

**THE CITIZENS' COUNCILS:  
THEIR ORIGINS AND NATURAL HISTORY**

**By**

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**B. A. In Government  
Southern Illinois University  
1962**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts**

**Department of Government in the Graduate School  
Southern Illinois University  
August, 1964**

## PREFACE

With the rise of racial difficulties in the United States in the past several years, it has become increasingly important to know and understand those organizations and groups involved in the conflict. One such movement is composed of the Citizens' Councils, or White Citizens' Councils as they are sometimes referred to, that have developed in the past ten years, primarily in the Southern portions of the United States. There is no doubt that they are of considerable significance in the recent struggles over Negro rights. The reason the Citizens' Councils were chosen for the subject of this paper is because of the interest they hold for the writer, and because of the previously mentioned importance they have in relation to present-day developments in the racial struggles that envelop the United States.

In doing research for this paper the writer fully realized that much of the material that he would be reading would be biased in one way or another. A continuing effort was made to eliminate this prejudice and bias in order that the true picture be made observable. There are times, of course, when the bias and the prejudice is the actual center of focus, and then it is presented just as it appears in whatever source is being cited. The reader should keep in mind, because this issue is so

highly charged with emotion, that in order to obtain a clear picture of what is presented, it is far better to read the paper with a mind open to all subjects presented, and to refrain from reaching a final judgment until its end has been reached.

The research done for this inquiry into the Citizens Councils involved much reading in such sources as The New York Times, The Nation, The New Republic, Newsweek, and various other newspapers and periodicals. For extensive background material the following books were of invaluable aid: The Segregationists, by James G. Cook; The Deep South Says Never, by John B. Martin; and The Extremists, by Mark Sherwin. One author that deserves special recognition for his contribution in aiding the author to discover the nature of the Councils is Hodding Carter, editor of the Delta-Democrat Times of Greenville, Mississippi. Through various articles written by Mr. Carter the writer was able to discern facts about the Councils available nowhere else. Material published by the Citizens' Councils of America was of prime importance in gaining insight into the actual first hand views of the spokesmen of the movement. Various television news programs were of aid, especially in regard to personal glimpses of Council leaders.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The writer would like to express his appreciation to Dr. David T. Kenney, Assistant Dean of the Graduate School of Southern Illinois University, who rendered invaluable aid in the preparation of this paper.

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent years the supporters of segregation have created and are using a new organization with which to battle the integration forces. Previously the segregationists were divided into many groupings each going its separate way to achieve similar goals. About the only group with a multi-state organization was the somewhat out-dated Ku Klux Klan. In the mid-1950's, however, a new and more modern organized agency for segregation arose: the Citizens' Councils. Within a few short years the Councils became a strong influence throughout the South, and took a commanding position in the ranks of the segregation units. In view of the undisputed importance of recent racial difficulties in the United States it is vital to understand as much as possible about the people and organizations which are involved. It will be attempted here to illuminate one actor in this struggle: the Citizens' Councils.

Because certain background factors in the South have played an important role in the shaping of Council development, it is important, in gaining an understanding of the Councils, to review those factors and to show their influence on the subject of this paper. The writer has done so under the heading "The Southern Heritage" and in that chapter will attempt to show the influence of

particular forces and institutions on Council development. Slavery is the first topic to be discussed. How this institution affected the mind of the South, and thus the present Southern attitude, will be indicated. Following, the Ku Klux Klan and its ramifications will be considered. The Negro, or "inferior" race, as it is often referred to by segregationists, and White supremacy, will then be discussed. The final section of this and later chapters will present certain conclusions.

With the background elements laid bare the discussion will then turn to Council development. Following a brief introduction the precipitating factors leading to the formation of the first Councils will be shown. This is followed by a section on the early growth of the organization. The type of chain of command the Councils developed will be section four of the chapter. Next an attempt will be made to indicate the various Council leaders showing their particular philosophy and basis of power within, and sometimes without, the Councils.

The goals and methods of the Councils are discussed in the third chapter. Although the goals may seem readily evident and obvious they need to be looked into with a discriminating eye because of underlying elements that are not easily visible. Methods used by the Councils in implementing their goals will be the subject of the second major portion of the chapter.

The influence and effect of the Councils in various parts of the South is, although often spotty, quite substantial. Thus an understanding of such power is vital to those interested in the race problems of the United States. Chapter four will describe this influence and its effect. Following a brief introduction, the three states where the influence of the Councils is strongest, Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana, are dealt with individually, and the remainder of the South as a whole. This method is used for convenience and ease of understanding.

The final section of the paper will be composed of conclusions reached by the writer in the course of this work.



## CHAPTER I

### THE SOUTHERN HERITAGE

#### Introduction

What is meant by the term "heritage?" According to the dictionary it indicates that which is inherited, or the condition or status into which one is born. In the way it is used here it means this, and more. When "the Southern heritage" is spoken of here it means the entire fabric of social, political, and economic development that has played a role in shaping the institutions and people of the South. It connotes every aspect of the environment that has played a significant role in the primary concern of this paper: The Citizens' Councils. Because of the necessity of limiting the length of this work it is obviously impossible to include the entire Southern heritage in the discussion. Why then, it may be asked, use such a broad term to encompass such a relatively modest undertaking? The answer is that although the abstraction "The Southern heritage" may be too broad for the present discussion, it does indicate a fact: that the particular institution that is under consideration here is not merely an isolated phenomenon but rather that it is the product of countless factors,

much too numerous to be mentioned here. Those aspects of the heritage that seem to the author most important in relation to the topic will be the ones that are mentioned, while all the multitude of other factors that had a more modest part will have to play a silent role in this paper.

Rightly or wrongly, the Southern section of the United States, particularly the Southeastern area, has always considered itself, and been considered by other areas, a section of the nation apart from the rest. The reasons for this are many and by no means generally agreed upon. Geographic determinists will point to the fact that the climate and soil of the South are unlike that of other sections of the country. Those who stress the economic aspects are certain to mention the fact that the plantation system was almost unique to the South. Regardless of the supposed reasons it cannot be denied that in the minds of most Americans the South is, in one way or another, different from the remainder of the nation. This difference is generally held to be greater than the difference of any other section of the nation from the whole.

Unlike the Northern sections of the country, the South never developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century a great reliance on government to cure its ills. Nothing comparable to the New England town meeting ever developed.

The Southern tradition had in it an intense distrust of the exercise of government authority beyond its barest minimal essentials.<sup>1</sup> No doubt a large part of this was due to the fact that urbanism was not developing at the same pace as it was in the North. Living somewhat isolated, the Southern farmer, similar to his Western cousins, tended to develop an intense individualism and, running with this, a basic distrust of foreign authority, and to him foreign had a very broad meaning. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the vast counties that had in them few, if any, major metropolitan areas were for the most part unpoliced areas that permitted maximum individual freedom and private justice.

Hand in hand with this individualism went a tendency to violence and the quick solution of one's problems.

. . . the tradition of vigilante action, . . . grew so steadily that already long before the Civil War and long before hatred for the black man had begun to play any direct part in the patterns . . . the South had become peculiarly the home of lynching.<sup>2</sup>

Rather than appealing to established authority for the settlement of a dispute or the satisfaction of a grievance, the Southerner would be more inclined to seek redress through his own efforts and this often entailed the use of violence. The notion of dragging a dispute through the courts, or waiting weeks or months to see a criminal punished was anathema to one who wanted to see

quick settlement of the situation. This individualism was reflected in the Confederate soldier who was notoriously undisciplined, and yet who, few will deny, made one of the best fighting men ever to take the field.<sup>3</sup>

### Slavery

The institution of slavery has long been one of the major aspects of the Southern heritage around which discussion has centered. It has been claimed by some that it was this institution, more than anything else, that has shaped the South into what it is. Others say that slavery had relatively minor effects upon the South, and that it was other and more basic considerations that really were the various causal factors. Regardless of which view is correct few will dispute the contention that slavery did have some role to play in the shaping of the South. It should be noted here that the institution of slavery and not the Negro in the South, per se, will be discussed. The Negro as such will be mentioned at another place.

There can be no doubt that slavery created in the minds of those associated with it a superior-inferior relationship with regard to the two races. On his part the White man came to feel that his legal and social superiority over the Black man was because of basic inherent traits that forever destined him to have ascendancy over the Negro. The Southerner justified the

relationship on the grounds that it was the most satisfactory arrangement obtainable and that both the White and Black man benefited from it. It cannot be doubted, however, that slavery was ultimately based on force and violence and that behind the paternalistic facade lay the sting of the whip and the shadow of the noose. It is the opinion of some that slavery corrupted the White man more than it did the Black, that it brutalized him by bringing out his coarser qualities.<sup>4</sup> In this light it might be true that the absolute power the White man had over the Negro corrupted the former to a large extent.

As the reader may know, prior to the coming of the cotton gin with its rejuvenation of the cotton industry, slavery was on the decline in most parts of the South. It was simply uneconomical. Once, however, Whitney's machine had revolutionized the cotton producing industry the South found that slavery was most profitable, which in turn, made those who practiced it seek justification of it on even more inflexible grounds. Whereas the South had previously been rather tolerant of dissenters from majority opinion, it increasingly became more intolerant of those who attacked the institution of slavery or White Supremacy.

From the taboo on criticism of slavery, it was but an easy step to interpreting every criticism of the South on whatever score as disloyalty -- to making such criticism so dangerous that none but a

madman would risk it. And from that it was but another and just as easy--an almost inevitable--step to a state of affairs in which criticism of any sort at all was not impossible, surely, but an enterprise for bold and excitement-loving spirits alone. If touched on any social sore point, on anything which the commonalty or their prompters, the planters, counted dear--and there were few things that did not fall under this description--the critic stood an excellent chance of being mobbed.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, it seems not unreasonable to say that this is an example of how slavery brought out one of man's coarser qualities: intolerance.

It was part of the goal of the North in the Civil War to remake the Southern society on lines more akin to those acceptable to it. For the most part the North was not successful in this venture.

. . . the victory was, in fact, almost entirely illusory. If this war had smashed the Southern world, it had left the essential Southern mind and will--the mind and will arising from, corresponding to, and requiring this world--entirely unshaken. Rather, after the manner of defensive wars in general and particularly those fought against odds with great stubbornness, it had operated enormously to fortify and confirm that mind and will.<sup>6</sup>

Supporting such a view Henry Savage, Jr. says this:

. . . although the South's prevailing state of mind emerged from the ordeal of war and Reconstruction little changed, great changes had been wrought, especially in relation to the North and the changed nation the South was rejoining. . . . The problem of the Negro, released from restraints of slavery and carrying his Reconstruction burden of enhanced hate, had become vastly greater, coloring every facet of Southern society, economics, and politics.<sup>7</sup>

The resistance of the South to Reconstruction is a matter of record (and will shortly be discussed). It appears

that when a society's basic institutions are under attack, these institutions take on a quality of reverence, that is, they appear to those who defend them to be immutable laws of nature that cannot be changed without defying the natural order of things. This seems to be what happened in the case of the South under Reconstruction.

Of all the institutions attacked by Reconstruction White supremacy was the one most dear to the heart of the Southerner. This was to him one of the most basic foundations of his society. All efforts were made to thwart the attempt of the North to impose racial equality, and in some cases Black supremacy, on the South. Because all other methods were closed to the White man in the South, violence was employed. The use of violence, i.e., whippings, lynchings and burnings, was justified because of this very reason: all other avenues of redress were closed.<sup>8</sup> The courts, local and state government, and the police, all were in the hands of the conqueror who was in no mood to cater to the wishes of the vanquished.

At the end of thirty years Reconstruction the South was solidly wedded to Negro-lynching because of the cumulative power of habit, obviously. But it was wedded to it far more because the dominant feeling about it . . . was that, as an act of racial and patriotic expression, an act of chivalry, an act, indeed, having a definite ritualistic value in respect to the entire Southern sentiment, and as an act which had had, in most concrete cases, the approbation and often the participation of the noblest and wisest of that revered generation of men which was now bending to the grave, . . .

lynching, and violence toward the Negro in general, was under certain circumstances necessary and desirable.

As will be indicated later, many of the leaders of the acts of violence were men of extremely high standing in the South and their attempts to maintain White supremacy through acts of intimidation and, if necessary, violence was anything but condemned by their peers.

Such, then, briefly stated is a part of the heritage of the South that has played a significant role in the development of the climate of opinion that has enabled the establishment and success of such an organization as the Citizens' Councils. What has been said is not, and was not intended to be, a lengthy discussion into the history of the South. It was intended to show certain aspects of the Southern heritage that are significant when viewed in the light of the primary subject of this paper.

### The Ku Klux Klan

#### Introduction

In almost any discussion of sociological institutions that have developed in the Southeastern sections of the United States in the past century the Ku Klux Klan is drawn in. It shall be the purpose of this discussion to show where and how the Klan has influenced the development of Southern institutions, particularly



the Citizens' Councils. It will be necessary to indicate the background of the Klan, pointing out its various causal factors. A brief outline of Klan history and development, with particular emphasis on those aspects of its nature that have remained a force, will be presented. Those elements of Klanism that are of particular significance, when viewed in the light of the nature of this paper, an inquiry into the Citizens' Councils, will be emphasized. It should be kept in mind that these elements may not at a particular time in the development of the Klan have been a primary force in it.

It should be mentioned that the reason the development of the Klan as primarily a Southern rather than a national movement is studied is twofold: (1) Although the Klan certainly did become a powerful force in areas outside the South, notably the West and Midwest, it is still nevertheless true that the Klan is identified with the South which appears to be its spiritual home as well as the area in which it received the greatest support; (2) At present the Council movement is restricted to the South, and appears to be somewhat attached to certain heritages peculiar to the South, some of which have already been mentioned while some will be brought up later.

The history of the Klan falls into two and possibly three distinct periods in time. The first

evidences of the Klan were present immediately after the close of hostilities of the Civil War. This movement lasted from about 1866 to 1871. The second Klan appeared in 1915 and continued until the Second World War. There was a brief spurt in Klan development following the Supreme Court school desegregation decision of 1954, but it so far has appeared to be less impressive than previous eras.<sup>10</sup> It is possible to make a case for the argument that the Klan of the "twenties" and "thirties" is much the same as the one that developed in the "fifties." The purpose of this paper is not a lengthy discussion of the Klan's development, therefore the choosing of three periods of Klan development is chronologically useful but not absolutely essential. What is more important is to discover the causes of the rise of the Klan, its influence, and its legacy.

### The First Klan

It is a well known fact that immediately following the Civil War, conditions in the Southern states were such that normal living was impossible. The defeated areas were occupied with Federal troops, civil authority was no longer in the hands of local officials, destruction was widespread, and in general the entire fabric of social life was close to being torn asunder. It was in such an environment that the Klan was formed. The beginnings of the Klan, as is the case with many

organizations, took place in modest surroundings. In December, 1865 a group of young men met in Pulaski County, Tennessee and formed the organization known as the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>11</sup>

Bubbling over with the excitement of their new-found plaything, the young members of the Ku Klux Klan decided to make a public manifestation of themselves; so, borrowing the familiar idea of the easy Hallowe'en disguise, they wrapped themselves in sheets, mounted their horses and galloped through the streets of the little town, greatly enjoying the sensation they created-- particularly the alarm and dismay of the negroes, to whose superstitious minds the sight of white-sheeted figures suggested nothing but spirits risen from the grave, . . . The successful effect of this entirely fortuitous costume was so satisfactory that it was adopted as the official regalia of the order, . . .<sup>12</sup>

As might be assumed from such antics seriousness was not the primary consideration of the early Klansmen. It was at first an organization of young men dedicated to having a good time at the expense of those who incurred their displeasure. Acts of violence did not begin to occur until late in the decade.<sup>13</sup> The secretiveness that has characterized the Klan was evident from the beginning, due to the fact that the authorities frowned upon their activities.

As time went on and the number of carpetbaggers and "scalawags" increased in Southern states, the resentment toward the Northern intruders became even more overt. Activities of the Freedman's Bureau among the Negroes greatly excited and upset the Southern

Whites. There was in the minds of residents of the former slave states a deep rooted fear of rebellion by the Negroes and the resultant race war that would follow.<sup>14</sup>

In such a state of affairs, it is not surprising that the white people should come to feel that some sort of organization for self-protection was needed, and throughout the South there began spontaneously to spring up local defensive groups, generally in the form of secret societies, designed primarily to offset the aggressiveness of the Loyal Leagues.<sup>15</sup>

The Loyal Leagues were,

. . .totally unrestrained and disorderly forms of group activity in its Southern manifestation, used by low-grade white men as an instrumentality for organizing the negroes politically and keeping them unified by a steady infusion of inflammatory propaganda by imported flannel-mouthed orators. . . . Bands of League members, armed to the teeth, prowled the country at all times, . . . and the white people were increasingly terrified.<sup>16</sup>

Finally in April, 1867 a convention was held in Nashville, Tennessee to form a central organization to bind together all the various Klan like groups.<sup>17</sup> This organization was not intended to be nor did it ever become a closely controlled institution with a well defined and strong chain of command. Throughout their existence the Klans remained essentially local in nature and operated separate from one another.

Contrary to popular belief the activities of the Klan were not limited to undercover action.

The Ku Klux movement was not entirely underground. Sheeted horsemen riding about in the night-time were not its only forces. Secrecy and silence were indeed its main devices, but others were employed. The life of the carpet-bagger was made wretched otherwise than by dragging him from his bed and

flogging him.<sup>18</sup>

Social pressure was a major device used by the Klan to make life as unpleasant as possible for those persons whom the Klan wished to remove. The carpetbagger or "scalawag" would find that his children had no friends, that the pews in church were emptied when he sat down, and, in general, that the Klan had organized the people to make his life as miserable as possible.<sup>19</sup> Behind this social pressure lay the threat of physical violence that could erupt at any time.

The provinces of the early Klan were federated into an "Invisible Empire" that encompassed the entire United States, but most activities were limited to local efforts to destroy the Radical political power, rather than a general conspiracy.<sup>20</sup> The Klan did much to revive historic social customs that the war had temporarily shattered, and helped re-establish White supremacy in certain areas of the South.<sup>21</sup> As time went on however, local chapters fell into the hands of irresponsible men and into disrepute. This failure of the Klan to maintain its early high standard for membership was inevitable because of the nature of the Klan itself. Masked men riding about the country-side breaking established laws and violating individual liberties draw the criminal and lawless element as honey does flies. After a time bands of outlaws wearing the hood

of the Klan were roaming areas of the South, robbing and beating persons with no goal other than plunder or sadistic pleasure. Finally in 1869 General Bedford Forrest, a war hero and Klan Grand Wizard or national leader, disbanded the Klan by proclamation.<sup>22</sup> Following this many Southerners turned to such organizations as the White League, the White Line, the Rifle Club, and the Red Shirts to continue the struggle for white supremacy.<sup>23</sup> Finally in 1874, through intimidation of Radicals and Negroes, the White Southerner regained control of Arkansas, Alabama, and Texas by electing governments favorable to the white population.<sup>24</sup> From this time on there was little need for the Klan or similar organizations.

Thus within less than a decade after its birth the Ku Klux Klan died a withering death. The causes of the rise of the Klan grew almost entirely out of the fact that an alien group of people attempted to impose upon the South certain sociological and psychological institutions that violated Southern mores. The attempt of the North to enfranchise the Southern Negro was perhaps the most important single thing that led to such tactics as those of the Klan, and closely related to this were the activities of the carpetbaggers and "scalawags" in using the Negroes to their own advantage. White supremacy had long been a part of the tradition of the South

and in a sense the Klan grew up in opposition to the attempt of the North to destroy this heritage.<sup>25</sup> Once this was achieved the Klan had served its purpose and was abandoned. The adulteration of the Klan toward the end of the 1860s was simply the taking over of an essentially lawless organization dedicated to the maintenance of principles being attacked by outsiders by an element that had as its goal the immediate self interest of the individual members with little or no thought given to the original purpose of the organization.

From the 1870's until the second decade of the 20th century the Klan, for all practical purposes, did not exist in the United States. There were isolated incidents where men wearing the attire of the Klan were seen, but there was no formal organization of any significance. As previously indicated, the reason for this was simply that there was no need for such an organization. Reconstruction was ended, or rapidly coming to a close, the principle of White supremacy was once again dominant in the South, and there was no concentrated immediate threat to the institutions the South held dear. With the first Klan disbanded, the discussion now turns to the second.

#### The Second Klan

On October 16, 1915 on a high hill near Atlanta, Georgia, William Joseph Simmons and a few associates

gave a second life to the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>26</sup>

For five years the Klan seems to have passed an uneventful existence, spreading very slowly and making no great impression upon the country. By the early fall of 1918 it was organized in localities of the South especially in Alabama and Georgia, the usual manifestation of its presence being the posting of warnings as in the Reconstruction days.<sup>27</sup>

Being the instigator of the movement "Colonel" Simmons became the first Imperial Wizard of the K. K. K., and in this position was possessed of considerable power in the handling of Klan affairs.<sup>28</sup> Early in 1920 Edward Clarke of Atlanta joined the Klan and became the Imperial Kleagle. As such he was in charge of membership.<sup>29</sup> With the help of a Mrs. Elizabeth Tyler, a widow of some financial means, he began building up the membership of the organization.

In their desire to "sell" the organization, they found it most effective to appeal to the racial, religious, and nationalistic feelings of prospective joiners. Their publicity releases strove to show how the Klan was the country's only bulwark against the evil forces of the Negro, Catholic, Jew, and immigrant. As a direct result of the Clarke-Tyler program the Klan found itself being quickly transformed from a somewhat easy-going southern fraternity of patriotic whites into a violently aggressive national organization of chauvinistic native-born, white Protestants!<sup>30</sup>

Within about a year's time the Klan had grown from a few thousand to something closer to one-hundred thousand.<sup>31</sup>

As the strength of the Klan grew so did the wave of lawlessness and crime throughout the country that was attached, rightly or wrongly, to the Klan.<sup>32</sup>



On September 6, 1921, the New York World began a three-week series of extremely hostile articles on the Klan.<sup>33</sup> This eventually led to a Congressional investigation of the Klan that lasted from October 11 to 17, 1921.<sup>34</sup> Simmons was called to Washington to testify and while there appears to have conducted himself in such an impressive manner that the Klan's popularity soared to new heights, for within the next year over 1.1 million new members were initiated.<sup>35</sup> It was right after this rise in membership that the triumverate of Simmons, Clarke, and Tyler was broken up and a Mr. Hiram Wesley Evans became the Imperial Wizard and the real power of the organization.<sup>36</sup> Although he attempted to reform the Klan and rid it of its hoodlum elements he never succeeded. From a high point in 1924 of 4 million members the Klan by 1928 had shriveled to about 200,000 and by the Depression it was all but forgotten.<sup>37</sup>

Now that the growth, decline, and demise of the second Klan has been shown it is in order to inquire into its causes, and to find out in what ways, if any, the Reconstruction Klan can be compared to the organization with the same name that developed during and after World War I.

The decade 1920-1930 was what it was largely because of the effects of World War I. During the armed struggle America mistrusted and mistreated aliens, deprived itself of food and fuel, and poured its money into the Liberty Loan campaigns. But the war was over too quickly for the nation to spend

its ultra-patriotic psychological feelings. In the decade following America permitted itself to reject the League of Nations, to curtail immigration, to deport aliens wholesale, and to accept the Klan with its motto of "one hundred per cent Americanism."<sup>38</sup>

To those who were displeased with the various social upheavels brought on by the first World War the Klan offered a way to strike back at the "uppity-niggers," the "adultrous neighbor," and the local "bootlegger."

The Klan's plank was chamelonic: On the Pacific Coast it was anti-Japanese; in the Southwest, anti-Mexican; in the Middle West, anti-Catholic; in the Deep South, anti-Negro; in New England, anti-French Canadian; in the large cities of the Northeast, anti-alien-born; on the Atlantic coast, anti-Semitic.<sup>39</sup>

Thus whatever elements of bigotry and hatred that existed among various groups, the Klan invariably capitalized upon.

There were, however, four elements that summarized the basic tenets of the Klan. They were: (1) White supremacy, or anti-Negroism; (2) gentile membership, or anti-Semitism; (3) complete Americanism, or anti-foreign-bornism; and (4) Protestantism, or anti-Catholicism.<sup>40</sup> These elements, more than any others express the true purposes of the Klan. If one phrase could summarize the basic beliefs of the Klan it would be "one hundred per cent Americanism." As Hiram Evans said in an article in The Forum:

We believe that the pioneers who built America bequeathed to their own children a priority right to it, the control of it and of its future, and

that no one on earth can claim any part of this inheritance except through our generosity. We believe, too, that the mission of America under Almighty God is to perpetuate and develop just the kind of nation and just the kind of civilization which our forefathers created. . . . Also, we believe . . . that the American stock, which was bred under highly selective surroundings, has proved its value and should not be [through intermarriage with the foreign-born] mongrelized. . . . Finally, we believe that all foreigners were admitted with the idea, and on the basis of at least an implied understanding, that they would adopt our ideas and ideals and help in fulfilling our destiny along those lines, but never that they should be permitted to force us to change into anything else.<sup>41</sup>

At later times Evans declared Catholics and Negroes to fall within this category of un-American Americans, due to the fact that Negroes are simply unworthy and Catholics owe allegiance to another temporal being other than the United States.<sup>42</sup>

It appears therefore, that when compared to the original Ku Klux Klan, the one that developed in the 1920's bears only scant similarity to its predecessor with respect to essentials.

The twentieth century Klan copied a great deal from its precursor -- the hierarchy of officers, subdivisional structure, regalia, silent parades, and mysterious language. There was only one thing, however, taken over from the original Klan by the twentieth century order which was ideological in nature rather than ritualistic or ornamental -- and that was a belief in White Supremacy.<sup>43</sup>

The old methods of threats and intimidation were used although actual physical violence was probably less prevalent than in the Reconstruction era. It is most difficult to cite statistics on this because of the lack

of proof of actual Klan violence. It is, of course, quite possible for hoodlums to don the Klan attire and proceed to take the law into their hands. It could be said, however, with no small amount of truth that the Klan of the 1920's used the methods of the Klan of Reconstruction to attain goals not a part of the original Klan, excluding that of White supremacy.

Just as the Klan of the late 1860's was a product of the Civil War and of the turmoil that followed, the Klan of the 1920's was the product of World War I and of its reactions. The Klan of Reconstruction was primarily a Southern phenomena while the more recent one was not so confined. Both were reactions to what was considered by Klansmen as attacks upon the sociological and psychological institutions and patterns that they held dear, the only common one being the alleged attack upon White supremacy. Both Klans were essentially negative in purpose and outlook, that is the prefix "anti" was a large part of the language of Klansmen. Once the alleged threat had disappeared, or once interest in the threat had waned, the Klans simply languished.

Getting its real start following the first World War, reaching its peak in the middle 1920's, and failing rapidly in the latter part of the decade, the second Klan had a life span of little over ten years. As with the first Klan there were areas in which, on particular

occasions, a Klan rally would be held or an undesirable would be whipped, but on the whole the second Klan had, by the 1930's, ceased to play a major role in the affairs of the United States, and in particular, of the South. During the second World War Klan activity on any but the most minor scale, ceased to exist. Immediately following the war there was a spurt of Klanism but it lasted only a very short time and was of but little significance.

### The Third Klan

The latest growth of Klanism occurred in 1954 after the Supreme Court decision to desegregate the schools. With the issue of integration thrust upon it the Klan had a ready-made concept to oppose. In addition, the term "anti-Communist" was used to attack integration, as it was assumed that the Communists were behind the integration movement. Current estimates of the Klan's size show that it has between 35,000 and 60,000 members, concentrated in the South.<sup>44</sup> This is far below the size of the Klan in the mid-1920's. With Robert Shelton as its Grand Wizard the Klan has generally eschewed violence and concentrated on prevention of integration through other means such as threats, legal action, and intimidation. It seems, however, that the South, as well as the rest of the country, is not receptive to the present Klan's search for support. The old regalia of

the hood and attire, the strange titles, and in general the "hocus pocus" of the so-called "Invisible Empire" no longer excite the general populace as it formerly did. Perhaps the hooded figures, Grand Wizards and Dragons are simply too unsophisticated for the present mood. In any case, the arch foes of integration and staunch supporters of White supremacy seem to have looked elsewhere for an organization to carry out their goals.

In many respects the Klan that is currently in existence could be considered to be merely the continuation of the Klan of the 1920's with its face turned in another direction, toward integrationists and Communists rather than Catholics, Jews, and the alien-born. The old class and racial hatred is still present, but now concentrated toward the integrationists. In this broad view there are basic similarities, but in terms of specifics the differences between the two Klans are readily evident. Whereas the Klan of the 1920's was more than a Southern phenomenon, indeed in its heyday it could be considered to be almost national, the present Klan is almost entirely Southern in outlook, membership, and goals. Rather than advocating "one-hundred per cent Americanism" the Klan could now be said to be advocating "one hundred per cent Southernism." However, in terms of membership, as in its peak in the 1920's, the Klan draws on Southern society's left-behind status-seekers

who are attracted by the "hocus pocus" and regalia of the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>45</sup>

### Klanism: Causes, Essence, and Future

Now that the development of the Klan has been explained, it is appropriate to ask certain questions dealing with the essence of Klanism and the underlying factors that are necessary for its existence. All of the Klans have been dedicated to the elimination or prevention of some state of affairs: the first Klan to the elimination of Radical rule and a return to White supremacy; the second Klan to the elimination of alien influences in the United States, particularly the Catholics, Jews, and Negroes; and the most recent Klan to the defeat of the integration movement. Thus it can be said that the Klans are a negative reaction to a real or imagined attack upon the mass of the society which the Klan seeks to protect. From this it can readily be seen that once this attack dissipates, or appears to dissipate, the purpose of the Klan is eliminated and so the active life of the Klan shortly will come to an end.

Closely associated with the Klan has been the weird costumes, titles and ceremonies that have distinguished it from other organizations. The original purpose of this regalia was to conceal identity and to strike fear into the heart of the Klan's opponents. Eventually

this original purpose was lost to some degree and the reason for its use was to attract members as well as to frighten enemies. It seemed quite romantic to don the Klan attire and congregate on some remote hill-side to burn a cross. At the present time this seems somewhat passe' to all but the lower echelons of society. The entire Klan seems to be something out of the middle ages to most Americans. Does this mean that it is impossible for a rebirth of Klanism to occur in the United States? Not necessarily, because there are scores, perhaps hundreds, of thousands of people in America who are exceptions to the previous statements and it is possible that they could provide the nucleus for a revitalized Klan movement. It does seem unlikely, however, that the Klan could ever again achieve the popularity it possessed in the 1920's, assuming that the socio-economic and political conditions undergo no rapid radical change.

The prejudice that lies at the base of the Klan certainly is present in the United States today even though the inclination to implement this prejudice through Klannish methods may not be. This is, it seems to the writer, the primary reason for the growth of organizations like the Citizens' Councils as opposed to a widespread growth of Klanism. The relationship of the Klan to the growth and development of the Councils is important because of the possible parallels that may be



drawn. It should be noted, however, that there is a danger in drawing parallels because one has the tendency to think the parallels are absolute and invariable, while in fact they are but vague similarities.

When a comparison of the Klans and Councils is undertaken, it is immediately apparent that the two are substantially different in appearance.

. . . from the very beginning the Council carried out its program in the open. Public auditoriums and theaters were used for meetings. Members made no attempt to shield from others their affiliation with the group. . . . in striving to create an image of "respectability," it studiously avoided extremism. There was to be no donning of regalia, engaging in ritual, or participating in terrorism. . . . as a result of the preceding policies it enlisted the support of the most esteemed citizens. Among those who joined the Council were, for example, the following: In Louisiana a state senator, a state university board supervisor, and a former president of the state medical association; in Alabama three state senators and the mayor of Montgomery; in North Carolina several leading industrialists, three former Sepakers of the state Assembly, a state university medical school professor, and a former United States Attorney.<sup>46</sup>

Thus generally speaking, the type of member the Council sought was the leading citizens who was well respected in his community. There were, of course, exceptions, for no one was barred from membership because of previous Klan activities. As has been indicated there was no tendency of the Councils to imitate the Klan's mystic formalities and mysterious ceremonies. The Councils were organized on a business-like basis, thus appealing to the more sober minded, less emotionally-ruled persons.

In terms of basic causal factors, similarities between the Councils and Klans increase. Just as the Klan was a reaction to supposed attacks upon a way of life that was deemed worthy of maintaining, so are the Councils a reaction to attempts by the Federal government and the Northern liberal philosophy, in general, to destroy the legal apartheid policy of the Southern states and localities. More broadly speaking the Councils came into being as a force to counter the attempt of the elements supporting integration, with all its connotations. Therefore it seems safe to say that both the Councils and the Klans were born as negative forces, and so they both depend upon the positive force they oppose for their very existence. Because of its anachronistic nature the Klan has not been as successful in organizing and gathering the forces in opposition to integration as have the more modern Councils. The Councils, with their business-like organization, sophisticated leadership, and appeal to the intellect as well as emotion, have appeared to be more in the stream of the twentieth-century than has the Klan. In terms of organization and methods there is quite a difference between the Klans of old and of today, and the Citizens' Councils, but in terms of basic purpose and goals the differences seem small indeed: both intend to maintain segregation of the Negro and Caucasian races.

In implementing programs both the Councils and Klans are extremely pragmatic. The particular method of achieving the desired goals that has the most success is the way in which the Klan or Council operates. For the Klan of olden times this included the wearing of regalia and the hood, burning crosses on hills, and in extreme circumstances, physical punishment of those individuals the Klan deemed in need of reprimand. For the Councils the greatest success has been in economic pressure, legal action, social ostracization, and propaganda. Should any of these methods bring harmful censure they will be abandoned for other means, just as unsuccessful methods are abandoned for others. Presently the Councils differ from the Klans, particularly the ones of yesteryear, in that the former's methods are more sophisticated and less violent. The Councils, whenever possible, use the law and methods that are, at worst, extra-legal to enforce their conception of what ought to be. They are less inclined to resort to violence both initially and at the point of failure, if they do fail. There is no doubt that some Council members have been connected with unlawful activities but as a general policy the Councils, both at the national and local level, have disclaimed any and all appeals to violence or unlawful activities. This cannot be said of the Klans.

Although the Ku Klux Klan and the Citizen's Councils are by no means strictly limited to the Southern sections of the United States, they are, nevertheless, products of what could be called the Southern heritage. Both grew out of Southern tradition and both have their strongest support from that area. As Francis Simkins said:

For more than a hundred years there has been a section of the United States known as the South. It has never lacked a culture as distinctive as its area or climate. Political, social, and even psychological variations have marked it off from other sections of the country almost as sharply as one European nation is distinguished from another.<sup>47</sup>

To a large extent it was from and because of this separativeness that the Councils and Klans found fertile ground in which to grow and expand both in terms of size and power. Both, then, stem from the same root, namely the Southern apartness with respect to the rest of the nation.

It has been shown that in terms of basic goals and causal factors the Councils and Klans have much in common. It has also been shown that when particulars such as methods and organization are considered there are vast differences. Both grew out of the same heritage but developed along dissimilar paths because of many factors; different points in time, different climates of opinion, and different outside pressures.

## The "Inferior Race" And White Supremacy

As has been shown the presence of the Negro race was the single most important factor in leading to the development of White supremacist or segregationist organizations like the Klan and the Councils. Had not this "inferior race," as many in and out of these organizations would refer to the Negro, existed in substantial numbers there most likely would have been no basis for a Klan or Councils. It should here be noted that although this discussion will center around the Negro race and the beliefs that relegate this group to a position of inferiority, there is always, directly behind such beliefs, the concept of White supremacy. When one talks of one the other is automatically assumed. The two concepts are different sides on the same coin, therefore a discussion of one invariably includes the other.

In order for the Citizens' Councils and the Ku Klux Klan to have had any success at all it has been necessary for a certain attitude to be present in America. Without at least tacit approval on the part of the populace immediately surrounding their organizations it would have been impossible for the defenders of segregation to be as successful as they have in impeding the advance of the forces of integration and racial equality. The question here to be considered is this:

What are the widely held beliefs that exist in the United States that relegate the Negro to a general position of inferiority and enable an organization like the Citizens' Councils to gain as much support as it has? It should be noted that these are the beliefs and views that large numbers of Americans hold, and that the Councils themselves may not support exactly the same notions.

There is no doubt that feelings of racial superiority on the part of Caucasian Americans exist in considerable measure outside the South. However, because the primary consideration of this paper is a Southern institution this discussion will be centered around Southern notions of racial comparisons and relative positions. In other words, although strong and powerful racial prejudice certainly exists throughout the United States, these feelings are of interest to the writer only in connection with the Citizens' Councils and since the Councils are presently restricted to the Southern portions of the United States, that area is the one that will be discussed.

Just who is this creature about whom so much emotion flows? What are the essential characteristics that comprise the Negro? In the United States, particularly in the South, the general rule is that all who are not White are Black.<sup>48</sup> This is to say that a trace of

Negro blood in one's veins is enough to classify this individual as a member of the Negro race. In the Southern states there has been since Reconstruction a tendency to broaden the legal concept of a Negro.<sup>49</sup> One-eighth Negro blood is a common legal dividing line. Socially, in the South, if it is known that someone has any Negro relatives, regardless of how far removed, that person is considered to be a Negro. Thus it is quite possible for one to have blond hair, blue eyes, and the fairest of skin and still be considered non-White. If the system that is used in certain parts of Latin America to differentiate between the races were used in the United States about 70% of the Negroes, as they are presently defined, would become members of the Caucasian race, because south of the United States border all who have any Caucasian blood are considered White. This 70% represents that percentage of American Negroes with some Caucasian ancestors.<sup>50</sup>

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the notion that the Negro was biologically inferior to the Caucasian gained wide support throughout the country. "Scientific" evidence was bolstered by everyday "proof" of the Black man's basic inferiority.

It is obvious to the ordinary unsophisticated white man from his everyday experience, that the Negro is inferior. And inferior the Negro really is; so he shows up even under scientific study. He is, on the average, poorer; his body is more often deformed; his health is more precarious

and his mortality rate is higher; his intelligence performance, manners, and morals are lower. . . . It is difficult for the ordinary man to envisage clearly how such factors as malnutrition, bad housing, and lack of schooling actually deform the body and soul of people. . . . The white man is, therefore, speaking in good faith when he says that he sincerely believes that the Negro is racially inferior, not merely because he has an interest in this belief, but simply because he has seen it. He "knows" it.<sup>51</sup>

It is quite natural that this feeling would have developed. When a group of people continually are at the bottom of the social and economic order, it is, it seems, inevitable that the remainder of society attribute this position to a basic inferiority in that group.

When this social inferiority is coupled with the obvious differences in appearance between the Negro and Caucasian races, it is very easy to make a prima facie case for inherent inferiority on the part of the former.

"When color differences coincide with differences in cultural levels, then color becomes symbolic and each individual is automatically classified by the racial uniform he wears." Darker color, woolly hair, and other conspicuous physical Negro characteristics became steadily associated with servile status, backward culture, low intelligence performance and lack of morals.<sup>52</sup>

Thus partly because of his inherent physical apartness from the majority in society, the Negro has had attached to him the notion of inherent-inborn inferiority. The physical differences probably are both an initial cause of this belief as well as a bulwark supporting the idea.



Closely related to the biological "proofs" that the Negro is basically inferior to the White man are appeals to history. It is often pointed out that conditions in the Negro homeland, Africa, were absolutely lacking in all things considered civilized. The claim is made that it was impossible for the black man to build a civilization of his own without help from White people. Gunnar Myrdal, quoting Lothrop Stoddard's The Rising Tide of Color Against White World Supremacy,\* gives an example of the type of literature supporting this view:

To begin with, the black peoples have no historic pasts. Never having evolved civilizations of their own, they are practically devoid of that accumulated mass of beliefs, thoughts, and experiences which render Asiatics so impenetrable and so hostile to white influences. . . . Left to himself, he [the Negro] remained a savage, and in the past his only quickening has been where brown men have imposed their ideas and altered his blood. The originating powers of the European and the Asiatic are not in him. . . . He adopts, but he does not adapt, assimilate, and give forth creatively again.<sup>53</sup>

In judging the achievements of the Negro, or lack of achievement, the environmental factors are given a minimal role. When environment is considered it is pointed out that large parts of India, Southeast Asia, and other areas of the world also had tropical climates and yet still achieved notable civilizations. The Negro's lot

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\*Lothrop Stoddard, The Rising Tide of Color Against White World Supremacy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920)..

in Africa was one of savagery and no amount of talk, it is said, can explain away this fact. Regardless if a particular Negro might be an excellent citizen, a good worker, and an agreeable person there always beats in his inner-most soul, says the Negrophobe, the drums of darkest Africa and at any moment this animal-like emotion can break through into the open causing terrible damage to the civilized persons about him.

Although there have been great changes in attitudes toward equality throughout most of America in the past few decades, in some parts of the deep South the Negro is still considered, in the words a former Governor of Mississippi, James K. Vardaman:

"a lazy, lying, lustful animal which no conceivable amount of training can transform into a tolerable citizen." Vardaman, governor in 1904-1908, said that Negro education would "only spoil a good field hand and make an insolent cook," . . .<sup>54</sup>

Such statements and sentiments as these will certainly permit no equality of the races to exist, but will rather work to maintain the inequalities that now exist, if not to increase them. Throughout the entire South, however, it seems that these radical views are not entirely accepted. As indicated by the Newsweek article just quoted, states such as Mississippi and Alabama generally are the most fertile ground for the continuing acceptance of such views. That such is the case is indicated by the results obtained by Louis Harris and William Brink

in a poll taken of Southern Caucasians. It was discovered that 88% of those interviewed approved of Negroes voting in elections although only 31% approved of a Federal vote-enforcement-law to enforce this right.<sup>55</sup> From such statistics it might be assumed that throughout the entire South Whites are generally more liberal toward Negro rights in principle than in actual practice, and that those who still oppose acceptance of minimal Negro rights are in a minority but that they are extremely rigid in their views.

The claim is often made that Negroes have a distinctive body odor that is particularly offensive to the Caucasian. Closely related to this is the widely held belief that Negroes are "dirtier" than others. Because of such opinions the idea of close association with Blacks in such places as public transportation facilities, restaurants, recreation areas and the like, is repugnant. That the use of Negroes to prepare food, clean houses, and care for children is a contradiction of such notions, does not seem to impress the average Negrophobe, however. It is primarily in the social setting that the revulsion for the Negro is felt. As long as he is performing the tasks of his White boss, regardless of the closeness of contact, the employer seems quite capable of withstanding the presence of such a distasteful person.

The Negro, then, is set apart from the rest of society because of a number of reasons: his obvious physical differences, social customs, economic factors, commonly accepted beliefs, and just about all factors that combine to create the mores of a society. This apartness is amplified in the South because of various reasons already indicated. It is from primarily those feelings and beliefs which support this separateness that the Citizens' Councils draw their support. Were it not for this concensus of opinion that Negroes ought not to be included in the mainstream of American society, or at least the mainstream of Southern society, the Councils could not have reached the position that they presently occupy. The further success or failure of the Councils relies in great degree upon whether or not this climate of opinion remains as solid as it is, or if it dissipates in the force of the equalitarian phalanx attacking it. It is most important to the success of the Council movement that the South not give up its traditional belief that the Negro race is inferior.

### Conclusion

All that has been discussed above, slavery, the Ku Klux Klan, the Negro, and White supremacy revolves around one basic consideration: the relations, social, economic, and political, of the two major races in the Southern states. This is the crux of the discussion.

It is the focal point around which that part of the Southern heritage that is relevant to the subject of this paper revolves. All else is derived from it.

It has been shown how the South first tried to solve the problem of race relations through the institution of slavery. The underlying supports and eventual effects of this system were indicated, showing that it led to a definite superior-inferior relationship that still permeates much of the thinking of the South today. When this system was destroyed by the Civil War the South, trying to maintain this relationship, turned to the Ku Klux Klan. The development of the Klan throughout its various stages was shown, indicating that although it developed primarily as a Southern phenomenon it had great appeal outside the old South. The various theoretical and practical reasons for belief in Negro inferiority and White superiority, as outlined above, show the broad base of support the various segregationist organizations have. With these elements of the Southern heritage in mind we can now turn to the development of a Southern institution that is a product of all these previously mentioned factors as well as countless others: the Citizens' Councils.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>W. J. Cash, The Mind of the South (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941), p. 33.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>7</sup>Henry Savage, Jr., Seeds of Time (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1959), p. 186.

<sup>8</sup>Cash, op. cit., p. 117.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>10</sup>Arnold S. Rice, The Ku Klux Klan in American Politics (Washington, D. C.: Public Affairs Press, 1962), p. 118.

<sup>11</sup>Stanley F. Horn, Invisible Empire (Boston: The Riverside Press, 1939), p. 9.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>18</sup>William G. Brown, The Lower South in American History (New York: Peter Smith, 1930), p. 218.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Francis B. Simkins, The South, Old and New (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), p. 201.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 202.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 406.

<sup>26</sup>Rice, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>27</sup>John Moffatt Mecklin, The Ku Klux Klan (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1924), p. 5.

<sup>28</sup>Rice, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>31</sup>Mecklin, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>33</sup>Rice, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>44</sup>The New York Times Magazine, Aug. 11, 1963, p. 8.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

46Rice, op. cit., p. 121.

47Simkins, op. cit., p. 3.

48Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1944), Vol. I, p. 113.

49Ibid.

50William Brink and Louis Harris, The Negro Revolution in America (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), p. 31.

51Myrdal, op. cit., pp. 97-98.

52Ibid., p. 98.

53Ibid., p. 99.

54<sup>m</sup>"An Account of Some Conversations on U. S. 45," Newsweek, July 13, 1964, p. 22.

55Brink and Harris, op. cit., p. 142.



## CHAPTER II

### COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT

#### Introduction

It is the purpose of this chapter to explain the development of the Citizens' Council movement from its beginnings to the time when it became a powerful force throughout many parts of the South. Since background causal factors have already been discussed only the immediate or precipitating factors for the development of the Councils will be mentioned here. Their organization and leadership shall also be considered in this chapter. The manner in which the Councils are organized, on both a local and regional level, will be explained. Differences between the Klan and the Councils will be made evident. Those leaders that are the most influential in the Council programs will each receive considerable attention.

#### Precipitating Factors

##### Brown v. Board of Education

On May 17, 1954 the Supreme Court of the United States rendered its opinion in the case of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas. In this unanimous decision the Court overruled the old "separate but equal"

doctrine which it had propounded earlier. According to the "separate but equal" rule it was not unconstitutional for public facilities to be maintained by local governments on a basis of separation according to race; thus it was perfectly constitutional for state and local governments to provide separate schools for White and Negro children. In the Brown case, however, it was the Court's opinion that separation according to race in public schools has in its very nature inherent inequalities and that schools that practice segregation must desegregate or be in violation of the United States Constitution. This decision, of course, had the effect of striking at the segregation of the races in many public schools throughout the country.

While most of the country took the decision philosophically, or at least were resigned to the fact, there were many in the Southern portions of the United States who adamantly refused to accept the new ruling. As has been shown, it has long been a tradition in the South that the Negro and Caucasian races be separate in all relationships but those required by business or employment. Social intercourse has been avoided most rigorously by the vast majority of the White South. For the Supreme Court to say to them, "desegregate your school systems or you will be in violation of the Constitution of the United States," seemed to many as though the

Court had ordered the South to abandon what is often romantically referred to as "the Southern way of life." In some respects it was the Reconstruction period all over again. The majority in the North was attempting to impose upon the South its own values and social mores even though the South was opposed to them. In actual fact, the Court had struck a blow at one of the basic conventions of the Southern society. In retrospect, it seems inevitable that a reaction to this decision would occur, in some form or another. One form that it did take was the rise of an organization, the Citizens' Councils, which had as its basic purpose and reason for existence, the solidification of opposition to this threat to the cherished institution of segregation.

### "Black Monday"

The reaction that is of concern to this writer began a few weeks after the Court's ruling in the Brown case. A certain Tom Brady\* of Mississippi, a state circuit judge, had long been concerned with the relations of the races and "The Decision," as it later came to be called, only sharpened this interest. As a somewhat experienced public speaker, he began to repeat a speech to various audiences which warned of the dangers of

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\*Although a thorough Southerner, Brady was educated at Lawrenceville in New Jersey and at Yale.

integration. It became known by the title "Black Monday." At the urging of friends he eventually had it published under that title. "Black Monday" was, of course, the May 17 of the Court decision. This book contained almost all the important programs and philosophies that have been used by the segregationists and White supremacist organizations since 1954.<sup>1</sup> Within about a year the little book became a best seller. It was later reported that Judge Brady turned over all proceeds from it to the Citizens' Councils he wholeheartedly supported.<sup>2</sup>

Because Black Monday is probably the most complete exposition of Council theory, at least in its earlier stages of development, it is necessary to examine the book in some detail.\* Judge Brady accepts the traditional division of races into three main groupings: Caucasian, Mongoloid, and Negroid. It is his contention that because of miscegenation and mongrelization of these races the great civilizations of Egypt, India, and Rome collapsed.<sup>3</sup> Judge Brady makes the generalization that: "Whenever and wherever the white man has drunk the cup of black hemlock, whenever and wherever his blood has been infused with the blood of the Negro, the white man, his intellect and his culture have died."<sup>4</sup>

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\*Because the writer was unable to obtain a copy of Black Monday it was necessary that he use other sources in quoting the book.

A basic inferiority on the part of the Negro is assumed by Brady.

He [the Negro] was compelled to lay aside cannibalism, his barbaric savage customs. He was transported from aboriginal ignorance and superstition. He was given a language. A moral standard of values was presented to him, a standard he could never have created for himself and which he does not now appreciate. His soul was quickened. He was introduced to God. . . . The veneer has been rubbed on, but the inside is fundamentally the same. . . . The purpose of this comparison is not to embarrass or humiliate anyone. You can dress a chimpanzee, housebreak him and teach him to use a knife and fork, but it will take countless generations of evolutionary development, if ever, before you can convince him that a caterpillar or a cockroach is not a delicacy.<sup>5</sup>

Following this discussion a passionate plea is made to the Supreme Court judges to reverse their decision on the grounds that no law is ever above the mores of a society, and that if enforcement of the desegregation decision is attempted violence and revolution must follow.

The role of certain Jews in the integration and Communist movements is denounced by Brady. Integrationists and Communists are often equated, to some extent, by advocates of segregation. Judge Brady explains that the Jew should be most thankful to the United States because it has been more kind to the Jewish peoples of the world than any other nation.<sup>6</sup> After mentioning such notorious Jews as the Rosenbergs, Greenglasses, and Alger Hiss, Brady hedges somewhat and declares:

. . . Because Arthur Spingarn is President of the NAACP it does not follow that all Jews approve of this rabid organization. Yes, Karl Marx was a Jew . . . [but] let us remember the loyal American Jew is not responsible for Karl Marx. . . . Let us not harp on the Hisses and Rosenbergs, but remember the Disraelis, the Guggenheims, the Schiffs, the Strausses, the Einsteins and the many remarkable and benevolent members of this race, whose patriotic loyalty and devotion have been above suspicion and reproach.<sup>7</sup>

It would be difficult to make a case that Black Monday, on the basis of the above statements, is rabidly anti-Semitic, but certain implications are present and those with an already anti-Jewish outlook could use parts of Brady's book to bolster their views.

The Communist conspiracy played an important role, according to the Judge, in the socialization of the United States.

"There will be more FHA's and more corruption, and more TVA's, et ceteras. The Government will first control and then usurp the banking business, then it will manage and socialize transportation, agriculture and any other private enterprises where the totalitarian state will be advanced. This is but a part of what lies ahead of 'Black Monday.'" But what lay behind it was a Communist plot, hatched in 1936, to establish "a black empire" in the South, ruled by Negroes. The plan failed; for it the NAACP and CIO, with President Roosevelt's encouragement, substituted the plot to abolish segregation.<sup>8</sup>

The obvious goal of segregation is, of course, amalgamation and miscegenation of the races. "The Negro proposes to breed up his inferior intellect and whiten his skin, and 'blow out the light' in the white man's brain and muddy his skin," so says Brady.<sup>9</sup> From this it can be

assumed that Brady felt that should amalgamation take place, the Negro, rather than having his own level raised, would drag the Caucasian down.

The solution offered in Black Monday is total and complete segregation, and education of the American youth to the dangers of integration and the Communist conspiracy. Brady gives as a specific proposal the creation of an additional state, perhaps by purchase from Mexico, to which all Negroes in the United States could be shipped.<sup>10</sup> Exactly who would be considered a Negro is not specified, but it might be assumed that the traditional Southern interpretation of a Negro as an individual with one-eighth Negro blood in his veins would be accepted. In addition it was recommended that constitutional amendments be passed strengthening states' rights, providing for the popular election of the Supreme Court Justices and the Attorney General, and a special court to try all ". . . undesirables, perjurers, subversives, saboteurs, and traitors. . ." <sup>11</sup> The suggestion was also made that all states should quickly pass laws that would prevent the implementation of the Court's decision and if all else fails, they should close the public schools, and institute an economic boycott against all Negroes which would render many of them destitute and force them to leave the South.<sup>12</sup>

In a few words, it is Judge Brady's opinion that

to integrate the two races in the United States would be a catastrophe of the first magnitude and would probably lead to the downfall of the country. The Supreme Court, under socialist and Communist influences, made a terrible mistake in the Brown case and it must be rescinded. The states must find the means to oppose this decision and just about any means that work are acceptable, although violence is not directly appealed to. Integration is opposed on all possible grounds with the main emphasis being upon the basic superiority of the Caucasian race over the Negro, and the assumption that amalgamation would erase this superiority.

Many of the present leaders of the Councils would disavow Judge Brady's rather vitriolic interpretation of the relative worth of the two major races in the United States, even though they espouse the same theories on a less rabid scale. His comparison of the Negro to the chimpanzee is somewhat embarrassing to the more urbane and sophisticated racists. They prefer to speak of racial differences in a more guarded tone avoiding the somewhat coarse generalizations used by Brady. In essence, however, many of Brady's theories coincide with Council thought and programs. The Councils have merely adopted an approach that, in Madison Avenue terminology, could be called "the softer sell," as compared to the old hard-line approach. With this in mind it can be concluded



that Brady's book had considerable influence on the minds of the early founders of the Councils and is today closely related to the thought of current leaders.

### Early Growth

While Judge Tom Brady can be considered the Council's chief architect and intellectual mentor, the actual organizer and head construction foreman has been Robert "Tut" Patterson of Indianola, Mississippi.<sup>13\*</sup> After he became aware of the possible effect of the school-integration case Patterson began writing and talking to friends about various ways of opposing the Court decision. Although he first found little enthusiasm for his notions he eventually met with fourteen men in the home of D. H. Hawkins on the night of July 11, 1954 and made arrangements for a town meeting to form the first Citizens' Council.<sup>14</sup> Patterson was elected secretary of the organization. The first items on its agenda were to increase membership, and to interest other communities in establishing Councils of their own. The method of arousing interest was for the various leaders of the Citizens' Council to speak with citizens of other towns and to explain to them the purposes and goals of the Council and show them how to form one of their own.

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\*Patterson, in addition to being a former Mississippi football star, is also a former Major in the Army paratroops.

Patterson, the founder of the movement, was most active in this program. He and others traveled around the state telling audiences that:

. . . the threat of mongrelization won't really be eliminated until the two races are geographically separated, . . . As a race the Negro is definitely inferior to the white. The only fields in which they are superior are in their physical strength and their natural capacity as entertainers, making fun of themselves for the benefit of others.<sup>15</sup>

By mid-August Councils had been set up in seventeen other Mississippi counties,<sup>16</sup> and on October 12, 1954 the Association of Citizens' Councils of Mississippi was organized at Winona, Mississippi with Patterson being named Executive Secretary and Judge Brady on the executive board.<sup>17</sup> At this founding of the state organization were such notables as U. S. Representative John Bell Williams, Governor Hugh White and U. S. Senator James Eastland.<sup>18</sup> There were at that time 260 individual Councils in Mississippi.<sup>19</sup>

Although Patterson was far from being able to claim to be a scholar, he had graduated from the University of Mississippi with a degree in animal husbandry. He wrote various pamphlets for the Council in which he stated that the Councils are,

. . . dedicated to the maintenance of peace, good order and domestic tranquility in our Communities and in our State and to the preservation of our States' Rights. . . . If we are bigoted, prejudiced, un-American, etc., so were George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and our other illustrious forebears who believed in segregation. The fate of

our great nation may well rest in the hands of the Southern white people today. If we submit to this unconstitutional, judge-made integration law, the malignant powers of atheism, communism, and mongrelization will surely follow, . . .<sup>20</sup>

Such material was sent not only to community leaders in Mississippi but throughout the South, and increased Patterson's mail to about 300 letters a week.<sup>21</sup> In addition, to traveling extensively himself he organized a speakers' bureau to help him get the message across. There can be little doubt that in these early days of Council growth Robert Patterson was the spark plug that kept the movement from faltering.

At about the same time the Association of Citizens' Councils of Mississippi was being formed the first non-Mississippi Council was set up in Selma, Alabama. Initially the Councils gained their greatest support and strongest leaders from the black-belt sections of the South which have a farm economy and where Negroes usually outnumber Whites. In Sunflower County, Mississippi, where Indianola is located, the Negro population comprises 68% of the total.<sup>22</sup> That Council strength is so great in these areas is understandable when it is realized that the "danger" of Negro control over politics is more substantial than in areas with Negro minorities. Should Negroes be permitted to vote or have a voice in the running of local affairs, they could very easily gain control of local government, which is anathema to the

Southern Whites.

Although Patterson vehemently denied that the Councils were anti-Semitic, some of the literature he recommended for Council members was definitely so. Some of these materials were "The Cross and the Flag," written by the noted anti-Semitic Gerald L. K. Smith, "Common Sense," by Conde McGinley, "The American Nationalist," by Frank Britton,<sup>23</sup> "The Christian National Crusade," and "The White Sentinel."<sup>24</sup> One well known anti-Semitic, Rear Admiral John Crommelin (Ret.), was asked to speak at a Council meeting.<sup>25</sup> Crommelin is noted for such statements as:

The Negro is just a pawn for those who are behind all this agitation for racial equality. . . . The Negro is the malarial germ, but the Jew is the mosquito.<sup>26</sup>

At one time the Admiral ran for the Democratic nomination for the Senate from Alabama on an outright anti-Semitic platform, and accepted the help of both Lincoln Rockwell, leader of the American Nazi Party, and the infamous White supremacist John Kasper.<sup>27</sup> Crommelin is also credited with statements claiming that Eisenhower, Woodrow Wilson, and Franklin Roosevelt were all Jews. Since the early days of the Councils, however, it must be said that most, if not all, of the official statements coming from Council leadership denounce anti-Semitism. It seems that if there is any of this feeling in the Councils it is on a local or individual level and that

as a national or regional organization anti-Semitism is not a part of the over-all platform.

In May, 1955 the Supreme Court rendered its second great decision in the integration-segregation controversy. It was ordered that desegregation of public schools take place with "all deliberate speed." This action seemed to the segregationists proof positive that "Tut" Patterson and his cohorts were correct when they spoke of the immediate dangers of the earlier Supreme Court decision. Fuel was added to the fire in the formation of Citizens' Councils throughout the South. On June 5 of the same year the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People sponsored petitions calling for admission of Negroes into all White schools.<sup>28</sup> In Jackson, Mississippi the attempt was thwarted merely by the Council threatening to call all who signed the petition before a grand jury for investigation.<sup>29</sup> Membership in the Council in Jackson rose by leaps and bounds after this success. In Yazoo City, Mississippi the Council bought space in the local newspaper and printed the names of those who signed the desegregation petition and asked that all citizens note the names very carefully. Within a few days virtually all had removed their names due to various pressures.

Thus with the increase in integration pressure came a counter-pressure in resistance, manifested by

increases in Council membership. By the end of 1955 one survey showed 568 local segregation organizations in the South, with a membership of over 200,000.<sup>30</sup> The Citizens' Councils had by far the largest membership. South Carolina claimed 40,000, Mississippi 75,000, Georgia 60,000, and Louisiana 20,000.<sup>31</sup> Most of this growth took place in mid and late 1955 because there were few, if any, attempts to implement the 1954 desegregation decision immediately after the Supreme Court handed down its opinion. Beginning in the spring and summer of 1955, however, implementation was attempted on a large scale thereby giving definite purpose for the organization of the Councils. Robert Patterson put it this way: "You've got to have opposition to have a ball game."<sup>32</sup>

The formation of a national, or regional, organization first occurred in December, 1955 when a meeting was held in Memphis, Tennessee attended by Senators James Eastland and Strom Thurmond, Governor Marvin Griffin, Judge Tom Brady, William J. Simmons, and six U. S. Representatives.<sup>33</sup> The purpose of the meeting was to create a national organization to organize and direct efforts of segregationists throughout the country. The name that was given to it was the Federation for Constitutional Government. To the dismay of the founders it did not live up to expectations. Within a relatively short time it died a quiet death and has not been revived.

A more durable Citizens' Council national organization was set up on April 7, 1956 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Called the Citizens' Councils of America, it linked the Council organizations of Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Texas with the States Rights Council of Georgia, the North Carolina Defenders of States' Rights, the Tennessee Federation of Constitutional Government, and the Virginia Defenders of Sovereignty and Individual Liberties.<sup>34</sup> The founder of the entire movement, Robert "Tut" Patterson, became Executive Secretary.<sup>35</sup> Roy V. Harris, of Augusta, Georgia, became President.<sup>36</sup> Some consider the Federation for Constitutional Government to be the forerunner of the Citizens' Councils of America, but in any case the latter was by far of more importance in subsequent events.

The Citizens' Councils of America was never intended to have close ties with local organizations, and in fact does not. The relation of the national organization to the various state associations of Councils was to be similar to the relation of the state associations to local Councils. That is, the Citizens' Councils of America was an association of associations. At the formation of the national association were official delegates from those states having fully organized state organizations. Two members were designated by each state group

to serve on the organizing committee which was to submit to the various state associations a proposed Charter and By Laws for ratification.<sup>37</sup>

The national organization was not ever intended to be a central head of all the segregation organizations, but rather a kind of clearing house through which communications could be established between the various states. The leaders fully realized that a tight, close-knit organization would be much more vulnerable to legal action than thousands of autonomous local groups each operating in the manner they saw fit. In addition it would have run cross grain to the entire movement if such a centralized structure had been erected. One of the basic tenants of the movement was local autonomy, as opposed to centralization.

Thus a little over two years after its beginning the Citizens' Council movement had grown to such proportions as to make possible the formation of a national, or at least a regional, organization. Between July 11, 1954, the date of formation of the first Council, and April 7, 1956, when the Citizens' Council of America was organized, the movement grew most rapidly in terms of members and strength. It was also during this time that the current leaders came to the fore and took control. These men included William J. Simmons, Leander Perez, Roy V. Harris, Sam Engelhardt, Asa Carter, and others who will be dis-



cussed in detail at a later time. Had not the Supreme Court handed down its momentous decision in 1954 it could be argued that the Citizens' Council movement would never have been conceived. There is little doubt, in any case, that the desegregation decision of May 17, 1954 was a major immediate cause in the development of the Citizens' Councils in the South.

### Organization

Essentially the Citizens' Councils throughout the South are autonomous organizations each with their own leaders, plans, and goals. Their key point of agreement is opposition to integration.<sup>38</sup> On this point all Councils are firmly agreed, and it is this understanding, regardless of differences, that usually draws them together in times of crisis. Cooperation between Councils tends to come from a focusing on a single incident, rather than broad, continual, mutual planning.<sup>39</sup> In peaceful times the Councils have relatively little to busy themselves with and contact with sister Councils declines. In times of crisis, however, information on tactics is passed, leaders huddle to discuss plans of action, and the Councils tend to draw together.

When the Councils first began organizing it was claimed that they were a somewhat secretive group, as indicated by The New York Times in its first article

about them. The Councils were referred to as "semi-secret" and it was reported that "Tut" Patterson was the only official whose name had been made public.<sup>40</sup> This secretiveness, if there ever was any, quickly dissipated as the Councils grew. Within a few months of their origins, the Councils were publicly appealing for members. Their leaders wanted a broadly based movement from which to launch the forces of segregation. The notion of a small select conspiratorial structure never played an important part in the formation of the Councils.

There are no fancy titles in the Citizens' Councils as is the case in the Klan -- no "imperial wizards," or "grand dragons."

Each Council simply [has] a board of directors and four committees: an information and education committee "to educate our citizens, black and white, to the advantages of segregation and the dangers of integration"; a membership and finance committee to "seek white patriotic voters for membership"; a legal committee to "anticipate moves by agitators (and) recommend application of economic pressure to troublemakers"; and a political committee to "screen all candidates (and) discourage Negro registration by every legal means."<sup>41</sup>

The term "economic pressure" was later dropped. The Councils, as indicated, are organized on a businesslike basis, thus eliminating the old paraphernalia of earlier segregation organizations.

In October, 1955 William J. Simmons, an early leader of Mississippi Councils, put out his first issue of The Citizens' Council which became in November, 1956

the official publication of the Citizens' Councils of America. It was at first a monthly publication using a newspaper format. In October, 1961 the "newspaper" became a "magazine" and the emphasis shifted from presenting segregation news to an editorial sheet for guest writers. The Citizens' Council became simply The Citizen.

In the second issue of The Citizens' Council, put out in November, 1955, Robert Patterson outlined the way in which to set up a Council. He stressed the necessity of local incentive in the formation of such a group. He recommended that a local leader, or group of leaders, call a meeting to which from ten to twenty other community leaders would be invited.<sup>42</sup> At this meeting the question of whether or not the community needs a Council should be discussed and a vote should be taken on this issue. If it is decided that the community is in need of a Council a temporary chairman should be elected and a date set for the next meeting. All should be asked to bring friends they feel would be interested. A nominating committee should also be elected to present a slate of officers to those attending the next meeting. At the second meeting Patterson recommended that a speaker be present to tell them of the erroneous doctrines behind the Supreme Court decision in 1954 and other pertinent information.<sup>43</sup> After the speech the officers should be elected including the following: Chairman, Vice-Chairman,

Secretary and Treasurer, and a Board of Directors. The Chairman and Directors would later appoint the four committees. It was suggested that in rural areas county-wide organization might be most effective while in urban communities the precinct type organization would probably be best. After local units have been organized an area chairman from a number of Councils can be chosen to represent the area in the State association.<sup>44</sup>

The State association of Councils was the inevitable daughter of success of the local Councils, These organizations were usually formed by a convention of representatives of local Councils. In Mississippi, where the first state-wide group was established, the purpose was, in the words of Robert Patterson:

. . . to provide an agency to act as an information center and as a co-ordinating agency for the various local Councils. Through the State Association, speakers were made available to carry the message to interested groups and to civil clubs all over Mississippi and nearby sister states.<sup>45</sup>

Funds to support the State association of Councils came from donations and the local Councils rather than state-wide dues.

### Leadership

Leadership of the Councils of a local level generally comes from the Chambers of Commerce, the landowners, and business men.<sup>46</sup> In some areas, however, much of the rank and file membership comes from the lower

income groups. With "respectable citizens" constituting the leaders of the Council organization, the great desire for respectability on the part of the Councils is partially fulfilled.<sup>47</sup> The Councils continually try to upgrade their leaders' stations in life to secure the respectability they desire.<sup>48</sup> Part of this desire has stemmed from the fact that much resentment was directed toward the Ku Klux Klan for its hoodlum-like activities, and Council leaders do not want the same fate to befall their organization. As will be shown later, when it appeared that a particular leader was bringing condemnation and scorn upon the Councils because of irresponsible statements and activities, other leaders saw to it that his power and influence were sharply curtailed. For a Council to be really effective it is necessary that the citizenry be inclined to support its activities. Actions and/or statements that tend to lessen this support are condemned by Council leaders as are those responsible for them.

William J. Simmons\*

Of the various Citizens' Council organizations in the South the one that has perhaps the most influence is that headed by William J. Simmons in Jackson, Mississippi. From the Plaza building in Jackson, Simmons

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\*Although the name William J. Simmons is the same in the case of the current Council leader being discussed and of the former Klan leader during the 1920's, there appears to be no blood relation between the two men.

edits the official publication of the Councils entitled The Citizen. Simmons\* could perhaps be called the "administrator" of the Citizens' Councils.<sup>49</sup> He began his rise to power in the movement in the spring of 1955 when Jackson organized its first Council,<sup>50</sup> and quickly became its Secretary.<sup>51</sup> Later that same year he published the first issue of The Citizens' Council that was later, it should be remembered, changed to The Citizen. Since late 1955 it has been the usual practice for membership fees to include the price of a subscription to The Citizen, thus giving to Simmons a vast audience for the airing of his views.<sup>52</sup> However, he does not want to bind the hundreds of Councils into any hierarchy or strictly defined organization. On the contrary, the looser the network the less responsibility the leaders need to take.<sup>53</sup> Local autonomy is emphasized by Simmons. The state and national organizations are financed by the local groups, for about one-third of each member's dues goes to the State association which generally acts as coordinator of the various Councils.<sup>54</sup> In addition to being the editor of The Citizen Simmons is President of the Citizens' Forum, an organization that sponsors speakers for radio and television.<sup>55</sup> Simmons

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\*Simmons is a very large man, easily over six feet tall, whose most distinguishing feature is his mustache which is described by his opponents as Hitlerian but which is, in actual fact, much more abundant than was Hitler's.

is considered by some to be "the most influential figure in the Association of Citizens' Councils of America."<sup>56</sup>

In an interview with James G. Cook, author of The Segregationists, Simmons gave some very candid views on the Council movement and the race problem in general. Because he is such an influential figure in the Councils his views are important. Asked about economic pressure being applied by the Councils to achieve their aims, he replied:

"No, there never has been any economic pressure by the Councils as such, . . . There never has been any organized attempt or recommendations to that effect by any Council. . . . As for economic pressure on Negroes themselves, when the petition for integrated schools was presented here in Jackson (in 1955) by forty-three Negroes, all of them lost their jobs except those in public employ, but to my knowledge only one of their employers was a Citizens' Council member," he added, "You can just expect them to react against the source of their annoyance. So it is with Negroes who persist in acting against what their employers think is correct."<sup>57</sup>

The fact that anti-Semitic charges had been made upon the Citizens' Councils was mentioned to Simmons and he answered:

"The Council is definitely not anti-Semitic or anti-Catholic, since we obviously have members from both groups, . . . If you ask me, if there were no anti-Semitism, some of those Jewish money-raising outfits would manufacture it out of whole cloth. It would make about as much sense for us to be anti-Semitic as to be anti-snow in Alaska. It has nothing to do with our problem. For that matter, Methodists have had more to do with promoting integration than have Jews, and there is even a Baptist on the board of the NAACP."<sup>58</sup>

Differing from some members of the Councils,

Simmons prefers the "soft sell" approach and is the personification of the urbane, sophisticated, racist.<sup>59</sup> Speaking on inferiority he said:

Rather than use a word such as "inferiority," . . . let me put it in this sense: In terms of the ability to adapt to Western civilization, the colored has shown himself to be less capable than the white.<sup>60</sup>

He goes on to say that it is his opinion that the threat to the South stems basically from ". . . a wave of equalitarian philosophy that started in the early part of the twentieth century, primarily with the progressive educationists, such as John Dewey."<sup>61</sup> It is his opinion that faculties of community schools ought not to be free from community pressure.<sup>62</sup> In an article printed in his publication The Citizen he stated that:

An all-out war is being waged against the white race. War is also being waged against those virtues which have historically characterized our race -- personal courage, loyalty to family and country, thrift, individual responsibility, probity, initiative, the spirit of adventure and love of freedom.<sup>63</sup>

Thus like many, Simmons sees the integration problem as one of an attack on the basic structure of American and Southern society.

#### Louis Hollis

Closely connected with Simmons' activities in Jackson is Louis Hollis, Executive Director of the Jackson Council and a member of the John Birch Society.<sup>64</sup> In addition to these activities Hollis is one of the managing



secretaries of the Councils' radio and television forum. Like many engaged in the fight to preserve segregation Hollis identifies the forces of integration with liberalism, and segregation with conservatism. One of his goals is the impeachment and removal of Earl Warren from the Supreme Court, and of course the reversal of the desegregation decision. Hollis is most anxious to gain closer ties with the Union of South Africa because he feels there are many similarities between the problems of that nation and the South, with particular reference to the racial problem. It is his opinion that like the Whites of South Africa, the Whites of the Southern portions of the United States would rather die than surrender to the forces of integration.<sup>65</sup>

#### Leander Perez

Another of the national or regional leaders of the Councils is Leander Perez\* of Louisiana. He is, in the words of David Brinkley, NBC news commentator, "one of the few remaining political dictators in the country." Perez, a behind-the-scenes power in Louisiana state politics, was at times a supporter of the Long machine, but is now its enemy.<sup>66</sup> A major source of his power arises from his position as President of the Plaquemines

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\*Perez is a rapid-fire talker and seems virtually to explode with energy. He is extremely nervous and is constantly brushing imaginary crumbs and tobacco ashes from the table, puffing on a cigar through a blunt holder, and slapping the table at pauses in the conversation.

Parish Council.\* Perez has often been present at various Citizens' Council gatherings such as the formation of the Federation for Constitutional Government in 1955, where he was named a member of its advisory committee.<sup>67</sup>

A key leader of white New Orleans' resistance to school integration, a chief architect of the awesome structure of anti-integration laws enacted by the Louisiana Legislature, Leander Henry Perez, Sr., has been the most powerful force for segregation in his state.<sup>68</sup>

Perez deviates quite a bit from the "soft sell" approach that has characterized William J. Simmons. He prefers blunt talk and once shouted to a Council rally in New Orleans: "Don't wait for your daughters to be raped by these Congolese, . . ."<sup>69</sup> In an interview with Reese Cleghorn, Perez voiced the following views:

The Negro is just used. . . . this is part of the Communist cold war. The Jews have been using the N. A. A. C. P. to their own purposes. The . . . ultimate Communist conspiracy against America . . . is a mongrelized people so helpless that national defense and national security would be a forgotten thing.<sup>70</sup>

To support his opinion that Negroes are unfit for the benefits society grants to White citizens Perez oftentimes quotes from the 1902 edition of the Encyclopedia Brittanica which states that:

The cranial sutures (close) much earlier in the Negro than in other races. To this premature

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\*This "Council" referred to is not a Citizens' Council but rather a Louisiana local governmental unit.

ossification of the skull, preventing all further development of the brain, many pathologists have attributed the inherent mental inferiority of the blacks. . . . Nearly all observers admit that the Negro child is on the whole quite as intelligent as those of other human varieties, but that on arriving at puberty all further progress seems to be arrested. . . . 'It is more correct to say of the Negro that he is non-moral than immoral.' . . . No full-blooded Negro has ever been distinguished as a man of science, a poet, or an artist, and the fundamental equality claimed for him by ignorant or willful philanthropists is belied by the whole history of the race throughout the historic period."<sup>71</sup>

Such rabid views came in conflict with those of the Catholic church and led to the excommunication of Perez, as well as two other individuals.<sup>72</sup>

#### Roy V. Harris

The official head of the Citizens' Council of America is Roy V. Harris,\* political king-maker and lawyer of Augusta, Georgia. In that state he is a leader of the "cracker" factions of the rural areas, and is one of the most rabid and influential leaders of the segregation movement.<sup>73</sup> Harris publishes The Augusta Courier.

In contrast with the conviviality of Harris in person his newspaper is superbly splenetic. His headlines, which are printed in red ink, breathe fire.

He pictures the desegregation movement as part of a plan to overthrow the United States -- a plan devised by Socialists and Communists and aided and abetted by Jack and Robert Kennedy: . . .<sup>74</sup>

Like most Council leaders he believes that intermarriage

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\*Harris, in years passed, has served in the Georgia House of Representatives as Speaker of that body. During the 1930's and 1940's his political power was considerably greater than it presently is.

is high on the list of Negro goals. In one article in his paper the writer declared that:

. . . forced integration of the races inevitably results in interracial marriage. . . . Integration means intermarriage and intermarriage means the destruction of the white race.<sup>75</sup>

The newspaper tends to editorialize news stories as indicated by the following headlines:

Republicans Show Evidence of Growing Dumber and Dumber<sup>76</sup>

Kennedys Wage War on White People of South, While Commies Rip the U. S.

Equalitarian Dogma Is the Scientific Hoax of the Century [9] University of Virginia Professor of Psychology Charges

Power-Drunk, Vote-Hunting Politicians in Washington Go on Rampage While Crime Runs Amuck in U. S. Capital<sup>77</sup>

Although there was reportedly an attempt on the part of certain Mississippians, presumably William J. Simmons, to merge The Courier with The Citizen Harris refused because he wanted to remain "independent."<sup>78</sup>

Asa "Ace" Carter  
Asa "Ace" Carter

In the early years of the Councils there was one leader in the Birmingham, Alabama area that is of particular interest now because of the choice he offered to the Councils. Asa "Ace" Carter\* was more in the Ku Klux Klan vein than is generally the case with most Council members. He was not above using violence when he thought

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\*Carter first gained notoriety as a radio commentator who denounced "rock-and-roll" and "be-bop" music as a part of a Communist plot to overthrow White supremacy in the South.

it necessary. Carter led the North Alabama Citizens' Council in the mid-1950's. During the period of his leadership the virulent young man was credited with efforts to impeach Governor Folsom of Alabama because, as Carter said: "He has willfully neglected his duty to respect and enforce the constitutional provisions, and state laws, dealing with segregation of members of the . . . [two] races."<sup>79</sup> In April, 1956 Nat "King" Cole gave a concert in Birmingham, Alabama and was attacked by members of Carter's Citizens' Council.<sup>80</sup> Of the five men arrested, four were Citizens' Council members.<sup>81</sup> Carter said he could not understand what the fuss was about because he had ". . . swung on niggers himself."<sup>82</sup> In addition to the violence associated with Carter, he brought anti-Semitism into his Council.<sup>83</sup> As mentioned earlier, anti-Semitism in Citizens' Councils is the exception rather than the rule, but this is one of the exceptions. His was a Christian organization, but it was reported that Jews could join if they were Christians. In March, 1956 Ted Hagen, Chairman of the East Birmingham Citizens' Council resigned because of a feud with Carter.<sup>84</sup> The Councils in Alabama eventually split between Carter's North Alabama Citizens' Councils and the Central Alabama Citizens' Councils headed by State Senator Sam Engelhardt in Montgomery.<sup>85</sup> Because of his ultra-extremist statements and actions Carter lost his influence in Alabama

to Engelhardt. Carter is no longer a major leader of the segregation forces.

### Sam Engelhardt

Like many Southern politicians Sam Engelhardt found it expedient to become associated with the Citizens' Councils, but unlike most he became a leader of the movement. It seems generally to be the case that men behind the scenes are the admitted leaders of the Councils, as opposed to elected officials, but Engelhardt is an exception. He was the prime mover in organizing a mammoth segregation rally in Montgomery, Alabama on February 10, 1956.<sup>86</sup> Between ten and fifteen thousand people attended this rally to hear such speakers as Attorney General Eugene Cook of Georgia, Robert "Tut" Patterson, William J. Simmons, the Mayor of Montgomery, and U. S. Senator James Eastland.<sup>87</sup> Governor James Folsom was noticeably absent from the rally due to his former criticism of the Councils.<sup>88</sup> Asa Carter's anti-Semitism, his admitted association with hoodlums, and the support given Sam Engelhardt at the rally he led in Montgomery, all combined eventually to give to Engelhardt control of the Councils in Alabama.

The leaders of the Councils that have been mentioned are certainly not the only ones of prominence in the Citizens' Council movement and in some circumstances they may not even be the most important ones. They are,

however, when viewed over a long period of time, those with the most consistent strong influence over Council activity. Other leaders that at various times have played important, if not decisive roles, include: Ross Barnett, former Governor of Mississippi; Lester Maddox, influential Atlanta restaurant owner; Richard D. Morphew, Managing Editor of the official publication of the Citizens' Councils, The Citizen; John Bell Williams, U. S. Representative from Mississippi; and, of course, Robert "Tut" Patterson, Executive Secretary of the Citizens' Councils of Mississippi.

#### Conclusion

This, then, has been the development of the Citizens' Councils. From mid-1954 until the present time they have been growing, with considerable fluctuation, both in terms of members and power. It has been shown how they developed from a small-town gathering to an inter-state system of segregation units. Although the background for the development of such an organization goes all the way back to pre-Civil War days, the initial impetus for its growth can be precisely pointed to: the Supreme Court desegregation decision of May 17, 1954. Beginning shortly after this, under the leadership of Robert Patterson and following Tom Brady's ideas, the Councils began their climb to a position of power. With few setbacks they continued to expand until the national

organization was formed in the spring of 1956. Following this, expansion was horizontal in nature and less rapid than before. With national and state organizations set up the Councils could concentrate on consolidation of power and increasing the number of local chapters. Although the Citizens' Councils of America was intended to serve as a kind of clearing house and headquarters for Council activity, the local level was intended to be the main focus of activity and action, with little centralized control.

Although the leaders of the Councils come from varied walks of life, those who have remained leaders over a long period of time tend to come from the upper-middle classes. They are often political leaders and have considerable influence in their particular areas. Such men as William J. Simmons, Leander Perez, and Roy V. Harris are considered to be king-makers in their respective states as well as Council leaders. With these facts fresh in mind it is now appropriate to turn to a discussion of Council goals and methods.



FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>James G. Cook, The Segregationists (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1962), p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>3</sup>John B. Martin, The Deep South Says Never (New York: Ballantine Books, 1957), p. 16.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Cook, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>14</sup>Martin, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

<sup>15</sup>Cook, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>17</sup>Robert B. Patterson, "The Citizens' Council: A History" (A published speech given by R. B. Patterson to The Annual Leadership Conference of the Citizens' Councils of America on October 26, 1963), p. 2.

<sup>18</sup>"The Citizens' Council," Time, Dec. 12, 1955, p. 25.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Martin, op. cit., p 22.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>24</sup>Cook, op. cit., p. 154.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>27</sup>Mark Sherwin, The Extremists (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963), p. 153.

<sup>28</sup>Martin, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>33</sup>The New York Times, Dec. 30, 1955, p. 12.

<sup>34</sup>Cook, op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>36</sup>W. J. Simmons, "Members of Editorial Advisory Board," The Citizen, (Nov., 1963), p. 10.

<sup>37</sup>"Citizens' Councils Formed Into National Organization at Historic April Meeting," The Citizens' Council, May, 1956, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup>The New York Times, Feb. 26, 1956, Part IV, p. 9.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>The New York Times, Nov. 21, 1954, p. 52.

<sup>41</sup>Cook, op. cit., p. 53.

<sup>42</sup>Robert Patterson, "Organization of a Local Citizens' Council," The Citizens' Council, (Nov., 1955), p. 1.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

45Patterson, "The Citizens' Council: A History," op. cit., pp. 2-3.

46Dan Wakefield, "Eye of the Storm," The Nation, (May 7, 1960), p. 403.

47David Halberstam, "The White Citizens' Councils," Commentary, (Oct., 1956), p. 295.

48Martin, op. cit., p. 13.

49Reese Cleghorn, "The Segs," Esquire, (Jan., 1964), p. 136.

50Cook, op. cit., p. 76.

51Martin, op. cit., p. 76.

52Ibid., p. 78.

53Dan Wakefield, "Respectable Racism: Dixies' Citizens' Councils," The Nation, (Oct. 22, 1955), p. 340.

54Martin, op. cit., p. 26.

55Cook, op. cit., p. 67.

56Ibid., p. 66.

57Ibid., p. 75.

58Ibid., p. 76.

59Cleghorn, op. cit., p. 136.

60Ibid.

61Ibid.

62Ibid.

63William J. Simmons, "Organization: The Key to Victory," The Citizen, (Feb., 1962), p. 7.

64Cook, op. cit., p. 77.

65Ibid., p. 81.

66Martin, op. cit., p. 142.

67The New York Times, Dec. 30, 1955, p. 12.

68Cook, op. cit., p. 194.

69 Ibid.

70 Cleghorn, op. cit., p. 134.

71 Cook, op. cit., p. 204.

72 Cleghorn, op. cit., p. 134.

73 The New York Times, Sept. 9, 1957, p. 18.

74 Cook, op. cit., p. 103.

75 The Augusta Courier, Jan. 27, 1964, p. 4.

76 Ibid., p. 3.

77 Cook, op. cit., p. 103.

78 Ibid., p. 102.

79 The New York Times, March 10, 1956, p. 14.

80 Douglas Carter, "Civil War in Alabama's Citizens' Council," The Reporter, (May 17, 1956), p. 19.

81 "Alabama: Who the Hoodlums Are," Newsweek, April 23, 1956, p. 32.

82 Ibid.

83 Carter, op. cit., p. 19.

84 The New York Times, March 17, 1956, p. 10.

85 The New York Times, March 6, 1956, p. 24.

86 The New York Times, Feb. 11, 1956, p. 38.

87 Martin, op. cit., p. 41

88 The New York Times, Feb. 11, 1956, p. 38.

## CHAPTER III

### COUNCIL GOALS AND METHODS

#### Introduction

The goals of the Citizens' Councils and the methods used in obtaining them are the subject of this chapter. It should be kept in mind that much of what is discussed here is derived, partially at any rate, from those individuals just mentioned in the previous section. This is not to say that their views have been dictatorially pressed upon the Councils, but rather that their personalities undoubtedly shape Council policies. Since, for the most part, the leaders of a movement are the voice of that movement, their opinions are important in any consideration of the purposes and goals of the organization they lead. From the opinions expressed by Council leaders many of its goals are already manifest, but a more detailed discussion of goals and methods is necessary to understand them fully.

#### Goals

Although many of the goals of the Citizens' Councils are readily evident it is necessary to examine them with care. An effort will be made to differentiate between the avowed and real goals of the Councils if a difference exists. It is not uncommon for the avowed

goals of an organization to be in reality mere camouflage covering its real goals or reasons for existence. Where this is the case with the Citizens' Councils the real purposes will be indicated.

In terms of one immediate goal all Citizens' Councils, regardless of where a particular one might be, are in agreement. This goal is one of maintaining segregation where it now exists and of extending it where it does not. As William J. Simmons put it: "The short-range goal of most Council members is to maintain the system of legal apartheid which existed relatively unchallenged before May 17, 1954, . . ." <sup>1</sup> This is perhaps the one unifying belief or goal of all Council members. On this point all are agreed. The various methods of implementing such separation do cause a divergence of opinion.

The official program of the Councils was outlined in an article published by the Citizens' Council of Jackson, Mississippi. In this small two page publication a five point program is outlined:

1. Prevent Race-Mixing. Racial integrity is essential to civilization and liberty. The fate of the white man (and woman) in the Congo and other new African nations is a stern warning!
2. Avoid Violence. Experience has proved that where integration occurs, violence becomes inevitable. Peaceful operation of segregated schools in the South proves that social separation of the races is best for all concerned.
3. Maintain and Restore Legal Segregation. As growing disorder in Washington, D. C., shows, if

segregation breaks down the social structure breaks down. The Communists hope to achieve disintegration through integration in America!

4. Defend States' Rights. The states are the source of all governmental power, local and Federal. Under the Tenth Amendment, the states have the reserved power to decide questions of segregation. Federal usurpation of any such power is a violation of the Constitution.

5. Reverse the "Black Monday" Decision. The Supreme Court's school integration decision of May 17, 1954 is a patent perversion of the Constitution, based on a false "science." If it stands, social segregation and laws against racial intermarriage will be subject to judicial condemnation. Such a prospect is intolerable!<sup>2</sup>

In an interview William J. Simmons\* stated that it was his personal opinion that the best solution would be the establishment of a Negro state or the mass exodus of all Negroes to Africa.<sup>3</sup> Regarding the notion of an all-Negro state, Simmons believed that Mississippi was unsuitable for such a development.<sup>4</sup>

There is a movement within the Mississippi Councils to add to the United States Constitution an amendment that would prevent national power from encroaching on the "internal affairs of the state."<sup>5</sup> Other Councils outside Mississippi would undoubtedly support such an amendment. Another legal aspect of implementation of the Councils' goal to preserve segregation is the use of the term "interposition" which is defined as: ". . . a doctrine

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\*Simmons, in his position as chief propagandist of the Councils, is, in all probability, the author of the five point program quoted above.

that some contend enables the states to refuse to implement a Supreme Court decision they believe unconstitutional."6

In an editorial in The Citizens' Council the following opinion was expressed:

For 23 years the American system of government has been undergoing a profound revolution. In the name of "democracy" and "equality" we have seen the unrelenting concentration of powers in a central totalitarian bureaucracy.

It is but the most appalling of a series of usurpations. . . .

There is one course of action that strikes at the root of the evil -- the evil that darkly threatens to destroy our dual sovereignty form of government. That course is INTERPOSITION!

The doctrine of Interposition, or State-Veto, is far removed from any mere legal manoeuvre. It is rather a whole philosophy of government rooted in the very nature of our Union of 48 separate political communities.7

The purpose of the use of such a term is, of course, to advance acceptance of the concept which would enable states to ignore the desegregation decisions of the Supreme Court.

Thus with respect to the avowed goal of segregation all else appears to be geared to the implementation of this end. In the eyes of the Council member,

Integration represents darkness, regimentation, totalitarianism, communism and destruction. Segregation represents the freedom to choose one's associates, Americanism, State sovereignty, and the survival of the white race.8

Segregation means separation of the races, but for some this separation is, at best, absolute; meaning no contact whatsoever between the races or, at least, complete separation in all social matters allowing only for the most



minimal interracial contact. This is obviously the primary avowed goal of the Councils, and many of the other goals are actually means to achieve the ultimate end: segregation of the races.

With the primary avowed goal of the Councils laid bare, the question must be asked: what differences, if any, exist between this professed goal and the real goal, or goals, as evidenced by the actions of the Councils? Segregation is certainly a real goal of the Councils, but is it a normative goal, that is, something to be desired by the Councils in and because of the inherent qualities within its self, or is segregation merely a prescriptive goal, that is, something that is desired because it leads to another goal? More simply, is segregation desired merely because of its intrinsic qualities or is it sought as a means to other ends not spelled out by the Councils?

To answer this question it is necessary briefly to look at the consequences of segregation. There is little doubt that it has contributed to the development of the Negro, particularly in the South, into a second or third class citizen, if a citizen at all, who is denied the legal, social, financial, and political rights possessed by the Caucasian citizen. Countless statistics support this statement as well as easily observable phenomena. The Negro can work only at substantially lower rates than those paid his White counterpart. Is this by-product

one of the things that segregationists really, above all else, desire to maintain? Is segregation advocated merely because it is the main support of White supremacy in the economic realm? There can be little doubt that the employer of a Negro would prefer that the going rate of Negro wages remain the same, and there is also little doubt that this rate would increase if the Negro's position in society were raised, which most agree would be a result of desegregation on a broad scale. It seems likely, at the very least, that economic factors play some role in the desire of many Southern citizens to maintain their system of segregation.

In addition to this possible economic basis for a belief in White supremacy there is also the notion that Whites fear granting equality to Negroes for political reasons. There is no doubt that the Negroes have great potential strength if the ballot were given them. In national elections this potential strength has already become actual power, for the role the Negroes played in the 1960 election was crucial, and it is likely that without the strong support they gave to John F. Kennedy he would not have been elected.<sup>9</sup> In the Southern sections of the United States the Negro comprises such large percentages of the population to be able, if he had the vote, to wield tremendous, perhaps decisive, political power. In Mississippi the Negroes constitute 42% of the total

population, but only 7% of the registered voters; in South Carolina 35% against 8%; in Louisiana 32% against 14%; in Alabama 30% against 5%; and in Georgia 28% against 6%.<sup>10</sup> In certain areas of these and other states the Negro far outnumbers his White neighbors and could easily control the government in these areas if he had the vote. Quite naturally the Whites who now hold power by denying the vote to the Negro are most unwilling to relinquish this power, and use every means possible to prevent Negro participation in the electoral process.

The social status of the Negro is definitely inferior to that of the Caucasian in the South. Segregation is the mainstay of this aspect of inferiority, and if it were removed the eventual supposed, and probable real result would be a relative rise in the status of the Negro vis a' vis his White counterpart. It seems to be human nature to be pleased with one's position in life if someone else, or some other class, is lower than one's own. This is, of course, not always one-hundred per cent true, but it does seem fair to say in a general sense. Thus when the person or class that is at the lower end of the social strata begins to rise, it appears as though the positions of other persons or classes has fallen. Such a decrease in social standing, real or imagined, is unpleasant to those who experience it. This fear of losing their superior social status is probably more

subconscious than conscious on the part of most segregationists. It appears, therefore, that segregation serves the latent function of supporting the superior social status of the Southern Caucasian.

Although economic, political and social factors have to be considered probable underlying reasons or motives in the desire to maintain segregation, there is another factor that seems to play an even more important role. This is the fear on the part of White Southerners that integration will eventually lead to miscegenation and the "mongrelization" of the Caucasian race. Some see this danger arising from a diabolical plot on the part of Negro leaders, others say it is a Communist plot, and still others say it would be the natural result of race-mixing. But regardless of the basic cause integration is considered by all the first step on the road to mongrelization and is to be avoided at almost any cost.

Throughout all the literature put out by the Councils there is constant reference to the dangers of miscegenation and the disastrous consequences to be expected where it is practiced widely. Closely connected with this is an unreasoning sexual fear on the part of many Southern Whites, of the Negro.<sup>11</sup>

Segregationists . . . are concerned about the color of their posterity, and many of them are hooked on the fear that the pedestaled white ladies of the

South secretly lust for a "Negro man of their choice."<sup>12</sup>

But even more fearful is the notion of the Negro males insulting and assaulting White women. Most of the leaders of the Councils believe that intermarriage of the races is a major goal of the Negro leaders in this country. In the October, 1958 issue of The Citizens' Council the headlines declared that: "Mixers' Aim Is Intermarriage."<sup>13</sup> Roy V. Harris' newspaper had as one of its headlines in bold red type: "White, Negro Intermarriages Increasing in Washington; Some Protestant Churches Urging Interracial Marriages."<sup>14</sup> The latter article attempted to show that as a result of integration in Washington, D. C., intermarriages increased greatly. The connection that most Council spokesmen make between integration and intermarriage indicates that they tend to be of the opinion that the one inevitably leads to the other; indeed, many seem to equate the two terms. That intermarriage is something to be avoided is as basic a belief with Council leaders and members as any belief can be. It therefore seems fair to say that integration is opposed, and segregation supported, partially at any rate, because of fears on the part of Council members of miscegenation.

In summary, it appears accurate to say that the Citizens' Councils have as their goals the following: continued social segregation of the races at least, and

total separation at best; avoidance at almost any cost of miscegenation; continued White supremacy in all regions where contact is necessary; prevention of Federal enforcement of the "Black Monday" decision and its eventual revocation; and, as might be assumed from what has been said, in the general area of politics, "conservatization," as Governor George Wallace of Alabama put it, of the entire public attitude.

### Methods

The methods of the Councils used in implementing their goals naturally vary greatly from place to place and from situation to situation, but there are some patterns to be found. The term "methods" refers to the ways in which the Councils oppose the forces they deem evil or undesirable, and support or further their ideals and goals. It would, perhaps, be useful to categorize Council methods into these groupings: economic, legal, political, and social. In general the methods of the Citizens' Councils fall into these classifications, whatever may be the situation at hand.

Whereas the Ku Klux Klan often used violence to achieve its aims, the Councils prefer not to rely on such means for achievement of its goals when others are effective. "In truth, violence has not been necessary. The organization . . . possessed a weapon just as effective as direct violence -- economic pressure."<sup>15</sup> Although

it is denied that the Councils use economic pressure there is little doubt that individual members do. In one instance a certain Gus Courts revealed in testimony before a Senate Judiciary Subcommittee that because of his activities in trying to organize Negro voters in Mississippi he was summoned by the Citizens' Council in 1955 and told that Negroes would not be allowed to vote and that he was going to be "put out of business."<sup>16</sup> Courts, who was a grocer, found that his landlord refused to rent to him after that time, he was denied access to wholesale food, and there was a great drop in his customers.<sup>17</sup> In another case an integration leader, Mrs. Wallace I. Schutt dropped her activities because economic pressure was put on her husband.<sup>18</sup>

Typical of this individual (rather than organizational) pressure was the move made against a group of Negroes who signed a school-desegregation petition in the [Mississippi] delta town of Yazoo City. Shortly after the petition was filed with school officials, the Yazoo City Citizens' Council ran an advertisement in the local paper listing the names of the fifty-three Negroes who had signed it. The ad urged that the readers "look them over carefully." Within a few days all but six of the original signers had asked that their names be removed from the petition.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, although no official group action had been taken, there is little doubt but that economic pressure was put on those Negroes who signed the petition. There is also little doubt but that their economic livelihood depended to a great extent upon the White citizens of the community, in some form or another.

Boycotting on a large scale was tried by the Councils in late 1955. The companies involved were the Falstaff Brewing Company, the Phillip Morris Tobacco Company, and the Ford Motor Company. For one reason or another the Councils, then under the leadership of Robert Patterson, decided that these companies were inimical to the Councils' position on various integration issues and that a boycott of the products of these companies should be instituted. All were successful to varying degrees except the one on the Ford Motor Company, and this perhaps failed because so many of the Ford dealers in the area were influential Council members.<sup>20</sup> In March, 1956 the Falstaff Company sent a representative to Jackson who offered \$50,000 to the Council to remove the boycott.<sup>21</sup> He was told that in order to have the boycott lifted he would, in the name of the company, be obliged to disclaim any support for the N. A. A. C. P., which he did.<sup>22</sup> Another indication of the effectiveness of the Council boycott is shown by the fact that in 1955 Phillip Morris sales dropped 17%.<sup>23</sup>

Economic pressure by the Councils was not unanimously supported by Southern Whites. Some called it "economic lynch law." The editor of the newspaper The Advertiser of Montgomery, Alabama said that:

. . . if a Negro stole a hog, he would be tried according to due process of law, but if he wrote a letter to the editor approving the Court's decision "he might become the swift victim of an



unseen, capricious, hearsay kangaroo court." For grand larceny he might draw a light jail sentence; for expressing an unpopular opinion he might "find himself jobless, his farm mortgage foreclosed, his family empty-bellied."<sup>24</sup>

This was written in 1954. Since then the editor has stopped opposing the Councils because, as one Council member put it: "He began to feel the pressure himself."<sup>25</sup> This was one case where Council pressure was successful in silencing a dissenting opinion.

The political pressures applied by the Councils can be very effective in certain cases. Before the May 8, 1956 primary election, the Citizens' Councils in Alabama sent out a questionnaire to all candidates for state-wide office asking for a disavowal of Negro voting rights.<sup>26</sup> A note attached said: "One of the purposes of the Citizens' Councils of Alabama is to make all white men stand up and be counted, . . ."<sup>27</sup> It went on to ask: "Do you here and now deny the negro vote?"<sup>28</sup> It is obvious that no candidate could hope for election if he answered this question in the negative.

In 1959 Ross Barnett was elected Governor of Mississippi after twice before being defeated in the Democratic primary election.<sup>29</sup> During this election campaign Barnett had the support of the Councils, and his indebtedness to them was reflected by the fact that the first speech he gave after winning the election was before a Citizens' Council meeting.<sup>30</sup> He is, of course, a

member. In the opinion of Hodding Carter, a long time foe of the Councils: "The Democratic Party here as anything but a hollow shell, has been destroyed."<sup>31</sup> The election four years later probably strengthened Carter's opinion because on August 27, 1963 Lieutenant-Governor Paul B. Johnson defeated J. P. Coleman in the Democratic primary election for Governor of Mississippi.<sup>32</sup> There is little doubt that Johnson, supported by Governor Barnett, owed much to the Citizens' Councils. His ". . . victory reflects the strength of the White Citizens' Councils. . ." in Mississippi.<sup>33</sup> In 1960 it was partially through the efforts of the Citizens' Councils that unpledged electors were sent from Mississippi to the electoral college. Generally speaking the Councils have forced political aspirants into more extreme racist positions.<sup>34</sup>

Social pressures applied by the Councils are less obvious than are its other methods. Whispering and smear tactics are sometimes used against individuals who deviate from the accepted Council view. As an example, after seating in the busses in Montgomery, Alabama was integrated, Council leader Sam Engelhardt lodged a complaint with a newspaper that a Negro man had winked at a White woman and invited her to sit with him.<sup>35</sup> The fact that the Negro's wife was present did not alter the accusation.<sup>36</sup> Through various social pressures many Protestant ministers

left Mississippi rather than face a showdown with segregationists.<sup>37</sup> The Councils have found that isolation of dissenters works just about as effectively as do economic pressures.<sup>38</sup> In stubborn cases the Councils have been able to silence incipient spokesmen for integration by widespread references to "nigger lovers," or "renegade Whites."<sup>39</sup> "Now, in unusually tough cases, they reportedly import the talents of professional anti-Communists."<sup>40</sup> Through speeches these persons then imply that even mild support of the 1954 Supreme Court desegregation decision is prima facie evidence of Communist affiliation.<sup>41</sup> As a result the Council has to be ". . . thought about by every Mississippian before he acted or spoke on any matter that might be considered at all 'controversial.'"<sup>42</sup> Somewhat the same attitude, although to a lesser extent, exists throughout the South where the Councils are strong.

The Citizens' Councils invariably have a legal aid, or department, upon whom they can rely for assistance in that particular context. In Louisiana and Mississippi the Councils have used legal maneuvering to have registered Negroes stricken from the poll books. In early 1957, Attorney General Herbert Brownell reported that between four and six thousand Negroes had been removed from the registration rolls in one county (Ouachita Parish) in Louisiana after challenges by the Citizens' Councils.<sup>43</sup> Although a Federal judge in New Orleans later restored

the Negroes' names,<sup>44</sup> and the decision was upheld by the Supreme Court,<sup>45</sup> there is little doubt that the Councils are still active in using legal technicalities to prevent Negro voting. In the trial of the accused killer of integration leader Medgar Evers, Byron De La Beckwith, a Citizens' Council member,<sup>46</sup> the three lawyers who represented him were paid from the Citizens' Council's legal fund.<sup>47</sup> It is also interesting to note that former Governor Ross Barnett was one of the lawyers on the staff. Thus, in addition to providing the legal assistance to ward off attacks on segregation on a broad scale, the Councils are also prepared to protect individual members who become involved in difficulties with the law over matters that are of concern to them.

Propaganda can be considered to be a secondary method to implement those previously mentioned. The Citizens' Councils of America has since 1958 presented a radio-television forum with interviews of legislators.<sup>48</sup> During times of crisis the Councils use propaganda and the distribution of information to consolidate opposition to the forces of integration or whatever might be threatening the status quo. One tool used by the Councils of Mississippi is the "mimeographed confidential communique" mailed to members.<sup>49</sup> Speakers, as indicated earlier, are used to a great extent in carrying the message of the supporters of segregation. Speeches are not limited to

Southern areas by any means for the Councils badly want other regions of the nation to hear and understand what they are doing and saying. William J. Simmons, one of the more widely traveled speakers for the movement, has given speeches in many Northern areas, including Notre Dame University at South Bend, Indiana. The ultimate purpose of the propaganda is, of course, to stimulate activity that will eventually result in victory for the leaders of segregation. With a long-range plan in mind, Councils have sponsored prizes for essays written by school children on such topics as: "Why Segregation is Necessary." The ultimate purpose of such contests is to instill in the minds of those participating the notion that segregation is the policy to be followed in matters concerning relations between the races.

Because The Citizens' Council and The Citizen represent the official publication of the Citizens' Councils of America it will be useful to indicate in some detail the attitudes the publication has taken on various issues. It should be noted again that William J. Simmons, as editor of both publications, has had much to say as to what their policies have been. Not only does Simmons write many of the editorials that appear, and have appeared in the papers, but there is little doubt that he also has considerable control over their "news" items. Therefore in some respects William J. Simmons is the official spokes-

man for the Citizens' Councils.

The position of the Councils toward the 1954 Supreme Court decision was set forth in the second issue of The Citizens Council. It declared that:

. . . the court threw away the Tenth Amendment, re-wrote the Fourteenth Amendment, and usurped the prerogatives of Congress in administration of the District of Columbia. The court abandoned the established precedents of 58 years, turned its back on lawbooks, and went to a left-wing Swedish sociologist [\*] for testimony to support its legislative enactment.<sup>50</sup>

In one article The Citizens' Council published a list of organizations --called "The Enemy" -- on record as favoring the Civil Rights proposals of 1957 and 1959. Included in this list of 74 groups were: the AFL-CIO, the Department of Justice, the Episcopal Church, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the American Jewish Congress, the Methodist Church, the National Lutheran Council, the United Auto Workers, the Department of Labor, the Department of the Air Force, and, quite obviously, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.<sup>51</sup> Many million Americans would usually consider themselves to be in good company in such a listing.

Concerning the "sit-in" and "sit-down" tactics of integrationists the official spokesman for the Councils had this to say:

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\*This reference to "a left-wing Swedish sociologist" is a jibe at the Court's use of Gunnar Myrdal's voluminous work on the racial problem in the United States, entitled An American Dilemma.

Throughout the South, these demonstrators have ignored state laws and city ordinances which protect the sanctity of private property, and reserve to the proprietor the right to select his customers. Laws regulating mobs and incitement to riot have been flouted by boisterous black brigands; the civil rights of white citizens have been openly violated. In some areas, violence has broken out. Only quick action by alert police in dispersing the Negro mobs and jailing their leaders has prevented a blood-bath of major proportions. Jail is the best deterrent to such tactics; it is also the best possible object lesson to Southern Negro troublemakers who might not have begun their lawless efforts in forcing their company upon others.<sup>52</sup>

Thus, in the editorial opinions of the Council publication it is the integrationists who are the cause of the violence that at times resulted from "sit-in" attempts, even though the actual violence that has sometimes occurred usually was started by those who oppose the integrationists.

In the presidential campaign of 1960 the position of The Citizens' Council was one of opposition to both candidates of the major parties.

Both parties -- and their candidates -- hold views directly opposed to ours in the field of race relations. Both parties -- and their candidates -- are pledged to secure the maximum amount of integration in the minimum amount of time. Both parties -- and their candidates -- are scheming constantly to attract Negro bloc votes in the Northern big cities. In short, we have reached a conclusion which should be obvious to anyone who has read the platforms and listened to the candidates: A vote for John Kennedy is a vote for integration. A vote for Richard Nixon is likewise a vote for integration.<sup>53</sup>

Although the article quoted did not come out in favor of unpledged electors it is evident from reading other sections of the paper that this is what was favored by the writers. It was hoped that unpledged electors

would keep the prize from both Kennedy and Nixon and throw the election to a Southerner. Even after the election the newspaper called for Southern electors to withhold their votes from the two major candidates in hopes of preventing either of them from winning.

As indicated earlier the Citizens' Council Forum, a series of radio and television programs, acts as a supplement to The Citizen. Richard C. Morphew, Executive Producer of the series, reported that in mid-1961 there were 383 radio and television stations carrying the program.<sup>54</sup>

"Citizens' Council Forum" is a weekly series of 15-minute interviews with leading Senators and Congressmen from all parts of the nation, representing both political parties. The series has featured about one out of four members of the Senate and House of Representatives. During 1960, a total of 7719 programs were distributed by "Citizens' Council Forum." This total includes 1300 TV programs and 6419 radio broadcasts. The programs are supplied free to TV and radio stations. The series is financed by voluntary contributions from individuals throughout the nation. Financial support is also received from the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission.<sup>55</sup>

Barry Goldwater, Karl Mundt, and John Dowdy, President of the American Medical Association, have all appeared on The Forum.<sup>56</sup> Through arrangements made by U. S. Representative John Bell Williams and U. S. Senator James O. Eastland The Forum has had made available to it the use of Federal government recording studios to prepare films and tapes for Council use.<sup>57</sup>



As a supplement to its regular publications and programs the Citizens' Councils have made available extra materials that can be obtained by special order. Included is a number of published speeches by such people as Ross Barnett, William J. Simmons, and James O. Eastland. Various articles written on the racial issue are re-published for sale. Certain books are put forth for sale as well as miscellaneous material such as phonograph records, bumper stickers, confederate flags, roadside signs, lapel buttons, and "Confederate desk sets."

### Conclusion

It has been shown that although segregation is the primary goal of all Councils, there is some disagreement over the scope of the word. Some feel that segregation simply means separation of the races in all possible aspects of life, particularly in social matters, while still retaining traditional contact such as employer-employee relationships. For others, segregation means eventual total separation, geographic as well as social, of the races. All segregationists desire the former type of separation immediately, while others, in addition to wanting this, also hope and plan for the complete segregation of races at some future date.

That segregation of the White and Black peoples in the United States is a goal of the Citizens' Councils

there can be no doubt. It is also true that segregation is a main support of other factors in Southern society. These factors include a cheap labor force, Caucasian domination of the political scene, and the continuation of "racial integrity," to use a favorite phrase of the segregationists. When placed together, these elements of Southern society add up to one particular state of affairs: White supremacy. This Caucasian domination of the Negro in almost all affairs would be extremely difficult to maintain if segregation did not exist. It can be said with no small amount of truth, that this White supremacy is the state of affairs really desired by the segregationists, and that in many respects separation of the races is merely a means to this end rather than an end in itself.

In the implementation of their goals the Councils are very flexible. That method which is most effective will be used. From what has been said it can be seen that just about every approach to the prevention of integration has been tried: economic pressure, both on an individual and a group basis; political pressure, applied to politicians as well as private citizens; character assassination by the use of smear tactics and professional hate mongers; legal maneuvering in attempts to thwart court orders calling for integration; and propaganda efforts intended to rally public support for

Council programs. Each of these methods has countless varieties so that each program instituted by the Councils is, in some way, different from those preceding it.

With the goals and methods of the Citizens' Councils fresh in mind it is now proper to turn to the influence and effect these programs have had in those areas where applied.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>James G. Cook, The Segregationists (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1962), p. 73.

<sup>2</sup>"What is the Citizens' Council Doing," (An information pamphlet published in Jackson, Mississippi by the Citizens' Council).

<sup>3</sup>Cook, op. cit., p. 73.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 251

<sup>6</sup>The New York Times, March 6, 1956, p. 24.

<sup>7</sup>"Interposition -- Basic Principle of States' Rights," The Citizens' Council, Jan., 1956, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup>Robert B. Patterson, "The Citizens' Council: A History." (A published speech given by R. B. Patterson to the Annual Leadership Conference of the Citizens' Councils of America on October 26, 1963), p. 6.

<sup>9</sup>William Brink and Louis Harris, The Negro Revolution in America (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), p. 81.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>11</sup>Cook, op. cit., p. 354.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 355-356.

<sup>13</sup>"Mixers' Aim is Intermarriage," The Citizens' Council, Oct., 1958, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup>The Augusta Courier, Jan. 27, 1964, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup>Cook, op. cit., p. 56.

<sup>16</sup>The New York Times, March 1, 1957, p. 9.

<sup>17</sup>"The Citizens' Council," Time, Dec. 12, 1955, p. 24.

<sup>18</sup>The New York Times, Nov. 3, 1963, p. 82.

19Cook, op. cit., p. 57.

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21Ibid., p. 59.

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23Ibid., p. 58.

24John B. Martin, The Deep South Says Never  
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26"Long Live the King," Newsweek, April 2, 1956,  
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34David Halberstam, "The White Citizens' Councils,"  
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40Ibid.

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43The New York Times, Feb. 15, 1957, p. 15.

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45The New York Times, March 1, 1960, p. 1.

46The Southern Illinoisan, Feb. 2, 1964, p. 4.

47"The Beckwith Trial," Newsweek, Feb. 10, 1964,  
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48Cook, op. cit., p. 81.

49Dan Wakefield, "Respectable Racism: Dixies'  
Citizens' Councils," The Nation, (Oct. 22, 1955), p. 340.

50"The High Court's Second Mistake," The Citizens'  
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51"Here is the Enemy," The Citizens' Council,  
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52"Seditious Sit-Downs," The Citizens' Council,  
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53"Our Only Election Comment," The Citizens'  
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54"Citizens' Council Forum TV-Radio Series Adds  
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## CHAPTER IV

### COUNCIL INFLUENCE AND EFFECT

#### Introduction

In this chapter an attempt will be made to indicate the influence the Citizens' Councils have had in various parts of the nation, but primarily in the South. Various successes and failures of the Councils will be mentioned in the hope that they will help identify those areas in which Council strength is greatest and least. There will also be a discussion of the effect of the Councils in the particular areas mentioned.

By now the reader is probably aware of the fact that in certain areas of Southern life the Citizens' Councils have great influence. This, quite expectedly, varies greatly from area to area depending on a myriad of factors. This chapter will deal with the influence and effect of the Councils in three particular states, Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana, and will then deal with the rest of the nation, concentrating on the South, as a whole. In the three states just mentioned the influence of the Councils is perhaps strongest, and in the remainder of the South, as well as outside the South, their strength is so variable and inconsistent that a state-by-state discussion becomes impractical.

## Mississippi

The influence of the Councils in Mississippi is at least as strong as in any other area of the country. As early as 1954 the influences of the Councils in that state over political aspirants was shown in the fact that no office seekers in state-wide elections publicly criticized the Councils.<sup>1</sup> In 1956 the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission came into being with the purpose of protecting the "sovereignty" of Mississippi from so-called "encroachment by the Federal Government."<sup>2</sup> It had a two year budget of \$350,000 and under Governor Coleman worked with the Councils, although it was not until Ross Barnett became governor in 1959 that funds were appropriated to the Councils from the state.<sup>3</sup> Seven months after he became Governor, Barnett authorized the granting \$20,000 by the Commission to the Citizens' Councils for their radio and television series.<sup>4</sup> It was estimated in 1962 that the Sovereignty Commission then subsidized the Councils in the amount of \$5,000 per month.<sup>5</sup> The Commission admits freely that it is engaged in investigations of various individuals and organizations in order to build a file on persons suspected of moderation in their views in the matter of race relations.<sup>6</sup> In mid-1956 the Commission voted to hire secret agents to serve as "eyes-and-ears" in



the segregation battle.<sup>7</sup> The mere fact that the Sovereignty Commission exists as the governmental affiliate to the Councils in apartheid, shows that the strength of the Councils in Mississippi is substantial, if not decisive.

In the March 22, 1955 issue of Look magazine an article written by Hodding Carter criticizing the Councils was published.<sup>8</sup> On April 1 the House of Representatives of Mississippi passed a resolution by a vote of 89 to 19, with 32 members not voting,<sup>9</sup> condemning Carter because, in the opinion of the supporters of the resolution, he

. . . drew inferences and conclusions on the flimsiest and most speculative kind of evidence \* \* \*  
No such conditions exist [as described by Carter]  
\* \* \* The statements made by the editor are wholly untrue . . .<sup>10</sup>

This indicates that the influence of the Councils is such that attacks upon it are taken, by the legislators in Jackson, as an affront upon the state of Mississippi.

On September 26, 1962 Governor Ross Barnett, with the fully support of the Councils and most of the citizens of Mississippi, blocked James Meredith from entering the state University.<sup>11</sup> Behind this action, it was claimed by The New York Times, was William J. Simmons who was described as: "The chief strategist in the campaign to keep the University White . . ."<sup>12</sup> The relation between Barnett and Simmons had long been a close one and it is extremely likely that Simmons did

certainly play a role in the Oxford crisis.

In the opinion of Hodding Carter, a long time foe of the Councils in Mississippi, the election of Ross Barnett in 1959 as Governor symbolized the stranglehold the Councils had on that state.<sup>13</sup> Barnett had twice before attempted to become the Democratic nominee for Governor, tantamount to election in Mississippi at that time, but had twice failed. On his third attempt, Barnett, with Council support, was victorious. As mentioned previously, Barnett's indebtedness to them was shown by the fact that the first speech he gave after winning the election was to a Council gathering.<sup>14</sup> He was, and still is, a member of a Council. In 1963 Barnett and most of the Councils supported Paul Johnson for Governor and he was elected. In mid-1964 Johnson was "accused" by Drew Pearson of moderation and to dispell this view the Governor quickly put out a statement denying the charge and praising the Councils.<sup>15</sup>

As expected the Councils violently opposed the 1964 Civil Rights Bill and urged that it not be obeyed. Partially because of Council prodding, Governor Johnson advised businessmen to refuse to comply with the new law until it had been tested in the courts.<sup>16</sup> Johnson and the Councils were only partially successful, however, because many of the hotel and restaurant owners decided to obey the law. The ones that refused to go along with

the Councils, however, were often large chain-owned establishments which were less susceptible to Council pressure than independent businesses.

The total effect of this rabid segregationist outlook on the part of such a powerful organization as the Citizens' Councils in Mississippi has been to crush attempts at moderation and to bring silence on the part of most citizens with respect to criticism of the Councils. There have been but few occasions when widespread criticism was apparent and these have been ineffective in limiting or reducing Council power. Keeping in mind the strength of the Councils in Mississippi, it is easy to understand the reluctance of individuals to express views divergent from the Council hard line when Council strong-men such as U. S. Representative John Bell Williams state:

There is no place for moderation in the fight to maintain racial separation. There are no moderates in the camp of our enemies -- they want nothing less from us than unconditional surrender. We face the most vicious kind of extremists in this struggle, and we cannot afford the luxury of moderation, complacency, or timidity.<sup>17</sup>

#### Alabama

Although the Citizens' Councils have to share power with the Klans in Alabama they still have great influence over the state. As early as January, 1956, the Councils were active enough in opposing the integration of busses in Montgomery to gain the support and membership

of Mayor "Tackey" Gayle as well as Clyde Sellers, the police Commissioner, who were both strongly opposed to such integration.<sup>18</sup> In 1959 the Councils achieved their goal of having removed from the open shelves of Alabama's public libraries, a children's book showing the marriage of a white and black rabbit.<sup>19</sup> It was the opinion of Council leaders that such material "promotes racial integration."<sup>20</sup> A few months earlier, in April, 1959, the public theatres in Montgomery cancelled scheduled showings of the movie "The Defiant Ones," which depicted a Negro and Caucasian handcuffed together in their attempt to escape from the law, because the Council in that city had said that it was "pro-integration and anti-Southern."<sup>21</sup> But perhaps the major success of the Councils in Alabama was in 1956 when a Miss Autherine Lucy, a Negro, was admitted to the University of Alabama. Due partially to the activities of the Councils and Klan in solidifying opposition to the order, the school eventually excluded her from entering because she allegedly had falsely accused University officials of conspiring in the disturbance that occurred.<sup>22</sup> It was through Council activities that mob demonstrations broke out on the campus thus making the situation more explosive than was previously the case.<sup>23</sup>

With this test case the power of the Councils was proven. It was probably the most serious setback

the N. A. A. C. P. had suffered to date. Not a man to let a chance for expansion to escape, State Senator Sam Engelhardt did everything he could to keep the Council momentum rolling.

-- Engelhardt suddenly had 60,000 members. Indeed, they sprang up all over the South. They had been gaining all fall; the Lucy case was a clincher. And at the height of the Lucy case, Engelhardt announced plans for a mammoth rally in Montgomery.<sup>24</sup>

On February 11, 1956 this rally was held and between 10,000 and 15,000 persons attended to hear and see such notables as Senator Engelhardt, Georgia Attorney General Eugene Cook, Mississippi Council leaders "Tut" Patterson and William J. Simmons, and U. S. Senator James Eastland.<sup>25</sup> At this mammoth rally an extremely sordid and vitriolic pamphlet was quietly passed around which included the following statement: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all whites are created equal with certain rights; among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of dead niggers."<sup>26</sup> This rally was certainly one of the high points of Council success, and disgruntled Southerners had found a new foundation upon which to build their resistance to integration.

An interesting result of this assemblage was the victory of Engelhardt over Asa "Ace" Carter in the struggle for control of the Councils in Alabama. Carter, a sometime supporter of the well known anti-Semitic John Crommelin, had been under fire for his alleged

religious prejudice. About a month after the rally various members of Carter's organization seem to have realized that Engelhardt was the man to back and, thus, they began deserting their old leader. Carter now seems to have decided to let others carry on the fight to preserve White supremacy and segregation for he has recently been notably inactive in the movement.

As in Mississippi the over-all effect of the Councils has been a hardening of the forces of segregation and an increasing lack of toleration of views that differ from the norm. Whereas, before the Councils were a strong movement in the state, there was wide-spread feeling that integration, though undesirable, would probably sometime be a fact, there is now present in Alabama the feeling that segregation can and must be maintained at almost any cost and that the Councils can not only successfully fight a holding action but that they can reverse previous segregation setbacks, such as the 1954 Court decision. It might be possible to make a case for the argument that the Councils in Alabama, more than in other states, have tended to lead to violence in cases where non-violent methods seemed ineffective. This was particularly true at the time when Asa Carter led the Councils around Birmingham. Although Carter has been removed from a position of power in the Councils, there is, nevertheless, something of an atmosphere of violence that is oftentimes

present at Council gatherings in Alabama.

### Louisiana

In Louisiana the power of the Councils rests to a large extent upon the power and influence of Leander Perez, the undisputed chief of the segregation movement in that state.<sup>27</sup> Perez does not limit himself to any one or two areas but rather is a power in many areas:

[He is] . . . a lawyer with a rich and busy practice, a director of political and governmental affairs in two parishes, a statewide political string puller, adviser to the governor, Citizens' Council chieftain, drafter of legislation, cattleman, oil-lands expert, "assistant" district attorney, and "de-facto" director of the hurriedly organized school in St. Bernard Parish attended by children of white parents who chose to boycott New Orleans' "integrated" schools.<sup>28</sup>

It seems that although Perez is without a doubt the "behind-the-scenes" power of the Councils, he leaves the every-day Council activity to underlings who are the instruments of his policy. His other activities would appear to make this necessary.

As in Mississippi the strength and influence of the Councils was a major factor in forcing the formation of the Louisiana State Sovereignty Commission. The activities of the Councils certainly aided in the creation of a climate of opinion that was conducive to the formation of such a state organ. In 1960 it was established by the Louisiana Legislature with John Deer at its head.<sup>29</sup>

In addition to directing an investigatory force designed to ferret out information on "scalawags"

and "carpetbaggers" who might be working for integration in Louisiana, the Sovereignty Commission staff keeps busy making speeches and distributing films and literature promoting the idea that Louisiana's segregated way of life is best for both Negroes and whites. Like the Citizens' Council Association and the Mississippi Sovereignty Commission, Deer's staff is aiming toward a wide-distribution of segregationist message in non-Southern states.<sup>30</sup>

However, the Commission in Louisiana does not seem to be quite as active as its counterpart in Mississippi. W. M. Rainach, the Council leader in the state Senate, tried to have passed a "seat-mate bill" that would provide that the first occupant of a seat in a public conveyance give his permission before another could join him.<sup>31</sup> The legislature, unlike its action in establishing the Sovereignty Commission, refused to enact this Council backed suggestion.

Another Council success in the Louisiana legislature was gaining passage of a law providing for the dismissal of any school employee advocating integration or expressing an opinion about it.<sup>32</sup> Even the conduct of the Catholic Church has been somewhat influenced by the Councils' continuing warfare against all integration.<sup>33</sup> According to Helen Fuller only the power structure of New Orleans' business and finance appears to be out of reach of Council influence, for they have no congregations or clients to fear and their primary goal is to keep their city the flourishing center of the state.<sup>34</sup>

The Councils in Louisiana at one time had great



success in having removed from the voting rolls numbers of registered Negroes. This was done, as mentioned earlier, by having various Council members challenge the ability of Negroes to meet the state law on voting standards. Quite naturally the judges were somewhat inclined to support the challenges. Early in 1960, however, this trend was reversed when a Federal judge restored 1,377 Negroes to the voting lists at the request of the Justice Department after they had been "purged" by the Councils.<sup>35</sup> Since then some Negroes have been restored, but at the same time others have been removed.

The grass roots strength of the Councils in Louisiana appears to be somewhat less than that of the two previously mentioned states. This does not mean that Council prestige and influence is necessarily weaker, however. Through the efforts of Leander Perez and other political leaders in the state, Council activity has met with considerable success. The total effect, however, has not been to make the Councils a government within a government as is sometimes claimed for Mississippi, nor has it been to make the state the most violently anti-integrationist of the South. The cumulative effect of the Councils in Louisiana seems to have been to create a reliance on the part of segregationists to use the courts and legal tactics rather than the more direct methods. The reasons for this are not entirely clear

but perhaps more than anything else has been the influence of the city of New Orleans and the Catholic Church. Both have considerable power over large portions of the populace of the state and both tend to have a liberalizing effect with regard to integration.

### The South Generally

Throughout the remainder of the South there are Citizens' Councils in virtually every state. There are state-wide organizations in: Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and, of course, the three previously mentioned states. There are individual Councils throughout the entire nation, varying greatly in influence from minimal to substantial. The strength, or influence, does not remain constant but fluctuates considerably due to innumerable factors. One month a Council may barely be in existence and the next it may be the focus of activity for a whole county.

To illustrate how the Councils can be extremely important in areas outside the South a few examples might be helpful in understanding the situation. In one particular area about one-hundred miles from where this paper is being written, in Sturgis, Kentucky, the Councils were at one time extremely active. In the fall of 1956 the schools in that town were to be integrated.

All appeared to be moving smoothly with a minimum of resistance when the Citizens' Council of Union County called for a boycott of the integrated school. The boycott was 80% successful.<sup>36</sup> The school board, which had formerly approved the integration plan, then changed its mind and voted to keep Negroes out entirely.<sup>37</sup> At a meeting held in that town, between two-thousand and twenty-five hundred people attended out of a population of twenty-two hundred, which indicates that not only did most of the town turn out, but persons from surrounding areas as well.<sup>38</sup> In this particular case the Councils were quite successful in arousing the public in opposition to an integration plan that had been proceeding without obvious problems.

During the 1957 school integration crisis in Little Rock, Arkansas, The New York Times reported that Governor Mark Griffin and Roy V. Harris of Georgia were instrumental in convincing Governor Faubus that resistance to the Supreme Court decision was necessary.<sup>39</sup> Harris admitted that he mentioned to Faubus the idea of calling out the National Guard.<sup>40</sup> Throughout the entire crisis the Councils in the state of Arkansas were active in organizing resistance to the school integration program.

Throughout the entire nation there are scores, perhaps even hundreds, of such cases where Citizens' Councils have grown into powerful forces to oppose

integration. There have been both successes and failures, but the general case has been to retard integration and only in a few cases has there been a backlash of opposition to Council tactics. As far north as Deerfield, Illinois, a Chicago suburb, there has been organized resistance, with a Council-like program, to oppose integration. Although there was no official Council organization the effect was the same as though there had been: organization of the citizenry to oppose integration of the races. This action on the part of the inhabitants of the town of Deerfield was applauded by the publication The Citizens' Council.

#### Conclusion

As can be seen from what has been said, the influence of the Councils is not a constant stable thing, but rather it rises and falls with predictable regularity. When the forces of integration plan a program for a certain area it can be said with some certainty that if this area is within the South a Citizens' Council, or some organization similar to it, will play the role of opposition. This dialectic process operates with considerable regularity and seldom fails to materialize. The singularly most important effect the Councils have had is to harden the resistance to integration by organizing those who oppose such a program. Another important side effect has been

the gradual, and sometimes not so gradual, shift of those persons in positions of public power, to more extreme platforms with regard to race relations. There has also been a tendency for those individuals who might like to oppose the Councils to refrain from voicing such opinion because of the tremendous social and economic pressures that can and have been applied by Council members on dissenters. Thus free speech has suffered at the hands of the Councils. There has been in many parts of the South a tendency of political leaders to lean more and more to the right in their political philosophy, and this is due in part to the fact that it is much easier to defend segregation on a conservative platform than it would be on a liberal one. Such programs as "states' rights," "individual liberties," and "the right of one person to choose his friends" are stressed over "every man's right to vote," "equal opportunity for all," and "the Federal government's responsibility to individual citizens." The reasons for this shift are obvious. It is the Federal government who most often is the enemy of the segregationists and supports the claims of the integrationists, therefore the rights of the states are to be maintained at all costs and increased wherever possible.

One interesting and, perhaps, long lasting effect of this shift to the right in the political spectrum

has been the demise of the Democratic party as the only modern party ever to win major elections in the South. Because integration, in the eyes of many a Southerner, seems to have made its most substantial progress under Democratic leadership in Washington, there is a very strong chance that for the first time the Republican party will become a major party in the South. Many of the Southern leaders speak of being "independent Democrats" and of being in almost complete opposition to the Democratic administrations of the past thirty years. To no small extent the Citizens' Councils are responsible for this possible radical shift in Southern politics. Much remains to be seen but there is little doubt that many a conservative Southerner finds himself more at home in the Republican party than with the Democratic, and will indicate this in the 1964 national election.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Waltraut Stein, "The White Citizens' Councils," The Negro History Bulletin, (Oct., 1956), p. 22.

<sup>2</sup>"Mississippi; Thought Control," Time, April 28, 1961, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>The New York Times, July 10, 1960, p. 55.

<sup>5</sup>James G. Cook, The Segregationists (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1962), p. 85.

<sup>6</sup>"Mississippi; Thought Control," op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>7</sup>The New York Times, May 16, 1956, p. 28.

<sup>8</sup>Hodding Carter, "A Wave of Terror Threatens the South," Look, (March 22, 1955), p. 32.

<sup>9</sup>Hodding Carter, "The South and I," Look, (June 28, 1955), p. 74.

<sup>10</sup>The New York Times, April 2, 1955, p. 38.

<sup>11</sup>The New York Times, Sept. 27, 1962, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup>The New York Times, Sept. 28, 1962, p. 22.

<sup>13</sup>Hodding Carter, "Mississippi: Deluded and Still Defiant," The Nation, (Oct. 13, 1962), p. 214.

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<sup>15</sup>"An Account of Some Conversations on U. S. 45," Newsweek, July 13, 1964, p. 23.

<sup>16</sup>"Stare and Bear It," Newsweek, July 20, 1964, p. 32.

<sup>17</sup>Hodding Carter, The South Strikes Back (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1959), p. 193.

<sup>18</sup>Rev. Thomas Thrasher, "Alabama's Bus Boycott," The Reporter, (March 8, 1956), p. 16.

<sup>19</sup>The New York Times, May 22, 1959, p. 29.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

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<sup>22</sup>John B. Martin, The Deep South Says Never  
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<sup>23</sup>The New York Times, Feb. 19, 1956, Part IV,  
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<sup>24</sup>Martin, op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., pp. 39-40.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>27</sup>The New York Times, Nov. 27, 1960, Part IV,  
p. 6.

<sup>28</sup>Cook, op. cit., p. 201.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 251.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Helen Fuller, "New Orleans Knows Better,"  
The New Republic, (Feb. 16, 1959), p. 16.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>The New York Times, Jan. 12, 1960, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup>The New York Times, Sept. 19, 1956, p. 20.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>The New York Times, Sept. 9, 1957, p. 18.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

We have now seen how the Councils developed upon a background of the "Southern heritage" into the strongest and most influential of the segregationist organizations. Although the specific events causing the formation of the first Councils are readily discernable, the age-old traditions and mores of Southern society have been important factors in shaping Council development and activities. With all these background factors in mind it is now appropriate to reach some conclusions with respect to the Councils. A word of caution is necessary. In dealing with phenomena as complex and complicated as are the Citizens' Councils it is necessary, because of sheer physical mass, to limit one's scope which, in turn, means that of the myriad of factors having influence and effect on the subject, only those that seem the most important can be chosen for study. This means countless factors have to be, if not ignored, at least shunted to the sidelines. With the elimination of such factors from primary consideration the danger of reaching erroneous conclusions is always present. The writer realizes these dangers and will attempt to avoid them as much as possible, but it is

always conceivable that his conclusions may, in a particular context, be somewhat less than completely accurate.

That the Citizens' Council movement has as its spiritual home the South, there can be no doubt. The first Councils were formed in that area and the movement still remains strongest there. Throughout its history the South has been wedded to a larger extent than any other section of the country, with the possible exception of the far-West, to private, in contrast to governmental, action, in defense of the mores of society. To a large extent this grew out of the rural nature of the communities that developed throughout most of the South. With the first great attack upon that society, the Civil War, having succeeded, the men of the South drew themselves together, in Klans and otherwise to carry further the battle to preserve their institutions. Although in this instance governmental action was not possible, the inclination to private action was always present. Whenever possible the South will most assuredly make use of its governments to implement its wishes but, if possible, private action is preferred. The Citizens' Councils are evidence that this aspect of the South remains in effect today. The Councils grew out of attempts by private citizens to preserve and protect a way of life they thought proper. Private citizens established and maintained the organization according to principles they

deemed necessary. Although the various local and state governments supplement, and often actively aid, the Councils, as the Councils aid particular governments in times of crisis, it can be said that the Councils were begun as a private organization to defend the South against outside attack. This is in the long standing tradition of the South. The Citizens' Councils are not alien to the South, but can be considered to be a part of the Southern tradition much in the same vein as the Klan, the Red Shirts, and all the other private action groups. Whether or not the Councils are a genuine "folk" movement in the same sense the Klan is considered by some to be, is another question. Given the German meaning of the term "folk" or "volk," it might be difficult to make a case supporting the view that the Councils fall into this category. The Councils, unlike the Klan, seem to be a bit too sophisticated to be classified as a true "folk" movement.

If it is true that the Councils are within the Southern tradition, does this mean that they are limited to the South? Not necessarily, because just as the Klan became nation-wide so could the Councils, given the essential catalyst. Racial prejudice exists throughout the United States and to those who hold such views the Councils could easily become the organization around which to rally. The so-called "White backlash" to racial

tensions could turn into a great boom for the Councils. Whether or not this will develop it is impossible to say. It does seem likely that if such a development did occur it would not be a permanent thing but, similar to the Klan bubble of the 1920's, would be short lived. Something that might precipitate the beginning of the bubble could be wide-spread Council publicity similar to that which occurred when a New York newspaper ran a series of articles on the Klan which led to a congressional investigation, thus giving the Klan a nation-wide audience. The permanent establishment of the Councils as a viable movement in the North seems unlikely because of a lack of traditions necessary for such a development.

In terms of basic goals the Councils are dedicated to one above all others: continuation and expansion of the segregation of the races in this country. As such they are opposed to the integration movement, and those organizations that support it. As is the case with most organizations dedicated to the defeat of a force or movement, the Citizens' Councils are destined to play a role of reaction to the integration movement. In the long run, the Councils cannot exist unless forces supporting integration also exist. This indicates another aspect of Council activity. As long as crises are not present in the integration-segregation conflict, the activities of the Councils will be minimal as will their

influence, although the latter seems to be subject to less violent fluctuations. When, however, a crisis develops, it can be said with some certainty that Citizens' Councils, or some organization similar to them, will, if not already present, arise and become intensely active. This is particularly true in the South. Although the role of the Councils is essentially one of reaction, this does not mean that in all cases they will permit the opposition to make the first move. Certain Councils have, for instance, initiated the movements to have particular states pass constitutional amendments providing that the state would no longer be obliged to maintain a public school system, and could thus close rather than integrate the schools.<sup>1</sup> Although basically a reaction, it nevertheless is an action initiated by the segregationists with no immediate prior move by the integrationists.

In the opinion of Hodding Carter, a long-time student and foe of the Councils, this essentially negative quality of the Citizens' Councils will ultimately lead to their destruction. He says:

. . . the basic factor which will ultimately destroy the Council as a major force in Mississippi is the fact that it is essentially a negative movement, founded on the defense of the status quo. . . . Defense of the status quo, as history has shown often enough, is an arduous task at best. When, in a democracy such as ours, it involves the repression of a minority, it becomes an impossibility.<sup>2</sup>

Although Carter may be correct in his evaluation, the time involved in the destruction of the movement could

be considerable, and make this prediction, for this generation at least, incorrect. The future of the Councils in the next few years appears to be to play somewhat the same role that they have exhibited during the past decade. There seems to be little chance for a rapid dissolution of the Councils as conditions presently exist. Their influence will fluctuate but as an opposition force to the integration movement they will remain on the scene for some time to come.

For the present it seems likely that a Council will be the type of organization to carry the battle for the segregationists. The old Klan is too out of date to be revived effectively. Instead an organization with a board of directors, carrying on meetings according to Robert's rules of order, and having leading citizens as officers, will be what is wanted. The Councils presently provide such an atmosphere of sophistication and respectability so avidly sought by many present-day segregationists.

If, then, the Councils are to be a part of the integration-segregation drama that will undoubtedly continue for the foreseeable future, what activities can they be expected to engage in? They will, of course, continue all those that in the past been successful. These include challenging Negro voters at the polls, the use of subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, pressures on

individuals who deviate from their conception of the way things ought to be, continual political pressure on those who shape the policies of government, and legal maneuvers in the courts to prevent and delay any and all integration attempts. As previously stated, the Councils are extremely pragmatic. What seems to be successful will be a policy of the Councils.

In this election year of 1964 one particular aspect of Council methods is particularly interesting. This refers to Council political activity, especially on the national scene. The Councils would have undoubtedly supported Alabama Governor George Wallace's attempt for the Presidency had he remained in the race. Wallace's views, and those of the Councils', are quite similar in many respects, particularly in regard to segregation: both think it essential. In addition, both are "conservative" in outlook, which is, more specifically, to say that both prefer local government action over Federal action, and in general expanded states' rights. Since, however, Wallace has chosen to withdraw from the race the Councils are, for the moment, without a realistic candidate, as they were in 1960 when they refused to support either major party. Because Barry Goldwater's views are considered "conservative" in nature it is possible that the Councils will support him even though he is reportedly opposed to racial discrimination.

Goldwater's opposition to the 1964 Civil Rights bill is a strong point in his favor in the eyes of Council members. Regardless of whether or not the Councils come out publicly in favor of the Republican candidate, there is no doubt that his "conservative" views are more in line with their own than are those of the present Administration.

As long as the current methods of the Councils are to some degree successful there is little reason to think that they will be changed. If, on the other hand, it becomes apparent to Council leaders that current methods are not leading to desired results, then new means will have to be found. Violence is always present as one choice and means. Although until the present the Councils have disclaimed violent methods there is little doubt that in specific areas of turmoil the Councils have become what they publicly deny they are: carriers of the seeds of violence. Few, if any, of the present Councils advocate the use of violence in achieving desired ends, and yet in many cases the Councils, by their speeches, pamphlets, and mere presence have increased the possibilities for violence. As one scholar put it:

. . . though the Citizens' Councils do not advocate violence, and indeed claim to have helped avoid it, there can be little doubt that they have helped to create an atmosphere where violence is imminent.<sup>3</sup>

During the Lucy crisis in Alabama in 1956 a writer reported that after a Council rally an atmosphere of violence was present where it had not been before, and that in this



case the Council was, to some extent, both the cause and result of this feeling.<sup>4</sup> In specific instances Council leaders have been known publicly to call for the use of violence in preventing integration as was the case in Nashville, Tennessee with Frederick J. Kasper, Executive Secretary of the Citizens' Councils of Tennessee.<sup>5</sup> At present then, although the Councils usually disclaim the use of violence, they, nevertheless, are partially responsible for the atmosphere of violence that inevitably accompanies an integration-segregation crisis in the South.

It seems, therefore, that as long as opposition to integration is present, the Councils, or some similar organization, will exist to rally the forces of segregation. The real danger is that violence will break out on a large scale, unless one takes the Council view that the prime danger is mongrelization of the White race. To some extent, as already indicated, the Councils are responsible for this potential violence. At present it appears unlikely that the Councils, as a group, would advocate wide-spread violence to prevent integration, especially as long as their other methods are effective. What they would do if all else failed in their struggle to maintain segregation is open to speculation. It is the considered opinion of this writer that the Councils would split with one group urging that the use of any and all means in the

prevention of integration be used, while another group would quit the movement, admit defeat, and accept integration, however distasteful it might be. The crux of the matter is who would go with each particular group. The prospects for another Civil War in which large portions of the population of the South would take up arms against the North is unlikely. It seems probable that only a minority of those within the Council movement itself would participate in such activity. Exactly how large that minority would be is impossible to predict.

What is the answer to the problem? How can such a situation in which violence is not only conceivable but likely to occur, be prevented? The Councils would answer by telling the "Northern liberals" to stop trying to force integration on an unwilling South. This would be one solution to possible violence, offered by Council members and others. Such an answer is not acceptable to a large number of the citizens of the United States who feel that the denial of constitutional rights by any government in the United States is of concern to the entire nation, and must not be permitted to continue to exist. As long as this impasse exists between the forces of segregation and integration the danger of violence is present. It is the writer's opinion that in the long run, the views held by the majority of Americans that no citizen should be denied his constitutional rights, as

defined by the Supreme Court and the Congress, will prevail. Chances for the Citizens' Councils and their allies to re-shape American opinion along their lines are remote. The only solution, therefore, is the acceptance of, with possible minor modifications, the majority opinion expressed through the laws of the land, by the South, and in particular by the segregationists. The ways of accomplishing this are too many and much too varied to be enumerated here. Until this is accomplished, Citizens' Councils, or similar organizations, will exist and as long as they do there are always lurking behind the sophisticated smile of the modern-day racists the age-old noose, torch, and whip. Any organization based on hatred, prejudice, and bigotry, as, in the writer's opinion, are the Citizens' Councils, is not far from the traditional methods of violence when all else seems fruitless.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>The New York Times, Aug. 29, 1956, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>Carl T. Rowan, "Self-Strangulation," The Saturday Review, (Sept. 19, 1959), p. 19.

<sup>3</sup>John B. Martin, The Deep South Says Never (New York: Ballantine Books, 1957), p. 175.

<sup>4</sup>The New York Times, Feb. 26, 1956, Part VI, p. 49.

<sup>5</sup>The New York Times, Sept. 8, 1957, p. 66.

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