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Joseph Makel, right, public relations executive of Calvert Distillers Co., presents a scroll on behalf of Calvert and National Negro Radio Network to Otto Preminger, producer of "Carmen Jones" sensational film which opened in New York last week. Leonard Evans, left, of the Network, presided at the ceremonies which were held in the Skyline Room at the Theresa Hotel in New York.



Dorothy Dandridge, star of Carmen Jones film, speaks at the preview ceremonies at the Hotel Theresa. Juanita Hall, a member of the cast, looks on. Her photo was featured on the cover of Life magazine the week of the opening of the film.

Can Integration Work?

BY EFFIE M. CLARK

The Supreme Court edict of May 17, outlawing segregation in public schools, evoked press comments that ranged between two extremes—the decision is "revolutionary," it is "infamous." Reactions from individuals selected at random could hardly be more extreme.

This ruling strikes a new high making it in a sense, revolutionary; for the court's judgment rested not upon a comparison of the "tangible" factors in Negro and white schools, but upon "the effect of segregation itself on public education." The Justices ruled that "to separate" children of a minority group "from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be done."

The court contended that "segregation with the sanction of law...has a tendency to retard the educational and mental development of Negro children and to deprive them of some of the benefits they would receive in a racially integrated school system."

Seldom in the history of American jurisprudence has mental health with its sociological implications served as a major premise for legal transcendence of the social custom. The new law strikes a blow and at the deep rooted racially delineated system or caste, and consequently, has aroused intense feelings among adults.

Essentially, the ruling states that the basic tenets of democracy cannot be taught effectively in public schools unless they are practiced in the schools. In view of the Justices' contention that education is perhaps "the most important function of state and local governments" and subsequently "the very foundation of good citizenship"—they had no other alternative for reaffirming A-

merican democratic-idealism to the world-at-large.

Sectional Loyalties Influence

Emotional responses to this momentous decision, both pro and con, become more highly charged when sectional loyalties take precedence. In the first place it is erroneous to assume that the 17 states immediately affected by the ruling, are the only ones where segregation is practiced in public schools. A

large majority of our 49 states practice segregation under various guises; from the selection of administrative and teaching personnel down to gerrymandering school districts. However some states' tenacious obedience to regional loyalties, affects or retarding influence on other sections of the country which admittedly need to do better in their school practices.

The old feud between the Bostonians and the Charlestonians constitutes a fiery rebuttal in the debate over the efficacy of desegregation and yet it misses the crux of the whole matter. Whether we like it or

not, the times in which we live and the future to which we aspire rule out this obsolete cleavage.

Old Order Is Dead

Technological industrialization has swept the whole country into its orbit. No longer is there an industrial north and agrarian south. The old north and the old south are dead. Whatever the merits of the Civil War, despite mistakes of the Reconstruction Era—at best, they should help thoughtful persons apprehend the magnitude of the task before us. Retreat to old Civil War haunts for support of one's viewpoints on the question of integrated schools clouds the issues.

At bottom, the question of integrated schools is one of human relations. What pertinent advantages or disadvantages accrue to integrated classrooms? What significant trends are indicated in states where integrated schools have progressively evolved to the point of general public acceptance? Are we informed of the outcome in Washington, D. C., Baltimore, Md., and the 25 counties in West Virginia where time-honored customs were overruled?

What Is The Negro

In all the arguments I have read by persons who are equivocal or outrightly opposed to the new law, never is their concept of the Negro made explicit. Is he a cat, a giraffe, is he half-human? Can he think, can he talk, does he have feelings that deserve consideration? Did the Negro create this racially-delineated system of caste which the opponents of integration fight so hard to defend? How does he fit into this puzzling picture?

Obviously to die-hard "white

supremacists" the Negro is a punk. They have no clear conception of him as a possessor of human dignity nor tenable reasons for why he should continue in the humiliating role of a second class citizen. Neither can they find supporting evidence for their arrogant concepts of white supremacy in social anthropology nor in the biological sciences.

Trend Of The Times

The desire of Negroes to participate as first-class citizens at the local, state and national levels in civic affairs, merely reflects the trend of the times. Throughout the world oppressed peoples and small nations seek to participate as partners with the major powers in shaping world events, since their general welfare too is directly affected by the shifting economic and social forces on the international scene.

Prejudices of old horse-and-buggy days do not fit into our modern mode of living, our manner of work or travel. They prevent people from learning how to live together as fellow citizens. They impede America's ascendancy to world leadership, as indicated in the U. S. Attorney General's brief to the Supreme Court on the school question. The deliberate practice of segregation growing out of mis-directed prejudices dissipates mutual confidence and goodwill so essential to domestic unity, besides leaving much to be desired in the eyes of nations who "should follow our example." Our "tenth man," the butt of racial stigmatism, needlessly constitutes a special problem in all public areas. Yet his energies and talents also are needed for ameliorating grave national problems of employ-

ment, commerce, housing, health, education just to mention a few.

Where whites earnestly seek to work with Negroes as active participants in civic affairs, antipathies are mellowed; old prejudices are eventually questioned and sometimes discarded by such searching persons. If partial correction of this stigmatism is possible in adult, what transforming results can ensue for children where they are given half-a-chance to know children of other racial and cultural groups as children.

Supreme Court Ruling Not Revolutionary

To integrate schools throughout America is to implement the principle of human dignity, the Magna Charter of democratic precepts. In this sense the Supreme Court decision is not revolutionary, but a necessary step in the forward thrust of democratic process.

Obstacles To Integration

Really there are only two obstacles to successful integration of schools throughout this country. First, unwillingness to give it a try. Second, bungling in the area of public relations when planning the transition program.

Skilled leadership of school administrators, heads of civic organizations, and especially the enlightened clergy can offset much of the general reluctance to try integration in the untired areas. Free and open discussions sponsored by organizations, radio and press can greatly facilitate the job. Free discussion means giving all sides a chance to be heard without reprisals.

Transition Not Easy

To oversimplify the problems incumbent with making this transition is naive. In socially benighted areas where no meeting-ground has been laid between the two races, the transition cannot be made without some pain of disappointment, especially if adequate steps are not taken early enough to offset a maximum of confusion. Parents especially, cannot be expected to go along automatically

LET'S INVEST MORE IN THEM!



with practices against which they have been conditioned by customs and mores. This doesn't mean that people cannot change or subdue their vehement resistance to new practices.

Young People More Adaptable

In contrast to older adults who find the anticipated change too hard a pill to swallow, emerge youth of both races who are not thoroughly taken-in by post-bellum mores. They half-accept, half-believe the quixotic Bourbons, traditions, realizing daily that the facts belie their half-hearted acceptance as the walls of segregation crumble all around them.

Some of these youths in returning from U. S. military outposts of World War II, in returning from exchange studies in Asia, Europe, Africa, they were and are quickened with

the growing realization that the paramount global-wide problem is not how to perpetuate white supremacy, but how to save the human race.

Integration Must Work

Integration of schools can work and must work for we have come too far to turn back. It can be facilitated through a clearer understanding of what the word means. Integration means simply, to bring the parts together into a whole. It is synonymous with the American ideal of democracy "a melting pot." People of diverse cultures and backgrounds share the same rights and privileges under law. They may worship differently, speak different languages. They represent different ethnic patterns, but they are all Americans deserving equal protection of the law.

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