

'Most everybody has been wringing his hands and gnashing his teeth about last week's little outbreak in Los Angeles. The Great Philosopher of Non-violence, with his chum Bayard Rustin, went directly to the scene to do some hand-wringing and soul-searching and what ever else "leaders" do in such situations. (We're not sure just how the Great Philosopher reconciles his philosophy of nonviolent love with his recommendation that police use whatever force is needed to restore the "peace".)

The Los Angeles cops, of whom, it is said, nearly one-half are members of the John Birch Society, displayed their valor by bunching together during the nighttime activities, pouncing ten to fifteen strong on individuals suspected of looting.

The top cop in Los Angeles, one Parker, revealed that such unpleasantness had been expected for a year or more. What had he and his superiors in the local and state governments done about their conclusion that conditions in the black ghetto were explosive? They reacted in the classic fascist pattern--an agreement was made, a year ago, between Parker and California Governor Brown that if things exploded, Parker need only shout, and Brown would send in the troops.

There was something classic too, about Governor Brown's situation. Here's a man whose income permits him to go to Greece for a vacation.

We don't know just what that income is, but we do know that Brown has been on the public payroll at least since 1943. We also know that vacations in Greece cost more money than most people have, and, probably, more than any of the people in the Watts area of Los Angeles have. In other words, while these people swelter in the heat and hopelessness of the ghetto, the man whose income has been provided by their taxes for the past 22 years, is basking in the sunlight of the Greek Isles. Then, the Governor comes home, when he learns about the outbreak. He comes to the area where the trouble is. He asks the men in the street--"What's wrong?" They had already told him in the only language he understands.

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And then there was Lyndon. His speechmakers drew up the usual statement with something in it for everybody. For America's Negroes there was this choice bit: "To resort to ~~terror~~ and violence...strikes from the hand of the Negro the very weapons with which he is achieving his emancipation."

Apparently the black men and women in the Los Angeles ghetto have not heard about this "emancipation" which Lyndon thinks is taking place. The "weapons" to which he refers are apparently those which the civil rights movement has been using--nonviolent protest. And the "emancipation" that has been achieved with these weapons?

A series of unenforceable and unenforced "civil rights" laws, filled with the language of fine intentions, but empty of the content of freedom from oppression. Trotsky had a term for this kind of "emancipation". He called it "parliamentary ventriloquism." He referred to a puppet legislature acting at the behest and in the interest of a class of financiers and industrialists--the owners of society--while speaking the language of "government by the people."

Here's Lyndon telling American Negroes that "terror and violence" are wrong, and that the use of such tactics will do them no good. Does he really believe this? Well let's see.

Lyndon's CIA roams the entire world, assassinating politicians, overthrowing governments, invading foreign countries. His Air Force daily drops napalm, poison chemicals and high explosives by the ton on the people of Vietnam. His marines and his army daily burn the villages of Vietnam and shoot down men, women and children in the village streets. Lyndon says he is using this "terror and violence" to bring "freedom" to the people of South Vietnam.

What's good for the goose, Lyndon, is good for the gander.

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Lyndon's good friends in the chemical industry are trying to get him to use more of their products in the war--either that or they are worried about public reaction to what Lyndon is already doing in Vietnam, and they're afraid he'll stop using their stuff against the Vietnamese people.

There's an outfit that's called the American Chemical Society. It publishes a number of magazines. One of them is the Chemical and Engineering News. In its August 16 issue, this publication carried an editorial which said that more chemicals should be used in the Vietnam war. The editorial went on: "Chemical warfare has been engulfed in a haze of horror through propaganda and ignorance..."

The fellow who wrote the editorial is Dr. Richard L. Kenyon, director of publications of the American Chemical Society. We don't know just how many times Dr. Kenyon has been under napalm attack. We don't know how many times he has seen his children liberally sprinkled with extremely corrosive defoliant chemicals. We don't know how many times he and his wife have lain retching on the ground as a result of the administration of nausea gas. We don't know how many of his children have had their eyesight permanently damaged by tear gas.

But we do have a pretty good idea what some of the people who have had this experience think about Lyndon's use of chemical warfare in Vietnam. Of course, these folks are probably biased--well, let's consider them anyway, keeping in mind that their viewpoint is a bit different from Dr. Kenyon's. Not being scientifically trained as Dr. Kenyon is, these folks are probably not "objective."

Bertrand Russell says that the South Vietnam Liberation Red Cross "has offered evidence to any international investigatory body, showing that over 1,000 people were caused severe illness accompanied by vomiting, bleeding, paralysis and loss of sight and consciousness" by the defoliants and other chemicals used by U.S. forces against the Vietnamese people.

Ma Thi Chu, a representative of the Vietnam Women's Union and the National Liberation Front, said: During the period from January to March, 1963, when chemicals were used against 46 villages, 20,000 people were affected, many of them women, children, and old people. I have been on the spot. I have seen children with swollen faces and bodies covered with burns. I have met women blinded ~~and~~ suffering from sanguinolent diarrhoea. Many of them died afterwards."

Then, there are the reports from respectable American newspapers. The Baltimore Sun last year reported: "We supply a phosphorous explosive fired from artillery and from fighter bombers which erupts in a white cloud burning everything it touches."

The Washington Star said: "The spectacle of children half-alive with napalm burns across their bodies was revolting to both Vietnamese and Americans."

Yes, we dare say the Vietnamese people are considerably less enthusiastic about chemical warfare than are the officials of the chemical corporations that make the chemicals and sell them to Lyndon for use in Vietnam.

And that brings us to another point, Dr. Kenyon is, we should judge, a pretty small apple in the chemical barrel. He is just an employee of the American Chemical Society. The Society is supported, we should suppose, by contributions from its members. And we should suppose that the larger the contribution from an individual member, the greater would be that member's influence in the affairs of the Society. Of course, Dr. Kenyon has said that his editorial does not speak for the whole society. But are we foolish enough to think that an employee of the Society is going to put something into the Society's magazine, with which the people who control disagree? It would indeed be a strange--even unique--Society if this were the case.

So who are members of the American Chemical Society for whom, Dr. Kenyon, in some sense, must speak? We don't have a membership list of the Society, but we've taken the trouble to identify some of the more distinguished members, along with their corporations. Here they are:

Crawford H. Greenewalt, Chairman, E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Co.

Lammot du Pont Copeland, President, E.I. de Pont de Nemours & Co.

H.G. Vesper, President, Western Operations, Inc. Standard Oil Co. of Calif.

David A. Shepard, Exec. Vice-President, Standard Oil Co. (New Jersey)

Charles A. Thomas, Chairman, Monsanto Chemical Co.

Herbert Dow Doan, President, Dow Chemical Co.

William E. Hanford, Vice-President, Olin Mathieson Chemical Co.

Kenneth H. Klipstein, President, American Cyanamid Co.

Robert E. Hulse, Exec. Vice-President, Natl. Distillers & Chemical Corp.

These are the fine, honorable, decent, law-abiding, respectable, god-fearing, pass-the-collection-plate- on Sunday, child-loving, wife-loving, home-loving American industrial heroes who, if we are right, want to increase the use of chemicals in Lyndon's war against the Vietnames people--who are not troubled as much, one supposes, by the mental picture of "children with swollen faces and bodies covered with burns", "women blinded or suffering from sanguinolent diarrhoea," "children half-alive with napalm burns across their bodies," as they are by the prospect of losing a profitable government contact.

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Lyndon is still worried about what people will think of the way the U.S. and "Government" forces treat prisoners in South Vietnam. He had his Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, tell the International Committee of the Red Cross that the U.S. intends to abide by the "humanitarian principles" of the Geneva Conventions of 1949. The U.S. formally ratified the Geneva Conventions on February 2, 1956. Lyndon told Rusk to send a letter to the Red Cross saying that the U.S. is already "applying these conventions in South Vietnam." He said that the "Government" of South Vietnam is sending a similar letter to the Red Cross. Lyndon also got in a little slap at the National Liberation Front by saying that "to our knowledge, the United States Government and the Government of South Vietnam are the only parties" that have said they'll observe the conventions.

While Lyndon was saying this, a reporter was interviewing Staff Sergeant Barry Sadler, of the U.S. Army, who is in this country recuperating from wounds he suffered while fighting for freedom in South Vietnam. Sergeant Sadler told about some of his experiences in South Vietnam. They included stories of the beheading of prisoners by the forces of the "Government". They also included some interesting ways of extracting information from prisoners: "They 'll /"Government forces_/ take four or five VC / Vietnamese guerillas_/ up in a helicopter /piloted by a U.S. Air Force pilot_/ and if they have refused to talk after capture, throw them out one at a time. Eventually, one of them talks."

This treatment of prisoners by U.S. and "Government" forces is, of course, nothing new. Almost a year ago there appeared an Associated Press photograph showing two men walking through the jungle. One was in uniform, the other in civilian clothes. Between them they carried a pole from which were suspended three human heads. "War Trophies in Viet Nam", read the AP cutlines, "A Vietnamese Marine follows a captive Viet Cong suspect as they carry the heads of a Viet Cong platoon leader and two soldiers..." The cutline said that the picture was made by U.S. Marine Sergeant Steve Stibbins.

Now we don't have before us a set of the Geneva Conventions on the treatment of war prisoners. It's been some time since we've read them. But as we recall them, they contain nothing which would suggest that throwing prisoners out of helicopters, and chopping off their heads is acceptable treatment.

There's that "ventriloquism" again. While Lyndon's help mates are busily scribbling letters to all kinds of folks, protesting how holy and pure are the U.S. intentions and actions in South Vietnam, the soldiers of whom Lyndon is commander-in-chief, are just as busy with their savagery against the people of Vietnam.

All this is not to suggest that Lyndon, or his corporation friends, or his soldiers, enjoy the beastiality of war. But it does, we think, confirm the fact that savagery is always the necessary tool of empire. And those who accept the necessity for maintaining the American Corporate Empire, by that acceptance, endorse the use of the savagery.

One does choose.

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We don't like to let the Vietnamese situation starve out other matters that deserve comment. On the other hand, the mailed fist of the Great Society is so frequently exposed there, it is difficult to resist reporting it. For example, on August 9, a man and two young boys were wounded near the South Vietnamese town of Quinhon. It seems that a U.S. Army garbage detail was taking to a garbage dump the leavings from the table of the "liberators". A crowd of 150 or so Vietnamese civilians, hoping to get some food, approached the garbage detail. Two U.S. Army guards, no doubt afraid that the hungry civilians were actually guerrillas, opened fire. And three more Vietnamese were wounded.

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If you were a Vietnamese, wouldn't you wonder at a "liberation" which consigned you to eating its garbage, and that only after you had been properly identified, as loyal to its "cause."

Again, we have a dispatch from Saigon which details how fortunate the Vietnam girls are when they can arrange an alliance with a U.S. soldier. As a result of becoming the lover of a U.S. "freedom fighter", one girl's family "has moved to a bigger house, and she is getting enough money from the soldier to send her five brothers to school."

Garbage for the hungry. Whoredom for the women. Napalm, poison gas and hot lead for dissenters.

Lyndon's "dream of freedom for an oppressed people."

August 19, 1965
Jack Minnis