



Medical Committee for Human Rights

Newsletter

211 West 56 St.

New York, N. Y. 10019

582-1661 and 1662

NUMBER 4

MARCH 1965

MCHR RESPONDS TO SOUTHERN CRISIS



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHOSEN

Johnny E. Parham, Jr. Unanimous Choice

After months of searching, of reviewing countless applications and interviewing dozens of applicants a committee, headed by Dr. Desmond Callan, selected Johnny E. Parham, Jr. as its nominee for Executive Director of MCHR. After hearing his qualifications the Executive Board voted for him unanimously.

Mr. Parham is 28 years old; he was born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia. He earned his B.A. degree from Morehouse College in History and Political Science and from Atlanta University he received a Master of Social Work degree. In 1960 he moved to Los Angeles where he worked for the Veterans' Administration as a Clinical Social Worker. He came to New York City in 1961 and worked for 6 months with the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene as a Psychiatric Social Worker. During this time he studied Community Organization Techniques

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SELMA

Perhaps the first MCHR member involved in the historic activities in Selma this month, was Dr. Peter Kenmore who very early in the month was in jail there for two days with Dr. King.

[The following, excerpted from Dr. Aaron Wells press release, summarizes the role MCHR played in the later events.]

"On Friday, March 5 our Committee responded to an appeal received from Lafayette Surney and Hosea L. Williams, SNCC and SCLC Field Directors respectively, to send teams to Selma, Alabama, to provide medical presence in the projected March in Selma on Sunday, March 7th.

"The first medical team consisted of Drs. A. L. Halpern, Syracuse; Alfred Moldovan, New York, National Treasurer of MCHR; Leon Redler, New York; Belinda Straight and Samuel Mitchell of Washington, D.C.; and nurses Nadine Battle, New York; Brenda Price, New York; Virginia Wells, Wife of the National Chairman of MCHR, New York. [See N.Y. Post, March 15, 1965, page 25, "Close up: Volunteer in Selma" for a biographical sketch of Mrs. Wells.] This team left for Selma on Saturday evening, March 6.

"The team, in addition to preparing to lend moral and first aid support to the marchers, was also charged with the responsibility for the personal welfare of Dr. Martin Luther King against whom many assassination threats had begun to multiply within the past two weeks.

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for Intergroup Relations at New York University. In 1962 he joined the staff of the Urban League of Essex County, New Jersey and was in charge of their Health and Welfare activities. That summer he attended the Rutgers University Workshop in Modern Trends in Intergroup Relations. February, 1963 saw his promotion to Director of the Brooklyn Branch of the Urban League of Greater New York. He comes to MCHR from that job.



Mr. Parham has also participated in important Civil Rights demonstrations. In 1960, shortly after the Greensboro, North Carolina sit-ins he helped organize student action at Atlanta University. As a result of his activities he was indicted for conspiracy by the State of Georgia though he was never convicted. He was also a member of the 1962 Freedom ride in Maryland which tested public facilities on Route 40 and the Eastern Shore. Again he was arrested for his efforts.

At present Mr. Parham lives with his wife in Stuyvesant Town in New York City. Mrs. Parham, originally of Atlanta, is a graduate of Spelman College. She also holds a Masters Degree from Columbia University and works as a Guidance Counselor in the New York School System. The Parham's favorite diversion is skiing.

The committee feels it is especially fortunate in being able to obtain the services of someone as talented and well suited for the job as Mr. Parham and looks forward to his directorship.

NEW SPONSORS

The impressive list of prominent men who have chosen to sponsor MCHR continues to grow with these new additions.

- Louis Thomas, M.D. - Professor and Chairman, Department of Medicine, New York University School of Medicine.
- Howard A. Rusk, M.D. - Director, New York University Medical Center, Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.
- Joseph E. Milgram, M.D. - Director of Orthopedics, Hospital for Joint Diseases, New York City.
- Irving S. Wright, M.D. - President elect, American College of Physicians.
- William Dameshek, M.D. - Director of Hematology, Pratt Clinic, New England Center Hospital, Boston.
- Louis M. Hellman, M.D. - Director of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Kings County Hospital, Brooklyn.
- Walter S. Mersheimer, M.D. - Professor and Chairman, Department of Surgery, New York Medical College, Flower and 5th Avenue.
- Samuel Standard, M.D. - Director of Department of Medicine, Jewish Hospital, Brooklyn.
- Richard J. Golinko, M.D. - Director of Pediatrics and Pediatric Cardiology, Brookdale Hospital Center, Brooklyn.
- Albert B. Sabin, M.D. - Children's Hospital Research Foundation, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- Rachmiel Levine, M.D. - Professor and Chairman, Department of Medicine, New York Medical College Flower and 5th Ave.
- Bernard N. Kalinkowitz, Ph.D. - Professor of Psychology, New York University.
- Lewis L. Robbins, M.D. - Medical Director, Hillside Hospital, Glen Oaks, New York.
- Louis Leiter, M.D. - Chief Medical Division, Montefiore Hospital and Medical Center.
- David State, M.D. - Director of Surgery, Bronx Municipal Hospital Center.

WASHINGTON MEETING

The Washington meeting is drawing near. Once again everyone interested in MCHR's future is urged to make every effort to attend.

FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 1965

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

11:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. There will be plenary sessions all day, with a break for lunch. At the end of the sessions there will be elections of Nomination and Resolution Committees.

All MCHR members are invited.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

8:30 P.M. to 10:30 P.M. OPENING PLENARY SESSION
This meeting will be addressed by a leading government official.

SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 1965

10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. WORKSHOPS

Technical Workshops

1. Chapter structure & membership
2. Fund raising & recruitment

Program Workshops

1. Field Teams
2. Health projects in the South
3. Government programs
4. Local activities

Workshops will be repeated in the afternoon so that each delegate may attend two different sessions.

6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. DUTCH TREAT COCKTAIL PARTY

8:00 P.M.

CONFERENCE DINNER

Main Speaker: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

SUNDAY, APRIL 25, 1965

8:30 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. FINAL PLENARY MEETING

Reports from Constitutional Convention, Workshops, and Committees will be heard at this meeting.

National Officers will be elected at this time.

A post-convention Cocktail Party and Reception will be given for all MCHR Convention delegates at the home of — Mr. & Mrs. Luke Wilson
9100 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, Maryland
from 3 - 6 p.m.

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"Our medical representatives were met in Selma by the Medical Committee's Health Mobile which had been brought up from Mississippi by Miss Linda Dugan, a public health nurse permanently stationed in Mississippi, and Vicki Levi, a fourth year medical student at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, who had also been sent to Mississippi by MCHR. This Health Mobile was augmented by five additional MCHR ambulances which were used to transport tear gas victims and other injured marchers to hospitals after initial first aid had been rendered.

"On Sunday, March 7, as scores of civil rights demonstrators were lying in the streets of Selma, Alabama, victims of a brutal clubbing and tear-gas attack by Alabama State Troopers the team of MCHR physicians and nurses were barred by Alabama enforcement officers from rendering emergency first aid.

"Outraged by the refusal by law enforcement officers to permit the administering of first aid to the injured on Sunday, our Committee sent telegrams to President Lyndon B. Johnson and Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach, urging Federal intervention to guarantee the right of doctors to administer emergency first aid. Similar wires were sent at the request of our Committee by the Medical Society of the County of New York through its President, John M. Cotton; and a group of eminent physicians who are sponsors of the Medical Committee for Human Rights: Drs. Thomas Almy, Douglas D. Bond, William Dameshek, Alan Guttmacher, Bernard Kalinkowitz, Wallace McCrory, Samuel Rosen, Benjamin Spock, David State and Paul Dudley White.

"On Monday, March 8, Drs. H. Jack Geiger, of the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston; Richard Hausknecht, New York; and Charles Wright, Detroit, joined the group already in Alabama.

"On Tuesday, March 9, I received a telephone call from Lee White, Special Assistant to the President, who assured me that the White House was going to give the matter of the prevention of MCHR physicians from rendering first aid its immediate attention.

"Wednesday, March 10, two of our physicians, Drs. Richard Hausknecht and H. Jack Geiger, were taken to the Dallas County Court House by State Troopers and were ordered by both the Troopers and Doug Benton, Administrator of the State Board of Licensure, not to give first aid to persons hurt in racial demonstrations. They were warned that they faced arrest if these orders were disobeyed.

"We immediately contacted Mr. Charles Morgan, an attorney in charge of the Atlanta, Georgia office of the American Civil Liberties Union, for legal advice. Mr. Morgan informed us that, according to the Code of Alabama governing the practice of medicine, our physicians and nurses were well within their legal rights in providing emergency first aid.

"The events of these several days have underscored not only the validity, but practical necessity for the medical presence of our Committee at civil rights demonstrations in the South.

"As long as the civil rights movement continues in its battle for equal rights, the MCHR will continue to act as its medical arm and remain at its side. When the next demonstration in Alabama takes place, the MCHR will once again supply medical teams representing our chapters throughout the country. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, "God knows what might have happened had they not been there (MCHR) to render emergency first aid"."

MORE JOIN THE RANKS

When Alabama took its stand barring First Aid by MCHR, Drs. Leslie Falk and Douglas Thompson went to Selma to discuss the matter with authorities. They met with Dr. Myers and Mr. Benton of the State Department of Health, and the Attorney General of the State, Mr. Flowers. Though the reception was cordial, the Alabamans were unrelenting in their intent to uphold the letter of the law. They interpret this to mean that if a doctor enters the state for another purpose and happens to see an acute injury occur he may give First Aid. Also, if he is called to the State as a bonafide consultant he may practice. They claim we did not qualify as consultants. They concluded that entering the state with the prior intent of giving aid is illegal.

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highlights from

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS

February 1, 1965

.... present at this meeting from SNCC were James Forman, Executive Secretary, Marion Berry of the N.Y. Office, and Ivanhoe Donaldson, the Administrative Assistant...the possible role of MCHR in physical and psychiatric examinations of SNCC volunteers was discussed with the representatives from SNCC. They agreed that it could be useful...the problem of our tax exempt status was discussed by our lawyer. Though we are certain to receive it, it is not functioning yet. However, it was pointed out that it will be retroactive so that contributions given now or in the past will be deductible. It was pointed out that a tax exempt organization must be non-political. This eventuality can be met by setting up within the organization a political action group which would not be tax exempt but which would be financed by MCHR funds ...Dr. John Holloman reported on the Southern Regional CORE meeting which he and Dr. Tom Levin attended at New Orleans. He, Dr. Robert Smith of Jackson and Dr. William M. Jones did physicals, routine blood and urine exams on more than sixty delegates. In general their health was good except for dental status which was poor. Dr. Levin saw more than 20 people for brief psychiatric counseling; many more wanted to be seen. Dr. Holloman addressed a Health Workshop. Delegates had an opportunity to criticize MCHR and offer suggestions. CORE will write up official suggestions and submit them to MCHR.....

February 15, 1965

....The Atlanta SNCC Conference of February 12th was attended by five MCHR physicians. They, together with several Negro physicians from Atlanta did physicals on about 100 SNCC workers...Dr. Desmond Callan introduced his "Mississippi Health Program." After brief discussion it was decided that this program was of such great potential importance that further action on it would have to be postponed until the Washington meeting in April...Dr. Sidney Greenberg proposed that since psychiatric counseling has become such an important part of our activities, a special sub-committee be formed of psychiatrists and psychologists to more efficiently meet these needs...

March 8, 1965

(much of this meeting was devoted to discussion of and actions for Selma. Details are given elsewhere)... "Freedom Ways" magazine has requested that MCHR lend its name as a sponsor for its forthcoming dinner in honor of Paul Robson. After much discussion it was decided that at this stage of our development, MCHR should not sponsor other organizations...Dr. Desmond Callan reported on his trip to Jackson, March 5-7th with Dr. Jack Geiger, Mr. Johnny Parham and Wilma Phipps, R.N. They found Mississippi quiet compared to last summer. COFO has very little activity on a statewide basis though some local projects are functioning. The Freedom Democratic Party is rising to a more important role in Negro community activities there. Josephine Disparti, R.N., our nurse in Holmes County has formed the "Holmes County Health Improvement Association." This is a community-based activity which is making excellent progress. Phyllis Cunningham, R.N., who operates in the southeastern part of the state has set up 3 or 4 community Health Committees. Linda Dugan, R.N., our newest nurse in the field will operate in Issaquena County. The nurses are doing an incredible job with very little professional guidance and inadequate financial support. (As an interim measure it was voted to send at once \$500 to their bank account.) They are still in great need of simplified Public Health teaching aides. At least three more nurses are needed. Most desirable would be Negro nurses with Public Health Training who would work for long terms...N.C.C. has finally obtained Mt. Beulah College in Edwards, Mississippi. It will be used as a Conference Center and Freedom Academy to give leadership training courses...Dr. Count Gibson of Boston discussed a meeting he attended with the U.S.P.H.S. and the Civil Rights Commission. There were many encouraging promises made by the Commission indicating their sincere intent to carry out the terms of the Civil Rights Law as it concerns health care. Mr. Frank Gannon of the U.S.P.H.S. is the man whose full-time job it is to investigate complaints.....

FUND RAISING

CHAPTERS REPORT

NEW YORK

The New York Chapter of MCHR is extremely active. It already has its own Newsletter to keep members (about 60 at last count) informed of chapter activities. At its next meeting, which will be March 31st, (Jr. High School #44, 100 West 77th Street) election of officers will be held. The chapter has several active projects. Under Dr. Wagner Bridger's chairmanship a committee is compiling a list of volunteers who will go South for the planned summer projects and those who will answer emergency short notice calls. Another group under Dr. Sam Siegel's leadership is planning to bring 3 to 5 Civil Rights workers to New York each week for dental and medical care. Thirty dentists have volunteered to work evenings and Sundays. Psychiatric consultants will also be available. Mrs. Leo Orris is gathering names of people who will take the workers into their homes for the week.

Other equally interesting projects are planned and will be reported as they go into action.

QUEENS-NASSAU

A new chapter has formed in the New York area. Its first meeting was held March 22, 1965. More details will follow.

WASHINGTON

This chapter is burgeoning with activity. It now has its own Newsletter. No sooner had members returned from Selma than recruitment began for the CORE meeting in Louisiana.

There is a Local Medical Care Committee functioning under Dr. Richard Mishell; a Medical Care for Civil Rights Workers Committee under Dr. William Matory which has been bringing several workers from the South each month for free medical and dental care. The chapter was recently instrumental (through Congressman Charles Mathias of Maryland) in getting care to a COFO worker (Charles Scattergood of Virginia) who was injured and jailed in Indianola, Mississippi.

The Women Workers for Civil Rights of Brooklyn raised \$1,200 for MCHR in one evening recently. They plan more fund raising activities.

Since January 1965 the employees and staff of the Long Island Jewish Hospital have contributed \$1,000 and the Queens Clinical Society, due largely to the efforts of Dr. Edith Reid, has contributed \$500.

The Cocktail party given by MCHR on February 14th was attended by more than 100 people. One automobile and \$12,000 were donated to MCHR.

The raffle held by the New York Women's group is expected to yield \$3,500.

Ester Smith, MCHR full-time fund raiser in New York would very much like to hear about successful fund raising techniques which chapters have been employing. She will pass them along to several groups which have contacted her asking for new fund raising ideas.

Dr. Alfred Moldovan, National Treasurer feels that this is the time to utilize the publicity received in Selma and Montgomery to re-double our fund raising activities. With a new Executive Director, the coming convention, our plans to buy a new ambulance, etc. our operating expenses are increasing tremendously.

\$ 20,000 CONTRIBUTION

Through the efforts of Jack Geiger, M.D. of Boston, MCHR has received a \$20,000 contribution from Mr. and Mrs. Luke Wilson of Bethesda, Maryland. The money was given to the National Council of Churches and has been made available to MCHR. Five thousand dollars is ear-marked for our long term Public Health plans in Holmes Co., Miss. The Wilsons also put Dr. Geiger in contact with a group of people in the Washington-Bethesda area who have pledged to raise \$25,000 for the Holmes County project.

*Without money
nothing happens !*

EXAMINATION OF CIVIL RIGHTS WORKERS

Dr. Douglas Thompson of Pittsburgh has been chosen as National Co-ordinator of this program. He is in the process of working out the details of forms, procedure, etc. and will have a complete detailed report in the next issue of the N.L.

SOCIETY OF BROTHERS

The Society of Brothers, Oak Lake, Farmington, Pennsylvania is anxious to provide rest and recreation at no expense for anyone who can be provided transportation. Anyone in the Freedom Movement would be considered eligible and several could come at once for periods of a few weeks to even a few months. Farmington is near Uniontown, Pennsylvania about 40 miles southeast of Pittsburgh. Inquiries should be sent c/o Mr. Arthur Wiser.

WONDERFUL PEOPLE OF THE FREE PRESS

Newsletters, even little new ones like this, do not reproduce themselves by parthenogenesis, fission or any other of those wonderful processes. The wonderful process which has brought the 'NL' to fruition is the hours of volunteer work of two people: Mrs. Sally Cecere did the typing, and re-typing. (Mrs. Geraldine Neal did all the typing on all previous issues.) Father Lawrence McGowan of Stepinac High School, White Plains not only donated hours of his labor in laying-out the 'NL' but also the facilities of his shop and press in printing it. My most sincere thanks to them both.

Lee Hoffman, M.D.
Editor

RUSSELTON MEDICAL GROUP

Enclosed with this mailing is a brochure from the Russellton Medical Group which is self-explanatory. We include it because they have contributed to the work of MCHR and we would like in this way to express our appreciation.

The following is excerpted from a New York Times special article by Gay Talese.

Kinship Grows Between Negroes And White Volunteers in Selma

SELMA, Ala., March 14—For the first time in their lives, many white people from the North are sleeping in Negro homes and praying in Negro churches.

They are experiencing a form of integration that they have long endorsed but had never lived—until they came to Selma. In the process, they have learned much about the Negro. They have learned much more about themselves.

These whites are not the young liberals from the campuses who have been coming and going here all week, cutting classes, sleeping on the grass. Nor are they the professional civil rights workers who have marched, have often been arrested, in a half-dozen other Southern cities.

No Stopping This Time

They are older people, in their forties and fifties. Some are the parents of college students. Some are nuns from St. Louis, clergymen from Chicago and California, doctors from New

York and Boston. They are conservative in their dress, usually responsible for their actions; they are the sort of people who, when a police officer yells "stop," are accustomed to stopping.

But in Selma this weekend, they have not been stopping. They have pushed, along with young white and Negro demonstrators, against Wilson Baker's Selma police force. They have screamed at the police to permit the marchers to reach the courthouse.

Some have pushed so hard that the police have had to bang them back with clubs. rebels in the South.

These older white people have become, in short, the newest rebels in the South. Some have not given it much thought, others have.

"It's strange, very strange," the Rev. Ralph Mollan, a Roman Catholic priest from Evanston, Ill., was saying today after attending mass. "But all our lives, we have preached the obeying of the law. And now

we find ourselves down here standing against the police—finding them against us. We find, as white people, wonderful hospitality among the Negroes, but we are told that it is unsafe to be seen in the white districts of Selma.

"Before attending mass today, we had to call the local priest and have him send a car for us. Whites live near the church; it would be unsafe." Then he continued, pensively, "Yes, strange—We have to go to the Negro neighborhood to feel safe in Selma, Alabama."

The Grip Is Firmer

The whites have also noticed in the last last week the difference in the handshakes of the Southern Negroes: the Negro hands were limp a week ago, but now, fortified by friendship, the Negro grip is firm.

This is part of the side of Selma that will linger in their memories when they leave Selma.

Mr. and Mrs. Mathew Tobey, who had just completed 29 hours of driving all the way from the University of Nebraska, where they are graduate students. ~~As~~ they sat on the grass near the street and listened to the singing, they remarked that the long trip had been worth it.

"It's so beautiful, so open," Mrs. Tobey said. "Right on this block, in Selma, all the barriers that society makes between people are gone . . . yes, it's beautiful . . . it's so unreal."

Among the things that seem unreal to the whites who have just arrived is the sudden feeling of being "at home" in the Negro quarter of this Alabama town.

The whites are able to stand without fear on dark nights among hundreds of Negroes who are yelling for equality. The whites leave their car doors unlocked in the Negro quarter—in fact, the whites would not park their cars anywhere but in this Negro section.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

HOUSING: A block of rooms has been reserved at the Dupont-Plaza Hotel, Washington, D. C.

RATES: Single: \$13-\$15
Double: \$17-\$19 (specify double or twin beds)
Triple: \$19-\$21
No charge for children under 14.

Please reserve rooms for me.
 single double triple
Housing reservations must be sent by April 8.

MEALS: The Howard University Cafeteria will be open to serve all registrants.

I will attend and plan to bring guests.

I enclose \$..... to cover:

- Registration fee (Conference, all meals and banquet)\$15.00
- Extra Banquet tickets for Saturday, April 24 7.50
- Scholarship Registration (Medical and Nursing Students, Internes, residents)NO FEE

\$..... Donation to the Conference Scholarship Fund.

Name.....

Address.....

City.....State.....

Affiliation.....

THIS REGISTRATION FORM with your check or money order payable to the Medical Committee on Human Rights should be mailed to:

David M. French, M.D., FACS
Chairman, Convention Committee
Box 91, Howard University
520 W Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001



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Furthermore, they insisted that Alabama physicians were willing and able to provide whatever care was needed.

MONTGOMERY

Drs. Thompson and Falk moved on to Montgomery on the 15th where they joined forces with Chester Pierce, M.D. of Oklahoma and Robert Dannenberg, R.N. of New York and were on hand to give First Aid when demonstrators were attacked by possemen March 16th. (Subsequently Mr. Dannenberg was arrested; at the time of this writing and is still in jail.) Drs. Falk and Thompson met with the Negro physicians of Montgomery and Selma (there are 7 in Montgomery; 2 in Selma) to discuss preparations for the March. On March 17th Dr. E. Richard Weirnerman of New Haven arrived in Montgomery and later assumed leadership of the group. Dr. Weirnerman was joined by Francis Durgen, M.D. (Syracuse) and Warner Slack, M.D. (Madison, Wisconsin). The Boston contingent next arrived. This group consisted of Drs. Count Gibson, Sheldon Zigelbaum, George Cloutier, Paul Hans and Peter Nathan. The activities of this cadre consisted of: 1) making arrangements for medical care for demonstrators through local hospitals and Negro physicians; 2) visiting everyone who was jailed to examine for injuries; 3) sending M.D.'s along with demonstrating groups.

THE MARCH

Count Gibson then went on to Selma where he met the New York group (Drs. Hy Gold, Harold Wise, Tom Levin, and Sidney Bender) and the Washington group led by David French, M.D. which consisted of several M.D.'s and Mrs. Stephanie Mahin, R.N. Further Public Health preparations for water, refuse disposal, First Aid, patient evacuation, etc, continued under the brilliant leadership of Dr. French. When the March began these doctors were part of it: French, Zigelbaum, Cloutier, Gold, Gibson, Levin, Geiger, Thomas Day (N.Y.), Samuel Brisbane (N.Y.), Markus (D.C.), Kedes (D.C.), Davis (D.C.), Murray (D.C.), Arthur Johnson (Cal.), Roland Wilson (Ind.), June Finer (Ill.), Thomas Jones (Md.), Lloyd Thomas (N.Y.), Noble (Conn.), Al White (Cal.), Jerome Lackner (Cal.). Drs. Herbert Cave, John Hollman (N.Y.) and others joined the March on route. [So many people went to Alabama that some names have undoubtedly been omitted. It is hoped they will excuse this unintentional oversight. - Ed.]