

***“Politics is white folk’s business!”***

**THE CITIZENS’ COUNCILS OF MISSISSIPPI**

**by**

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## 2022 Writer's Note

### "REVENGE OF THE CONFEDERACY"

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The forces of racial repression have come out of the shadows into the political mainstream. They have emerged with the clear permission and unaccountable embrace of the national leadership of the Republican Party ... to roll back and undo the guarantees and protections of the (Civil) Wartime Amendments ... the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. I call this the "Revenge of the Confederacy".

The 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment abolished slavery and peonage, but left the door open to imposing involuntary servitude for convicted felons. The 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment created national citizenship for anyone born in the United States, and national protections and guarantees of equal protection, due process and guarantee of the rights, privileges and immunities of citizenship. The 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment did not create a right to vote, but outlawed denial of any right to vote on the basis of race.

The Republican Party of today is standing in the shoes of the Democratic Party of the 1860s, fighting to return the classes of emancipated persons to a status of dependency, subservience and, exploitation. They promote the fear that people of color will become the majority of the population and through the electoral process will redistribute power and wealth and implement policies of equity and diversity to alter the historic axioms of politics and culture to establish that people of color have rights that white people are bound to and will be held accountable to respect. This time-proven multi-pronged tool of fear and hate is designed to pit the white and people of color communities as permanent adversaries and thereby to manipulate people into acting against their own self-interest. As a strategy it has had enormous success for more than 400 years. Moreover, it is has been a self-reinforcing and self-policing instrument of culture. When it seems to be insufficient to the task terror is deployed to secure compliance.

In 1964, when I was on SNCC staff, I wrote this report on the dominant role of the segregationist Citizens' Councils in Mississippi as a project of the SNCC Research Department. I prepared it under the inspired, able guidance and mentorship of the department head, Jack Minnis, and with the invaluable assistance of fellow research team members Walter Tillow and Rick Manning.

I recently came across this “what was” analysis as I rummaged through old file boxes. I thought it might be of interest since the ideologies and operational strategies of the white supremacy organizations in 2022 sound in the language, spirit, goals and strategies of the white establishment arch-segregationist “Never Forever!” terror organizations in 1964.

I have re-typed the report to make it more readable, incorporating handwritten edits, adding italics and bold for emphasis and clarity, and made some improvements in syntax and phrasing to strengthen context and meaning.

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### **Preface (1964)**

It is 99 years since the end of the Civil War and the abolition of slavery. It is 96 years since the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment guaranteed national and state citizenship, due process and equal protection of the laws to most Americans, including men of African descent. It is 94 years since the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment prohibited the denial of the right to vote on the basis of race, and 44 years since the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment prohibited the denial of the right to vote on the basis of sex. It is 10 years since the U. S. Supreme Court held state-imposed public school segregation, and implicitly the entire fabric of racial separation, inherently unconstitutional.

In Mississippi, however, as in many other states in this nation, black families are not free, are denied the fundamental rights of citizenship, especially the right to vote, and are subjected to the rigid segregation of the public schools. Whether black or white, to challenge the “way things are” in favor of the “way things ought to be” may be to risk everything.

This report is about how Mississippi’s white communities, through the white-led, white-based, whites-only Citizens’ Councils, continue to organize their all-out struggle to keep black communities shackled with the bonds of disenfranchisement and racial segregation.

## **THE CITIZENS' COUNCILS OF MISSISSIPPI**

### **Penetration, Organization and Responsibility for Violence**

The Citizens' Councils are a society-wide conspiracy to maintain white supremacy through the aggressive enforcement of a web of statutes, ordinances, administrative policies, customs and practices that restrict, hinder and undermine the freedom and citizenship of persons of African descent. The conspirators aid, abet, and lend encouragement to those who, in furtherance of these goals, commit terrorist acts of violence against the black community.

The Citizens' Councils were launched in 1954 to combat court-ordered school desegregation, which is seen as a mortal threat to white supremacy. The *national* Councils organization is known as the **Citizens' Councils of America** and the *Mississippi* division is called the **Association of Citizens' Councils of Mississippi**.

The Citizens' Councils of Mississippi, with county chapters and members throughout the state, are dedicated to preventing, hindering, and subverting by all means the lawful efforts of black citizens of Mississippi to secure their freedom, equality and the right to vote.

The goal of the Citizens' Councils is to build membership until the organizations impact every part of the social, political, economic and educational fabric. In this vision every element of white Mississippi society is supposed to become engaged in the Citizens' Councils programs and operations.

In reality, however, not every white Mississippian belongs to or supports the Citizens' Councils. Nevertheless, through militant organizing, carefully planned and concerted activity, buttressed by continual propaganda on TV, radio and in print, the Citizens' Councils aspire to be the most effective white supremacy organizations within the State. Any individuals or groups that dare to oppose Citizens' Councils policies necessarily must have the courage, wisdom, commitment and tenacity to engage in a head-on confrontation with the seemingly impregnable, and sometimes violent, white establishment resistance to change.

In Mississippi prior to 1955 most black citizens in most rural communities and in many urban communities did not risk attempting to register or to vote, and did not participate in public on the political landscape because of the violent terrorist acts against those who sought to do so.

In response to the 1954 U. S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, black communities in Mississippi began to assert their right to participate in the political processes of the

state. In reaction to this direct threat to white supremacy the Citizens' Councils urged their members and supporters to use their extraordinary relationships with, and inside, government, judicial and business institutions to counter-attack in order to repel the quest by black communities for first-class citizenship.

The Mississippi Citizens' Councils often *dominate* local and state government agencies, law enforcement departments, and the judiciary. A significant number of Mississippi public officials, law enforcement officers, and judges are Council leaders, members, and supporters who *collaborate* together to obstruct or refuse to comply with the guarantees and protections provided in the U. S. Constitution, federal laws, and federal court orders.

This powerful combination of domination and collaboration form a keystone in the formidable structure of white supremacy. This combination provides a critical insulation against moral and legal accountability for the brazen violent lawlessness used to terrorize and suppress black community resistance to white supremacy.

Many state and local authorities systematically fail to provide either protection to *all* citizens or to prosecute those performing acts of terrorist violence. These systemic lapses effectively aid and abet such acts of violence. Consequently, these authorities become legally and morally complicit in these violent acts through their strategic and willful "intentional negligence". It is against this backdrop that terrorist acts against black communities are undertaken with a certainty of impunity.

### **Citizens' Councils document their goals of unfettered white supremacy**

The Association of Citizens' Councils of Mississippi, through members' statements and their publications, document their intentions by any means necessary to keep black communities "in their place", subordinate to and dependent upon white communities, and without sufficient power to change their conditions.

The Citizens' Councils do not believe in majority rule. They fear majority rule. The Councils recognize that in many of the counties in the northwest plantation-rich Delta region, the east central area along the Alabama border, the southwest region bordering the Mississippi River and Louisiana, and the south central part of the state, the white population is greatly out-numbered by the black population, rendering white citizens the "minority" population in these areas. The Councils fear that if majority rule is effectively exercised at the ballot box in these counties, it will re-distribute a major

share of political power to the black community, end the white community legal stranglehold of the black community, and threaten to dismantle the entire system of white supremacy.

A Citizens' Council flyer entitled *What is the Citizens' Council Doing?* explains the basis for this fear:

**In many Mississippi counties the white population is outnumbered by more than two to one by the Negro population. The specter of negro political domination looms ominously with the apparent blessing of the Federal government.**

**Highly organized schemes are now being launched to force circuit clerks to register unqualified negro voters! The only solution for the white Southerner is strong determined organization on every level. There is no acceptable alternative. Negro political domination would destroy property values, place the safety of all white people in jeopardy, and lead to complete chaos.**

The Councils justify this attitude by promoting as axiom that any black person is by heredity and nature inherently inferior to any white person. According to Council logic, therefore, a black person should not be afforded the protections and rights guaranteed to all citizens by the United States Constitution, especially not the right to vote. Rather, black people must be excluded from such rights and protections to ensure that white people can continue to enjoy them.

Former Mississippi Democratic Governor **James K. Vardaman** delivered this malignant racial paradigm in a missive originally published by the *Saturday Evening Post*, April 27, 1907 and presented unvarnished in a reprint issued by the Citizens' Councils headquarters in Greenwood, Miss.:

**The negro should never have been trusted with the ballot. He is different from the white man. He is congenitally unqualified to exercise the most responsible duty of citizenship. He is physically, mentally, morally, racially and eternally the white man's inferior. There is nothing in his achievements of the past nor his promise for the future which entitles him to stand side by side with the white man at the ballot box.**

And:

**We must repeal the Fifteenth and modify the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Then we shall be able in our legislation to recognize the negro's racial peculiarities, and make laws to fit them. This would leave the matter precisely as was intended by the fathers of the Republic.**

And:

**The negro cannot be remodeled by beginning at the ballot, the highest duty of citizenship, and then working downward. The cleansing process must begin in his home, in his private character, at the elemental duties, and work upward. Schooling may sharpen his intellect, but it does not make character.**

The Democratic U. S. Senator **James O. Eastland**, cotton plantation magnate from Doddsville in Sunflower County, Miss., powerful Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and eventually an intense advocate for Citizen's Council values and strategies, quite succinctly synthesized Gov. Vardaman's malevolent racial screed during a Senate debate on a proposed bill to create a Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC), June 29, 1945:

**I assert that the Negro race is an inferior race. The doctrine of white supremacy is one which, if adhered to, will save America. (Congressional Record)**

In 1948, as post-World War II storm clouds gathered over the nation regarding demands for and resistance against enforcement of civil and constitutional rights, Sen. Eastland sought to head off such strife in his home state when he addressed a joint session of the Mississippi House and Senate. From the podium Eastland sent a disingenuous “olive branch” to the Mississippi black community in what can only be described as a proposed Faustian “bargain with the devil”:

**If Negroes want better housing, we will give them better housing. If they want better jobs, we will give them better jobs. If they want better schools we will give them better schools. But in exchange Negroes must understand that politics is white folks' business and they must stay out of it.**

Sen. Eastland is fond of bragging about how he manages to block many proposed civil rights bills that necessarily have to be approved by his Senate Judiciary Committee: **“I stuff the bills in my coat pocket!”**

The statewide Association of Citizens' Councils of Mississippi, in their *2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Report, August 1956*, targeted voting rights and public education as critical battlefields in their struggle to protect and defend white supremacy:

**The first major accomplishment and the first project undertaken by our Councils on a State level was the passage of the Constitutional Amendment to raise voter qualifications in Mississippi. Although this same amendment failed to pass in 1952, it passed by a tremendous majority when the people of Mississippi, through the Citizens' Councils, were informed of the necessity and reason for the passage of this amendment. It is impossible to estimate the value of this amendment to future peace and domestic tranquility in this State. Our next major effort was the school amendment. On December 21, 1954, the people of Mississippi passed the amendment that gave the Legislature the power to abolish public schools as a last resort in order to prevent racial integration in these schools. In passing this amendment we told the world in no uncertain terms that before we would submit to integration we would abolish our schools and set up State-supported private schools. Against organized opposition the Citizens' Councils threw their strength behind the passage of this bill. The Council officers felt that if integration came to Mississippi our schools would be automatically destroyed and we felt that this amendment was merely a legal statement of principles and fact that expressed the sentiment of the people of Mississippi.**

The Mississippi Citizens' Councils ideology is rooted in the premise that racial segregation is essential to the preservation of “white civilization”, and that efforts to end segregation will necessarily end in violence.

The Citizens' Council *Five-Point Action Program* insists on the urgency to reverse the Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* and restore the legality of school segregation to prevent societal collapse resulting in chaos and violence. The *Program* was printed in *The Citizen*, the “Official Journal of the Citizens' Councils of America”, February 1964:

#### **FIVE-POINT ACTION PROGRAM OF THE CITIZENS' COUNCIL**

- 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 integrating 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 false "science". If it stands social segregation and laws against racial intermarriage will be subject to judicial condemnation. Such a prospect is intolerable!

A constant theme in Councils rhetoric is the demand for a return to "constitutionalism". But in direct contradiction of their own logic, the Councils persistently attempt to discredit the framework of constitutionalism and the rule of law by condemning the Supreme Court and other federal courts, accusing them of being under the influence of Communism. Sen. Eastland delivered a blistering attack on federal courts generally, and desegregation decisions specifically, in his speech to the first statewide convention of the Citizens' Councils, December 1, 1955, in Jackson. Entitled *We've Reached the Era of Judicial Tyranny*, Sen. Eastland argued:

**The anti-segregation decisions are dishonest decisions. Although rendered by Judges whose sworn duty it was to uphold the law and to protect and preserve the Constitution of the United States, these decisions were dictated by political pressure groups bent on the destruction of the American system of government, and the mongrelization of the white race. The Judges who rendered them violated their oaths of office. They have disgraced the high office which they hold. The Court has responded to a radical pro-Communist political movement in this country.**

#### **The Councils' 3-pronged strategy to preserve white supremacy:**

##### **Penetration, Organization, and Violence**

The Citizens' Councils strategic plan to maintain white supremacy has three prongs: penetration, organization, and encouragement of anti-black violence as necessary and inevitable. Citizens' Councils attempt to organize the white leadership of entire communities to implement their goal of preserving segregation and denying the ballot to black citizens. They also work through individual members who are situated in and often dominate local and state legislative, judicial and executive branches of government, and occupy leadership roles in major businesses.



## A. Penetration

The first prong of Citizens' Council strategy is to *penetrate* social and governmental institutions. Penetration in some instances may mean a Council member joins a new group or organization, or it may involve recruiting or collaborating with people who are already part of the institution. This is made clear in a Councils pamphlet entitled, *The Citizens' Council, A History: An Address by Robert B. Patterson, Secretary, Citizens' Councils of America; Executive Secretary, Association of Citizens' Councils of Mississippi, to the Annual Leadership Conference of the Citizens' Councils of America, Jackson, Mississippi, October 26, 1963:*

**The Citizens' Councils think and plan as a group and then they are able to act as individuals within their various churches, schools or any other organization to which they may belong. This has already proved effective in many, many instances.**

The Citizens' Councils penetration of major institutions does not require that they have great numbers inside a given institution. A member committed to the Council ideology is able to bring to a business or bank or government agency the Council message that institutional policies need to reflect unyielding support for racial segregation and opposition to black voter registration. At the same time, Council members are in position to serve as watchdogs to monitor whether the institution is being faithful to the Council cause. Council members are strategically situated to report back to the Councils so that counter-pressures can be created when an institution hesitates or begins to waver. Since goodwill and the absence of strife are invaluable to most institutions, the presence of Council members serves as an effective reminder to institutional leaders that being faithful to Council policies is the discretion that is the better part of valor.

An example of Patterson's thesis is reflected in the framework of interlocking directorates among electric power, finance capital and the Mississippi Democratic Party. Citizens' Councils members are strategically situated to provide influence and monitor policies in these institutions because their members and supporters occupy major roles inside the interlocking directorates.

On the economic front **Mississippi Power and Light** is the largest producer of electric power in Mississippi. **Deposit Guaranty Bank and Trust Company** of Jackson and the **First National Bank** of Jackson are the two largest banks in the State of Mississippi. Together electric power and finance capital form the keystone of industrialization, with which Mississippi is highly concerned today.

On the governmental landscape the **Mississippi Democratic Party** totally dominates political institutions at the state, county and municipal levels. The Party undergirds the Mississippi “way of life” through the adoption and enforcement of constitutional amendments, statutes, ordinances, resolutions, and administrative policies. The Party also uses its omnipresence in communities, and domination of policy formation and implementation in government, to monitor and enforce adherence to perhaps the most powerful elements in the culture: Mississippi’s historic customs and practices.

Citizens’ Council leaders and supporters are important threads in the fabric of business and governmental executive authorities that comprise an establishment with extraordinary influence in the formation and implementation of policy in the public and private sectors.

For example: **R. B. Wilson** of Jackson, Miss., is a member of the Board of Directors of **Middle South Utilities**. Middle South Utilities wholly owns Mississippi Power and Light. Wilson is also President and a member of the Board of Directors of Mississippi Power and Light, and is a member of the Board of Directors of the Deposit Guaranty Bank and Trust Company of Jackson, the largest bank in the State of Mississippi. Wilson was a sponsor of the pro-segregationist gathering, the *Carleton Putnam Day Dinner*, October 26, 1961, held in Jackson, Miss.

**William P. McMullan** is another Board Director of Mississippi Power and Light. McMullan is also Chairman, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), a Board Director and important stockholder of Deposit Guaranty Bank and Trust Company. McMullan occupies a seat on the Board of Directors of the Jackson Citizens’ Council.

**Robert M. Hearin** is another member of the Board of Directors of Mississippi Power and Light. He is also President, Board Director and member of the Advisory Committee of the First National Bank of Jackson, and controls the second largest percentage of outstanding stock of the First National Bank. Hearin is a past President of the Jackson Chamber of Commerce and now a Director of the United States Chamber of Commerce. He is a Colonel on the official staff of Mississippi Governor **Paul B. Johnson**, who is an outspoken supporter of the Council’s anti-black and pro-segregation policies.

Colonels on the Governor’s staff receive their appointments because of their support for the gubernatorial candidate during the campaign. An analysis of the colonel staff provides some indication as to where Governor Paul Johnson’s support came from during the 1963 campaign and to whom he owes political debts.

The Vice-President and Secretary of Mississippi Power and Light is **Alex Rogers**, who was appointed by Governor Paul Johnson as a Colonel on his official staff.

The Public Information Director for Mississippi Power and Light is **Alex McKeigny**, who holds a seat on the Board of Directors of the Jackson Citizens' Council.

A scoreboard of Directors of *Deposit Guaranty Bank and Trust Company* reveals:

- one* member who sits on the Board of Middle South Utilities;
- two* members who sit on the Board of Mississippi Power and Light;
- five* members who sit on the Board of Directors of the Jackson Citizens' Council; and
- three* members who are Colonels on Governor Johnson' staff.

A scoreboard of Directors for the *First National Bank* shows:

- one* member is on the Board of Mississippi Power and Light;
- one* member is on the Board of the Jackson Citizens' Council; and
- four* members are Colonels on the Governor's staff.

A scoreboard of Directors for the *Jackson Citizens' Council* discloses:

- two* members and one Council supporter hold key positions in Mississippi Power and Light;
- five* members sit on the Board of Deposit Guaranty Bank and Trust Company;
- one* member holds a seat on the First National Bank Board; and
- thirteen* members were appointed by Governor Johnson to his Colonel staff.

When the emphasis is shifted from economic to political institutions, such as the Mississippi Democratic Party, the State Legislature and the Governor's office, the Citizens' Council grip on the reins of power is clear.

The Mississippi Democratic Party members hold almost every position in government despite the existence of the Republican Party. The Republicans have only one member in the State Legislature, none in the Executive branch, and none among the Congressional and Senate delegations.

The *Platform of the Mississippi Democratic Party*, adopted in Convention in Jackson, Miss., June 30, 1960, illuminates the symmetry and symbiosis between the Councils, its philosophy and campaigns, and the formation of public policy by the political party:

**We believe in the segregation of the races and are unalterably opposed to repeal or modification of the segregation laws of this State, and we condemn integration and the practice of non-segregation. We unalterably oppose any and all efforts to repeal the miscegenation laws. We believe in the doctrine of interposition as defined in the appropriate resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Mississippi at its Regular Session of 1956 ....**

**We believe in the separation of the races in the universities and colleges, in the public schools, in public transportation, in public parks, in public playgrounds, and in all spheres of activity where experience has shown that it is for the best interest of both races that such separation be observed.**

The State Democratic Party, meeting again on August 16, 1960, adopted the following measures in response to the 1960 National Democratic Convention held in Los Angeles, California:

**That we reject and oppose the platforms of both National parties and their candidates. That we reaffirm and readopt the Platform and Principles of the Democratic Party of Mississippi adopted in Convention Assembled in the City of Jackson on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of June, 1960.**

The actions and public positions of the Democratic Party leadership reveal the extent of Citizens' Council influence upon and control of the formation and implementation of public policy.

In 1959 infamous segregationist Governor **Ross Barnett**, a committed and outspoken Councils supporter, swept into office on the strength of his Citizens' Council outlook. In 1960, under the guidance of Governor Ross Barnett, the Mississippi Democratic Party went on to support and then carry the State for a slate of unpledged electors in opposition to the candidacy of National Democratic nominee, John Kennedy.

Barnett's attempt in 1962 to prevent James Meredith from becoming the first black student to enroll at the University of Mississippi, an action supported by then-Lt. Governor Paul Johnson, exemplified the Councils' approach. In the September 1962 edition of *The Citizen*, the official publication of the national Citizens' Councils apparatus, Governor Ross Barnett blasted the impending entrance of Meredith to Ole Miss in an address delivered on September 13, 1962. It was billed in *The Citizen* as a "clear summary of Mississippi's position in the current crisis."

**The day of expediency is past. We must either submit to the unlawful dictates of the Federal Government or stand up like men and tell them "Never!"**

**I have made my position in this matter crystal clear. I have said in every county in Mississippi that no school in our state will be integrated while I am your Governor.**

**As your Governor and Chief Executive of the Sovereign State of Mississippi I now call on every public official and every private citizen of our great state to join with me in refusing, in every legal and constitutional manner available, to submit to illegal usurpation of power by the Kennedy Administration.**

Note Governor Barnett's cynical and disingenuous rhetorical flourish: "... in every legal and constitutional manner available ...". In contradiction of his own words, Barnett used the power of his leadership position as the state's Governor to vigorously reject the legal and constitutional federal court orders to admit Meredith to the University, and "granted permission" to the white community to resist the legal process by any means necessary. In direct response, a mass of white rioters invaded the college campus and attacked the federal marshals who were there to protect Meredith and enforce constitutional authority. Gov. Barnett and Lt. Gov. Johnson never denounced the felonious, unconstitutional and illegal conduct of the rioters.

In response the Councils featured both Ross Barnett and Paul Johnson on the *Program for the Annual Leadership Conference of Citizens' Councils of America* in Jackson, Miss., October 25-26, 1963. The program listed:

**These Dedicated Patriots Featured on Program:  
Ross Barnett, Governor of Mississippi  
Paul B. Johnson, Lieutenant Governor**

Paul B. Johnson is now Governor of Mississippi. Johnson, elected in 1963, campaigned on these themes:

- Maintain white supremacy through a one-party system
- A two-party system will split the white conservative vote
- Segregation in Mississippi forever
- Bury the Republican Party once and for all.

Johnson also played heavily on the fact that he "stood in the door" at Ole Miss with Barnett.

Johnson's standard campaign leaflet, available at the Johnson headquarters during the campaign, contended that in order to preserve white supremacy Mississippi needs to become a one-party dictatorship and eliminate the dangers of competitive election cycles every four years:

**A DIVISION OF CONSERVATIVE MISSISSIPPIANS INTO TWO POLITICAL CAMPS ... WOULD GIVE THE BALANCE OF POWER TO OUR MINORITY GROUP. This would be the end of our way of life in Mississippi and the peace, tranquility, law and order we now enjoy in all of our communities would soon come to an awesome end.**

**To have Mississippi Democratic nominees and Republican nominees running for every public office ... municipal, county and state ... every four years ... would constitute an unnecessary nuisance and would bring to Mississippi the same political evils and dangers that now beset such states as Illinois, New York, Michigan, Pennsylvania and California ....**

If you've already had enough of politics for 1963, then help stamp out Republicanism on November 5. Let's bury these Republican "upstarts" so deep under good, solid, Mississippi Democratic votes that it will be the year 2000 before you hear of Republican candidates for Mississippi offices again!

We do not have to belong to and participate in an integrated national party which tolerates in its ranks radical leftists like Governor Nelson Rockefeller and Senator Jacob Javits of New York and "Black Monday" Earl Warren in order to cast Mississippi's votes for a true conservative. We do not have to make an "accommodation" with liberals, and we do not have to compromise our principles, in order to make our electoral votes count for freedom.

Let's ... bury forever these "overnight" Republicans who would like to divide our State and hand it over to a minority group.

Johnson's campaign manager in the City of Jackson and Hinds County, the largest city and county in the State, was attorney **Dan Shell**, who heads the Legal Advisory Committee on the Board of Directors of the Jackson Citizens' Council. Shell is a city prosecutor for Jackson in civil rights cases and a defense attorney for Jackson in the school desegregation cases. He is a law partner of **John C. Satterfield**, who heads the *anti*-Civil Rights bill lobby in Washington, D.C.

Another key Mississippi Democratic Party leader is **Tom P. Brady**, who was the Democratic National Committeeman in 1960 to the Democratic National Convention. He is temporary chairman of the State Democratic Convention of 1964 and a delegate to the Democratic National Convention of 1964. Brady has been on the State Executive Committee of the Association of Citizens' Councils of Mississippi since at least 1955. Formerly a circuit judge, Brady was appointed by Governor Barnett as a Supreme Court Justice of the State of Mississippi. Judge Brady swore into office the present Governor of Mississippi, Paul Johnson, on January 21, 1964.

Judge Brady, serving his second term as Circuit Judge of the 14<sup>th</sup> Judicial District in 1957, gave a speech in which he denounced black people as inherently inferior and contended that justifies and requires denying to them the full rights of citizenship. His polemic was featured in a widely distributed Citizens' Councils pamphlet:

**Segregation and the South**

**Address by Judge Tom P. Brady of Brookhaven, Miss., on October 4, 1957**

If in the South the Negro was permitted, as he is in some Northern states, to obtain the ballot by simply reaching 21 years of age, it would mean that no qualified white man in many counties throughout the South could ever hold public office. It would also mean that in the halls of Congress seats now held by competent white representatives would be held by ignorant, incompetent Negroes.

While I regret that I must do so, I must nevertheless comment upon some of the intellectual and moral aspects of the reason why the South must remain socially segregated. The average vocabulary of the Negro in the South consists of approximately 650 words. I hesitate to estimate the IQ of the average Negro in the South since the Federal Government refused to give me the results of the intelligence tests given in World War II and in the Korean conflict. The NAACP objected to the furnishing of this information. I can, however, safely say that based on the tests which are available from World War I, and from general experience, there is a vast gulf

of difference between the IQ of the Negro of the South, as well as in America, and in the average white man. It is because of an inherent deficiency in mental ability, of psychological and temperamental inadequacy. It is because of indifference and natural indolence on the part of the Negro. All the races of the earth started out at approximately the same time in God's calendar, but of all the races that have been on this earth, the Negro race is the only race that lacked mental ability and the imagination to put its dreams, hopes and thoughts in writing. The Negro is the only race that was unable to invent even picture writing.

And then continued:

Finally, so that there may be no vestige of doubt in your mind how we feel regarding segregation, I now fervently say, "Sum vivamus tum segregabimur post-mortem – Seo volente, etiam nunc sic erit," which literally translated means "As long as we live, so long shall we be segregated, and after death, God willing, this it will still be!"

Another important Democratic leader is **George Malone Yarbrough** of Red Banks, Miss.

Yarbrough is President Pro-Tempore of the Mississippi State Senate and has been the floor leader for Gov. Paul Johnson's legislative program since the new Governor took office. Yarbrough, who is a farmer, cattleman, insurance agent and newspaper publisher, is on the State Executive Committee of the Association of Citizens' Councils of Mississippi. Yarbrough is also Chairman of the Senate Committee on Interstate and Federal Cooperation and Vice-Chairman of the Rules Committee.

Yarbrough steered the Highway Patrol Bill (House Bill 564) to passage. The measure, one of Gov. Johnson's major legislative proposals, created a state police force out of the Highway Patrol, increased its size and expanded its powers. Speaking in Biloxi, Miss, April 20, 1964, Gov. Johnson said he would use the expanded patrol to ensure "**that no civil rights agitators are allowed to drive a wedge of dissension between the people of the state.**"

The extent of the measure prompted some very outspoken attacks upon it on the Senate floor. **Sen. Howard McDonnell** of Biloxi said, "**What you are about to do here is create a traveling Gestapo. It besmacks of Nazi Germany and Russia.**"

**Sen. Tom Williams** of Lexington agreed, "**If you read the history of Germany you will see that the people were not afraid of a thing that Hitler did. This is the way that people lose their liberties.**"

Sen. Yarbrough answered McDonnell and Williams by saying, "**I am sure it will be said in some parts of the country ... that Mississippi has itself a Gestapo. I think Senators do a disservice to the State when they utter things up here about Hitler and other things that should be left unsaid.**"

*Seven* of the 34 House members that introduced the Highway Patrol Bill are known to be Citizens' Council members. The bill was reported out of the House Ways and Means Committee.

*Nine* of the 33 Ways and Means members are known to be Citizens' Council members. Twelve of the

34 who introduced the bill are also on the Ways and Means Committee that reported the bill, and *three* of those twelve are Citizens' Council members.

While Citizens' Council members are strategically placed in the Democrat-controlled Legislature, there are no black state legislators in either the House or Senate to give voice to the needs and interests of the black community.

Of the 122 members of the House of Representatives in the 1964-1967 Legislature at least *twenty-four* are known to belong to the Citizens' Councils, including powerful House Speaker **Walter Sillers**. The House Speaker controls all Committee assignments. *Six* of the *twenty-four* who belong to the Councils are on the State Executive Committee of the Association of Citizens' Councils of Mississippi.

In the Senate *thirteen* of the 53 members are known to belong to the Citizens' Councils, including President Pro-Tempore George Yarbrough. The Lieutenant Governor, **Carroll Gartin**, who presides over the Senate in his capacity as President of the Senate and appoints the committee chairs, is also a Citizens' Council member.

The number and strategic positioning of Council members provides effective control over parliamentary procedure, committee membership and floor leadership on legislation.

Of the 7 members of the powerful Senate Rules Committee, *four* are known to belong to the Citizens' Councils. Of the 14 members of the equally powerful House Rules Committee, *five* are known to be members of the Councils.

Council members control the key position of Chairman on many Committees:

House – Rules; Census and Apportionment; Conservation of Minerals and Resources; Constitution; Corporations; County Affairs; Drainage; Federal Relations; Insurance; Labor; Military Affairs; Mississippi Levees; Universities and Colleges

Senate – Rules; Claims; Constitution; Contingent Expense; County Affairs; Eleemosynary Institutions; Interstate and Federal Cooperation; Military Affairs; Oil and Gas; Temperance; Transportation; Universities and Colleges; Joint Committee of State Library

Following is a list of those Legislators known to be Citizens' Council members:

Senate (14)

**Lt. Governor Carroll Gartin**, Laurel, Miss. – also Lt. Governor and President of the Senate from 1952-1960

**William B. Alexander**, Cleveland, Miss.

**Hayden Campbell**, Jackson, Miss.

**Herman B. DeCell**, Yazoo City, Miss.

**C. Thomas Douglas**, Hazlehurst, Miss.

**Edward C. Henry**, Canton, Miss.



**Ben F. Hilbun, Jr.**, Starkville, Miss.  
**James Edgar Lee**, Prentiss, Miss.  
**Walter V. Moore, Jr.**, Oakland, Miss.  
**John William Powell**, Liberty, Miss.  
**Willie Conly Smith**, Kokomo, Miss.  
**Parham McAtee Watkins**, Port Gibson, Miss.  
**Arnee Watson**, North Carrollton, Miss.  
**George Malone Yarbrough**, Red Banks, Miss.

## House (24)

**Speaker of the House Walter Sillers**, Rosedale, Miss. – House Speaker since 1944.  
**Charles Gray Blackwell**, Laurel, Miss.  
**George Milton Case**, Canton, Miss.  
**Billy Joe Cross**, Vicksburg, Miss.  
**Russell C. Davis**, Jackson, Miss.  
**Radford Eugene DuBois**, Yazoo City, Miss.  
**Hubert Noel Finnie**, Courtland, Miss.  
**Thomas Zacharian Gipson**, Columbia, Miss.  
**Horace H. Harned, Jr.**, Starkville, Miss.  
**John Fielding Hollinger**, Meadville, Miss.  
**Edwin Wilburn Hooker, Sr.**, Lexington, Miss.  
**John Howard Hough**, Indianola, Miss.  
**Peaster Leo Hughes**, Madison, Miss.  
**Jesse Fred Jones**, Inverness, Miss.  
**James Wesley Mathis**, Carthage, Miss.  
**Dana Clifton Moore**, Cleveland, Miss.  
**J. A. Morrow, Jr.**, Brandon, Miss.  
**Clarence Benton Newman**, Valley Park, Miss.  
**Judson Arledge Thigpen, Jr.**, Cleveland, Miss.  
**James Benjamin True**, Gulfport, Miss.  
**Irby Turner, Jr.**, Belzoni, Miss.  
**H. G. Walker**, Gulfport, Miss.  
**Frank Wall**, Liberty, Miss.  
**Kenneth Ogden Williams**, Clarksdale, Miss.

In the 1964 Legislative session Citizens' Council members either introduced or co-sponsored more than 30 bills to hinder specific efforts by the black community to organize against segregation and as general attacks on black persons, families and communities in the State. For example:

### **Senate Bill 1607 – Anti-Economic Boycott bill**

This bill attempts to outlaw economic boycotts by black communities against white businesses that discriminate in services to black patrons.

### **Senate Bill 1545 – Anti-Leafleting Law**

This bill prohibits the distribution of leaflets that call for economic boycotts.

### **House Bill 64 – Restrain movement of persons under certain circumstances, the curfew law**

This bill would allow police to restrict freedom of movement of individuals and groups and to establish curfews without having to formally declare martial law.

### **House Bill 777 – Refusal to comply with certain requests**

A bill to outlaw passive resistance in civil rights demonstrations

### **Senate Bill 2136 – Criminalizing conduct of community liberal arts and health education programs; undermining Freedom Summer Project**

This bill is aimed at the COFO Mississippi Freedom Summer Project, but it could criminalize every community-instigated general liberal arts education school, workshop or meeting and every community-initiated health education program.

The bill doesn't ban such activities outright. Rather, the bill requires every participant, including program leaders, teachers, parents, students, and interested citizens to file a sworn affidavit with the Chancery Court clerk, prior to participation in such programs, that discloses the name, address, participant's employer, date, time, and place of the program, a complete description of the information to be imparted during the program, and any other information sought by the clerk.

In addition, every participant in a general education program is required prior to participation to obtain a license to participate from the state or county superintendent of schools, and in the case of health education programs a license to participate from the county health department.

Failure to comply with these requirements constitutes a misdemeanor punishable by fine and imprisonment. Further, the state Attorney General would be empowered to seek injunctive relief to shut down such community programs.

### **Senate bill 1672 – Revoke charter of Tougaloo College**

This bill was introduced in retaliation for civil right activities of students and faculty at integrated Tougaloo College.

### **Senate Bill 1783 – Invalidate the 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment which bans the poll tax**

This bill appears to comply with the 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U. S. Constitution that bans the poll tax in federal elections. But the bill actually provides for a similar form of voter registration that would have the same exclusive effects as the poll tax itself.

### **House Bill 180 – Provide prison terms or forced sterilization for parents of children born out of wedlock**

This bill in its original House provisions gave parents of more than one child born out of wedlock the choice between prison terms up to five years or sexual sterilization. A Senate version, striking the sterilization clause and reducing the penalty from a felony to a misdemeanor, was finally approved and signed into law.

The State Legislature created the **State Sovereignty Commission** on March 29, 1956 to provide a state-funded, state-operated agency dedicated to the implementation of the Citizens' Council agenda. The Commission, with offices on the first floor of the State Capitol, includes the

Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General, Speaker of the House, five legislators and four attorneys among its 13 members. The Governor, Lt. Governor and the Speaker of the House appoint the rest of the Commission (except for the Attorney General whose seat on the Commission is set by the statute).

Of the 13 members of the 1960-1964 Commission at least *ten* were known Citizens' Council members. The State Legislature has voted hundreds of thousands of dollars of tax money to support the Commission, which in turn, according to the New Orleans *Times Picayune*, "has sunk over \$160,000 of state funds since June 1960 in the White Citizens' Councils television and radio series."

The April 3, 1964 Jackson, Miss., *Clarion Ledger* reported:

... [the Senate] voted unanimously to give the State Sovereignty Commission an additional \$50,000, which informed sources said was headed for an anti-civil rights lobby in Washington, D.C.

**There was no dissent to the special appropriation for the State Sovereignty Commission, and passage came within 20 minutes of a special Appropriations Committee meeting at which the bill was approved. Chairman Burgin declined to reveal what the money was to be used for. However, authoritative sources said the grant was earmarked for donation to a group known as the Coordinating Committee for Fundamental American Freedoms, headed by John C. Satterfield, a Yazoo City attorney.**

Mississippi public education is a structured blend of racially segregated state and local policies and administrations that limit, hinder and undermine teaching black students the tools and skills of critical thinking and strategic analysis as a foundation for a meaningful liberal arts education. Rather, the emphasis in the schools is on internalization of the Mississippi "way", where dissent is heresy, ignorance is safer than inquiry, and fear pervades the academic atmosphere. This is a critical part of how the white establishment seeks to keep the evolution of Mississippi culture rooted in the principles of white supremacy.

\* In the spring of 1961 a number of black high school students in Jackson were expelled from high school because they stood up in their classrooms and inquired pointedly about the Freedom Rides and their significance.

\* In the spring of 1964 more than 800 students at all-black Alcorn A & M College in southwest Mississippi were suspended from school by the college president because they were protesting social conditions on the campus. The president enlisted the aid of the feared Highway Patrol to load the students into buses so that they could be sent home without even the opportunity to collect their belongings.

\* During the spring of 1964 campus police at all-white University of Southern Mississippi confiscated an issue of the student newspaper under the direction of University President **W. D.**

**McCain** because it carried an article about the school administration's refusal to grant admission to a black applicant.

McCain is a strong supporter of the Citizens' Councils and an Advisory Board member of the *Patriotic American Youth*, a campus youth organization that shares space with the *John Birch Society* in a Jackson bookstore. McCain is a frequent contributor to the Citizens' Councils' publication, *The Citizen*. He received a special commendation from the State Legislature for refusing admittance for the fifth time to **John Frazier**, a student at the predominantly black Tougaloo College.

The Jackson, Miss. *Clarion Ledger* of March 21, 1964, carried a United Press International dispatch about suppression of the student newspaper:

**Copies of Newspaper Confiscated**

**Hattiesburg – A University of Southern Mississippi official said Friday copies of the *Student Prints* were removed from distribution points on the campus.**

**The paper contained a brief account of an attempt by Frazier to enroll at the all-white institution here for the spring quarter. Frazier was denied admission on grounds that he failed to comply with college board regulations.**

**In a brief statement issued Friday after the papers were picked up by the campus police, the college added: The publication of the *Student Prints* is construed to be a lab experience for students studying journalism and consequently is under constant preview by the instructional staff at the university.**

**... The student publication was reprinted later in the day without the Frazier story.**

\* During the 1964 legislative session **Rep. James Mathis**, a Citizens' Council member from Carthage in Leake County, helped lead the attack on **James Silver**, a professor of history at the University of Mississippi who is a "white moderate" critic of segregationist policies and author of *Mississippi: The Closed Society*.

The *Clarion Ledger*, May 16, 1964, reported:

**Rep. Jim Mathis, Leake, introduced a concurrent resolution calling upon the Board of Trustees of the Institutions of Higher Learning to investigate certain employees of such institutions who are reputed to be and generally believed to be engaged in activities disloyal to their employers and the people of Mississippi, injurious to the academic standards of the institutions, and in contumacious conduct in violation of Section 213-A of the Mississippi Constitution.**

The lawmaker said that the resolution is directed at Ole Miss Professor James Silver who, Mathis said, has been actively condemning the state and school on racial matters. "If we can't invoke the provisions of the Constitution against such activities we are in a sorry mess," Mathis said.

The “economics” of public school segregation reveals how tax dollars paid by all persons are used to create and sustain a huge disparity in educational opportunities between the black and white communities.

In Mississippi the county appropriates funds for education ... according to its own budget ... in addition to the funds contributed by the State. Black students receive far less support for their education than white students. For example, the State of Alabama spends less per pupil, black and white, than any state in the nation. But the State of Mississippi spends less per pupil in the Mississippi Delta than Alabama spends on the average per pupil. The Delta is the region of the state that has the highest concentration of black families, and where black citizens constitute two-thirds of the population.

Throughout Mississippi black students get much less than their fair share of expenditures for education. Although black students in the Delta school districts receive the least education funding support, here are some examples from counties that are *not* located in the Delta. The following figures represent the county appropriation *per pupil* above the state’s appropriation for instruction in 1960-1961.

**North Pike County [McComb] (43% Black)**

**White students ..... \$ 30.89**  
**Black students ..... \$ 0.76**

**South Pike County (Magnolia)**

**White students ..... \$ 59.55**  
**Black students ..... \$ 1.35**

**Forrest County (28% Black)**

**White students ..... \$ 67.76**  
**Black students ..... \$ 34.19**

**Hattiesburg Separate**

**White students ..... \$ 115.96**  
**Black students ..... \$ 61.69**

Whites who control Mississippi have little respect for education for black communities. At the same time they have cynically invented arbitrary, irrelevant education qualifications to register to vote that county registrars can manipulate to prevent black citizens from registering to vote.

For example, in addition to the literacy tests administered by voter registrars, the voter registration laws permit circuit clerks, acting as voter registrars, to ask applicants to correctly interpret any provision of the Mississippi Constitution. Many fair-minded lawyers contend it would be extremely difficult for anyone without a law degree to pass this test if the tests were honestly administered. However, there are no standards provided by the law. As a consequence, voter registrars have unfettered discretion to judge the legal sufficiency of the “constitutional interpretations” given by registration applicants. Through this “legal” device, as well as others, black applicants are systematically denied registration.

It is ironic, therefore, that whether *white* public officials should be required to have even a minimum level of education to hold public office is actually quite controversial in the all-white Mississippi Legislature.

During the legislative session in 1964, while the State Penitentiary Reform Bill was pending in the Senate, **Sen. Howard McDonnell** of Biloxi proposed an amendment that would require that the Penitentiary Superintendent have two years of college education. Foes of the amendment said the requirement would force the ouster of the present Superintendent, **C. E. Breazeale**. The amendment failed. McDonnell then asked that the Superintendent be required to have a high school education. That amendment was also defeated.

In April 1964 a bill was introduced into the Senate Education Committee that would have required members of county boards of education to have a high school education. The bill reached the floor, but was eventually sent back to committee.

The *Clarion Ledger* carried a story on April 1, 1964, about a series of laws regarding minimum educational standards for Justices of the Peace and Constables:

**The Senate adopted four bills designed to improve state justice of the peace courts, headed by a measure to require justices of the peace to be high school graduates. Judiciary Committee Chairman E. K. Collins of Laurel said the high school requirement – which won passage 27-21 – would not apply to those now in office or persons who have four years JP experience. Collins said justices of the peace “can take property away from you, put you in jail and fine you ... don’t you think they should at least be able to read and write?” But foes of the measure said it was discriminatory. Sen. Ike Sanford of Collins asked: “Isn’t it true that a lot of farmers without high school diplomas know more about justice than Earl Warren, head of the U. S. Supreme Court?”**

**The author of the bills, Sen. Bill Alexander of Cleveland, admitted, “I’m sure of that.” But he said the reforms are badly needed and that many justices of the peace backed them.**

**Sen. Hayden Campbell of Jackson said the bill discriminates against “poor boys who couldn’t afford to finish high school. Wouldn’t this bill disqualify some fine men who have been elected governor?”**

**“This bill will mean progress for the state,” said Sen. Howard McDonnell of Biloxi, who added that he favored abolishing Justice of the Peace Courts entirely. “But since we can’t get that done,” he said, “let’s do the next best thing and upgrade the office.”**

## **B. Organization**

The second prong of the Citizens’ Councils program is *organization*: the operational process through which to achieve and sustain political, economic and social control and stave off the “integrationists”.

As early as 1955 Sen. James O. Eastland made it clear that organization needs to be a primary strategy of Citizens’ Council activity. Addressing the statewide convention of the Association of Citizens’ Councils of Mississippi held in Jackson December 1, 1955, he said:

**There is only one prescription for victory. As we prepare to fight, this is basic: Organization. Every other step must be based upon and through our organized effort. We must organize and we must be militant. That is prescription. The only way that we can mobilize all our strength is through organization.**

**W. J. Simmons**, editor of *The Citizen*, expressed the critical importance of effective organizing by the Councils in the February 1962 issue:

**The strength of the Citizens’ Council movement is based on capable, responsible local leaders who understand organization and effective administration. They understand that the formula for victory when integrationists attack a community is a steady and sustained building up of Citizens’ Council membership to a point where city government and other elements of the local power structure become part of the mass effort to preserve racial integrity.**

**An unorganized community is an open invitation to the agitators. This we know from experience. By contrast, cities and counties where strong Citizens’ Councils exist have either been let alone, or have won repeated victories over the race-mixers. This, too, we know from experience.**

**There is nothing mysterious about the Councils’ successes. They have been simply the product of common sense and hard work, applied in organized fashion to the problems at hand.**

On the editorial page of *The Citizen*, March 1962, the Councils’ leadership stated clearly that the goal of these policies is the creation of a “climate of opinion” so strong that it controls the thinking and conduct of every government official:

**The primary role of the Citizens’ Council movement in all fields of activity, including politics, is to advance the cause of racial integrity.**

**Each local and state group should work to create a climate of opinion so strong that it would be unthinkable for any candidate for public office to be less than ardent in supporting segregation to the utmost. That fortunately has been the case throughout most of the Deep South since the Councils were formed.**

In Mississippi, for example, the last gubernatorial contest found all of the candidates holding Citizens' Council membership cards. It would be the height of folly for the organization to split over personalities in such cases.

The emergence of the Negro bloc vote as a factor for the first time since Reconstruction has caused a few candidates for local and state office either to take a no-win position or to court the integrationists openly.

In those circumstances the duty of the local councils is to inform the white voters of the disastrous consequences of Negro political control....

... where segregation itself is at issue, no stone should be left unturned in an all-out campaign to defeat the traitors to our race!

The Citizens' Councils organized quickly throughout the state. A 1954 Citizens' Council report entitled *The Citizens' Council*, stated:

**How will the Citizens' Councils Roll Back the Dark Cloud of Integration?**

....

In conclusion, here are some facts: At this time (November 1954) there are one hundred and ten towns in Mississippi that now have Citizens' Councils, including over 25,000 white male members and penetrating 33 counties. Our sister states, Alabama and Georgia, have formed councils and they are now spreading. A state Association of Citizens' Councils of Mississippi has been formed, with headquarters at Greenwood, Mississippi.

The Citizens' Councils have taken every opportunity to brag of their strength and their highly organized activities. By 1956 they claimed over 80,000 members in 65 of Mississippi's 82 counties. They claim to have mailed "tons" of literature into all 50 states. In *The Citizens' Council, A History*, **Robert Patterson**, Secretary of the Citizens' Councils of America and Executive Secretary of the Mississippi organization states:

**We have helped to mobilize public opinion so that it has expressed itself from every possible direction against every attempt at integration. We are striving to present the case for racial separation to the entire nation.**

Patterson also had this to say in the January 1964 issue of *The Citizen*:

**Ralph McGill, left-wing publisher of the *Atlanta Constitution*, charged in a speech in Wellesley, Massachusetts that "Citizens' Council leaders have begun a cleverly planned campaign to exploit irrational northern fears of Negro demonstrations." And "Mississippi is ruled by a network of White Citizens' Councils. Their political control and their coercive power in economic affairs is so vast as to be difficult to comprehend." Coming from Ralph McGill this must be considered a tribute to the effectiveness of the organization of which you are a part.**

**Many of you here have been part of this organization from the beginning nine years ago. Our basic strategy, to inform and organize white people in this country, has changed but little during this time.**

**Canton, Miss.** is the county seat of **Madison County**. The city and county are models of the apparent success of this organizing strategy. Madison County has 9,267 whites (29%) and 23,650 blacks (71%), according to the 1960 U. S. Census, and abuts the north side of Hinds County in the central part of the state. Canton is about 15 miles from the state capital in Jackson.



Black citizens are an overwhelming majority, but whites hold all public offices and all important city and county officials in Canton and Madison County are members of the Steering Committee of the **Canton Citizens' Council**. The city Mayor and county Sheriff, the Representatives and Senator who are the voices of the citizenry in the State Legislature, and the chief economic powers in the city and county, are prominent members of the Steering Committee.

However, despite the extensive organizational success of the Canton Council, the white community does not possess all of the power. The black community in Canton is very well organized, and thereby has developed a share of power, too. In the winter of 1963-1964 the black community in Canton instituted a voter registration drive and a boycott of white merchants who did not treat black customers courteously or give them the same service as white customers. This campaign, based in and led by the black community, was met with a large number of arrests of civil rights workers and Canton residents and by economic reprisals against Canton's black community.

Canton's white community, led by the Citizens' Council leadership, is afraid that if the voter registration drive and boycott succeed in the face and defiance of pervasive Council strategies, then it might result in the election of public officials by the majority-black community. They fear such newly-elected officials would decry white supremacy, oppose segregation, adopt and implement policies that reflect the needs of the black community, and put an end to the use of terror tactics by police and private individuals to keep the black community "in its place". Further, if the white community has to share power with the black community, it just might shatter the image of the Citizens' Councils as the indomitable vanguard of white supremacy and protector of the segregated way of life.

In February 1964, in response to the growing success of the business boycott and intensity of the voter registration campaign, the Canton Citizens' Councils underwent reorganization. Within days all downtown stores sported Citizens' Council stickers on their doors or windows. The Chinese American owner of *Canton SuperMart* claims that he posted the Council sticker under threat of a Council-organized boycott of his store and that other merchants were "being forced" to join.

Shortly thereafter Canton state Senator **Edward C. Henry**, a member of the Canton Citizens' Council Steering Committee, sponsored bills in the state Senate which outlawed economic boycotts or any form of participation in one, including leafleting. He also sponsored a bill to facilitate police control of the black community.

At the same time a very strong anti-boycott campaign was conducted in the white-owned *Madison County Herald*, the weekly newspaper published in Canton. The editors made it clear that

they had published a good deal of the material on the boycott at the request of the Mayor and the Chamber of Commerce. The Mayor and all the leading Chamber of Commerce executives are on the Steering Committee of the Council. The Mayor is also on the State Executive Committee of the Association of Citizens' Councils of Mississippi.

The Canton Citizens' Council distributed an open letter to whites in Canton calling for their support against black community efforts to change their "way of life":

**Dear Fellow White Citizens:**

**... THE WHITE CITIZENS OF CANTON MUST BE UNIFIED IN ORDER TO SAVE CANTON FROM MASS CONFUSION LEADING TO RACE MIXING. Organization is the key to victory!**

**The Canton Citizens' Council is the gathering place for those white men and women who are determined to keep the white people in all governmental positions and in complete control of our way of life....**

**Thank you for your support and continued effort to keep Canton, Madison County and Mississippi in the hands of white men and women.**

**Sincerely,  
Gus Noble, President**

Black citizens in Canton and Madison County who seek justice through the judicial system to protect their constitutional rights to freely speak their minds, peaceably assemble, challenge existing norms, and exercise their right to vote to help determine who shall govern, are faced with this daunting dilemma:

Black individuals who dare challenge the *status quo* are often arrested. The Sheriff, **Jack Cauthen**, and the Police Chief, **Dan Thompson**, are on the Steering Committee of the Canton Citizens' Council.

After arrest individuals are tried in Municipal Court before the Municipal Judge, Mayor **Stanley Matthews**, who is a member on the statewide Citizens' Councils Steering Committee.

At trial they are prosecuted by the city attorneys, **R. L. Goza**, **W. S. Cain** and **J. R. Fancher**, who are on the Canton Citizens' Council Steering Committee.

After conviction at trial individuals can appeal their cases to the Circuit Court, where they will appear before Judge **Russell Moore III**. Gov. Paul Johnson appointed Moore to his judgeship this year. Judge Moore, who prosecuted Freedom Riders in 1961, is a member of the Board of Directors of **Patriotic American Youth**, a college and high school campus group in Mississippi. The Board of Directors of PAY represents an interlocking directorate with boards of directors of various Citizens'

Councils, especially the one in Jackson. PAY also shares a bookstore headquarters with the **John Birch Society** at the Freedom Bookstore in Jackson.

If the case is heard in Circuit Court as a jury trial it is more than likely that there will be *no black jurors* to decide the innocence or guilt of the defendant. To be eligible to be a juror a person has to be registered to vote. Since the white voter registrar uses the state laws to disqualify black potential voter registrants, very few if any black citizens in Canton are registered and eligible to serve on a jury.

If the case is appealed from the Municipal Court to the Circuit Court and the appeal is denied, the case can be appealed to the Mississippi Supreme Court. At the Supreme Court Justice **Tom P. Brady** will be one of the Justices to hear the appeal. Brady has been on the State Executive Committee of the Association of Citizens' Councils of Mississippi since at least 1955.

When a case is brought from Canton to the Federal District Court sitting in Jackson it would probably be heard by Judge **Harold Cox**, whose racist attitudes toward black voter registration applicants in Canton were cited in the *New York Times*, March 9, 1964:

**Federal District Judge Harold Cox is expected to rule ... on a Justice Department suit to speed up the processing of Negro voter applicants at Canton .... At yesterday's hearing Judge Cox, the first judge appointed by President Kennedy under the 1961 expansion of the Federal Judiciary, repeatedly referred to Negro applicants as a "bunch of niggers."**

Canton and Madison County are examples of Council penetration and organization on the "local" level. Following is some background on many of the Canton Citizens' Council Steering Committee members that reveals their extensive impact on the Canton political, economic, educational and social "way of life". In short, this is how it is done!

The names of the members of the Steering Committee were published in the Madison County *Herald* after the Committee's reorganization meeting held February 25, 1964.

**Stanley Matthews**

Mayor of Canton, elected in 1961

Former Personnel Director, King Lumber Industries (until 1961)

Now a Consultant to King Lumber Industries Personnel Department

Past President Canton Lions Club, now a member

Chairman of Red Cross Fund Drive 1963, 1964 (Red Cross segregated)

Past county Chairman of county USO fund drive

Lay Leader, member of the Board of Stewards, and adult teacher in Northside Methodist Church Sunday School (now known as St. Johns Methodist Church)

Helped organize Northside Methodist Church in 1939

An organizer of Canton Textiles

Member, Madison County Industrial Development Corp.

Member, Madison Investment Company

Member, Chamber of Commerce Industrial Committee

Treasurer, Canton Treating Co.  
City Judge in civil rights cases  
Mississippi Democratic Party National Committeeman  
Chairman, Democrats for Goldwater 1964  
State Executive Committee, Citizens' Councils of Mississippi

**R. L. Goss**

City Attorney, Prosecutor in civil rights cases  
Headed Law Consultation Group at Canton High School (white) Career Day Ceremonies, 1964

**W. S. Cain**

Law firm of Spivey, Ray and Cain  
Special Prosecutor in Canton civil rights cases

**Gus Noble**

Chairman, Steering Committee, Canton Citizens' Council  
Partner, Noble and Fortenberry Real Estate and Insurance Company  
Director, First National Bank of Canton

**Tom Maynor**

Secretary, Steering Committee, Canton Citizens' Council  
Executive Secretary, Canton Chamber of Commerce  
Member, Chamber of Commerce Industrial Committee  
Publicity Chairman, Sabin Oral Sunday Program  
Publicity Chairman, 1964 Canton Beautiful Committee, a city government agency  
Head of the 1964 Madison County Cancer Crusade for the American Cancer Society

**Tom Riddell, Jr.**

Director, First National Bank of Canton  
Owner and Secretary-Treasurer, Champion Chemical Co.

**Nelson Cauthen**

Attorney  
Director, Canton Exchange Bank (largest bank in Canton)

**J. R. Fancher**

City and Prosecuting Attorney  
Law firm of Fancher and Fancher, Canton

**Edward C. Henry**

State Senator, 19<sup>th</sup> District, since 1961  
Pilot, United States Air Force  
Vice-President, First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Canton  
Immediate Past President and member of Board of Directors, Canton Chamber of Commerce  
Church Deacon  
Merchant  
Past President, Lions Club  
Member, American Legion (segregated)  
Member, Veterans of Foreign Wars (segregated)

**Jeff Pace**

Owner, Davidson Marble and Granite Works

**W. A. Sims**

Madison County Chancery Clerk

**Frank E. Allen**

President, Canton Chamber of Commerce  
Member, Chamber of Commerce Industrial Committee  
President, First Federal Savings and Loan Association  
President, Canton Exchange Bank

**W. B. Brannan**

President, First National Bank of Canton  
Former Vice-President, First National Bank of Meridian  
Board of Directors, Canton Chamber of Commerce  
Member, Lions Club

**Herman Mosby**

President, Madison County Dairies [Mosby's Milk, a boycotted product]

**Otway Noble**

Owner, Noble Drug Company  
Director, Canton Exchange Bank  
Member, Utilities Committee of Canton Municipal Utilities

**Shelby Smith**

Owner, Firestone Store (sells Firestone tires, Westinghouse appliances)

**Harmit Jones**

Vice-President, American Tent Co. (employs 150)  
President, Jones and Yandell Manufacturing Co. (employs 15; Division of American Tent Co.)  
[Mrs. Harmit Jones is Treasurer of Canton Beautiful Committee]

**Grady Morgan**

[Mrs. Grady Morgan is Vice-President of the Parents-Teacher Association of Canton]

**James T. Conner**

Owner and President, Champion Chemical Co.  
President, Canton Rotary Club  
Chairman, Canton Chamber of Commerce Agricultural Promotion Committee

**Sam Bailey**

Owner, Bulk Petroleum Plant

**Lester Penn, Jr.**

Owner, L. A. Penn Sawmill

**J. D. Rasberry**

Treasurer, Canton Poultry Co.

**Emmett Ross**

President, Canton Textiles, Inc.  
Chairman, Madison County Agriculture and Soil Conservation District Commissioners( ASCS)

**Sam Latimer, Jr.**

[Mrs. Sam Latimer, Jr. is President of Canton PTA]

**Robert Cox**

Madison County Superintendent of Schools  
Member, Lions Club

**Jack Cauthen**

Madison County Sheriff  
Madison County Tax Collector  
Former Vocational Agriculture teacher for 18 years

**D. M. Allen**

Canton Superintendent of Schools  
Wrote letter March 2, 1964 to Madison County *Herald* to urge black students to stay in school despite black boycott efforts in protest against prevailing conditions in Canton  
In 1964 he addressed Negro Division of Red Cross

**Henry Johnson**

Alderman, Canton Board of Aldermen

**Bill Noble**

Ex-Sheriff and Tax Collector who now heads roving “special deputy” force in Madison County and appears to be unofficial Captain of police resistance to change. Considered to be strongest personality in Canton politics.

**Dan Thompson**

Canton Chief of Police

The owners of the *Madison County Herald* succumbed to the racial pressure cooker in Canton and sold their paper during March 1964. The March 26, 1964 editorial stated:

**How time has a habit of changing things rapidly and drastically. Three months ago, December 26, 1963, had anyone asked us where we expected to spend the remainder of our years and be laid to rest we would unhesitatingly have said Canton, Mississippi. Today we have no idea where it will be.**

In a column published in the March 26 issue entitled *Moonbeams*, one of the owners reflected:

**I owe you wonderful people a real debt of gratitude. You have allowed me to think, to talk, and to some extent, write much more liberal lines than the way you think....**

**The only person I dislike being around is the one who in our conversation will try to say the things I want to hear.**

**I'd rather argue with Gus Noble, Jim Butchart, Charlie Riddell, Sam Bailey, Dr. John Russell Darfey, A. B. Mansell, Jr. or Jo Jo Fancher than to listen to some sapsucker trying to soft-soap me. And, of course, there are a few people around here – believe it or not – who think like I do, and they are a joy indeed. But I'd rather not name them....**

**To say that racial troubles in Canton had no influence upon our decision to sell the *Herald* and leave Mississippi would be telling an outright lie.**

An article in the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, May 21, 1964, tied the sale of the Madison County weekly to the intense battle over the Canton “way of life” and the effectiveness of the boycott of white businesses by the black community:

## FATHER AND SON SEEKING TO BUY OSCEOLA TIMES

Special to the Commercial Appeal

Canton, Miss., May 21 –

Curtis Mullen and his son, Phil Mullen, former editors of the Madison County Herald, are negotiating to buy the Osceola (Ark.) Times, Phil Mullen said Thursday. The Mullen father-son team has edited the Herald here 11 years. They were former owners of newspapers at Oxford and at Paris, Tenn....

"The Herald," Phil Mullen said, "has been sold to W. C. Taylor, Jr. of Jackson, publisher of weekly newspapers at Charleston and Holly Springs."

He said the move was motivated by "purely economic reasons", heightened by racial tensions here. Madison County, with a total population of about 32,000 has only 9,000 white residents, he said.

"A boycott of 20 stores by a Negro group is now under way," he said, "and has proven 90 percent effective. The city's largest grocery store has lost 40 percent of its retail business. White businessmen at the beginning of the action met and decided to band together in opposing the boycott. All store owners, after the meeting, displayed a sticker on the business place doors proclaiming membership in the Citizens' Council."

Mr. Mullen said, "We didn't believe it (the boycott) could work like it has. Business will be hurt, and hurt bad."

He said. "However, no economic sanctions were leveled against the newspaper...."

The **City of Greenwood**, Miss., county seat of **Leflore County**, is another example of a community dominated by the Councils. Greenwood is located on the east side of the heart of the Delta, a one and three-quarters hour drive north of Jackson.

Mayor **Charles Sampson**, City Judge **O. L. Kimbrough**, City Attorney **Hardy Lott** and Police Commissioner **B. A. Hammond** are all members or on the Board of the **Greenwood Citizens' Council**.

During the black community voter registration drive in the winter of 1962-1963, Leflore County agricultural officials refused to distribute federal agricultural commodities to black families in an unsuccessful effort to "starve" the black community into submission. A national food drive led by national civil rights organizations helped enable the community to get through the winter.

In the spring of 1964 the State Legislature passed a bill, referred to on the floor of the Senate as the "Greenwood Emergency Act", which is designed to outlaw picketing for voting rights by the black community in front of the Leflore County Courthouse in Greenwood. Since the passage of the act more than 200 persons have been arrested on charges of violating the state law regarding picketing public buildings and on public sidewalks (and, therefore, courthouses).

The Greenwood Citizens' Council opposes the picketing of the courthouse and has offered legal aid to anyone arrested on charges of violating any section of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. If a white person who attacked a black picketer in violation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act were actually arrested, that white person would be in the interesting, if also peculiar, position of being tried and defended by leading members of the Greenwood Citizens' Council.

Passage of the anti-picketing law was described in the Jackson *Clarion Ledger*, April 3, 1964:

**[The Senate] gave final legislative approval to a House-passed bill to outlaw picketing and mass demonstrations at public buildings.**

**The bill to ban picketing was passed without discussion after Judiciary Chairman E. K. Collins of Laurel said it was “an emergency bill for Greenwood.” The county courthouse at Greenwood has been the scene of picketing in connection with mass voter registration drives for Negroes. The bill carries a maximum of a \$500 fine and a 6-month jail term for pickets who block entrances and exits of publicly-owned buildings.**

Two days earlier, after a brief explanation of the bill without discussion, the House voted in favor of the bill 113-0.

The Canton and Greenwood examples illustrate the degree to which local communities can expect to receive state-level cooperation to support Citizens’ Council strategies.

### **C. Responsibility for Violence**

The third prong of the Citizens’ Council strategic approach is to implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, encourage as necessary the *use of violence* to defend white supremacy, while at the same time pretending to discourage it.

Two primary forms of violence are deployed against black individuals, whole families and entire communities: *general* and *specific*. *General violence* refers to the apparently random:

lynchings, murders, or brutal beatings,

shootings into homes,

church burnings,

denials of employment or terminations of employment,

mortgage foreclosures, or evictions from tenant housing, or being run off the plantation,

refusals by county agricultural officials to distribute urgently needed federal agricultural commodities to indigent families in the dead of winter,

verbal harangues by whites intended to intimidate and humiliate and that are fraught with the specter of imminent transition to an unwarranted physical attack,

for no apparent reason other than that the objects of these violent acts are black individuals, families and communities of families.

General violence is intended as notice to *all* black persons that *each* of them is permanently and at any time, without reason or notice, vulnerable to attack simply because they are not white, and had better know and “stay in place” in Mississippi society.



*Specific violence* is not random. This violence is directed at those who stand up or rise to leadership in the black community to challenge white doctrine regarding black aspirations and behavior, such as calling for black voter registration or carrying people to the courthouse to register to vote.

The assassinations and beatings of civil rights activists and leaders in various counties of the State exemplify this kind of violence. Many of these murders are unsolved and others go without convictions and incarcerations notwithstanding that the killers are known.

Specific violence is intended to serve as notice to the black community that this kind of challenging activity, such as attempted voter registration, is tantamount to “stepping out of place”. The message is: Let your leader, or *late* leader, serve as an example of what might happen to you if you do as he or she did.

Many white community leaders appear to understand how violence can be stimulated and deployed to hinder, undermine, limit, and if possible, destroy any challenge to the way they think things ought to be. They know that if the Councils maintain an audible drumbeat about the inevitability of violence, then sooner or later persons will emerge who imagine that terrorist acts represent righteous courage in service of a civic duty ... and thereafter undertake to do it.

The Citizens’ Council organization is built on a base comprised of the most “respectable”, powerful and authoritative white men in the community, including bankers and leading businessmen, attorneys and doctors, farmers, cattlemen and plantation owners, and city, county and state officials. These white men are the “establishment” on the local, county and state levels that makes policy, in both the public and private sectors, and enforce it.

These white men are the brains behind, and organize the heart and muscle for the Citizens’ Council operations. They are arrogant and self-righteous in their unequivocal dedication to their vision of the Mississippi “way of life”, and appear to be emotionally insulated by an extraordinary immoral indifference to the suffering and harm their policies and actions cause to others.

Notwithstanding their protestations to the contrary, the Citizens’ Councils are *not* opposed to the use of force and violence to keep the black community from asserting its rights. Council leadership contends, and their literature states, that the methods of resistance should be both “constitutional and legal”. But Council leaders frame the issue in such a way that force and violence are made to appear inevitable and the only logical result of integration battles.

For example, Point Two of the *Five-Point Action Program* of the Citizens' Councils of Mississippi states:

**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.**

The Councils do not contend that violence by whites against blacks is the wrong response to integration, nor do they appear to blame or denounce white attackers for causing the violence. Rather, they contend that the mere existence of integration necessarily creates circumstances that guarantee violence will result, and demand that racial separation is the only meaningful precaution to avoid violence. In essence, they are blaming those who seek to end segregation as causing the conditions that necessarily lead to the violence.

This prediction of inevitability and shifting of blame is a clever, cynical and disingenuous technique. It is designed to absolve the white community of any moral or legal responsibility for the use of force and violence to deter integration. The Councils' prediction enables persons engaged in anti-black force and violence to rationalize that they are engaged in a righteous pre-emptive strike to prevent the inevitable chaos and violence ... deemed to be the responsibility of the integrationists ... that would otherwise result should integration come about. In other words, according to Council logic, it is righteous and permissible for law enforcement officials and private citizens to use violence, both general and specific, in the effort to "avoid" further catastrophic violence.

A critical corollary to the premise of inevitability of violence is the white establishment's absolute rejection of any notion that black persons, families and communities have any right to defend themselves by using force and violence to resist and repel attacks by whites.

In some Citizens' Council literature local citizens are urged to leave the problem of dealing with the "agitators" to the local and county authorities. The *Madison County Herald* noted, February 25, 1964:

**... [C]ity and county officials have made elaborate preparations to maintain law and order if the city is invaded by a large number of outside agitators.**

**Officials here have asked local people to "go about your local business, restrain your curiosity as much as you can, leave all actions up to the constituted authority of the city police department and the sheriff's office.**

This "leave it to the authorities" approach serves two functions for the Citizens' Councils.

First, this enables the Councils to appear to the "outside world" to be against violence; that is, to the business and financial communities, and public at large, outside the State of Mississippi. This is

important because the base of the Citizens' Councils is rooted in the leading white businessmen bankers, and public officials in the community and the State. They need the "good" public image of appearing to be against violence in order to preserve the proper "business atmosphere" to attract and maintain Northern capital to develop the economic base generally, and the industrial base specifically.

Second, in many communities local and county law enforcement officials are Council members, providing the Councils with effective control of policy formation and enforcement. Therefore, requests to let the "authorities" deal with civil rights workers and community activists actually means enabling Council members, operating in their capacity as public officials, to have absolute control as to how the white community responds to civil rights activities, especially voter registration efforts.

This is particularly onerous for the black community because law enforcement officials are in a position to harass and attack the black community by manipulating and abusing the conventional tools of law enforcement, while appearing to go about their "normal business practices". For examples:

- conducting invasive and burdensome *investigations*,
- generating *arrests* on a pretense that a crime has been committed,
- denying *bail* or setting very high bail,
- detaining* people without charging them with an offense,
- creating oppressive show *trials*, or
- causing long delays in bringing cases to *trial* while defendants remain incarcerated,
- obtaining *convictions* notwithstanding a lack of evidence,
- saddling defendants and their families with unmanageable *finer* and long *sentences* to jail or prison, and
- fostering excessively harsh conditions during *imprisonment*.

Most intimidating is that everyone knows that publicly elected officials, law enforcement, prosecuting attorneys, and judges often work together to squelch the voices of those who step out of line to challenge existing norms. Worse, there is an unfortunate widespread *belief* in both the white and black communities that the black community has little or no recourse against either the oppression or the violence.

According to the Citizens' Council, when compliance with the Federal system is unacceptable, then violence becomes the only way out. The Councils will not abide any "middle ground" position.

This philosophy is clearly stated on the editorial page in the January 1963 issue of *The Citizen*:

**Among the interesting developments arising from the attempt to integrate Ole Miss is the appearance of a few "moderates" advising peaceful surrender.**

**Will the "moderates" never learn? Their advice is not new. Its utter futility has been demonstrated over and over.**

**Of course no responsible person wants violence. It is an unpleasant remedy to which people resort only in desperate extremity when all else has failed.**

**On this point the position of the Citizens' Council has been clear in the past, but we will restate it here: it is to prevent violence by preventing integration!**

**But there is a point beyond which even the most judicious restraint becomes cowardice. To say that there would be no violence under any circumstances whatsoever is like President Kennedy assuring Khrushchev that the United States will not invade Cuba.**

**Perhaps the explanation for their seeming blindness to reality lies in a definition we heard the other day: "A 'moderate' is for segregation, but he's chicken!"**

Aha! Violence is proclaimed to be virtuous, righteous, and the means to vindicate fundamental values. Violence is heralded as the antithesis of cowardly dithering on and spineless surrender of principle. This *Citizen* polemic exposes the cynicism behind the pretend paradigm political principle that purports to admonish whites to "avoid violence" in the defense of segregation.

**Roy Harris**, President of Citizens' Councils of America lauded the resistance and violence at Ole Miss in the January 1963 issue of *The Citizen*:

**It took six hundred marshals and thirty thousand armed troops to put this Negro in the University of Mississippi and keep him there. (It is problematical as to whether or not he will still be there when this appears in print.)**

**The situation at Ole Miss demonstrates one thing clearly and that is that the people of Mississippi haven't surrendered.**

**They are still fighting. They are still resisting. They are still fighting to preserve their way of life and to preserve the white man's civilization.**

Mississippi U. S. Senator **James O. Eastland**, addressing the Citizens' Council meeting in Jackson, December 1, 1955, denounced "gradualism" as more dangerous than attempts to change conditions radically:

**The present condition in which the South finds itself is more dangerous than Reconstruction. It is more insidious than Reconstruction. There was no attempt to have interracial schools during Reconstruction. It is more dangerous in that the present court decisions are built on gradualism. To induce us to agree or to force**

**us to comply step by step. In Reconstruction there was the attempt to force the hideous monster upon us all at once. It will take special precautions to guard against the gradual acceptance, and the erosion of our rights through the deadly doctrine of gradualism.**

Eastland also stressed how resistance can spread by example:

**A wonderful job has been done in Mississippi. You have shown a will to resist. My friends, resistance is contagious. Resistance inspired by the Citizens' Councils of Mississippi has spread all over the country.**

And:

**No one knows better than the NAACP how effective the Citizens' Councils have been. No one is more aware than they of how highly contagious your organized efforts have been.**

This uncompromising, mean-spirited racist screed of the Councils is exhibited again in the January 1964 issue of *The Citizen*:

**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. These two ideologies are now engaged in mortal conflict and only one can survive. They cannot be fused any more than day can exist in night. The twilight of this great white nation would certainly follow. There is no middle ground!**

## **Conclusion**

What do the Citizens' Councils want?

The Councils want *power*, with sufficient *control* throughout society to determine who is able to share in the exercise of that power.

What do the Citizens' Councils fear the most?

The Councils fear *independent black political organization*.

Why are the Councils afraid?

The Councils fear independent black political organization because it represents unconditional, *assertive defiance of white supremacy* and constitutes a specific rejection of the premise that people had better know their place and stay there.

Such organizations represent a rejection of the critical axiom of white supremacy that "politics is white folks' business", demonstrating that the black community is not indifferent to politics, voting and governance, but rather is demanding its right to a fair share *through the political process* in the distribution of power and participation in governance.

And last, but not least, Councils are afraid because independent black political organization signifies and teaches how people with courage, wisdom, commitment and tenacity *can and have*

*come together to fight* for change, mustering much greater strength and capacity to resist white intimidation and retaliation than any individual working alone, no matter how capable. Moreover, independent black political organization demonstrates by example that courage is not the absence of fear, but the willingness to press forward notwithstanding the fear.

In short, the emergence of independent black political organizations, such as the integrated, bold and innovative **Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party**, based in the black community and anti-segregationist at its core, and which *works in alliance with many other black community organizations*, suggests that the domination of Mississippi by Citizens' Council white supremacists may be nearing its end.

We shall see!

. . .

### **2022 Postscript**

It is 58 years since the year of this report. As the Movement forged a new moral center for the nation the Citizens' Councils lost their luster, clout, marketability, and ultimately their viability.

Inspired by the struggle, armed with the vote, and assisted by the safeguards and tools in the 1965 Voting Rights Act, black communities across the state waged successful battles to create fair political redistricting plans. These new districts provided meaningful opportunities for the first time since Reconstruction for the election of representatives accountable to the black communities. At all levels of government these new public officials collectively became the first generation of black officials since Reconstruction with the right to have a seat at the table and the power to impact the formation and implementation of public policy.

As a result, for the first time since Reconstruction the black communities have an initial generation of people, and are now building a second one, who are experienced in governance and able to share their understanding and wisdom, tools and skills, from the perspective of the black community, with the next generation of community activists and leaders. This is something the white community has always taken for granted as it handed down its knowledge and power from generation to generation.

By 1991 the black vote enabled the Mississippi Legislative Black Caucus to grow to 21 members out of 174 Senators and Representatives, with one black Congressperson in the federal delegation. In 1992 a three-judge federal court ordered a special legislative election based on a new

legislative redistricting plan negotiated with the state by a coalition of grassroots black community organizations and a team of black Mississippi attorneys. The community-based voter turnout campaign resulted in the largest black voter participation in the state's history (until the first Obama campaign). The 1992 election doubled the size of the Black Caucus to 42 and the caucus gained the balance of power on appropriations bills. In the 1995 regular election the Caucus again increased to 45 and in 2003 increased to 50.

In 1997 the Black Caucus demonstrated its capacity to impact major policies when it led the successful fight to override the veto by Republican Governor Kirk Fordice of the MS Adequate Education Program (MAEP). The victory margin was one vote in the Senate and three votes in the House. The votes of the newly elected black legislators were key to this appropriation.

MAEP became the largest single increase in K-12 appropriations in the history of the state. In 1998 the state legislature passed the largest single teacher pay raise in Mississippi history. In 2000 the legislature adopted a major school district accountability statute focused on student achievement standards. The law also established a set of procedures that enabled local communities to elect Parent Community Advisory Councils with tools to hold local schools accountable to these new standards.

This dynamic period of effective black political participation demonstrated the community's commitment to tearing down the infrastructure of white supremacy, and the wisdom to create new strategies designed to achieve the long denied fairness and justice to which they were entitled.

In reaction to these developments, the heretofore politically feeble Mississippi Republican Party, once denounced as a divisive threat to white power, became the new party of choice for so many distressed white establishment leaders. When these white leaders recognized that they were no longer able to prevent the election of a significant number of black Democrats to public office at the state, county and municipal levels, could not minimize the emergence of black leadership within the Democratic Party, and therefore, were unable to control the platform and policies of the Democratic Party, they led major segments of the white community to abandon the Democratic Party.

The emerging Republican Party gained control of the Governor's office, and first one and then both houses of the legislature. The Party has used its majority share of power to systematically, significantly underfund K-12 education appropriations in violation of the MAEP formula. The Party leadership also sought to divert millions of state dollars from public school funding to privatize major

segments of public education. But a coalition of Black Caucus members, moderate white Democrats, and pro-public education Republicans has saved hundreds of millions for public education that the Republican leaders sought to axe, and has limited the success of the privatization efforts. But this struggle is far from over and is the stuff of other reports.

What a difference the fair and unfettered representation of all voices in the community makes in the formation and implementation of public policy! For so many of us the enforcement and impact of the right to vote has been the stuff dreams are made of, and for so many others it has been and remains the dreaded nightmare. Which leads to the primal question lifted up by the inspirational song of the labor and civil rights movements, *Which side are you on, boy, which side are you on?*

. . .