

# South Finds New Negro In Key Role

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ATLANTA, May 15—One of the major aspects of the South's racial dilemma is the emergence of the New Negro.



Baker

He plays a

key role.

He is William Bennett, attorney of Florence, S. C., who smiled when he heard the robed and unmasked Ku Klux Klan had solemnly gathered and burned a cross

in a field at Effingham, near Florence. "Now what do they think they're accomplishing?" he asked.

Negroes not long ago fled in terror to the woods when the Klan stormed, but Bennett smiled.

The New Negro is the Rev. Martin Luther King of Montgomery, Ala., who has led a boycott of that city's buses. This had led to a Negro-supported test of Alabama's transportation segregation laws.

The New Negro is on the campus of South Carolina State College at Orangeburg. He answered a White Citizens Council boycott with a boycott of his own, defiantly protested a state investigation of National Association for the Advancement of Colored People activities on the campus and rallied around a burning effigy of Gov. George Bell Timmerman.

He is Henry Carroll, principal of Carroll High School in Monroe, La., who broadcasts a half-hour Sunday radio show on KNOE, popular among white and Negro residents. He gently lectures the whites on racial discrimination ("Does a black tulip in a bed of white tulips really mean that God has made a mistake?"), often sharply reprimands Negroes for not fulfilling their responsibilities of citizenship ("You have the schools. It is your fault if you don't take advantage of them.")

The New Negro is the Rev. A. C. Curtright of Thunderbolt, Ga., adjacent to Savannah, who is no Johnny-come-lately in age. When the white man speaks of the Negro's secret and real desire for intermarriage, Dr. Curtright explodes: "That is an absolutely undeserved derogatory reflection upon the white Southern womanhood and I resent it. Apparently, I have more faith in the white woman than you do!"

It wasn't too long ago that such words might have been whispered, but not exploded.

It is Dr. Curtright who reflects the thinking of many New Negroes when he says: "We Negroes must help the white man to remove the burden of guilt and conscience, which he has so long suffered, and help him set himself free."

The New Negro is St. Elmo Johnson, a Monroe, La., attorney, who says the Negro, in most cases, will willingly segregate himself in an integrated school system—but the Negro, himself, wants to suggest this and not be told to do it by the whites.

It is the Monroe, La., New Negro who refused to let a purge of Negro voters go by unchallenged. He showed up by the hundreds to defend his vote.

The South's New Negro, then, is becoming unafraid and more outspoken. The paradoxical aspect, and the subject of study by many sociologists, including Prof. John A. Griffin of Emory University here, is that the southern white man has helped make the emergence of the New Negro possible.

Before the U. S. Supreme Court's desegregation decision in 1954, the South had started a tremendous equalization program in school facilities. The Negro began to get fine buildings and adequate teachers. That program is continuing at full swing.

(Most white Southerners freely admit the schools should have been equalized long ago. But until the South's industrial revolution, still accelerating while the North long ago went through its industrial revolution, the people and land were poor. The Negroes did not have adequate schools, but neither did the whites.)

As the Negro fares better in education, he will fare better economically. Sociologists say he will better his social status and that this, in itself, is a potent force, constantly gathering strength, working toward integration.