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The Mississippi Power Structure

Part I: Where Their Money Comes From

In 1961 Senatore James O. Eastland and his family produced 5,394 bales of cotton on their plantation in Sunflower County. They sold this cotton for about \$390,000. It cost them about \$500,000 to produce the cotton. So they made a profit of about ~~\$324,000~~ on the cotton produced on their land in 1961.

A part of the cost of producing the cotton on which the Eastlands made this profit was what the Eastlands had to pay the people who actually did the work in the fields--the plowing, planting, chopping and picking. We don't know exactly how much the Eastlands paid their workers, but we do know that hired labor in the cotton fields in the area was being paid \$.25 to \$.30 per hour.-- Let's say the Eastlands were paying top dollar for field work--\$3.00 per day for ten hours' work. For a six day week, the worker would be paid \$18.00. The cotton season runs from some-time in March to sometime in December. Thus the cotton field worker would get, at the most nine months', or about 36 weeks', work. On this basis his earnings from the year's work would come to around \$648.00. Who makes money when Negroes are paid less than white ,cople?

In the cotton-producing sections of the Delta, cotton field work is traditionally done by Negroes. Whites, except the rapidly disappearing share croppers and tenant farmers, and small producers, do not engage in this type of work. They consider it beneath them, in both dignity and money. Thus in the cotton-producing areas, the money that Negroes should be making from work in the cotton fields is not going to white workers so much as it is to the land owners, the planters. In other words, whites are not in competition for work in the cotton fields. This, in terms both of dignity and of income, is the price the wealthy planters have paid to the poor whites for their alliance against their natural allies, Negroes. The myths of which we've been speaking have thus brainwashed the whites into working directly against their own interest.

This alliance between wealthy whites and not-so-wealthy whites can be measured in terms of education, income, and job opportunities. The 1960 census reports that 72.7% of the Negro people in Sunflower County over 25 had less than six years of school, while only 16.7% of the white people over 25 had less than six years. Thus white wealth has been willing to pay the taxes to provide school facilities for whites, but not for Negroes. The 1960 census reports that 90.8% of the Negro families in Sunflower County had annual incomes less than \$3,000, while only 21.5% of the white families in the county had incomes under that figure.

This disparity of family incomes is directly traceable to the disparity of job opportunities. In 1960, according to the census reports, 60.2% of employed Negroes in Sunflower County had

jobs either as private household servants or as farm laborers. These job categories were filled by only 9.7% of the employed whites. And on the other side of the coin, 53.2% of the whites employed had jobs in technical, sales, professional and operative positions, while only 10% of the employed Negroes had such jobs.

The jobs in which the whites preponderate are better not only from the point of view of money earned, but they are less burdensome, physically, they involve fewer hours work, and they permit the preservation of a kind of personal dignity which can hardly survive the implied deprecations of personal service and farm labor.

Of course, this is not to say that employed whites have actually bettered themselves at the expense of Negroes. The fact is that they have been the victims of a brainwashing every bit as vicious as that practiced on Negroes. Whites in Sunflower County, indeed throughout Mississippi, have been led to believe that they can best measure their status ~~xxxx~~ in life by comparing it with those beneath them in the economic and social scales, rather than with those above them. It seems doubtful that the \$50-a-week clerk in a drygoods store in Indianola would think himself so well-off if he compared his position with that of the \$200,000-a-year planter, rather than with the \$188-a-week farm laborer. But in fact he does not. The white worker sees the plight of the Negro worker and, just as his master has taught him, he subscribes to the myth of the inferiority of the Negro. What he doesn't realize is that at the same time he is subscribing to another myth--the one which says that everyone in our society has an equal opportunity to attain wealth and comfort and that those who have reached the \$200,000-a-year bracket have done so on the basis of ~~xxxx~~ superior ability and hard work. If that white worker were not so completely brainwashed he would look at Senator Eastland's riches and would realize that Senator Eastland never did anything to earn them except be born to a man who owned much land. And if he looked a bit further he would see that Senator Eastland's father obtained that land in the same way Senator Eastland obtained it. If it was ever earned by superior ability and harder work, that was many generations ago. If the white worker threw off the effects of his brainwashing, and saw reality for what it is, he would turn to his black brother and say, come, we shall, together, build a political machine which will ensure that some will not live in the lap of luxury while others must sit in an unheated shack and listen to their babies crying for the milk they cannot provide.

It is the fear that the white worker will eventually see this reality which haunts the nights of the planters and industrialists who are presently amassing great fortunes from the work of Mississippi people, black and white.

Not long ago a group of workers at the plant of Durant Sportswear, Inc. decided they were not being paid enough by the owners of the factory, so they arranged to have an election of all the workers in the plant to see if a majority of the workers wanted a labor union to come in and force the owners to pay higher wages. What did the owners of the plant do? They began immediately to convince the white workers that the labor union would be integrated and that Negroes would begin getting their jobs. A majority of the

brainwashed white workers believed management and voted against the union. Now they have the same wages as they had before, but, fools that they are, they take comfort in the whiteness of the plant force. Were it not for the brainwashing of years, they would have realized that their jobs are not safe so long as one man, black or white, has no job, because the owners themselves now that the workers have rejected organization, will threaten the white workers with Negroes whenever the white workers try to get higher wages. This is a pattern which has been going on ever since the first factory was built in Mississippi.

And while the owners of industry are brainwashing the white workers, they are picking their pockets at the same time. Take, for example, the Baldwin Piano Company in Greenwood. Baldwin wanted to start making piano cases and organ cases in Greenwood, because the labor was cheaper there and because Greenwood was closer to the supply of raw materials necessary to make the cases. Baldwin went to the city of Greenwood and to Leflore County and told them that if the city and county would build them a \$3,000,000 plant and put the kind of machinery in they wanted, that Baldwin would move its operation there. The city and the county officials went to the bankers and the utilities executives and the landowners and the merchants of Greenwood to see what they thought should be done. All these people were very eager to have the plant there-- the bankers wanted the large deposits of money the company would have to put in their banks; the land owners knew the people working in the plant would have money to spend on all kinds of things, and that, therefore, homes would be built and there would be a general increase in the demand for property and so land prices would go up; the merchants knew that the people working in the plant would spend the money they made in the local stores; the utility company knew the plant would require large amounts of electricity; so all the city fathers said, why certainly, it will be good for the economy to have this factory here. So they borrowed the \$3,000,000 and built the plant and equipped it with the machinery Baldwin wanted, and then they rented the plant to Baldwin for enough money to pay back the \$3,000,000 that had been borrowed to build it. Baldwin was delighted because the plant was actually the property of the city of Greenwood, and, therefore, not subject to property tax. Since Baldwin would be paying rent, instead of paying on a loan as they would have had to do if they had built the plant themselves, the \$3,000,000 they would have to pay out in rent would be tax deductible. Had they built the plant themselves, the payments would not have been deductible.

So the people in the North who own the Baldwin Piano Company can sell the materials that are made in the Greenwood plant, and out of the proceeds of the sale, they only have to pay the salaries of the employees in Greenwood and the operating expenses. The rest they can put in their pockets. If the plant had been built by Baldwin, and the machinery bought by Baldwin, then Baldwin would have to pay property taxes for the land, the buildings and the machinery. These property taxes would be spent for better schools, and streets and all kinds of other services. Since Baldwin doesn't have to pay these taxes, the people who live in Greenwood have to pay all of them, and the people who own the Baldwin Piano Company just get richer and richer.

We've been talking about how the cotton planters make profit from the labor of workers, and how the manufacturers do the same, while neither cotton planters nor manufacturers pay a fair wage or their fair share of taxes.

Now let's take a case in which it is very clear how all this comes about. In 1959 the Standard Oil Company of California decided it would like to build a refinery in Pascagoula, Mississippi. They wanted to build the refinery there for a number of reasons: 1) it would be close to the Mississippi and Louisiana oil fields so it would cost very little to transport the crude oil from the wells to the refinery; 2) Pascagoula has the kind of port in which large tankers can pull right up to the refinery docks and load the products of the refinery onto ships which will carry it to retail markets; 3) many people are out of work in Mississippi, so labor will be very cheap--men who are desperate to find a job so they can feed their families will work for almost nothing; 4) Mississippi has a right-to-work law in its constitution which makes labor organization very difficult; 5) if workers cannot organize into labor unions, company owners like Standard Oil know they'll be able to continue paying very low wages. Johnson

So representatives of the Standard Oil Company of California had a meeting with Governor Ross Barnett and other state officials. The Standard Oil Company representatives told the State officials that if the State would exempt oil refineries from taxation and would sell Standard Oil Company the land they wanted, that Standard Oil Company would build the refinery there. The politicians and those behind them, all wealthy men, wanted very much for Standard Oil to build the refinery. So they agreed to do what Standard Oil wanted. The Governor called a special session of the legislature. The legislature passed resolutions proposing amendments to the Mississippi constitution which would exempt the refinery from property taxation, and would permit the state to sell to Standard Oil Company a piece of land which the Congress of the United States had given to Mississippi people for financing and building schools. As soon as these resolutions had been passed in the Mississippi legislature, an election was called, because the people have to vote on amendments to the constitution. A very small proportion of the voters voted in the election, because they didn't really understand what was going on. All of the proposed amendments to the constitution were passed in the election. Then the governor called the legislature back into session and passed the laws that Standard Oil Company wanted passed. The Standard Oil Company built the refinery in Pascagoula at a cost of ~~\$125~~ \$125,000,000 and it just recently went into operation. Standard Oil will never have to pay any property taxes on this \$125,000,000 refinery, because the governor and legislature by hoodwinking the people, got the refinery exempted from such taxation.

Part II: Industry and Politics

Electric power and finance capital form the keystone of industrialization, with which Mississippi is most concerned today. Mississippi Power and Light is the largest producer of electric power in Mississippi. Electric power is fundamental to commerce and industry. Deposit Guaranty Bank and Trust Company of Jackson

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and the First National Bank of Jackson are the two largest banks in the state of Mississippi. You cannot do business in the State without dealing, directly or indirectly, with one of the two banks.

The White Citizens' Council, through its connections in political and economic structures dominates the prevailing social policies throughout the state. We will show that electric power and finance capital play a leading role in the White Citizens' Council of Mississippi.

The overwhelmingly dominant political machinery in Mississippi is the Mississippi Democratic Party. We will show that electric power, finance capital and the White Citizens' Council dominate the Democratic Party.

First, H. B. Wilson of Jackson, Mississippi, is a member of the Board of Directors of Middle South Utilities. Mr. Wilson is also President and a member of the Board of Directors of Mississippi Power and Light, which is wholly-owned by Middle South Utilities. In addition, Mr. Wilson is a member of the Board of Directors of the Deposit Guaranty Bank and Trust Company of Jackson, the largest bank in the state of Mississippi.

Then there is William P. McMullan, who is a Director of Mississippi Power and Light. Mr. McMullan is also Chairman, Chief Executive Officer, a Director, and important stockholder of Deposit Guaranty Bank and Trust Company. Furthermore, Mr. McMullan occupies a seat on the Board of Directors of the Jackson White Citizens' Council.

Another member of the Board of Directors of Mississippi Power and Light is Robert M. Hearin, who is President, Director and member of the Advisory Committee of the First National Bank of Jackson, and controls the second largest percentage of outstanding stock of the First National Bank. Mr. Hearin is a past president of the Jackson Chamber of Commerce and now a Director of the United States Chamber of Commerce. In addition, he is a colonel on the official staff of Mississippi Governor Paul B. Johnson.

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

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

Let's explore this further.

A scoreboard of Directors of Deposit Guaranty Bank and Trust Company would read the following way. On the Deposit Guaranty Board there is one member who sits on the Board of Middle South Utilities. There are two Deposit Guaranty Board members who sit on the Board of Mississippi Power and Light, which is wholly-owned by Middle South Utilities. There are five Deposit Guaranty Board members who sit on the Board of Directors of the Jackson White Citizens' Council. And there are two Deposit Guaranty Board members who are colonels on Governor Johnson's staff.

A similar scoreboard for the First National Bank would read this way. One First National Board member is on the Board of Mississippi Power and Light. Four First National Board members are on the Board of the Jackson White Citizens' Council. And four First National Board Members are colonels on the Governor's staff.

It's important to understand what the White Citizens' Council and Democratic Party of Mississippi believe and stand for.

In the North, White Citizens' Council supporters may talk about States' Rights and Constitutional government. But in Mississippi it sounds much different. And its main purposes are to prevent Negroes from voting, to maintain white supremacy and racial segregation in all phases of life, and to squash any semblance of Negro or Negro and white organization which is concerned with making changes in the Mississippi pattern of life. The White Citizens' Councils' principal techniques are economic intimidation and political control of the state.

Following is a statement from Mississippi Governor Vardaman in 1907, which the White Citizens' Council includes in its standard literature packet available from the Greenwood headquarters of the Council.

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

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

At a Harrison County White Citizens' Council banquet on May 2, 1964, Master of Ceremonies Raymond Butler ended his remarks with the following statement: "Throughout the pages of history there is only one third class race which has been treated like a second class race and complained about it--and that race is the American Nigger."

Mr. Butler introduced several important Mississippians who had attended the banquet. Most prominent among them was the Chairman of the State Democratic Executive Committee, Bidwell Adam. Mr. Adam is also Chairman of the Harrison County Democratic Executive Committee.

Mr. Butler also introduced the Sheriff of Harrison County, the President of the Gulfport Port Authority and state representative Jim True, a Council member.

of white men and women.

Sincerely,

Gus Noble
President

We have seen some of the approaches of the White Citizens' Councils. Now let's look at the position of the Mississippi Democratic Party.

The Mississippi Democratic Party dominates the politics of Mississippi. The Republicans have only one member in the State Legislature and none in the Executive Branch or among the Congressional and Senatorial delegations. And the White Citizens' Councils dominate the Mississippi Democratic Party.

First, let's look at the platform of the Mississippi Democratic Party, adopted in Convention, June 30, 1960.

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

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

August 16, 1960, the State Democratic Party, meeting in Jackson, adopted the following measures in response to the 1960 National Democratic Convention held in Los Angeles, California.

That we reject and oppose the platforms of both National Parties and their candidates. That we reaffirm and readopt the Platform and principles of the Democratic Party of Mississippi, adopted in Convention assembled in the City of Jackson, Mississippi on the 30th day of June, 1960.

Another important measure of the Mississippi Democratic Party is the campaign literature of Paul Johnson's 1963 race for Governor. Johnson's campaign themes focused on maintaining white supremacy through a one-party system, segregation in Mississippi forever and bury the Republican Party once and for all.

Here is an excerpt from the standard leaflet which could be obtained from Johnson headquarters during the campaign:

A DIVISION OF CONSERVATIVE MISSISSIPPIANS INTO TWO POLITICAL CAMPS . . . WOULD GIVE THE BALANCE OF POWER TO OUR MINORITY GROUP. This would be the end of our way of life in Mississippi and the peace, tranquillity, law and order we now

enjoy in all of our communities would soon come to an awesome end.

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

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

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

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

So we can see the themes of one-party rule and white supremacy coming through Johnson's campaign. And we can see the overlap of principles between the Mississippi Democratic Party and the White Citizens' Councils.

Now let's look at how the White Citizens' Council exerts control over the State Legislature, which is strictly a Democratic Party affair.

Of the 122 members of the House of Representatives in the 1964-68 Legislature, at least 20 are known to belong to the White Citizens' Councils, including House Speaker Walter Sillers. Six of the 20 are on the State Executive Committee of the White Citizens' Council.

In the Senate, at least 10 of the 53 members are known to belong to the White Citizens' Councils, including President pro-tem George Yarbrough, who is on the Citizens' Councils' State Executive Committee.

In the 1960-64 Legislature the line-up was slightly different. There were 140 members of the House and 22 of them were known to be Citizens' Council members. And there were 49 Senators, of whom 12 were Citizens' Council members.

Another measure of Citizens' Council legislative strength is placement of Council members on committees which control key legislation..

Of the seven members on the very important Senate Rules Committee, three are known to belong to the Citizens' Council. Of the 14 members of the House Rules Committee, four are known to be members of the Council.

On the House Ways and Means Committee nine of the 33 members are known to be Council members. In the Senate, Council members hold at least four of the 13 seats on the Oil and Gas Committee, including Chairman and Vice-Chairman. In the comparable House committee, called Conservation of Minerals and Natural Resources, eight of the 29 members are Council members, including the chairman.

Another measure of the Citizens' Council importance in the Mississippi Democratic Party is Executive appointments. We've already mentioned the Governor's official staff of colonels. Colonels receive their appointments because of their support for the gubernatorial candidate during the campaign. Therefore, an analysis of the colonel staff should give some indication of where Johnson's support came from and to whom he owed political debts.

We find that Paul Johnson appointed fourteen members of the Jackson White Citizens' Council (13 of them Board members) to his colonel staff. He also appointed eight members of the State Executive Committee of the White Citizens' Councils to his colonel staff.

The State Sovereignty Commission is another place where Executive appointments are very important. The Commission, which is supported by state tax money, has been the official segregation watchdog agency of the State since 1956. Its body for the 1964-68 session has not yet been chosen, but we know that at least seven of its members for the 1960-64 session were members of the White Citizens' Council.

Until the fight on the civil rights bill began last summer, the Commission had been channeling state funds every year to the Citizens' Councils in Mississippi. Now the money is used to fight the civil rights bill. The State Legislature which had donated more than ten thousand dollars to the Washington anti-civil rights lobby, recently appropriated another fifty thousand dollars of state funds for the same purpose.

So we can see how the White Citizens' Council dominates the Executive and Legislative branches of the State Government of Mississippi. And we have seen what the White Citizens' Councils believe and stand for.

We have seen how the two leading banks and the leading electric power company, which are crucial to commerce and industry, play major roles in the Citizens' Council.

We have seen the major role electric power, finance capital and the White Citizens' Councils play in the Mississippi Democratic Party.