

# *Civil War in July, 1967*

## *Part I*

**T**anks rumbling through the streets, buildings sprayed wholesale with machine gun fire, the rubble pervading the cities looking like Germany in 1945, compulsory curfews and blockades imposed — who would have thought during the Age of Apathy in the 1950s that, a decade later, America would be reduced to this? And who can now deny that the Negroes in America are a colonized and occupied people? The tanks, the National Guardsmen and state police, the federal troops, are merely the outward manifestation of this ever-present fact.

Ask yourself: If a white neighborhood were rioting and looting, would buildings be pulverized en masse by state and federal troops, wounding and killing thousands of innocent people? Would curfews be imposed and streets blockaded? Would apartment-to-apartment searches be made, as at Plainfield, New Jersey, breaking down doors and destroying furniture without bothering about search warrants? Of the thousands wounded during this virtual civil war of July, 1967, almost all were Negroes, and the vast majority were shot by trigger-happy white troops, concerned only to “shoot everything that is black and that moves,” in the words of one officer. Since the greatest degree of devastation and shooting was performed by the state troops, we are justified in calling the July civil war an exercise in mass counter-revolutionary violence perpetrated by the government, in response to a far more limited Negro rebellion against a white state. For

when the very basis of the state is challenged, or seems to be, the state's violence is many times that of the rebels.

And ask yourself also: By what right does the state move in and shoot looters? Surely looting cannot be condoned, but capital punishment for looting, which is what shooting amounts to, is just as criminal and unjustifiable. In my view, a criminal forfeits the rights which he takes away from another person; and therefore a murderer, who takes away from another person his right to life, deserves capital punishment. But surely, and by any known moral standards, capital punishment for mere robbery is so far excessive a punishment that it, in turn, amounts to criminal murder of the victim. We all revile the days of pre-Industrial Revolution Britain, when petty thieves were executed. Are we to return to that brutality now?

Perhaps the most incredible aspect of the July warfare was the decree of the mayor of Milwaukee — one that was universally applauded — forcing everyone off the streets! This, to be sure, ended the riot, but what did it do to the liberty of everyone in Milwaukee? Can we tolerate a country where no one is allowed on the streets because someone might commit a crime? The mayor only ended rioting in Milwaukee by turning that city into one vast jailhouse, and free men cannot tolerate this sort of action.

If the Negroes in America are, indeed, an occupied and colonized people, then we must give serious consideration to a solution which, baldly stated, seems absurd and ridiculous: the partitioning of the United States into white and Negro nations. This solution will be explored in future columns.

## *Part II*

**T**he most revealing fact of the July civil war in the American cities was the continuing parallel to the attitudes and actions of America's imperial war in Vietnam. The American troops' attitudes toward the Negroes in the urban ghettos followed with uncanny similarity their attitudes toward that other oppressed colored people: the Vietnamese. This is apart from the fact that American Negroes are drafted to fight and die in disproportionate numbers in the Vietnam War.

Newsmen reported that, on New Jersey Governor [Richard J.] Hughes's staff during the fighting, there were the "hawks" and the "doves." Terms like "hold and clear," "search and destroy," began to be applied. Revealing also was the famous interview (*New York Times*, July 29) with Maj. Gen. Almerin C. O'Hara, commander of the New York State Army National Guard. General O'Hara called for a "greater commitment of force" to bring riots under control, and added the amazing statement that he would "not rule out the use of any weapon."

Escalation once more raises its ugly head; will someone soon suggest the use of tactical nuclear weapons on American cities? "Clean" ones, of course, so that the fallout doesn't filter down to white areas.

The General, however, assures us that while he contemplates the use of hand grenades, bazookas, and recoilless rifles, the chances of using heavy artillery are "very remote." Well, we must be grateful for small blessings.

General O'Hara insisted that National Guard actions must be under the authority and decisions of the military, including choice of tactics and weapons, since "civilians are not cognizant" of these delicate fine points. "These are military decisions which should be left to military men." O'Hara also stressed that the National Guard must not be "unduly restrained by civilian authority," because "if the military is brought in and they lose control, then what do you have left?"

The answer, it would appear, is no control at all, and in a supposedly "freedom-loving" country, is *that* so unthinkable?

General O'Hara conceded that the standard riot control techniques — stressing closed formations with bayonets at the ready — are "not really adequate for the kind of guerrilla warfare (these are American cities, remember, *not* Vietnam) and snipers we face these days." Instead he said that "military methods used in flushing guerrillas out of a village in Vietnam could be adapted to guerrilla warfare in the ghettos."

"Of course," he added wistfully, "we can't do just what we would do in Vietnam. Out there if you had a sniper in a room you'd just crank up a tank and fire a shell through the window, destroying the whole room, and much of the building. I don't think public opinion would accept the use of that kind of force here."

Poor General O'Hara. To be hobbled like that! But cheer up, General. I'm afraid that public opinion might well support that kind of force — provided, of course, that it would not be used in white, middle-class areas. If *that* ever happened, you'd really have trouble on your hands.

## *Part III*

**M**asterpiece of Unconscious Humor during the July Days: the unmitigated gall of President Johnson in his July 24 proclamation: “We will not endure violence. It matters not by whom it is done, or under what slogan or banner. It will not be tolerated.”

Let us savor that statement, surely a classic of its kind. It is a statement from a man in charge of the greatest violence-wielding machine, the mightiest collection of destructive power, in the history of the world. It comes from a man in charge of the day-by-day use of that power to bomb, burn, and napalm thousands of innocent women and children and old people in Vietnam. For such a statement to come, in all seriousness, from the greatest violence-wielder of our time, and to be taken with a straight face by the public, demonstrates how far our society has gone down the road to irrationality. So, “it matters not by whom it is done, or under what slogan or banner,” eh, Mr. President? Does that include the banner of “saving” the crushed and bleeding people of Vietnam from “International Communism”?

And so here we have our President making a totally absurd, irrational, and self-contradictory statement about violence, which no one seems to think is in the least out of order.

Let us contrast to this, the Masterpiece of Conscious Humor of the Month, and the clarity and sanity of this statement, by a supposedly irrational Negro extremist, H. Rap Brown, head of SNCC [Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee]. Brown was asked at a press conference what it would take to satisfy black power militants. Brown replied: "I want Lyndon Johnson to resign and go to Vietnam and fight — he and his family." The reporter adds that "Negro onlookers cheered as he brushed aside newsmen's requests that he be 'more specific.'" Surely Brown cannot be blamed for this brushing aside; how specific can one get?

The Negro movement has come a long way from the days when compulsory integration was the goal and the NAACP was the leader. The old civil rights movement was thoroughly statist and modern-liberal; its goal was to use the arm of the federal and other governments to coerce whites into hiring, eating, and living with Negroes. The new movement, headed by Rap Brown and Stokely Carmichael of SNCC, is totally and radically alienated from the government of the United States and the entire "power structure." To contrast, once more, two statements of LBJ and H. Rap Brown, LBJ proclaimed: "From its earliest day, our nation has been dedicated to justice, to equality — and to order," while Brown declared: "The white man makes all the laws, he drags us before his courts, he accuses us, and he sits in judgment over us."

There speaks the voice of a true black nationalist; and the logic of black nationalism, finally explicitly stated in the National Black Power Conference at Newark this July, is a national black republic totally separated and seceded from the US government. As absurd as this goal seems when first stated, this is the inner logic of the continuing rebellions of the Negro ghettos, and this is the direction in which these rebellions are, willy-nilly, moving. For the other traditional solutions are not going to work. The conservative solution of ever-greater force is not going to work, for during the rioting it was the entry of the National Guard that stimulated and accelerated the retaliatory sniping; the conservative solution cannot work, short of exterminating the entire Negro population.

And nothing is deadlier than the liberal solution of more federal funds, more playgrounds, and the rest of the liberal pap. Detroit was supposed to be the great model home of Liberal Race Relations, with plenty of playgrounds, inter-racial committees, and all the rest. And Detroit suffered a week-long civil war and property damage of \$1 billion. Detroit murdered liberalism, and good riddance.