

Box 12105  
North Side Station  
Atlanta 5, Georgia  
January 16, 1959

Mr. Edward R. Murrow  
CBS Television Network  
485 Madison Avenue  
New York 22, New York.

Dear Mr. Murrow:

As an independent television writer-producer, it was my privilege yesterday to watch the closed-circuit screening of the CBS-Television survey, narrated by you, on the school segregation controversy in Norfolk.

The program as a whole seemed to make a reasonable attempt to present both sides of the controversy, but there was one disturbing exception--the long sequence, near the beginning, during which a Negro teacher called the roll of the six closed schools and asked the Negro pupils for each school to stand. Following each standing, your voice, with a hint of laughter in it, would say, "One pupil out of six thousand"--or whatever the numbers involved might be. Six times that was repeated and then a humorous conclusion was drawn: "Seventeen students out of forty-three thousand."

That seemed to me to be holding Virginia up to unfair ridicule, and it would doubtlessly increase the prejudice and hatred of the unthinking against the entire South. Propaganda, to be most effective, must be subtle enough not to be recognized as such by the average person whose thoughts and emotions are nonetheless modified by it. Such propaganda is doubly effective if it manages to make the opposition appear to be laughable and ridiculous. I consider the 17-out-of-43,000 sequence as propaganda because no Virginian was given an opportunity, immediately following the sequence, to explain that the massive resistance is not aimed merely against seventeen out of forty-three thousand, although any Communist could tell you that such a percentage would be highly advantageous. No Virginian was given an opportunity to say that token integration would be merely an opening wedge, that in a relatively short time, Negroes would constitute one fourth, one third and, in some sections of the South, more than half of the student body. What person, looking through a peep-hole and seeing an unwanted visitor, will open the door even though the visitor insists that all he wants is to put his foot inside? The Negroes, of course, admit that they will not be satisfied with token integration.

Intelligent viewers would refute the unbalanced sequence on their own and the network, rather than the South, would be the object of the ridicule, but all of us with some experience in radio and television know that the masses are influenced by skilful