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# Alabama Council NEWSLETTER

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ALABAMA COUNCIL ON HUMAN RELATIONS, INC. ~~XXXX

aren't interested unless there's somebody petitioning to get into our schools or walking instead of riding the busses." Today the Assn. could probably find no more than 15,000 paid-up members.

> Typical of the recession is the once powerful Montgomery Citizens Council. Enjoying $3 from 14,000 members in March a year ago, the South's largest and wealthiest council put forth a supreme effort to prevent bus desegregation only to come out second best last December. Disillusioned, only 2,500 persons, by liberal estimates, chose to renew their memberships necessitating the discontinuance of their publication and removal of their offices from a downtown suite to third rate facilities in an outlying area. Instead of 5,000 persons turning out for a rally as of old, some 250 recently greeted Roy Harris, old workhorse of the Talmadge machines, at the Municipal Auditorium.

With the decline of local activity the Association's state office is still potent and currently serves as an effective stimulus for segregation bills in the state legislature through its salaried Executive Secretary, Sen. Sam Englehardt.

2. Alabama Citizens Councils: An anti-semitic offshoot of the Assn., this group led by Ace Carter claimed 60,000 members last Spring while actually enjoying the paid support of no more than 15,000. Bad publicity and overly aggressive leaderships resulted in a sharp decline of interest last Fall until the remnants apparently were absorbed into a Birmingham Klan group around the first of the year.

3. Various Independent Councils: Several independent Councils which never affiliated with either of the above groups have not been heard from since last summer.

THE RISE OF THE KLANS

As the Citizens Councils have receded the Klans have emerged with violence scattered in its wake. The more deeply prejudiced who were the first to join the Citizens Councils and who due to their interest constituted the faithful backbone of the Councils were the first to be disillusioned and today are moving into the Klans. Due to their cloak of secrecy the total membership of the Klans operating in Alabama is difficult to estimate any more precisely than 10-20,000.

1. U. S. Klans, Knights of the Ku Klux Klans: The first group in the state of revive after the Supreme Court decision, the U. S. Klans rose from the ashes of the Lucey riots but did not pick up momentum until around last December. The U. S. Klan's tentacles reach into Ga., Ala., S.C., and North Florida under the dominance of Imperial Wizzard Eldon Lee Edwards, Atlanta Paint sprayer. The 10,000 or so Alabama members in the central and southern parts of the state were led by Grand Dragon Alvin Horn of Talladega until he married a 15 year old girl which split his ranks forcing his "resignation". As Edwards contemplates naming a

successor an undertermined segment of this Alabama membership is pulling out because of Edward's "dictatorial powers".

2. Alabama Ku Klux Klan: Filing incorporation papers in Birmingham on June 14 this group headed by several of Horn's ex-lieutenants is openly competing for the U.S. Klan's Alabama membership most of which it will probably get. Horn and "some others who held positions of leadership" will be excluded. The 3,000 members of the Birmingham Klavern will be organized in the near future with other Alabama Klaverns to be brought in subsequently.

3. Original Ku Klux Klan of the Confederacy: Incorporated in Birmingham in December, this ultra-secret military styled group of which Ace Carter is an "advisor" was in an organizational stage with less than a 100 members when a flurry of shooting broke up one of its meetings in January leaving three men injured. Rent with dissention this Klan is now inactive but probably in the process of reorganization. Carter recently ran for Birmingham police Commissioner to come out fourth in a field of five with 1,400 votes.

4. Gulf States Ku Klux Klan: The Gulf Klans have around 2,000 members in Baldwin and Mobile counties and the nearby Pascagoula, Mississippi area. Frequent church visitors and cross burners, this group is headed by non-church member Imperial Wizzard Elmo C. Barnard, Mobile gunsmith. A high official of this Klan recently asserted, "Terrorism is one of our methods". Its current task is to get Barnard into a city commission chair next Fall.

5. Independent Klan Groups: Several independent Klans have sprung up as offshoots of the larger bodies when personalities clashed or finances were questioned.

## AN ANALYSIS OF PRO-SEGREGATION GROUP GROWTH

The trends of Negro movements can largely be explained in terms of frustration. The trends of white pro-segregation movements can largely be understood in terms of fear.

### STAGE ONE

In Black Belt areas where the tenuous political and economic life is riveted to the immobile Negro and any rustling among the depressed colored people constitutes an immediate challenge, it was natural for Alabama's White Citizens Councils to arise at Selma in December 1954. For the ensuing year it spread only to six counties all of which were rural and having heavy majority Negro population. Each Council was generally led by political figures backed by "red necks" for whose jobs the emancipated Negro might compete. Businessmen were not in evidence numerically.

STAGE TWO

In the Fall of 1955 the W.C.C. came to Montgomery under the leadership of a collection lawyer and attracted only less than a hundred low-status members. Then the "challenge" came in December in the form of the bus protest and 14,000 Montgomerians ran to the W.C.C. in the space of three months with political figures and businessmen following in self-defense. It became unpopular to criticize the W.C.C., or have any association with Negroes. Tension, wild rumors and incidents persisted for months all contributing to a virtual community split.

Other Black Belt areas with similar social conditions fearing that "their" Negroes would follow Montgomery's pattern generally went quickly through the same process.

STAGE THREE

But on the northern and southern fringes of the Black Belt, more removed from Negro population pressures and from precedent-setting Montgomery, the "challenge" was not regarded as serously. Therefore the Citizens Councils of the Wiregrass section and the lower Piedmont negotiated only the first stage of development and never received the support of the more stable community elements. The "challenge" simply was not strong enough locally to tip the balance or cause the majority to run for security in such areas as Anniston, Sylacauga, Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, Dothan or Mobile. These were the ares where the Citizens Council recession first began.

STAGE FOUR

A little known fact is that the W.C.C. was not able to establish a single chapter north of Gadsden, Birmingham, or Tuscaloosa, an area comprising 15 counties or a quarter of the state. Although Ace Carter made a vigorous attempt to organize in Huntsville in May, 1956, his effort resulted in only 14 people attending his rally and no council eusued. Such metropolitan areas as Huntsville, Decatur and the Tri-Cities similarly stood firm. With progressive attitudes generally, smaller Negro populations (Huntsville - 23%), good Negro schools, bi-racial Community Chest and Red Cross Boards, liberal voter registration, etc., the upper Piedmont Negroes generally do not constitute immediate "threats" to white economic or political security. Their frustration has been partially released through rather enlightened policies and consequently their moves are less aggressive resulting in less fear among whites.

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The pattern of growth of the Klan can be expected to generally parallel that of the Citizens Council in the future. To date the Klan enjoys rather wide respect in three or four rural Black Belt counties (Sen. Albert Davis of Pickens County recently deemed it safe to address a Klan rally). In other Black Belt areas

including Montgomery, the public generally "tolerates" the Klan but questions its methods. In the Wiregrass and lower Piedmont there is no doubt that it is considered "a bunch of hot headed radicals who ought to be curbed". So far the Klan has had no success in penetrating the upper Piedmont. Thus it has been able to operate only in areas which have been prepared by the Citizens Councils.

## WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

Speculation on the future is a questionable practice, but certain generalizations appear to be obvious.

* The present "lull" is temporary. Intimidation has only slowed the desegregation movement and it is only a matter of time until new "challenges" will arise followed by new Citizens Council and Klan growth.

* Although crucial points will be encountered with desegregation of busses, ballot boxes, recreational facilities, etc., the real crisis in a given community will be met only when the public school issue is faced.

* Unless unforeseen constructive steps are taken, initially many communities will experience serious splits over this issue with intensity varying largely according to white fear and Negro frustration.

* After a significant number of communities have suffered these bitter experiences without preventing integration and extremist resistance has reached a peak, inevitably a reaction will set in and responsible people in surrounding areas will realistically ask "Is it really worth it.

* Somewhere along the line the white and Negro leaders of a community will openly sit down togehter and jointly plan the best approach to the inevitable.

## HAVE YOU DONE YOUR SHARE?

The Southern Regional Council grant to the Alabama Council expires on Sept. 30 after which time we will be self-sustaining. Our minimum budgetary needs to insure present operations until February and our Annual Meeting are $6,000.

Our Board has mapped out a campaign that has been underway for two months which has secured cash or commitments for $4,500. The campaign has been centered on the district level. Many members and non-members have given sacrificially to see that this work continues. Have you done your share? July 15 marks the end of the campaign at which time the future operations of the state office will be mapped out in the light of available funds. Please don't delay. We need your help.

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Your next Newsletter will be out in two weeks.

-- Reverend Robert E. Hughes
Executive Director