

say they are dedicated to the idea of defeating desegregation 'by means short of violence.' But already the spirit of violence has manifested itself..."

Mark cited instances of violence in Mississippi, mentioning that ²Old Miss was his alma mater and Alabama his father's native state, but that he was "not proud of either." Then he continued;

"Now, nobody desires to hurry the transition that the Supreme Court decreed to be the law of the land, that our intelligence told us was inevitable, that our conscience told us was right. Nor has the Supreme Court insisted upon a hurried transition. It has given the seventeen states affected a reasonable time and, moreover, it returned enforcement to the lower courts, knowing that special problems are presented where the population is overwhelmingly Negro. But Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana have not responded with the same understanding the court had.

"Under the leadership of Virginia, which presented an idea, not a plan, they have ridden off like headless horsemen into the woods of nullification ¹ even though they call it interposition ¹ and in the pursuit of every evasion of the decree that slick, if not smart, lawyers may devise. Nobody has proposed firing upon Sumter again, but the spirit of secession is there: secession from the moral conscience of the rest of the country and indeed of the world that is giving men of color ¹ who far outnumber us of the white race ¹ their civil rights, their right to be free and to share fully in the bounties of civilization.

"There are many sickening manifestations about the whole thing ^{but} the one that interests me greatly and nauseates me most is the attempt to

find a scapegoat. It is such a common trait among people who feel their own inadequacy or whose conscience hurts[#] them. The man who gets fired frequently tells his wife, 'The boss has it in for me.' Hitler, leading a beaten Germany, persuaded it that it was in the chains of the Versailles Treaty not because it had lost a war, but because of the 'dirty Jews.' America is the scapegoat of the Soviet hierarchy; people can't live better in Russia, they are told, because imperialistic America has evil designs upon their country. There is always a focal point for prejudice, a rallying point for fascism, a scapegoat when there is no desire to face facts. Elements of the South are angry at the Supreme Court... and even at the President himself."

However, the greatest anger of Southerners was directed at the NAACP. It was more courageous and truthful, Mark argued, for them to attack the Supreme Court and the President, even though the NAACP was vulnerable to attack and ~~even~~ in all candor, he ^{even} had to admit it was not his favorite organization.

The NAACP "is sometimes as radical on its side as Senator Eastland is on his," he said. "By trying to hurry too fast, it can violate the spirit if not the word of the Supreme Court decision quite as grossly as Senator Eastland is trying to defeat it. It is contributing nothing toward a calm and rational working out of a very difficult situation. The reasonable people of the South are caught between two forces; one of them sitting down in the traces like a balky mule, the other trying to move it by setting firecrackers under its belly."

"Both attitudes are dangerous.

"But, when all that has been said, it must be repeated that there are hard facts to be faced by ~~calm~~ ^{calm} and sober people ~~by~~ facts not advanced by political demagogues or agitators.

"One of them is that the South will not be allowed to withdraw from

the union; it will not be allowed to establish defiance of the Supreme Court as the law of the land; it will not be allowed to bend the will of the union to denial of the civil rights or full citizenship of a tenth of our population any more than it was allowed to continue to enslave that minority. It will not profit by attempts at slick evasion, even though it may long delay integration.

"The rest of the country, I repeat, has no desire to hurry the process of integration, but it does most earnestly want some evidence of good faith and good will. Adlai Stevenson spoke for most of us when, acknowledging that transition will require time, he said:

"True integration requires more than the mere presence of children of two races in the same classroom; it requires a change in the hearts and minds of man. No child can be properly educated in a hostile atmosphere. In the five or six states where public opinion does not yet sustain the Court's decision, we are faced with one of the ultimate tests of democracy and of our Federal system.

"The five or six states may delay, but they cannot defeat a ruling that accords with the conscience of the overwhelming majority of our people and marks us before the world as a nation that means it when it sings, 'As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free!'

"The fight that lies before the South will make some martyrs, whether editors give their lives or only suffer 'the slings and arrows of an outrageous economic fortune.' But not since the Civil War has the Southern editor faced such a challenge as he has to fight the black heartedness of organized prejudice and repression and fanaticism on the one hand and give calm counsel on the other to people who believe in living under the law and in expanding the freedom of all of us."

The scurrilous letter Mark received after Time carried a good part

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of what he said read as if he had said something outrageous. Some, though, were not scurrilous, just terribly troubled.

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One of the latter came from an old acquaintance of Mark's, Robert Bridgeforth of Picken, Mississippi. He was a fellow alumnus of Ole Miss and he wondered, he said, if Bill Faulkner and Mark were not doing "irreparable harm to the beloved South." He asked, "Do you fully understand the true situation that we face? Are you fully aware of the cold facts that surround us on all sides? How can you, living in a big city, far removed from realities, write or talk intelligently on something you really know nothing about? You ~~was~~^{were} reared in Meridian, Mississippi's second city, and have never lived with and among our colored friends. Mark, you are so wrong!"

Then, after telling Mark in specifics about the Negro tenants on his three thousand acres cohabitating with their mothers, daughters, common-law wives, and neighbors' wives, he vowed: "We can't permit our children to associate as equals in their formative years with a different race of people that have no morals. Mark, we will die first. To encourage and sanction integration of the different races will ruin not only the South, but the entire nation. Do you want negroid blood in your family? Endorse integration and you will have.

"Please, Mark, don't write or talk such harmful nonsense. Didn't our Savior on the Cross say, 'God forgive them for they know not what they do?' You certainly 'know not'..."

Mark answered his friend at length, ^{saying} in part ~~he wrote~~: "If you remember what I said, it was that integration in schools is inevitable; that the Supreme Court did not require ~~hast~~^{haste}, but it did ask for evidence of good faith and good will and that it did recognize, as in your case and the rest of the Delta, for instance, that there are special situations

that will require long working out. But the Supreme Court did most emphatically say, and reiterated again this week [this letter was written on March 7, 1956] in its decision on the tax-supported colleges, that the 17 states affected by the decision must begin to move in the direction of integration in the schools. It has said nothing about social integration or intermarriage or any of the other bugaboos too many white Southerners raise. My feeling is that if white Southerners would spend as much brainpower and as much energy trying to find solutions to their problems and to particular problems such as yours we would go along way towards an acceptable solution.

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"I do remember my Mississippi days and my Mississippi experience quite well. While I have lived in Louisville twenty years, the other forty years of my life ¹/₄ excepting for two in the Navy and two in New York ¹/₄ have been lived in Southern small towns. I have shared most of the experiences white Southerners have had, including covering three lynchings. Not because I am any less devoted to the South, but because of my experiences at ^{home} ~~home~~ in the South ... I have come to the very strong feeling that there is no compromise between making a man a first-class citizen or a second-class, subservient one. You don't do that by fiat, I know, but you can do it by gradualism ¹/₄ by the long, slow process of giving him more and more of the rights with which, according to the Declaration of Independence, he is already endowed...."

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There were also letters that praised Mark's courage in speaking out and editorials that commended him, especially one that appeared in Life, ^{urging} ~~The thrust of the editorial was to urge~~ that integration be kept "as gradual as may be necessary to keep it peaceful." Progress had been made, Life argued; the "great battle of principle" had already been won by the Negro; he could afford patience ^(awaiting) in its execution.

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"A growing number of young Southerners ¹ ~~are~~ enlightened by college, or by battle ¹ ~~are~~ facing up to the fact that discrimination cannot be reconciled either with Democracy ^{racy} ~~or~~ or with Christianity," Life stated. "Other Americans can help them best by giving them the patience, forbearance and time to work out their own solution of what is essentially a moral evil rooted in [#] ~~ignorance~~, superstition and fear. They might well heed the advice of Louisville's ~~Publisher~~, Mark Ethridge, who has done as much as any man to build interracial bridges."

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Ten years before Life's assay of Mark's contribution, The Louisville Defender, a Negro newspaper, had presented him a citation "as an Outstanding Kentucky Citizen for the year 1946 IN RECOGNITION OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE IN THE CAUSE OF DEMOCRACY AND RACIAL BETTERMENT." It was signed by Frank L. Stanley, ~~the~~ publisher.

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At the University of ^{ouri} ~~Missouri~~, two years after the University of Florida speech, in accepting on behalf of the Courier-Journal the Annual Citation ^{Merit} of the American Society of Journalism School Administration ^{ota} ~~and~~, Mark spoke again on integration. Beginning his speech ^{with} ~~about~~ the business side of getting out a newspaper, he ~~then~~ turned to the editorial end, which led to the issue uppermost in his mind.

"My greatest apprehension on the news and editorial side has been whether newspapers... are accepting the awful responsibility devolved upon all of them.... Basic to any understanding of the truth is knowing the truth. As a nation we do not know it. I am not talking about freedom of the press. I'm talking about its handmaiden, freedom of information, without which freedom of the press is a mockery anyway."

The reason the people did not know the truth, he argued, was because newspapers, except for a few, were not interpreting the news

fully. There was not enough reporting in depth and ^{not enough} serious editorial writing.

"It is no secret to anybody that the South's obsession, the thing that hangs like a dark cloud, that obscures most other considerations, is the question of integration....

"...Nobody has yet told the full story of what the Supreme Court decision has done to the mind of the South. Integration to the South is merely putting white boys and girls in the same classrooms with Negro boys and girls. It is a challenge to a whole way of life; it has driven the South ^{to} at least those who control the destinies of eight Southern states ^{to} back into introversion, into an isolationist mood, into an insularity so intense that it feels embattled martyrdom. It challenges the world with such intensity that its representatives in the Senate and the House cannot act with reality.

"The question of integration pollutes all the channels of Southern life. It makes a Fulbright of Arkansas, one of the better senators, one of the most intelligent internationalists, one of the more informed ^{critics} ~~critics~~ of our foreign policy, vote for a Supreme Court ripper bill that would in effect tear up the national Bill of Rights and set up forty-eight different concepts of the civil rights of American citizens....But Senator Fulbright was not alone. Leaving aside Kentucky and Missouri, whose senators voted to kill the bill, the effort to strip the Supreme Court of its powers rallied only four Southern senators in ^{of} ~~op~~ position. Twenty Southern senators voted for an idea that would have constituted a ^{national} ~~national~~ ^{tragedy} because they saw in it an opportunity to pass laws against integration and to punish the Supreme Court.

"It took the Senate nine months to confirm the President's nominee for head of the ^{Civil} ~~Civil~~ Rights Commission ^{to} and then over the bitter opposition of Southerners.

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"Alaska statehood was strenuously opposed by Southerners under the leadership of Russell and Stennis because it would give the Senate two more members who would be unsympathetic to the Southern stand.

"The whole field of legislation has been clouded by the South's attitude toward desegregation....

"This feeling of being embattled, this determination to protect its way of life, come hell or high water, come hydrogen world or not, has led the South into isolation that has never been part of its tradition until recent years. On the contrary, it has been the most internationally minded of all sections of the country.

"I have not begun to exhaust the research into the subject. I think there emerges a pattern of insularity and isolation, a secession from reason....

"We of the South and you of the North are living through and seeing before our eyes, if we would but look, one of the great tragedies of our national history: a revolt being led by men who have so much to offer the country if their minds were not paralyzed by a sectional bitterness. As James McBride Dabbs ruefully says in his book, Southern Heritage, 'Defending, so they say, the Southern way of life, they indicate by their actions that they have lost its quality....'

"Every region has its problems. I have dealt with the most intense region and the most intense problem because I know it best and because it is more than a regional problem. But every newspaper that hopes to survive in a contracting field, every editor who is worth his salt, must deal with the problems of his region, his country, and the world. What shall we teach them | the young who aspire to join us in journalism? Teach them that | and less of the technique."

A few months later Mark talked on integration in the same vein to

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the Southern Association of Schools at its meeting in Louisville.

His closing remarks were new:

"... if we are to bring some sense of reality to a situation that urgently demands it, if we are to stop being a hopelessly romantic people who had much rather deal in pleasant, fragrant fancies about our past than in stark realities of the present ~~—~~ a people violently attached to causes and all the more attached if the cause be hopelessly lost ~~—~~ then all of us must be up and doing, the educators most of all.

"A good many years ago I heard Sherwood Anderson speak at the University of Georgia. In the course of his speech, he turned to that part of the faculty seated on the stage and said words to this effect:

"I rode by car from Charlotte [N.C.] to Athens, past the unpainted cabins of Northern Georgia, through the eroded cotton-worn red land, and I suddenly came upon this magnificent institution upon her hill. These people whose shacks I passed have helped to ^{pour} ~~pour~~ millions into these fine buildings. The thought came to me and has haunted me ever since I came: What an awful, fearful responsibility you have.

"And so I say to you educators of the South: What an awful, fearful responsibility you have in the creation of new attitudes and new leaders."

^{Mark} He was still writing and speaking on [#] integration two years later when he ^{delivered} ~~made~~ the Pulitzer Memorial Lecture at Columbia University.

Talking shop, he reviewed the "profound and shocking changes in the structure of the industry." Then he argued, as he so often had, that there was not enough depth reporting and ^{not enough} serious editorial writing. ~~He said:~~

"There have been three phases in newspaper life in the United States. The first was what has been called that era when newspapers were 'violently and proudly non-objective.' That was the day of intensely personal journalism....

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"In the swing away from that sort of reporting, we went to what is called objective reporting, a straight-down-the-middle of quoting what a man said, whether the reporter knew it was a lie or not. The McCarthy era at home and the more complicated world situation that demanded the meaning of the news, if it was to be understood by our readers, revealed the inadequacy of pure objectivity and projected us into that phase which is only beginning: the era of interpretative writing.

"It is best illustrated, I think, by [Scottie] Reston and Cy sulzberger. In the hands of ^{people} ~~people~~ of less intelligence and less character, interpretation can become editorials in the news columns, which we severely eschewed during the day of complete objectivity. I have serious reservations and grave apprehensions as to possible abuse. But in spite of possible abuse, it is a useful device in a most complicated world, for as Erwin Canham editor of the [Christian Science Monitor] has said, 'Nothing is more misleading than the unrelated fact, just because it is a fact, and hence impressive. Background, surrounding circumstances, prior events, motivation ^{it} are all part of the real and basic news. This kind of interpretation... is actually the ^{best} ~~best~~ kind of reporting.'"

Then Mark pointed out once more that the country hadn't had this type of reporting on integration. So far, in most papers, the coverage had been superficial; yet segregation was an obsession; in the South it obscured most other considerations. He stated:

"A hundred years ago this month, Lincoln said, 'Slavery debauches even our greatest men. Monstrous crimes are committed in its name...'

"Substitute a word [segregation] for slavery and there is Lincoln speaking to this generation.

"For those of us who have chosen to serve journalism, there is no escape from the ^{Pulitzer} ~~Pulitzer~~ injunction: 'Never be satisfied with merely printing news; always be drastically independent; never be afraid to

attack wrong by predatory plutocracy or predatory poverty."

Mark was chosen to give this Pulitzer Memorial Lecture because, he ^{to receive} was ~~receiving~~ at the luncheon, following the speech, the Columbia Journalism Award, "For singular Journalistic Performance in the Public Interest," ~~It had~~ been voted by the faculty of the University's Graduate School of Journalism. ⁴ Dr. Grayson Kirk, president of Columbia, presented the award, which cited on a bronze plaque Mark's "important role in providing intelligent and comprehensive news linked with editorial policies of responsible journalism, courage, and fair play." The award had been given only twice before: first, to Mr. John Heiskell, president of the Arkansas Gazette of Little Rock, and second, to Mr. Arthur Hays Sulzberger, publisher and ^{Chairman} ~~Chairman~~ of the board of The New York Times.

In his bread-and-butter letter to Ed Barrett, dean of Columbia's School of Journalism Mark wrote in part:

"Dear Ed,

Sometimes I wish I hadn't made the damned speech. The mail has been pouring in in such volume that I am going to have to spend as much time answering it as I did writing the speech. Not all of it is praise, of course; the White Citizens Councils are represented, in addition to the anonymous people who say, 'You are a traitor.' The praise is running six to one, however, a good deal of it from the South. In addition, all the people around here ⁴ being sure they won the award for me, as they did ⁴ are inordinately proud of the recognition by Columbia..."

Following the delivery of that speech at Columbia, Mark gave it ⁴ with ~~some~~ variations to fit different circumstances, again and again, He made it at Marquette University, at the South Carolina Press Association meeting, at the University of North Carolina ⁴ his favorite platform at the Southern Newspaper Publishers convention ⁴ and at any and all other places that afforded him a rostrum.

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