



# **Defending White Democracy: The Making of a Segregationist Movement and the Remaking of Racial Politics, 1936-1965**

*Jason Morgan Ward*

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Most studies of the white resistance in the civil rights era begin with the reaction to *Brown v. Board of Education*. "The Death of White Democracy" traces white southern resistance to segregation to its early roots, in the relatively tranquil decades before the dramatic reaction to the Supreme Court's action and in so doing he pushes back the date of the development of coordinated resistance in a way that mirrors the new focus on the long civil rights movement. Perhaps not surprisingly, the early stirrings of the civil rights struggle in the interwar period had an equal and opposite reaction in the white community. Building on that base of research, Ward is able to argue that the massive resistance to integration in the wake of *Brown* grew out of a much longer, more sustained effort to defeat the civil rights movement than has been previously understood by scholars, and that the segregation movement brought together numbers of southern whites including powerful statesmen, militant white supremacists, gradualists, and the overwhelming majority of southern whites who shared the same goals despite their often conflicting interests. Ward contends that segregationists were not merely reacting to the movement for civil rights but often times acted preemptively, to subvert any efforts toward integration. Revisions to this manuscript during the review process bring the story through the early sixties to 1964 and the election of Lyndon Johnson.

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