with looters not arrested by the**

police, legitimizing the looting as a "natural" phenomenon and portraying lumpenized youth as Robin Hood heroes. It is reported, simultaneously, that Mayor Beame had declared the city in a "state of emergency." Four separate, contradictory accounts of the cause of the blackout are broadcast, including the story that lightning had struck a power plant at Indian Point near New York, putting it out of commission.

****On-the-spot observers, including police officers and other city employees, reported to NSIPS that firstly, while most of the crowds assembled become involved in the looting, the great majority of looting and arsons are started by neighborhood drug-related networks who are supplied with vans and trucks - not at all spontaneous activity. Secondly, the sources said, where escalations occur they are directly due to provocations by these drug-related networks.**

Thirdly, the looting is generally confined to only about one dozen small sections of the city and is not spreading out of police control. Finally, media indicate that Mayor Beame's declaration of a "state of emergency" was called in response to these confined centers of looting, it is known that Beame was well aware of a deliberate attempt on the part of New York banking interests and Con Edison to get a riot "going" in the city by keeping the blackout going in selective areas - the areas where looting is taking place and where the "riot networks" are deployed.

****Throughout these first 12 hours of the blackout, the**

'There Will Be Action Tonight'

Les Campbell, head of the Brooklyn-based black nationalist organization known as EAST, became notorious for his role as the leading anti-semitic provocateur in the 1968 New York Teachers strike.

EAST began as an overt scab-herding operation around Campbell and Albert Vann, now a member of the New York state legislature, in an exact replication of the rise of Leroi Jones alias Imamu Amiri Baraka in Newark, whose career began with the Newark riots of 1967. Campbell, who adopted the name "Jitu Weusi" soon joined Baraka's National Congress of African People.

From the moment of their acceptance of the roles of strike-breakers and riot provocateurs, both Campbell and Jones were heavily funded from a multitude of government and foundation sources continuing to this day.

Campbell later broke with Baraka to maintain his own black racist group in the ravaged Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn. From that vantage point he has fallen under the scrutiny of the New York City Police Department under suspicion of advising community youth to take revenge on "the system" by looting neighborhood merchants and

setting fire to the city. Here are some of Campbell's remarks in an interview conducted on July 14.

EIR: Were the police arrests irregular in any way?
Campbell: No nothing unusual...As usual police protected the big white businesses and let the black and minority owned stores be looted...

EIR: Did any community people try to tell people to stop?

Campbell: No. Thank god no politicians came out and told people to cool it. That would have been degrading. It may have worked once but now everybody knows the politicians have no jobs to offer, nothing, and this is an oppressed community.

EIR: If there's no power tonight, will the disturbances continue?

Campbell: I'll tell you something, there will be action tonight, power or no power. People have gotten a taste of something and they're going to be out again for more.... We have people on the street keeping us informed of what's going on."

Mayor fights off all attempts to turn the city into a riot situation. Emergency Financial Control Board President Steven Berger and a Con Edison representative try to gain audience with the Mayor during the night to feed him pre-packaged lines to "explain" the blackout and to call the situation in New York City as desperate and in need of state intervention. Beame refuses to see them; and rolls up his sleeves to put the city on a healthy footing.

Beame groups together his police and firemen, thousands of whom had shown up voluntarily during the first hours of the blackout, and give strict orders that no weapons should be used except under the gravest of "deadly circumstances" — an order that is followed to the letter. Unofficially, Beame sends the word down that under no circumstances should the word "riot" be used to describe any situation, only "disturbance."

Day One: July 14

**From the morning hours and throughout the day, Beame and his allied politicians battle attempts by other city and state officials to guarantee a riot by bringing in the National Guard. Simultaneously, the Mayor opens fire on Con Edison for "gross negligence" in allowing the blackout to occur in the first place — an attack which Charles Luce of Con Edison tries to counter by charging that the Mayor was "playing politics."

**First reports received by NSIPS are that Governor Carey has spoken with the Mayor between 8 and 10 a.m.

and urged him to accept National Guard troops. Beame refuses. The Governor puts the Guard on a "standby" status anyway. Now Beame raises the ante against Con Edison. He calls for the Federal Power Commission to investigate Con Edison and the blackout.

**At this point the political forces who wanted a riot come out of the woodwork. Bronx Borough President Robert Abrams, on a radio call-in show in the early attention attacks Beame for letting the city deteriorate and calls openly for deploying National Guard troops. In response, U.S. congressman Herman Badillo from the Bronx calls into that radio show to denounce Abrams. Badillo states that a National Guard deployment would start a riot, not prevent one — that the Guard was simply not trained, like New York City police, to handle the situation.

Shortly after Abrams' statement Manhattan Borough President Percy Sutton joins Abrams in calling for a National Guard deployment and furthermore attacks the city for putting looters in the "Tombs" (a Manhattan detention center which had been closed) where they were "without food and water."

EFCB head Berger holds an impromptu press conference that morning announcing provocatively that all financial matters during the crisis are going to be under his control, since it is "an emergency," and implies strongly that Mayor Beame will have to answer to *him*.

**At noon, the Mayor holds his press conference. He

NYPD Spokesman: 'We Didn't Want The National Guard....'

An officer in the Public Information Office of the New York City Police Department explained deployments and thinking during the blackout in the following interview:

A: We had about 8,600 men out on the first night, at least 6,000 were sent into the black and Puerto Rican ghetto areas, with the rest of us spread out to cover the rest of the city. Overall, people throughout the city were just great. We made over 3,500 arrests and the last count I saw, over 430 police officers were injured, with 18 hospitalized and many in critical condition. The cop who was just shot today, at 3:00 p.m. in the 34th precinct, he's in critical condition. Shot twice in the chest. Four cops were beaten brutally with baseball clubs.

Orders came down not to use weapons unless faced with extreme bodily injury, but you know with people throwing rocks and bottles by the time you can make that determination, well it's too late. Those cops beaten with the baseball bats, they didn't go for their guns. We practiced restraint facing tremendous odds.

Q: How did the police department feel about calling in the Guard?

A: We didn't want the Guard called in. History will bear me out on this, whenever they've been called in is when you have a riot on your hands. The Guard is made up of civilians, who can't handle themselves in this kind of situation; they panic and use

firepower and bang! — you've got a riot on your hands. They're not professionals. We wanted to bring in State Troopers, professional men, who are able to stare a crowd down...In my opinion, if the troopers had been brought in on the first night, not as much damage would have been done.

Q: What about the Department of Justice, they have people here in the city from their Community Relations Service (CRS) and from their riot monitoring apparatus, the people who make the determination as to whether or not federal intervention...

A: Yeah, well here a political decision was made, unofficially orders came down that we were not to report a riot, or anything like a riot potential, just to report disturbances.

Q: Are you saying that NYPD made a political decision not to report a riot potential, so as to give the Justice Department any reason for calling for federal intervention, that by reporting in "disturbances" the Department felt they could keep the situation under police control and avoid Carter calling out the National Guard?

A: You got it, we had the situation under control, I think the Department did a good job. We would have liked to have gotten the troopers earlier than we did, but we wanted to avoid bringing in the National Guard unless it was absolutely necessary.

minces no words ("I am outraged") in criticizing Con Edison for not yet restoring power to the city (at that time only partial restoration has taken place and the "riot target" areas are still without power). Beame praises the police, firemen and other city workers for the tremendous effort in maintaining the safety and well-being of the population of the city, and thanks the citizens of the city for standing behind him and following the guidelines requested for the duration of the crisis (such as not making unnecessary calls into the police emergency number 911 such that real emergencies could be responded to with rapidity). The Mayor emphasizes throughout the question and answer period of the press conference that it is up to Con Ed to give a definitive time when power will be restored to the city. Finally, Beame announces the formation of a blue-ribbon panel to investigate Con Edison's "negligence."

**In the afternoon hours, the press, in particular WINS, begins characterizing the looting in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area and elsewhere as expanding geographically. NSIPS calls police and fire officials in the area who deny this report, explaining that, on the contrary, the situation was becoming more and more "under control." However, WINS reports, from reporter Al Shaw, continue claiming that the situation is getting out of control. (Only later in the evening does Shaw reverse earlier reports after NSIPS had informed both Wins and police officials of the enormous characterizations being played over WINS!). At 3:00 p.m., Con Edison president Charles Luce, holds a press conference. He praises the Mayor for his outstanding "leadership" during the crisis

but claims that the Mayor has been "unfair" by attacking Con Edison.

A few hours later, CBS radio carries a "live" phone interview with Governor Carey trying to get Carey to admit that the National Guard could be called out imminently. But, at that point, even though power is still out in the "hot spots" throughout the city — Jamaica Queens, Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn and areas of the South Bronx and Harlem — the riot potential has been sharply reduced. Carey can only mutter that the city had the situation under control "at the present."

Around this time, NSIPS interviews an editorial board member of the *New York Times* Roger Starr who bitterly denounces the Mayor for not bringing the National Guard into the city. In another NSIPS interview, black Ford Foundation-funded counterinsurgent Les Campbell in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, laments that indeed there was really nothing going on in Bedford-Stuyvesant, but that he hopes to get "action" that night, "power or no power."

Night Two: July 14

**A few last attempts are made to start a riot. Along with Leslie Campbell provocative threats, former Weatherunderground terrorist John Froines, now a radio personality on WBAI, claims police brutality where some of the looters are being held and demands that people mobilize to protest the next day in front of the detention areas.

Edwin Newman, NBC-TV personality, on his program

New York Times' Starr: 'Beame Gets Hurt By Blackout'

The following is a July 14 interview with Roger Starr, Editorial Board of the New York Times

Q: Now that there has been so much looting throughout the city, do you think that the basis has been laid, with this destruction of key areas of the city, for your relocation proposals — that is your proposals to relocate people in the rundown, slum areas of the city to other areas?

A: People who called me inhuman, now see that local residents were not so happy with their life and responded this way. What has been destroyed now is the lifework of people who owned the local stores. Nobody could doubt how critical things are. But I am more interested in who gets hurt by this.

Q: What do you mean?

A: Well Beame gets hurt by this. It will hurt him considerably. People will remember him as the mayor who was mayor during the blackout.

Q: I understand there is a fight between Beame, Carey and Berger now. What is the reason for this?

A: The fight between Beame, Carey and Berger has been going on a long time. As a matter of fact Beame

would not receive Berger last night when he went to call at his home. Beame is furious over Carey's support for Cuomo for Mayor.

Q: Beame charged that the blackout may not have been an accident. Isn't this the basis of the dispute?

A: I don't believe that, do you? I heard Beame, he charged gross negligence, maybe worse.

Q: What do you think he meant by that?

A: He thinks that Con Ed knew the networks would be not sufficient to handle the load and did nothing.

Q: Why is he saying this? Why would Con Ed let this happen?

A: He has to do something to get the heat off him.

Q: Does Berger now have emergency powers?

A: Berger announced that he is representing the Governor. Beame should have asked for the National Guard to come out. There will be more looting tonight if the lights are not on. And it will spread because so many places have had looting. This has got to hurt Beame unless he alleges that Con Ed is responsible. There will be looting if the lights are not on and maybe if they are.

in the evening tries desperately to portray the situation in the city as reminding him of the "urban violence of the 1960s" and that it is growing out of control. Unfortunately for him, a co-reporter who has actually been at the scenes, continuously contradicts Newman on the "live" show.

City Council President Paul O'Dwyer offers a statement to the press which put the finishing touches on the riot potential. O'Dwyer reveals that he had conducted a fact-finding visit to the Indian Point nuclear power plant that afternoon, and had discovered that not even the employees there had bought the line that lightning was the cause of the power failure. In a strongly worded statement broadcast by Channel 5 television at 10 p.m. O'Dwyer documents that employees at the plant at the time of the powerout saw "no lightning" at that time. Although O'Dwyer's statement is either buried in a corner of the next day's press or simply not covered at all the pressure on Con Edison to restore the power has reached a peak.

Thus, by 11:00 p.m., the "riot" potential has been destroyed. Con Edison by now has put the power back on in the "riot prone" areas. Throughout the night, police, along with community volunteers, work together to clean up existing debris and to watch for any attempts at provocations.

Day Two: July 15

With power restored, as the city returns to "normal," the Rockefeller-linked press has not given up its political effort to create a race riot — if need be, with further lies. The *New York Times* characterizes the 24 hour period as having "far exceeded the outbreaks that followed the assassination of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968." The *Times* also lyingly depicts a meeting of 75 community leaders with the Mayor the night before as a unified call for "deploying the National Guard."

Editorially, the *Times* labels the crisis, not so much a blackout as a riot — an analog of "the hot summers of the 60's which started in Harlem and in Bedford Stuyvesant in the summer of 1964, a year before Watts." Rupert

Murdock's *New York Post* runs a four-inch banner headline, "24 Hours of Terror," and carries a multifaceted attack on the Mayor for not calling in the National Guard — joining with the *New York Times* in claiming that, in fact, there had been a riot.

The side of the mayor and New York City is taken by the *New York Daily News*. The *News* editorially defends Beame, laying the "burden of proof" on Con Ed. The *News* also notes that the much-publicized marauders "had moved as though on signal at the start of the power blackout."

Newsday: Blackout Shows Blacks Need Slave Labor

Newsday editorialized: "It's not a coincidence that the neighborhoods where housing, education, and employment are poorest...were the ones plagued by looting Wednesday night... The remedy," according to *Newsday*, is "jobs for youths and hispanics...the city is entitled to look to Washington."

In the wake of the New York blackout, much of the U.S. press has editorialized heavily for energy conservation and power rationing. The July 15 issue of Long Island's *Newsday* added a new wrinkle — by asserting that the blackout shows the need for a massive program of slave labor jobs to "help oppressed minorities."

While the *New York Times* and the *New York Post* did not issue such thinly veiled calls for a Humphrey-Hawkins national slave labor program, both papers heavily played up the looting as a "legitimate sociological tendency" resulting from "oppression." The *Times* went so far as to say the looting was the "white man's heritage for having so long mistreated" blacks and other minorities.

Press in Baltimore, Boston, and Chicago have echoed the *New York Post's* "24 Hours of Terror" headline with the constant query: "Can it happen here?" The *Boston Globe* has blamed the blackout on "too much technology."