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DESEGREGATING SCHOOLS: FROM BROWN TO THE LITTLE ROCK CRISES 1954-1964

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DESEGREGATING SCHOOLS: FROM BROWN TO THE LITTLE ROCK CRISES
1954-1964

BY
LARRY PATRICK BAXTER

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an historical study of the racially charged context in which public schools in Little Rock, Arkansas were 'desegregated' between 1954 and 1964. The author first examines the Supreme Court's landmark decision of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954), in which racially segregated public schools were declared unconstitutional. The central focus of the study, however, is on the paternalistic and unequal nature of southern race relations and their impact on the desegregation process in Little Rock, Arkansas between 1954 and 1964.

Utilizing archival manuscripts and secondary sources, the author explicitly challenges the established historical interpretation of school desegregation in Little Rock and the Little Rock crisis of 1957-1958. In those accounts, the Little Rock crisis is viewed at its core as a political/constitutional crisis that was resolved once President Eisenhower dispatched federal troops to Little Rock, paving the way for desegregation to proceed at Little Rock Central High School. The author argues that the Little Rock crisis was an extension of a much larger crisis in race relations. Black demands for equal and integrated public schools and a white refusal to grant African

Americans their constitutional rights precipitated this structural crisis in race relations.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DDE	Dwight D. Eisenhower Library
JFK	John F. Kennedy Library
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
PHS	Presbyterian Historical Society
PDDEP	Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower as President
RDDEP	Records of Dwight D. Eisenhower as President
SASW	State Archives of the State of Wisconsin

INTRODUCTION

We are not asking for love. We are DEMANDING the rights and privileges as guaranteed any American citizen under the Constitution of the United States.

Daisy Bates, 2 May 1958¹

On 2 May 1958 Daisy Bates, president of the Little Rock chapter of the NAACP and principle in the fight for school integration in that city, gave a speech on the new black civil rights leader of the 1950's, whom she called, "The New Negro." Speaking to an audience at the People's Community Church in Detroit, Michigan, she discussed the impact that the Brown decision had on race relations in Little Rock, Arkansas. She especially focused on the 'new' position of black citizens of Little Rock who had begun to question the paternalistic nature of those relations. Unlike southern white officials who were lamenting the court's ruling as "a great blow to the Negro race" that was "destroying the amicable relations between the white and Negro races," Bates focused on the psychological benefits (to blacks) of the Brown decision. Describing Little Rock prior to 1957, Bates called the capital city "praiseworthy, quiet, peaceful and rather

aggressive --It gave the impression as a part of the New South." She acknowledged, "Little did I know then that it was not a changed Little Rock, Arkansas, but a new Negro who appeared on the surface."²

Daisy Bates was the very embodiment of the 'new Negro.' No longer willing to partake in bi-racial meetings in which whites led and blacks followed, she led a local movement to desegregate public schools. As a leader of the local NAACP armed with the Brown decision, in 1956 she led a group of parents of black children in pressing the Little Rock School Board to develop an equitable plan for desegregation. Shut out on the local level, they turned to the courts, pressing their claims for full citizenship in the area of public education in Aaron v. Cooper.

Rather than a 'New South', Bates soon realized that "we are dealing with a confused South and a New Negro." The term 'New South' held a different meaning for Bates and other southern blacks than it did for whites. Bates recognized African American demands for full citizenship as the embodiment of the spirit of the New South. On 23 September 1957, Daisy Bates witnessed the New South in action as she watched nine black students enter previously whites-only Central High School for the first time.

That morning, I observed courage rarely seen in my lifetime. I realized that these parents represented the spirit of the New South, and in a quiet, dignified manner, were serving notice on America that "We are a determined people, willing to pay the price that our children might enjoy true democracy."³

Hence, from 1956 to 1958 black citizens of Little Rock

were beginning to redefine the New South and the terms under which race relations evolve.

Few books specifically devoted to the Little Rock situation of the 1950's have been published. Of these, many have been written by individuals directly involved in the crisis.⁴ In these books, as in other books on post-World War II civil rights movements that include the Little Rock situation, authors tended to focus on the political dimensions of desegregating schools in Little Rock. Hence, the Little Rock crisis was often interpreted at its core as a mere political crisis or as a constitutional crisis prompted by a state governor thwarting federal authority. The crisis as it was defined often began on 3 September 1957, the day on which Governor Orval Faubus ordered the Arkansas National Guard to surround Central High School and to prevent black students from entering the school. The climactic scene came on 24 September 1957, the day on which President Eisenhower called in federal troops on the principle of 'law and order', thus allowing desegregation to proceed. The story ended on 17 May 1958, the day on which the last of the federalized National Guard were withdrawn from Central High School. However, this is not to suggest that each author's argument remained indistinguishable from the next. Each emphasized different aspects and causes of the crisis, but one thing remained constant: the view that the Little Rock situation was a political crisis.⁵

In It Happened Here, a book on Little Rock authored by Superintendent of Little Rock Schools Virgil Blossom, the author's argument, posited in the above framework, centered on the question of whether or not desegregation would have proceeded peacefully had Governor Faubus not intervened. His conclusion, of course, was affirmative.

Little Rock did not bring on disaster. Disaster was deliberately thrust upon a majority of progressive and law abiding citizens by extremists and outsiders seeking to serve their own ends.⁶

He maintained that despite the school board's best efforts, Governor Faubus's actions encouraged outside interference in the desegregation process, thus causing the crisis. According the Blossom,

even the fact that most of the people of Little Rock originally were ready to accept our integration plan worked against us in the end, because we did not expect trouble and were surprised and unprepared when, as I have related, trouble was thrust upon us by outsiders.⁷

In this view, the Little Rock School Board and the larger white community, and not the black community most affected by events in Little rock, were the victims.⁸

Daisy Bates is more critical of the school board in her autobiography, The Long Shadow of Little Rock. Even though her account goes up to the 1962-1963 school year, she too posits her story in the formula of a political crisis. Leading up to the day Faubus called out the troops, she recalled,

everywhere in Little Rock there were rumors that segregationist forces from hard-core states, the so-called 'solid South,' were organizing for a fight to the finish against integration in public education.

Little Rock was to be the battleground.⁹

However, unlike the other first person accounts of the events in Little Rock, hers took a wider view. She placed Little Rock within a history of American racism:

More than any other single event in many years, Little Rock demonstrated the gaping discrepancy between the Declaration of Independence--one of the precious documents of American History--and the reality of twentieth century America. Despite professions of equality, America and Americans exercise racial discrimination against millions of dark American¹⁰ citizens practically from the day of their birth.

Bates was well aware that Little Rock represented yet another event in a long history of racial discrimination in the United States. This study, hopefully, is an addition to that understanding, as the author explores how American racism was deployed in the desegregation process in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Another book, not a first person account, is Irving Spitzberg, Jr.'s Racial Politics in Little Rock, 1954 1964. Spitzberg was a high school student in Little Rock in the years 1957 through 1959. His is a sociological study of local politics in Little Rock during the decade between 1954 and 1964. Like Bates, he placed most of the blame for the political crisis upon those on the local level, especially the school board and local white civic leaders. His conclusion,

insofar as the Blossom plan failed, it failed because the superintendent did not organize the local polity in a manner to ensure commitment to public education when the choice came between them. One can trace directly the community leadership's complete inaction in the face of this political

intrusion to¹¹ the Blossom method of preparing for the transition.

Although in the book's preface, Spitzberg acknowledged, "I am about to tell a story with no heroes and no villains," his whole argument hinged upon the conclusion that Blossom's one-man show strategy for desegregation effectively silenced white civic leaders, who customarily were active politically. A greater part of the study was devoted to how the white leadership acted in the aftermath of Faubus's September 1957 actions, once they hurt these leaders financially and socially.¹²

In this author's opinion, there are two major weaknesses in Spitzberg's study. First is the complete lack of analysis of white-black relations in Little Rock during these years. Consequently, this read as a study of how whites in Little Rock were affected by Faubus's actions. The second weakness is directly related to his methodology. Spitzberg relied heavily on personal interviews, 41 in all (of which seven were with African Americans). Yet, none of the comments of those interviewed were identified in the text. Instead, he anonymously listed their comments as "Confidential Source" followed by a number.¹³

Other scholarly works also have followed this same pattern of focusing on white policy makers at the expense of African Americans who were also shaping events. In his 1973 doctoral dissertation, "Civil Rights Policies in the Eisenhower Years," Ronald Schlundt succinctly placed his

argument within this narrow framework. In Chapter 5: "The Justice Department and the White House--I: Desegregation of Schools and the Little Rock Crisis," Schlundt chronicled the political maneuvering of local, state, and federal authorities that ultimately led to the showdown between Faubus and Eisenhower. He concluded that

during the Little Rock crisis, the White House and Justice Department intervened only when prodded and tried to avoid making decisions when asked. As a result of the continuation of this hands-off policy, the forces of obstruction in Arkansas became convinced that the administration would take no action, until a strong response from Washington became virtually unavoidable.¹⁴

Again, the operating assumption was that if Faubus had not intervened or if the federal government had taken on more responsibility after the Brown decision, the Little Rock school system would have been desegregated peacefully.

In framing the Little Rock situation principally as a political or a constitutional crisis, scholars have limited too much the boundaries of analysis. Writers have focused on white policy makers at the expense of other participants --chiefly African Americans. Too often scholars forget to analyze the nature of desegregation that whites were defending. My argument is built on the assumption that the Little Rock crisis was first and foremost a crisis in white-black paternalistic race relations. Initiated by African Americans who stepped outside of the normative channeling of minority grievances --bi-racial meetings-- blacks in Little Rock not only caused a crisis in race relations, but also created a

crisis within the white community, and another among the local, state, and national political structures. Thus without the continual pressing for full citizenship on the part of blacks, what little that was achieved during the political crisis of 1957 in Little Rock could not have been realized.

This thesis is an attempt to highlight the actions of African Americans alongside those of whites in the history of desegregation, during the years from 1954 to 1958. Section I of the essay focuses on Brown v. Board of Education and the power that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) possessed in the federal courts. For the status of the NAACP as the leader in the fight for more equal educational opportunities for black children directly relates to the limited options those on the local level held for carrying out the court's decisions. The fight for an equal public education is also discussed in the context of the larger national white discourse. In effect, how did the nation respond to the challenge of the Brown decision to the racial status quo.

Section II, the greater portion of the paper, focuses specifically on race relations in Little Rock. It considers the formulation of the Blossom plan, the nature of white-formulated desegregation, its consequences for Little Rock's blacks, and how the African American community responded. In essence, section II is an

analysis of the power dynamics of race relations in Little Rock which undermined black expectations of achieving equal educational opportunities "with all deliberate speed."

SECTION I

Brown v. Board of Education, 1954-1956

If ever there was a time when we must be patient without being complacent, when we must be understanding of other people's deep emotions as well as our own, this is it. Extremists on neither side are going to help this situation, and we can only believe that the good sense, the common sense, of Americans will bring this thing along.

President Eisenhower, 15 March 1956¹⁵

I'm the world's oldest gradualist...I just think ninety-odd years is gradual enough.

Thurgood Marshall, 14 May 1958¹⁶

In 1952 as the NAACP moved forward on appeal in a series of cases challenging the constitutionality of de jure segregated education systems, the Supreme Court was re-examining the constitutionality of its earlier decision in Plessy v. Ferguson (1896), which first articulated the "separate but equal" doctrine. The Court ruled in 1896 that state laws [in this particular case, of Louisiana] requiring the separation of the races in public accommodations were not a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment and were thus constitutional so long as "such

laws as [were] enacted in good faith for the promotion of the public good, and not for the annoyance or oppression of a particular class." The NAACP cases of 1952 challenged both the unequal separate school systems and the intellectual rationale underlying a paternalistic system of southern race relations. The Supreme Court case, Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, involved a series of four individual cases concerning similar constitutional questions. The Brown case was part of an all out attack on Jim Crow that the NAACP began in the years leading up to World War II and which it accelerated after the war.¹⁷

The Supreme Court under Chief Justice Fred Vinson (1946-1953) responded slowly to the NAACP's challenges. Although only six cases concerning the separate but equal doctrine in secondary education had ever been heard on the Supreme Court level, none directly challenged Plessy. The Court consistently adopted the narrowest possible reading. It would rule in favor of the plaintiff, but cite extenuating circumstances of a particular plaintiff or situation. The Court continued dancing around Plessy, refusing to address the constitutionality of the separate but equal doctrine, until the NAACP mounted a campaign to force direct consideration of Plessy and, hopefully, to end discrimination in public education. The NAACP first focused on the graduate school level; after gaining a series of victories there, they turned to the secondary

schools.¹⁸

The Supreme Court initially skirted the central constitutional questions involved in segregated school cases. In Sweatt v. Painter (1950), the Court ruled in favor of the plaintiff, Heman Marion Sweatt, an applicant to the University of Texas Law School. It ruled that although the state of Texas provided its African-American citizens a segregated law school, it was inherently unequal not only because of the absence of quality faculty, facilities, and until Sweatt applied, a student body, but also because the black law school

exclude[d] from its student body 85% of the population of the State including most of the lawyers, witnesses, jurors, judges, and other officials with whom the petitioner would inevitably be dealing when he becomes a member of the Texas Bar.

The Court's reasoning came down on the side of Mr. Sweatt, but not on the side of all African-Americans who desired equal educational opportunities. The Court granted Sweatt injunctive relief, ordering state officials to admit him to the University of Texas law school. Although the NAACP won the case, those states with segregated educational facilities were able to maintain them.

In another case filed by the NAACP in 1950, McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents, the Court also found for the plaintiff. In this instance, Mr. McLaurin had already been admitted to a doctorate program at the previously all-white state university, but he was then segregated from his fellow students in the library,

classrooms, and in social areas. The importance of this case lies in the Court's rejection of the state's argument that by tradition Oklahoma citizens segregated themselves and that the regents' actions were dictated by their concerns that if integrated, Mr. McLaurin would be ostracized by his peers. Chief Justice Vinson in his decision explained to Oklahoma the difference between state imposed restrictions and those individuals impose on themselves: "There is a vast difference --a Constitutional difference-- between restrictions imposed by the state [and] the refusal of individuals to commingle." Although these cases did set precedents which were later expanded in the Brown decision, they were still narrowly focused from the NAACP's perspective to affect the larger structure of southern education. The NAACP wanted an end to school segregation throughout the United States. Those states with segregated educational facilities were able to maintain them. Until the Brown case reached the Supreme Court, each suit was brought on behalf of a single individual, addressing a specific failure of the Plessy doctrine. Thurgood Marshall and his team of NAACP lawyers were slowly chipping away at "separate but equal." But not until Brown was the Supreme Court forced to address the constitutional issues of the "separate but equal" doctrine in the area of segregated public schools on the secondary level.²⁰

Following original arguments in Brown in December of 1952, the Supreme Court had further questions for the parties to the litigation. Prodded by Associate Justice Felix Frankfurter who was seeking a unanimous decision in the case, on 8 June 1953, "all five segregation cases [in Brown] were unanimously restored to the docket for reargument on October 12." This date was moved to December of 1953 after the unexpected death of Chief Justice Fred Vinson in September. The Supreme Court, under the leadership of newly appointed Chief Justice Earl Warren, was ready to tackle Plessy in 1954. It did so beginning in December of 1953 in the reargument of Brown. On May 17, 1954, Chief Justice Warren announced the unanimous decision declaring segregated public schools unconstitutional:

We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the plaintiffs and others similarly situated for who the actions have been brought are, by reason of the segregation complained of, deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment.²¹

Unlike the previous NAACP lawsuits, Brown was a class-action suit on behalf of all African Americans attending segregated public schools. Thus the Court's decision was directed at all de jure segregated school systems in the United States, not simply those of the parties named in the individual suits. Hence the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) prevailed in the landmark case, Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka,

Kansas, after a long and arduous struggle that began well before World War II, against a southern system of de jure racially segregated public schools.²²

The new legal theory initially had little effect on the southern practice of de jure school segregation.

In the fall of 1961, only 7.3% of all black students in the South (including the District of Columbia, Delaware, West Virginia, and Missouri) went to schools attended by whites. In three Southern states not a single black student attended a desegregated school,²³ and in seven others less than one per cent did so.

These findings also apply to school segregation in Little Rock, Arkansas. As late as the 1961-1962 school year, only 45 black students of a total student population of 21,569 were permitted to attend previously all-white junior and senior high schools. In the 1962-1963 school year, elementary schools in Little Rock were still strictly segregated. Racial segregation in public schools throughout the South remained the model during the 1950's and into the 1960's.²⁴

In Brown I²⁵, the Supreme Court sided with the NAACP and recognized that even though segregated school systems may at times appear en facie equal, the courts must go beyond an examination of mere "tangible" factors and look at the effects of such systems:

Our decision, therefore, cannot turn on merely a comparison of these tangible factors in the Negro and white schools ... We must look instead to the effect of segregation itself on public education.²⁶

The Chief Justice cited the psychologically damaging impact segregation had on black children:

To separate them from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their²⁷ hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be done.

After achieving victory over southern segregationists, the NAACP nevertheless still faced tremendous obstacles in effecting the implementation of Brown.

The implementation ruling of Brown, known as Brown II, demonstrated the limitations of the NAACP's legal strategy. On May 31, 1955, the last day of the court term, the Supreme Court delivered the implementation decision of Brown. Recognizing that education is "perhaps the most important function of state and local governments," the Supreme Court in Brown II entrusted these political units with sole responsibility for implementing the Court's decrees. In Brown I, the Court recognized that public education was a state and local responsibility. Accordingly, it placed the responsibility of desegregation on these officials. Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote for the Court,

school authorities have the primary responsibility for elucidating, assessing, and solving these problems; courts will have to consider whether the action of school authorities constitutes good faith implementation of governing constitutional principles.²⁸

The Court's decision was problematic for the NAACP and African Americans because it did not recognize the near absence of political power of blacks on the state and local levels of governance in South. In a city like Little Rock, Arkansas, where the black population was one-

fourth the size of the white population, sheer numbers of white voters precluded the notion that blacks would be on local school boards. Hence, it was highly doubtful that they could determine their own destiny alongside these white majorities. Unlike in Brown I, where they successfully challenged racial segregation --a system of white dominance over African Americans-- the NAACP and African Americans were shut out of the process of public school reconstruction in Brown II and on the local levels of southern government.²⁹

Marshall and his team of NAACP lawyers representing not just the plaintiffs involved in the particular cases, but all black Americans, wanted a total and immediate integration of public schools. Kluger in Simple Justice summarized the NAACP's opposition to gradual integration during the implementation arguments:

Thurgood Marshall closed out the argument for black America. He insisted that 'there is nothing before this Court that can show any justification for giving this interminable gradual adjustment. I am particularly shocked at arguments of impotency of our government to enforce its Constitution.'... Why should those seeking to delay desegregation 'be given advantage brought out by their own wrongdoing.'?³⁰

However, the NAACP lawyers recognized the political and legal infeasibility of such a strategy in the face of southern intransigence. So they argued for integration with a specific timetable. As Richard Kluger emphasized in Simple Justice,

the South was devoting its efforts to circumventing the decision, not to figure out how best and faithfully to bow to it. For that reason, it was vital that the Court set a fixed³¹ date for the end of segregated schools everywhere...

In his closing arguments in Brown II, Marshall reiterated the NAACP position that if the South is not given a set date to complete the integration of schools, the Brown decision "will mean nothing [to black Americans] until the time limit is set." In the Brown II decision glaringly absent were the words 'desegregation' and 'integration'. The court, instead, posited its opinion in a more inclusive rhetoric of ridding public education of racial discrimination. Even so, the Brown II decision in many ways aided those who wanted to preserve and fortify segregation, not end it.³²

Without giving a specific timetable as the NAACP wanted, or detailed instructions to the lower courts, Warren laid a grid of legal expectations.

...the courts will require that the defendants make a prompt and reasonable start toward full compliance with our May 17, 1954, ruling.³³

Expecting local units to submit plans to the lower courts for approval, Warren continued,

they will also consider the adequacy of any plans the defendants may propose to meet these problems and to effectuate a transition to³⁴ a racially nondiscriminatory school system.

The eight paragraph decision ended with "all deliberate speed"; an innocuous enough phrase which would mean very different things for the majority of southern whites and African Americans.

The Court reached its decision only through a well organized legal campaign begun by the NAACP some twenty years earlier. These legal achievements were won in the face of southern state intransigence. The Court's implementation decision handed down on May 31, 1955, however, gave African-Americans an uneasy feeling. In the implementation phase of Brown II, the Court also provided a decentralized framework in which school desegregation would be achieved.

Full implementation of these constitutional principles may require solution of varied local school problems. School authorities have the primary responsibility for elucidating, assessing, and solving these problems; courts will have to consider whether the action of school authorities constitutes good faith implementation of the governing constitutional principles. Because of their proximity to local conditions and the possible need for further hearings, the courts which originally heard these cases can best perform this judicial appraisal. Accordingly, we believe it appropriate to remand the cases to those courts.³⁵

Unlike the celebrations that followed Brown I, the NAACP quickly realized the Court's refusal to set a specific timetable for desegregation --regardless of local conditions-- would only allow recalcitrant school districts to ignore indefinitely the order. The Court's Brown II decision has thus led one historian to conclude that "by almost any measure, [Brown II] gave the South a great deal more of what it had asked at the final round of arguments than it gave the Negro." The nine Justices of the Supreme Court were depending on the prestige of the entire Federal Judiciary, responsible state and local

officials, and if necessary, the moral and constitutional authority of the entire Federal Government. The Court soon realized that not only had it been the final arbiter on a great constitutional and moral issue, but that it would stand alone among the three branches of the Federal Government in ensuring the implementation of Brown.³⁶

Why, after almost ten years since declaring segregated public school systems unconstitutional, were the overwhelming majority of black students in the South in 1963 still attending often inferior, segregated schools? The answer lay partly in the different positions of the NAACP in the federal courts versus African Americans on the local levels of government in southern states. As subjects in the legal process, African Americans appropriated the dominant ideological rhetoric of liberty and equality in their argument against school segregation. In Brown, they especially were able to expose the weaknesses and inconsistencies of the Plessy doctrine on which the southern system of white supremacy was dependent for its legal and political legitimacy. Throughout the legal process, Thurgood Marshall et al. exposed the inconsistency of white reasoning. They effectively weakened white arguments that both whites and blacks desired segregation and that separate facilities were equal. The NAACP disrobed white rhetoric that claimed the two races were actually separated under de jure segregation. In the original case of Brown v. Board of Education, legal counsel

for black elementary school children pointed to the inconsistencies of the Kansas state law permitting (but not requiring) cities with a population of 15,000 or more to operate schools on a segregated basis. In Topeka, the state's capital, only the elementary schools were racially segregated; all other schools were operated on a non-segregated basis.³⁷

This legal strategy was buttressed by the NAACP's use of sociological and psychological data, which demolished the constitutional reasoning of Plessy v. Ferguson (1896). Associate Supreme Court Justice Henry Billings Brown, writing in the 1896 Plessy decision, outlined the Court's disingenuous response to Homer Adolph Plessy's argument that racial segregation [on railroad cars] was a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment.

We consider the underlying fallacy of the plaintiff's argument to consist in the assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of inferiority. If this be so, it is not by reason of anything found in the act, but solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it.³⁸

NAACP chief counsel, Thurgood Marshall, and his team of lawyers skillfully introduced into the Brown cases evidence to the contrary. Relying to a great extent on the doll experiments of psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Clarke, they argued that racial segregation was injurious to black children. The Court agreed.³⁹

The NAACP's power, however, remained a 'negating' one as demonstrated in the Supreme Court desegregation

implementation orders. On the federal level, this limited power enabled blacks to get specific racist practices declared unconstitutional; African Americans were active participants in the courts, able to act as subjects affecting change rather than being objects of change. They, however, could not achieve positive or reconstructive changes endorsed by the Supreme Court. This was demonstrated in Brown II when the Supreme Court summarily rejected NAACP strategies and accepted those of the Eisenhower Justice Department: no timetable and gradual desegregation under the jurisdiction of the District courts. According to Kluger, the Supreme Court not only accepted in full the Justice Department's amicus curiae brief, but also it integrated the following remarks by President Eisenhower included in the government's brief, regarding how the Brown decision would affect southern whites:

--an institution, it may be noted, which during its existence not only has had the sanction of decisions of this Court but has been fervently supported by great numbers of people as justifiable on legal and moral grounds. The Court's holding in the present cases that segregation is a denial of constitutional rights involved an express recognition of the importance of psychological and emotional factors; the impact of segregation upon children, the Court found, can so affect their lives as to preclude their full enjoyment of constitutional rights. In similar fashion, psychological and emotional factors are involved--and must be met with understanding and good will--in the alterations that must now take place in order to bring⁴⁰ about compliance with the Court's decision.

Whereas the Brown decision was directed against a segregation system designed by whites, President

Eisenhower's concern was for those southern whites who would be affected by Brown. His central concern was not for those southern black taxpayers and black American citizens, and their children who were receiving inferior educations for at least 50 years. Thus, the inclusion of his remarks are even more ironic when one considers the overwhelming economic, social, and political power whites held over blacks not only in southern states, but throughout the United States.⁴¹

At the local levels the position of African Americans was reversed --now African Americans were the objects of desegregation plans as they were earlier in segregation laws-- as southern school boards attempted to obey the "law of the land" by devising desegregation plans that could pass constitutional muster. Having no power of enforcement, the Supreme Court looked to other branches of government for the orderly carrying out of its decisions, including the Brown decision. Unfortunately, for African Americans, local school boards in the South were usually dominated by hostile whites, and they (blacks) had no direct representation on these boards. In places like Little Rock, Arkansas, black Americans were not direct participants in reconstructing more equal public school systems. They could challenge white-devised plans that promised only a bare minimum of school desegregation, but they could not construct alternative ones.

While African Americans and supportive whites were

attempting to redefine American race relations via the courts, southern defenders of the racial status quo in Congress and in the states were fighting back, as northern whites would do two decades later. Senator Eastland of Mississippi took to the senate floor less than a week after the Brown I decision to defend 'our southern way of living'. He attacked the Court for what he viewed as its utter disregard for the constitution and warned all white southerners of the clear and present danger of these rulings.

The Court has determined to strike down all State laws which provide for racial segregation, and upon which the institutions, the culture, and the civilization of the South are built. This attack upon the South is not concluded. We are witnessing only the beginning.⁴²

As the spokesperson for a southern (white) civilization, he further outlined the ideology that lay behind racial segregation.

The future greatness of America depends upon racial purity [of the white race] and the maintenance of Anglo-Saxon institutions, which still flourish in full flower in the South.⁴³

Hence, segregation was necessary for the purity of the Anglo-Saxon race and for the strength of American institutions. Unlike the NAACP and other black Americans who were demanding equal access to public education, Eastland was reiterating the worn-out argument that both races desired de jure segregation:

Segregation is not a badge of racial inferiority, and that it is not is recognized by both races in the Southern States. In fact, segregation is desired and supported by the vast majority of the

members of both of the races in the South who dwell side by side under harmonious conditions...There is no racial hatred in the South.⁴⁴

Instead, Eastland explained, southern whites have "race consciousness".

Had they not possessed it, the South would have been mongrelized and southern civilization destroyed long ago.⁴⁵

For Eastland and many white southerners, 'southern' civilization was code for 'white' society. By this definition, no black American could be a full citizen.⁴⁶

Unwilling to recognize that some black Americans did not accept the second class citizenship to which southern ideology relegated them, Eastland saw a communist conspiracy infiltrating the chambers of the United States Supreme Court. He claimed that the Court had "been indoctrinated and brainwashed by left-wing pressure groups." Citing individual justices being "honored by left-wing Communist-front organizations militantly interested in legislation on which the Supreme Court must pass," he condemned the Brown I ruling as a

violation of the Constitution, the laws of nature, and the laws of God...an attempt to put the races together, physically, upon a plane of social equality...[that] will justly cause, in my opinion, evasion and violation of law and contempt for law, and will do this country great harm.⁴⁷

In considering the impact that Brown and other rulings banning segregation in publicly-owned facilities would have on southern institutions, Eastland concluded that

These decisions, coming at a time of grave world crisis, when there should be unity in the United States, will cause great dissension and will weaken

us internally.⁴⁸

Eastland's kind of 'unity' however was built on a variety of assumptions on the proper position of blacks -- including their subordination to white authority-- in the American polity. Thus the southern way of life was not simply a separation of the two races, denoting a 'social superiority' of the white race, it was the embodiment of white civilization at the expense of black Americans' full citizenship. Because southern whites viewed blacks as passive and as social inferiors, Eastland could easily shift the focus of debate from the power dynamics of race relations to blaming outside meddlers for the Court's attacks on southern segregation.

Everyone knows that the Negroes did not themselves instigate the agitation against segregation. They were put up to it by radical busybodies who are⁴⁹ intent upon overthrowing American institutions.

According to southern white ideology, African Americans could not have demanded equality for they too understood that they were not yet ready for full citizenship. For those few who did not know, white spokesmen like Senator Eastland would speak on their behalf.

Eastland then proposed an amendment to the constitution to safeguard against federal meddling in state affairs. The unsuccessful proposal read:

There shall be no interference with or limitation upon the power of any State to regulate health, morals, education, marriage, and good order in the State; and exclusive jurisdiction thereof is reserved to the States.⁵⁰

In the meantime, Eastland called upon all southern [white]

people to present a united front to insure the continuance of their segregated school system. And that they did immediately following the 1956 decision of the Supreme Court.

By that date when the implementation ruling of the Brown decision was announced, seven southern states were well on their way in thwarting school desegregation. As of January 1956, Virginia and Louisiana amended their state constitutions, allowing state funds for pupils attending private, segregated schools. Three more states passed interposition laws, declaring that the Supreme Court encroached upon states' rights in its Brown decision; while Florida authorized the formation of a state commission whose duty it was "to seek all legal means of avoiding desegregation."⁵¹

Southern obstructionists got further support from approximately one-hundred southern delegates to Congress who signed the Southern Manifesto of March 1956. As Eastland did one year earlier, the Strom Thurmond-inspired manifesto derided the Supreme Court for

destroying the amicable relations that have been created through 90 years of patient effort by the good people of both races. It has planted hatred and suspicion where there has⁵² been heretofore friendship and understanding.

The signers also lent direct support to southern states attempting to resist desegregation by commending "the motives of those states which have declared the intention to resist forced integration by any lawful means." The

Southern Manifesto was a diplomatic call to arms which further encouraged southern white resistance.⁵³

After Senator Walter F. George of Georgia read the document, Strom Thurmond of South Carolina took to the senate floor to discuss what had always been lurking behind southern rhetoric: southern whites were the true victims and the greatest minority in the nation.

All of us have heard a great deal of talk about the persecution of minority groups. The white people of the South are the greatest minority in this Nation. They deserve consideration and understanding instead of the persecution of twisted propaganda.⁵⁴

Major Frederick Sullens, editor of the Jackson Daily News in Mississippi, earlier presented a similar view that white southerners were the true victims. He also claimed, as many southern whites did, that "the tragic part of this unwarranted decision is that the thinking people of neither race want the abandonment of segregation."⁵⁵

Others in the Senate, however, rose to challenge this perversion of reasoning. Senator Morse of Oregon was the most forceful in his condemnation of the signers of the Southern Manifesto and the most articulate in his support of Brown. He assailed the signers,

If the gentlemen from the South really want to take such action, let them propose a constitutional amendment that will deny to the colored people of the country equality of rights under the constitution, and see how far they will get with the American people.⁵⁶

Echoing the sentiments of Thurgood Marshall and many African Americans, he too was tired of southern white smokescreens for denying African Americans equality of

justice.

I say, respectfully, the South has had all the time since the War Between the States to make this adjustment. That is why I am not greatly moved by these last-hour pleas of the South, "We need more time, more time, more time." How much more time is needed in order that equality of justice may be applied to the blacks as well as to the whites in America?⁵⁷

Senator Morse concluded, the Supreme Court "has at long last declared that all Americans are equal, and that the flame of justice in America must burn as brightly in the homes of the blacks as in the homes of the whites."⁵⁸

Not letting southerners monopolize cold war rhetoric, two northerners, urban Senators Richard Neuberger and Hubert Humphrey cited southern intransigence as a factor that could lead to a loss of American leadership abroad. Senator Humphrey explicitly made the connection between justice and internal stability as necessary ingredients in claiming world leadership:

If America ever hopes to give world leadership, we must set the pattern here in America. We have to set it unmistakably in a firm belief in humane equality and equal justice under the law.

This is the very heart and core of an effective foreign policy...No amount of appropriations, no amount of armaments, can be as important today as being right and being moral and being just. Citizenship in America must be first-class citizenship.⁵⁹ There can be no second-class citizenship.

Continuing the remarks of Senator Humphrey, Neuberger directly challenged southern racial ideology and the accusation that these lawsuits were instigated by 'communist-front organizations intent on overthrowing the

government.'

We live in a world most of whose people are of a different color than white. What are they thinking when members of the highest American parliamentary body announce themselves as against judicial decisions granting equality to colored people in America? How fares the Soviet Union propaganda war as a result of these developments?

Hence, from the moment the Supreme Court announced its initial decision of Brown in May 1954, white southern leaders worked toward reinforcing the racial status quo of the South and the racial segregation on which they were dependent. The one individual on the federal level who could have used his leadership and moral position to affect positively post-Brown events initially failed to do so. When President Eisenhower did act, his response was too little, too late to affect a smooth transition.

The president had many opportunities to take a stand between May 1954 and September 1957. Previous to Brown twenty-one states and the District of Columbia either legally required or permitted racial segregation in public schools. By the end of 1956, ten of these states and the District were either desegregated or on their way to achieving desegregation. It was the states of the Old Confederacy that were maintaining Plessy. In these situations the president had an opportunity to demonstrate his support for equality in public education, and yet he refused. Virginia, Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina, Mississippi, and Florida all passed laws by 1957 that effectively nullified court ordered desegregation and yet

Eisenhower and the Justice Department, denying they had the constitutional authority, refused to intervene in school desegregation cases. As late as 11 September 1956, Eisenhower insisted that the executive was impotent. Speaking with Attorney General Brownell, "The President said the whole U.S. thinks the President has a right to walk in and say 'disperse -- we are going to have negroes in the high schools and so on.' That is not so."⁶¹

The White House officially remained silent on the issue of school desegregation until March 1956 when over one-hundred southern Congressmen and Senators signed the "Southern Manifesto". These Senators and Representatives aided southern attempts at undermining the Brown decision as they "promised to use all lawful means to maintain segregation." Rather than reminding the southern "gentlemen" of their responsibilities to uphold the United States Constitution, Eisenhower narrowly focused on the inconsequential fact that the legislators were not calling for nullification:

the first thing about the manifesto...is this: That they say they are going to use every legal means.⁶²

The President maintained a seemingly neutral position which could only encourage southern intransigence.⁶³

When particular southern states began to flaunt publicly their determination not to desegregate their schools, Eisenhower, simply changed the reasoning behind his inaction rather than provide any real leadership. The Eisenhower administration contended it lacked the

constitutional authority to intervene (unless specifically requested by the state or local authorities) and that federal action was unnecessary so long as the individual states maintained order. Hence, school segregation became not a moral or constitutional issue, but one of law and order.⁶⁴

An opportunity arose in 1956 for Eisenhower to act in a well publicized Texas case. In September of 1956, under a court order to desegregate schools in the city of Mansfield, a few African-American students attempted to enroll at all-white Mansfield High School. The day they arrived at the school, the mayor of Mansfield and its chief of police were conspicuously out of town. A white mob formed at the high school thus preventing the students from actually enrolling. Then, Governor Allan Shivers ordered the Texas Rangers on the scene, giving them the authority to arrest "anyone who represented a threat to the peace." The students were promptly arrested. The Governor not only sided with the mob, but he also publicly nullified specific Federal Court orders to allow the black students to enroll. "Yet through the entire incident, the Justice Department ignored a NAACP request for federal intervention in Mansfield to protect the rights of the black students there."⁶⁵

When Eisenhower was asked during a press conference on 5 September 1956 whether his administration or the Justice Department were planning to take action against

Texas officials, Eisenhower replied that law and order had been restored and therefore, the issue was moot. He then went further

I want to emphasize this: certainly, every liberal will be very jealous of protecting the locality's right to execute the police power in this country. When police power is executed habitually by the...Federal Government, we are in a bad way. So, until the states show their inability or their refusal to grapple with this question properly which they haven't yet, at least as any proof has been submitted, we'd better be very careful about moving in and exercising police power.⁶⁶

Eisenhower failed to mention, however, that the re-establishment of law and order denied African-Americans in Mansfield, Texas their constitutional rights to an equal educational system.

In his study "Civil Rights Policies in the Eisenhower Years", Ronald Schlundt traced the President's reluctance to intervene in Texas as a political move. Schlundt argued that Eisenhower understood "the importance of Texas in the coming presidential election" in deciding not to intervene. Regardless of motive in this particular case, Eisenhower sent a signal to the Old Confederacy that whether or not integration proceeded "with all deliberate speed" was immaterial, the Federal Government would not intervene so long as authorities maintained a superficial sense of order. The President's refusal to put forth the full moral and political force of his office remained consistent from the initial Brown decision right up until 1957, when the Federal Government was forced to intervene --not to enforce desegregation, but to restore law and

order in Little Rock. As late as 3 September 1957, the day on which Faubus ordered the Arkansas National Guard to prevent black students from entering Central High in defiance of court orders, Eisenhower remained steadfast in his refusal to lend any moral support behind Brown:

Now, time and again, a number of people --I, among them-- have argued that you cannot change people's hearts merely by laws. Laws are presumably --express the conscience of a nation and its determination or will-- to do something. But the laws here are to be executed gradually, according to the Supreme Court...Now there seems to have been a road block thrown in the way...and the next decision will have to be by the lawyers and jurists.⁶⁷

This lack of leadership, coupled with the congressional defiance of the Brown decision, would have severe consequences in places like Little Rock, Arkansas, where local school boards were searching for leadership in sharply divided communities.⁶⁸

SECTION II

Little Rock, Arkansas, 1954-1964

I hated the people who had apparently burned the Constitution of the United States when they placed fiery crosses on the lawn of our home; I hated the so-called liberals who were too afraid of their social positions to speak out clearly and firmly; I hated the moderates who were too cowardly to say: "This is the law of the land, and it must be obeyed. This kind of action should not only be stopped in Little Rock, but throughout the nation." Most of all I hated the frightened and complacent Negro of the south, and the contented Negro of the North and East.

Daisy Bates, 2 May 1958⁶⁹

On the evening of 23 September 1957, an anonymous telephone caller to the home of Daisy Bates announced: "We have just had our first killing in Little Rock, and you are responsible. There will be more before day." Bates immediately assumed that the segregationist mob which had forced the "Little Rock nine" to withdraw from Central High earlier in the day had lynched the father of one of the black students on his return from a night job. Although the report shortly thereafter was proven false, Bates could no longer contain her anger, frustration, and even rage over the active and passive resistance of whites

in Little Rock against the struggle of African Americans to achieve equality. At that moment and in her reflections, she weighed the heretofore passive behavior of southern blacks:

In that moment I became bitter for the first time. I wondered who was to blame for this day and night of horror. I hated in that moment Faubus, the White Citizens Council, and all of its kind. But something seemed to say, "No, Daisy, they are not to blame. You are responsible, along with all the freedom-loving people of America. You are responsible because you didn't holler loud enough when [that] policeman on the corner beat up the "Wine-O;" when you failed to register and vote you were aiding and abetting the Faubuses all over the south. The sororities, fraternities, the professional group who failed to feel the plight of the little Negro when he was mistreated, denied, and harassed; yes - all of us share in this responsibility of September 23, 1957, in Little Rock, Arkansas.⁷⁰

Bates, who lived in Arkansas all her life, was feeling the effects of white repression; a repression that descended upon those who dared to step outside of the confines of established patterns of paternalistic race relations.⁷¹

Bi-racial interactions in Little Rock although frequent, were far from equal. For many white participants the objective of these meetings was to maintain racial harmony, not to achieve equal justice. This became most apparent when during the events of 1957-1958 white participants continually stressed the importance of law and order and racial harmony above black equality. With the exception of Ogdon Dunbar, Jr., a local Presbyterian minister, no other white individual was as consistent in public support of Little Rock's black community. When the

clergy did respond belatedly, they did so in the grand tradition of southern white paternalism. In the midst of chaos, they called for prayer services to be held on 12 October 1957. However, "white ministers determined the call, formulated the objects of petition, and then invited Negroes to cooperate." Their objective was a "calling for the observance of law and order and good will among men." In the hearts and minds of these white ministers, the overriding concern was racial harmony and community order, not black oppression: "the churchmen do not plan to take sides in the matter."⁷²

For those individuals, black and white, who dared to take the side of equality, stepping outside the established racial status quo brought severe sanctions. Bates and her husband suffered heavily. Bates, who grew up in the small southern Arkansas town of Huttig, was raised by family friends, Orlee and Susie Gatson, after her mother was attacked and killed by three white men early in Daisy's childhood. Following her marriage circa 1941 to Lucius Christopher Bates, Bates and her husband moved to Little Rock. It was there that the Bates founded the Arkansas State Press, "a crusading paper for Negro rights." Bates was co-publisher and manager, while L.C. was editor. As early as 1956, when as president of the local NAACP Bates advised parents to bring suit against the school board to quicken the pace of desegregation, her home was under attack. As she reported to the U.S.

Justice Department in a telegram of July 1959,

my home has ben under constant attack since October 1956 by lawless elements of this state; and many threats have been made upon my life and the lives of my immediate family. Incendiary bombs have been thrown at our home from automobiles. Three KKK crosses have been burned on our lawn. Fire has been set to the house on two occasions. All the glass in the front of the house has been broken out and steel screens had to be⁷³ made to cover the front windows to protect our home.

Bates also suffered because of her stance in a much more personal way. She and her husband had a foster child, Clyde Cross Bates, who lived with them from 1951 to 1957. When the Bates came under attack in the fall of 1957, the state removed Clyde and returned him to his biological family. Southern whites also used their most potent weapon --economic reprisals-- against "uppity blacks" and those wayward whites who foolishly challenged white prerogatives in determining the position of blacks in southern society. By October of 1959, Daisy and L. C. Bates saw almost twenty years of their lives lost as their Arkansas State Press, one of the largest black newspapers in the southwest, went under due to a well orchestrated boycott by white advertisers.⁷⁴

Dunbar Ogdon, Jr., a Presbyterian minister in Little Rock and an unwavering supporter of Bates's actions, like other similarly situated whites also felt the economic reprisals that accompanied his stance. Ogdon's commitment to civil rights went beyond calling for prayers for peace: "...unlike most of his integrationist colleagues [among white clergy, Ogdon] was neither cautious nor compromising

in his approach to Little Rock's crisis." Almost as soon as he arrived at his new post at Central Presbyterian Church in September 1954, he preached sermons "explicitly supporting integration as a Christian imperative." He was there to escort the nine black students on their first day at Central on 9 September 1957.

Mr. Ogdon led his Presbytery in voting to oppose the actions of governor Faubus which resulted in the Governor saying that the Presbyterian ministers of Arkansas were Communists, brain-washed and fellow travelers.⁷⁵

Ogdon also stood alone among his colleagues in his public praise of Eisenhower's belated decision to send troops to Arkansas. In the end, however, Ogdon was forced out of his pastorate at Central Presbyterian Church in Little Rock on 1 November 1958, because of his uncompromising stance against forced segregation.⁷⁶

In many respects there were two distinct views of community life in Little Rock, Arkansas at the time that Brown v. Board of Education was decided. For most whites, Little Rock exemplified the New South. As Superintendent of Schools Blossom recalled in his 1959 book, It Happened Here,

Little Rock was proud, too, of its reputation as a city of excellent race relations. Buses, hospitals, and certain other public facilities were integrated. biracial meetings commonly strove in a spirit of harmony to solve problems. Negro and white employees worked side by side on many jobs with a minimum of tension and friction. And despite a general traditional attitude in favor of segregation, the majority of residents were prepared --reluctantly-- to accept the United States Supreme Court 1954 school desegregation decision as the law of the land and to initiate a program of gradual

integration of Negro students into Central High School.⁷⁷

However, African Americans in Little Rock held a different view of community life. Bates most succinctly expressed this view:

Much has been written by some of the world's most renowned novelists of the new South, but the experience of the past few months in Arkansas shows clearly that we are not dealing with a new South. But instead, we are dealing with a confused South and a New Negro."⁷⁸

To blacks, Little Rock only gave the impression of being part of the New South. In the 1950's, black Arkansans lived in a state that was still unable to shed "the cloak of ignorance, superstition and traditions which shielded her during the pre-reconstruction era." Schools were nominally desegregated only with federal intervention in 1957. Hotels, restaurants, ten-cent stores, lunch counters, public facilities, churches, and public recreation areas were still strictly segregated in 1962.⁷⁹

Little Rock, the capital of Arkansas, is located in almost the exact center of the state. With a population of more than 100,000 and a progressive image, Little Rock in 1954 well represented its image of an aggressively industrializing southern state. According to the 1950 census, there were 78,600 white residents (including 970 foreign-born whites) and 23,425 black residents. Although Little Rock had a small black middle class --clusters of independent professionals and clergy--the income disparity between black residents and white residents was significant.

The reported median income of whites in 1949 was \$2,122, while for blacks it stood at \$881 --less than half the white median. Additionally, no black resident of Little Rock reported earnings of more than \$5,000 for 1949. Ten years later, "of the approximately 28,000 families in Little Rock, . . . 4,000 had incomes over \$10,000 per year." Coupled with the virtual exclusion of blacks politically and the de jure practice of segregation, Little Rock may have been a progressive city in race relations to whites, but because of the white majority's economic, social, and political dominance, African Americans participated in bi-racial meetings, while whites determined the local political discourse in which race relations existed.⁸⁰

In Little Rock, like in other southern cities, it was the civic leaders (business elites) who were in charge. According to Irving Spitzberg, a native of Little Rock, in his study of the Little Rock political structure, "the 'civic' leaders had established a long tradition of activism in Little Rock and (when they felt secure in their actions) demonstrated the ability to use economic, social, and political power effectively." It was the younger members of this business community, who actively initiated a campaign for good government in the early fifties. They spearheaded a campaign for a state law that would allow municipalities to choose the city management form of government. Civic leaders in Little Rock formed

the Committee of One Hundred, a group of businessmen associated with the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce, to funnel money into and organize the campaign calling for adoption of city management in a local referendum.

Power --political, social, and economic-- was in the hands of the business elite, for the people of Little Rock, at the civic leaders' instigation, had repudiated the Mayor and his Council at the ballot box.⁸¹

It was this group who held a greater potential to guide Little Rock in desegregation in public schools, but like the federal government, they declined the position. Their interest lay in maintaining the status quo and in creating an image that would attract new industry to the city. To prevent a recurrence of the economic slowdown that the Montgomery business community experienced during the Montgomery bus boycott in 1956, the Little Rock leaders took the initiative to desegregate public buses in their city. As a lame duck, Mayor Woodrow Wilson Mann and his Council were ineffective in desegregating Central High. It was incumbent upon Little Rock's civic leaders to act in good faith and take a public stand. To understand their failure to take an active role, we must look at the process by which Little Rock would proceed with desegregation.⁸²

Just five days after the Brown I decision, the Little Rock Board of Education of which Virgil Blossom was superintendent, announced that it would comply with the court order:

It is our responsibility to comply with Federal Constitutional requirements and we intend to do so when the Supreme Court of the United States⁸³ outline[s] the method to be followed.

The school board also stressed that its segregated school system would remain in effect until further instructions from the Court:

Until the Supreme Court of the United States makes its decision of May 17, 1954 more specific, Little Rock School District will continue with its present program.⁸⁴

More importantly, this same cautiously worded statement reemphasized a southern white commitment to segregation that would serve as an intellectual basis for any future desegregation plans. First, the board officially opposed integration, but it recognized its responsibility to abide by federal laws. Second, the board defended its segregated school system. Regardless of the Court's finding that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal", the school board claimed equality among all-black and all-white schools. The most significant element, however, was how the board narrowly viewed desegregation as a court-imposed remedy. Hence, all the board could do was hope that Little Rock would pull together for "the creation of an integrated school program required as a result of the Supreme Court decision."⁸⁵

The black community in Little Rock, as most black Americans did, rejoiced at hearing the Supreme Court's May 1954 ruling. The Bates' Arkansas State Press in an

editorial called the decision ". . . a great forward step in achieving true equality for our race." Initially, black leaders had a tentative faith in the school board: ". . . while moving all too slowly, [they recognized that the school board] was determined to obey the law at least in token form." However, with the gubernatorial success of Orval Faubus in the fall of 1954, their tentative faith began to weaken. During the race, Faubus issued a statement on integration in which he clearly sided with the pro-segregation camp. He proclaimed that

It is evident to me that Arkansas is not ready for a complete and sudden mixing of the races in the public schools and that any attempt to solve this problem by pressure or mandatory methods will jeopardize, in many communities, the good relations which exist between whites and Negroes...In my opinion, de-segregation is the No.1 issue of this gubernatorial campaign . . . "86

Unlike the incumbent governor, Francis A. Cherry, who had announced that "Arkansas would obey the law" following the May 1954 decision, Faubus implicitly rejected Arkansas's responsibility to support the Brown decision.⁸⁷

Added to the new political situation on the state level, blacks also began to question the school board's commitment to desegregation. Viewing its public statement of May 1954 as the beginning of a desegregation process, African Americans were concerned that the school board was not acting to achieve these goals. When in 1955 there was still no action, a group of black parents requested a meeting with Superintendent Blossom:

Negro parents requested an appointment with the

superintendent of the school board. After some delay and disappointments a meeting was held, but with no success. A petition signed by more than 100 was then filed with the school board urging compliance with the⁸⁸ court decision. No action was taken by the board.

From the perspective of most African Americans, these parents were seeking immediate desegregation of Little Rock's school system. But considering the school board's earlier statement that it would not proceed without further direction from the Supreme Court, such action was highly doubtful. Nevertheless, they wanted a signal, preferably in the form of a plan for desegregation, that the school board was working on the situation. They got a signal from the school board --albeit the wrong one. Following the Supreme Court's Brown II implementation decision of May 1955, Superintendent of Schools Virgil Blossom announced an open-ended plan for "a transition to a system of racially desegregated schools in several successive stages": Desegregation "may start in 1957" on the high school level. Over the next six to twelve years, the high schools, junior highs, and elementary schools would be desegregated in that order. However, each stage of the plan was dependent upon the success of desegregation in the previously segregated grade levels.⁸⁹

Bates and others involved in the local NAACP immediately recognized that under the proposed plan desegregation would take years. Frustrated over the Little Rock School Board's lack of responsiveness to their needs, a group of black parents attempted to enroll their

children in all-white schools. The school board denied them entrance and in February of 1956, the local chapter of the NAACP on behalf of thirty-three students filed a lawsuit to force full integration immediately.

The hearing was held in August, 1956 at which time the Little rock School Board presented a plan for gradual integration to be completed in 12 years.⁹⁰

Federal Judge John E. Miller of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas upheld the constitutionality of the plan in Aaron v. Cooper. As the Reverend J.C. Crenshaw of the Little Rock NAACP wrote in a press release following the decision,

However, neither we or our attorneys regard the plan as conforming with the ⁹¹real intent of the U.S. Supreme Court decision.

With the aid of Thurgood Marshall, attorneys for the local chapter appealed Judge Miller's decision to the Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit. Citing that "little children are still being forced to go to schools at great distances from their homes, when other schools are within walking distance," under the proposed plan, the NAACP hoped the Appeals Court would over-rule Miller.⁹²

The Appeals Court on 26 April 1957 affirmed the lower court's decision. Although blacks in Little Rock did not favor the school board's plan, the NAACP did win three important points in the decision. First, the Appeals Court placed the Little Rock plan under federal jurisdiction: "jurisdiction of this case shall be retained by the District Court to insure full opportunity for

further showing in the event compliance at the 'earliest practicable date' ceases to be the objective." This legal maneuver would allow the NAACP to respond quickly in the event that opponents of the plan attempted to use the state courts to prevent its implementation. Second, the court established the 1957-1958 school year as the starting date for desegregation. Third, the court rejected the idea of a flexible timetable. It instead reduced the implementation schedule from a possible twelve years to a definite six years. African Americans were still shut out of the desegregation formulating process in Little Rock, but they were not passive. They continually attempted to shape the school board's plans between May 1954 and April 1956; Little Rock's black community first acted in a spirit of cooperation. When that failed, they resorted to the federal courts.⁹³

As Superintendent Blossom and the Little Rock School Board went about presenting their desegregation plan to the white community, blacks and their white friends in Little Rock were attempting to prod the school board into going beyond a presentation, to actual planning for school desegregation. Between June 1955, the date that the school board announced its phase plan for desegregation, and September 1957, Superintendent Blossom made over 200 speeches to professional groups and clubs. Blossom preached to these audiences the board's own personal distaste for desegregation. As Colbert S. Cartwright, a clergyman in Little Rock wrote soon after federal

intervention in 1957: "The general attitude of Dr. Blossom in explaining the plans for integration to white groups was that the prospect was as distasteful to him and the school board as to anyone else."⁹⁴

Blossom and the school board spent most of their time listening to the concerns of whites, rather than attempting to rally an already skeptical white majority around its plan. According to the Arkansas Gazette, Blossom and the board instead discussed how their plan

was a legal design intended to accomplish the minimum integration over the longest period⁹⁵ of time permissible under the Supreme Court ruling.

In these meetings school officials continually emphasized how, in formulating their plan, they considered the psychological damage that the required desegregation would caused to white citizens:

We can comply with the law if we are given a long period so that we can take small steps in developing and activating a very gradual program of integration that will be acceptable to the large⁹⁶ majority in a border state community such as this.

Thus from the very beginning of the desegregation process in Little Rock, the school board was most concerned about how desegregation would affect the white majority. In their quest "to do everything possible to maintain educational standards," school officials failed to reflect upon how the city's segregated school system had affected the educational prospects of black students for the last eighty years. Absent among school officials' concerns was a concern for the African American minority in Little Rock,

the majority of whose children would be forced to remain in inferior schools.⁹⁷

Being "guided by the reactions of [white] parents and civic leaders," Blossom repeatedly told his concerned audiences,

we must do everything possible to maintain educational standards and that can be best achieved with the voluntary cooperation of Negro residents in a plan of orderly, gradual integration."⁹⁸

Hence, when officials did mention how blacks could play a role in the school board's plan, holding true to white paternalism, Blossom called upon black citizens to follow a white lead. Rather than emphasizing the responsibility that all of Little Rock had in insuring that desegregation proceeded "with all deliberate speed," Blossom reminded the black community of the "great responsibility [that] now rests on Negro citizens." As far as school officials were concerned, they had assembled a reasonable plan for desegregation, based on a system of voluntary transfers, which if not challenged by African Americans would lead to token desegregation for less than 1% of the city's black students. In the view of school officials, this was all that the white majority of Little Rock could handle in the short term.⁹⁹

Importantly, the Little Rock School Board failed to make any concrete plans to prepare the wider community for the beginning of school desegregation. In fact, when black leaders and liberal whites suggested these preparations, they were rebuffed with open hostility. In

October of 1955, Dr. Blossom met with the Arkansas Council on Human Relations, a statewide interracial group dedicated to racial understanding. According to Spitzberg, this group composed of white liberals and some blacks whose liberalism could be defined as racial liberalism, rather than an economic one. Members of the Human Relations Councils, which existed in most urban centers in the South were typically well-educated, professionals and their spouses. Irene Osborne, a member of the group who had worked with Washington, D.C. authorities earlier on community preparations for school desegregation, suggested that the same broad-based community involvement could also prepare Little Rock. According to Spitzberg and Cartwright,

Mr. Blossom responded to Miss Osborne's remarks not only by disregarding her suggestions, but also by making it clear that he was hostile to the concept of broad preparation involving the total community in the positive manner, which the authorities had used in Washington...Dr. Blossom exhibited open hostility toward the approach she suggested. 100

Blossom and the school board rejected each request of assistance that came their way in the period leading up to September 1957. Concerned about possible racial strife, the black ministers of the Alliance of Greater Little Rock, a group of black clergy from various denominations, asked the school board to appoint an advisory committee to assist in any plans, and they too were rebuffed.

The board not only declined, but refused to suggest any alternative way in which the Little Rock community might help in paving the way to a smooth transition. 101

School officials also rejected the offer of the predominately white Little Rock Ministerial Alliance's offer to endorse publicly the board's plan. Each of these two clergy groups held a great potential to affect a smooth transition to a desegregated school system.¹⁰²

Even those working at Central High, many of whom were not fully accepting of the pending desegregation, recognized what the school board refused to do. Early in 1955, Jesse Mathews, principle at Central High School, called faculty together into committees on guidance and community cooperation to begin preparing white students for the impending integration.

The committees began meeting in the fall of 1955. But Mr. Mathews called an abrupt halt to these activities. He explained to the teachers that Mr. Blossom had decided he wanted to handle the matter personally for the time being.¹⁰³ That was the last the committees heard of it.

The school board's refusal to accept outside assistance, in part, reflected the logic behind the plan itself. Had they intended to alter the cultural patterns of Little Rock and end desegregation, perhaps wider community involvement would have been accepted. However, their plan was designed specifically to prevent that. As Blossom repeated often, the Little Rock plan was designed with the advice of the board's legal counsel to meet the legal minimum of integration.¹⁰⁴

The plan itself, widely known as the Blossom plan, called for gradual desegregation over a seven year period commencing September 1957. Initially conceived as a plan

to desegregate on the first grade level and then, upon careful assessment of success, the school board would allow further desegregation up the grade levels to the high school level. Representative of the unequal race relations in Little Rock in which the rights and attitudes of whites were taken much more seriously than those of black residents was the manner in which the board revised its plans after white parents objected. After what Blossom called, strenuous objections from white parents of primary school children, the board moved to begin desegregation on the senior high level first.

I first began to realize that it would not work when I talked to groups at the (white) PTA meetings. Almost invariably, the parents who were most outspoken against integration had children in the lowest grades at school. The younger the children, the more violent the parents were in their denunciations of the Court's decision.¹⁰⁵

Desegregation ultimately would be achieved in three phases, beginning on the high school level, then the junior high, followed by the elementary school level. This was a reversal of the original Blossom plan and reflected the powerful influence of conservative white opinion.¹⁰⁶

Nevertheless, the plan was not designed to desegregate Little Rock's entire school system. Through a system of voluntary transfers and a board-implemented screening process, the school board's plan virtually guaranteed only token desegregation. As Superintendent Blossom acknowledged in his book,

The Board's purpose in regard to transfers was to lessen the impact of integration on local cultural patterns by a system of voluntary transfers allowing both white and colored students to maintain, as far as possible, the system of segregated education.¹⁰⁷

These administrative procedures effectively placed the burden of desegregation on black school children as no white students were expected to request transfers to black schools: If black students wanted to attend the state's most highly academically-rated high school, Central High, or any other school in the city, it was their responsibility to request a transfer in a community where the majority of whites favored segregation.

Furthermore, the Little Rock school system under the Blossom plan was divided into three separate high school attendance zones. These zones roughly corresponded to the pre-existing demographic patterns of segregation. Hence, between a system of voluntary transfers and gerrymandered attendance zones, Horace Mann in zone 1 would remain a black High school; Hall High in zone 3 would remain all white, while Central High School in zone 2 would serve as a tokenly desegregated school. Although each attendance zone was assigned one of the three senior high schools open in the 1957 school year, students could obtain permission to transfer to another school. Since the school board, under state's pupil placement law, had the authority to place students in a particular school, whites who found themselves in the 'wrong' attendance zone, could request a transfer.¹⁰⁸

Dividing the city into three attendance zones, in my opinion, was a fraud. The Little Rock School Board knew before hand that most, if not all, white students would want to continue at Central High (or all-white Hall High School). They also knew that most blacks, fearing white retaliation if they attended overwhelmingly white schools, would opt for Horace Mann. As they assumed, whites in fact did transfer out of zone 1 and most blacks did stay at the all-black high school. The zone system and voluntary transfers enabled the school board to wash its hands of a measure overwhelmingly opposed by whites; and yet, it still allowed school officials to claim they were working toward desegregation.¹⁰⁹

Most revealing of school officials' attitudes toward desegregation was the manner in which black students were allowed to enroll at previously all-white schools under the Blossom plan. White students who desired a school transfer received an administrative okay, while black students were required to undergo a battery of psychological and academic evaluations. Blossom, who held a master of science degree in education, single-handedly decided the academic fate of each black student. Unlike white students, whose 'whiteness' was taken as a sign of their academic ability, black students had to prove their 'worthiness'.¹¹⁰

Blossom's own account of the interview format, later published in 1959, clearly demonstrated how the

school board's plan lent itself to a reinforcement of a white paternalistic concern for controlled black advancement. School officials counselled the parents of each black child who made a transfer request of the "problems that any children would face in a pilot program of integration." These talks were not designed to prepare students for the pressures they would possibly confront in an overwhelmingly white school: As Blossom reminded school administrators, "Then in your talks with students and parents it should be your purpose to guide those who are not equipped away from participation in the transition program." Blossom and the school board never considered establishing a similar procedure for white students who would find the transition program equally as challenging.¹¹¹

Blossom's interviewing technique also appeared rather crude. When "two terrific football players from Horace Mann --both over six feet tall-- came...to enroll in Central High," the superintendent went out of his way to express how their presence at the school would seriously affect the white students. Besides noting that their academic performance was below average (Blossom never discussed what happened to white children who were attending Central whose scholastic achievements were below average, nor did he explain how an average was determined), Blossom "felt it would be a serious mistake for them to transfer." Blossom reasoned that their

presence on the football team would cause a disturbance among white students and would cause other high schools to cancel games with Central's desegregated football team. As Blossom counselled them in the best tradition of paternalistic relations, "So you would not only not get to play but you would be depriving others of a chance to play." According to the Superintendent, their response was one of thankfulness: "Mr. blossom...nobody had explained that to us and we didn't understand the situation." Perhaps no one explained it in those terms because those black citizens of Little Rock in the vanguard of school segregation were no longer willing to forgo equality and equal access to public educational opportunities simply out of deference to "white sensibilities".¹¹²

In another case, Blossom counselled an appreciative mother and her daughter to withdraw a transfer application to Central:

'You and I are trying to make a decision in the best interest of this child,' I told her mother in the girl's presence. 'In view of these factors [Blossom's perception that the child lacked 'the necessary scholastic background and emotional stability'], I recommend that you withdraw her application.'

. . . 'I believe you're right, Mr. Blossom,' the mother said.¹¹³

Blossom failed to recognize however that he and the girl's mother perhaps did share the same view of what was in the best interest of this student. While the girl's mother may have been motivated by a belief that Central could

offer her daughter a better education than what she was then receiving at Mann, Blossom's perception of her best interests was tainted by other concerns over limited desegregation.

In the end, if black citizens wanted a desegregated public school system, they would have to request a transfer into Central High school. Of the several hundred eligible to transfer, only eighty black students applied. From the initial interview process 32 were selected by Blossom, and after final screening, 17 were selected to attend Central. Ultimately, only nine actually enrolled at Central High for the 1957-58 school year.¹¹⁴

Each of these families, like others who advocated changes in race relations in Little Rock, were exposed to white economic and social reprisals. The families of all nine students, who actually desegregated Central High in September 1957, suffered from white reprisals. Jefferson Thomas's father, Ellis Thomas, was fired after ten years employment with International Harvester in Little Rock; Elizabeth Eckford's mother was fired from her teaching position at the State School for the Blind; Carlotta Walls's father was forced to seek out of state employment since no building contractors in the area would hire him; and Terrance Robert's family moved to California to escape the harassments. Nevertheless, individual black families were still willing to stand for black equality in Little Rock. Hence, as far as the Little Rock Board of Education

and its superintendent of schools were concerned, 17 African American students out of a total school population of 2,650 students at Central High School constituted "integration" of that school.¹¹⁵

The constitutional/political crisis of 1957-1958, collectively recorded as the Little Rock Crisis, must be posited in this much wider context of Little Rock's race relations in order to understand the full historical meaning of desegregation at Central High School. As a contemporary wrote,

Governor Faubus' decision on September 2 to call out the troops and to block integration was the natural outcome of every step the Little Rock School Board had taken. Having sought to prepare the community solely upon a legalistic basis, they had no defense when the governor, prompted by rabid segregationists in Little Rock, insisted he had found the needed loophole.¹¹⁶

From the very beginning, the board's strategies for implementing even the bare minimum of desegregation awaited failure.

Antithetical to Blossom's belief that had the governor not intervened, Central High would have been successfully integrated in 1957, the lack of community preparation almost guaranteed a crisis would erupt. Instead of rallying community support among whites, school officials were "guided by the reaction of parents and civic leaders." Blossom focused on gaining acceptance from civic and business elites, rather than focusing on any genuine community involvement. As one local manufacturer said:

They talked to the Little Rock Club, the Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary --the same people over and over. They missed the people with children in the public schools who believed their children would be injured by [school integration].¹¹⁷

Blossom also ignored the black community. When Blossom and the school board did discuss their plans with leaders of the black community, these discussions were often like briefings. During one in early 1954 (following the school board's announcement that it would comply with the court decision), the editor of the State Press, L. C. Bates, husband of Daisy Bates, asked whether the school board intended on full integration as soon as possible. Blossom replied, "No...it must be done slowly." Later in the same meeting, Blossom reiterated what he would often say to blacks and whites over the next three years,

A greater responsibility now rests on Negro citizens...We must approach this problem carefully and sanely. The School Board will not delay merely for delay's sake but to be able to do the job right.¹¹⁸

Blossom's belief that Little Rock's black community was in great support of the board's plan was not shaken, even in 1959, when he claimed that "we had the cooperation of probably 95 per cent of the Negro citizens." This in spite of the fact that the NAACP and other members of the black community continually had been pressuring the school board to act more quickly via petitions, court cases, and personal requests for school desegregation.¹¹⁹

While the school board was refusing to rally support for the Blossom plan, ardent segregationists were

at the state house developing a highly organized resistance campaign. They were actively promoting legislation that would nullify the spirit and letter of the Brown decisions. In the spring 1957 legislative season, four segregationist bills passed the state legislature: House Bill 322 established a state sovereignty commission which was given "the authority to resist the United States Supreme Court's decision against segregation in public schools; House Bill 323 made attendance in a desegregated school voluntary; House Bill 325 also allowed local school boards to use public funds for hiring lawyers to fight desegregation orders.; and House Bill 324 was aimed at organizations like the NAACP. This last law "required persons and organizations in certain activities to register with the State and make regular reports of their income and expenses" --including membership disclosure. Although the NAACP and other groups, black and white, opposed the passage of these bills, each passed with overwhelming support. Ardent segregationist views, coupled with the absence of any leadership required for integration to proceed in Little Rock, ultimately dictated political discourse in the state of Arkansas.¹²⁰

Although we may never know the exact number of ardent segregationists, many of the city's white residents wanted to avoid the Brown decision if legally possible. Mrs. J. H. Edmondson of Little Rock wrote to President Eisenhower, expressing many of the thoughts other white residents who

also wrote would articulate:

You say everyone has a responsibility to support and obey orders. [A]nd I am sure 90 per cent of the People want to as long as that order is a just one. [B]ut we [are] not going to obey any thing that not just. and you certainly know it, not just to force our children to mix with Negroes.¹²¹

Another white mother wrote,

I am a mother with 1 thirteen year old son, actually, integration with the negro race won't hurt him too much. However, I would fight it and will fight it with every way I can. If I were a mother of small children just beginning school, I would do battle if necessary. Me, and millions like me, the parents, especially the mothers, do not want this thing we are being forced to take.¹²²

Another writer from Little Rock encouraged President Eisenhower to help southern whites obey federal laws, by condemning the Supreme Court's Brown decisions. A resident of Little Rock who claimed never having voted for Faubus, Grady Forgy wrote,

I, as well as most honorable citizens --certainly the intensely patriotic Anglo-Saxon people of the south heartily agree with you that ours is supposed to be, should be a government of laws...Why in heavens name did you not and why don't you now denounce with firmness the arrogant, arbitrary and tyrannical usurpation of the befuddled Supreme Court of legislative functions of government?¹²³

Hence, segregationist victories in the state legislature joined with the general attitude among whites that desegregation was being forced upon the South, and Little Rock in particular, helped fill the vacuum of political leadership in Little Rock.

As Daisy Bates emphasized in her assessment of the Little Rock Crisis,

However, the majority of Little Rock citizens,

frustrated by fear and violence, was unwilling to check what was happening.¹²⁴

Ardent segregationist groups like the Capital Citizens Council, an affiliate of the White Citizens Councils proliferating throughout the South, and later the Mothers League of Central High School were able to capitalize on this ambivalent crisis of conscience. They simply filled a vacuum in political leadership, moving political discourse further and further to the right, as the date for desegregating Central approached. By August 1957, you were either a segregationist or an integrationist. By September, the month in which the Blossom plan would be implemented, ardent segregationists had a well organized campaign backed by the authority of Governor Faubus, moderates had virtually none, and the African American community stood alone.

On 29 August 1957, just one week before Little Rock schools were scheduled to open, a Mrs. Clyde A. Thomason filed suit in Pulaski Chancery Court seeking a temporary injunction against school desegregation in Little Rock. A member of the recently organized Mothers League of Little Rock Central High School, a group dedicated to preserving segregation, she contended that the school children's safety was in jeopardy. Her lawyers based this on rumors that black and white teenagers were arming themselves. Ironically, according to Bates, few of the members of the Mothers League actually had children attending Central High. The state court granted the stay, but lawyers for

the NAACP appealed the following day, and Judge Davies of the U.S. District Court overruled the lower court. What was significant about the case was the surprise witness, Governor Faubus, who testified on behalf of the petitioner that he feared violence. He would use these same reasons one week later to justify his calling out of the Arkansas National Guard.¹²⁵

On the morning of 2 September 1957, just one day before the scheduled opening of Little Rock schools, Faubus ordered the Arkansas National Guard to surround Central High; and he ordered National Guard Adjunct General Sherman T. Clinger to prevent black students from attending classes at the school:

You are directed to place off limits to white students those schools for colored students and to place off limits to colored students those schools heretofore operated and recently set up for white students.¹²⁶

White students began classes the following day, as did black students who attended segregated Horace Mann High School and other 'black' schools in the city. Only those nine black students who challenged school segregation were denied access to public education under the governor's orders. With the state of Arkansas's blessing, all public schools in Little Rock would remain segregated until further notice.¹²⁷

Under the pretext of maintaining "the peace and good order," Faubus preserved the racial status quo in Little Rock, Arkansas. Dupliciously he explained over the

public air waves that evening,

The mission of the State Militia is to maintain or restore order and to protect the lives and property of citizens. They will act not as segregationists or integrationist, but as soldiers called to active duty to carry out their assigned tasks.¹²⁸

Faubus understood however, as did many whites, that desegregation would cement a shift in power relations between blacks and whites and those between federal and state authorities.

But, I must state here in all sincerity that it is my opinion -- yes, even a conviction, that it will not be possible to restore or to maintain order and protect the lives and property of the citizens if forcible integration is carried out tomorrow in the schools of this community. The inevitable conclusion therefore must be that the schools in Pulaski county, for the time being, must be operated on the same basis as they have been operated in the past.¹²⁹

Hence, like many white southerners, Faubus's response to black demands for equality was a white call to arms in defense of 'our way of life'.

Faubus's actions temporarily lifted the school board's burden of desegregation. Immediately following the governor's actions, the Little Rock School Board issued a statement requesting that those nine black students not attend Central. Blossom explained,

although the Federal Court has ordered integration to proceed, Governor Faubus has said that schools should continue as they have in the past and has stationed troops at Central High School to maintain order.

In view of this situation, we ask that no negro students attempt to attend Central or any white high school until this dilemma is legally resolved.¹³⁰

The school board also returned to federal court the

following day; the board asked for a stay in the execution of the Blossom plan in light of unforeseen circumstances. Legal counsel for the nine students argued that granting a stay would be tantamount to sanctioning the actions of the state of Arkansas. Judge Davies of the 8th Circuit denied the school's petition, citing that,

The evidence presented to this Court reveals no reason why the original plan of integration approved by this Court cannot be carried out forthwith.¹³¹

Nevertheless, the school board made little attempt to carry out its desegregation plan. Carlotta Walls, Jefferson Thomas, Elizabeth Eckford, Thelma Mothershed, Melba Patillo, Ernest Green, Terrance Roberts, Gloria Ray, and Minniejean Brown, the "Little Rock 9", were denied access to Central High for the next three weeks.

Importantly, Faubus's actions moved public discourse on desegregation away from issues of justice and black equality to the relative safety of 'law and order'. Faubus's defensive claims of outside interference and forced integration served in obscuring the monolith of a white power structure in the State of Arkansas. These actions revealed themselves for what they were, not an attempt to preserve public safety, but an angry and desperate stab at preserving white power. The words 'law and order' served as a code for 'maintaining black subordination'.

The Eisenhower administration initially refused to act in Little Rock. In his 3 September 1957 press

conference, President Eisenhower again counselled patience, stressing that

there are very strong emotions on the other side, people that see a picture of a mongrelization of the race, they call it...They are very strong emotions, and we are going to whip this thing in the long run by Americans being true to themselves and not merely the law.¹³²

Eisenhower himself viewed Faubus's actions not as a violation of U.S. law, but as a "road block thrown in the way of [the Blossom] plan." As far as the president was concerned, "the next decision will have to be by the lawyers and jurists."¹³³

The Eisenhower administration acted in Little Rock only after being told to do so by the federal courts. On 9 September, Judge Davies ordered the U.S. Justice Department and Attorney General Herbert Brownell to enter Aaron v. Cooper as amici curiae. The following day, the department filed "an application for preliminary injunction against Governor Faubus and the commanding officers of the National Guard."¹³⁴

The federal government acted cautiously following the District Court's instructions to participate in the Little Rock case. The New York Times reported on the 11th that while on his Newport golf vacation,

President Eisenhower counseled 'patience' today in dealing with the tense school integration dispute in Little rock.¹³⁵

When Eisenhower officials did take an active role in resolving the constitutional crisis, they still hoped Faubus would conform to court orders without federal

intervention. The president met with the governor on 14 September 1957 "to counsel together."¹³⁶

A few day later, on September 20th, Judge Davies ruled that the Arkansas governor's use of the national guard constituted a "violation of the rights of the Negro children under the 14th Amendment' and so ordered,

The three defendants [Governor Faubus and two officers of the Arkansas National Guard], all persons subject to their orders, and 'all persons in active concert, participation or privity with them' are enjoined from obstructing or preventing the entry of eligible Negro students to the school.¹³⁷

Faubus responded that evening by withdrawing the guard, and refusing to assist city authorities in maintaining public order once a mob began to form. As die hard segregationists took to the streets and the mob grew more and more unruly over the next couple days, the Eisenhower administration was forced to become an active participant in resolving the immediate constitutional crisis.

Eisenhower issued a proclamation on 23 September 1957, "commanding all persons engaged in such obstruction of justice to cease and desist therefrom, and to disperse forthwith." Once that failed, and the administration received a direct plea from Mayor Mann for federal help, Eisenhower called out the federal troops.¹³⁸

On 24 September of 1957, Eisenhower ordered the 101st Airborne Division to Little Rock with the express purpose of maintaining law and order and of enforcing the specific lower court order to proceed with the Blossom plan. In a nationally televised speech at the White House

that evening, the president emphasized the limited capacity of their mission:

Now, let me make it very clear that the Federal troops are not being used to relieve local and state authorities of their primary duty to preserve the peace and order of the community. Nor are the troops there for the purpose of taking over the responsibility of the School Board. The running of our school system and the maintenance of peace and order in each of our states are strictly local affairs and the Federal Government does not interfere except in a very few special cases and when requested by one of the several states. In the present case the troops are there, pursuant to law, solely for the purpose of preventing interference with the orders of the Court.¹³⁹

Eisenhower emphasized that the presence of federal troops was necessitated by the state of Arkansas's refusal in maintaining law and order. "If resistance to the Federal Court orders ceases at once," the president continued, "the further presence of Federal Troops will be unnecessary..."¹⁴⁰

For Eisenhower, federal troops in Little Rock were there to defend American 'democracy' and our federal system of government. They were not there to enforce desegregation. He first made this distinction during his speech of the 24th and again, more explicitly, a week later during a press conference. On the 24th, the president reminded all Americans of the damage that the events in Little Rock were causing to the nation.

At a time when we face grave situations abroad because of the hatred that Communism bears toward a system of government based on human rights, it would be difficult to exaggerate the harm that is being done to the prestige and influence, and indeed to the safety, of our nation and the world...Our enemies are gloating over this incident and using it

everywhere to misrepresent our whole nation.¹⁴¹

On 3 October 1957, he reinforced his earlier statements on federal intervention in Little Rock.

They are there to uphold the courts of the land under a law that was passed in 1792, because it was early discovered that unless we supported the courts in whose hands are our freedoms and our liberties, our protection against autocratic government, the kind of government set up by our forefathers simply would not work. That is why they are there, and for no other purpose, it is merely incidental that the problem grew out of the segregation problem.¹⁴²

Thus, federal intervention in Little Rock was necessary to preserve the balance of power, it was not intended to support any specific court orders to desegregate.

The president did not address the issue of black civil rights in his actions from September 3 to September 24, 1957. Administration officials continually interpreted the situation as a constitutional issue, first between the federal courts and the state of Arkansas, and then, when they acted, between the federal government and the state of Arkansas. Shut out were African Americans. Not once did administration officials consult the plaintiff's legal counsel or any black leaders. Roy Wilkins, executive director of the NAACP, expressed his anger over the fact that Eisenhower was meeting with whites and other 'sundry people' while ignoring those most affected:

When you were troubled over the expressed views of Senator Richard B. Russell on the Civil Rights Bill you granted him a hearing. When you were troubled over the actions of Governor Orval E. Faubus of Arkansas you granted him a hearing. The citizens who have a prime and intensely personal interest in both of these situations were not offered an opportunity to be heard. Like all Americans they do

not relish debate and settlement of their destiny by others while they sit in an anteroom.¹⁴³

Thurgood Marshall wrote to Eisenhower and Brownell, requesting

inclusion in any meeting that related to Little Rock, As representative of negro pupils directly involved in litigation being discussed, would suggest you discuss matter with either parents or children involved or their lawyers before discussing matter with sundry people not directly connected with litigation involved.¹⁴⁴

In his telegram, Thurgood Marshall also renewed an NAACP request for a White House conference on desegregation that was originally suggested as early as the spring of 1956. In the end, these requests did not translate into a White House conference on school desegregation.¹⁴⁵

Although the Federal Government restored order in Little Rock and thus ended the immediate political crisis during the 1957-1958 school year, the crisis in race relations not only continued, but also it intensified. For those nine black students who gained access to a better education at Central High, the crisis in race relations gained a more immediate prominence. Following the letter of the Brown decision, the school board, in devising a plan of minimal desegregation, made a distinction between a program of public education and its associated extra-curricular activities.

Certain social functions of our schools which have been desirable in the past may have to be eliminated. (Social functions which would involve race mixing will not be held.). . . The Board of Education authorizes from time to time, on an individual basis,

grade-level social clubs, formed and supervised by parents in co-operation with school faculty. Mixing of the races need not take place in these organizations as they are not a required part of the school program.¹⁴⁶

As far as Blossom and board members were concerned, Brown only applied to classroom instruction, not athletics or other school-related activities and clubs. Thus the 'Little Rock 9' were 'in' Central, but they were not accepted into the larger structure of public education at the school. A federal presence guaranteed these nine students access to an improved public education, traditionally reserved for white, but it did not integrate these students into the larger program, classroom instruction and accompanying clubs and activities.

Besides their exclusion from the social aspects of learning, daily harassments, degradations, and humiliations were inflicted upon the nine students. Daisy Bates estimated that only a small group of white students, 75 to 100 in number, were actually responsible for the harassment. However, a veil of silence among white students and the lack of a stated policy on harassment exasperated the situation. On 12 November 1957, Thomas Jefferson, one of the black students, was knocked unconscious in the corridor. "At the time there were only two National Guardsmen stationed on each floor and none of the 101 troops." However, school officials did not take any immediate action against the white perpetrator, later identified as Hugh Williams, as no white students were

willing to identify him. On this occasion, as on others when a black student complained of harrassment, school officials reminded the student, parents, and Bates, that the perpetrator must admit the offense or the victim must produce two eye witnesses. In this instance, it took the intervention of a captain of the 101st Division to get Williams suspended for three days. Nevertheless, the relative isolation and the harassment of the nine black students increased after 27 November 1957, the day on which regular army personnel were withdrawn from Central High School.¹⁴⁷

Minniejean Brown stood apart from the other black students at Central in how she responded to the incessant provocations. She fought back. As she told Clarence Laws, field secretary for the NAACP, a few days after her suspension for the lunchroom incident,

She went into the school cafeteria . . . [on] Tuesday, December 17. Having obtained her lunch, which she carried on a tray, she started for a table. In doing so she walked between other tables with a small clearance for passage. At one point four boys who saw her approaching moved their chairs back into her path. She waited a moment; the boys moved their chairs back to their original positions clearing the passage. However, as she attempted to move, she was again blocked. The path was again cleared and as she attempted to proceed sideways once more, a chair was pushed into the front of her body. Her tray, which at this point was just above the head of the boy whose chair rested against her, was released causing chili and other items of food to spill upon this boy and another sitting next to him.¹⁴⁸

Only Brown, not the two white students, "was suspended from school for an indefinite period" as a result of the incident. Although Laws hoped that "this could mark a

turning point in the relationship between our students and the whites," harassment actually increased as the federal presence in the school decreased during the 1957-1958 school year.¹⁴⁹

Lack of discipline at Central reached a crisis point by the beginning of February 1958. In a letter to Val Washington, an officer of the National Republican Committee, J. R. Booker, a black lawyer in Little Rock associated with the NAACP, wrote,

We further observe that recent weeks have been punctuated by incident after incident initiated by White students against the 9 Negro students at Central High School, so as to maintain a climate of fear, unrest and intimidation within the institution. . . . We attribute this situation to a too greatly relaxed program of protection on the part of the Federalized National Guards.¹⁵⁰

In early February, Bates also wrote a letter to Washington in which she expressed the "feeling that the lack of discipline within the school is partially responsible for the stepped-up harassment and physical attacks on the children." Still, school officials refused to acknowledge these racial problems. As if these incidents were of an everyday nature, school officials addressed each harassment complaint of black students within the school's general discipline policy.¹⁵¹

The swift actions of school officials in mid-February represented the racial double standard of conduct that existed at Central High School. For days, Minniejean Brown was taunted by a white girl. Each time this student saw her, she would call Brown a "Nigger looking bitch,"

"until Minnie lashed out on her with all the suppressed, pent-up emotions of the previous months with "white trash," stating further that 'if you were not white trash, you would leave me alone.'" (School officials, according to Bates, "never corrected the [white] children concerning them calling her "Nigger.") For this verbal assault, Brown was expelled from Central High School, while the white student received a minor suspension. In an issued statement to the press following the incident, Laws decried this miscarriage of justice:

Considering the hideous mockery and hateful misery to which the nine Negro children have been subjected at Central High School and the almost total lack of positive plans by school officials for coping with the situation, the recommendation of School Superintendent Virgil blossom that Minnie Jean be expelled, is a shocking and cruel miscarriage of justice. . . . After all, ashool [sic] officials were totally aware of the intensity of harassment against Minnie Jean. They even admit that she was provoked to the verbal¹⁵² retaliation for which expulsion is now recommended.

School officials' lack of policy and swiftness in sanctioning black students when they did occasionally retaliate only encouraged segregationist forces, who believed that if enough pressure was applied, the black students would withdraw from the school.¹⁵³

The experiences of the 'Little Rock 9' once they entered Central High, in many ways, paralleled what was happening in the Little Rock community. As federal authorities were belatedly guaranteeing African Americans a minimum of equal rights in education, the white community - the majority of whom heretofore remained silent on the

issue of school desegregation-- began to move further to the right. Rather than tracking down disturbers of the peace, like the white mob resisting desegregation, city officials set out to fix 'uppity' blacks in Little Rock. Those, like eight of the ten aldermen on the Little Rock City Council, were now actively supporting Faubus's actions. In late October 1957 the city council passed an ordinance,

requiring any organization, on request by any elected official of the city, to supply information regarding its membership, donors, amount of contributions, and expenditures. This information would become a matter of public record¹⁵⁴ when it was filed with the City clerk's office.

This kind of legislation, enacted throughout the South, was designed to intimidate the NAACP and other civil rights organizations. By making public the names of contributors and members, many segregationists hoped to thwart the effectiveness of the NAACP via a campaign of economic and social intimidation.¹⁵⁵

School officials too were failing to take any positive steps toward gaining community acceptance of desegregation. In early February 1958, the Little Rock School Board petitioned the federal courts for a delay in carrying out desegregation: "It asked that the Negro pupils currently enrolled be removed and that integration be postponed until January mid-term of 1961." In its petition, the school board presented itself as the helpless victim in a no win situation.

The District now finds itself in a most difficult

position in providing satisfactory education for its pupils. It has the responsibility of operating under the phase plan of integration as directed by this court, and yet it has no power to prevent interference with the operations of its schools under the terms of the plan.¹⁵⁶

However, the school board was not helpless. It could have accepted the failure of its desegregation plan, and it could have begun developing a more comprehensive approach, involving the entire Little Rock community, as the NAACP and the Arkansas Council on Human Rights had suggested as early as 1955.

A day of prayer, called by the ministers of eighty-five churches in the Little Rock area, was indictive of the slow shift in public discourse, away from school segregation to maintenance of social stability. The ministers' only public act since the school board's announcement on school desegregation, prayer services were held throughout the city on 12 October 1957. These meetings however, were not in support of school desegregation, nor were they meetings in which ministers would preach on the moral responsibility of Christians to end an immoral and unjust legal practice. The ministers were ". . . calling for observance of 'law and order and good will among men.'" Too timid or simply unwilling to address Christian immorality of segregation,

the churchmen do not plan to take sides in the matter. A spokesperson said they are trying to find a solution by starting on their knees.¹⁵⁷

With the exception of Ogdon Dunbar, Jr., no other white religious leader in Little Rock was so public in his

condemnation of segregation. As late as March 1959, these religious leaders had refused to address directly the issue of segregation. In a letter to Dr. Edwin Dahlberg, president of the National Council of Churches, Vivian L. Brewer wrote,

From the very beginning of our critical school situation, we waited hopefully but in vain for a statement from the church. We felt then and feel now that a statement such as the enclosed "Out of Conviction" signed by 312 ministers of Greater Atlanta, issued by the ministers of Greater Little Rock would immediately turn the tide of public opinion. . .¹⁵⁸ But no united statement has been forthcoming.

As a group, the ministers of Little Rock never did take a public stand on school segregation.¹⁵⁹

As federal intervention at Central ended at the completion of the school year, the Arkansas state legislature in Little Rock aided segregationist forces by passing a host of anti-desegregation legislation in the spring and summer of 1958. The most damaging of these was Act 4. Act 4 empowered the governor to close any school, slated for integration under court order, in the state of Arkansas. Act 4 also provided a local referendum option on which communities could vote to re-open schools and thus allow desegregation, or close them and thus prevent court-ordered desegregation. Although Faubus did close the high schools of Little Rock, it was the majority of white voters who sanctioned his action in a special "Segregation Versus Integration School Election" held on 27 September 1958. A majority of the white citizens of Little Rock could not

accept even limited desegregation of 'their' public schools by the fall of 1958. 19,470 voters opted for school closing, while only 7,651 voted in favor of opening desegregated schools. Hence, as Eisenhower and his attorney general, William Rogers, denied they had any constitutional authority to prevent the school closings, high schools in Little Rock remained closed for the 1958-1959 academic year and African Americans once again stood alone in their fight for equal rights.¹⁶⁰

In 1959, civic leaders in Little Rock, businessmen associated with the Chamber of Commerce, finally acted. However, like the school board which planned only a bare minimum desegregation to satisfy the psychic needs of whites, they acted out of self-interest. These business leaders realized that the events of Little Rock from 1957 to 1959 were causing serious economic disruption in the Little Rock metropolitan area. Between 1950 and 1957, 40 new industrial plants relocated to the Little Rock area; none moved in between 1958 and 1961. According to a January 1959 study commissioned by the Social and Economic Issues Committee of the Little Rock branch of the American Association of University Women, called "Effect of the Little Rock School Situation on Local Business," the school situation did affect business activity. Of 85 businessmen interviewed, 44 acknowledged that the school situation had adversely affected their business, while only 6 said that it had a favorable effect on their business activity. (Of

those 6, 2 were moving companies.) As one real estate/insurance agent responded:

It has very definitely hurt the real estate business -- just about killed it, as a matter of fact. That's particularly in the house sales. First, we're not getting any new people into Little Rock. (2) A lot of them are moving out -- particularly engineers, and people like that with industrial plants here. The minute ¹⁶¹ it starts affecting their children they leave.

Some of those who claimed the school situation had no effect on their businesses acknowledged that many of their accounts were outside of the Little Rock area. The AAUW concluded that

it is our opinion that present prosperity is due to the expansion which took place prior to the school crisis. Since the school crisis, no new business has moved ¹⁶² into Little Rock, which bodes ill for the future.

It was this concern that propelled civic leaders in Little Rock to initiate a campaign for school reopening under a plan of measured and minimum desegregation. Thus the white leadership in Little Rock was willing to take action in the school situation only when it directly affected them, economically, politically, and socially. They, however, were still unwilling to address the crisis in race relations. Consequently, two years after schools reopened, the number of black students in the 1961-1962 school year attending previously whites-only senior and junior highs schools increased to a mere 45. The school board assigned only 78 black students to white-identified schools by the 1963-1964 school year.¹⁶³

CONCLUSIONS

Integration with one's context, as distinguished from adaptation, is a distinctly human activity. Integration results from the capacity to adapt oneself to reality plus the critical capacity to make choices and transform reality. To the extent that man loses his ability to make choices and is subjected to the choices of others, to the extent that his decisions are no longer his own because they result from external prescriptions, he is no longer integrated. . . .

The integrated person is person as Subject. In contrast, the adaptive person is person as object, adaptation representing at most a weak form of self defense. If man is incapable of changing reality, he adjusts himself instead. Adaptation is behavior characteristic of the animal sphere; exhibited by man, it is symptomatic of his dehumanization. Throughout history men have attempted to overcome the factors which make them accomodate or adjust, in a struggle--constantly threatened by oppression--to attain their full humanity.

Paulo Freire¹⁶⁴

The history of desegregation in Little Rock, Arkansas, 1954-1964, was a history of white hegemony over black Americans. At its very core, it was a record of white racism and of white attempts to maintain black subordination. Equally as important, the process of desegregation in Little Rock was also a part of a larger post-World War II black freedom movement in the United States, in which black Americans and white visionaries

challenged and cracked a system of white domination. What Bell Hooks wrote in her book, Talking Back, in regards to feminist politics, also applies to black efforts in Little Rock following the Brown decision.

Even in the face of powerful structures of domination, remains possible for each of us, especially those of us who are members of oppressed and/or exploited groups as well as those radical visionaries who may have race, class, and sex privileges, to define and determine alternative standards, to decide on the nature and extent of compromise.
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Black Americans in Little Rock did offer a more inclusive meaning of American citizenship, a new meaning that in this author's opinion, has yet to be fully recognized by the white majority in the United States.

Nevertheless, white economic, political, and social domination in Little Rock forced blacks to compromise on their vision. Nine black students attending classes under the protection of 10,000 federal troops, was not their vision. As far as the federal courts and the local school board were concerned though, Central High School was now desegregated; 9 out of a total black high school student population of 1,055 constituted desegregation on the high school level in the 1957-1958 academic year.

The black community over the next 15 years continued to press, not just for greater desegregation, but also for a greater involvement in the desegregation process. It would take another 15 years to desegregate fully Little Rock's high schools. The school committee proposed seven plans for school desegregation. Each was

either soundly defeated by referendum or found inadequate by the federal courts. Little Rock's public schools were still identifiably racially segregated in 1972. Only in 1973, when "the school district and the minority community agreed to work together toward bringing about complete desegregation of the schools," were student populations consistent with the idea of racial balance in public schools. However, this achievement was not without its drawbacks for the black community. As the United States Commission on Civil Rights concluded in its report, "School Desegregation in Little Rock, Arkansas" (1977),

The black community feels that throughout desegregation it has borne the largest share of the burden--for example, all-black rather than all-white schools were closed. White flight in the late 1960s has increased the degree of residential segregation in the city. Black administrators and teachers continue to complain that they receive unequal treatment and opportunity. Black parents dissatisfied with the unequal burden of busing have nonetheless accepted busing because it provides opportunities for their children to attend better schools.¹⁶⁶

In 1976, a generation later, black citizens of Little Rock achieved their vision of racially balanced public schools, if not a racially balanced society.¹⁶⁷

NOTES

1. "The New Negro," 5-2-58 (7), File 4, Box 3, Papers of Daisy Bates, State Archives of the State of Wisconsin.

2. Congressional Record, Vol. 102: Part 4 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), p. 4460. Congressional Record, Vol. 100: Part 6, 7254. "The New Negro" (1), Bates, SASW.

3. "The New Negro" (5), Bates, SASW. Bates also recounted in this speech how, upon hearing a description of the growing crowd outside Central High School, none of the students expressed any reservations about what they were doing: "While we waited, the radio gave a vivid description of the mob that had grown larger in number, and more vicious in its attitude. Yet, these children never once said, 'Maybe we should not go today.'" Ibid.

4. Daisy Bates, The Long Shadow of Little Rock (New York: David McKay Company, Inc, 1962); Virgil Blossom, It Has Happened Here (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959); Harry Ashmore, Chapter 14: "The Faubus Era" in Arkansas (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1978); Dale Alford, The Case of the Sleeping People (Little Rock: privately printed, 1959).

5. Jack M. Bloom, Class, Race, & the Civil Rights Movement (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); Taylor Branch, Parting the Waters (New York: Simon & Schuster Inc, 1988); Richard Kluger, Simple Justice (New York: Random House, 1975); Irving Spitzberg, Racial Politics in Little Rock 1954-1964 (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1987). See also, Ronald Alan Schlundt, Chapter V: "The Justice Department and the White House--I: Desegregation of Schools and the Little Rock Crisis" in "Civil Rights in the Eisenhower Years" (Ph.D. Diss., Rice University, 1973), 129-175; M. Zabezensky, "To Safeguard the Peace: Federal Judiciary Legitimization of Autonomous Presidential Actions," (Ph.D. Diss., Arkansas State University, 1976), 165-214. All of the above, among others, frame the situation in Little Rock following the Brown decision either fully or partly as a political or constitutional crisis.

6. Virgil Blossom, It Happened Here (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), 4.

7. Ibid., 198.

8. Ibid., 194-202.
9. Bates, The Long Shadow. . ., 58.
10. Ibid., 220.
11. Spitzberg, Racial Politics in Little Rock, 1954-1964 (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1987), 57.
12. Ibid., 188-191.
13. See Spitzberg, Part I: "Narrative" in Racial Politics in Little Rock, 1954-1964, 12-181.
14. Ronald Alan Schlundt, "Civil Rights Policies in the Eisenhower Years," (Ph.D. Diss., Rice University, 1973), 144.
15. "Eisenhower Asks For 'Moderation' on Segregation," New York Times, 15 March 1956, 1.
16. "Negroes Criticize 'Patience' Advice," New York Times, 14 May 1958, 1.
17. Gerald Gunther, Constitutional Law, 11th ed. (Mineola: The Foundation Press, Inc., 1985), 633. The Brown case was actually four different suits grouped together: These cases included Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka; Briggs v. Elliot, SC; Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County, VA; and Gebhart v. Belton, DE. Lawyers for the black children were arguing that segregation in public schools was a violation of the equal protection of laws clause under the Fourteenth Amendment. Supreme Court Reporter, Vol.74 (St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1954), 687-688.
18. In an earlier case, Cumming v. County Board of Education (1899), African-American taxpayers sought a court injunction against the local school board that would prohibit the operating of a whites-only high school in the absence of a black-only high school. In another case, Gong Lum v. Rice (1927), at issue was not the constitutionality of the separate but equal doctrine, but the decision of school authorities to classify a Chinese-American student as a "Negro" in the context of the doctrine. Each case assumed the constitutionality of the doctrine of "separate but equal." Accordingly, the Court based its decisions on the 'tangible' absence of equality in the former, and on the authority of the state to regulate public education in the later case. Gunther, 636.
19. Ibid., 636.
20. Gunther, 636-637. Richard Kluger, Simple Justice (New York: Random House, 1977), 267-269, 274-278.

21. Supreme Court Reporter, Vol. 74, 692.

22. Kluger, 614-616; Gunther, 635-638; Supreme Court Reporter, Vol. 74, 691-695.

23. Ronald Alan Schlundt, "Civil Rights Policies in the Eisenhower Years" (Ph.D. Diss., Rice University, 1973), 172-173. Using data on school desegregation (from 1954 to 1961) collected by the Southern Education Reporting Service, Schlundt also found that more than half of the black student population of only two states, West Virginia and Delaware, were enrolled in schools also attended by whites. These findings led Schlundt to the conclusion: "More than seven years after the first Brown decision declared "separate but equal" schools unconstitutional, educational desegregation was still only a dream for virtually all black students in the South." Ibid., 173.

24. Gerald Walker, "Little Rock -- Five Years Later" in Redbook, November 1962 (125), File 5, Box 4, Bates, SASW. In the 1961-1962 school year, 15,403 white students and 6,155 blacks students were attending public schools in Little Rock. Slightly more than 1% (78 students) of those black students were expected to attend schools with white students in the 1962-1963 school year. Ibid.

25. The Supreme Court initially heard arguments in the consolidated cases known as Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka in December 1952. These cases were reargued the following December, and the Court's decision was handed down in May of 1954. In its May ruling, known legally as Brown I, the Court unanimously declared segregated public schools unconstitutional. This ruling however, did not provide any implementation orders for carrying out the court's decision. Instead, the Court requested all those involved, including the United States Government, to submit implementation plans that could guide the Court in its implementation ruling. 11 April 1955 was the date set for argument on implementation. The Supreme Court decided the implementation phase of Brown, known legally as Brown II, in May 1955.

26. Supreme Court Reporter, Vol. 74, 690-691.

27. Ibid., 691.

28. Supreme Court Reporter, Vol. 75 (St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1955), 756.

29. Ibid., 753-757.

30. Kluger, 735.

31. Ibid., 736.

32. Ibid., 736.
33. Kluger, 756.
34. Ibid., 756.
35. Ibid., 744.
36. Ibid., 744-745.
37. Supreme Court Reporter, Vol. 74, 687-688 [note #1].
38. Kluger, 80.
39. Kluger, 700-707. In the doll experiments, the Clarks used four identical dolls, two of them brown and two white. They asked their subjects, black children between the ages of three and seven years old, a series of questions, including "Give me the doll that looks bad" and "Give me the doll that is a nice color." In each case, the majority of children "indicated an unmistakable preference for the white doll and a rejection of the brown doll." Ibid., pp. 317-318. For a full discussion of the Clarks' research and the impact of segregation on children, see Chapter 14: "The Doll Man and Other Experts" Ibid.
40. Kluger, 726-727.
41. Ibid., 727-736.
42. Congressional Record, Vol. 100: Part 6 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1954), 7251.
43. Ibid., 7257.
44. Ibid., 7255.
45. Ibid., 7256.
46. Ibid., 7256.
47. Congressional Record, Vol. 100: Part 6, 7251.
48. Ibid., 7251.
49. Ibid., 7255.
50. Ibid., 7257.
51. Schlundt, 135-136.
52. Congressional Record, Vol. 102: Part 4 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), 4460.

53. Ibid., 4460. All member of the Arkansas congressional delegation --including Brooks Hays-- signed the manifesto: Senators John McClellan and J.W. Fulbright; Representatives E. C. Gatherings, Wilbur Mills, James Trimble, Oren Harris, Brooks Hays, and W. F. Norrell.
54. Ibid., 4462.
55. Congressional Record, Vol. 100: Part 6, 7254.
56. Congressional Record, Vol. 102: Part 4, 4462.
57. Ibid., 4462.
58. Ibid., 4462.
59. Ibid., 4463.
60. Ibid., 4463.
61. Log of Telephone Calls, 9-11-57, Box 27, DDE Diary Series, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower as President (PDDEP), Dwight D. Eisenhower Library.
62. New York Times article dated 15 March 1956, Box 22, Papers of Brooks Hays, John F. Kennedy Library.
63. M. Zabezensky, "To Safeguard the Peace: Federal Judiciary Legitimization of Autonomous Presidential Actions," (Ph.D. Diss., Arkansas State University, 1976), 175 [note]; Ibid., 181.
64. Schlundt, 136-139. According to Schlundt, the Justice Department intervened in only two secondary school desegregation cases between 1954 and 1957. In each, the Justice Department stepped in only after explicitly being asked to do so. Ibid., 139.
65. Schlundt, 138. Zabezensky, 169.
66. Memorandum: Eisenhower on Segregation and Little Rock (3), Box 23, DNC Clippings file: Eisenhower Clippings, 1945-1963, Box 23, Records of Democratic National Committee #2, JFK.
67. Press Conference, 9-3-57, File 121-3, Box 6, Press Conference Series, PDDEP, DDE.
68. Schlundt, 139.
69. "The New Negro" (6), Bates, SASW.
70. Ibid., 6.

71. The Research Guide to the Papers of Daisy Bates (1-2), Bates, SASW.

72. Report of Dr. Lee (3), File 12, Box 47, RG 6, Papers of the National Council of Churches, Presbyterian Historical Society; Spot Report: Arkansas, 10-11-57, Box 16, White House Office Files, Records of White House Office, Office of Staff Secretary, DDE.

Dr. J. Oscar Lee, an African American official of the National Council of Churches on a visit to Little Rock in the fall of 1957 recognized the futility of white gestures in bi-racial meetings so long as these were predicated on paternalistic terms: "they need to know that the day of paternalism is past." Report of Dr. Lee, 3, NCC, PHS.

73. Bates to U.S. Justice Department, 7-8-59, File 11, Box 4, Bates, SASW.

74. Ibid.; Research Guide to Papers of Daisy Bates, 1-2; "Was It Worth It...?" (1-4), File 6, Box 3, Bates, SASW.

75. "A Study of Courage" by Earnest Campbell and Thomas Pettigrew, File 11, Box 5, Bates, SASW.

76. Ibid.; Barry to Lee, 6-16-58, NCC, PHS. The Ogdons' teenage son David also publicly took a stand against segregation and black oppression. He too paid the price as he was ostracized and attacked by his peers. Soon after the events of the 1957-1958 school year, David committed suicide. Bates, The Long Shadow . . ., 195.

77. Virgil Blossom, 2.

78. "The New Negro" (1), Bates, SASW.

79. Jack Bloom, Class, Race, & The Civil Rights Movement (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 111; "Little Rock -- Five Years Later" in Redbook, November 1962 (132), File 5, Box 4, Bates, SASW.

80. Bureau of the Census, 1950 Census of Population, Vol II: Part 4 (Washington, U.S. Printing Office, 1952), 4-9, 4-130, 4-201. Spitzberg, 7.

81. Ibid., 42.

82. Ibid., 38.

83. Statement of the Little Rock Board of Education, 5-23-54 as it appeared in the Arkansas Gazette, File 1, Box 6, Bates, SASW.

84. Ibid.
85. Blossom, 11-12.
86. Bates, The Long Shadow. . ., 48-49.
87. Ibid., 3, 48-49; Ibid., 48.
88. Telephone Interview, 10-4-57, File 1, Box 5, Bates, SASW.
89. Ibid. Brownell to Eisenhower, 11-7-57, Box 8, Administrative Series, PDDEP, DDE. Report of History of Litigation in the Little Rock, Arkansas, Public School Desegregation Matter, Box 4, Papers of Henry McPhee, DDE.
90. Telephone Interview, 10-4-57, Bates, SASW.
91. "Our Reason for Appeal," File 11, File 11, Bates, SASW.
92. Ibid.
93. Brownell to Eisenhower, 11-7-57, PDDEP, DDE. Telephone Interview, 10-4-57, Bates, SASW; Bates, The Long Shadow. . ., 50-52.
94. Spitzberg, 44-45; Colbert S. Cartwright, "Lesson from Little Rock" in The Christian Century, Box 733, Official File, Records of Dwight D. Eisenhower as President (RDDEP), DDE.
95. Colbert S. Cartwright, "Lesson from Little Rock," RDDEP, DDE.
96. Blossom, 15.
97. Ibid., 13-15; Spitzberg, 44-45; Colbert S. Cartwright, "Lesson from Little Rock," RDDEP, DDE.
98. Blossom, 15.
99. Ibid. 13.
100. Spitzberg, 45; Colbert S. Cartwright, "Lesson from Little Rock," RDDEP, DDE.
101. Ibid.
102. Ibid. Spitzberg, 175.
103. Spitzberg, 44-45.
104. Blossom, 21. Bates, The Long Shadow. . ., 53.
105. Blossom, 16.

106. Ibid., 15-16; Brownell to Eisenhower, 11-7-57, PDDEP, DDE.

107. Blossom, 23.

108. Ibid., 16-20.

109. 1957 figures for students in each high school attendance zone are as follows:

SCHOOL	AREA	BLACK	WHITE
TOTAL			
Horace Mann 959	No. 1	533	426
Central High 2,651	No. 2	516	2,135
Hall High 706	No. 3	6	700

SOURCE: Blossom, p.17.

As Virgil Blossom wrote: "...we knew that in view of the circumstances all of the white students in Area No. 1 would desire to transfer to Area No. 2 so they could continue to attend Central High. We believed, correctly, that the six Negro students in Area No. 3 would voluntarily transfer to Horace Mann. The question was whether a large majority of the Negro students in Area No. 2 would transfer to Horace Mann, thus permitting us to start the integration program by having only a few Negro students among the 2,000 attending Central High." Their concerns over whether or not blacks in Area No. 2 would make the 'appropriate' decision ended however, with the implementation of the interview scheme. Ibid., 17-18.

110. Blossom, 18-19.

111. Ibid., 20.

112. Ibid., 20-21.

113. Blossom, 20.

114. Ibid.

115. Blossom, 19-20; Bates, The Long Shadow. . ., 159-160; Gerald Walker, "Little Rock --Five Years Later" (132), Bates, SASW.

116. Cartwright, "Lesson from Little Rock," RDDEP, DDE.
117. Spitzberg, 51.
118. Blossom, 12-13.
119. Ibid. Spitzberg, 52-54.
120. Spitzberg, 61; Bates, The Long Shadow. . ., 53-56. The segregationists' strength was evident when, "despite the protest of thousands of citizens," the bills passed the Arkansas House of Representatives on a vote of 88 to 1. Ibid.
121. Edmondson to Eisenhower, 8-23-58, Box 3, Bulk Mail #2, RDDEP, DDE.
122. Anonymous to Eisenhower, 10-7-58, Box 3, Bulk Mail #2, RDDEP, DDE.
123. Forgy to Eisenhower (U.D.), Box 3, Bulk Mail #2, RDDEP, DDE.
124. Bates, The Long Shadow. . ., 112.
125. History of the Litigation in the Little Rock, Ark... (1), McPhee, DDE; Bates, The Long Shadow. . ., 56-57.
126. Brownell to Eisenhower, 11-7-57, 6, PDDEP, DDE.
127. Ibid.
128. Brownell to Eisenhower, 11-7-57, 4, PDDEP, DDE.
129. Ibid.
130. "History of Litigation in the Little Rock, Arkansas..." (2), McPhee, DDE.
131. Brownell to Eisenhower, 11-7-57 (5), PDDEP, DDE.
132. Press Conference, 9-3-57, PDDEP, DDE.
133. Ibid.
134. Ibid., 4.
135. New York Times, 11 September 1957, 1.
136. Ibid.; Press Release, 9-11-57, Box 22, DNC #2, JFK.
137. "History of Litigation in the Little Rock..." (6), McPhee, DDE.

138. Ibid., 4-6; Press Release, 9-23-57, Box 22, DNC Clippings File, DNC #2, JFK.

139. Text of President's Speech, 9-24-57, Box 22, DNC #2, JFK.

140. Ibid.

141. Ibid.

142. Press conference, 10-3-57, File #122, Box 6, Press Conference Series, PDDEP, DDE.

143. Wilkins to Eisenhower (U.D.), Box 6, Papers of James Hagerty, DDE.

144. Marshall to Eisenhower (N.D.), Box 6, Hagerty, DDE.

145. Ibid.

146. Blossom, 41-42.

147. Val Washington to Maxwell Rabb, 14 November 1957, Box 11, Papers of Federic Morrow, Bates, SASW; "Little Rock Situation," 19 November 1957, Box 84, Hays, JFK.

148. Laws to Wilkins, 18 December 1957, File 11, Box 4, Bates, SASW.

149. Ibid. Laws attributed "the increased pressure against the students" that followed the withdrawal of the 101st Division to the following six factors:

1. The failure of the justice department to take action against those involved in mob violence at the school in September.
2. Dismissal of charges or suspension of sentences against mob leaders by the municipal judge [in Little Rock].
3. Failure of school officials to enunciate a firm policy regarding the behavior pattern of white students toward the Negroes at Central High School.
4. The false and inflammatory utterances by Governor Faubus and other segregationists.
5. The silence of the so-called responsible citizens of the community on the legal and moral aspects of school segregation.
6. The apparent feeling on the part of segregationists that the students will withdraw voluntarily if enough

pressure is exerted upon them.

Laws also could have added the fact that many in the federalized Arkansas National Guard stationed at Central were themselves Arkansan segregationists. Ibid.

150. Booker to Washington, 5 February 1958, Box 11, Papers of Frederic Morrow, DDE.

151. Bates to Washinton, Box 11, Morrow, DDE.

152. "Statement Issued by Clarence Laws," 12 February 1958, File 11, Box 4, Bates, SASW.

153. "The New Negro" (3-4), Bates, SASW. Following her expulsion, Minniejean Brown accepted a scholarship to attend New Linclon School in New York City. "From the Office of L. C. Bates, Field Secretary, NAACP" (u.d.), File 11, Box 4, Bates, SASW.

154. Bates, The Long Shadow of. . ., 108.

155. Powell to Washington, 11 October 1957, Box 11, Morrow, DDE. Bates, The Long Shadow. . ., 116; Ibid., 107-108. On 1 November 1957, Bates and other NAACP officials were arrested and fined for violating the ordinance. They were convicted of violating the city ordinance in the state courts, but these convictions were later overturned in the federal courts. Nevertheless, this ordinance aided segregationist in the short-term as they stepped up their terror campaign on Little Rock's black community. Ibid., 107-112.

156. "Substitute Petition for Aaron v. Cooper," File 1, Box 6, Bates, SASW.

157. "Spot Report: Arkansas," 11 October 1957, Box 16, White House Series, PDDEP, DDE.

158. Brewer to Dahlberg, 12 March 1959, File 47, Box 12, NCC (RG 6), PHS.

159. "Spot Report: Arkansas," 11 October 1957, Box 16, White House Series, PDDEP, DDE.

160. Spitzberg, 82-82; Ibid., 85; Dale Alford, The Case of the Sleeping People (Little Rock: privately published, 1959), 62, 70-79 passim.

161. "Effect of the Little Rock School Situation on Local Business," 24 January 1959, Box 84, Hays, JFK.

162. Ibid.

163. Ibid.; Walker, "Little Rock -- Five Years Later" (125), Bates, SASW. See Spitzberg, "Part I: Narrative" in Racial Politics in Little Rock, 1954-1964, 12-181, for more information on Little Rock's civic leaders and their actions following school closings.

164. Paulo Freire, Education for Critical Consciousness (New York: Seabury Press, 1973), 4-5.

165. Bell Hooks, Talking Back (Boston: South End Press, 1989), 81.

166. Williams et al. Chapter IX: "Contemporary Arkansas" in A Documentary History of Arkansas (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas, 1984), 306.

167. Ibid., 302-206.

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Papers of E. Federic Morrow
Records of White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary

John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library (Boston, MA)

Records of Democratic National Committee #2
Papers of Brooks Hays

Presbyterian Historical Archives (Philadelphia, PA)

Papers of the National Council of Churches, RG 6

State Archives of the State of Wisconsin (Madison, WI)

Papers of Daisy Bates
Papers of Scott M. Cutlip (Special Collections)

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