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GIANT STEP TO MODERATION
LEWIS PERDUE

WHITE HOUSE AIDES

# Faceless Agents of Power

GEORGE E. REEDY

DID MEALIT WILLS

# Labor's Credibility Crisis

PHILIP SHABECOFF

### KINGSLEY WIDMER

Faul Coodman's Politics Within Limits'

At the next round of conferences the North Vietnamese reacted predictably—they proposed new terms. That is standard procedure in negotiations. If A brings up a new point after a tentative agreement has been reached, B feels at liberty to make new demands of his own. Yet we have the gall to cast the entire blame on the enemy and to make it appear that they are preparing a big build-up, hence that we are justified in resumed bombing of the entire enemy territory on an intensified scale.

A dispatch from Saigon in the December 20th New York Times contrasts the gloom of American officials, who had hoped that they could get out of the unholy mess in Indochina, and the jubilation of Thieu and his henchmen. Some Americans said—privately, of course—that they were puzzled by the resumption of the bombing so soon after the breakdown of the peace talks.

Others pointed out that State Department officials had suggested that the President was persuaded that the mining of Haiphong and the intensified bombing of North Vietnam had induced the Communists to negotiate "seriously," i.e., to make concessions; and the process having worked once, the President was giving it another try. That is plausible. Nixon feels that he needs Thieu as much as Thieu needs him. With Thieu there, Nixon can maintain an American presence in South Vietnam through civilian advisers, multinational operators, military personnel in civilian dress—and Thieu's million-man army. American troops can be withdrawn almost completely, since war from the air can be threatened indefinitely. But without Thieu in place there might be a real peace and an unconcealable American political defeat.

These plans are precariously poised. Mr. Nixon must get the prisoners home somehow, and with intensified bombing their number increases daily. Further, he has his eyes fixed on January 3, when a new Congress convenes. His best hope is to pound the North into accepting his terms before then.

The voters may be inured to the Nixon style of governing, but it is to be hoped that the Congress will not forget that under the Constitution it too is a branch of government. If the Senate, in particular, has an ounce of resolution left, it will bring the President to book. It is intolerable that on a matter of this importance the President should continue to keep Congress, press and public so much in the dark about what is really going on. Nearly every commentary on Kissinger's latest briefing has characterized it as "unclear," "fuzzy," "murky" and "uncertain." These occasional briefings, always self-serving, partial, unilateral, with only limited questioning, cannot substitute for the appearance of Mr. Kissinger or Mr. Rogers before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at an open public hearing. The notion that the Paris and Saigon talks enjoy the special sanctity that once protected "secret diplomacy" is no longer (if it ever was) tenable. Both sides disclose what it suits their purposes to disclose, but the full record is kept from public scrutiny. It should be clear by now that only the force of public opinion will ever end this war, but without the facts the public will be inclined to hold back, reserving judgment. Even if the people are prepared to tolerate a resumption of the bombing, they should insist on knowing what the President is doing in their name.

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Publisher
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Associate Publisher LINDA EDER STORROW

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neighbors in Greenwich Village, he in a solid house on Bleecker Street, I in a basement flat around the corner on Grove Street; which was as it should have been considering the distances that, in those days, lay between a full professor and a mere instructor. But with Mark no one, not even an instructor, was ever "mere." There must be dozens of us, scattered now around the country, who can remember those late afternoon teas in the English office on the 4th floor of Hamilton. Mark would be there, and sometimes his friend Joseph Wood Krutch and other luminaries of a distinguished department, and of course some of us hired hands (so to speak), who came at first in awe to tea but who, almost at once, were made to feel at home in the very world to which we then aspired. (There was a risk in this: some of us, I'm afraid, emulated the manner—which was the least of it—but, resting on imaginary laurels, never achieved the stature, sometimes not even the degree, of our elders.) At times the talk was shop, and the university administration, like all administrations everywhere, would then be the natural butt of our academic grousing. On one occasion Mark, having listened quietly to a severe round of criticism directed at a famous soldier who was then president of Columbia, brought the round to a close by observing that the general was at heart a decent man really—"though it's true," he added, as if his demur might be taken as a rebuke to his more voluble colleagues, "it's true he does suffer from delusions of adequacy." Mark Van Doren was ever a just man.

It is justice the young really thirst after and love when they find it embodied, all too seldom, in those who have charge over them. For this difficult and elusive virtue, whether found in the right ordering of words or ideas or lives, is an essential measure of man's belief in the perfection, never totally realizable perhaps, of a life, a society, a work of art. And it is this virtue, I think, which underlay Mark Van Doren's attraction for those generations of students who sought him out at Columbia.

He was loved, yes, but in this special way, the way of justice. He never invited nor could he tolerate those easy intimacies, that revolting chumminess, through which some teachers, out of an avarice of the emotions or a simple emptiness of head or heart, seek to cultivate a following among students. Mark never had a following of that kind. But there can be few of his students at Columbia, as there were few of us instructors (who were generouslythough not quite accurately—allowed to think ourselves his colleagues) who did not consider Mark Van Doren a friend. In even the most casual conversation you felt that his attention was wholly yours, that you were for the space of that meeting the center of his universe, that then and there you alone mattered. And you felt this because it was true. You were indeed in touch with a sane and wise and whole human being and, unless wholly corrupt yourself, you could not fail to bring away with you some of that same sanity, wisdom and wholeness.

Mark Van Doren was that rare a man. A man in whom nothing was lost, retaining to the end the serenity of Wordsworth, who had first opened for him the wonders of English poetry; the sanities of Dryden, who had first given direction to his critical intelligence and English prose style; but also, as one of his most perceptive students, the monk Thomas Merton, had realized, a simplicity and humility that is rarer still. And that is why those of us who knew Mark Van Doren, even slightly, now feel a part of us diminished by his death.

MISSISSIPPI

## GIANT STEP TO MODERATION

#### **LEWIS PERDUE**

Mr. Perdue, a native of Jackson, Miss., is consumer editor of the Ithaca (N.Y.) Journal.

"Mississippi: State of Change," say the ads extolling the virtues of Mississippi's workers and industrial sites. In Fortune, Newsweek and other national magazines, the ads tell the world of the economic changes that have reshaped the state in the last decade, but they are also an omen of greater things. Mississippi, they say, is dynamic, vital and changing, and that is so—but in more than just the economic sector.

Unlike a decade ago, segregation is no longer the official law of the state; Mississippi's public schools are the most fully integrated in the nation; white and black youth work openly together at school and in their leisure time, often in projects designed to end the last vestiges of white supremacy; white voters last month overwhelmingly rejected the segregationist American Independent Party's Presidential candidate; a governor was elected

without shouting "nigger" and his "nigger"-shouting opponent was soundly trounced; the Governor advocates the integration of the state Democratic Party and has appointed blacks to responsible positions in his administration; almost without exception restaurants, motels and hotels now serve blacks as courteously as they serve whites; Mississippi State University has a black quarterback and a black was elected Mr. MSU; the Black Miss America pageant was televised in Jackson and, miracle of miracles, the ultra-reactionary, segregationist Clarion Ledger-Jackson Daily News has begun to soften its "seggregation forever" position.

In the past, not too distant, the first rule for a Mississippi politician was to yell "nigger" louder than his opponents. Theodore Bilbo, one of the worst demagogues to haunt the white supremacist Old South, yelled it louder than any man; it won him the Mississippi governorship twice, and a seat in the U.S. Senate once. Even today his statue guards the rotunda of the state capitol in Jackson, though his ugly spirit is fading to oblivion.

Back in 1963, Rubel Phillips, Republican candidate for governor, took up the old cry, but his opponents outyelled him. Four years later, Phillips sensed the coming political trend; he said: "It is painfully clear that the race issue has retarded the development of our human resources. The white man cannot keep the Negro down without paying the awesome penalty of restricting his own development." But the time of the moderate had not come in Mississippi and Phillips was beaten by an old-time segregationist, Rep. John Bell Williams.

By the 1971 campaign, however, the Mississippi politician had added the word "Negro" to his vocabulary, and a moderate Democrat, William L. Waller, became Governor. In addition, Mississippi's voters were offered something unseen since Reconstruction, a black gubernatorial candidate. Charles Evers, Mayor of Fayette, received 21 per cent of the vote.

Only one of the gubernatorial candidates, Hattiesburg radio announcer Jimmy Swan, peddled the old racist line, and he was buried under a landslide that makes George McGovern look like a winner. All of the leading contenders advocated giving blacks responsible positions in any future administration.

The November 7th elections reflect in Mississippi a move toward a more moderate ideology. President Nixon captured a massive 79 per cent of the vote in the state. In most of the United States, a vote for the President meant support for his conservative withdrawal from the reforms of the Johnson era. In Mississippi, however, it indicated a leftward move toward a moderate point of view. Riding Presidential coattails were two moderate candidates for the House of Representatives. Republican lawyer Thad Cochran, 34, upset Democratic state Sen. Ellis B. Bodron. Bodron is viewed by some as the most powerful man in the state legislature. His defeat by the more liberal Cochran surprised state Democratic leaders. Trent Lott, 31, scored another victory for the Republican Party, capturing the seat vacated by Democratic Rep. William O. Colmer, who retired after forty years in the House. Lott is also regarded as a moderate.

The only election result which moved against the current toward the political Center was the re-election of incumbent Sen. James O. Eastland. Gil Carmichael, Eastland's Republican opponent, was repeatedly snubbed by the national GOP, Eastland being President Nixon's influential supporter in the Senate. When Vice President Agnew spoke in Jackson on September 30, Carmichael was barred from the speaker's platform. Despite the White House scorn, the Meridian Volkswagen dealer took 40 per cent of the vote.

Waller won the gubernatorial race by promising the "involvement of all people" in his administration. One of his first acts after inauguration in January 1972 was to appoint a black to head the state Bureau of Drug Law Enforcement. It was the first time a black had been appointed to a state law-enforcement post.

Waller also integrated the State Police. This move was dictated by a federal court order, but the new Governor—unlike his predecessors, who disposed of federal court edicts as though they were mail addressed to "occupant"—complied with the order, and in August

three blacks were among the thirty-two cadets to graduate from the state law-enforcement training center. It is a modest beginning, but one that Waller termed "a significant step forward for Mississippi."

In parallel with the Governor's relatively progressive attitude, the legislature has repealed laws banning interracial marriages and the teaching of evolution in the schools. With only two dissenting votes, the legislature in April eliminated these laws, along with several segregation laws passed during the Ross Barnett administration. Commenting on the removal of the anti-evolution law, state Rep. Douglas Abraham of Greenville said: "The ones who would create the biggest furor over repealing the monkey law are the ones whom I consider the most direct descendants"—a statement that would not have been tolerated in Jackson ten years ago.

Waller's efforts toward racial equality, though tepid by liberal standards, are beginning to offset the damage done by prior administrations. His relations with Mississippi's substantial black community have certainly progressed past the point where they were in 1964 when Gov. Paul B. Johnson replied, "What leaders?," when asked at a news conference if he expected to confer with black leaders.

Old-style power politics, rather than racial antagonism, have put a blotch on Waller's political record. His political inexperience showed when, shortly after inauguration, he ordered mass firings within state departments. This sweep was exacerbated by his strong-arm efforts to dominate the Hinds County Democratic convention (Hinds County contains more than 15 per cent of the state's population), and came to a climax in the split between his Regular Democratic Party and the Loyalist Democratic Party, led by Aaron Henry, head of the state NAACP. The Loyalists have unseated the Regulars at the last two Presidential conventions, when negotiations between the two parties broke down. Waller, however, is the only Governor who has tried to reconcile the two parties. Rather than deny or deplore the existence of the integrated Loyalists, he attempted a merger. The Regulars proposed that each of the factions send fortyeight delegates to the national convention, each delegate having a half vote. They also proposed that the unified delegation be led by Waller and Henry. The Loyalists replied that, in return for giving up half their voting powers at the national convention, they should receive half the seats on the Democratic Party's state and county executive committees. The Regulars rejected this and other Loyalist demands that included more blacks in state government and the support of a fair-employment

Although the Regulars' rejection of Loyalist demands is motivated to a degree by racism, the main issue, according to most observers, was the reluctance to give up power. The Regulars have taken their fight to the U.S. Court of Appeals.

The change in complexion of Mississippi politics can be attributed in part to the registration of large numbers of blacks. Ten years ago blacks composed 1 per cent of registered voters; today they are something less than a third of the electorate. (Blacks compose 42 per cent of the state's population.) Even if they were

to vote in a bloc, they could swing an election only when the white electorate was split. However, this potential power has had a moderating effect, although other less apparent pressures may also have been at work.

As Mississippi politicians have changed, so have the people and businessmen. Boycotts by blacks have shown white merchants that the Negro dollar can mean the difference between profit and loss. For this reason, and one hopes partly for reasons of decency, merchants have extended the courtesy of "Mr." and "Mrs." to their black customers and are carrying more products, like cosmetics, for blacks. More stores are open to the Negro.

Ten years ago, the sight of a black sitting at the white section of a lunch counter aroused the animal in white patrons. Not long ago, a Negro family sat near my wife and me at a pancake house in Jackson and received service as pleasant as that extended to white patrons. Although many stores closed their lunch and snack bars in the early 1960s rather than integrate them, most have now accepted the idea of desegregated dining.

There are exceptions. Walking into a Primos restaurant near the capital in Jackson one day last summer, I passed one of the last visible vestiges of Mississippi apartheid: a rest-room door marked "colored." Aleck Primos, one of the most successful restaurateurs in Mississippi, has long been an ardent segregationist; his favorite word is "never." It is a shame, since the food in his restaurants is so good.

The news media, too, have discovered the black community, Television was awakened when WLBT in Jackson lost its license when black interest groups charged that the station did not serve the best interests of the entire community—a community that is about 40 per cent black. When the wheels of legal justice had only begun to grind, other stations started hiring black news reporters and cameramen. In contrast to the time when the white population boycotted TV programs sponsored by Ford, Falstaff Brewing Co. and other large companies in protest against their equal employment practices, advertisers no longer need fear the economic consequences of sponsoring the Miss Black America pageant or public discussion shows that deal with desegregation and other racial problems. Although programming aimed directly at blacks is still token, the objectivity of news and other programs in which blacks may be interested or involved, has improved tremendously.

Because of the FCC hold on station franchises, the broadcasters have been the quickest to develop content that appeals to the black community. Among the slowest to respond have been newspapers. Among the slowest of the slow are the Jackson Clarion-Ledger and Jackson Daily News, the two largest papers in the state, owned by the ultra-segregationist Hederman family. For years, the papers have been a forum for segregationist opinion. But even though they still think that civil rights is a Communist plot and that Martin Luther King was a fellow traveler, the two papers have shown recent signs of softening.

They occasionally run a picture of blacks involved in social events, though the items are invariably buried amid filler. A great milestone was passed for the Hedermans when the picture of a black bride was published

in the wedding section. The Clarion-Ledger, the morning paper, still carries a column by Tom Ethridge, who often fills his space with racial invective of the most abusive and inflammatory nature. The editorial policies of the papers retain a martyred attitude that is only a little less paranoid than it was in August of 1964, when it depicted the civil rights murders of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner in Neshoba County as a carefully contrived play by the NAACP and Communist agents to besmirch the good name of Mississippi and its law-abiding citizens and to attract the attention of the FBI and other federal authorities.

There is evidence, however, that the influence of the Hederman journalistic monopoly is weakening. For many years, the gubernatorial candidate backed by the Hedermans invariably won. Charles Sullivan, the Hederman choice in 1971, lost to Waller, who, as Hinds County District Attorney, had prosecuted the murderer of Medgar Evers over the objections of most state political leaders and the Hederman press.

Changes in the power structure of any society are significant. Equally significant, and vital to the perpetuation of change, are antecedent changes in the youth of the society. The present changes in Mississippi have been won blow by blow, court order by court order; few of them would ever have occurred without federal intervention. Now, these gains of freedom and civil rights wrought by federal action have provided room for the seeds of a Populist society to germinate within the youth of the state.

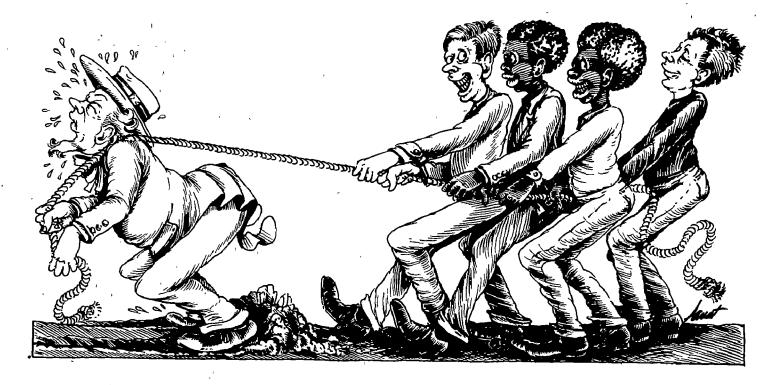
Modern federal intervention in racial matters began in the South in 1954 with the Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Topeka Board of Education. That decision prompted many states to start abolishing their dual school systems on their own, but Mississippi was not one of them. It refused adamantly to open the doors of its white schools to blacks.

The federal government would threaten aid withdrawal and Mississippi would call its bluff and ignore the court order. The bluffing maneuvers and threats came to a climax on October 29, 1969 with a decision by the Supreme Court which ordered "complete and immediate desegregation" of thirty Mississippi school districts. Under the plan approved by the Court, teachers and students would be reassigned by February 6, 1970, in numbers that reflected community racial composition—60 per cent white and 40 per cent black.

School boards leaped into frenzied activity and by February 6 most classrooms were integrated. For the first time in the history of the state, blacks and whites were going to school together in more than token numbers.

"Less than 10 per cent of the pupils gave us any sort of trouble at all after the massive integration of 1970," said the principal of an integrated high school in Jackson. His appraisal was verified by the black assistant principal, who said: "Maybe 5 per cent of the students give us any trouble. I'm in charge of student discipline and I never thought the concept of a black man disciplining white students would come off this smoothly."

One immediate result of the integration was greater contact between young black and white Mississippians.



The knowledge thus gained is helping to break down the black stereotypes most of the whites were taught by their elders.

In the midst of the massive school reorganization to meet the October 29th decision, Kathy Coker, a senior at Callaway High School in Jackson, and the editor of the school's yearbook, summed up the feelings of her classmates and of many other white pupils across the state:

Integration, alone, is not the problem. People who resist are the problem.

The reason the courts ordered integration and will continue ordering change until it is achieved is because the black children have suffered from poor education for years. Many whites claim to be against integration because they fear it may hinder their children's education. If this is true then it is too bad, but after all, it is the whites' turn.

Actually this will not hinder anyone's education if people will try to make it work.

However, many whites say blacks are different. They point to poor jobs and homes. Of course, if you don't have a good job you make very little money. Without money you will have a poor home, no luxuries, and often not enough food. Do you really blame black parents for wanting their children to have a chance at a good education? After all, we had a chance for "separate but equal" schools. When we ignored this we were told to integrate. That was sixteen years ago. I think the blacks have waited long enough.

Students at Callaway High School in Jackson set up a tutoring program which often results in a white tutor for a black tutee. "It's time the youth started doing something to show people we don't buy white supremacy any more," said one white tutor. "This isn't a bundle of white paternalistic BS," he added; "it's just a nuts-and-bolts helping hand." Other youths like him are working in freedom schools, with VISTA and with civil rights attorneys, all to further the cause of equality.

A letter printed in the Jackson Daily News on September 23, 1964, summed up the average Mississippian's attitude then toward whites who work with blacks. It said, in part: "How any person could be a traitor to the white race by being a freedom worker is beyond me. How can a man or woman be traitor enough to his own race to support the civil rights bill is beyond me. The white freedom workers have turned against the white race. No white girl will be safe on any street in any town if the white traitors have their way. . . ."

Previously, the whites who worked with blacks were from outside the state; rarely did a white native stoop to become a "traitor to his race." Today, white parents and politicians can no longer console themselves by thinking that all of the white troublemakers are "outsiders." Integration has become an inside job.

The scalawag, born with Reconstruction, was a native Southerner who preferred to pledge his allegiance to the Stars and Stripes rather than to the Stars and Bars. He became a pariah and was perpetually in danger from the Ku Klux Klan and other vigilante groups.

The spirit of the scalawag is alive today, risen from the fires of racial hatred, injustice and prejudice. It is so alive in many of the youth of the state that they have been branded the "new scalawags" by their elders.

The new scalawags represent no formal movement, rather a change of spirit, a mood. The potential has long been in the minds of the youth, but had been repressed until the protection of the federal government made it possible to speak and act openly without fear of bodily harm. "I suppose you could call me a scalawag," mused Ron Welch, a third-year law student at Ole Miss, who in the summer works for a firm of civil rights lawyers in Jackson. "I'm working against the ideals of the Old South.

"Equality is a myth right now, but at least it is safe to try to obtain it," he said. "Racial harmony is not really a goal. You have to have equality first, and harmony should follow afterward. The answer is not to simply ask someone's cooperation; you've got to watch public officials and sue the hell out of them when they step out of line."

Along with the students, the teachers are changing. One young white elementary schoolteacher who taught at a predominantly black school last year said that the experience changed her ideas about integrated teaching. "The only trouble I had was with the few white children. They were mostly from poor families, and to be honest, they just weren't as sharp as the black kids. This bothered them and they resorted to racial slurs and cursing."

Her spare time is often spent with the children in her class. Many have never been to a doctor or dentist; she takes them there and sometimes pays the bills. They call her up at night with family problems and she listens. Often she goes to see the family to try to help solve family disputes with the children.

The integrated schools now have racist competition. Private "segregationist academies" have sprouted like weeds in a garden. The largest and most notorious of these are the schools run in Jackson by the Citizens' Councils, a middle- and upper-middle-class white supremacist organization sometimes referred to as the white-collar Klan. Council Schools, as they are called, are cheap, inferior imitations of the public system.

"I knew one teacher who majored in art and wound up teaching geography in a Council School," said Sandra Brooks, a young teacher at the educational television center in Jackson.

"The funny thing about many of the people going to Council Schools," said Pat Booker, former student body president of Callaway High, now at Harvard, "is that they are not bigots at all. Some of them went because they didn't want to sit by a black, but many of them were forced to go there by their parents."

The Council Schools serve a kind of ironic purpose. Many public school officials to whom I talked said that they siphoned off most of the troublemakers from the public schools. "It's better to remove those who can't change," said Booker. "I guess we were better off sending the hopeless cases to the Council Schools."

Education, prodded and protected by the federal government, has borne the brunt of integration in Mississippi. In a related vein, sociologists have found that naked racism is usually more prevalent among the uneducated and poor than it is among those who are better off socially and by education. The most avid supporter of white racism in Mississippi has been the poor, illiterate sharecropper. Violence is the language of the inarticulate.

The ignorant rural laborer stands to lose most from the growth of Negro equality. He had no status, no money, no land, no education—nothing except his selfconceived superiority over the Negro. He had no selfrespect save what he could get from feeling superior to the black.

Education has interrupted the eternal cycle of poverty, but in education lies the destruction of white supremacy in Mississippi. As the redneck gains respect, he ceases to be a redneck. There are still thousands of deprived whites in Mississippi, but they are a dying breed.

Integrated education has not been completely alone in nurturing the growth of the new scalawag. The effects of the mass media have also helped to destroy the state's bigotry, which flourished in isolation. The barriers started to crack with the advent of radio, and that small trickle of outside ideas became a torrent with the invention of television. At last, Mississippi could see how the rest of the nation looked and thought.

More important, TV in the 1950s became a baby sitter for the youth of the state; they often paid more attention to it than they did to their parents. As a result, they developed in much the same way as did youth all across the nation. Regional variations became lost in the electronic shuffle. The television set brought home the brutalities of police dogs shredding the flesh of black men in Birmingham and Selma and the brutality of the sheriff and his cronies who conspired to kill those three civil rights workers in Neshoba County and bury their bodies beneath an earthen dam. The youth of Mississippi were shocked, as were the youth of Oshkosh, Wis. or Bath, N.Y. "Southern youth today feel like part of a national culture," said Booker.

The changes in Mississippi have been mind-boggling. They have been fundamental, deep and damaging to the psyche of many of the state's residents, who have had to see their old comfortable standards collapse. The changes in Mississippi have indeed been great, but the state still has a long way to go.

"It is worth noting that everything the white Southerner once said would never happen has happened," said Hodding Carter III, Pulitzer Prize-winning Mississippi journalist at a symposium on the Contemporary South last year in Tampa, Fla. "But I have fears about where we will go in the future. Much can be done in ways subtle and not so subtle." He has said several times that he thinks President Nixon has slowed racial progress in the South.

Reconstruction ended with what some Mississippians refer to as Redemption, and which produced for most blacks conditions worse than slavery. "There's not going to be another Redemption," said Welch; "there has just been too much progress. Sure, progress can be slowed, but it will never turn around." During the Johnson era, the FBI was omnipresent in Mississippi, ready to deal with any violations of the then new Civil Rights Acts. "We're just on our own now," said one black resident of Jackson. "We can't depend on the federal government any more. Any progress that comes now comes because all of the people of the state want it."

Ross Barnett, a prominent Jackson lawyer, told me he felt that sentiments were swinging back toward segregation and would one day return to the apartheid that once reigned supreme in Mississippi. "Jim Eastland has plenty of influence in the White House, and with the man in there now, Mississippi is going to get her way."

Whether or not the United States has an Executive who is lax in enforcing civil rights legislation, the fact remains that Mississippi has moved far toward a moderate stance in ideology and, with the political awareness that has been raised among blacks and youth, is likely to keep moving in the same direction, even if, thanks to the President, the change comes more slowly.