Ace Reporter Examines Racial Friction

(Robert R. Kirsch, book editor of the Los heat each Negro as a re-Angeles Times, recently reviewed an important new study of racial friction in this country by ace reporter Samuel Lubell. Kirsch's review

computer. Not that he deprecates the use of statistics or electronic devi-ces, but that he regards these as instrumentalities rather than a substitute for mentality,

chological and economicdemand a balanced interpretation and judg-ment, imbued by common sense and understanding. In brief, political analysis is not primarily a science. It is an art. And in this art, Lubell is practically in a class by himself.

The fact that he has been uncannily accurate in his predictions of elections since 1952 (he foresaw the write-in swing to Hampshire primary long before the computer pundits) is really of less consequence than his ability to understand root causes and motivations. And this in turn comes from good, solid reporting which is being able to ask the right questions of the right questions of the right time. In Lubell suggests that le man has become an intemean—a great many ob- problems as they think. servers have lost sight of this basic truth.

All of this, and more, is demonstrated in WHITE demonstrated in WHITE methods which may blur AND BLACK: Test of a and even deny the ulti-Nation (Harper & Row: mate aim—which is re-\$4.95) in which Lubell, cognition of the Negro as with no little courage, an individual human addresses himself to the being. time and reaches conclusions unlikely to satisfy those at the polar extremes. One reserving the satisfy in at large tremes. increasingly complex points: simple. And if there is anything about the race national commitment to problem, it is not simple.

Samuel Lubell is a liv- to the current demand for ing example of mind over integration and equal rights. There is nothing particularly new in this, but it serves to remind readers that the emotionality of the present has its roots in the past. But if r mentality, emotion is an essentially.

He is, in fact, a well- irrational condition, it is educated reporter, who nevertheless a reality. The recognizes that the activi-real problem comes when ties of men, being based on emotion clashes with rea-a multiplicity of factors— son in an effort to secure a son in an effort to secure a historical, cultural, psy- climate in which the moral and legal demands of the Negro can be conceded without demolishing the arena in which our political and economic contentions can be contained

Segregationists will have a fit when they read that Lubell considers it a sine qua non that all diit is indispensable to any Lodge in the New viable solution that the irritating reminders of lower status which rob the Negro of his dignity and his identity have no place in America.

and worked out.

a time when the ordinary gislation may not be anywhere near as effecger—a mode, median or tive in solving the ultimate

Negroes may question his criticism of demoustration tactics, of political maneuvering, of bloe voting, of economic special treatment, as in the end

those at the polar ex-tremes. One reason is that cognition of the complexas one goes to extremes, ity of forces involved. Let the proffered solutions to us consider some of these

"The heart of any racial The firm bedrock of this individualism as against The firm bedrock of this book is to be found in its brilliant narration, of the istence the conditions historical forces which ied which will enable us to

not as an anonymous black face."

In the South, Lubell argues that the moderates on both sides should be given a chance to solve the problems on local levels through Racial Peace Commissions which might restore the Negroes' "willinguess to accept gradual measures . . . if a timeta-ble of actions to be taken was set up and carried through."

In the North, different conditions prevail; and there is a tendency to be blinded by the lack of overt difficulties (a blindness which is fast disappearing in the light of recent events). Here, says Lubell, residential mobility is crucial:

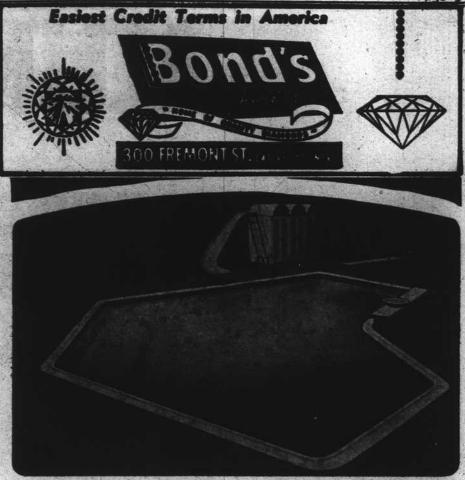
"Individual Negro fa-milies must be able to register their social and economic progress by moving to better neigh-borhoods."

Ultimately, for both Negro and white the essence of the problem is to learn to know one another as individual buman

Without this voluntary rapprochement, Lubell argues, the bloc thinking may be hardened, thus increasing rather than decreasing racial tensions.

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