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## THE SOUTH: The Authentic Voice

(See Cover)

Out of the U.S. South last week blew a chill and ominous wind, a wind that carried with it the echoes of half-forgotten battles and the seeds of conflict yet to come. In Montgomery, Ala., where the Confederacy was born, obdurate Negroes persisted in their 3½-month-old boycott of a bus company that apparently was prepared to go bankrupt rather than abandon Jim Crow. In Sumner, Miss., an all-white jury decided that a white cotton-gin operator was not guilty of murder when he fired two charges of buckshot and one of squirrel shot into the body of a Negro gas-station attendant with whom he had an argument. In Washington, Texan Lyndon Johnson, majority leader of the U.S. Senate, felt obliged to announce that he did not "anticipate" that irreconcilable views on racial segregation would split the Democratic Party in 1956. Elsewhere on Capitol Hill another U.S. lawmaker, an owlish, bespectacled man with a dead cigar in his mouth, stared unblinkingly at a visitor and said: "I can tell you that integration will never come to Mississippi. I say there is no basis for compromise."

For James Oliver Eastland, senior U.S. Senator from Mississippi, and spiritual leader of Southern resistance to school desegregation, this was a relatively restrained statement. In less temperate moments, Eastland has trumpeted the traditional Southern creed with a bluntness unsurpassed in the postwar U.S. From the floor of the U.S. Senate he has proclaimed his belief that "the Negro race is an inferior race," and has warned the nation that the white people of Mississippi will "maintain control of our own elections and . . . will protect and maintain white supremacy throughout eternity." He has denounced the Supreme Court decision banning racial segregation as "an illegal, immoral and sinful doctrine" and the court itself as "this crowd of racial politicians in judicial robes." He has called on Southerners to fight integration "every step of the way," and has assured them that "Southern people will not be violating the Constitution or the law

when they defy this monstrous proposition."

Thanks to these and countless similar statements, Eastland is today one of the most widely disliked men in the U.S. New York's Senator Herbert Lehman has attacked him in the Senate as "a symbol of racism in America." Sermons have been preached against him in Northern churches and the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of New York has accused Eastland of "subversion just as real and, because it comes from a U.S. Senator, far more dangerous than any perpetrated by the Communist Party." The most frequent charge against him, one that is almost universal among Northern liberals, is that he is the latest in an unlovely line of Dixie demagogues who have deliberately fanned the flames of racial prejudice to serve their own political ends.

Man Without a Pitchfork. This last charge does not express the whole truth about James Oliver Eastland. There can be no doubt that he consciously exploits the tensions created by the Supreme Court's anti-segregation decision to advance his political fortunes. ("As far as Jim and segregation are concerned," says an Eastland aide, "none shall walk before him.") In almost every other respect, however, 51-year-old Jim Eastland is a far cry from the traditional Southern demagogue.

His thinning grey hair is worn at ordinary, not Claghorn, length, and he shuns the string tie and the diamond stickpin. Taciturn and humorless, he has neither the gift nor the inclination for the vivid rhetorical attacks on opponents that were the stock in trade of such old masters as South Carolina's Ben Tillman, who won the voters' hearts by announcing his determination to go to Washington and plunge a pitchfork into the rump of President Grover Cleveland. Where Theodore ("The Man") Bilbo embarrassed respectable Southerners with personal peccadilloes, ranging from a particularly messy divorce to brazen bribe-taking, Eastland is the epitome of respectability—a devoted family man and a prosperous landowner for whom politics is a passion rather than a livelihood. And even in his most intemperate outbursts, Eastland never descends to the kind of semi-obscene, anti-Negro venom displayed by Mississippi's late Senator James Vardaman when he declared: "I am just as much opposed to Booker T. Washington as a voter as I am to the coconut-headed, chocolate-colored typical little coon who blacks my shoes every morning."

It is precisely his restraint and respectability that make Eastland a far more dismaying phenomenon than Vardaman and his ilk ever were. When an old-style Southern politician made an unvarnished appeal to racial hatred, it was possible to dismiss it as a coldly cynical maneuver to get the poor white vote; it was obvious that the decent, educated white people of the South did not feel that way. But when James Eastland soberly proclaims his undying opposition to integrated schools, he is obviously speaking from a profound conviction, and his voice is the authentic voice of most of the South's 30 million whites, including the respectable and the educated. -

"I'll Choose Mississippi." Even "moderate" Southerners for whom segregation was an indefensible evil are warning the North to keep hands off. Mississippi's Nobel Prizewinner William Faulkner, whose novels eloquently express the thoughtful Southerners' sense of moral guilt toward the Negro, recently told a British newspaperman: "I don't like enforced integration any more than I like enforced segregation. If I have to choose between the United States Government and Mississippi, then I'll choose Mississippi ... If it came to fighting, I'd fight for Mississippi against the United States, even if it meant going out into the street and shooting Negroes."

These are disturbing words, especially when placed beside the fact that in eight Southern states from Florida to Virginia, the governor or legislature or both have publicly proclaimed a firm resolve to maintain racial segregation in public schools. To justify this defiance of the Supreme Court, the South has breathed new life into constitutional issues that most Americans had assumed were conclusively settled in 1865. Looking back, it is now clear that the Civil War settled in the U.S. the questions of slavery and secession. But the underlying problem, that of absorbing the Negro into the U.S. body politic, was shirked. The Reconstruction, blundering and shameful as it sometimes was, included the last serious attempt to give Negroes full citizenship. In 1877 the weary North, in one of the fateful compromises of U.S. history, agreed to sweep the whole unpleasant issue under the carpet. Rather than accept Democrat Samuel Tilden as President of the U.S., the North traded withdrawal of Federal troops from the South for Southern acquiescence in the dubious election of Republican Rutherford Hayes. Thereafter, the South was free for decades to handle the race problem in its own way.

Fatal Flaw. The results have not been entirely negative. In the fourscore and eleven years since the Civil War, Negroes have made greater progress than any comparable group in modern history. Today, the total income of the 16 million U.S. Negroes is \$16 billion, nearly as great as that of prosperous Canada's 15.7 million citizens. Nor has this economic progress been confined to Northern Negroes. Since 1932, the Federal Government and U.S. industry between them have wrought an economic revolution in the South, and Negroes as well as whites have benefited. Nowhere is the change more dramatic than in Jim Eastland's Mississippi, where Negroes make up 45% of the population. Mississippi now has Negro editors, doctors, businessmen. It has Negro farmers who gross \$10,000 a year or better. Many of the tumbledown Negro cabins which once disfigured the Delta have been painted and electrified; and the sons of illiterate field hands drive to their factory jobs in new cars. Most important of all, their children, in many cases, go to decent schools.

This economic progress has not been accompanied by the slightest spontaneous relaxation of the rigid social and political controls that Southern whites imposed on Negroes after Reconstruction. (Southern talk

that segregation is part of the South's traditional way of life is nonsense; in much of the South, Jim Crow is only half a century old.) Gradualists, North and South, used to comfort themselves with the theory that, with increasing Southern prosperity, the poor whites whose votes enforced segregation would lose their fear of Negro economic competition, and the problem of human rights would then solve itself. Unhappily, this has turned out to be untrue. Southern Negroes today enjoy more rights than they did a half century ago. They can vote—if they aren't too aggressive about it. In a few states they can attend "white" colleges—if they are willing to accept "segregated" living quarters. In others they can use the same railroad waiting rooms as whites—provided they are interstate travelers. But in virtually every case, even these spotty and limited gains were not freely conceded by Southern whites; they were imposed on the South by the Federal Government spurred on by the Negroes themselves.

Room for Maneuver. This fact gives a hollow ring to arguments of "moderate" Southerners when they protest against federal intervention and demand to be allowed "to work this thing out our own way." Already the Supreme Court's school desegregation decision has accomplished more toward giving first-class citizenship to U.S. Negroes than anything since the Emancipation Proclamation. It is true that no public secondary schools have as yet been desegregated in eight of the Southern states with the largest percentage of Negro citizens, i.e., Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. It is also true that at least four of these states—Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi and South Carolina—seem certain to go on defying desegregation orders for years to come. But before the Supreme Court decision, racial segregation of public schools was legally required in a total of 17 states and the District of Columbia, an area comprising 4,791 school districts. Today 537 of those school districts are desegregated, and 256,000 Negro children—10% of the Negro enrollment in once-segregated areas—attend integrated schools. Prudently and considerately, the Supreme Court granted lower courts "practical flexibility" in enforcing the decision. In the word flexibility, diehard Southern segregationists saw room for maneuver and delay. And in Southern eyes, the existence of the possibility of delay inevitably put a premium on the politician who would do the most delaying—a politician like James Oliver Eastland.

"How Else Is It Done?" Until last year few people outside Mississippi were really conscious of Jim Eastland's existence. In the Magnolia State itself, however, Eastland was born a power to be reckoned with. His maternal grandfather, Dr. Richmond Austin, came from one of the state's most blue-blooded families, and rode as a cavalry officer under General Nathan Bedford Forrest (later one of the founders of the Ku Klux Klan). His paternal grandfather not only made a pile out of a drugstore chain, but also had the foresight to buy, at \$1 an acre, 600 acres of cotton land near the hamlet of Doddsville in the Mississippi Delta. Today Delta land fetches up to \$200 an acre.

Jim Eastland was born on the Doddsville plantation, and throughout his youth his father, Woods Eastland,

steadily increased its size. "Judge" Woods Eastland was a lawyer by profession, and his practice was in Forest (pop. 1,500), in the hill couftry about 100 miles from Doddsville. It was there that Jim grew up—a wellborn Delta planter's son set down amongst planter-hating "rednecks." Jim and his father were inseparable, but somehow Woods Eastland's rollicking geniality never rubbed off on his son, and Jim grew up cold, reserved and somewhat arrogant. Said a clerk in a Forest general store last week: "I hear folks say what a grand job Jim Eastland is doing and what a fine man he is, but I don't know. I always remember him as an uppity kid."

After Forest High School, Jim went to the University of Mississippi, where he began to display some of the zest for politics he had acquired from his father, one of Mississippi's bigger, behind-the-scenes political operators. Once, remembers Jim, "I had to arrange for a whole board to get elected in order to elect myself business manager of the paper." On another occasion he broke open a ballot box for two strong reasons: 1) to fix the election of a friend as prettiest girl; 2) to filch ballots proclaiming him (as he recalls) biggest liar in the class.

Jim spent three years at "Ole Miss," then transferred to Vanderbilt, where his father felt he could get better legal training, and after one semester there switched to the University of Alabama. While still a senior at Alabama, he passed his bar exams ("I made the highest grade") and promptly dropped out of school to run for the Mississippi state legislature. With his father's backing, 24-year-old Jim Eastland had no trouble in getting elected, and for four years he was one of then Governor Theodore Bilbo's leading supporters in the house of representatives. In 1932, when Bilbo left office under a cloud of financial troubles, Eastland also got out of politics and began to practice law. The same year he married attractive Elizabeth Coleman, daughter of a Delta doctor. Says Libby: "We got engaged in a swing on the front porch, naturally. How else is it done in the South?"

Unmistakable Light. For nine years Jim Eastland seemed to have forgotten politics. He and Libby moved to the Delta, where he quietly plugged away building up a law practice in Ruleville (pop. 1,500), six miles from Doddsville. Just about everybody in Mississippi gasped with astonishment in 1941 when Governor Paul Johnson, a lifelong friend of Woods Eastland, appointed young Jim, after Woods turned it down, to fill the U.S. Senate seat left vacant by the death of Pat Harrison. But the appointment was only for 88 days until a special election could be held, and Jim had promised he would not be a candidate in the special election.

Just about the time Jim hit Capitol Hill, OPA Administrator Leon Henderson injudiciously announced plans to put a price ceiling on cottonseed oil. Jim Eastland rose on the Senate floor and delivered a violent attack on Henderson's decision. The ceiling on cottonseed oil was abandoned, 3,500 congratulatory letters poured into Eastland's office, and when his 88 days were up, he returned to Mississippi with an unmistakable light in his eyes, boasting that he had put \$50 million in the pockets of Southern cotton

growers.

True to his promise, Eastland didn't run in the special election, but a year later he won a full Senate term in a bitter contest with Wall Doxey, who had the support of Eastland's onetime hero, Theodore Bilbo.

During the campaign Eastland lambasted the Roosevelt Administration from hell to breakfast, and when he got to Washington early in 1943, he was reminded of it by a chuckling F.D.R. Said Roosevelt: "That's all right, son. I got quite a kick out of those anti-New Deal cracks. Now you're elected, though, remember we've got to play together. You can come see me whenever you want to. You take two minutes telling me what you want, and I'll do the talking the rest of the 15 minutes. Then I'll give you anything you ask for." As far as Eastland can recall, however, he never did ask F.D.R. for anything. In fact, during his early years in the Senate, Eastland, as one of his friends concedes, "spent most of his time just accumulating seniority." Colorless, closemouthed and seldom consulted by his colleagues, Eastland was just another Southern Senator who supported low tariffs, opposed organized labor, and generally went along with the Administration on foreign policy. His only noticeable personal interest was agriculture—especially cotton.

Land of Cotton. It was a natural interest, even more natural for Eastland than for most cotton state Senators. Since his father's death in 1944, Jim Eastland has been owner of the Doddsville plantation—it now comprises 5,020 acres—and cotton is one of his major sources of livelihood. This fact has not only influenced his legislative approach, but has helped to keep his heart firmly in Mississippi. The eleven-room brick house which the Eastlands purchased two years ago as a permanent Washington headquarters for themselves and their four children (three daughters, one son) is a sparsely decorated, unlived-in-looking place. And in Washington, where the younger children attend Sidwell Friends School (which recently announced that it planned to desegregate), the Eastlands almost never go out, very rarely entertain. In summertime, however, when the family gets home to Doddsville, all this changes. There the unpretentious, six-bedroom frame house, surrounded on three sides by cotton fields, bulges with guests. Says Eastland: "We always have at least five guests for dinner [at midday] and one or two staying the night." There, too, Jim can get his fill of hunting, and ride his two Tennessee walking horses.

Most of Eastland's time at Doddsville, however, is devoted to business. Though he relies heavily on his general manager, spry, 76-year-old William Godbold, Eastland is keenly aware that casual absentee ownership can never make a success of what is less of a plantation than an agricultural factory. Last year the Eastland plantation had about 1,900 acres in cotton, the remainder in corn, soybeans, oats, barley and pasturage. Under Eastland's close supervision, the land is cultivated according to the most scientific information available. Each spring, tractor-pulled applicators, straddling four rows at a time, inject seventy tons of anhydrous ammonia to the exact depth of 15 inches into the Eastland soil. Heavy plows bite deep into the Delta loam and turn under 150 tons of carefully prepared silage. Tons of cottonseed hulls provide

humus for sections where the soil is heavy. This year, for the first time, several hundred acres of cotton will be irrigated by Eastland's own irrigation system, engineered by an Arkansas consultant.

All this has required a heavy investment in money and in Eastland's time. The plantation's equipment includes 27 tractors, one caterpillar, 25 cotton trailers, 15 four-row plowing units and a vast assortment of plows, combines, trucks, balers, pickers, etc. Eastland's plantation with its equipment is worth more than a million dollars and grosses about half a million a year in sales. Working the 4,500 acres directly under the plantation manager—520 acres are worked by tenant farmers—are 84 sharecroppers (mostly Negro) and, in this season, about 30 Negro day hands. The material welfare of these men and their families—about 400 people—is directly dependent on Eastland. By Delta standards, he does well by them. Showpiece of the Eastland plantation is Preston Jones, Negro manager of a 360-acre "unit," who last year netted \$7,800 after living expenses. Jones is admittedly exceptional, but General Manager Godbold estimates that the 84 sharecroppers probably averaged \$800 as their share of the plantation profits last year. Asks Godbold: "How many auto or aircraft workers wound up 1955 by paying all their living expenses and still having \$800 left over?"

A Measure of Fame. So strong is the pull of Doddsville on the Eastlands that Libby Eastland was reluctant to have Jim stand for re-election in 1954. Jim, however, liked being a Senator, and his interests had broadened to include Communism as well as cotton. He had even won a certain measure of fame for arrogant behavior as a member of the Internal Security Subcommittee—though nothing like the national attention he was to get later when his investigation of Communist influence on the U.S. press brought down upon him the wrath of the New York Times (TIME, Jan. 16).

Jim decided to run, and with that decision was on his way to becoming a national figure. One month before he started his re-election campaign (which he won handily), the Supreme Court handed down its anti-segregation ruling. Less than a month later, a small group of white citizens of Indianola, Miss., in Eastland's own Sunflower County, founded what they called a Citizens' Council, the first appearance of a movement which Mississippi Editor Hodding Carter describes as "the uptown Ku Klux Klan." Though it lacked—and still does—any kind of interstate organization or direction, the movement rapidly spread through the South. Today Citizens' Councils and similar organizations under other names have an estimated 300,000 members. A few councils have a protofascist tinge; the great majority of them, however, are composed of respectable, middle-class white Southerners who simply believe "there can be no compromise on segregation."

Into the Vacuum. Eastland denies that he has ever been a member of a Citizens' Council (or of the Klan). There is no doubt that he has become a kind of patron saint of the councils. Stepping into a vacuum at the heart of the councils, he gave them a philosophy and a voice, and today Southern cities which had barely

heard of him two years ago fight for dates on his crowded speaking schedule. Those who manage to get him hear what has become almost a canned speech. In it, Eastland starts from the assumption that the anti-segregation decisions represent a violation of the Constitution. "There is nothing in the U.S. Constitution or the amendments there to," says he, "that gives to Congress, the President or the Supreme Court the right or power to declare that white and colored children must attend the same schools." What this amounts to is a denial of the Supreme Court's right to interpret the Constitution—as Eastland himself makes clear when he says: "We will challenge the doctrine that the Constitution is what nine men say it is."

He does not face the question of how a constitutional system of government can operate unless some judicial process can determine in disputed cases what the constitution means. He argues that "in the field of contested powers . . . the states and not the Supreme Court are the final arbiter." This does not mean that Eastland believes in nullification. In January he told a Citizens' Council audience in South Carolina, historic home of nullification, that the South Carolina Nullification Act of 1832 was constitutionally unsound, and added, "no one contends that a state can nullify an act which Congress has the power to pass or to nullify any of the constitutional and legal powers of the Federal Government." What he does advocate is something he calls "authentic acts of interposition." Interposition, as Eastland interprets it, means that "the states affected should say that the Supreme Court . . . has no power to interfere with, or place a limitation on, the power of any state to regulate health, morals, education, marriage and good order within the state . . . We should then request by resolution an amendment to the Constitution which would rivet these principles into our Constitution and into our system of Government."

Eastland himself has already introduced in the Senate a proposed constitutional amendment along this line. He is fully aware that such an amendment, even in the unlikely event that Congress approved it, would be a long time getting passed by 36 states. In the interim, he is ready with a plan for evading the Supreme Court decision by "legal and constitutional means." Says he: "The effective way to oppose integrated schools ... is through the government of the states ... If we contest at the local level, by individual school districts, or by a county, or on a community basis, we are sitting ducks and will be picked off one by one . . . The state and no one but the state can segregate under the police powers . . . The state, if necessary, can abolish school districts, create other ones and thus remove the corpus or basis of a suit. This would mean the whole case just start over, with years' delay."

The Prospect. Will the U.S. stand for years of delay—stretching according to Eastland's intention to "eternity." Certainly the dominant opinion in the North and West of the U.S. respects the sincerity and depth of Southern white feelings on this issue and shrinks from the thought of coercion. Just as certainly, the U.S. outside the South will not tolerate the indefinitely prolonged prospect of Negroes as a legally segregated group, with all the injustice involved in that status.



The political strain created by this basic moral and social conflict is felt most keenly in the Democratic Party. In New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Illinois and other Northern states, at least 70% of the Negro vote in recent years has been Democratic and has been necessary for Democratic victory. Northern Democrats cannot abandon their pro-civil rights position, nor do their leaders wish to do so.

At the 1956 Democratic Convention, a civil rights plank may touch off a North-South fight so hot that Southern delegates will bolt the party. The chance that this will happen is increased by the accepted probability that Eisenhower will win whether or not the South bolts. Some Southerners may feel that 1956 is a good year to stand on "principle" and to express the vigor of their pro-segregation feelings through a third party.

Whether or not that happens, what of the prospects for desegregation? By determined and cool legal action, it can probably be enforced without violence over much of the South. It probably cannot be enforced in Mississippi, Georgia or South Carolina or in parts of other states as long as they retain their present very high proportion of Negroes.

But the South's Negroes, despite their economic progress, have been moving north for 40 years; today 2,500 Negroes arrive in Chicago every month. This exodus from the South, an ultimately healthy process, is checked by the wretched conditions under which many Negroes live in Northern cities. The contribution of the North and West to the greatest internal problem facing the nation is not to give in to the Eastlands, nor to try to match them in rancor. It is to hasten the progress of Negroes outside the South, while pressing for all "deliberate speed" in the enforcement of the court's decision. In U.S. Grant and the American Military Tradition, Historian Bruce Catton says that "the Civil War . . . infinitely broadened the category of American citizenship and the meaning of the American experiment ... It had committed the nation to a working belief in the brotherhood of man. This probably was a little too much to swallow at one gulp in the 1870s or at any other time." It is surely too big a gulp for one part of the nation to swallow without the help and vigorous cooperation of the rest of the U.S.

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