

The Outward Face of Massive Resistance:  
Segregationists' Media Strategies  
during the 1950s and 1960s

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# **The Outward Face of Massive Resistance: Segregationists' Media Strategies during the 1950s and 1960s**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the breadth and range of segregationist media strategies mobilised to win broad support for massive resistance and construct a national countermovement against desegregation and civil rights. It reveals a protracted battle over hearts and minds between civil rights activists and massive resisters during the 1950s and 1960s through a series of detailed case studies which comprise a cumulative examination of segregationists' efforts to influence and mobilise public opinion. Chapter 1 investigates how resisters sought to contest dominant media narratives concerning segregation by capitalising on racial strife in northern cities and selling segregation as a viable social system. Chapter 2 explores the level of consensus, collaboration, and disagreement between segregationists across the South concerning the most effective media strategy and demonstrates how public relations expertise was used to enhance their media ventures. Chapter 3 uncovers a pronounced shift in approach catalysed by Carleton Putnam, highlighting the full extent of his impact and a far-reaching, multifaceted, multimedia campaign to promote his ideas. Chapter 4 investigates segregationists' attempts to produce dramatic photographic and cinematic imagery to recalibrate public perception of the civil rights movement, the federal government, and their combined efforts to enforce desegregation and civil rights. The thesis evaluates the effectiveness of resisters' manifold attempts to harness different forms of mass media, revealing both their successes and failures. It uncovers how some of the most savvy strategists found ways to constrain the civil rights movement and assesses how they positioned some aspects of segregationist thought as part of a broader, national conservative ideology. By tracing the ebb and flow of segregationist media strategies, it offers new and important insights into the nature and trajectory of massive resistance, the successes and shortcomings of the civil rights movement, and the development of a new national conservatism.



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## Abbreviations

ABC	American Broadcasting Company
ACCL	Association of Citizens' Councils of Louisiana
ACCM	Association of Citizens' Councils of Mississippi
ACCSC	Association of Citizens' Councils of South Carolina
ACCT	Association of Citizens' Councils of Texas
ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
ASSC	Alabama State Sovereignty Commission
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting System
CCA	Citizens' Councils of America
CCFAF	Coordinating Committee for Fundamental American Freedoms
CCGNO	Citizens' Council of Greater New Orleans
CCL	Citizens' Councils of Louisiana, Inc.
CCT	Citizens Councils of Tennessee
CORE	Congress of Racial Equality
CPUSA	Communist Party of the United States of America
DSSIL	Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberty (Virginia)
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
FCG	Federation for Constitutional Government
FLIC	Florida Legislative Investigation Committee
GaSRC	States' Rights Council of Georgia
GCE	Georgia Commission on Education
HUAC	House Un-American Activities Committee
IAAEE	International Association for the Advancement of Ethnology and Eugenics
JLC	Louisiana Joint Legislative Committee on Segregation
LSSC	Louisiana State Sovereignty Commission
MSSC	Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NBC	National Broadcasting Company
NPLC	National Putnam Letters Committee
SCEF	Southern Conference Education Fund

SCLC	Southern Christian Leadership Conference
SISS	Senate Internal Security Subcommittee
SLCC	South Louisiana Citizens' Council
SNCC	Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee
SRC	Southern Regional Council
TFCG	Tennessee Federation for Constitutional Government
VaCCG	Virginia Commission on Constitutional Government
UN	United Nations
UPI	United Press International

## Abbreviations in Footnotes

<i>AC</i>	<i>The Atlanta Constitution</i>
AGAF	Alabama Governor Administrative Files, 1962-1978, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama
AGAAF	Alabama Governor Administrative Assistants' Files, 1961-1972, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama
ASSCA	Alabama State Sovereignty Commission Administrative Files, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama
ASSCD	Alabama State Sovereignty Commission Disbursement Files, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama
BM	Burke Marshall Personal Papers, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston, Massachusetts
<i>CCF</i>	<i>Citizens' Council Forum</i>
CCFF	Citizens' Council Forum Films Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History
CCRF	Citizens' Council Radio Forums Collection, Mississippi State University Library
CREA	Civil Rights during the Eisenhower Administration, Part 1: White House Central Files, Series A: School Desegregation, Roosevelt Institute for American Studies, Middelburg, Netherlands
CRKA	Civil Rights during the Kennedy Administration, 1961-1963, Part 2: The Papers of Burke Marshall, Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, Roosevelt Institute for American Studies, Middelburg, Netherlands
DSM	Mayor deLesseps S. Morrison Records, New Orleans Public Library, New Orleans, Louisiana
EFV	Ed Friend Visual Materials Collection, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, Athens, Georgia
GCEP	Georgia Commission on Education Papers, Georgia Archives, Morrow, Georgia



GS	George Shannon Papers, LSUS Northwest Louisiana Archives, Shreveport, Louisiana
HET	Herman E. Talmadge Collection, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies
IFB	Iris F. Blich Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, Athens, Georgia
KLR	Kim Lacy Rogers Collection, Amistad Research Center, New Orleans, Louisiana
LES	Lawrence E. Spivak Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
LHP	Leander Henry Perez Papers, New Orleans Public Library, New Orleans, Louisiana
NT	Ned Touchstone Papers, LSUS Northwest Louisiana Archives, Shreveport, Louisiana
NYT	<i>The New York Times</i>
RFR	Reverse Freedom Bus Rides Collection, Amistad Research Center, New Orleans, Louisiana
RWC	The Right Wing Collection of the University of Iowa Libraries, 1918-1977, Roosevelt Institute for American Studies, Middelburg, Netherlands
SCOC	Sovereignty Commission Online Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi
SE	Sam Engelhardt Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama
SEV	S. Ernest Vandiver, Jr., Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, Athens, Georgia
TC	<i>The Citizen</i>
TCC	<i>The Citizens' Council</i>
TCN	<i>The Councilor Newsletter</i>
TCR	<i>The Councilor</i>

TRW	Thomas R. Waring, Jr., Papers, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, South Carolina
VHS	Mayor Victor Hugo Schiro Records, New Orleans Public Library, New Orleans, Louisiana
WCG	Wesley Critz George Papers, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina
WJ	Wellborn Jack Papers, LSUS Northwest Louisiana Archives, Shreveport, Louisiana
WMR	William M. Rainach Papers, LSUS Northwest Louisiana Archives, Shreveport, Louisiana
WP	<i>The Washington Post and Times-Herald</i>

## Introduction

On 7 April 1956 leading figures within massive resistance met to answer US Senator James O. Eastland's ambitious rallying cry urging segregationists to "work together unceasingly to obtain a vocal and literate... [means of] expressing the Southern viewpoint" to the rest of the nation. "The great areas of the Midwest and West, which do not have and never have had a racial problem", Eastland proclaimed, "are fertile fields for educational work".<sup>1</sup> With charismatic Louisiana state senator William M. "Willie" Rainach presiding, segregationists from eleven southern states gathered at the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans to join in the "formation of a sound over-all organisation" that could "fight a battle for public opinion" on a united front. "We want to set public opinion in motion", Rainach announced, "to return to our beloved States and individuals the rights which have been taken from us". Those gathered were more concerned with engaging and harnessing public opinion at the national level than they were with legislative rejoinders to the 1954 and 1955 *Brown vs. Board of Education* Supreme Court rulings or suppressing black activism in the southern states. After a string of localised, small-scale propaganda efforts to promote the passage of state-level legislation to block desegregation, the segregationists in attendance were prepared "to organize on a nationwide basis", resolute in their contention that "the critical situation affects all of our great States". Following Rainach's opening remarks, delegates began to debate "how we can coordinate our activities over the entire South and present a unified front to the nation".<sup>2</sup> Discussions, however, would not get very far.

The rest of the day-long meeting was spent debating the name of this new organisation. Robert B. Patterson, founder of the Citizens' Councils in Indianola, Mississippi, in July 1954, triggered the debate by proposing the moniker "The Association of Citizens' Councils". Initial, knee-jerk objections came from state organisations formed under different names – such as the GaSRC and TFCG – but internecine squabbles were set aside to concentrate on how to avoid delimiting the organisation as "strictly

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Eastland to Thomas R. Waring, Jr., 8 November 1955, Folder 2, Box 393, TRW. Eastland's sentiments echoed throughout the South in speeches and letters distributed by the ACCM and other massive resistance organisations. See, for example, "Excerpts From Speech Made by Senator James O. Eastland", Letter from John U. Barr (FCG) to "Fellow American[s], Members of the FCG]", November 1955, Reel 56 (F46), RWC. James O. Eastland, *We've Reached Era of Judicial Tyranny* (Greenwood: ACCM, 1955).

<sup>2</sup> Rainach in "Convention of Delegates Organising the Citizens Councils of America", 7 April 1956, Folder 48, Box 5, WMR.

Southern”.<sup>3</sup> Delegates sought a name which would frame the organisation as one which embraced “all the states” and could serve as “the voice of the people”.<sup>4</sup> It was decided it should minimise any association with the States’ Rights Democratic Party of 1948 and should not include the words “Confederation” or “Federation”, which were understood to evoke memories of the Confederacy and the Old South and created the impression that the organisation’s interests were regional rather than national.<sup>5</sup> Patterson’s contention that “Citizens Council is a magic name” free from clear southern overtones was eventually agreed. In response, the title “Association of Citizens’ Councils of America” was suggested as clearly capturing the organisation’s national purview but was deemed too verbose to win universal approval.<sup>6</sup> It needed to be short and simple, delegates resolved, not to confuse the public or limit publicity. When one representative proposed “Citizens’ Councils of America”, Mississippi judge Thomas P. Brady tabled a motion to accept name immediately. It was carried unanimously.<sup>7</sup>

This was no petty debate between power-hungry adversaries. As Ross Carlton, representative for the ACCT explained, “the value of a name... should not be minimised”.<sup>8</sup> The care taken over the naming of what would become one of the most influential massive resistance groups reflects deep concern for public opinion and media strategy. More than economic pressure, intimidation, violence, legislative responses at both state and federal level, and legal challenges in the Courts, many segregationists considered an effective media strategy to influence public opinion to be the only viable route to preserve segregation in the South, stem African American civil rights, and safeguard white supremacy in the United States. “All legal action is merely a delaying tactic”, Rainach asserted in the lead up to his appointment as Chairman of the CCA.

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<sup>3</sup> These state organizations were similar to the Councils and often followed the example set by Patterson. Many had direct ties to Council groups. By 1956, the Councils were firmly established as the South’s most widespread resistance group.

<sup>4</sup> Judge Scott Raulston Schoolfield, Ross Carlton, and Judge Thomas P. Brady quoted in “Convention of Delegates Organising the Citizens Councils of America”.

<sup>5</sup> Mr. Garrett quoted in “Convention of Delegates Organising the Citizens Councils of America”. Minutes note “there followed a difference of opinion among those whose belief it is that the word confederacy or federacy has been used to localise its meaning to the South”.

<sup>6</sup> Patterson and Mr. Chandler quoted in “Convention of Delegates Organising the Citizens Councils of America”.

<sup>7</sup> Mr. Garrett quoted in “Convention of Delegates Organising the Citizens Councils of America”.

<sup>8</sup> Carlton quoted in “Convention of Delegates Organising the Citizens Councils of America”.

“The real solution”, he maintained, was a ten-year public relations programme “with the ultimate objective of changing public opinion throughout the nation”.<sup>9</sup>

This was a viewpoint shared by grassroots resisters, who wrote to resistance leaders and southern politicians at the state and national level frequently urging them to refocus resistance away from legal manoeuvres and towards public opinion. Correspondents demanded segregationist leaders harness mass media in the name of massive resistance and “cooperate with the other Southern States in taking our message to the North via television and radio... and literature”.<sup>10</sup> Northern sympathisers also urged white resisters to publicise their “important message” in northern cities where “there is not one newsheet... that will print one word of the truth” about the South or the “upsurge of racial troubles in this country”.<sup>11</sup> “If this Republic is to be saved”, one northern correspondent declared, “it will be the South that will do it”.<sup>12</sup> Sponsors and advisors outside the South instructed resisters to design media campaigns to appeal to “the average northerner” and provided media platforms for segregationists to share their message, serving, in the words of one grateful segregationist editor, as “Beacons of Truth in the North”.<sup>13</sup>

The meeting in New Orleans reveals segregationist activity far removed from the assumed staples of white resistance which prevail in established historical narratives and opens new and important avenues of investigation. The summit was a signal shift in the trajectory of massive resistance and, in the years following, segregationists coordinated a range of media strategies throughout the South and the nation, with the most media savvy resisters applying the same attention to detail given to the naming of the CCA to a wide variety of sophisticated media campaigns. This thesis explores the breadth and range of

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<sup>9</sup> Letter from Rainach to P. G. Borron, Sr., 26 November 1955, Folder 10, Box 1, WMR. See also, Letter from Rainach to E. C. Bott, 3 October 1955, Folder 10, Box 1, WMR; Letter from Rainach to James J. Kilpatrick, 18 April 1956, Folder 80, Box 8, WMR.

<sup>10</sup> Letter from C. G. Jones, Jr., to the GCE, 21 November 1957, Requests Sub-Folder, Virginia Folder, Box RCB-35188 Correspondence Ohio-Wyoming, 1957-1958, GCEP. See also, Letter from J. O. Fuller to Iris F. Blich, 15 December 1956, Folder 22, Box 68, Series II: Subject Files, IFB; Letter from John W. Emmer to Rainach, 26 December 1959, Folder 56, Box 5, WMR; Letter from William Flax to John U. Barr, 2 May 1960, SCR ID # 3-69-0-1-2-1-1, SCOC; Letter from G. A. Mitchell to George C. Wallace, 29 October 1964, Folder 13, Box SG22397, AGAF.

<sup>11</sup> Letter from Mrs. F. C. Quell to CCL, n.d., Folder 78, Box 6, NT; Letter from Roy M. Harrop to Rainach, 7 March 1957, Folder 69, Box 7, WMR. In both letters, correspondents confirm they are from and living in the North, rather than being transplanted southerners.

<sup>12</sup> Letter from Quell to CCL.

<sup>13</sup> Letter from H. C. Lewis to ACCM, 16 December 1959, CCGNO Folder, Box S60-7, Subject Files, DSM; Letter from Carlton Putnam to Ralph Nicholson, 28 April 1959, Folder 9, Box 430, TRW; Letter from Charles J. Lewin to Douglas F. Attaway, 20 July 1959, Folder 31, Box 2, GS.

these media strategies deployed to influence and mobilise public opinion against the civil rights movement. It investigates the rationales and ideas behind these campaigns and segregationists' competing visions of effective media strategy. It examines the extent to which individuals within the massive resistance movement were aware of a rapidly changing media environment and the new propaganda opportunities at their disposal and considers the ways in which they adapted their rhetoric and tactics pragmatically to respond to changing attitudes and contexts. By assessing the relative interconnectedness of their respective efforts, this thesis uncovers the level of both cooperation and discord between segregationist media strategists and explores how particular tactical approaches were moulded and re-shaped to conform to the ideological standpoint of individual resisters. It also seeks to evaluate the success of segregationists' efforts in a protracted battle over American hearts and minds and the effectiveness of their attempts to position massive resistance within a broader conservative countermovement. This in-depth exploration of media savvy segregationists and the strategies they developed provides new perspective necessary to achieve a more complex and complete account of massive resistance, the civil rights movement, and the emergence of a new national conservatism in the second half of the 1960s.

The idea that segregationists had a media strategy or strategies has been largely overlooked in extant studies of massive resistance. Formative scholarly assessments dismissed segregationists' attempts to harness mass media as one-dimensional, prosaic, lacking a clear strategic impulse, and ineffective. Numan V. Bartley described the "southern informational offensive" as "the endless repetition of three basic – and largely spurious – propositions", while Neil M. McMillen offered a dismal view of the Citizens' Councils' extrinsic adventures.<sup>14</sup> In an especially derisive assessment, Francis M. Wilhoit discounted segregationists' attempts to influence public opinion as "naïve, stridently parochial, and hyper-defensive", which, he argued, reflected "a deep malaise in the southern mind".<sup>15</sup> Writing in the years immediately after the federal government dealt its most decisive blow to the segregationist South, scholars based their judgements, in large part, on the fact that resisters failed to win public support necessary to prevent the

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<sup>14</sup> Numan V. Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance: Race and Politics in the South during the 1950s* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), pp. 171, 184, 189. The three basic propositions cited by Bartley were states' rights, the alleged biological inferiority of African Americans, and the claim that the quest for social justice was a communist plot. Neil R. McMillen *The Citizens' Council: Organised Resistance to the Second Reconstruction, 1944-64*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), pp. 138-158, esp. 152.

<sup>15</sup> Francis M. Wilhoit, *The Politics of Massive Resistance* (New York: G. Braziller, 1973), pp. 127-128.

passage of federal civil rights legislation, judging their media efforts to be entirely inconsequential.

Earlier accounts published in the late 1950s and early 1960s by journalistic commentators tended to take a less perfunctory approach. John Bartlow Martin and James Graham Cook noted the expansion of the Councils' propaganda machine to include newspapers, magazines, and, more importantly, radio and television. Both remarked on the professionalism of the Councils' "national propaganda campaign" and "up-to-the-minute publicity techniques", comparing them to those practised by "a Madison Avenue-type operation".<sup>16</sup> John Howard Griffin, during the ethnographic expedition he documented in *Black Like Me* (1960), wrote of the serious barrier to racial change posed by the "immense propaganda of the racists".<sup>17</sup> After reading an "incredible collection" of literature produced by massive resistance organisations given to him by Mississippi journalist and anti-Citizens' Council campaigner P. D. East, Griffin resolved "the most obscene figures are not the ignorant ranting racists, but the minds who front for them, who 'invent' for them the legislative proposals and the propaganda bulletins". Far from the mindless "assdom" he expected, Griffin discerned a dangerous and effective campaign "to foster distortions... under the guise of patriotism, upon a people who have no means of checking the facts". The segregationists leading these efforts, Griffin concluded, exhibited a ruthless "contempt for privacy of conscience" and inexorable "willingness to destroy and subvert values that have traditionally been held supreme in this land".<sup>18</sup> To this extent, propaganda was positioned as a priority of segregationists throughout the resistance hierarchy and their media efforts were afforded some degree of significance. Like the scholarly accounts which followed, however, these contemporary commentators did not place segregationist media strategies under scrutiny.

Following the revival of scholarly interest in massive resistance in the late 1990s, scholars have documented how segregationists constructed a tight defensive perimeter to control public opinion and maintain public support for segregation within the southern states.<sup>19</sup> Studies demonstrate the vast majority of white southern newspapermen

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<sup>16</sup> John Bartlow Martin, *The Deep South Says "Never"* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1957), p. 138; James Graham Cook, *The Segregationists* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1962), p. 62.

<sup>17</sup> John Howard Griffin, *Black Like Me* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), p. 42.

<sup>18</sup> Griffin, *Black Like Me*, p. 82. When East presented Griffin with the body of work, he described the collection sardonically as "assdom". For East's ideas on massive resistance and the Councils, P. D. East, *The Magnolia Jungle: The Life, Times and Education of a Southern Editor* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960).

<sup>19</sup> This revival was a sparked, in part, by Michael J. Klarman's "Backlash Thesis", which was criticised for its oversimplification of the white southern opposition to the civil rights movement. Michael J. Klarman, "How

continued to uphold the racial status quo in the years following the *Brown* ruling. While acknowledging the “horizontal diversity” among white southern editors, scholars agree they promulgated a broadly segregationist line, “nearly unanimous” in their belief that no southerner, “black or white, was ready for the reality of a racially integrated society”.<sup>20</sup> Historians have also focused on the censorship and suppression of media which presented a challenge to the “southern way of life”. At the basest level, northern reporters covering racial strife in the South and southern journalists taking a sympathetic line on desegregation were targets of threats, harsh derision, and, sometimes, violence.<sup>21</sup> David J. Wallace demonstrates how boycotts, legal pressure, libel law, and intimidation were used to silence dissenting southern reporters and critical northern correspondents.<sup>22</sup> Compounding this was a steady barrage of editorials in segregationist newspapers, notably the *Charleston News and Courier*, *Birmingham News*, and *Montgomery Advertiser*, repeatedly maligning “the credibility and motives of specific journalists and outlets” which opposed segregation.<sup>23</sup> Some southern newspapers, such as the *Clarion-Ledger* in Jackson, Mississippi and the *Herald-Leader* in Lexington, Kentucky, simply refused to

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*Brown* Changed Race Relations: The Backlash Thesis”, *Journal of American History*, Vol. 81, No. 1 (June 1994), pp. 81-118. Kevern Verney cites Klarman’s backlash thesis as a contributing factor to the newfound interest in massive resistance. Kevern Verney, *The Debate on Black Civil Rights in America* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 104.

<sup>20</sup> Davis W. Houck and Matthew A. Grindy, *Emmett Till and the Mississippi Press* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008), p. 9; Susan M. Weill, “Mississippi’s Daily Press in Three Crises”, in David R. Davies (ed.), *The Press and Race: Mississippi Journalists Confront the Movement* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2001), p. 18; Emily Yellin, “Journalism (Print) and Civil Rights (1954-1968)”, in Allison Graham and Sharon Monteith (eds), *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture, Volume 18: Media* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), p. 120; John C. Nerone, *Violence Against the Press: Policing the Public Sphere in US History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 157-159; David R. Davies “Introduction”, in Davies, *The Press and Race*, p. 3; Susan M. Weill, *In a Madhouse’s Din: Civil Rights Coverage by Mississippi’s Daily Press, 1948-1968* (Westport: Praeger, 2002). For earlier works which present a more monolithic account of the white southern press, Ted Poston, “The American Negro and Newspaper Myths”, in Paul L. Fisher and Ralph Lynn Lowenstein (eds), *Race and the News Media* (New York: Praeger, 1967), pp. 63-72; Hodding Carter III, “Comment on the Coverage in the Domestic Press”, in Jack Lyle (ed.), *The Black American and the Press* (Los Angeles: The Ward Ritchie Press, 1968), pp. 38-41; Roger Williams, “Newspapers in the South”, *Columbia Journalism Review*, Vol. 6 (Summer 1967), pp. 26-35; James W. Silver, *Mississippi: The Closed Society*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964), p. 30. For an exception among earlier studies which highlights the range of editorial positions on desegregation in Tennessee, Hugh Davis Graham, *Crisis in Print: Desegregation and the Press in Tennessee* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1967).

<sup>21</sup> Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff cite numerous examples of the threats and violence faced by reporters, Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff *The Race Beat: The Press, The Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation* (New York: Random House, 2006), pp. 176-179, 247-249, 360-361, 377-378. See also, David L. Chappell, *Inside Agitators: White Southerners in the Civil Rights Movement* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), pp. 80-81; Robert J. Donovan and Ray Scherer, *Unsilent Revolution: Television News and American Public Life, 1948-1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 12-14.

<sup>22</sup> David J. Wallace, *Massive Resistance and Media Suppression: The Segregationist Response to Dissent during the Civil Rights Movement* (El Paso: LFB Scholarly Publishing LLC, 2013), pp. 157-188.

<sup>23</sup> David J. Wallace, “Piercing the Paper Curtain: The Southern Editorial Response to National Civil Rights Coverage”, *American Journalism*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (November 2016), p. 422.



publish civil rights stories.<sup>24</sup> Steven D. Classen and Kay Mills, in studies of Mississippi television station WLBT, reveal how television broadcasters in the South strategically omitted integrationist or black perspectives from programming. These “racial blackouts” were adopted throughout the region, with stations announcing “technical difficulties” or “cable trouble” when African Americans featured on NBC or CBS-franchised programmes.<sup>25</sup> Recognising the need to consolidate public opinion in the South, segregationists and their allies in the southern media organised to shield white and black southerners from reports which exposed the worst excesses of massive resistance and defied white supremacy and Jim Crow.

It was in this context that some segregationists resolved the battle over public opinion would need to be won north of the Mason-Dixon Line. Whilst acknowledging some “weak sisters in the Southern press willing to give this fort and surrender that hill”, they recognised their powerful hold over public opinion in the South and were more concerned that massive resistance received short shrift in other areas of the country.<sup>26</sup> As James J. Kilpatrick, editor of *The Richmond News Leader*, quipped, “when the literate Southern conservative... seeks access to the major media channels of national communication, he finds the borders closed to him as though he carried typhoid”.<sup>27</sup> Resisters who shared this view understood they would need to devise inventive strategies to place their position persuasively before non-southern audiences dubious about massive resistance and focused their attention on achieving those ends. While there is certainly more work to be done on segregationists’ media strategies at the local-level, this thesis is more interested in ambitious media projects designed to win support outside the South and how grassroots segregationists were encouraged and equipped to direct their efforts more widely. How segregationists sought to transform and manage perceptions of segregation, massive resistance, and the civil rights movement outside, as well as inside,

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<sup>24</sup> Yellin, “Journalism (Print) and Civil Rights”, p. 120.

<sup>25</sup> Steven D. Classen, *Watching Jim Crow: The Struggles Over Mississippi TV, 1955-1969* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), p. 43; Kay Mills, *Changing Channels: The Civil Rights Case that Transformed Television* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2004), p. 16. Steven D. Classen, “Television, Civil Rights”, in Graham and Monteith, *The New Encyclopedia, Media*, p. 168; Sharon Monteith, *American Culture in the 1960s* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), pp. 81-82. William G. Thomas III provides a useful caveat and shows two local stations in Virginia, WSLS and WDBJ, provided more balanced analysis, “Television News Coverage and the Civil Rights Struggle: The Views in Virginia and Mississippi”, *Southern Spaces* (November 2004). [Accessed online 10/06/2016 <https://southernspaces.org/2004/television-news-and-civil-rights-struggle-views-virginia-and-mississippi>]

<sup>26</sup> Letter from Thomas R. Waring, Jr., to James J. Kilpatrick, 8 November 1955, Folder 2, Box 410, TRW; Letter from William Rainach to Donald M. Ewing, 7 February 1957, Folder 107, Box 11, WMR.

<sup>27</sup> James J. Kilpatrick, “Conservatism and the South”, in Louis D. Rubin, Jr., and James J. Kilpatrick (eds), *The Lasting South: Fourteen Southerners Look at Their Home* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1957), pp. 195-196.

the South more palpably highlights the magnitude of the battle for hearts and minds and the extent of segregationists' attempts to harness mass media.

Studies have begun to draw attention to some segregationists' realisation that "massive resistance's long-term success was dependent on their ability to draw national public opinion behind" their cause and some of the media strategies developed to meet this objective.<sup>28</sup> Scholars have largely focused on the public relations strategies of the MSSC, founded in 1956 and the most well-funded, enduring, and far-reaching state-sponsored segregationist organisation in the region. Yasuhiro Katagiri and Jenny Irons note some of its attempts to "give the South's side" to a national audience, including mass mailings, two documentary films, and a series of speaking engagements in states outside the South, and highlight the decision to employ a full-time public relations director and set up a public relations department to professionalise its efforts.<sup>29</sup> To be sure, the MSSC was a significant player in the battle over public opinion. Yet, neither afford the MSSC's media strategies sufficient analysis. They overlook and oversimplify its media strategy and discount entirely one of the most ambitious and far-reaching media efforts taken by any segregationist group: *Citizens' Council Forum*, a weekly fifteen-minute political panel show produced by the CCA in collaboration with the MSSC and broadcast on television and radio stations throughout the nation between 1957 and 1966.<sup>30</sup> Indicative of the continuing lack of scholarly engagement with segregationist media strategies, Katagiri echoes Bartley's flawed formulation of resisters' efforts to mobilise public opinion.<sup>31</sup> While Stephanie R. Rolph grants the *Forum* greater significance as an instrument designed to position the Councils within a broader conservative movement, her analysis does not address the programme as a distinct media strategy or account for significant changes to *Forum* programming.<sup>32</sup> In Chapters 2 and 3, this thesis challenges

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<sup>28</sup> George Lewis, *Massive Resistance: The White Response to the Civil Rights Movement* (London: Hodder Education, 2006), p. 108.

<sup>29</sup> *Don't Stone Her Until You Hear Her Side* (Jackson: MSSC, 1956) quoted in Yasuhiro Katagiri, *Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission: Civil Rights and States' Rights* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2001), pp. 36, 32; Jenny Irons, *Reconstituting Whiteness: The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2010), pp. 8, 16, 36-38. See also, Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, pp. 108-110.

<sup>30</sup> Katagiri, *Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission*, p. 28. Irons does not offer an analysis of the *Forum*. Classen echoes Katagiri in his brief commentary on the programme, Classen, *Watching Jim Crow*, p. 38.

<sup>31</sup> Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance*, p. 184.

<sup>32</sup> Stephanie R. Rolph, *Resisting Equality: The Citizens' Council, 1954-1989* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2018), p. pp. 188-189, 185. See also: Stephanie R. Rolph, "Courting Conservatism: White Resistance and the Ideology of Race in the 1960s", in Daniel K. Williams and Laura Jane Gifford (eds), *The Right Side of the Sixties: Reexamining Conservatism's Decade of Transformation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 30-36; Stephanie R. Rolph, "The Citizens' Council and Africa: White Supremacy in Global Perspective", *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 82, No. 3 (August 2016), pp. 617-650.

earlier assessments and contributes vital new knowledge regarding the Councils' "most important propaganda vehicle", tracing the uneven and somewhat contradictory development of the *Forum* and examining it through a media-focused lens to explore how the Councils attempted to harness the unique qualities of television.<sup>33</sup> Through an interdisciplinary analysis deploying media primary sources and a range of archival records, it positions the *Forum* as one of the most substantial, collaborative, and far-reaching initiatives in segregationists' collective efforts to harness mass media.

More broadly, the pronounced emphasis among historians of massive resistance on the MSSC as exceptional risks obscuring concomitant media strategies devised by segregationists working in similar organisations, including the GCE, JLC, and VaCCG. It assumes other groups' contributions were less important or inconsequential. This was not the case. Each of these groups constructed ambitious, far-reaching media strategies which were cutting-edge and transformative for the cause of massive resistance. In some cases, they were adopted, supported, or adapted by other propaganda organisations impressed by their ingenuity. Focus on a single organisation also has the propensity to overlook the interplay and cooperation between segregationist media strategists as well as the differences and conflicts in their approaches. Attaining an understanding of both is essential to gain a full impression of resisters' attempts to harness mass media. By placing the MSSC in conversation with other resistance groups, this thesis considers the extent to which segregationists collaborated on media strategies and explores divergences, the reasons behind them, and the problems they caused for massive resistance.

Scholars have also singled out Alabama Governor, Presidential candidate, and segregationist icon George C. Wallace as having harnessed mass media effectively, exploiting the limelight afforded him as "spokesman for the white South" prior to and following the integration of the University of Alabama in 1963.<sup>34</sup> Dan T. Carter details how Wallace co-opted television expertly, adopting a calm, smiling, and good-humoured persona more suited to the medium than the raw, angry style for which he was infamous, to take advantage of every publicity opportunity offered by national television

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<sup>33</sup> Cook, *The Segregationists*, p. 81.

<sup>34</sup> Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, The Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), p. 156.

producers.<sup>35</sup> He presents Wallace as a political chameleon who expertly tailored his message to his audience and platform, adopting new rhetoric “to command a more *visible* political stage”.<sup>36</sup> Despite the failure of his carefully choreographed “Stand in the Schoolhouse Door” to generate national sympathy for massive resistance, Wallace’s skilful media strategy allowed him to graduate from the segregationist South to establish himself as integral to an emergent national conservative movement.<sup>37</sup> Like the MSSC, Wallace is framed as an anomaly, one of the few segregationist leaders to manipulate mass media and transcend the segregationist-conservative divide successfully. Wallace’s story is certainly exceptional in a number of ways, but he was not alone in his ability to devise intelligent media strategy. Many of his segregationist contemporaries, elite and grassroots, shared his strategic dexterity and exploited television, crafted shrewd media narratives tailored to audience, media mode, and the changing political landscape, and successfully produced striking images to dramatise massive resistance.

Much remains to be uncovered about segregationists’ media strategies. Despite advances in the field, the “continuing gap in historians’ collective knowledge” of “the battle between segregationists and civil rights activists for the hearts and minds of the American people” highlighted by Clive Webb and George Lewis has persisted. Scholars have yet to offer a sustained account of “how southern segregationists used channels of communication to influence public opinion” or their manifold attempts “to use various forms of media to promote and defend their way of life”.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, Lewis’ broad, summative account of segregationists’ multifaceted and wide-ranging use of media, published in the media volume of the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, is indicative of a considerable historiographical lacuna which must be addressed. This thesis seeks to confront this gap by revealing the nature of segregationists’ multi-layered efforts in a protracted contest over public opinion fought most fiercely in the media and at the national level. It challenges and builds upon the ideas presented in earlier works,

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<sup>35</sup> Carter, *The Politics of Rage*, pp. 136, 185. In 1964, Marshall McLuhan argued “television performers”, a classification which included politicians, were only effective if they adopted an understated and controlled personality that conformed to the new, “cool” media of television. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: Signet Books, 1964).

<sup>36</sup> Carter, *The Politics of Rage*, p. 160. Emphasis added.

<sup>37</sup> Carter, *The Politics of Rage*, pp. 147-148. See also, Dan T. Carter, *From George Wallace to Newt Gingrich: Race in the Conservative Counterrevolution, 1963-1994* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), pp. xi-23; Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, pp. 174-176.

<sup>38</sup> George Lewis, “Segregationists’ Use of Media”, in Graham and Monteith, *The New Encyclopedia, Media*, p. 163; Clive Webb, “Introduction”, in Clive Webb (ed.), *Massive Resistance: Southern Opposition to the Second Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 14.

providing much needed substance to their assessments, and disputes emphatically those scholars who contend segregationists “never organised concerted, consistent propaganda that might have undermined the increasing (and increasingly confident) public authority of civil rights leaders”.<sup>39</sup> The media strategists highlighted in this thesis were not those suffering the “deep malaise” diagnosed by Wilhoit, nor were they a haphazard cohort devoid of focus or reason, what James McBride Dabbs depicted as “a horseman mounting and riding furiously in all directions at once; a sort of Paul Revere without a message”.<sup>40</sup> Some of the segregationists discussed in this thesis were imaginative and masterminded carefully considered campaigns with clear objectives supported by concrete rationales.

Scholarly understanding of media strategy in the black freedom struggle remains deeply one-sided. While there is only limited knowledge of segregationist media strategy, there is a rich and diverse vein of scholarship considering the important relationship between the civil rights movement and the media. Studies have demonstrated how movement activists developed and mobilised a well-coordinated strategy to expose the brutality of segregation and secure sympathetic media coverage. As John Lewis reflected in his memoirs, movement media strategy relied on “that cycle of violence and publicity and more violence and more publicity that would eventually, we hoped, push things to the point where something – ideally, the law – would have to be changed”.<sup>41</sup> “The remarkable skill with which... protesters presented themselves to the press, and through the press, to the nation, as models of patriotic virtue and moral respectability”, Julian Bond contended, allowed the movement to seize “the moral high ground” from the segregationists, paving the way for landmark legislative victories of 1964 and 1965.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> David L. Chappell, “The Divided Mind of Southern Segregationists”, *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 82, No. 1 (Spring 1998), pp. 68-69. In a particularly short-sighted assessment of segregationists’ “national vision”, Jason Morgan Ward claims resisters’ efforts to influence public opinion reached their “high-water mark” in 1956. Jason Morgan Ward, “The D.C. School Hearings of 1956 and the National Vision of Massive Resistance”, *Journal of Civil and Human Rights*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring/Summer 2015), p. 105.

<sup>40</sup> Wilhoit, *The Politics*, pp. 127-128; James McBride Dabbs, *Who Speaks for the South?* (Funk & Wagnalls: New York, 1964), p. 319.

<sup>41</sup> John Lewis with Michael D’Orso, *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement* (New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 1998), p. 321.

<sup>42</sup> Julian Bond, “The Media and the Movement: Looking Back from the Southern Front”, in Brian Ward (ed.), *Media, Culture, and the Modern African American Freedom Struggle* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), p. 23; For more on the centrality of respectability to the strategies of the southern civil rights movement, Marisa Chappell, Jenny Hutchinson, and Brian Ward, “‘Dress Modestly, Neatly... as if you were Going to Church’: Respectability, Class and Gender in the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Early Civil Rights Movement”, in Peter Ling and Sharon Monteith, *Gender in the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Garland, 1999), pp. 69-100. For scholarship on SNCC’s media strategy, Vanessa Murphree, “‘Black Power’: Public Relations and Social Change in the 1960s”, *American Journalism*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Summer 2004), pp. 13-32; Vanessa Murphree, *The Selling of*

Although national media did not always serve unequivocally as an “instrument of the revolution”, there is consensus that its outlets played an important role in facilitating movement efforts to win public support for federal civil rights legislation.<sup>43</sup> “Without the media”, Lewis explained, “the civil rights movement would have been like a bird without wings”.<sup>44</sup> Some studies do note that segregationists “increasingly recognised the power of media representations to affect public perceptions of the civil rights movement”.<sup>45</sup> However, while there is the suggestion that some “shared a media savvy with their Southern black antagonists”, their efforts are not considered in any great depth and are deemed inconsequential in the face of civil rights activists’ effective media strategy and the national media’s broad support for the movement.<sup>46</sup> Scholars assert, or assume, civil rights organisations “came to understand the dynamics of [mass media]... earlier and

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*Civil Rights: The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Use of Public Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Leigh Raiford, “‘Come Let Us Build a New World Together’: SNCC and Photography of the Civil Rights Movement”, *American Quarterly*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (December 2007), pp. 1129-1157; Mark Joseph Walmsley, “Tell It Like It Isn’t: SNCC and the Media, 1960-1965”, *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (February 2014), pp. 291-308. For scholarship considering the SCLC’s media strategy, David Garrow, *Protest at Selma: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Voting Rights Act of 1965* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978); Adam Fairclough, *To Redeem the Soul of America: the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987) and “Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Quest for Nonviolent Social Change”, *Phylon*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 1986), pp. 1-15; Linda Childers Hon, “‘To Redeem the Soul of America’: Public Relations and The Civil Rights Movement”, *Journal of Public Relations Research*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (1997), pp. 163-212. Comparatively less has been written on the media strategies of CORE and the NAACP. For works that consider the NAACP’s engagement with media see: Langston Hughes, *Fight for Freedom: The Story of the NAACP* (Norton: New York, 1962); Leonard Archer, *Black Images in the American Theatre: NAACP Protest Campaigns – State, Screen, Radio & Television* (Brooklyn: Pageant-Poseidon, 1973); J. Fred McDonald, *Don’t Touch That Dial: Radio Programming in American Life, 1920-1960* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1979), pp. 356-370; Jenny Woodley, *Art for Equality: The NAACP’s Cultural Campaign for Civil Rights* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2014). See also, Taeku Lee, *Mobilising Public Opinion: Black Insurgency and Racial Attitudes in the Civil Rights Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

<sup>43</sup> Clayborne Carson, David J. Garrow, and Carol Polsgrove, *Reporting Civil Rights, Part One: American Journalism, 1941-1963* (New York: Library of America, 2003) and *Reporting Civil Rights, Part Two: American Journalism, 1963-1973* (New York: Library of America, 2003); Roberts and Klibanoff *The Race Beat*; Charlotte Grimes, “Civil Rights and the Press”, *Journalism Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2005), pp. 117-134; MacDonald, *Don’t Touch That Dial*; Stephen Walsh, “Black Oriented Radio and the Civil Rights Movement”, in Ward, *Media, Culture*, pp. 67-81; Brian Ward, *Radio and the Struggle for Civil Rights in the South* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004); Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams & the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999); J. Fred MacDonald, *Blacks and White TV: Afro-Americans in Television since 1948* (Chicago: Nelson Hall Publishers, 1983); Allison Graham, *Framing The South: Hollywood, Television, and Race during the Civil Rights Struggle* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Sasha Torres, *Black, White, and in Color: Television and Black Civil Rights* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Lynn Spigel and Michael Curtin (eds), *The Revolution Wasn’t Televised: Sixties Television and Social Conflict* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Donald Bogle, *Primetime Blues: African Americans on Network Television* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001); Aniko Bodroghkozy, *Equal Time: Television and the Civil Rights Movement* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012); Mary Ann Watson, *The Expanding Vista: American Television in the Kennedy Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

<sup>44</sup> John Lewis, quoted in Grimes, “Civil Rights and the Press”, p. 118.

<sup>45</sup> Classen, “Television”, p. 167.

<sup>46</sup> Bodroghkozy *Equal Time*, p. 83.

better than did many of its direct opponents”.<sup>47</sup> Somewhat ironically, then, the movement’s opposition in the war waged over public opinion is largely absent in extant accounts. This thesis seeks to remedy such an “asymmetrical approach”.<sup>48</sup>

While there is some debate over which medium offered the most significant or supportive coverage of the civil rights movement during the 1950s, historians agree that by the early 1960s television was, as NBC television journalist Bill Monroe put it, the “chosen instrument of the revolution”.<sup>49</sup> Television offered a compelling platform from which to expose the violence aimed at civil rights demonstrators in the South. As J. Fred MacDonald argues, “the mixture of pictures and sound via TV was considerably more impressive” than print and radio accounts.<sup>50</sup> Television’s “liveness” transformed “events and people into ‘history’ in the moment of their media coverage”, defining national issues as well as reporting them with an unprecedented sense of immediacy.<sup>51</sup> More than other media, television relied on “a traditional narrative structure and easily legible binaries of good and evil”, which presented the struggle for civil rights in particularly stark terms when viewers were confronted by images of white violence against non-violent black protesters.<sup>52</sup> These characteristics made television a powerful propaganda tool for progressive change. By the same token, however, television could serve as a powerful propaganda tool for those standing in opposition. Although it is clear that national television networks never served as a “sympathetic instrument for the segregation position”, this should not preclude full and complete analysis of the ways in which segregationists attempted to harness the “other side’s instrument of national

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<sup>47</sup> Garrow, *Protest At Selma*, p. 164.

<sup>48</sup> In 2000, Charles W. Eagles observed an “asymmetrical approach” to the civil rights movement more broadly, in “Towards New Histories of The Civil Rights Era”, *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 66, No. 2 (November 2000), p. 815.

<sup>49</sup> Bill Monroe quoted in Watson, *The Expanding Vista*, p. 94. Roberts and Klibanoff, *The Race Beat*, p. 54; Monteith, *American Culture in the 1960s*, pp. 27, 74; Houck and Grindy, *Emmett Till*, p. 6; MacDonald, *Blacks and White TV*, p. 83. Leo Bogart argues that by the mid-1950s “Television had established its place as the most important single form of entertainment and of passing the time” in *The Age of Television*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (New York: Ungar, 1972). For additional works which deal with the emergence and significance of television during this period, Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992); Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), pp. 135-162.

<sup>50</sup> MacDonald, *Blacks and White TV*, p. 81. See also Mary Ann Watson’s discussion of the television coverage of the 1957 Little Rock crisis. Watson, *The Expanding Vista*, p. 91. Sharon Monteith provides several instances which complicate MacDonald’s assertion in “‘I Second that Emotion’: A Case for Using Imaginative Sources in Writing Civil Rights History”, *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol 49, No. 5 (2015), pp. 441, 455-458.

<sup>51</sup> Monteith, *American Culture in the 1960s*, pp. 80-81.

<sup>52</sup> Bodroghkozy *Equal Time*, p. 83; Allison Graham and Sharon Monteith, “Southern Media Cultures”, in *The New Encyclopedia, Media*, p. 21.

communication”.<sup>53</sup> This thesis is particularly interested in segregationists’ use of television.

Aniko Bodroghkozy devotes the most sustained attention to segregationist forays into the medium, highlighting a handful of segregationist attempts to defend segregation and advance their conservative worldview on broadcasts aired by the national networks, ABC, CBS, and NBC. While segregationists were routinely denied a forum in national newspapers and magazines, they were regularly provided a platform by television executives who felt they “could not ignore the racial sensibilities of specific regions and groups” due to the FCC’s Fairness Doctrine, which required broadcasters to dedicate airtime to contrasting views on controversial matters of public interest.<sup>54</sup> Resisters recognised the propaganda opportunities television presented, understood the medium’s conventions, realised compelling images broadcast nationally could significantly impact the narrative surrounding civil rights, and were convinced audiences could be swayed by consistent coverage. Indeed, Bodroghkozy demonstrates civil rights leaders and supporters “worried that the news media could be captured by savvy segregationist propagandists”.<sup>55</sup> Nonetheless, she concludes resisters’ efforts to co-opt national television ultimately came to nothing and had fizzled out by the early 1960s. “Understanding how television news worked to make meaning”, she argues, “did not help them bend the medium to their will”.<sup>56</sup> While a vital contribution to scholarship on civil rights and the media, her analysis of segregationist media strategy is too shallow to consider the full extent of segregationists’ use of television.

This thesis examines the full breadth and range of segregationists’ attempts to harness television, complicating and moving beyond *Equal Time* (2012) in four crucial ways. First, it demonstrates segregationist efforts to co-opt national television began in the years following the *Brown* rulings and persisted into the mid-1960s. Second, as well as their appearances on network programming, it examines the television news programmes and documentaries produced by massive resisters to counter the national networks’ unsympathetic stance toward the segregationist position. Third, it explicates the ways in which segregationists’ efforts amounted to more than the presentation of a set of

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<sup>53</sup> Bodroghkozy *Equal Time*, pp. 88, 80.

<sup>54</sup> Lewis, “Segregationists’ Use of Media”, p. 163. Bodroghkozy *Equal Time*, p. 87. Archival research carried out for this thesis at the Library of Congress confirms segregationists maintained a significant presence on national network television.

<sup>55</sup> Bodroghkozy, *Equal Time*, p. 70.

<sup>56</sup> Bodroghkozy, *Equal Time*, p. 83.



sentimental, paternalistic, outworn “Southern caricatures”.<sup>57</sup> Fourth, it considers resisters’ use of television in conjunction with other media. Television formed an important plank in segregationists’ media apparatus alongside newspapers, books, magazines, photographs, and pamphlets. This thesis, therefore, investigates how their use of television and moving images complemented, enhanced, and also potentially undermined campaigns which relied on other media and assesses how rhetorical strategies manifested differently across different mediums, thereby affording a fuller understanding of the breadth of segregationist media strategy.

The dominant images of segregationists in the historiography and public imagination are those depicting violent resistance and angry white mobs produced by the increasingly sophisticated media strategies of civil rights organisations and propagated by the national television networks and the popular press.<sup>58</sup> In *Framing the South* (2001), Allison Graham demonstrates how print and television journalists of the 1950s and 1960s relied on well-worn stereotypical representations of uneducated, reactionary, rednecks when reporting on massive resistance and unpacks how this template for “the iconic southern racist” was refined and perpetuated in popular television and Hollywood film in the decades following. “The persistence of such stereotypes”, she argues, has denied the “complexity of white reaction to school desegregation”, stood in the way of further exploration and complication, and defined popular understandings of the era.<sup>59</sup> Just as scholars point to a media-made civil rights movement, we can also speak of a media-made massive resistance.<sup>60</sup> Images of “genteel, well-spoken”, middle-class resisters which appear in a handful of popular media accounts are vastly overshadowed by images depicting crowds of bitter white parents in Little Rock and segregationist violence in

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<sup>57</sup> Bodroghkozy, *Equal Time*, p. 83.

<sup>58</sup> Lewis, “Segregationists’ Use of Media”, p. 163; Graham and Monteith, “Southern Media Cultures”, p. 22.

<sup>59</sup> Graham, *Framing The South*, p. 11.

<sup>60</sup> Graham, *Framing The South*, pp. 11-12. For scholarship considering the idea of a media-made civil rights movement, Bond, “The Media and the Movement”, pp. 23-24, 35-37; Sharon Monteith, “The Movie-Made Movement: Civil Rites of Passage”, in Paul Grainge (ed.), *Memory and Popular Film* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 120-143; Jenny Walker, “A Media-Made Movement? Black Violence and Nonviolence in the Historiography of the Civil Rights Movement”, in Ward, *Media, Culture*, pp. 41-66. The idea of a media-made massive resistance builds on works which explore media constructions of the South, for example, Stephen A. Smith, *Myth, Media, and the Southern Mind* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1985); Jack Temple Kirby, *Media-Made Dixie: The South in the American Imagination* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1986); Tara McPherson, *Reconstructing Dixie: Race, Gender, and Nostalgia in the Imagined South* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

Birmingham and Selma.<sup>61</sup> The most enduring images of massive resistance, then, highlight the total lack of subtlety demonstrated by some segregationists in the glaring spotlight of the media and present an incoherent and ignorant rabble incapable of devising a sophisticated media strategy. While these are important to any understanding of white opposition to the civil rights movement, they only tell part of the story. They should not preclude analysis of those segregationists who had a refined, critical understanding of the power of effective media strategy to shift the course of massive resistance and the African American freedom struggle.

This thesis therefore complicates popular and scholarly conceptions by building a new visual understanding of massive resistance. It explores how segregationists sought to produce images of their own to present their resistance as respectable and reasoned, recalibrate public perceptions of both segregation and the civil rights movement, and dramatise massive resistance as a virtuous defence of American freedom. By highlighting the success and sophistication of some of their efforts, it demonstrates civil rights activists did not have a monopoly on effective image-making or media strategy. More broadly, this challenges the progressive narrative generated by placing the responsibility for massive resistance squarely at the feet of violent, ignorant working-class reactionaries. As Graham argues, popular narratives refuse “to indict social and political institutions for racial injustice” and present a “spectacle of racial redemption” in which “the expulsion of the lawless redneck from southern society [affirms] the moral purity of whiteness itself”.<sup>62</sup> By revealing the range, reach, and subtlety of media strategies devised by educated, “respectable” members of southern society and their use of state funds and political networks, this thesis highlights the breadth of massive resistance, the depth of many white southerners’ commitment to segregation, and the endurance of some aspects of resistance ideology beyond the passage of civil rights legislation in 1964 and 1965.

By using media strategy as a prism through which to examine massive resistance more broadly, the analysis here also contributes to a growing body of work which complicates and challenges conventional scholarly understandings of segregationists as a monolithic band of “homogenous, inflexible, ignorant reactionaries”.<sup>63</sup> Building on and

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<sup>61</sup> For example, Henry Loeb in *At the River I Stand* [film], dir. by David Appleby, Allison Graham, and Steven John Ross (USA: California Newsreel, 1993); James J. Kilpatrick in “A Long March to Freedom”, *The Sixties* [television programme] CNN, 26 June 2014.

<sup>62</sup> Graham, *Framing The South*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>63</sup> George Lewis, *The White South and the Red Menace: Segregationists, Anticommunism, and Massive Resistance, 1945-1965* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), p. 175. The major historical works on the civil rights

challenging formative works by Bartley and McMillen, studies have examined the heterogeneity of resistance forces, painting a picture of a multivalent resistance movement operating in front rooms in small southern towns, the upper echelons of the federal government, and everywhere in between. Rather than a top-down phenomenon led by “neobourbon” political elites, scholars suggest a symbiosis between low-level grassroots organisations, state-level coordinators, and regional leaders and highlight the range of resistance beyond the political sphere. Massive resistance was not exclusively the domain of maundering old men clinging to an outmoded nineteenth-century philosophy or belligerent, bigoted, “cartoon figures” incapable of pragmatic thought. Many resisters were young, dynamic professionals, paradoxically aware of the need for new ideas to preserve an anachronistic institution.<sup>64</sup> As Robert Penn Warren wrote of an unnamed segregationist leader in 1957, “He is not the rabble-rouser, the crusader, but the persuader, the debater, the man who gives the reasons”.<sup>65</sup> This thesis contributes new layers to our understanding of the diversity and strategic dexterity of those driving massive resistance. It demonstrates that many placed great importance on harnessing mass media to influence public opinion and explores the extent of their media savvy. It also reveals a significant body of segregationist media strategists operating energetically behind the scenes who have been overlooked or discounted and assesses their impact on

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movement offer no significant attention to the opposition forces that mobilised against the black freedom struggle, see, for example: David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: William Morrow, 1986); Fairclough, *To Redeem the Soul*; Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981); Harvard Sitkoff, *The Struggle for Black Equality, 1945-1980* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981).

<sup>64</sup> For early works which present massive resistance as a top-down political phenomenon, Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance*; Wilhoit, *The Politics*; Robert Sherrill, *Gothic Politics in the Deep South: Stars of the New Confederacy* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1968); I. A. Newby (ed.), *The Development of Segregationist Thought* (Homewood: The Dorsey Press, 1968). For early works which highlight grassroots elements and some of the complexities of white resistance, McMillen *The Citizens' Council*; Martin, *The Deep South*; Cook, *The Segregationists*, quotation from p. 6; Hodding Carter III, *The South Strikes Back* (New York: Doubleday, 1959); Silver, *Mississippi: The Closed Society*. For works which consider the interplay between elite and grassroots segregationists, Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, p. 95; Lewis, *The White South*; Rolph, *Resisting Equality*; Jeff Roche, *Restructured Resistance: The Sibley Commission and the Politics of Desegregation in Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998); Adam Fairclough, *Race & Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in Louisiana, 1915-1972* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995); Elizabeth Jacoway and C. Fred Williams (eds), *Understanding the Little Rock Crisis: An Exercise in Remembrance and Reconciliation* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1999); Matthew D. Lassiter and Andrew B. Lewis (eds), *The Moderates' Dilemma: Massive Resistance to School Desegregation in Virginia* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998). Inevitably, biographies of leading segregationist politicians adopt a more top-down approach to resistance, but, nonetheless, add much needed texture to our understanding of their the mentality, motivations, philosophies, and strategies. Gilbert C. Fite, *Richard B. Russell, Jr., Senator from Georgia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991); Ronald L. Heinemann, *Harry Byrd of Virginia* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996); Roy Reed, *Faustus: The Life and Times of an American Prodigal* (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 1997); Nadine Cohodas, *Strom Thurmond and the Politics of Southern Change* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1994); Karl E. Campbell, *Senator Sam Ervin, Last of the Founding Fathers* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

<sup>65</sup> Robert Penn Warren, *Segregation: The Inner Conflict in the South* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1957), p. 34.

the trajectory of massive resistance. Moreover, by exploring how some segregationist leaders sought to activate and control grassroots propaganda campaigns as part of their broader efforts to shift public opinion, grassroots responses to these initiatives, and their concomitant attempts to dictate media strategy, the thesis adds new dimensions to our knowledge of the interplay between segregationists operating throughout the resistance hierarchy.

With local and state-level case studies, historians have traced the distinctive circumstances within which white opposition developed in areas across the South, the peculiar ebb and flow of resistance in particular locales, and subtle differences between approaches. Where Adam Fairclough depicts a small elite force of segregationists guiding the trajectory of massive resistance in Louisiana, Matthew D. Lassiter and Andrew B. Lewis stress the importance of ordinary citizens in driving resistance in Virginia.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, the differing political realities in the Upper and Lower South often demanded divergent responses and engendered different modes of resistance, with border states often more concerned about loss of northern investment and the need to maintain “progressive” facades.<sup>67</sup> Taken together, they uncover common themes in resistance across the region: the gradual move from zero-tolerance resistance to the no less pernicious resistance of “minimum compliance” and the substantial disagreements between white southerners nominally in favour of segregation over the most appropriate way to respond to *Brown*. As individual studies, however, they are limited in their ability to expose the tangible, as well as the conceptual, connections between segregationists. Those connections remain vital to understanding the scale of massive resistance and, for this thesis, exposing these networks is an important objective. A broad regional approach is therefore adopted to reveal the nature of intra- and inter-state cooperation, as well as disagreement, between segregationist media strategists, the efforts towards a unified regional strategy, and the unevenness of segregationist thought concerning media strategy. This, in turn, uncovers

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<sup>66</sup> Lassiter and Lewis, *The Moderates' Dilemma*; Fairclough, *Race & Democracy*. See also, for example, the essays collected in Webb, *Massive Resistance*; Lewis, *The White South*; Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 245; Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

<sup>67</sup> William H. Chafe, for example, described North Carolina's apparent progressivism as a “progressive mystique”, while Jonathan Houghton described the Tar Heel State's response to *Brown* as “sly resistance”. William H. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980); Jonathan T. Y. Houghton, “The North Carolina Republican Party: From Reconstruction to the Radical Right” (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill 1993); Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, pp. 50-61.

new areas of collaboration and divergence and provides useful insights into the successes, shortcomings, and eventual demise of massive resistance.

As scholarship on massive resistance has developed, historians have sought to establish typologies of segregationists to account for their diversity. In an attempt to complicate and update the “massive resister-moderate” dichotomy – which has been decried for understating the barrier to racial change posed by the gradualism and tokenism advocated by “white southern moderates” – Joseph Crespino and Jenny Irons pit “hard-line segregationists” against “practical segregationists”, recasting “moderation” as a mode of resistance.<sup>68</sup> David Chappell separates segregationists into “Constitutionalists”, who argued massive resistance was motivated by the belief that states’ rights had to be protected and federal power curtailed, and “Racial Purists”, who focused on “white purity” and “intermarriage”.<sup>69</sup> While they have prevailed in the historiography, these formulations lack flexibility, assuming each faction to be mutually exclusive, and do not substantially improve our understanding of massive resistance. As Jason Sokol argues, “to identify whites as ‘extremists’, ‘segregationists’, or even ‘moderates’ inadequately explains their beliefs or actions”.<sup>70</sup> For this thesis, establishing rigid distinctions assumes a uniformity of approach among individuals and organisations assigned to each faction and does not allow for development in strategy or shifts in approach. Inflexible dichotomies make no room for segregationists who operated between, or independently of, such categories and obscure clandestine efforts for collaboration between like-minded segregationists in different camps. Segregationists’ multifarious, multimedia propaganda strategies and campaigns substantiate the shortcomings of stringent binary formulations and typologies – Chapters 2 and 3 engage with this debate most directly. This thesis presents segregationists as three-dimensional

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<sup>68</sup> Crespino, *In Search of Another Country*, p. 19; Irons, *Reconstituting Whiteness*, p. 48. In particular, the essays in Lassiter and Lewis’ *The Moderates’ Dilemma* (1998) draw sharp distinctions between “massive resisters” and “moderates”. For studies critical of the distinctions between the two which define moderate gradualism as a strategy “designed to be more harmful than was massive resistance to the cause of racial equality”, Jim Bissett, “The Dilemma over Moderates: School Desegregation in Alamance County, North Carolina”, *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 81, No. 4 (November 2015), p. 891; John A. Kirk, “Massive Resistance and Minimum Compliance: The Origins of the 1957 Little Rock Crisis and the Failure of School Desegregation in the South”, in Webb, *Massive Resistance*, pp. 76-98; Anders Walker, *The Ghost of Jim Crow: How Southern Moderates Use Brown v. Board of Education to Stall Civil Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Clive Webb, *Rabble Rousers: The American Far Right in the Civil Rights Era* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010), pp. 4-7; John Kyle Day, *The Southern Manifesto: Massive Resistance and the Fight to Preserve Segregation* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014).

<sup>69</sup> Chappell, “The Divided Mind”, pp. 52-55.

<sup>70</sup> Jason Sokol, *There Goes My Everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights, 1945-1975* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), p. 13.

actors unsuited to easy categorisation, but united in their resolve to restrict the progression of desegregation and stifle the enforcement of civil rights.

A deep and nuanced field of scholarship has developed to consider segregationist ideology and the intellectual arguments mobilised to defend segregation, building on earlier accounts which argued massive resistance could not be reduced to “the sludge of racism” or a “cliché of hate”.<sup>71</sup> This includes studies of anticommunism and the Cold War, states’ rights and constitutional government, racial science, and religion.<sup>72</sup> The complexity of segregationist ideology presents an almost insurmountable obstacle to the categorisation of massive resisters into discrete groupings. Moving beyond earlier assessments which dismissed states’ rights arguments as deceptive chicanery, historians have demonstrated segregationists’ firm ideological commitment to a strict conservative reading of the Constitution and the complexity of their legislative legal critique of *Brown* and civil rights legislation.<sup>73</sup> Studies of the Cold War and massive resistance show that many segregationists were motivated by palpable fear that communists were driving the movement and Soviet revolutionaries had infiltrated the upper echelons of US government. Lewis shows both segregationist leaders and grassroots activists exploited these fears to recast a southern problem of race relations as an issue of American national security, renovating older arguments of states’ rights, “race-mixing”, and religious freedom.<sup>74</sup> Also viewing massive resistance through a broader Cold War lens, scholars

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<sup>71</sup> Sherrill, *Gothic Politics*, p. 4; Warren, *The Segregationists*, p. 17. See also, Martin, *The Deep South*, p. 169; Cook, *The Segregationists*, p. 5; McMillen, *The Citizens’ Council*, p. 161; Newby (ed.), *The Development*, p. 20. These works draw on ideas presented by cultural commentators, such as, W. J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Knopf, 1941); Lillian Smith, *Killers of the Dream* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1949).

<sup>72</sup> For an overview of segregationist thought see the essays in Webb, *Massive Resistance*.

<sup>73</sup> For works which take a purely cynical view of states’ rights arguments, James W. Ely, Jr., *The Crisis of Conservative Virginia: The Byrd Organization and the Politics of Massive Resistance* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1976), pp. 332-333; Robbins L. Gates, *The Making of Massive Resistance: Virginia’s Politics of Public School Desegregation, 1954-1956* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), pp. 104-108; Benjamin Muse, *Virginia’s Massive Resistance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961), pp. 19-25; Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance*, pp. 126-130. For works which present a more complicated analysis of states’ rights and constitutional arguments, George Lewis, “Virginia’s Northern Strategy: Southern Segregationists and the Route to National Conservatism”, *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 72 No. 1 (February 2006), pp. 111-146; James R. Sweeney (ed.), *Race, Reason, and Massive Resistance: The Diary of David J. Mays, 1954-1959* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2008); Joseph J. Thorndike, “‘The Sometimes Sordid Level of Race and Segregation’: James J. Kilpatrick and the Virginia Campaign against *Brown*”, in Lassiter and Lewis, *The Moderates’ Dilemma*, pp. 56-57, 61; Clive Webb, “Charles Bloch, Jewish White Supremacist”, *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 83, No. 2 (Summer, 1999), pp. 267-292.

<sup>74</sup> Lewis’ conclusions stand in opposition to Jeff Woods’, who claims “a conservative white-power elite led the southern red scare”. Lewis, *The White South*; Jeff Woods, *Black Struggle Red Scare: Segregation and Anti-Communism in the South, 1948-1968* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), p. 6; David Alan Horowitz, “White Southerners’ Alienation and Civil Rights: The Response to Corporate Liberalism, 1956- 1965”, *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (May 1988), pp. 173-200; Sarah Hart Brown, “Congressional Anti-Communism and the Segregationist South: From New Orleans to Atlanta, 1954-1958”, *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 80, No. 4 (Winter, 1996), pp. 785-816. See also: Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and*

have begun to explore massive resisters' ideological and strategic connections to the nations of southern Africa. They suggest a sustained and extensive segregationist foreign policy which promoted white internationalism and viewed Jim Crow segregation as an integral component within a global ideology of white supremacy.<sup>75</sup> Others consider how segregationists looked to racist scientists to provide a new rationale for their archaic regime, focusing on how racial science was mobilised to litigate the *Brown* ruling.<sup>76</sup> This thesis is interested in how and why the various aspects of segregationist ideology were manifested, or concealed, in strategic campaigns to mobilise public opinion. The unevenness of and contradictions within segregationist ideology is a salient point across this strand of historiography, a point this thesis engages with by considering the diverse ways in which strategists applied particular tenets of resistance ideology and tracing their fluctuating popularity in media campaigns.

One of the most fervent historiographical debates over segregationist ideology has developed over the role of religion in massive resistance. Chappell argues religion proved a disappointment for segregationists unable to find or mobilise meaningful scriptural justifications for the social separation of the races. Southern religious leaders, he asserts, did not provide vocal or unified support for the continuation of segregation.<sup>77</sup> Jane Dailey, on the other hand, argues theology formed a vital part of segregationist ideology, contending it was the chief mobilising factor for many southern whites. She demonstrates how grassroots resisters cultivated a "sexualised theology" through the

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*the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

<sup>75</sup> Zoe L. Hyman, "American Segregationist Ideology and White Southern Africa, 1948-1975" (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sussex, 2011); Thomas Noer, "Segregationists and the World: The Foreign Policy of White Resistance", in Brenda Gayle Plummer (ed.), *Window on Freedom: Race, Civil Rights, and Foreign Affairs, 1945-1988* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), pp. 141-162; Daniel Geary and Jennifer Sutton, "Resisting the Wind of Change: The Citizens' Councils and European Decolonisation", in Cornelis A. van Minnen and Manfred Berg (eds), *The U.S. and Europe: Transatlantic Relations in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2013), pp. 265-282; Rolph, "The Citizens' Council and Africa". See also, Ann K. Ziker, "Segregationists Confront American Empire: The Conservative White South and the Question of Hawaiian Statehood, 1947-1959", *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 76, No. 3 (August 2007), pp. 439-466.

<sup>76</sup> John P. Jackson, Jr., *Science for Segregation: Race, Law, and the Case Against Brown v. Board of Education* (New York: New York University Press, 2005); George Lewis, "'Scientific Certainty': Wesley Critz George, Racial Science and Organised White Resistance in North Carolina, 1954-1962", *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (August 2004), pp. 227-247; John P. Jackson, Jr., "'In Ways Unacademical': The Reception of Carleton S. Coon's 'The Origin of Races'", *Journal of the History of Biology*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Summer 2001), pp. 247-285; Gregory Michael Dorr, *Segregation's Science: Eugenics and Society in Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008). These scholars build on I. A. Newby's *Challenge to the Court: Social Scientists and the Defence of Segregation* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967).

<sup>77</sup> David L. Chappell, *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004); David L. Chappell, "Religious Ideas of Segregationists", *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (August 1998), pp. 237-262.

“language of miscegenation” – the American neologism used to criminalise interracial marriage and interracial sexual relations – which transformed the nature of the struggle between massive resistance and the civil rights movement.<sup>78</sup> The extensive primary research carried out for this thesis suggests segregationists considered religious rhetoric unsuitable for media campaigns, especially those intended to reach a diverse national audience. While many of those devising media strategy were religious and subscribed to a “sexualised Christian theology”, religious arguments for segregation simply do not appear prominently in their large-scale efforts to mobilise public opinion.<sup>79</sup> Contrary to Dailey’s conclusions, evidence of the political and social power of these ideas did not appear “everywhere”.<sup>80</sup> Rainach, while receptive to “Biblical arguments” privately, explicitly refused to imbue massive resistance with religious connotations publicly, declaring during a 1957 television appearance, “Race relations is a social issue, not a religious one”.<sup>81</sup> William J. Simmons, the general secretary of the CCA and chief media strategist for the Councils movement, instructed resisters to stay away from religious aspects of the desegregation debate.<sup>82</sup> His strategic reasoning is not explicitly stated. However, it is likely that media strategists considered religious arguments among weaker modes of rhetoric at their disposal on the national stage, especially in relation to Martin Luther King, Jr., and the civil rights movement’s powerful invocation of religious ideals. A “theology of segregation” also relied on outmoded, provincial understandings of race and segregation, ideas from which strategists with ambitions beyond the South sought to distance themselves. For this reason, discussion of the religious aspects of segregationist ideology does not feature prominently in this thesis.

Complicating our understanding of segregationist ideology further, scholars have begun to re-examine the extent to which massive resistance relied on southern or national

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<sup>78</sup> Jane Dailey, “Sex, Segregation, and the Sacred after *Brown*”, *Journal of American History*, Vol. 91, No. 1 (June 2004), pp. 132, 138. For an analysis of the pre-*Brown* manifestations of the fear of miscegenation and a discussion of anti-miscegenation laws, Alex Lubin, *Romance and Rights: The Politics of Interracial Intimacy, 1945-1954* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2005).

<sup>79</sup> The most well-known segregationist publication which puts forth a religious defence of segregation was Reverend G. T. Gillespie, *A Christian View on Segregation*, reprint of address, 4 November 1954 (Greenwood: Educational Fund of the Citizens’ Councils, n.d.). Archival records indicate that the pamphlet did not receive a national distribution. It does not appear in many segregationist collections outside Mississippi, which further highlights the provincial nature of the publication. Chappell notes that Gillespie “was particularly hesitant when speaking about the Bible, giving the whole speech a tentative tone”. David L. Chappell, “Disunity and Religious Institutions in the White South”, in Webb, *Massive Resistance*, p. 138.

<sup>80</sup> Dailey, “Sex”, p. 126.

<sup>81</sup> Letter from Rainach to Reverend Ewing T. Wayland, 12 September 1957, Folder 128, Box 13, WMR; Letter from Sybil Huckaby to Rainach, 24 June 1955, Folder 9, Box 2, WMR.

<sup>82</sup> Letter from Simmons to Harry P. Gamble, 3 December 1958, Folder 62, Box 6, WMR.



iconography. Formative assessments tended to emphasise resisters' reliance on regional myths enshrined in the Lost Cause narrative and agrarianism. Wilhoit claimed civil rights groups "pre-empt[ed] virtually all of the national historic symbols of the United States", leaving segregationist leaders "at a distinct disadvantage in the vital political art of myth-manipulation".<sup>83</sup> More broadly, cultural commentators have highlighted white southerners' propensity to turn inward upon themselves when confronted by an external threat to their "way of life", looking to the "elaborate mythology that... glorified the Lost Cause" for inspiration or retreating into the "idyllic 'dream world' of the southern plantation fantasy".<sup>84</sup> Undeniably, massive resistance was replete with the symbols and rhetoric of the Confederacy and the Lost Cause. Renditions of Dixie opened Council meetings; for many the Confederate battle flag became the talisman of resistance; resisters likened their efforts to those of their Confederate forefathers; and, white southern womanhood and the southern belle were harnessed as the ideal white southern men must rally to defend.<sup>85</sup> However, more recent scholarship has argued "expressions of neo-Confederate nationalism" were balanced by "explicit claims that the fight for segregation was, at heart, the fight for America".<sup>86</sup> This thesis intervenes in this debate by exploring how some segregationist media strategists attempted to harness the "national historic symbols of the United States" – Old Glory, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. It also argues some segregationists actively purged their nationally-oriented media campaigns of overt references to southern iconography. These resisters sought to expand the perception of massive resistance beyond a sectional struggle to preserve Jim Crow segregation, reframing resistance as a broad ideological

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<sup>83</sup> Wilhoit, *The Politics*, p. 123. See also, Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance*, pp. 17-18; Sherrill, *Gothic Politics*, p. 302.

<sup>84</sup> Silver, *Mississippi*, p. 6; Cash, *Mind of the South*, pp. x-xi; Dabbs, *Who Speaks for the South?*, pp. 4-5; James C. Cobb, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 33; Pete Daniel, *Lost Revolutions: The South in the 1950s* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), p. 26.

<sup>85</sup> See, for example, tapes of Council meetings and rallies in Box 75 of WMR; the enormous battle flag unfurled at a University of Mississippi football game ahead of James Meredith's entry into the school, "The U.S. versus Mississippi", *Eyewitness* [television programme] CBS, 28 September 1962; Letter from Rainach to Martin P. Broderick, Jr., 14 July 1955, Folder 10, Box 1, WMR; William A. Bacon, "Mistress of the Mansion", *TC* (November 1961), p. Cover. Gender and class analyses of massive resistance argue Old South myths and iconography formed an essential component of segregationist ideology, especially for the working-class. Karen S. Anderson, "Massive Resistance, Violence, and Southern Social Relations: The Little Rock, Arkansas, School Integration Crisis, 1954-1960", in Webb, *Massive Resistance*, pp. 203-220; Elizabeth Gillespie McRae, "White Womanhood, White Supremacy, and the Rise of Massive Resistance", in Webb, *Massive Resistance*, pp. 181-202, and *Mothers of Massive Resistance: White Women and the Politics of White Supremacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Steve Estes, *I Am a Man! Race, Manhood, and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), pp. 39-60.

<sup>86</sup> Crespino, *In Search of Another Country*, p. 51.

battle over the meaning of Americanism, or, in the words of Senator Eastland “a crusade to restore Americanism”.<sup>87</sup>

Following similar historiographical trends in the study of the civil rights movement, historians have complemented this expansion of the segregationist mind by demonstrating white opposition to civil rights activism was not unique to the southern states. Arnold R. Hirsch, for example, explores the organised and protracted campaign of resistance launched by white working-class residents against the desegregation of Trumbull Park, a housing project in Chicago.<sup>88</sup> In his study of the VaCCG, Lewis demonstrates that segregationists who “elevate[d] massive resistance above the confines of sectional politics... [and] the open racism and demagoguery” were able to win support from and build meaningful alliances with individuals and organisations “beyond the segregationists’ traditional heartland in the white South”.<sup>89</sup> These studies are of particular importance to this thesis because they indicate some audiences outside the South would have been receptive to segregationist propaganda. Many non-southerners shared segregationists’ ideas on race and segregation, as well as their staunchly conservative reading of the Constitution and laissez-faire approach to the economy. Segregationist media strategists recognised the possibility for a national white consensus; they were not merely firing into the dark.

The proliferation of studies reaffirming the strategic and ideological complexity of massive resistance as an evolving and uneven phenomenon also provoked a revision of the traditional chronology of massive resistance, which essentially conformed to the “classical phase” of the black freedom struggle, beginning with *Brown* in 1954 and ending with the Voting Rights Act in 1965.<sup>90</sup> In line with the chronological expansion of the civil rights movement, scholars have expanded the temporal scope of massive resistance to predate *Brown* and extend beyond the Civil and Voting Rights Acts, thereby delineating a

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<sup>87</sup> James O. Eastland quoted in Erle Johnston, *Mississippi’s Defiant Years 1953-1973: An interpretive Documentary with Personal Experiences* (Forest: Lake Harbor Publishers, 1990), pp. 44-45.

<sup>88</sup> Arnold R. Hirsch, “Massive Resistance in the Urban North: Trumbull Park, Chicago, 1953-1966”, *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 82, No. 2 (September 1995), pp. 522-550. See also, Jeanne Theoharis, “‘I’d Rather Go to School in the South’: How Boston’s School Desegregation Complicates the Civil Rights Paradigm”, in Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard (eds), *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940-1980* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 125-152; essays in Matthew D. Lassiter and Joseph Crespino (eds), *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) and *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008).

<sup>89</sup> Lewis, “Virginia’s Northern Strategy”, pp. 116, 122.

<sup>90</sup> Bayard Rustin refers to the “classical” phase of the civil rights movement in Bayard Rustin, *Down the Line: The Collected Writings of Bayard Rustin* (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1971), p. 111; Bartley, Macmillan, Sherrill, and Wilhoit all present massive resistance within these temporal boundaries.

“Long Massive Resistance”.<sup>91</sup> Given the rich and long tradition of white supremacy and segregation in the South and the unrelenting efforts of generations of white southerners to protect the South’s system of racial stratification, it is clear that massive resistance cannot be considered an isolated phenomenon.<sup>92</sup> Indeed, scholars have highlighted white southerners’ use of media to promote and defend racial separation, disenfranchisement, and white supremacy during the late-nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>93</sup> These efforts, however, pale in comparison to the efforts of segregationists operating in the post-*Brown* era. This is a crucial distinction. The sophistication and extent of the propaganda produced by segregationists after 1954 separates massive resistance from earlier incarnations white resistance. Their access to and use of such a wide array of communication systems, particularly the newly emerging medium of television, and the range of functioning propaganda apparatuses constructed to carry their message beyond the South constitute a significant break from previous defences white supremacy.<sup>94</sup> Consequently, despite some connections to pre-*Brown* resistance, this thesis conceptualises massive resistance, and, therefore, the “media strategies of massive resistance”, as the period of coordinated white opposition to desegregation and African American civil rights following 1954.

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<sup>91</sup> Jacqueline Dowd Hall pioneered this expansion in, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past”, *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 91, No. 4 (March 2005), pp. 1233-1263. Several scholars trace the beginnings of massive resistance to the Dixiecrat Revolt of 1948, Joseph E. Lowndes, *From The New Deal to the New Right: Race and the Southern Origins of Modern Conservatism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 7-8; Kari A. Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South, 1938-1968* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), p. 9. Jason Morgan Ward finds the roots of resistance in white southern opposition to challenges to the racial status quo during the New Deal in, *Defending White Democracy: The Making of a Segregationist Movement and the Remaking of Racial Politics, 1936-1965* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011). See also, essays in Glenn Feldman (ed.), *Before Brown: Civil Rights and White Backlash in the Modern South* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004).

<sup>92</sup> For works on the development, establishment, and perpetuation of segregation, C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955); George Brown Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967); J. Morgan Kousser, *The Shaping of Southern Politics: Suffrage Restriction and the Establishment of the One-party South, 1880-1910* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974); Howard Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978); George M. Frederickson, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981); John W. Cell, *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy: The Origins of Segregation in South African and the American South* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), pp. 88-99; Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998).

<sup>93</sup> Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, pp. 88-99; Hale, *Making Whiteness*, esp. pp. 168, 229; Jacqueline Goldsby, *A Spectacular Secret: Lynching in American Life and Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Sandy Alexandre, *The Properties of Violence: Claims to Ownership in Representations of Lynching* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012); Amy Louise Wood, *Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890-1940* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance*, p. 36; Emile B. Ader, *The Dixiecrat Movement: Its Role in Third Party Politics* (New York: Public Affairs Press, 1955), pp. 15-17.

<sup>94</sup> Lewis has highlighted previously that the “the increasing sophistication of resistance propaganda” as a unique feature of massive resistance. Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, pp. 105-112.

This is not to say, as some historians have, that *Brown* was the singular historical moment that “crystallised southern resistance to racial change”, joining what had previously been “scattered and episodic” moments of southern racial intransigence into a unified movement.<sup>95</sup> As Lewis argues, massive resistance was a phenomenon “too sprawling, and simply not sufficiently obedient, to have been ushered into existence by a single landmark event”.<sup>96</sup> The wide disparities in segregationist strategy and ideology, the unique circumstances dictating the trajectory of resistance in particular locales, and the complex interplay between political elites and grassroots resisters make any decision to select a specific event as the trigger for massive resistance highly problematic. Rather than citing *Brown* as the event which set in motion a ready-made movement, this thesis views it as a moment which sent white southerners at the elite and the grassroots scrambling for a suitable response to the desegregation ruling, with pro-segregation forces across the South mobilising in very different ways. It was during this period that the foundations for segregationists’ large-scale media efforts were laid.

At the other end of the traditional chronology, historians have challenged the idea that segregationists’ fierce and multi-layered defence of a “way of life” cultivated and preserved in southern society for generations dissipated entirely with the passage of federal civil rights legislation in 1964 and 1965. Clearly, given the slow progress of racial change in the South following federal legislation, many remained committed to resistance and continued their efforts to stymie reform. It is in the successive waves of responses to Alan Brinkley’s “problem of American conservatism” that the legacies of massive resistance have begun to be addressed.<sup>97</sup> Scholars look beyond the “symbolic last stands” of massive resistance to explore how some segregationists “were brought seamlessly into the new currents of developing national conservatism” in the late 1960s and 1970s.<sup>98</sup> Two broad schools of thought have emerged. The first concentrates on the ways in which national-level conservative politicians co-opted the politics and the thinly coded racial

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<sup>95</sup> Klarman cites *Brown* as the definitive starting point of massive resistance. Klarman, “How *Brown* Changed Race Relations”, quotations from pp. 82, 91. See also, Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance*; McMillen, *The Citizens’ Council*; Earl Black, *Southern Governors and Civil Rights: Racial Segregation as a Campaign Issue in the Second Reconstruction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976).

<sup>96</sup> Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, p. 24.

<sup>97</sup> Alan Brinkley, “The Problem of American Conservatism”, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 99, No. 2 (April 1994), pp. 415-417. For two more recent overviews of the historiography on American conservatism, Kim Phillips-Fein, “Conservatism: A State of the Field”, *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 98, No. 3 (December 2011), pp. 723-743; Elizabeth Tandy Shermer, “American Conservatism: A Historiographic Renaissance without Much of a Reconsideration”, *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (May 2012), pp. 481-488.

<sup>98</sup> Crespino, *In Search of Another Country*, p. 276; Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, p. 26.

rhetoric pioneered by Deep South politicians, such as Wallace and Strom Thurmond, in the mid-to-late 1960s. This “southern strategy” was developed to win support from working-class voters across the country alienated by the victories of the civil rights movement, the rise of black radicalism, the militancy of the anti-war movement, and challenges to traditional values.<sup>99</sup> The second moves away from “backlash politics” to explore the growing strength of conservative forces at the grassroots in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. Charting a journey from radicalism to respectability, Lassiter and Kevin Kruse demonstrate how affluent white southerners, living in the “Sunbelt” rather than the Deep South, evolved an ostensibly colour-blind “middle-class rhetoric of rights and responsibilities” to defend their racial and class privilege.<sup>100</sup> Crespino makes a similar argument, but contends that this “conservative colour-blindness” had always been part of the segregationist lexicon in the Deep South.<sup>101</sup> For all three, those white southerners who rejected open white supremacy and embraced a philosophy of colour-blind meritocratic individualism were able to find common ground with conservatives in the rest of the nation. In doing so, they facilitated the electoral successes of national conservative figures and transitioned smoothly out of massive resistance into broader conservative currents at the end of the 1960s.<sup>102</sup>

This thesis intervenes in both strands of the historiography concerning the legacy of massive resistance and its connections to new conservatism. It spotlights segregationist leaders who used, and advocated the use of, media to reframe resistance as a broader conservative effort to lead the segregationist South out of provincial confines into a burgeoning national movement. It also considers how segregationists at the grassroots developed media strategies of their own to drive perceptions of massive resistance,

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<sup>99</sup> Carter, *The Politics of Rage*; Carter, *From George Wallace to Newt Gingrich*; Kevin P. Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority* (New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1969); Joseph A. Aistrup, *The Southern Strategy Revisited: Republican Top-Down Advancement in the South* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996); V. O. Key, *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1977); Thomas Byrne Edsall and Mary D. Edsall, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics* (New York: Norton, 1991); Earl Black and Merle Black, *The Rise of Southern Republicans* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002); Rick Perlstein, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001); Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt*.

<sup>100</sup> Kruse, *White Flight*, p. 245; Lassiter, *The Silent Majority*, pp. 3-4. The Sunbelt refers to a broad region stretching from the Southeast to the Southwest of the United States of America, from South Carolina to California.

<sup>101</sup> Crespino, *In Search of Another Country*, p. 8.

<sup>102</sup> See also, Lowndes, *From The New Deal to the New Right*; Nancy MacLean, “Neo-Confederacy versus the New Deal: The Regional Utopia of the Modern American Right”, in Lassiter and Crespino, *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, pp. 308-390; Emma Folwell, “From Massive Resistance to New Conservatism: Opposition to Community Action Programs In Mississippi, 1965-1975” (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leicester, 2013).

demanded leaders use media to guide the white South into broader cultural streams, and supported media initiatives handed down by segregationist leaders. With regards to the transition in segregationist strategy, this thesis substantiates the conclusions of Lassiter and Crespino by illustrating how some segregationists developed existing strategies to make them more palatable to the changing national zeitgeist, while others mobilised race-free, conservative rhetoric early in the trajectory of massive resistance. What is clear as a result is that the media was used to expand the purview of massive resistance before Wallace's forays in national politics and helped to cultivate the national conservatism that was emerging.

The recent tendency to emphasise the fuzzy boundary between massive resistance and new conservatism, the continuities and similarities, and the individuals and organisations who made the transition successfully, however, threatens to eclipse some of the complexities of massive resistance. Drawing too bold a line between massive resistance and new conservatism and continually expanding the boundaries of massive resistance promotes, as Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang wrote of the "Long Civil Rights Movement", an "excessive elasticity of periodisation schemas" and risks ignoring or minimising "ruptures and fractures" within and between waves of resistance.<sup>103</sup> "Stressing history's 'seamless web'", to borrow Adam Fairclough's image, threatens to turn back the historiographical clock, reducing massive resistance, once again, "into a homogenised mush, without sharp breaks, and clear transitions and transformations".<sup>104</sup> Indeed, the few works which do consider individual segregationists' strategic use of certain forms of media spotlight nationally-prominent figures, such as James J. Kilpatrick and Jesse Helms, who transitioned gracefully from massive resistance to new conservatism. Scholars focus squarely on their transformation, rather than the broader complexities of segregationist efforts to shift public opinion between 1954 and 1965. They present their subjects as exceptional pioneers who almost single-handedly laid the foundations for the triumph of the conservative countermovement and guaranteed the white South's place within it.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang, "The 'Long Movement' as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies", *The Journal of African American History*, Vol. 92, No. 2 (Spring 2007), pp. 266, 271.

<sup>104</sup> Adam Fairclough, "State of the Art: Historians and the Civil Rights Movement", *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (December 1990), p. 388.

<sup>105</sup> William P. Hustwit, *James J. Kilpatrick: Salesman for Segregation* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Bryan Hardin Thrift, *Conservative Bias: How Jesse Helms Pioneered the Rise of Right-Wing Media and Realigned the Republican Party* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014); Carter, *The Politics of Rage*.

This thesis confronts these historiographical trends in two important ways. First, it challenges the purported exceptionalism of individuals such as Kilpatrick and Helms, revealing the variety of media strategies directed by a range of individuals and organisations which contributed to the conservative ascendancy. In doing so, it places Deep South segregationists alongside these border state resisters, as well as northern conservatives and right-wingers such as William F. Buckley, Clarence Manion, and Curtis McIntire, in the evolving narrative surrounding the development of “right-wing media” during the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>106</sup> Second, in Chapter 3, it considers those no-less media savvy segregationist strategists, and their media campaigns, who tried and failed to influence the development and ideology of the emergent conservative movement. It examines the reasons for their failure to merge into the steadily evolving national climate of “colour-blind” conservatism and the attendant conceptual disparities between resisters over the nature of new conservatism. By accentuating the unevenness of segregationist media strategies, this thesis distorts the prevailing narrative concerning the endurance of massive resistance.

Given this warning against overemphasising continuity, this thesis sets the end point of massive resistance loosely between the passage of the Civil Rights Act in July 1964 and the final months of 1966. In this sense, it ended as unevenly as it began. This period constituted a significant moment of transition for the segregationist South. Whilst conscious not to single out a specific event to mark the end of massive resistance, landmark federal legislation was undoubtedly a central factor in sparking this state of flux. The Civil and Voting Rights Acts marked the end of legally-sanctioned white supremacy in the southern states and forced a rapid diminution in the most overt forms of public resistance. The ground had shifted fundamentally and segregationists were forced to recalibrate. Massive resistance as a broad movement mobilised to resist desegregation and civil rights ceased to exist. Those resisters who successfully encoded their resistance rhetoric transitioned into a new movement, separate and apart from massive resistance, leaving behind many of their former comrades. Southern resistance continued, but it was in a different guise, taking on new forms in response to the new context. Most

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<sup>106</sup> Heather Hendershot, *What's Fair on the Air? Cold War Right-Wing Broadcasting and the Public Interest* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011); Nicole Hemmer, *Messengers of the Right: Conservative Media and the Transformation of American Politics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016). Kim Phillips-Fein cites the “role of mass media in the creation of the Right” as a field that has “not yet received full attention from historians”. Phillips-Fein, “Conservatism”, p. 735.

importantly, these attendant changes to the political context catalysed a dramatic shift in segregationist media strategy, which is examined in the Conclusion. By focusing on the period between 1954 and 1966, this thesis, drags the focus away from the conservative ascendancy to explore the complexities of massive resistance itself.

In order to assess the breadth and range of segregationist media strategy, this thesis draws on a wide range of archival research. To attain a clear impression of the wide array of media produced by segregationists to win support for massive resistance outside the South, this study has necessitated dedicated analyses of complete runs of segregationist newspapers, periodicals, and pamphlets collected within the Right Wing Collection of the University of Iowa Libraries and segregationists' personal papers; close-readings of an assortment of monographs published under the broad banner of massive resistance, such as *You and Segregation* (1955), *The Case for the South* (1960), and *Race and Reason* (1961); viewings of the full collection of *Citizens' Council Forum* films; and, screenings of the small, but no less rich, selection of documentary films produced by state-sponsored resistance organisations in the Deep South.<sup>107</sup> The tendency to overgeneralise and oversimplify specific massive resistance media initiatives, particularly segregationists' audio-visual campaigns, is likely born out of not having read or viewed the material in full. As Lewis notes, this may be due to practical difficulties relating to incomplete runs of segregationist literature, limited access to audio-visual material, and time-based restrictions placed upon archival research which makes audio-visual sources unattractive to the time-pressured researcher.<sup>108</sup> This thesis seeks to remedy this historical problem by affording these neglected primary sources due attention. A similarly rigorous study has been made of the large collection of national network television news programmes collected at the Library of Congress. Taken together, this material provides a clear and near comprehensive picture of segregationists' multifaceted attempts to sway public opinion at the national level.

To complement, texture, and support the textual and visual analyses of segregationist media, this thesis has made extensive use of segregationists' personal papers and the administrative files of segregationist organisations. It was essential to look behind the scenes to attain a clearer impression of segregationists' thoughts, motivations, and decision-making processes. Those selected were identified through primary and

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<sup>107</sup> WMR and LHP hold impressive collections of segregationist literature.

<sup>108</sup> Lewis, "Segregationists' Use of Media", p. 168.



secondary research as being particularly active in attempting to reshape national public opinion. These include: Rainach, Wallace, Roy Harris, Marvin Griffin, George Shannon, Herman Talmadge, Ned Touchstone, and Thomas R. Waring, Jr., and the ASSC, GCE, MSSC, and Citizens' Councils. The correspondence between these resistance leaders and their constituents provides an impression of grassroots segregationists' views on media strategy. The correspondence held within these collections also illuminates the strategic visions of those segregationists whose papers have not survived or are not collected at a repository, such as Patterson, Simmons, Richard D. Morphew, Carleton Putnam, John J. Synon, T. V. Williams, Jr, the JLC, and the CCFAF. This breadth of study allows for the identification of coordination and cooperation, as well as points of departure, between groups and individuals working towards similar goals. It moves beyond previous studies, which adopt a narrow focus on one individual or group, to provide a broad, holistic understanding of segregationists' efforts to harness mass media.

A core methodological problem facing this research project concerns measuring the impact of segregationists' media strategies, the reach of particular campaigns, the level of public engagement with these efforts, and their sophistication and effectiveness. At the most basic level massive resisters lost the battle over American hearts and minds. Ultimately, they were unable to mobilise public opinion to prevent the passage of landmark civil rights legislation. This does not, however, mean that segregationists' efforts were entirely ineffective. At the very least, the popularity of Wallace in his presidential bids in the second half of the 1960s and 1970s, and the rise of a new potent form of social and economic conservatism during this period, indicates that there was a national market for some of the ideas expounded in resisters' media campaigns. While public opinion polls, such as those carried out by George Gallup during this period, provide a useful tool through which to assess the changing public attitudes towards desegregation and civil rights, they are not always accurate or representative. Moreover, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain whether those surveyed individuals had been exposed to segregationist media. Segregationists themselves did not carry out any such surveys to evaluate their efforts. Even if they had, tracing causality reliably would be problematic. This thesis, therefore, draws on a range of primary and secondary resources, embracing a wider reading, to construct as full a picture as possible concerning the aforementioned issues. Admittedly, however, this is not a perfect science.

The reach of a particular campaign can often be estimated using the administrative and financial records of segregationist organisations which detail the areas targeted and the volume of material used. This can be substantiated using national, state, and local newspaper databases to measure the extent of the public discussion generated and, when dealing with television or radio campaigns, to confirm whether local stations were carrying segregationist broadcasts. However, this still does not necessarily prove that the wider public viewed or engaged with particular media efforts. Here, letters from the public, particularly letters from individuals outside the South, to segregationists, newspaper editors, and broadcasters can be useful to suggest the breadth of viewership and to reflect broader trends in opinion. As well as correspondence collected in segregationists' personal papers, the Library of Congress' vast collection of audience mail written in response to appearances of segregationists on NBC's *Meet the Press* has proven invaluable in this respect. The reactions of civil rights organisations and the federal government to specific segregationist media strategies, documented in archival records and the popular press, also helps determine their impact and efficacy. Existing records indicate civil rights leaders and federal advocates for racial change only occasionally commented on resisters' media efforts, so when a response was drawn it suggests they had hit upon an effective approach.

The approximate reach and impact of respective strategies offers some indication of the sophistication, suitability, and effectiveness of segregationist media strategies. This impression can be enhanced by comparing segregationists' efforts to the successful strategies mobilised by civil rights groups, popular conventions observed in contemporary media, and prevailing contemporary ideas on public relations. It is apparent that some of the individuals involved in devising and directing media strategy had an understanding of the professional media landscape and what one resister from South Carolina termed, "psychological and sociological warfare... [and] the principles of mass psychology expressed through organised public opinion".<sup>109</sup> Kilpatrick, Morpew, Waring, and Williams, along with several others, all had backgrounds and training in media and journalism which would have informed their strategic decisions. Some segregationists without media expertise drafted in individuals who did, recognising the

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<sup>109</sup> S. Emory Rogers quoted in Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance*, pp. 170-171 See also, S. Emory Rogers quoted in Bev Ballard, "FBI Agent Not Present At Lamar Citizens Meet", *The Florence Morning News* (5 January 1956), p. 9;

benefits they might bring to their media ventures. By placing segregationists' strategies in conversation with those of the movement and successful media formats of the day, this thesis positions segregationist media strategies within a broader media context of the 1950s and 1960s.

This thesis places greatest emphasis, however, on segregationists' own evolving conceptions of effective media strategy and their personal reasoning behind particular propaganda programmes. Segregationists' personal papers offer the clearest insight into their ideas and rationales. A larger picture can be assembled by considering which strategies gained traction in segregationist circles and which were cast aside. This thesis highlights those strategies which received the most praise and support from other resisters, were adopted or remodelled by segregationists operating throughout the region, and had the most longevity, either being sustained for an extended length of time or re-emerging at moments throughout the period. By placing these strategies alongside those that failed to capture the imagination of segregationists, it constructs a full impression of the competing approaches to media strategy and highlights the varying degrees of media savvy among segregationists. In doing so, this thesis reveals the idiosyncrasies of segregationist thought on media strategy. Segregationists were not simply reacting to civil rights strategy or responding to the demands and conventions of an evolving media landscape. Resisters defined their own terms and often had their own unique vision of the most appropriate means by which to mobilise public opinion. Avoiding an overly restrictive theoretical framework allows this thesis to reveal the strategic and ideological heterogeneity of resisters' approaches to mass media and their expansive effort to redefine the national discussion of race and civil rights.

This thesis is split into four chapters which revolve around four of the most common and prominent rhetorical arguments mobilised to win public support for massive resistance. Through a sequence of in-depth case studies, they form a comprehensive analysis of segregationists' attempts to harness mass media in the battle over American hearts and minds. It is not uncomplicatedly chronological because a linear approach risks suggesting media strategy developed evenly and incrementally across the period. A more issue-based focus through a selection of representative case studies ensures it is clear when a strategy is adopted, adapted, or reapplied. By the same token, media modes are not separated to study television as entirely distinct from pamphlets and periodicals, or newspaper advertisements from documentary film. Such an approach

would obstruct analysis of resistance organisations which deployed multiple strategies simultaneously and the competing strategies of separate segregationist agencies which mobilised similar rhetoric but on different platforms.

Chapter 1 examines segregationists' oscillating and interconnected attempts to recalibrate public perceptions of segregation by publicising examples of racial upheaval and inequality in the North, showcasing the apparent harmony, tranquillity, and prosperity of southern society, and marketing racial separation as a beneficial mode of social organisation. It traces their attempts to debunk dominant media narratives regarding segregation, exposes their almost universal distrust of the national media, and their evangelical faith in segregation and the racism and paternalism underwriting it. It also highlights how resisters drew on political developments overseas to bolster their arguments for segregation at home. Chapter 2 investigates the divergent ways in which the VaCCG, CCFAF, and CCA attempted to mobilise states' rights and constitutional arguments across various media. It reveals disagreements among segregationists over the most effective media strategy, the comparative cogency of their efforts, and the extent of and barriers to collaboration. More broadly, it considers the ways in which segregationists attempted to redefine Americanism and how, in some cases, the battle over public opinion served as an ideological contest over the "true meaning" of Americanism. Chapter 3 explores a dramatic shift in CCA media strategy away from a "race-free" constitutional approach towards one premised on overt ideas of race and white supremacy and the promotion of racial science. It analyses the extent of Carleton Putnam's role in sparking this transformation and the multi-layered media campaign to publicise his ideas, highlighting CCA attempts to dictate media strategy at the grassroots. It alters our understanding of the importance of Putnam and racial science to massive resistance fundamentally. Chapter 4 shifts perspective slightly to uncover segregationists' efforts to generate photographic and cinematic imagery to dramatise massive resistance and reconfigure public understandings of the civil rights movement and the federal government. Chiefly, it traces the production, use, and re-use of a photograph of Martin Luther King, Jr., at Highlander Folk School to present the civil rights movement as part of nefarious communist plot to destroy American democracy. The thesis concludes by documenting the transformation of segregationist media strategy between 1964 and 1966, proposing a new chronology of resistance based on patterns in media strategy, offering broad, summative thoughts on its interventions, and suggesting areas for further research.

Each chapter contributes vital knowledge to the broader questions addressed by this thesis as a whole, providing valuable new insights into the nature of massive resistance, the civil rights movement, and the development of a new national conservatism.

## Chapter 1 – Tearing Down the “Paper Curtain”: Reconfiguring the Perception of Jim Crow Segregation in the United States

In the build up to his symbolic stand in the schoolhouse door to block the integration of the University of Alabama on 11 June 1963, Governor George C. Wallace embarked on a determined nationwide public relations campaign. He planned to ingratiate himself with the American public and justify his impending confrontation with the forces of the federal government.<sup>1</sup> On 2 June, during his appearance on *Meet The Press*, NBC’s renowned public affairs television programme, he brazenly attacked national newsmen for what he alleged to be their inadequate reporting. In an impassioned defence of his defiance and of the system of segregation in the southern states, Wallace derided national news media for failing to report on a range of pertinent matters. He chastised them for ignoring the supposedly large numbers of African Americans exercising their democratic right to vote in Alabama. He bemoaned the lack of attention afforded to his own and his state’s efforts to equalise segregated schools, his commitment to serve both races equally, the job opportunities apparently available to both blacks as well as whites through Alabama’s developing economy, and the supposedly harmonious race relations in Alabama and across the South. Finally, he claimed the press was ignoring racial strife in northern and western cities where racial discrimination and racial disturbances occurred as regularly as in the South. Wallace sneered each time he stated “it wasn’t reported”, revelling in the opportunity to present the “truth” to the American public.<sup>2</sup> Maligning mainstream media and contesting its narratives of the South and segregation was an essential weapon in Wallace’s rhetorical arsenal. He saw the national media as a threat and questioned its legitimacy, whilst appreciating its value as a platform he could use to publicise his own viewpoint. He was not alone: denunciation and repudiation of mainstream media as biased was a cornerstone of massive resistance and an essential part of segregationists’ media strategies.

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<sup>1</sup> In the weeks leading up to his stand, Wallace appeared on a number of the national television networks’ political panel shows, such as *Meet The Press* and *Face The Nation*. He also invited a documentary film crew to record his actions, experiences, and preparations. Stephan Leshner, *George Wallace: American Populist* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1994), pp. 210-211; Carter, *The Politics of Rage*, pp. 140-144; “Crisis – Behind a Presidential Commitment”, *Close-up* [television programme] ABC, 21 October 1963.

<sup>2</sup> “The Honourable George Wallace: Governor of Alabama”, *Meet The Press* [television programme] NBC, 2 June 1963.

Segregationists decried mainstream media for allegedly skewed and inaccurate reporting of the racial situation in the southern states. For them, mainstream media meant the dominant nationally circulated newspapers – particularly the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* – and the three national television networks, ABC, CBS, and NBC, which they argued were controlled by “anti-South” northerners. James O. Eastland claimed northern presses were “willing tools” of communist, “race-minded” groups bent on producing anti-South propaganda. Thomas R. Waring, Jr., editor of the *Charleston News and Courier*, went so far as to describe the perceived bias of northern media as a “paper curtain”, riffing on the “iron curtain” that ostensibly separated the Soviet Union from the West. He declared that northern reporters had abandoned an objective approach to “one of the biggest news stories of our time”.<sup>3</sup> They sought to challenge the prevailing media narrative that framed the South and segregation as violent, oppressive, and profoundly unequal.

Historians have noted the prevalence of this rhetoric in segregationist speeches and publications throughout the 1950s and 1960s, with Joseph Crespino labelling it the “scapegoat metaphor”, and have begun to consider how resisters translated their resentments into action.<sup>4</sup> They have tended to concentrate on defensive strategies deployed within the South which sought to suppress and censor media that presented a threat to segregation and white supremacy.<sup>5</sup> In these studies, they do not consider the ways in which the segregationist South attempted to write back to the North, how they sought to correct what they perceived to be the northern press’ crude caricatures of the South, and thereby realign northern and western perceptions of massive resistance. A handful of scholars have highlighted instances in which segregationists publicised examples of racial upheaval in northern cities in order to draw attention away from racial problems in the South and uncover the North’s apparent hypocrisy.<sup>6</sup> However,

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<sup>3</sup> Eastland and Waring quoted in Wallace, *Massive Resistance and Media Suppression*, pp. 36-38.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Crespino, “Mississippi as Metaphor: Civil Rights, the South, and the Nation in the Historical Imagination”, in Matthew D. Lassiter and Joseph Crespino (eds), *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 111.

<sup>5</sup> For example, Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff, *The Race Beat*, pp. 176-179, 247-249, 360-361, 377-378; Chappell, *Inside Agitators*, pp. 80-81; Donovan and Scherer, *Unsilent Revolution*, pp. 12-14; Martin, *The Deep South*, p. 160; Wallace, *Massive Resistance and Media Suppression*, pp. 157-188. Wallace, “Piercing the Paper Curtain”, p. 422; Yellin, “Journalism (Print) and Civil Rights (1954-1968)”, p. 120; Classen, *Watching Jim Crow*, p. 43; Mills, *Changing Channels*, p. 16..

<sup>6</sup> Scholars have been particularly drawn to segregationists’ efforts to promulgate a distorted account of the desegregation of public schools in Washington, D.C., in 1956. Ward, “The D.C. School Hearings”, pp. 82-110; Anders Walker, “Blackboard Jungle: Delinquency, Desegregation, and the Cultural Politics of Brown”, *Columbia Law Review*, Vol. 110, No. 7 (November 2010), pp. 1911-1953; Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, pp. 42, 126. See also,

scholarship has yet to address fully the “fluctuations in the argument that race and racism was not a peculiarly ‘southern’ problem” and the “distinct and discrete tranche of resistance propaganda that was designed... to expose the North’s complicity in racial inequality”. This chapter confronts this historiographical lacuna, first identified in 2005 by George Lewis.<sup>7</sup> It expands Lewis’ formulation by placing media efforts to reveal racial strife in the North alongside concomitant attempts to exculpate the South’s system of racial separation and argues that these two strategies were complementary, working in parallel to achieve similar strategic objectives. Indeed, exonerating the South’s policy of racial separation was at least a secondary objective of attempts to highlight the extent of northern racism. This chapter explores the multifarious ways in which segregationists attempted to tear through the “paper curtain”, to preach the “truth” of segregation and unveil the North’s duplicitous and dissonant attitude towards the “race problem” in the United States. It analyses a range of rhetorical and practical media strategies and examines how segregationists produced their own alternative media and attempted to hijack existing media outlets to appeal to a national audience. Taking a broad approach, it demonstrates segregationists at the grassroots and elite level were committed to reconfiguring the nation’s understanding of segregation.

### **Seeing is Believing?**

Convincing the rest of the nation that African Americans did not face systemic oppression and were satisfied with their lot was a central objective of this strategy. Beyond flatly denying the presence of discrimination when confronted by northern reporters, some segregationists adopted a more audacious “seeing is believing” approach whereby non-southern newsmen were invited to see the South for themselves. The MSSC was the first to pioneer this strategy. During its first year of operation, Hall C. DeCell, the Commission’s director, escorted twenty-one New England newspaper editors on an all-expenses paid press junket through Mississippi. He expected to overturn what he considered to be their misguided prejudice against the South, and to demonstrate segregation was an effective and necessary social system for a region with a large population of African Americans. It was hoped the editors would return to their home

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Ian Davis, “White-Collared White Supremacists: The Mississippi Citizens’ Councils and the Origins of Rightwing Media”, *The Journal of Mississippi History*, Vol. 77, No. 1 and 2 (Spring/Summer 2015), pp. 35-37.

<sup>7</sup> Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, pp. 126-128.



states and vindicate the South. No such thing happened. While one reporter conceded northerners “should not presume to tell these people how they ought to run their affairs and how to change their ways overnight”, the majority were outraged. One editor declared the situation in Mississippi “worse than I had been led to expect”<sup>8</sup>. Despite pronounced failure, a stark indication of segregationists’ blindness to the inequality that pervaded the South and their attendant lack of media savvy, MSSC leaders hailed the tour as a roaring success.<sup>9</sup>

In its formative years, the MSSC was in direct competition with the Citizens’ Councils for public support, with the MSSC seeking to direct segregationists towards a more “practical” programme of resistance which allowed some tokenistic integration. The MSSC could not be seen to fail, especially since a substantial amount of taxpayers’ money was spent on the media stunt.<sup>10</sup> By presenting the tour in a positive light, the MSSC established itself as a productive, effectual resistance organisation with an effective way to alter public opinion outside the South. While historians have noted its failed southern junket, they have marked its efforts as exceptional without considering how other segregationists employed similar approaches. William D. Workman, Jr., an influential resistance leader in South Carolina and reporter for the *Charleston News and Courier*, endorsed the strategy in his segregationist treatise *The Case for the South* (1960) as a useful way to offer northerners “some insight into the complexity and ramifications of the [race] problem regardless of where their sympathies lie”.<sup>11</sup> In 1959, George Shannon, editor of *The Shreveport Journal*, proposed a student exchange between integrated northern schools and segregated southern schools, replete with ample press coverage.<sup>12</sup> The MSSC’s uncritical evaluation was lapped up by white southerners inside and outside Mississippi and resulted in a number of similarly staged press junkets in other southern states. Its decision to mask its failures meant segregationists continued to mobilise this strategy and is a striking example of how internecine rivalries could restrict the acuity of segregationists’ media strategies.

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<sup>8</sup> J. Clark Samuel, of *The Foxboro Reporter*, Massachusetts, quoted in William D. Workman, Jr., *The Case for the South* (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1960), p. 71; Richard P. Lewis, managing editor of *The Journal-Transcript* of Franklin, New Hampshire, quoted in Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, pp. 108-110.

<sup>9</sup> Katagiri, *The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission*, p. 35.

<sup>10</sup> Irons, *Reconstituting Whiteness*, p. 36; Katagiri, *The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission*, pp. 15-17.

<sup>11</sup> Workman, *The Case for the South*, p. 71.

<sup>12</sup> Letter from R. W. Atkins to Shannon, 25 June 1959, Folder 31, Box 2, GS.

Not content with relying on northern newspapermen to report accurately on alleged racial harmony supposedly exhibited for them, other, perhaps more enthusiastic, apologists for segregation invited television news teams to capture on film incontrovertible proof that the “southern way of life” was one of tranquillity and equality. In 1959, John Smith, a local historian and zealous advocate for the “Lost Cause” narrative, took National Education Television (NET) producer Dirk Hartzell and his team on a tour of York, South Carolina. Throughout the trip, Smith pointed out serene, polite, and hospitable characteristics of southern towns, in contrast to “sensationalised” northern accounts of southern lawlessness.<sup>13</sup> During the 1960 schools crisis in Louisiana, Armon Duvious, a Parent Teacher Association director and leader of the resistance to integrated schools in New Orleans, drove an ABC news team to an African American neighbourhood to show them how black Louisianans did not suffer poverty and were content. “They don’t want this integration”, stated Duvious to the camera, “they want to live their own lives, just as they’re doing here”.<sup>14</sup> In 1964 and 1966, two Mississippi plantation managers insisted on introducing northern filmmakers to their black tenants. While escorting them around their tenants’ living quarters in the making of two separate films, both managers avowed they looked after the plantation workers and invited them to confirm their contentment, an invitation they accepted under unspoken duress.<sup>15</sup> The images, and attitudes of those who deemed this an effective strategy, reeked of paternalism. Despite their hopes, they exposed the abject poverty suffered by many African Americans in the South and highlighted racialised economic power (Figs. 1.1 and 1.2). There is no evidence they shifted public opinion, but it is clear these defenders of segregation appreciated the platform offered by national television cameras and sought to use it to demonstrate their steadfast belief that Jim Crow was a functional, reasonable way to organise southern society. They were convinced that if non-southerners could see for themselves they would appreciate the white South’s position and its resistance to change.

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<sup>13</sup> “The Southerner, Part One”, *Search For America* [television programme] NET, c.1959.

<sup>14</sup> “The Children Were Watching”, *Close-up* [television programme] ABC, 16 February 1961.

<sup>15</sup> John W. Reavis, *The Streets of Greenwood* (New York: New York Times Films, 1964); “Mississippi – A Self Portrait”, *NBC News* [television programme] NBC, 1 May 1966.



Fig. 1.1 – Farmer John Hughes surveys African America workers. John W. Reavis, *The Streets of Greenwood* (New York: New York Times Films, 1964).



Fig. 1.2 – Plantation manager shows television crew the home of one of his tenants. “Mississippi – A Self Portrait”, *NBC News*, NBC, 1 May 1966.

Alongside these attempts to co-opt existing channels of communication, some segregationist organisations produced their own media to counteract the lies they alleged were being spread by the national media. Segregationist newssheets, such as *The Citizens' Council* and *The Councilor Newsletter*, frequently ran stories attesting to the contentment of southern blacks and the harmony of southern race relations.<sup>16</sup> While the readership of these segregationist newspapers and newssheets was often based predominantly in the South, the editors nevertheless considered them valuable tools to shift public opinion at the national level. Certainly, the CCA's flagship publication, *The Citizens' Council*, was intended for national consumption. As William J. Simmons stated in its first issue, it was designed "to present, at least in a small way, something of the Southern viewpoint to our friends, and to some not so friendly, in the North and the West".<sup>17</sup> With the growth of the Council movement and the increasing funds this brought, the newspaper was increasingly geared towards a national audience.<sup>18</sup>

Without the means to reproduce massive numbers of publications or achieve widespread distribution, editors of smaller papers produced by less prominent resistance groups instructed southern readers to forward copies to friends and relatives in the North, East and West, effectively sub-contracting distribution of propaganda material to segregationists at the grassroots. As Fig. 1.3 illustrates, there was a genuine belief among some leaders that there was a demand for the views of the segregationist South beyond the borders of the old Confederacy. Such a strategy constituted both an attempt to reach out to non-southerners and to mobilise a southern segregationist diaspora. Frances Mims, editor of the ACCL's *The Councilor Newsletter*, for example, frequently featured advertisements instructing: "DON'T DESTROY your copy of The Councilor. Pass it along to a friend or relative". She also requested readers provide names of individuals and organisations to be added to the *Newsletter's* mailing list.<sup>19</sup> Responding proactively to Mims' instruction, Shreveport Council members used "out-of-the-South" telephone directories to distribute copies of the *Newsletter* in the North and the West.<sup>20</sup> The ACCL was so keen to make its "aims and purposes known to the rest of the United States" that

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<sup>16</sup> For example, "NAACP Sow Seeds of Hate", *TCC* (November 1958), p. 2; "What Does The North Know Of Integration?", *TCC* (November 1957), p. 4; "But The Negro Himself", *TCN* (March 1957), p. 8; "Negroes Became Leaders Under Policy of Racial Separation", *TCN* (May 1958), p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> "To All Citizens' Council Members", *TCC* (October 1955), p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> McMillen, *The Citizens' Council*, p. 138.

<sup>19</sup> Advert in *TCN* (March 1958), p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> Paul R. Davis quoted in "Shreveport Council Rendering Unique Service", *TCN* (September 1957), p. 8.

the *Newsletter* requested readers prevent duplicate mailings to the same households to maximise the amount of literature that could be sent outside the South.<sup>21</sup> Across the South, “truth by mail” campaigns were mobilised to combat the “curtain of falsehood” drawn to hide “the South’s position on segregation from the remainder of the nation”.<sup>22</sup> These mailing campaigns were a crude but essential part of a segregationist media strategy to attain northern support and maintain existing support outside the South. They demonstrate the important interplay between elite and grassroots segregationists united by their shared commitment to mobilising public opinion. They also illuminate the multiple approaches adopted by segregationists to educate and inform the nation. Rather than bring the North into the South, mailing campaigns directly exported southern opinion into northern homes.



Fig. 1.3 - “Something You Can Do”, *The Citizens’ Council* (February 1957), p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> Advert in *TCN* (May 1957), p. 2; Advert in *TCN* (May 1957), p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> Tom O’Connor, leader of the Allendale County Citizens’ Councils in South Carolina, quoted in “A ‘Truth By Mail’ Crusade Is Asked”, *TCC* (February 1957), p. 4.



These were small-scale efforts to shift opinion at the grassroots, but organisations with greater financial and administrative resources at their disposal devised more far-reaching campaigns to place segregationist accounts of the “positives” of segregated society in the hands of northern politicians, newspaper editors, and television and radio station owners. *Don't Stone Her Until You Hear Her Side* was one of the first segregationist publications designed expressly to be sent North (Fig. 1.4). Produced by the MSSC in 1956 as a parallel initiative complementing its southern press junket, it followed a simple format in which “The Facts” were posited to debunk “The Falsehood[s]” supposedly being peddled by “national circulation seekers” (Fig. 1.5). The Commission mailed 7,000 copies to “home-town newspapers and radio and television stations” outside the South to ensure “equal attention to the good that abounds in Mississippi”, anticipating recipients might spread this “truth” further.<sup>23</sup> As part of its programme to demonstrate that “for over ninety years the white and Negro people of Mississippi have lived side by side in peace and harmony”, the MSSC mobilised conservative black voices in favour of segregation, a pioneering move shunned by other segregationist groups, particularly the CCA.<sup>24</sup> MSSC leaders saw black participation in their programme as unquestionable evidence of black compliance with continued white rule.<sup>25</sup> Following a defined strategic trajectory, the MSSC developed increasingly sophisticated initiatives designed to recalibrate the nation’s understanding of segregation. In July 1960, it began a “Speakers Bureau” sending volunteer representatives, including Joseph F. Albright, an African American man from Texas, to speaking engagements at civic clubs and colleges in northern cities. A scripted address titled “Message from Mississippi” would “sell” Mississippi in a “reasonable and persuasive” way using facts and figures supposedly drawn from state government documents to show “how whites and Negroes in our State work together, plan together, and make mutual progress together under segregation”.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Don't Stone Her Until You Hear Her Side* (Jackson: MSSC, 1956). A selection of MSSC publications are held on Reel 127 (S79), RWC. Katagiri, *The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>24</sup> Governor James P. Coleman quoted in “Don't Stone Her Until You Hear Her Side”, p. 4; William J. Simmons, interview by Charles Pearce, tape, 9, 11, 23 September 1981, Mississippi Department of Archives and History (hereafter MDAH), Jackson, Mississippi. Quotation from p. 65 of transcript. Transcript available online: <http://zed.mdah.state.ms.us/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=96183> [accessed 4 July 2016]

<sup>25</sup> Irons, *Reconstituting Whiteness*, pp. 73-74

<sup>26</sup> Katagiri, *The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission*, p. 78; “The Message from Mississippi”, 1960, Folder 5, Box 9, Erle E. Johnston, Jr., Papers, Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

As well as persuading individuals in attendance, the MSSC also attempted to attract local press to propagate the message.<sup>27</sup>

## Don't Stone Her Until You Hear Her Side



## All Mississippi Asks Is Fairness and a Chance to Present Its Side of the Case

Fig. 1.4 - *Don't Stone Her Until You Hear Her Side* (Jackson: MSSC, 1956), p. 1.

### THE FALSEHOOD—

Unfounded and untrue stories which imply a state of brutality and persecution in Mississippi have created the impression that white Mississippians constantly wear guns, ever-ready to shoot a Negro on the slightest provocation.

### THE FACTS—

Official figures for the year 1954, give the lie to such insinuations. Those figures show that Negroes killed 8 whites; Negroes killed 182 Negroes; and whites killed only 6 Negroes.

### THE FALSEHOOD—

In a cover story of *TIME* magazine of September 19, 1955, Thurgood Marshall of the NAACP was allowed to state as a true story an incident supposed to have taken place while he was waiting for a train to Shreveport, La., at a "small town" railroad junction in Mississippi, saying: "I was out there on the platform, trying to look small, when this cold-eyed man with a gun on his hip comes up, 'Niggah,' he said, 'I thought you ought to know that the sun ain't never set on a live niggah in this town.' So I wrapped my constitutional rights in cellophane, tucked 'em in my hip pocket and got out of sight."

### THE FACTS—

When the veracity of this slander was challenged, Thurgood Marshall said he could not remember the name of the town in question. The facts are that there are only four railroad junctions in Mississippi where he could have caught a train to Shreveport, La.—Meridian, Newton, Jackson and Vicksburg. Even today, the white and Negro population of these towns is about evenly divided, and at the time the incident was supposed to have taken place, Negroes in Jackson and Vicksburg outnumbered the whites. Thurgood Marshall conveniently "cannot remember" the name of the town, and 2,000,000 Mississippians have never heard of such a town. *TIME* editors refused not only to retract or correct the accusation made against a state and its people, but also refused to print even a "letter to the editor" because "other letters (on the story) . . . proved more representative of the reactions and interests of most *Time* readers."

### THE FALSEHOOD—

A Negro doctor, who is but one of many of his race who have accumulated wealth in Mississippi, is currently lecturing around the nation, taking up collections for what he says are "poverty-stricken" and starving Negroes of Mississippi.

### THE FACTS—

Such ridiculous accusations are answered by facts such as, 28% of the adult Negro population of Mississippi own their own automobiles. In addition, the U. S. Bureau of Census reports that in 1950, 73,230 whites reported less than \$500 income, and 114,810 Negroes reported less than \$500 income. It is pertinent to point out in this connection that 45.4% of Mississippi population is Negro, and that in the past six years Negro income has shown a decided increase.

### THE FALSEHOOD—

There are those writers, commentators and publications that have left the impression that all Mississippi is interested in is the segregation question.

### THE FACTS—

Admittedly, Mississippi and Mississippians are determined to maintain a system of segregation which they know to be a practical necessity. However, the scope of Mississippi's present alarm embraces the entire nation, derived from the threatening danger to each and all of the 48 states. That danger lies in the obvious attempt in some quarters to supplant our democratic-republic form of government with federalization and the all-powerful completely centralized national government. Mississippi sees clearly that if the Supreme Court can usurp the power of the states on the segregation question, it can also outlaw the States' systems of levying taxes, and enforcing laws against narcotics, liquor and even traffic violations. It has already taken from local communities the control of schools, parks and intrastate travel. Today such usurpation hurts the South. Tomorrow it can hurt the North, East and West. It can hurt you. Mississippi's fight is to prevent the substitution of government by judicial fiat for the constitutional process of government by Congressional legislation based upon an awareness of the constitutional rights of the states.

Fig. 1.5 - *Don't Stone Her Until You Hear Her Side* (Jackson: MSSC, 1956), pp. 2-3.

<sup>27</sup> *A Report on the First Eighteen Months of the Public Relations Program*, SCR ID #99-139-0-1-1-1-1 to #40-1-1, SCOC.

The MSSC's most ambitious efforts towards this strategic objective came in December 1960, when it released a thirty-minute documentary film also titled *The Message from Mississippi*. Costing almost \$30,000, it had remarkably high production values having been professionally produced by the Dobbs-Maynard Advertising Company in Jackson, Mississippi.<sup>28</sup> It celebrated segregation as a positive and natural way to organise a bi-racial society and placed great emphasis on the economic, social, and cultural progress made by blacks and whites in Mississippi. It showed footage of blacks and whites working together, living harmoniously, and enjoying segregated facilities supplied by the state: swimming pools, beaches, and parks. It featured interviews with black community leaders and white officials who attested to the purported prosperity and progress achieved under segregation.<sup>29</sup> The MSSC co-opted a modern, well-respected television documentary format to repackage Old South paternalism as modern, enlightened philosophy. It was never shown on television but the 16mm film enjoyed a significant distribution. Screenings are recorded in California, Colorado Iowa, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Oregon, and Wisconsin.<sup>30</sup> Having learned from the failure of its press junket, the MSSC's artificial visual representation of life in Mississippi allowed non-southerners to "see for themselves" without the attendant risk of exposing them to the realities of Jim Crow segregation.<sup>31</sup>

### **The Segregationist South Returns Fire**

In contrast to those individuals and organisations addressing northern assessment of southern race relations directly, other strategists attempted to redirect the spotlight away from the South and towards the North. In the post-*Brown* moment, Grover C. Hall, Jr., editor of *The Montgomery Advertiser* was one of the most vocal regarding the perceived bias of northern reporters and publishers. From March through July 1956, Hall published a series of scathing editorials and news stories on racial friction in the North. Titled "Publish It Not in the Streets of Askelon", it made no attempt to cover up the tense racial situation in Montgomery. Instead, Hall described for readers northern communities

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<sup>28</sup> "Report of Special Committee on Cost of Film, 'The Mississippi Story'", SCR ID #7-0-2-93-1-1-1 to 7-1-1, SCOC.

<sup>29</sup> *Message from Mississippi*. dir. by Dobbs-Maynard Advertising Company (USA: MSSC, 1960). A copy of the film is held at MDAH.

<sup>30</sup> *A Report on the First Eighteen Months of the Public Relations Program*, SCR ID # 99-139-0-23-1-1, SCOC.

<sup>31</sup> DeCell in "No Effort Set To Sell Guests on Segregation", *Enterprise-Journal* (19 September 1956), p. 5.



ostensibly more segregated than any in the South.<sup>32</sup> Workman, similarly outraged by “sanctimonious South-baiting editors” believed Hall “returned their fire” to “devastating effect”.<sup>33</sup> Although primarily a localised counteroffensive to the “lurid headlines” of the northern press, Hall tried to persuade the Associated Press (AP) wire services and northern newspapers to pick his column. His efforts to expand the reach of his critique proved successful when *The Washington Post and Times Herald* published extracts from his AP submission late in April 1956.<sup>34</sup> Hall had spotted a viable opportunity to shift the nation’s attention away from the southern states. Other segregationist editors, including Waring, Shannon, and Joe Parham of Georgia’s *Macon News*, co-opted Hall’s strategy and collaborated on a campaign to “put the heat on” the AP wire services to provide greater coverage of racial strife in northern cities.<sup>35</sup> Where Hall succeeded, however, Waring, Shannon, and Parham’s failed, with AP repudiating their frenzied harassment. It is also likely that their close association with the massive resistance movement, in contrast to Hall’s public standing as a “moderate”, despite restricting press facilities during the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott, raised suspicions among AP executives.

Willie Rainach, who led the JLC, Louisiana’s version of the MSSC, doubled as the leader of the ACCL, and served a brief term as president of the CCA in 1956, pioneered a more successful strategy to share his narrative. He came to accept Waring’s view that “The AP and most newspapers are going to do all they can to discredit our cause. We have to use the most effective public relations techniques to overcome their bias”.<sup>36</sup> His response was to buy up advertising space in northern newspapers, an astute strategic manoeuvre which guaranteed segregationists’ message would be heard on the other side of the “paper curtain”.<sup>37</sup> This plan was set in motion in late January 1958 after a mysterious benefactor, Gordon Roberts of Roberts Dairies in Omaha, Nebraska, donated \$4,500 to the JLC to finance advertisements to share its message with the people of the North. As segregationists had long-claimed, there were conservatives in other parts of the country who shared their belief that the “truth” about segregation was not being

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<sup>32</sup> Workman, *The Case for the South*, pp. 74-80.

<sup>33</sup> Workman, *The Case for the South*, p. 74.

<sup>34</sup> Tom Johnson quoted in Workman, *The Case for the South*, p. 77; “On Racial Issue: Dixie Editor Rakes Press of North”, *WP* (22 April 1956), p. A15.

<sup>35</sup> Waring quoted in Roberts and Klibanoff, *The Race Beat*, p. 220, see also 218-220.

<sup>36</sup> Letter from Waring to Simmons, 18 October 1956, Folder 3, Box 393, TRW.

<sup>37</sup> W. M. Rainach, “Memorandum: To Association Membership and Local Council Officers”, October 1957, Folder 48, Box 5, WMR.

heard.<sup>38</sup> Moving with great speed and enthusiasm, by mid-February Rainach secured space for a full-page advertisement within the *New York Herald Tribune*, selected for its sizable readership and reputation as a high-minded, conservative publication, an essential characteristic for Rainach who sought to imbue massive resistance with a sense of respectability.<sup>39</sup> The advertisement ran on 17 February 1958 and warned “The People of New York City” racial strife would soon become daily a reality in the North due to increasing southern black migration.<sup>40</sup> Eschewing the self-celebratory tone of segregationists such as Hall or revelling in northern racial tension, the JLC offered segregation as a solution for the entire nation. Rainach advocated its benefits as a social system he believed the South had perfected through “years of experiment and experience in adjusting to a bi-racial society”.<sup>41</sup> As he explained to James C. Thomas, a member of New York’s State Assembly, “experience has taught the South that the only peaceable solution for a society composed of more than one race is an arrangement of friendly separateness”.<sup>42</sup> He believed segregation was “a saleable product for which the North has a terrific demand”.<sup>43</sup>

The advertisement was a strategic masterstroke. Written “calmly and dispassionately” it indicted northern racism and celebrated segregation simultaneously, presenting the case for segregation attractively, succinctly and persuasively.<sup>44</sup> Paid advertising proved a most effective tool by which to place segregationist opinion before a wider public. Responses to the advertisement from different interest groups confirm its effectiveness. Thousands of letters from readers in New York City flooded the offices of the *New York Herald Tribune* and the JLC. Analysis of the content of this

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<sup>38</sup> Rainach, “NY Herald Tribune Ad Chronology”, Handwritten Note, n. d., Folder 94, Box 9, WMR. Roberts requested that Rainach and the JLC refrain from disclosing any information concerning his contribution. No other information on Roberts exists. Letter from Rainach to George Shannon, 7 February 1958, Folder 107, Box 11, WMR.

<sup>39</sup> “NY Herald Tribune Ad Chronology”; Sam Roberts, “Recalling a ‘Writer’s Paper’ as a Name Fades”, *NYT* (6 March 2013); Richard Kluger states that the *New York Herald Tribune* competed with *The New York Times* in the daily morning market in, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), p. 8.

<sup>40</sup> “To The People of New York City: The Position of the South on Race Relations”, *New York Herald Tribune* (17 February 1958), p. 8.

<sup>41</sup> “To The People of New York City”.

<sup>42</sup> Letter from Rainach to James C. Thomas, 19 March 1958, Folder 115, Box 12, WMR.

<sup>43</sup> “South’s Position on Race Relations Told in New York by Legislative Committee”, *TCN* (March 1958), p. 5; “Pres. Rainach Reports on Washington”, *TCN* (March 1958), pp. 1-2. This statement appears in a range of letters sent to correspondents in response to the advertisement. See for example: Letter from Rainach to C. C. Batcheller, Jr., 28 April 1958, Folder 36, Box 3, WMR.

<sup>44</sup> Press clipping, “The South Must Tell Its Story Everywhere”, *The Shreveport Times* (21 February 1958), n. p., Folder 504, Box 49, WMR.

correspondence corroborates Rainach's claim that the "favourable response has been astonishing", with those in support of the South's position "running better than four and one-half to one".<sup>45</sup> The issue in which Rainach's advertisement appeared "was bought off the newsstands as fast as it reached them", editors stated, recognising a tangible demand for the "southern viewpoint".<sup>46</sup> As a result of the popularity of the JLC's bitesize treatise, and, perhaps, eyeing the profits that could be made by encouraging this strategy, New York dailies, including the *Daily News* and *New York World-Telegram*, and national publications, such as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The New Republic*, approached Rainach and JLC officials offering space to republish the advertisement. Each expressed a commitment to providing "full news coverage".<sup>47</sup> Segregationists across the South were enraptured by Rainach's innovative strategy, including Simmons of the CCA, T. V. Williams, Jr., of the GCE, and Stanley F. Morse of the Grass Roots League, Inc. (Fig. 1.6). They vowed to use paid advertisements as part of their initiatives to mobilise public opinion and offered Rainach support in continued promotion, with a view to collaborating on future projects.<sup>48</sup> Donald M. Ewing of *The Shreveport Times* was unequivocal: "the South's story on race relations and philosophies needs to be told in a hundred such full page advertisements in a thousand daily newspapers of the nation". Calling for a coordinated southwide campaign, Ewing urged segregationist leaders to abandon arguments relating to states' rights, constitutional government, or the apparent "socialistic" leanings of the Supreme Court and embrace exclusively that made in the JLC's advertisement. "If segregation is to be retained", he wrote, "it will have to be done because the American people *as a whole* understand the need for it and are willing to have

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<sup>45</sup> Letter from Rainach to National Economic Council, Inc., ATTN: Mrs. C. G. Dall, 18 March 1958, Folder 94, Box 9, WMR. Numerous letters and telegrams from readers in the North praising the advertisement are held in Boxes 3-10 of WMR. For example: Telegram from Daniel Gibbons to JLC, 18 February 1958, Folder 63, Box 6; Letter from Joseph Di Clerico, Jr., 18 February 1958, Folder 51, Box 5. Frank LoPresto of Jackson Heights, New York, found the advertisement "most heartening and refreshing". Letter from Frank LoPresto to Rainach, 18 February 1958, Folder 86, Box 8.

<sup>46</sup> Letter from Rainach to Robert B. Patterson, 3 April 1958, Folder 97, Box 10, WMR.

<sup>47</sup> Quotation from Letter from Frank P. McGowan (*The Wall Street Journal*) to Leander Perez, 20 February 1958, Folder 98, Box 10, WMR; Letter from Rainach to George H. Keim (*The New York Times*), 24 February 1958, Folder 79, Box 8, WMR; Letter from Ruth K. Franklin (*The New Republic*) to Rainach, 7 January 1958, Folder 94, Box 9, WMR; Letter from Wylie Stewart (*New York World-Telegram and Sun*) to Rainach, 19 February 1958, Folder 112, Box 11, WMR; Telegram from Rainach to John Bell Williams, 19 February 1957, Folder 123, Box 12, WMR.

<sup>48</sup> Letter from Simmons to Rainach, 24 February 1958, Folder 48, Box 5, WMR; Letter from Morse to Rainach, 26 April 1958, Folder 93, Box 9, WMR; E. E. Keister (*Northern Virginia Daily*), 12 March 1958, Folder 107, Box 11, WMR; Letter from Roy V. Harris to T. V. Williams, Jr., 25 March 1958, Misc. Correspondence Sub-Folder, Georgia Folder, Box RCB-35186, GCEP. "Louisiana Report: New York Ad Scores", *TCC* (March 1958), p. 3.

it”.<sup>49</sup> Just over one month later, Rainach began working towards such an end with Robert B. Patterson and the CCA.<sup>50</sup>

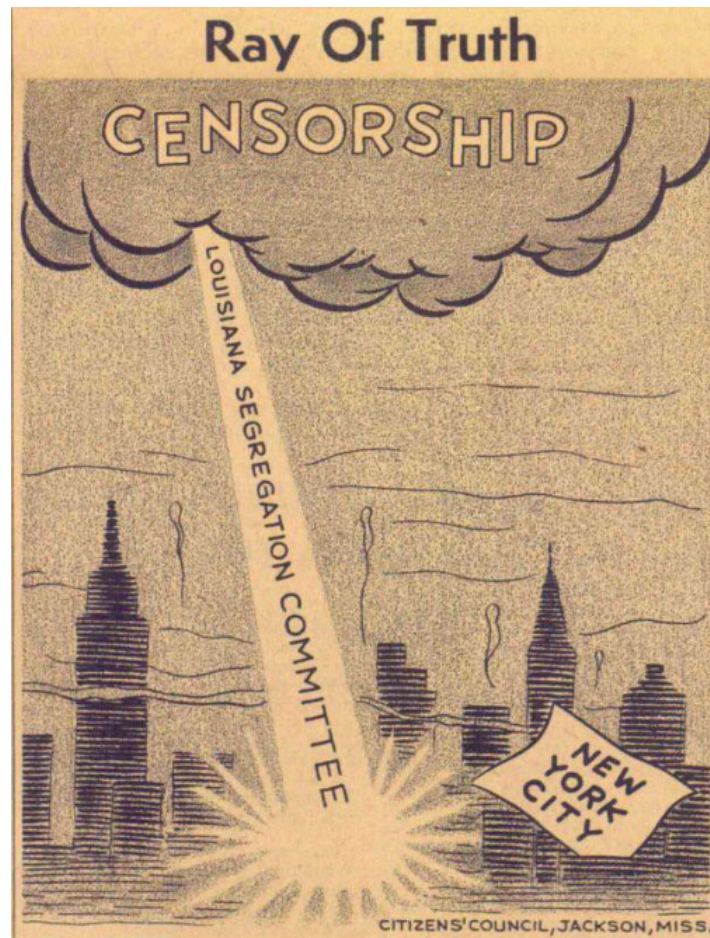


Fig. 1.6 – “Ray Of Truth”, *The Citizens’ Council* (March 1958), p. 1.

The NAACP and the African American press were deeply alarmed by the attention the advertisement was receiving and the implications of Rainach’s innovation in the battle over public opinion. The day after the advertisement was published, Roy Wilkins, Executive Secretary of the NAACP, issued an urgent memorandum to all NAACP members across the country instructing them to bombard editors of the *New York Herald Tribune* with letters refuting the statements made by the JLC, in the hope that the newspaper might publish them.<sup>51</sup> Wilkins enclosed a copy of the advertisement and a four-page itemised template for the letters containing “answers to the arguments

<sup>49</sup> “The South Must Tell Its Story Everywhere”.

<sup>50</sup> Letter from Rainach to Patterson, 3 April 1958.

<sup>51</sup> Letter from Wilkins to Fellow NAACP Worker, 18 February 1958, Folder 001471-009-0179, Group III, Series A, Administrative File: General Office File – Reprisals, Papers of the NAACP, Part 20: White Resistance and Reprisals, 1956-1965, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

presented... which may serve as a source for your remarks". It was a carefully orchestrated operation, with Wilkins advising workers to use one or two points from the template and to keep their responses below 300 words because the *Tribune* "seldom publishes long letters".<sup>52</sup> Branches of the NAACP issued sharp statements of disapproval to the *New York Herald Tribune* and African American newspapers provided a supportive volley of terse rejoinders.<sup>53</sup> Given that civil rights groups rarely responded to segregationist propaganda, this rapid response indicates the advertisement was considered a significant threat and serves as another sign of the JLC's strategic success. Fearing a more expansive, long-term campaign to buy up space in national newspapers and anxious about the potential impact on public opinion, civil rights leaders from the NAACP, the ACLU, and the SRC met in New York in February 1959 to map out how to meet such a threat. Without recourse to prevent the publication of segregationist advertisements outright, testament to Rainach's ingenuity, civil rights organisations pledged to maintain a high level of vigilance and to "write dissenting letters to the editors analysing the misstatements and errors" whenever propaganda appeared. Members were instructed to demand editors "include editorials rebutting the segregation thesis advanced in the ads, or at least run news articles... quoting opponents of segregation".<sup>54</sup> Rainach had stolen a march on civil rights groups, forcing them into a reactive, defensive mode, sending a shockwave rippling through the civil rights movement. In a retrospective piece written some months later, *The New Republic*, a liberal, northern periodical, spotlighted Rainach's advertisement as one of the opening shots in a "second battle of Gettysburg", a "well-organised and well-financed [battle]... behind enemy lines... to be fought with the techniques of psychological warfare, aimed at the public outside the South". It was, Helen Fuller explained, evidence of a significant shift in the "strategy of 'massive

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<sup>52</sup> Letter from Wilkins to Fellow NAACP Worker; "Reply to Advertisement of the Joint Legislative Committee, State of Louisiana, Published in The New York *Herald Tribune*, February 17, 1958" attached to Letter from Wilkins to Fellow NAACP Worker.

<sup>53</sup> For example: Letter from Samuel A. Browne (President of the Staten Island Branch of the NAACP) to the editor of the N. Y. *Herald Tribune*, 20 February 1958, Folder 94, Box 9, WMR; "Dixie Launches Bias Propaganda Drive in North, Wilkins Charges", *Arkansas State Press* (28 February 1958), p. 4; "Dixie Launches Bias Propaganda Drive in North, Wilkins Charges", *Plain Dealer* (28 February 1958), p. 7; "Dixie Bias Drive Bared by NAACP", *Los Angeles Tribune* (28 February 1958), p. 8.

<sup>54</sup> "Minutes of the Last Meeting: Integration Leaders Work Busily to Influence Public Opinion", *The Richmond News Leader* (29 February 1959), p. 12, the minutes were "Distributed as a public service by the Association of Citizens' Councils, Greenwood, Mississippi". See also, <http://digifindingaids.cjh.org/?pID=1311337> [accessed 25 April 2018]

resistance' from defence to attack".<sup>55</sup> Indeed, following Rainach's success, paid advertising would become an important weapon in the massive resistance public relations arsenal.<sup>56</sup>

To complement the JLC's newspaper advertisement, the ACCL's monthly newsmagazine engaged in a concerted campaign at national and local levels to demonstrate the presence of racial conflict in the North. It was designed to indoctrinate readers in the sanctity of segregation by presenting alleged lawlessness in northern cities as the result of integration. Mims, Rainach's secretary as well as editor of *The Councilor Newsletter*, adopted a more graphic, lurid editorial line to that deployed in the JLC's advertisement, publishing a steady stream of sensationalised reports covering the most dramatic incidents of violent crime committed by black men in northern cities. Playing on worn stereotypes of the black male as a violent rapist advanced during the Reconstruction era, reinforced by *Birth of a Nation* (1915), and revived and perpetuated in the post-*Brown* era, Mims warned of African American gangs robbing, attacking, raping, and terrorising innocent white citizens in New York City and Washington D.C.<sup>57</sup> Framing the breakdown of law and order as a result of integration, *The Councilor Newsletter* situated segregation as a the remedy for cities plagued with violence.<sup>58</sup> Mims published testimonies from sympathetic non-southerners and flagged literature emanating from the North that was supportive of Council ideology, in an effort to legitimise the assertion that segregation was not a regional anachronism.<sup>59</sup> These testimonies demonstrated

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<sup>55</sup> Helen Fuller, "Southerners and Schools – III: The Segregationists Go North", *The New Republic* (26 January 1959), p. 10. The JLC's advertisement was also republished in this issue. "Advertisement: To The People of New York City", *The New Republic* (26 January 1959), p. 11.

<sup>56</sup> The paid advertisement was used by other segregationist groups such as the Putnam Letters Committee (Alabama), the Mothers of School Children (Louisiana), and the CCFAF (Washington, D. C.). For example, "Distinguished New Englander Discusses High Court's Decision on Public Schools", Display Ad 18, NYT (5 January 1959), p. 19; Letter from Rainach to L. P. Davis, 18 September 1961, Folder 165, Box 16, WMR; "\$100 Billion Blackjack", *WP* (9 March 1964), p. A13.

<sup>57</sup> "Wall Street Journal: 'Rising Negro Influx Stirs New Trouble...'", *TCN* (April 1958), p. 7; "New York City Teacher 'Can't Tell Much About Integration'", *TCN* (July 1958), p. 6; "But Race Not Involved! They Use Novel Weapons When There's a 'Minor Disturbance' in New York!", *TCN* (December 1958), p. 4; "Integrationist Papers Report On a 'Darkening Washington'", *TCN* (May 1959), p. 2; "Washington, D.C. – A Haven For Integrationist Hoodlums", *TCN* (February 1958), pp. 4-6. For more on the white southern myth of African American men as rapists, Cash, *The Mind of the South*, p. 119; Deborah E. Barker, *Reconstructing Violence: The Southern Rape Complex in Film and Literature* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2015).

<sup>58</sup> Other segregationist publications, such as *TCC* and the *Charleston News and Courier*, published similar stories. However, they lacked the consistent editorial drive of *TCN*. For example: "North Rejects Mixed Housing; Drop In Property Values Seen", *TCC* (July 1958), p. 1; "More New York Trouble", Orangeburg, South Carolina, *Times and Democrat* reprinted in *TCC* (August 1958), p. 2; "Big City Press Conceals Facts in Racial Violence", Charleston, South Carolina, *News and Courier* reprinted in *TCC* (February 1956), p. 1.

<sup>59</sup> Positive responses from general readers outside the South made up a preponderance of the content included in the publication's regularly published "Bouquets and Brickbats" feature. Rather than printing the musings of her fellow Louisianans, Mims favoured the plaudits, funding pledges, and subscription requests of Americans

segregation could be marketable as a national product, encouraged local and southern readers to send the *Newsletter* North, and reassured readers segregation was not as taboo as northern media suggested. By stating that integration led to anarchic violence and representing segregation as a harbinger of nationwide racial harmony, segregationists advanced massive resistance as a patriotic movement to preserve peace in the United States.

Just over a year after the success of the JLC's advertisement, however, Rainach shifted his focus away from national public opinion to concentrate on his 1960 gubernatorial bid. Although he worked with resisters in Mississippi and Georgia to produce a series of three advertisements that were published in *The Arkansas Democrat* in support of white resisters fighting to preserve segregation in Little Rock, his plan for a unified, large-scale advertising campaign never came to fruition.<sup>60</sup> Tearsheets of the advertisement continued to circulate throughout the South, but without Rainach to lead, the rhetorical strategy he championed fell out of favour with other media strategists who turned to a range of different arguments.<sup>61</sup> After his failed run for Governor, Rainach faded into the background, occasionally sharing ideas with contemporaries but never pioneering new strategic ventures. Rainach, then, is indicative of how political exigencies and competing strategic priorities could stifle efforts to mobilise public opinion. Historians are left to wonder whether the battle over public opinion may have played out differently had he remained in the fold.

Spokesmen for segregation on national television avoided some of the more graphic, sensationalist, and apocalyptic stories of racial conflict published in Council newspapers. Senator Herman Talmadge evaded issues facing his own state of Georgia by pointing critics to "several hundred thousand Puerto Ricans who are disenfranchised in New York State". Far from castigating such laws, Talmadge acknowledged the presence of similar laws in Georgia and advocated them as an effective means to prevent "lunatics and idiots and imbeciles and convicted felons" from voting, positing a broader

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from places such as: Kansas, Ohio, Washington, New York, Washington, D.C., New York City, and Oregon. See for example: "Bouquets and Brickbats", *TCN* (January 1958), p. 6; "Bouquets and Brickbats", *TCN* (June 1958), p. 7.

<sup>60</sup> Rainach, Memorandum: Little Rock Vote Against School Integration, 10 October 1958, Box 13, Folder 127, WMR; "Louisiana's Salute To A Brave People", *The Arkansas Democrat* (24 September 1958), n.p.; "To The Parents and Citizens of Little Rock", *The Arkansas Democrat* (25 September 1958), n.p.; "A Message to the People of Little Rock From the People of Georgia", *The Arkansas Democrat* (26 September 1958), n.p.

<sup>61</sup> Fuller, "The Segregationists Go North", p. 10

conservative appeal which suggested voting was a privilege to be earned.<sup>62</sup> If segregationists could avoid discussing racial inequality in their own publications, national news reporters did not tolerate evasive remarks and challenged them directly. In this way, segregationists used northern racial troubles to dodge and reframe questions concerning the inherent inequality and violence built into Jim Crow segregation.

In his 1963 appearance on *Meet The Press*, George Wallace also counselled against the use of federal troops in the upcoming desegregation crisis at the University of Alabama, pointing out they had not been called to quell incidents outside the Deep South. “No troops were sent”, exclaimed Wallace, when “485 people were hurt in Washington in the twinkling of an eye at one football game... [or] when 5,000 stoned the policemen [in Illinois]”. Like Talmadge, Wallace sought opportunities to expose what he considered northern hypocrisy by redirecting the discussion. In a stark manifestation of arguments advanced by Rainach and Ewing, Wallace arraigned the apparent lawlessness of “integrated” northern cities explicitly when lamenting, “you can’t even walk in Central Park at night without fear of being raped or mugged or shot”.<sup>63</sup> Without referring to race explicitly, like the ACCL’s *Newsletter*, Wallace plugged into pernicious stereotypes of black men. Unlike Council publications, however, Wallace’s thinly veiled statement eschewed explicit reference to race and highlights how segregationists often altered their rhetoric between media platform, especially when attempting to navigate the inauspicious arena of national television news. Reluctant to give credence to Wallace’s equivocation, caught off guard, or unwilling to have questions derailed by irrelevant remarks, reporters on *Meet The Press* declined to challenge Wallace’s allusions to northern hypocrisy, which risked tacitly endorsing his provocative statements. As a general rule, white southern politicians were not expected to comment on the state of race relations in the rest of the nation by broadcasters. Therefore, much like Rainach with the paid advertisement, they were forced to carve out their own space and hijacked television interviews to put forth their agenda, with Wallace representative of a wider trend.

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<sup>62</sup> “Senator Herman E. Talmadge, Democrat, Georgia”, *Meet The Press* [television programme] NBC, 6 March 1960.

<sup>63</sup> “The Honourable George Wallace”, 2 June 1963.



## The “Virtues” of Segregation and the “Horrors” of Black Rule Outside the United States

As well as presenting segregation as a productive way to organise a bi-racial society, another tactic in this broader strategy extolled the virtues of white-rule in southern Africa. Scholarship considering massive resisters’ engagement with white southern Africa during the 1950s and 1960s has only just begun to emerge and has tended to focus on segregationists’ efforts to forge international white unity.<sup>64</sup> The following analysis shifts the focus away from segregationists’ “foreign policy” and considers instead how they also used positive accounts white-rule in southern Africa to bolster their claims that segregation was the only viable way maintain peace, order, and progress in the US South.

No other group pursued this strategy as resolutely as the Citizens’ Councils. While *The Citizens’ Council* newspaper established and maintained support for white regimes in Africa from its very first issue, celebration of white minority regimes was most pronounced in the mid-1960s on the *Citizens’ Council Forum*, the CCA’s television and radio programme.<sup>65</sup> In 1962, for example, Mississippi Congressman John Bell Williams and Dr. Robert Gayre, a racial scientist and Professor of Anthropology, explained and applauded the apparent successes of Apartheid, hailing the policy of “Separate Development” as a triumph for the South African government. Gayre even claimed “thousands of negroes from other parts of Africa” were entering South Africa “to enjoy the high standard of living and facilities”. He berated the “English speaking press” for failing to present a fair analysis of Apartheid which Williams likened to a “lack of objective reporting of incidents which occur in the South”.<sup>66</sup> Throughout the fifteen-minute broadcast, the social system of Jim Crow segregation was linked to Apartheid directly. By skipping over arrant inequalities in South Africa and highlighting the alleged stability, contentment, and prosperity produced by the separation of the races, the programme endorsed the continuation of segregation in the US South. The *Forum* also offered white South Africans an “impartial” platform to explain the reality of racial

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<sup>64</sup> For example, Noer, “Segregationists and the World”, pp. 160-162; Hyman, “American Segregationist Ideology”, in particular, pp. 108-156; Geary and Sutton, “Resisting the Wind of Change”, pp. 265-282; Rolph, “The Citizens’ Council and Africa”, pp. 617-650. These studies build on earlier works on the relationship between the two regimes. For example, Frederickson, *White Supremacy*; Ann Seidman, “Apartheid and the U.S. South”, in Sidney J. Lemelle and Robin D. G. Kelley (eds), *Imagining Home: Class, Culture and Nationalism in the African Diaspora* (London: Verso, 1994), pp. 209-221.

<sup>65</sup> “The Myth of ‘World Opinion’”, *TCC* (October 1955), p. 2; “UN Delegate Urges Gifts For The NAACP”, *TCC* (October 1955), p. 4; S. E. D. Brown, “From South Africa”, *TCC* (October 1955), p. 4.

<sup>66</sup> John Bell Williams and Robert Gayre, “South Africa and an anthropological study of the black man”, 1962, *CCF*, Reel #026, CCF.

separation and white rule, a platform the Councils contended was being withheld by American newspapers, radio, and television. Representative from Mississippi Arthur Winstead played host to Reverend D. F. B. De Beer, the Public Morals Secretary of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa who alleged the “facts have been slanted”, arguing ardently that the situation in South Africa was stable. Referring to black South Africans as “Bantu”, De Beer declared that they had held festivities to thank the government “for education, for hospitalisation, and for the right of self-government” and cited Separate Development as a policy with which “they are perfectly satisfied”.<sup>67</sup> This paternalism mirrored that of plantation owners and managers who claimed African Americans in the segregated South were content. Black South Africans, like black southerners in the US, he argued, were content with white rule. The Councils promoted the practice of racial separation in South Africa to argue segregation was not an anachronism but a universally viable way to govern societies made up of different races.

After issuing a Unilateral Declaration of Independence in November 1965, Rhodesia also drew considerable attention from the *Forum*. William Simmons travelled to Rhodesia in 1966 as part of a press junket through southern Africa and interviewed Ian Smith, the new Prime Minister. A special edition *Forum* opened with a short documentary introduction to Rhodesia, detailing the apparent success of white-rule and the satisfaction supposedly felt by both races as a result. Simmons took the reins from the show’s usual anchor Dick Morphew. His questions prompted Smith to explain he could not understand why heavy sanctions had been placed on Rhodesia by Britain and the US, considering its stability and prosperity.<sup>68</sup> He portrayed himself as ignorant of racial strife, alleged the government was made up of blacks and whites, and claimed the country was functioning effectively. The *Forum* recast white-led African nations in a positive light as propaganda for the “virtues” of preserving segregation in the southern states. Rhodesia and South Africa were presented as templates that the US could learn from. The key lesson the *Forum* promoted was that organised, deliberate, and strict racial separation was the foundation stone of a bi-racial society.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Arthur Winstead & D. F. B. De Beer, “The policy of Apartheid in South Africa and the Americans’ misconceptions about Apartheid”, 1962, CCF, Reel #077, CCF.

<sup>68</sup> For an in-depth analysis of US involvement in Rhodesia, Gerald Horne, *From the Barrel of a Gun: The United States and the War Against Zimbabwe* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

<sup>69</sup> William J. Simmons and Ian Smith, “How Rhodesia are handling their race problems”, 1966, CCF, Reel #020, CCF.

To reinforce the endorsement of white rule in southern Africa, the stability of white-led nations was contrasted with the apparent instability of black nations. The “horrors” of black rule became a prominent defence of segregation in the wake of the Sharpeville Massacre in South Africa in 1960 and crisis in the Congo in 1960-61.<sup>70</sup> Carleton Putnam, racial pseudo-scientist and favourite of the Councils, proclaimed on the *Forum*, “we have had experience with Negro governments now in many places, in Haiti, throughout central Africa, and invariably they have been a catastrophic disaster”.<sup>71</sup> He pointed to violence and turmoil in emerging African nations as evidence of the inability of blacks to govern without white supervision. He presented this as an argument against legislating for African American equality or political representation. Editorializing on the inadequacies of black rule, segregationists also attempted to undermine civil rights organisations linking their struggle to the decolonisation movements and to negate activist appeals to the US government to end segregation to build relationships and alliances with new non-white nations.<sup>72</sup>

Mississippi Congressman Jamie Whitten asserted “all these Congolese nations, new nations as some folks call them”, were actually “mostly tribes”.<sup>73</sup> Fellow Mississippi Congressman John Bell Williams expounded a similar view that emerging nations in Africa and Asia were merely “tribes” because “they are not educated, they are barbaric, uncivilised and they just haven’t reached the point where they are able to govern themselves”.<sup>74</sup> Both Congressmen claimed the UN was a “racist organisation” because it supported “coloured races where they have come into conflict with the white races, no matter whether the coloured race was right or wrong in its position”. Whitten specifically offered the example of the UN intervention to prevent the secession of the province of Katanga from the Congo. Katanga was a region rich in natural resources including copper, gold, and uranium, and was backed by white Belgian business elites, white Rhodesians, and white South Africans seeking to establish another white-led nation in

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<sup>70</sup> Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*, pp. 126-128; John Kent, *America, the UN and Decolonisation: Cold War Conflict in the Congo* (New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 32-59.

<sup>71</sup> Carleton Putnam, “The situation in Rhodesia”, 1965, CCF, Reel #068, CCFF.

<sup>72</sup> For more on the ways in which African Americans linked their struggle to decolonisation movements, Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*, pp. 3-5; Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, p. 6; James Mayall, *Africa: The Cold War and After* (London: Harper Collins, 1971), p. 77; James H. Cone, “Martin Luther King Jr. and the Third World”, *Journal of American History*, Vol. 74, No. 2 (1987), pp. 455-467; Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and US Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

<sup>73</sup> Jamie Whitten, “The federal government’s expenditures”, 1962, CCF, Reel #109B, CCFF.

<sup>74</sup> John Bell Williams, “The United Nations”, 1962, CCF, Reel #090, CCFF.

southern Africa. Whitten cited the intervention as an unnecessary attempt to bring a relatively stable region back into a nation rife with turmoil, and claimed there was a trend of “striking out stability wherever we find it”.<sup>75</sup> Whitten and Williams indicted the supposed volatility of black-rule and defended the reliability of white-rule, arguing the UN, like the federal government, was forcing change tyrannically. They held up black violence in formerly colonised nations as a warning for the South and the US, should the civil rights movement succeed.

Where the *Forum* attempted to strike a tone characteristic of highbrow conservative political programmes like *Meet The Press*, *The Citizens’ Council* newspaper adopted the same lurid tenor in its critique of new black nations that it had used to discuss racial strife in northern cities. Its discussion of new African nations bordered on hysterical, presenting black Africans as foolish savages and claiming that “witchcraft and cannibalism were still practiced” (Fig. 1.7).<sup>76</sup> Articles warned readers “wild disorder and chaos” prevailed and black rule caused civilisation to crumble in an avalanche of rape and murder.<sup>77</sup> Like the *Forum*, *The Citizens’ Council* drew a direct line between movements for independence in Africa and the civil rights movement at home, by applying the same racist caricatures to African Americans. In a striking example, *The Citizens’ Council* distorted NAACP field secretary Medger Evers’ admiration of Jomo Kenyatta, a Kenyan anti-colonial activist the Councils claimed masterminded the violent Mau Mau Uprising in Kenya against British rule. The Councils’ propaganda piece stated that Evers, in his activism on behalf of the NAACP, dreamed “of an American ‘Mau Mau’ band, roaming the Delta in search of blood... and extracting an ‘eye for an eye’ from whites”.<sup>78</sup> Above the article, a cartoon (Fig. 1.8) warned readers that “The Mau Maus Are Coming!” Other cartoons lampooned African American attempts to attain public office as the misguided efforts of illiterate, violent, uncivilised tribesmen (Fig. 1.9). They claimed an end to segregation would lead to the same black-on-white violence the Councils claimed prevailed in new black-led African nations.

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<sup>75</sup> Whitten, “The federal government’s expenditures”; Williams, “The United Nations”. For a detailed account of the Congo crisis see: Kent, *America, the UN and Decolonisation*.

<sup>76</sup> “Lesson From The Congo”, *TCC* (July 1960), p. 1. See also, “Wonder Whatever Became Of ‘Soapy’ Williams” (Cartoon), *TCC* (December 1960), p. 4; “Western Nations Undermine White Influence In Africa”, *TCC* (December 1960), p. 4.

<sup>77</sup> “The Natives Are Restless!”, *TCC* (December 1960), p. 4.

<sup>78</sup> “Nuf Said?”, *TCC* (November 1958), p. 1.



Fig. 1.7 – “Black Supremacy”, *The Citizens' Council* (July 1960), p. 2.



Fig. 1.8 – “The Mau Maus Are Coming!”, *The Citizens' Council* (November 1958), p. 1.



Fig. 1.9 – “Mau Mau Party – Mississippi Headquarters”, *The Citizens' Council* (December 1958), p. 4.



In thematic concert, the newspaper labelled integrated schools “Blackboard Jungles” with black “savages” stalking the corridors, terrorising white students and teachers alike and drew on the same depraved imagery used to portray black African men fighting colonial rule.<sup>79</sup> The Mau Mau Puerto Rican street gang Simmons claimed was operating in New York, fitted almost too perfectly. Simmons reeled in horror as he relayed how a non-white street gang, supposedly inspired by the Mau Mau uprising, was unleashing violence and terror in integrated New York City.<sup>80</sup> For the Councils, there was a seamless connection between the violence perpetrated by black Africans in newly decolonised African states and the claim that cities in the North were crime-ridden because they were governed by liberal politicians who welcomed integration. Black rebellion was, in this formulation, the only possible result when strict racial separation and white rule were struck down.

Both the Councils’ newspaper and the *Forum* used distorted accounts of white rule and decolonisation in Africa to justify the continuation of segregation in the US South and advocate for the implementation of segregation in other sections of the country. However, they took on sharply divergent journalistic registers and were directed at different audiences, which suggests a multifaceted media strategy. At the same time, this reveals the sometimes confused or contradictory attempts to win public support devised by segregationists. Boorish images and descriptions published in *The Citizens’ Council* did not fit the respectable, middle-class image the Citizens’ Councils sought to embody. It is no surprise, then, that the most tactless representations were quickly removed from the Councils’ printed content when the newspaper was replaced with a glossy, upmarket monthly magazine late in 1961. The Councils’ media strategy ebbed and flowed and became more refined as they endeavoured to attain broad, national support.

### **The Reverse Freedom Rides: A Practical Attempt to Refute and Retaliate**

In May 1962, George Singelmann of the CCGNO designed perhaps the most deplorable tactic mobilised in the context of segregationists’ attempts to expose northern hypocrisy and the presence of systemic discrimination outside South. Aware that massive resistance was foundering in Louisiana, due to the relatively successful integration of schools in

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<sup>79</sup> “A Rip In The ‘Paper Curtain’ --- Savages Stalk Corridors Of Northern ‘Blackboard Jungles’”, *TCC* (November 1960), p. 4.

<sup>80</sup> “Race Violence Erupts Anew In New York As ‘Mau Mau’ Gang Kills Brooklyn Boy; Negro Athlete’s Son Charged In ‘Rumble’”, *TCC* (February 1959), p. 4.

New Orleans in 1960, Rainach's hiatus from the massive resistance movement, and the bitter factionalism within Louisiana's Citizens' Councils that followed, Singelmann pioneered a new scheme that he hoped would reinvigorate white resistance in his home state.<sup>81</sup> Singelmann followed on from the core strategy of the ACCL, now reformed as the CCL, intent on revealing the racial inequality and strife that plagued northern cities.

Referred to as "Reverse Freedom Rides" or "Freedom Rides North", Singelmann's plan involved sending southern blacks to northern cities, specifically those where politicians were vocally critical of segregation. In a truly multimedia campaign, using press advertisements, handbills, and broadcasts, Singelmann appealed to "the Negro population who feel oppressed and desire the complete freedom offered by the northern and eastern states", pledging free transportation and five dollars for expenses to any African American person or family willing to take the trip.<sup>82</sup> The promotional material churned out by the CCL promised they would find employment, housing, and unlimited welfare benefit payments on their arrival in northern cities and assured them that they would be welcomed with open arms and provided for handsomely.<sup>83</sup> Of course, these promises were fabrications designed to deceive impoverished and desperate African Americans into being pawns in the Councils' perverse scheme. Singelmann's plan rested on his belief that northern cities would be unable or unwilling to provide the Reverse Freedom Riders with the support they needed. By attracting media coverage, Singelmann hoped reporters would document the lack of assistance offered to these southern refugees and expose northern support for desegregation as duplicitous. "We are telling the North to put up or shut up", he announced to the press.<sup>84</sup>

Although historians have highlighted the array of objectives attached to the Freedom Rides North, they have not fully considered the initiative's significance in the public relations battle between segregationists and civil rights advocates.<sup>85</sup> Singelmann

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<sup>81</sup> Massive splits in the Louisiana Citizens' Council movement occurred in 1962 when disagreements over the prevalence of anti-Semitism within the upper echelons of the Association of Citizens' Councils of Louisiana, the statewide Council organisation, came to a head. McMillen, *The Citizens' Council*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>82</sup> Quotation from "Freedom Bus (to points North and East)" handbill produced by the Gentilly Citizens' Council of New Orleans, Folder 23: Correspondence and working papers Urban League of Greater New Orleans and Citizens' Council of New Orleans, Box 1, RFR.

<sup>83</sup> "Information For Those Who Wish To Got To New York" handbill, Folder 23: Correspondence and working papers Urban League of Greater New Orleans and Citizens' Council of New Orleans, Box 1, RFR.

<sup>84</sup> Singelmann quoted in *Newsweek* (7 May 1962), p. 30.

<sup>85</sup> See, for example: Clive Webb, "'A Cheap Trafficking in Human Misery': The Reverse Freedom Rides of 1962", *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (2004), pp. 249-271; Rosemary Pearce, "The Reverse Freedom Rides: 'a diabolical, inhuman game of revenge'", Unpublished paper presented at the 2014 BAAS Postgraduate Conference: "Protest in America", University of Sussex (15 November, 2014).

devised the Reverse Freedom Rides expressly to gain ground in the contest over American hearts and minds. In his words, they were “strictly a promotional venture” designed to attain “publicity” for the massive resistance movement.<sup>86</sup> He had witnessed the media frenzy surrounding the Freedom Rides in the summer of 1961 and sought to take advantage of it for his own cause. With a background in journalism and media, he engineered the Freedom Rides North expertly to ensure they would be well-covered by the national press. Reflecting on the campaign in 1973, Singelmann explained that he “selected the destinations on the basis of where I thought it would do the greatest amount of good to expose the hypocrisy of the community”.<sup>87</sup> Indeed, in an audacious attempt to test the Kennedy administration’s commitment to civil rights, he sent a cohort of southern blacks to the Kennedy family’s summer vacation destination Hyannis Port, Massachusetts.<sup>88</sup> Through careful planning, Singelmann was successful in achieving the substantial media attention he desired.<sup>89</sup>

Singelmann ran a tight operation, coaching his campaign workers to ensure they would not reveal the true purpose of the Rides. When interviewed by the press, those whites involved in masterminding the campaigns carefully framed their efforts as motivated by a Christian desire to help those in need. As well as providing the Reverse Freedom Rides with a positive public relations sheen, such charitable benevolence chimed with the Councils’ desire to be seen as an organisation genuinely concerned with the integrity and vitality of both whites and blacks.<sup>90</sup> One passionate Mississippian wrote to *Life* magazine to defend Singelmann for his “generous” programme to send southern blacks North “upon a voluntary basis and at the expense of the council”. Incensed by what he deemed to be the double-standards of the “left-wing northern press”, he moaned that national media reacted with “elation” at the Freedom Rides South but decried the Freedom Rides North as “trafficking in human misery”.<sup>91</sup> Singelmann also carefully crafted the campaign to make certain it did not contravene any federal laws. Despite

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<sup>86</sup> Oral History Interview with George Singelmann, 1973, Folder 24: Interview transcripts, 1962-1963, Box 1, RFR.

<sup>87</sup> Oral History Interview with George Singelmann (1973).

<sup>88</sup> “Guthridge Finds Taker For Trip to Kennedyland”, press clipping, 11 May 1962, Folder 2: Miscellaneous clippings, 1962 May 1 - May 15, Box 1, RFR.

<sup>89</sup> The impressive collection of news clippings held as part of RFR indicate the remarkable amount of attention the Rides generated.

<sup>90</sup> McMillen, *The Citizens’ Council*, pp. 231-232.

<sup>91</sup> W. Dixon Dossett, “Letters to the Editors”, *Life* (25 May 1962), p. 23. In another letter to the editors, an angry reader from Syracuse, New York, wrote the following: “Today and everyday is hate George Singelmann day”. Bobbi Maydeck, “Letters to the Editors”, *Life* (25 May 1962), p. 23.



appeals from local authorities and civil rights organisations, the federal government did not intervene, claiming its hands were tied. While condemning the Councils' actions as "deplorable", the Kennedy administration conceded that "so long as coercion is not employed, there is no violation of law".<sup>92</sup> The Reverse Freedom Rides, then, were a carefully choreographed practical media strategy demonstrative of the media savvy of some segregationists. Singelmann and his associates transposed the strategy of taking the South northwards, both literally and figuratively, onto the strategy of shifting the media's gaze away from the South with expert precision.

The Reverse Freedom Rides, and the media coverage they acquired, successfully sustained the segregationist argument that the race problem was a national issue, not a regional concern unique to the South. Northern city officials and politicians were forced to acknowledge openly, in front of the national press, that they did not have sufficient resources or adequate job opportunities to provide for incoming southern black migrants.<sup>93</sup> Despite widespread condemnation by both northern and southern media outlets, the CCA endorsed the strategy as an effective way to challenge mainstream media's skewed portrayal of the "South's time-tested and history-proven custom of racial separation", a representation that they claimed "has regrettably led to... sectional division in our nation".<sup>94</sup> The CCA instructed local and state organisations to implement their own Freedom Rides North and instructed them to target "those areas whose press and public officials advocate so-called 'civil rights'".<sup>95</sup> Soon after the resolution, Councils in Arkansas, Mississippi, Georgia, and Alabama, began to send African Americans North.<sup>96</sup> Testament to the popularity of the Freedom Rides North among supporters of segregation, Singelmann recalled that "when the programme began to accelerate, money came from every state in the United States" to fund its continuation.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> See frames 395-423, Reel 3, Part 1: The White House Central Files and Staff Files and the President's Office Files, Civil Rights During the Kennedy Administration, 1961-1963 (Microfilm), Roosevelt Institute for American Studies, Middelburg, Netherlands.

<sup>93</sup> For example: "Two Negro 'Riders' From N.H. Jailed In Mass. On Vagrancy", press clipping, Folder 4, Box 1, RFR; "Local Job Opportunities Questioned", press clipping, Folder 4, Box 1, RFR; "'Free Rides' Miss First Goal But Do Stir Big Controversy", press clipping, Folder 3, Box 1, RFR; "North Not Like He Thought: Negro Is Unhappy Up North So Returns To Sunny Dixie", press clipping, Folder 10, Box 1, RFR.

<sup>94</sup> McMillen notes that such "callous disregard for human dignity brought condemnation from major newspapers across the South". McMillen, *The Citizens' Council*, p. 232. For example, "'Freedom Rides' North Hit In WDSU Editorial", press clipping, Folder 2, Box 1, RFR; "The Klan Rides Again", press clipping, Folder 2 Box 1, RFR. Quotations from "Resolutions Adopted At Meeting Of Citizens' Councils of America In New Orleans, May 19, 1962", *TC* (May 1962), p. 4.

<sup>95</sup> "Resolutions Adopted At Meeting Of Citizens' Councils of America In New Orleans, May 19, 1962".

<sup>96</sup> See press clippings in Folders 5, 7, 10, 13 and 14 of RFR.

<sup>97</sup> Oral History Interview with George Singelmann (1973).

Broad segregationist support for and application of Singelmann's inventive scheme is indicative of a number of important aspects of segregationist media strategy. First, it highlights the interplay between the grassroots and the elite. Singelmann and the CCGNO impacted the regional organisation's centrally mandated media strategy directly, which, in turn, influenced local Councils throughout the South to do the same. This confirms that there was some regional cooperation among segregationists and demonstrates that the CCA had some authority in defining a regionwide media strategy. Indeed, CCA leaders were so impressed with Singelmann that they appointed him as the regional coordinator to oversee the transportation of southern blacks to the hometowns of prominent liberal northern politicians in time for Christmas 1962.<sup>98</sup> Second, whilst the birth of the Reverse Freedom Rides reflected the increasing impetuosity of Louisiana's massive resistance, the widespread adoption of the strategy establishes the continued importance segregationists placed on exposing northern hypocrisy. The strategy of shifting the focus away from the South and towards the North was central to segregationists' efforts to harness mass media as the 1960s progressed. It enabled them to nationalise their cause and frame massive resistance as something of national importance.

Whether the Reverse Freedom Rides were the most effective way to reframe massive resistance is up for debate. It is certain, however, that the Councils placed great faith in them. Rainach, slowly re-entering the fray, expressed his approval: "Nothing has so caught the imagination of the nation... For the first time we are on the offensive".<sup>99</sup> In an address at the CCA's Leadership Conference on 26 October 1963, its Director of Public Relations, Dick Morpew referred to the Reverse Freedom Rides as a "master stroke". He celebrated them as the opening shot in "Operation Information", a nationwide Citizens' Council public relations programme designed to "carry our story to the American people – to give the people the facts". "The tide has turned during the past several months", declared Morpew, applauding the apparent success of Operation Information and the Freedom Rides North, "national opinion has undergone an about-face and... we are now on the road to victory". Like Rainach, Morpew saw the Reverse Freedom Rides as the first step in a new, more potent, offensive phase of massive resistance that would take the fight beyond the South effectively. For Morpew, and

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<sup>98</sup> McMillen, *The Citizens' Council*, p. 233.

<sup>99</sup> Rainach quoted in McMillen, *The Citizens' Council*, pp. 232-233.

segregationists across the South, the Freedom Rides North were a success because they offered resolute proof that northern leaders “didn’t want any new ‘first-class’ Negro citizens” and “reflected the growing sentiment against integration which was developing rapidly in the North”. Morpew concluded: “The ‘reverse freedom rides’ showed what we’ve maintained all along – that the overwhelming majority of the American people prefer not to integrate!”<sup>100</sup> Although Singelmann’s scheme was short lived, dying out by the end of 1962, it made a significant impact on the trajectory of massive resistance and segregationist media strategy, contrary to the conclusions of previous studies.<sup>101</sup>

### **The Tide Begins to Turn**

As the 1960s progressed, segregationists’ wishes began to be realised insofar as the media scrutiny placed upon the southern states began to turn northwards. Growing activism and unrest in the rest of the country and increasing introspection forced broadcasters and journalists to acknowledge civil rights were a national issue. This shift in coverage was particularly evident in network television programming. As the television market grew, so did the competition for viewers between the national networks, ABC, CBS, and NBC, with television executives coming under increasing pressure to produce content that spoke to all sections of the nation. Indeed, the continued expansion of profits within the industry depended on television producers delivering the larger share of national audiences to advertisers. In order to continue to meet the expectations of advertisers, national network news programmes and reporters forged an unspoken alliance with the civil rights movement; they shared a “common cause”. The networks gradually, and sometimes unevenly, moved towards defining and establishing a new national consensus on race through their largely sympathetic coverage of the civil rights movement, which would allow them to achieve a more ideologically unified audience and, in turn, would permit them to satisfy the demands of advertisers more effectively.<sup>102</sup> For this consensus to be truly national, the networks could not focus solely on southern race relations, especially given the shifting political landscape and the growing nationwide appreciation of the racial inequality that abounded throughout the entire United States. The civil rights

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<sup>100</sup> Richard D. Morpew, “Operation Information”, *TC* (January 1964), pp. 18-19.

<sup>101</sup> McMillen considers the initiative a total failure, for example. McMillen, *The Citizens’ Council*, p. 233.

<sup>102</sup> Watson, *The Expanding Vista*, pp. 91-111; MacDonald, *Blacks and White TV*, p. 91. Outside of news coverage, the national networks were reluctant to create popular entertainment programmes which depicted images of a changing nation. Monteith, *American Culture in the 1960s*, pp. 30-31

movement was television news' first major on-going domestic story and the racial issues facing northern communities provided the next chapter in this saga.<sup>103</sup> The extent of racial strife in the North demanded the national networks expand their horizons in order to maintain the authenticity and integrity of television news' most integral internal narrative.

The unprecedented three-hour television report produced by NBC on the African American struggle for equality, titled *The American Revolution of '63*, was a watershed moment in televisual reporting on the civil rights movement. The lengthy documentary signalled its intentions from the outset, opening with the host, Frank McGee, silhouetted in front of a large map of the United States (Fig. 1.10). NBC presented the "revolution" for African American equality as nationally significant and emphasised that it was taking place throughout the country. As well as covering the flash points of the southern movement, *The American Revolution of '63* examined demonstrations in Cambridge, Maryland, and Torrance, California; protests for equal employment rights in New Jersey; segregated housing in Hillsborough, Ohio, Rochelle, New York, Englewood, New Jersey, and Los Angeles, California; unrest in Harlem, New York, and Chicago; and the continued prevalence of discrimination from Cedar Rapids, Iowa to Reedpoint, Montana. Dr. Wendell Cotton, an African American orthodontist living in Los Angeles who was interviewed for the film stated, "Where you don't expect these things to occur, they still do. This, unfortunately, is a part of the American scene". Most strikingly, McGee acknowledged openly that the North is "often guilty of assuming moral authority over the South because the North allows the Negro his public benefits, but when the Negro attempts private advancement, the self-righteousness of the North is frequently exposed". Madison Avenue had engaged in some introspection of its own and deigned to acknowledge the national reality of the issues at hand concerning the "American Negro".<sup>104</sup>

Following *The American Revolution of '63* the national networks rolled out a range of shows, such as "The Harlem Temper", "Eye on New York: The Inter-racial Marriage", "Metropolis – Creator or Destroyer? The Run from Race", and "Segregation, Northern Style", which exposed the painful realities of *de facto* segregation in northern

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<sup>103</sup> Harry Ashmore referred to the civil rights movement as the "first great national story". Ashmore quoted in Richard H. King, *Civil Rights and the Idea of Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 208.

<sup>104</sup> *The American Revolution of '63*.

housing and employment, the stark levels of racism that prevailed outside the South, and revealed many white northerners held opinions on the civil rights movement that were startlingly similar to southern segregationists.<sup>105</sup> In a heated discussion with Mike Wallace, Harry A. Wilson Jr., the President of the New Jersey Association of Real Estate Boards, defended the rights of property owners to sell to whomever they pleased. Advocating freedom of choice, he stated plainly that white property owners had the right to refuse to sell to blacks. As though channelling a southern segregationist, Wilson explained: “We feel that the rights attendant to private property are the very foundation of our nation and we don’t think they should be tampered with”.<sup>106</sup> Not only did this reveal unequivocally that segregationists had ideological allies in the North, it exposed what white resisters had claimed all along: racism prevailed throughout the United States, not just the South.



Fig. 1.10 – Opening studio shot from *The American Revolution of '63*, NBC, 2 September 1963.

<sup>105</sup> “The Harlem Temper”, *CBS Reports* [television programme] CBS, 11 December 1963; *Eye on New York: The Inter-racial Marriage* [television programme] CBS, 3 March 1964; *Metropolis – Creator or Destroyer? The Run from Race* [television programme] NET, 8 March 1964; “Segregation, Northern Style”, *CBS Reports* [television programme] CBS, 9 December 1964; *All America Wants to Know: Negroes are Moving Up the Job Ladder* [television programme] broadcaster unknown, 1963.

<sup>106</sup> “Segregation, Northern Style”.

The real turning point came when “race riots” began to erupt in the mid-1960s in cities outside the South. The mainstream media could not ignore violent unrest in Harlem, Los Angeles, Newark, Philadelphia, Rochester, or Detroit. The media’s gaze was wrenched away from the South to rioting and looting in places that were ostensibly friendlier to African Americans. Segregationists considered themselves vindicated and offered self-righteous analyses of the troubling events. The riots captured the essence of the segregationist media strategy explored in this chapter: integration and acquiescence to the demands of civil rights activists only resulted in violence and volatility, segregation, on the other hand, preserved law and order and retained stability in an uncertain Cold War world. Segregationists no longer had to rely on their own constrained communications channels to display northern racial problems; the nationally circulated newspapers and the national networks were doing it for them.

Dick Morphey and his guests on the *Citizens’ Council Forum* struggled to mask their self-satisfaction as they discussed how “recent news accounts, which have filled the airwaves and the mass media, dealing with the crisis in race relations have been centred not in the South, but in various areas of the North”.<sup>107</sup> Noting the possible surprise of their audience, segregationist spokesmen waxed lyrical about their long-standing awareness of the far greater “racial agitation and discord and dissention and trouble between the races in the North” and their knowledge that “the day would come when those who had accused us would find that their troubles were more severe”.<sup>108</sup> Although Morphey and the *Forum* ostensibly took the high ground by stating that “we are not sitting here in judgment on other parts of the country”, he and his guests made it very clear that they believed the blame laid squarely at the feet of northern liberals who supported racial change.<sup>109</sup> According to Strom Thurmond, Senator from South Carolina, the racial unrest in places such as New York and Los Angeles was the result of a willful and thoughtless embrace of civil rights legislation. Joe D. Waggoner, Representative from Louisiana, concurred and indicted non-southern politicians who encouraged, explicitly or implicitly, civil rights protesters to disobey laws that they deemed morally wrong. By giving in to “lawbreakers”, these politicians had, they argued, created a political

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<sup>107</sup> Dick Morphey quoted in Strom Thurmond, “Race conflicts in the North & communist infiltration of the race movement”, 1964, CCF, Reel #085, CCFF; Joe D. Waggoner, “The Watts riots in Los Angeles and the question of obeying the law (Part Two)”, 1965, CCF, Reel #80, CCFF.

<sup>108</sup> Thurmond, “Race conflicts in the North”.

<sup>109</sup> Morphey quoted in Waggoner, “The Watts riots in Los Angeles (Part Two)”.

environment in which such tragedy could occur. “The chickens have come home to roost”, smirked Waggonner.<sup>110</sup> Segregationists argued that the riots sweeping the United States provided solid proof that legislating for equality only bred further discontent and, as such, advocated the repeal of the Civil Rights Bill of 1964 for the good of national security. Thurmond declared confidently that civil rights laws “will not cure this trouble”, while Morphew vowed that the riots were a “warning of what could happen unless the American people wake up to the situation”.<sup>111</sup>

The South, on the other hand, was held up as setting “a national pattern for good race relations”.<sup>112</sup> Quoting the conservative *U.S. News & World Report* magazine, Morphew relayed to his audience that a great many politicians in Washington, D.C., were starting to realise that the South’s defiant and obstructive approach to the civil rights movement might have been warranted and, ultimately, the correct course to take. Segregationists appearing on the *Forum* maintained that the lack of concurrent disturbances in the South verified the existence of “peace and harmony” between the races in the southern states and demonstrated the viability of “the southern way of life”.<sup>113</sup> Acknowledging civil rights activity that occurred in the South before 1965, both Thurmond and Waggonner blamed outside agitators from the North who had been conditioned by “communistic” politicians who had given in to the demands of civil rights activists in their own localities. These agitators had returned to wreak havoc in their own northern communities, leaving behind a peaceful and tranquil South where a deep “understanding... between the white man and the Negro” endured.<sup>114</sup> Echoing the statements made by the MSSC in 1956 and the JLC in 1958, Morphew explained that the South’s “years of experience in this field” ensured it avoided such turmoil and stated that the nation could learn from the example set.<sup>115</sup> For them, the racial turmoil outside the South being exposed by national news media at long last confirmed their repeated claims that the South had far less racial trouble than the rest of the country.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Joe D. Waggonner, “The Watts riots in Los Angeles and other race motivated riots throughout the country”, 1965, CCF, Reel #113, CCFF.

<sup>111</sup> Thurmond, “Race conflicts in the North”; Morphew quoted in Waggonner, “The Watts riots in Los Angeles (Part Two)”.

<sup>112</sup> Morphew quoted in Waggonner, “The Watts riots in Los Angeles and the question of obeying the law (Part Two)”.

<sup>113</sup> Morphew quoted in Thurmond, “Race conflicts in the North”.

<sup>114</sup> Waggonner, “The Watts riots in Los Angeles (Part Two)”. Thurmond, “Race conflicts in the North”.

<sup>115</sup> Morphew quoted in Waggonner, “The Watts riots in Los Angeles (Part Two)”.

<sup>116</sup> Waggonner, “The Watts riots in Los Angeles (Part Two)”.

As network television's attention migrated from the South, sympathy towards the more radical wings of the civil rights movement and demands for economic justice began to evaporate and by mid-decade the alliance between the movement and the media all but collapsed.<sup>117</sup> Indeed, the use of the word "revolution" in the title of the special 1963 NBC civil rights documentary, and the documentary's negative editorialising against more radical activists who, it was alleged, were prepared to resort to violence, signalled the beginning of NBC's growing feeling that some elements of the civil rights movement had become too radical.<sup>118</sup> Jacquelyn Dowd Hall argues that the eventual shift in coverage resulted in a "narrative breach" that severed "the movement" from the unrest in northern and western cities and the ongoing struggles of the late-1960s and 1970s.<sup>119</sup> This divergence was starkly apparent in mainstream television's hostile reaction to the mid-decade urban riots. The 1965 *CBS Reports* documentary "Watts – Riot or Revolt?" conveyed shock and horror at the racial unrest and struggled to square inner city racial troubles with the southern movement championed by television news reporters throughout the first half of the decade.<sup>120</sup> Whilst acknowledging the economic, educational, and social inequality faced by black communities living in Los Angeles, the programme portrayed aggrieved individuals in these communities in a distinctly negative way. African Americans involved in the unrest were depicted as violent thugs, devoid of any higher political cause. They were portrayed as having no respect for law enforcement and no desire to work with authorities, despite pleas from local and national black leaders to end the violence. Bill Stout, the show's presenter, denounced the riots as a "criminal attack" and resolved bleakly: "the mobs hated authority, but more generally, they hated all whites". The philosophy of non-violence and Christian love was notably absent in Watts. The documentary reported that the overwhelming majority of white Americans believed that African Americans had gone too far in this new wave of direct protest, an opinion echoed by Louisianan segregationist Joe Waggoner during his appearance on the *Citizens' Council Forum*.<sup>121</sup> Angry, violent African Americans who embraced militancy

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<sup>117</sup> Bond, "The Media and the Movement", pp. 34-35.

<sup>118</sup> *The American Revolution of '63*.

<sup>119</sup> Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement", p. 1263.

<sup>120</sup> Reverend Brookens, an African American member of the Watts community, expressed his shock at the behaviour of the LA police, stating that their attitude was one he would expect from Sheriff Jim Clark in Alabama. "Watts – Riot or Revolt?", *CBS Reports* [television programme] CBS, 7 December 1965.

<sup>121</sup> "Watts – Riot or Revolt?"; Waggoner, "The Watts riots in Los Angeles (Part Two)".



and Black Power had replaced southern segregationists as the villains in this new emerging media narrative.

Simultaneously, national networks began to accommodate some of the more articulate segregationists more readily, presenting them as reasonable, conservative, dissenting voices. Throughout the early 1960s James J. Kilpatrick, a committed segregationist and editor of *The Richmond News Leader*, had worked to carve out a space for himself within mainstream media. In a 1963 broadcast concerning the civil rights demonstrations in Birmingham, for example, Kilpatrick calmly and unemotionally critiqued protesters' tactics as too militant and divisive, a critique that the show's host endorsed as a being indicative of discussions occurring among white people across America.<sup>122</sup> By the mid-1960s he had become a relatively established TV personality and national spokesman for conservatism, skilfully presenting himself as the voice of reason in times of increasing uncertainty and perceived black militancy. In particular, Kilpatrick thrived on national television when given the opportunity to interview advocates of Black Power. With carefully veiled remarks, he baited spokesmen for Black Power into angry and bitter responses, which he knew would confirm white America's worst fears.<sup>123</sup> After provoking an angry outburst from Stokely Carmichael on *Meet The Press* in 1966 he wrote to the producer to express how well he thought the show had gone and remarked sardonically that if enough exposure was just given to Carmichael, "they'll draft [Barry] Goldwater in '68".<sup>124</sup> Kilpatrick used his position to fan the flames of growing public dissent towards the civil rights movement and to establish in the minds of white America that further reform would only result in more unrest. Racial conservatism had begun to embed itself firmly within mainstream US media.

With attention no longer focused on the South, a new media narrative gained airtime and national legitimacy. It appeared to some segregationists that the "Paper Curtain" had been well and truly torn down. Although the Civil Rights Act and the

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<sup>122</sup> "Breakthrough in Birmingham", *Eyewitness* [television programme] CBS, 10 May 1963. Kilpatrick also became a regular panellist on NBC's *Meet The Press*, often offering questions to segregationist guests that allowed them to widen the discourse beyond segregation and race. For example, Kilpatrick's questioning of Senator Richard Russell on *Meet The Press* in August 1963. After a barrage of questions on the civil rights bill, directed by other members of the press, Kilpatrick steps in to question Russell on "the area of the treaty with Russia". "Senator Richard B. Russell, Democrat of Georgia", *Meet The Press* [television programme] NBC, 11 August 1963.

<sup>123</sup> For example, "Civil Rights: Carmichael, Stokely; King, Martin Luther, Jr.; McKissick, Floyd B.; Meredith, James H.; Wilkins, Roy; and Young, Whitney M.", *Meet The Press* [television programme] NBC, 21 August, 1966.

<sup>124</sup> Kilpatrick to Betty Coles, 22 August, 1966, Folder "Aug. 21, Civil rights: Carmichael, Stokely; King, Martin Luther, Jr.; McKissick, Floyd B.; Meredith, James H.; Wilkins, Roy; and Young, Whitney M.", Box 225, Program Transcripts and Related Material, 1945-1983, "Meet the Press" File, 1945-1994, LES.

Voting Rights Act had been passed successfully, public support for progressive racial change had begun to dissipate. A growing distrust and resentment would result in widespread support for massive rollbacks of civil rights legislation in the 1970s.

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Rejecting and repudiating northern media reports of the South, segregation, and massive resistance was a core media strategy adopted by segregationists to win broad public support between 1954 and 1965. Advocates for racial separation across the South understood that massive resistance could not be successful in the courts and in Congress alone. They realised that attaining favourable public opinion was essential if they were to hold back racial change in the South and the nation. The generally hostile stance taken by mass media in the United States towards massive resistance, then, posed a serious threat to segregationists' public relations campaigns and necessitated a determined and multifaceted response from the segregationist South. As this chapter has shown, segregationists adopted a range of rhetorical and practical tactics, which were designed to appeal to audiences in the South and in the rest of the nation to reconfigure the public perception of segregation, recontextualise massive resistance, and expose a double standard in reporting.

In 1964, historian and contemporary observer James W. Silver described Mississippi as a “monolithic”, “closed society” which withdrew further into itself when faced with external challenges, an assessment which has been applied to many of the southern states.<sup>125</sup> This analysis of segregationists' manifold responses to, what they considered to be, the unfair and biased coverage in the media proves otherwise. White southern resisters invited northern reporters to the South to exhibit the “virtues” of segregation and quotidian harmony it purportedly generated. They produced an impressive amount of their own media and distributed it throughout the nation. Through effective manoeuvring they also attained a platform on existing national media outlets to share the supposed benefits of segregation, expose racial strife and inequality in the North, and to market segregation a solution to the nation's “race problem”. Indeed, the ways in which resisters engaged with and exploited events and issues in areas outside the

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<sup>125</sup> Silver, *Mississippi: The Closed Society*, p. 6.

South and the rest of the world demonstrates the breadth and range of this tranche of segregationist propaganda strategy. Massive resistance was not simply a movement made up of guileless, parochial rednecks. There was sophisticated thought behind some of the strategies deployed that highlights the resourcefulness of some media strategists. The development of the strategies employed to dispute and counter northern reporting only further exemplifies the pragmatism of some segregationists.

At its core, the broad strategy explored in this chapter was necessarily quite reactionary, despite some proactive approaches. Oftentimes, pointing a finger back at the North only served to further emphasise the myopia of the segregationist South to the severe inequality that existed throughout the southern states. Nevertheless, the almost universal contempt towards nationally circulated northern media outlets felt by segregationists formed the foundation stone of some effective examples of their attempts to harness mass media. The following chapters will uncover and unpack some of the more proactive media strategies implemented by segregationists and drill down into themes touched on in this chapter: the wide variety of media strategies and tactics used by segregationists, different approaches employed to address particular audiences, disagreement over which strategies were most effective, attempts to achieve inter- and intra-state cooperation between segregationist groups and figureheads, the interplay and disconnects between the elite and grassroots, and the ignorance evident in some segregationists' approach towards mass media.

## Chapter 2 – “The American Viewpoint with a Southern Accent”: Masking Race and Broadening the Appeal of Massive Resistance

In a fiery editorial printed in *The Richmond News Leader* on 29 November 1955, James J. Kilpatrick declared “Interposition, Now!”. A spirited call to arms, Kilpatrick urged legislators in Virginia and across the South to resurrect and mobilise the “age-old right” of interposition to resist the Supreme Court’s *Brown* rulings, which, he warned, represented a “deliberate, palpable, and dangerous encroachment of the Federal Government upon the mandatory rights of the States”.<sup>1</sup> This legislative strategy originated in the writings of James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, and John C. Calhoun, a detail made clear by the Virginian editor in a series of editorials he published in the week preceding his declaration. It rested on the principle of “states’ rights” enshrined in the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution, which granted certain powers to the federal government while retaining all other powers in the states.<sup>2</sup> Since the provision of public education was not a power delegated to the federal government, Kilpatrick argued, the *Brown* decision was illegal and fundamentally unconstitutional and should be rejected. The South had a “sacred duty” to rally against the Court’s “attempt... to pervert the Constitution” by defending “the sovereignty of States” and upholding the “high ideals of this Union”, Kilpatrick declared. “This is our heritage. This is our tradition.”<sup>3</sup>

The response to Kilpatrick’s rallying cry was pyretic. Virginia passed a “Resolution of Interposition” on 1 February 1956, with legislatures in seven other southern states following suit soon after. In March 1956, 101 southern US congressmen reinforced the states’ defiance by adopting the language of interposition in a passionate denunciation of *Brown* as an affront to constitutional order: the “Southern Manifesto”.<sup>4</sup> Rooted in America’s political past and consecrated by Confederates deified in the Lost Cause narrative, southern legislators were captivated by interposition and, after searching

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<sup>1</sup> James J. Kilpatrick, “Interposition, Now!”, *The Richmond News Leader* (29 November 1955), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> “Fundamental Principles, I: Kentucky, Virginia Asserted Sovereignty in Famed Resolves of 1798-99”, *The Richmond News Leader* (21 November 1955), p. 3; “Fundamental Principles, II: Madison Warned Against Usurpation of Power by Federal Judiciary”, *The Richmond News Leader* (22 November 1955), p. 3; “Fundamental Principles, III: ‘Interposition’ Is Basic Rights of Sovereign States, John Calhoun Believed”, *The Richmond News Leader* (23 November 1955), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Kilpatrick, “Interposition, Now!”. Kilpatrick’s interposition editorials continued into February 1956.

<sup>4</sup> Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance*, pp. 116-117.

for almost a year after *Brown*, were convinced they had finally found a forceful legislative retort to the Supreme Court. However, lawmakers enamoured of Kilpatrick's proposal for legal and, more importantly, peaceful defiance, failed to realise its flimsiness. The doctrine of interposition was legally unsustainable, with each state's interposition laws struck down as quickly as they were enacted.<sup>5</sup> As a legal strategy, therefore, interposition was short-lived and ineffective. As a rhetorical strategy, however, it had strength and potential, having a lasting legacy in segregationist resistance to *Brown* and the civil rights movement.

Kilpatrick spearheaded and established a purportedly "race-free" language of resistance. Centring the debate on states' rights afforded his ideas broader application and enabled segregationists to re-define their cause as a defence of the sacredness of the Constitution. "Elevating this controversy from the regional field of segregation to the transcendent national field of State sovereignty", Kilpatrick wrote, would create "a tactical advantage" in the battle over public opinion at the national level. He reasoned that conservatives more broadly would rally behind the South's defence of constitutional government if issues of race were removed. The "transcendent issue", he argued, "surpasses any questions of racial segregation".<sup>6</sup> For Kilpatrick, it was the only way to win widespread support for massive resistance outside the South. Unlike segregationists discussed in Chapter 1, he feared northerners and westerners could not be persuaded of the professed efficacy or benefits of racial segregation. In a further sign of the very different tactical approaches that existed within massive resistance, rather than confronting the prevailing narrative in the national media, he advanced a strategy to subvert the issue of segregation and reframe the media narrative. Other segregationists who shared Kilpatrick's sentiments were impressed by his "race-free" approach. This chapter examines strategists who, following Kilpatrick's interposition campaign, marshalled states' rights and constitutional arguments in a range of media strategies.

Historians writing in closer proximity to massive resistance were quick to dismiss the interposition strategy as a "transparent and cynical subterfuge" and "little more than the anachronistic refashioning of old arguments". They wrote off Kilpatrick's blueprint for resistance as a hasty, ill-conceived product of hysterical extremism.<sup>7</sup> As the temporal

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<sup>5</sup> Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance*, pp. 126-150.

<sup>6</sup> Kilpatrick, "Interposition, Now!".

<sup>7</sup> For example: Ely, *The Crisis of Conservative Virginia*, pp. 332-333; Gates, *The Making of Massive Resistance*, pp. 104-108; Muse, *Virginia's Massive Resistance*, pp. 19-25; Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance*, pp. 126-130.

distance between scholars and the civil rights movement increased there has been an important revision in understanding Kilpatrick's intent. Joseph J. Thorndike and William Hustwit argue he was aware of the legal frailty of interposition and did not envisage it as a realistic, long-term legal solution but a "rhetorical device", a public relations tool which could be mobilised to minimise "fissures within the South" and serve as the "rallying cry of a solid south" to win non-southern support for massive resistance.<sup>8</sup> They assert Kilpatrick's interposition campaign "laid the intellectual groundwork" for an important aspect of "the South's intransigence to the Court".<sup>9</sup> Scholars have begun to trace the legacy of Kilpatrick's ideas and demonstrate that a range of segregationists placed "the language of the Constitution" at the centre of campaigns to build alliances with northern conservatives.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, it was in the realm of northern public opinion that Kilpatrick envisaged his strategy having greatest importance, believing that the battle over segregation could only be won "with help from other areas of the country". The South "spend entirely too much time convincing one another of the rightness and justness of our cause", he explained, "the whole States' rights movement needs... to win friends and influence people in New England, the upper midwest, the Southwest, and the Pacific Coast states".<sup>11</sup> Other segregationists also saw a willing constituency outside the South and, encouraged by conservative leaders such as William F. Buckley and Henry Regnery who openly expressed their support for the segregationist South's position on states' rights, sought to unite conservatives on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line.<sup>12</sup>

In particular, scholars have identified the VaCCG, the CCFAF, and the CCA as being especially active in attempting to shift public opinion outside the South by using "colour-blind" constitutional arguments.<sup>13</sup> However, they have not examined their media strategies in detail or comparatively. This has led to a tendency to overemphasise similarities, which flattens the heterogeneity of their strategies and obscures the ingenuity and idiosyncrasies of each groups' efforts.<sup>14</sup> All three groups adopted "race-free" rhetoric

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<sup>8</sup> Thorndike, "The Sometimes Sordid Level", pp. 56-57, 61. Hustwit, *James J. Kilpatrick*, p. 59.

<sup>9</sup> William P. Hustwit, "From Caste to Color Blindness: James J. Kilpatrick's Segregationist Semantics", *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 77, No. 3 (August 2011), p. 648; Thorndike, "The Sometimes Sordid Level", p. 63.

<sup>10</sup> Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, pp. 124, 120; MacLean, "Neo-Confederacy Versus The New Deal", pp. 308-329; Crespino, *In Search of Another Country*, pp. 93-100.

<sup>11</sup> Kilpatrick quoted in Thorndike, "The Sometimes Sordid Level", pp. 63-64.

<sup>12</sup> MacLean, "Neo-Confederacy Versus The New Deal", pp. 312-314.

<sup>13</sup> Lewis, "Virginia's Northern Strategy", pp. 111-146; Crespino, *In Search of Another Country*, pp. 91-100; Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, pp. 177-; Hustwit, *James J. Kilpatrick*, pp. 123-133; Rolph, *Resisting Equality*, pp. 5, 82.

<sup>14</sup> George Lewis, for example, states "The similarities between the Coordinating Committee and the CCG were stark". Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, p. 177.

in campaigns but the ways in which they mobilised states' rights arguments were markedly different. Through in-depth, comparative analysis of each groups' media strategies, this chapter spotlights how strategists operated, exposes and explores competing visions of effective media strategy, and uncovers a remarkable breadth of attempts to intervene in public debates over segregation. In doing so, it highlights the serious public relations battle over American hearts and minds, an important new dimension to historical understanding of massive resistance and the civil rights movement. Adopting a broad regional approach by drawing on case studies from both Border and Deep South states, it investigates why organisations chose differing strategies and the strengths and weaknesses of their approaches. It analyses how states' rights and constitutional arguments were presented using different media forms, the variation in tone, rhetoric, and visual imagery. More broadly, it demonstrates how even rigorous campaigns could be undermined by less disciplined segregationists advancing a similar approach and the ideological problems that ensued when strategies were based on the doctrines of states' rights and individual liberty. It therefore complicates homogenous understandings of nationally-minded "race free" strategies which prevail in massive resistance historiography.<sup>15</sup> In 1957, Kilpatrick lamented that the segregationist South had "yet to find any method of merchandising that seems to get the story across".<sup>16</sup> In the years that followed, segregationist groups across the South piloted a range of solutions to his dilemma.

### **"This is not the argument of disgruntled Southerners": The VaCCG and an Academic Approach**

Established in March 1958 by Governor J. Lindsay Almond, Jr., the VaCCG was "directed to develop and promulgate information concerning the dual system of government, federal and state, established under the Constitution of the United States and those of the several states".<sup>17</sup> David Mays, a close friend of Almond and former head of the Virginia Bar Association, was selected to lead the organisation for his knowledge of and respect for constitutional law and restrained approach to resistance.<sup>18</sup> As the

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<sup>15</sup> For example, Chappell, "The Divided Mind", pp. 52-55.

<sup>16</sup> Kilpatrick quoted in Thorndike, "The Sometimes Sordid Level", p. 63.

<sup>17</sup> Almond quoted in "Almond Assails Supreme Court In S. C. Speech", *The Progress-Index* (2 May 1958), p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Mays, for example, wrote in his diary: "Nothing but defiance in the end will get us nowhere". Mays quoted in Lewis, "Virginia's Northern Strategy", p. 119.

Commission's chief of publications and his personal right-hand man, Mays appointed Kilpatrick because he admired his cutting prose and respected his intelligent and determined stance on states' rights.<sup>19</sup> In agreement that public attention on "social problems" had obscured the "towering question of constitutional government... [which] transcends the immediate and personal issues of particular children in particular schools", Mays and Kilpatrick determined the VaCCG would be "broad in scope, not merely another tool in the school fight".<sup>20</sup> They resolved to appeal primarily to non-southerners and to use only robust legal and constitutional arguments free from any notion of race or sectionalism. Educating northerners on the "truth" of the Tenth Amendment would be "like plowing fresh clay", Kilpatrick quipped, convinced they were entirely ignorant of the purported constitutional crisis facing the nation and confident that if informed they would line up behind massive resistance. Mays and Kilpatrick embarked on a campaign "to educate the great world outside [the South] in a few fundamental truths about the Constitution".<sup>21</sup>

Scholars of massive resistance have noted the VaCCG's rigid commitment to a race-free language of resistance and "reputable image" as an organisation free from demagogues and reactionaries. They have demonstrated that, by maintaining a reasoned, race-free approach, leaders of the VaCCG built a firm alliance with a group of Republican politicians in Pennsylvania who shared the desire to roll back federal power. Indeed, the VaCCG is presented as an exceptional resistance organisation.<sup>22</sup> The tactics Mays and Kilpatrick used to promote their constitutional defence of segregation, however, have yet to be unpicked. Moreover, while the VaCCG's efforts were certainly remarkable, scholars have neglected to appraise the limits of Mays' media strategy. James R. Sweeney explores the decline of Virginia's states' rights propaganda agency but does not consider the shortcomings of its efforts to mobilise public opinion, finding its collapse merely a product of the "changing political environment of the mid- to late 1960s" rather than any failing on the part of the organisation.<sup>23</sup> The following analysis addresses these gaps

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<sup>19</sup> Entry for 8 September 1958, Mays' Diary cited in Sweeney, *Race, Reason, and Massive Resistance*, p. 227.

<sup>20</sup> Entry for 25 June 1958, Mays' Diary cited in Sweeney, *Race, Reason, and Massive Resistance*, p. 218; David J. Mays, *A Question of Intent: The States, Their Schools and the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment* (Richmond: VaCCG, November 1959), p. preface.

<sup>21</sup> Kilpatrick, "Conservatism and the South", pp. 196, 195.

<sup>22</sup> Hustwit, *James J. Kilpatrick*, p. 100; Lewis, "Virginia's Northern Strategy", pp. 119-120;

<sup>23</sup> James R. Sweeney, "Postscript to Massive Resistance: The Decline and Fall of the Virginia Commission on Constitutional Government", *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 121, No. 1 (2013), p. 45. Sweeney's analysis focuses predominantly on the VaCCG's activity in the years after 1965 and, therefore, does not assess the strength of the group's strategy during its heyday between 1958 and 1964.



in the historiography and contributes new and important knowledge to our understanding of the VaCCG and segregationist media more broadly.

The VaCCG's media strategy was steeped in academic rigour, based on Mays and Kilpatrick's resolute faith in the inviolability of constitutional law. It relied on the curation, production, and distribution of pamphlets containing detailed legal treatises that removed race and side-lined segregation as only one component in a larger assault on states' rights and constitutional principles. It presented this assault as a grave threat to American freedom. With the majority ranging from forty to a hundred pages, Mays and Kilpatrick took great care to ensure each publication presented the most rigorous and convincing legal case possible. The prose was dense, saturated in legal terminology, and many publications were diligently footnoted.<sup>24</sup> In a notably shorter publication, *A Question of Intent* (1959), which included only sixteen pages of prose, Mays included a staggering 147 footnotes.<sup>25</sup> Publications struck a reasonable tone, eschewing impassioned hyperbole in favour of reasoned analysis and application of fundamental principles. "Our Commission is not in any sense 'at war' with the Federal government", Mays explained, "the concept of constitutional government we seek to preserve most assuredly demands a strong central government... Our aim is simply that a balance be restored, and the States be encouraged to insist upon exercising the powers reserved to them".<sup>26</sup> Mays presented the VaCCG as a stoic defender of the purity of the American Constitution and strove to disassociate its stance on states' rights from radical ideas of secession, the Confederate's constitutional defence of slavery, and the Dixiecrat Revolt.<sup>27</sup> By adopting a rational academic approach, Mays and Kilpatrick sought to imbue publications with scholarly authority and thereby secure a sheen of intellectual respectability for the VaCCG's opposition to desegregation and civil rights.

As well as legal opinions written by members of the VaCCG, its publications programme included a range of pamphlets reproducing existing legal tracts carefully selected and introduced by Mays or Kilpatrick. A series of "Historic Statements and

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<sup>24</sup> A comprehensive collection of VaCCG publications is held as part of RWC. See Reel 138 Section V3 and Reel 140 Section V13.

<sup>25</sup> Mays, *A Question of Intent*.

<sup>26</sup> Mays quoted in Hustwit, *James J. Kilpatrick*, p. 93.

<sup>27</sup> States' rights was mobilised by white southerners in the lead up to the Civil War to justify secession and the continuation of slavery, and in 1948 states' rights formed the central plank of the Dixiecrats' political platform. Sarah McCulloh Lemmon, "The Ideology of the 'Dixiecrat' Movement", *Social Forces*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (December 1951), pp. 162-171; Lowndes, *From The New Deal to the New Right*, pp. 7-8; Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt*, p. 9; Ward, *Defending White Democracy*, pp. 101-103.

Papers Expounding the Role of the States in Their Relation to the Central Government” presented the strict separation of state and federal power as a fundamental principle rooted in the American political past and championed by the nation’s most treasured political icons. The VaCCG reproduced large sections of the US Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the Kentucky-Virginia Resolutions, and ventriloquized former statesmen: Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, George Washington, and Abraham Lincoln.<sup>28</sup> A tradition of limited government and separation of powers needed to be protected, they asserted. Historical substantiations of the supposedly unassailable sanctity of states’ rights were supplemented by contemporary testimonials from northern lawyers who revealed federal overreach in fields unrelated to school desegregation. Mays wrote in 1958, “It is out of the mouths of *northern* judges and other leaders that I plan to [develop] the publications of my Commission on Constitutional Government. The southerners are automatically discounted because of the school issue.”<sup>29</sup> If southern cries for states’ rights risked being disregarded as transparent platitudes concealing a deeper commitment to the maintenance of racial separation and subjugation, he believed statements by northern leaders on the erosion of states’ rights were less susceptible to accusations of racial and regional bias and, therefore, more effective propaganda tools.<sup>30</sup> In what Mays described as “an historic statement on judicial self-restraint”, the VaCCG distributed a report of August 1958 by the “Committee on Federal-State Relationships as Affected by Judicial Decisions”. In the preface, Mays pointed out Chief Justices from 36 states voted to adopt the report because it was a critique of “recent Supreme Court decisions... from the point of view of general trends”, rather than specific cases, to buttress his claim that there was a nationwide assault on states’ rights and constitutional government.<sup>31</sup> In other pamphlets, the VaCCG spotlighted federal usurpation of state powers in specific areas unrelated to race, such as

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<sup>28</sup> For example, *The Constitution of the United States of America: With a Summary of the Actions by the States in Ratification of the Provisions Thereof* (Richmond: VaCCG, June 1961); “The American Beginnings”, *Historic Statements and Papers Expounding the Role of the States in Their Relation to the Central Government* (6<sup>th</sup> in the Series, Richmond: VaCCG, March 1961); “The Kentucky-Virginia Resolutions and Mr. Madison’s Report of 1799”, *Historic Statements and Papers Expounding the Role of the States in Their Relation to the Central Government* (2<sup>nd</sup> in the Series, Richmond: VaCCG, April 1960); *A Statement* (Richmond: VaCCG, September 1958); *Thomas Jefferson on Constitutional Issues: Selected Writings, 1787-1825* (Richmond: VaCCG, n.d.).

<sup>29</sup> Entry for 25 August 1958. Mays’ Diary cited in Sweeney, *Race, Reason, and Massive Resistance*, p. 224.

<sup>30</sup> Richard H. King states that many Americans understood the “racial assumptions” behind the “emollient language of states’ rights” in, “Race, Equality, and ‘Hearts and Minds’”, *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (May 2004), p. 311.

<sup>31</sup> “Report of the Conference of Chief Justices”, *Historic Statements and Papers Expounding the Role of the States in Their Relation to the Central Government* (1<sup>st</sup> in the Series, Richmond: VaCCG, October 1959), pp. front cover, 1.

the control of decedents' estates and the regulation of state court procedures. In each case, opinions of distinguished northern judges established the VaCCG's position as not uniquely southern to demonstrate that it was not solely concerned with school segregation.<sup>32</sup> Unlike many other segregationist publications which do not name the author as a matter of course, Mays and Kilpatrick made the strategic editorial decision to identify the authors of VaCCG publications and to detail their judicial credentials to underscore the scholarly virtue of the organisation and its pronouncements. As Kilpatrick explained to readers in July 1960: "This is not an argument of disgruntled Southerners".<sup>33</sup>

When VaCCG publications did consider civil rights legislation directly, Mays and Kilpatrick maintained the same unemotional, restrained tone and language, and focused exclusively on constitutional legality. They explicitly defined the VaCCG as a colour-blind organisation firmly against all kinds of discrimination. This is most apparent in two of its most reproduced and widely distributed publications, *Civil Rights and Legal Wrongs* (1963) and *Voting Rights and Legal Wrongs* (1965), which assessed the proposed civil rights bill of 1963 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. In brief introductions, Mays and Kilpatrick declared "racial discrimination is a bad thing" denouncing the denial of citizens' right to vote "on account of race, colour, or sex" and concluding there is "no question that the Congress has full power to deal with [such] evil through appropriate legislation".<sup>34</sup> Whilst intimating the VaCCG would support legislation designed to prevent discrimination, they judged the legislation in question to be unconstitutional. Rather than an unyielding oppositional force, Mays presented the Commission as a voice of reason and restraint, offering "the other side" of the debate in seemingly objective terms to counteract the positive response to the bills that prevailed in the popular press. Such publications broke down in great detail why the VaCCG judged the legislation to be legally flawed and a threat to the freedoms enshrined in the Constitution, a route to tyranny that would grant the President "the powers of a despot".<sup>35</sup> *Civil Rights and Legal Wrongs* enumerated how each of the eight sections of the proposed civil rights bill violated constitutional law in

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<sup>32</sup> *A Statement on United States v. Oregon* (Richmond: VaCCG, October 1961); *Mr. Justice Harlan Dissents* (Richmond: VaCCG, October 1961). In the case of *United States v. Oregon*, rendered on May 29, 1961, concerning the control of decedents' estates, the opinions of Justice William O. Douglas of Minnesota and Justice Charles Evans Whittaker of Kansas were presented. In the case of *Mapp v. Ohio*, rendered on June 19, 1961, concerning the regulation of state court procedures, the opinion of Justice John Marshall Harlan II of Chicago, Illinois, was presented.

<sup>33</sup> *Did the Court Interpret or Amend?* (Richmond: VaCCG, July 1960).

<sup>34</sup> *Civil Rights and Legal Wrongs* (Richmond: VaCCG, August 1963), p. 1; *Voting Rights and Legal Wrongs* (Richmond: VaCCG, April 1965), p. 4.

<sup>35</sup> *Civil Rights and Legal Wrongs*, pp. inside cover, 20.

ways that would constrain individual rights throughout the nation. *Voting Rights and Legal Wrongs* took the form of a set of questions and answers exploring the legislation. Stressing his belief in the widespread implications of the Voting Rights Act, Kilpatrick described it as “not a rifle, aimed at localized situations where racial discrimination unquestionably has occurred . . . [but] rather a blunderbuss or blockbuster, primed to explode indiscriminately across whole states”.<sup>36</sup> This tactical rhetoric hid the VaCCG’s founding motivation from view. It concealed members’ deep-seated racism in a shroud of legalisms. Whilst Mays and his associates believed African Americans were inferior and considered segregation inviolable, they did not allow it to leak into the organisation’s resistance strategy.

In keeping with a commitment to the virtue of unadulterated legal argument, illustrations were kept to a bare minimum. Cover images only entered the VaCCG’s repertoire in the early 1960s and, when they were included, made for uninspiring visuals. One of the more eye-catching and expressive illustrations displays “CONSTITUTION” clamped in a vice atop a vivid red background; a simple symbolic representation of the pamphlet’s rhetorical content, which argued civil rights legislation was destroying the Constitution (Fig. 2.1).<sup>37</sup> For the most part, the VaCCG embraced a no-frills approach, placing greatest emphasis on the soundness of legal argument, rather than eye-catching or provocative visuals, snappy headlines, or catchy soundbites. Mays did not sensationalise or distract from the supposed purity of legal discourse. He had genuine confidence in the persuasive power of assiduous legal argument and believed this strategy had longevity and was the least susceptible to refutation. He wanted to educate, not to titillate, and developed a compendium of scrupulous, scholarly material with which to promote this brand of conservative constitutionalism and provoke a rightward shift in American politics.

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<sup>36</sup> *Voting Rights and Legal Wrongs*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>37</sup> *Civil Rights and Federal Powers* (Richmond: VaCCG, November 1963). A colour version of the pamphlet is held here: Coordinating Committee for Fundamental American Freedoms, undated folder, Civil Rights Act of 1964 Subseries, BM.

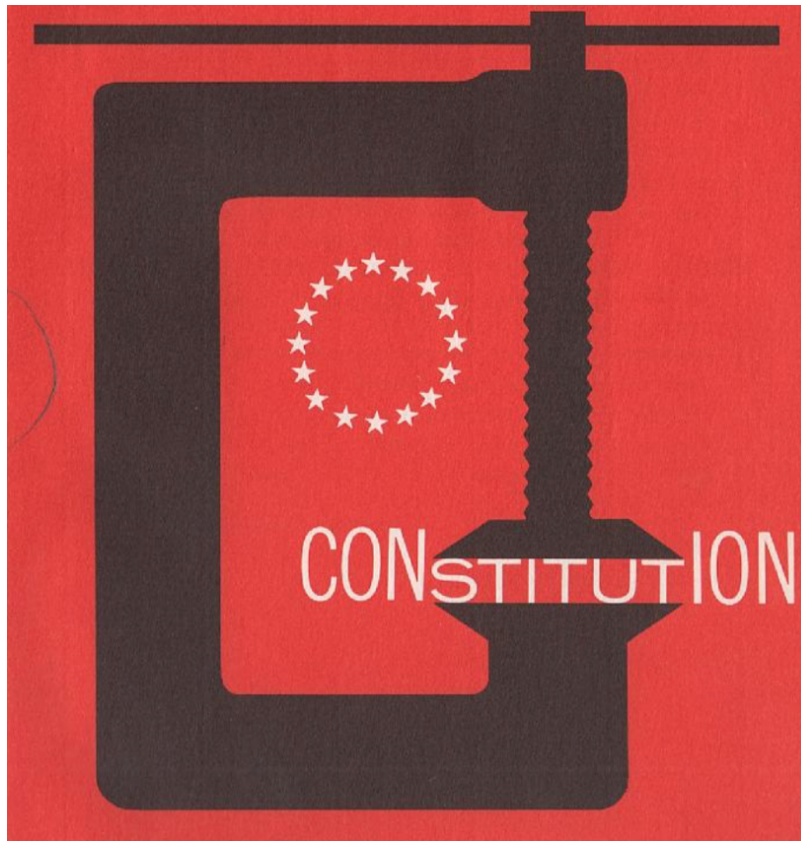


Fig. 2.1 – Cover image on *Civil Rights and Federal Powers* (Richmond: VaCCG, 1963).

The VaCCG developed a targeted distribution strategy to re-educate the American body politic. Mays compiled an impressive mailing list of state legislators, governors, and chief justices; U.S. congressmen, federal judges, Supreme Court justices, and bar associations; college, junior college, and city public libraries; state libraries, law school libraries, and state law libraries; chambers of commerce in every American city with a population over 100,000; and, editors, columnists, and selected daily newspapers and magazines of national circulation.<sup>38</sup> As Mays explained, he targeted “the ‘opinion-maker’ – the legislator, editor, teacher, business leader, and the like”. He was not interested in appealing to the masses directly.<sup>39</sup> This approach reflected the nature of the VaCCG’s intellectual publications, which clearly were not directed towards general readers. It also reflects the organisation’s membership, the vast majority of whom were selected for their legal training and background in constitutional law, rather than any expertise in public relations.<sup>40</sup> Evidently, they played to their strengths and focused on

<sup>38</sup> Lewis, “Virginia’s Northern Strategy”, p. 122.

<sup>39</sup> Mays quoted in Sweeney, “Postscript to Massive Resistance”, p. 57.

<sup>40</sup> An examination of the membership lists printed at the back of the VaCCG’s pamphlets held in RWC indicates that, throughout the lifespan of the VaCCG, Kilpatrick was the only member with a background in media.

an educated elite.<sup>41</sup> While Kilpatrick had a background in media, he appears to have shared their faith in the persuasive power of punctilious legal argument.<sup>42</sup> By persuading powerbrokers, the VaCCG strove to re-educate the educators, who, it was hoped, would pass on the wisdom of the VaCCG to constituents. Rather than waging a “general public information campaign” as indicated in its founding documents, then, the VaCCG implemented a trickle-down approach to persuading the nation.<sup>43</sup>

The VaCCG’s publication and distribution strategy raises important questions about its impact on and position in the battle over public opinion, and demands further consideration of its limits as a segregationist propaganda agency formed to educate the general public. It is clear that dense, extended legal treatises, with negligible visual stimuli, lacked mass appeal. The complex language of the publications is likely to have deterred less-educated readers, as well as those educated readers unfamiliar with legal discourse. Indeed, Luther Carter, Washington correspondent for the *Virginian-Pilot*, was doubtful that even the “serious people” Mays sought to address spent time reading VaCCG pamphlets. With scant faith in the effectiveness of Mays’ strategy, Carter wrote in a particularly scathing editorial: “the suspicion persists in some quarters that most of the pamphlets go unread into the wastebasket”.<sup>44</sup> William D. Workman, Jr., shared Carter’s view and applied it to his own resistance efforts, lamenting in 1961 “none of the politicians wants to sit down and read a book”.<sup>45</sup>

A number of resisters seeking to shift public opinion held similar misgivings about the effectiveness of extended intellectual treatises as propaganda material. Several segregationist media strategists expressed preference for shorter, more easily comprehensible material. When advising S. Emory Rogers on a booklet for the ACCSC, Thomas R. Waring, Jr., instructed him “to shorten [the] sentences and make the text as readable as possible for people in a hurry, already swamped with too much reading matter and not always possessed of a full vocabulary”.<sup>46</sup> In a pamphlet instructing southern

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<sup>41</sup> There is an argument to be made that the “intellectualism” of the VaCCG’s approach was intended to win over non-educated non-elites who may have accepted the VaCCG’s “truth” at face-value because of academic appearance of the publications and the intellectual credentials of the authors. However, the VaCCG’s distribution strategy suggests this was not the primary intention.

<sup>42</sup> As well throwing his support behind the VaCCG’s strategy, Kilpatrick himself authored a 329-page plea for states’ rights and limited government. James J. Kilpatrick, *The Sovereign States: Notes of a Citizen of Virginia* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1957).

<sup>43</sup> “Va. Constitution Govt. Committee To Report Today”, *Daily Press* (4 September 1958), p. 17.

<sup>44</sup> Carter quoted in Sweeney, “Postscript to Massive Resistance”, p. 57.

<sup>45</sup> Workman quoted in Letter from Thomas R. Waring, Jr., to Carleton Putnam, 23 March 1961, Folder 1, Box 431, TRW.

<sup>46</sup> Letter from Waring to Rogers, 25 August 1956, Folder 3, Box 393, TRW.

leaders how best to appeal to the American people, Stuart O. Landry of the FCG wrote, “The average man is not a thinking man... To reach the common man, the man in the street, the publicist must put forward a simple idea, [and] express it in one or more slogans and catch phrases”.<sup>47</sup> When discussing the CCA’s information and education programme at its inaugural meeting, Robert B. Patterson, declared, “[t]he people will read little short pamphlets, some sheets, but not a lot at once”.<sup>48</sup> As well as a lack of confidence in the suitability of longer treatises, others were dubious about the efficacy of constitutional and legal arguments. William Rainach expressed concerns to Mays directly, writing “we are engaged in a political, rather than a legal struggle”.<sup>49</sup> T. V. Williams of the GCE, discussed at length in Chapter 4 and whose efforts appear to have had greater impact, felt material dealing exclusively with constitutional issues was ineffective in mass campaigns.<sup>50</sup> In 1958, for example, he flatly refused to support the distribution of Charles J. Bloch’s impenetrable glorification of states’ rights and constitutional government, *States’ Rights: The Law of the Land* (1958). While Bloch’s book looked the part, exuding respectability with its leather cover adorned with gold lettering and embossed detailing, Williams judged it unsuitable for mass circulation for a range of reasons related to argument, content, length, and the enormous costs that would be incurred to distribute such a hefty tome (Fig. 2.2).<sup>51</sup>

In 2003, Jack Kershaw reflected on the media strategy pursued by the TFCG, which resembled that of the VaCCG. As former Vice Chairman of the group, he regretted the inherent lack of excitement in TFCG publications and lamented their corresponding ineffectiveness in altering public opinion. Dense, intellectual, scholarly tracts relaying intricate constitutional arguments, he declared, simply could not “reach out and control the masses”.<sup>52</sup> In a telling illustration of his belief in the ultimate futility of his group’s efforts, he stated, “not one in a hundred has ever read [the Constitution]

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<sup>47</sup> Stuart O. Landry, *We Need A “Voice of the South”* (New Orleans: FCG, 1959), pp. 2-3.

<sup>48</sup> Patterson quoted in “Convention of Delegates Organising the Citizens Councils of America”, 7 April 1956, Folder 48, Box 5, WMR.

<sup>49</sup> Letter from Rainach to Mays, 10 December 1958, Folder 119, Box 12, WMR.

<sup>50</sup> Ed Cony, “Selling Segregation: South Steps Up Drive To Tell North and West Its Side of Race Issue”, *The Wall Street Journal* (4 December 1957), p. 1.

<sup>51</sup> Letter from Williams to Bloch, 19 February 1958, Misc. Correspondence Sub-Folder, Georgia Folder, Box-RCB-35186 Correspondence Alabama-Illinois 1957-1958, GCEP; Charles J. Bloch, *States’ Rights: The Law of the Land* (Atlanta: The Harrison Company, 1958). For more on Bloch, Webb, “Charles Bloch, Jewish White Supremacist”.

<sup>52</sup> Kershaw in Benjamin Houston, “We kept the discussion at an adult level”: Jack Kershaw and the Tennessee Federation for Constitutional Government”, *Southern Cultures*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (Winter 2014), p. 78.



and knows what it says, in the ordinary populace, I'm sure".<sup>53</sup> While some segregationists shared Mays' belief that a race-free approach might prove productive in soliciting support outside the South, they believed his chosen media strategy was flawed and unlikely to deliver significant returns. The VaCCG's efforts, then, were exceptional not purely because other segregationists lacked the same discipline or academic rigour, but also because some made the strategic decision not to adopt this approach. Moreover, as a result of these misgivings, some segregationists declined to invest time or resources into reproducing and distributing VaCCG material. It is telling that VaCCG publications never appeared on the Citizens' Councils' recommended reading lists.<sup>54</sup>

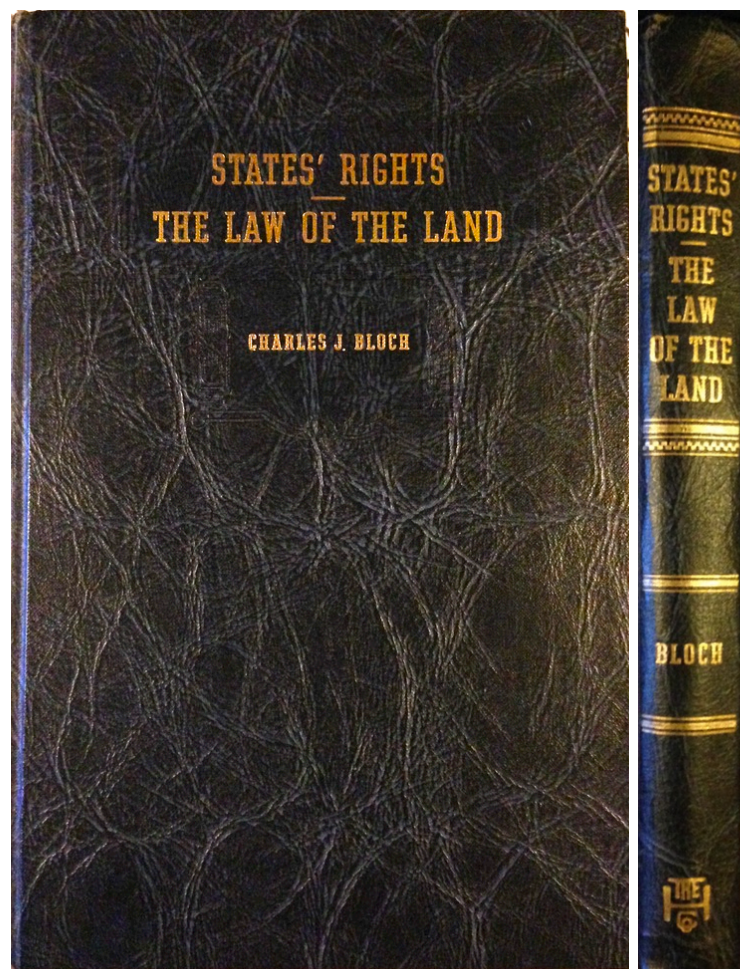


Fig. 2.2 – Charles J. Bloch, *States' Rights: The Law of the Land* (Atlanta: The Harrison Company, 1958).

<sup>53</sup> Kershaw in Houston, "We kept the discussion at an adult level", p. 75.

<sup>54</sup> "Recommended Literature Available From The Citizens' Council", *TCC* (January 1961), p. 3; "Know The Facts! Be Well Informed!", *TC* (May 1963), pp. 26-30; "Know The Facts! Be Well Informed!", *TC* (July-August 1964), pp. 16-22; "Know The Facts! Be Well Informed!", *TC* (June 1965), pp.26-32. This was also partially because Mays was openly anti-Citizens' Councils, referring to them as a "rabid crowd". Mays quoted in Lewis, "Virginia's Northern Strategy", p. 124.



This suggests that VaCCG played only an auxiliary role in segregationists' collective efforts to mobilise public opinion against the civil rights movement. It also adds an important layer of understanding to Mays' failure to persuade other segregationist organisations to model themselves on the VaCCG and his inability to unite disparate segregationist organisations in a regionwide programme of "dignified resistance".<sup>55</sup>

By relying exclusively on one medium and a single target audience, the VaCCG limited the potential reach of its message.<sup>56</sup> It is significant that it made few, if any, forays into the medium of television or film, given that it was the dominant form of mass media by the mid-1950s.<sup>57</sup> Mays' diaries offer little indication that he was interested in pursuing a televisual campaign with the VaCCG.<sup>58</sup> Whilst Mays received requests from the University of Georgia and the Central Virginia Educational Television Corporation, in August 1963 and April 1965, respectively, to produce television recordings explicating the VaCCG's views for use "in different parts of the country", he did not believe the VaCCG should have a direct presence on local or national television.<sup>59</sup> Indeed, he only began to send VaCCG publications to station managers in 1965 and did not request funds to produce educational material for use on television until 1966.<sup>60</sup> Whilst Kilpatrick engaged with the medium of television and was regularly afforded a platform by national networks, he rarely billed himself as the VaCCG's publications director and never promoted the VaCCG or its educational activities during his many appearances on political news programmes.<sup>61</sup> Even when he was introduced as a member of the VaCCG during his debate with Martin Luther King, Jr., on NBC's *The Nation's Future*, Kilpatrick chose not to draw any attention to its activities.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Lewis suggests that Mays' style of resistance remained on the "periphery" because it was "deployed so late in the struggle" and cites Mays' own caution and reluctance to develop firm ties with other segregationist groups as a barrier to collaboration. He worried that firm connections to less disciplined segregationist groups might sully the VaCCG's respectable image. Lewis, "Virginia's Northern Strategy", pp. 144, 123-125.

<sup>56</sup> In an influential contemporary guide to public relations, for example, Benjamin Fine wrote "A combination of various media provides the impact to 'sell' your story". Fine, "Planning", in Edward L. Bernays (ed.), *The Engineering of Consent* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955), p. 193.

<sup>57</sup> Watson, *The Expanding Vista*, pp. 3, 17.

<sup>58</sup> Mays did, however, rely on television to watch baseball. See entries in Sweeney, *Race, Reason, and Massive Resistance*.

<sup>59</sup> Mays quoted in Lewis, "Virginia's Northern Strategy", p. 126.

<sup>60</sup> Hustwit, *James J. Kilpatrick*, p. 95, 241n38; Sweeney "Postscript to Massive Resistance", pp. 65-67.

<sup>61</sup> See Kilpatrick's appearances on television programmes held within the Library of Congress' extensive television collections and the collection of *Meet The Press* transcripts in LES.

<sup>62</sup> For a full transcript of the debate, Clayborne Carson et al., *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr., Volume V: Threshold of a New Decade, January 1959-December 1960* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 556-564.

Historians have not addressed the VaCCG's non-presence on television. While there are no existing archival documents that detail his reasoning explicitly, Mays' ambivalence may be explained by his firm stance on the organisation's media strategy and uncompromising vision of the VaCCG as a highbrow, scholarly organisation concerned with the proper application of constitutional law more broadly, not with the *Brown* decision specifically. Primarily, the snappy, uncomplicated language and widely comprehensible register required by television did not align with Mays' insistence on the use of carefully considered, lengthy arguments based on expert legal knowledge.<sup>63</sup> The VaCCG's academic discourse would not have translated to the small screen without abridgment, which would undermine the rigor of Mays' cherished lawyerly approach. His aversion to television may also have been borne out of the broad contempt for the medium held by intellectuals at the end of the 1950s, viewing it as an inane stream of mindless nonsense with little societal benefit, summed up by Newton N. Minow's "vast wasteland" speech in 1961.<sup>64</sup> In addition, national network television programmes' narrow scope and sharp focus, as discussed in Chapter 1, as well as the brevity the medium demanded, made it difficult for segregationist spokesmen to expand the conversation beyond segregation and civil rights. For Kilpatrick, civil rights was the primary focus when he was invited to act as a voice for segregation, in line with the FCC's fairness doctrine.<sup>65</sup> This powerfully reinforced his standing as a "salesman for segregation", albeit a more reasonable one.<sup>66</sup> This presented a significant problem for Mays if he wished to establish the VaCCG as a voice for conservative constitutionalism. Given that the VaCCG's *modus operandi* was to elevate segregationist resistance above the race issue, Mays would not have seen these programmes as an attractive platform on which to promote the VaCCG and may have preferred Kilpatrick to avoid or downplay his association with the organisation.

These specific issues were compounded by two additional shortcomings of the VaCCG. First, Mays decided not to set up a regular series of publications with regular

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<sup>63</sup> In his contribution to Bernays' influential text, A. Robert Ginsburgh explained "In talking over these media [television and radio]... simplicity of style and expression, clarity, brevity, and logic become even more important". A. Robert Ginsburgh, "The Tactics of Public Relations", in Bernays, *The Engineering of Consent*, p. 231.

<sup>64</sup> See <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/newtonminow.htm> for a full transcript and recording of Minnow's speech [accessed 15 December 2017]; see also, "Newton N. Minow, Chairman, Federal Communications Commission", *Meet The Press* [television programme] NBC, 22 July, 1962.

<sup>65</sup> For further information on the Fairness Doctrine, Bodroghkozy, *Equal Time*, pp. 63-64.

<sup>66</sup> Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff note that Kilpatrick, Thomas Waring, and Grover C. Hall were "the 'responsible spokesmen' for the resistance" in, *The Race Beat*, p. 212.

deadlines but to “go to print only when we have something to say”.<sup>67</sup> This maintained a scholarly commitment to originality, guarded against reactionary bombast, and ensured publications were well-thought-out but compromised the VaCCG’s ability to maintain momentum or generate consistent attention that might alert the nation’s media to its activities. Many other segregationist groups considered it more effective to maintain a steady stream of propaganda material, seen clearly in weekly or monthly newspapers and bulletins issued across the South.<sup>68</sup> In a pamphlet on propaganda, for example, Landry instructed segregationists to “‘harp’ on... idea[s] persistently and continuously”.<sup>69</sup> Second, and significantly for this study, the VaCCG did not include individuals with a firm background in public relations who might have advised Mays on alternative routes to influencing the general public or tailored his approach. Mays represented a particular strand of the old guard of segregation, a “gentlemanly” mix of legal rigour and racial paternalism. Although his strategy was unique and astute, he lacked understanding of the contemporary media landscape within which he was operating, the fast-pace and regularity demanded in the new era of television, and he sometimes abandoned VaCCG duties to attend to his “busy legal practice and numerous civic involvements”.<sup>70</sup> Ultimately, Mays’ inflexibility narrowed the VaCCG’s field of vision, an attendant irony given that it was established to mobilise a “general public information campaign” and generate a broad shift in public opinion. Attention to its publications and media strategy adds new and important detail to our understanding of the VaCCG and highlights some segregationists’ lack of media savvy. Others would take a more expansive approach to execute multimedia campaigns based on at least some knowledge and consideration of public relations strategies.

### **“An extraordinary wave of racist propaganda”: The CCFAF’s Barrage against President Kennedy’s Civil Rights Legislation**

Under the leadership of Mississippi lawyer and former President of the American Bar Association, John C. Satterfield, the CCFAF formed in July 1963 for the single purpose

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<sup>67</sup> Entry for 1 July 1958, Mays’ diary cited in Sweeney, *Race, Reason, and Massive Resistance*, p. 219.

<sup>68</sup> See, for example, *The Augusta Courier*, *TCC*, and *TCN*.

<sup>69</sup> Landry, *We Need A “Voice of the South”*, p. 3. In his important and influential study of propaganda, Bernays argues that to be effective “modern propaganda” must be “a consistent, enduring effort”, it must be “universal and continuous”, and must be mobilised “continuously and systematically”. Edward L. Bernays, *Propaganda* (New York: Ig Publishing, 2005, originally published in 1928), pp. 52, 71, 140.

<sup>70</sup> Sweeney “Postscript to Massive Resistance”, p. 49, see also 53, 63.

of defeating President John F. Kennedy's proposed civil rights bill. This new organisation adopted a "race-free" approach similar to the VaCCG, resolving to focus squarely on uncovering the bill's legal or constitutional problems. It committed itself boldly and ambitiously to achieving a broad national realignment on civil rights, laying early plans to "cover the nation" with over 5,000,000 pieces of literature and harness existing news media channels.<sup>71</sup> With substantial financial resources at their disposal, CCFAF leaders unleashed a large-scale assault on public opinion.<sup>72</sup> Historians acknowledge the organisation's lofty ambitions and considerable financial resources, and the remarkable volume of literature they allowed the group to distribute. They have also identified similarities between the CCFAF and the VaCCG in terms of a mutual reliance on "colour-blind" constitutional arguments.<sup>73</sup> Like the VaCCG, however, scholars have yet to afford the CCFAF's media strategy due attention and, as a result, have judged the group's efforts to be largely inconsequential. Uncovering the organisation's carefully engineered media strategy, this analysis demonstrates that the similarities between the VaCCG and the CCFAF were not as definitive as they may seem and that the CCFAF achieved greater impact than previously acknowledged.

The CCFAF shared Mays' view that "widespread knowledge of the true import" of civil rights reform – with reference to its "devastating effect on... the individual's right of self determination... [and] the States as political entities" – would bring "instantaneous opposition".<sup>74</sup> The CCFAF's strategy differed markedly from the rigid, one-dimensional programme directed by Mays. It executed an intricate, relentless, and multifaceted multimedia campaign to appeal to a wide demographic. It determined to "publicise the nature of the bill with every facility available" and deemed "constant propaganda... a powerful thing".<sup>75</sup> Whilst accepting the importance of reaching "opinion molders", the CCFAF recognised the need to address the general public directly if it were to catalyse a

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<sup>71</sup> Memorandum Concerning the Formation, the Purpose and the Operation of the Co-Ordinating Committee for Fundamental American Freedoms (hereafter Memorandum Concerning Formation, Purpose and Operation of the CCFAF), 26 July 1963, Folder 7, Box SG19973, AGAAF.

<sup>72</sup> Condensed Budget for The Co-Ordinating Committee for Fundamental American Freedoms, 12 September 1963, Folder 7, SG19973, AGAAF.

<sup>73</sup> Hustwit, *James J. Kilpatrick*, p. 124; Crespino, *In Search of Another Country*, pp. 93, 97-98; Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, p. 177-178; George Lewis, "Coordinating Committee for Fundamental American Freedoms", *Mississippi Encyclopedia* (Online), (Oxford: Center for Study of Southern Culture, 2017). <https://mississippencyclopedia.org/entries/coordinating-committee-for-fundamental-american-freedoms/> [accessed 15 November 2018]

<sup>74</sup> Memorandum Concerning Formation, Purpose and Operation of the CCFAF.

<sup>75</sup> Memorandum Concerning Formation, Purpose and Operation of the CCFAF; Letter from CCFAF to "the editor", 5 August 1963, Folder 7, SG19973, AGAAF.

shift in opinion and, therefore, drafted analyses of the bill in “layman’s language”.<sup>76</sup> The group’s expansive effort was planned meticulously and was broken down into five parallel projects, each addressing a particular facet of the campaign: direct mailings to “persons of particular influence”; “full coverage with editorial comment and columnist material” in all daily and weekly newspapers and specialty publications throughout the nation; and “broad coverage by full-page newspaper advertisements” in daily newspapers in important states.<sup>77</sup> Its public education programme was a carefully managed operation.

The tangible gulf between the CCFAF’s and the VaCCG’s efforts was in large part due to Satterfield’s decision to employ a trained public relations specialist as CCFAF director. John J. Synon had “an extensive background in conservative public relations in California and Washington” and had provided services to the Portuguese government.<sup>78</sup> While a committed white supremacist and a vicious racist, he ensured the CCFAF maintained resolute focus on “the Constitutional issue” and presented a principled conservative “public image”.<sup>79</sup> Burying his deepest feelings on the matter, Synon explained to reporters coolly, “We are not interested in the racial aspects of this thing at all. I have pretty much of a detached view of it”.<sup>80</sup> Recruited from the “crack public relations firm of Selva & Lee”, and considered a “top-flight” public relations expert and “slick publicity-man”, leaders in the CCFAF valued Synon’s services so highly that they paid him \$500 a week, and covered his expenses which amounted to around \$1600 a quarter.<sup>81</sup> They clearly felt a need to professionalise their media efforts and were willing to pay exorbitant amounts to win what was a critical clash in the ongoing battle over public opinion.

State-sponsored segregationist organisations from across the region funnelled money into the CCFAF to bankroll its propaganda onslaught. The FLIC and the newly formed ASSC contributed at least \$50,000 and \$14,000, respectively, the LSSC donated an undisclosed sum, and the MSSC appropriated \$60,000 of its funds and channelled a

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<sup>76</sup> Memorandum Concerning Formation, Purpose and Operation of the CCFAF; Letter from John C. Satterfield to James A. Simpson, 27 August 1963, Folder 7, SG19973, AGAAF.

<sup>77</sup> The projects were named rather unimaginatively: Project A, B, C, D, and E. Break-Down of Budget with Typical Projects, 12 September 1963, Folder 7, SG19973, AGAAF.

<sup>78</sup> Research Report on the CCFAF, 9 December, 1963, Frame 59, Reel 25, Coordinating Committee for Fundamental American Freedoms Folder, CRKA; Johnston, *Mississippi’s Defiant Years*, p. 125.

<sup>79</sup> Synon’s correspondence with Waring contains numerous examples of his bigotry. See folders 9 and 10, Box 450, and Folder 1, Box 451, TRW.

<sup>80</sup> Synon quoted in Luther J. Carter, “A New Dixie Colonel”, *WP* (12 April 1964), p. E3.

<sup>81</sup> Drew Pearson, “Lobby Inspires Anti-Rights Mail”, *WP* (4 April 1964), p. B7; Letter from Waring to Synon, 13 September 1963, Folder 10, Box 450, TRW; Carter, “A New Dixie Colonel”; Johnston, *Mississippi’s Defiant Years*, p. 242.

further \$200,000 donated by Wickliffe Preston Draper, a wealthy New Yorker and committed racial ideologue, into CCFAF coffers.<sup>82</sup> These vast sums suggest a unity of purpose among those organisations which felt Kennedy's proposed civil rights bill had put their backs to the wall. They had a shared faith in "race-free" constitutional arguments to turn northern conservatives against the bill and a common belief that only an expansive, professional, expert-led campaign could provoke the dramatic shift in public opinion they desired. Whilst the VaCCG did not appropriate funds, it offered ideological support, sharing literature and advising on legal analysis. Kilpatrick took up position as Vice Chairman of the CCFAF and served as intermediary between the two groups.<sup>83</sup> The CCFAF constituted a regional initiative and, with Synon at the helm, pioneered a versatile propaganda programme.

The material Synon designed for mass consumption was concise and accessible.<sup>84</sup> Usually in the form of single- or double-page newspaper advertisements and articles, or five- to six-page pamphlets, it was engineered to provide "basic" and "brief" analysis of the bill. It made good use of images and slogans, all the while avoiding overtly racist content. While this material was directed at the lay reader, the CCFAF nevertheless shared the VaCCG's commitment to rigorous, respectable, and reasoned argument. Synon based his material on legal analysis provided by Satterfield and other CCFAF associates, and his prose was checked for "legal exactitude" as a matter of course.<sup>85</sup> In 1963, for example, Synon drew on the VaCCG's *Civil Rights and Legal Wrongs* to produce a newspaper advertisement with the same name. The advertisement condensed the pamphlet into a single newssheet, simplifying the analysis and adding simple illustrations to break up the text (Fig. 2.3).<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Memorandum Concerning Formation, Purpose and Operation of the CCFAF; Letter from Satterfield to George C. Wallace, 12 December 1963, Folder 11, Box SG22381, AGAF; Handwritten note from Cecil Jackson to Wallace, 2 December 1963, Folder 11, SG22381, AGAF; Minutes: State Sovereignty Commission, 3 January 1964, 1964-1965 Minutes File, Reel 13, ASSCA; Crespino, *In Search of Another Country*, p. 98. For more on FLIC, more commonly known as the Johns Committee, Stacy Braukman, *Communists and Perverts Under the Palms: The Johns Committee in Florida, 1956-1965* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012). Braukman makes no mention of the CCFAF.

<sup>83</sup> Sweeney "Postscript to Massive Resistance", pp. 53-55; Hustwit, *James J. Kilpatrick*, pp. 123-133.

<sup>84</sup> "A Brief 'Resume' of the Activities of the Coordinating Committee on Fundamental American Freedoms" (no date), SCR ID #6-70-0-374-1-1-1, #6-70-0-374-2-1-1, #6-70-0-374-3-1-1, SCOC.

<sup>85</sup> Synon quoted in Carter, "A New Dixie Colonel".

<sup>86</sup> "Civil Rights and Legal Wrongs" Newspaper Advertisement, 14 November 1963, Reel 37 (C155), RWC; see also Frames 57-58, Reel 25, CRKA.

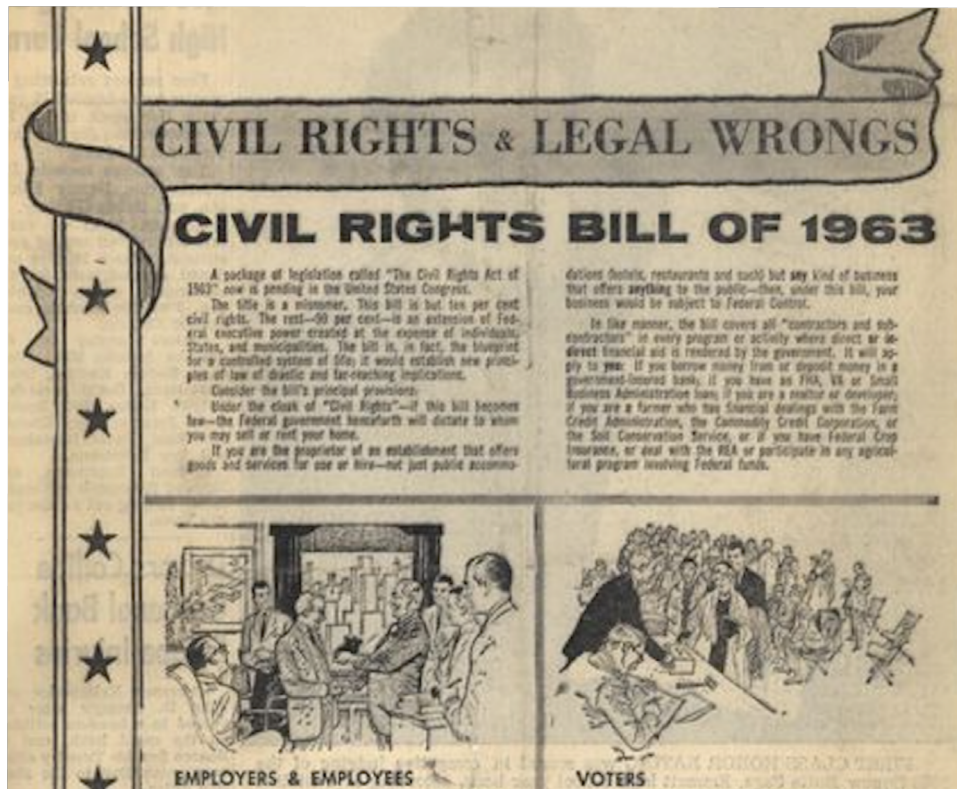


Fig. 2.3 - “Civil Rights and Legal Wrongs” Newspaper Advertisement (14 November 1963).

Other publications included more striking imagery, such as the piercing eyes of Uncle Sam on the cover of *The Federal Eyes Looking Down Your Throat!* (n. d.) and the heavy chain running down the centre of each page deployed as visual representation of the despotic growth in central government and the restraints on individual liberty the bill would supposedly enable.<sup>87</sup> The CCFAF’s most arresting effort involved a clenched fist brandishing a “\$100 Billion Blackjack” threateningly before newspaper readers across the country (Fig. 2.4). The blackjack was selected by Synon as a striking metaphor for the alleged financial wrath the federal government promised to unleash on businesses that refused to comply with the law, and the billions of dollars it threatened to withdraw from “federally-assisted local activities which they fancifully conceived to be discriminatory”.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>87</sup> *The Federal Eyes Looking Down Your Throat!*, (Washington, D.C.: CCFAF, n.d.) Reel 37 (C155), RWC (colour image downloaded from <https://archive.org/details/1963Throat> [accessed 10 January 2018]); for the version of “The Federal Eyes Looking Down Your Throat!” with the chain running down the centre of the page see Frames 128-132, Reel 25, CRKA. The Research Report on the CCFAF in Frames 59-61 of the aforementioned collection specifies that it is a latter version of the publication.

<sup>88</sup> Synon quoted in Carter, “A New Dixie Colonel”. “\$100 Billion Blackjack” Newspaper Ad, Reel 37 (C155), RWC; Johnston, *Mississippi’s Defiant Years*, p. 243.





Fig. 2.4 – Cover page of “The Federal Eyes Looking Down Your Throat!” pamphlet (left) and the heading of the “\$100 Billion Blackjack” single-page newspaper advertisement (above).

Although shorter form publications eschewed dense academic language and meticulous footnoting of the VaCCG’s legal treatise, Synon still tried to imbue CCFAF content with scholarly authority by specifying Satterfield’s tenure as President of the American Bar Association. Indeed, *The Washington Post* stated much of the “impact of the Committee’s work comes from the respectability that Satterfield’s name adds to its views of the law”.<sup>89</sup> To separate the CCFAF from a specifically southern fight to preserve segregation, literature specified its headquarters were in Washington, D.C., highlighted its nominal chairman, William Loeb, hailed from New Hampshire, and claimed that Synon had roots in the nation’s capital, rather than his native Virginia. Synon practised a streamlined version of the VaCCG’s publication strategy.

To appeal to elite audiences directly and personally, the CCFAF engaged in targeted mailshots. Aimed at influential civic leaders, legislators, and opinion-makers, material designed for this educated demographic went into greater detail with extended analyses of the proposed legislation, much like those published by the VaCCG.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>89</sup> James E. Clayton, “Anti-Rights Bill Lobby Is Best-Financed Ever”, *WP* (22 March 1964), p. A9.

<sup>90</sup> For example, E. E. Willis, E. L. Forrester, WM. M. Tuck, Robert T. Ashmore, John Dowdy, and Basil L. Whitener (Members of the House Committee on the Judiciary), *Unmasking the Civil Rights Bill* (Washington, D.C.: CCFAF, n.d.); Loyd Wright and John C. Satterfield, *Blueprint for Total Federal Regimentation: Analysis of “The Civil Rights Act 1963”* (Washington, D.C.: CCFAF, 1963).



However, unlike the VaCCG, Synon also produced truncated, simplified versions of these longer form publications for use in different contexts and different audiences, and to serve as advertisements for the extended edition, thereby maximising the publication's potential utility and reach. When mailing material to newspaper editors, Synon included abridged and unabridged versions of CCFAF copy "for use... in whatever manner you choose", cognisant of differing space requirements, readerships, and the stylistic preferences of particular publications.<sup>91</sup> For example, one of the Committee's flagship long-reads, *Blueprint for Total Federal Regimentation: Analysis of "The Civil Rights Act 1963"* (1963), was adapted for publication by *Human Events*, a conservative news magazine published in Washington, D.C. The 22-page pamphlet was compressed into a single-page briefing, which suited the magazine's standard article length. It provided a pithy, lucid exposition of the CCFAF's contention that the bill would result in "an extension of federal executive power created at the expense of individuals, states and municipalities... more drastic than all such legislation ever passed". The extended version was advertised for readers who wished to learn more.<sup>92</sup> As well as print media, Synon secured time for Satterfield on ABC's nationally broadcast television news special "The Great Divide: Civil Rights and the Bill", and set up interviews with prominent conservative broadcasters Wayne Poucher and Clarence Manion.<sup>93</sup> Synon had a firm grasp of the national media landscape and recognised that multiple lines of attack offered the greatest chance of success.<sup>94</sup>

The CCFAF's programme of distribution and advertisement placement was choreographed with surgical precision and exemplifies Synon's professionalism and skill. "The committee prepared a program of 'complete saturation'", he explained in a brief report on CCFAF activities, "in states critical to the passage of the civil rights bills, blanketing these areas with CCFAF materials".<sup>95</sup> He targeted "vital" northern and western states with large white ethnic working-class voter bases, which he believed would

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<sup>91</sup> Synon quoted in Clayton, "Anti-Rights Lobby".

<sup>92</sup> Wright and Satterfield, *Blueprint for Total Federal Regimentation*; Loyd Wright and John C. Satterfield, "The Civil Rights Act of 1963: An Analysis", *Human Events*, Vol. 22, No. 15 (12 October, 1963), p. 8, Coordinating Committee for Fundamental American Freedoms, August 1963-April 1964 folder, Civil Rights Act of 1964 Subseries, BM.

<sup>93</sup> *The Great Divide: Civil Rights and the Bill* [television programme] ABC, 22 May 1964; "A Brief 'Resume' of the Activities of the Coordinating Committee on Fundamental American Freedoms", SCR ID #6-70-0-374-3-1-1. See also, John. J. Synon, "The impact of 1963 Civil Rights Act", 1963, CCF, Reel #057, CCFF.

<sup>94</sup> Fine, "Planning", p. 193.

<sup>95</sup> "A Brief 'Resume' of the Activities of the Coordinating Committee on Fundamental American Freedoms" (no date).

perceive the federal government's efforts to enforce fair hiring practices as a threat to their livelihood. He also aimed the CCFAF's crosshairs at constituencies with small African American populations because he thought politicians representing these communities would feel less "pressured" to support civil rights legislation.<sup>96</sup> He selected areas of the country he deemed most susceptible to conservative ideas and where he believed CCFAF material would have greatest impact. "There's nothing I need to do in Virginia", he explained when describing his strategy, "and there's nothing I can do in New York".<sup>97</sup> Ahead of the Senate vote, for example, Synon targeted Everett Dirksen's Illinois constituency with notable belligerence because he was considered a vital Republican dissenter in the South's fight to kill the proposed bill. Recognising Dirksen was "feeling pressures from two sides, from Negroes and the white working class", Synon resolved to help him make up his mind, to settle the debate over the Senator's "softer side". Unleashing an especially aggressive assault on public opinion in Dirksen's constituency, CCFAF material instructed readers to write him and demand he vote against the bill.<sup>98</sup> Synon's distribution strategy was directed with expert proficiency and greatly enhanced the impact of CCFAF publications and advertisements.

The CCFAF's campaign was short-lived, because soon after its inception the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act were passed. Nonetheless, it played a significant role in stoking white resentment of civil rights legislation. An article in *Newsweek* reported "an extraordinary wave of racist propaganda" produced by the CCFAF generated "new opposition" to the civil rights bill and "anti-civil rights sentiment in the most unexpected places". Idahoans "overwhelmingly against the bill" had sent "an unusual 200 letters a week" to Senator Frank Church expressing dissent, often containing CCFAF literature. Analysis of Senator from Nebraska Roman Hruska's mail indicates at least 40 per cent of those opposing the bill were inspired by the CCFAF. The Wisconsin State Chamber of Commerce charged the bill would be a "monstrous infringement on the rights of citizens", informing Senator Gaylord Nelson it had adopted an ardent position of opposition based on information in a pamphlet circulated by the CCFAF.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Condensed Budget for The CCFAF; Synon quoted in Carter, "A New Dixie Colonel". The states singled out as "critical" states included: Alaska, Colorado, Delaware, District of Columbia, Idaho, Illinois, Maine, Montana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Wyoming.

<sup>97</sup> Synon quoted in Carter, "A New Dixie Colonel"; Memorandum Concerning Formation, Purpose and Operation of the CCFAF.

<sup>98</sup> Synon quoted in Carter, "A New Dixie Colonel".

<sup>99</sup> "Congress: Backdoor Battle", *Newsweek* (30 March 1964), n. p., Folder 7, SG19973, AGAAF.

*Washington Post* correspondent Luther J. Carter described how “newspaper readers in scores of cities outside the South” felt the palpable “sense of alarm” the “menacing full-page [“\$100 Billion Blackjack”] advertisement” was designed to produce.<sup>100</sup> Carter’s colleagues Drew Pearson and James E. Clayton were also startled by this “remarkable impact on Northern thinking”. “[In] letters that have been pouring in on Congress” wrote Pearson, “thousands of Northerners have paraphrased the astute arguments... issued by this lobby”.<sup>101</sup> The effect of the CCFAF’s “skilful and well-financed... ads and publications has already been considerable”, Clayton feared.<sup>102</sup> The fact so many constituents reproduced CCFAF material and echoed its arguments in letters to congressmen signals the effectiveness of Synon’s campaign strategy.

Burke Marshall, Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, shared serious concern over the CCFAF’s industrious public relations campaigns.<sup>103</sup> In letters to Representative William J. Randall and Senator Mike Mansfield, he expressed intense unease over “distortions of the bill” promoted by the CCFAF and worried it was preventing “a fair debate about the bill on the merits of its actual provisions”.<sup>104</sup> After receiving numerous requests for a response to the CCFAF’s publications from nervous Congressmen and constituents, Marshall composed a six-page letter refuting the organisation’s claims. His letter explained “the bill does not establish ‘dictatorial Federal control’” and was sent alongside further reading to anxious colleagues, members of the public, and was inserted into the *Congressional Record*.<sup>105</sup> In 1990, Erle Johnston, former leader of the MSSC, recalled three of the most prominent Congressional proponents for the bill, Senators Kenneth Keating, Jacob J. Javits, and Hubert Humphrey, speaking out explicitly against the CCFAF. Worried indignant white voters who had been persuaded

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<sup>100</sup> Carter, “A New Dixie Colonel”.

<sup>101</sup> Pearson, “Lobby Inspires Anti-Rights Mail”.

<sup>102</sup> Clayton, “Anti-Rights Lobby”.

<sup>103</sup> Marshall wrote to Senator Hubert Humphrey regarding his concerns over the CCFAF’s activity, noting its advertisements had “received a good deal of circulation”. Letter from Marshall to Hubert Humphrey, 28 February 1964, Coordinating Committee for Fundamental American Freedoms, August 1963-April 1964 folder, BM.

<sup>104</sup> Letter from Marshall to Mike Mansfield, 9 March 1964, Frame 100, Reel 25, CRKA; Letter from Marshall to William J. Randall, 13 March 1964, Frame 101, Reel 25, CRKA.

<sup>105</sup> Marshall’s papers indicate the latter was sent to Senators Lee Metcalf, Hubert Humphrey, and Mike Mansfield; Representatives John V. Lindsey, Garner E. Shriver, William T. Cahill, Charles McCurdy Mathias, Jr., Clark MacGregor, James E. Bromwell, William M. McCulloch, and William J. Randall; and, Hugh A. Brimm, Chief of the United States Army Equal Employment Opportunity Office. Marshall sent the letter to a Miss Frances Lyon of Jacksonville, Florida, in February 1964. Parts of the letter appeared in the *Congressional Record* published on the 27 January 1964. Coordinating Committee for Fundamental American Freedoms, August 1963-April 1964 folder, BM.

by the CCFAF's ideas would sway congressional representatives into voting against the bill, the senators declared the CCFAF a peddler of "vicious propaganda" and strove to dismantle its accusations.<sup>106</sup> The firm, and somewhat panicked, response issued by congressmen further emphasises the impressive extent to which Synon was able to mobilise public opinion and highlights the significant threat the organisation posed to the successful passage of the bill. Given that non-southern political leaders rarely commented on segregationist efforts to shift public opinion, strong condemnation of the CCFAF suggests it was seen as a dangerous and exceptional oppositional force.

Further evidence of CCFAF success can be seen in the surprising support George Wallace received from white voters in the 1964 Democratic primaries in Indiana, Maryland, and Wisconsin. Aware that a sharp critique of the civil rights bill was a cornerstone of his campaign rhetoric, the CCFAF coordinated its campaign with Wallace's.<sup>107</sup> Wallace cited CCFAF publications as the best analysis of the civil rights bill's effects and used them in his speeches.<sup>108</sup> In each of the aforementioned states, the CCFAF placed a steady barrage of full-page advertisements in daily newspapers that have been credited as a decisive factor in securing Wallace's symbolic victories.<sup>109</sup> In celebration of his rocking the political establishment, the CCFAF published another full-page newspaper advertisement, "What the Wallace Vote Means to Democrats", which predicted massive political change in the US.<sup>110</sup> Synon and the CCFAF successfully tapped into growing conservative sentiment across the country, anticipating the new national conservative ascendancy which emerged by the end of the decade. Moreover, they had exposed a burgeoning national conservative constituency that shared many of the views and values held by segregationists in the South. The success of their efforts indicated to segregationist leaders that by abandoning the racist excesses of massive resistance and embracing "colour-blind" politics they could absorb themselves into a broader conservative countermovement growing across the country. In this way, the CCFAF and Synon as its media strategists were active players in development of a new national conservatism.

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<sup>106</sup> Johnston, *Mississippi's Defiant Years*, p. 243.

<sup>107</sup> Carter, *The Politics of Rage*, pp. 205-215. Wallace sought Synon's expertise in the run up to his primary campaign. Synon helped convince him to seek the presidency.

<sup>108</sup> Letter from Lowndes County Citizens for Constitutional Government to James Eastland, John Stennis, and Thomas Abernathy, n. d., Folder 19, Box SG22383, AGAF; "Wallace Carries Civil Rights Bill to North", *States Rights Advocate* (April 1964), p. 1.

<sup>109</sup> Leshner, *George Wallace*, p. 272; Johnston, *Mississippi's Defiant Years*, p. 243.

<sup>110</sup> "What the Wallace Vote Means to Democrats", *WP* (1 June 1964), p. A9.

Synon marketed states' rights, small government, and conservative constitutionalism effectively as American ideals, pioneering a strategic, considered, multifarious effort to forge a national conservative countermovement. By subverting race and with almost unlimited funds at his disposal, Synon secured a substantial platform from which to propagate the CCFAF's message on a mass scale. The CCFAF succeeded where other less media savvy, less well-financed, and less subtle segregationists did not. The JLC, for example, only managed to place a singular advertisement in the *New York Herald Tribune*. This examination of the CCFAF's strategy demonstrates that with an effective media strategy and well-designed material, segregationists could have a tangible impact and cause significant problems for supporters of civil rights. Other organisations, notably the VaCCG, would have benefitted from the guidance of an adept public relations technician like Synon, and massive resistance may have won more converts had the energetic and enthusiastic Virginian entered the fray earlier than 1963.

### **The *Citizens' Council Forum*: "A Crusade to Restore Americanism"?**

In spite of the stark differences between the CCFAF's and the VaCCG's strategies, the leaders of the two organisations appear to have shared a common indifference towards television. Whilst Synon spent huge sums of money to place full-page advertisements in newspapers, there are no records which indicate he purchased time on local television stations or invested funds in the production of audio-visual material. Indeed, no money was budgeted for television production at all.<sup>111</sup> Although CCFAF leaders did appear on a handful of television programmes, the organisation did not, by any stretch, establish a presence on the nation's most dominant medium. The reason why is suggested in plans for a new educational organisation to be formed out of the ashes of the CCFAF. Like Mays, Satterfield and Synon considered television intellectually moribund, unfit to publicise their respectable legislative critiques: "TV... people", those who watch it and those who produce it, "are 'show biz', with neither the background nor the desire to evaluate material submitted", they snarled, "they follow the popular trend; they are the eunuchs of thought".<sup>112</sup> Further testament to the unevenness and wide variety of

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<sup>111</sup> Condensed Budget for The CCFAF; Break-Down of Budget with Typical Projects. Founding documents state that the CCFAF proposed to "publicise the nature of the bill with *every facility available*". Memorandum Concerning Formation, Purpose and Operation of the CCFAF [emphasis added].

<sup>112</sup> Untitled Document, n. d., SCR ID # 6-70-0-128-1-1-1 – 6-70-0-128-26-1-1, quotation from SCR ID # 6-70-0-128-12-1-1, SCOC. For more on this new project see Letter from Synon to Carleton Putnam, 19 January 1965, Folder 10, Box 450, TRW.

segregationist media strategy, a range of resisters disagreed with Mays, Satterfield and Synon's sentiments and sought to harness television to promote states' rights and conservative constitutionalism to the nation.

From 1957 to 1966 the CCA produced a weekly fifteen-minute public affairs panel-interview television and radio programme, the *Citizens' Council Forum*, which aired throughout the US. No segregationist group was more ambitious in its attempts to court non-southern opinion and the *Forum* was its most important media endeavour. Between 1958 and 1962 it broadcast its most far-reaching and focused campaign to frame massive resistance within broader national concerns of states' rights and constitutional government. In this four-year period, the *Forum's* producers mobilised a strident states' rights narrative in the Councils' most significant and substantial campaign to shift public opinion at the national level. It was a truly mammoth effort which marshalled resources and support of subsidiary Citizens' Councils and members across the South. Council and segregationist leaders in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Virginia marketed the *Forum* inside and outside the South, raised funds to finance its expansion, and deferred to the television show as the official voice of the Council movement, placing greater importance on it than their individual "educational" programmes.<sup>113</sup> Local Councils affiliated with the CCA paid dues which contributed to the *Forum*, members championed the programme as the South's most important resistance initiative, and politicians from every southern state appeared as panellists on the show throughout its time on air.<sup>114</sup> The *Forum* was a truly collaborative media effort, with operatives across the South supporting and propelling the CCA's bold campaign, all

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<sup>113</sup> Letter from William J. Simmons to Governor of Alabama John Patterson, 28 September 1959, Folder 1, Box 3, SE; Letter from Walter C. Givhan to Sam Engelhardt, 24 September 1959, Folder 1, Box 3, SE; Letter from William J. Simmons to Thomas R. Waring, Jr., 16 February 1959, Folder 4, Box 393, TRW; Letter from William J. Simmons to Rainach, 25 May 1959, Folder 132, Box 13, WMR; Letter from Manning Gasch (President of the Commonwealth of Virginia Association of Citizens' Councils) to William J. Simmons, 25 June 1959, Folder 62, Box 6, WMR; Letter from Rainach to Willard L. Cobb (General Manager KALB-TV), 9 June 1959, Folder 79, Box 8, WMR; Minutes: Meeting of Board of Directors Citizens' Council of Louisiana, Inc., 13 July 1963, Folder 62, Box 5, NT; "Massive, Interlocking Program of Public Contact", n. d., Folder 78, Box 6, NT; Letter from W. A. Lufburrow (Executive Director of the Georgia States' Rights Council) to Richard B. Russell, 26 October 1959, Folder 6, Box I.41, SEV; Letter from Lufburrow to The Honorable Senators and Representatives of the General Assembly of Georgia, 21 October 1959, Folder 6, Box I.41, SEV; Letter from Lufburrow to Governor of Georgia Ernest Vandiver, 26 October 1959, Folder 6, Box I.41, SEV.

<sup>114</sup> 20% of all dues went to the *Forum*. "Application for Membership" in *White Book of Citizens' Council Organization* (Jackson: The Citizens' Council, Inc., 1962), n. p. Grassroots members within their local "Information and Education Committee" were instructed to promote the programme to station managers and within their community. "Functions of Committees" in *White Book of Citizens' Council Organization*. Jackson Ricau, Address delivered to the Executive Club, July 8, 1960 (Metairie: SLCC, 1960), pp. 1-3, Folder 5, Box 2, KLR; Citizens' Council Forums Collection Inventory held in CCRF.

confident that harnessing television effectively could turn the tide in the battle over public opinion.

The *Forum* is one of the most striking examples of segregationists' efforts to harness mass media. Yet, it has received little attention from historians of massive resistance or media and remains an underutilised collection of primary source material. Those who have commented on the *Forum* tend to reproduce Numan V. Bartley's broad assessment of segregationist propaganda strategies. "Southern propagandists", Bartley declared, "relied primarily upon the endless repetition of three basic – and largely spurious – propositions": states' rights, the alleged biological inferiority of African Americans, and the claim that the quest for social justice was a communist plot.<sup>115</sup> Yasuhiro Katagiri reduces the programmes to a steady stream of "southern politicians and some experts" expounding their "lofty views" on states' rights, "outlandish stories on the 'worldwide Communist conspiracy' in the civil rights struggle, alleged black inferiority, and the 'vice' of interracial dating and marriages".<sup>116</sup> Echoing Katagiri, Steven D. Classen dismisses the *Forum* in an equally brief analysis which judges it to have been "very narrow in topical scope" consisting of "discussions of integration and communism veiled within the language of 'states' rights' concerns".<sup>117</sup> These accounts of the *Forum* do not treat it as a discrete body of work and their shallow analyses suggest that scholars have not viewed a substantial number of the programmes.<sup>118</sup> As this chapter has demonstrated, segregationists' rhetoric and media strategies were not always rudimentary repetitions of anachronistic aphorisms, particularly with respect to their invocation of states' rights and Constitutional government. The *Forum* is no exception here. Having clearly watched a far larger amount of the broadcasts, Stephanie R. Rolph appreciates the *Forum's* significance and sophistication, remarking on its use of race-free language "to market their message to a broader audience".<sup>119</sup> Yet her study does not acknowledge the *Forum* as a collaborative venture or place it in conversation with concomitant campaigns which mobilised the language of states' rights. Most importantly, it does not recognise the period of programming between 1958 and 1962 as a distinct media campaign with a tightly worked narrative or explore how *Forum* producers harnessed the unique qualities

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<sup>115</sup> Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance*, p. 184.

<sup>116</sup> Katagiri, *Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission*, p. 28.

<sup>117</sup> Classen, *Watching Jim Crow*, p. 38.

<sup>118</sup> The study presented here is based on the analysis of 130 instalments of the *Forum* which amounts to around 4,500 minutes of viewing.

<sup>119</sup> Rolph, *Resisting Equality*, p. 127.

of television to promulgate this. Scholars examining the expansion of television in this period have also overlooked how the CCA sought to co-opt the medium to foment a conservative counterrevolution and those exploring the role of mass media in the emergence of a new conservatism at the end of the 1960s disregard the CCA's efforts completely.<sup>120</sup> This analysis intervenes in the historiography to demonstrate that the *Forum's* producers constructed a sophisticated and strategic media campaign to sell segregation. In doing so, it transforms our understanding of the battle over American hearts and minds.

This exploration of the *Forum* also complicates David Chappell's compartmentalising of the Councils into the "Racial Purist" subset of his segregationist binary.<sup>121</sup> The *Forum's* race-free programming between 1958 and 1962 defies this categorisation. Nevertheless, it would be short-sighted to place the Councils in the opposing category in Chappell's formulation based solely on the *Forum*; they were not entirely "Constitutionalist" either. The CCA resists Chappell's binary because it implemented a multiplatform media strategy with strategically divergent rhetoric. While producing the *Forum* it was also publishing *The Citizens' Council* newspaper, which featured overtly racist cartoons. The CCA sought to cast a wide net by pursuing a number of different strategies concurrently.

The *Forum's* states' rights campaign opened in 1958 when the show shifted from parochial Mississippi-centric programming to spread its "light of truth and logic" to audiences beyond Mississippi.<sup>122</sup> Its producers, William J. Simmons and Richard D. "Dick" Morphew, initiated this campaign by making two precise changes. First, the CCA took control of the *Forum* from the Mississippi Councils. This allowed the CCA to draw funds from ancillary Councils across the region to expand *Forum* programming.<sup>123</sup> Second, Simmons and Morphew worked with Senator James O. Eastland and Representative John Bell Williams to move production of the show to the US

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<sup>120</sup> See, for example, Watson, *Expanding Vista*; Spigel and Curtin, *The Revolution Wasn't Televised*; Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV*; MacDonald, *Blacks and White TV*; Bodroghkozy, *Equal Time*; Hendershot, *What's Fair on the Air?*; Thrift, *Conservative Bias*; Hemmer, *Messengers of the Right*.

<sup>121</sup> Chappell, "The Divided Mind of Southern Segregationists", p. 58.

<sup>122</sup> "Why an Educational Fund Is Necessary for Victory", *TCC* (April 1957), p. 4. In December 1957, *The Citizens' Council* newspaper conceded that "[s]ince the program originates out of Jackson, most heavily represented is Mississippi". Simmons explained the Mississippi Citizens' Councils lacked the funds to expand the *Forum's* distribution. "Council Offers Radio Program", *TCC* (December 1957), p. 4; William J. Simmons, "Let's Face It: An Editorial", *TCC* (September 1957), p. 1.

<sup>123</sup> "Organising For Victory", *TCC* (April 1959), p. 2.



government's recording studios in Washington D.C.<sup>124</sup> Broadcasting directly from the nation's capital was an expedient tactical decision. It afforded greater access to a wide range of politicians, which would enable it to highlight the purportedly broad geographic support for the Councils' cause.<sup>125</sup> Unfettered access to the studios and equipment also reduced production costs dramatically because the rates for a congressional studio were "a fraction of the rates charged by a commercial establishment", which allowed funding to be focused on distribution.<sup>126</sup> Filming on Capitol Hill infused the CCA's campaign with a sense of professionalism and legitimacy. *The Citizens' Council* newspaper even co-opted the image of the Capitol Building to enhance the appeal of its advertisements for the *Forum*, proclaiming it was exposing the "propaganda" of the mainstream national media by reporting "The Truth For A Change".<sup>127</sup> The variety of attire sported by three marvelling onlookers was designed to emphasise that the programme catered to a broad audience, in terms of geography and socio-economic status (Fig. 2.5). It positions representations of an Easterner, a Southerner, and a Westerner stood alongside each other equally in awe of the "truth" transmitted by the *Forum*. 1958, then, was a turning point for the *Forum*, cementing it as the Councils' most prized propaganda outlet.<sup>128</sup>

Simmons formally announced a shift in programming in the June 1958 edition of *The Citizens' Council*, declaring proudly the *Forum* would soon take the Councils' message to "the entire nation".<sup>129</sup> Whilst the show's listings indicated it was broadcast by television and radio stations based predominantly in the South, its reach would expand rapidly due to diligent Council activity and the financial resources this generated.<sup>130</sup> Simmons himself promoted the *Forum* energetically, claiming to have personally sent a brochure containing information about the show to "6,500... television and radio station[s] in the forty nine

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<sup>124</sup> William J. Simmons, interview by Charles Pearce, tape, 9, 11, 23 September 1981, MDAH. Senator Eastland had long been an advocate for expanding the reach of massive resistance propaganda beyond the borders of the South. See, "Excerpts From Speech Made by James O. Eastland" attached to Letter from John U. Barr to "Fellow Americans", November 1955, Reel 56 (F46), RWC.

<sup>125</sup> The editors of *TCC* were particularly excited about the move because it meant the *Forum* could host the, supposedly, "large number of distinguished guests who are eager to take part in the series". "Councils Take Lead In TV-Radio", *TCC* (June 1958), p. 1.

<sup>126</sup> McMillen, *The Citizens' Council*, p. 39; Cook, *The Segregationists*, p. 83; Carter, *The South Strikes Back*, p. 188.

<sup>127</sup> "Organising For Victory", p. 2; "Councils Take Lead In TV-Radio", p. 1.

<sup>128</sup> In 1962, James Graham Cook stated that since 1958 the Councils' "most important propaganda vehicle has been its radio-TV 'forum'". Cook, *The Segregationists*, p. 81.

<sup>129</sup> "Council Take Lead In TV-Radio", p. 1.

<sup>130</sup> In June 1958, the *Forum* was broadcast in Washington, D.C., and the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia. "Citizens' Council Forum on TV and Radio", *TCC* (June 1958), p. 3; Letter from Simmons to Rainach, 25 May 1959.

states”, and offered the *Forum* “free of charge” as a public service.<sup>131</sup> By April 1959, it was carried by stations broadcasting in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming.<sup>132</sup> As its national reach grew, it nevertheless retained its southern audience. In contrast to the VaCCG and the CCFAF, the CCA considered maintaining white southern support as important as winning the backing of northern conservatives. Recognising early on that many of the ideological touchstones of segregationism were shared by conservatives to the North and the West, *Forum* producers deployed the same media strategy to reach both demographics.

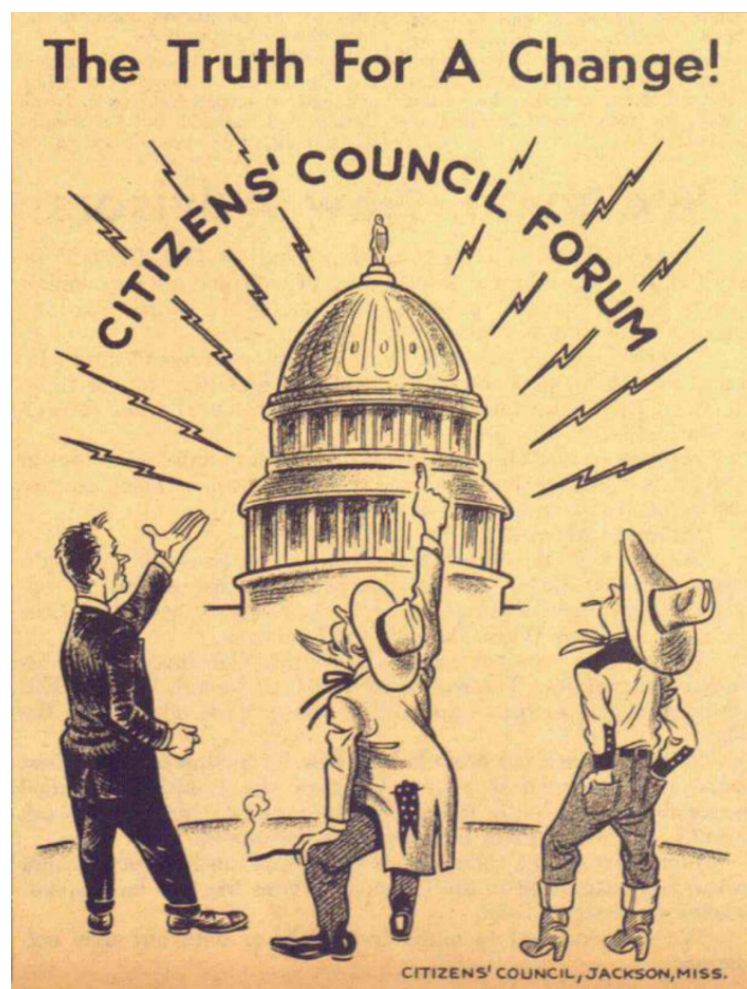


Fig. 2.5 – Advertisement for the *Citizens' Council Forum*. “The Truth For A Change”, *The Citizens' Council* (April 1959), p. 1.

<sup>131</sup> Letter from Simmons to Rainach, 25 May 1959, Folder 132, Box 13, WMR.

<sup>132</sup> “Citizens' Council Forum on TV and Radio”, *TCC* (April 1959), p. 3.

Rival segregationists at the time and historians since have disputed the purported reach of the *Forum*.<sup>133</sup> However, analysis of the radio and television listings across state newspapers reveals it was broadcast regularly in Deep South, the border states, and as far afield as Arizona, Iowa, and Ohio.<sup>134</sup> Television and radio schedules indicate a further increase in the *Forum*'s potential viewership in 1960 after it received a hefty funding injection from the MSSC. On becoming Governor of Mississippi in 1960, Ross Barnett issued an immediate payment of \$20,000 to support production of the *Forum* and pledged a further payment of \$5,000 per month to boost distribution.<sup>135</sup> Appropriation of Mississippi's tax funds to "the privately-operated White Citizens Council Forum to publicise racial segregation views throughout the nation" was announced in newspapers throughout the United States.<sup>136</sup> Feature articles on the *Forum* and comments made by the programme's guests were also printed regularly around the country by newspaper editors from across the political spectrum, further testifying to its national impact.<sup>137</sup> Its states' rights campaign between 1958 and 1962 was a national phenomenon.

The *Forum* represented an ideological break from CCA-sponsored newssheets and print media, which addressed race directly alongside discussions of states' rights.<sup>138</sup> *Forum* producers, like VaCCG and CCFAF strategists, eschewed crude appeals to racial fears completely in a race-free narrative focused resolutely on the constitutional principle of states' rights. Early CCA policy documents indicate Simmons and Council leaders

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<sup>133</sup> Johnston, *Mississippi's Defiant Years*, pp. 236-238; McMillen, *The Citizens' Council*, pp. 337, 347-348.

<sup>134</sup> The *Forum* is listed in the Radio and Television schedules in *The Anniston Star* (Alabama), *The Signal* (Arizona), *The Arizona Republic*, *Hope Star* (Arkansas), *Thomasville Times-Enterprise* (Georgia), *Ames Daily Tribune* (Iowa), *Cedar Rapids Tribune* (Iowa), *Ruston Daily Leader* (Louisiana), *The Daily Herald* (Mississippi), *Rocky Mount Telegram* (North Carolina), the *Hamilton Daily News Journal* (Ohio), *Wichita Falls Times* (Texas), *Amarillo Sunday News-Globe* (Texas), and *The Hamilton Herald-News* (Texas). The newspaper database <https://access.newspaperarchive.com/> was used to carry out this analysis. This list should not be considered comprehensive, since not every newspaper in the US is catalogued and searchable. This is merely an indicator of the wide reach the *Forum* achieved and it is likely that the programme was broadcast in states other than those listed.

<sup>135</sup> Johnston, *Mississippi's Defiant Years*, p. 102; Lewis, "Segregationists' Use of Media", p. 166. No records exist to explain why Barnett appropriated funds. He may have been genuinely impressed with the *Forum* or it may have been based purely on his close personal alliance with the Councils.

<sup>136</sup> "Aids Citizens Council", *Lebanon Daily News*, Lebanon, Pennsylvania (July 8, 1960), p. 11. The <https://access.newspaperarchive.com/> newspaper database confirms same story was published in Arizona, California, Connecticut, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. It was originally a United Press International story written in Jackson, Mississippi.

<sup>137</sup> Most of the articles were written by the Associated Press or United Press International and picked up over the wire by newspaper editors in various parts of the country. See for example Ralph McGill, "Rebirth of Hope", *The Gazette* (14 November 1962), p. 4; "College Girls Say Walkout Was Protest Of Forum Procedure", *Elmira Advertiser* (16 May 1960), p. 12; "Sen. Talmadge Seeks Unity Among Southern Senators", *The Daily Plainsman* (27 March, 1960), p. 1; "Stennis Says Censors Show Over Caution", *Kingsport Times-News* (11 March 1962), p. 2-A.

<sup>138</sup> For examples of the more race-based appeals made by segregationists see Chapter 1 and McMillen, *The Citizens' Council*, pp. 37, 107.

considered this to be the most effective way to attain broad, national support.<sup>139</sup> With *Forum* they sought to present the Councils and massive resistance as “the substantial beginnings of a fundamental conservative revolt”.<sup>140</sup> Morpew, the show’s anchor as well as its producer, and his guests framed their defence of states’ rights as vital to the preservation of American liberty, not solely the preservation of segregated schools. They sought to rehabilitate segregation within states’ rights, to market states’ rights as a national issue and an American ideal, and depict the segregationist South’s interests as identical to any Americans with an interest in maintaining the status quo. As *The Citizens’ Council* explained to its readers, the *Forum* was “nationwide in scope” in order “to spread the doctrine of true Americanism throughout our land”.<sup>141</sup> Guests quoted the “prophetic words” of the Founding Fathers to warn against the dangers of “centralisation” and position states’ rights as “the foundation of our type of government” and a sacred American political tradition.<sup>142</sup> It also played host to conservative politicians from the North and West who shared its political outlook and discussed states’ rights problems in their home states, such as Representative Noah M. Mason of Illinois, Representative Carl T. Curtis of Nebraska, and, notably, Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona.<sup>143</sup>

To dramatise the states’ rights narrative, the *Forum* exploited broader Cold War concerns and the pervasive anti-communist impulses of the American public.<sup>144</sup> This distinguishes the *Forum* from the other groups examined in this chapter which avoided anticommunist rhetoric altogether to preserve the purity of their legal arguments,

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<sup>139</sup> Citizens’ Council of America Meeting – October 12, 1956, Folder 87, Box 6, NT. See also, William J. Simmons, “Race in America: The Conservative Stand”, in Huston Smith (ed.), *The Search for America* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1959), p. 63.

<sup>140</sup> For example, “An Address by William J. Simmons, Administrator, Citizens’ Councils of Mississippi, Before the Farmers-Merchants Annual Banquet, Oakland, Iowa, February 3, 1958”, held within the FBI files on the Citizens’ Council Movement. <https://archive.org/stream/CitizensCouncilMovement/Citizens%20Council%20Movement-HQ-8#page/n0/mode/2up> [Accessed 20 January 2018] For the full speech see pp. 109-134. Quotation from p. 133 (p. 24 of the speech transcript).]

<sup>141</sup> “Organising For Victory”, p. 2.

<sup>142</sup> Ovie Clark Fisher, William Bray, and Arthur Winstead, “Discussion of the Federal Government’s take over of power from state governments”, 1958, CCF, Reel #088, CCFF. Strom Thurmond, “Attempts to change Senate seniority rules”, 1958, CCF, Reel #072, CCFF;

<sup>143</sup> Noah M. Mason, “States’ rights from a northerner’s point of view, constitutional rights, and federal troops in Little Rock”, 1958, CCF, Reel #052, CCFF; Carl T. Curtis, “The usurpation by the federal government of powers belonging to the states”, 1961, CCF, Reel #103, CCFF; Barry Goldwater, “The power of organised labour and states’ rights in the West”, 1959, CCF, Reel #050, CCFF.

<sup>144</sup> For authoritative works of American anticommunism, M. J. Heale, *American Anticommunism: Combatting the Enemy Within, 1830-1970* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1990); M. J. Heale, *McCarthy’s Americans: Red Scare Politics in State and Nation, 1935-1965* (London: MacMillan Press, 1998); Richard Gid Powers, *Not Without Honor: The History of American Anticommunism in the Cold War Era* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

providing another example of the unevenness of segregationist ideology and strategy.<sup>145</sup> Of course, the CCFAF's warnings of an "omnipotent president" and "federal dictatorship" played to communist fears, but they did so implicitly and were far removed from the rabid, redbaiting extremism of some segregationist groups.<sup>146</sup> Although it was more explicit than the VaCCG or the CCFAF, the *Forum* avoided redbaiting individuals or organisations involved in the civil rights movement, arguing instead that the preservation of states' rights was necessary to defend the nation from communist infiltration.<sup>147</sup> Across the *Forum* programming, Morphey repeatedly asserted that "the maintenance of the sovereign powers of the state" was essential to "the maintenance of a sound system of national security".<sup>148</sup> Ben Jenson, a Republican Congressman from Iowa, argued that the alleged push for centralisation compromised the nation's security because one government is more susceptible to communist subversion than forty-eight separate governments.<sup>149</sup> In this way, the programme recast states' rights as a national security imperative. Its strategic manipulation of the American public's fear of communism reinforced states' rights as a national concern and imbued its narrative with a sense of urgency other legalistic media campaigns lacked: if viewers did not act immediately to preserve states' rights, the erosion of American democracy led by communist agents would continue unchecked.

The CCA's impressive use of television stands out and separated them from their contemporaries as well as from advocates of white supremacy in previous decades. Whilst other local and state Councils groups also produced television programmes, they were short-lived and achieved nowhere near the same reach as the *Forum*.<sup>150</sup> The CCA understood the power and influence of television on public opinion and recognised its

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<sup>145</sup> The VaCCG produced one pamphlet dealing with the "awful menace of Communist expansion" and labelled this publication "an exception". Charles Malik, "Will the Future Redeem the Past?", *Historic Statements and Papers Expounding the Role of the States in Their Relation to the Central Government* (4<sup>th</sup> in the Series, Richmond: VaCCG, June 1960), p. foreword. George Lewis explores the disparate mobilisation of anticommunism by massive resisters in Lewis, *The White South*. See also, Lewis, "Virginia's Northern Strategy", pp. 120-123.

<sup>146</sup> "\$100 Billion Blackjack"; *The Federal Eyes Looking Down Your Throat!*.

<sup>147</sup> In the years after 1962 guests engaged in more brazen acts of red-baiting. See, for example, Myers Lowman, "Executive Secretary of Circuit Riders, Inc., an anti-Communist organization, discusses civil rights organizations which he believes are communist fronts", 1963, CCF, Reel #033, CCFF; Edward Hunter, "News management' by communist sympathizers", 1963, CCF, Reel #067, CCFF.

<sup>148</sup> Morphey quoted in Fisher, Bray, and Winstead, Reel #088 (1958), CCF.

<sup>149</sup> Ben Jensen and John B. Trevor, Jr., "American Coalition of Patriotic Societies and Immigration", 1959, CCF, Reel #019, CCFF. Lewis notes that Virginia's DSSIL made similar arguments in radio broadcasts aired in 1957. George Lewis, "White South, Red Nation: Massive Resistance and the Cold War", in Webb, *Massive Resistance*, p. 130.

<sup>150</sup> The Louisiana Citizens' Councils, for example, directed a short four-week series that aired on Sundays on WRBZ Channel 2 at Baton Rouge. "Louisiana Councils Go On Television", *TCC* (August 1957), p. 1.

position as dominant media form in the nation.<sup>151</sup> Indeed, Council leaders had spent two years prior to the *Forum*'s expansion "studying the use of television to inform the people of the South and, eventually, the entire nation".<sup>152</sup> The CCA also made a wise decision in hiring Morpew ahead of the *Forum*'s expansion so that he could advise on production before serving as the show's anchor and the public face of the Council movement. He was a graduate of the University of Missouri School of Journalism and an experienced television news reporter, having worked for television stations in Kansas City, Missouri, and Jackson, Mississippi, where he was headhunted by Council officials.<sup>153</sup> The results of Simmons research and the extent of Morpew's expertise are wholly evident in the quality and sophistication of the finished product broadcast over the American airwaves.

Simmons and Morpew modelled the *Forum* on successful political public affairs programmes, *Meet the Press*, *Face the Nation*, and *Longines Chronoscope*, adopting the serious and substantive panel-interview format they had pioneered. At the most basic level, adopting the style and appearance of well-established talk shows positioned the *Forum* within a genre associated with high-minded, nonpartisan discussion; it tapped into existing notions of credibility and respectably attached to the genre.<sup>154</sup> The interview format also offered more practical strategic benefits. By featuring different guests each week from various parts of the country, the *Forum* presented its core ideology as universal rather than the repetitious harangues of a lone demagogue or a small group of like-minded individuals. The question and answer exchange, rather than scripted statements, created the impression that the ultra-conservative ideas posited in response to Morpew's questions were spontaneous and instinctive, thereby framing the *Forum*'s ideology as the natural state of American political thought. In this sense, the *Forum* practised what Bernard M. Timberg now calls "television talk", a guiding principle of talk shows which involves presenting viewers with a discussion that is "unscripted yet highly planned and invariably anchored by an announcer [or] host".<sup>155</sup> Ahead of filming each episode of the show, Morpew liaised with guests to formulate "a rough outline" of the program and

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<sup>151</sup> Carter, *The South Strikes Back*, pp. 82-84; Cook, *The Segregationists*, p. 81; McMillen, *The Citizens' Council*, p. 38.

<sup>152</sup> "Councils Take Lead In TV-Radio".

<sup>153</sup> McMillen, *The Citizens' Council*, p. 125; Cook, *The Segregationists*, p. 83.

<sup>154</sup> The conventions and characteristics of the panel-interview television format are discussed in, Steve M. Barkin, *American Television News: The Media Marketplace and the Public Interest* (New York: Routledge, 2003) p. 84.

<sup>155</sup> Bernard M. Timberg, *Television Talk: A History of the Talk Show* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), p. 3. "Television talk" is based on what sociologist Erving Goffman terms "fresh talk", that is, talk which seems spontaneous but may well be planned or staged. Goffman, *Forms of Talk* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), p. 171.

provided a set of possible questions as well as an summary of the *Forum's* format and core message in the expectation that guests would prepare their replies accordingly. They were instructed that discussion should be “based on the necessity of maintaining our Constitutional form of government and protecting the rights of states and individuals against the encroachments of an increasingly-centralised and all-powerful Federal government”. To maintain a clear and robust message, Morpew directed guests to express their views “soundly and lucidly” and “in unequivocal terms”.<sup>156</sup> Morpew and Simmons both appreciated how the “live” quality of television talk shows could imbue the ideas expressed with a sense of integrity as well as authenticity, thereby creating the impression that the show was “completely non-partisan”.<sup>157</sup> Morpew also guided guests through the conversation when the camera was rolling to ensure discussion conformed to the *Forum's* core narrative. If guests were not articulating the *Forum's* message effectively or descended into the dense legalese that characterised VaCCG publications, Morpew related their comments to the core themes, restated their arguments in simpler terms for a more general audience, and steered the conversation back towards the nationwide significance of the federal government’s apparent assault on states’ rights.

Morpew proved to be a skilled anchor. His interview style resembled, and likely emulated, the direct, sombre, and pointed delivery of more serious contemporary television journalists, including William Bradford Huie, Edward Murrow, Mike Wallace, Chet Huntley, and David Brinkley, and corresponded to what was characteristic of highbrow political programmes of the time.<sup>158</sup> He avoided a more anecdotal and informal style of entertainment television hosts such as Arthur Godfrey and Steve Allen.<sup>159</sup> He spoke, as one contemporary observer noted, in “that diaphragmatic, studiously mellifluous manner characteristic of radio-video performers” in an accent without any distinct

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<sup>156</sup> For example: Letter and attachments from Morpew to Herman E. Talmadge, 19 July 1959, Folder 17, Box 301, Subgroup C, Series 2: Press Office, HET; “Suggested Questions for Senator Talmadge for Citizens Council Forum Program”, n. d., Folder 6, Box 300, Subgroup C, Series 2, HET.

<sup>157</sup> An informational brochure assured prospective viewers the “live” quality” of the programme’s format ensured it maintained a “completely non-partisan” editorial line. “Facts About... Citizens’ Council Forum... the AMERICAN Viewpoint with a SOUTHERN Accent!” attached to Letter from Simmons to Editorial Board State Executive Committee Jackson Directors, 12 February 1959, Folder 48, Box 5, WMR.

<sup>158</sup> For discussion of the serious, highbrow style of contemporary television journalists, Timberg, *Television Talk*, pp. 21-28, 51-54; Barkin, *American Television News*, pp. 83-85; Robert J. Erler and Bernard M. Timberg, “A Taxonomy of Television Talk”, in Timberg, *Television Talk*, pp. 199-200; Robert J. Erler, “A Guide to Television Talk”, in Timberg, *Television Talk*, p. 220.

<sup>159</sup> For discussion of the anecdotal, informal style adopted by hosts of entertainment show, Timberg, *Television Talk*, pp. 29-33, 45-47; Robert J. Erler and Bernard M. Timberg, “A Taxonomy of Television Talk”, in Timberg, *Television Talk*, pp. 200-201.



regional characteristics. This too served as an aural reminder that the programme was “non-sectional”.<sup>160</sup>

Morphew epitomised contemporary understandings of what made an effective and persuasive television persona. He created and sustained a “bond of intimacy” with audiences, welcoming viewers, inviting them as active participants into the conversation in a close-up, “face-to-face” introduction, addressing the camera directly at intervals throughout the show, and closing the programme with a signature sign-off: “Thanks a lot for being with us, so long everybody”.<sup>161</sup> His open conversational style, free from overly-intellectual jargon allowed viewers to relate to him and the ideas presented without need for pre-existing knowledge, ensuring each programme was accessible to the “average or typical spectator”.<sup>162</sup> Expressing genuine interest in his guests’ ideas and maintaining a convivial demeanour throughout the broadcasts, his performance was sincere and warm, crafted to generate loyalty and sympathy from viewers.<sup>163</sup> In an attempt to manage viewers’ responses, the *Forum* established clear roles for Morpheu, guests, and viewers. By introducing the programme as a means of “mobilising public opinion”, declaring at the outset “informed people will not surrender their freedom”, and depicting Morpheu and his guests as “paragons of middle-class virtue”, the *Forum* positioned Morpheu and his guests as educators and viewers as learners in a didactic exchange. Correspondingly, Morpheu provided viewers with “a model of appropriate role performance”, cordially accepting the conservative views of his guests to reinforce the *Forum*’s “coaching of audience attitudes”.<sup>164</sup> By establishing careful techniques, Morpheu and Simmons cultivated and sustained what a study of television personalities published in 1956 termed “para-social interaction”: an “intimate, face-to-face relationship”, maintained at a distance and controlled by the television persona. As a para-social relationship develops, Donald Horton and R. Richard Wohl argue, viewers’ compliance

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<sup>160</sup> Cook, *The Segregationists*, p. 83; “Facts About... Citizens’ Council Forum... the AMERICAN Viewpoint with a SOUTHERN Accent!”.

<sup>161</sup> Donald Horton and R. Richard Wohl state that “an unvarying characteristic of... ‘personality’ programs” was the creation of “an illusion of intimacy”. Donald Horton and R. Richard Wohl, “Mass Communication and Para-Social Interaction: Observations on Intimacy at a Distance”, *Psychiatry: Interpersonal and Biological Processes: A Journal of the Washington School of Psychiatry*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (1956), p. 217.

<sup>162</sup> Horton and Wohl, “Mass Communication”, p. 221.

<sup>163</sup> Contemporary publicity experts and press agents expected audiences to reward a television persona’s sincerity with loyalty and respond sympathetically to ideas presented in a kind-hearted manner. Robert K. Merton, Marjorie Fiske, and Alberta Curtis, *Mass Persuasion; The Social Psychology of a War Bond Drive* (New York: Harper, 1946), pp. 142-146; Mervyn LeRoy and Alyce Canfield, *It Takes More Than Talent* (New York: Knopf, 1953), p. 114.

<sup>164</sup> For discussion of the coaching of audience attitudes, Horton and Wohl, “Mass Communication”, pp. 226, 223.



increases, as does the television persona's influence over "the situation defined by the program" and "the values realised" by the audience.<sup>165</sup>

As well as enabling the development of a "para-social relationship", the weekly episodic format was effective in establishing, developing, and reinforcing a clear, well-defined narrative. Reflecting contemporary public relations conventions, ideas portrayed and expressed on the *Forum* were embodied "over and over again, in ever varied form" to generate an overarching story line.<sup>166</sup> Edward L. Bernays, considered the "father of public relations" in the mid-twentieth century, declared this an essential part of any campaign to shift public opinion, particularly those campaigns which relied on television.<sup>167</sup> Similar ideas continue to prevail over 60 years on. As Mark McKinnon, media strategist for the successful presidential campaigns of George W. Bush in 2000 and 2004, declared: "successful campaigns tell a story". The strongest, most fundamental way to build a powerful "narrative architecture", he explained, is to "identify a threat or an opportunity, fear or hope. There's a victim of the threat or the denied opportunity, a villain, a resolution, and a hero".<sup>168</sup> The *Forum* broadcasts aired between 1958 and 1962 adopted these conventions. The threat was an end to state sovereignty and American constitutional government, which would result, it was argued, in tyrannical, despotic centralisation. The villains were conceived as a corrupt federal government and communistic "outside agitators" for civil rights. The resolution was organised resistance mobilised by the hero, the Citizens' Councils, through the *Citizens' Council Forum*. Morphew and Simmons upheld this narrative resolutely and filmed multiple *Forum* episodes successively to ensure it was maintained and consistent.<sup>169</sup> This clear, repetitious, protracted approach distinguishes it from the CCFAF and VaCCG's propaganda campaigns. It demonstrates the CCA's media expertise and sharp understanding of how to exploit television effectively.

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<sup>165</sup> Horton and Wohl, "Mass Communication", pp. 215, 219, 228. See also, Timberg, *Television Talk*, p. 4.

<sup>166</sup> Edward L. Bernays, "The Theory and Practice of Public Relations: A Résumé", in Bernays, *The Engineering of Consent*, p. 16. See also, Edward L. Bernays, "The Engineering of Consent", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 250, No. 1 (March 1947), p. 118.

<sup>167</sup> Ann Douglas, *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s* (New York: The Noonday Press, 1996), p. 34; "Edward Bernays, 'Father of Public Relations' And Leader in Opinion Making, Dies at 103", *NYT* (10 March 1995), p. B7; Horton and Wohl, "Mass Communication and Para-Social Interaction", p. 216; Barkin, *American Television News* p. 58.

<sup>168</sup> Mark McKinnon quoted in Sarah Klein and Tom Mason, "How to Win an Election", *New York Times* (18 February 2016). <http://www.nytimes.com/video/opinion/100000004216589/how-to-win-an-election.html?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&version=timesvideo-heading&clickSource=story-heading&module=watch-in-times-video&region=video-player-region&WT.nav=video-player-region> [Accessed 19 February 2016]

<sup>169</sup> Letter from Simmons to William H. Burson, 16 June 1959, Folder 17, Box 301, Subgroup C, Series 2, HET.

The *Forum*'s visual aesthetic was well-designed and connoted that the campaign for states' rights was, as Senator Eastland avowed, "a crusade to restore Americanism".<sup>170</sup> The Stars and Stripes in the studio and the image of the Capitol Building gleaming through the windows (Fig. 2.6) created the impression that the ideas presented were of national political concern, its guests' opinions coming from the heart of America. Whilst initially this may appear to stand in direct contradiction to a states' rights narrative, it was an expedient strategic decision, not least because those visual touchstones reinforced the CCA's contentions that the show was non-partisan and non-sectional. By adopting the Capitol as an icon of *Forum* programming, states' rights was presented as a fundamental tenet of American politics and positioned southern political traditions as the "true" embodiment of American democracy. These visual motifs reassured viewers that the CCA did not embrace radical ideas of secession or revolutionary anti-federalism. It was a pictorial endorsement of the *Forum*'s "patriotic and responsible" message, which called for "balance" to be restored and an end to federal encroachment.<sup>171</sup> The opening and closing credits also featured slogans and images that complemented the narrative agenda. The opening refrain announced the *Forum* as: "The American Viewpoint with a Southern Accent", instantly locating the interests of white southerners as indistinct from those of other Americans. The phrase opened every show prior to 1962 and was the by-line of the *Forum*'s listings in *The Citizens' Council* (Fig. 2.7). The telecasts closed by reiterating states' rights as an American principle and declaring a degenerate judiciary and power-hungry federal government were defiling the sovereignty of the states. In this way, the preservation of states' rights was branded as a cause not exclusively tied to the preservation of segregation. The balance between the *Forum*'s tightly worked narrative content, professional format and production, and Morphey's development of a "para-social relationship" was enhanced by the use of patriotic imagery and the programme's provident bookends. All of these highlight the skill with which the CCA harnessed the unique qualities of television to promote its message.

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<sup>170</sup> Eastland quoted in Johnston, *Mississippi's Defiant Years*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>171</sup> "Citizens' Council Forum" brochure attached to Letter from Simmons to the Members of the Alabama Senate and House of Representatives, 25 September 1959, Folder 1, Box 3, SE.



Fig. 2.6 – US Representative from Georgia E. L. “Tic” Forrester, Richard D. “Dick” Morphew, and US Representative from Michigan August E. Johansen (From Left to Right) on the set of the *Citizens’ Council Forum Films* in 1959. Box 82, Series VII: Photographs, E. L. (Tic) Forrester Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia.



Fig. 2.7 – Header for the *Citizens’ Council Forum* listings. “Citizens’ Council Forum on TV and Radio”, *The Citizens’ Council* (June 1958), p. 3.

Nevertheless, some guests at pains to remove race and regional exclusivity from their discussion fell into exposing the deficiencies of the *Forum*’s states’ rights argument. They openly referenced the Civil War when castigating federal encroachment, suggestive of the segregationist context of states’ rights and historic links to the suppression of African Americans. Mississippi Senator John Stennis, for example, stressed the “grave danger and the very serious consequences to our constitutional system [when change is forced on the South] through the use of bayonets”, while Eastland referred to federal

encroachment as an “invasion” of the South.<sup>172</sup> Open correlations with the white South’s mythologising of the Civil War as “the War of northern aggression” and Reconstruction as an illegal occupation equated the contemporary push for desegregation as a continuation of the North’s alleged oppression of the South and risked placing southerners and northerners into oppositional camps, which ran counter to the goals of the *Forum*. As Simmons stated in an oral history in 1981, the Councils were trying to move beyond a Confederate past and “worshipping dead Confederate heroes”.<sup>173</sup> Unfortunately for Simmons, this did not always cohere in panellists’ discussions.

Certain elements of the opening titles also laid bare historical ties linking states’ rights to white supremacy. Although the motto, “American Viewpoint with a South Accent”, established a nationwide context for the *Forum*, “Dixie” featured as the opening theme music and a Confederate battle flag formed part of the show’s logo (Fig. 2.8). Such potent symbols of the South’s supposedly “Lost Cause” implied a stark divide between the federal North and the segregated South and would have done little to assure viewers the *Forum*’s concerns were free from such notions. This was compounded by the fact that the moniker on the *Forum* logo specified not only states’ rights, but also “racial integrity”, which confused supposedly non-regional, “race-free” language and narrative content.



Fig. 2.8 – The *Citizens’ Council Forum* logo and opening title screen between 1958 and 1962.

<sup>172</sup> John Stennis, “Reaction to the Federal Government’s take over of state powers” 1958, *CCF*, Reel #075, *CCFF*; James O. Eastland, “Supreme Court’s decisions and the need for censorship in the United States”, 1961, *CCF*, Reel #098, *CCFF*.

<sup>173</sup> Interview with Simmons (1981), p. 100.

These strategic inadequacies are significant and indicative of the difficulties faced by segregationists seeking to influence public opinion at the national level, as well as the tactical tensions within massive resistance. However, the comments like those made by Stennis and Eastland were relatively unusual and did not reflect the tenor of most discussions across the entire programme. Correspondingly, the icons of the “Lost Cause” in the opening titles were counterbalanced by “non-sectional”, “race-free” conversations and national political symbols. The most significant threat to the cogency of the *Forum*’s message – and those of the VaCCG and the CCFAF – emanated from other segregationist organisations which claimed their resistance was predicated solely on the grounds of states’ rights and constitutional government but mounted fiercely racist campaigns and mobilised racist arguments. The Louisiana-based FCG and the GaSRC, for example, were ostensibly “for the preservation of all men’s individual liberties, for states’ rights, and for the protection of America’s very political, religious, and economic system”.<sup>174</sup> Yet their publications, some of which offered scholarly discussions of legal precedent, collapsed into a familiar racist discourse propagated since Reconstruction, as evident in Tom Brady’s *Black Monday* (1954).<sup>175</sup> Despite its commitment to avoid issues of race, the FCG published pamphlets discussing “racial realities and white solidarity” and asked readers “can the white race win through?”<sup>176</sup> In the closing passage of a pamphlet titled *The Supreme Court, The Broken Constitution, and The Shattered Bill of Rights* (1956), R. Carter Pittman of the GaSRC stated that the “proposition that all men are equal reduced the chastity of white womanhood of America to the level of black brutes”.<sup>177</sup> The Southern Manifesto descended into the same paternalism engrained in white southern culture.<sup>178</sup> The inability of some segregationist organisations to maintain a “colour-blind” discourse undermined the efforts of the CCA, CCFAF, and VaCCG. It exposed the fallacy of their claims that massive resistance was motivated by the will to preserve constitutional government. While the *Forum*, and to a lesser extent the CCFAF,

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<sup>174</sup> Cook argues that the FCG was one of the few groups to expand the arguments for massive resistance beyond the issue of race. It would appear that he did not engage in a thorough analysis of the group’s literature. Cook, *The Segregationists*, pp. 253-255. See also the FCG’s statement of purpose on Reel 56 section F46 in the RWC. McMillen, *The Citizens’ Council*, pp. 83-85.

<sup>175</sup> Tom Brady, *Black Monday: Segregation or Amalgamation... America Has Its Choice* (Winona: ACCM, 1954).

<sup>176</sup> *Racial Realities and White Solidarity* (New Orleans: FCG, n.d.); *Can The White Race Win Through?* (New Orleans: FCG, n.d.). A sizeable collection of FCG publications is held on Reel 56 (F46) in RWC.

<sup>177</sup> *The Supreme Court, The Broken Constitution, and The Shattered Bill of Rights* (Atlanta: GaSRC, 1956). See also, *The Law of the Land* (Atlanta: GaSRC, 1958); *All Men Are Not Equal* (Atlanta: GaSRC, 1956).

<sup>178</sup> Lewis, *Massive Resistance*: p. 65. See also: Tony Badger, “Southerners Who Refused to Sign the Southern Manifesto”, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (June 1999), pp. 517-534; Day, *The Southern Manifesto*.



achieved regional cooperation, the segregationist South was unable to coalesce around or cohere in a single resistance argument or strategy and, therefore, struggled to present a united front.

The fact that groups and individuals who shared relatively congruent outlooks failed to link up effectively speaks to broader issues facing massive resistance and larger problems with segregationist media strategy. It is puzzling that meaningful and sustained collaboration on regional propaganda projects were so rare, especially considering many segregationists shared a rhetorical style and a desire to expand support for massive resistance beyond extremist die-hards. This is particularly true of the lack of cooperation between the VaCCG and the CCA. The different approaches to media and public relations held by advocates of “race-free”, legalistic discourse discussed here offer insight into this historical problem. With clear and divergent visions of the form they believed segregationist media strategy should take, they targeted different audiences through different modes of media and expression and placed varying degrees of emphasis on the importance of public relations activities. Achieving compromise or managing a unified campaign with such a diverse group of powerful individuals would have proved quite a task. In a clear example of internecine factionalism undermining strategic acuity, on entering office as the new director of the MSSC in March 1963, Erle Johnston led a coup to withdraw all state funds from the *Forum*, preferring to pursue his own media strategy separate from the Councils.<sup>179</sup> Competing ideas over media strategy were a significant obstacle to forging a “Solid South”.

Jack Kershaw offered a particularly astute explanation for disunity. “The South has always been characterized by certain antagonisms developing between this group and that group, and that hero and that hero”, he mused. The problem, he asserted, lay in “[s]tates’ righters running around, not realizing that we had to make a joint effort, in a nutshell, and that’s a weakness in the South”.<sup>180</sup> Such was the irony of states’ rights as an ideology and a media strategy: to have a centralized campaign for the preservation of states’ rights was paradoxical. That is, segregationists championing states’ rights were ideologically predisposed to being suspicious over the concentration of power. The lack of cooperation between groups employing the rhetoric of states’ rights evinces a

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<sup>179</sup> Johnston, *Mississippi’s Defiant Years*, pp. 236-238.

<sup>180</sup> Kershaw stated that he saw little difference between his organisation, the Citizens’ Councils, and Virginia’s Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberties. Kershaw quoted in Houston, ““We kept the discussion at an adult level””, pp. 76, 81.

fundamental issue facing segregationists. With existing antagonisms and variances in thought as well as other logistical and administrative issues, this ideological paradox left cooperation problematic and sometimes undesirable. The quest for unity would prove insurmountable for many segregationists and the resulting shortage of unified public relations efforts would be a key limiting factor for massive resistance.

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This chapter has examined three case studies to reveal how states' rights and constitutional concerns could be deployed in defence of segregation, repurposed for contemporary relevance, and repackaged for a national audience. The states' rights argument was not merely a spurious subterfuge. It has exposed the expertise of some segregationists, the disparities between their approaches, and the implications of these divergences. It shows how race neutral language could cause significant problems for the civil rights movement; indicative of how resourceful segregationists could be. Where the strategies explored in Chapter 1 confronted the national media and the civil rights movement head-on, those considered in this chapter rested on minimising the issue of segregation altogether. Resisters subsumed their defence of Jim Crow within broader national concerns, claiming that *Brown* and civil rights legislation were surface issues in a larger struggle to protect central tenets of American constitutional government against nefarious plans concentrate power in Washington, D. C. In essence, then, the public relations battle over segregation was recast as an ideological struggle over the "true" meaning of "Americanism" and presaged a more permanent, national conservative coalition by provoking a nationwide re-examination of civil rights reform.

In 1964, James McBride Dabbs, president of the cross-racial SRC, was especially critical of segregationists' efforts to win non-southern hearts and minds using constitutional arguments. "There's no more chance of selling it over the counter in 1964 than there was of selling slavery in 1864", he concluded, "the fact that Southerners should try suggests how lost they are". In expressing contempt, Dabbs may have missed the point insofar as he saw evidence of "how deeply concerned [white southerners were] to close somehow the gap that separates them from the nation" but judged their efforts to

be a cry for help, an indication of a deeper yearning to feel part of the nation.<sup>181</sup> He was only half right. The CCA, CCFAF, and VaCCG defined themselves as the true representatives of the American nation, the noble defenders of American freedom. Rather than feeling disconnected themselves, they believed citizens in other parts of the nation were drifting away from American principles. In seeking to influence public opinion outside the South, they set out to alert the rest of the nation that the South was America and America the South. Where the VaCCG and the CCFAF stuck resolutely to a states' rights narrative, the CCA would shift its approach completely to establish a new conservative countermovement based exclusively on explicit ideas of race and white supremacy. This transformation is explored in the next chapter.

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<sup>181</sup> Dabbs, *Who Speaks for the South?*, pp. 327, 320.



## Chapter 3 – “A Turning Point in the South’s Struggle”?: Racial Science, the Citizens’ Councils, and Carleton Putnam

In the November 1961 issue of *The Citizen*, William J. Simmons declared a “turning point in the South’s struggle to preserve the integrity of the white race”. He explained to readers that he had finally come to appreciate the major failing of the segregationist South’s attempts to win national public support for the preservation of racial segregation. It was time, Simmons proclaimed, “to stop fighting a purely defensive rear-guard action”; it was “time for the South to take the initiative”.<sup>1</sup>

The professed source of Simmons’ epiphany was an address delivered by Carleton Putnam on the evening of 26 October 1961, in Jackson, Mississippi.<sup>2</sup> A proud New Englander, Putnam scolded the segregationist South for relying on states’ rights arguments to win national sympathy for its opposition to desegregation and civil rights reform. He presented an entirely different view from the established historical and historiographical narrative in which segregationists are said to have relied exclusively on states’ rights and constitutional arguments to appeal to a non-southern audience. “The average man in the North and West”, Putnam declared, “doesn’t give a damn about states’ rights in the face of his belief that the South is committing a wrong against the Negro”. Putnam criticised such arguments as “defensive and evasive” and suggested strategic confrontation of the “fundamental issue”: race. As delineated in *Race and Reason: A Yankee View*, published earlier in 1961, Putnam believed there was scientific evidence which proved inherent genetic differences between the races, verified the intrinsic inferiority of blacks, and demonstrated the threat intermarriage posed to the stability of white civilization. The only way segregationists could oppose desegregation effectively, he concluded, was to convince northerners they were “fighting for the integrity of civilisation”. Putnam proposed a widespread, multimedia public relations campaign to expose the “truth” of racial science.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> William J. Simmons, “Editorial Opinion: The Turning Point”, *TC* (November 1961), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Simmons, “Editorial Opinion”; “Race and Reason” Author Carleton Putnam To Speak At Jackson Council Banquet Oct. 26”, *TCC* (September 1961), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> A number of versions of Putnam’s address exist, the most complete is Carleton Putnam, “This is the Problem!”, *TC* (November 1961), pp. 12-33; Carleton Putnam, *Race and Reason: A Yankee View* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1961). A digital, plain text version of *Race and Reason* can be found online at <https://archive.org/details/RaceAndReason> [accessed 13 November 2018].

Simmons dedicated the November issue of *The Citizen* to Putnam's ideas, declaring it "the most significant and most important publication ever to bear the imprint of the Citizen's Council movement". In his own call to arms, Simmons avowed the "South can ill afford to let [Putnam's] advice go unheeded" and urged white southerners to take an active role "in telling and selling the South's story" by passing on the message to friends, relatives, acquaintances, and business associates in the North.<sup>4</sup> Translating Putnam's words into action, Simmons redirected the Councils' media strategy towards *Race and Reason* and Putnam's ideas which, in turn, catalysed a reconsideration of segregationist strategy across the South. In November 1961 he declared, "Carleton Putnam has shown us the way; now, we must show the nation!"<sup>5</sup>

Historians have yet to assess in detail the impact Putnam had on massive resistance, particularly on segregationist propaganda strategies. Whilst almost all scholars of massive resistance agree that Putnam was an important figure, analyses are brief and, most tellingly, do not explore how he catalysed a seismic shift in Council media strategy. Neil McMillen asserts Putnam was "the most influential spokesman of the new racism", and Idus A. Newby describes Putnam as the "most significant of the popularisers" of scientific racism, citing *Race and Reason* as "the most widely circulated and probably the most influential defence of segregation written since 1954".<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, neither they nor other scholars examine the extent of Putnam's influence or precisely how segregationist organisations embraced or harnessed his ideas.

Scholars examining scientific racism in the twentieth-century United States also highlight Putnam's fixation on public opinion. John P. Jackson, Jr., unpacks his belief that "the climate of public opinion must be changed" to prevent desegregation, arguing that, of scientists who opposed *Brown* within the IAAEE, Putnam was the most concerned with "education of the public about the facts".<sup>7</sup> William H. Tucker, in a study of Wickliffe Draper and the Pioneer Fund's surreptitious funding of scientific racism, cites Putnam as a key player in the transmission of racial science throughout the 1960s.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Simmons, "Editorial Opinion", p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Simmons, "Editorial Opinion", p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> McMillen, *The Citizens' Council*, p. 165; Newby, *Challenge to the Court*, pp. 148, 157.

<sup>7</sup> Putnam quoted in Jackson, *Science for Segregation*, pp. 138 and 129. The IAAEE was a scientific organisation founded, in Washington D.C., in April 1959, by Putnam and his fellow anti-equalitarians, notably Robert Kuttner, Henry Garrett, and A. James McGregor. Its expressed function was to "objectively" investigate racial difference and to publicize the findings. Jackson, *Science for Segregation*, p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> William H. Tucker, *The Funding of Scientific Racism: Wickliffe Draper and the Pioneer Fund* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), pp. 101-106.

How Putnam's ideas translated in to a segregationist media strategy and how strategists offered Putnam ways and means to disseminate his ideas is neglected. Instead, scholars have tended to concentrate on Putnam's impact on the litigation of the *Brown* decision and role in the development of racial science more broadly in post-war America.<sup>9</sup> The full extent of Putnam's influence on the trajectory of massive resistance is yet to be recognised. Only through an analysis of segregationist media strategies, particularly those of the CCA and associated Councils, can scholars begin to appreciate Putnam's impact.

We have only begun to appraise the place of racial science within massive resistance and have yet to consider its importance in segregationists' attempts to win support outside the South. This is partly because scholars who have noted segregationists' efforts to secure northern, conservative allies have focused on organisations and individuals which subverted the race issue, framed massive resistance as a fight to preserve states' rights and constitutional government, and avoided direct references to racial difference or inferiority.<sup>10</sup> The embrace of racial science by the CCA challenges the notion that every nationally-minded segregationist group sought to displace race. Some segregationists agreed with Putnam and decided it was unproductive to obscure his fundamental argument; they placed race at the forefront, presenting white resistance to the civil rights movement as a battle to preserve racial purity and white "civilisation".

In the main, scholars studying the intellectual and ideological approaches of massive resisters have divided segregationists between those who focus on race and those who focus on states' rights and constitutional government. David Chappell's segregationist binary, which separates massive resisters into two distinct camps: "Constitutionalists" and "Racial Purists", exemplifies the approach. In Chappell's formulation, constitutionalists argued their resistance was motivated by the belief that states' rights had to be protected and federal power curtailed, while Racial Purists, on the other hand, focused entirely on "white purity" and "intermarriage".<sup>11</sup> Such a division has prevailed in massive resistance historiography, and, whilst paradigms such as Chappell's have gained purchase, they lack flexibility. Scholars stress the groups' unwillingness to cooperate and judge the two factions and their strategies as mutually exclusive. Inflexible distinctions do not allow for development in strategy or shifts in approach but assume

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<sup>9</sup> As well as Jackson's and Tucker's studies, see, Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance*, p. 179; Chappell, *A Stone of Hope*, p. 169-171; Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, pp. 123-124.

<sup>10</sup> Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, p. 176; Chappell, *A Stone of Hope*, pp. 160-175.

<sup>11</sup> Chappell, "The Divided Mind", pp. 52-55.

uniformity and neglect relationships between different factions. It is for this reason that the sea change generated by Putnam has been overlooked. While Putnam was an “archetypal” racial purist, he reached out to segregationists, such as Simmons and the Councils, who relied on states’ rights arguments to shift public opinion outside the South. More importantly, he was successful in affecting a dramatic change in approach.<sup>12</sup> In this analysis, Putnam used the “scientific certainty” provided by racial pseudo-science to attempt to heal the “divided mind” of segregationists.<sup>13</sup>

This chapter therefore explores the absence of racial science in massive resistance rhetoric prior to the early 1960s and explains how and why racial science came to dominate some segregationists’ media efforts to mobilise public opinion, inside and outside the South. It examines the impact of Putnam on media strategy and segregationists’ multi-layered attempts to publicise his ideas. It also considers the limits of Putnam’s influence and why some segregationists were left unconvinced by his proselytising.

**“The practical aspects of race relations... are totally unrelated to any kind of scientific premise whatsoever”**

Given the well-established eugenics movement in the United States prior to the Second World War, there was ample “scientific evidence” from which massive resisters could draw to defend segregation.<sup>14</sup> Racial scientists including Madison Grant, Lothrop Stoddard, and Earnest Sevier Cox published popular “scientific” studies between 1910 and 1940 that claimed to demonstrate the superiority of the white, or “Nordic”, race and maintained non-whites posed a deadly threat to its integrity. According to precedent scientific observation, they argued, racial integration and amalgamation could only lead to the collapse of “civilised” American society.<sup>15</sup> During the apotheosis of the American

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<sup>12</sup> Jackson defines Putnam as the “archetypal example” of the “racial purists who believed that states’ rights were a diversion from the real issue, which was the threat of racial intermarriage”. Jackson, *Science for Segregation*, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> In his article on Wesley Critz George and organized white resistance in North Carolina, Lewis argues that George used racial science “to bring an element of scientific certainty to racial arguments”. Chappell refers to the “divided mind” of southern segregationists when explaining his segregationist binary. Lewis, “Scientific Certainty”, pp. 227-247; Chappell, “The Divided Mind”.

<sup>14</sup> For example, Jackson, *Science for Segregation*, pp. 19-92; Stefan Kühl, *The Nazi Connection: Eugenics, American Racism, and German National Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Madison Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race; or, The Racial Basis of European History* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1917); Earnest Sevier Cox, *White America* (Self-published, 1923); Lothrop Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1921); Lothrop Stoddard, *Re-forging America: The Story of Our Nationhood* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1927); Edwin Black, *War Against the Weak: Eugenics and America’s Campaign to Create a Master Race* (London: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2003).

eugenics movement in the 1920s and 1930s, white southerners found little need or use for racial science. The system of Jim Crow segregation was deeply entrenched and faced no serious threats during the interwar years, so the embrace of a new scientific language to justify and ensure its survival was simply not required.<sup>16</sup> As George Tindall and Grace Hale both note, meaningful and purposeful public discussion concerning the “Negro question” all but disappeared in the early years of the twentieth century.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the most active eugenicists operating during the inter-war years were northerners concerned with defending the “Nordic race” against the supposed threat posed by “alien” immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, not African Americans in the southern states.<sup>18</sup> Facing the most pronounced threat to the “southern way of life” for generations in the mid-1950s, however, the works of eugenicists would have held some utility for segregationists desperately searching for an intellectual response to the *Brown* decision, especially with Earnest Sevier Cox serving as “an ideological bridge between pre-war white supremacy and post-war massive resistance”.<sup>19</sup> Early twentieth-century definitions of an enemy without could be applied by segregationists to define an enemy within. Yet, the racial science of the interwar years was afforded little to no prominence within the rhetorical arsenal of massive resistance.

This was largely due to eugenics and scientific ideas of racial hierarchy falling into disrepute after the horrors of the Nazi regime became apparent.<sup>20</sup> Cox’s “rapid slide into neo-Nazism” during the mid-1950s underscored the stark connections between inter-war American eugenics and the racial policies of the Third Reich, leaving segregationists

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<sup>16</sup> Edward J. Larson demonstrates that the eugenics movement in the Deep South focused primarily on poor whites and exuded few racial overtones. Edward J. Larson, *Sex, Race, and Science: Eugenics in the Deep South* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995). J. Douglas Smith and Julie Novkov offer some useful exceptions to this. J. Douglas Smith, “The Campaign for Racial Purity and the Erosion of Paternalism in Virginia, 1922-1930: ‘Nominally White, Biologically Mixed, and Legally Negro’”, *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (February 2002), pp. 65-106 (quotation from page 73); Julie Novkov, “Racial Constructions: The Legal Regulation of Miscegenation in Alabama, 1890-1934”, *Law and History Review*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Summer 2002), pp. 225-277. See also: Dorr, *Segregation’s Science*, p. 11; J. Douglas Smith, *Managing White Supremacy: Race Politics, and Citizenship in Jim Crow Virginia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Paul A. Lombardo, “Miscegenation, Eugenics, and Racism: Historical Footnotes to *Loving v. Virginia*”, *U.C. Davis Law Review*, Vol. 21 (Winter 1988), pp. 421-452; Jackson, *Science for Segregation*, pp. 19-21.

<sup>17</sup> Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South*, p. 160; Hale, *Making Whiteness*, p. 144.

<sup>18</sup> Walter Benn Michaels, *Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995); Smith, “The Campaign for Racial Purity”, p. 72; Paul R. D. Lawrie, *Forging a Laboring Race: The African American Worker in the Progressive Imagination* (New York: New York University Press, 2016).

<sup>19</sup> By the time the *Brown* ruling was issued the majority of the “Eugenics Old Guard” had met their demise, leaving Cox alone to assume the mantle. Dorr, *Segregation’s Science*, pp. 197-199; Jason Ward, “‘A Richmond Institution’: Earnest Sevier Cox, Racial Propaganda, and White Resistance to the Civil Rights Movement”, *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 116, No. 3 (2008), p. 287; Jackson, *Science for Segregation*, p. 43.

<sup>20</sup> Richard H. King, *Race, Culture, and the Intellectuals, 1940-1970* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2004), p. 24; Jackson, “In Ways Unacademic”, pp. 256-257.

seeking a respectable approach unwilling to cross the ideological bridge Cox provided.<sup>21</sup> Whilst founder of the Councils, Robert Patterson, and other resisters held the work of pre-war eugenicists in high regard, their studies were not mobilised to any significant extent to win public support.<sup>22</sup> Despite undeniable connections to Nazi eugenics, however, a new generation of racist scientists emerged in the post-war period, whose studies continued to uphold the white supremacist worldview. They supported racial separation and offered a scholarly “rationale” for the preservation of segregation in the South.

In the post-*Brown* scramble to build a respectable opposition movement, some segregationists recognised that this newer work could serve as a valuable tool and considered enshrining it as a core argument in their presentations to the North. As with constitutional arguments, it was believed racial science could be used to give massive resistance an intellectual edge. Mississippi Circuit Judge Tom Brady, described by *Time* magazine as the “philosopher of Mississippi’s racist white Citizens’ Councils”, called on members of the fledgling Council movement to propagate “the facts of ethnology” in the vicious segregationist treatise *Black Monday* (1954).<sup>23</sup> Echoing the conclusions of pre- and post-war racial scientists, *Black Monday* warned readers, “whenever the white man has drunk the cup of black hemlock, whenever and wherever his blood has been infused with blood of the Negro, the white man, his intellect and his culture have died”.<sup>24</sup> Ostensibly counselling white southerners against violence and impulsiveness, it called for resolute but considered resistance and served as the Councils’ first notable publication and, in 1954, one of the most important massive resistance texts published immediately following *Brown*.<sup>25</sup> However, Brady’s and the Councils’ fixation on racial purity did not last long.

In the final months of 1955, Brady and many other white resisters became swept up in the excitement surrounding interposition and nullification.<sup>26</sup> Resistance to the Supreme Court’s desegregation order had finally crystallised around the constitutional

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<sup>21</sup> Dorr, *Segregation’s Science*, p. 198.

<sup>22</sup> Neither Cox nor Grant it is ever cited in the Citizens’ Councils’ flagship publications, *TCC* or *TC*. Jason Ward highlights that Patterson and a number of more extreme segregationists held Cox and his bedfellows in high regard. Patterson ordered one-thousand copies of Cox’s *White America* pamphlet for distribution in Mississippi. Ward, “‘A Richmond Institution’”, p. 272.

<sup>23</sup> “Judges: The Education of Tom Brady”, *Time* (22 October 1965), p. 94; Brady, *Black Monday*, p. 78.

<sup>24</sup> Brady quoted in Carter, *The South Strikes Back*, p. 28.

<sup>25</sup> Carter, *The South Strikes Back*, p. 21.

<sup>26</sup> Carter, *The South Strikes Back*, p. 56.

principle of states' rights. After fumbling around for a suitably sophisticated response to the *Brown*, many of segregation's apologists settled on James J. Kilpatrick's purportedly race-free approach. Whilst segregationists were united in their belief in the superiority of the white race and the sanctity of segregation, their faith in the racism of the rest of the United States was shaky at best. This constitutional approach, therefore, came to define massive resistance in the courts and the sphere of national public opinion in the years following Kilpatrick's renowned editorials. For many segregationists, his "Genteel" Rebel Yell drowned out other potential rhetorical strategies they potentially had at their disposal.<sup>27</sup>

Throughout the 1950s, racial science percolated quietly in the background of segregationist media efforts. As the mouthpiece of the Council movement inside and outside the South, *The Citizens' Council* made few references to any scientific justification for the continuation of segregation. The newspaper's most pronounced application of racial science came in October 1956 when the front page blared, in large, bold letters, "Professor Cites Fallacies Of Integration Arguments".<sup>28</sup> Dr. Henry E. Garrett – a former Professor of Psychology at Columbia University, one of the nation's leading authorities on psychometrics and psychological testing, a committed racial ideologue, and champion of racial science – presented a list of seven "erroneous" assertions made by advocates of integration.<sup>29</sup> Despite the shrill headline, however, racial science was downplayed. Garrett took until point five to comment on ideas of racial heredity and the point he made was notably weak. Rather than state his unequivocal belief that blacks were innately inferior in intellect compared to whites, Garrett offered only a feeble and vague assertion that integration would not result in an improvement in black educational performance. He was reluctant to state categorically that blacks could never attain the same level of academic achievement as whites.<sup>30</sup> In a sharp critique of Garrett's ideas, the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, a division of the American Psychological Association, pointed out Garrett's unwillingness to state that innate differences in intelligence between the races had been proven.<sup>31</sup> Prior to 1960, Garrett's public stance on the use of science in the debate over racial separation was uncertain and

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<sup>27</sup> Chappell refers to Interposition as "A Genteel Effort at a Rebel Yell" in, *A Stone of Hope*, p. 168.

<sup>28</sup> Henry E. Garrett, "Views of An Authority: Professor Cities Fallacies Of Integration Arguments", *TCC* (October 1956), pp. 1 and 4.

<sup>29</sup> Newby, *Challenge to the Court*, pp. 91-91.

<sup>30</sup> Garrett, "Views of An Authority", p. 4.

<sup>31</sup> Newby, *Challenge to the Court*, p. 96

noncommittal. Rather than arguing forcefully that scientific evidence demonstrated the inferiority of blacks, he contended simply that the social sciences were “infant disciplines, inexact and easily manipulated”.<sup>32</sup> Such a reticent stance undermined racial science and, given Garrett’s stature, may have precluded segregationists from mobilising racial science in their bid to win sympathy for their cause.

Garrett’s caginess was mirrored in statements by other racial scientists published in *The Citizens’ Council* and in its editorials. Dr. R. Ruggles Gates, for example, avoided speaking in terms of distinct racial groups or biological inferiority, observing only that “no two men are equal either in physique or mentality”.<sup>33</sup> Simmons undermined his own attempt to exploit the work of Russian-born American sociologist Pitirim Sorokin, who asserted that black people had failed “to create complex forms of culture” and “the negro has been ‘inferior’ when compared with the white in the majority of the studied mental functions”. Rather than concluding firmly, his article closed equivocally: “these considerations and facts seem to point at the factor of heredity”.<sup>34</sup> In a letter to the editor, F. W. Altstaetter of Savannah, Georgia, was prompted to respond that segregationists’ responses to the “fallacious arguments” of “race equality advocates” needed to be “water tight”, especially “in the North and West where they seem to think Southerners are guided by feelings and not reason in the race question”.<sup>35</sup> Evidently, scientific support for racial separation was far from watertight. Indeed, the scant use of racially scientific arguments in *The Citizens’ Council* supports the view that the flimsiness of scientists’ statements on segregation deterred the use of racial science in any large-scale effort to win support for massive resistance outside the South.

The Councils’ membership certainly believed there were inherent biological differences between the races. In a crude treatise based entirely on “experience”, Austin E. Burges, the secretary of the ACCT, proclaimed “the white race is biologically different from the Negro race”.<sup>36</sup> Elsewhere, Councils listed “biology” as one of three reasons to resist integration and “fundamental biological difference” as the only factor that could

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<sup>32</sup> Wilhoit, *The Politics*, p. 94. Wilhoit points out that Garrett “eventually changed his mind, and began arguing that social science evidence clearly demonstrates the inferiority of blacks and the rationality of segregated education”.

<sup>33</sup> R. Ruggles Gates, “Equality Doctrine Is Contrary To Science: All Men Are Not Born Free and Equal”, *TCC* (June 1957), p. 2. See also Dr. Frank C. J. McGurk’s remarks in Mobile, Alabama, Press, “Psychologist Finds Negroes Below Whites In Capacity for Education”, *TCC* (October 1956), p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> Pitirim Sorokin quoted in “Refuting The Big Lie”, *TCC* (January 1957), p. 2. [Emphasis added.]

<sup>35</sup> F. W. Altstaetter, “Welcome Support”, Letters to the Editor, *TCC* (February 1957), p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> “An Intriguing Theses Based On Experience”, *TCC* (December 1956), p. 2.



account for low test scores among black students, despite separate and unequal schools and black children losing schooling to the cotton field.<sup>37</sup> As Hodding Carter III noted in a contemporaneous analysis of the Councils: “the majority of whites [in the South] sincerely believed, and have believed, that basically the Negro is inferior”.<sup>38</sup> However, Councils lacked propaganda that would provide the firm scientific endorsement they needed to have the confidence to foreground biological arguments and take that message beyond the borders of the Old Confederacy.

Throughout the 1950s, Simmons, *The Citizens’ Council* editor and leading media strategist in the CCA, had little faith in the ability of racial science to win non-southern support for massive resistance.<sup>39</sup> In an essay for a nationally distributed book to accompany a nationally broadcast television series, Simmons admitted his misgivings about the utility of racial science in the debate over desegregation. Echoing the ambiguous statements of pro-segregation scientists, Simmons wrote, “the question of race differences and their significance is far from having been settled in the research laboratories”.<sup>40</sup> He questioned the applicability of scientific reasoning to the “race problem” altogether when he explained:

Even if science were to prove the races to be absolutely equal in potential – which we must emphasise it has not – such a finding would in no way affect the practical aspects of race relations, for these are rooted in social attitudes which are totally unrelated to any kind of scientific premise whatsoever.<sup>41</sup>

Simmons and the CCA preferred to deny the relevance of scientific analyses to the segregation controversy. The article printed beside Garrett’s front-page story declared in bold print that the “real issue” was the federal government’s violation of “the precious document through which [American] freedoms are guarded from the rapacities of power-hungry officials”. The commentary dismissed “biological taboos”, arguing instead that

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<sup>37</sup> John Temple Graves II quoted in “Serves Notice To Negrophiles: The South Won’t Surrender, Says Dixie Spokesman”, *TCC* (July 1956), pp. 1 and 4 (quotation from p. 4); “An Obvious Weakness”, *TCC* (September 1956), p. 2.

<sup>38</sup> Carter, *The South Strikes Back*, p. 108.

<sup>39</sup> In another example of Simmons lack of faith in racial science, Dr. Audrey M. Shuey’s *The Testing of Negro Intelligence* (Lynchburg: J. P. Bell, 1958) was relegated to a narrow column on the back-page of the newspaper, despite its potential relevance to Council ideology. Her findings failed to satisfy white segregationists. She contended African American’s test scores lagged behind whites’ but did not argue outright that the discrepancy was the result of innate biological difference. “Book Reviews: The Testing of Negro Intelligence”, *TCC* (May 1958), p. 4.

<sup>40</sup> Simmons, “Race in America: The Conservative Stand”, p. 56. Simmons presented similar ideas when he appeared on the *Search for America* television series. “Our Race Problem: Part 1”, *Search for America* [television programme] NET, 1959.

<sup>41</sup> Simmons, “Race in America”, p. 56.

“the destruction of the Constitution itself” – through contravention of “the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> articles of the Bill of Rights” – should be the nation’s primary concern.<sup>42</sup>

The contention that social science had no place in the discussion of racial separation in the South was an integral part of segregationists’ constitutional critique of the *Brown* decision. Whilst social science formed only a minor part of *Brown*, segregationists argued strategically that the decision rested entirely on the testimony of social scientists. U.S. Senator Richard B. Russell of Georgia, one of the leaders of the South’s resistance to civil rights reform in the U.S. Senate, scolded the Supreme Court for replacing law and legal precedent with psychology and social science.<sup>43</sup> During an appearance on NBC’s *Meet The Press*, Mississippi senator James O. Eastland charged the Court with violating “the principle of *stare decisis*”, claiming that “no legal authority was cited”. By relying on the writings of psychologists and sociologists, Eastland argued, the court undermined due legal process and had produced a decision that was thoroughly unconstitutional.<sup>44</sup> This was compounded by the belief that the “modern authorities” cited in the *Brown* decision were “pro-Communist agitators” with “a long record of affiliations with anti-American causes”.<sup>45</sup> In *The Citizens’ Council*, James F. Byrnes, former Justice of the Supreme Court from South Carolina, and U.S. Representative from Illinois Noah M. Mason, one of the Councils’ favourite northern allies, proclaimed science had no place in the realm of law.<sup>46</sup> As such, many segregationists adopted a strictly constitutional approach in both the courts and in the field of public opinion. As Chapter 2 demonstrates, this strategy was applied rigorously, and most notably, in the *Citizens’ Council Forum*. By adopting such a rigid approach, these segregationists effectively prohibited the use of racial science to full effect. With legal and rhetorical strategies inextricably linked, if resisters were to insert racial science into the debate, they would undermine one of the key arguments in their legal opposition to *Brown* and contradict their own rhetorical appeals for constitutional government.

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<sup>42</sup> Dr. Alfred Haake, “Cause For Alarm: Welfare State Crushes Constitutional Liberty”, *TCC* (October 1956), pp. 1 and 4.

<sup>43</sup> Fite, *Richard B. Russell*, p. 331.

<sup>44</sup> Eastland quoted in “Senator James O. Eastland (D.-Miss.)”, *Meet The Press* [television programme] NBC, 29 January 1956.

<sup>45</sup> James O. Eastland, *The Supreme Court’s “Modern Scientific Authorities” in the Segregation Cases* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1955), p. 13. Eastland’s speech was printed in the Congressional Record and appears in archival collections throughout the South, for example, Box 4, LHP.

<sup>46</sup> “Ex-Justice Says Court Needs Curb”, *TCC* (June 1956), pp. 1 and 3; “Illinois Solon In Sharp Attack On Court Tyranny”, *TCC* (June 1956), p. 8. See also, “Georgia Leads The Way: Moves To Impeach Justices”, *TCC* (March 1957), pp. 1 and 3.

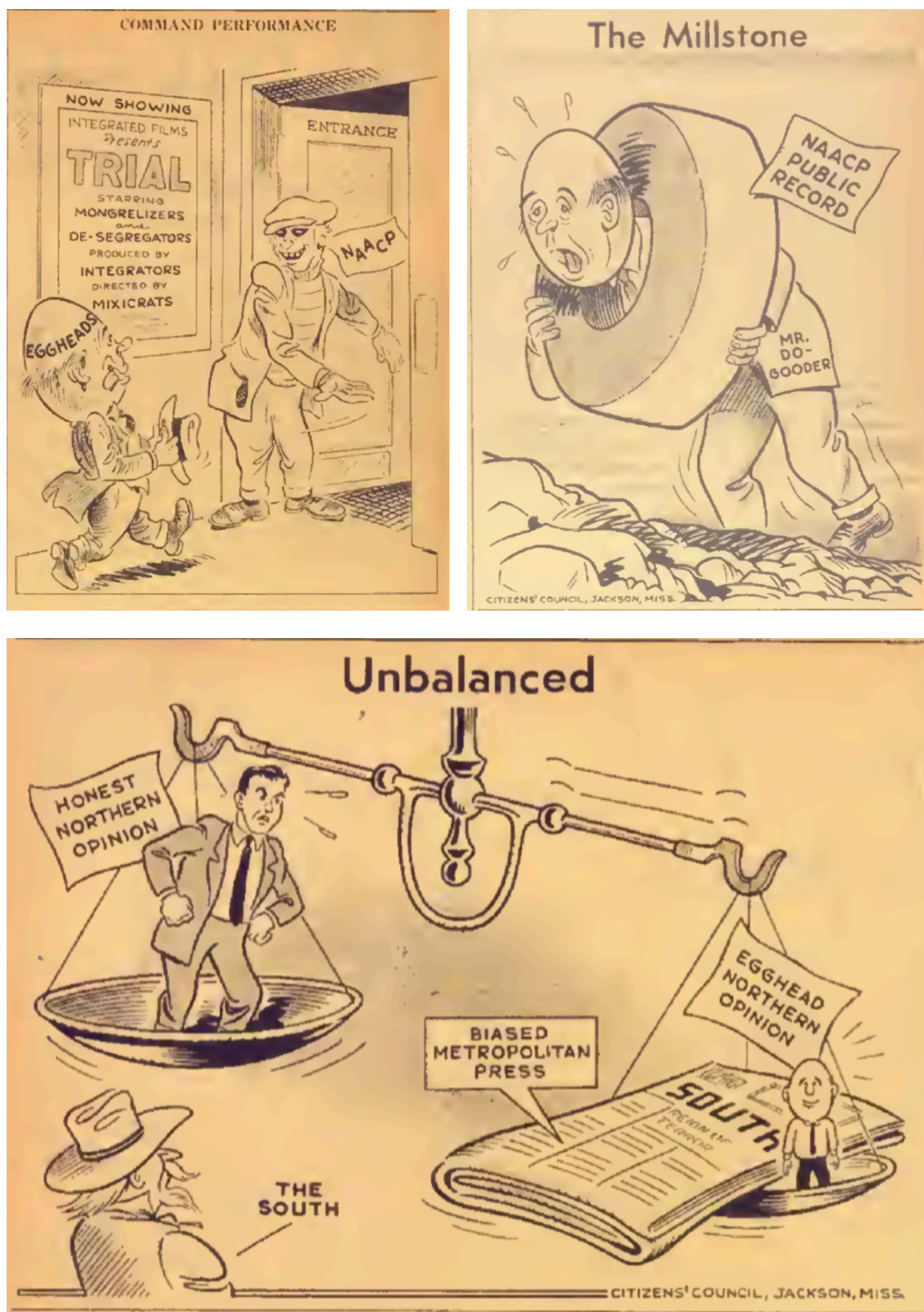


Fig. 3.1 – “Command Performance”, *The Citizens' Council* (January 1956), p. 2; “The Millstone”, *The Citizens' Councils* (May 1957), p. 1; “Unbalanced”, *The Citizens' Council* (August 1957), p. 4.

Apathy towards racial science also stemmed from a long-standing anti-intellectualism in the southern states.<sup>47</sup> As Francis M. Wilhoit observed, the segregationist South had a “preference for rhetoric over reason”. Segregationists, he argued, “feared the intrusion of reason into their belief system” and demonised the “entire corpus of modern social science”.<sup>48</sup> *The Citizens’ Council* frequently portrayed advocates for integration as “eggheaded do-gooders” who lacked common sense and blindly supported the goals of the NAACP and “biased metropolitan press” (Fig. 3.1). Over-intellectual, know-it-all “Mixie-cologists” or “Mixiecrats”, segregationists argued, were using scientific abstractions to destroy a social system they could not appreciate, having never experienced life in the South.<sup>49</sup> Once again, Simmons summed up segregationist thought when he declared:

Social attitudes arise from the everyday experiences of generations which crystallise in time into customs and folkways. It is these rather than the abstractions of the scientist that guide men’s actions... they cannot be measured in test tubes or by slide rules.<sup>50</sup>

There was little compulsion to utilise racial science as a justification for segregation. Instead, segregationists suggested they knew best how to organise a bi-racial society because they had lived alongside a large African American population for over one hundred years. For Simmons and the Councils, it was nature not science that dictated the separation of the races in the South.

This is not to say that no segregationist sought to make racial science the primary mode of resistance rhetoric during the 1950s. During his time as president of the Tar Heel state’s version of the Citizens’ Councils, The Patriots of North Carolina, Inc., Dr. Wesley Critz George, Emeritus Professor of Histology and Embryology at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, established racial science as the sole argument deployed by the organisation.<sup>51</sup> The Patriots’ efforts, however, were short-lived and achieved only limited impact outside North Carolina, with the organisation plagued by “internal friction” and consistently poor organising. Whilst the JLC and GCE distributed

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<sup>47</sup> Dabbs, *Who Speaks for the South?*, pp. 6-7. Dabbs states that the white southerner never felt the need to observe local customs and local objects “with an intelligence equal to his fondness”. “He found his world satisfactory and felt no urgency to subject it to sharp scrutiny. He avoided the abstract because of his interest in things as they were”.

<sup>48</sup> Wilhoit, *The Politics*, pp.128-130.

<sup>49</sup> “How To Organize A Citizen’s Council”, *TCC* (August 1956), p. 4; Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance*, p. 83; Carter, *The South Strikes Back*, p. 17.

<sup>50</sup> Simmons, “Race in America”, pp. 56-57.

<sup>51</sup> Lewis, “Scientific Certainty”.

pamphlets authored by George, the promotion of racial science did not constitute the central feature of either groups' strategy. Rainach's and Williams' efforts to disseminate George's ideas pale in comparison to their more significant and substantial public relations campaigns, namely the JLC's paid advertisement in the *New York Herald Tribune* and the GCE's Highlander Folk School broadside, which is examined in Chapter 4.<sup>52</sup> George's strategy never took hold beyond the borders of the Tar Heel state.<sup>53</sup> Amy Wiese Forbes and Amanda Smithers explore how George N. McIlhenny, a Mississippi State University graduate in biology and engineering, implored the MSSC to use his research on sickle cell anaemia to develop a "biologically-based" public relations campaign against the *Brown* decision.<sup>54</sup> McIlhenny proved equally ineffective in impacting the MSSC's strategy, which remained centred firmly on states' rights.<sup>55</sup> It would take the increasing tenacity of civil rights activists in the 1960s, and the apprehension this activism engendered among segregationists, to provoke a transformation in the CCA's media strategy in the form of a national media campaign to publicise and promote racial science.

**"A veritable encyclopedia of information from virtually every field concerning race"**

In a letter sent in November 1960 to those he deemed "the South's foremost leaders and molders of strategy", Patterson outlined his ideas for a new approach to resistance media strategy:

The South must soon and with proper tact proclaim that the negro, as a race, is different from the white race... The people of this nation... have been battered by pulpit, press, radio,

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<sup>52</sup> Rainach circulated a range of miscellaneous segregationist literature during the JLC's formative years. During 1955, Rainach enclosed George's *The Race Problem From the Standpoint of One Who is Concerned About the Evils of Miscegenation* (American States' Rights Association, 1955) in numerous letters to correspondents. Rainach ceased to publicise George's ideas as the JLC began to develop its own concrete, more expansive media strategy. Letter from Rainach to The Eastland School Faculty, 6 April 1955, Folder 16, Box 2, WMR. See, more generally, correspondence in Boxes 1 and 2 of WMR. The GCE sent out only 20,000 copies of George's *Human Progress and the Race Problem* (1956), compared to over 700,000 copies of its Highlander Folk School exposé. Publication and Distribution Approval Memorandum from Roy V. Harris, 1957, Advertising Committee Folder, Box RCB-35183 Correspondence A-M 1957, GCEP; Letter from T. V. Williams, Jr., to Dewey M. Taft, 6 February 1958, Misc. Correspondence Sub-Folder, Arkansas Folder, Box RCB-35186 Correspondence Alabama-Illinois 1957-1958, GCEP. For George's pamphlets see Folders 103 and 104, respectively, Subseries 2.1 Writings by George, Series 2 Writings, 1950s-1960s, WCG. Accessible online via <https://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/03822/>.

<sup>53</sup> Lewis, "Scientific Certainty", pp. 243-244; McMillen, *The Citizens' Council*, p. 114. The failure of George's strategy to take hold was due to frailties and disagreements within The Patriots as well as his insistence on racial science.

<sup>54</sup> Amy Wiese Forbes and Amanda Smithers, "Combatting the 'Communitistic-Mulatto Inspired Movement to Fuse the Two Ethnic Groups': The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission, Sickled Cells, and Segregationists' Science in the Atomic Age", *Social History of Medicine*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (May 2018), pp. 392-413.

<sup>55</sup> For example, Katagiri, *Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission*; Irons, *Reconstituting Whiteness*.

TV, and movie screen with propaganda regarding 'tolerance,' 'brotherhood,' 'all men are created equal,' 'myth of race,' 'equality,' and other such clichés propounded by experts and parroted by the uninformed. We must contradict the false premise that there is no difference in race other than color of skin if we are to survive.

Such a pronounced strategic shift was essential, Patterson explained, because of the growing threat of the black vote in the South, proclaiming "every other phase of integration fades into the background behind it". He warned "unrestricted negro voting... would simply mean destruction for all of us, black and white", not only the South but in the nation at large. Patterson argued segregationists needed to present massive resistance as a fight "to keep from being destroyed" by "negro domination" if they were to win support and understanding from the North. To do so effectively, he charged, "we must... proclaim that the negro as a race is different from the white man". "For several years now... we have been rather timid in proclaiming it", Patterson stated in closing, "Somewhere soon... we have to take a stand on these two points."<sup>56</sup>

By the early 1960s, some segregationists believed appeals to states' rights and constitutional government were wearing thin. Standing resolutely behind the Tenth Amendment had not prevented the integration of the University of Alabama in 1956, Little Rock High School in 1957, or schools in New Orleans in 1960. Moreover, the civil rights movement was on the offensive. The success of tactical non-violent direct action to trigger federal intervention was making it ever more clear that racial change was coming to the South and that the civil rights movement was concerned with more than the destruction of Jim Crow: African Americans were seeking full political representation. Many segregationists feared the black vote in the South would sound the death knell for white supremacy and presage a fundamental shift in political power in the US. Segregationists needed to re-mobilise the forces of massive resistance and reinvigorate their efforts to win public support. In the months after his call to arms, Patterson and the Councils searched for a suitable solution; in Putnam's *Race and Reason* they would find it. For a range of reasons, it was a perfect fit for the newly proposed strategic objectives and provided the necessary spark to activate their strategic metamorphosis.

Published in April 1961, two-and-a-half years after Putnam joined the struggle to preserve segregation, *Race and Reason* was the centrepiece of his "long range" plan to turn

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<sup>56</sup> Letter from Patterson to Thomas J. Waring, Jr., 2 November 1960, Folder 5, Box 393, TRW; Letter from Patterson to George Shannon (editor of *The Shreveport Journal*), 3 November 1960, Folder 32, Box 2, GS.

the tide in the battle over public opinion.<sup>57</sup> It argued vociferously that “all the facts, and a preponderance of theory” indicate that “the Negro, given every conceivable help regardless of cost to the whites”, is incapable “of full adaptation to our white civilisation”. Contrary to equivocal statements on racial difference offered by racial scientists in the wake of *Brown*, as seen in *The Citizens’ Council*, Putnam argued African Americans could never hope to progress to the same intellectual and cultural level as whites due to innate biological difference. He warned racial “intermixture” would not resolve biological differences and “complete integration of these races [could] result only in a parasitic deterioration of white culture, with or without genocide”.<sup>58</sup> He also expounded his view that “modern equalitarian anthropology – a school which holds that all races are currently equal in their capacity for culture, and that existing inequalities of status are due solely to inequalities of opportunity” – was an elaborate deception driven by nefarious, left-wing propagandists. This form of anthropology, Putnam held, “form[ed] the foundation of the [*Brown*] decision” and, if scrutinised, “will not stand an informed judicial test”.<sup>59</sup> Unlike Eastland, the Councils, and other advocates of a strictly constitutional approach, he argued that the social science inherent in the *Brown* decision should be challenged along scientific lines, not on the basis of legal precedent. Whilst offering a caveat that he was in “total agreement with the South on the constitutional question”, Putnam contended that it was a serious “mistake” to emphasise strict legal precedent to the exclusion of “limited racial adaptability” because “arguments about states’ rights fall on unwilling ears”. A “pseudo-scientific hoax”, he maintained, had persuaded “the North and the court... that a burning wrong” was being committed against African Americans in the South which rendered them unreceptive to appeals based in the doctrines of states’ rights or constitutional government. Effectively ceding the legal precedent argument to the NAACP, he demanded a new strategy based in racial science.<sup>60</sup> If resisters were to have any hope of preserving segregation, he resolved, the American public must be informed of the “truth” of racial science and the “fallacies” of equalitarianism.<sup>61</sup> *Race and*

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<sup>57</sup> Letter from Putnam to Waring, 23 March 1959, Folder 8, Box 430, TRW. While Putnam’s papers have not survived, he maintained regular correspondence and a close personal relationship with Thomas R. Waring, Jr., editor of the *Charleston News and Courier*. This archival material provides the clearest insight into Putnam’s role and activities in service of massive resistance.

<sup>58</sup> Putnam, *Race and Reason*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>59</sup> Putnam, *Race and Reason*, p. 22.

<sup>60</sup> Putnam, *Race and Reason*, pp. 110, 22.

<sup>61</sup> Putnam, *Race and Reason*, pp. 20-21.

*Reason* proclaimed loudly and confidently the ideas at the centre of the new approach proposed by Patterson. Putnam and the Councils were on the same strategic wavelength.

Putnam and his publisher, Public Affairs Press of Washington D. C., carefully engineered the book to appeal to “all Americans” and “people everywhere”, regardless of their views on race or segregation.<sup>62</sup> First and foremost, they selected a “disarming” title, discarding the one originally attached to the manuscript, *Warning to the North: A Yankee View*, which was deemed too “hostile” by the Press and cast the race issue as a regional problem, rather than a national one, hardly appropriate for a book they hoped would propel a paradigm shift in the discussion of race and civil rights in the US.<sup>63</sup> As well as signposting the content more effectively, the new title functioned as a catchy and memorable slogan. For some, the catchphrase alone would have sufficed. It is seductive, implies the contents of the book are irrefutable, that previous arguments on both sides of the debate lack reason and insight, and that the ideas presented are common sense. Simmons and Patterson agreed “Race and Reason” was a “eye-catching title”.<sup>64</sup> A similar approach was adopted to draft the Foreword to avoid “betraying the position of the author immediately”. The approved text was suitably non-committal, commending Putnam’s integrity and praising “crisp” and “thorough” analysis of “argument[s] in favour of integration” without alluding to his central thesis. “The idea”, Putnam explained, was “to entice them into the text by Curiosity until they are caught by Reason”. They strove to ensure unsympathetic readers on the other side of the segregation debate would read on and not simply “toss the book aside at once”.<sup>65</sup> Putnam maintained a reasonable tone throughout, having written it with a sceptical, northern audience in mind, especially those he believed had been persuaded by the “equalitarian conspiracy”.

The prose was clear, concise, and easily understood, and the book was of manageable length at one-hundred-and-twenty-five pages. It could, as the Foreword assured readers, “be read by the layman at one sitting”.<sup>66</sup> Arranged into four easily digestible sections, it guides readers through Putnam’s ideas. Chapters 1 and 2 detail Putnam’s background and narrate how his interest in the “race question” developed.

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<sup>62</sup> Letter from Putnam to Waring, 17 March 1961, Folder 1, Box 431, TRW.

<sup>63</sup> After receiving the manuscript, the Press requested Putnam provide a “new, less hostile, more disarming title”. Letter from Putnam to Waring, 9 October 1960, Folder 1, Box 431, TRW; Tucker notes the change in title but does not consider why such a change occurred. Tucker, *The Funding of Scientific Racism*, p. 103.

<sup>64</sup> “New Book Is Headed For Fame”, *TCC* (April-May 1961), p. 1.

<sup>65</sup> Letter from Putnam to Waring, 3 January 1961, Folder 1 Box 431, TRW. See also, Letter from Putnam to Waring, 17 March 1961. The foreword is attributed to Waring. See Putnam, *Race and Reason*, pp. iii-v.

<sup>66</sup> Waring quoted in Putnam, *Race and Reason*, p. iii.



They also reproduce his well-publicised letter to President Dwight D. Eisenhower of October 1958, which established him within massive resistance, and his less well-known follow-up letter to Attorney General William P. Rogers of March 1959, in which he began to employ racial science in defence of segregation.<sup>67</sup> Putnam envisioned *Race and Reason* as a means to expand on and more effectively publicise the ideas outlined in his letter to Rogers.<sup>68</sup> The majority of the book is dedicated to answering myriad questions and critiques related to the segregation debate that he received from correspondents and critics across the country. Grouped into six sub-sections corresponding to “the major categories the debate had produced” – Anthropology and Intermarriage; American Democracy; Christian Ethics; Sociology and Communism; The Constitutional Issue; and, Summation and Outlook – the central section of the book consists of ninety-two pairs of questions and answers.<sup>69</sup> “Each question”, Simmons remarked, “is answered in a thorough, yet easy-to-read manner”.<sup>70</sup> The question and answer format enhanced the readability and authority of *Race and Reason*, breaking down Putnam’s thesis into soundbites in favour of segregation and purporting to provide an answer to every question about the “racial issue”. The result, Simmons asserted, was an “incisive” summation of the South’s position on race, “a veritable encyclopedia”, which tells “the South’s story in terms the North can understand”.<sup>71</sup>

Putnam and the Press also sought to imbue *Race and Reason* with scholarly credence, without overburdening the text with footnotes or bibliography. It therefore included a short introduction written by a “panel of scientists” which endorsed the “logic”, “common sense”, and “inescapable scientific validity” of Putnam’s analysis and carefully enumerated each scholars’ academic qualifications.<sup>72</sup> The panel’s academic

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<sup>67</sup> Letter from Carlton Putnam to Dwight E. Eisenhower, 13 October 1958, Frames 490-493, Reel 11, CREA. His letter to Eisenhower was published in *NYT* and a range of newspapers across the country. “Distinguished New Englander Discusses High Court’s Decision on Public Schools”, Display Ad 18, *NYT* (5 January 1959), p. 19. See also: “Sweeps South: Putnam Letter In Sunday Star”, *The Anniston Star* (8 November 1958), p. 1; Virginius Dabney, “A Northerner on the Race Issue”, *Richmond Times-Dispatch* (16 October 1958), p. 14. Letter from Carleton Putnam to William P. Rogers, 16 March 1959, Frames 531-540, Reel 11, CREA. The letter to Rogers was only published in a small number of southern newspapers and efforts to distribute the letter were limited. Letter from Waring to Putnam, 21 April 1959, Folder 9, Box 430, TRW; Thomas R. Waring, Jr., “2nd Putnam Letter Exposes ‘Hoax’ On Which Race Decisions Relied”, *The News and Courier* (24 March 1959), p. 8-A; “Second Putnam Letter Devastating”, *The Anniston Star* (5 April 1959), p. 4-A.

<sup>68</sup> Letter from Putnam to Waring, 23 March 1959.

<sup>69</sup> Putnam, *Race and Reason*, p. 34. Putnam’s answers take up 80 pages of the book.

<sup>70</sup> “New Book Is Headed For Fame”.

<sup>71</sup> “New Book Is Headed For Fame”; “‘Race And Reason’ Author Carleton Putnam To Speak”.

<sup>72</sup> Waring quoted in Putnam, *Race and Reason*, p. iv; Gates, Garrett, Gayre, and George quoted in Putnam, *Race and Reason*, p. viii; In a letter to Waring discussing amendments to his manuscript, Putnam stated that Garrett

integrity was more than questionable, consisting solely of racial ideologues Garrett, George, Robert Gayre, and R. Ruggles Gates, all of whom were members of the IAAEE and wrote for its flagship pseudo-scholarly publication *Mankind Quarterly*. Putnam also informed readers in the main text he had sent “questions and answers to experts in their respective fields – to anthropologists, judges, ministers, editors and politicians – asking their comments”, to ensure his responses would be well-informed and robust. Indeed, he claimed to have “kept an open mind, and an open manuscript” throughout the writing process.<sup>73</sup> Again, despite laudable claims to rigorous objectivity, the individuals from whom he sought advice included Garrett, Thomas R. Waring, Jr., editor of the *Charleston News and Courier*, former Governor of South Carolina James F. Byrnes, David Lawrence, editor of *U.S. News and World Report*, and physical anthropologists Gayre and Carleton S. Coon. Universally in favour of the maintenance of segregation, they were unlikely to counter him.<sup>74</sup> It is hardly surprising, then, that Putnam concluded any critical correspondence he received posed no credible challenge to his thesis: “the silences proved nothing, and the arguments nothing”.<sup>75</sup> To historians, it is clear that Putnam’s purported due diligence and the ringing endorsement offered by four “scientists” were utterly devoid of dispassionate integrity. To lay readers, however, Putnam’s deference to “experts” and the glowing testimony offered by professionally certified “scientists” would have connoted credibility.<sup>76</sup> These attributes made Putnam’s treatise an attractive propaganda device for the Councils.

For the Councils, these qualities elevated *Race and Reason* above another book published by Public Affairs Press a few months earlier which presented essentially the same argument. Whilst given praise and attention for its scientific analysis of “racial differences” in the January 1961 edition of *The Citizens’ Council*, Nathaniel Weyl’s *The Negro in American Civilization* (1960) had limited value as a tool of propaganda for massive

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had instructed him to “insert an MA before the PhD after George’s signature”. Letter from Putnam to Waring, 2 February 1961, Folder 1, Box 431, TRW.

<sup>73</sup> Putnam, *Race and Reason*, p. 34.

<sup>74</sup> Letter from Putnam to Waring, 2 February 1961; Letter from Putnam to Lawrence, 11 August 1959, Folder 9, Box 430, TRW; Letter from Putnam to Byrnes, 11 August 1959, Folder 9, Box 430, TRW; Jackson, “In Ways Unacademical”, p. 255.

<sup>75</sup> Putnam, *Race and Reason*, p. 33.

<sup>76</sup> George Lewis has made a similar argument with reference to Wesley Critz George’s *The Biology of the Race Problem* (n.p. 1962), “Despite the apparent scientific weaknesses of *The Biology of the Race Problem*, to a lay audience its rigorously footnoted brand of pseudo-science continued to strike a chord”. Lewis, “Scientific Certainty”, pp. 240-241.

resistance.<sup>77</sup> Principally, its author refused to advocate for the preservation of segregation explicitly and acknowledged the validity of evidence that contradicted his argument. “Weyl almost gets there, but not quite”, Simmons lamented.<sup>78</sup> More practically, *The Negro in American Civilization* was a hefty tome. At over three-hundred-and-fifty pages, written in dense scholarly language, and overloaded with footnotes, it was wholly unsuitable for a mass, lay audience and would have been too costly to distribute effectively on a mass scale. Putnam’s slim, pocket-sized volume, streamlined prose, zealous endorsement of segregation, and unwavering critique of equalitarianism, proved a far more appealing text to place at the centre of the Councils’ new media strategy. Indeed, the inadequacies of Weyl’s treatise further illuminate why *Race and Reason* was embraced by the Councils. Following its brief moment in the spotlight, *The Negro in American Civilization* quickly faded from view.

Putnam’s background and personal qualities made him an ideal figurehead for the Councils’ proposed strategy. Immediately following the *Brown* ruling, Putnam had been busy writing a critically-acclaimed biography of Theodore Roosevelt’s early years. Prior to that he had been a highly successful airline executive, founding Chicago and Southern Airlines and serving as chairman of the board of Delta Airlines. He was also a graduate of Princeton in history and politics and of Columbia in law.<sup>79</sup> Whilst lacking scientific qualifications, Putnam was a highly successful blue-blooded Yankee, who exuded respectability and was suitably detached, at least on the surface, from the race issue in the South. The Councils believed this made his arguments insusceptible to accusations of regional bias, which negated any reservations they may have had over his lack of scientific credentials. Certainly, it appears as though Council leaders placed greater value on Putnam’s elite northern background than on the academic credentials of southern scientists who supported massive resistance, such as Garrett or George, for fear they would invite accusations of bias and partiality.<sup>80</sup> Putnam afforded an opportunity to

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<sup>77</sup> William J. Simmons, “Inferior Role Of Negro In American Culture Is Subject Of Highly-Significant New Book”, *TCC* (January 1961), p. 4; Nathaniel Weyl, *The Negro in American Civilization* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1960).

<sup>78</sup> “Inferior Role Of Negro”.

<sup>79</sup> W. D. McCain, “Who is Carleton Putnam?”, *TC* (November 1961), p. 9; McMillen, *The Citizens’ Council*, p. 166.

<sup>80</sup> Simmons, for example, was acutely aware of George’s “Southernness” and his prior engagement with massive resistance groups. In a particularly self-conscious attempt to override charges of bias that might be levelled at George’s 1962 publication *The Biology of the Race Problem*, Simmons stated clumsily, “90 per cent of the scientists quoted by him in the documentation of his paper were not Southerners”. William J. Simmons, “The Truth About Racial Differences!”, *TC* (October 1962), p. 7.

market their ideology as more than a parochial anachronism, endorse segregationist scientists' research as an "objective" outsider, and repackage their ideas for a lay audience. In addition, he understood effective public relations because of his time as an airline executive and demonstrated this assuredly in *Race and Reason*. This expertise made him an especially attractive ally and imbued his ideas on the most effective way to reach non-southerners with authority, a level of credibility only reinforced by his northern background. As Simmons professed: "Mr. Putnam is a Northerner – he knows the Northern mind."<sup>81</sup> Most importantly, Putnam was a racial ideologue deeply committed to the promotion of racial science and was himself searching for a suitable ally to support his efforts.<sup>82</sup> Whether they knew it or not, Patterson and Putnam were searching for each other. During the 1950s, Council leaders had been reluctant to mobilise "the facts about race" over "purely constitutional arguments", unwilling to "grasp the nettle firmly".<sup>83</sup> Following the publication of *Race and Reason*, they grasped the nettle with both hands. Putnam triggered a strategic transformation; he was the talismanic figure Council propagandists had been waiting for.

On the front-page of its April-May 1961 edition, *The Citizens' Council* proclaimed Putnam's "New Book Is Headed For Fame". It was the movement's new sacred text. Patterson urged "every member, officer and friend of the Council movement to read 'Race and Reason'", declaring it a "must" for "every person interested in the race question", and predicted it would "fast become one of the primary authoritative reference works on the subject". To secure that end, Patterson consecrated the Councils as the hallowed text's hierophant. In the usual way, readers were urged to send copies to friends and relatives in the North and "to see to it that copies were supplied to schools and public libraries".<sup>84</sup> Patterson also issued a memorandum to "All Citizens' Council Officers, Members and Friends" to the same effect.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Simmons, "Editorial Opinion: The Turning Point".

<sup>82</sup> See, for example, Letter from Putnam to Lawrence, 11 August 1959; Letter from Putnam to Byrnes, 11 August 1959; Letter from Putnam to Waring, 17 March 1959, Folder 8, Box 430, TRW.

<sup>83</sup> Letter from Waring to Putnam, 13 August 1959, Folder 9, Box 430, TRW.

<sup>84</sup> "New Book Is Headed For Fame".

<sup>85</sup> Memorandum from Patterson to All Citizens' Council Officers, Members and Friends, c. July 1961, SCR ID # 9-11-1-75-1-1-1, SCOC.

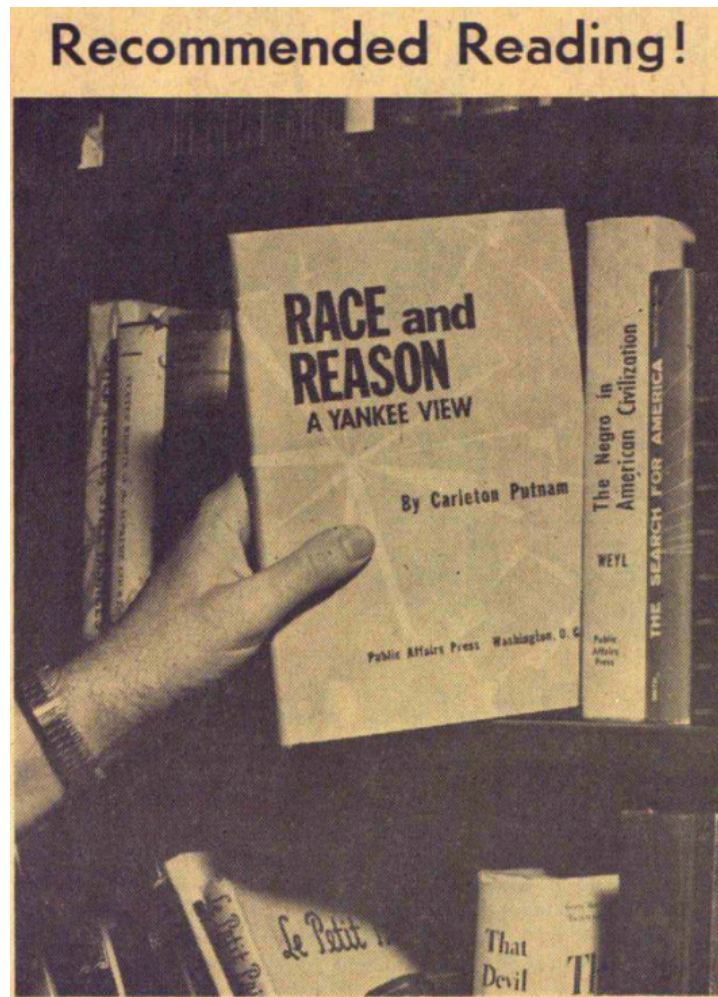


Fig. 3.2 - “Recommended Reading”, *The Citizens’ Council* (April-May 1961), p. 1.

Such strong endorsement signalled the beginning of a sea-change in the CCA’s media strategy. Where previously Council media strategists kept their distance, they now openly promulgated a race-centric approach. The image accompanying the editorial affirmation of *Race and Reason* symbolised this change in approach (Fig. 3.2). As well as being the first photograph to feature in *The Citizens’ Council*, ahead of its discontinuation in September 1961 in favour of a glossy, professional magazine format, it illustrated that *Race and Reason* was the first book readers should turn to, ahead of any works previously advertised, such as *Black Monday* or *The Negro in American Civilisation*. *Race and Reason* was positioned as the book to consult when appealing to “open-minded Yankees”.<sup>86</sup> Following the editorial fanfare, in August 1961 the CCA issued a policy statement during its semi-annual meeting re-dedicating the white South “to a total effort for total victory” vowing to mobilise a “strongly-organised counter-force” to meet the threat of

<sup>86</sup> “New Book Is Headed For Fame”.

integration. In the proclamation, *Race and Reason* was cited as the most effective weapon in the segregationists' arsenal to galvanise "a national reawakening to the threat which racial integration poses to the white race". Putnam's treatise was formally enshrined as the cornerstone of the Councils' renewed pledge to "battle relentlessly until all America is informed and aroused".<sup>87</sup> Searching for a suitable catalyst with which to spark their new strategy into life, the CCA met *Race and Reason* with unprecedented enthusiasm.

**"Carleton Putnam has shown us the way; now, we must show the nation!"**

The complete remobilisation of Council resources towards a race-centric strategy did not occur until November 1961, following the "Race and Reason Day" celebrations held in Mississippi to honour Putnam's by then fabled text. To mark the occasion, Governor Ross Barnett issued a proclamation under the Official Seal of the State of Mississippi, underscoring the tremendous significance placed on *Race and Reason* by segregation's most ardent protectors. Barnett declared Putnam's "valuable new book" finally met the "long-recognised need in improving communications between patriotic Americans, informing responsible Northern citizens of the viewpoint on race relations held by loyal Southerners", and that it "made an important contribution towards creating in the North an understanding of the South's problems". He heralded *Race and Reason* as the Holy Grail massive resisters had been waiting to find. To commemorate Putnam's "efforts in behalf of true intersectional understanding", Barnett decreed 26 October 1961 "Race and Reason Day" and urged white Mississippians to "observe this occasion by reading and discussing 'Race and Reason' [and] calling the book to the attention of friends and relatives in the North".<sup>88</sup> With Council sponsorship, the state held a lavish twenty-five-dollar-a-plate banquet at the Heidelberg Hotel in Jackson.<sup>89</sup> Guests from across the South were treated to a rousing address by the author, in which he restated his acerbic critique of states' rights and his hopes for a multimedia campaign to publicise racial science.<sup>90</sup> The momentous response to "Race and Reason Day" offered the CCA a platform from which to launch its new strategy.

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<sup>87</sup> "Text Of CCA Policy Statement Adopted At New Orleans Meeting", *TCC* (September 1961), pp. 1-2.

<sup>88</sup> Ross Barnett, "Proclamation Declaring Race and Reason Day", *TC* (November 1961), p. 4.

<sup>89</sup> "'Race and Reason' Author Carleton Putnam To Speak". Page two of the same issue (*TCC*, September 1961) featured a "Handy Coupon" that readers could use to purchase their \$25 ticket to the event.

<sup>90</sup> Putnam, "This is the Problem!".

Simmons acknowledged publicly in *The Citizen* that “the major shortcoming in previous statements of the South’s position” was the preoccupation with the constitutional question which, he explained, echoing Putnam, obscured the deeper significance of massive resistance and severely limited the ability to win support outside the South. Massive resistance was about protecting the sanctity of white civilisation, Simmons resolved, not merely the protection of states’ rights. In agreement with Putnam, he determined that the South’s story must be told in these terms.<sup>91</sup> *The Citizen*’s cover in November 1961 reflected this revised narrative (Fig. 3.3). A young southern Belle, the archetypal symbol of white southern womanhood, stands alone in an immaculate slaveholder’s mansion in the historic Mississippi town of Natchez. Her left-hand rests on the back of an empty chair, her eyes gazing longingly into the distance. Having embodied “the South’s Palladium,” the “mystic symbol of its nationality in the face of the foe”, and the subject of “gyneolatry”, as W. J. Cash wrote in *The Mind of the South* (1941), she was harnessed here as representative of the ideal that must be protected from the “barbarism” of integration.<sup>92</sup> The absence of her chivalrous male counterpart is palpable; she longs for his return, but he is serving in the South’s second war to preserve its cherished way of life. The race-centric approach championed by Putnam not only reinvigorated the Councils’ resistance, it gave new life to old racist myths. Indeed, its popularity throughout the South can be partially explained by the fact that it allowed segregationists to reconstitute and resurrect the narrative of the Lost Cause.<sup>93</sup>

The entire November issue was dedicated to Putnam, *Race and Reason*, and Race and Reason Day to set the CCA’s new multimedia campaign in motion. The magazine included multiple advertisements for *Race and Reason* and offered a paperback edition to new subscribers for a dollar.<sup>94</sup> Readers asking “What Can I Do?” were invited to purchase multiple copies for friends and relatives, particularly those living outside the South.

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<sup>91</sup> Simmons, “The Turning Point”.

<sup>92</sup> Cash, *The Mind of the South*, p. 86. For works on the southern belle, Anne Firor Scott, “Women’s Perspective on the Patriarchy in the 1850s”, *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (July 1974), pp. 52-64, and *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); Kathryn Lee Seidel, *The Southern Belle in the American Novel* (Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1985).

<sup>93</sup> In a similar vein, Hale, in her study of the development of Jim Crow segregation in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, highlights that “The modernity of racial ‘science’... could satisfy forward-looking white northerners while backward-facing white southerners could find assurance in resurrected and reconditioned pro-slavery polemics”. Hale, *Making Whiteness*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>94</sup> Advertisements appear on pp. 7, 47, and the Back Cover.





Fig. 3.3 – William A. Bacon, “Mistress of the Mansion”, *The Citizen* (November 1961), p. Cover.

*The Citizen*’s editors also encouraged readers to distribute extra copies of the special issue, which could be purchased at a discounted rate.<sup>95</sup> The majority of the magazine was dedicated to Putnam’s address, “This is the Problem!”, a concise presentation of his resistance philosophy in twenty-two pages including pictures deemed “so vital that... [it must] be taken to the people of America!” Readers were urged to “Meet The Challenge” to “help the light of truth to shine more brightly, and to illuminate the heretofore dark corners of our nation”.<sup>96</sup> For those unwilling or unable to read Putnam’s ideas, a demographic William D. Workman feared would be depressingly large, a one-hour audio tape recording of his address was also available.<sup>97</sup> A special *Citizens’ Council Forum* 30

<sup>95</sup> “What Can I Do?”, *TC* (November 1961), p. 6.

<sup>96</sup> “Will You Meet The Challenge?”, *TC* (November 1961), p. 33.

<sup>97</sup> “Putnam Tape Recordings Available”, *TC* (November 1961), p. 11. Workman in Letter from Waring to Putnam, 23 March 1961, Folder 1, Box 431, TRW.



minute television documentary “Project Understanding: Race and Reason Day in Mississippi” also chronicled the events of 26 October 1961 in Jackson as a “Public Service Message”. Readers were to petition local stations to show the film and “Patriotic organisations, civic clubs, schools, [and] churches” were offered free screenings for educational purposes.<sup>98</sup> Finally, resisters were encouraged to hold more “Race and Reason Day” events in their own communities; Louis W. Hollis, executive director of the Jackson Citizens’ Councils, even provided a guide for how to do so.<sup>99</sup> The CCA rolled out all communications media available and compiled a compendium of resources to propel this multimedia campaign.

In 1962, a fifty-minute LP was added to the CCA’s Putnam collection which contained highlights from the speeches delivered during the Race and Reason Day celebrations. Side One featured introductory statements by U.S. Representative from Mississippi John Bell Williams, Dr. W. B. McCain, President of Mississippi Southern College, and Barnett, and the first half of Putnam’s address, with Side Two dedicated to the remainder of Putnam’s address.<sup>100</sup> The record was marketed as a thoughtful gift and a means by which to “bring outstanding patriots into your living room”, an inventive way to expose visiting friends and relatives to the “truth” of the segregationist South’s fight to resist desegregation.<sup>101</sup> The CCA created a pyramid model of distribution to mobilise the grassroots and, thereby, achieve the widest possible reach. *The Citizen* advertised the full collection of Putnam paraphernalia doggedly from 1961 to 1963 as the tools needed to fight effectively, and at every opportunity, in the battle over American hearts and minds.<sup>102</sup> In-keeping with this resourceful and novel dissemination framework, the first

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<sup>98</sup> “Project Understanding Coming Soon!”, *TC* (November 1961), p. 38.

<sup>99</sup> Louis W. Hollis, “Here’s How We Did It!”, *TC* (November 1961), pp. 39-41

<sup>100</sup> The Citizens’ Council, *Race and Reason Day in Mississippi* (Jackson: The Citizens’ Council, 1961), LP. <https://www.discogs.com/Carleton-Putnam-Race-And-Reason-Day-In-Mississippi/release/4571069> [accessed 10 November 2018]. A digital version of the LP and a transcript of the recording can be found here: <https://archive.org/details/CarletonPutnamRaceAndReasonDaySpeech102661> [accessed 10 November 2018].

<sup>101</sup> “Hear These Famous Americans In Your Own Home!”, *TC* (February 1962), p. 15.

<sup>102</sup> For example, “Special ‘Race and Reason Day’ Issue Still Available!”, *TC* (December 1961), p. 23; “Announcing – Two Outstanding Films!”, *TC* (January 1962), p. 26; “Special ½ Price Offer! Save \$1! Get your copy of Race and Reason”, *TC* (January 1962), p. Back Cover; “Bring Outstanding Patriots Into Your Living Room!”, *TC* (March 1962), p. 15; “Bring Outstanding Patriots Into Your Living Room!”, *TC* (April 1962), p. 15; “Build Your Library With These Books On Segregation!”, *TC* (June 1962), pp. 22-23; “Build Your Library With These Books On Segregation!”, *TC* (December 1962), pp. 6-7; “Bring Outstanding Patriots Into Your Living Room!”, *TC* (December 1962), p. 8; “Save On Books And Records!”, *TC* (January 1963), p. 14; “Save On Books And Records!”, *TC* (February 1963), n.p.; “Let’s Tell The Truth About Racial Differences!”, *TC* (June 1963), p. 4; *Race and Reason* appears at the top of a comprehensive list of recommended Council literature published in May 1963, “Know The Facts! Be Well Informed!”, *TC* (May 1963), pp. 26-30; “Proof vs. Propaganda”, *TC* (October 1963), p. 2.

comprehensive Citizens' Council handbook, published in 1962, instructed old and new members alike to read *Race and Reason* to gain a "thorough understanding of the problems involved in the fight for racial integrity".<sup>103</sup> Known as the *White Book of Citizens' Council Organisation*, this handbook formed part of centralised efforts to ensure uniformity of strategy and ideology across the board at local and state level.<sup>104</sup> CCA leaders declared a well-defined understanding of their strategy and tactics was "necessary to every person who wants to be an effective fighter in the war for our racial heritage".<sup>105</sup> The handbook directed members – particularly those on local Information and Education Committees whose primary responsibility was to present the "Citizens' Council story to the public" – to consult *Race and Reason* when developing strategy to provide "the people of your community [with] the facts of life regarding racial integrity".<sup>106</sup> The simple question and answer format enabled the book to function as a propaganda toolkit for grassroots segregationists. As Simmons wrote on the book's release, "It has the answers to most of the questions you'll be asked concerning race relations in the South".<sup>107</sup> As well as a propaganda device in its own right, *Race and Reason* functioned as a platform around which the Council movement could rally and reorganise.

In March 1963, the Councils added yet another publication to its Putnam package: "A Southern Survival Kit", a second issue of *The Citizen* dedicated Putnam's writings, reemphasising their value as the reference texts for resisters.<sup>108</sup> This special edition focused on three addresses by Putnam: a reprint of "This Is The Problem"; "The Road To Reversal", presented at Louisiana's Fifth Annual Attorney General's Conference on 16 February 1962; and "These Are The Guilty", addressed to the Washington Putnam Letters Club on Lincoln Day in the nation's capital on 12 February 1963.<sup>109</sup> Again,

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<sup>103</sup> "Understanding The Problem" in *White Book of Citizens' Council Organization*, no page numbers are present in the first edition. The *White Book* can be found in archives across the South. The edition cited here is held in Box 73, WMR. Prior to the *White Book*, the Councils relied on small pamphlets such as "The Citizens' Council", "The Citizens' Councils... Their Platform", and "The Educational Fund of the Citizens' Councils". These pamphlets are held in numerous archival collections. See, for example, Reel 9 (A64), RWC.

<sup>104</sup> Willie Rainach pledged to use the *White Book* "to achieve discipline, system, economy, centralized accounting, coordinated membership enlistment, and a program of activity" for the individual members of and Councils collected within the CCL. Ned Touchstone also attempted to rouse Council members into activity: "Every local Council has a White Book, you have a phone book and paper to write on. If you don't think of anything to do, read the White Book". Letter from Rainach to Simmons, 13 February 1963, Box 15, Folder 149, WMR; Letter from Citizens' Council of Louisiana, Inc. (Touchstone) to Council Members, n.d., Box 7, Folder 103, NT.

<sup>105</sup> "Understanding The Problem" in the *White Book*.

<sup>106</sup> "Information and Education" in the *White Book*.

<sup>107</sup> "New Book Is Headed For Fame".

<sup>108</sup> William J. Simmons, "A Southern Survival Kit", *TC* (March 1963), p. 2.

<sup>109</sup> Carleton Putnam, "This Is The Problem", *TC* (March 1963), pp. 6-21; "The Road to Reversal", *TC* (March 1963), pp. 22-35; "These Are The Guilty", *TC* (March 1963), pp. 36-51.

additional copies were available for redistribution at a discounted rate.<sup>110</sup> The Councils' rapturous enchantment with Putnam continued well into 1963. He remained the movement's chosen champion, continued to be lionised for providing the tools to tell "the truth about race", and his works remained at the top of Council reading lists as "a major contribution toward solving our most difficult domestic problem today".<sup>111</sup> No other pro-segregation text or thinker received anywhere near the attention Putnam was given; he had a profound impact on segregationist media strategy.

The strategic shift catalysed by *Race and Reason* can be seen most profoundly in the *Forum*. Stephanie Rolph identifies a shift in *Forum* programming in line with "a new phase of Council activism that considered the fact of racial difference and natural white superiority an underarticulated point" but argues this did not occur until 1964.<sup>112</sup> As Patterson's November 1960 letter evinces, the CCA took steps to recalibrate its efforts far earlier than Rolph claims.<sup>113</sup> This is no less true when considering the *Forum*. As Chapter 2 demonstrates, it presented a clear and focused states' rights narrative in the years following its move to the congressional studios in Washington, D.C., in 1958. When strategic reorientation towards Putnam's ideas began at the end of 1961, the programme's strict adherence to this narrative was abandoned. Simmons used the *Forum* as another platform through which to publicise *Race and Reason* and the ideas it presented, and Putnam was invited to break down his ideas into even simpler terms for viewers.<sup>114</sup> To enhance and accentuate the sheen of scholarly credence attached to *Race and Reason*, the *Forum* played host to racial scientists, making use of Putnam's connections within the IAAEE.<sup>115</sup> The show's producers called on Putnam's skills in public relations to guide some of the less media savvy academics through televised discussion. Passionate and

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<sup>110</sup> "MUST Reading For Americans!", *TC* (March 1963), p. 55; "Let's Tell The Truth About Racial Differences!", p. 4; "Know The Facts! Be Well Informed!", p. 27.

<sup>111</sup> Simmons, "A Southern Survival Kit", p. 2.

<sup>112</sup> Rolph, *Resisting Equality*, p. 162.

<sup>113</sup> Letter from Patterson to Waring, 2 November 1960.

<sup>114</sup> Carleton Putnam, "Race and Reason – A Yankee View", 1962, *CCF*, Reel #6219R and 6242R, CCRF; Carleton Putnam, "Philosophy of Equalitarianism", 1962, *CCF*, Reel #6243R, CCRF; Carleton Putnam, "Race Issue – Equalitarian Philosophy – Left Wing Overdrift", 1961, *CCF*, Reel #6147, CCRF. Putnam appeared on two programmes in 1960 to promote *Race and Reason* ahead of its release. These two appearances did not elicit, and do not constitute, a dramatic shift in strategy, rather they foreshadow the strategic shift that would take place after the book was published. Carleton Putnam and William Tuck, "Supreme Court's Decisions in the Brown Case – Forcing School Integration of the South", 1960, *CCF*, Reel #6028, CCRF; Carleton Putnam and William Tuck, "The Putnam Letter", 1960, *CCF*, Reel #6031, CCRF.

<sup>115</sup> Robert Gayre, "Racial differences between blacks and Caucasians", 1962, *CCF*, Reel #078, CCF; John Bell Williams and Robert Gayre, "South Africa and an anthropological study of the black man", 1962, *CCF*, Reel #026, CCF.

exuberant, Putnam led the conversation, allowing his scholastic companions time only to agree with his assertions, and relayed their “scientific” findings pithily in comprehensible language free from academic jargon.<sup>116</sup> Although Rolph correctly observes an increase in the number of racial scientists on the *Forum* in 1964, largely in response to the *Evers* and *Stell* court cases, racial scientists were already established as regular panellists in line with the change in *Forum* content provoked by Putnam several years earlier. The focused narrative that characterised *Forum* programming after 1958 crumbled in 1962 giving way to a less-defined editorial line that allowed for the espousal of overtly racist ideas. Academic pseudo-scientists joined conservative northern politicians as legitimisers when “states’ rights” became increasingly unpopular in the Councils’ vernacular. The decision to abandon the *Forum*’s staunchly race-neutral narrative in favour of one proclaiming black inferiority overtly is emblematic of Putnam’s impact on the CCA’s media strategy.

Rolph also asserts that the assimilation of Putnam and racial science into *Forum* programming contradicted the CCA’s efforts to connect “the defence of segregation with national issues”.<sup>117</sup> Putnam’s race-based arguments against desegregation certainly cut against the *Forum*’s supposedly race-free narrative but it was not necessarily a contradiction of the CCA’s desire to engage a national audience. Nor was it merely the manifestation of the organisation’s fierce belief in white supremacy, its wavering commitment to race-blind tactics, or its natural ideological affinity to the radical right, as Rolph suggests.<sup>118</sup> The decision to shift Council media strategy so drastically was carefully calculated and predicated on Council leaders’ belief that they could attain national support for segregation only by convincing the American public of a racial hierarchy and the innate differences between races. For Patterson and Simmons, racial integrity and the “equalitarian conspiracy” were national issues. They did not take Putnam’s advice on a whim but had already recognised the failings of constitutional arguments. Putnam reinforced their convictions; he provided the spark needed to trigger a realignment they were already primed to undertake.

The turn to racial science and embrace of racial arguments against desegregation also coincided with the *Forum* becoming increasingly national in scope. Following the

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<sup>116</sup> Carleton Putnam and Wesley Critz George, “George’s book, which George wrote in response to the 1954 Supreme Court decision”, 1962, CCF, Reel #079, CCFF; Robert Gayre and Carleton Putnam, “The inferiority of the blacks and the race issue in South Africa”, 1962, CCF, Reel #049, CCFF. George, for example, appeared sluggish, unenthused, and frail during his appearance on the *Forum*.

<sup>117</sup> Rolph, *Resisting Equality*, p. 91.

<sup>118</sup> Rolph, *Resisting Equality*, p. 91.

MSSC's commitment to fund the *Forum* in 1960, producers expanded its reach significantly. As Chapter 2 shows, an analysis of television schedules published in newspapers across the United States corroborates Dick Morpew's oft-stated claim that the show was broadcast "coast to coast". Two years after this funding injection, and attendant expansion in viewership, Simmons and Morpew revamped the *Forum*'s opening titles to reflect a national outlook. It no longer opened with the *Citizens' Council Forum* logo featuring the Stars and Stripes crossed with the Confederate Battle Flag. Instead, viewers were greeted with an outline map of the United States and an illustration of Capitol Hill (Fig. 3.4). The voiceover introduced the show as "America's number one public affairs programme, where prominent Americans report to the nation".<sup>119</sup> The popular southern Civil War anthem "Dixie" was replaced as the show's theme with generic marching music. The new titles eschewed any reference to the South to present the *Forum* as concerned only with national issues. The new opening also characterised the programme's shift from a states' rights narrative, reflecting growing apathy towards constitutional arguments as an effective mode of resistance. The voiceover no longer positioned the Councils as "dedicated to states' rights" but defined them as a collection of organisations committed to the belief that "Americans must be informed to remain free", which tapped into more universal Cold War fears and harked back to revolutionary rhetoric. With the removal of the Council crest, "States' Rights" disappeared completely. The title sequence denoted the fluid approach to *Forum* programming adopted after 1961, embodying a broader, national and international conservative ideology.



Fig. 3.4 – Opening title screens of the *Citizens' Council Forum* from 1962 onwards.

<sup>119</sup> The two opening title sequences can be viewed in the various *Forum* episodes collected in CCFE.



Fig. 3.5 – Carleton Putnam speaking at “Race and Reason Day”, 26 October 1961. Carleton Putnam, “Project Understanding: Author of *Race and Reason* talks about black inferiority at the ‘Race and Reason in Mississippi Day’ festivities”, 1962, *Citizens’ Council Forum*, Reel #021, Call No. MP 1986.01, Citizens’ Council Forum Films, Film and Television Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

It was at this critical juncture in CCA media strategy that racial science was cemented within the *Forum*’s ideological framework, and as the Councils’ most prominent mode of resistance rhetoric. Council leaders saw scientifically-supported white supremacy as an essential part of a new, emergent conservative movement, of which they considered themselves a part. The special thirty-minute *Forum* production on “Race and Reason Day” provides the most visually arresting representation of the Councils’ belief that the “environmentalist conspiracy” and the preservation of “natural white supremacy” were national issues. As Putnam stands at the lectern, delivering his speech on the differences between the races and urging citizens of the South to go forth and prove these “truths” to the nation at large, the camera pans out to reveal he is standing before an enormous American flag (Fig. 3.5).<sup>120</sup>

Building on their own media outlets, the CCA diversified their efforts by commandeering existing media platforms. During a debate aired on Los Angeles television station KTTV, for example, Simmons promulgated “anthropological findings, psychological data, and sociological studies” when arguing that “the Negro race is inferior

<sup>120</sup> Carleton Putnam, “Project Understanding: Author of *Race and Reason* talks about black inferiority at the ‘Race and Reason in Mississippi Day’ festivities”, 1962, *CCF*, Reel #021, CCFF.

in various ways to the white race”.<sup>121</sup> Ahead of Putnam’s address at the Lincoln Day banquet in Washington D.C. in February 1963, Simmons instructed Waring to “ask your wire service for news and picture coverage... to bring the story to the attention of many other editors”.<sup>122</sup> Simmons placed greater emphasis on “scientific arguments” in speaking engagements outside the South to intellectualise the threat he contended was posed to the stability of northern cities by the increasing in-migration of southern blacks, adding a new edge to the strategy explored in Chapter 1 of this thesis.<sup>123</sup> The CCA also worked hard to attain national network “television time”.<sup>124</sup> Simmons sent copies of *Race and Reason* to Lawrence Spivak, the producer of NBC’s popular political panel show *Meet The Press*, and offered his assistance “in securing a qualified spokesman... to represent the segregation point of view”.<sup>125</sup> He hoped to persuade Spivak to offer a spot on *Meet The Press* to a Council spokesman, or, at least, to acknowledge the book on his programme when discussing race and civil rights. It is likely he would have put forward Putnam for his public relations skills, as well as his personal desire for a national platform. Indeed, Putnam wrote to Spivak multiple times in the hope he might be invited to appear as a guest of the show.<sup>126</sup>

Putnam and Simmons were never invited onto *Meet The Press*, but Patterson secured screen time on a special, feature-length ABC national news broadcast concerning pending civil rights legislation in 1964. To fulfil their obligations under the FCC’s Fairness Doctrine by presenting both sides of the debate, ABC sent reporters to the CCA Head Office in Jackson, Mississippi, for Patterson’s thoughts on the proposed legislation.<sup>127</sup> He made expert use of the opportunity to promote *Race and Reason* and the racial ideology it embodied. Whilst the documentary did not include the Council leader discussing Putnam’s work, Patterson had arranged his office prior to filming so that a

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<sup>121</sup> Associated Press, “Simmons Debates Mixing on Los Angeles TV Show”, *Clarion Ledger* (11 December 1962), p. 16.

<sup>122</sup> Letter from Simmons to Waring, 6 February 1963, Folder 5, Box 393, TRW.

<sup>123</sup> William J. Simmons, “The Race Problem Moves North”, An Address Presented at Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota, released to the press on 15 May 1962, Folder 5, Box 393, TRW; William J. Simmons, “Race Relations and Civil Rights: A Southern Point of View”, An Address Given to The Yale Political Union, New Haven, Connecticut, released to the press on 28 February 1963, Folder 5, Box 393, TRW.

<sup>124</sup> Putnam, “This is the Problem!”, p. 29.

<sup>125</sup> Letter from Simmons to Lawrence E. Spivak, 17 December 1962, Folder S, Box 128, General Correspondence, 1945-1994, “Meet the Press” File, 1945-1994, LES.

<sup>126</sup> Letter from Putnam to Spivak, c. July 1963, Folder P, Box 128, General Correspondence, “Meet the Press” File, LES; Letter from Putnam to Spivak, 17 June 1964, Folder P, Box 131, General Correspondence, “Meet the Press” File, LES.

<sup>127</sup> The Fairness Doctrine required broadcasters to present contrasting positions when covering controversial issues. Bodroghkozy, *Equal Time*, pp. 63-64.



copy of *Race and Reason* would be in direct view of the camera throughout the interview (Fig. 3.6). Although he featured only briefly in the documentary, it is reasonable to assume he was interviewed for far longer, and, given the prominence of the book, it is likely he discussed it in a section of the interview that did not make the final cut. Perhaps anticipating parts of the interview would be left on the cutting room floor, Patterson guaranteed the book would stay in the picture as a symbol of the Councils' resistance, engaging in what might be termed now as "product placement".<sup>128</sup> With Putnam's treatise literally centre frame, Patterson presented massive resistance as a national struggle:

We are concerned with the safety of our families and of the value of our property just like people in the North... [We] have always taken the position that southerners object to integration for the same reason as northerners.<sup>129</sup>



Fig. 3.6 – Robert B. Patterson on *Great Divide: Civil Rights and the Bill*, ABC, 22 May 1964.

<sup>128</sup> Segregationists' unshakable belief in a media conspiracy against the South had left them distrustful of national, or northern, media outlets. Less than two years earlier, Putnam himself deemed an ABC programme, which featured excerpts from an interview between himself and Howard K. Smith, a "wholesale deception of the American people". Another aggrieved segregationist, for example, complained that New York TV interviewers "took advantage of the opportunity to edit to suit themselves. The important questions asked me were cut". Letter from Putnam to Carleton Coon, 8 October 1962, Folder 1, Box 431, TRW. Letter from W. T. C. Bates to Waring, 5 December 1955, Folder 2, Box 393, TRW.

<sup>129</sup> Patterson quoted in *Great Divide: Civil Rights and the Bill* [television programme] ABC, 22 May 1964. It should be noted, however, that the Confederate battle flag appears with *Race and Reason* and serves to undermine Patterson's nationally-oriented rhetoric but was likely construed as a necessary to mollify white southern viewers who may have felt besmirched by Patterson's equation of them to white northerners.



That this image was broadcast into the homes of Americans across the country, exemplifies the prized position *Race and Reason* held in the canon of Council literature: it was squarely at the forefront of the CCA's most extensive multimedia campaign to win national support for massive resistance.

State and local Councils reciprocated the CCA's enthusiasm for Putnam and racial science. The Texas Councils recommended *Race and Reason* to all Americans "unqualifiedly" as the most effective means to "counter the false propaganda that has succeeded in blanketing our nation", urging readers to share copies with relatives or friends "up North".<sup>130</sup> Robert Crawford and the DSSIL – Virginia's equivalent to the Citizens' Councils – distributed the book.<sup>131</sup> The Alabama Councils organised their own version of Mississippi's Race and Reason Dinner, with Gayre taking the place of Putnam as the guest of honour.<sup>132</sup> In Louisiana, Rainach placed *Race and Reason* at the top of the CCL's recommended reading and promoted it doggedly, with a librarian in Claiborne Parish remarking upon the extraordinary demand for it.<sup>133</sup> The SLCC stated "the academic ammunition which Mr. Putnam has provided" has placed the South "in a position to win the battle".<sup>134</sup> *Race and Reason* became so popular in southern Louisiana that the CCGNO was forced to purchase additional copies for its library after more and more requests poured in from members.<sup>135</sup> The CCGNO even persuaded Mayor Victor Hugo Schiro to award Putnam the "Keys to the City" of New Orleans.<sup>136</sup> Local and state Councils cooperated enthusiastically with the CCA's directives to blanket the nation with Putnam's writings in a collaborative, interstate propaganda crusade.

Whilst the Councils' strategic realignment centred on *Race and Reason*, the embrace of Putnam and his ideas generated far-reaching changes to resistance strategy. Councils ended crude attacks on social scientists which labelled them "do-gooder eggheads", a rhetorical strategy that had cast aside expertise and scholarship as irrelevant to the debate over segregation for years. Instead, the social science that was part of the *Brown* decision

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<sup>130</sup> "Race and Reason", *The Texas Councilor* (25 August 1961), p. 2.

<sup>131</sup> Letter from Vaughan H. Howard to Waring, 1 August 1961, Folder 1, Box 431, TRW.

<sup>132</sup> "Citizens' Councils of Alabama Dinner Program: Dr. Robert Gayre", Pamphlet. (The event took place on 26 October 1965 at the Thomas Jefferson Hotel, Birmingham, Alabama), Reel 35 (C96), RWC.

<sup>133</sup> Letter from Doris Lessel to Rainach, 27 September 1961, Folder 163, Box 16, WMR; "Revised Book List" (Shreveport: CCL, February 1962), Folder 2035, Box 74, WJ.

<sup>134</sup> George Shannon, "Race and Reason: A Yankee View", *Shreveport Journal* (2 May 1961), re-printed and distributed by the SLCC (Metairie, Louisiana), Folder 5, Box 2, KLR.

<sup>135</sup> *Citizens' Council of Greater New Orleans Bulletin* (March-April 1963), Folder 2035, Box 74, WJ.

<sup>136</sup> Handwritten notes by Schiro confirm he agreed to the Council's request. Letter from George Singelmann to Schiro, 7 November 1961, Folder: Citizens' Council of Greater New Orleans (S62-4), Box 4, Subject File 1962, VHS.

and criticism levelled at *Race and Reason* and racial science was engaged more seriously in a more “scholarly” manner through strategic “scientific” evidence. As well as dedicating time to explore racial science on the *Forum*, articles endorsing and promoting scientific racism peppered *The Citizen* and publications by racial scientists, such as *Mankind Quarterly*, were advertised regularly.<sup>137</sup> This new culture of expertise constructed a more “respectable” brand of resistance.<sup>138</sup> Putnam assumed an unofficial consultative public relations role within the CCA to actively propel the new approach. Branding himself “counsel for a muzzled group of scientists”, he pointed Council leaders towards more “scientific research”, including Coon’s *The Origins of Races* (1962) and George’s *The Biology of the Race Problem* (1962), which he considered valuable in “the fight for racial integrity”. He worked closely with the CCA to publicise these studies through its various media platforms.<sup>139</sup> Great trust was placed in Putnam’s judgement and recommendations and the CCA followed his guidance faithfully to strengthen and develop the campaign to expose the American public to the “truth about race differences”.<sup>140</sup> Putnam, then, had a profound impact on the content and form of Council media. He triggered a dramatic shift towards race-based, scientific arguments against desegregation and racial equality and equipped Council strategists with materials to maintain the strategy. Putnam’s professionalism and the sophistication of *Race and Reason* provided further impetus for the CCA to refine its media efforts, evidenced most notably in the move from a cheaply printed newspaper to a glossy magazine and the more polished production of the *Forum*. Through the CCA, as the foremost resistance organisation, Putnam altered the trajectory of massive resistance fundamentally.

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<sup>137</sup> See, for example, Henry E. Garrett, “Facts vs. Opinions On ‘Race And Reason’”, *TC* (February 1963), pp. 7-12; “A Meeting Of The Minds”, *TC* (June 1962), p. 2; The works of Dr. Bela Hubbard and Dr. Stanley D. Porteus on racial differences and the dangers of “miscegenation from the biological viewpoint”, among others and alongside *Mankind Quarterly*, are listed in “Know The Facts! Be Well Informed!”, p. 27.

<sup>138</sup> Simmons also gave space to non-political “experts” on communism and Soviet brainwashing, such as Edward Hunter and Myers Lowman. See, for example, Edward Hunter, “The Menace Of Managed News”, *TC* (January 1963), pp. 5-8; Myers Lowman, “Civil Rights Organisations that are communist fronts”, 1962, *CCF*, Reel #033, *CCFF*; Edward Hunter, “Brainwashing in the US and how the Anti-Communist Liaison was founded”, 1962, *CCF*, Reel #091, *CCFF*; Edward Hunter, “The Warren Commission Report and aspects of the death of President Kennedy”, 1964, *CCF*, Reel #062, *CCFF*. Contrary to Wilhoit’s observations, not all white southerners had a “preference for rhetoric over reason”. Wilhoit, *The Politics of Massive Resistance*, p.128.

<sup>139</sup> Putnam quoted in “Gag on Racial Issue Charged by Writer”, *NYT* (2 December 1961), p. 47; Letter from Putnam to Waring, 11 May 1962, Folder 1, Box 431, TRW; Letter from Putnam to Waring, 23 May 1962, Folder 1, Box 431, TRW; Letter from Simmons to Putnam, 11 June 1962, Folder 1, Box 431, TRW. Carleton S. Coon, *The Origin of Races* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962).

<sup>140</sup> News Release attached to Letter from Simmons to Putnam, 11 June 1962; Simmons “A Meeting of the Minds”, *TC* (June 1962), p. 2; William J. Simmons, “The Truth About Racial Differences!”, *TC* (October 1962), pp. 7-8; “Know The Facts! Be Well Informed!”, *TC* (December 1964), p. 27; Putnam and George, “George’s book”, *CCF*.

**“Right as you may be, your thesis is too radical for many people to swallow today”**

Beyond the Councils, *Race and Reason* received plaudits from leaders across the South. Segregationist heavyweights, including Senators Russell, Harry F. Byrd, and Strom Thurmond, praised Putnam’s examination and its potential influence the national debate over segregation.<sup>141</sup> Segregationist newspaper editors expressed collective admiration for Putnam’s work.<sup>142</sup> Legislatures in Mississippi and Virginia recommended the book to school libraries, and the Louisiana School Board purchased 5,000 copies and made it required reading on several school courses.<sup>143</sup> Across the country, feature articles discussed *Race and Reason* in positive terms. Putnam was interviewed by *Time* magazine and secured airtime on several television and radio stations, appearing on ABC’s coast-to-coast television network in “one of the prime time positions of the week”.<sup>144</sup> Due in large part to the CCA’s dogged promotion and petitioning, *Race and Reason* became “a blockbuster in print”.<sup>145</sup> However, while many viewed it as “the opening gun” in a “counter attack against ideas of race that have influenced the thinking of the Supreme Court justices, Presidents, preachers and writers”, others remained unconvinced and unwilling to line up behind Putnam and the Councils.<sup>146</sup> Reactions to the May 1963 *Stell vs. Savannah-Chatam County Board of Education* decision exemplify a more uneven response to *Race and Reason* and the CCA’s and Putnam’s calls for strategic realignment.

In *Stell*, presiding federal district judge Frank M. Scarlett, described by NAACP attorney Jack Greenberg as “adamantly hostile to blacks”, ruled racial segregation in schools a reasonable exercise of state power.<sup>147</sup> He based his decision exclusively on scientific testimony presented by a roster of racial scientists drawn from the IAAEE and prepared by Georgia Attorney Carter Pittman in direct response to arguments and ideas advanced by Putnam.<sup>148</sup> Simmons and the Councils celebrated the ruling as the “First

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<sup>141</sup> *Race and Reason: A Report* (New York: National Putnam Letters Committee, n.d.), p. Back Cover; Folder 1, Box 431, TRW.

<sup>142</sup> “First Reviews, Putnam’s Race and Reason”, 1 May 1961, enclosed in Letter from Putnam to Waring, 6 May 1961, Folder 1, Box 431, TRW.

<sup>143</sup> *Race and Reason: A Report*, p. 4.

<sup>144</sup> *Race and Reason: A Report*; Letter from Putnam to Coon, 8 October 1962; Letter from Putnam to Waring, 24 February 1962, Folder 1, Box 431, TRW; “See, Hear Carlton [sic] Putnam”, *Monroe Morning World* (27 October 1962), p. 6-A; “Proof vs. Propaganda”.

<sup>145</sup> *Kingsport Times-News* quoted in “First Reviews, Putnam’s Race and Reason”.

<sup>146</sup> Bill Freehoff, “Attacks Accepted Ideas: Northerner Says Negro Race Inferior To White”, *Kingsport Times-News*, p. 5-B.

<sup>147</sup> Greenberg quoted in Jackson *Science for Segregation*, p. 146. For an in-depth examination of the hearing see Tucker, *The Funding of Scientific Racism*, pp.112-117; Jackson, *Science for Segregation*, pp. 131-147.

<sup>148</sup> Letter from Pittman to Putnam, c. March 1959, Folder 8, Box 430, TRW; Putnam, “The Road to Reversal”.

Step on the Road to Reversal”, and moved quickly to publicise the decision.<sup>149</sup> On “an unprecedented three hour [national television] report” purportedly designed to study the “American Negro’s struggle for equality”, Simmons cited *Stell* in an acerbic critique of the civil rights movement. “In the *Stell* case... uncontradicted, unrefuted testimony showed that the factual basis of the [*Brown*] Supreme Court decision was entirely wrong”, Simmons declared, emboldened by the outcome of the suit, “this entire integration movement is based on false legal grounds”.<sup>150</sup> Putnam was exuberant, convinced the *Stell* case presented segregationists with an unprecedented opportunity. “If Heaven itself had sent... down a sword with which to fight the integration movement”, he proclaimed, “it could not have done better than give you *Stell*”.<sup>151</sup>

With a keen eye for public relations opportunities, Putnam wrote special delivery to George Wallace immediately after the decision was handed down, recognising the Alabama Governor was in the spotlight ahead of the integration of the University of Alabama and much-anticipated “Stand in the Schoolhouse Door”. Putnam urged him to use his platform to publicise the findings in *Stell* and compel the Supreme Court to hear the case so the *Brown* decision could be overturned. It is the “chance of a lifetime”, Putnam proselytised, “you can save the case and the case can save you”. Playing to Wallace’s ego, Putnam suggested he would be celebrated as the “saviour” of the South. Aware Wallace would appear on *Meet The Press* that weekend, and certain he would feature in television news because of the looming crisis in Tuscaloosa, Putnam included in his message a brief statement for Wallace to use on “coast-to-coast broadcast[s]” to explain “what this case really means... to the American people”. Engineered to appeal to a national television audience, it addressed “Americans in the North and in the South” and touched on salient points in Putnam’s argument – the equalitarian conspiracy, the apparent flaws in the social science used in *Brown*, and the implications of *Stell* – in less than two-hundred words. Sentences were short, the language clear and concise. He also provided model answers to some hostile questions he believed Wallace might encounter from interviewers. Finally, he instructed Wallace to avoid dwelling too heavily on issues

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<sup>149</sup> Editorial, “A Good First Step on the Road to Reversal”, *TC* (May 1963), p. 2.

<sup>150</sup> *The American Revolution of '63* [television programme] NBC, 2 September 1963. See also, J. Frank Dobie, “Letters, Solicitations, Causes”, *San Antonio Light* (8 September 1963), p. 57; “Know The Facts! Be Well Informed!”, *TC* (December 1964), p. 27.

<sup>151</sup> Letter from Putnam to Richard B. Russell, 21 June 1963, Folder 2, Box 431, TRW.

related to the Constitution, the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, and states' rights.<sup>152</sup> The letter served as a comprehensive crib sheet with which to publicise the ruling.

Wallace did not share Putnam or the CCA's enthusiasm for *Stell*. Not only did he disregard the pre-prepared media statement, but he also barely acknowledged the *Stell* case. Sharing feelings of "frustration and futility" with the director of the Montgomery Citizens' Councils, Putnam lamented how Wallace gave only "five seconds to the *Stell* case" on *Meet The Press*.<sup>153</sup> Where the Councils embraced a new "intellectual" and "academic" approach, Wallace maintained disinterest in opinions of "pointy-headed egg-heads" and continued to belittle universities and "expert opinion" throughout his political career. While this stance would become a shibboleth of the populist right, the disparity in this moment highlights an important area of conflict and competition over the most effective strategy to popularise conservative thought.<sup>154</sup> Not content to accept defeat, Putnam turned to Senator Russell who was guaranteed a great deal of media attention as he prepared to lead the South's resistance to President John F. Kennedy's "massive civil rights programme" in the U.S. Senate. He "beseech[ed]" Russell to study the findings in the *Stell* case and "plead[ed]" with him to expand upon it in "statements to the press and on television and in your Senate speeches". "With all the mass media on the other side", Putnam repined, "unless men in your position who can command public attention use every opportunity offered, the situation is hopeless".<sup>155</sup>

Like Wallace, Russell spurned Putnam's advances. At his wits' end, Putnam wrote to Senator Thurmond to express his "perplexity at the lack of public attention being focused on the *Stell* case by Southern leaders who had it in their power... to make this case *the* major topic of discussion". With other resistance-minded senators copied in – including Byrd, Eastland, Talmadge, Allen J. Ellender, John L. McClellan, and John Stennis – Putnam demanded they end their silence on race. He presented six reasons to explain why innate racial differences should form the backbone of massive resistance and why *Stell* was the most valuable tool at their disposal.<sup>156</sup> Again, Putnam suffered rejection. Even in "a last-ditch" strategy session in March 1964, Russell and the Southern Bloc

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<sup>152</sup> Letter from Putnam to George C. Wallace, 27 May 1963, Folder 2, Box 431, TRW.

<sup>153</sup> Letter from Putnam to Carl Herbert Lancaster, Jr., 7 June 1963, Folder 2, Box 431, TRW; "The Honourable George C. Wallace", *Meet The Press*, 2 June 1963.

<sup>154</sup> For example: "George C. Wallace", *Public Broadcasting Laboratory* [television programme] PBS, 2 November 1968.

<sup>155</sup> Letter from Putnam to Russell, 21 June 1963.

<sup>156</sup> Letter from Putnam to Strom Thurmond, 10 July 1963, Folder 2, Box 431, TRW.

dismissed calls to “prepare a scientifically-documented argument” to address the alleged intellectual disparity between blacks and whites and the chaos forced integration would supposedly bring. Holmes Alexander, conservative columnist and exponent of Putnam and the Councils, excoriated the Senators’ decision “to do-or-die at the breastworks of the Old Reliable—the fortress called States’ Rights”, citing the resolution as an affront to the scientific search for truth on the same scale as the Catholic Church’s condemnation of Galileo Galilei.<sup>157</sup> In spite of the popularity of *Race and Reason* and the acclaim many of them personally afforded Putnam’s work when it was released, some of the most influential southern leaders remained unconvinced and were unwilling to put his ideas into practice. The disunity was palpable. The inability to settle on a unified media narrative only compounded their struggle to win public support.

Uncertainty over the suitability of Putnam’s and the Councils’ approach continued further into the 1960s. Despite supporters of racial science holding influential positions within the CCFAF, such as Draper as primary benefactor and John J. Synon as chief publicity officer respectively, the organisation’s impressive nationwide media campaign in 1963 and 1964 relied exclusively on constitutional arguments and contained no overt references to race, as discussed in Chapter 2.<sup>158</sup> While the archives do not provide a definitive answer to how or why, early planning documents indicate a definite reluctance to distribute material relating to the “natural inability of the Negro... his lack of intelligence as demonstrated by numerous tests” or “the findings in the Stell case”.<sup>159</sup> They reveal a lack of confidence in the facility of race-based arguments to secure northern sympathy. Whether or not they agreed with Putnam’s and the Councils’ arguments personally, some segregationist leaders considered the approach strategically flawed and came to accept that overt racial discrimination and the systematic subjugation of African Americans no longer sat within the bounds of political acceptability. Instead, they pursued purportedly “race-free” facets of “southern conservatism”, such as constitutional traditionalism and law and order, judging them to have greater appeal in other parts of the nation. As Waring informed Putnam, some were hesitant to utilise

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<sup>157</sup> Holmes Alexander, “Book Runs Afoul Of Racial Prudery”, *Richmond News Leader* (Virginia, 3 March 1964), n.p., Folder 11, Box SG19973, AGAAF.

<sup>158</sup> Tucker shows that Draper funneled money into the CCFAF via the Pioneer Fund. Tucker, *The Funding of Scientific Racism*, pp. 122-127. Synon’s correspondence with Waring demonstrates he was vicious racist and a firm supporter of Putnam’s racial theories. See Folders 9 and 10, Box 450, and Folder 1, Box 451, TRW. See also, Hank Burchard, “John J. Synon, Fought for Conservative Causes”, *WP* (8 April 1972), p. B10.

<sup>159</sup> “Rough memorandum concerning material to be prepared with reference to the ‘Civil Rights Act of 1963’”, 27 June 1963, SCR ID # 6-70-0-391-3-1-1 to 6-70-0-391-5-1-1, SCOC.

racial science “because it involved drawing attention to the innate limitations of the negro, and might thereby antagonise people who would otherwise support the Southern viewpoint”.<sup>160</sup> An ardent supporter of Putnam’s ideas and strategy, Waring grew weary and jaded, convinced that the American public “had been deeply infected with the egalitarian doctrine” and could not be persuaded of “inherent racial differences”.<sup>161</sup> “Right as you may be”, he told Putnam, “your thesis is too radical for many people to swallow today”.<sup>162</sup> Even the Councils moderated their emphasis on race slightly, opting to place anticommunism and national security at the centre of their final large-scale massive resistance media campaign, as examined in the next Chapter. Racial science became increasingly marginalised within resistance circles as mid-decade approached.

Putnam and the Councils nevertheless continued their drive to persuade the American public of the alleged validity of racial science and racial difference, drifting further towards the fringes of American politics.<sup>163</sup> While they battled desperately to create a conservative countermovement with whiteness and race at its centre, many other segregationist leaders gravitated towards a conservatism that was outwardly “colour-blind”. More attuned to the changing zeitgeist in the US and more prepared to respond pragmatically to new political realities, segregationists, including Kilpatrick, Russell, and Wallace, jettisoned the most brazen aspects of white southern racism to position themselves within broader conservative currents. These competing visions of a new political order formed an important part of the reckoning taking place among conservatives across the nation concerning the form the emergent conservative countermovement should take, which eventually saw them coalesce around a purportedly colour-blind ideology maintained by an ostensibly race-free media narrative. In May 1965, William F. Buckley, Jr., media mogul and ideological tastemaker of the new conservative movement, shut down any remaining hope held by the Councils or Putnam for a conservative movement unified exclusively around whiteness. “Whatever the differences

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<sup>160</sup> Waring quoted in Letter from Putnam to Thurmond, 10 July 1963.

<sup>161</sup> Letter from Waring to Putnam, 20 July 1963, Folder 2, Box 431, TRW.

<sup>162</sup> Letter from Waring to Putnam, 10 October 1963, Folder 2, Box 431, TRW.

<sup>163</sup> “Race With Reason – Leading Scientists Refute Equalitarian Propaganda!”, *TC* (December 1964), pp. 20-22; *Race and Reason* was still listed as the primary means through which to gain an “Understanding [of] The Problem” in the 1965 edition of the *White Book*. Folder 118, Box 7, NT; Dr. Ernst van den Haag, “The sociological-psychological impact of segregation”, 1964, *CCF*, Reel #009, CCFF; Dr. Robert Kuttner, “Professor of Pre-Clinical Sciences at Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska, discusses genetic and brain differences between Negros [sic] and Caucasians”, 1964, *CCF*, Reel #043, CCFF; Carleton Putnam, *Three New Letters on Science and Race* (New York: National Putnam Letters Committee, 1964). Putnam began writing a second book titled *Race and Reality*, which was published without fanfare in 1967.

between the races, the similarities between them far outdistance them”, Buckley wrote to Putnam in a particularly barbed letter: “I reject your opinion that the Negro is ‘200,000 years behind the white race’”. Buckley defined the new conservatism as colour-blind and consigned Putnam and the Councils’ race-based worldview to the past, no longer welcome in the American political mainstream.<sup>164</sup> Council leaders’ decision to transform their media strategy by adopting an overt and vocal position on race had left them in the political wilderness, an attendant irony given their more “race-neutral” public stance prior the publication of *Race and Reason*. In the years following the passage of federal civil rights legislation, the Councils’ firm belief in the science of segregation endured and led to the creation of the Citizens’ Councils’ private school programme.<sup>165</sup> Putnam faded out of the public spotlight quickly and withdrew himself from public life before the decade was over.

Putnam was undoubtedly a key figure in massive resistance. Where previous studies only touch on the popularity of *Race and Reason*, this study has explored the full extent of Putnam’s impact on segregationist media strategy, providing new perspectives on his influence on the trajectory of massive resistance. The CCA’s sustained multimedia campaign to promote racial pseudo-science exemplifies Putnam’s seismic impact and, despite its failure, further illuminates the resourcefulness and sophistication of some segregationist media strategists. This analysis challenges established historical and historiographical narratives which maintain segregationists relied on strategies subverting race when appealing to the rest of the nation. By uncovering the transformation of the CCA’s strategy, it complicates the constitutionalist-racial purist dichotomy and reveals intersections between the two positions, demonstrating how some segregationists and organisations transitioned from one position to the other. It also shows how some white resisters often dwelled between these two extremes, prepared to endorse and support Putnam’s racial treatise but unwilling to put his ideas into action. Finally, it highlights ideological conflict over the private and public faces of massive resistance within and between individuals and organisations committed to the preservation of segregation and white supremacy, a conflict which would limit the potency of massive resistance significantly.

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<sup>164</sup> Letter from William F. Buckley, Jr., to Carleton Putnam, 21 May 1965, Folder 7, Box SG22397, AGAF.

<sup>165</sup> Rolph, *Resisting Equality*, p. 162.



## Chapter 4 – Visualising the Enemy; Dramatising Massive Resistance

On Labour Day weekend in 1957, the state of Georgia dispatched an undercover investigator to infiltrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tennessee. Under the auspices of the GCE, Georgia's version of the MSSC, Edwin H. "Ed" Friend undertook a secret interstate mission to reconnoitre the activities and affiliations of the long-suspected "Communist Training School". He was tasked with determining the extent to which the movement for desegregation and civil rights was being directed by communists and to establish "whether [the] malignancy of the NAACP and Communism was leaking out over Georgia".<sup>1</sup> Friend was a trusted, well-respected employee of the state, who was serving loyally under the governorship of Marvin Griffin having previously served under Herman E. Talmadge.<sup>2</sup> He was the official state photographer and was renowned for his skills.<sup>3</sup> It was his dexterity behind the camera that led T. V. Williams, Jr., general secretary of the GCE, to select him for the Highlander assignment. Aware that leaders of the civil rights movement would be attending Highlander's anniversary celebrations, Williams spotted a unique opportunity to, quite literally, expose communism as the driving force behind the push for African American civil rights. He charged Friend with capturing visual "proof" that "racial strife and tensions are part of a Communist plan to subvert America".<sup>4</sup>

While it has been suggested that proponents of massive resistance could be "gifted image-makers", scholars have focused almost entirely on the ways in which civil rights organisations used images.<sup>5</sup> Even in scholarship seeking to complicate the historical understanding of white opposition to the civil rights movement, there is a tendency to focus on photographs depicting the violent extremes of massive resistance,

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<sup>1</sup> John Egerton, "The Trial of the Highlander Folk School", *Southern Exposure*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1978), p. 82. The labelling of Highlander and its founders as communists "began during the labour organising days and it intensified during the civil rights movement". Hugh Merrill, "Highlander 50 Years On a Left Wing And a Prayer", *Atlanta Weekly* (13 February 1983), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> In November 1962, Friend was awarded a Faithful Service Award in appreciation of 20 years of loyal service to the state of Georgia. State of Georgia Faithful Service Award awarded to Edwin H. Friend, 1 November 1962, Subseries B: Scrapbooks and Articles, Series V: Personal, EFV.

<sup>3</sup> Donna Friend (Edwin Friend's daughter), e-mail conversation with Author, 12 September 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Williams quoted in Heale, *McCarthy's Americans*, p. 259.

<sup>5</sup> For works which suggest resisters could be effective image-makers, Maurice Berger, *For All the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), p. 9; Monteith, *American Culture in the 1960s*, p. 56; Lewis, "Segregationists' Use of Media", pp. 163-167.

which inevitably stress segregationists' lack of media savvy. Tellingly, the photographs selected as cover images for scholarly monographs on white resistance are almost always those of incensed white agitators captured by photographers working on behalf of mainstream media organisations.<sup>6</sup> Studies of the civil rights movement and the media reveal civil rights organisations' coordinated and sophisticated strategies to capture these images. Scholars show how movement media tacticians recognised that images of white violence against peaceful black protesters would be a "powerful propaganda tool" in their efforts to secure public support for federal civil rights legislation.<sup>7</sup> In an effort to dramatise the black freedom struggle as a noble battle between good and evil, organisers increasingly planned demonstrations in areas such as Birmingham and Selma, Alabama, where they expected a violent response from the local white power structure.<sup>8</sup> With the civil rights movement positioned as the "first great national story", strategists often used Martin Luther King, Jr.'s celebrity to ensure the nation's media were on hand to capture images of the "archetypal public villain[s]" he battled.<sup>9</sup> Through expert strategic manoeuvring, civil rights activists produced deeply affecting images which were vital in provoking a sea change in American race relations.<sup>10</sup>

Given the effectiveness of strategies developed by civil rights organisations and the striking images the media produced, the tendency to overlook corresponding efforts by segregationists is not without justification. Indeed, by contrast, segregationists struggled to produce similarly affecting images to explain their resistance. This was a serious deficiency in segregationist media strategy and, in itself, a contributing factor in the ultimate failure of massive resistance. That segregationists were unable to produce powerful visuals with near universal emotional appeal, however, does not mean they did

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<sup>6</sup> For example, McRae, *Mothers of Massive Resistance*; Webb, *Rabble Rousers*; Webb, *Massive Resistance*; Lewis, *Massive Resistance*. When illustrations are included scholars rely on the same kinds of images – Citizens' Councils cartoons and portraits of segregationist leaders – and are rarely interrogated. For example, Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance*, illustrations follow p. 178; McMillen, *The Citizens' Council*, illustrations follow p. 182; Chappell, "The Divided Mind", pp. 47, 51, 54, 57, 61, 66; Sweeney, "Postscript to Massive Resistance", pp. 59-62; Ward, "The D.C. School Hearings", pp. 90, 102.

<sup>7</sup> MacDonald, *Blacks and White TV*, p. 81; Bond, "The Media and the Movement", p. 23; Chappell, Hutchinson, and Ward, "Dress Modestly, Neatly"; Watson, *The Expanding Vista*, p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> Bodroghkozy, *Equal Time*, p. 83; Garrow, *Protest At Selma*, pp. 3-4, 135, 221-222;

<sup>9</sup> Harry Ashmore quoted in King, *Civil Rights and the Idea of Freedom*, p. 208; Bodroghkozy, *Equal Time*, p. 2; Graham and Monteith, "Southern Media Cultures", pp. 21. Claude Sitton, the southern bureau chief for NYT, for example, insisted the newspaper cover all appearances made by Martin Luther King, Jr. Roberts and Klibanoff *The Race Beat*, p. 378.

<sup>10</sup> Martin A. Berger, *Seeing Through Race: A Reinterpretation of Civil Rights Photography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); and, Leigh Raiford, *Imprisoned in a Luminous Glare: Photography and the African American Freedom Struggle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

not attempt to do so, nor does it mean they failed to appreciate the significant impact that affecting images could have on public opinion. Some understood that violent white reprisals against civil rights campaigners were counter-productive and recognised the impact these had on the nation's perception of massive resistance. However, they disagreed sharply about how to respond to negative publicity and the kinds of images that might best advance the segregationist cause.

As this thesis documents, some of the more sophisticated segregationists were deeply concerned with the public's impression of massive resistance and attempted to present their countermovement as respectable and reasoned. Previous scholarship considering the media's relationship to the civil rights movement has highlighted a cruder, coercive set of strategies designed to suppress stories which exposed the worst excesses of massive resistance and challenged the racial status quo in the South.<sup>11</sup> In both instances, segregationists were seeking to redefine *themselves* in an effort to control the dominant narrative surrounding *their* resistance to the civil rights movement. Their strategies were designed to subvert the dramatic imagery that presented massive resistance as bloodthirsty, reactionary, and made up entirely of ignorant, brutish firebrands. By presenting the American public with an alternative, positive vision of massive resistance and by depriving the movement and the media of the dramatic scenes they desired, some segregationists worked to undermine the civil rights movement's most effective media strategy. These examples represent one side of the segregationist response to mass media. This chapter addresses a parallel approach: how segregationists attempted to use media to redefine their opponents.

Segregationists endeavoured to produce striking images of their own to recalibrate the public's perception of the civil rights movement and the federal government and, in turn, to dramatise massive resistance as a prodigious battle for the good of the region and the nation. It was almost a mirror image of the civil rights movement's media strategy and worked in concert with segregationist efforts to redefine themselves: the two approaches were not mutually exclusive. Just as movement strategy was predicated on images of violent white southerners and peaceful black protesters, the segregationist response rested on representations of upstanding, law-abiding white southerners positioned against depictions of radicalised, permissive leftist protesters and

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<sup>11</sup> Roberts and Klibanoff, *The Race Beat*, pp. 252-253; Wallace, *Massive Resistance and Media Suppression*, pp. 157-188; Classen, *Watching Jim Crow*, p. 43; Yellin, "Journalism (Print) and Civil Rights", p. 120.

an invasive, tyrannical federal government poisoned by communist treachery. While some segregationist strategists sought ways to dispute that massive resistance was a violent, bigoted movement, this chapter explores how others challenged the moral and ideological integrity of civil rights activists and the federal government. Analysis of Williams' media strategy, Friend's photographs, and subsequent use of these images, as well as documentary films produced by the MSSC and ASSC hitherto considered in any depth, reveals segregationists' ambitious and sometimes successful use of photographic and cinematic imagery. In doing so, it transforms historical understandings of massive resistance and the battle for American hearts and minds between segregationists and civil rights activists.

Historians have noted Friend's extraordinary covert mission to Highlander and the impressive mass distribution of the photographs captured over the course of the Labour Day weekend, citing chairman of the GCE Advertising Committee Roy Harris' claim that the Commission "published a million copies" of a broadside newspaper containing an assortment of the images.<sup>12</sup> The incident is usually discussed in the broader context of attempts to mobilise anticommunist impulses against the civil rights movement, and the publication's popularity is framed as emblematic of the resonance of anticommunist rhetoric within communities across America.<sup>13</sup> Somewhat oddly, while the popularity of the GCE publication, *Highlander Folk School* (1957), is noted, scholars have not considered the significance of its photographic content.<sup>14</sup> Given that other prominent resistance tracts distributed on a mass scale – *Black Monday* (1955), *The Ugly Truth about the NAACP* (1955), and *Race and Reason* (1961) – are devoid of illustrations, the centrality of photography in the *Highlander* publication is, in itself, worthy of note.<sup>15</sup> However, as yet, scholars of massive resistance and the civil rights movement have made no attempt to uncover the details of Williams' decision to select a trained photographer to infiltrate the celebrations and have disregarded Williams in the segregationist South's struggle to win hearts and minds. An analysis of his short-lived, but nonetheless significant, tenure as head of the GCE indicates that he appreciated how photography

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<sup>12</sup> Roy Harris quoted in Raines, *My Soul Is Rested*, p. 395; Yasuhiro Katagiri, *Black Freedom, White Resistance, and Red Menace: Civil Rights and Anticommunism in the Jim Crow South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2014), p. 111.

<sup>13</sup> Katagiri, *Black Freedom, White Resistance*, pp. 110-111; Heale, *McCarthy's Americans*, pp. 258-260.

<sup>14</sup> *Highlander Folk School: Communist Training School, Monteagle, Tenn.* (Atlanta: GCE, 1957).

<sup>15</sup> Brady, *Black Monday*; Eugene Cook, *The Ugly Truth About the NAACP* (Winona: Association of Citizens' Councils of Mississippi, 1955); Putnam, *Race and Reason*.

could more effectively communicate segregationists' resistance. His decision to send a photographer to Highlander was based on substantial knowledge of existing segregationist literature, assiduous study of media strategies, and a clear vision of the GCE's objectives.

The influence and impact of Friend's photographs has yet to be analysed beyond distribution numbers. Exploring the excited and energetic response among segregationists highlights that a range of resisters understood the value of compelling images in the battle over public opinion. In particular, scholars have overlooked the true significance of Friend's photograph of King participating in a workshop held at Highlander on Labour Day weekend, dismissing it as merely the work of desperate fanatics.<sup>16</sup> This was not the case. This chapter affords the image appropriate analytical attention and demonstrates it had a considerable impact on the trajectory of massive resistance and the civil rights movement. The image served as a time-honoured weapon in the segregationist propaganda arsenal and was one of few photographs produced by segregationists which gained traction both in and outside the South. To place the significance of the photograph, and the GCE's strategy more broadly, in sharper perspective, it is examined alongside other attempts to use visual media. Its importance becomes most apparent, however, through an analysis of two intense media campaigns executed in 1963 and 1965 which placed the image at the centre of consecutive multimedia "propaganda blitzkrieg[s]" against King and the civil rights movement.<sup>17</sup> Without magnetic media personalities of their own – another factor which contributes to those who operated behind the scenes, such as Williams, being overlooked – resisters tried to undermine the charismatic appeal of King, to use his celebrity against him, and recast him as the "repellent antagonist" of the civil rights story.<sup>18</sup> These campaigns caused

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<sup>16</sup> Woods, *Black Struggle, Red Scare*, p. 146.

<sup>17</sup> The term "propaganda blitzkrieg" has been used previously by M. J. Heale and Corey T. Lesseig to describe the public relations activities of the GCE and the Citizens' Councils, respectively. Whilst certainly an attractive turn of phrase, the term blitzkrieg, meaning "lightning war", does not apply in either of their analyses, which describe a more steady publication and distribution programme. More broadly, Heale's and Lesseig's use of the term flattens the varied, evolving, and protracted propaganda campaigns pursued by each group. The term is applied more appropriately in this chapter to refer to two focused, short-term propaganda assaults. Heale, *McCarthy's Americans*, p. 261; Lesseig "Roast Beef and Racial Integrity: Mississippi's 'Race and Reason Day', October 26, 1962", *The Journal of Mississippi*, Vol. 56 (1994), p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> Graham and Monteith, "Southern Media Cultures", p. 17. While George C. Wallace and James J. Kilpatrick could be cited as two well-known segregationist media personalities, they lacked the magnetic and charismatic appeal of King, during the "classical" 1954-1965 phase of the civil rights movement at least. Wallace had yet to establish himself fully as a national political force and was considered little more than a ranting, racist demagogue in the classic southern mould. Kilpatrick's constitutional arguments against civil rights reform, on the other hand, while intellectually impressive, were dry and devoid of emotional intensity.

difficult questions to be asked of the civil rights movement and led some Americans to re-examine their position on massive resistance and civil rights. The story of Williams, Friend, and the Highlander photos, therefore, is deeply revealing of segregationist media strategy.

### **“An effective common denominator”: T. V. Williams and the Route to Highlander**

Williams was a young and ambitious “salesman” for segregation, resolute in his belief that the South needed “to sell the rest of the country on segregation”. “If we can get public opinion in the country in our favor”, he declared in a press interview, “we can get the politicians on the Supreme Court to bring their decisions into line with their Constitutional authority” and force Northern congressman to relax “pressure on the South”.<sup>19</sup> From the moment Williams officially succeeded experienced Atlanta attorney Durwood T. Pye as general secretary of the GCE in August 1956, he began to dramatically reorient the organisation’s primary objective.<sup>20</sup> Contrary to Howell Raines’ description, which positions the GCE as a propaganda agency from inception, it was originally established with Pye at the helm by Governor Talmadge in 1953 to develop and draft laws to protect segregated education in Georgia, ahead of the impending 1954 Supreme Court school desegregation decision.<sup>21</sup> Although the GCE polled and canvassed public opinion to ensure the safe passage of its proposed legislation, its forays into public relations were short-lived and provincial under Pye who focused almost entirely on legislative matters.<sup>22</sup> To be sure, by the end of his tenure, Pye and his counterparts in the Georgia legislature had erected an elaborate legislative framework to

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<sup>19</sup> Williams quoted in Ed Cony, “Selling Segregation: South Steps Up Drive To Tell North and West Its Side of Race Issue”, *The Wall Street Journal* (4 December 1957), p. 1. That Williams was interviewed by *The Wall Street Journal* is very intriguing. Unfortunately, no records exist to explain why such an interview took place.

<sup>20</sup> “\$500-a-Month Job With State Given T. V. Williams Jr.”, *AC* (9 August 1956), p. 1. Williams was first appointed to the role by Governor Marvin Griffin in April 1956. However, both archival material and newspaper accounts indicate that he did not formally take up the position until August later that year. Letter from Williams to Griffin, 6 April 1956, Hon. Marvin Griffin Governor Folder, Box RCB-35184 Correspondence 1956, GCEP.

<sup>21</sup> According to Raines, Harris established the GCE in 1953 and made “propaganda, not politics” the organisation’s primary focus. Raines, *My Soul is Rested*, p. 395.

<sup>22</sup> Kevin M. Kruse, “The Paradox of Massive Resistance: Political Conformity and Chaos in the Aftermath of *Brown v. Board of Education*”, *Saint Louis University Law Journal*, Vol. 48 (2004), pp. 1010-1019; Heale, *McCarthy’s Americans*, pp. 249-250. In 1954, the GCE executed a “coordinated propaganda campaign”, which included television appearances and distribution of pamphlets, cards, and letters, to ensure the passage of its “private school plan”. This campaign, however, was confined to the state of Georgia and was not sustained beyond the passage of the amendment. Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, p. 34; Roche, *Restructured Resistance*, p. 20, also see pp. 27-28.

defend the state's schools against desegregation.<sup>23</sup> With this legislation in place, Pye graduated into a role away from the GCE and Williams stepped in to steer it towards a new phase of resistance.<sup>24</sup> The strong legal defences enacted by the Georgia Legislature offered Williams space to expand the purview of the GCE beyond defensive, state-level legislative resistance and towards a nationwide propaganda offensive.<sup>25</sup> Williams dedicated himself to solving what Kevin M. Kruse refers to as the “paradox of massive resistance”, that is, segregationist leaders’ apparent inability and disinterest in devising any meaningful attempts to win widespread support for resistance. Contrary to Kruse’s conclusions, Williams acknowledged the American public’s coolness towards massive resistance and endeavoured to provide grassroots segregationists and rank-and-file conservatives with reasons to mobilise against the civil rights movement.<sup>26</sup>

Just weeks into his tenure at the top of Georgia’s state-sponsored segregationist organisation, Williams announced a plan for a “publicity programme designed to present Georgia’s pro-segregation stand to the nation”. With segregationist powerhouse Harris by his side, Williams urged the General Assembly to appropriate funds that would allow the GCE to advertise in national magazines and newspapers and distribute pamphlets and brochures. In a stark representation of the new direction in which the GCE was headed, Harris and Williams declared it was as productive “to spend money on propaganda as [it was] to hire a lawyer to represent the state in segregation litigation”.<sup>27</sup> Williams had monitored the public relations activities of other state-sponsored resistance organisations in Mississippi and Louisiana. He insisted he be allotted funds to support them in forging a national resistance movement, contending “communication of our position to people of other sections of the country is our greatest problem”.<sup>28</sup> Cognisant that some white southerners were apathetic towards media efforts to win national support and determined to secure substantial financial support, Williams worked

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<sup>23</sup> Kruse, “The Paradox of Massive Resistance”, p. 1026; Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, p. 54; Roche, *Restructured Resistance*, p. 20.

<sup>24</sup> Pye was appointed Judge of Fulton Superior Court by Governor Griffin. “\$500-a-Month Job With State”; “Judge Pye Qualifies for 4-Year Term”, *AC* (25 June 1956), p. 8.

<sup>25</sup> State-sponsored resistance in Louisiana followed a similar pattern. The JLC initially concentrated on state-level legal responses to the *Brown* decision and, once firm segregation laws were established, proceeded to engage in national endeavours to win public support for the preservation of segregation.

<sup>26</sup> Kruse, “The Paradox of Massive Resistance”, p. 1035.

<sup>27</sup> Bruce Galphin, “Education Panel Votes To Present Georgia School Stand to the Nation”, *AC* (28 September 1956), p. 1.

<sup>28</sup> Letter from Williams to Ney Gore, 15 October 1956, Mississippi Folder, Box RCB-35184, GCEP; Letter from Williams to John Miller, 15 October 1956, Louisiana Folder, Folder, Box RCB-35184, GCEP; Galphin, “Education Panel Votes”.

diligently on a preliminary plan of “cost, media, methods and distribution” ahead of the General Assembly’s formal budgetary meeting.<sup>29</sup> He was studious in his approach, convinced absolutely of the need to influence public opinion at the national level.

His preparations paid off in February 1957 when the legislature agreed that “the people of the entire nation should be made aware of... the Georgia and southern viewpoint” and granted the GCE powers to request “public funds for propaganda to combat northern criticism”.<sup>30</sup> Several months later, Williams explained to the press that discussions to decide the most appropriate “media to be used in the [GCE’s]... advertising and publicity campaigns” were ongoing.<sup>31</sup> He was unwilling to follow templates laid out by the MSSC or JLC and reluctant to reproduce or distribute material produced by other groups. He wanted the GCE to determine its own output. Williams had lofty ambitions, as well as unshakable confidence in his skills in public relations, and strove to establish the GCE as the leading massive resistance organisation. Georgia should “take the lead in formulating and carrying out a successful plan of public relations”, he proclaimed, to “show other states what can be done”.<sup>32</sup>

Williams had a clear vision of what he deemed to be effective propaganda material. He favoured concise publications which could communicate the South’s position expediently, believing long treatises to be ineffective and overly expensive to reproduce on a mass scale. On several occasions, he flatly rejected proposals to publish or distribute intellectually rigorous treatises, such as Richard W. Edmonds’ *Foundation for Segregation* (1957) and Charles J. Bloch’s turgid *States’ Rights* (1958).<sup>33</sup> Williams’ critique of *Foundation for Segregation* was particularly pointed. Responding to a strident advocate of Edmonds’ publication, Williams wrote, “the book... contain[s] little of an original nature... it has virtually no literary flavour, and its style is not conducive to general interest”. He carried out his own market research to test the demand for the book, which

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<sup>29</sup> Letter from Williams to Gore, 15 October 1956; Galphin, “Education Panel Votes”; Letter from Williams to Roy Harris, 13 December 1956, Hon. Roy Harris Folder, Box RCB-35184, GCEP; Letter from Williams to Roy Harris, 18 October 1956, Roy Harris Folder, Box RCB-35184, GCEP.

<sup>30</sup> Joint Resolution of the Georgia General Assembly relative to the GCE, 15 February 1957, No. 15 (House Resolution No. 11-7d), *Georgia Laws 1957*, pp. 56-57.

<https://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/topics/history/article/civil-rights-sunbelt-georgia-1946-1989/joint-resolution-of-the-georgia-general-assembly-relative-to-the-georgia-co> [Accessed 20 February 2019]; Joseph H. Baird, “Governor Gets Police Powers”, *The Christian Science Monitor* (25 February 1957), p. 14.

<sup>31</sup> “State’s Plan To Tell U.S. Its School Stand Pushed”, *AC* (28 May 1957), p. 6.

<sup>32</sup> Letter from Williams to Hal C. DeCell, 5 April 1957, Misc. Correspondence Sub-Folder, Mississippi Folder, Box RCB-35187 Correspondence Indiana-North Dakota, 1957-1958, GCEP.

<sup>33</sup> Letter from Williams to Harris, 18 October 1956; Richard W. Edmonds, *Foundation for Segregation* (n.p., 1957); Letter from Williams to Charles J. Bloch, 19 February 1958, Misc. Correspondence Sub-Folder, Georgia Folder, Box RCB-35186 Correspondence Alabama-Illinois 1957-1958, GCEP.



confirmed his misgivings: “People simply will not sit down and read it”.<sup>34</sup> Although he regarded the *Brown* decision as gross misuse of federal power, Williams did not consider constitutional arguments effective in mobilising public opinion against desegregation. He lamented that pamphlets dealing with constitutional issues simply “didn’t catch on” and did not warrant “wide-scale distribution”.<sup>35</sup> He wanted something to grab people’s attention, to tantalise and provoke. He was equally opposed to material that dwelt heavily on the issue of race or played on base racial fears.<sup>36</sup> Williams strove to expand the debate beyond the alleged legality and morality of Jim Crow, to reach a mass audience beyond those who already held a “pro-segregationist outlook”.<sup>37</sup>

Williams’ “favourite theme” was the idea that “subversive influences” were “behind all racial incidents in the South”. In order to appeal to people all over the country, he asserted the GCE must “take an effective common denominator – and subversion is a good one”.<sup>38</sup> When he pointed to “subversive influences” he was referring to communist elements supposedly working within the civil rights movement. He recognised that the fear of communism in the Cold War era was palpable and pervasive and sought to exploit it.<sup>39</sup> By presenting the civil rights movement as a communist conspiracy to destroy American democracy, Williams defined massive resistance as a movement with concerns that extended beyond the preservation of racial segregation in the southern states. In doing so, he strove to dramatise massive resistance as a noble defence of American freedom. The communist infiltration of the civil rights movement “is a problem which does not confront the South alone”, he proclaimed, “[t]he area affected is so large that the entire nation would feel repercussion”.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Letter from Williams to J. Robert Elliot, 20 August 1957; and, Letter from Elliot to Williams, 27 July 1957 Misc. Correspondence Sub-Folder, Georgia Folder, Box RCB-35186, GCEP.

<sup>35</sup> Cony, “Selling Segregation”, p. 1; Letter from Williams to B. D. Murphy, 6 February 1958; and, Letter from Murphy to Williams, 29 January 1958, Misc. Correspondence Sub-Folder, Georgia Folder, Box RCB-35186, GCEP.

<sup>36</sup> Letter from Williams to Martha O. Andrews, 20 September 1957; and, Letter from Andrews to Williams, 10 September 1957, Misc. Correspondence Sub-Folder, Georgia Folder, Box RCB-35186, GCEP. Letter from Williams to William O. Moncure (Vice President Fairfax, Virginia, Citizens’ Council), 19 November 1957; and, Letter from Moncure to Williams, 6 November 1957, Requests Sub-Folder, Virginia Folder, Box RCB-35188 Correspondence Ohio-Wyoming 1957-1958, GCEP.

<sup>37</sup> Letter from Williams to Elliot, 20 August 1957.

<sup>38</sup> Cony, “Selling Segregation”, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> For authoritative works on American anticommunism see: Heale, *American Anticommunism*; Heale, *McCarthy’s Americans*; Powers, *Not Without Honor*. For works on segregationists’ use of anticommunism see in particular: Lewis, *The White South*; Woods, *Black Struggle, Red Scare*.

<sup>40</sup> Letter from Williams to Francis M. Wilhoit, 27 June 1956, Interposition to Massachusetts Folder, Box RCB-35184, GCEP.

Williams already had at his disposal a treasure trove of material concerning supposed “subversive influences” directing the civil rights movement, having collected segregationist publications which purported to expose the drive to dismantle Jim Crow as a communist subterfuge.<sup>41</sup> He also established connections with state- and local-level anticommunist organisations, northern right-wing Cold Warriors, Myers G. Lowman and J. B. Matthews, and HUAC and SISS, both of which included a preponderance of southern segregationists because white southern Democrats continued to hold seniority in Congress.<sup>42</sup> Through these connections, Williams expanded his vast library of “reports and publications... essential” to the GCE’s “programme of research and study” into the civil rights movement’s communist connections.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, in spite of the volume of resources at his disposal, Williams remained determined to devise his own content. Moreover, it was clear to him that text-based, accusatory publications produced and distributed by resistance groups, which relied on long government citations of alleged communist activity, had yet to convince the public of the civil rights movement’s alleged relationship to a broader communist conspiracy to overthrow the US. Determined to reveal these connections once and for all, Williams searched for a new way to expose the civil rights movement’s “subversive elements”. Highlander’s four-day workshop, “The South Thinking Ahead: The Human Aspects of the Integration Struggle”, presented Williams with the opportunity to achieve his objective.

### **“The Pictures...Speak for Themselves”: The Production and Distribution of the “Highlander Folder”**

White southerners committed to the institution of segregation had long-held suspicions about Highlander and the training in “agitation” its allegedly communist cadre provided civil rights activists and organisations. Since its inception in 1932 the school’s founders, Myles Horton, Donald L. “Don” West, and James Dombrowski, had been labelled communist. Established as an educational institution committed to organising unemployed and working people into a progressive labour movement to “bring about a new social order”, Highlander advocated for a racially integrated movement and held

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<sup>41</sup> Most notable among these was Cook’s *The Ugly Truth*, p. 10; Kruse, “The Paradox of Massive Resistance”, p. 1021.

<sup>42</sup> Heale, *McCarthy’s Americans*, pp. 234-276.

<sup>43</sup> Letter from Talmadge to James O. Eastland Director of SISS, 3 July 1957; Letter from Talmadge to Richard Arens Director of HUAC, 3 July 1957; and, Letter from Talmadge to Williams, 9 July 1957, Washington, D.C. Folder, Box RCB-35182, GCEP.

integrated workshops in brazen defiance of the South's segregation laws and traditions.<sup>44</sup> In 1953, when Highlander shifted its educational focus from the labour movement towards civil rights and the desegregation of schools, segregationist consternation crystallised.<sup>45</sup> Following Senator James O. Eastland's widely-publicised SISS investigations of the school's founders in 1954, it became a potent symbol of the subversive connections between civil rights and communism.<sup>46</sup>

Williams had kept a watchful eye on Highlander since taking charge of the GCE, receiving regular updates on activities from anticommunist "factfinders" Matthews and Lowman.<sup>47</sup> Through this surveillance, Williams learned of the upcoming Labour Day celebrations.<sup>48</sup> With the programme settled and in public circulation in advance, he discovered leading figures in the civil rights movement, including King, Rosa Parks, and Reverend John B. Thompson, would be featured speakers at the anniversary celebrations and were slated to take an active role in the programme of workshops and seminars.<sup>49</sup> Williams also learned the event would be open to public and press. Although he would claim later that the celebrations were a closed event, in an attempt to further sensationalise the narrative he constructed, he was entirely aware that it was not a secret, underground meeting of covert communist operatives.<sup>50</sup> In fact, he relied on this information when planning Friend's infiltration.

Based on intelligence gathered, Williams was certain King and other civil rights leaders would be in close company with "many known communists" at Highlander throughout the weekend.<sup>51</sup> If he could picture them together exchanging ideas on strategy

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<sup>44</sup> "Highlander Over Time", *21<sup>st</sup> Century Highlander: Democracy in the Making* (New Market, Tennessee), <https://www.highlandercenter.org/our-history-timeline/> [Accessed 13 March 2019]; Merrill, "Highlander 50 Years On", p. 9.

<sup>45</sup> "Our History: 85 Years of Fighting for Justice", <https://www.highlandercenter.org/our-history-timeline/> [Accessed 13 March 2019]; Katagiri, *Black Freedom, White Resistance, and Red Menace*, p. 107.

<sup>46</sup> United Press, "Witness Ejected at Hearing; Ex Red's Story Starts Fight", *NYT* (21 March 1954), pp. 1, 31; "Red Probe Slated To Open In Birmingham In June, *Alabama Journal* (22 March 1954), p. 2-A.

<sup>47</sup> Letter from Williams to Lowman, 2 July 1957, Circuit Riders Folder, Box RCB-35183, GCEP. Williams maintained regular contact with Lowman. See Circuit Riders Folder, Box RCB-35183, GCEP.

<sup>48</sup> Almost certainly referring to Lowman or Matthews, Harris recalled that "some of these darn cranks that's always nosin' around found out about [the Highlander meeting]". Harris quoted in Raines, *My Soul is Rested*, p. 396.

<sup>49</sup> Archival records confirm that the programme was established by late-April 1957. Program, "The South Thinking Ahead: The Human Aspects of the Integration Struggle", enclosed in Letter from Myles Horton to Martin Luther King, Jr., 19 April 1957, Folder 27, Box 14A, MLKP-MBU, Martin Luther King, Jr., Papers, 1954-1968, Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts. Jim Elliot, "King To Speak At Anniversary Of Mixed School In Tennessee", *The Montgomery Advertiser* (31 August 1957), p. 1.

<sup>50</sup> "Georgia Segregationists Told Agent Infiltrated Race Meet", *The Montgomery Advertiser* (5 October 1957), p. 1.

<sup>51</sup> According to the GCE, "many know communists" attended the celebrations. *Highlander Folk School*, p. 1.

at a “communist training school”, segregationists would no longer have to rely on dull extended expositions of apparent communist affiliations. Photography, Williams reasoned, would allow the GCE to provide irrefutable visual evidence of the civil rights movement’s subversive underbelly. Hand-picked to undertake the clandestine operation, Friend was instructed to pose as a freelance photographer who simply wished to document the occasion.<sup>52</sup> Once he gained entry, he was to take photographs to demonstrate that communists were inextricably involved in the push for desegregation.<sup>53</sup> With an abundance of written “evidence” in the GCE’s files purporting to demonstrate communists were fomenting “racial strife and disturbance”, Williams set out to obtain visual proof which might communicate in a single frame the purported threat to national security.<sup>54</sup>

Remaining undetected, Friend captured an array of photographs and in just over a month they were assembled into a simple, well-organised four-page newspaper-size publication (Fig. 4.1).<sup>55</sup> The broadside was laid out expertly to communicate the GCE’s message quickly and unambiguously. It relied primarily on Friend’s photographs to deliver information at a glance with text only to affirm the visuals. The headline on page one defined the context: “Highlander Folk School: Communist Training School, Monteagle, Tenn.”. This was presented as axiomatic, a known and incontrovertible fact proven, the GCE claimed, by successive HUAC and SISS investigations into the school. Two photographs on the front page established the GCE was alarmed by the seminars hosted over the Labour Day weekend because they were led by individuals and organisations “regarded as useful aids to the Communist apparatus” to develop a “long range program” of agitation.<sup>56</sup> The final page reaffirmed the GCE’s contention that “known Communists” were in attendance by featuring a photograph of Ralph Helstein, President of United Packing House Workers of America and a representative of “Labor extremists who serve the Communist Party”, and Abner Berry, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.<sup>57</sup> Pages two and three formed a double-page photospread, where the GCE laid out a visual indictment of the civil rights movement.

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<sup>52</sup> Letter from Anne Braden to Martin Luther King, Jr., 23 September 1959, in Carson, *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr., Volume V*, p. 291.

<sup>53</sup> Donna Friend, e-mail conversation with Author, 12 September 2018.

<sup>54</sup> Williams claimed to have “some 50 exhibits” to back up the claims made in the *Highlander* broadside. “Georgia Segregationists Told Agent Infiltrated Race Meet”, p. 1.

<sup>55</sup> “Booklet on Race Rally Left Up to State Panel”, *AC* (9 October 1957), p. 9

<sup>56</sup> Image Caption, *Highlander Folk School*, p. 1.

<sup>57</sup> Image Caption, *Highlander Folk School*, p. 4.



Fig. 4.1 – Highlander Folk School: Communist Training School, Monteagle, Tenn. (Atlanta: GCE, 1957).



Here Friend's photographs were used to confirm the two massive resistance national security narratives which had been central to segregationist thought and strategy since the passage of *Brown*. First, photographs of interracial dancing and swimming involving individuals of both sexes and images of racially mixed classes, were deployed to show celebrations were "integrated in all respects" and highlight that communists accepted and welcomed racial integration.<sup>58</sup> Second, and more important, were the "pictures of the leaders of every major race incident in the South" participating in the workshops, which supposedly concerned "methods and tactics" that would create "racial strife and disturbance". These images were positioned to demonstrate "training and tactics are furnished to the agitators" by "known Communists" fomenting racial strife as part of a broader national conspiracy to destabilise the American government.<sup>59</sup> Williams and the GCE challenged the contemporary understanding of civil rights demonstrations as spontaneous events, an impression cultivated strategically by civil rights leaders.<sup>60</sup> By showing leaders actively learning how to strategize, Williams revealed that protests were planned and carefully orchestrated.

Written text was entirely supplementary. It collected for more discerning readers "Communist Front Records of [the] Leadership of [the] Highlander Inter-racial Seminar", "House Committee Citations" of the "Communist Fronts" in attendance, reproduced from HUAC's *Guide to Subversive Organisations and Publications* (1957), and, "the records of Communist Affiliations of four of the leaders of Highlander Folk School".<sup>61</sup> Unlike previous propaganda in which government documents, records, and citations were the primary information, here citations served as ancillary, an additional layer of evidence to enhance the publication's credibility. A short 300-word preamble provided contextual information and captions identified individuals in each image and disclosed their relationships to communist groups and the civil rights movement.<sup>62</sup> A short, back-page "Editorial Comment", written by Williams and signed by Governor Griffin, is the only written content of any serious consequence. Rather than elaborating at length, they

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<sup>58</sup> "Labour Day Weekend at Communist Training School, 1957", *Highlander Folk School*, p. 2.

<sup>59</sup> Marvin Griffin and T. V. Williams, Jr., "Every American Has the Right to Know the Truth, Editorial Comment", *Highlander Folk School*, p. 4; "Labor Day Weekend, 1957", *Highlander Folk School*, p. 1.

<sup>60</sup> For example, in 1956, when on trial for his involvement in the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Martin Luther King, Jr., declared that the protest was "a spontaneous happening". King quoted in, Donnie Williams with Wayne Greenhaw, *The Thunder of Angels: The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the People Who Broke the Back of Jim Crow* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2006), p. 198.

<sup>61</sup> *Highlander Folk School*, pp. 1, 4.

<sup>62</sup> "Labor Day Weekend, 1957", *Highlander Folk School*, p. 1, images captions pp. 1-4.

simply reminded readers they had “*seen*” the leaders of the civil rights movement receiving instruction at a “Communist training school”, presenting the photographs alone as irrefutable proof of their claims. Instead, their message was a call to arms instructing readers to “disseminate this information... as rapidly as possible” and authorising the reproduction of “all or any part of this folder... with or without credit being given to this Commission”. “Only through information and knowledge”, they proclaimed, “can we combat this alien menace to Constitutional government”.<sup>63</sup> Griffin and Williams equipped resisters with tools to direct their own independent propaganda efforts, in the hope that these propaganda cottage industries would coalesce as a unified media barrage.

Williams took special care over the physical format so the reproductions of Friend’s photographs would be high-quality, substantial facsimiles, not obscure, grainy, diminutive imitations. The purpose of the publication, after all, was to showcase what Williams and the GCE deemed striking visual evidence of the communist forces behind the civil rights movement. Investing in high-end reproductions would increase its potential impact by minimising any depreciation of image quality that might occur through duplication. With the luxury of almost unlimited state funds at his disposal and, therefore, no reason to compromise his high professional standards, Williams opted for a large, broadside format and expensive, glossy, high-grade printing stock.<sup>64</sup> When one well-meaning correspondent from Arkansas suggested the GCE switch to a “cheaper tabloid format on newsprint”, Williams’ response was frank and incisive: “the reproduction of the photographs and the amount of material which we had to include *dictated* the larger size and the slick paper”.<sup>65</sup> For Williams and Griffin, the images Friend supplied offered the most effective route to the formation of a forceful, nationally-constituted conservative countermovement. Griffin declared the photographs were “too good to be locked up in the barn and left there”.<sup>66</sup> They wanted to give the photographs the best showing. They wanted them to be arresting and were not content to distribute a smaller, lower-quality, exposé for the sake of cost or increased efficiency. Williams sought to establish the photographs firmly within a visual language of massive resistance. He did

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<sup>63</sup> Griffin and Williams, “Every American”. Emphasis added.

<sup>64</sup> An original copy of the *Highlander Folk School* broadside is held in “Mapcase”, Subseries A: Subject Files, Series I: Governor’s Office Files, SEV.

<sup>65</sup> Letter from Williams to Dewey M. Taft, 6 February 1958, Misc. Correspondence Sub-Folder, Arkansas Folder, Box RCB-35186, GCEP. Emphasis added.

<sup>66</sup> “Griffin Seeks Funds To Free Inter-Race Data”, *The Montgomery Advertiser* (9 October 1957), p. 17.

not want the content he crafted to be considered disposable but to cement it as an indelible contribution to white resistance to racial change.

After an initial run was sent to reporters in Georgia in early October 1957, the broadside was rapidly distributed throughout the South.<sup>67</sup> Williams mobilised allies in other states to disseminate the *Highlander* folder, establishing a loosely-defined segregationist propaganda distribution network for the exposé. Thousands of copies were sent to Sam Engelhardt in Alabama; local Citizens' Council representatives in Florida; Willie Rainach and Jackson Ricau in northern and southern Louisiana; Robert B. Patterson and William J. Simmons in Mississippi; Stanley F. Morse of the Grass Roots League, Inc., in South Carolina; and, Robert B. Crawford in Virginia.<sup>68</sup> The publication was immensely popular. Just over a month after receiving an initial batch of three-thousand copies, Rainach, for example, requested another three-thousand and anticipated placing an even larger order.<sup>69</sup> Several southern newspapermen, including William D. Workman, Jr., of the *Charleston News and Courier*, and Fred Sullens of the *Jackson Daily News*, were equally impressed and readily reproduced Friend's photographs, encouraging readers to secure copies of the full publication.<sup>70</sup> *The Citizens' Council* advertised the broadside in a special bulletin on page one of the November 1957 edition.<sup>71</sup> In December 1957, *The Atlanta Constitution*, which openly decried massive resistance, carried out its own investigation of Highlander in response to the GCE's publication. While the resulting series of articles was sympathetic towards the school and its founders, it did little to refute the claims made so effectively by Williams. The *Constitution* revealed the Internal Revenue Service deemed Highlander a "propaganda and political organisation" and reported that it had trained forty to fifty Georgians for civil

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<sup>67</sup> "Booklet on Race Rally". The newspapers.com database indicates that newspapers in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia, as well as in California, Nebraska, New Mexico, and Ohio, reported on the *Highlander* broadside by the end of October 1957.

<sup>68</sup> Letter from M. A. Perry (Franklin Printing & MFG. Co.) to Sam Engelhardt, 21 October 1957, and Letter from Perry to Rainach, 18 October 1957 Highlander Folks School 1957 Folder, Box RCB-35183, GCEP. Letter from Perry to George A. Downs, 29 October 1957, Misc. Correspondence Sub-Folder, Florida Folder, Box RCB-35186, GCEP. Letter from Perry to Jackson Ricau, 29 October 1957, Misc. Correspondence Sub-Folder, Louisiana Folder, Box RCB-35187, GCEP. Letter from Perry to Patterson, 29 October 1957, Citizens' Council Folder, Box RCB-35183, GCEP; Letter from Williams to Stanley F. Morse, 19 November 1957, Requests Sub-Folder, South Carolina Folder; Letter from Robert B. Crawford to GCE, 12 February 1958, Requests Sub-Folder, Virginia Folder, Box RCB-35188, GCEP.

<sup>69</sup> Telegram from Rainach to GCE, 22 November 1957, Requests Sub-Folder, Louisiana Folder, Box RCB-35187, GCEP. Letter from Perry to Patterson, 29 October 1957.

<sup>70</sup> Letter from William D. Workman, Jr., to GCE, 29 October 1957, Requests Sub-Folder, South Carolina Folder, Box RCB-35188, GCEP; Letter from J. R. McComie to GCE, 21 October 1957, Requests Sub-Folder, Mississippi Folder, Box RCB-35187, GCEP.

<sup>71</sup> "Race Agitators Attend Commie School", *TCC* (November 1957), p. 1.



rights work. In an interview for the series, Horton denied Highlander was communist, but admitted it was “in the same field”. Williams and Harris were delighted.<sup>72</sup> The *Highlander* folder, as it became known, took the South by storm. Its impact was unprecedented.

Just as quickly, it gained national attention. The *New York Times* and *Washington Post and Times-Herald* reported Friend’s infiltration soon after it was announced to the Georgia legislature, quoting Governor Griffin’s belief that the photographic testimony provided “irrefutable” facts concerning the odious origins “of the South’s racial trouble”.<sup>73</sup> *Human Events* publicised the exposé, instructing readers to obtain a copy.<sup>74</sup> In December, the *New York Times* highlighted the GCE’s aggressive distribution programme, reporting more than 250,000 copies of the GCE’s pamphlet circulated across the country.<sup>75</sup> Archival records indicate that by July 1958, Williams had met his distribution target of between “three-quarters of a million [and] a million copies”. The startling figure cited by Harris in an oral history interview with Howell Raines was no exaggeration.<sup>76</sup> Williams and Griffin believed they were providing a public service announcement and considered it their duty to inform “Every American” of “the Truth”.<sup>77</sup> Testament to Williams’ innovative approach and the extent of his efforts, Ed Cony of the *Wall Street Journal* profiled him as the leading man in the South’s “Drive To Tell [people in the] North and West Its Side of [the] Race Issue”.<sup>78</sup>

No other publication produced by the GCE received such widespread distribution. It was one of the most reproduced pieces of massive resistance propaganda of any type. This unmatched publicity effort can only be attributed to its photographic

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<sup>72</sup> Heale, *McCarthy’s Americans*, p. 260; John M. Glen, *Highlander: No Ordinary School, 1932-1962* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1988), p. 183.

<sup>73</sup> “Griffin ‘Spy’ Charges Race Strife Plot”, *WP* (5 October 1957), p. C16; “Negroes Accused of Agitation Plot”, *NYT* (5 October 1957), p. 18.

<sup>74</sup> An advertisement for the broadside appeared in *Human Events* in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October 1957 editions. Letter from W. H. Waterman to GCE, 30 October 1957, Requests Sub-Folder, Georgia Folder, Box RCB-35186. Letter from Philip S. Finn, Jr., to GCE, 30 October 1957; Letter from J. D. Henderson, 8 November 1957, Requests Sub-Folder, Louisiana Folder, Box RCB-35187, GCEP.

<sup>75</sup> John N. Popham, “Leaders Defend School In South”, *NYT* (22 December 1957), p. 43.

<sup>76</sup> “Segregation Booklets Going Out”, *AC* (29 October 1957), p. 8; Letter from Williams to Tommy Tibbs, 25 November 1957, Requests Sub-Folder, Georgia Folder, Box RCB-35186, GCEP. Harris quoted in Raines, *My Soul is Rested*, p. 395. In a letter to a correspondent from Arkansas dated 6 February 1958, Williams claimed that the GCE had printed “approximately 700,000 copies of this folder”. Given that printing of the broadside would likely have continued until Williams’ resignation in July 1958, it seems plausible that 1,000,000 copies were indeed distributed at state expense. Letter from Williams to Taft, 6 February 1958. Numerous documents in the GCE’s records attest to the aggressive distribution of the publication.

<sup>77</sup> Their joint editorial comment on the back-page of the *Highlander* exposé bellowed “Every American Has the Right to Know the Truth”. *Highlander*, p. 4.

<sup>78</sup> Cony, “Selling Segregation”, p. 1.

content because rhetorically the publication was entirely unoriginal and offered no new explanation for the white South's resistance to civil rights. It was the use of photography to communicate segregationists' resistance that set it apart. The ways in which core members of the GCE discussed the publication with explicit reference to its photographs illuminate their shared belief that this exposé was an unprecedented break from conventional segregationist propaganda. When questioned on the integrity of the *Highlander* exposé, Griffin stated "the pictures...speak for themselves".<sup>79</sup> Williams referred to the publication as his "amazing *factual* compilation".<sup>80</sup> Harris was unequivocal: "That was somethin'. Nobody could defend that".<sup>81</sup> For all three men, the use of photography validated their claims absolutely. The images were damning, indefensible and undisputable. They were unflinchingly confident that these images could turn the tide in the battle over public opinion.

Segregationists outside the GCE discussed the photographs in similarly superlative terms. As executive secretary of the ACCM, Patterson wrote simply, "This is devastating".<sup>82</sup> Festus J. Brown, the Chairman of the Americanism Committee of the American Legion in New Orleans was exultant. Professing initial incredulity towards accusations directed at the civil rights movement for its communist ideas, he wrote, "the marvellous pictorial coverage of this strange meeting between these people *dramatically* removes all doubt as to who is really directing these sinister activities in our Country".<sup>83</sup> In his aptly titled "As I See It" column in *The Montgomery Advertiser*, William J. Mahoney, Jr., wrote acerbically of the "Pretty Pictures" circulated under the stamp of the GCE. They "prove[d] the charge", he declared, that "the flame-red brand" of communism was imprinted upon "integrationists". Mahoney also highlighted a crucial strategic benefit of photography over text-based indictments: using images allowed pro-segregation propagandists to issue claims of communist conspiracy without the fear of violating "the complex laws of libel". Friend's images did not require explicit textual explication; they spoke "noisily for themselves".<sup>84</sup> This was of considerable significance because a fear of

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<sup>79</sup> "Group Scores Griffin Move", *The Anniston Star* (24 December 1957), p. 1. See also, Glenn Anthony, "Unrest Plot Of Negroes Is Revealed", *The Anniston Star* (4 October 1957), p. 8.

<sup>80</sup> Williams quoted in "Georgia Says Race Leader Trained At 'Red' School", *Tampa Morning Tribune* (5 October 1957), p. 18. [Emphasis added.]

<sup>81</sup> Harris quoted in Raines, *My Soul is Rested*, p. 396.

<sup>82</sup> Letter from Patterson to Williams, 15 October 1957, Citizens' Council Folder, Box RCB-35183, GCEP.

<sup>83</sup> Letter from Festus J. Brown to GCE, 6 November 1957, Requests Sub-Folder, Louisiana Folder, Box 35187, GCEP. [Emphasis Added.]

<sup>84</sup> William J. Mahoney, Jr., "As I See It", *The Montgomery Advertiser* (3 November 1957), p. 11.

libel challenges often made segregationists reluctant to issue “categorical statements” that King and his allies were communists or members of the CPUSA.<sup>85</sup> The GCE had produced a powerful and unique propaganda tool for massive resistance. Before the sit-ins, Freedom Rides, and infamous violence in Birmingham and Selma, some segregationists recognised the immense impact images could have on public opinion.

The furore created by the *Highlander* broadside eventually led the Tennessee legislature to mount an investigation into supposedly subversive activities at the school. Following three hearings held in February and March, September, and then November 1959, the school was closed, its land and buildings auctioned off to the highest bidder. In each trial, Friend testified on behalf of the state and presented the photographs he took on Labour Day Weekend in 1957.<sup>86</sup> Using Friend’s photographs, the GCE galvanised an aggressive counteroffensive which struck a significant blow against the civil rights movement. When armed with a collection of explicit images, segregationists, like their opponents, proved able to dramatise their cause and mobilise public opinion.

### **“One of the Most Controversial Photographs in the Civil Rights Field”**

Somewhat ironically, before the Highlander hearings even began, the GCE had been disbanded and Williams’ self-proclaimed reign as the “greatest segregation leader” had come to an end.<sup>87</sup> He was forced to resign in July 1958 amid allegations that he used GCE money and resources to support William T. Bodenhamer’s gubernatorial campaign against Lieutenant Governor S. Ernest Vandiver.<sup>88</sup> On entering the Governor’s mansion in January 1959, following comprehensive victory over Bodenhamer, Vandiver dissolved the GCE, an organisation Trezzvant W. Anderson, a roving reporter for the *Pittsburgh Courier*, described as the “most vicious Dixie segregation group”; a crack team of “real

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<sup>85</sup> Lewis, *The White South*, pp. 70-72.

<sup>86</sup> While Horton maintains that there was no connection between the GCE’s publication and the closure of Highlander, both primary and secondary accounts suggest a significant correlation. Horton in Raines, *My Soul is Rested*, p. 399; Harris in Raines, *My Soul is Rested*, p. 396; “Legislature Asks Look At School”, *The Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle* (Tennessee, 27 January 1959), p. 10; “Amendment On School Tuesday”, *The Daily News Journal* (Tennessee, 1 February 1959), p. 1; “Horton Denies Bennett Charge”, *The Nashville Tennessean* (5 March 1959), p. 2; Woods, *Black Struggle*, p. 128; For a detailed account of the hearings and the demise of the Highlander Folk School see Glen, *Highlander*, pp. 173-209. For an analysis of the language mobilized by segregationists during the Highlander hearings in Tennessee, Laura Grantmyre, “The Attacks On the Highlander Folk School: A White Supremacist Response to Anti-Racist Activism” (unpublished master’s thesis, University of North Carolina at Asheville, 2003).

<sup>87</sup> “Williams’ Letter of Resignation”, *AC* (25 July 1958), p. 5.

<sup>88</sup> “Junior Is Caught; The Aroma Lingers”, *AC* (25 July 1958), p. 4; “Education Commission Is State Propaganda Agency”, *AC* (31 July 1958), p. 4; “Lawson Finds Board Helped Bodenhamer”, *AC* (29 August 1958), pp. 1, 12.

smart white folks – extra intelligent and well-trained”.<sup>89</sup> Vandiver did not share this view. In another example of the unevenness of segregationist thought on media strategy, he was profoundly indifferent towards the battle over public opinion at the national level and therefore unimpressed by the work of Williams and the GCE. For Vandiver, well-crafted legislative strategy was the most effective way to stymie efforts towards desegregation. Following the dissolution of the GCE, he declared an end to Georgia’s nationwide propaganda efforts and renewed focus on legal and governmental resistance at state and local levels.<sup>90</sup>

Williams’ plan to lead the South to ultimate victory through a far-reaching, propaganda campaign set to cost the state around \$376,000 would never be realised.<sup>91</sup> Indeed, it appears likely that Vandiver and his supporters within the Georgia legislature put additional pressure on Williams to resign to ensure his propaganda programme was not in place when Vandiver entered office so that state funds earmarked for it could be funnelled into “Freedom of Choice” resistance plans.<sup>92</sup> Williams left the public eye soon after his resignation, leaving historians to wonder once again whether the trajectory of the battle over American hearts and minds may have been altered had he remained active in massive resistance. Nonetheless, his legacy, and the legacies of Friend and the GCE, would persist through the photograph of King at Highlander with “known communists” Horton, Berry, and Aubrey Williams, President of the SCEF: the “‘four horsemen’ of racial agitation” charged with fomenting “tension, disturbance, strife and violence in advancement of the Communist doctrine of ‘racial nationalism’” (Fig. 4.2).<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> “Text of Vandiver’s Message on the State of the State”, *AC* (16 January 1959), p. 12; Trezzvant W. Anderson, “Georgia Education Commission Called Most Vicious Dixie Group”, *The Pittsburgh Courier* (28 December 1957), p. 3.

<sup>90</sup> “Cameraman Is Warned By Vandiver”, *AC* (21 February 1957), p. 5; “The New Agency”, *The Macon News* (9 October 1959), p. 3; Harold Paulk Henderson, *Ernest Vandiver, Governor of Georgia* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2000), p. 130; Kevin M. Kruse, “The Fight for ‘Freedom of Association’: Segregationist Rights and Resistance in Atlanta”, in Webb, *Massive Resistance*, p. 101.

<sup>91</sup> With assistance from “representatives of an advertising agency”, Williams planned “to spend about \$376,000 over two years on propaganda”. Joseph H. Baird, “Georgia Revamps Educational Unit”, *The Christian Science Monitor* (11 August 1958), p. 13.

<sup>92</sup> Following Williams’ resignation, Paul Stevenson, a Vandiver stalwart, was installed as interim head of the GCE and began to dismantle the organisation from within ahead of its dissolution in 1959. Bruce Galphin, “Griffin Puts Aide In Williams Post; 8 Jobs in Doubt”, *AC* (26 July 1958), pp. 1, 5. For more on Vandiver’s freedom of choice plans see: Kevin M. Kruse, “The Fight for ‘Freedom of Association’: Segregationist Rights and Resistance in Atlanta”, in Webb, *Massive Resistance*, pp. 99-114.

<sup>93</sup> “Labor Day Weekend at Communist Training School”, p. 3.

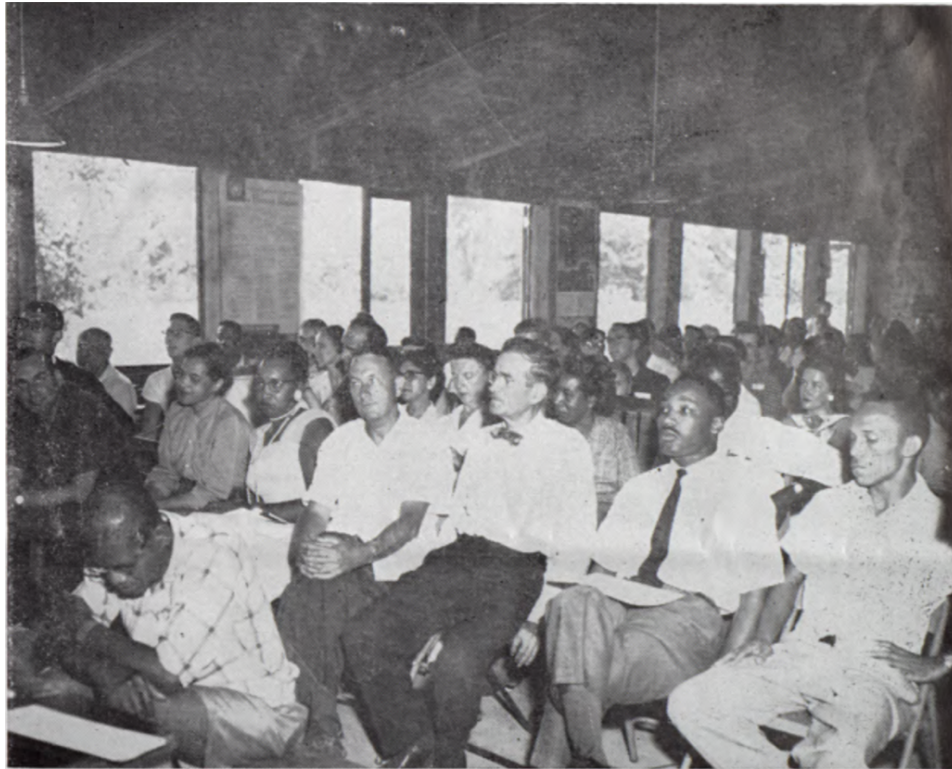


Fig. 4.2 – Martin Luther King, Jr., attending a workshop at Highlander Folk School. Abner W. Berry is pictured in the foreground on the far left. On the first row are King (second from right), Aubrey Williams (third from right), Myles Horton (fourth from right), and Rosa Parks (sixth from right). *Highlander Folk School: Communist Training School, Monteagle, Tenn.* (Atlanta: GCE, 1957), p. 3.

This photograph of King proved a vital weapon in the battle over public opinion in the 1960s. Confronted by a burgeoning civil rights movement driving forcefully towards landmark federal civil rights legislation, media savvy segregationists recognised the image's immense propaganda value. For the majority of Americans, King was the face of the civil rights movement and symbolic of the African American struggle for freedom by the early 1960s; the human embodiment of respectable, religious piety underpinning non-violent direct action. King demanded the media's attention and served as the major conduit through which reporters told the story of the civil rights movement. His iconic status was not lost on segregationists who understood that by defaming King they could call into question the motives and purposes of the entire movement. They recognised that Friend's photographic "proof" of King's alleged communist sympathies would make for serious news if the media's attention was drawn to it. Just as King's celebrity attracted media attention to civil rights demonstrations, his status could also be used to publicise segregationists' conspiratorial narrative. The photograph presented resisters with a unique and valuable opportunity to mobilise public opinion. As well as its newsworthiness, the image's narrative message and iconography separated it from

concomitant attempts to dramatise massive resistance using visual media. It played on longstanding and almost universal American fears of radicalism rejuvenated and heightened by the Cold War context and the perceived threat of communist takeover. By contrast, other photographs deployed by segregationists previously relied on tired imagery and dated iconography which drew on a specific set of white southern fears and myths and, thus, had limited potential as effective propaganda tools.

Photographs distributed as visual “proof” of segregationist claims that intermarriage and interracial sexual relations were the “horrifying byproduct[s]” of racial integration, for example, indicate how much more effective Friend’s photograph was. They were designed to exploit southern racial fears around the chivalric cult of white southern womanhood.<sup>94</sup> Images of white girls and black boys interacting in integrated schools or white women socialising with black men in the North or at federal institutions in the South visibly rejected white patriarchal control of white women and denied the capability of white men to protect the sexual “purity” of white women, or indeed “whiteness”, against the advances of black men and the supposedly unrefined sexual desires of white women (Fig. 4.3).<sup>95</sup> More than words on a page, they served as a vivid emasculation of white southern men and likely drew a visceral reaction based in a mythologised patriarchal duty to maintain white supremacy.<sup>96</sup> The photographs’ reliance on regional mythology, however, made them unsuitable for far-reaching media campaigns designed to appeal to conservatives in the North and West. Leading media strategists in massive resistance preferred to elevate their resistance above the knee-jerk bigotry characterising these efforts to exploit base fears of lower-class whites. Such crude attempts to inflame racist fears of “mongrelisation” would not play outside the South.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Robert B. Patterson quoted in McMillen, *The Citizens’ Council*, p. 184; W. J. Cash refers to this romantic adoration of white southern femininity as “gyneolatriy”. *The Mind of the South*, p. 89.

<sup>95</sup> See, for example, *The Little Rock School Board’s Plans for Your Child* (Little Rock: Capital Citizens’ Council, 1957); “Is This What We Want?”, *The Virginian* (April 1956), p. 3; *Shocking, You Bet It Is* (New Orleans: CCGNO, n.d.); “White And Negro Marriage Is Goal”, *TCC* (October 1956), p. 3; “Via Integration – Mixed Marriages Will Become Commonplace”, *TCC* (November 1956), p. 4. The photograph at Fig. 4.3 also appears in Dailey, “Sex, Segregation, and the Sacred”, p. 136.

<sup>96</sup> Lillian Smith details how patriarchal control of white women was essential to the maintenance of white supremacy. *Killers of the Dream*, pp. 120-135.

<sup>97</sup> The term “mongrelisation” was a southern racist neologism used to criminalise and stigmatise the results of “intermarriage” and interracial sex. It appears in a range of crude segregationist publications designed to play on base racist fears. For example, Dorothy Nelson, “Fence of Segregation, Chasm of Mongrelization, Ambulance of Racial Suicide”, *Dixie-American* (March 1, 1956), p. 2. See also, Theodore G. Bilbo, *Take Your Choice: Separation of Mongrelization* (Poplarville: Dream House Publishing Company, 1947).



Fig. 4.3 – “Is This What We Want?”, *The Virginian* (April 1956), p. 3.

Photographs mobilised in the wake of the Little Rock crisis to reframe the federal intervention in Arkansas as a reckless assault on the innocent citizens of a sovereign state drew on similar strands of southern mythology. Resisters seized upon photographs taken during the crisis to sustain a developing segregationist narrative of a heavy-handed horde of federal troops descending recklessly on a defenceless town and engaging in unnecessarily violent and coercive actions against children and peaceful spectators.<sup>98</sup> Invoking the Civil War and Reconstruction, they propagated mythologised memories of how the federal government had forcibly and irresponsibly undermined white control before, and destabilised white men’s faith in their ability to maintain a white supremacist regime in the South.<sup>99</sup> These photographs had some potential to tap into broader American fears of despotism and authoritarian tyranny heightened by the Cold War. However, segregationists’ ability to mobilise the images in such a way was restricted severely by the narrative attached firmly to these images in the national news media and

<sup>98</sup> “Integration Comes To Little Rock At Gun Point”, *The Palm Beach Post* (26 September 1957), p. 6; “Scene Calm Today As Nine Negroes Start Second Day At L. R. School”, *Opelika Daily News* (26 September 1957), p. 1; “Combat Veteran: Man Bayoneted in Arm By Troops to Sue U.S.”, *The Shreveport Times* (26 September 1957), p. 1; “Troops Prod Little Rock Mixing”, *The Florence Morning News* (26 September 1957), p. 1.

<sup>99</sup> Cash, *The Mind of the South*, p. 17.

some southern newspapers. While newspapers across the country published photographs depicting men bloodied at the hands of US army troops and teenage schoolboys held at bayonet point, they positioned white southern men as the aggressors and federal troops cautious peacekeepers.<sup>100</sup>

Lacking an authentic photograph of their own around which to construct their narrative, resisters' efforts to perpetuate the segregationist memory of Little Rock centred on a crude hand-illustrated emblem. Depicting a U.S. army soldier marching two schoolgirls away from Little Rock Central High School at bayonet point, it was designed to invoke what W. J. Cash called the "southern rape complex" (Fig. 4.4).<sup>101</sup> It was reproduced in segregationist publications between 1957 and 1959 and imprinted on reams of correspondence to supporters and detractors across the nation, but was no match for visceral photographs of angry white mobs lining the streets surrounding Central High or the brutal assault on Alex Wilson, an African American newspaper editor from Memphis.<sup>102</sup> Despite highly dubious claims that it was "a reproduction of something which really happened; something real – the truth – not a fabrication", without an authentic reference photograph of the incident it depicted, it relied on hackneyed iconography and presented a tentative fiction.<sup>103</sup> The emblem was based on the image pictured at Fig. 4.5. The smiling girls and US army troop cut against the segregationist narrative that an atmosphere of hostility and coercion prevailed in Little Rock, which was likely the reason segregationists focused on disseminating the reproduction rather than the photograph itself. Moreover, the odd placement of the troops in the middle-ground and the proximity of the tree to the house on the left suggests the image was deliberately

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<sup>100</sup> Homer Bigart, "U.S. Troops Enforce Peace In Little Rock As Nine Negroes Return To Their Classes", *NYT* (26 September 1957), p. 1; Robert E. Lee Baker, "9 Little Rock Negro Pupils Integrated With Aid of 350 Tough Paratroopers; Troops Coolly Oust Defiant Onlookers", *WP* (26 September 1957), p. 1; "U.S. Troops Put Down Little Rock Outbreak: Demonstrator Injured in Clash With Troopers Near Little Rock School", *Los Angeles Times* (26 September 1957), p. 3; "A Historic Week of Civil Strife", *Life*, Vol. 43, No. 15 (7 October 1957), pp. 42-43, 48; "U.S. Troops Integrate School", *The Times and Democrat* (26 September 1957), p. 1; "Airborne Troops Use Guns, Bayonets to Escort Pupils, Slug Spectator, Move Crowds", *The Montgomery Advertiser* (26 September 1957), p. 1; Elizabeth Jacoway, *Turn Away Thy Son: Little Rock, the Crisis that Shocked the Nation* (New York: Free Press, 2007), p. 181.

<sup>101</sup> Cash, *The Mind of the South*, p. 17; Carter, *The South Strikes Back*, p. 84; "Remember Little Rock", *TCC* (January 1958), p. 4.

<sup>102</sup> Carter, *The South Strikes Back*, p. 84; "Uses 'Remember Little Rock' Stamp", *The Shreveport Times* (3 January 1958), p. 6C. Karen Anderson, *Little Rock: Race and Resistance at Central High School* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), p. 69; Jacoway, *Turn Away Thy Son*, p. 172; Roberts and Klibanoff, *The Race Beat*, p. 182. The emblem appears in, for example, Carleton Putnam, *High Court's 'Arrogance' Is Viewed By Northerner* (Greenwood, Mississippi: Educational Fund of the Citizens' Councils, 1958); Tom P. Brady, *Segregation and the South* (Greenwood: Association of Citizens' Councils of Mississippi, 1957). The imprint appears on correspondence held in segregationist archival collections consulted for this project throughout the South.

<sup>103</sup> Howard Suttle, "Liftin' the Lid in Washington", *The Winston County Journal* (28 February 1958), p. 6.



framed. Owen Gunter, the photographer, admitted as much, “the bayonets appear much closer to the girls than they actually are... due to an optical illusion”, conceding that the soldiers had “moved slowly”.<sup>104</sup>

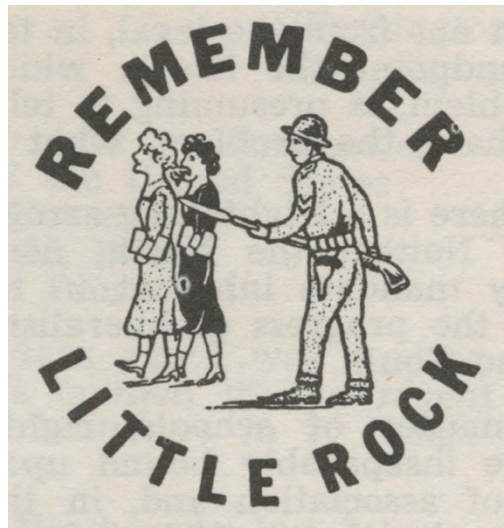


Fig. 4.4 – “Remember Little Rock” icon, as pictured in Tom P. Brady, *Segregation and the South* (Greenwood: Association of Citizens’ Councils of Mississippi, 1957), p. Back Cover.



Fig. 4.5 – “Dispersal Order”, *Arkansas Democrat* (25 September 1957), p.1.

<sup>104</sup> “Dispersal Order”, *The Arkansas Democrat* (25 September 1957). See also, “The teen-agers giggle as paratroopers move them on”, *Hattiesburg American* (26 September 1957), p. 1; “Bayonets Move Laughing Girls”, *Tallahassee Democrat* (26 September 1957), p. 2. The photograph was notably absent from mainstream coverage and appeared in few segregationist publications. For scholarly discussions of the image, see: Phoebe Godfrey, “Bayonets, Brainwashing, and Bathrooms: The Discourse of Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Desegregation of Little Rock’s Central High”, *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 62, No. 1 (Spring 2003), pp. 50-51, 55-56; Anderson, *Little Rock*, pp. 74-76; Elizabeth Huckaby, *Crisis at Central High, 1957-1958* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), p. 45.

Segregationists yearned for an authentic photograph to dramatise massive resistance in a single frame, an image which could appeal to broad fears held by Americans across the nation and around which they could construct and control their own narrative. In the King photograph, they found this. With a clear understanding of the unique opportunities it presented and its potential impact, segregationists deployed Friend's photograph to derail the civil rights movement at two of its most critical junctures in the mid-1960s. In response to segregationists' efforts to propel it into the public consciousness, news reporters across the country would recognise the image as "one of the most controversial photographs in the civil rights field".<sup>105</sup>

### **"Cries of 'Communism' have... laid the basis for physical destruction"**

Friend's photograph was invoked in the summer of 1963 during widely publicised Congressional debates over President John F. Kennedy's civil rights legislation. Segregationists were on the back foot in the wake of a media storm over horrifying images of segregationist violence in Birmingham, Alabama. Those segregationists who recognised the impact of those images on public discourse surrounding civil rights realised they needed a way to divert attention away from the incidents in Birmingham and a way to shift the terms of debate over Kennedy's proposed civil rights reform. Friend's photograph presented them with an opportunity to counter with a dramatic image of their own.

Harris was the first to redeploy the image in *The Augusta Courier* on 17<sup>th</sup> June 1963 and again on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1963, dedicating the entire back page of his small fortnightly paper to the photograph.<sup>106</sup> The advertisement distilled the ideas presented in the GCE broadside onto a single tabloid-sized sheet and intensified the indictments against King by stating he belonged "to sixty Communist-front organisations – more than any Communist in the United States". Readers were instructed to "Join the Augusta Courier in the Fight for Freedom" by purchasing additional copies of the newspaper tear sheet

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<sup>105</sup> "Picture Of King At Highlander Controversial", *Statesville Record and Landmark* (16 June 1965), p. 10; "The Uproar Over Photo Of Dr. King", *Oakland Tribune* (16 July 1965), p. 40-X; "King Photo Brought Red Charge", *The Minneapolis Star* (19 June 1965), p. 7.

<sup>106</sup> "Martin Luther King... At Communist Training School", *The Augusta Courier* (17 June 1963), p. 4; "Martin Luther King... At Communist Training School", *The Augusta Courier* (8 July 1963), p. 4. The second advertisement included a more detailed caption and instructed readers on how they could acquire reprints. "Testimony in Congress: Folk School Called Red Training Site by Barnett", *The Shreveport Times* (13 July 1963), p. 2-A.

for redistribution.<sup>107</sup> By announcing King was “promoted and encouraged by the Kennedys”, Harris explicitly tied President Kennedy and his brother to King’s communist conspiracy and framed their legislation as a threat to national security. Despite decisive action during the Cuban Missile Crisis less than a year earlier, Harris was clearly confident the photograph could convince Americans the Kennedys were overlooking, and thereby emboldening, the communist threat within the US. With the administration’s commitment to civil rights signalled during the integration crisis at the University of Alabama and President Kennedy’s televised “Report to the American People on Civil Rights”, Harris positioned King and the Kennedys as collaborators, willing or otherwise, in a nefarious communist plot to destroy American freedom.

Less than a week after the image appeared in the *Courier* for a second time, Ross Barnett displayed a “poster-sized” version of the photograph before the US Senate Commerce Committee hearings on the civil rights bill, which were receiving considerable media coverage (Fig. 4.6). His testimony before the committee declared civil rights agitation was “part of a worldwide Communist conspiracy”. Like Harris, he charged the Kennedys with aiding communist activity by placing civil rights legislation before Congress, arguing they were endorsing “demonstrations, Freedom Rides, sit-ins, picketing and actual violation of local laws” which furthered the goals of communists. “The President and the Attorney General are sowing the seeds of hate and violence”, Barnett proclaimed, which would lead to a “bloody harvest”. When Senator Mike Monroney of Oklahoma requested Barnett provide evidence of his claims, Barnett pulled from his briefcase the “fly sheet” printed in the *Courier*.<sup>108</sup> Clearly, he shared Harris’ confidence in the photograph’s persuasive power. Following his lead, George Wallace and Attorney General of Arkansas Bruce Bennett also presented Friend’s photograph to the Commerce Committee as evidence of communist involvement in civil rights demonstrations.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> “Martin Luther King... At Communist Training School”.

<sup>108</sup> “Links Communists to Agitation: Barnett Accuses Kennedy Of ‘Sowing Seeds of Hate’”, *Alexandria Daily Town Talk* (12 July 1963), p. 1; E. W. Kenworthy, “Barnett Charges Kennedys Assist Red Racial Plot”, *NYT* (13 July 1963), pp. 1, 7. A telephoto of Barnett presenting the photograph is included in *NYT*’s report.

<sup>109</sup> E. W. Kenworthy, “Wallace Asserts Air Force Offers Aid To Race Riots”, *NYT* (16 July 1963), pp. 1, 16; Richard L. Lyons, “Charge Made Again at Rights Hearing: Monroney Attacks ‘Red Smears’”, *WP* (17 July 1963), p. 1.

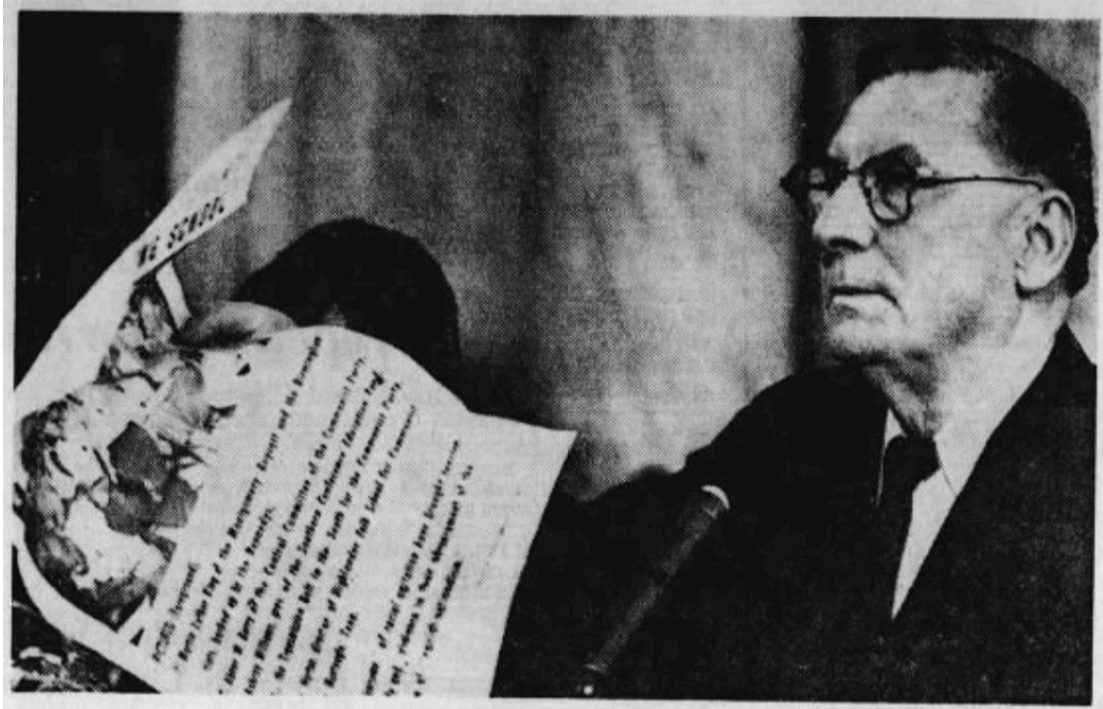


Fig. 4.6 – “Barnett Displays Picture at Hearing”, *The Evening Press* (13 July 1963), p 1.

Barnett, Wallace and Bennett used this platform to publicise Friend’s photograph and legitimise their conspiratorial narrative. The fact they all brought physical copies of the photograph to the televised hearings demonstrates a mutual recognition that it could communicate their ideas in a single frame. Emulating the strategy adopted by Joseph McCarthy a decade earlier, they presented it as the only necessary evidence in their chimera of truth. They recognised that exhibiting physical evidence before the viewing public, via the media outlets covering the hearings, was an effective means of authenticating their claims. With the nation watching, they established the image as a powerful visual touchstone in public discussions of the civil rights movement and proposed legislation. In response to their testimonies, national, state, and local newspapers featured reports contemplating the supposedly nefarious affiliations of the civil rights movement’s most recognisable man, some of which included reproductions of Friend’s photograph.<sup>110</sup>

Segregationists who deployed this image of King were convinced they were hitting on “a vital spot”, which could stall or derail the proposed civil rights legislation.<sup>111</sup> Allegations that King, and, by association, the entire civil rights movement, held

<sup>110</sup> For example, “Picture Figures in Testimony”, *The Evening Press* (3 July 1963), p. 1; “King, Communists at Monteagle”, *The Dothan Eagle* (16 July 1963), p. 3; Kenworthy, “Wallace Asserts”; Kenworthy, “Barnett Charges”.

<sup>111</sup> J. L. Wallis, “Passing Scene”, *The Talladega Daily Home and Our Mountain Home* (16 July 1963), p. 1.

communist affiliations had intensified in late 1961.<sup>112</sup> With growing antagonism between the US and USSR, the Kennedy administration came under increasing pressure to tackle threats posed by communists operating domestically. In March 1962, Robert F. Kennedy authorised the FBI to launch an investigation of King and his associates under its Communist Infiltration Program to root out subversives operating within the civil rights movement. Having promulgated suspicion over King's alleged communist ties previously, J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI directed an enthusiastic programme of surveillance, readily feeding incriminating information to the White House and, more importantly, to the press. Indeed, it was in large part the FBI which fuelled mounting suspicions of King and the movement for the public and policymakers.<sup>113</sup> Evidently, some segregationists were delighted to piggyback on the FBI's smear campaign. It provided a new opportunity to mobilise Friend's photograph and further inflame uncertainty surrounding the "true" motivations of King and the movement.

Proponents of the civil rights bill within the Committee's hearings were quick to dismiss segregationists' claims as nothing more than "red smears".<sup>114</sup> Due to publicity generated by the photo, King himself also felt forced to issue a sharp statement rejecting the accusations as a cynical attempt "to distort the meaning of the integration movement".<sup>115</sup> Cold War pressures rendered any association with communism untenable for the civil rights movement and Kennedy administration. Movement and administration officials, therefore, were forced to take these segregationists' claims seriously and respond accordingly. Whilst Monroney decried repeated attacks on King in an "angry outburst" before the Committee, he nonetheless assured reporters he would "check with the FBI and see if it has any information about Communist participation", tacitly affording some legitimacy to the segregationists' claims.<sup>116</sup> King disavowed both his own and the movement's close connection to Highlander and denied the invaluable training and support it provided, stating he had only been in contact with the school "once to make a speech several years ago".<sup>117</sup> That King issued a response at all is significant, since civil rights leaders rarely acknowledged segregationist propaganda. This

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<sup>112</sup> Richard Lentz, *Symbols, the New Magazines, and Martin Luther King* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), p. 64.

<sup>113</sup> Lentz, *Symbols*, pp.64-65.

<sup>114</sup> For example, Lyons, "Charge Made".

<sup>115</sup> Al Kuettner, "Highlander Attended By King", *AC* (13 July 1963), p. 2.

<sup>116</sup> Lyons, "Charge Made Again at Rights Hearing"; "Raps Rights Bill: Barnett Says JFK Backs Racial Acts", *The Shreveport Times* (13 July 1963), p. 2-A.

<sup>117</sup> "King Comments Here", *NYT* (13 July 1963), p. 7; Kuettner, "Highlander Attended By King".

was likely a strategic decision to avoid granting segregationists further exposure or legitimacy. Robert Kennedy released a “carefully worded statement” in an attempt to assure the public that no civil rights leaders were communists or communist-controlled.<sup>118</sup> President Kennedy even made time during a presidential news conference to repudiate the claim that the civil rights movement was “communist-inspired”. The President did, however, acknowledge that communists may attend the demonstrations, which failed to fully extinguish segregationists’ claims and risked validating an aspect of the narrative.<sup>119</sup> Media attention drawn to the segregationist viewpoint by Friend’s photograph sent a wave of nervousness rippling through the administration and the movement.

Friend’s photograph contributed to the anticommunist hysteria plaguing racial politics in the early-1960s and helped sustain a toxic environment in which “any allusion to the left [brought] forth an emotional response” that could threaten the passage of civil rights legislation. Policymakers and movement leaders could ill-afford “to risk any such impressions”.<sup>120</sup> Bayard Rustin, for example, was side-lined and removed from the public eye for holding, or having held, communist views and affiliations. Jack O’Dell, a central member of the SCLC, and King’s advisor Stanley Levison were ousted entirely. Indeed, O’Dell submitted his resignation from the SCLC on the same day Barnett displayed the photograph of King to the Senate Committee and the press. An active union member in the late-1940s, he had campaigned for Henry Wallace’s Progressive Party in 1948, been involved with the CPUSA throughout the 1950s, and, been called to testify before HUAC. In the intense Cold War context, his background could be used against the SCLC. He first came under pressure to resign when the FBI leaked this information to the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* in October 1962, denouncing him as a communist. It came to a head when Burke Marshall and the Kennedy brothers met with King in June 1963, ahead of the Congressional debates on the administration’s civil rights package. All three men told King that by keeping O’Dell on staff he was jeopardising the bill’s passage and

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<sup>118</sup> Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, p. 278.

<sup>119</sup> John F. Kennedy quoted in “The Rights Bill: A Battle Joined”, *Eyewitness* [television programme] CBS, 19 July 1963.

<sup>120</sup> Letter from Martin Luther King, Jr., to Jack H. O’Dell, 3 July 1963, Martin Luther King Folder, Box 008, Special Correspondence, 1961-1964, BM.

requested he sever all ties. Succumbing to threats posed by segregationist propaganda to the passage of civil rights legislation, King reluctantly obliged.<sup>121</sup>

While policymakers and movement leaders vehemently rejected Friend's photograph as a crude and hollow attempt to establish "guilt by association", the image did reinforce a powerful segregationist narrative that forced concessions from the civil rights movement. O'Dell himself explained the constant threat of communist accusations stood as one of the most "formidable... obstacles blocking the path to Freedom".<sup>122</sup> In September 1963, following astonishing scenes at the civil rights hearings and the departure of O'Dell, the SCEF's Anne Braden lamented that the forces of "Southern Fascism" had used "cries of 'Communism'" successfully to "stifle creative forces" and to inflict "physical destruction" on the movement.<sup>123</sup>

Historians have been too quick to dismiss Friend's photograph and the flysheets produced by the *Augusta Courier* as the work of desperate fanatics, which, they contend, had negligible impact on the trajectory of the civil rights movement. Jeff Woods, for example, argues that while the image may have "sway[ed] the under-educated and... solidified the support of those already committed to segregation", it "did little to convince even conservatives to join the segregationist cause".<sup>124</sup> Gauging the extent to which the photograph won converts to massive resistance is, of course, very difficult. Certainly, it is not the most effective way to evaluate the image's impact. It is, however, wholly apparent that the photograph and its message worried civil rights leaders and political supporters of the civil rights bill. Although many "thunder[ed] against the theory of guilt by association" publicly, behind the scenes they feared "ordinary men and women will continue to form their judgements by this rough rule of thumb". As the editors of *The Richmond News-Leader* quipped, "Since the days of Aesop, men have been known by the company they keep".<sup>125</sup> Advocates for racial change believed the photograph had the potential to turn public sentiment against the civil rights movement and compromise the passage of the civil rights bill. The Kennedy administration could not be seen to support a movement inspired or controlled by communists. To placate political allies, civil rights

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<sup>121</sup> <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/odell-hunter-pitts-jack> [accessed 1 April 2019]. See also, Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, pp. 195, 200-201, 235-236, 272-279.

<sup>122</sup> O'Dell quoted in <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/odell-hunter-pitts-jack> [Accessed 1 April 2019].

<sup>123</sup> Anne Braden, "It Was Finally Burned To The Ground – Southern Fascism: The Case Of Highlander School", *The Gazette and Daily* (30 September 1963), p. 19.

<sup>124</sup> Woods, *Black Struggle, Red Scare*, p. 146.

<sup>125</sup> Editors of *The Richmond News-Leader*, "Odd-Ball Outfit", *The Montgomery Advertiser* (13 January 1958), p. 4-A.

leaders and organisations discharged leftist organisers, curbed involvement in causes which could be construed as left-wing, and, most importantly, limited emphasis placed on economic inequality. Friend's photograph powerfully expressed a noxious segregationist narrative which restricted civil rights organisations and distorted perceptions of the movement as being without economic goals which would persist in American memory.<sup>126</sup>

### **“Enough documentation to convince the average voter”**

The second revival of Friend's photograph came in early-1965. Following “Bloody Sunday” in Selma, Alabama, members of the Citizens' Councils “from all over the United States” met in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, for a “Strategy Conference” to plan “counter-offense measures” to divert attention away from atrocities committed by Sheriff Jim Clark and his posse and “confine the spread of socialism, communism and federal tyranny”.<sup>127</sup> Facing the prospect of a second piece of landmark civil rights legislation in less than one year, segregationists were determined to malign civil rights demonstrations that promised to place pressure on the federal government to pass voting rights legislation. With Governor Wallace and Judge Leander Perez of Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana, at the head of the speaking schedule, leading figures within the Council movement discussed plans for a concerted media effort to improve the “exchange of important information” between white southern resisters and the rest of the nation.<sup>128</sup> It was George Singelmann, the mastermind behind the Reverse Freedom Rides, who conceived of the idea that would serve as the South's “Counter-Punch”.<sup>129</sup>

On 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1965, the day after civil rights activists set off to march to Montgomery from Selma for the third and final time, Ned Touchstone unveiled Singelmann's proposal. The Councils were to undertake their “most ambitious” campaign to “expose King's ties with communists” and “educate the public” on the supposed threat to American freedom posed by the civil rights movement. At the centre of this educational programme was Friend's “tell-tale” photo. Touchstone and

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<sup>126</sup> Hall, “The Long Civil Rights”, pp. 1233-1263.

<sup>127</sup> “Lieutenant Governor to Speak: Council Calls Strategy Meet In Baton Rouge March 12-13”, *TCR* (16 February 1965), p. 1; “Strategy Meeting Will Draw Hundreds”, *TCR* (5 March 1965), p. 1.

<sup>128</sup> “Citizens' Councils Seek End to Aid”, *Lake Charles American-Press* (1 February 1965), p. 15; “Lieutenant Governor to Speak”.

<sup>129</sup> Medford Evans, “Defending the Billboards... Was Highlander Communist? A Council Leader Speaks His Piece”, *The Nashville Tennessean* (25 July 1965), p. 3-B; “South Unveils Counter-Punch! Will Expose King's Ties with Communists”, *TCR* (22 March 1965), p. 1.



Singelmann recognised the “hush-hush picture” had “haunted King” and considered it the most compelling means to communicate their ideas.<sup>130</sup> As well as detracting attention from the march and “Bloody Sunday”, Council leaders saw the campaign as an opportunity to dismantle the pious image of King, and, by association, the marchers and movement. They sought to galvanise a critical reaction to place “tremendous pressure on the White House and on Congress” to reject calls for voting rights legislation.<sup>131</sup> The plan was twofold: to erect hundreds of “sobering billboards” bearing a twenty-foot reproduction of the image along highways throughout the nation, and distribute millions of postcards featuring Friend’s photograph of King.<sup>132</sup> Undoubtedly, Singelmann believed this striking image, when mobilised effectively, could have a dramatic impact once again.

Hundreds of thousands of postcards were printed and distributed nationally in the days following the announcement. Council members supported the campaign by purchasing packs of postcards to distribute to friends, relatives, politicians, and opinion makers.<sup>133</sup> On 23<sup>rd</sup> March, the first set of billboards were erected along U.S. Highway 80, the route taken by the marchers (Fig. 4.7).<sup>134</sup> Whilst the billboard plan could be construed as an outmoded, back-to-basics approach reflecting growing desperation and diminishing financial resources of a dying movement, the initiative was a savvy attempt to exploit existing mass media networks. By placing the billboards before reporters and cameramen trailing the marchers, Singelmann co-opted the media attention directed at the demonstration.

On the day the first signs were erected, reporters for the *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, and *The Washington Post*, alerted readers that a series of billboards bearing a “huge picture purporting to show Dr. King at a ‘Communist training school’” had been placed “on the line of the march”.<sup>135</sup> Newspapers throughout the United States printed

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<sup>130</sup> “South Unveils Counter-Punch!”, “Here’s the hush-hush picture... To go on hundreds of billboards”, *TCR* (22 March 1965), p. 1.

<sup>131</sup> “First Billboards Are Up. Pressure is on White House to Dump Martin Luther King”, *TCR* (9 April 1965), p. 1; Letter from Courtney Smith to *TCR* subscribers, n.d., Folder 136, Box 8, NT.

<sup>132</sup> “South Unveils Counter-Punch!”;

<sup>133</sup> “Martin Luther King Postcards”, *TCR* (22 March 1965), p. 4; “Martin Luther King Postcards”, *TCR* (9 April 1965), p. 2;

<sup>134</sup> Roy Reed, “Rights Marchers Push Into Region Called Hostile”, *NYT* (23 March 1965), pp. 1, 28; quotation from p. 28.

<sup>135</sup> Reed, “Rights Marchers Push”, p. 28; William Chapman and Thomas R. Kendrick, “300 Continue March, Near Half-Way Mark”, *WP* (23 March 1965), p. 8; Don Irwin, “Marchers Arrive At Halfway Point”, *Los Angeles Times* (23 March 1965), p. 2.

a photograph of a billboard made available by news agency UPI.<sup>136</sup> Tracking the legacy of the image he helped mastermind, former Governor Griffin reported jubilantly that UPI's telephoto had "appeared in most of the daily press".<sup>137</sup> The Councils had forced mainstream media to publicise Friend's photograph and acknowledge their accusations. Whilst the majority of the nation's newspapers did not affirm the charges levelled at King, they did not challenge or interrogate the photograph. Reporters responded to the billboards with brief, descriptive statements and shied away from in-depth analysis.



Fig. 4.7 – (Anti-clockwise from top). The photograph of the King billboard distributed by UPI; Council Officials unveil the first billboard to be erected. Letter from Courtney Smith to *The Councilor* subscribers (reverse side), n.d., Folder 136, Box 8, NT; Civil rights marchers in Alabama pass a billboard along the highway. "The Road to Montgomery Gets Shorter and Shorter", *The Decatur Herald* (Illinois, 25 March 1965), p. 56.

<sup>136</sup> For example, Al Kuettnner, "Footsore Marchers Log 16 More Miles", *Casper Morning Star* (Wyoming, 23 March 1965), p. 1; "Greets Marchers", *The Grand Prairie Daily News Texan and Banner* (23 March 1965), p. 11; "Billboard Attacks Rights Leader", *The Latrobe Bulletin* (Pennsylvania, 24 March 1965), p. 3; "The Road to Montgomery Gets Shorter and Shorter", *The Decatur Herald* (Illinois, 25 March 1965), p. 56.

<sup>137</sup> Marvin Griffin quoted in "About that Picture of Martin Luther King...", *The Bismarck Tribune* (27 April 1965), p. 6.

By failing to condemn the Councils' campaign universally as a pernicious attempt to mislead the American public, reporters inadvertently granted some legitimacy to the segregationists' ideas. Readers were left to make up their own minds which played into the hands of the Councils. Indeed, Touchstone was confident the photograph alone provided "enough documentation to convince the average voter that the rumors he has heard about King are probably true".<sup>138</sup>

The substantial publicity generated by this inventive strategy provoked an almost instantaneous response at the grassroots. Ahead of King's scheduled appearance on *Meet the Press* on 28<sup>th</sup> March, following soon after the conclusion of the march to Montgomery, Lawrence E. Spivak, the show's producer, was bombarded with correspondence concerning King's alleged communist affiliations. White southern resisters reactivated by the Councils' campaign wrote to the programme's producers demanding King be questioned on his affiliation with Highlander.<sup>139</sup> Southern segregationists mailed in copies of the image, daring panellists to show it to King on air and ask why he was associating with "known communists".<sup>140</sup> Viewers from outside the South demanded answers too. With some having only been made aware of Friend's photograph by this campaign, they echoed earlier segregationist sentiment when complaining key "facts" about King had been "kept from the nation by a managed press who had never [afforded due attention to] the picture of King photographed... at the HIGHLANDER FOLK SCHOOL". Northerners and westerners of like mind also sent copies of Friend's photograph, no doubt acquired through the Councils, and urged Spivak "to peruse it when posing questions to King".<sup>141</sup> On the reverse side of a flysheet featuring the photograph, one particularly disdainful Baltimore resident stated: "If only the press would regain its 'guts' and become American to expose the free-roaming commies".<sup>142</sup>

These viewers' impassioned demands, combined with coverage of the billboards by the nation's press, forced the programme's producers to confront King on his dealings with Highlander. The Councils and their supporters had harnessed the power of Friend's

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<sup>138</sup> "South Unveils Counter-Punch!". See also: Evans, "Defending the Billboards".

<sup>139</sup> Letter from R. H. Maddox (Arkansas) to Lawrence E. Spivak, 24 March 1965; and, Letter from Ernest L. McLaughlin (South Carolina) to Spivak, 23 March 1965, Folder 2, Mar. 28, King, Martin Luther, Jr., Box 53, Audience Mail, 1945-1979, "Meet the Press" File, 1945-1994, LES.

<sup>140</sup> Letter from Gladys Beene (Tennessee) to Meet the Press, 21 March 1965; Letter from Mrs. C. J. Tucker (Georgia) to Meet The Press, 22 March 1965, and Letter from Frank Sells (Tennessee) to Spivak, 22 March 1965, Folder 1, Mar. 28, King, Box 53, LES.

<sup>141</sup> Letter from John W. Rock (California) to Spivak, 26 March 1965, Folder 2, Mar. 28, King, Box 53, LES.

<sup>142</sup> Letter from Robert Robusto (Maryland) to the producers of Meet the Press, n.d., Folder 5, Mar. 28, King, Box 53, LES.

photograph again, this time to secure a platform on one of America's most watched political television programmes. As it drew to a close, segregationists saw their ideas and suspicions emerge from the mouths of some of the nation's most respected and discerning journalists. Posing the penultimate question, Spivak asked:

Dr. King, the AP reported the other day that a picture of you taken in 1957 at a Tennessee inter-racial school is being plastered all over Alabama billboards with the caption "Martin Luther King at a Communist training school." Will you tell us whether that was a Communist training school and what were you doing there?<sup>143</sup>

King responded in much the same way as when the photograph was unearthed by Barnett in 1963, quickly brushing away the idea that Highlander was a communist training school and proceeding to deny any meaningful relationship with it: "I got there about 15 minutes before I was to speak. I spoke about 45 minutes, and then I left immediately".<sup>144</sup> In earlier interviews, King had rejected the billboards as ridiculous, stating "there are as many Communists in the civil rights movement as there are Eskimos in Florida".<sup>145</sup> Perhaps sensing King's frustration, *Meet the Press* panellists chose not to press the issue. Whilst King dismissed the photograph quickly, it was nonetheless granted some legitimacy by elite figures in American media, and, by delaying its discussion until the programme's conclusion, the show's producers had afforded the image inordinate prominence.

Viewers' reactions indicate that, for some, the panellists' purposefully objective questioning and King's responses only reinforced suspicions generated by Friend's photograph and the Councils' tenacious campaign.<sup>146</sup> The speed with which King discounted the photograph intensified some viewers' distrust, especially since earlier in the programme King had proposed a "massive economic withdrawal program on the State of Alabama" and affirmed that he considered trade unions a vital part of the civil rights movement.<sup>147</sup> These viewers branded King an "all out liar" and continued to mail copies of the photograph to Spivak, arguing it proved King was indeed a student of Highlander, which they continued to claim was a communist training school.<sup>148</sup> The seeds

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<sup>143</sup> Spivak quoted in "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.", *Meet The Press* [television programme] NBC, 28 March 1965.

<sup>144</sup> King quoted in "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr."

<sup>145</sup> Reed, "Rights Marchers Push"; Chapman and Kendrick, "300 Continue March".

<sup>146</sup> With reference to the panellists' objective approach to the photograph, Betty Cole, an Associate Producer of *MTP*, explained that "the purpose of MEET THE PRESS is to present the views of persons importantly related to issues and events in the news in order to give our audience an opportunity to judge the facts and the people for themselves". Letter from Cole to G. G. Guest, n.d., Folder 4, Mar. 28, King, Box 53, LES.

<sup>147</sup> King quoted in "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr."

<sup>148</sup> Letter from G. G. Guest (Alabama) to Spivak, 30 March 1965, Folder 4, Mar. 28, King, Box 53, LES. See also, for example: Letter from Octavia Hunter (Colorado) to Spivak, 28 March 1965, Folder 2, Mar. 28, King,

were sown and King's response did little to uproot them. With the closing question concerning the possible "eruption of Negro violence in pursuit of Negro rights", some were left aghast, an image of black communist revolution hanging in their minds as the programme went off air. Afraid King's "real intentions" were "revolutionary" and convinced he was "preaching anarchy", these viewers begged the programme's producers to "do your country a real service" by taking a firm stand against King and the movement.<sup>149</sup> Two viewers in Michigan were especially alarmed by King's distinctions between just and unjust laws, writing "What if we should all decide that!!!" Fearing King was advocating anarchic rebellion, they declared the withdrawal of their support for the civil rights movement: "Before his appearance on your show we were in sympathy with the just cause we thought he represented, but his opinions changed our mind".<sup>150</sup> The programme left some viewers more determined to prove King's communist guilt and others terrified of what was to come. The Council had both manipulated mainstream media and mobilised public opinion to significant effect.

The segregationist campaign to defame King using Friend's notorious photograph continued until the passage of the Voting Rights Act in August 1965. Emboldened by denunciations of the image and attempts to tear down the billboards, Council leaders urged supporters to erect new billboards in their communities and requested funds to help pay for the costs of printing and distributing both the signs and the postcards.<sup>151</sup> Indeed, negative reactions to the signs only served to further convince massive resisters that their continued dissemination of the photograph posed a significant threat to pending voting rights legislation. According to Touchstone, by the end of June 1965 over four-hundred billboards stood alongside highways in northern, southern, and western states, and hundreds of thousands of the post-cards were in circulation throughout the country.<sup>152</sup> Whether the impressive numbers touted by Touchstone were accurate, it is apparent that new billboards continued to be constructed in towns across America and reproductions of Friend's photograph continued to appear in

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Box 53, LES; Letter from Mrs. Henry Coates (Texas) to Spivak, 30 March 1965, Folder 4, Mar. 28, King, Box 53, LES.

<sup>149</sup> Letter from Alan Thorpe to Betty Cole, 12 April 1965; Letter from Arthur B. McDonald to Betty Cole, 9 April 1965, Folder 4, Mar. 28, King, Box 53, LES.

<sup>150</sup> Letter from Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Carlina, 30 March 1965, Folder 4, Mar. 28, King, Box 53, LES.

<sup>151</sup> "About 300 MLK Billboards Have Been Erected", *TCR* (17 May 1965), p. 1; "Martin Luther King Postcards", *TCR* (17 May 1965), p. 3; "Further Proof", *TCR* (1 June 1965), p. 1; "Papers, Posters Available", *TCR* (1 June 1965), p. 1. "Censorship In Ohio", *TCR* (15 July 1965), p. 1; "Listen To Them Squawl!", *TCR* (15 July 1965), p. 2; "Pegler Raps Billboard Censorship – MLK Exposure To Continue", *TCR* (1 June 1965).

<sup>152</sup> "This Billboard", *TCR* (20 June 1965), p. 4.

newspapers.<sup>153</sup> In many respects, the photograph commissioned by Williams formed the basis of the final large-scale massive resistance media campaign directed by the Councils.<sup>154</sup>

“The sign[s], however, did not slow down the marchers”, to quote one contemporary observer, nor could they prevent the passage of the Voting Rights Act.<sup>155</sup> The pendulum had swung too far for segregationists to derail voting rights reform successfully. Due to the skilled strategizing of civil rights activists, the campaign for voting rights was viewed by policymakers and the public at large as a reasonable request for political representation from a disenfranchised and oppressed minority in a country which championed representative democracy. Moreover, with the growing presence of SNCC and its more radical approach to the problems of society, the King of Montgomery and Selma was increasingly cast as a moderate. Judging SNCC to be a greater threat to the status quo, even the conservative news magazine *U.S. News and World Report* watered down its previously ardent critique of King and redirected its malice towards SNCC.<sup>156</sup> The Councils’ efforts had little chance of causing significant harm to the movement’s campaign for voting rights.

The strategy and thought behind the Councils’ use of photography, however, should not be discounted entirely. Whilst decrying segregationist efforts to disseminate Friend’s photograph as a reckless and desperate bid “to stigmatise the most responsible of the [civil] rights leaders”, Thomas O’Neill, a reporter for the Baltimore *Sun*, acknowledged the strategic planning behind the sustained attack on King. Seeking to plant “late hour questions in the minds of Congress as it moves toward a decision on voting rights legislation”, O’Neill observed, segregationists grasped that “a successful attempt to discredit Mr. King would be unquestionably a heavy blow to the entire civil rights movement”. Most importantly, O’Neill also predicted the impact the photograph, and the campaign to expose King as a communist more broadly, would have on the

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<sup>153</sup> “5 Men Are Seized in Indiana For ‘Hate’ Activity for the Klan”, *NYT* (1 August 1965), p. 57; “King Photo Brought Red Charge”, *The Minneapolis Star* (19 June 1965), p. 7; “Picture Of King At Highlander Controversial”, *Statesville Record and Landmark* (16 June 1965), p. 10; “From Independent American”, *St. Mary Banner And Franklin Tribune* (8 June 1965), p. 2; “Martin Luther King... At Communist Training School”, *The Bismarck Tribune* (27 April 1965), p. 6.

<sup>154</sup> Reed, “Rights Marchers Push”, p. 28.

<sup>155</sup> “The Road to Montgomery Gets Shorter and Shorter”, *The Decatur Herald* (Illinois, 25 March 1965), p. 56.

<sup>156</sup> “If Voting is the Problem – Look Outside the South”, *U.S. News & World Report* (5 April 1965), p. 39; “An Immoral Law”, *U.S. News & World Report* (5 April 1965), p. 116; “Martin Luther King: Who He is... What He Believes”, *U.S. News & World Report* (5 April 1965), p. 18; “After Alabama... Negroes Next Battlegrounds”, *U.S. News & World Report* (5 April 1965), p. 38; Lentz, *Symbols*, p. 165-166.

longer-term goals of the movement. “Even should it fail in that aim [to stifle the passage of the Voting Rights Act]”, he asserted, “its effect might prove a handicap when Mr. King moves into the next phase of his claim for full freedom, a phase likely to be directed against job discrimination”.<sup>157</sup> Council leaders shared O’Neill’s assessment, conceiving of their late-hour efforts as part of a “long-range campaign” to forge a broader conservative movement with concerns that extended well beyond voting rights legislation. As Robert Lucas Williams, state secretary of the CCT, explained in June 1965, the money for the King billboards had been collected from a range of “conservative’ citizens” concerned with maintaining the status quo.<sup>158</sup> As it became clearer that the voting rights bill would make its way through Congress, the Councils recognised the billboards were helping to shape the limits of the civil rights movement.

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With a single image, Friend and Williams captured the imagination of segregationists across the South. These segregationists understood the impressive impact photography could have on public opinion in “an age of images”.<sup>159</sup> They mobilised the King photograph effectively at two critical moments in the civil rights movement, securing media attention, provoking public scrutiny of King and the movement, and forcing a defensive response from civil rights leaders and officials within the federal government. Segregationists challenged public understanding of the civil rights movement with this image and, in turn, dramatised massive resistance as a struggle to preserve American freedom against a pervasive threat of communist tyranny. Moreover, the photograph and the segregationist narrative it reinforced placed restrictions on civil rights organisations’ ability to challenge economic inequality, which were felt beyond the mid 1960s and would contribute to the shaping of popular memory of the movement. While civil rights leaders developed a more successful media strategy, they were confronted by media savvy segregationists who developed and deployed strategies of their own. Massive resisters were active participants in the battle over public opinion and, sometimes, as in the case of the King photograph, were able to engineer sophisticated and effective strategies

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<sup>157</sup> Thomas O’Neill, “Politics and People: Klan at Work”, *The Sun* (Maryland, 31 March 1965), p. 16.

<sup>158</sup> Robert Lucas Williams quoted in Rob Elder, “Council Poster Challenge Told”, *The Nashville Tennessean* (19 June 1965), p. 7.

<sup>159</sup> Roberts and Klibanoff refer to the 1950s and 1960s as “an age of images” in *The Race Beat*, p. 248.

which had a considerable impact on the civil rights movement. Indeed, given its widespread use and re-use, it is clear that resisters considered it the best and, perhaps the only suitable, image at their disposal to shift public opinion at the national level. It was the apogee of segregationist image making and resisters clung to it desperately.

### **“In Order to Convince the American People... They Must be Shown Graphically”**

Although resisters certainly depended on the King photograph during the 1960s, segregationists continued to develop concomitant strategies to recalibrate perceptions of their opponents and dramatise massive resistance using visual media. Not content to rely solely on Friend’s photograph, they recognised they would need more evidence than a single picture to sustain a consistent, unyielding assault on the movement and its supporters in the federal government. This was especially apparent given the numerous pictorial accounts of “moronic savagery” committed by white southerners against civil rights activists which could be called upon by the nation’s media to outrage the “national conscience”.<sup>160</sup> The most notable of these strategies were executed by the MSSC and the ASSC in two of the most ambitious and costly efforts to harness mass media executed by segregationists. With ample financial resources at their disposal, they eschewed photography and opted to produce feature-length television documentaries, recognising the potential of a relatively new genre and harnessing it for themselves. Their respective efforts were exceptional, with only a handful of documentary films produced by massive resisters. However, the resultant films highlight segregationists’ inability to capture emotionally impactful visuals which rationalised massive resistance for a national audience. Nevertheless, failure to do so consistently was not for lack of funds or lack of trying. Whilst revealing the impressive ambition and resourcefulness of some segregationist media strategists, analysis of these films demonstrates that Friend’s photograph was the exception that proves the general rule.

Produced by the MSSC and ASSC respectively, *Oxford, U.S.A.* (1963) and *State of Alabama* (1965) strove to present massive resistance as a noble struggle to protect the US from tyranny, communist or otherwise. Having been commissioned in the wake of two public relations crises, they sought to redirect public scrutiny away from the

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<sup>160</sup> “Protest on Route 80”, *Time* (2 April 1965), pp. 21 in Lentz, *Symbols*, p. 164.



segregationist South and towards those driving civil rights reform in the United States. *Oxford, U.S.A.* was produced in the aftermath of the rioting that took place at the University of Mississippi following the enrolment of African American US Air Force veteran James Meredith. *State of Alabama* was commissioned in response to the events of “Bloody Sunday”, ahead of the third attempt to march from Selma to Montgomery. The films shared a similarly exorbitant budget, each costing in excess of \$30,000.<sup>161</sup> Segregationists leading the MSSC and the ASSC recognised “the emotional impact of video” and valued it highly.<sup>162</sup>

With *Oxford, U.S.A.*, the MSSC endeavoured to share with the American public “the true facts” concerning the events that occurred at the University of Mississippi between 30<sup>th</sup> September and 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1962. Commission leaders sought to repudiate the “erroneous charges and misconceptions heretofore conveyed to the public”.<sup>163</sup> Much like segregationist initiatives to shift the narrative surrounding Little Rock, the MSSC reframed the deployment of federal forces as an unconstitutional invasion of a sovereign state and stated the riots were caused by overly aggressive federal troops. Press releases promised a “revealing film documentation” and “exclusive scenes never shown to [the] general public”, which would reveal the Federal Marshalls’ apparent brutality and incompetence.<sup>164</sup> “You will see for yourself”, claimed one particularly passionate spokesperson, “who actually ordered and fired tear gas. You will see how your boys and girls at Ole Miss were treated”.<sup>165</sup> The film’s narrative corresponded with accounts published by segregationists and white conservatives criticising federal intervention, such as Earl Lively, Jr.’s *The Invasion of Mississippi* (1963) and the CCL’s “Voices From Oxford” tape recordings.<sup>166</sup> It functioned as a visual companion to these accounts, providing pictorial evidence of their claims. For those producing *Oxford, U.S.A.*, “the dark cloud

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<sup>161</sup> Letter from Bell and McBee Attorneys at Law to Albert Jones, 11 December 1962, SCR ID # 10-102-0-21-2-1-1, SCOC; “‘The State of Alabama’: Final Billing – Production Charges from 6/23/65 through 7/29/65”, n.d., Selma to Montgomery March – Film Cost File, Reel 15, ASSCA.

<sup>162</sup> Gary L. Wamsley and Richard A. Pride discuss the emotional impact of moving images in, “Television Network News: Re-Thinking the Iceberg Problem”, *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (September 1972), p. 438.

<sup>163</sup> Letter from Patrick M. Sims to MSSC, 10 December 1962, SCR ID # 10-102-0-1-1-1-1, 10-102-0-1-2-1-1; Letter from Erle Johnston, Jr., to Andrew McAllister, 1 July 1963, SCR ID # 99-115-0-9-1-1-1; Letter from Johnston to Michael F. Foley, SCR ID # 99-115-0-173-1-1-1, SCOC.

<sup>164</sup> *Oxford U.S.A.* newspaper advertisement, n.d., SCR ID # 10-102-0-44-1-1-1, SCOC.

<sup>165</sup> Charles M. Hills, “Affairs of State”, *The Clarion-Ledger* (n.d.), SCR ID # 10-102-0-42-1-1-1, SCOC.

<sup>166</sup> Earl Lively, Jr., *The Invasion of Mississippi* (Belmont: American Opinion, 1963). The “Voices from Oxford” tape recordings are discussed in, Letter from Robert B. Mahoney to James F. Landrum, 16 January 1963, Folder 78, Box 6, NT.

that hangs over Oxford [had] a silver lining”, for it offered segregationists a valuable opportunity to “dramatise the ruthless grab for political power behind federal might”.<sup>167</sup>

The film makes for dramatic viewing.<sup>168</sup> Between talking-head accounts of the crisis, the documentary is peppered with vivid shots of tear gas clouds drifting eerily across the campus; federal troops silhouetted by fires and spotlights; cars and debris ablaze in the darkness; the headlights of troop carriers hurtling towards the university; injured students staggering away from the tumult; destruction left in the wake of the rioting; and, numerous images of gas-masked Federal Marshalls toting tear gas guns and federal troops with bayonets patrolling the campus and the city of Oxford. The portentous narration and the rapid-fire cuts between the action scenes intensifies the drama. However, whilst certainly a stirring and stylish cinematic display, the film lacked substance. Contrary to the filmmakers’ bold claims, it provides no visual evidence to corroborate the counternarrative peddled by the supporters of massive resistance. There are no clips of Federal Marshalls firing tear gas cannisters or riot guns at students and patrolman, nor is there evidence of federal troops assaulting or harassing students or the citizens of Oxford. Mississippi patrolmen are not pictured turning away heavily armed groups of “outside agitators” attempting to enter the campus to further inflame the unrest. Most importantly, there is no visual evidence to show that the Marshalls fired tear-gas prematurely at an innocuous crowd of peaceful onlookers. Without a firm visual indictment, the film’s narrator and talking heads – Barnett, Lieutenant Governor Paul B. Johnson, Jr., the commander of the Mississippi Highway Patrol Colonel T. B. Birdsong, and Ole Miss students, local citizens, and rank-and-file highway patrolmen – could only describe the “horror” and “terror” they supposedly experienced at the hands of the federal forces. The film, then, demanded an emotional leap of faith that sceptical viewers would have been unwilling to make. Lacking necessary visual testimony, it posed little threat to the dominant mainstream narrative.

*State of Alabama* proved equally disappointing. Commissioned ahead of the third march from Selma to Montgomery, the ASSC’s objectives were similar to those of the Councils’ billboard campaign. Like Touchstone and Singelmann, Eli H. Howell, Executive Secretary of the ASSC, sought to direct attention away from the heinous

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<sup>167</sup> Letter from Robert B. Patterson to Friend[s] of the Association of Citizens’ Councils of Mississippi], 24 October 1962, Folder 2036, Box 74, WJ.

<sup>168</sup> *Oxford, U.S.A.* is held on Reel #053 in CCF.

violence of “Bloody Sunday” and, simultaneously, derail proposed voting rights legislation. Rather than focus exclusively on King, however, Howell took a broader approach “to prove that those influences [behind the demonstration] are working directly and effectively toward fulfilling Communist objectives -- principally that of establishing a Socialist order in the United States”.<sup>169</sup> Following in the footsteps of Williams, Howell amassed a small library of material concerning the civil rights movements’ “perversion by Communism” and had become convinced that the public would turn against the movement if only they knew the “truth”.<sup>170</sup> Howell wanted to “accomplish the widest possible distribution” for his “arguments and observations”, taking special care when planning the documentary film’s opening scenes to ensure that they would not alienate “pro-movement” audiences.<sup>171</sup> He was ambitious as well as media savvy. However, having begun discussions with the film production company just one day before demonstrators departed for Montgomery, Howell and his collaborators appear to have given little thought to how they might document the “Communist infiltration, direction and control of the march” visually.<sup>172</sup> Their haste is apparent in the finished product.

The documentary is dull and uninspiring.<sup>173</sup> Despite the ASSC having been established expressly to “dramatize” massive resistance, and while the film company professed excitement about the “dramatic possibilities of this film”, *State of Alabama* is devoid of any drama.<sup>174</sup> More importantly, it provided no visual evidence to verify the claim that the march was “a World-wide attention-gaining device” coordinated by communist revolutionaries.<sup>175</sup> Instead, a narrator reels off a slew of communist citations levelled at the leaders of the march, as still images of the accused flashed across the screen. In another part of the film, the camera pans across crowds of marchers assembled at the Alabama State Capitol, lingering on hippie-types with long-hair and beards, implying they are fellow-travellers. As the film progressed, the narrator develops a stilted metaphor to frame the march as a “carnival”, a staged “production” for the nation’s

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<sup>169</sup> “Synopsis of the Treat For ‘We Shall Overcome!’”, n. d., p. 1, Selma to Montgomery March – Film Correspondence (General) File, Reel 14, ASSCA. “We Shall Overcome!” was a provisional title for the film.

<sup>170</sup> Howell’s collection of material linking the civil rights movement to communism is held in the Alabama Legislative Commission to Preserve the Peace records, 1962-1975 (Microfilm), Government Records Collections, ADAH. The collection includes GCE and JLC publications.

<sup>171</sup> “Synopsis of the Treat For ‘We Shall Overcome!’”, n. d., p. 2.

<sup>172</sup> Letter from Tom Young to Earl Morgan, 22 March 1965, and Letter from Eli H. Howell to Richard D. Morphew, 29 July 1966, Selma to Montgomery March – Film Correspondence (General) File, Reel 14, ASSCA.

<sup>173</sup> *State of Alabama* is held as part of ASSCA.

<sup>174</sup> “Proposed Agenda”, n. d., p. 1, Folder 7, Box SG19973, AGAAF. Letter from Tom Young to Eli Howell, 5 April 1965, Selma to Montgomery March – Film Correspondence (General) File, Reel 14, ASSCA.

<sup>175</sup> “Synopsis of the Treat For ‘We Shall Overcome!’”, n. d., p. 3.

media by communist strategists. Civil rights leaders are described as “stage managers” and the marchers as “clowns” and “performers”. The narrator labours over the apparent “pageantry” of the climactic demonstration in Montgomery, struggling to provide viewers with evidence of conspiracy or foul play. The only visual indictments the filmmakers could muster were a few fleeting clips of demonstrators walking more than two abreast, marching on the right side of the road, and failing to employ a single file on a narrow stretch, which contravened the conditions set by Judge Frank Minis Johnson, Jr., when he approved the SCLC’s plan for the march on 17 March 1965.<sup>176</sup> These were feeble complaints to say the least, and would likely have gone unnoticed by many viewers.

Howell himself recognised the inadequacies of the film, lamenting that the filmmakers “were not able to get on film the acts of violence and indecencies” which, he claimed, “characterised the period before the march gained nationwide notoriety”.<sup>177</sup> Many viewers were also left dissatisfied and voiced disappointment that the film depicted none of the debauchery cited by US Representative of Alabama William Louis Dickinson in a controversial speech delivered to Congress on 30 March 1965.<sup>178</sup> Audience members expected to see civil rights marchers engaged in alcohol abuse, bribery, and sexual debauchery and were most displeased when their lurid expectations were left unsatisfied. Members of the Atlanta Citizens’ Councils, for example, complained that “the picture did not show the shady side of the march”.<sup>179</sup> Howell could only respond sheepishly, assuring correspondents that “the acts of immorality reported in the newspapers are amply documented by affidavits in possession of Congressman Bill Dickinson”, and reaffirming that the film was “concerned primarily with illustrating the communist leadership and influence in the march”.<sup>180</sup> Much to the frustration of Howell, *State of Alabama* failed to excite viewers because it lacked provocative visual stimuli needed to galvanise a public reaction.<sup>181</sup> One particularly astute correspondent cut to the heart of

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<sup>176</sup> Johnson declared “On the highway, the marchers will proceed on shoulders of the road walking on the left side facing automobile traffic. They will march along road shoulders two abreast and employ single files at places where the shoulder is narrow and on bridges without sidewalks”. *Williams v. Wallace*, 240 F. Supp. 100 (1965), p. 31.

<sup>177</sup> Letter from Howell to Morpew, 29 July 1966.

<sup>178</sup> William Louis Dickinson, “March on Montgomery – The Untold Story”, *Congressional Record – House* (30 March 1965), pp. 6113-6114.

<sup>179</sup> Letter from J. K. Callaway to Howell, 26 November 1965, Selma to Montgomery March – Film Correspondence – Request for Film File, Reel 15, ASSCA.

<sup>180</sup> Letter from Howell to Mrs. William F. Keppy, 27 May 1965; Letter from Howell to Noah Sarvis, 8 June 1965, Selma to Montgomery March – Film Correspondence – Request for Film File, Reel 15, ASSCA.

<sup>181</sup> “Abolish The Sovereignty Commission”, *Alabama Journal* (4 February 1966).

the issue and in so doing epitomised a problem facing segregationist more broadly in this context:

I'm afraid that in order to convince the American people of the possibility of a revolution and [the] civil strife that the Communists are striving so hard to achieve, they must be shown *graphically* the methods that they employ.<sup>182</sup>

Both films failed to live up to their price tags and had negligible impact on the trajectory of the civil rights movement. Neither film secured a mass audience. Both were rejected by the national television networks and were difficult to distribute effectively with only a limited number of copies in circulation.<sup>183</sup> Indeed, the medium itself proved problematic. Whilst the King photograph could be flashed up on a television screen or easily reproduced in print, it was far more difficult to disseminate a feature-length documentary on a mass scale. Documentaries lacked the photograph's economy of style which created mystery and encouraged the viewer to build their own conspiratorial narrative around it. More importantly, neither film delivered the shocking, "eye-opening" images that segregationists claimed to have captured. Like their opponents, segregationists recognised that production and publication of powerful imagery was crucial to winning national public support. However, the ideas and arguments put forth to justify resistance could not be captured easily or authentically in a single frame to provoke an emotional reaction from a geographically and ideologically diverse audience. They found it almost impossible to visualise a threatening and imposing antagonist effectively and consistently. Ultimately, segregationists were unable to match the startling images produced by civil rights media strategists, which proved decisive in the battle over public opinion. Segregationists would have to wait for the explosion of urban rebellion in cities across the US in the second half of the 1960s before public opinion began to shift the other way. With images of angry and frustrated black protesters plastered across television screens and in newspapers and magazines, national support for continued racial reform began to dissipate.

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<sup>182</sup> Letter from Russell J. Levit to Howell, 28 March 1966, August 1966 File, Reel 3, ASSCD. [Emphasis added]

<sup>183</sup> Letter from Howell to Robert E. Kintner (NBC), Frank Stanton (CBS), and Thomas W. Moore (ABC), n. d., Selma to Montgomery March – Film Correspondence (General) File, Reel 14, ASSCA. The Presidents of each company appear to have completely ignored Howell's request for "equal time". Letter from Erle Johnston, Jr., to Ethel Winier, 6 February 1964, SCR ID # 99-115-0-145-1-1-1, SCOC.

## Conclusion

Understanding the ebb and flow of segregationist media strategy is important in its own right, as well as for the considerable light it sheds on the civil rights struggle, the history of US race relations, and American conservatism. A significant change in segregationist media strategy was presaged by the passage of federal civil rights legislation in 1964 and 1965, outbreak of racial unrest in cities across the country, a weakening alliance between mainstream media and the civil rights movement, and an attendant decline in public support for progressive racial change. Massive resisters who were still engaged in the battle over public opinion discontinued large-scale public relations efforts to take their message North. The CCFAF disbanded following the passage of the Civil Rights Act, the LSSC made no further contributions after the CCFAF's campaign, the ASSC slumped into obscurity after the release of *State of Alabama*, and the VaCCG's publications programme withered away.<sup>1</sup> There were two reasons for this, one fatalistic and one optimistic. Whilst some capitulated following failure to block landmark legislation, others asserted, as Dick Morphew did regularly on *Citizens' Council Forum* programmes, there had been an awakening of the "white majority in the North". "The wedge which has been... driven between various regions of the country", he declared, "might be no longer an important factor".<sup>2</sup>

With many of the most strategically-minded segregationists concluding that the battle for hearts and minds was seemingly over, the organisations most committed to influencing and mobilising public opinion diverted resources and attention towards a new project. The CCA and affiliated Councils throughout the South strove to set up Council-run, all-white private schools in the southern states. Council schools became the "focal point" for Morphew's activities throughout 1965 and 1966, taking priority over his role as Managing Editor of *The Citizen* and Executive Producer and host of the *Forum*. In 1966, the Councils' Leadership Conference centred its activities entirely on the "fast-growing private school movement." In a signal shift, no mention was made of large-scale

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<sup>1</sup> The JLC and the GCE were dissolved long before the passage of the Civil and Voting Rights Acts.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Strom Thurmond, "Race conflicts in the North & communist infiltration of the race movement", 1964, CCF, Reel #085, CCFF; Joe D. Waggoner, "The Watts riots in Los Angeles and other race motivated riots throughout the country", 1965, CCF, Reel #113, CCFF; Joe D. Waggoner, "The Watts riots in Los Angeles and the question of obeying the law", 1965, CCF, Reel #80, CCFF; William C. Cramer, "Riots in Cities", 1966, CCF, Reel #6637, CCRF.

media initiatives.<sup>3</sup> Following Morpew's death in an automobile collision in November 1966, Council leaders saw no reason to find a new *Forum* host and terminated their most prized propaganda vehicle.<sup>4</sup> Less concerned with winning support in the North and West, Councils throughout the South focused on promoting and coordinating local, ground level modes of resistance.<sup>5</sup>

The MSSC, the longest standing segregation propaganda organisation alongside the Councils, also adopted a new approach which involved actively seeking to reduce its media profile and the negative publicity attracted by Mississippi. Speaking to a national audience on an NBC news special about Civil Rights Commission hearings in Jackson in February 1965, Governor of Mississippi and *de facto* leader of the MSSC, Paul B. Johnson, Jr., turned to the camera and declared boldly, massive resistance "is just no longer possible or practical, it just doesn't work" (Fig. 6.1). He stated that Mississippi would accept new civil laws and urged "those who have criticized our former position and actions to get off of our back and to get on our side".<sup>6</sup> On the surface, Johnson was asking the Federal Government and nation's media to leave Mississippi alone in order to put civil rights legislation into practice. In reality, he had more nefarious ideas to shield the state from media attention so he could execute a plan to offer only token concessions and create new laws to render legislation ineffective, and, thereby, stymie further racial change without national scrutiny.<sup>7</sup> With the support of Erle Johnston, director of the MSSC, he initiated a new policy of "resistant accommodation".<sup>8</sup> Following its implementation, Johnston abruptly ended the MSSC's national public relations programme, turning inwards to focus on promoting resistant accommodation to Mississippi audiences. In the second half of the decade, the MSSC reversed its previous strategy to have people "see for themselves" and aimed instead to limit media coverage. In many ways, Johnson and Johnston attempted to draw a "paper curtain" of their own.

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<sup>3</sup> William J. Simmons, "In Memoriam", *TC* (December 1966), p. 2. Medford Evans, "The Leaders of the Leaders", *TC* (November 1965), pp. 8-14. See also: "Message of Hope", *TC* (February 1966), p. 2; Frank E. Bain, "Our Best Hope For Freedom", *TC* (March 1966), pp. 31-32.

<sup>4</sup> Simmons, "In Memoriam".

<sup>5</sup> For example, Roy R. Pearson, "Solution in Virginia", *TC* (February 1966), pp. 23-28; Dr. T. E. Wannamaker, "Private Schools: Developments in South Carolina", *TC* (February 1966), pp. 29-37. The CCA collected the addresses delivered at the 1966 conference and material related to Council Schools in a manual for members seeking to set up all-white private schools in their own states. *The Citizens' Councils and Private Education* (Jackson: CCA, 1966).

<sup>6</sup> Johnson quoted in "Hearings before the United States Commission on Civil Rights. Jackson, Mississippi, Feb. 16-20 1965", *NBC News* [television programme] NBC, February 1965.

<sup>7</sup> For Governor Paul B. Johnson's post-1965 resistance, Folwell, "From Massive Resistance to New Conservatism".

<sup>8</sup> Irons, *Reconstituting Whiteness*, p. 120.

Between 1964 and 1966, segregationists' efforts to harness mass media to influence public opinion drew to a close, signalling the end of massive resistance and the dawning of a new epoch in American politics.



Fig. 5.1 – Governor Paul B. Johnson, Jr., addresses the camera on “Hearings before the United States Commission on Civil Rights. Jackson, Mississippi, Feb. 16-20 1965”, *NBC News*, February 1965.

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This thesis has demonstrated there was a protracted battle over American public opinion between civil rights activists and massive resisters during the 1950s and 1960s. It reveals that there were segregationists who recognised the importance of controlling public opinion and how effective use of media could impact public discourse surrounding civil rights and massive resistance. It has uncovered and analysed the range of different and complementary media strategies they designed to win public support for massive resistance outside and inside the South. Therefore, it challenges prevailing histories which emphasise the palpable lack of subtlety demonstrated by some segregationists in the glaring spotlight of the nation's media, and those which present segregationists as lacking any semblance of media savvy. It has demonstrated that, as well as crude proponents of white supremacy, there were resisters at both the elite and grassroots level who shared a sophisticated understanding of how to harness mass media effectively. In so doing, they



forced civil rights leaders and supporters onto the defensive at several significant moments throughout the period. The evidence attests that, whilst some segregationists shared similar ideas on media strategy and worked collaboratively on large-scale campaigns, others held idiosyncratic and sometimes contradictory ideas of how to achieve the desired change in public opinion. These segregationists made impressive use of all contemporary media platforms, producing their own newspapers, television and radio programmes, books, pamphlets, and even feature length documentary films. At the same time, they also devised innovative techniques to co-opt existing channels of communication. In some cases, they imitated conventions of popular media, turned to northern advisers, and hired public relations specialists. Their media efforts ebbed and flowed in response to changing attitudes, the evolving strategies of civil rights organisations, and political developments at the national, state, and local levels. Taken together, white resisters' attempts to construct a broad countermovement against the civil rights movement through careful manipulation of mass media constituted a protean phenomenon. Their endeavours had a significant impact on the trajectory of the civil rights movement.

This thesis intervenes in a growing body of work which portrays resisters as three-dimensional actors of considerable agency and sophistication and massive resistance as heterogenous and multifaceted. By offering the first sophisticated analysis of their media strategies, it brings into view the impact and ingenuity of individuals and organisations neglected or absent in previous scholarship. The range of those figures include Richard D. "Dick" Morphey, Carleton Putnam, William J. Simmons, and George Singelmann, all affiliated with the Citizens' Councils; William M. "Willie" Rainach and the JLC; John J. Synon and the CCFAF; T. V. Williams, Jr., Ed Friend, and the GCE; and, Eli Howell and the ASSC. It adds new and important layers to our knowledge of figures and organisations already established firmly within the historiography, including George C. Wallace, Richard B. Russell, Laurie Pritchett, S. Ernest Vandiver, David J. Mays and the VaCCG, and the MSSC. By uncovering a corresponding desire to influence public opinion and devise effective media strategy at the grassroots, it adds new dimensions to our understanding of the interplay between segregationist leaders and their constituents. In their correspondence to resistance leaders, grassroots resisters in local contexts helped inform decisions concerning media strategy and often demanded that leaders do more to take the segregationist South's message northwards. Their responses to campaigns

pioneered by segregationist propaganda agencies served as a litmus test and influenced future efforts to affect public opinion. Although not all segregationist leaders responded in the affirmative, some considered grassroots public relations initiatives an integral part of their broader efforts to shift public opinion. They equipped grassroots elements with propaganda material, advised them on media strategy, and instructed them to direct their own smaller-scale forays into enemy territory. Such an approach enlarged the potential reach of resistance propaganda and promoted a uniformity of message, strategy, and purpose.

The connections and sustained collaboration between some individuals and organisations demonstrate that segregationists formed loose media networks across the region, exchanging ideas, literature, and resources, which, in turn, enhances our understanding of the structure and coherence of massive resistance. This thesis reveals that, at moments throughout the period, there was a unity of thought among some resisters seeking to mobilise public opinion at the national-level and a well-organised regional web of activity to achieve similar ends. The level of collaboration challenges analyses which tend to stress the fractures within massive resistance. At the same time, the short tenure of some of these individuals and the strategic disagreements and divergences between them indicate new cleavages within massive resistance and provide an important perspective on the limitations and failures of segregationist opposition. The internecine conflict over media strategy, the fluctuating emphasis placed on developing media strategies, and the attendant barriers to directing consistent, regionally homogenous public relations initiatives were important factors in their failure to prevent desegregation and the passage of federal civil rights legislation.

The heterogeneity and transformation of segregationists' media strategies complicates and distorts existing typologies of massive resisters. The rigid distinctions between "hardline" and "practical" segregationists established by Joseph Crespino and Jenny Irons collapse when confronted by the fact that "hardline" groups, such as the CCA, mobilised reasoned legalistic rhetoric and advocated for "restrained" legislative strategies more characteristic of "practical" resisters in their appeals to non-southerners.<sup>9</sup> An analysis of the media strategies pursued by the VaCCG, CCFAF, and CCA also reveals that while a range of organisations appropriated the "unemotional" language of

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<sup>9</sup> Crespino, *In Search of Another Country*, p. 19; Irons, *Reconstituting Whiteness*, p. 48.

the Constitution, their modes of propagation varied sharply, complicating David L. Chappell's "Constitutionalists" and denying the uniformity of approach implied by his formulation. The shift in CCA media strategy in the early 1960s from a resolute focus on purportedly "colour-blind" constitutional arguments to an approach which placed race at the centre shatters Chappell's binary, in which he seeks to present "Constitutionalists" and "Racial Purists" in a mutually exclusive dichotomy. The CCA's reasoned and pseudo-intellectual application of racial science in its race-based campaign also blurs distinctions between "hardline" and "practical" segregationists and separates the Councils' efforts from some of the base and extremist rhetorical strategies employed by other groups and individuals placed in the "Racial Purist" category.<sup>10</sup> The strategies pursued by other organisations, such as the JLC and the GCE, defy Chappell's groupings altogether. In their efforts to influence public opinion, segregationists often operated between, or independently of, the categories defined by scholars of massive resistance, sharing language, strategies, and ideas with other resisters taking divergent ideological or strategic approaches. The discrepancies in these formulations expose the sometimes-significant disparities between segregationists' private and public face. Indeed, some of the most media savvy segregationists were able to subvert their most fundamental ideological principles when pursuing campaigns which they deemed more appropriate for a broad, non-southern audience. To complicate this further, some resisters adopted multiple outward faces to appeal to a range of audiences simultaneously, in yet another indication that labels and categories are often overly restrictive when discussing massive resistance. As this thesis has shown, segregationist ideology and strategy were amorphous and were moulded by media strategists to fit different conceptions of effective media strategy, respective campaign objectives, and target audiences.

Segregationists' ability to mask the worst excesses of southern racism and reframe their opposition to appeal to broader conservative audiences also provides valuable insights into the development of a new iteration of national conservatism in the late 1960s. By presenting aspects of their ideology and massive resistance itself as foundational for an emerging conservative countermovement, some segregationists were able to absorb their ideas and strategies into these broader conservative currents, which allowed them to shape this new political force. As well as positioning the segregationist

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<sup>10</sup> Chappell, "The Divided Mind", pp. 52-55.

South as part of this national conservative movement, the steady stream of segregationist propaganda flooding into northern and western cities cultivated and perpetuated conservative thought across the country, and nurtured conservative activists at the grassroots. It helped set the stage for a transformation of American politics. The roots of right-wing media which would sustain American conservatism in ensuing decades can be traced back to some of the media strategies and media networks developed by massive resisters. This line, however, should not be drawn too boldly. Segregationist media strategy was uneven: not all strategies and campaigns mobilised by segregationists conformed to the “race-free” lexicon which would come to define conservative politics. Chapter 3 highlights the competing visions for the new political order propagated by segregationists, contributing a new perspective to our understanding of the development of the “colour-blind” conservatism championed by William F. Buckley when he rejected the CCA’s and Putnam’s vision for a conservative countermovement with whiteness and race at its centre.<sup>11</sup> By showing how leading segregationist media strategists, and significant aspects of resistance ideology and strategy, fell to the wayside, this thesis disrupts prevailing ideas of a “long massive resistance” and offers an important caveat to studies which suggest a smooth transition from massive resistance to a new conservatism.

Although vacillations in segregationist media strategy resist a strictly chronological analysis, some patterns do emerge. Identifying broader shifts in resisters’ efforts to mobilise public opinion substantiates and charts more precisely the “three broadly distinct periods of resistance” suggested by George Lewis in his chronology of massive resistance.<sup>12</sup> The first phase, triggered by the *Brown* decision and ending in 1956, saw white southerners plagued with uncertainty in search of an appropriate response to stifle the immediate enforcement of desegregation. During this period, segregationists were most concerned with the construction and passage of legal measures to defend segregation within their own states. Devising media strategies to win allies and supporters outside the South was therefore a low priority, if on their radar at all. The correspondence between resisters operating in different states reflected this focus on legislative resistance.<sup>13</sup> Some segregationists nevertheless demonstrated an early understanding of

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<sup>11</sup> Letter from Buckley to Putnam, 21 May 1965, Folder 7, Box SG22397, AGAF.

<sup>12</sup> Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, p. 25.

<sup>13</sup> For example, Letter from Rainach to Durwood Pye, 13 August 1954, and Letter from Pye to Rainach, 18 August 1954, Folder 25, Box 2, WMR; Letter from Pye to Jack Kershaw, 29 December 1955, TFCG Folder, Box RCB-35191 Correspondence 1954-1955, GCEP. More generally, see Pye’s correspondence with

the power of mass media and the pronounced impact effective media strategy could have on public opinion. Required by state law to secure a popular mandate to ratify drastic legislative rejoinders to *Brown*, segregationist politicians and grassroots supporters in six southern states executed propaganda campaigns to ensure public approval, making use of newspapers, advertisements, television and radio appearances, pamphlets, posters, and flysheets.<sup>14</sup> This was a sign of things to come. Many of those involved in these campaigns – Rainach, the JLC, Simmons, Patterson, the Councils, and the GCE – would play an important role in the segregationist South’s efforts to shift public opinion at the national level. Their media campaigns and strategies were, however, discrete, short-lived, highly provincial, and focused entirely on the passage of specific state-level legislation. They did not constitute the large-scale, sustained, and intricate efforts designed to court national public opinion directed in later periods which are the principal concern of this thesis. This first period, then, saw segregationists lay the foundations for their battle for American hearts and minds.<sup>15</sup>

The second phase of resistance followed the passage of firm state-level resistance legislation and a growing sense of regional unity established by the doctrine of interposition and the signing of the Southern Manifesto in 1956. Massive resistance was on the front foot and segregationists began to broaden their horizons. Convinced of the security of segregation in their home states and equipped with sufficient financial resources, segregationists began a wide range of attempts to forge a national movement against civil rights reform. The formation of the MSSC in March 1956 and its focus on public relations outside the South encouraged other states to establish similar commissions of their own, such as the VaCCG in March 1958, and provided further impetus for existing state-sponsored segregation agencies, such as the GCE and the JLC, to refocus their energies along the same lines. A month later, Council organisations from

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segregationist leaders across the southern states concerning interposition, which is held in Box RCB-35184, GCEP.

<sup>14</sup> Referendums were held in Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Virginia, Alabama, and North Carolina. A referendum to pass similarly drastic legislation was held in South Carolina in 1952 in anticipation of the *Brown* ruling. William D. Workman, Jr., “The Deep South: Segregation Holds Firm”, in Don Shoemaker (ed.), *With All Deliberate Speed: Segregation-Desegregation in Southern Schools* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), pp. 97-99. For details on the respective propaganda campaigns, Carter, *The South Strikes Back*, pp. 40-49; Fairclough, *Race & Democracy*, p. 170; Roche, *Restructured Resistance*, p. 20; Kruse, “The Paradox of Massive Resistance”, pp. 1013-1015; Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, pp. 31-35, 56; Rainach, Handwritten note titled “Racial Problems – Joint Leg. Com. – Television Appears.”, 6 October 1954, Folder 9, Box 1, WMR; Letter from Rainach to Policy Jury, Plaquemines Parish, 11 November 1954, Folder 25, Box 2, WMR; Letter from T. V. Williams to Roy Harris, 13 December 1956, Roy V. Harris Folder, Box RCB-35184 Correspondence 1954, GCEP; Robert B. Patterson, *The Citizens’ Council: A History*, reprint of address, 26 October 1963 (Greenwood: ACCM, n. d.).

<sup>15</sup> The Councils, for example, set up its “Information and Education Committee”, Carter, pp. 32-33.

across the South organised to form the CCA expressly to direct campaigns to mobilise public opinion at the national level. The media strategies adopted to win public support during this period took various forms, making use of all contemporary communications media and employing a range rhetorical and narrative approaches. Despite the panoply of intellectual rationales at their disposal, strategists selected specific, singular arguments around which to construct their efforts in order to give their campaigns clear narrative focus.<sup>16</sup> Together, they coordinated an impressive national media bombardment and, in some cases, established cooperative media networks. As this period wore on, however, several of the most ambitious and active media strategists faded from view, in particular Williams and Rainach, leaving Simmons and the Councils to lead the segregationist South into the next phase of resistance and the ongoing battle over public opinion.

The focus on media strategy allows a more nuanced dating of the third period, placing it between 1961 and 1966, rather than 1960 and 1965 as proposed by Lewis.<sup>17</sup> This final phase saw massive resistance under increasing pressure from the federal government and a burgeoning civil rights movement which had regained the initiative through tactical non-violent direct action. In the face of mounting pressure, segregationist media strategists re-mobilised alongside new nationally-oriented resistance organisations to generate some of massive resistance's most ambitious propaganda efforts. 1961 marked a watershed moment for the CCA and, due to its pre-eminence as the leading resistance organisation, resisters across the region. With increasing financial support from the MSSC and benefactors inside and outside the South, leaders replaced its tabloid newspaper with a glossy, more upmarket and intellectual magazine designed by a professional advertising company. Council leaders expanded the *Forum*, and intensified efforts to centralise and consolidate media strategy across the region, publishing the first in a series of comprehensive guides to Council organisation in 1962 which included instructions concerning "Information and Education", "Public Affairs", and "Publicity and Public Relations".<sup>18</sup> On top of this, the CCA altered its public rationale for massive resistance fundamentally.

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<sup>16</sup> This conforms to and substantiates Lewis' arguments concerning the second phase "in the development of the rhetoric and intellectual rationale of resistance". Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, p. 122.

<sup>17</sup> Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, p. 25.

<sup>18</sup> Letter from William J. Simmons to Thomas R. Waring, Jr., 24 November 1961, Folder 5, Box 393, TRW; William J. Simmons, "Organisation: The Key To Victory", *TC* (February 1962), pp. 7-8; Richard D. Morphew, "Operation Information", *TC* (January 1964), pp. 17-23; *White Book of Citizens' Council Organisation* (Jackson: The Citizens' Council, Inc., 1962). McMillen highlights the CCA's efforts to "consolidate its position in the region" but overlooks how a centralised media strategy figured within this. McMillen, *The Citizens' Council*, pp. 135-137.

Alongside the CCA, the CCFAF developed one of the most well-coordinated segregationist public relations campaigns to resist civil rights legislation, and the MSSC and ASSC spent tens of thousands of dollars producing highly-professional, feature-length documentary films. In a stark representation of the unevenness of segregationist media strategy, the CCL in collaboration with the CCA recycled a strategy first executed by the GCE in 1957 with its “back to basics” billboard campaign to derail voting rights legislation. The extent of segregationists’ efforts in this period complicates Lewis’ conception of the third stage in the “continuing refinement of the resistance canon”. While some strategists were “forced into becoming increasingly responsive” and the rhetoric used in particular initiatives lost some of its “new-found coherence”, most notably in the abandonment of a strictly states’ rights narrative on the *Forum*, the sophistication, lucidity, and collaboration evident in some of the media strategies developed during this period belies an undeviating decline into desperation and rear-guard action.<sup>19</sup> Some segregationists were not prepared to accept that massive resistance was in its death throes, recalcitrant in their opposition to desegregation and civil rights, and steadfast in their determination to attain victory in the battle over public opinion. This study of segregationist media strategy, then, provides a clearer impression of the trajectory of massive resistance.

Recognising the resourcefulness, and sometimes sophistication, of segregationists’ attempts to mobilise public opinion also throws the successes and shortcomings of the civil rights movement into sharper perspective. Civil rights activists faced intelligent, well-resourced, and effective opponents in the battle over American hearts and minds. In this context, that civil rights strategists were so successful at mobilising public opinion was an astonishing feat of ingenuity. However, detailed study of segregationist media strategies indicates that the countermovement was able to limit some of the movement’s achievements. Through expert manipulation of the media, resisters forced civil rights leaders to make concessions and downplay or deny important objectives. The limitations imposed by the most effective elements in segregationist media strategy had ramifications beyond the 1960s, contributing to a dramatic reduction in popular support for continued legislative action to address racial inequality. They also

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<sup>19</sup> Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, pp. 120, 122.

worked to distort popular memory of the civil rights movement, which would impact the image and success of future protest movements.

There is, nonetheless, more to be done in this new area of study. Where this thesis has concentrated on segregationists' efforts at the national level, the media strategies mobilised at the local level, particularly those either side of the period focused on here – the segregation amendment referendum campaigns between 1954 and 1956 and the promotion of Council private schools post-1966 – would prove fruitful areas of investigation. Equally, it would be interesting to explore the gendered dimensions of segregationists' media campaigns, how segregationists promoted particular notions of masculinity and femininity, and how these ideas interacted more broadly with prevailing conceptions of gender in the Cold War United States. The documentary films produced by segregationists also warrant further analysis. It would be fascinating and beneficial to study these films from different scholarly perspectives and to place them within a broader conversation around civil rights documentary cinema produced both contemporaneously and subsequently. Thinking more broadly and given the continued dominance and influence of right-wing media in the US and the UK, it is vital scholars continue to scrutinise the media strategies of conservative leaders and activists in the decades following the 1960s to gain a wider perspective and understanding of the sophisticated and pernicious ways in which they have mobilised public opinion.



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