

A. J. T. & J. W. L.
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A Letter To The South

ON SEGREGATION

To be accurate the logotype above should read: A Letter To The White People Of The South. For the doubling back on our phrases, to achieve at all points parallel arguments addressed to both races, would be too cumbersome a procedure. But we wish that every man of good will, white or colored, in the South from which we came, could read this letter we now send you across the miles and the years. It contains a warning which, though by no means new, is important enough to deserve endless repetition.

I

THOSE MILES and years had changed our attitude, towards the racial problem in the South, in some ways of which many of you will not approve. We ask earnestly for your patience, through these first paragraphs, while we summarize that changed outlook. There are readers for whom such an introduction will make what follows more convincing.

For we had come to believe it to be inevitable, and desirable, that *formal* segregation would eventually be abandoned everywhere in the South. In time, we felt sure, nothing would be left but a voluntary and incomplete segregation in purely social activities, resulting from the rights of any man, white or colored, to have friends of his own choosing, and from the tendency of those with like interests and friends in common to associate together. We thought this would be brought about by a yielding, area by area and step by step, to the pressures of enlightened opinion.

Many Southerners, we know, have felt the same way. One of our good friends, as typical a "Southern gentleman of the old school" as you can well imagine, is a member of the nine-man governing council of one of the largest

cities in the South. He took an active lead, only a few years ago, in the successful campaign to have a Negro elected to that council. Another close friend—now deceased—was a wealthy manufacturer in another large southern city. He personally led the movement, also successful, to provide a municipally-supported golf course for its colored population.

These were, as yet, only straws in the wind. But you do not meet with a man, whom you learn to respect, as one of a group of "city fathers" in a small room, once a week for years, without eventually being willing to sit beside that man in other meeting places. Or let some of the young men in that "colored" golf club have begun to achieve fame as champions—and the Negro has the stuff of which champions are made, as has already been shown in baseball, football, boxing, and many other sports—and it would not have been long before somebody would have been arranging occasional matches between their team and the teams of white clubs in the same area. Then sportsmanship would have started adding its powerful influence towards breaking down the barriers.

Also, we were aware of some different straws, in another wind blowing towards the same goal. These were the efforts, laudable and earnest, which the South has been putting forth to comply more realistically with the "separate but equal" requirements of the Fourteenth Amendment. An excellent illustration is the way the state of Georgia has, for several years, been spending more than fifty per cent of its total education funds on improvement of its schools for Negroes. Colored people constitute only thirty-five per cent of the state's population, and pay only ten per cent of its taxes. But the white people of Georgia, who pay ninety per cent of the

taxes, have been in favor of this program, in order to bring the school facilities for Negroes up to a truly equal basis.

Even under the still-far-from-equal standards that have prevailed our Negro population has been making steady gains in its educational level. THE LONDON ECONOMIST has pointed out that already a larger percentage of American Negroes get college educations than the percentage of Englishmen in the British Isles. We believe it could also have pointed out, if there were any satisfactory statistics on the subject, that the material standard of living of the average American Negro is today higher than that of the average Englishman. For the improvement in economic status of our Negro population has been parallel with the improvement in education. It is only in comparison with white Americans of the same communities, not in comparison with people elsewhere on the planet, that the American Negro can now justify any feeling of inferiority in his living conditions or his cultural opportunities.

The tangible supports of even this feeling have been slowly but surely fading; in the South, as everywhere else in our nation. In educational facilities and educational accomplishments; in the kind of jobs that were available; in the business and professional openings; in general living conditions; in the acquisition of luxuries and leisure; in the growth of entertainment and information media, such as radio and television, that reach all races alike on exactly the same terms; in every aspect of our daily lives, the gap between the positions of colored man and white man has been getting perceptibly narrower. And we have felt sure that every item of progress towards more real equality was, in its inevitable

practical results, an equal step towards less separateness.

For let us suppose that by some miracle the gap of inequality had been completely closed a few years ago; that the Negroes of the South could suddenly have had as good homes, as many bathtubs as frequently used, as good clothes, as much per capita wealth, as much earned standing in the business and professional worlds, as much education, as their white neighbors; and that both colored and white members of the community had become conscious of actual equality. Under these circumstances we believe that the prejudice against desegregation would have begun to evaporate rapidly, and that formal and public segregation would have become ridiculous — and completely unnecessary. No such major miracle was possible. But an infinite number of minor miracles were slowly adding up to the same result.

At least, to return to our earlier figure of speech, we believed that the winds were blowing towards more equality and less segregation; that the atmosphere was being changed by these winds to a healthier and more comfortable one for everybody concerned; that they were good winds, blowing in the right direction. And we must further confess that we, like many others — including Mr. Faulkner — were somewhat impatient at times, and anxious for the South to open more doors to these winds, more readily, before the accumulated pressures began rattling things about.

Now the whole situation has changed. Progress towards voluntary desegregation has already been set back a generation. The very people, of farsighted and recognized leadership, who were doing the most to create equal opportunities for the Negro population, and thus to eliminate tremendous obstacles

in more equal association between the races, are now being driven into the same camp with the most irreconcilable segregationists. And the easy-going colored man, who has been finding steadily increasing ways open to improvement of his lot, even on his side of the segregation fence, and who has never let this slowly eroding barrier distract him too much, is now being inflamed into a hatred of his white neighbors which he never felt before.

It is this foreboding outlook, and some slight knowledge of the even more foreboding forces behind the scenes, that prompt this letter. We hope you will take a good look with us, while there is still time, at the hurricane that is replacing the beneficent winds and growing in intensity. And the place to start with that look is at the lightning stroke which ushered in the storm. This was the U. S. Supreme Court decision of May 17, 1954.

II

THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT forbids any state to "deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." But the Tenth Amendment specifically provides that "the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." Public education is, by this reservation, a function of the states, so far as the people of any state wish to have their state government perform that function for them. Thus each state has the clear right to establish schools, control schools, and close schools, according to the wishes of its own citizens, so long as its acts or policies do not violate the Fourteenth Amendment forbidding discrimination.

Sixty years ago the Supreme Court,

in the case of *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, decided that the provision by any state of "separate but equal" schools or other public facilities, for colored people and white people, fulfilled the requirements of the Fourteenth Amendment. This was in accordance with legal precedent which had already prevailed since the Amendment had been adopted in 1868. When, in 1954, the Supreme Court again considered the relationship of the Tenth and Fourteenth Amendments to each other, there had been no change in either, nor any new amendment or law affecting that relationship, since the earlier decision. Nor did the 1954 Court claim that its predecessor had erred as to the law sixty years ago. It merely intended that, in the light of modern psychology which had not been available to that earlier court, "separate but equal" schools did constitute discrimination in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Other writers and speakers have already publicized the Communist sympathies and connections of the "authorities" on modern psychology to which the Court referred in its decision, and on which its action was theoretically based. Let us merely draw on their observations here to point out that foremost among these authorities were Theodore Brameld, E. Franklin Frazier and Gunnar Myrdal. The first two names are well known to anybody who keeps up with the activities of officially-cited Communist fronts. Gunnar Myrdal is the Swedish socialist and collaborator with Communists, employed by the Carnegie Foundation (of Alger Hiss fame) to study race relations in this country. The result of that study was his book, AN AMERICAN DILEMMA, in which Myrdal stated that the Constitution of the United States was "impractical and unsuited to modern conditions", and that the Conven-

tion which adopted it was "nearly a plot against the common people". Among those who helped Myrdal prepare this book were Franz Boas, W. E. B. DuBois, Alain Locke, Ira DeA. Reid, Doxey Wilkerson, Ruth Benedict, Charles S. Johnson, Clark Foreman, Arthur Raper, Louis W. Jones, Rose Nelson, Sterling Brown, Eveline Burns, Thomas Jones, T. Arnold Hill — and E. Franklin Frazier. All of these have been active participants in known Communist fronts, most of them in many such fronts. But it was AN AMERICAN DILEMMA, that Gunnar Myrdal turned out with their help, which the Court cited as its chief authority in "modern psychology" dealing with race relations.

Equally significant, in order to arrive at its conclusion the Court had to get around the one most important and firmly established base for the interpretation of any legislation, which is the intent of the legislators at the time a law or an amendment—or a constitution—was promulgated. It pleaded ignorance of the intent of the framers and ratifiers of the Fourteenth Amendment, with regard to the meaning of the "equal protection" clause, in the face of overwhelming evidence that those framers and ratifiers did consider "separate but equal" schools a satisfactory compliance with the law.

Of course, even if Myrdal were right that the U. S. Constitution is so horrible an instrument, there are perfectly proper ways for the people, through their state legislatures, to change it. While it is amply clear that this decision of the Supreme Court constituted a deliberate rewriting of basic law simply by judicial fiat. *It established the doctrine that the meaning of our laws and of our constitution itself changes — without any new legislation being needed for that purpose — with changes*

in psychological and sociological theories, and according to the preferences for particular theories on the part of the current justices. Through its abandonment of the bases of judicial determinations, that have been hundreds of years in the building, this decision strikes at the very foundation of every legal protection previously held by any citizens of the United States — white or colored, in the South or in the North. It is, we believe, the most brazen and flagrant usurpation of power that has been seen in three hundred years, in any major court in the whole Anglo-American system of jurisprudence.

III

We now come to the point and purpose of this message — which is to offer advice. It is not the advice of an "authority" on modern psychology or anything else, but it derives from long study and deep convictions, in connection with the very nature of such storms as the one now gathering fury over your once peaceful landscape. With humility, but without apology, we offer this one man's opinion for whatever it may be worth.

1. Do not put the responsibility where it doesn't belong. Do not blame your neighbors, the colored people of the South. They had nothing to do with the Supreme Court decision, did not seek it, and as a class have not been the ones to bring the racial issue to a boil. Most of them would be just as embarrassed as you would at forced integration, and are just as opposed to the whole idea. In fact, some of the most sensible and level-headed discussions of the whole problem have been coming from Webster McClary, Dr. Joseph Winthrop Holley, Zora Neale Hurston, and other southern Negroes with personal pride and great understanding.

The ordinary colored people of the South can easily be misled by clever agitators, as you would be if you were in their position. Some few of them here and there will want to become virtuous heroes of the new dispensation, or martyrs to a newly acquired oppression complex. Many will easily be stirred into mob action that will constitute the gravest aspect of your overall problem. But truly, in most cases, they know not what they do; and if there was ever a time and place when patience and charity and a huge reservoir of deep good will were needed, it is in the South today.

2. Put the blame where it does belong, squarely on the shoulders of the Communists. Even the known and major preparations by the Communists over many years, for bringing about this situation, have been tremendously more extensive than is realized, or even suspected, by the American public. For you must remember that in any ideological arena one Communist can count on the support of ten fellow travelers; each fellow traveler can marshall the help of ten leftwing liberals; each leftwing liberal can lead by the nose ten "progressives" who look up to him intellectually; and the influence of the Communist at the center spreads through hundreds of agents who do not have any idea that their actions and beliefs and demands are Communist-inspired.

As you study in detail the huge complex of organizations, fronts, and activities that have helped to blow up this storm—either directly and intentionally, or as a by-product of other purposes—you will find many names, constantly reappearing on the records that you read. A comparative few of those names are: Ella Reeve Bloor, Ralph Bunche, Allan Chalmers, Evans Clark, W. E. B. DuBois, Herman Edelsberg,

George Field, Clark Foreman, John Gates, Lester Granger, John J. Gunter, Langston Hughes, Rev. John Paul Jones, Stetson Kennedy, Conrad Lynn, Patrick Murphy Malin, Milton Mayer, Emil Mazey, Loren Miller, Clarence Mitchell, A. J. Muste, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Victor Perlo, Pesta Perry, Shad Polier, Mike Quill, A. Philip Randolph, Roy Reuther, Walter Reuther, Winthrop Rockefeller, Eleanor Roosevelt, Rev. Ralph Lord Roy, Whitney North Seymour, Paul Sifton, Maxwell S. Stewart, Rex Stout, Tom Tippett, James Waterman Wise, Roy Wilkins, Aubrey Williams, and Charles S. Zimmerman.

Gunnar Myrdal's book, *An American Dilemma*, contains 1542 large pages. If some group, less influenced by the admen of Alcoa-His, than was the Carnegie Foundation, would finance a similar study of the subversive forces seeking to use that dilemma for selfish and sinister ends, it might be possible to disentangle the aims and effects of the actions which brought the above names onto our list. And it might be possible also, as it would certainly be desirable, to distinguish between the good aims and bad aims of a long list of supposedly public-spirited and usually tax-exempt organizations functioning in this field—organizations in which and through which many of these people have labored to stir up racial bitterness and to lay the groundwork for civil disorder. For at one end of the spectrum of intention, represented by the forty-one names, you have people like Winthrop Rockefeller, whose chief claim to such a niche of notoriety lies in the contribution, by himself or through his influence, of considerable sums of money to "liberal" associates and associations; without his showing, in our opinion, much sense or enough concern about the ultimate objectives some of that money was being used to accomplish.

At the other end you have people like Milton Muser, whose actual purpose can most easily be indicated by this passage from a speech he made in Syracuse in 1947, as quoted by the Syracuse Post-Standard on February 17 of that year: "We must haul down the American flag. And if I wanted to be vulgar and shocking I would go even further and say, haul it down, stamp on it, and spit on it. In between you have Communists, Communist-sympathizers, Communist frontiers, Communist-aiding trouble makers, and misguided liberals and idealists, of many shades of pink and red. And the list is, as we have indicated, only a sample of one that might be prepared.

The truth is that, if you look far enough, you will find every agitator on this issue being pushed, from somewhere behind, by a Communist — even though the agitator may not know he is just a pawn in a dirty game. And any thought that the trouble in the South — even the Supreme Court decision which blew open the door for this trouble — has not been Communist-inspired and contrived, is just one manifestation of that gullibility and lack of perception of the true picture, on which the Communists are counting so heavily in their plans to take us over.

This is not to imply that there is even one Communist on the Supreme Court bench (though of course there may be). In the fall of 1951 we wrote, in a small book on the dismissal of General MacArthur: "It is my utterly sincere belief that, through whatever strings may have been pulled and whatever puppets activated to exert their combined insidious pressures, MacArthur was fired by Stalin." This did not argue that Harry Truman, who issued the dismissal order, was acting as a conscious agent of Stalin. In fact, we made our opinion clear that Truman

was not a Communist. The behind-the-scenes history of the period, that has been laboriously excavated and put together since, hardly leaves any room today for doubt as to the correctness of either part of our interpretation of events. And we believe that exactly the same considerations apply to both the Supreme Court decisions on segregation, and to the formal steps of implementation being taken or urged.

For this rising racial bitterness is the finest grist the Communists have yet been able to obtain for their American mill. It is exactly the same kind of raw material out of which they have so successfully manufactured violent strife in one country after another. And their planned use of this raw material makes the need all the more urgent for the American people, north and south, white and colored, of all states and all races, to become aware of what is being done to them — and by whom. The increasing schisms within Protestant sects, the growing doubts of each other's good will between Catholics and Protestants, the rising intolerance by Christians of Jews and animosity of Jews towards Christians, and now the darkening storm of activated hatred between white people and colored people — these things aren't just happening by chance and they didn't, like Topsy, just grow up. They have been carefully planned, subtly foreshadowed, cleverly nourished, and raised to tremendous forces of disruption by the Communist conspirators and the misguided dupes and allies who have been cued and egged on by them.

One illustration should be permissible here, because the episode is more pertinent than at first appears. It's a matter of court record that one of the most loud-mouthed and effective smear artists in America, in the area of charging prominent gentiles with anti-Semitism,

worked for months as an *agent provocateur*, passing out vicious anti-Semitic literature. Anybody he could find to nubile at his best be then encouraged to go further in the anti-Jewish feeling which he claims to despise. It's true that any man who listened to him was foolish, or worse. But being foolish and easily misled in such prejudices is one of *homo sapiens'* most innate characteristics. And obviously this man — who is not even a Jew — doesn't give a damn about either Jew or Gentile. He just wants to make trouble between good Americans of both categories, for entirely other and sinister purposes. The activity of conspirators of this kind can be found in connection with every one of the spreading and dangerous cracks now being opened in the great melting pot which was our America.

It is easy to see the field day which the Communists and their agents plan to make out of this even greater opportunity. They do not have the slightest real interest in the welfare of either the colored people or the white people of the South. It is not desegregation as an end in which they are interested, but the bitterness, strife, and terrors of mob action which can be instigated while that end is supposedly being sought. If complete, one-hundred-per cent integration and racial equality could, by miraculous dispensation, be achieved in the whole South tomorrow, these troublemakers would be as disgusted and disappalled as were the Chinese Communists, for a while in 1946, after Chiang Kai-shek offered them every single thing they had been shouting in the proposed new constitution for China.

Now admittedly the Communists, even with their radical and fanatical non-Communist sympathizers, could not make this situation so dangerous and difficult to resolve peacefully,

were it not for the support of many, many times their number of perfectly honest and entirely honorable liberals, of both races. There are, of course, both altruistic idealists and vain busybodies all mixed together in the forefront of the crowd calling for the police to come and enforce the law. There are thousands of misguided liberals who, completely ignorant of the pragmatic difficulties in the way of imposing their racial Utopia on the South forthwith, will add their voices to the shouts for the policeman to do his stuff. Right in our home city there are "proper Bostonians", who have hemorrhages at the mere suggestion that an Irish American or a Greek American or a Jewish American be admitted to one of their clubs, who nevertheless will demand that the U. S. Army be used to ensure that you and your colored neighbors have dinner in each other's homes every second Sunday. And they will feel very virtuous in making the demand.

These innocent and not-so-innocent stooges of a Communist-led agitation are troublesome, and give strength to the movement. But most of them are out in the open. You can know who they are and learn what they do. And to whatever extent you may be willing to yield or to compromise, most of them will at least give you credit for trying to make progress in the direction they demand. Try to meet the honest liberals, in argument and in action, with all of the reasonableness and patience you can muster. Please have, and show, all the tolerance you can achieve, for the aberrations of other earnest and thoughtful men who get involved in the struggle, even when they are blindly doing great damage. For we all make mistakes, out of ignorance or obstinacy, that we need to have forgiven. And remember, ominously, that it is the actual Communists, both hidden and

visible, who are your real enemies, and the enemies of your country, and who have deliberately stirred up this whole sorry far reasons of their own. Put the blame where it belongs; on those who, making no mistake but proud of their crimes, are consciously doing all the harm they can to the South and to our whole nation.

IV

FINALLY — as our last consignment of advice — recognize what you are up against, and get that same realization over to your colored neighbors in every way that you possibly can. For this action in the South is only a part of the larger and longer plans of the Communists. When the point was reached, in their time schedule, where their strategic design for the ultimate conquest of America called for the incipient moves towards civil war in the South, they were ready. They simply brought off the Supreme Court decision and went to work. Please understand that the Communists behind this trouble are not playing. They mean business all the way.

As to how far and how fast you should comply with the Supreme Court decision; the extent to which you should try to use "interposition" or state contributions to private schools or other legal maneuvers to block its impact; whether and in what ways you should work towards a constitutional repeal of that decision through another amendment or through federal legislation; just how you should meet and handle the spikes of the dilemma that are daily crowding you — and that will begin to crowd you a great deal more viciously as soon as the elections are over this fall; as to these things we have neither the know ledge nor the presumption out of which to offer any advice. It is true, as

the idealists claim, that the core of the difficulty is a moral problem. But it is so far from an *abstract* moral problem, it is so imbedded by concrete *escrencies*, that only the conscience and the intelligence of those who know every inch of this crust should be applied to its solution. Keeping hands off, so far as dealing with these *escrencies* is concerned, is probably the most helpful thing the rest of us can do.

We do wish to assure you that there are plenty of good citizens in the North who will agree with you that there is still a limit — or should be a limit — to the right of the federal government to interfere in the local affairs and the self-governing privileges of duly organized smaller governmental units — whether they be states, counties, municipalities, townships, or villages. There are plenty who feel that this question of segregation is one that should have been left — and should still be left — to the determination and handling of such smaller and local units. To whatever extent you can use legal and constitutional means, therefore, to slow down the bites of desegregation to a speed at which you can digest them, you will find considerable — and probably adequate — moral and political support.

But failing that, or being urged to more direct resistance, consider carefully the consequences of all you do or plan. For this is not going to be a *illabub storm in a teacup*. Our friends in the South write us that they will not be forced; that nothing will force them to immediate desegregation, short of civil war. And what we are trying to tell you, what this whole letter is really about, is the very real danger of this extreme result of a civil war that would engulf the South and spread through race riots and other Communist-fomented disorders into a chaotic terror over our whole nation.

For civil war, of course, is exactly what the Communists want; and what they now have every intention of inflicting on this country by whatever means they can. Communist-initiated civil wars, whether in China or Vietnam or Spain or Yugoslavia, never start as full-fledged warfare. The exact pattern is not well worked out, and too successfully tested, for that. They always begin as localized clashes, over some such principle as "agrarian reform" or "abolition of tyranny", that has no easily apparent connection with plans for Communist conquest. In the present instance the phrase is "civil rights". Racial jealousy actually furnishes them a far better tool than they usually have available. And not only is it likely to seem to them the best they will ever have available in America; but, in their efforts to put on pressures that will force you to armed resistance, they have exactly what they always take pains to have for such occasions—the appearance in the minds of most people, not close enough to be truly informed, of right and justice on their side. Of one thing you can be certain. These enemies in our midst are not going to let this opportunity get away from them if they can help it, or fail to make the very most of it that their cunning, ruthlessness, and long experience in exactly similar situations can achieve.

On February 8, 1956, there was a demonstration staged at Manhattan Center, in New York City, by the *Provisional Committee For Justice In Mississippi*. The main speaker of this rally was W. E. B. DuBois, once indicted for his pro-Communist activities, and long a front man for Communist causes. Angus Cameron, who was kicked out of his editorial job at Little, Brown and Company, because of his identification as a member of the Communist Party, was one of the promoters

of the rally. Dr. Otto Nathan, Hugh Mulzac, the Rev. Kenneth Ripley Forbes, and others of their ilk, all did their part to make the rally as noisy and as successful as possible. *The Daily Worker* gave the affair front page support for several days preceding the rally. Altogether it would be hard to imagine a more open and obtrusive example of pro-Communist activity. Yet the sponsors who staged this show got approving messages from members of the N. Y. Assembly, from U. S. Congressmen, and from other public officials. They attracted a considerable crowd, most of them perfectly innocent and well-meaning Americans, to listen to their bitter and vicious charges hurled at you, and to contribute food and clothing for the "embattled Negroes in the South."

This is just one small sample of the attacks the Communists are turning loose on you, which they intend to suggest into a deadly barrage; and a very weak sample, because their most telling blows will be delivered far more secretly, and cunningly, and effectively. If you would like some advance knowledge of just how foul, how cruel, how ruthless, and how *deceptive* they can get, study carefully the details of some of those civil wars we referred to above. Study especially the "rehearsal performance" in Spain, where they enticed hundreds of idealistic young Americans to fight on their side — by their appearance of being in the right — and then shot those same American boys in cold blood as fast as the boys became disillusioned.

You have read and heard for years that "it can't happen here." To believe that was to deny every clear lesson of the history of the past thirty-five years. But the argument is now only academic. It is happening here, right now. In Mississippi and South Carolina and all

over a fourth of our country the Communists have already entered — incipiently, insidiously, patiently, farsightedly, deceptively — onto the last stage, the physical-fighting stage, of their three-pronged strategy for making the U. S. a group of provinces ruled by Moscow. Even the Communists hope, we believe, that they can take us over by more subtle means, long before this embryonic civil war could amount to much more than a help in their other plans. But they will foment it and spread it to the equal of what happened in China if the rate of progress in other ways makes such a full-fledged civil war the necessary or surest road to success.

"The ugly threat which now imperils every community south of Washington," and the less visible but equally ugly threat to our whole nation, are one and the same thing. That threat is eventual and complete mastery by the Commu-

nists over our freedom and our lives. Put the responsibility for every ugly step, towards carrying out that threat, squarely where it belongs; then act accordingly, and do not let yourselves be blinded by the mud and lies the Communists will throw so diligently to affix the blame elsewhere. There is only one thing the Communists fear, and that is the truth about their methods and their plans. With all the fervor we can convey we beg of you that you recognize this whole movement for what it is, and handle its every aspect with foresight equal to that of the Communists themselves. In your case that means with understanding and good will towards its innocent victims, with deeprooted patriotism, and with statesmanship worthy of your heritage. For the fate of all of us, and of our country itself, is largely in your hands.

ABOUT THIS ARTICLE

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