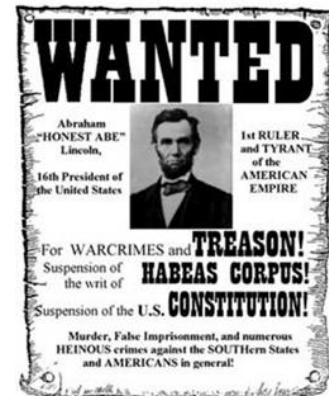


Council of Conservative Citizens

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INTRODUCTION

The St. Louis-based Council of Conservative Citizens traces its roots directly to the racist, anti-integrationist White Citizens' Councils of the 1950s and 1960s. Its current leader, attorney Gordon Lee Baum, was an organizer for the WCC and built the Council of Conservative Citizens in part from the old group's mailing lists. Like its predecessor, the CCC inflames fears and resentments, particularly among Southern whites, with regard to black-on-white crime, nonwhite immigration, attacks on the Confederate flag and other issues related to "traditional" Southern culture. Although the group claims not to be racist, its leaders traffic with other white supremacist groups and its publications, Web sites and meetings all promote the purportedly innate superiority of whites. Despite its record, the CCC has been successful in drawing southern politicians to its events: the 1998 revelation that then Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott had been a frequent speaker before the group drew substantial media attention. Mississippi governor Haley Barbour, Mississippi state senators and several state representatives have appeared in recent years.



CCC's online "wanted" poster of Abraham Lincoln

Quick Profile

Founded: 1985

Headquarters: St. Louis

Leader: Gordon Lee Baum

Publication: *The Citizens Informer* (circulation of 20,000)

Background: Established by former activists in the segregationist White Citizens' Councils

Ideology: White supremacy, white separatism

Outreach: Mass mailings, prison newsletter

Approach: Advances its ideology by inflaming fears and resentments, among Southern whites particularly, with regard to black-on-white crime, non-white immigration, attacks on the public display of the Confederate flag, and other issues related to "traditional" Southern culture.

Connections: Several mainstream figures have spoken at or attended CCC meetings, including Senator Trent Lott; Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour; Mississippi state senators Gary Jackson and Dean Kirby; and several Mississippi state representatives. Former governors Guy Hunt of Alabama and Kirk Fordice of Mississippi also spoke at CCC meetings.

Extremist associations: David Duke, Mark Cotterill, Chris Temple, Jared Taylor, Paul Fromm



BIGOTRY AS POLITICS

Considerably more polished than traditional extremist groups, the Council of Conservative Citizens propounds its bigotry in the guise of hot-button conservative advocacy. Striking hard-right positions on such contentious issues as immigration, gun control and affirmative action, the organization has insinuated itself into the mainstream successfully enough to attract a number of prominent conservative politicians to its gatherings. However, an examination of the origins, membership and publications of the CCC suggests that it remains, despite its assertions to the contrary, squarely within Southern racist traditions. While not every CCC chapter may be equally extreme, all are founded on anti-minority bigotry.

ROOTS IN JIM CROW

The roots of the CCC rest in white opposition to integration during the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. The group is a successor to the Citizens' Councils of America (originally configured as the White Citizens' Councils), an overtly racist organization formed in the 1950s in reaction to the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision outlawing school segregation. Trumpeting the "Southern way of life," the CCA used a traditionalist rhetoric that appealed to better-mannered, more discreet racists; while the Klan burned crosses, the CCA relied on political and economic pressure.

The first Citizens Council was founded on July 11, 1954, in Indianola, Mississippi, by Robert B. Patterson (a current member of the CCC and former editor of its publication, *The Citizens Informer*). It formed committees that screened local political candidates to ensure they viewed "the negro vote" with appropriate disapproval, promoted "the advantages of segregation and the dangers of integration" and coordinated the application of economic pressure. The organization grew quickly, attracting members from across the South and beyond; by August 1955, Patterson's membership list exceeded 60,000 people and included 253 Councils. In August 1956, Citizens' Councils in 30 states came together to form the Citizens' Councils of America. Its goals were to preserve the "natural rights" of racial separation and "the maintenance of our States' Rights to regulate public health, morals, marriage, education, peace and good order in the States, under the Constitution of the United States."

The CCA tried to recruit public and civic leaders for membership. Organizers wanted to demonstrate that their views represented those of the modern and mainstream white South, not those of a rural, uneducated fringe. For the most part, its publicists avoided the coarser formulations of race-hatred associated with such groups as the Klan, but the white supremacy of the Council movement was nonetheless unmistakable and unapologetic. In the widely popular tract *Black Monday*, for instance, Mississippi State Supreme Court Justice Thomas P. Brady wrote, "Whenever and wherever the white man has drunk the cup of black hemlock, whenever and wherever his blood has been infused with the blood of the negro, the white man, his intellect and culture have died." Many of Brady's readers were state representatives, attorneys, local bank presidents and prominent farmers, leading historian Robert Hart to observe that "most membership lists read like a Chamber of Commerce."

While its membership reflected Main Street, the movement was not notably infused with civic spirit. It intimidated and harassed blacks involved in the civil rights movement and printed and distributed pamphlets containing inflammatory racist speeches by segregationists. A typical CCA pamphlet like "Segregation and the South" described African Americans as having "an inherent deficiency in mental ability" and "a natural indolence." Another pamphlet, "The Ugly Truth About the NAACP," spread the

accusation, common at the time among opponents of integration, that this organization was controlled by Communists intent on destroying America.

As African Americans began to win greater civil rights during the 1960s and into the 1970s, however, and became more politically active and influential, Southern states and their elected officials gradually liberalized. Losing its cultural struggle, the movement sharply declined, becoming moribund by the late 1970s. Still, it is likely that many members of the CCA retained their racist views after the organization's decline -- a circumstance that would eventually allow for its rebirth.

THE SONG REMAINS THE SAME

In 1985, 30 men met in Atlanta, Georgia, among them Robert Patterson; St. Louis attorney and former CCA Midwest field organizer Gordon Lee Baum; and William Lord, another former CCA organizer. Brought together by their frustration with government "giveaway programs, special preferences and quotas, crack-related crime and single mothers and third generation welfare mothers dependent on government checks and food stamps," they saw the opportunity to renovate the Council movement. Using old Citizens' Council mailing lists, they established a new organization, the Council of Conservative Citizens, and named Baum as chief executive. The group rapidly gained adherents -- including many former CCA members -- and by 1999, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center, numbered 15,000 members in more than 20 states; it has been particularly active in Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia.

The beliefs of the CCC fall within the racially charged tradition of its predecessor but reflect the contemporary fears of its constituency. Instead of segregation, CCC members focus on issues like interracial marriage, which the group calls "mongrelization of the races"; black-on-white violence; and the demise of white Southern pride and culture, best exemplified in the debate about the Confederate flag. Additionally, in its heightened rhetoric about the expropriation of states' rights by the federal government and by an impending "New World Order," the CCC shares some of the conspiratorial fears of modern militia groups and other right-wing conspiracy theorists.

CCC activists have used the White Citizens' Councils' tactic of economic pressure, as well. The group's North Carolina chapter, for instance, inflamed anxieties about Hispanic immigration by organizing protests in September and December of 1999 in Wilkesboro because the local Tyson Foods plant allegedly hired illegal immigrants. CCC Eastern Regional Director A.J. Barker organized the protests, according to the local newspaper, both of which were held in front of the town's Federal Building and attracted about 40 protesters each. CCC later claimed that because of the group's efforts Tyson fired several illegal workers (this claim is not verifiable), and that the publicity elicited by the protests had drawn new members to the chapter.

Both on its national and chapter Web sites and in its primary publication, *The Citizens Informer*, CCC's belief in white superiority and its derision of nonwhites, particularly African Americans, are delineated without apology. The Web site of the Arkansas chapter, for instance, elaborates on the toll that interracial marriage ostensibly takes on "European-American culture": it is totally unacceptable, the site states, "to think that we should voluntarily commit cultural and racial abdication." On the group's California site, contributor Peter Anthony states, "...just as breeds of dogs are different, races of people are different as well. And just as no two cultures created by different Races are even remotely alike, no two races have the same destiny in the eyes of God." Anthony also waxes nostalgic for the bygone era "when the Klan could

'march on Washington' to the cheers of an adoring public, when race-mixing and homosexuality were taboo, when racial separation was the norm."

In the same vein, the national Web site has posted photos of African Americans during the March 2001 Mardi Gras riots in Seattle over captions that referred to "wild blacks" and "animal control" (a picture of two white people apparently using pepper spray: "Keeping the wildlife at bay until animal control arrives"). A photograph of an African American apparently attempting to kick a white person was captioned, "Dancing with the Dark." Nearby links had titles like "Beautiful white girl bludgeoned to death by black soldier."

CAPTURE THE FLAG

The Confederate flag's deeply rooted connection to white Southern pride and identity -- shared throughout the South -- has made it a powerful rallying point for the CCC since the early 1990s, and the controversy over its display has been a useful recruiting tool, attracting both conservatives and extremists to the organization. The main CCC Web site frames the issue as one of protecting and defending "Southern Heritage" and includes announcements for all upcoming protests as well as links to articles addressing the various debates across the South about the flag's display. A November 1999 article in the Augusta (Ga.) Chronicle noted that the CCC had protested at the state capitol 15 times, and while unsuccessful there, its aims were recently realized in Mississippi, where more than 60% of voters chose to retain the Confederate symbol in their state flag.

When the N.A.A.C.P. urged African Americans in particular not to vacation in South Carolina until the Confederate flag was removed from the Statehouse, the CCC encouraged its constituents to take advantage of the absence of African American tourists; it posted a flier pronouncing that "now that the African Americans are boycotting South Carolina over the Confederate Flag, Whites can enjoy a civil liberty that has been denied to them for many years at hotels, restaurants and beaches: the freedom to associate with just one's own people."

But the views of some CCC members go beyond wistfulness for lost white privilege and disfavor toward encroaching minorities and multicultural change. In an article posted on the Arkansas Web site, for instance, Dr. James Owens, a former Dean of the American University School of Business, hypothesizes that a second civil war is imminent and suggests that Southern states secede from "the Union" in hope of creating segregated living spaces for the country's different races. In his scenario, the "silent, white majority" will become shocked into taking action by the catastrophic genetic effects of interracial marriage and by the inevitable rise of an accompanying police state; a white rights movement will be forged across the political continuum, "ranging from moderate political activists...to the overt hostility of white supremacists and militias." Individual differences with regard to tactics will be suppressed, and the "white preservation party" will succeed in elevating and arousing "white consciousness to action" and restoring the country to "its original Euro-white dominance."

There are other suggestions that many CCC members may be more radical than the organization's public face indicates. Openly white-supremacist organizations advertise in *The Citizens Informer*, including the TC Allen Company, which sells pamphlets arguing that integration leads to genocide and that the biblical Adam was father only of the white race; the Ohio-based Heritage Lost Ministries, a racist and Third Position

organization known also to distribute National Socialist Movement literature; and *The Resister*, the racist and anti-Semitic "political warfare journal of the Special Forces Underground."

WELL-INFORMED CITIZENS

The *Citizens Informer* contains far more than advertisements, however. Named after a publication of the original Citizens Councils, the bimonthly articulates the views that form the core of the CCC's belief system. It is edited by Sam Francis, formerly a controversial *Washington Times* columnist who was eventually dismissed for defending slavery. Francis has become more forthright in denigrating nonwhites and is frequently a guest at conferences of *American Renaissance*, a group that champions the genetic inferiority of African Americans; he stated at a 1998 gathering that "White Americans have a short time to stop the universalism and egalitarianism that threaten to destroy their race." Chris Temple, *The Citizens Informer's* managing editor, has been a fixture on the white-supremacist scene for years (he calls himself a "very close personal friend" of Aryan Nations leader Richard Butler) and has written for *Identity* and anti-Semitic publications such as *The Jubilee* and *The Spotlight*.

The ideology of *The Citizens Informer's* editors is echoed in the publication's pages, although in a somewhat muted form. Many articles consist of either tributes to the superiority of the white race or diatribes about black violence or Hispanic immigration. As Robert Patterson, the publication's past editor, has written in a column, "...any effort to destroy the race by a mixture of black blood is an effort to destroy Western civilization itself." Columnist H. Millard has offered a similar observation and a more visceral anxiety about intermarriage when he argued that minorities are turning the United States population into a "slimy brown mass of glop." Other essays in the publication lament the victimization of whites at the hands of minorities and the liberal "elite."

Other contributing writers to *The Citizens Informer* have included Jared Taylor, publisher of *American Renaissance*, which argues that African Americans are genetically inferior; Indianapolis Baptist Temple Pastor Greg Dixon, who believes that churches are not bound by human laws or regulations; and psychology professor Glayde Whitney, who wrote the preface to David Duke's racist and anti-Semitic "autobiographical thesis" *My Awakening* ("Completely separately from David Duke," Whitney wrote, "my inquiries led to essentially the same places and some of the same conclusions that he spells out in this book.")

AFLOAT IN THE MAINSTREAM

The CCC has distinguished itself from other racist organizations--and gained considerable notoriety — in attracting the attention and support of seemingly mainstream conservative leaders. The group was catapulted to national prominence in December 1998, when a *Washington Post* reporter revealed that, earlier in the year, Georgia Congressman Bob Barr had spoken before its national board in Charleston, South Carolina. Barr denied being aware of the CCC's racist views, claiming that the information packet he had received from the organization had not revealed these positions. Moreover, he stated that he found such views abhorrent.

However, the ante was upped a few days later when *Post* reporter Thomas Edsall revealed that Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott had appeared as the keynote speaker at a 1992 meeting of the CCC in

Greenwood, Mississippi. In the article, Edsall cited an issue of *The Citizens Informer* that featured a large photograph of Senator Lott at a CCC conference and quoted him as telling attendees that "we need more meetings like this." According to the *Informer*, Lott asserted that "the people in this room stand for the right principles and the right philosophy. Let's take it in the right direction and our children will be the beneficiaries." Lott's involvement was more complicated than Barr's, because Lott originally denied firsthand knowledge of the CCC (later having to backtrack on this statement) and because, as opposed to Barr, there was evidence of an ongoing relationship. CCC leaders revealed that Lott had spoken to them on more than one occasion; that his syndicated column regularly ran in *The Citizens Informer*, and that his uncle, a member of the Council's Executive Board, called him an "honorary member." Lott later criticized the CCC's use of his name in their publications, denied membership and claimed ignorance as to the racist nature of the group's rhetoric. Unlike Barr, however, he never condemned the group's racist ideology explicitly and unequivocally.

Edsall's reporting revealed that Lott and Barr were only the most prominent of a number of conservative politicians who had developed ties of varying intimacy with the CCC, most notably former Mississippi Governor Kirk Fordice, who not only attended CCC meetings but was quick to defend the CCC to the press as well. Additionally, a Mississippi CCC leader boasted that 34 members of the Mississippi legislature counted themselves among the ranks of the 5,000 individuals claiming membership in the state.

In fact, the CCC has enjoyed connections with public officials at every level. In Mississippi, all five members of the Lamar County Supervisors Board attended a 2001 meeting of the group's Piney Woods Chapter that addressed county zoning and its potential infringement on the rights of property owners and on the "ongoing battle to save our beloved state flag." Other prominent mainstream political figures have attended meetings or addressed the group, including past Alabama Governor Guy Hunt, United States Representative Mel Hancock, Alabama Public Service Commissioner George C. Wallace, Jr., Tennessee G.O.P. National Committeewoman Alice Algood, South Carolina G.O.P. National Committeeman Buddy Witherspoon, former Arkansas Supreme Court Justice Jim Johnson, as well as media figures like editorial cartoonist Michael P. Ramirez, Accuracy In Media head Reed Irvine, and Joseph Sobran, a syndicated columnist and former senior editor for the *National Review* whose anti-Jewish bias contributed to his firing by that magazine.

Above all, however, the appearances of Barr and especially Lott elicited widespread media coverage. In response to the revelations, Representatives Robert Wexler, a Florida Democrat, and Michael Forbes, a New York Republican, introduced to Congress in January 1999 a resolution that condemned the racism and bigotry espoused by the Council of Conservative Citizens. The resolution, modeled after a 1994 House resolution criticizing former Nation of Islam member Khalid Muhammad for racist and anti-Semitic remarks, also condemned manifestations and expressions of racial and religious intolerance wherever they occurred. But whereas the resolution against Muhammad passed through both houses of Congress in 20 days, the criticism of the CCC never even made it to the floor, due largely to the reluctance of Republicans to accept what amounted to an indirect censure of their leadership. Instead, Representative J.C. Watts of Oklahoma, the only African American Republican in the House, introduced a resolution that condemned racism in general. Unlike the Wexler-Forbes resolution, which had 148 cosponsors (13 of whom were Republicans), the Watts bill had none. When it was put to a vote, Democrats urged their colleagues not to vote for a bill that was, in the words of Michigan Democrat John Conyers, "just a joke" and a cover for those politicians who had "cloaked themselves in mainstream conservatism... masking an underlying racist agenda." Watts' resolution failed, ending the CCC episode in Congress.

CONCLUSION

By appealing to widespread resentments and successfully attracting prominent conservatives, the Council of Conservative Citizens has been able to recruit numbers of relatively moderate individuals into an organization that maintains strong connections with extremists. Its record demonstrates that CCC has not tried to break away from its racist antecedents. Instead, it has adopted not only its predecessor's racial attitudes but also its strategies, deriving from them the tools to advance a racist agenda from the grassroots to the senior levels of American government.

Report Updates (2004-2005)

COUNCIL OF CONSERVATIVE CITIZENS: UPDATE

March 1, 2004

During the 2003 election, the CCC was at the center of another controversy involving the endorsement of a major politician. In July, Mississippi Republican gubernatorial nominee Haley Barbour, who served as Chairman of the Republican National Committee from 1993 to 1997, attended a CCC-sponsored barbecue. Though the attendance of local Republican and Democratic office-seekers at political events partly sponsored by the CCC usually evokes little controversy, this year the group posted on its Web site a photo of Barbour at the barbecue (l. to r.: Mississippi GOP aide Chip Reynolds, State Senator Bucky Huggins, Ray Martin, Barbour, John Thompson, and CCC Field Director Bill Lord.).



The photo was placed directly above a variety of racist and anti-Semitic materials, including an essay by outspoken anti-Semite Edgar J. Steele entitled "In Defense of Racism" and tracts urging that Germany be cleared of the "blood libel" of the Holocaust. Numerous civil rights organizations, including the NAACP, called on Barbour to ask the CCC to remove the photo, but Barbour, whose campaign included a pledge to preserve a version of the Mississippi state flag that includes an emblem of the Confederate flag, refused to do so. Though he condemned some of the views expressed on the CCC Web site as

"indefensible," he insisted that the photo was in the public domain and could be used freely, by anyone. For its part, CCC Field Director Bill Lord said that the posting was a publicity stunt and should not be construed as an endorsement. Barbour won the election, and was sworn in as Governor of Mississippi in January 2004. The photo was removed from the site shortly after his victory.

MAINSTREAM POLITICIANS AND EXTREMIST HAVE CONNECTIONS TO CCC

January 21, 2005

The Council of Conservative Citizens connection to mainstream politicians was again newsworthy in 2004.

- Tom Parker, a highly conservative Republican with ties to the CCC and the League of the South, was elected to a seat on Alabama's Supreme Court. Parker is a former aide to Roy Moore, the Alabama judge who was removed from office for refusing to comply with a federal court directive to remove a 10 Commandments monument that he installed in the state judicial building.
- Ron Wilson, a former member of both the CCC and the neo-confederate League of the South, as well as past head of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, was elected to the South Carolina Board of Education. Wilson previously sold anti-Semitic materials on his Web site.
- According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, 26 office-holding politicians in four southern states have attended or spoken at CCC events since 2000, including 23 from Mississippi. In December 2004, the Mississippi branch of the group announced that it had met with some key Mississippi Senators to discuss issues of concern. "Things look good on the front in Mississippi in 2005." The group expected several senators and representatives to speak at their Jackson meeting on January 27, 2005.

The CCC also maintained relationships with extremists outside their ranks. University of Vermont professor Robert S. Griffin wrote a cover-page story for *The Citizens Informer* in fall 2004 about his travels through Europe meeting with members of Blood and Honour, a racist neo-Nazi organization that also has a presence in the United States. And at the groups June 11 national conference in Valley Forge, Tennessee, speakers included Jared Taylor, editor of the racist publication *American Renaissance*, and Paul Fromm, Holocaust-denying head of the Canadian Association for Free Expression.