

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.

O.F.O. Visits

The Fourth Congressional District, Virginia's Black Belt, ranks 405th out of the nations 435 congressional districts in annual median income. The district is 47.9% Negro, and nearly a third of the Negro families earn less than \$1000 a year. There are a number of federal programs that can help the poor people in Southside, but those in power have not tried to put them into effect.

The Virginia Students' Civil Rights Committee contacted Gary Lefkowitz of the Office of Economic Opportunity and asked him to come to Southside. He spoke in Nottoway, Lunenburg and Brunswick counties and told of the various programs available from the war on poverty, such as adult education, community centers and day care centers for working mothers.

In Lunenburg, the NAACP sponsored a meeting to choose a board of directors for a community action project. One of the problems found almost everywhere is the unrepresentative nature of the local boards. In Brunswick County, where 60% of the people are Negro, a majority of the board is white. Nearly 60% of the people, both white and Negro earn less than \$3000 a year, yet the poverty board is filled with Mayors, councilmen, supervisors, teachers and ministers--not a poor person among them.

People in Southside counties are now trying to form boards that will include people directly affected by poverty, and give them a voice in this program that hopes to better their future.

POWHATAN PICKETS COURT HOUSE

A group of 70 Powhatan County citizens marched on the monthly meeting of the County Board of Supervisors. The purpose of marching was to protest their inaction on meeting certain requests that had been presented for the past 23 months by a spokesman of the local branch of NAACP.

The four main grievances of the people were as follows: (1) Removal of the "White" and "Colored" signs on the restrooms at the Court House, (2) Establishment of a bi-racial committee in the county to work out racial problems and problems of the Negro community, (3) Opening of county government jobs to Negroes, (4) Demand information on the county's financing of the segregated War Memorial Building.

A.S.C.S. Elections

In order to keep farm prices stable, the federal government places limitations on the amount of certain crops, like cotton and tobacco, that can be grown. The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) of the Department of Agriculture is the agency responsible for determining the crop allotments of each farmer. This is done at the local level through ASCS committees elected directly by the farmers.

In the south for many years only white farmers voted and served on these committees, and white farmers got the best allotments at the expense of the small Negro farmers. Civil rights workers in Southside have been encouraging Negro farmers to take part in ASCS elections. Lunenburg, Amelia and Nottoway have had strong efforts made.

The Department of Agriculture in order to fight discrimination in farm programs has established an advisory committee of Negroes to work for (a) equal employment opportunities in ASCS offices, (b) equal opportunity in ASCS farm programs and (c) full participation in ASCS elections both as voters and candidates.

ASCS elections will be held in Virginia in the month of October. All farm owners, operators, tenants and sharecroppers will be eligible to participate.

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS
V S C R C
Box 79
Kenbridge, Virginia
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The Board indicated that they would give no definite answer to the protests and made it clear to the persons attending the meeting that they would not act under any pressure from the group. They claim that they have no power to act on the protestations and continue to ignore demands from the Negro Community. When one of the white civil rights workers tried to address the Board, the Board refused to listen to him although this worker is a registered voter in Virginia.

The March and picketing took place on August 9, 1965. Following the meeting of the Board, some members of the demonstration decided to stage a sit-in in the Court House. From seven to eleven persons spent the

POWHATAN COUNTY (CON'D)

night in the Court House. They were not bothered in any way. The newspaper coverage of the sit-in was fairly good, and it did succeed in bringing the situation to light. The participants vacated the Court House at 8:00am August 10.

Official protests have since been lodged with the Justice Department. It can be proven that Titles III and X of the Civil Rights Act are being violated.

WHY I TRANSFERRED TO A WHITE SCHOOL

The reason why I decided to go to a white school based on the condition in which the school are built and many more reason as I will write later in my report. First we will start talking about the two school (white-Victoria High and Negro-Lunenburg High). Lunenburg is in a very bad condition, the restrooms are up hill at school are very unsatisfactory because they are old fashion bathroom dug in the ground. The class rooms are divided by a piece of plywood just high enough to keep you from seeing over it. While one teacher is teaching Government on one side of the plywood other teaching math, the teacher teaching Government sound like he is you in math. Class rooms are over crowded in subject we have in school. Now at Victoria High the condition are much better. The classes are not over crowded and rooms are much cleaner. Well every thing is much more better than in a Negro

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PLEASE SEND MONEY!!

VSCRC at the present time has no money with which to carry on winter activities. As the reader can tell by the articles, civil rights activities must be carried on all year. We are asking that you send MONEY! The larger your donation the better, but if you only have a dollar to send--send it! We need money for rent, supplies, gas & car repairs, wages, conferences,

school altogether. That why I chose to go to a white school.

Bobby Crane
High School Student
Lunenburg County

For more information and donations to the project write VSCRC the following address:

V S C R C
Box 79
Kenbridge, Virginia

FREE DOM
NOW!
WHEN DO YOU
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NOW

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Box 79
Kenbridge, Virginia



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