

Jesse, McNeil Hit 'Silence'

By PIERRE GUILMANT
(Daily Defender News Editor)

Surrounded by the colorful dashikis of Black Men Moving, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, director of Operation Breadbasket, and attorney E. Duke McNeil, president of The Woodlawn Organization (TWO), rebuked city, county, state and national elected officials for "their silence and ineffectiveness in dealing with the present black-on-black crime crisis."

At the same time, they effectively slapped the collective wrists of Chicago's "white press" for its failure to enunciate the problem as "the black community sees it."

In an indictment against silence The Country Preacher called upon elected officials to raise their voices and their legal power "to investigate, arrest and prosecute the guilty while they exercise equal vigor to protect the innocent."

Both Rev. Jackson and McNeil bitterly denounced "a double standard which resulted in wholesale arrests and veritable siege of the black community after the shooting of a white policeman, but failed to produce equal concern upon the attempted assassination of the Rev. Curtis Burrell, the burning of his church, or the killing of more than 70 black youths."

Voicing regret on the death of Det. James Alfano Jr., McNeil said: "The Woodlawn community mourns his death as it has mourned countless deaths in the Greater Woodlawn Community over the last year, perpetrated by a small minority of individuals. This community stands ready to assist and cooperate in any sane and reasonable program designed to eliminate the situation that has caused the death of Det. Alfano and those other hundreds of black people that have been slain in the streets."

Citing the Daily Defender for its "courageous challenge of black-on-black crime," Rev. Jackson recommended "the white media and community should read the Defender to learn how the black community really feels about the present crisis."

After citing the need for upper echelon black police officers with the authority to act, Rev. Jackson turned upon the "white media representatives." "Your questions indicate you don't know what to leave in your story or what to leave out," he said.

"Let me tell you right now," he continued, "this is not a fight with the police department."



E. DUKE McNEIL

Rev. J. JACKSON

He and McNeil pointed out that "having only one of the top 25 police officers as black in a city that is 45 per cent black is not authority."

They cited figures indicating black representation on the police force is less than 16 per cent while the black community comprises more than 40 per cent of the city's population.

To overcome this apparent imbalance Rev. Jackson said he is organizing a force of more than 500 men, black and Spanish-Americans, to call upon the police recruiting office for jobs.

He also called for the tripling of the number of black commanders from the present four to twelve.

An Indictment Against Silence

"In one of the most grave crises that our city has known the elected officials who are legally bound and sworn to uphold the peace and to protect all of the people are noticeably silent and unresponsive. The apparatus for justice is here, but not the application.

— Mayor Pro-Tem Claude Holman is Alderman and Ward Committeeman of the He is silent.

— U. S. Senator Charles Percy serves on the Senate Investigations Committee which has the authority to subpoena persons and records to get to the root of this problem. He is silent.

— Cook County Board President George Dunne is also the Ward Committeeman of 42nd Ward where Cabrini-Green is located. He is silent.

— U. S. Congressman Abner Mikva of 4th Ward where Rev. Burrell has been shot large portion of the south side of Chicago where the shootings and murders have taken place, particularly in Woodlawn. He is silent.

These men have the power to investigate, legislate, arrest and prosecute. They must do it justly, but they must do it.