

The New Virginia

Virginia Students'
Civil Rights Committee

Newsletter

KKK RALLY IN VICTORIA

There was a Ku Klux Klan rally held near Victoria, Virginia, Saturday, September 4, 1965. Although news reports stated that from four to five thousand persons attended the meeting, there were actually only about a thousand. The success of the rally

is undetermined at this point. It is reported that there are going to be a number of such gatherings scheduled for different localities.

The Grand Dragon of North Carolina and the Grand Dragon of Virginia spoke and tried to stir up emotions. One speaker said NAACP stood for "Niggers, Apes, Alligators, Coons and Possums;" another said it stood for "National Association for the Advancement of the Communist Party." They blasted Negroes President Johnson, Vice President Humphrey and civil rights workers. At the conclusion of the rally men dressed in the Klan regalia lighted the sixty-five foot cross and paraded around it singing such songs as "The Old Rugged Cross" and "Kneel At the Cross."

Four white civil rights workers, two from Amelia, one from Brunswick and another affiliated with VSCRC, entered the rally. Somehow they were identified by the Klan and forced out of the meeting. They were kicked and beaten and told that only white people were allowed. One State Trooper observed one girl being shoved from the rally but did nothing about it. When it was reported to another trooper, he asked what the civil rights workers were doing there and said if they would take his advice they would go home right then.

Two carloads of Negroes and civil rights workers remained parked across the road from the entrance of the rally during the meeting. They were yelled at from time to time and constantly referred to during the speeches.

No incidences took place after the rally.

We Are Here To Stay!

FIVE staff members of the Virginia Students' Civil Rights Committee have decided to stay in Southside Virginia for the rest of the year to continue the work which was started this summer.

The main office has been moved from Blackstone to Victoria. Full-time workers will be in Nottoway, Lunenburg, and Brunswick Counties. They will be trying to carry on limited activities in Amelia, Dinwiddie and Powhatan Counties where there were full-time workers this summer.

Different programs during the winter will be coordinated with students on various college campuses. Two conferences have been tentatively planned for educational and recruiting purposes. From time to time there will be projects, such as a get-out-the-vote project in November. College students will be recruited to work on this type of program.

We hope that by exposing students to the Southside Project some will decide to work in the area full-time next summer. Effort will be made to work with existing civil rights groups on the campuses and to stimulate the establishment of groups on campuses where there are none.

Civil rights and academic freedom are closely related. Hopefully this will become clear to students.

Freedom Rally in Amelia

On Saturday, August 14, in Amelia County, over three hundred local Negroes gathered in the usually deserted Court House Square to celebrate the passage of the Voting Rights Bill of 1965. For the first time in the history of this very poor and completely rural community, people demonstrated en masse that they are not satisfied with living in a segregated society where whites occupy every county office, own nearly every major local business concern, and receive twice as much total income per year as Negroes. They demonstrated that they will no longer endure economic and social oppression.

Mr. Herbert Coulton, Director of the Virginia SCOPE civil rights projects, led the rally and generated a vigorous freedom spirit among the participants. He and some of the workers took the lead in the singing of freedom songs, with lyrics specially written by members of the Junior NAACP. The youth group had also made signs for which they wrote slogans such as "Fair School Bus Transportation--No More Two Hour Rides," "Let Negroes Use the County Ball Park Too," and "Amelia Needs Doctors and Dentists--And the Board of Supervisors Can Get Them." Mr. Coulton spoke dramatically on these topics, as well as on voting. His plea was for organized community action against Negro apathy and white oppression. The rally climaxed impressively in the forming of a giant circle around the square and the enthusiastic singing of "We Shall Overcome."

Amelia's Freedom Rally was a peaceful one, although it was re-

ported that a hand of young whites was cruising around the square with a shotgun in the back seat of their car. Also, a white was identified as he shoved a paper bag full of yellow jackets into a hedge next to the crowd. The sheriff was not sent for, since the man was the only one stung. A public address system boomed the proceedings to the many whites who stood outside the stores surrounding the Court House Square. A Nazi leaflet distributed through the town early that morning was read by Mr. Coulton and drew quite a response from the crowd; the leaflet urged whites to turn out and vote for George Lincoln Rockwell for governor of the state, thereby counteracting "the illiterate nigger vote."

Not only did the people voice their discontent with the oppressive racial situation in Amelia, they also proved that they are willing to do something to change things.

133 people registered to vote the day of the Freedom Rally. Thanks to the new Voting Rights Act (and a surprisingly cooperative treasurer) and the amount of poll tax required to register for the first time was only \$1.50, instead of the \$4.77 it had been only a week before. Also, applicants were not required to be able to fill out the complicated and confusing registration forms by themselves. Thus, Amelia was the first county in the South to take significant advantage of the Voting Rights Act enacted by our government, a government which is just beginning to really represent the people for whom it serves.

VSCRC, SCOPE and a Presbyterian group worked there this summer.

Lunenburg Reddishes

Around 175 persons registered to vote in Lunenburg County, Saturday, August 21. This is the largest turn out this summer. Much of the impetus for registration came from a march held earlier in the month for support of the Voting Rights Bill. Due to pressure from the Negro community, the Electoral Board added the first and third Saturdays as registration days. Thursdays, the second and fourth, had been the only registration days.



VSCRC and SCOPE workers spent much time on voter registration and political education. Political education took place through area meetings. Local elected officials and their duties, the Circuit Court Judge's power, and responsibilities, the state officials, such as, General Assembly and the Byrd Machine have been the major topics of discussions in these meetings. Other area meetings of community organization have evolved around farm problems, school desegregation and poverty.

