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FRIDAY, JULY 19, 1963

## There Are Right and Wrong Reasons For Opposing the Civil Rights Bill

Sen. Richard B. Russell's original opposition to the President's civil rights bill belabored the proposed cure—legislation—but ignored the ill—existence of Negro grievances.

In a television interview he has now stated that he is "well aware that we're living in a social revolution." It seems to us this a step forward by him toward the higher ground of recognizing that a problem exists.

The other half of the question still remains, however: What to do about the problem?

The opponents of the President's bill in Congress will not have a strong argument if—though they recognize existence of the national problem he is trying to cope with—they avoid any responsibility of their own for helping solve it.

Much of the Southern congressional opposition to the bill is based on just such an avoidance of responsibility, emptying the arguments to a large extent. The implication is that even though a problem is conceded to exist, the Southerner in Congress is willing to block the President's effort to do something about it while in turn offering the alternative of doing nothing about it.

It seems to us this position is 180 degrees opposed and 100 per cent weaker than the position taken by the Board of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce in its own resolution opposing passage of the President's bill.

The Chamber opposition is based neither on denying that a problem exists nor upon the alternative of doing nothing about solving it. On the contrary, the Chamber couples its opposition to the legislation with a specific and forthright alternative solution—voluntary progress instead of compelled progress.

Like Sen. Russell, the Chamber Board found the public accommodations portion of the bill to be "particularly objectionable" because it would bring intrusion of further federal regulation into private property.

But unlike Sen. Russell, the Chamber Board reiterated an alternative to the legislation; it appealed "to all businesses soliciting business from the general public to do so without regard to race, color or creed," solving voluntarily a problem whose solution it does not want to see federally compelled.

Atlanta itself is an example of a city that does not need the President's proposed law because it is recognizing the problem and solving it voluntarily. This, it seems to us, is the right reason for opposing the public accommodations bill.

If the Southern opposition to the bill in Congress would move up to this position which has already been taken at home, then it seems to us the arguments would be greatly strengthened, the solution of racial problems would be considerably advanced, and the dignity and reputation of the South would be better served.

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