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WHO— WHAT— WHY—

TREDIT must be given to Attornev General Brownell for having proposed to Congress a new civilrights package bill—as the politicians inelegantly call it-that includes some original and far-reaching features. In his editorial, Max Ascoli points out the most striking of these features, the one that has aroused most vigorous opposition among Southern senators, who are led in this fight by a former North Carolina judge, Senator Sam Ervin. Edward Gamarekian provides firsthand evidence on the continued disfranchisement of the Negro in many areas of the South. Mr. Gamarekian's last article in *The Reporter*, "The Ugly Battle of Orangeburg" (January 24), also concerned race relations in the South. Walter F. Murphy, a student of Constitutional law. points out some of the ironies of Southern opposition to the administration's civil-rights bill. Segregationists in the Texas legislature have gotten some of their own medicine in the form of an obstructive filibuster, according to Stuart Long, an Austin journalist. Yet there is progress in the South, and it is obtained through more democratic means than filibustering. In our next issue our Washington Editor, Douglass Cater, who has been observing the city of Atlanta, will report on what he saw.

OUR Mediterranean Correspondent, Claire Sterling, sends a report from Damascus on extraordinarily inflammable Svria. What's worrisome about that country is not so much the messiness of its political affairs as the quality and quantity of the weapons Soviet Russia has sent there. What for? The figures that Mrs. Sterling sends are as startling as they are authentic. . . . The Russians are also busy in India. The impact of the Soviet trade program is described by Willard J. Hertz, now on leave from the Minneapolis Tribune to travel in Asia. . . . There have been many arguments about the legality of Nasser's seizure of the Suez Canal. Robert Delson, a specialist in international law and economic development, traces the legal background, cites precedents, and comes to his own conclusion. . . . Everyone knows how the curse of bigness affects industry and government, but apparently it can even affect kids in the third grade. Virginia **P. Held,** a member of our staff, asks some searching questions about New York City's school system. . . . We all get a lot of stuff in our mailboxes asking us to buy a product or contribute to a worthy cause or vote for a political candidate. Gene R. **Kearney**, a free-lance writer, tells how it happens that the postman is provided with a great deal of the material that he carries to our homes.

There's a lot of talk about revivalism going around these days. In our opinion the most stirring Gospel music we've ever heard is that sung by Mahalia Jackson, and so we asked Nat Hentoff to go and have a talk with her. Mr. Hentoff, who has written several books on 'azz, will moderate a panel discussion at this summer's Newport Jazz Festival—which we certainly wish we could attend—on "Music and the Use of Habituating Drugs."

May Sarton's latest book is The Fur Person (Rinehart). . . . It's nice to know about a home movie that made good in the big time. Gerald Weales is the author of a new children's book, Miss Grimsbee *Is a Witch* (Atlantic-Little, Brown). . . . Chiang Kai-shek has written his own account of the events that have led to his isolation on Formosa. Few students of Chinese affairs are more qualified to separate fact from fiction in Chiang's book than Professor Nathaniel Peffer of Columbia University. . . . John Kenneth Galbraith of Harvard contributes regularly to The Reporter. . . . Sander Vanocur is on the staff of the New

Our cover, a moonlight impression of a Southern plantation, is by **Fred Zimmer.**

York Times.

THE REPORTER

THE MAGAZINE OF FACTS AND IDEAS

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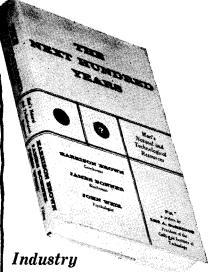
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JUNE 27, 1957

The Segregated Ballot Box

Since the Supreme Court decision on desegregation, the fight for civil rights in the South has had its battleground in the schoolhouse. The education and future of children have been at stake in this fight. If Attorney General Brownell and Senator Douglas have their way, there is a chance that a second front will be opened up—one concerning a large group of American adults and their right to exercise the electoral franchise.

The crucial importance of such a second front can scarcely be overestimated. If Federal district attorneys down South can start action so that the same qualifications which admit white people to the ballot box are made applicable also to Negroes, then the nearly century-old aftermath of the Civil War may be on its way to liquidation. Southerners who share the feelings and the fears of Senator Ervin know that the final battle for white supremacy may be at hand. They have barricaded themselves behind the ancient Anglo-Saxon right that entitles every man to a trial by his peers-in this case every segregationist to a trial by fellow segregationists.

 $\mathbf{A}_{ ext{ to be Southerners should be}}^{ ext{mericans}}$ thoughtful and responsible before passing judgment on those of their countrymen for whom segregation is a harrowing issue. Thoughtfulness and responsibility, however, do not mean indecisiveness or wishywashyness. In this spirit, while we welcome the civil-rights proposals put forth by Attorney General Brownell, we would be much happier if the authority to be granted the U. S. district attorneys were aimed primarily at making the Fifteenth Amendment at long last operative. This admirably brief and pointed amendment states:

"Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

"Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."

Congress would be following Section 2 by authorizing Federal judges to issue civil injunctions — which means no trial by jury—against those who are found responsible for having violated Section 1.

Several private organizations—the N.A.A.C.P. first of all-have done admirable work in bringing before the Federal courts cases of violation of basic rights, and the Federal judiciary, under the leadership of Mr. Justice Warren, has reacted magnificently. But the Fifteenth Amendment needs specific reinforcement, since the devices that have been used to prevent individual citizens from exercising their rights in the polling booth have been most frequently devious and specious. To safeguard all other civil rights, other remedies can be used aside from civil injunctions brought at the request of Federal attorneys. In general, we are distrustful of all monopolies or potential monopolies, and we are unwilling to concede the monopoly of virtue or of civil libertarianism to anybody-not even to the successors of Mr. Brownell.

But again, we think that a second front in the battle for civil rights is needed, just as unrelenting pressure is needed on the first front—the one where the rights of children are at stake. The Fifteenth Amendment has been in our Constitution for eighty-seven years, and only the Federal government can make it operative.

If and when Negroes enjoy their franchise in the South as they do in

the North, then whatever advantage they can gain will be gained by themselves, according to their skill in playing the game of politics. As has happened with other groups at various times considered inferior, the skill the Southern Negroes can develop in playing this game will allow them to reach a greater measure of equality. Voting cannot make them automatically equal, but will give them the chance to move step by step, one election after another, toward political equality.

OF ALL the competitive games in our competitive society, politics is the fairest. It is not easily learned, and as a rule all our so-called minority groups have had a hard time at first. Before conquering their proportionate share of public offices, they have had to overcome the vested interests of other previously entrenched groups. It has frequently happened that the leaders each group has given itself at the beginning have been of a rather poor quality. But improvement both in leadership and in political skill has invariably come.

This was the case with the Irish and with the Germans and with the Italians and with the Jews, as it is the case in our own days with the Puerto Ricans—each group fighting with others that were already on top, and at the same time gaining some measure of recognition from them. Ultimately the sharper differences and conflicts dwindle, and links are established that go beyond all groups.

This is the way America has been made and is being made, thanks to the toughness and fairness of American politics. This will certainly happen south of the Mason-Dixon Line. Both whites and Negroes know that it will happen. It will never be too soon.