

OTHER EDITORS SAY

WRAL-TV VIEWPOINT

The Real Lesson of Alabama

It scarcely seems necessary to comment that no rational mind could have been prompted, by any set of circumstances, to pull the trigger of the gun that killed the Detroit woman in Alabama. Among civilized people any man who presumes to ordain himself as judge, jury and executioner is not merely an enemy of society, but a fool as well.

There is more to it than that — cause and effect, for one thing. This regrettable incident cries out for questions to be answered, foremost among them the matter of who should share the broad responsibility for the woman's death. And this is where the pious finger-pointing begins.

No less a figure than President Johnson himself chose to dismiss the matter by laying it at the doorsteps of the Ku Klux Klan. This may have been a comfortably easy decision for the President, and it may have been astute politics. But it is hardly the right medicine for a sick country.

There is no reason to question the FBI's identification of the four Alabama men it arrested as being members of the Klan. We shall set aside the matter of whether the men — if they are guilty of the murder — were acting as Klansmen or as individuals. The larger question, and America may as well face it, is why and how did the rage of these men become so great as to prompt them to commit such an outrage. Let Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphrey and Martin Luther King, and all the rest, probe their own consciences. Can it be honestly said that there was no deliberate provocation of violence in Alabama? What was the point of it all? Who engineered it? Who smiled at defiance of the law on one side, while complaining about it on the other?

The trouble with anarchy — disregard for the law — is that it never travels a one-way street. The assignment of blame in Alabama, like the argument about whether it was the chicken or the egg that came first, can be as old as the question of slavery or as recent as Martin Luther King's refusal to obey a federal court order. But even those

are not the big questions in Alabama today, nor in much of the rest of the nation. The question is whether the dignity and integrity of government have now been so diminished that government is concerned with and obedient to the cause that assembles the largest crowd. If so, we had better prepare to live with anarchy for a long while.

Even Eric Severeid, who has long been an admirer of loud, flamboyant civil rights demonstrations, expressed concern the other night. He described the white people of Montgomery as "conquered people," hardly concealing his amusement at the fact that they stayed indoors and away from downtown when Martin Luther King's hordes moved in. But Mr. Severeid was disturbed at the threats and the taunts of the civil rights leaders. He mentioned one of Winston Churchill's ringing phrases — "in victory, magnanimity" — and Mr. Severeid expressed the hope that Dr. King's forces would henceforth practice this. Then he finished the Churchill phrase — "in defeat, defiance" — and cautioned the conquered people of the South

not to be defiant.

Hours later, after there had been no magnanimity, there was defiance — defiance in the form of an anger-crazed mind that sought satisfaction with a high-powered rifle. It is a blessing that only one incident occurred.

It is not an easy thing, of course, for a politician to call off a mob and thus silence its provocations. It seems far simpler, as Pontius Pilate sought to demonstrate, to let the mob have its way. But mobs feed on weakness. Over the weekend, it was disclosed that Martin Luther King now proposes to join forces with labor unions throughout the land to promote work stoppages. This, too, will be done in the name of "non-violence." And after that, what?

Let us hope, however, that the political fling is through, and that the frolic is over. The Detroit woman died a needless death, participating in a senseless performance. Cracking down on the Ku Klux Klan, however justified that may turn out to be, will be a case of treating the symptom and ignoring the disease. Unless we henceforth declare war on anarchy by anybody, we may as well brace ourselves to see it practiced by everybody.

That is the real lesson of Alabama.

Peers and Picasso

The Lord Chancellor took his seat on the Woolsack at three o'clock.

Lady Summerskill asked the Government how they justified, in the present state of the national economy, the spending of £60,000 (\$168,000) on the fabrication of Picasso called "The Three Dancers."

Lord Bowden, Minister of State for Education and Science. — The trustees of the Tate Gallery have entire discretion concerning the purchase of works of art from the money which has been allocated to them.

Lady Summerskill — As the Treasury make a large contribution to these galleries, should they not keep a more watchful eye on the one or two individuals who, guided solely by their own idiosyncrasies, choose these pictures? (Cheers).

Lord Bowden. — This is a matter which will excite great interest and controversy, but when the Government have appointed, as they have, eminent and distinguished artists to advise them about methods of disposing of the funds allocated to them, they can do no other than trust their judgment. The last thing the Government should engage in is an analysis of the present state of the market in

works of art.

The budget which the Tate has is about £110,000 (\$308,000) a year, and the only thing we can do is to leave the trustees to spend it to the best of their discretion. We shall have to be content with such results as they achieve.

Lord Stuart of Findhorn. — Has the Minister any knowledge to date of how many Friends of the Tate Gallery have now ceased to be friends? (Laughter.)

Lady Summerskill. — If today Picasso doodled and put his name to it would it not command a large sum from some pseudo-intellectual snob?

Lord Bowden. — I agree. I forget who it was who defined a highbrow as a man who looks at a sausage and thinks of Picasso. (Laughter) — From a parliamentary report in *The London Times*.

DECIDE TO APPEAL

Tuesday William Keys and Early Dawson of Vanceboro route 1 pled guilty to attempting to fraudulently obtain a driving license and Recorder Buck Wooten gave each four months in prison, at which point they decided to retain counsel and file appeal to superior court.

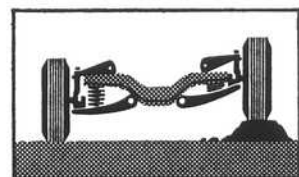
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