

Other Editors Say

JIM COMSTOCK IN THE WEST VIRGINIA HILLBILLY

WEST VIRGINIA EDITOR TELLS PRESIDENT ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT VIOLENCE

President Johnson appointed another commissioner the other day. When the President wants some answers to questions he already knows, he appoints a commission. This latest commission's job is to tell him why there is so much violence in this country, as if he didn't know. It will take the commission too long to come up with the answer. So I'll give you my answer, Mr. President.

Remember when the greatest man in these United States tried to make a speech at the opening of the United States building at the World's Fair in New York City? That was some years back. That man was you, Mr. President. By the vote of the people, by the tradition of the country, you were what we all looked up to. You were the one who merited respect. It was then that I found out something that my old dad used to tell me. "You get the respect you demand. You get the respect you are entitled to. No more, no less," he used to say. You didn't get the respect you were entitled to remember? And that was simply because you didn't demand it. You started your speech, and then this group of people, a minority group for whom you done more than any other living man, started jamming it. They made such a noise that you couldn't be heard. Remember what you did? You stopped. And did you reprove them? No, Sir, you didn't. You said that you had compassion on them because they had been mistreated down the years. You felt sorry for them. And you weren't going to punish them. You weren't going to correct them. So you waited until they were through, and then you tried it a couple of more times, and at last you got said what you wanted to say. Or gave up. I don't remember what.

That was the birth of the boos. That was the beginning of violence in this country, because this group of people saw that they could hold the heels of the mighty to the fire and from then on violence was theirs. You excused these people, Mr. President, knowing they were violating the very principals of democracy, the rules of good conduct, the laws of decency. The seed you planted there became the tinderbox of burned cities without one inch of stature gained for the minority group.

One of your questions to the new commission is this one: "Has permissiveness toward extreme behavior in our society encouraged an increase in violence?"

Isn't your World Fair "compassion" the answer? You were permissive toward the most extreme bad behavior, you know.

Another question:

"Are the seeds of violence nurtured through the public's airwaves, the screens of neighborhood theatre's, the news media, and other forms of communication that reach the family and our young?"

Well, let's see, Mr. President. Did you see this hour-long, or maybe two-hour television show on racism? Do you remember a street scene of two black citizens walking down the street. One is telling the other, plus several million other Americans, that by rights the Negroes should own those stores, those business places. Then the man

made a threat. They would own them, or . . . But he didn't speak his threat, Mr. President. He simply struck a match and tossed it menacingly at the business section. Translated from savagery that meant, "We will get what we want in America or we'll burn the place down."

That's television, Mr. Johnson. What kind of American permitted a thing like that to go out to millions of other Americans? And newspapers, too, Mr. President have lined up, some of them, on the side of violence. What would you make of this item from the Village Voice?

It's anybody's guess what will happen this Saturday from 1 to 2 p.m. when the Yippies turn their love and energy toward "liberating" Macy's. Touted as an anti-property demonstration in their leaflets and press re-

leases, suggested activities include exchanging your old clothes for new ones, building sculptures of merchandise in the aisles, switching items to different counters, and establishing free stores at the entrances. Yippie leaders, acknowledging the likely prospect that Macy's and the police will not fully understand, caution, "Cops love property and probably will be fierce. Teeny-boppers probably should stay home." Immediately following these experiments in modern merchandising methods, the Yippies will move to Central Park's Sheep Meadow for a "New-Nation Celebration."

Isn't that a pretty dish to set before the children? "Is violence a contagious phenomenon?" asks the Presi-

dent.

It is indeed. And when a President tried to play footsie with a Governor while a city burned, violence became an epidemic.

"What is the relationship between mass disruption of public order and individual acts of violence?"

One is father to the man, that's all. Mr. Humphrey praised the younger generation for becoming involved, and said that when

they demonstrated on campuses and disturbed speakers that they were exercising their American right. And remember, Mr. President, when they demonstrated against Dean Rusk? They had a large poster which said something like this, "Get the troops out of Vietnam, Mr. Rusk, and you can have your daughter back." A violent thing to say, what?



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