Carte Blanche for Chaos by Lillian R. Boehme

Katherine G. Peden
Commonwealth of Kentucky

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Book Reviews


The year—1967. The 'Level of Violence' was 'E'—(Rock and BottleThrowing and Window Breaking) at 5:00 PM on April 8th in Nashville, Tennessee.

Newark's 'level of violence' ranged from 'D' (a few fires and rock throwing) at 9:00 PM July 12th to 'C' (isolated looting) at 3:00 AM Monday the 13th to 'A' (widespread fires, looting and sniping) from 6:00 PM to 6:00 AM on the 14th. Policeman killed at 3:00 PM Thursday afternoon of the 15th.

The Detroit violence raged from 4:00 AM on July 23rd through July 28th—43 persons were killed; 7,200 arrested; damage estimated at $32 million.

July 27th—10:00 PM. President Lyndon B. Johnson appoints the 11-member National Advisory Committee on Civil Disorders.

These and other events in 164 American cities became the concern of millions of Americans, including author Lillian R. Boehme in "CARTE BLANCHE FOR CHAOS—a critical look at the Kerner Report."

Mrs. Boehme, with the acknowledged help of the author's cat, Nathaniel, used 237 pages to lay the cause of America's past, present and future ills on the Kerner Commission. In fact, the author states— "The chaos around us exists, we are told, because we have not heard and not heeded what the Kerner Report had to say. That is not why the chaos around us exists, not because the Kerner premises and proposals have not been accepted, but because they have been. It is time those premises and proposals were examined."

Mrs. Boehme's suggestion that the Kerner Commission's proposals be "examined" is her book's most constructive thought.

For those who deplore the 1971 happenings in Chattanooga, Tennessee; Drew, Mississippi; Brooklyn, New York, etc., perhaps reading "CARTE BLANCHE FOR CHAOS" will move you through anger to action into implementing the Kerner Report's recommendations.

It was the Kerner Commission—not Lillian R. Boehme—who said "Violence and destruction must be ended—in the streets of the ghetto and in the lives of people." Your book reviewer still believes.

Katherine G. Peden*.

*Miss Katherine Peden, served as Kentucky's Commissioner of Commerce,
(Continued on next page)