

New South

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OCTOBER 1964

**MARION WRIGHT
ON**

**Poverty, Race and Capital
Punishment**

Strictly Subjective

By MARGARET LONG

New South

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ies are 20 cents each, or less in quantity.

DIPPING INTO the enormous spate of books on the Negro Problem which have afflicted, warned, bored and excited American readers North and South in the last year, I've found I couldn't even finish some of them, having decided long ago to eschew, except in the excruciated line of duty, all stale, unstyled and tedious writing which is, after all, that kind of thinking.

But finishing up several intelligent, alarmed works on our struggle to equality — Silberman's **CRISIS IN BLACK AND WHITE**, a comprehensive and high-minded book, Nat Hen.hoff's **THE NEW EQUALITY**, perhaps a hasty and second-rate Silberman, and the late Richard Wright's **WHITE MAN, LISTEN**, rousing and profound reflections on colored versus white people everywhere, to name just three — I find myself quite unable to recognize the Negroes they describe, espouse, deplore and generously would elevate.

This year's theme seems to be that the depressed mass of Negroes in the United States is so maimed in psyche from a heritage of slavery and segregation that they believe in their own worthlessness, so cruelly and carefully less educated that they find expression only in crime, ferocity and self-destruction, and, of course, so badly used that they hate all white people.

This thesis certainly makes excellent sense and the authors' prescriptions for relief are radical, intelligent, expensive — and probably inevitable. Their propositions to cure poverty, abolish horrible housing and competently educate the apathetic and illiterate would also liberate poor whites similarly shackled and crippled, and high time.

These informed, concerned and studious gentlemen so carefully and compassionately document their find-

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NEW SOUTH

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Capital Punishment

by Marion Wright

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT is the penalty of death inflicted by law. The life of a man, convicted of crime, is snuffed out by the state. What is this creature whom society exterminates? One answer is given by the Psalmist:

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet . . .

So it is a creation of God, one made a little lower than the angels, that society destroys, as you or I would crush a spider or a worm under our heels. It is as though one took a sledge hammer and smashed to bits a masterpiece of Michelangelo or slashed to ribbons Leonardo da Vinci's painting of Mona Lisa.

Capital punishment is an ancient, if not an honorable, institution. It was prescribed for certain crimes in the celebrated Code of Hammurabi, who ruled over Babylon from 2067 to 2025 B. C. There are frequent references to it in the Old Testament and in Roman law in the times of Justinian. So it has survived for four or five thousand years. But, as the centuries have unfolded, punishment by death has under-

gone profound changes in the crimes for which it has been inflicted, in the method of execution and in the circumstances under which sentences have been carried out.

From certain passages in Leviticus, and Exodus, Deuteronomy and Numbers we learn that in those times, the death penalty was inflicted for adultery, bestiality, blasphemy, cursing father or mother, idolatry, incest, rape, sabbath breaking, unchastity and witchcraft.

Under Roman law it was inflicted for treason, adultery, sodomy, murder, forgery by slaves, corruption, kidnapping under certain circumstances, seduction and rape.

From this beginning as punishment for relatively few crimes, in England the number of crimes skyrocketed to the point that more than 200 offenses carried the penalty. Among them during the reign of George III were: shoplifting to the amount of five shillings; consorting a year with gypsies; breaking the head of a fish pond; cutting down an ornamental tree in a park; coining; sheep stealing; horse poisoning; forgery; damaging Putney, London or Westminster bridges; stealing apples from an orchard; stealing in a dwelling house; being found armed and disguised in a park at night; highway robbery; stealing geese from a commons; bigamy; sacrilege; damaging the rail or chain of a turnpike gate; rick burning; cultivating the tobacco plant in England; and smuggling.

Under the grim mood of the time of George III—the period of the American Revolution—small boys were ac-

tually hanged for stealing apples from an orchard. How many of us would be alive today if that practice were still followed?

In England, it is now inflicted for only four crimes—willful murder, treason, piracy and arson. And every year parliament comes closer and closer to its complete abolition. The story is the same everywhere else in the civilized world—the list of capital crimes is steadily reduced or it is entirely abolished.

The idea seemed at one time to be to make death as bitter and cruel as man's savage ingenuity could make it. At one time or another, pursuant to law, men were torn to pieces by horses attached to arms and legs of the victim. They were broken on slowly revolving wheels. They were skinned alive. They were burned at the stake. Their flesh was ripped from them by the cat-o-nine-tails. A screw applied to the back of the neck was slowly turned until the spinal cord was severed. They perished on the cross. These tortures were not inspirations of some sadistic executioner acting on his own; they were methods prescribed by law. No man has ever been more cruel than an impersonal state or church. Many of these victims were put to death by ecclesiastical courts. The methods of execution now in use seem most generally to be the firing squad in some countries, the guillotine in France, hanging, electrocution and the gas chamber in others.

There has been an equally notable change in the circumstances under which men have been put to death. Anyone who has read *A Tale of Two Cities* will never forget the circumstances in England and in France at the time of the French Revolution—Madame LaFarge, as member of a multitude, knitting away as heads were

chopped off by the flashing blade in Paris; and throngs of the curious—men, women and children—watching in fascination in London while the black cap was affixed, the noose adjusted and the trap sprung. These were public spectacles, attended as the Romans attended the gladiatorial games.

Now, there is no public exhibition. A few official witnesses are let into a small room. The final drama is enacted in awesome silence before a handful of pale and shaken observers. It is as though society were ashamed of the dirty business in which it is engaged and wanted no spectators of its shame.

So the trend is steadily toward fewer crimes, more humane method and less public display. You may almost measure the advance in civilization by these developments. As men slowly move upward from barbarism they legally snuff out human life with greater reluctance, with greater humanity and with greater appreciation of the fearful solemnity of the act.

It seems entirely proper to assume the final inevitable step is the abolition of the death penalty for any crime. Reason and religion may operate feebly but they do operate upon law and custom. That operation will ultimately cause mankind to regard the electric chair and the gas chamber, along with the rack, the thumb screw and the stake, as relics of barbarity and as proof that men do ever move upward toward the stars.

Indeed, this final step has been taken by eight American states: Minnesota, North Dakota, Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, Rhode Island, Michigan and Wisconsin; in six South American countries; in the Queensland province of Australia; in Austria, Denmark, Finland, West Germany, Greenland, Iceland, Italy, Mexico, Norway, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal,

Republic of San Marino, Sweden and Switzerland. There are a number of countries where, though the law is still on the books, it is never invoked.

Capital punishment has been abolished because it did not do what it was supposed to do. The reason which its spokesmen gave was that it would deter the evilly disposed, keep wicked men from committing capital crimes. In an era when a 13-year-old boy was hanged for stealing a spoon and a boy of nine was hanged for stealing a few pennies' worth of merchandise from a shop window, Lord Ellenborough, Chief Justice of England, stated the argument against repeal: "I am certain that depredations to an unlimited extent would be committed. . . No man could trust himself an hour out of doors without the most alarming apprehensions that on his return every vestige of his property will be swept away by the hardened robber."

Judge Ellenborough, of course, was proven wrong. But not too long ago a North Carolina judge was making the same kind of predictions before a committee of his state's legislature.

One historical fact ought to dispose of the contention as to deterrent effect. In England, among the host of crimes punishable by death, was, of course, the picking of pockets. Yet, the preamble of a law passed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth reads: "Whereas, persons in contempt of God's commands and in defiance of the laws are found to cut pockets and pick purses even at places of public executions while executions are being done on criminals, be it therefore enacted that all such persons shall suffer death without benefit of clergy." A sufficient commentary upon the deterrent effect of the death penalty.

Fortunately, because certain states have been willing to experiment, we

now have the light of experience. Of the seven northwest central states (Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas), Minnesota and North Dakota do not have the death penalty. In 1961, the entire area's rate for homicide was 1.5 per 100,000 population. Minnesota's rate was 1 and North Dakota's was 0.9. The entire area's rate for rape was 6.4. Minnesota's rate was 2.7 and North Dakota's was 5.2. The two states having abolished capital punishment were well below the average for the region.

The same story is true in Europe. The Scandinavian countries have lower rates of capital crimes than do Great Britain, Spain, France and Ireland, the only nations of Western Europe which retain the death penalty.

If punishment has any effect, it is due to its certainty, rather than its severity. The plain truth of the matter is that as safe a gamble as one may make, if he should commit a capital crime, he will not be executed. Juries, with a naturally tender regard for human life, refuse to convict. If convicted, the appellate courts resolve all doubts in the convicted man's favor, and, finally, parole boards and governors are humanly and properly disposed to commute sentences. Only 42 executions took place in the United States in 1963. My belief is that not more than two per cent of those brought to trial on capital charges in North Carolina ever walk that last mile to the gas chamber. And my belief is that the convictions for crimes not punishable by death is much higher than for those carrying the death penalty.

Warden Clinton Duffy of San Quentin, in his book *88 Men and Two Women*, states that he has interviewed thousands of convicted murderers and

not a single one said he even remotely considered punishment at the time of the crime. Generally speaking, murder is a crime of passion where the perpetrator is not thinking of the punishment consequences.

So the argument that capital punishment acts as a deterrent will not hold water. All experience is against it. And the whole case for capital punishment rests on that argument.

What are the arguments against it?

The first appeals to our sense of fair play. It is that capital punishment is inflicted mainly on the poor—those unable to hire skilled counsel to represent them. Warden Lewis E. Lawes in his book *Twenty Thousand Years in Sing Sing* stated: "In the 12 years of my wardenship I have escorted 150 men and one woman to the death chamber and the electric chair. In ages they ranged from 17 to 63. They came from all kinds of homes and environments. In only one respect were they all alike. All of them were poor and most of them were friendless. . . . Thus, it is seldom that it happens that a person who is able to have eminent defense attorney is convicted of murder in the first degree. A large number of those who are executed were too poor to hire a lawyer, counsel being appointed by the state."

The death penalty also discriminates against non-whites. This is not to say that judges and juries harbor outright prejudice against Negroes and other non-whites — although it is not far-fetched to suppose that some prejudice does exist. It is rather to suggest that whatever group is at the bottom of the economic ladder will have a disproportionately higher representation in the Death House. Non-whites, being at the bottom of the ladder, pay the penalty. Thus, more than half of those executed in the United States since 1930 have

been Negroes. In New York during the last five years 80% of the persons sentenced to death were Negroes or Puerto Ricans, and all but two of the 13 men actually executed were either a Negro or Puerto Rican. The same pattern exists in other states.

There is a further argument for its abolition. Nations undergo periods of upheaval, of storm and stress. This may take the form of revolution and overthrow of government, as in Russia, in Cuba and in many South American countries; or it may take the form of mass hysteria, as in Salem, Massachusetts in the late 1690's when witchcraft was the great fear, or fear of the labor movement about the beginning of this century, or fear of Communist subversion which Senator McCarthy whipped up a few years ago.

Where laws permitting infliction of the death penalty are on the books, such laws are ready and convenient tools for tyrannical or merely frightened men who suddenly come to power. So Hitler, *acting under existing law*, exterminated millions of Jews—again the despised minority. So Stalin liquidated the Kulaks, or wealthy land owners of Russia, *under existing law*. So, *under existing law*, Castro's firing squads mowed down those who opposed his regime.

Let us here in America indulge in no vainglory. In the year 1692 ten young girls of Salem, Mass. accused Tibula, a West Indian slave, and two old women of bewitching them. Those accusations set off a wave of hysteria. Within four months hundreds were arrested and tried for witchcraft; 19 were hanged and one pressed to death for refusing to plead. The reaction came quickly, and, in May, 1693—one year from the first accusation — Governor Phelps ordered release of all persons held on the charge of witchcraft. But

he could not bring back to life 20 innocent women. They were victims of mass hysteria and a statute which prescribed capital punishment for witchcraft, a crime which existed only in the minds of the illiterate and superstitious.

All competent observers now agree that the State of Massachusetts took the lives of two innocent men when, on August 23, 1927, it executed Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti for murder. They had three strikes against them when they entered the dock: they were Italian immigrants; they spoke broken English; they were active in labor and Socialist circles at a time when anti-labor and anti-Socialist sentiment was rife in Massachusetts. They were executed in spite of the confession of one Celestino Madeiros that he had participated in the crime and that neither Sacco nor Vanzetti was present. True, they were victims of mass hysteria, but that hysteria used the tool of capital punishment which lay ready to hand.

So with the Rosenbergs, husband and wife, executed for espionage, an unprecedented penalty in peacetime. It was their misfortune that they were tried at the height of the subversion fear which Senator McCarthy had whipped up. The Rosenbergs were victims of hysteria, too, but in calmer times society had devised the tool.

The point of all this is that capital punishment would have no justification even if it were inflicted only by calm, sober, intelligent and unbiased minds operating in an atmosphere of complete tranquility. The part of wisdom is to foresee that inevitably there will be periods of turmoil, stress, upheaval, when power may be exercised by the unscrupulous or by those whose reason is dethroned by popular passion. Then the margin for error, or the

opportunity for abuse, is greatly enlarged. Witness the busy guillotine of the French Revolution or Castro's firing squads. In a time of domestic tranquility, we should de-fuse the dangerous weapon of capital punishment in order that it may not, in later fevered occasions, be wrongfully employed against the innocent.

But, without regard to the temper of the times in which it is inflicted, this ancient institution has robbed humanity of its noblest spirits. Socrates, with his cup of hemlock; Jesus on the cross; Joan of Arc, Bruno, John Huss, St. Stephen. The list spans the centuries and continents. Humanity has been forever impoverished by the *lawful* execution of men and women of genius and nobility guilty of no crime.

But, at the time, their executioners, judges, jurors, hangmen, butchers all—in short, society—*thought* they were guilty, thought that the world would be better off without them. And so fallible men sustained by a belief in their infallibility think today.

Capital punishment is based upon this belief in infallibility. In the case of any lesser punishment than death, errors may be corrected. There is always the parole board or the governor who may act upon a showing that justice has miscarried, that is, when the prisoner is still alive. When death in the chair or gas chamber has closed the books, all errors are beyond correction. Scattered over this land are graves of many men, innocent of crime, whom society has crushed under its heel.

The blow falls not merely upon the condemned man. For him the agony is quickly ended. But there are relatives, friends, wife, children, mother, father, perhaps, who will to the end of their days wear the mantle of shame. For the murder of one man, society

murders another and condemns his survivors to endless sorrow and humiliation.

Surely a civilized state in the year 1964 has wisdom enough to meet the challenge of crime without using the tools and method of the barbarian. Surely one created in the image of God—a little lower than the angels—should not be crushed, worm-like, beneath the heel of the state.

Mr. Wright, an attorney, is vice president of the Southern Regional Council.

Strictly Subjective

(Continued from page 2)

ings of Negro character and personality ruination that reason nearly compels me to believe it, but to save my life I can't. I'm sure that the Negroes I know should be so brain-washed by white oppression, demeaned by servitude and debased by poor and separate schools that they are on the whole a despairing, bitter and actually second-rate breed. They ought to be, but in my experience and view of the stressful southern scene, they aren't.

The Negro Movement in the South, the biggest fact of our time, I reckon, clearly demonstrates, rather than inferiority, great mental and moral superiority of Negroes over most white people, this week, anyway. James McBride Dabbs, in his address last year to the Southern Regional Council, reminded us: "And now they come, scorning the whole structure of segregation, and bringing to its overthrow the best manners and deepest religious heart of the South. They are insiders, speaking inside our hearts, undermining the foolish things our brains have thought . . . they speak from the human heart with its deep vision of

life's tragedy and its possible glory . . . Are there no Southerners left among the whites to match these colored Southerners? Have we been so mini-mized, so belittled by the last hundred years that we do not remember greatness of spirit? Courtesy, magnanimity, devotion? I do not believe it." In another speech Mr. Dabbs declared that Negroes are the new leaders of the South and will take us wherever we are going, with the white folks, so far, "dragging our feet."

This seems to be a rather exalted mission for a people so self-despising, illiterate and consumed with hatred.

Another southern scholar celebrated for studies showing the capacity of the lowliest children to grow and develop with academic education and the national eminence of Negroes and their descendants subjected to real learning in the South, has been known to assert that Negroes are so superior a breed, at this point, that he doesn't care for his children to associate with whites. Dr. Horace Mann Bond makes a good case that in order to survive the brutality, humiliation and hardship of slavery and segregation, Negroes developed strengths of mind and spirit necessarily superior to their oppressors who had it easy. Dr. Bond has also suggested that Negroes, who made it, are physically stronger than poor whites because as valuable property and lucrative labor they were better fed.

I had previously arrived at Dr. Bond's view, without benefit of scholarship, but rather by random sniffings and musings, and particularly by the spectacular circumstance that people so demeaned and abused produced the noblest idea of the South, Dr. Martin Luther King's proposition that "we will love you, forgive you and redeem you until we are brothers." Surely

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A Kaddish for Whom?

by A. Schwarzlieber

THERE WAS the obituary: Orville Singleton, for many years a leader in March of Dimes solicitation died yesterday evening at his home on Madison Street in a small southern city in the deep South, after several months of declining health. After noting his education and business the item reported the fact that, as chairman of a division of the local March of Dimes, he was awarded a citation by the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis for five years meritorious service. The article did not state that he headed the Negro division of the drive; it did not have to, since the photograph accompanying the obituary showed him to be Negro. In this part of the United States even charities and their local drives are on a strictly segregated basis, which after all is the way the better elements of both races desire it.

Nothing of his personal heartbreak was noted in the obituary. The funeral and memorial prayers were on the same tasteful segregated basis as the rest of his life. His favorite charity which had honored him and sped his destruction took no further notice of him. It does no good to rake up cold, gray coals.

It is somehow fitting, however, that a Kaddish be said. After all, by coincidental circumstance, the Temple in town is where it took place and it was the congregation hiding behind the Board of Trustees which administered the *coup de grace*. Although he never knew the extent of the trouble he caused, because of him the by-laws of

the Temple were amended so this House of God could not be profaned again.

It is difficult to realize how things got out of hand. There it was, the wind-up of another March of Dimes campaign. In recent years, the local drive chairman was a member of the Temple. Efficient organization required a reporting session by division chairmen. Often in the past these were drab sessions held in some office during the afternoon at a time that could not assure complete attendance. The overburdened drive chairman would then have personally to find absent division leaders to ascertain how close to the local quota the campaign stood. This year it would be different. The division chairmen meeting would be held in the Temple Annex in the evening. To assure attendance, the meeting was announced in advance in the local papers.

This meeting was well attended. The chairman was pleased. It had barely started when a few stragglers arrived and, like a black cloud during a summer picnic, Orville. He took his place at the back of the auditorium. A slightly reddened and flustered chairman called for reports and discussed the wind-up of the campaign. In the course of events, Orville read his report which, as usual, showed the Negro community exceeding its quota. While this was going on, the chairman, who knew which of his division heads were members of the White Citizens Council, tried to seek out their faces. From time to time, he tried to penetrate their

business-like visages to detect any sign of disapproval. The only one visibly disturbed was a member of the Congregation Board, a man of an old family who were pillars of both the congregation and the Citizens Council.

At the conclusion of the session, cookies and coffee were served from the sisterhood's modern kitchen facilities in the annex. Before the chairman could wonder what Orville would do he was in line accepting a cup of coffee, which he took with sugar and cream, and some cookies. A quick glance around the room was enough for the troubled chairman to see that the pillars of our way of life definitely did not approve such behavior. He could see in their angry glances the question in their minds: Had the Jews broken faith with the white race and reverted to type?

Orville was pleased with the evening. Some of his fellow leaders exchanged pleasantries with him and the Rabbi made him feel welcome. He joined a small party, who had completed their refreshments, and the Rabbi on a tour of the Temple sanctuary. It was the first time in his life that he had entered a Jewish House of Worship. The simple decor, the impressive line of oaken pews, the altar, the Torah and her splendid garments blended in with the direct, friendly and patient explanations of the Rabbi to make this a memorable religious experience for him.

Early next morning, after a fitful night, haunted alternately by visions of that pushy Orville sipping coffee and the cool "I told you so" glares of the champions of our way of life, the chairman was called upon by the Jewish section of the White Citizens Council. He assured them that he was innocent of any wrongdoing in the grievous episode. How could he dream that this *schwartz*a would be so insensi-

tive to the realities of the world as to present himself at the meeting. Orville had lived in the Deep South all of his life and should have known what was expected of him. He had never given any sign of being a trouble maker before. Obviously, someone had put him up to it to make trouble.

The group, who were giving the Jews a good name in the South that counted, were unimpressed. It was not clear why the chairman had not ordered the intruder out. It was known that the Rabbi, a native of the Southwest and not particularly aware of the problems of the South, and one or two other members of the congregation, were sympathetic to the agitators for racial justice coming out of the North. Perhaps the chairman, not a native Southerner, was leaning toward that group? But the chairman had the trump: the Rabbi had been present all evening and he made no move to make Orville unwelcome. In such a situation, how could a lay person presume to order another person out?

The delegation left, quiet but unsatisfied; the chairman was satisfied but unquiet. He summoned Orville to his office by telephone. Orville expected his usual commendation for his superior performance as the chairman of the poorest division. In previous years he had been called to similar conferences with the drive chairman, always to be graciously thanked for his community spirit in tackling such a tough assignment.

This time, before he could sit down the finger pointed and the tongue lashed out. What irresponsible compulsion had made him enter the Temple? Was he a member of an organized plot to break the March of Dimes and the Jewish community? Orville blanched and stuttered. Being free from sin he could not confess. Carrying no lance

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Tuskegee and The Good Life

by Paul Anthony

TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE: old brick building and new laboratories, aged with tradition and new in curricula. A place built on a strange mixture of dreams and necessity. A place heavily marked by men of strong wills, achievement and controversy, Booker T. Washington, George Washington Carver, Luther Foster, Charles C. Gomillion. Students, new in spirit and purpose, from an old and honored land and old and proud people.

This is Tuskegee. And this is the South. And, that is why this same place, a small dot on the map of Alabama, can be sleepy and insignificant on a Sunday afternoon and at the same time a front page story in the *Wall Street Journal*. Tuskegee is South and painfully typical of so much that is South. But it is unique too. For there are now in Tuskegee trends and arguments and differences of opinions and elections which will have great influence on our whole region. When the *New Yorker* magazine, or *Newsweek*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, or the national television look at Tuskegee, they don't give a hoot about Tuskegee being typically South or even of Tuskegee being. What they are after is an answer to the question, "Can there be a New South now in one of the first places where the issue is joined?" They want to know, "Can

Southern men live and share together?"

The answer to this question will tell us whether all Southerners can live together and build a sound, decent and democratic society. If we cannot, if most of us are yet so obsessed by fear, and race, and likely with a good measure of greed, then we will again consume ourselves with past grievances and lost causes, and again obscure the image and the promise of the New South.

James McBride Dabbs has said that if you show a Southerner a cause and really convince him it is a lost one, then he will embrace it with a vengeance and support it to the bitter end. We have embraced the damndest causes. We once tried to put Christianity, democracy, and human bondage in the same package. And, we still insist on supporting all three just enough to keep the situation thoroughly confused. We skillfully figured ways to get into a war that was destined nearly to ruin us and which we couldn't possibly win. We decided to live off the land, then planted crops and used methods guaranteed to ruin that same land. We sold our crops to New England mills at such price that we couldn't even buy ready-made cotton cloth. In general we attached ourselves to economics which guaranteed our bankruptcy.

We have attached ourselves to politics and political candidates which were certain to dishonor and betray us

This is, in part, a speech Mr. Anthony, field director of SRC, made at Tuskegee on the eve of the first election with a majority of Negro voters, reflecting before a biracial audience on the importance to the South of a biracial, rather than an all-Negro government at Tuskegee. Tuskegee elected a biracial slate of officials, with all-Negro and all-white slates defeated by white and Negro voters.

and make us appear idiots before the whole world.

To top it all off, we have allowed these lost causes to be glorified in song and story — often Yankee-written, always Yankee-produced—and painfully purchased these bootleg myths with what little cotton money we did have. Now I'm told, we're making a thing of buying souvenir Confederate battle flags—made in Japan.

This is part of our crazy, good and bad South too. And, we have to be very careful of it. This affection for lost causes is a part of most of us, and we have to be very careful to recognize it for what it is. It can be a trap. Certainly it is not glamorous.

I am reminded of a sign in a shop window in Atlanta, which sells hair pieces for bald or balding men. In one window a big sign blares out to every man who passes by: "There's only one Yul Brynner—you're just bald!" All of us in the South need such a sign before us. It might read: "Johnny Reb and Harriet Tubman were glamorous. You're just stupid."

Mr. Reb and Miss Tubman certainly had one common characteristic, at least as strong as our obsession for lost causes, and we need to recognize this characteristic too. This is our capacity to hope, to dream and to do something about it; to work for a better situation for ourselves and our neighbors. It is generally known that when you're down there is no place to go but up. This is certainly generally known in the South, for most of this region's people, white and Negro, have been down far enough that it wasn't hard for us to see that if we moved in any direction, it would have to be up.

(Dr. Washington was right. The few who were up didn't get far. They had to stay at least part-way in the ditch to keep the rest there.)

This situation of being down together and hoping to get up may be one of the great promising things for our people. All of us in this South are down lower than we want to be economically and politically. And, all of us want to get up. Perhaps we can find real unity here. We need unity, for we'll never get up separately. Surely if we have learned nothing else in the past 300 years, we have learned that.

No matter how few their numbers, we have had leaders—and we have them now, men who went against the tide, men who saw what things could be, who refused to have their senses dulled by the present. Women, too, have provided some of our greatest dreams and certainly our most permanent strength. Earlier I deliberately mentioned Harriet Tubman. At first it appeared almost sacrilegious to mention this heroine of the underground railroad in the same sentence with the symbolic Confederate soldier, but the more I thought the more I became convinced; the bad things in our society put these two symbolic people against each other, the deeper, longer-running part of that same society gave them more in common than in difference.

Harriet Tubman knew this and southern women know it now. It is doubtful if southern men deserve the women we have. Patient, long-suffering, determined, who tolerate our foolish squabbles and go on gently leading us toward decency.

This is leadership. I am certain that we have it now, just as we can know that we have always been so blessed. Thomas Jefferson *was* one of them. Leading a nation, establishing a university in Charlottesville, trying to get the legislature in Richmond to make slavery illegal—these things were the work of a man who had a vision of the New South.

Franklin Roosevelt at Warm Springs also dreamed of a New South, not I believe in empty sentimentality, but knowing intimately the land and the people. And knowing the land and the people, he was determined the dream was not hopeless. Something could be done about it. The physical beauty of the Warm Springs countryside drew Roosevelt back again and again to this region. A pull even stronger on him was the people and their plight.

This millionaire, born with it all, saw people so gaunt and destitute that a full slab of side meat was as incomprehensible as was a million dollars. He saw people without any certainty except regular, dulling, inescapable misery. Yet none of this "reality" kept this New Yorker who became the national president from trying to convince us and the nation that we could get up again. He knew there could be a New South. He helped us achieve part of it and he proved to us that we could achieve all of it, if only we tried.

Ironically, the thing which most hindered Roosevelt was the thing which earlier had most hindered Jefferson. And this same "thing" was the great stumbling block for Henry Grady. It marched Johnny Reb off to war and left him a poor, bitter, defeated man. It channeled all the creative skills of Harriet Tubman into surviving at night in the swamps and the fields. It has had every Tuskegee in the South paralyzed, holding us back, crippled. It has us now. The "thing," is, as you know, race.

We have to face this thing of race, all of us, for unless we do, we can face nothing else.

This may all seem very obvious, as it should be. But, lest you dismiss it as too obvious, I would caution you to remember how little we have faced up to this reality. Frequently, even though race is at the core of our whole South-

ern society, we have pretended, seriously, that race did not exist. We have built and developed and lived as if the whole world was either all white or all Negro. We knew better, of course, and frequently we had to look over our shoulder, uneasily glimpsing reality. In fact, we insisted on pretending.

We made an even more serious mistake. We looked at each other, knew each that the other was there — and then with peculiar Southern logic developed the absurd belief that even if we were here together, we didn't have to be and that each could get along without the other.

We have done this, we do it now, and in time of foolish temptation we advocate it as a possible solution for the future.

In your mind drive through Tuskegee, Macon County. You see the pastures, the houses, the town square to be sure. But the living, breathing, important part of what you see is the people. Take them out of it and you have nothing. And unless we insist on continuing that peculiar Southern pastime of pretending, we have to see that we as people are stuck with each other.

Whatever our past, whatever our station, whatever our sins and whatever our virtue, here we are together and stuck with it. This being a fact, we need each other.

If we go on living we either must build or we must destroy. We can look at each other realistically — seeing black and white—and use the talents God gave us to try to find a way to live together and hopefully even grow together. Or, we can act like real, good, time-honored Southerners and put all our energies into putting one people on top—one on bottom.

(Now, of course, if we follow this latter case, Booker T. Washington's ghost will still haunt us. No matter

who's on top he will find himself still half-way in the ditch just a little bit above the man on the bottom, and with that little distance bought at the price of spiritual and material bankruptcy.)

The alternative of trying to live together certainly won't be easy either. We have so much to learn and it will be so hard to learn it.

It will be hard for the white man to look at the Negro man and see man. And it will be just about as hard for the Negro man to look at the white man and see anything but white. What strong human reserves we will all have to call on to overcome 300 years! How difficult it will be for the white man to see that a Negro man can be stronger or wiser. And, in the new world, how difficult it will be for a Negro man to shed 300 years of grievance and see that a white man could be good or decent—or again, stronger or wiser.

How difficult it will be — after all these years—for us now to learn to trust each other completely, or to evaluate each other correctly. This would be no longer the world of magnolias and banjos in the moonlight. And neither would it be any longer the world of “the man” and the dark shack across town.

To begin with it would be a world in which people deliberately saw race. We've got to see it initially because we've pretended for so long that we did not. Initially, we would have to say there has to be one Negro and one white, because for so long we have said just the opposite. Whites would have to work deliberately to *include* Negro because we have worked so hard to *exclude* Negro. Initially Negro would have to work very hard to include white to prove that we could overcome the temptation of substituting “Negro only” for “white only.”

We cannot drift naturally into a community when we have been so unnaturally divided. We must work very hard at it. We must see that white is not right. We must see that black is not right.

We must see that man is the strongest creature ever made; the damndest most wonderful mixture of virtue and sin ever imagined; that while we are stuck with 300 years of tragedy and grievance and misunderstanding so too we are blessed with our humanity.

Finally, having seen race and planned for it deliberately, we must dream of the day when we do not plan deliberately. We must dream of the day when neither white nationalism nor black nationalism devours us. We must dream of the day when we all are men, when we judge each other as men, nothing more and surely nothing less.

We must dream of the day when we can look with pride on this wretched land and this divided, victimized people and say here we take history and tragedy and intelligence and common sense and build the good life.

History, white and black, has defeated us too long. And I want free of that history, that burden.

The good South wants free of it too. The New South wants free of it.

I have strained today to speak of the New South, strained to recall the dream associated with Henry Grady: to begin with Thomas Jefferson and to link Franklin Roosevelt with Warm Springs, Georgia and the South. I have strained even more to give common purpose to runaway slave Harriet Tubman and poor white Johnny Reb — though I honestly believe they did have common purpose. I believe we Southerners must strain. We must because there is so much tragedy, definite and unavoidable, if we do not. We have had tragedy enough. Now it is

time we strain our strength and our ingenuity to build and not destroy.

I have not strained to include Tuskegee. Tuskegee is a leader. What is done here now will have influence far beyond the boundaries of Macon County.

Can the people of Tuskegee live together and, together, govern themselves? Will the tragedy of our past—which has cost us so much for so little—obsess Tuskegee, or will the New South begin here?

You, uniquely and importantly, have the power to decide. You here can show us all or you can discourage us greatly. All of us who are Southern and who love, unashamedly, what we are, are here, in Tuskegee. Your decision is critical.

A Kaddish for Whom?

(Continued from page 10)

for any cause he could not raise a shield in defense. Since there seemed to be no other alternative he humbly apologized. That later the Rabbi told him he had not done anything to apologize for did not prove to be the balm to soothe that which is unconsolable.

The knights errant saw to it that the Temple Board was convened within the week. The drive chairman assured the troubled board that he had not invited the intruder and had no reason to expect a Negro to enter a place where he knew he was not welcome. The Citizens Council leaders proposed a resolution excluding Negroes from the sanctuary and the Temple annex. This was too strong for the moderates. Since the NAACP had refused to make its membership known, the moderates

amended the resolution to exclude any person whose race has organizations with secret membership. As amended, the resolution was passed unanimously over the objection of the non-voting Rabbi.

The religious problem now to be resolved: May I, a Temple member in good standing, say a Kaddish for Orville Singleton? Perhaps his memory has no color and at last it is safe to have him in the Temple.

Strictly Subjective

(Continued from page 8)

such an aspiration, involving the Negro sacrifice and danger it has in the last few years, is clearly superior to the position of white people who have feared, resisted and punished so splendid a purpose.

This is not to dispute Mr. Silberman's and Mr. Henthoff's findings and beliefs that insult and degradation impair human personalities, or the late Mr. Wright's more eloquent and profound reflections on Negro suffering and cultural homelessness, nor to claim that southern Negroes are well-educated, self-assured, and open-hearted. Nor would I pretend that most Negro Southerners aim to love, redeem and be brothers to The Man; in fact, it is the fierce, and perhaps therapeutic, fashion of the youngsters in the Movement this year frequently to proclaim that they "hate white people."

It is to suggest, though, the old-fashioned notion that suffering strengthens and deepens persons who survive it, and that a people demeaned and abused can break from their emotional and material chains with a great idea and a just cause.

A MATTER OF MONEY

FIRST: Effective September 1, 1964, the *New South* subscription price became \$2.50 a year.

Increased publication costs of all kinds make this increase necessary. *New South* has held its price at \$2.00 for so many years that the figure has almost become a tradition. We are the more sorry, therefore, to go up to \$2.50. We hope our readers will understand the necessity.

SECOND: The Southern Regional Council invites annual subscriptions to all our publications, except *New South*, at \$5.00 a year.

All subscriptions will begin on October 1 of each year and will bring to readers all publications issued between October 1 of one year and September 30 of the next. Subscriptions received after October 1 of any year will be started by an initial mailing of publications issued between that date and the date of the order. Annual subscribers will receive 10-15 reports per year; for example, during the calendar year 1963 we issued these publications:

PAMPHLETS

J. Kenneth Morland, *Southern Schools: Token Desegregation and Beyond*.

Robert Coles, *The Desegregation of Southern Schools: A Psychiatric Study*.

Vivian Henderson, *The Economic Status of Negroes: In the Nation and in the South*.

SPECIAL REPORTS:

Plans for Progress: Atlanta Survey

SPECIAL ISSUE OF NEW SOUTH:

March on Washington, September 1963

Direct Action in the South, October-November 1963

MISCELLANEOUS:

The City and Minority Groups (jointly prepared with the Potomac Institute and the International City Managers Association, and published by the latter)

The Civil Rights Crisis: A Synopsis of Recent Developments in four parts: I. April-June 24, 1963; II. June 24-July 24, 1963; III. July 24-August 28, 1963; IV. August 28-November 30, 1963.

L — REPORTS

L-41 *Excerpts from Speeches of Governor Bert Combs of Kentucky and Secretary of Commerce Luther T. Hodges.*

L-42 *Speech by Edward J. Meehan, Editor Emeritus of Memphis Press-Scimitar.*

L-43 *Business Point the Way.*

L-44 *Charlotte Has Built Its Integration Road: A Different Way.*

L-45 *Public Education in Mississippi.*

L-46 *Voice of the People: 'At This Very Late Hour.'*