

# VIOLENCE REPORT DECLARES NATION IS 'BLOODY-MINDED'

Panel Finds a Tradition of  
Using Force Obscured by  
'a Historical Amnesia'

## CAUSE NOT PINPOINTED

Presidential Group Asserts  
Trouble Persists in the U.S.  
but Declines Elsewhere

Conclusions of the report will  
be found on Page 23.

By JOHN HERBERS  
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 5

—A study group of scholars appointed by a Presidential commission told Americans today that they had become a "rather bloody-minded people in both action and reaction."

The National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence issued, without comment, the work of a study group appointed last August to evaluate the history and foreign parallels of contemporary violence in this country.

The 22-chapter report, issued on the anniversary of the assassination of Senator Robert F. Kennedy, was ordered by the commission last August in an effort to help bring about a better understanding of the use of violence in domestic affairs.

The 13-member commission was appointed by former President Johnson after Senator Kennedy had been shot in Los Angeles while campaigning for the Presidency.

### A Panel of Scholars

Participating in the study were historians, political scientists, anthropologists, lawyers, psychiatrists, psychologists, and sociologists, many of whom wrote chapters of the report.

The study was directed by Dr. Hugh Davis Graham, associate professor of history at Johns Hopkins University, and Dr. Ted Robert Gurr, assistant professor of politics at Princeton University. They wrote a conclusion.

The report, the first broad study of its kind, documents in great detail a violent tradition in America, with various interest groups using violence to gain their ends. But the co-directors said in a conclusion to the study that this had been obscured by "a kind of historical amnesia."

"Probably all nations share this tendency to sweeten memories of their past through collective repression," they said,

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Associated Press

**ISSUE REPORT ON VIOLENCE:** Members of the task force from the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence discussing their report on the history of violence in the United States. From the left are Dr. Ted Robert Gurr of Princeton, Dr. Hugh Davis Graham of Johns Hopkins and Lloyd Cutler, executive director of the commission.

# Violence Report Declares U.S. Has 'Bloody-Minded' Populace

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"but Americans have probably magnified this process of selective recollection, owing to our historic vision of ourselves as a latterday chosen people, a new Jerusalem."

This might explain why many Americans have been shocked at the violence of the 1960's, acknowledged by the authors of the study to be one of the nation's most violent eras.

Most other Western nations share the tradition for violence, the study showed, but what remains to be explained is why violence persists in the United States while it has diminished in other countries.

"The first and obvious answer is that some fundamental grievances in the United States have not only gone unresolved but have intensified in recent years," the authors said.

A less obvious answer, they said, is that "the myth of the melting pot" has obscured the fact that the United States is made up of a myriad of ethnic, national, religious, regional, and occupational groups involved in competition and conflict.

Throughout history, virtually all groups involved have used violence both for protection and to promote their causes, the study showed.

"Almost every major act of violence in our history, whether public or private, has antagonized one group at the same time that it satisfied another," the authors said, adding:

"The grievances and satisfactions of violence have so reinforced one another that we have become a rather bloody-minded people in both action and reaction. We are likely to remain so as long as so many of us think violence is an ultimate solution to social problems."

Charles Tilly, professor of sociology at the University of Toronto, contributed a long

chapter on the European tradition and concluded that "historically, collective violence has flowed regularly out of the central political processes of Western countries.

"Men seeking to seize, hold, or realign the levers of power have continually engaged in collective violence as part of their struggles," he continued. "The oppressed have struck in the name of justice, the privileged in the name of order, those in between in the name of fear."

The odd thing, Mr. Tilly said, is how quickly people forget.

"When Lincoln Steffens visited London in 1910, he found distinguished members of Parliament convinced that England was on the brink of revolution as a result of the angry strikes of the time.

Richard M. Brown, professor of history at the College of William and Mary, wrote that although there was general alarm at the urban violence of today "the fact is that our cities have been in a state of more or less continuous turmoil since the Colonial period."

During the American Revolution, Mr. Brown said, both sides adopted the operational philosophy that the end justifies the means.

"Thus given sanctification by the Revolution, Americans have never been loathe to employ the most unremitting violence in the interest of any cause deemed to be a good one," he wrote.

The report contains 350,000 words.

The authors said that although the report should provide "substantial insights" into the causes and character of violence in America, "we have yet to understand fully how civil peace is created and maintained.

"But at least," they added, "we know that it is possible, for Americans and other people have done so before."