

Anti-Klan marchers hit Greensboro murders

City sabotage fails

GREENSBORO, N.C. In 1960, a Black person here couldn't get a cup of coffee at the same lunch counter as a white. But on February 1, Joseph McNeil and three of his classmates from North Carolina Agricultural & Technical College refused to move from the lunch counter at Woolworth's until they were served.

They started a movement that saw thousands of people "sitting-in" at public facilities throughout the South, at one point 10-15,000 in Greensboro alone. Up North, Yale, Harvard, Brandeis and MIT students demonstrated in support.

It took six months to integrate that Woolworth's lunch counter and five years to break legal segregation in the South.

Twenty years later, certain things haven't changed in Greensboro, N.C., among them the tight grip of racism. On Nov. 3rd, five members of a leftist group organizing in Greensboro, the Communist Workers Party (CWP), were shot down in cold blood at a rally protesting renewed Ku Klux Klan activity. The city rushed to whitewash the murders.

Now, as then, people did what had to be done. On Feb. 2nd, the 20th anniversary of the Woolworth sit-in, 7000 converged on Greensboro to protest the five murders and the resurgence of the Klan. From the new generation of North Carolina A & T students who



Demonstrators form ranks as 7,000-person anti-Klan march in Greensboro begins.

were prominent in the march, to the activists who came from cities across the country where the Klan presence is growing, there was a common sentiment among them as they marched past that Woolworth's—"We will never go back."

It was a victory that the march happened at all. The government was able to force the cancellation of the first

planned protest of the Nov. 3 murders—an inter-religious service organized by three local Black ministers—with an intensive red-baiting campaign. The FBI launched an investigation, not of the Klan, but of anti-Klan organizers! Under the pressure of 3:30 a.m. phone calls and 11th hour meetings with the "Human Relations" Commission, not to mention newspaper headlines like "Leftists Plan War on Klan," ministers endorsing the service were forced to back down.

When questioned about the repression in Greensboro, North Carolina Governor James Hunt gave his wholehearted backing. "I am much more concerned about what these groups might do than I am about the violation of their rights," he said.

To which Virgil Griffin, N. Carolina Grand Dragon of the Klan sect that pulled the triggers on Nov. 3, commented, "He's the best governor the state has ever had."

ANTI-KLAN ORGANIZERS NOT DETERRED

Anti-Klan organizers were not deterred. They gathered in a national conference December 14-15 in Atlanta and laid plans for the Feb. 2 march.

The Greensboro City Council responded with a hearing on a new parade ordinance that would force demonstrators to post bond to cover costs for all but 45 police assigned to patrol a march. If more than the estimated number of people came out, they would not be allowed to participate.

Meanwhile, City Manager Tom Osborne told the anti-Klan network that the Coliseum, where they asked to hold their rally, was booked Feb. 2. The city was sponsoring a Rhythm and Blues festival that day, he announced.

Greensboro was not in the habit of sponsoring R&B concerts, so march organizers checked with performers supposedly scheduled to appear. They knew nothing about it! Roy Ayers, whom the city finally managed to book, backed out as soon as he learned of the situation.

From the Pulpit Forum, an organization of Black ministers, to local politicians, public opinion against the



One of the 4 original lunch counter sit-in participants back at Woolworth's 20 years later on the day of the anti-Klan march.

city snowballed. The City Council tabled the proposed parade ordinance and city manager Osbourne had to postpone the concert and grant the march organizers a permit for the Coliseum.

For its efforts, the city now faces a \$600,000 damage suit.

When the government officials realized they couldn't stop the march, they did what they could to sabotage it. Organizers' homes were raided and hundreds of bus companies were contacted and told not to rent.

Governor Hunt actually declared a state of emergency for all of North Carolina on Feb. 2! Greensboro itself was shut down tight. Police blocked off the roads and cleared the areas along the march route.

7000 MARCH

Nonetheless, 7,000 people made it to Greensboro Feb. 2, and in a three and a half mile march, made their point. In addition to the strong contingent of A&T students and others from North Carolina schools, there were busloads from across the South: Tidewater, Va., Atlanta, Ga., Chattanooga, TN., Florida and Mississippi.

(Continued on page 17)

KLAN TERROR IN 1979

The Ku Klux Klan murder of 5 anti-Klan demonstrators in North Carolina last November came as a shock to millions. But 1979 was full of vicious incidents showing just how dangerous the reviving Klan really is.

In their quest for White Power, the KKK shot at people, burned crosses, marched with machine guns, distributed racist films and literature - anything they could to ignite racial violence. And while the new civil rights movement in the South remained a particular target, the KKK raised hell everywhere else, too - in the North, the West, in people's homes, at schools, factories, prisons, and in the military. The following is just a sample of Klan activities in 1979:

JANUARY

*KKK burns a cross on the Navy ship USS Norfolk. Klan official Tom Metzger boasts, "The military has become a good training ground for our people." Weekly KKK meetings are held at Ft. Hood, Texas Army Base and Camp Pendleton Marine Base.

*Alabama: Klansmen take responsibility for kidnaping, beating and whipping Rev. Manual Whitefield after he publicly defended Tommy Hines, a retarded Black youth charged with rape. Hines defense rallies come to be a KKK target.

FEBRUARY

*Kentucky: Former head of the Kentucky Klan is arrested for conspiring with 12 others to murder public officials and a witness against the Klan.

*South: The Invisible Empire of Bill Wilkinson claims 2000 members in the Tennessee Valley alone.

*Decatur, Alabama: After KKK attacks group protesting arrest of Black charged with shoplifting, the mayor enacts a ban on weapons within 1000 feet of public demonstrations. On the 24th, 200 Klansmen march through Decatur flaunting weapons which include sawed-off shotguns and submachine guns. Policemen stand by and wave.

MARCH

*Winston-Salem, North Carolina: 8-foot cross is burned on front lawn of James Stowe, a Black. Five days later 20 heavily armed Klansmen surround his home shouting "White Power!"

*Forsyth County, North Carolina: The Forsyth County Public Library mounts an exhibit of KKK paraphernalia, billed as a "white version of 'Roots.'" Hundreds of calls, all negative, force it to close.

APRIL

*Childersburg-Sycaluga, Alabama: 21 KKKers are arrested by the FBI, after a 2-year spree of harassing and shooting into the homes of interracial couples and local Black leaders. By the time the trial concludes in October, 4 get off for insubstantial evidence, 8 get 2-year terms for misdemeanors, and one government witness, Loyal Newton Bailey, is found murdered.

(Continued on page 17)

Anti-Klan march

(Continued from page 9)

Buses also rolled in from D.C., Philadelphia, N.Y., Boston, Cincinnati, and some came from as far as California. In the North as well as the South, the Klan is on the rise, and many of the people who marched in Greensboro came from local anti-Klan fights.

The list of the 23 speakers at the Coliseum rally, as well as the hundreds of endorsers, reflected the broad support for the event. Highlights included Rev. Joseph Lowery of SCLC, Rev. Lucius Walker of the Inter-religious Foundation of Community Organizations, Rev. Ben Chavis, Anne Braden of the Southern Organizing Committee, Skip Robinson of the U-

nited League of Mississippi, Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth of the Cincinnati Anti-Klan network, and Odys Hyde of the Southern Conference Educational Fund. The speakers saw the growth of the Klan as no freak accident, but a reflection of growing right-wing trends in the government and country as a whole. The Klan can be fought, they emphasized, not by threats or rhetoric, but by an organized grassroots effort. We must enter into the '80's, they said, resolved to struggle against the Klan.

OBSTACLES TO UNITY

As hard as the government worked to prevent that scene in the Coliseum from happening, there were participants in the demonstration itself, most notably the CWP, who also threatened the success of the day. Publicizing the march under the slogan that it was better to die fighting the Klan than to live like slaves, they refused to go along with the coalition's decision to tell people not to carry arms. Only the night before the demonstration did they give in. At the rally itself, they booed speakers who every day put their lives on the line to fight the Klan.

The CWP's behavior not only scared many people from coming to Greensboro, but also made it difficult for organizations to put their names out in public as backers of the demonstration. It will take thousands of people to stop the Klan, not just the handful that agree with the CWP down the line. The CWP's refusal to try to unite the broadest numbers was a thorn in the side of the coalition all along.

STOP THE WHITEWASH

The 7000 demonstrators are gone from Greensboro, many back organizing in their local communities. But their presence there Feb. 2 will make it harder for the city to proceed with its whitewash of the Klan murders.

The FBI has completed its investigation and withdrawn from the



Terrorism from the right in Florida.

KLAN TERROR IN 1979

(Continued from page 9)

MAY

*Decatur: 150 club-swinging Klansmen attack a Southern Christian Conference Leadership march for Hines. 20 shots are fired, 3 Blacks and 2 Klansmen are hurt, and the KKK vows "We'll never leave our guns in the car again!" Two days later, KKKers storm City Hall, burn a cross and chant "White Power" to protest the arrest of Klansmen after the demo.

*Fayetteville, Arkansas: KKK rebirth continues as Arkansas Klan holds first public meeting in years.

JUNE

*Okolona, Mississippi: 18-year-old Lee Carouthers is fatally shot by known Klansman, Deputy Sheriff Hansel Rogers, while handcuffed in prison. Skip Robinson, leader of the United League of Northern Mississippi, says "The cops here wear blue by day, white by night."

JULY

*East Point, Georgia: Ken Chastain, a Lumbee Indian and shop steward at Pittsburgh Paint and Glass, Local 1961, is attacked at work by co-worker Roger Campbell, an admitted member of the United Klans of America. Chastain is then fired for "fighting on the premises."

*New Haven, Connecticut: Cross is burned in front of the mayoral campaign office of State Treasurer Henry Parker, the state's highest ranking Black official.

*China Grove, North Carolina: The Klan shows the racist film, Birth of A Nation, as part of recruiting drive. It is also shown in Winston-Salem and Charlotte, NC, and Stockton, California.

*Birmingham, Alabama: The KKK marches through downtown while police protect them from jeering Blacks.

AUGUST

*Barnegat, New Jersey: 19 KKKers turn out to announce the presidential candidacy of David Duke, the Klan's best publicity getter. A week later, Duke leads a march of 80 through Columbus, Georgia.

*Valley Stream, Long Island, NY: A 3-foot cross is burned at home of Grant family, one week after they moved into this mainly white area. It

case—without filing charges.

The Greensboro police department has released an investigation clearing themselves of any wrongdoing or negligence. One officer reports that the reason his squad was nowhere to be seen when the Klan caravan pulled up and opened fire was "because most had stopped to get a sandwich."

Fourteen men were arrested in connection with the shooting, and bail was set for as low as \$4000. The 14 have pleaded "Not Guilty" to the murder charges, claiming they fired in self-defense. Their story is corroborated by local law enforcement officials, who now claim the

first shots came from the CWP, and by local media reports of "an unidentified fellow worker" of the victims who says the CWP set up their own assassinations to get publicity.

As the trial approaches, Klan cross burnings continue in the Greensboro area. On January 16, Virgil Griffin, head of the state KKK, was arrested running from the scene of a cross burning in Boger City, N.C. In his car, police found a 22 caliber rifle, a 16 gauge shotgun, a pistol, a Bible, a book about Hitler, and 2 unburned crosses wrapped in oil-soaked rags.

The anti-Klan struggle must continue.

Black rebellion rips Oklahoma town

IDABEL, OKLAHOMA — Early Sunday morning, January 20th, word spread through Idabel, Oklahoma's Black community, that 15-year-old William Henry Johnson had been beaten and shot to death behind the Black Hat. The Black Hat is an all-white social club on the edge of the Black section of town, and had been the scene of previous racial confrontations.

By 4:00 p.m. that afternoon, 100 Blacks gathered outside City Hall to demand justice for Johnson. By nightfall, Idabel was engulfed in a rebellion that 200 state troopers with automatic weapons couldn't quell. The Black Hat caught fire, and angry demonstrators kept firemen at bay while the club burned to the ground.

Two died in the uprising—Ruben Farmer, a white auxiliary cop and William Mack, Jr., a Black. Eight Blacks were arrested. Property damage was estimated at \$100,000.

"They feel they're swimming in a sea of racism and they're about to drown," said William Y. Rose, director of Oklahoma's Human Rights Commission, shortly after the rebellion. He was describing the situation, not only for Blacks, but Mexican Americans and Indians as well in the small towns clumped in south-

east Oklahoma.

Johnson's murder was not the first. Last fall in nearby Enid, 2 Blacks died mysteriously. Last May in Hobert, a Black man was shot by a white bartender. Police brutality, bad housing, discrimination in hiring and promotion, and no jobs were high on the list of grievances that Idabel's Black community sent to City Hall in the week following the rebellion.

Tensions continued to simmer during the week as Bill Wilkerson, head of the Invisible Empire of the Knights of the KKK, announced plans to visit Idabel. A group of Choctaw Indians burned Wilkerson in effigy, but the Klan leader showed up anyway—the day of Johnson's funeral. One hundred fifty people came to pay their final respects to the murder victim, but Wilkerson left town complaining that no one would meet with him. "I'll be back," he promised.

Meanwhile, in Arkansas, police are holding 29-year-old Walter Anthony DeShazo for Johnson's murder. They arrested DeShazo the night after the riot, arraigned him in Judge Gail Crayter's living room, and whisked him away over the border. According to eyewitnesses to the murder, the police want DeShazo out of town because they know he's not the killer.

is the latest in a series of KKK crossburnings, harassment and defacing of synagogues in New York and Connecticut, including 4 firebombings in Queens. Suffolk County, NY reported three times more KKK violence in August than all of 1978.

*Montgomery, Alabama: As civil rights activities in the South heat up, Klan retraces steps of Martin Luther King's 1965 civil rights march, calling it a march for White Power. All 176 are arrested in Montgomery for lack of a permit. A weapons search turns up 100 weapons, including a Thompson submachine gun.

SEPTEMBER

*Lewisburg, North Carolina: United Racist Front forms when 100 KKKers and Nazis meet to counter opposition sparked by showings of Birth of A Nation. Greensboro massacre is planned.

*Dearborn, Michigan: Two foremen parade through a Ford Rouge plant in KKK hoods. They are transferred only after 6 workers walk out and 1000s sign a protest petition.

OCTOBER

*Virginia Beach, Virginia: The KKK holds a recruiting rally on a parking lot opened to them by owner—Mayor Patrick Standing.

*Boston, Massachusetts: 200 East Boston High students with KKK sign stone a school bus filled with Blacks. Klan often jumps into desegregation battles to push racial tension to the explosion point. At California schools, they distribute thousands of Klan applications.

NOVEMBER

*Greensboro, North Carolina: The KKK and Nazis open fire on anti-Klan march, murdering five.

*Dallas, Texas: First KKK march in 60 years; thousands demonstrate in protest. Dallas Times-Herald article plugs local Klan leader Addie Barlow Fraser—"She's Just Your Average Cross-Burning Grandmother."

DECEMBER

*San Antonio, Texas: Klan spearheads harassment of Iranian students as embassy crisis unfolds. City manager uses attacks as excuse to ban demonstration against Shah's presence at nearby Lackland Air Force Base.