

Tensions Mounting in Mississippi Over Desegregation

By BEN PRICE
Associate Press-Nationals Writer
JACKSON, Miss., Aug. 20.—(AP)—Racial tensions are mounting in Mississippi like a mauling summer haze over a parched cotton field.

Negro leaders are hammering at the State's old and rigid segregation barriers, beginning with the public school system in Jackson, Vicksburg and Natchez.

Dr. A. H. McCoy, Jackson dentist and state president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), said of the demands for ending segregation in public schools:

"We just gave them the courtesy title of petitions. They were more in the nature of ultimatum."

McCoy maintains that if race tensions should explode into violence "some white blood will flow too."

CITIZENS COUNCILS.
About 500 to 60,000 of them—have banded together in semiregular organizations known as citizens councils to halt Negro inroads into the "Southern way of life."

After the school petition was filed in Jackson, Ellis W. Wright, president of the Jackson Citizens Council, said:

"We now tell the NAACP people they have started something they will never finish."

While both sides are adamant in Mississippi, the same is not true throughout the rest of the South.

In Texas, Arkansas, Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Missouri, Delaware, Maryland, Oklahoma and West Virginia, various public school districts have moved or plan moves toward integration.

This does not mean there is no opposition in these States to desegregation. Attorney General John Ben Shepperd of Texas said this week his investigators have uncovered attempts in twenty-two counties to revive the Ku Klux Klan, apparently as an outgrowth of the Supreme Court's ruling. All of the counties are in east Texas, which has a heavy Negro population.

Georgia, South Carolina, Louisiana, Alabama and Florida, however, are ranging themselves in the anti-integration column. But nowhere have race tensions reached the same peak as in Mississippi.

NO-QUARTER FIGHT.
Both sides in Mississippi have made clear publicly that this is a no-quarter fight. Each has ruled out compromise, and for all practical purposes there is no communication between white and Negro leaders.

For support the Negroes are leaning heavily on the May 17, 1954, ruling by the United States Supreme Court that school segregation is unconstitutional and on the same court's order last May 31 requiring school districts to proceed with "reasonable" speed toward integration.

The Federal courts are the Negroes' only bulwark. Pitted against them is the entire legislative and administrative machinery of the State.

Five candidates for governor stumped Mississippi in July, each arguing chiefly that he was qualified to fight off the Negroes' demands. The winners, who will appear in a run-off primary next Tuesday, were Paul Johnson and Attorney General J. P. Coleman.

FLEDGES TOLD.
Coleman, chief legal agent for the State, says he has obtained a pledge from virtually every practicing white lawyer in the State that he will serve the defense in segregation suits.

Besides passing special legislation designed to keep Negroes out of new white schools and away from the ballot box, the Mississippi legislature set up a legal educational advisory committee to devise ways and means of evading the high court decision.

The voices of moderation are few and far between. The situation, however, did move author William Faulkner, of Oxford, winner of the Nobel Prize for literature, to write the Memphis Commercial Appeal:

"We Mississippians already know that our present schools are not good enough. . . . So what do we do? . . . No, we beat the bushes, rake and scrape to raise additional taxes to establish another system at best only equal to the one which is not good enough, which therefore will be good enough for Negroes either: we have two identical systems neither of which is good enough for anybody. The question is not how foolish can people get, because there apparently is no limit to it."

The question of how foolish in simple dollars and cents, let alone in wasted men and women, can we afford to be?"

OUTSPOKEN CRITIC.
Hodding Carter, Pulitzer Prize winning editor of the Greenville Delta Democrat-Times, has been among the few outspoken critics of the citizens councils, thereby incurring the wrath of the State legislature.

Writing in Look magazine, Carter asked the question: "Are the councils an incipient Ku Klux Klan?" He went on to say that he could not imagine the present leadership of the councils condoning terrorism. But he added: "The ingredients are there. The incentive and the incendiary spark are lacking—so far. If and when these should appear, I say, we should be warning that the men in white robes will seize control."

This article caused the legislature to pass, by a vote of 89 to 19, with thirty-two members not voting, a resolution denouncing Carter as a liar. Carter retorted in an angry front-page editorial that there are eighty-nine liars in the State legislature.

As the State divides itself more and more into hostile camps, incidents are multiplying. Some are minor, but by the time they have made their way over the grapevine, they often are vastly distorted.

Negroes claim they are being driven from the ballot box by threats and economic pressures. Some are minor, but by the time they have made their way over the grapevine, they often are vastly distorted.

REFUSED TO TALK.
At Belzoni, Negroes clustered around a small grocery store in the shimmering heat of the Mississippi delta region refused to talk to a strange white man who came to investigate the situation.

A Negro Baptist minister, the Rev. Walter G. Lee, an outspoken advocate of Negro voting rights and economic pressures, was killed mysteriously at Belzoni two months ago.

Lamar Smith, a Negro who reportedly had been active in getting Negroes to vote absentee ballots, was shot to death last week near the courthouse in Brookhaven. Three white men have since been charged with murder.

In the aftermath of filing the school petitions, McCoy, state president for the NAACP, has been treated repeatedly with assassination. He said the threats were anonymous.

Two Negro ministers, who have advocated the ballot for Negroes, were beaten by white men at Starkville and Tupelo.

There is nothing to link the citizens councils with any of the acts of violence. In fact, the Negroes have been active in Sunflower County, publicly decry the use of force. Even so, the Negro leaders are inclined to blame all the incidents on the councils.

The announced aims of the councils are to maintain segregation by all legal means and by the application of economic pressures.

ECONOMIC PRESSURE.
By economic pressure the councils say they mean boycotts against "troublemakers," including the withdrawal of credit.

Membership has been drawn from the so-called best people—bankers, lawyers, politicians, planters, merchants and some newspapermen.

July 1954, the councils began admitting housewives, many of whom employ Negroes as domestic servants.

The existence of the councils was first reported late last summer. They reportedly originated at a meeting of five or six men in a private home at Indianola.

Blast at Home
Of U. S. Diplomat
SAIGON (Viet Nam), Aug. 20.—(AP)—A hand grenade tossed from an automobile exploded in front of the residence of the American ambassador, shortly before midnight last night. It blew a small hole in the road before Ambassador G. Frederick Reinhardt had returned from dinner. The event was passed off as minor by the police here and created no official stir.

Senator Mike Mansfield, Democrat of Montana, who has spent several days in Saigon, will leave tomorrow for Vietnam, capital of Laos, on the stop of his Far Eastern tour.

Californians Held
In Bank Robbery
PRESTON (Mo.), Aug. 20.—(AP)—Five Californians who held up the Bush City, Kas. bank yesterday, were captured less than four hours later by Missouri highway patrolmen who heard the description of their car on the police radio.

The \$1,800 loot was recovered in the bank's car. The lifted themselves as Richard Harp, 26, Los Angeles; Gwinn Gorrell, 26, Long Beach, and Robert Eugene Shaff, 19, Paramount.

Belgrade Mission
BELGRADE, Aug. 20.—(AP)—Svetozar Vukmanovic, vice president of Yugoslavia, and boss of its economy, left Belgrade today for Russia at the head of an economic mission.

(Editor's note: Of all the States affected by the Supreme Court decision against school segregation, few have resisted more vigorously than Mississippi. Here's the story of a tense State-wide social struggle in which both sides say there will be neither compromise nor quarter.)

and included German Moore, head of the Indiana bank.

Since this beginning the councils have spread rapidly, though there are reports that membership is being screened to avoid enlisting those "with the Ku Klux Klan mentality."

The plan for the councils reportedly was drawn from the book, "Black Monday," by Circuit Court Judge Tom P. Brady, of Brookhaven, in which the theory of economic pressure is advanced. Black Monday is the designation given by some to May 17, the date of the Supreme Court announcement.

MAJOR EFFORT.
While the aims of the councils are designed to maintain segregation generally, Edgar E. Evers, state secretary for the NAACP in Jackson, said he believes their major effort right now is to eliminate Negroes as voters.

"We constitute," he said, "nearly 50 per cent of the population . . . and Negroes have become interested in their welfare politically. They realize that if they obtain the vote, they'll soon have people in the legislature and courts. . . . We think we should share a part of this democracy just like everybody else."

Evers was asked what action, if any, had been taken to eliminate Negroes from the voter registration lists.

"Well," he said, "the place most people know about is Humphreys County. There were a number of Negro voters there. The session which adopted this amendment also provided for the abolition of the State's public school system if necessary to keep Negroes out of white schools."

CURRENT ACTIVITY.
Patterson said most of his current activity has been devoted to organizing and that he has appeared in six States by invitation to explain the Mississippi councils. He listed these States as Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina.

Citizens councils are known to be operating now in Dallas County, Alabama, and Kilgore, Tex. There are reports of council activity in southeast Arkansas and Patterson said he believed one had been set up in Florida.

During the interview, Patterson objected to an Associated Press story which last year described the councils as "anti-Negro vigilantes." Said Patterson: "We aren't anti-anybody."

you'd better get your name off this list." After they started making personal visits, the Negroes gave in to the extent that there are now only about thirty-five left."

Last year, prior to the organization of the citizens councils, Humphreys had 120 Negroes registered. A random check of three neighboring delta counties showed that Negro registration in Sunflower county had dropped from 114 to zero. The number in Montgomery County went from twenty-six to zero. Yazoo county's voting list for Negroes shrank from 125 to ninety.

When asked about registration figures in Sunflower, Circuit Court Clerk C. C. Campbell, said sharply:

"No Negro voters. This is the home of the citizens councils."

Robert B. Patterson, a Holly Ridge planter and executive secretary of the statewide organization of citizens councils, was asked if one of the current objectives was to eliminate Negroes as voters. He replied:

"We aren't against any one voting who is qualified under our new registration law."

Mississippi has adopted a constitutional amendment requiring prospective registrants to be able to read, write and interpret the Federal and State constitutions to the satisfaction of the local registrar.

The amendment was described in legislative debate as a means of keeping Negroes from the polls. The session which adopted this amendment also provided for the abolition of the State's public school system if necessary to keep Negroes out of white schools.

Q. You are actually looking for a reversal of the decision?
A. It is hard to say. I think in the long run it may be reversed if not by this one then a subsequent court.

Q. Can this be classed as a white supremacist movement?
A. I think it is much more than a white supremacist group and I think it is much more than a protectionist group. I think it is fundamentally the first real stirrings of a conservative revolt in this country, judging by the responses we've gotten from other States . . .

Some of the people who are attracted to this movement may not be concerned about the Negro. What would be classed as the old white supremacist movement has no place. It is too narrow."

One of the rising powers in council activities is William J. Simmons, executive secretary of the Jackson council, largest and richest in the State.

Simmons, a tall man with a British Guardsman's black mustache, is a native of Jackson. He said he received his education in the State and the Sorbonne in Paris.

After serving in the British Army from 1939 to 1942, said Simmons, he transferred to the American Navy.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS.
Here are some of the questions and answers by Simmons in an interview.

Q. Has there been any occasion to practice the announced aims of the councils; that is, economic coercion?
A. Not that I know of . . . You must realize that the citizens council movement is not a closely controlled movement . . . I have been to a lot of district meetings and I have heard a lot of discussion. I think I can state it this way: They feel that the NAACP has gained a lot of its aims by use of economic pressure and if that is the way they choose to fight, why then it is up to us to take such measures as we can to protect our interests."

Q. Is there any feeling that ultimately integration will come about? Are these delaying tactics?
A. These are not delaying tactics. If it thought they were I wouldn't be interested. Now try to answer your question objectively. I think there are people in Mississippi who think it (integration) inevitable, would hazard no guess as to what proportion . . . we feel it (the Supreme Court decision) can be reversed.

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PLAY CENTER SOON TO OPEN

Kids in the Western Addition are waiting eagerly for next month these days—and not because school doors will swing open then.

That, of course, is a necessary evil. But it's one that will be tempered this year by the opening, too, of a new \$545,000 recreation center at Hamilton Playground.

From its 40 by 100-foot swimming pool to a fully equipped stage which could do justice to a professional production, the new center was designed with one purpose in mind—to keep children off the streets in one of San Francisco's most crowded areas.

POOL FOR WATER SHOWS.
In its two concrete buildings, youngsters will find facilities to suit every recreation need and nearly every hobby.

One of the two buildings at Post and Steiner Streets houses the pool, with one wall completely of glass, and bleacher seats to meet the possibility of future aquatic shows.

The other, a 14,000 square foot building, includes an 80 by 100 foot gymnasium with volleyball, badminton and basketball courts, a 35 by 40 assembly room, a completely outfitted stage, a comfortable lounge with its own fireplace and a 12 by 20 foot "craft room."

FOR MANY ACTIVITIES.
This latter is expected to make a big hit with the neighborhood's smaller children, for after the city's parks and recreation department takes it over with specially trained personnel, it will be the scene of everything from classes in basket weaving to finger painting.

The entire project, with the first municipally owned indoor swimming pool here, was financed under the \$12,000,000 recreation bond fund of 1947. Three similar facilities will be built with the same bond funds, one at Rossi Playground in the Richmond, one at Garfield Square in the Mission and the last at Balboa Playground near Ingleside.

Two other similar centers, one at Nineteenth Avenue and Vicente Street and the other at McLaren Park, are proposed under the \$7,000,000 bond issue which will appear on the November ballot as Proposition C.

Changes in Speed Law To Start September 7

The conscientious motorist, after September 7, will have to concern himself with a "prima facie" speed limit in addition to the more understandable traffic restrictions.

On that date a number of changes in the traffic laws enacted by the Legislature and signed by Governor Goodwin J. Knight take effect.

Among them will be the substitution of a prima facie speed limit of twenty-five miles an hour on highways where men are working in the place of a fixed speed limit of twenty-five miles an hour.

What's the difference? Well, Webster's International defines the Latin words "prima facie" as meaning: "At first view; on the first appearance."

The change adds up to a prima facie case of confusion. But The Examiner, as a public service, asked the California State Automobile Association for something better than a prima facie explanation.

Here is what a CAAA spokesman explained:

"Under the old law, a highway work crew posts its 'Men Working—25 Miles An Hour' sign and goes to work. They might move miles from the sign, but under the fixed limit

law a motorist exceeding the limit was in violation.

"Under the new law, the motorist passes the sign and observes it. Then he also notices that the area of work is considerably removed from the sign. He is free to exceed the twenty-five miles an hour limit as long as it is 'safe and reasonable,' i.e., not in the actual work area."

"When he gets to the actual work area, he must slow down to 25 mph.

"Now an officer can still cite him for exceeding 25 once he passes the sign. But the motorist, by showing the judge that his speed was 'safe and reasonable' and not in the actual work area, can argue a dismissal for himself.

"Under the old law, he had no such basis for appeal because the limit was 'fixed' rather than 'flexible.'"

But, the spokesman was asked, would it not have been prima facie reasoning merely to have required highway work crews to move their signs along with the work?

He sighed. "That was argued in committee and this is what we got. We hope that it brings about more respect for speed limit signs."

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While they're reading the funnies, Dad...



... pick up the Examiner Want Ad section and turn to the Real Estate columns. First, glance at the wife and kids and picture them in one of the homes described in the want ads.

Picture the wife relaxing between household chores this summer in her own yard, while the children play safely near her. And picture yourself as a weekend gardener, or an outdoor chef preparing a barbecue for friends.

Think of the security you will be buying for your family. Think of the pride of home ownership. Think of the better way of life you and your family will enjoy.

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Find the home that appeals to you and best fits your family's needs—then pile the gang in the car and take a look today.