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The News and Courier

South Carolina's Most Outspoken Newspaper

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CHARLESTON, S. C., MONDAY, JULY 14, 1958

Citizens Councils Must Be Strong To Protect S.C. If Crisis Comes

This is an editorial on the citizens council movements. Those readers who think this isn't fit hot weather fare may want to turn to the comic page and follow the adventures of Li'l Abner among the señoritas.

But leaving temperatures aside, a discussion of citizens councils in South Carolina is timely. From reports we have received, the citizens council movement in South Carolina has been taking a siesta. While citizens councils across the South have been stepping up their organizational activities, South Carolina's councils have gone to sleep.

Some South Carolinians may say: So what? We asked ourselves that question. Is it necessary for the citizens councils to be tremendously active in the state at this time? Everything is quiet. Race relations are good. Why rock the boat?

Well, we don't believe the boat should be rocked. The good relations between the races should be maintained. South Carolinians have had firm leadership on the segregation front from Gov. Timmerman. We know that our next governor, Ernest F. Hollings, will use all his considerable ability to protect separation of the races. We also know that the General Assembly is like a rock. It will enact whatever legislation is needed to prevent disruption by outside forces.

Nevertheless, The News and Courier believes that a vigorous citizens council movement is needed in this state. While things are peaceful now, the situation can change. In fact, it is clear that trouble won't stay away from our door forever. Virginia is in turmoil

this summer as the NAACP pushes its massive enrollment tactics.

Five Virginia cities are under court order to integrate this fall. All sorts of legal devices are being employed in the hope that public schools may be kept open, but there is not much cause for optimism. Troops could be sent into Charlottesville, Richmond, Newport News, Norfolk or Arlington in September.

If Virginia, or any embattled area, is to survive assaults on its independence, citizens must be prepared. People must know how to act when pressure is applied. They must have a clear understanding of their legal rights.

The citizens council movement is the Southern grass roots organization that can help people become prepared for the day when pressure is applied to them. It is not enough for a governor or legislature to be firm. There must be intensive county by county, ward by ward preparation.

The citizens council movement in South Carolina should include representatives from all sections of the community. Men of substance in their communities should play an active role in council affairs. The best minds and the most independent men are needed as leaders. On the state level, there should be a highly qualified administrator for the councils. It should be required that dues be paid in order that the members may be serviced with up-to-the-minute information.

There is no need for a lot of hubbalooboo about integration. But there should be a great deal of quiet preparation and study. The citizens councils of South Carolina are nothing less than a good insurance policy for the state.