

The Petal Paper

THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 1959

VOL. 6, NUMBER 31



East Side

By P. D.

Although a native Southerner, and a good friend of long standing, I fear a parting of the ways is near between Easton King and I. Last week, writing in his column, "Over The Editor's Desk," in the Chronicle Star of Pascagoula, Miss., King had this to say:

First it was the Rabbit Wedding that sent the lunatic fringe into full cry, and now its The Three Little Pigs. The former was banned in some Alabama libraries because the cover showed a black rabbit and a white one dancing in the moonlight.

Now a Florida crackpot says The Three Little Pigs is much worse than the rabbit story. The former, he says, is an insidious attempt to brainwash American children. That's because the cover shows a white pig, a black pig and a black and white one.

He charges the white one and spotted one are eaten by the wolf, but the black one built his house of brick and wasn't. That's an attempt to show racial superiority, he says. It's amazing how ridiculous people can get when they really put effort into the trying.

Next thing you know we'll have demands for legislation that is going to play heck with rabbit raisers and pig farmers. They'll be called on to provide separate pens and troughs for black, white or spotted rabbits and pigs.

Now if one of this group can just find a picture of a black cat fiddling while a white cow jumps over the moon they'll have it made.

Since first hearing about the rabbit plot, I've been worried sick some damned bunny was going to ask my daughter to marry him. Yet, in view of the possible threat of a rabbit invasion, King makes sport about the pig situation! And him a native Southerner, too! I've done what little I could in the past several years to keep Easton's mind open on the subject, but it seems I've failed to make him realize the horror of some pig asking to marry his daughter. Easton King can make sport if he wishes, but as for me, I'll never again look into the eye of a rabbit or a pig but what I'll wonder what thoughts are going through their depraved minds.

I don't care how well you educate 'em, they'll never understand our southern way of life!

Perhaps it isn't strange, but it is most interesting, to note how a feeling of guilt feeds on itself. Almost every act by the vast majority of us who are native Mississippians indicate that we suffer from a feeling of guilt, the origin of which, generally speaking, is most complex.

The recent murder of Mack Parker at Poplarville is, in my opinion, another manifestation of a guilt complex. It has been interesting to listen to defensive explanations about the murder. It was commonplace to hear a person say: "I think maybe that Parker was took out of that jail by the NAACP." Or something like this: "The communists plotted the whole thing just to make the state look bad."

Even as such lame excuses were offered, the speaker knew that they wouldn't hold up in the light of reason. To see and hear such excuses made me wonder about the extent of our mass illness. I wondered especially about the illness when I heard this one: "The reason Parker was killed was because the people didn't want to see a Negro lawyer question a white woman."

I'll admit that no one has asked me why Parker was murdered.

(Continued on Page 2)

Letters

Fairhope, Ala.

Dead P. D.

Mary Einsel's criticism of the kind of "moral" teaching that a child gets from the TV and screen pictures of killings and for which the adults apologize with "Oh, it's all right. The good cowboy always wins," should be printed in every paper in the country. The trouble is that such criticism does not take with the kind of mind that the average parent has developed. Most adults have had the same kind of regimented schooling that keeps our children from using their own minds creatively or thoughtfully. "Seeing that they have work to do" in the household is good, as they should be helped to feel their responsibility in the life of the family, but "Checking that they do it right" may be only irritating. An adult's idea of what is right may not be understood by the undeveloped mind. It can easily be noticed if the child is TRYING to do it right. Criticism is not conducive to friendly feelings nor to enthusiasm for work.

All of Mrs. Einsel's rules for teaching calls for a receptive mind. Isn't that the rub? Is it enough to teach, preach and talk about the right things to do? Have we not learned from the development of wireless telegraphy, etc. that it is not enough to have a transmitting instrument, we must also have a receiving instrument tuned to the right wave length or we get no message? In other words, as they say in telepathy, "you must be in rapport!"

Why is this fact in nature not considered when we want to teach children anything? Has the child had a life that would insure its being in a mental condition to accept or to understand what is being told? Is that not the trouble with our school curriculum? (Continued on Page 2)

FOR SALE

Since it's the policy of this paper to provide service, once again we have a special offer to make:

Don't suffer from the summer heat using your regular uniform of a muslin bed sheet! Be modern! Inquire about our complete stock of Cotton Eyelet Embroidery, designed especially for summer wear in Mississippi and the South. Klansmen may enlarge the holes for arms, but your heads will fit nicely through the eyelets as they are. Keep cool this summer on your night rides of mercy! (This special offer open only to Klukkers in good standing. Pay your dues and save money and be comfortable!) Address all orders to: Big Brother, Degradation, Miss. Don't wait! This is election year and a ride may be necessary any night now!

Two Views: MISSISSIPPI AND COLEMAN— Mississippi's Time Bomb

by

Jay Milner

(New York Herald-Tribune)

Mississippi's economic and political course may be altered radically by the F.B.I.'s failure to find evidence for Federal charges in the Charles Mack Parker lynch case.

If it had become a Federal Court case, Mississippi officials could have sat on the sidelines. But the F.B.I. has stepped out of the picture, leaving its files (which reportedly carry names of members of the lynch mob) ticking like a time bomb on the desk of Mississippi Gov. James Plemon Coleman. And close observers of the state's political scene are predicting the bomb, set to go off when the grand jury meets in Poplarville in November, will cause a lot of political fence-jumping in the elections this summer.

Gov. Coleman is a young man (age forty-three) of driving energy who has been busy constructing a state-wide political organization since he cracked the so-called Old Guard's twenty-year hold on the state with his surprising election four years ago. Since that time a running propaganda war has been waged between Coleman's rapidly expanding forces of "young moderates" and Old Guard leaders.

The Governor's pet project has been the revision of the state's constitution (written in 1890 as one of the white population's first acts following Reconstruction). He calls the document "an ox cart in a jet age" and wants to revamp it. He wants to make it more appealing reading for industrial executives considering the location of a plant in the South. He believes an updated constitution is necessary if Mississippi, one of the wealthiest states before the Civil War and one of the poorest ever since, is to prosper.

Among the Governor's detractors, however, are a number of influential voices contending that a constitutional convention might weaken Mississippi's barricades against racial integration. Also in the anti-Coleman ranks are some diehard status quo boys who argue that big industry would bring only trouble — meaning unions.

Gov. Coleman has outraged some of the state's traditionalist politicians in other ways:

He has refused to join the White Citizens Council and warned the pro-segregation organization to "stay out of state politics." Many W.C.C. leaders blame Coleman personally for their comparative impotence in state elections.

An advocate of Democratic party loyalty, Coleman beat down efforts to instruct the state's delegation to the 1956 national convention to bolt if the party's platform went too heavy on civil rights.

When President Eisenhower sent troops to Little Rock, Coleman repeatedly refused to comment on the situation except to say that it was "strictly an Arkansas problem." But later, when Gov. Orval Faubus set out to defeat Rep. Brooks Hays, Coleman came to Hays' defense with a lengthy letter which was printed

as a political advertisement in many Arkansas newspapers.

Twice Coleman has been asked on the nationally televised "Meet the Press" show, if he, like some other Southern Governors, believed that "Mississippi would never integrate." Both times his answer was, "Never is a long time." This didn't sit well back home.

During the last state legislative session, Gov. Coleman was narrowly beaten in his attempt to get the Legislature to call a constitutional convention. Credit for this single defeat in the Governor's many fractional skirmishes goes to House Speaker Walter Sillers, a Delta planter and Old Guard leader.

Stung by this defeat, Coleman planned to support a pro-convention candidate for Governor this year (he cannot succeed himself) and run for the House, then seek to take the speakership from Sillers. Furthermore, he indicated he would make the constitutional convention a major issue at the county level and take the stump in support of legislative candidates favoring the convention.

And, until the Poplarville lynching, the odds were on the Governor. But his popularity is now reported at an all-time low.

About the worst thing that can happen to a Mississippi politician is to be praised by the "Northern press." The only thing more damaging is praise from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. In recent weeks Coleman has had the misfortune (from the standpoint of his political ambitions) of being on the receiving end of both because of the Parker lynching.

"Time" Magazine said Coleman "acted swiftly and sensibly" by asking the F.B.I. to enter the case. Then Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of the N.A.A.C.P., declared at a Jackson rally: "It should be said that Gov. Coleman has a record of support for law and order."

Inevitably the man on the street began to mumble things like "What's J. P. doing to make the Northern press and the N.A.A.C.P. like him?" State Democratic Chairman Bidwell Adam charged that the Governor was catering to Mississippi's Negro voters. This is somewhat shaky logic, because, although the state is approximately 50 per cent Negro, there are only 25,000 Negro voters compared to 200,000 white voters.

Now it is being said that Coleman's support of Lt. Gov. Carroll Gartin as his successor is making Gartin squirm.

The fellow on the courthouse square will also tell you that unless Coleman "comes up with something quick," the Governor will have to move into the back-ground with other "young upstarts" who have tried to whip the old pros of Mississippi politics.

But some of the Governor's more ardent supporters say the fight is just beginning and predict that ultimately Coleman will succeed in culling the Reconstruction era attitude from Mississippi's constitution.

East Side

dered, but I'd venture to guess he was murdered because some of us are sicker than others. Always I'm the voice of doom, and with that in mind, I wonder how many more persons are going to suffer at the expense of mob rule before this whole business runs its course. I believe with all my heart there will be others, and I think if mob action isn't punished now those others could be either white or colored . . . in short, those others could so easily be YOU or me.

I believe firmly that most of us in the state want to see a just handling of the Parker case. Eternal pessimist that I am, I wonder whether we'll see it or not. But if Justice isn't done, how can anyone of us sleep at night in peace and with security? Indeed, if Justice isn't done, how can anyone of us sleep at night with our feeling of guilt?

What with the feeling of futility I have about the matter of Justice in my state, and feeling as I do about the future, I think an editorial I ran in November of 1956 would not be out of order. It is being re-printed here in the hope, however futile, of getting across the point that there is a vast difference in "Civil-Legal rights and Personal-Social privileges." From observation it seems some of us have overlooked the difference with a rare degree of consistency. Anyway, the editorial:

Always I've given him the benefit of considerable doubt, but I've finally had to conclude that my friend, Easton King of Pascagoula, just ain't very couth. Not long ago he called me and pleased that I come down and spend a few days with him. Finally, I said okay, if it'd make him happy. (Some of you may remember Easton King for having been condemned by the Mississippi State Legislature because he attempted to integrate all the little fishes in the Gulf of Mexico.) I was hardly in the house before he began asking when I planned to leave and, by any standards, that ain't couth!

"Well," he said, "you've been free-loading off Paul Coates in Los Angeles, as well as other ex-friends you have there, and you've been free-loading off Maxwell Geismar and Steve Allen in New York, I understand. How long you plan to free-load off me?"

I ignored him, naturally. Things continued in this pleasant manner for a day or so. But being something of a captive guest, I was forced to watch "The Mickey Mouse Club" with Easton each evening. I figured it was the least I could do for a friend. One evening while watching TV he began to talk.

"You know, P. D., this is the damndest situation I've ever seen," he began. "Right here in your lifetime and mine we've seen the inception of the jet age and the rocket age. And now we're on the threshold of the space age. In our lifetime, the next fifteen or twenty years . . . well, my lifetime, not yours, if you keep eating as you do you won't live until tomorrow morning." (You see, it's that kind of comment that makes King so damned uncouth.) "Anyway, in our lifetime, you and I will see the space age come into its own. Outer space will simply be another trip for man, with as much safety as a highway trip right now. All this progress in jets, rockets, and in space . . . it's amazing and wonderful. And you know what we here in Mississippi are worried about? We worry about who's gonna vote! We worry about who's likely to sit down beside us on a bus! We worry about who's going to school with whom! All the progress in this world . . . and look what we are fighting mad about! My God!"

That King may be condemned; he may not be very couth, but one thing he is . . . he's so right! And as for me, I'd prefer to free-load off someone who's right and honest and fair than off someone who's wrong and dishonest and stupid, and in the category with King I would certainly put Paul Coates, Max Geismar, and Steve Allen.

While I much prefer to free-load off such men as these, if it were to boil down to free-loading or not free-loading, I'd probably accept the hospitality of "Jungle Gem" eastland, et al. There are times when principle is indeed an abstract!

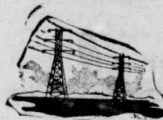
I don't know but what the above is nothing more than the long way of saying: WHILE I AIN'T FOR INTEGRATION, PER SE, I'M HELL BENT AGAINST DISCRIMINATION!

It is imperative now that responsible citizens, irrespective of color or creed, talk about race problems in their communities and state. In resolving this crisis over public schools it is vital to the honor, peace and progress of the state that there be mutual respect, goodwill and intelligent cooperation between the white and colored races.

In the promotion of these objectives it is up to the white people to lead the way because of economic and political power are on their side.

Their first move should be to do everything they can to banish forever what is left of the cruel and absurd notion that there could possibly be any stigma attached to any human being because of race, color or other physical characteristics. The Creator never stigmatizes anybody . . .

The next step the white people should take to help create a



Injury Frequency Reduction Award

This certificate is awarded to,

Mississippi Power Company

In recognition of the achievement by its employees of a twenty-five per cent. or greater reduction in its injury frequency rate during the year 1958 as compared with the preceding three years.

A. J. Watson, Jr.
PRESIDENT

Mississippi Power Company has been awarded the Edison Electric Institute's Injury Frequency Reduction Award according to an announcement by A. J. Watson, Jr., company president. The award is made in recognition of having achieved a twenty-five percent or greater reduction in injury frequency rates as compared with the preceding three years. Mississippi Power Company's actual reduction amounted to 51%. In commenting on the award, Mr. Watson said, "We are very proud of this recognition for our company, but our deepest sense of gratitude comes from the knowledge that we have successfully reduced human pain and suffering." "This," he said, "is the ultimate goal of our accident prevention work." In 1958, Mississippi Power Company's employees worked approximately 1½ million man-hours with a total of six disabling injuries.

wholesome climate for tolerance, justice and interracial cooperation is to try to convince everybody, especially themselves, that in democratic America no citizen's rights are meted out on a basis of color, creed, occupation, education, intelligence, wealth or social position. Human dignity, freedom, justice and civil rights are indivisible — all our citizens must have them equally or none can ever be secure in them.

All our people, colored and white, need also to understand the vast difference between civil-legal rights and personal-social privileges. In the latter field discrimination is not a bad word nor an evil practice. In our personal affairs and social relationships we all discriminate and, indeed, must do so to get along.

In these relationships background, color of skin and other factors can and frequently do make practical differences which must be considered. Recognition of such differences does not reflect on anybody. Difference is not stigma, nor sin. It is natural and necessary. A free society is full of differences and benefits enormously from them.

It is violently contradictory in a free nation for anyone to insist that "white supremacy," or any other sort of racial "supremacy," be supported by law. The only supremacy that can properly be a part of our government is the supremacy of individual freedom, justice, fair and equal treatment under law. Interracial conferences on segregation problems that do not start from that basis can accomplish no lasting good.

History and our own experiences teach us that attempts to force the mixing of the races in some areas of life, ignoring the customs and preferences of the people involved, are not only unrealistic but dangerous. Progress in these fields must come slowly and naturally by mutual acceptance or the great gains already achieved could suffer a severe setback or be lost altogether.

By sensible cooperation on a fair and equal voluntary basis the white and colored citizens can "have their cake and eat it too" in public schools, public recreation, in their churches and in many other fields . . .

Because the Negro citizens are a minority group with relatively little political or economic power they would be severely penalized in the "private enterprise" developments in all the fields under discussion . . .

The white citizens have delayed much too long in sharing policy making responsibilities in civil, educational and governmental affairs with colored fellow citizens. For instance, the case for public school segregation is greatly weakened without proper Negro representation on school boards and commissions.

The best insurance for a segregated public school system, voluntarily maintained, would be integration on the official level, giving Negroes a proportionate voice in the operation of separate schools, which most of them, sincerely as the whites, genuinely desire. Furthermore, there should be a proper ratio of Negro representation on the official level in other governmental agencies, local and state.

Should disaster take place in this connection all informed people surely must realize which race would suffer most grievously. The Negro race has been handicapped far too much already. The colored and white citizens owe it to themselves and to each other to cooperate intelligently in peaceful and constructive evolution rather than to allow their current racial difficulties to precipitate chaos and revolution.

there were materials for a number of activities in which the child might get interested, in which it would have the opportunity to use its own mind instead of that of the teacher and thus acquire knowledge of materials as well as of its own ability, it might be possible that such a mind would be sufficiently educated to understand the teaching of ethics and morals. Judgment cannot be taught, it can be grown only thru experience and experience begins when the child is born and should be continued in the kindergarten as soon as the child is able to toddle. If the kindergarten is not available then the mother could supply raw materials such as the child can handle, pencils, crayons, paper, saw and wood, plain wooden blocks or any raw material that is available; but no commercial toys, finished objects that require no imagination to use. How often I have seen children riding horseback on a broomstick. A neighbor's little girls used to build cities in the sand on the road, using pebbles, green leaves and wild flowers for decoration. They were artistic, it was creative work. But when she was sent to Public School the creative instinct was put in "cold storage".

All the wayward children that I have known have had religion, morals and obedience drilled into them until it meant nothing to them. An overdose of a good thing is not a good thing.

When teachers consider education first instead of how much information can be pumped into the child and the needs of the individual are considered instead of the needs of the war and commercial machines, maybe we'll be bothered less by "infantile delinquency" for it is infantile in its mentality.

Sincerely,

(s) Alexis C. Ferm

Box 373,
Fairhope, Ala.

Dear Mr. East,

At times it is hard for a reader to figure out what your paper is against more—segregation or Almighty God.

You published without comment an anti-God letter by Alexis C. Ferm in your May 21st issue. You might at least have expressed surprise that the vast majority of men are willing to submit themselves to divine

(Continued on Page 3)

Letters . . .

riculum?

What chance does the child have to do anything but use its memory? When I see a girl walking home from school carrying a load of books with both arms I can't help wondering what she is supposed to get from all that

conglomeration of information, for it is not knowledge that she gets from books but information, most of which is uninteresting to her.

Frederick in his "Education of Man" and in the development of the kindergarten had in mind the growth of the child's mind and character thru its own activities, its own initiative and creative work. If in the school