

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND VIOLENCE

What "law and order" really means:

"Lacking in empathy, these people cannot understand that, to the dispossessed, Law and Order mean precisely the runaround they have been getting."---Paul Goodman, "The Cold Violence of the Self-Righteous is the Worst Kind," New York Times Magazine article, April 28, 1968. P.111

The following letter is an example of this attitude.

"Third Reich Had Law, Order, Too"

Chapel Hill, N. C. -- In the present situation it is the whites, not the minority, who are violating law and order, It is the colored citizens, not the white, who are defending basic American law.

The American tradition is not buildt on a simple notion of law and order. All societies, including Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, and the Union of South Africa, maintain law and order, else they could not exist.

The American principle is not that law and order should dominate man, which makes the police masters rather than servants of society, but that law and order are servants of justice, that law exists to secure justice, and that order shall apply to all men equally.

Colored Americans have been deprived of life, denied liberty, and prevented from pursuing happiness. These are the basic principles and the fundamental laws of the state.

With far less provocation the revolutionists revolted against unjust laws and created great disorder. With more patience than I would have had, black citizens have carefully followed the orderly steps of American law. They assembled in an orderly fashion and petitioned the government for the redress of obvious wrongs. They mostly have been denied.

They have now moved to violent and destructive protest. The Boston Tea Party and similar events involved public law breaking and the violent destruction of property in protest against unjust laws.

We have forced them from peaceful petition to the Boston Tea Party just as the British did our colonial ancestors. It remains to be seen if we will force them to Lexington and Concord. But the only way a country can defeat millions of its own citizens is to turn Fascist and if that happens the second American Revolution will be doubly lost.

John W. Dixon, Jr.
Letter in Washington Afro-American
Feb. 13, 1968

Violence result of poverty and uprooting, group in transition:

Cite words of Chief Commissioner(not exact title) Patrick Murphy, who pointed out a few months ago in a speech before the Georgetown Citizens Assoc. that a hundred years ago most criminals were Irish. Now that they've made

Ineffectiveness of the "garrison-city" approach:

But the garrison-city approach is worse than merely ineffectual. It is positively bad, because it neglects the question of WHY people riot.

In the short run, the need is to put down violence. But a need, too, to get working on underlying problems.

The tragedy is that no city yet has found the will to move simultaneously on both fronts. Social programs have been most often designed to promote tranquility, not to solve underlying problems. And if tranquility is the top priority, it is not surprising that we turn to repressive measures to produce it when the social programs fail to do it quick enough."

William Raspberry, Washington Post
(March 4, 1968)

"To continue present policies is to move steadily toward a divided country and at a cost of increasing civil disorder, violence and loss of freedom not only for the Negro but for whites as well"

Marquis Childs, Washington Post
(March 4, 1968)

It can be pointed out that America now spends \$80 billion a year on violence, through the Department of Defense. It is not surprising that Rap Brown says "Violence is as American as cherry-pie." We all understand that the campaign will be non-violent, but should not feel that we are obligated to sooth people's fears about violence in the cities-of America,