

Birmingham Police Clash With 1,000

Los Angeles Times (1886-Current File); May 5, 1963; ProQuest Historical Newspapers Los Angeles Times
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Negroes Yield After Dousing By Water; U.S. Starts Inquiry

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP). A taunting crowd of more than 1,000 Negroes defied policemen, dogs and high velocity water hoses Saturday before their own leaders persuaded them to disperse.

Doused for about an hour with water, they gave ground grudgingly. Finally, two Negro ministers pleaded with remnants of the crowd to leave.

Some of the Negroes threw rocks and other missiles. A fireman, Billy Boak, was treated for a head injury from a flying brick.

Police said nearly 200 Negroes were arrested—including 111 children under 16. More than 1,600 have been arrested since demonstrations started April 3.

Kennedy Dismayed

The trouble broke out as President Kennedy expressed dismay over the situation and his brother, Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy, dispatched two of his key civil rights aides to Birmingham. The attorney general canceled a speech and stayed at his office.

Burke Marshall, chief of the Justice Department's civil rights division, talked with several officials, including Sheriff Melvin Bailey.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., integration leader, said he was scheduled to meet with Marshall. However, King left for the airport to return to Atlanta for the weekend without meeting him.

King declined comment on whether demonstrations might be halted.

Gov. George C. Wallace deplored them, calling them useless.

After policemen cleared a park where Negro spectators had gathered, two Negro ministers urged the crowd to leave.

Ministers Issue Plea

"Will you please go home?" pleaded the Rev. William Greer, pastor of a Birmingham church. He bor-

rowed a loudspeaker from a police officer.

"Your leaders have asked you all to go home. Please do not cause trouble," he said.

"We don't want a riot," said the Rev. James Bevels. "Lives could be lost. I saw at least 25 Negro men with guns."

It was the third straight day of a stepped up campaign against racial segregation in this steel city, Alabama's largest.

At least two women and several men were knocked off their feet Saturday when firemen turned on the high-pressure hoses.

The water was used after someone threw a pop bottle at police. The bottle broke near Police Commissioner Eugene (Bull) Connor and

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RACIAL CLASH

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he ordered: "Give them the water."

Police held the dogs in readiness.

A huge roar welled up from the crowd as the dogs were brought up. The Negroes did not disperse immediately as they did Friday.

Two Negroes with rocks attempted to climb on top of a car but ran when a police dog approached.

The Negroes started to give ground gradually as firemen played the hose into the crowd. White spectators cheered when the water hose was brought into play.

Another 1,000 Negroes gathered in the area and shouted encouragement to the embattled demonstrators. Many were old Negro women.

One Negro teen-ager ran toward a group of policemen and struck an officer in the chest with a rock. The policeman chased him, whacked him across the back with his billy club, then let him go.

Stripped Trees

Two of the fire hoses were equipped with monitor guns which take water simultaneously from two hoses with such force that it knocked the bark from trees 100 ft. away.

White spectators numbering in the hundreds were ordered to move away from the area. They obeyed.

An employee of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights, Doris Gulce, 30, of Birmingham, was dragged more than 20 ft. by a deputy and plainclothes

detectives through a gravel parking lot after she refused to get off a sidewalk.

Several young Negroes were placed in a school bus. Some jumped out of the windows, but police quickly rounded them up again.

Two Negro girls ran around the park clad only in slips—their outer clothing had been ripped off by the water. Several Negro youths had their shirts torn off.

Twenty-five Negroes were arrested Saturday morning in a march on City Hall.

Minutes later two Negro women slipped through police lines and knelt on the steps of City Hall. Police arrested them and one girl wept as she was being led to police headquarters. Later, two other Negro women walked up to the steps, knelt and bowed their heads. They too, were arrested.

An estimated 700 Negroes, including some as young as 7 years old, were arrested Thursday. Another 250 were taken into custody Friday when police used police dogs on a leash and fire hoses to turn back marchers.

In Washington, Atty. Gen. Kennedy canceled a speech to remain in his office Saturday after sending Marshall and Joseph F. Dolan, assistant deputy attorney general, to Birmingham.

President Kennedy was reported dismayed at the situation, a visitor to his office said. John P. Roche, national chairman of the Americans for Democratic Action, said the President discussed the use of police dogs and water hoses to break up the Negro demonstrators with him.

STRIPE IN ALABAMA

Children March Off to Jail in Racial Protest

Birmingham Scene of Turmoil; Scores Arrested by Police

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (UPI) — Hundreds of Negro school children with comedian Dick Gregory in the lead marched off to jail Monday in the biggest civil rights demonstration the South has ever seen.

More than 800 demonstrators, many carrying blankets and school books—marched from a mass church meeting that started at the 18th Street church at 10:30 a.m. Monday. They were kept in an open jail of waiting policemen who were told during a thunderstorm to let them go.

Police officers arrested about 150 Negroes carrying signs protesting racial discrimination. They were taken to a jail in the downtown area. Police promptly arrested them later, a Negro committee of Negroes and whites convened to work out ways of ending the 14 days of racial demonstrations which have rocked the city and filled jails to overflowing.

By late Monday afternoon, Birmingham officials said the city had a total of 1,000 demonstrators in jail. They were held in the city's main jail, which is crowded to capacity. The demonstrators are being held in the city's main jail, which is crowded to capacity. The demonstrators are being held in the city's main jail, which is crowded to capacity.



DEMONSTRATOR DOWNED.—Three Birmingham, Ala., policemen restrain a Negro woman after she refused to obey orders to move along and get into school with the officers. Such skirmishes were few despite the numerous arrests.

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Strife in Alabama

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ALABAMA JAILINGS

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as an uneasy calm settled over the city, authorities had made at least 867 arrests — bringing the total arrested in the month-long protest to more than 2,200 Monday's jailings easily surpassed those last Thursday during similar demonstrations.

Those arrested Monday included a white reporter and scores of students — the youngest appeared about 12 — who skipped classes to take part in the massive drive to crack the city's rigid segregation barriers.

They joined hundreds of fellow demonstrators already sleeping shoulder to shoulder on concrete floors in three jails in the city.

In one of the few cases of scuffling, a Negro man tangled briefly with a policeman, fearing his shirt. He seemed to be trying to get the policeman's pistol, but was quickly subdued.

A Negro woman was dragged kicking and scratching from the front porch of a home and subdued by three policemen, one with his knee on her chest.

Seeks Truce

Monday's demonstrations came while Marshall conferred with leaders of both sides to seek a truce and ease the crisis that began building April 3.

The Negroes have demanded four concessions as the price for calling off the demonstrations: better employment opportunities, desegregation of downtown lunch counters; release of the estimated 1,200 Negroes still in jail from earlier arrests and creation of a biracial committee to work out plans for gradual desegregation of public schools.

The Negroes began pouring from the church, where the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. addressed the estimated crowd of 2,000, with Gregory in the lead.

Comic Leads Group

The Negro comic led his group up to a police blockade where he was halted and asked if he had a parade permit. He replied no, and police told him to turn around.

"No, we'll stay here," he said and the police herded them to waiting paddy wagons.

The others followed in groups of 20 to 30 and officers situated atop buildings with walkie talkies alerted

police who swarmed in the area.

The demonstrations Monday were calm and carefully planned with only a few isolated cases of scuffling. Among those arrested was Barbara Demming, a white news reporter for The Nation magazine.

At the city jail, already packed with earlier demonstrators, Supt. Robert K. Austin, said "we have the jail at capacity and the jail yard is packed. It's standing room only out there."

Austin said the state fairgrounds auditorium and other facilities there were being used to house juveniles.

Austin said many of the adults arrested would be sent to the county jail. He said he understood city officials were getting ready to ask nearby counties for boarding space at their jails.

To Expel Students

School Supt. Theo Wright has said that students who cut classes would be suspended or expelled.

Just as Gregory arrived at the 18th St. church a fireman accidentally turned on a hose nozzle that lightly sprinkled Gregory and other spectators. The spurt of water lasted no more than 10 seconds.

This was the nearest thing approaching use of the fire hoses that were put into play earlier to halt demonstrators.

King emerged from a meeting of Negro leaders to say "some victories have been achieved but it is too early to tell whether they will be lasting."

But shortly after King returned to the church, which was ringed by helmeted police who broke up crowds of Negroes when they gathered outside, Negroes began streaming from the meeting hall. An estimated 2,000 had gathered inside.

Gregory led 18 Negro teenagers on a march toward the downtown area. Stopped by police who demanded if he had a permit to parade, Gregory replied no and refused to budge.

He and the Negro youths were hauled away in a paddy wagon, less than a block after leaving the church.