

SRC 32 Conference
(Day 1, Tape 2)

Brian Ward: And miraculously, you will notice that a University of Florida exhibit has appeared, and an exhibitor. **Meredith Marisbab** is over there, she will whore her wares around amongst you—I'm sure there's another turn a phrase that I could have used, but you know exactly what I mean. Seriously, peruse the books, do not steal; very, very bad form, very, very bad form. I'm sure there is a generous conference discount available, am I right? The exhibits manager says thirty percent. We can probably haggle it up to thirty-five [percent] if we do well. Alright, I'm pleased to announce that we have the second session about to get underway, and our very own Jack Davis from the University of Florida is going to be chairing it, so thank you Jack.

Jack Davis: Thank you, and welcome to Gainesville. I hope you do get a chance to see the Gainesville area and also the more beautiful parts of the UF campus because it is a really nice place. It'd be a shame if we all had to stay inside for the next few days since the weather is promising to be so great, so try to get out to other places besides bars. [laughing] We have two speakers, David Chappell, who teaches history at the University of Arkansas, and he is the author of the book *Inside Agitators*, published by Johns Hopkins Press in 1994, and the forthcoming book, *A Story of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow*, which is due out in December and will be published by UNC Press. Many of his articles have appeared in the Journal of American Studies, The African American

Review, World Policy Review, and others. David will actually be our second speaker. Our first speaker this morning will be John Kirk, who teaches US History at **Royal Holloway University of London**. He is the author of *Redefining the Color Line: Black Activism in Little Rock, Arkansas, 1940-1970*, and also the author of numerous articles and essays on the Civil Rights Movement. His latest book on the public leadership career of Martin Luther King, Jr. will be published by **Longman Pearson Press** next year. Again, we'll start with John Kirk.

John Kirk: Thank you. For better or for worse, and I suspect I'm just about to find out, I took Brian at face value when he instructed us to talk to the published papers rather than actually deliver a written paper itself.

Brian Ward: Which is fifty pages.

John Kirk: Which is fifty pages, yeah, and they're all posted on the internet there on the conference website. Of course, as a former graduate student of Brian's, I should know by now that taking Brian's advice at face value can only lead to trouble in one way or another, but I figure he's gotten by so far, so why turn back now. The paper that's published on the internet is on the Arkansas Council on Human Relations in the Civil Rights Movement in Arkansas from 1954-1964, the first decade of operations of the human relations council that actually went on for another decade from 1964-1974, before finally merging with the local branch of the Urban League in Little Rock. I think conceptually the paper breaks down to three sections, which makes it easier to manage and hopefully easier to fathom. The first section looks at the Arkansas Council on Human Relations as it facilitates school desegregation from 1954, handed down by the Brown v. Board decision, up to the outbreak of the Little Rock School Crisis in 1957. The second section looks at the crisis years in Little Rock and how the Arkansas Council on Human Relations relates to that, and from 1957 up to the reopening of the schools up to _____ closed them in August 1959. The third section looks at how the Arkansas Council relates to the desegregation of the downtown facilities in the aftermath of the Little Rock Crisis from 1960-1964. So that's the basic rubric of the paper. By way of some sort of background introduction, historians of the past twenty years or so have been trying to remap the history of the Civil Rights Movement, moving away from national biased Montgomery to Memphis, Martin Luther

King centered national narrative, and they've been looking back to developments amongst other places at a local level. Starting with **Willy Mays Chase** book in 1980 on *Civilities and Civil Rights* about the sittings in Greensboro in North Carolina and looking at those in a local context. A number of studies have looked at the local and state dimensions of the Civil Rights Movement, including **Professor Narell's** excellent work on **Tuskegee, Alabama**, down to my own on Little Rock, Arkansas, for this part of the University of Florida _____, which is available at a reasonable discounted price in the back—Meredith's here and she forced me to say that—which came out last year. I think that's collectively taught us a number of things, one of the things that they've taught us is that the Civil Rights Movement has complex origins that go back beyond the 1950s into the 1940s and 1930s and in some places even beyond that. Another thing I think that the local studies have done is allow us to look at national and regional based organizations at a local level to look at what their affiliates are doing. For example, in Little Rock, Arkansas, I explored the relationship between local branches of the NAACP and the national based NAACP. I found a very sort of rancorous relationship between the two; the two in constant bickering over aims and tactics and goals and the way that the organization should operate. The Arkansas Council on Human Relations office [was] a very different sort of set, I think. The Arkansas Council I think quite accurately mirrors what's going on at the Southern Regional Council level, and hopefully the point of

the paper is not just to offer some local flavor or some quaint sort of adjuncts to the Southern Regional Council itself, but to hopefully offer a tool for instructive analysis of the way that Southern Regional Council operates as a whole in terms of its ethos, in terms of tactics, in terms of the way it operates. Really what I want to do is look at that in a _____ if you like at a local level as to what's happening in Arkansas. The Arkansas Council on Human Relations was founded in the mid 1950s as a state organization, connected to the Southern Regional Council across the south during that period, to try and help refocus efforts, I think, to prepare communities for what was going to happen after the 1954 Brown versus Board of Education decision, to sort of pave the way to educate, to provide hopefully a tolerant climate for the implementation of Brown v. Board of Education. The two leading founders or the two leading movers of the Arkansas Council on Human Relations were **Halley Actuar**, who was editor of the *Arkansas Gazette*, on the one hand, and on the other **Fred Caderer**, who was a local multi-millionaire businessman and philanthropist. Together between them they instigated the reformation of the Southern Regional Council branch in Arkansas to launch the Arkansas Council on Human Relations. Interestingly, both were former GI's and both cited their experience in WWII as forming the basis for wanting to be involved in the Arkansas Council on Human Relations. The first thing that they had to do was find an executive director and associate director. The Arkansas Council on Human Relations was fairly limited

operationally—its numbers never really reached beyond 300 members in the state—but even more focused than that, the executive director and associate director were the two main parts, and they were the two people who really drove the organization. They decided to appoint a man called **Matt Griswald** to the executive director position, a white Methodist minister. He was a native Arkansan who had been recreations director of the Japanese-American relocation camps in Arkansas during WWII. He moved around the country as a Methodist minister, and at the time he was appointed to the Arkansas Council as executive director, he had been working for the **AFIC** in Texas. So he took on the job of executive director, and **Christopher Mercer**, one of the first African-American graduates of the University of Arkansas Law School, took on the job of associate director. That mapped out that the two poles would be divvied up for the rest of the time that the organization [existed], that always executive director and the associate director, one would be black and one would be white, as a self-conscious attempt to be a truly interracial organization.

There was a great deal of optimism when Brown versus Board of Education came down in Arkansas; many people saw Arkansas as a state that might possibly lead—as a progressive state—they might possibly lead the rest of the South in compliance with the Brown decision. **Karias Actuar**, one of the two leading figures of the Southern Regional Council, just the day after Brown versus Board of Education was handed down, he wrote, 'Looking at the _____ this morning, I'm right proud of the

South. _____ on schedule, but virtually every other Southern politician is standing on the high ground. If I had to define the prevailing feeling here, and I believe this is generally true all over the South except for the really hot spots, I would say it is one of relief that the other shoe has finally dropped. I think I can see the beginning of the time I've always dreamed of, where you can conduct a conversation in the South without it degenerating into an argument over where a man should sit in a streetcar.' Of course eighteen minutes later the Montgomery bus boy court begins, which is almost directly _____ that you can't have talk race relations without an argument over where, in this case, a woman sits in the streetcar. No less, I don't think **Actuar** is necessarily wrong, but I think the court sort of reveals that _____ didn't really anticipate the sort of resistance the school would set up. It's the beginning of the resistance to school desegregation that would eventually develop. In that first period of its operations, the Arkansas Council on Human Relations in trying to smooth the for school desegregation from 1954-1957, I think it can be faster understood by looking at developments in two different places and comparing and contrasting those. One of them is in Little Rock, the state capital of Arkansas, which many people thought was a beacon of Southern progressivism. The place had been very successful in luring an Army base during WWII, and the emergence of a progressive business elite of managers and professionals had given the hope and optimism that Little Rock would be a gleaming new size city. They had been particularly

successful in luring all the money and luring all the investment in the years after WWII; hand in hand with that, they had significant changes within the context of the times, the natural segregation. In 1948, Little Rock desegregated its public library quite quietly but quite effectively. A number of white and colored signs had been taken down from water fountains downtown. The medical school in Little Rock desegregated, or at least I mentioned its first black student in 1949; the year before, the University of Arkansas fight mill had admitted its first black student into the law school, the first black student to attend a Southern university since the twentieth century. So there was the hope that Arkansas would be a leading beacon, that Little Rock as the state capital would be that progressivism city, the kind of city that the Supreme Court thought that school desegregation might make progress in. The other place to contrast that with is a very small settlement called **Hocksey, Arkansas**, just sitting right above the Mississippi Arkansas Delta, just north of Memphis, a very small, boondocks, backwoods kind of town. Now if you have to bet, if you're a betting man, then you'd put your money of course on Little Rock being a success for school desegregation, and **Hocksey** being exactly the kind of place where you wouldn't make any progress at all. In fact, exactly the opposite happens; **Hocksey** becomes a model for progress in how you successfully desegregate schools, and Little Rock becomes a place that shows exactly how not to go about desegregating schools. Understanding why that happens and the differences between the two is very important in

terms of understanding the work of the Arkansas Council on Human Relations because it's intrinsically involved in both those episodes. In **Hocksey**, soon after the school desegregation decision is handed down, the superintendent of schools, **Kay Vance**, announces that **Hocksey** intends to desegregate. He gives three reasons for this; the first reason he gives is that it's called right in the sight of God, a quite unusual sort of model justification leading for desegregation, which I won't tell you know, but which David could probably tell you more about and probably has written more about already. The second reason was that it was the law; the Supreme Court said that we had to desegregate schools, so we're going to have to desegregate. Third of all, perhaps more to the point, it was cheaper. **Hocksey**, although it was just above the delta area, had only a very small black population, and it was a real burden for the school board to maintain a separate black school, such as it was. At one point even the white school board described the black school as a **bat hole**, but even then they had to maintain it and pay money and pay taxes just to maintain a separate school. They figured if we desegregate schools, it'd be a lot easier and a lot cheaper, so they desegregated in 1955. On the first day of classes they integrated twenty-five black students into the high school of 1050 people, and concerned white citizens turned up on the first day of school, but interestingly the reporters who interviewed them, and all seemed to get the same story, they say, well we don't want to desegregate, it's not what we would have wanted, but what else can we

do? The Supreme Court has spoken, the school board is going to desegregate, we have to desegregate. The classes start and by lunch time it seems as if everything is going fine; black kids are attending school with white kids and it's like segregation never existed. It goes on like that for three weeks, and the school board reports there are no incidents, no discipline problems in the school, and everything is going on as normal. Then the turning point comes when *Life* magazine, which was there to cover desegregation, prints a big photo spread of what's happening, and it has lots of photos of black children playing with white children. It says, look how successful desegregation can be, which is like a red flag to a bull for the segregationists in Mississippi just across the border. They said, we can't have a successful desegregation taking place just like that so close to us, so the Mississippi Citizens Councils _____ urged the Arkansas Citizen Councils, which were kind of newly forming, to stop integration from taking place at **Hocksey**. A number of loosely bound organizations in Arkansas, _____, _____ Citizens Council in Little Rock, which hadn't really gotten a great amount of support, all sort of converged on this town of **Hocksey** and tried to stop the school desegregation there. Under immense pressure the school board actually holed up, and part of the reason that the school board holds up is because of the Arkansas Council on Human Relations. **Matt Griswald**, the executive director, writes to the school board of **Hocksey** and says, you're doing the right thing, you're absolutely right, this is the

right thing to do, the stand you're taking is the most sensible one. He sends them copies of the SRC publication and says, here's back up for you, this is exactly what you should be doing. Equally what the Arkansas Council on Human Relations does is to provide practical support for the **Hocksey** School Board. They have a contact up there by **Jonesboro** called **Bill Phoenix**, a lawyer who represents the school board, and the attorneys at **Hocksey** are successful in getting a court ruling which gives them an injunction against interference from the Citizens Councils. The Citizens Council were really forced to go away with their tail between their legs because the court said, stop interfering, the school board holds firm; the Arkansas Council on Human Relations backs them up very quietly while the white Citizens Councils are getting all the headlines. The Arkansas Council is, as it does throughout its time, operating quietly in the background to ease progress, and **Hocksey** remains integrated and the Citizens Councils were just forced to back down and go away in the face of standing firm. It was a very different story in Little Rock, a slightly different story. Initially the superintendent of schools there, **Virgil T. Blossom**, says, we'll comply with the law, and they draw up the plans to desegregate the schools. But **Blossom** has more of a insidious intent; he's not really serious about desegregating the schools, his idea is that there will be a more controlled integration of schools. **Blossom's** idea is that what we'll do in Little Rock is have a sophisticated plan for a sophisticated city, and what we'll do is we'll minimize the impact of school

desegregation as much as we possibly can. We'll allow a token number of black students in, so we won't look as if we're defying the law, but at the same time that will only mean that we can use a legal loophole to have as little desegregation as possible. The real difference between **Hocksey** and Little Rock is the role that the Arkansas Council on Human Relations plays, one important difference between the two. In Little Rock, **Blossom** absolutely refuses to listen to the Arkansas Council on Human Relations or accept any of their expertise or advice; **Blossom** says, I'm in charge, I've made up this plan, and I don't want to listen to whatever you have to say. As **Matt Griswald** says of **Blossom**, he says, he [**Blossom**] did not confer the _____ sends; he pleasantly explained and defended a position, his. In response to any thoughtful contrary position, usually he said something like this, you have a right to your view, but this is our plan. **Griswald** went on to say that Blossom thought he found the admissions device by which the requirements of the court could be met, and at the same time, by which only a few Negro students would be enrolled in the white schools. The intent of the plan was to guarantee the extended life of the dual school system. He was the author of one of the earliest plans for school desegregation in the South; he was at the same time guarding it with built in submerged pictures which provided a way for schools in the South to avoid the dreaded consequences of integration. The difference was that in **Hocksey** people were prepared, as the Arkansas Council on Human Relations tried to do, to be educated and to listen; in Little Rock

the school board wasn't prepared to listen and wasn't prepared to be educated and they said, stay away, we're managing this on our own terms, this is what we can do best. Of course, it doesn't turn out that way at all, and what happens is that the **Blossom** plan, someone folds, in subisolation with **Blossom** in its center, and by the time, in late 1957 when the **Blossom** plan is back to being implemented, when they're about to send nine African-American students into Central High School, the pressure from the White Citizen's Council has built. The White Citizen's Council was not very powerful in Arkansas, but the concentrated focus on one school in the city sort of gives an impetus to them. Without an infrastructure or support paving the way for school desegregation in Little Rock, as soon as the White Citizen's Councils put school desegregation to pressure, Blossom begins to fold, and as Blossom begins to fold, _____ steps into the breach, sees the political currency being built up by the head of steam of the White Citizen's Council, intervenes, stops school desegregation rather than to implement it. So 1957, as you all know, the Little Rock School Crisis explodes in Little Rock and leads to federal troops being sent in by President Eisenhower to enforce school desegregation. The troops stay for the year; at the end of the year Governor _____ Forbes closes all the schools to prevent desegregation continuing. Finally in 1959, December 1959, the white business community mobilizes to win positions on the school board and to carry on with a token integration of Central High School. In August 1957,

under white business community control, the school board desegregates Central High School, although notably with black students than the Blossom plan had intended to in 1954, at two students admitted to Central High and two admitted to another city school, Hall High School. The Arkansas Council on Human Relations has problems during the Little Rock School Crisis, of course, because if nobody wants to listen and to be educated before the Brown decision, before this Little Rock School Crisis, certainly nobody wants to listen during the Little Rock Crisis as both sides polarize and black and white communities move further apart. One of the important things that the Arkansas Council on Human Relations does do is to actually exist and come out on the other side of the Arkansas School Crisis, and the NAACP doesn't really manage that. Because of the NAACP's actions, it's sort of chased out of town by the white community, and the branch is decimated. The **Oven League** is chucked out of the community chest and doesn't go on from there. The Arkansas Council on Human Relations exists and continues and comes out on the other side. The importance of that is that the Arkansas Council on Human Relations is there as a moderator and _____ voice in the community after the school crisis, and is there to lay the blueprint for desegregation in that 1960-1964 period. What the Arkansas Council on Human Relations does is exactly the same thing it was doing before the school crisis, it tries to work on the white business community, it tries to get them to desegregate, but they still won't listen. So again they face the problem, what happens if

we have people who won't listen to what we have to say, who don't want to be educated? Ultimately the Arkansas Council on Human Relations resolves that by calling in SNICK, and it's the Arkansas Council on Human Relations who invites SNICK into Little Rock, because you need an invitation to come in. [SNICK] organized black students to initiate sit-ins in Little Rock. Through the sit-ins, through this kind of pressure of direct action, eventually the white business community is forced to listen to the voice of moderation, the Arkansas Council on Human Relations, and it's forced into negotiations to follow the actual blueprint that the Arkansas Council on Human Relations follows. So what does this story mean? I hope that it gives a model for how the Arkansas Council on Human Relations and perhaps the Southern Regional Council operates in that the emphasis is on education, on informing people, and yet the problem is what happens if people don't want to be educated and if people don't want to be informed. The lesson for the Arkansas Council on Human Relations is that we need to engage in direct action, and ultimately the Arkansas Council on Human Relations was successful when SNICK was in town to actually force the white business community to listen. Therefore the sort of learning curve of the Arkansas Council on Human Relations is that, as **Griswald** sums up in 1964, at the end of this decade, in an article in the *Arkansas Gazette*: 'It would be good to have the heart converted, but if that doesn't work, we try something else.' So through battle hardened experience, what the Arkansas Council on Human Relations evolves to is

a sort of education, informative organization, but moves to that option through battle hardened experience. They realized, we have to work within the context of what's happening in the community; we have to find some way of actually making people listen to what we have to say, and ultimately can only do that by employing direct action. One of the sub-questions that that sort of addresses is why _____

historians finally stumbled upon the Southern Regional Council, why has it taken them so long to get there when we see the Southern Christian Leadership Conference analysis of the NAACP, of SNICK, and all those organizations. Partly I think it's because those direct action organizations are the ones that capture the headlines, they're the ones out in the forefront, and therefore they're the ones that are first seen. The Southern Regional Council and the Arkansas Council on Human Relations as its surrogate sort of is there throughout offering support, but it's more of a sort of infrastructural organization. It provides the context, it creates the environment, it provides the blueprints for what's going to happen, [and] it creates the context of the direct action. Really historians are only now beginning to move beyond those headlines and to see those kinds of infrastructural headlines like the Arkansas Council on Human Relations, like the Southern Regional Council, like, for example, the American Friends Service Committee Fellowship of Reconciliation. There's a whole trench of organizations that I think the investigation beyond those headlines leads us into, which this conference is sort of part of in charting

that new territory. That seems to be the place I need to stop, so thank you.

[clapping]

Chappell: I'm David Chappell from the University of Arkansas. I want to thank Brian, Jenny, and Jack, and others at the University of Florida, for welcoming us here. I just want to thank the Southern Regional Council for inspiring and provoking our research on what's so far a very fruitful discussion. My topic is the Fourteenth Amendment, constitutional, equality; the Fourteenth Amendment, of course, being the only place in the constitution where the concept of equality of persons shows up, and the role of the Southern Regional Council in Southern moderates struggling with the efforts to realize the promise of the Fourteenth Amendment. Historians of the Civil Rights Movement, including me, have tended to give Southern moderates short shrift, echoing Martin Luther King's pronouncement from his great pulpit in the Birmingham Jail, I have been greatly disappointed with the

white moderate; “I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negroes’ greatest stumbling block is not the White Citizens’ Council or the Ku Klux Klan, but the white moderate, who was more devoted to order than to justice, who paternalistically believes that he can set the timetable for another man’s freedom, who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a more convenient season. Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will.” I would like to begin by suggesting, however, that SRC types were justified in their special brand of moderation without making more general claims in about moderation in the abstract. Though King’s rebuke of the white moderate was a stinging one, it is often forgotten that he quickly added a list of exceptions, white brothers in the South, he said, who have grasped the meaning of the social revolution and committed themselves to it. Ralph McGill, somewhat startlingly, was first on the list, followed by **William Smith, Harry Golden, James Dabbs, Ann Braden, and Sarah Boyle. McGill, Smith, Golden, Dabbs, and Boyle**, at least, had all been associated with the Southern Regional Council. While **Ann Braden** may not relish being mentioned in the same breath as **McGill** and vice versa, it is important that King was even here holding up hope in the moderates, or at least declining to burn his bridges to them. The SRC’s moderation was not that _____ or absolute, it was a selective reluctance to act radically on Fourteenth Amendment questions as opposed to Fifteenth Amendment voting rights

on which I think the accusations of overweening gradualism cannot stick. The Southern Regional Council's moderation can best be seen, I think, as a strategic sense of priorities, and a strategy, if you will, of covert operations, an effort to stay below the radar screen of their enemies to keep radical changes out of the headlines where demagogues would exploit them. By strategic priorities I mean the SRC's moderation meant, not reluctance per se, but the reluctance to press Fourteenth as opposed to Fifteenth Amendment questions before the Fifteenth Amendment voting changes had been achieved, before economic development had taken firmer route, and before a degree of acceptance appeared among the general white Southern population. Meanwhile, there was much they could try, especially out of the range of the media, and much they could and did accomplish, and much of that has historical significance that we need to recognize. After its famous turn in favor of desegregation in 1951, the SRC remained reluctant until the 1954 Brown decision to force Fourteenth Amendment questions of equality upon the public schools. One of the things I wish to suggest is that we may have an exaggerated sense of the public schools importance—elementary and secondary schools as opposed to higher education in other institutions. The SRC's hesitation is not evident at all in its approach to desegregation of other arenas, at least after 1951, for example, public transportation, which I think is particularly important, where again, I think, the SRC cannot be accused of temporizing. Our understanding of transportation desegregation may be

occluded by the Brown decision, which seemed to turn so much of the civil rights struggle into a litmus test of where people stood on the schools. There's something artificial about viewing the whole struggle through the lens somewhat arbitrarily intruded by the Supreme Court in 1954. Transportation from the perspective of 1945 or 1952 might have been a strategically sounder starting place to begin a serious campaign to restore Fourteenth Amendment rights. One of the early members of SRC, **Virginia Dabney**, who figured as a sort of godfather of modern Southern liberalism in the 1930s, certainly had greater faith in transportation than school desegregation in the pre-Brown era. In 1943, while he was participating in plans to launch the SRC, **Dabney** tried an experiment now notorious in the annals of Southern liberalism. In a few editorials he proposed desegregation of streetcars in Virginia cities, thinking that the white citizenry would accept his conservative—that's his word—argument that the law had already become a dead letter. The great wartime growth in black and white employment, **Dabney** explained, repealed bus segregation through simple overcrowding. In the new conditions, strict adherence to the law of segregation perversely led to greater interracial contact. To get to the black section, black passengers had to push all the way to the back of the bus or streetcar, jostling more white passengers on their way than they would if they just stood or sat wherever there was room. **Dabney** conceded that streetcar laws were among the more gratuitous of the humiliations of Jim Crow. But within two months **Dabney**

recoiled from his conservative desegregation proposal. Sensible pragmatic gestures like his were futile, he explained to a friend, when the mass of whites is hostile to any change, and that was the characteristic stance of the Southern liberal and often of the genteel Southern conservative. [He said], I favor change, but out there in **bubba** land there's a combustible mixture of hatred and fear growing which just won't allow reasonable people like me to take any obvious or significant steps; we can be liberals, but only closet liberals. As historian **John Nebaun** showed, however, **Dabney** invented the mass reaction to his proposal almost entirely out of cold cloth. His editorials did not bring on a flood of angry letters from uneducated white folk. He told a friend that in fact he got no reaction at all from those types of white Southerners, and **Nebaun** observed that for decades **Dabney** and other Southern liberals, "brandished this boogeyman, the cruelly Negro-phobic poor white, to drive away impetuous reformers." In the end **Nebaun** says, this terrifying class of white Southerners also paralyzed Southern liberalism. The opposition to **Dabney's** proposal, if his own papers are any guide, actually came from upperclass educated leaders like himself. Even at that, the letters he published in his newspaper from white readers were overwhelmingly in favor of his proposal of roughly three to one, but newspaper editors and political leaders, including **Governor _____ Arden**, elsewhere in the state, cold-shouldered **Dabney** on this question and **Dabney** concluded that he could not fight those leaders. So of course he joined them by

opposing further experimentation along even the conservative lines that he had tentatively sketched out. Although **Dabney** soon joined the SRC, he fought efforts within the organization to question Jim Crow, then after he lost that fight in 1951, he quit the SRC and became one of the most effective segregationists in the South. My interest in bringing up the story is not to bring scorn on **Dabney** as a spineless wishy-washy paternalist—dishwater interpretation that **Doug Smith** so ably described—rather I wish to call attention to **Dabney's** discovery about white Southern society, or **Nebaun's** discovery of **Dabney's** discovery, which is: the masses of urban Virginia apparently would not react violently to desegregation of public desegregation. A lead reformers fear of the masses on that issue was ill-founded, and this is important because even before the great turning point in 1951, most of the SRC leaders were moving in the opposite way from **Dabney** on the question of segregation. At least, I don't think we can say absolutely what the numbers are, but it seems to me they are moving that way more decisively on every question except schools than they are moving on the schools, and I think the school question is lagging. There is something special about school desegregation. Its emergence as the defining issue in civil rights was to some degree a fluke, perhaps a tragic one, of the haphazard *ad-hoc* path of legal development. The Supreme Court did finally bring on for a few years following May 1954, the surge of mass anger and hysteria that **Dabney** had feared, or to be more precise, had raised a human cry

among opportunistic politicians and rabble-rousers who, for a remarkably long run, succeeded spectacularly in mobilizing angry white voters. But before Brown, the NAACP defense fund had been following other avenues, and until 1946, the most promising of those was probably public transportation. The original judicial loophole justifying segregation under the Fourteenth Amendment, after all, came in the transportation case, the **Plessy case**. The most logical place to attack the **Plessy** doctrine was in other transportation cases. As historian **Mark Tushnet** explains, however, the **LDF's** campaign against transportation segregation petered out after the apparent victory in 1946, *Morgan v. Virginia*. In the *Morgan* case, 1946, the court decided seven to one that a state could not impose segregation on an interstate bus because doing so unreasonably interfered with interstate commerce. The lone dissenter from the case, **Harold Burton**, normally a supporter of civil rights, pointed out however that the court was evading the central question, which was whether state imposed segregation violated the Fourteenth Amendment. In the *Morgan* majority's controlling precedent, an 1878 case, **Hall v. Dequer**, the court had used the exact same logic of interstate commerce to strike down an anti-segregation law. **Thurgood Marshall** feared, in 1946, that resuscitation of that precedent could be turned around to invalidate the existing laws at that point of eighteen northern states that banned segregation on interstate carriers that crossed over their borders. Considering these and other quirks of interstate commerce, **Thurgood**

Marshall said at that point that he was unwilling to test transportation further. The Legal Defense Fund needed to push the court to find segregation in conflict somewhere with the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause in the event, of course, it ended up using schools, but there were signs in the late 1940s that going that way, down what appeared the most promising litigated avenue, was heading away from crucial bases of political support. The year after the Morgan decision, President Harry Truman's special commission on civil rights showed weakness and division on only one question in its famous report of 1947 to secure these rights. After forthrightly recommending a permanent FEPC, an anti-lynching law, and "elimination of segregation from all aspects of American life," the committee divided on the means to eliminate segregation from the public schools. A minority of the commission went on record that it did not think schools should be desegregated immediately or forcefully by the federal government. The commission minority thought that school desegregation might be a desirable end, but that it should be achieved voluntarily, gradually, and by local initiative with due regard to the peculiarities of local conditions. There was no such hedging in the report on other issues, some of them quite radical. In fact, I wonder whether this show of division over the means to school desegregation did as much to provoke the reaction from **Strom Thurmand's Dixiecrats** as the report's radicalism. Much as the commission's radicalism allowed Southern politicians to accuse Truman of betrayal of the _____ loyal

South, the division over federal force on schools made the commission and the whole civil rights lobby, Republican as well as Democrat, look vulnerable. When Brown finally came in 1954, the Southern Regional Council stuck its neck out by pushing for compliance with the inevitable, now that the desegregation was suddenly the law of the land. How did that work out? The first major test of public school desegregation in real life, in Little Rock in 1957, provides an instructive juxtaposition. The very year before the school crisis that put that city into the headlines, Little Rock's public transportation system was perfectly desegregated without fanfare or incident, also the suburban system immediately to the north of Little Rock. Even in Montgomery that same year, 1956, opposition to reducing discrimination on the buses seemed to come more from the bus company and city officials than from the general lay population, and that is especially significant since the bus riding, part of the white population, was skewed toward that allegedly more combustible end of the income distribution. When, after a year of struggle the bus system finally was desegregated in Montgomery, it happened with no significant violence. Also in 1956, Tallahassee desegregated its bus system much more quickly than Montgomery. Maybe the stiff resistance and international publicity that the Montgomery boycott got was the exception, not **the rule**. **At any rate, Mills Thornton persuasively argued that it was only the intranscendents** of a few local officials that made a local dispute in Montgomery literally into a federal case. Desegregation of transportation

might well have proceeded had it not been for all that fanfare. In 1956, the segregationist editor **Tom Waring** of the *Charleston News and Courier* wrote to **Virginia Dabney** that even his own paper, which he rightly called diehard, had been “advocating some, perhaps most, of the SRC’s agenda when the Supreme Court came along and made it all but impossible to pursue that line.” It was desegregation of schools, or rather what was perceived as their sudden forced desegregation by a distant alien authority that provoked and seemed to justify violence and mass resistance. Some of the local dynamics are important here as well. Many white parents in Little Rock perceived the desegregation of Central High as an imposition by upper crust do-gooders like **Virgil Blossom**, who’s own children would continue to attend segregated schools. Massive resistance was not just about home rule as it was about who should rule and how. **Jennifer Hothschild**, among others, makes it clear that the same view that liberal activists and federal judges whisked their own children off to private or suburban schools where there was no black presence, played a key role in many, if not most other cases of resistance to school desegregation in the North as well as the South. The year after Little Rock, the SRC was delivering a pamphlet, *South Carolinians Speak: A Moderate Approach to Race Relations*; this is in 1958. Though the Southern Regional Council had committed itself to school desegregation, this pamphlet suggested that local affiliates, the State Councils on Human Relations, still depended on members who agreed with the Southern

Regional Council on every point but schools. I would echo and amplify what John Kirk said that we really won't get to the marrow of the story of Southern liberalism and moderation in these years until we look at that relationship of the local councils on human relations. The example of what people have done on the black side of the struggle, if you will, looking at the local NAACP branches and finding how often . . .

[end side A 1]

Chappell: . . . in South Carolina, it was a compendium of statements by prominent community leaders all identifying themselves as moderates. Most of them advocated an end to segregation in transportation. One of these moderates stated, there is no good reason why segregation on public conveyances should be continued. I think it was on the way out when the school issue arose, and in a comparatively short time it would have disappeared. But all the contributors to this pamphlet who expressed themselves with any clarity on the issue went down the line opposing the imposition of public school desegregation. Many of them said it was a desirable goal, but they didn't want to achieve it by forced impost from outside. It is of some interest that the moderate position here echoed the segregationist position of **Tom Waring** quoted earlier. It was indeed common for other segregationist leaders, including **James Kilpatrick** and

the **Reverend James Dees**, to make such concessions. Short of federal public school desegregation, they could acknowledge and accept and even embrace desegregation of medical schools and professional schools, seminaries, divinity schools, desegregation of professional associations and so on. My point in making that connection is not that the SRC's local rank and file were really closet reactionaries with secret affinities to people like **Tom Waring and James Kilpatrick**, but rather that the middle ground, the white Southerners who favored segregation, wanted to hang onto it but didn't want to fight over it or make careers over it, might well have expanded if locally initiated desegregation of transportation rather than court-ordered school desegregation had been the defining issue. Had the Southern Regional Council proceeded without Brown, then history may have taken a very different path; resistance may not have been as explosive and surprising as it was. Moderates could at least have called the bluff of people like **Kilpatrick and Dees and Waring** perhaps in the hope that a little desegregation would ward off demands for systematic desegregation, which I would argue is all that happened in so many of the school desegregation cases anyway. People like **Dees and Waring** could justify acquiescence in token gradual desegregation. Had the court not drawn the line with schools, moderates could have driven the absolute diehard sets to the margins instead of driving themselves to the margins, which is what they did. Not only white liberal opinion but black opinion seems deeply divided on the question of desegregation, and this seems to

me a conspicuous fact that historians have not begun to face up to. I'm not saying that I've done more than begin to face up to this, but in 1955, a gallop poll found out that only fifty-three percent of black Southerners supported the Brown decision. I was very struck by Patricia Stevens, whose reading of the letter from her father saying that eighty-five percent of the black community were opposed. Who knows, maybe that's exaggerated, but it's an interesting statement in itself. **Daisy Bates**, the leader of the Little Rock Nine said in a 1976 interview that she had never felt much confidence about her relationship with the black population of Little Rock, that she was walking on egg shells. Many black folk there considered her an outsider, she said, who was stirring up trouble and causing people to lose their jobs. Not only her white friends, but also her black friends stopped visiting her house, and not simply out of fear. If one of the Little Rock Nine had gotten killed in those days, she said, the whites would not have needed to persecute me anymore; the black community would have chased me out of town, I knew that. School desegregation, especially the token variety, which was often the only kind available at least for the first fourteen years or so after the Brown decision was, after all, very often not a strategy for the black masses, rather for the foreseeable future it appeared that it would benefit at best a small number of extraordinary children, or children with extraordinary parents. The black newspapers of the period have a rich and diverse range of opinion in their editorial, op-ed, and letters columns. **George Skylar** [and] Zora Neale

Hurston were not isolated freaks, but had significant numbers of black readers and letter writers who supported their positions, and their positions were quite different; **Skylar** opposing the means to desegregation, and ultimately assimilation, which he favored, and Hurston opposing the end of desegregation. Those are just two [opinions]. There is a whole range, a whole variety, of different positions that is not for public school desegregation or against. Why not continue such proposals as the equalization plans in South Carolina, Mississippi, and elsewhere? The fact that segregationists were pushing those plans as a way to avoid or evade desegregation might, in a sense, make those plans more politically viable, more likely to succeed in the real world, and accomplish more in the long run if they were admittedly less palatable to moral purists. Historians who see the struggle as literally black and white I think are a long way from understanding the diversity of opinion within the Southern black population on such questions as differences of tactics, but also I think differences of ultimate ends and goals. The main reason, though, that I wish to reexamine the Southern Regional Councils initial hesitation to lead the South into federally forced school desegregation, and to put that court before a lot of other ready horses, is that a major trend of recent years, especially the 1990s, has been the resegregation of public schools, the ongoing of what was achieved at such costs in the 1960s and 1970s. Resegregation, whatever or whomever we choose to blame it on, suggests that the schools were not in the long run the great

accomplishment of the Civil Rights Movement. This is not to question the value or the desirability of desegregation, just for the record I supported desegregation, including public school desegregation, participated in it as a third grader. I supported it and continue to support it both as a practical means to greater equality and as a civic and cultural end in itself, but it has not been the most durable initiative and I think it's unraveling, or at least its significant unraveling in many parts of the country should, in addition to inspiring new strategies for achieving equality now, should lead us to take another look at the relative values and priorities that we tend to take for granted in our efforts to learn from the past. Thank you very much.

[clapping]

Jack Davis: I read a longer version of David's paper and I was reminded that apparently I commented on one of your paper's before at another conference, and David's ideas I always find very stimulating and interesting and also fascinating. Also sometimes I don't understand them, so I apologize ahead of time as I present my comments if I'm a little off base here. He asks us to think in terms of the counter-factual, which I think is useful in analytical methodology. In other words, if civil rights organizations and federal policy makers had obtained a better understanding of the so-called white masses and the pluralistic views of the so-called black community and taken the SRC's moderate position on

school desegregation, something about the course of history would have been different. However, I'm not clear from reading his paper on what would have been different and perhaps he will offer some clarity. Is he suggesting that if desegregation forces had followed the front to eliminate discrimination in public facilities such as transportation, successful and enduring desegregation of schools would have followed without or with just limited volatility? Would the SRC's "more general strategy" in public accommodation of desegregation have worked for schools? It is clear from the paper and presentation, I think, that David is himself trying to sort out the puzzle of school desegregation and resegregation, yet it seems at this point in his venture he wants to have his beer but drink somebody else's, as he has been known to do. [laughing] I confess that I, as a co-conspirator, it seems from reading his paper—it was not in the talk because of the restriction of time—he wants integrative schools and yet he wants to respect the sanctity of local control. He questions though whether this is possible. Of course, after the expenditure of thousands of dollars and countless calories of physical and intellectual energy to address the continuing problem of race in schools, the experts have shown us one thing, and that's that no one has a solution. Now we've been talking a lot this morning about Southern liberals, but it seems to me that before historians can begin evaluating alternative strategies of the Civil Rights Movement, they and racial liberals, whoever and whatever they may be, should first fully understand what segregation meant to white

segregationists. [They should get] to know the reason rather than just the fact. Why are schools today, next to churches, the most segregated public and semi-public venues in the country? What exactly was it that whites feared in desegregation? Too many activists and policy makers failed to listen, for instance, when **Walker Percy**, during the heady days of Brown and Little Rock and Ole Miss, clarified the private nature of public schools? When the justice department compelled the enrollment of James Meredith at the University of Mississippi in 1962, **Percy** wrote, "It was if the black man had been quartered in the living room of Southern whites. The familial boundary of this society came to coincide with the actual public space which it inhabited." It seemed odd and contradictory, if not traitorous, to many white liberals when in early days of resegregation in the late 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, it seemed contradictory when throngs of black parents expressed their opposition to integration at the expense of neighborhood schools and local control. As David pointed out, plenty of blacks took this very position in the early days of the civil rights struggle, but no one on the side of civil rights seemed to listen because, I think in part, because conservative whites were making the very same arguments. Again, we cannot know what social reformers were up against until we get at the heart of white racial attitudes, the basis of which I have argued elsewhere, was more complex than social fears and economic competition; that racial amalgamation meant not just physical amalgamation to white segregationists. Only after we scholars give

credence to the reality of white segregationists, rabid races, semi-civil conservatives, and white supporters all, and refrain from imposing our own value laden reality on our subjects, can we answer question about failed strategies of the Civil Rights Movement. I mean, how many of us scholars in here have actually interviewed a citizens council member, a Klansman, a race murderer? There's not very many, only two or three of us. If we too secondguess the motives, beliefs, ideals, and values of Southern whites—if we treat them as objects rather than subjects—our own strategies as scholars will fail.

John Kirk is part of the British invasion in the study of civil rights, and he brings what I call the across the pond perspective of U.S. History. Kirk encourages us to consider civil rights activity beyond traditional civil rights organizations such as _____, SNICK, SELC, and NAACP, and other historians such as **Linda Reed** and **John Ederton** and **Pat Suldon** have given us a glimpse into the civil rights contributions of public interest organizations whose agendas were not necessarily civil rights specific. In many such organizations old and new, [they] continue to carry the torch or picked up the church of civil rights after some of the traditional civil rights organizations lost their luster or just sort of faded into obscurity. The non-traditional organizations were national, regional, and they were community based, and Kirk takes us down to the all important state and local level to introduce us to the historical impact of the Arkansas Council on Human Relations. He consequently reminds of just how decentralized

the Civil Rights Movement actually was. While it did reveal some centralized aspects such as campaigns like the lunch counter sit-ins and the freedom rides that mushroomed into region wide campaigns, and of course the reinforcements that were sent in from the national headquarters or the regional headquarters, the real work of change was done in separate, individualized, local campaigns. The initiatives in Little Rock were part of a larger collective that shared a common spirit and goals, but depended on strategies that were tailor made at the local level to meet specific challenges. As some of us have shown, even local NAACP branches acted independently of national headquarters in New York; the two groups weren't even connected at times. Local branches adopted agendas that clashed with national policy, frustrating the leaders of the national organization as would a wayward child a parent or a _____ soldier his superiors. I want to wrap up my comments by beginning with a question for John that perhaps we can use as a springboard into questions from the floor. You opened your paper by saying that the ACHR "grew out of the reorganization of the Board of Arkansas Division of the Southern Regional Council." I wonder if you can tell us more about those origins and why, for instance, did **Harry Ashmore** choose the SRC? What was the appeal about the SRC?

John Kirk: The SRC branch itself reflects the Council on International Cooperation, which had been in Little Rock before that, and it was part of a long succession, I think, of liberal moderate white entities in the community. I

think one of things that happened in the mid 1950s is that organization, what we would call it today, regrounds itself as the Council on Human Relations. **Harry Ashmore**, as a returning GI, goes to Little Rock just about the time, or just a few years before, that regrounding takes places. I think there's a new impetus, a new direction, that the Southern Regional Council has taken by that regrounding exercise which attracts those people who think, this is something new, this is a new context we can operate within.

M. Lassitter: This is a question for David. My name is Matt Lassitter from the University of Mississippi. This is for David, but maybe you can speak to this to. I can't decide whether I'm troubled or a little confused about the implications of taking schools out of the civil rights narrative because a lot of historians are starting to use a **consumer** model to understand civil rights, and **Liz Cohen** has a new book on New Jersey in which she does this. Back then schools had a much more fundamental challenge to raise _____ class privilege like with street cars, for example, in other consumers' faces. Like Jack said, schools are semi-private; understand that a lot of white middle class and suburban lines, and they are increasingly private residents. If you think about it this way, you can argue that the real successes of the Civil Rights Movements are in consumer spaces, shopping malls are probably the most integrative places in the country today, whereas neighborhoods and schools are not. If you think about this in terms of moderates and massive resistance, moderates do get control

of the process in the South in every major city by the late 1950s and early 1960s. Increasingly what they do is they stop using a language of segregation and they start using a language of neighborhoods, and a class privilege as well as racial privilege. I wondered if you wanted to speak a little more to the implications of what does this mean? They're really moving toward a **northern** model, I think, which is a consumer model based on this idea that there's a distinction between public spaces and neighborhoods and schools. What does it mean in a larger context to try to rethink the role of schools in civil rights?

D. Chappell: There's a lot there. The consumer stuff, I think that's a very, very promising development in historiography. I hadn't thought of that connection; it's an astute and provocative one to make. It bothers me a little. I think there's a lot going on in the 1950s. Generally what I see as the Civil Rights Movement, what makes it distinctive, what makes it interesting, is that it's a counterpoint to those consumer trends. These are human beings who have lives and jobs and they are getting and spending like the rest of America, and they often partake of that consumerism—everybody does. The reason we're interested in them, the reason they stand out from my point of view, is that they resist so much of that consumerist ideology or solution to the old problems of freedom and democracy. That's obviously a personal answer. The private or semi-private nature, Jane brought up _____, I thought that the

distinction that she made was not between public and private there, but she had sort of a three-steer model of human society, and she did not say that schools are private. Her basis for thinking that school desegregation was the wrong move to make in those essays was that there's this fear somewhere between the private and the public. She wasn't saying that it's as private as families are—it was a distinct sphere from us—but neither was it an entirely private realm. On liberal egalitarian grounds, she argued that we still need to have spheres like public schools, neighborhood schools, that can be insulated from the claims of the state, the claims that we rightly make on strictly public space like voting booths and jury boxes and streetcars and public accommodations like hotels and so on; those would be public. I'm not saying that I want to narrate all those implications, and of course one of the things Jane didn't mention that was that **Orinth** quickly recanted all of that for tactical reasons. She wanted to push this repeal of **massessination** laws, and that wasn't what the civil rights leaders most wanted to push or even envisioned as a goal. It's sort of that question of the semi-private quality of schools, [which is] sort of a moral and philosophical question, and that's the way our ends approached it. My approach, I think, is somewhat different. I mean Jack was right to say that some of my argument wants to favor desegregation and yet recognize I think what he referred to as the sanctity of local control. That's not the way that it came to me. I think what I want to respect is other people who respect the sanctity of local control, black and white, liberal and

conservative, in those years and in other periods—in the 1950s but also in the 1980s and 1990s. In the immediate context of the 1950s, it's not respecting people for the moral sake of respecting them, but respecting them because you're fighting them in a battle; there's a war, a sort of social-cultural-political war going on for desegregation and other strategies to achieve greater equality. What you want to do, I think, and what the Civil Rights Movement often did at the grass roots level, the local level, was go after the weak points. [They'd] pick the pressure points where segregationists opinion was most vulnerable to division, most likely to come apart. I think strategic choices that the Supreme Court made, or if you will, imposed, or sort of fobbed off on the Grass Roots Movement in 1954, aren't necessarily the ones that the shrewdest field commanders in that battle might have chosen. Whatever their ultimate goals, and I think it was more respecting people's notions of local control, it's more a matter of respecting the enemy's power and ability to unify and develop solidarity on the school issue, which they couldn't do. The diehard seg[ments] were more isolated, more marginalized, or more vulnerable to marginalization on other issues. It's a strategic analysis that I approach this through. I think I learned something about the philosophical issues, but that's the way I get at it. Les you had your hand up earlier.

L. Dunbar: I'm Leslie Dunbar of the University of _____. [laughing] I have an organizational privilege, but before I get to that. I got to the SRC a few months after the South Carolina _____. I would like to say that at

least one of the organizers of that path with _____ became one of the more outspoken, forceful leaders of progressivism in the South, and as a matter of fact, Law Street Church in South Carolina pretty much was thrown in that path. What I really wanted to say was Barry and I and Paul Gaston's warning about getting lost in words, and I don't want to do that, the word is moderation. That is one of the most hateful words in my own personal life. To me, _____. More crucially, that decision for the _____ Southern Regional Council is far more incredibly important than the NAACP. I cannot really think of any important issue between the _____. I cannot think really of any important issue on which the Southern Regional Council took a position different from that of _____.

C. Currie: I'm Connie Currie. I just wanted to make a comment on the issue about the schools. I think it would be important that if you leave the issue of the black parents sending their children to white schools out of the _____ of the movement, because certainly after 1964, the women that I have interviewed and the father's who made that choice to send their children to the white schools, it was part of the Civil Rights Movement. If you interview people, you know they say, yeah, we know that—this was in Mississippi—we knew that if we were caught educated _____, we would be killed. So it was not just a schools issue, it was a flowing part of the movement. It's very interesting because I was talking to some people at the NAACP Regional Defense Fund, and at one of their last meetings

they were considering trying to get the right to a public education into the Constitution. A lot of people don't realize that it's not a Constitutional right to be able to go to a public school and to get a public education in this country. Now what happened at that meeting a few weeks ago, _____ amendment on public education.

Doug Smith: I'm Doug Smith. I have two questions, one for each of you. John, I was fascinated by your comment that the ACHR actually invited SNICK into Little Rock. I just wondered if there are examples of that happening elsewhere. If you could talk about that for just a second. Then David, my question for you is just sort of following up with what was just happening here. I think it's certainly understandable to look at the amount of resegregation of schools and say, well what went wrong, and maybe different choices should have been made, but I'm a little bit uncomfortable with the notion that it was the Supreme Court that sort of imposed its agenda on the South when, in fact, the NAACP for twenty years had been building up to ground, and people like **Oliver Hill** in the 1930s are running all over the state of Virginia trying to get people riled, students. Oliver Hill says that World War II was not the best thing that happened but the worst thing that happened because it stopped the momentum that he and others had actually made in filing these equalization suits. I wonder if you might comment on that.

John Kirk: On the point of the Arkansas Council of Human Relations inviting SNICK in, I think it is interesting in the light that I was talking about different types

of organizations in the Civil Rights Movement. Those kind of Big Five organizations, if you like, felt in competition with one another. What's interesting is that those organizations don't seem to feel in competition with the Southern Regional Council or the Arkansas Council on Human Relations. There's a deception that they're doing two different things at two different sorts of rivals, and therefore the Arkansas Council on Human Relations doesn't really think it's a threat to invite SNICK in to operate within those organizations, whereas SNICK and the NAACP do come to blows—not literally, but metaphorically—because of their operations. I think there's a twin track structure; if different organizations work with one another, it is more broadly effective too.

D. Chappell: The key word in those suits in Virginia is equalization; those are not desegregation suits, they're equalization suits. That, of course, is a strategy that is embraced by Jimmy Burns and other diehard segregationists. Maybe, and I'm just saying, we ought to consider the ultimate fate, the tokenistic quality that so much of school desegregation in fact had for so long despite the calories that were expended in achieving it, there's a lot that can be done and a lot that may be really radical. I think one of the things we do, to throw this back to you guys, we see the school issue as so radical because that's what finally got the segregationists to come together and make a stand. That doesn't necessarily mean that as a long term strategy it leads to the most radical achievement. I'm just saying let's pick that apart and look at it. I'm not saying that I've got a new answer

and a new interpretation, I think actually Connie Currie's point that there is a kind of continuum for all of these issues certainly by the mid 1960s, I think that's indisputable. But I also think that if you look in the opinion and letters columns of the black newspapers, people break the issues down; two people may agree on one issue and disagree sharply on another.

M. Lassitter: Resegregation is happening to all the local people because of neighborhood schools, because of the _____ supervision of school districts like Charlotte and _____.

D. Chappell: Okay, but I think that is just begging the question of why did local control become such a value for many black parents, as well as white? Why did judicial control sort of—I think the turning point is this 1974 in the Miliken decision—why did the Supreme Court justices just sort of throw up their hands. They're cowards, they're closet reactionaries—we can say all of these things about them, or that the climate of opinion is changing, or it's just the irreducible racism of American society. I think there's something to all of those theories, but I also think that the Supreme Court was saying, we can only force, to use _____ term, social engineering so far; not as a moral choice of the ideal world we want to create, but the practical choice of what we can actually achieve in our limited lifetimes in the real world. If I could briefly respond to Les' point, and maybe I didn't make myself clear, but my point was to suggest that the people working in the SRC even before the advent of your leadership, the term moderation is really not a good one. What they were doing, if you look at it carefully

and break down the issues, was often quite radical, quite historically significant, and we shouldn't sort of dismiss it as moderation.

Steve Suits: I'm Steve Suits from _____. When the last gentlemen's question of schools, it seems to me that an important line of inquiry _____, is you always kind of measure whether equalization would have gotten anywhere, whether **Jimmy Burns** would have taken it up at all had it not been an effort. Equalization was an effort since Reconstruction _____; that historical continuum. Folks were ready to assume that equalization was not going to come about _____. That's a separate point, but I think you have to measure, how far did it get along in 130 years to measure or not whether it would be an option for strategy in _____ of good schools. The second point about this _____ of the ground, I was intrigued by your difficulty in refuting the polling of the blacks after Brown and the split. It reminds me a little of the folks who slight **Eddie Williams** _____ the day _____ in studies. In over one year has shown that most African-American parents support vouchers at a higher rate than do white parents. Those who believe in vouchers have tried to make good use of that in an appropriate way, but if you look at both those polls in the point of view of a parent, you say, what does my child need? My child needs a better education? Either that or he needs better choices. I'm not supporting a voucher, but I'm supporting a choice for a better school. In

1954, what parent of a black child would say, is that decision, in my child's life, get them a better education? Every child that went to a white school knew what kind of hell they'd have to deal with, and **Eddie Bates** and others had to make sure that those children were taken care of. To assume that a parent in a poll makes a global choice about what is good rather than an understanding that that poll is raising to them a question about their own children I think's a consideration. I'm interested in the terms by which these interpretations come about; as analytic frameworks whether they are grounded and respectful of people who are living those lives. **Harry Ashmore** and his day after editorial—now we all have a memory that can serve us better than the past sometimes right—more than once in the **Poppem Seminar Harry Ashmore** remembered editorial. He clearly, from his memory, wasn't trying to project what was, he was trying to project what he hoped would encourage the South to do and who necessarily thought by writing that editorial he was not trying to persuade the South, but instead reflecting. It's something I think you're assuming that Harry as an editorial writer was liberally always honest—he wasn't. He would like to have had the South respond that way; he was trying to encourage the South to respond that way.

Jack Davis: We're out of time and I think we need to have David respond.

Steve Suits: As I would conclude, I'd like you to consider that point.

D. Chappell: Actually, I don't want to say how wrong you are. On the poll, I lean toward your interpretation exactly; the only thing that confuses me is how you

seem to think we disagree on that. I think we don't know what the deepest inner motives of the people who answered the polls are, but I think what you suggest is very plausible. I would sort of go with that as the most likely general explanation to the extent that there is a general explanation. It just brings it back to the question for me of whatever people might have believed about ultimate ends and goals, we need to keep those goals in mind, but also keep in mind what people think is worth making a sacrifice for, worth working full time, and actually likely to be achieved in our lifetimes or in the school age range of our children. That is as much a framework that determines the course of Southern history through the Civil Rights Movement as the ultimate goals, that I'm not saying we should ever forget, but I want to keep those things in balance and look at their relationship in a different way after we have the experience of resegregation, among other things.

Jack Davis: Thank you. Very good presentation, thank you.

Brian Ward: I thank you to everyone who has presented and shared this morning.

[Lunch instructions]