

THE NEGRO IN THE NORTH

School segregation is dying, but in housing the Negroes' dilemma is grim. In most places, a noted novelist reports, they can either live quietly in the slums—or dangerously elsewhere

By ALAN PATON



This is the second of two articles about America's Negroes by Alan Paton, author of the distinguished novel Cry, the Beloved Country, dealing with the racial tensions of his own South Africa. Before starting his series for Collier's, Mr. Paton went to the Deep South, the West Coast and major U.S. cities, observing and interviewing. His opening article was about the Negro in school and church

HOUSING and employment hold the key to the problem of integration of the Negro into the life of America. The cry of the Negro is no longer, "Let my people go"; it is, "Let my people in." There is hardly a community in America where the purchase of a house by a Negro in a hitherto "white" section does not cause resentment, leading at times to violence. In Louisville, shots are fired and bricks hurled through the windows of Andrew E. Wade, a veteran, and the cross is burned outside his house. In Philadelphia, mobs batter the house bought by Wiley Clark and force him and his wife and four children to sell out and look elsewhere for a home. In Levittown, Long Island, and in Levittown, Pennsylvania, Mr. Levitt builds 33,700 houses, but no Negro need apply.

While I was in the Deep South, gathering material for the first of these articles (Collier's, October 15th), I visited Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and spoke to Lieutenant Melvin Scott. Lieutenant Scott, a Negro, comes from Los Angeles, where, he told me, he felt he was free. Yet I went to Los Angeles, and looked for the sore spot, and it is there, too. I found it also in San Francisco, which, both Negroes and whites told me, is the nation's "freest" city.

The great weapon of the segregator has always been the restrictive covenant, intended to guarantee forever that a white-owned house would pass only into white hands. The covenant has been used against Orientals, Mexicans, Armenians, Hindus,

No school segregation exists in San Francisco—which both Negroes and whites call nation's "freest" city—yet author (l. rear, with play supervisor Bill Sterelt) found housing bias

Collier's for October 29, 1954



Paton called Detroit slum "the most filthy and terrible place I have seen in America"—but new Detroit housing projects bar Negroes

whatever the local prejudice is; Orientals have even used it against Negroes. In 1926 such covenants were upheld by the courts. In 1948 the white neighbors could sue the traitor who sold to a Negro, but could not revoke the sale. In 1953 they could not even sue. The covenant itself has not yet been outlawed; perhaps someday it will be.

But I heard that there is yet another covenant, an unwritten one, that a white realtor must not sell white-owned property to any colored man. That is how I met Mr. George Valentine in California.

Mr. Valentine sold a piece of land in a "white" section to a Negro. Though the neighbors tried to stop it, the colored man built his house and moved in, and lives there today without incident.

But Mr. Valentine had broken the unwritten law, and he has had to pay for it. He was not anxious to talk about it, as he distrusts the intervention of newspapers, commentators and writers in such matters. He reckons that they pretend to be doing a public service, but do not really care so long as they get a good story. He was very warm to me because I had written *Cry, the Beloved Country*, and very cold because I was now writing for a magazine, and had stumbled upon a painful episode of his life. That is why I do not use his real name here.

While this alternate warmth and cold exasperated me, I was clear on one fact: Mr. Valentine had broken the unwritten law out of his loyalty to America. He wanted to see his country worthy of the moral leadership of the nations.

Mr. Valentine was a realtor in a big way, because he wanted to sell America to the world.

There was another reason why Mr. Valentine did not want to talk much. His son is in the business too, and has just married and started a family. He too has had to pay for his father's breaking of the unwritten law. Big deals that normally would have

come his way have been taken elsewhere. Both men look as though they have suffered. The older finds it painful that his son should suffer for his father's principles. The younger finds it painful to discover that one's own friends can make one suffer for doing what is right, but he does not want his father to know how painful it is. I guessed that the father was an upright man, who had never thought to lead anything but an honorable and uneventful life, and that he had brought up his son in the same way. But they had touched American morality on its sorest spot, and life was not uneventful any more.

Into this intimate and painful situation the writer of the novel was welcome to enter, but not the writer for the magazine. Yet the story must surely be told, for it shows clearly the struggle between ideal and practice in this area of American life, and gives its hint that the ideal is very powerful. And the reason why it is powerful is because it is held powerfully by some Americans.

If I had California property to sell, I know where I would go.

I Meet a Realist

MR. GEORGE HENRY GORDON, of 505 North Fair Oaks, Pasadena, is a realist, not a realtor. That is because he is a colored man. He was cutting his hedge, and the sweat was pouring down his face, but he asked me in. Mr. Gordon took the simple view that an American should be able to live where he is able to buy. He expressed this view with a kind of sturdy serenity which I have seen so often in Negroes, and which I was learning anew was the outward sign of moral strength.

"This unwritten covenant will break down," said Mr. Gordon. "You can't go on doing what is

wrong. Not long ago a white owner told me he was willing to sell his house to a colored buyer, but he asked that such prospective buyers should come and see the house after dark.

"I wouldn't do it," said Mr. Gordon. "I told him I did my business in the light."

He did not stand on the table to make this tremendous statement, nor smile apologetically for so extreme a view. He just went right on mopping the sweat from his brow.

"We're too afraid to do right," he said, "and often nothing happens at all. I told one timid colored woman that I was sure she thought much more about the neighbors than they did about her."

"Don't believe what they say about Negroes bringing down property values. They often live in shabby houses because that's all they can get. Look at the nice houses on my own street. Do you think they're worth any less than before? White people take fright, signs go up all round *For Sale*. If they'd wait, they'd get their price. If they sell in panic, they lose; but it's their own prejudice they're paying for. A month later their house is worth what it used to be, sometimes even more, because of all the Negroes who want to get a house."

"Are you an NAACP member, Mr. Gordon?"

"Yes, I am," he said, "but I think the time has come for us to change our name. We should now be The National Association for the Advancement of *All People*. Until man rids himself of racial pride and fear, he can't make a better world."

The Negro Buys a House

WHAT HAPPENS to a "white" section when a Negro buys a house there? Mr. Valentine and Mr. Gordon gave me much the same answer:

The FHA once wrote covenants, but now forbids them

1. Sometimes the section was already on the decline. The decline continues.

2. Sometimes the section goes into a decline because of the tremendous influx of Negroes once the section is opened up. But paradoxically, the gross rentals go up, because of overcrowding.

3. Some "white" streets have turned into "colored" streets that are as clean and attractive as before. There is no property loss here, except for those who sold too soon.

4. In some expensive neighborhoods, wealthy colored people move in without arousing resentment or disturbing values.

Most property loss, both said, is due to prejudice, not depreciation.

The realtor and the realist not only told me the same thing; they are doing the same things. They are asserting the right of the American to choose where to live. They are both fighting the forces of prejudice, but the realtor is fighting a world to which he himself belongs. The Negro is fighting a world to which he has never been allowed fully to belong. The one is torn by struggle, the other made whole.

These two men symbolize the people of America. The Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal saw the split clearly (as he saw most things else) in his study of the Negro, *An American Dilemma*. But since his book was published in 1944, America has taken giant steps toward "one nation indivisible." Maybe, one day, there will no longer be two men of different worlds.

See what has happened. In 1934 the Federal Housing Administration regarded itself as a busi-

ness organization, and regarded Negro occupancy as harmful from a business point of view. In 1937 it actually published a model race-restrictive covenant. In the words of Mr. Loren Miller, of Los Angeles, one of the most powerful Negro fighters against the covenant, "the FHA sowed race-restrictive covenants through the country far and wide." The FHA dropped the model covenant in 1949, and declared it would no longer insure loans in new developments where there were covenants.

Nevertheless, the builders and real-estate brokers went on enforcing unwritten covenants; even Negro veterans could not get in. The new city of Lakewood, 71,000 people, fifteenth city of California, is "lily-white."

In San Francisco, the "freest city in America," the city's own housing authority operated on a so-called neighborhood pattern. When a new project was built, it was to be filled in such a way that its racial composition conformed to the pattern of the neighborhood. Such a policy paid no attention to who needed houses. It would, if carried out extensively, condemn San Francisco to be forever what it is. That is not the way San Francisco, or any other American city, has become what it is. That is not the way to develop new industry and enterprise. It seems, to a visitor from abroad, an extraordinarily un-American thing to do.

California courts condemned the neighborhood-pattern policy, whereupon the housing authority appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States. The Supreme Court recently refused to hear the appeal.

So it seems as though freedom of choice in America will mean freedom to buy where you like. Everyone else will be free to buy where he

likes, too. You can choose where to buy, but you cannot choose who your neighbor will be. No other course could have been taken, for proud as America is of her diversity, it is her unity that is so vital to herself and the world.

An American Drama

IT IS FASCINATING to consider why the struggle between ideal and practice should be considered to be so especially American. It is the American drama. One of the great scenes of it is being played today, in the theater of Trumbull Park.

Trumbull Park is a low-cost housing project of 462 apartments opened by the Chicago Housing Authority in the white section called South Deering. In 1950 the CHA declared that there would be no racial discrimination in its projects; "the laws of the state of Illinois make it a criminal offense." Thereafter, Negroes moved into a number of new developments, but no Negroes moved into older CHA projects in "white" neighborhoods.

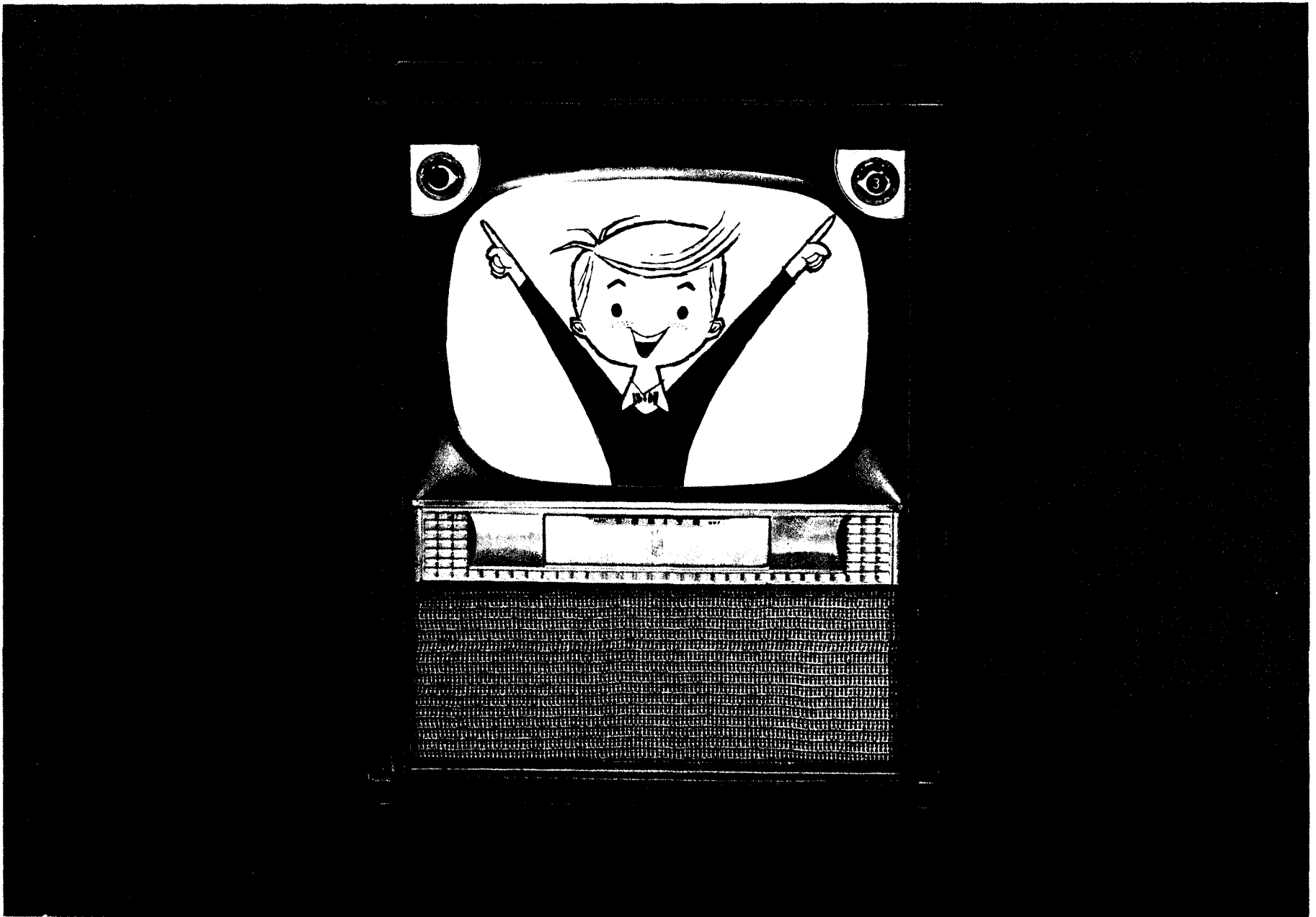
As in so many cities in America, the congestion in housing occupied by Negroes and its generally squalid condition set up a pressure that endlessly seeks relief. That was how, on July 30, 1953, the Donald Howards came to Trumbull Park, hitherto an all-"white" project. It was Mrs. Howard, who does not look like many Negroes look, who got the apartment. Suddenly the CHA realized that its ideal had been fully translated into practice. There were Negroes at Trumbull Park.

Before that, the Howards had moved from room to room to room, always looking for something bigger and better and cleaner, a place where their chil-



Some Negroes moved to Chicago's Trumbull Park project—and had to live behind drawn blinds and shop with police escort, like R. Dowdell, above

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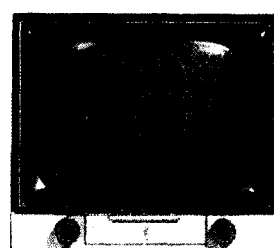
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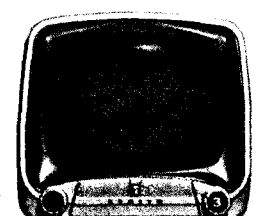
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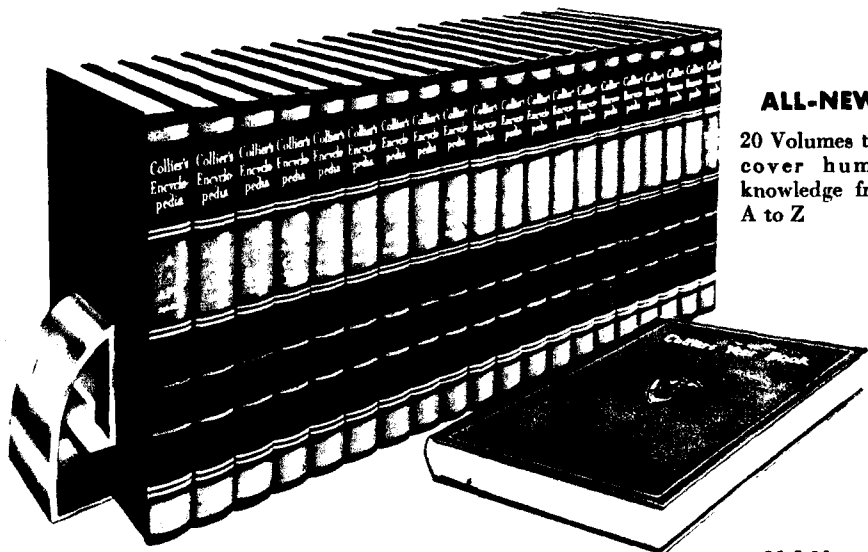
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The Howards sought a home. They

dren could play. And at last they got this place. Mrs. Howard could hardly believe it; Donald Howard said, "This is it."

That was it, sure enough; in the weeks that followed, the Howards lived as very few human families have had to live. There were people in South Deering who were determined to get them out. They milled about in front of the Howards' apartment; many times a day, and every day, they fired off giant fireworks, which are known as aerial bombs and are forbidden by Illinois law. They shouted insults and smashed windows; they were kept back by hundreds of policemen on duty day after day. The Howards lived behind boarded windows, their children in terror, all youngness gone, in a cacophony of bombs and curses and smashing glass. Christians did this, not knowing or not caring for the fierce words of their Lord. The Howards wanted their rights as Americans, and they wanted some place to live. In the end, tried beyond their strength, they moved away.

But before the Howards left, the CHA had moved ten other Negro families into the project. It was a grave decision to make. It was thought to be right, but as to expediency, the CHA took a grim leap in the dark.

When I first visited the project in Trumbull Park, with Dan Weiner, the photographer, it was a lovely day of spring, with trees in tender leaf, and tenants sitting in the sun. You wouldn't have known it was Trumbull Park, if it hadn't been for the bombs going off in South Deering, and for the police everywhere at every turn, and for the fact that it was only the white tenants sitting in the sun. The white tenants of the project take no active part in South Deering's fight against the Negroes; you learn that some do little kindnesses, and some are hostile, and most are cold. It's an unreal world, white children playing, white women staring, white and colored policemen smoking, colored men and women and children sitting behind blinds, the sun shining and the trees coming out in leaf, and

the bombs. The bombs don't go off all the time; sometimes they stop, and it's just when you think: "Maybe, maybe there'll be no more," that they go off again.

I met Mr. Herman King, one of the colored tenants, a veteran. He is a big man, and he talked to me quietly, but he talked to me like a man who has some deep internal pain, and wishes wistfully that it were not there, but that is how it is. Sometimes he stopped talking and looked out into space, which was not very far, because the blinds were down.

He told me a story.

"It was the night Howard lost control and fired off a gun. There was a great crowd there, yelling and shouting. And I had to take my wife to the hospital, because it was time for our fourth child. I knew I'd lose control if they hurt my wife. I was praying they wouldn't throw a stone. The police appealed to the crowd please not to hurt the woman, please not to throw a stone. I was glad the crowd listened. It was only the cursing we got.

"We nearly moved out once," he said. "Then we thought of all the work done to get Negroes in. I wasn't prepared to see it wasted. So I felt obligated to go on. I didn't come in as a crusader. I came to get a place to live. I'm a man of principle, but no man wants to die for it if he can live. But I'm going to stay. I had to become a crusader after all."

He thought a while.

"It takes a toll of my nerves," he said quietly, then. "But I sit down and think it over, and then I'm all right. I have to be, because of my kids. I don't want them to know how bad it is. But you can't tell till later.

"When we first came, and I first put them out to play, the white kids came round with toys and candies. But now they don't come any more."

He said with pain, "Some of them do, but not with toys and candies any more. Then I have to bring them in."

But he added cheerfully, "Our neighbor is fine. She comes to see us. She's rescued our kids more than once."



COLLIER'S

JOHNNY HART

Collier's for October 29, 1954

got bombs, curses, smashing glass

I hardly spoke. I only listened. What can one say to such a man?

"Are you tired of talking?" I asked.

"Not to you," he said.

And what could I say? Why does he equate himself with me, who have never faced such things in my easy life?

"I was coming home from work one day last February," he said. "There was a tremendous crowd, shouting and yelling. I thought I would get out of the bus farther on, and get back through the south end. But in trying to avoid one crowd, I walked into another. They had sticks and stones and asked me where I lived. I told them I was lost, and lived in some other place.

"Get out," they said, 'and get out fast.'

"A woman shouted, 'Beat that nigger's brains out,' but there was an old man there who kept on saying, 'Don't hurt that nigger, he don't live around here.' I often think of that. I reckon that old man saved my life.

"I started walking. My heart was in my mouth, but I was acting calm. Someone yelled, 'Pick up some speed, nigger.'

"So I picked up some speed. A stone hit me. I am proud to this day that I had no weapon on me. Something told me to stop, and something told me to go on. They called out, 'Faster, nigger, faster,' and something told me, 'No,' and something, 'Yes.' So I went faster.

"When I reached the big street, there was a bus right there, and I got in. But before I even sat down, every window on that side was broken. I moved over, out of the glass, and every window on the other side was broken too. The driver stopped the bus, which was the last thing I wanted. He sent for the police, and they took our names, but I didn't dare to give my right name, because of my wife and children. I got off the bus some long way off and sat down on the edge of the sidewalk for twenty-five minutes, trying to pull myself together. Then I got up, but there was hardly any strength in my legs."

He sat for a long time remembering it. His face was covered with sweat, and he wiped it off.

"That night took seven years off my life," he said. "I'll never get used to it."

We sat in silence for a long time.

"When we go to work, the police escort us to a bus four miles away," he said. "One day as I left the house, one of the teen-age boys fell in beside me, step for step. If that happened to some other kind of man, he could slap the boy down. You might break, you might do something. But you can't break. If you break, lots of other things must break too."

He saw me looking at a card that hangs on the wall. *Smile*, it said.

"Sometimes I can't," he said. . . .

Dan Weiner, with his two cameras hanging from his neck, went walking with me outside the project, into South Deering. On 106th Street, Mr. Blue Denim eyed us from the other side. As we passed, he turned so that his eyes could follow us.

"Let's go speak to him, Dan."

We crossed over, and asked him how things were going.

"We mean to get the jigs out, that's all."

"Who's we?"

"All of us," he said. "We've got no leader or president. We all feel the Collier's for October 29, 1954

same. There'll be a race riot, sure enough. You wait a few weeks."

"What do the churches say?"

"I'm a Catholic," he said, "and a good one, I'd say. But the church hasn't got a right to tell me who I should live next to. And the church knows it, too, because it hasn't said anything about Trumbull Park."

"I read somewhere that it did," I said.

"That's Bishop Sheil," he said. "He's a liberal, and he talks too much."

To my astonishment I saw a very dark man walking toward us.

"Who is this?" I asked in a puzzled way.

He smiled tolerantly at my ignorance.

"He's a Mexican," he said. "We don't mind Mexicans around here."

The Improvers

MR. LOUIS P. DINNOCENZO is the president of the South Deering Improvement Association. He is an American and a Christian (applause). He will not use violence, only the law (great applause). He works with Negroes, and they'll all tell you how we get along (deafening applause). But the only solution for peace is to get them out of here (pandemonium).

Interviewed, Mr. Dinnocenzo is asked why he advocates picketing, when picketing so often leads to violence.

"I advocate peaceful picketing," he says. "I have never advocated violence."

"But doesn't picketing lead to violence?"

"I don't advocate violence," he says, "I advocate peaceful picketing."

He says, "Let them take the Negroes out of here. Then let us re-educate the people. Then maybe the Negroes can come back."

He is supported by The Daily Calumet (circulation: 11,000) and its redoubtable editor, Colonel Horace F. Wulf. The colonel is American and Christian too, and is for brotherhood. His argument about brotherhood is very clear.

1. Brotherhood is a fine thing.
2. It fights against odds of greed and human nature.
3. You cannot enforce it by law.
4. It begins with the "rank and file, not in the mighty houses of state."
5. Therefore support the Scouts, Y.M.C.A., clubs and churches.
6. But do not try to enforce it by law. . . .

I met a Sunday-school teacher who doesn't teach any more. She had always taught children that they must love their neighbors, but how could one love men who, by choosing to live in a white project, had destroyed its peace? Why couldn't the Negroes go away when they saw what they had done? Did they think one liked to live with fear and police and bombs? She still believed in the commandment, but she couldn't teach it here. . . .

I met another, a little old woman who believes that anyone can live next to her. She is perplexed by the age-old problems of expediency. But at least she knows the difference between the Bible and The Daily Calumet. Therefore when people ask her how she de-



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fends those "who have destroyed Trumbull Park," she answers with those words that can be understood only by the reason of the heart. She is a humble woman, not learned. She does not talk about America and democracy and the problems of international influence, but she knows the things on which they are based.

"I know it," she says; "I know segregation is wrong. I know it is wrong to judge by color."

Her husband is blind. "If all people could be blind," she says, "the world would be a better place."

I met Frank Brown, veteran, aged twenty-six, another of the Negro tenants who came to Trumbull Park. He and Dan Weiner and Ed Holmgren of the CHA had lunch with me. Brown showed me a post card:

*All Persons who believe in
 WHITE SUPREMACY
 It has been done in the South and can
 be done in TRUMBULL PARK.
 Join a white supremacy organization!
 Inquire, you will find it.
 Watch for:
 ZERO HOUR
 At the Signal we will strike
 BE READY!
 A dead nigger is a good nigger!
 Pass along the good word!!*

Frank Brown talked to us as we sat at lunch. We listened. It didn't seem important for us to do the talking. Maybe he needed to talk, living that kind of life in Trumbull Park.

"My wife said to me, 'Frank, let's go, I can't stand it any more.'"

"I said to her, 'Listen, I'll never . . . never . . . never leave this place. You can go and the kids can go, but I can't go. You'd better look at me: it's still Frank Brown; it may be the first time you ever saw me this way, but it's the way I am now, and if you want to be my wife, it's the way you have to be too.'"

"She thought it over and then she kissed me and said, 'All right, Frank, if that's the way you want me to be, it's the way I am.'"

And never again have they talked of leaving Trumbull Park.

Lunch was over, and we had to go, so I dared to ask him a question.

"How do you do it, Frank?"

He smiled at me.

"It's a neurosis," he said. "I hate cowardly Negroes."

The Negro Slums

I WENT from Chicago to Detroit, both of them cities that have seen great Negro migrations and bitter race riots. In Detroit I went walking with a Negro friend, Mr. Arthur Johnson, in one of the alleys of the slums. It was the most filthy and terrible place I have seen in America, the only one which compared with the slums of Johannesburg.

A woman was arguing with two men, and their language was violent and obscene. I did not look at them, but I listened. She knew I was listening and shouted at me, "Go back to Cadillac Square."

We visited the home of a Negro family on the lower east side. The husband was laid off in July, 1953, and was now on relief, getting \$83 a month.

They had six children, the eldest seven years old. They had a small bedroom, a smaller kitchen, a third dark room containing cistern, basin, tin bath and wet, hanging clothes. For this apartment they paid \$50 a month.

"How do you manage?" I asked the wife.

She had no reply, not even a complaint. She was docile and humble, only two years out of Montgomery, Alabama. Out of her will come, no doubt, child after child, but no revolution. Yet not being sure of her pride, I asked Arthur Johnson if I might ask her if she would accept a present of food. She accepted with thanks—and I, having trodden so delicately, made a white man's slip, the only one, so far as I know, that I made in America. I went to the little shop at the corner, and asked the white woman there for meat, hominy grits, eggs, bread, candies. She showed me the meat in a big glass case, and I looked at it, manlike and lost.

"Is it for colored people?" she asked. And I said, "Yes."

I knew that at my side Arthur Johnson froze. I did not see him, but I felt the cold. He started to say something, but stopped, because he is too warm to be cold for long.

I was unhappy for the rest of the day. Look how delicately I trod, and how I came crashing down.

Dan Weiner tried to console me.

"You fell into a trap," he said.

But I am not consoled, because it was the trap of my own mind. . . .

These terrible slums are being pulled down, and new projects are going to take their place. But the segregation battle will have to be fought anew. There are two integrated projects in Detroit now, dating from earlier times; but in more recent projects, although there are vacancies, no Negroes can get in. They must wait for the new projects that will be built. It is the "neighborhood pattern" over again.

But if the value of the Supreme Court schools decision is not to be lost, this other battle, of housing, must be won. In this field, and in employment, the chief instrument of the Negro has been the National Urban League. It is a nonpolitical organization, and it uses persuasion rather than any stronger weapon: for that reason it is criticized by some, but its record of achievement is impressive.

Yet the neighborhood patterns, the Harlems, do exist; how are these vast congregations of Negroes to be broken up? Here we cross the intangible line into an area where we know that legislation is not the American answer.

I can think of a fantastic solution; yet while it is fantastic, it is the solution to which America unconsciously moves: when the day comes that the American no longer sees color, or when he sees color as he now sees height, stoutness and baldness, it will not matter who lives where. I met a white couple in Tarrytown, New York, whose small child goes to a small school with two teachers, one Negro and one white. But this small child has never mentioned that her two teachers are not of the same color; she calls the Negro teacher the "teacher with the dark suit." Isn't that fantastic, too? Of course, some Americans fear intermarriage. I think this fear is needless, not

Collier's for October 29, 1954

only because intermarriage happens so seldom now, but because it will only happen more as Americans fear it less.

Sometimes, when I am in New York, I go to the zoo in Central Park. There are always children there, twenty, forty, fifty, with a teacher in charge. They walk in pairs, of every race that there is in New York; when they are very small, they usually walk hand in hand. And yet some people say New York is a wicked city.

My own South African eyes are far from color-blind. Perhaps it would hardly be possible at this stage of our history. Therefore I see things that others do not see. I go into a little coffee place near the Gotham Hotel, New York, and sit there and drink a coffee. It is candle-lit, one of these places that is said to have "atmosphere." I note, subconsciously, that all the people there are white, but when I leave I see that there, sitting alone at a table, is a young colored girl, drinking her coffee, thinking some thoughts of her own. In a way I am astonished at myself, but I am more astonished by the sudden fierce pride that I feel in this great city where I am an alien, that this girl can sit there, the mistress of herself. They are always telling me that New York is not America. But in this she *is* America, much more than America herself.

I go to a meeting in Long Island City, of the residents of the Queensview Co-operative Housing Development. There are 700 or so families there, possibly 20 of them colored; no one keeps count. The candidates for five resident directorships sit on the platform. They elect my friend Henry Lee Moon, who is an official of the NAACP and a Negro, and who by being thus elected inflates the "quota" of 10 per cent to monstrous proportions. I am aware that the people there see Henry Moon is a Negro, and I am also aware that they don't. I can't put it clearer than that, can I?

Employment

IN 1945 the average income of Negro city dwellers reached a high of 66 per cent of average white city dwellers'

income; the proportion has now declined, but Negro *average* income—both urban and rural—has gained.

America has now 15,000,000 Negroes with an annual purchasing power estimated at more than \$15,000,000,000, a figure said to equal that of Canada, certainly not one of the poor countries of the world.

Radio and TV are giving more attention to this growing market. But there are still few Negro announcers, salesmen or executives. The press is competing for Negro advertising, but it does not employ Negroes to any noticeable extent, except for janitors and occasionally a special reporter. There are no Negro pilots in the airlines, no Negro engineers nor conductors on passenger trains. The number of Negroes employed as clerical workers and craftsmen rises, but the proportion is still less than half that of the whites—and in professional occupations less than a quarter.

The unemployment rates for Negroes are 50 per cent higher than for whites. More Negro wives have to work, and both men and women carry on longer. Big new factories open, but they are looking for Negroes only for lesser jobs. Negroes still are, in general, "last hired, first fired."

Why did they not turn to Communism? I asked that of Mr. Walter P. Reuther, president of both the CIO and the United Automobile Workers, the largest single union in the world.

"The Communist argument is too doctrinaire and dogmatic to appeal to the American," he said. "The American is a pragmatist. Furthermore, the Negro has always hoped for a better day. As a workingman, he could turn to the CIO, which refused to have anything to do with race or color discrimination, which worked in his interest as a worker and a man.

"Last year International Harvester made a Negro a welder in Memphis, and members of our own UAW local downed tools. But the UAW executive board supported International Harvester to the limit, and the men returned.

"We even expelled a Texas union for

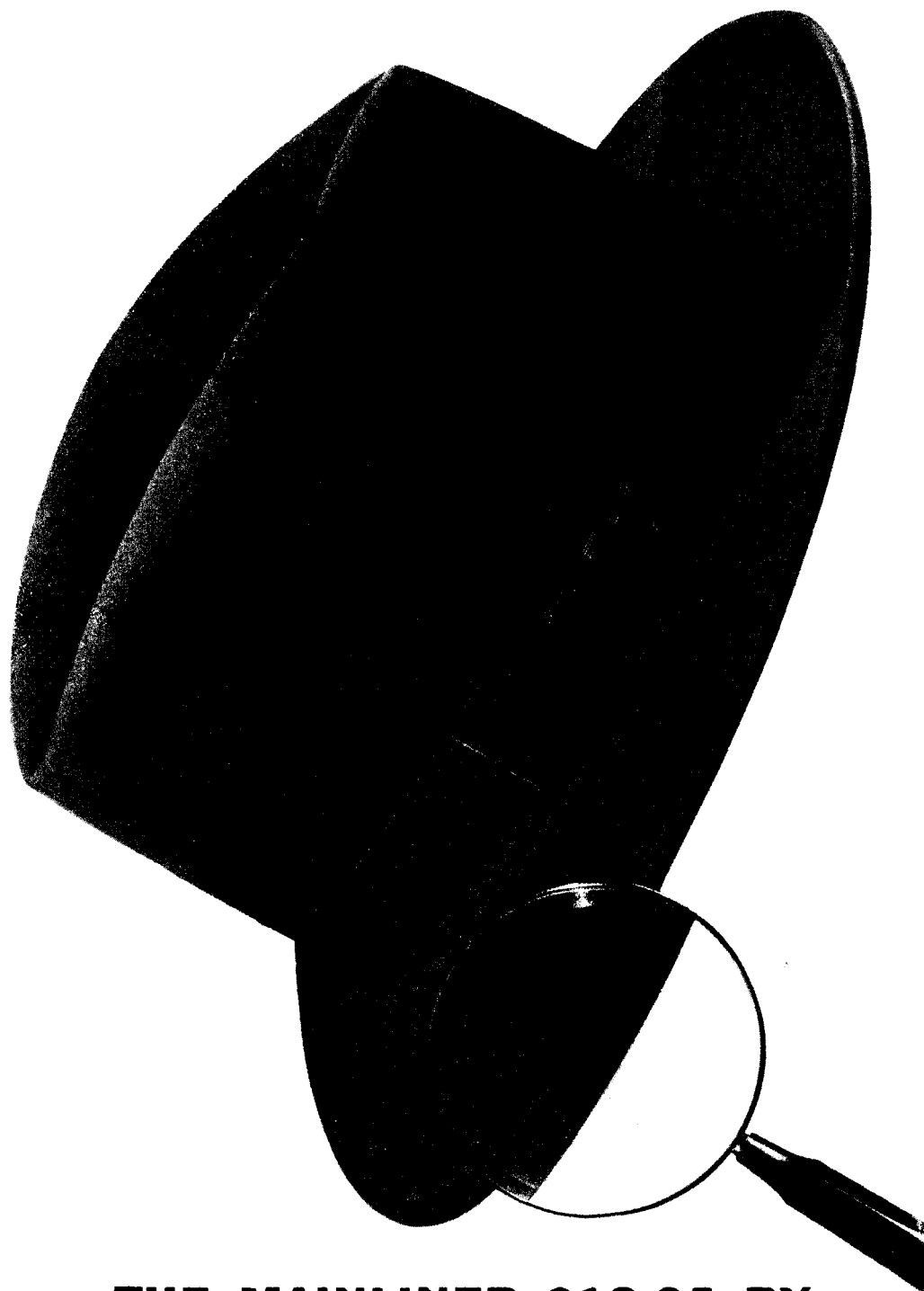
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DAVE HIRSCH

Collier's for October 29, 1954

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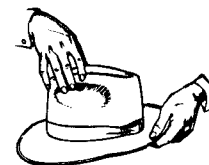


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The Supreme Court decision has far-reaching implications, says the author:

excluding Mexicans. That was the only time in our history that we had to do that.

"Last hired, first fired? That's often true, but it isn't always discriminatory. The Negro may be the last hired because he was the last to come on the scene. He came to the cities late. But we are trying to help him to change that. We are getting him the same seniority, the same promotion privileges. That will keep him from being first fired, at least. But where hiring is discriminatory, we have no power. We protect workers, we don't hire them."

In New York, later, I met Walter Reuther again. He was presenting a gift of \$75,000 to the NAACP from the Philip Murray Memorial Foundation, established in honor of the late president of the CIO. Reuther made the kind of speech I knew he would. Some kind of youthful enthusiasm and sincerity shines out of Walter Reuther. I record his work and him as two of the best and most hopeful things I found in America.

I asked Henry Lee Moon, director of public relations of the NAACP, about the Negro and Communism.

"No one tried harder than the Communists to get Negro support," he said. "They spent more of their resources than any church or union or party did. But they failed. They failed because ultimately they wanted us on their own terms. They wanted us to be a separate nation. They wanted us to subordinate our interests to those of the Soviet Union. They wanted us to ac-

cept their discipline, and to sacrifice our intellectual integrity. They didn't understand that we were Americans in spite of all.

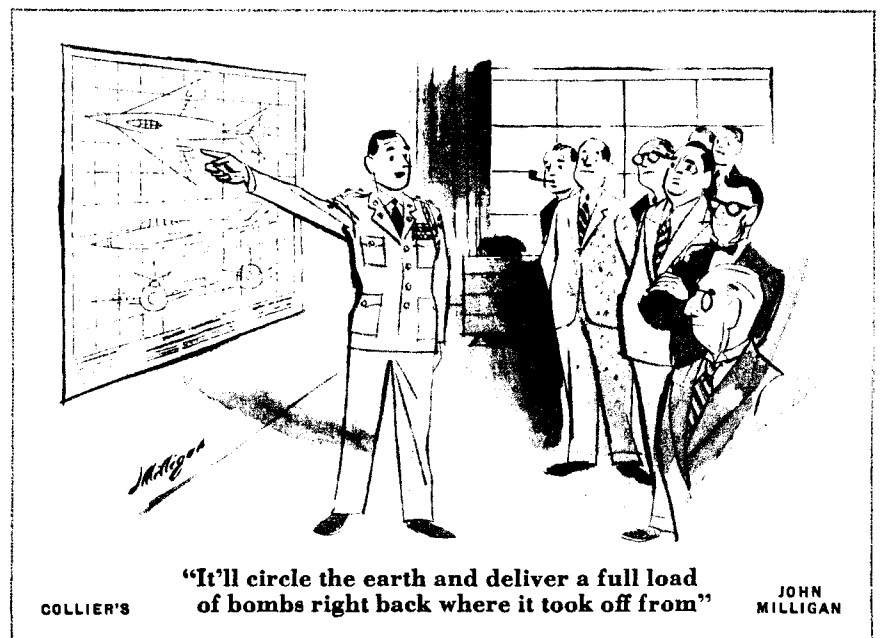
"Mind you, they exerted an influence on us not wholly baneful. They sharpened our awareness that there were economic as well as political, social and psychological roots of discrimination. They stimulated our interest in trade-unionism. They made us realize the need for allies in the fight for justice.

"A. Philip Randolph, when he resigned as president of the Communist-inspired National Negro Congress, said:

"Negroes do not reject the Communist party because it is revolutionary or radical . . . but because it is controlled by a foreign state."

"We are not so afraid as the white American of being thought radical. You have heard the saying: 'They have called me black so long, why should I mind if they call me Red?' But Communist influence on the Negroes began to wane when Russia traded with Mussolini, and made a pact with the Nazis. We are true Americans, and don't stand for that kind of thing. . . ."

I met Jackie Robinson, who in 1947 became the first Negro baseball player to be admitted to the major leagues. He had no easy time. Not docile by nature, he had to submit himself to severe self-discipline. He knew that he was fighting a more important battle than the entry of the Negro into baseball; it was in fact the entry of the Ne-



gro into the life of America. In 1949, the Baseball Writers Association declared him to be the Most Valuable Player in the National League.

While I was in the South, a Negro played for the first time with whites in Memphis, Tennessee. For the first time a Negro photographer was permitted on the field. Before that, the Pacific Coast League had appointed the first Negro to be employed as an umpire.

Jackie Robinson won the big battle in baseball; the question today is not whether Negroes may come in, but how

many may come in. This is a question that will fall away only when Negroes are seen primarily as humans, as they are seen by the small child at the Tarrytown school. Meanwhile Jackie had difficulty in getting a house in a "white" suburb, but when the story of his difficulty was published he had a flood of offers. "It is proof," said Jackie, "that people are inherently decent." It might also be proof that people are decent to Jackie Robinson.

What is happening in baseball is happening elsewhere. I was in Harlem

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"If separate educational facilities are unequal, what separation is not?"

when playwright Elmer Rice got one of the Canada Lee awards. He did not get this award for putting a Negro judge into a play. He got it for putting a judge into a play, and giving the part to a Negro. Negro actors are not fighting for the chance to play Negro judges; they just want to play judges. Integration in stage and film must naturally be affected by such a thing as school segregation, just as it must by residential segregation. But there is no reason why stage and film and writer should not also play their part in showing the way; otherwise it will remain tough to be a Negro actor.

My Conclusions

I HEARD many a time the generalization that the white Northerner loves the Negro race but not the persons, and the white Southerner the persons but not the race.

In the end I discarded this generalization. But one part of it has an approximation to the truth. The white Northerner is in general a supporter of the proposition that all men are created equal; he would not hesitate to have a Negro in his house, but you seldom meet one there. It is this white Northerner who asks me eagerly when I get back: What did you see, what did you think? It is he who is touched by the story of Ada Sipuel, the Negro girl who defeated Jim Crow at the University of Oklahoma, and it is he who shrinks from the stories of Trumbull

Park. It is he who wants to talk about the Negro he does not know.

What did I see? What did I think? What did I think was really happening in America? I approach these questions with a due sense of my qualifications and my lack of them.

By now I assume that it is an incontrovertible fact that segregation is dying. The evidence is massive. I take it to be a fact of immense significance that the leaders of Negro action, who can without great error be identified with the NAACP, have set 1963, the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation, as the year by which all forms of segregation and discrimination should have been rooted out forever from the life of America.

The President of the United States has stated unequivocally that in the District of Columbia, in all the armed services, and in all areas where federal authority clearly extends, he is fully committed to this same goal.

It must be recorded again that the protagonist in this struggle has been the Negro himself. This is not to belittle the part that has been played by non-Negroes, in the NAACP itself, in churches and Jewish organizations, and in labor unions, by civil liberty leagues, by fighters of every kind.

Yet it seems proven that the burden of this struggle has been borne not by those who fought for others, but by those who fought for themselves. This may seem a melancholy conclusion to some, derogatory to altruism; but it seems to me a sturdy fact of life. I do

not think it establishes the inherent moral superiority of the Negro; but it re-establishes that out of adversity great strength is born.

This adversity is now on the decline. Will the great strength stay on, now part of the Negro soul? Or will it waste away? As America accepts the Negro more and more fully, will this strength be poured into herself, so that she can play more surely her role in the world? Will she understand more deeply the problems of Asia and Africa? Of the far future no one can speak, but of the nearer future one can have every hope, as the Negro is more and more admitted to the high offices and the high responsibilities of the republic, and more and more uses the power of his vote.

In 1776 the commoners of America, much angered by a king, committed to paper fantastic thoughts of equal creation and unalienable rights, which rights, with means for their protection, they later enshrined in a Constitution. By this Constitution the ultimate judicial power of the United States was vested in one Supreme Court.

By this Constitution, also, the individual was guaranteed the right to liberty, but the fugitive slave had to be returned.

Such a conflict between ideal and practice could not persist. Because of it and other reasons, the nation in 1861 was plunged into civil war, and in 1863, Lincoln, in the Emancipation Proclamation, declared slavery in the South to be at an end. The Constitution, far

from being the dead hand of the past, put out like a living tree the branches of its amendments. Slavery was prohibited; the equal protection of the laws and the right to vote were guaranteed to all.

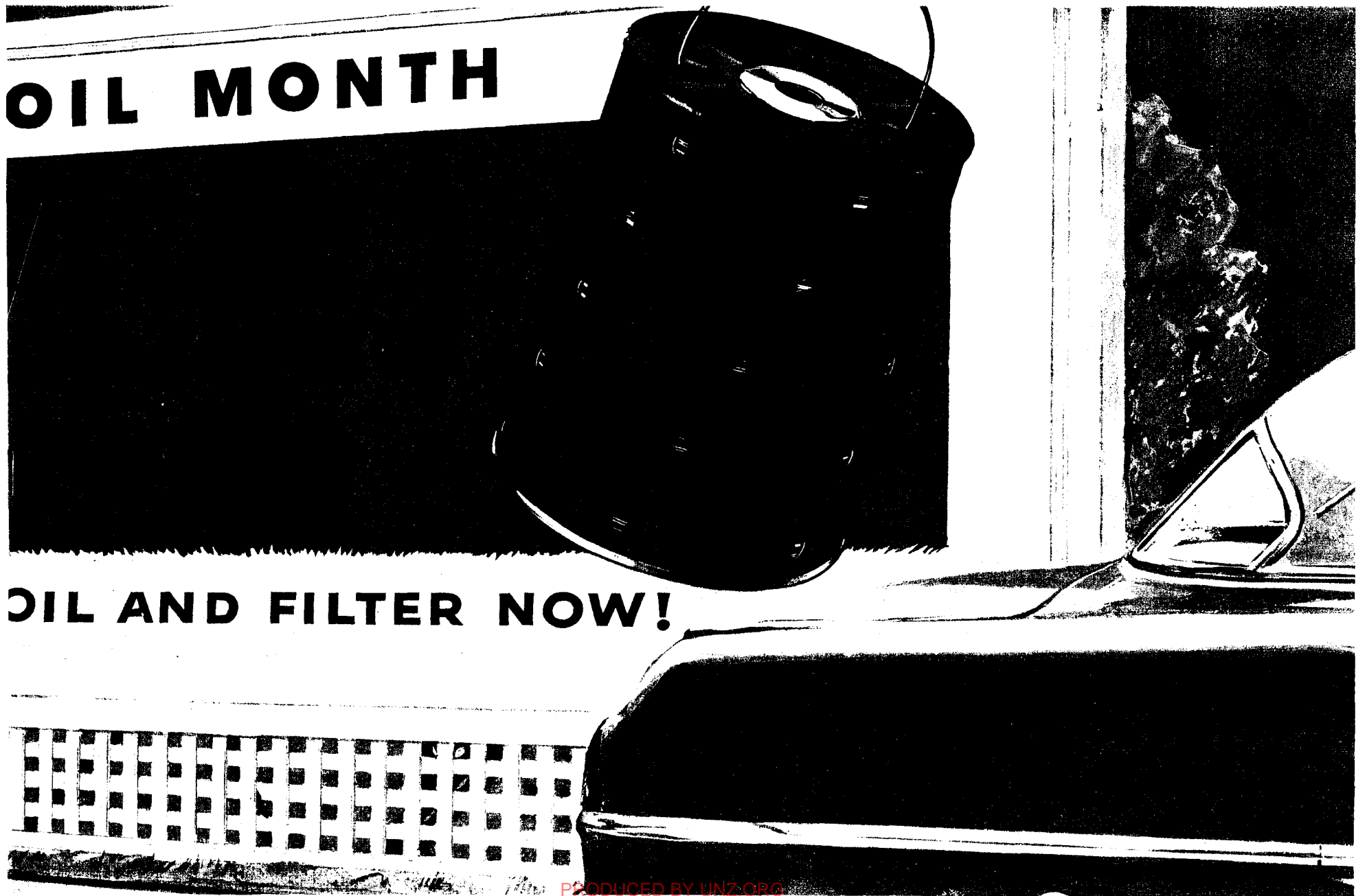
But the conflict between ideal and practice did not cease. Negroes were denied the equal protection of the laws and the right to vote. In 1896 the Supreme Court of the United States declared that facilities could be separate provided they were equal, Mr. Justice Harlan dissenting.

In 1909 was founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the NAACP. Its early years were devoted to the defense of Negro rights, but as time passed, it grew more aggressive in its fight against racial discrimination. Its leaders sometimes went in danger of their lives. On Christmas night, in 1951, one of its leaders in Florida, Harry Moore, and his wife, were killed by a bomb. Finally the NAACP began to attack segregation itself, and in 1954 won the greatest victory of all, when the Supreme Court of the United States declared that separate educational facilities were inherently unequal. The New York Times published an editorial on the decision entitled, by genius, "Mr. Justice Harlan Concurring."

So in this century it was the Negro, of all Americans, who clarified the principles on which the democracy of America was based. It was he who kept on reminding America what kind of nation she was. It was he who used

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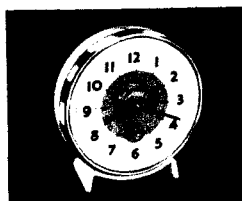
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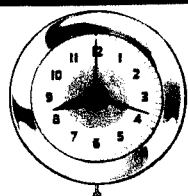
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persistently, as free men should, the power of law and court. But as America could thus thank God for him, so could he thank God for America, that he lived in a country where such things could be, where man was both bound and made free by the law.

I note that in my two well-known modern histories of America, no mention is made of the NAACP. I predict that the importance of this body, not for the Negro only but for America, will not go unrecognized in future histories.

Nor will the work of Walter White, who for 35 years has served the NAACP, and who is now its executive secretary. I heard him speak on the evening of the great decision. He is a short, slight man, a Negro who is white in color as well as name. He was deeply moved, as he had cause to be, by this crowning of his life's endeavor, by this act of justice to an excluded people. But most moving of all to me was to hear him speak as something more than a Negro, to see his pride that it was America which has done this justice.

The NAACP has been called a subversive organization. This stigmatization is so absurd as not to call for comment. It would never have been made if America had not been passing through a period of uncertainty about herself, when she saw something sinister in those who most faithfully proclaimed the revolutionary truths on which the republic is based. There are many signs that she is recovering, and that she will reject those who would bind liberty in order to possess it.

The emancipation of a people does not endanger liberty. It is liberty, and its price is eternal vigilance.

The implications of the decision of 1954 are far-reaching. If separate educational facilities are unequal, what enforced separation is not? Segregation is thus seen not through a haze of sophistry and altruistic cant, but through the clear air of common sense, as something indefensible and unjust, even evil.

What does it mean to say that the remnants of segregation are doomed? It means far more than that Negroes will go to American schools and play on American golf courses and eat in American hotels. It means that just as America has accepted and made part of herself all the peoples of Europe, and has resolved within herself those tensions which twice have torn the world apart, she now accepts, or is on the threshold of accepting, all those other races which live upon her soil. If she can now resolve within herself those tensions which could tear the world apart again, how much greater her contribution to the world. For race and ideology have become fatefully intertwined.

To me there is one inescapable implication of the end of segregation. For if by maintaining segregation America was declaring that she was a white nation with some colored citizens, then by removing segregation she is declaring something else. If a man with one drop of colored blood is a colored man, then what is a nation with one colored citizen?

To me America is declaring that she upholds no kind of racial civilization, but upholds civilization itself. This may have considerable consequences for the peace of the world. To some people this is a shocking implication; they conjure up a picture of a dissolute and degenerate nation. But the truly shocking thing was the assumption of the "civilization" that she forsakes—that

men could do what they liked with men. . . .

We all know the dangers of our present world, that numberless millions of people seeking for life and liberty may set the world aflame. By many this struggle is feared, and therefore resisted; yet the advance and emancipation of any human being should give joy and hope to all.

Who should understand this better than America, especially America now? And who should understand it better than the Negro himself? He goes out into the new world without fear. He understands its birth pangs better than any man alive. He is not afraid of the way it is going because that is the way he came himself. He is not afraid of its revolutionary ideas, because he learned the same ideas from America. To get where he did, he used no weapon but those provided by the Constitution of America herself.

But it is he more than any other American in this century who has helped America to know what her Constitution is, and that it is fit for all mankind. Perhaps now he can help America to tell the world.

Your Land, and Mine

I WRITE these closing words from South Africa. I told people here that America was determined to put an end to segregation and discrimination, and for four reasons:

1. The constitutional reason—a legal, moral, emotional, romantic reason.
2. The low percentage of the Negro population—a cynical but very important reason.
3. The moral reason.
4. The world reason—a political, practical, but also moral reason.

I was told, in turn, that the low percentage of the Negro was the real reason, and that white South Africa, not possessing this reason, could never follow America's example.

I do not believe this. I believe that the moral reason, by itself, and as a component in the constitutional and world reasons, is the most important; but it was easier for America to obey it because of the low percentage of the Negro population, and also because of the high degree in which Negroes have become Americans.

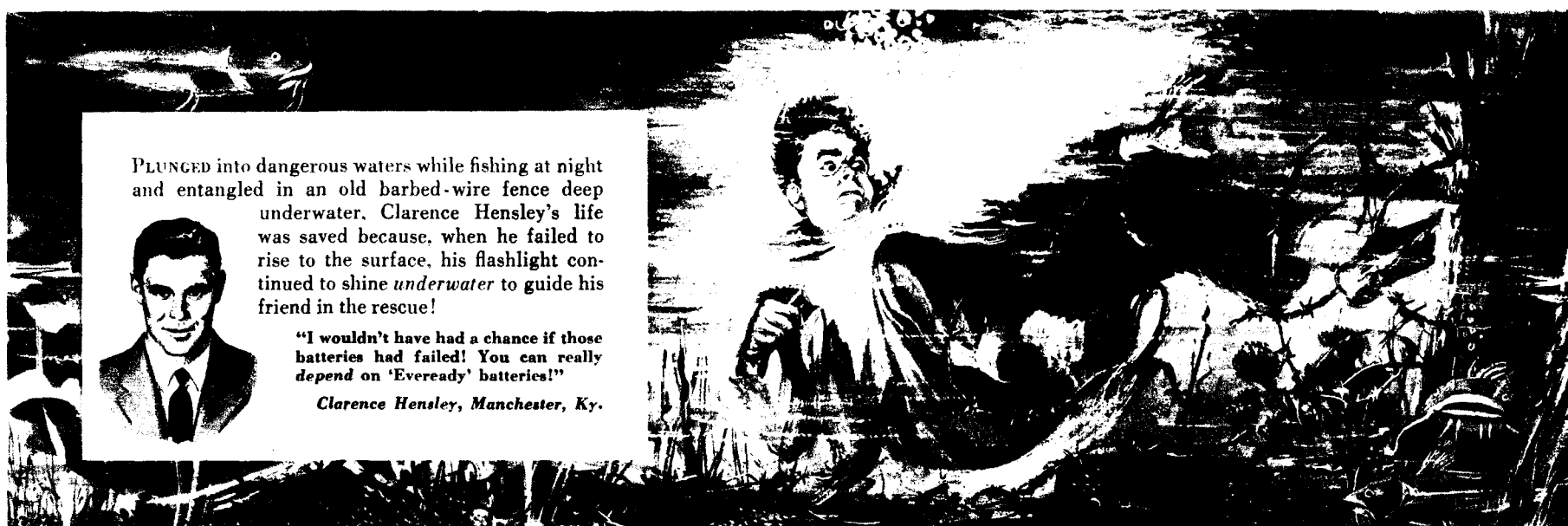
In one sense the population percentages are irrelevant. When one begins to see people of color as fellow humans, as many Americans do, their numbers become irrelevant. In fact, thinking by numbers is destructive not only of justice, but also of progress, national security, world's peace and man's peace. It has to be given up. If the white people of South Africa do not give it up, they will find themselves, having rejected the evolutionary solution, heading for a revolutionary one. But most white South Africans do not see that; or if they do, they think they have more time for the evolutionary solution than they will get.

Many Americans are too pessimistic about their own country; they measure their moral strength in terms of sleeping-tablet consumption, Kinsey reports, juvenile delinquency and McCarthyism. Let them try measuring it as well in terms of the advance of the Negro. Let them try measuring it in terms of justice, which, so often defeated, has a way of conquering in the end.

Perhaps it might be true, after all, that a nation gets the Supreme Court that it deserves. ▲▲▲

Collier's for October 29, 1954

If your life depended on it . . .




PLUNGED into dangerous waters while fishing at night and entangled in an old barbed-wire fence deep underwater, Clarence Hensley's life was saved because, when he failed to rise to the surface, his flashlight continued to shine *underwater* to guide his friend in the rescue!

"I wouldn't have had a chance if those batteries had failed! You can really depend on 'Eveready' batteries!"

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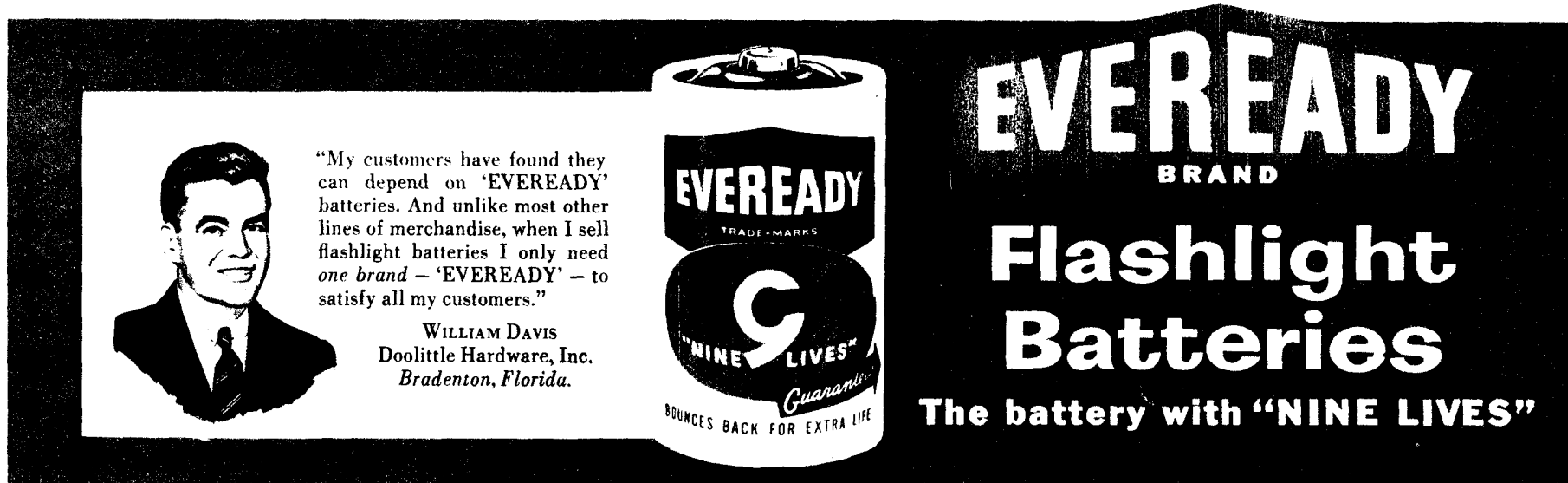


IN A SMALL traveling carnival, just as the girl trapeze artist swung out into space . . . the lights failed! Thrown off by the break in timing, the girl was held dangling—by only one hand! Then an onlooker, Burl Campbell, spot-lighted the girl in his flashlight beam. The catch was completed . . . the girl's life saved!

"You can depend on 'Eveready' batteries in an emergency! I've used them for years and I can tell you — you never get a dud with 'Eveready'!"

Burl Campbell, Pleasanton, Iowa.

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My customers have found they can depend on 'EVEREADY' batteries. And unlike most other lines of merchandise, when I sell flashlight batteries I only need one brand — 'EVEREADY' — to satisfy all my customers."

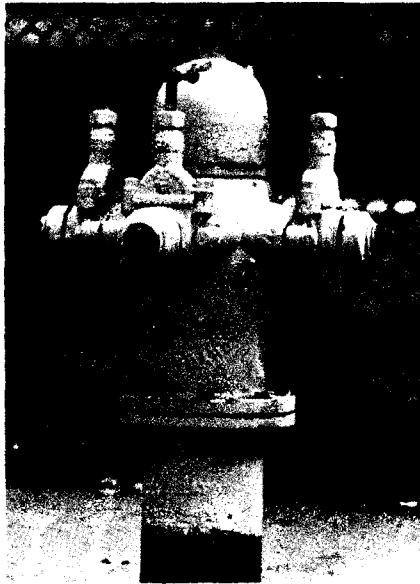
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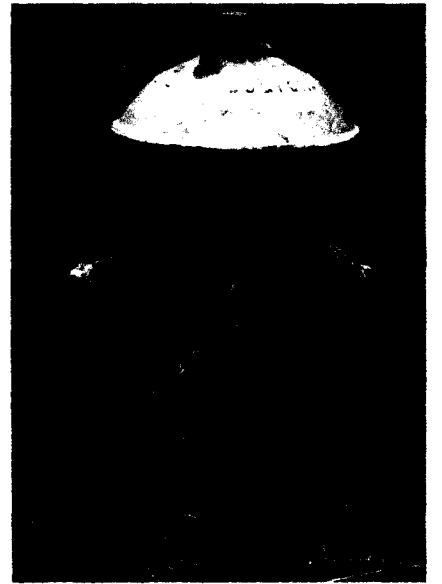
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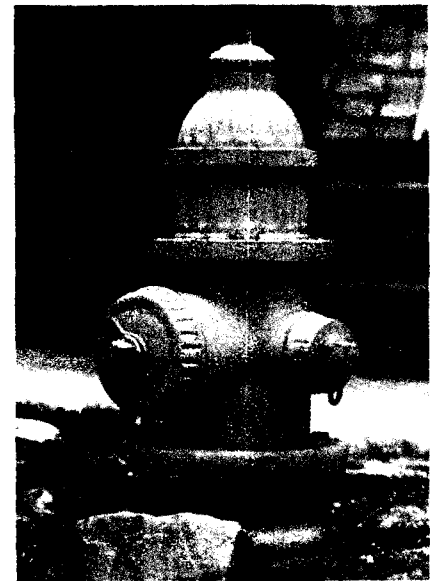
VICTORIAN DANDY

Anybody Here

Look twice next time you pass a fire hydrant. Behind

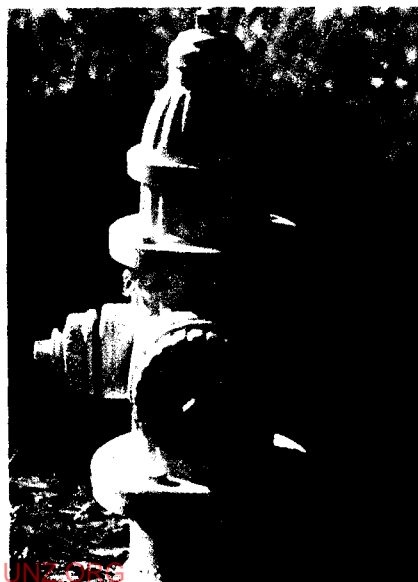
PHOTOGRAPHER Sam Rosenberg is a man who keeps his eyes open. He looks at things hard, deep and with a twinkle. During a recent trip through New England, he looked at fire hydrants. He discovered, first, that they come in all shapes, sizes and colors. Then he found that they turn up in all kinds of places—on busy streets, along country roads, in empty lots. Interested, he looked a bit harder, and “Before I knew it,” he says, “I found the hydrants looking back at me.” Finally, Rosenberg was convinced that fire plugs are people. “They look like folks we all know,” he claims, “I’ve recognized many friends among the plugs. But sometimes I think they’ve got the devil in them.”

Rosenberg may be right. Certainly, fire hydrants do seem to have an impish sense of humor. Many a motorist has parked his car along a barren curb only to discover, an hour or so later, that a plug he has never met before has sneaked up and sat down beside it. ▲▲▲

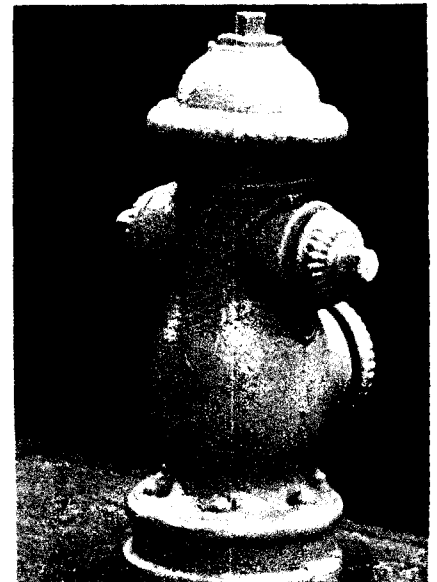


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