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New York's rumbling racial volcano

New York is boiling with racial tension just as the hot, steamy days of summer are about to begin. The latest example of civic bad blood is a bizarre conflict between angry blacks and Korean shopkeepers.

I recently saw one minor act in this drama while buying cigarettes in one of the innumerable, tiny fruit stands run by New York's 250,000 hard-working Koreans, the city's newest wave of immigrants.

Two burly young blacks were stealing beer from the store's cooler. The shopkeeper, a tiny Korean woman, grabbed them and demanded they return her beer. A shouting and shoving match erupted around me as the blacks threatened to kill the woman and burn down her shop. Neighboring shop owners arrived with baseball bats and finally chased off the thieves.

For someone used to Toronto's bucolic ways, it was horrifying, ugly and all in a day's business—for New York.

On Brooklyn's storied Flatbush Ave., crowds of militant blacks have been picketing another Korean fruit stand because of a recent incident in which a black lady tried to underpay the owner and was, it is said, treated rudely. The press here has been giving fevered coverage to the incident, which has by now produced deep enmity between blacks and the Koreans.

Out in front of the fruit stand, self-proclaimed black "activists" have been whipping up crowds with anti-Korean and anti-Semitic tirades. Prominent among them is the biggest, loudmouth in the black community, the noxious Rev. Al Sharpton. The tubby Sharpton, sporting a huge gold medallion, is the same mountebank who perpetrated the hoax over Twana Brawley, a black girl whose outrageous lies about having been raped and

Eric
IV ARGOLTS
in New York



sodomized by whites almost produced race riots in New York.

Egged on by Sharpton and his like, a group of blacks mistook three hapless Vietnamese for Koreans, attacked them, and fractured the skull of one with a hammer. As if all this were not bad enough, blacks are still seething with outrage over the killing last August of a black, Yusuk Hawkins, in Queens. Blacks are charging that the courts aren't being tough enough on the Italian youths who were charged.

That incident, which has turned into a racial cause celebre, may have been over a white girl who was hanging around with out-of-neighborhood black drug dealers.

In the middle of this storm is New York's new black mayor, David Dinkins, a courtly gentleman who is clearly confused. He's trying to placate his black constituents while upholding the law and soothing his furious Jewish financial backers who are up in arms over the anti-Semitic statements of black "activists." The mayor is being publicly accused of being a "white lover" and "Jew lover" by militant blacks.

Now he is also being called a "Chink lover" because of his faintly voiced support for Koreans. Many blacks deeply resent Koreans because of their relative success

in making a living in New York. These Koreans arrive almost penniless and work 16 hours a day, six days a week, for years, making an average of \$175 weekly. They save \$50 a week and eventually open their own clean, well-run fruit stands. Many of New York's two million blacks, a good percentage of whom subsist on welfare, claim Koreans are taking their jobs away.

Behind these latest nasty events is the growing anger of non-blacks against the hard core of unemployed and unemployable blacks who make up the majority of New York's drug dealers and muggers. Last year, there were nearly 100,000 reported street assaults in the city—and probably more than double that number since at least half of all muggings go unreported. Most of these are done by black teenagers who are virtually immune from serious prosecution or even arrest. Their victims are blacks and non-blacks alike.

Add to this the swarms of homeless who infest every street in New York, often threatening pedestrians with violence if handouts are not made. New York is getting to look like Calcutta, except Calcutta is far sater.

What a mess. And just about everyone is expecting a long, hot summer when New York's pressure-cooker atmosphere will explode into more racial violence. It's painfully ironic that New York's liberal elite, which lectures nations like South Africa on how to achieve racial harmony, is sitting on top of a rumbling racial volcano.

Toronto, which used to be peaceful until it began importing criminal elements of all colors, like South American drug dealers, still looks like a country village by comparison to New York's steaming racial swamp. But who knows? In time it too could become a second, rotten Big Apple.