

# The Curse of Indecision

**I**T WAS bound to happen: The Supreme Court ruling on desegregation had been flouted so flagrantly and repeatedly by Southern authorities and mobs that the Federal government could not help quelling one of these brushfire rebellions with a show of force. The President, it has been said, had no alternative. Do we need to say that the President was right? Maybe we do, for this is one of those occasions when every citizen must take his stand. We must also respectfully add that a man does not deserve much credit for acting as an agent of necessity—particularly when this man is the Chief Executive of a powerful, free nation.

This is a strange, sad kind of national unity that extends throughout the country, with the exception—we are sure not total—of the South. We have all to bow to the inevitable, and can play only a few variations on the theme it dictates. This is a rather unseemly way to practice freedom. But, like the President, we have no choice. All citizens, particularly those who pass public judgment on our nation's affairs, must subject themselves to unquestionable and definite obligations.

We must, first of all, avoid evoking the ghosts of the Civil War and of the post-Civil War Reconstruction. No one in the South, we suppose, is even dreaming of secession, and the prospect is rather remote that spokesmen for a new Confederacy-to-be will appeal to the U.N. and ask to have the Southerners' right to self-determination recognized. Senator Eastland of Mississippi, on learning of the President's order to send Federal troops to Little Rock, exploded: "This makes Reconstruction II official." The senator could use a refresher course in history. He would learn then how great is the difference between Northern war chieftains like Generals Philip Sheridan and Daniel E. Sickles, who, following an order of Congress, took over the "conquered provinces," and Major General Edwin A. Walker, commander of the Federal forces in Arkansas, who gave the children of Central High one of the best lectures on civics ever delivered in any high school.

**I**N FACT, there has been too much talk about the need for keeping this nation "one and indivisible." The nation's unity is not in danger, and there is little assist-

ance to be derived from the memories of Abraham Lincoln or of Robert E. Lee, unless it is from their unsurpassed dedication to duty. At the utmost, the unity of the Democratic Party is in danger, and that can scarcely be considered a new departure in our history.

What afflicts the nation now is a deficiency of the national will. Even this negative, passive unity around the President is an evidence of this. We all, the President included, cannot help being sad, patriotic, and virtuous. But this is not the re-enactment of the old drama that shook the nation in the second half of the nineteenth century. This is not—even remotely—the unmaking of the Union that came into being at the end of the eighteenth century. This is a brand-new drama, entirely unrehearsed, the drama of national indecisiveness in the second half of the twentieth century.

## Stuck With *The Federalist*

From this viewpoint General Eisenhower is the perfect representative of the nation. Since the beginning of his administration, this man who had been a reluctant candidate for the Presidency has exhibited a striking reluctance to use his power as Chief Executive. In his formal addresses to Congress, in his campaign speeches as well as in his press conferences, he has always made it as clear as he could that Federal government acts best when it acts least.

Since he has been twice nominated by his party and twice elected by the nation, it would be unfair to attribute sole responsibility to him for the consequences of the principles he has repeatedly, if cloudily, proclaimed. On countless occasions he has stated his belief that the Federal government had encroached on too many activities that the states are better suited to handle. His motives have been of a most laudable nature, for unquestionably the essence of democracy lies in the correlated existence of many centers of self-government. The trouble is, however, that in the President's mind the two major protagonists of self-government are still the same as they were when the Constitution was written. Perhaps, as has been said, he has actually read *The Federalist* lately, and still wonders who had a

better case: Hamilton, Madison, and Jay, or the uncompromising champions of states' rights.

Actually, there are centers of self-government at work today of a type that would bewilder even the writers of *The Federalist*. There are, as the President should know, big business and big labor and the great interstate authorities and the powerful voluntary associations for the protection of special interests. Indeed, the running of the Federal government itself, with all its semi-independent or regulatory agencies, has become a fantastically complex affair, requiring the utmost administrative and political skill.

Yet, just at this particular phase of our history we have a Chief Executive who still thinks of the states as the basic unit of government, to be supplemented or sustained by the government of the nation. What has been happening in the case of the relations between the white and colored people in the South has been profoundly affected by this trait in the President's mind. For here there are not only the Southern states to be reckoned with but also what may be called the Southern region as a whole. It is not to be found in the Constitution, yet it exists. What happens to the people of the region, white and colored, is frequently the result of sustained efforts and trends that are regional in scope, affecting every Southern state and—ultimately—the nation.

**I**F THE ruling of the Supreme Court is to be enforced, if the South is to be prevented from becoming a center of blatant disobedience to Federal laws, then a great power for good may come from Northern capital that the Southerners themselves are eager to entice. The President is not supposed to be against capitalism; among his friends and golf-links associates are men who have developed sizable businesses in the South. Yet from the time of the Supreme Court decision, the President has never stopped putting his sole reliance in the state governments. He has said it so frequently and his sayings on the subject have been quoted so widely of late that we do not feel like inflicting them on our readers. With the same vigor, the President has stated over and over again that he could not imagine that any set of circumstances would ever induce him to send Federal troops to enforce an integration order of a Federal court.

In his attitude toward integration the President has never deviated. He has never sought to influence, directly or indirectly, the antagonistic groups that have organized themselves in the Southern region. He has never brought his prestige to bear on the Congressional leaders of that region, or, for that matter, until lately on the Southern governors themselves. He has refused to act as a politician or as a statesman or as a spokesman for the national conscience. He has never used his influence with business or with labor or with the churches. As a result of his mounting, cumulative in-

action, and after he had repeatedly proclaimed that the intervention of Federal forces, in spite of ever-increasing provocation, was unthinkable, no other course was left him but the one he had prayerfully abjured.

The danger from now on is that either the will of the courts may be flouted over and over again or that Federal bayonets may be brought into other Southern communities at the call of any local demagogue on the make.

### **The Army's Very Best**

The Federal troops that have been sent to Little Rock are of the type specially trained and equipped to quell brushfire wars. The 101st Airborne Division is one of the very best in our Army, and it is constantly used as a showpiece whenever our government wants to impress foreign potentates visiting Washington. It is in condition of constant readiness, and could be flown to any trouble spot in the world on very short order—if only we had the planes. Unfortunately, we have not.

Again, the President is not to be blamed for having sent troops from the 101st to Little Rock: In such an emergency nothing but the best and the readiest could be used. But we have to face the fact that from now on our soldiers may have to be deployed for what are called tripwire operations, both abroad and at home. Our reserves of wire on which domestic and foreign troublemakers may trip are far from unlimited, considering the zest exhibited by Secretary Wilson during his last weeks of tenure in cutting down armed manpower and weapons and planes—briefly, everything.

But the administration is as unworried about foreign affairs as it was, until a few weeks ago, about law enforcement in the South. Armed intervention is considered possible only if requested by a foreign government, as the Eisenhower Doctrine proclaims, or by the U.N. The initiative is left to others, and we are ready to act only as their understudies. For the rest, as the President and the Secretary of State never stop saying, we want peace, peace. As they have stated so frequently, there is no alternative to peace. At the same time, there is nothing that can even remotely be called a substitute for war. In any case, we do not choose to take the initiative: At the utmost, we react when we are asked to or if the enemy invites us to retaliate.

**T**HE REAL LESSON of Little Rock is here, and we are lost unless we learn it. In Little Rock, the administration was driven by its own indecision and inaction to use the very means of persuasion it had abjured. In international affairs, considering that with all our talk of massive retaliation we have dedicated ourselves to stockpiling absolute or near-absolute weapons we do not want to be the first to use, the present trend can only lead to the ultimate disgrace of surrender.

How many more Little Rocks do we need before we wake up?

# Sixty-four Economies In Search of a Policy

SIDNEY HYMAN

THE STRANDS of money, credit, and trade that help give the non-Communist world its tenuous political unity are badly overstrained. The stress must be eased before the breaking point is reached, but it seems fairly clear that it cannot be done by leaving the matter to the care of self-adjusting "economic laws." It can only be done by political decisions, which the United States must take the lead in making. The alternative to a politics that can impose its binding force on economics is an economic collapse that may destroy the very political alliances on which the United States has based its leadership of the non-Communist world. This is the heart of what was said at the late September meeting in Washington of the finance ministers, central bankers, and senior treasury officials of sixty-four nations.

These men, assembled for the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (known more formally as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development), hold in their hands the most fateful of responsibilities. They, more than any other government officials, must find the economic means to make good on the promise of an ever-improving state of material well-being that is to be reached by democratic instead of totalitarian means. Since these men stand on the common frontier where order ends and disorder begins, the cry of danger that they voiced in Washington cannot be ignored.

FIRST OF ALL, they were concerned with the present institutional strains in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, created at Bretton Woods in 1944 as United Nations agencies (though no

Communist country except Yugoslavia is currently a member). The objective of the World Bank is to facilitate the movement of surplus investment capital from the highly developed to the underdeveloped areas of the world. The objective of the International Monetary Fund is to help stabilize the flow of international trade by stabilizing the rates at which importers of goods using one national currency buy the various foreign currencies they need to pay the exporters of the goods.

For all their usefulness, however, both institutions are under siege. The World Bank's capital borrowings of \$322 million in the previous fiscal year enabled it to make development loans of more than \$338 million during a comparable period. Yet the current tightening in the physical supply of capital for investment in World Bank bonds—with an attendant increase in interest rates—necessarily points to a more tight-fisted World Bank lending policy to underdeveloped countries.

As for the International Monetary Fund, a series of shocks that upset world-trade patterns in the last fiscal year required it to grant stabilization help of \$1.114 billion to member nations while agreeing to \$1.212 billion more in stand-by credits. All it has left now is \$1.5 billion to meet any new and heavy demands on its paid-in resources. Nor is it the kind of financial institution that can go into the capital market and borrow new funds against bonds. Its resources come from the deposits of member nations—which means, in the case of the United States, grants approved by a doubting Congress.

A second and related concern of the financial authorities who met in Washington was whether the

fluctuating currencies in the foreign-exchange markets could be stabilized without devaluation of the British pound sterling and a revaluation upward of the West German mark. This was serious enough. But it was charged with an undercurrent of resentment that Germany, a former enemy of most of the nations represented in Washington, should now have the economic upper hand over its victors in the Second World War. Moreover, that this should have resulted from a government policy that tolerates unemployment, lower wages, fewer social-security benefits, and is free from the NATO defense burdens the late victors sustain only made matters worse.

THE POSSIBILITY of a devaluation in the pound presents an especially ominous threat because of the fact that more than a third of all world trade is transacted in this currency, even though London is not sovereign over the uses to which it is put. London merely acts as the central banker for the many nations that use the pound in their trade. Still, if there should be a devaluation of the pound because of the domestic pressures in the British home economy and the external pressures of other nations in the sterling area, the effect would profoundly unsettle almost all other economic standards of value.

The danger here was not removed entirely at the recent meeting of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Rather, the maximum effort was made to create a climate of opinion in which concrete measures could later be taken.

To begin with, Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Peter Thorneycroft, Hans Karl von Mangoldt,