

artificial and masochistic sophistication — the vague uneasiness that our values are false — that there is something wrong with being patriotic, honest, moral or hardworking.

This phenomenon could be described as collective breast beating where a nation indulges itself in self-flagellation on everything from Vietnam to violence. Abroad, we are so busy apologizing to our critics for our prosperity and our position of power, that we have failed to employ either for the good of the world.

At home, we are equally immobilized by this new national pastime of intellectual immolation. The report of the U. S. Commission on Civil Disorders, appointed after the violent summer of 1967, provides a classic example. The Commission headed by my good friend Otto Kerner, the former Governor of Illinois, after months of exhaustive research on recent civil disturbances, issued a report to the President. Its central thesis was a searing indictment of the American Mainstream.

Careful study of the Kerner report's documentation refutes its contention that white racism is the real cause of violence. In examining the attitudes of rioters, the report concluded that the typical rioter is, and I quote, "almost equally hostile toward middle-class Negroes . . . his hostility is more apt to be a product of social and economic class than of race."

The profile of the rioter as drawn by the Kerner Commission depicts a Negro male between the ages of 15 and 24, a school dropout and lifelong resident of the community. If employed, "his employment was frequently interrupted by periods of unemployment." "He feels strongly that he deserves a better job and that he is barred from achieving it, not because of lack of training, ability or ambition, but because of discrimination by employers."

Removing racial identification, this could be the portrait of a classical troublemaker, the malcontent who abuses society for his own failure. If this is the typical rioter, I cannot believe he is any more representative of the black majority than the Ku Klux Klansman is symbolic of white America.

When one dispassionately regards this profile of the rioter one cannot help but agree with the Kerner Commission critic who said: "They seem to blame everybody but the people who did it." This masochistic group guilt for white racism which pervades the Kerner report, and to a large extent preoccupies the mind of our nation, excuses individual responsibility altogether.