

About the middle of February a new approach to the violence here appeared. Marked by three cross burnings in five days, an intensive effort was launched to intimidate the Negroes at Koinonia and Negro neighbors who had been friendly toward us. These cross burnings, coupled with widespread rumor and threats of terror which might fall on those who continued associating with us, were a ruthless weapon. For with the burning of a cross there flashed in the minds of these people the woes of a bygone day when lawless, masked hoodlums spread their terror at will. Knowing that even yet the law is white (but not for all whites, it would seem) a feeling of helpless fear spread about the Negro community. Most of them no longer dared to continue openly their previous friendship. However, a remnant remains which is a tremendous tribute to their courage and loyalty.

This terrorism was climaxed on Sunday, February 24, when the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan met in Americus and then made a pilgrimage to Koinonia to ask us to sell out and move away. They kindly offered their assistance. It seems they wanted to buy our farm but not our farm products, such as white eggs, laid by white hens who live in white buildings, but alas, whose yolks are colored. A full account of the event occurred in the Americus Times Recorder (Feb. 25), from which we quote extensively:

#### KLANSMEN MEET IN CITY; MOTORCADE GOES TO KOINONIA

"A 70-odd car motorcade to Koinonia Farms for the purpose of asking members of the controversial farm if they would sell the property and move away from Sumter County climaxed a meeting of some 150 members of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan--including women--from various parts in South Georgia here Sunday afternoon...

"Following the KKK rally held at the fair grounds on the Friendship Road members were asked to remove their robes and join in the motorcade. A member said they were not going in the name of the Klan but as a 'group of interested citizens.'

"The long procession of autos then wound its way the eight miles to the farm located on the Dawson Road. On reaching it the motorcade stopped and three unidentified out-of-county men walked on the grounds of Koinonia. All others had been asked to remain inside their cars.

"Koinonia residents met the trio on the farm property about 100 yards from the highway motorcade for the conference. The meeting was most congenial and each side addressed the other as "gentlemen." There were no negroes present. While three main spokesmen for Koinonia talked with the visitors a number of other Koinonia residents came out, including men, women and children and looked on.

"There were no threats or harsh words from either side as members of both sides spoke together in normal tones.

"Asked if they were communists one of the Koinonia spokesmen answered 'No, unless Jesus Christ was a communist--we follow his teachings.' Then one of the three men from the motorcade told the other side that the reason for the motorcade was to show a protest against the integrated policies of the farm. In answer to this, one of the Koinonia men said that it was their beliefs as christians that all men are equal.

"Asked who they represented, one of the motorcade men said 'a group of interested citizens.' He also said that an offer for sale of the bi-racial farm would be made and Koinonia contacted later.

"The entire meeting lasted about eight minutes and afterwards the three visitors walked away and the line of cars was driven away.

"Highlight of the Klan rally at the fair grounds were addresses given by two ministers, one a member of the KKK, the other a non-member and Baptist minister. The former was unidentified while the latter told a reporter he was the Rev. A. S. Maples of Doerun, Ga.

"Presiding at the session from the back of a truck was the Grand Titan of the Eighth Province of KKK from Moultrie. He was not otherwise identified. The highest ranking KKK member present was C. E. Freeman, Great Titan of the Sixth Province from Macon.

"Klan units represented at the meeting were from Macon, Warner Robins, Cochran,

Vienna, Moultrie, Albany, Waycross and Americus. Waycross was the farthest point represented, eight carloads of men and women coming the 150 miles.

"Prior to the meeting it was not generally known that Americus had a unit, but it was described as "unit 10." A reporter recognized only one person from this county in robes, however.

"As the speaking program progressed the robed men and women stood and sat on the fair grounds. One small boy, 4 or 5, was also robed. Many other local citizens who had heard the motorcade passing through town also were present. Many got out of their cars while others remained inside. A public address system made it easy to hear.

"A Klan spokesman told a Times-Recorder reporter that the KKK represented a new group of the Klan and that it had no connection at all with the "old Klan." None of the members present wore masks. Throughout the meeting it was emphasized that the KKK was not an organization condoning violence.

"The meeting opened with a prayer in which the person praying said that it was being held to 'Uplift mankind and the kingdom of heaven.' Then the presiding officer, who said that he was a member of the Masons, spoke briefly saying that he found it unfortunate that '20 million people were trying to destroy 140 million others,' and that he could not understand 'why the white man has to bow down to minority groups.' He said that the KKK has no real fight against the negro but 'against the white men on the inside who are fighting the negro's cause for money.' He also commended an action of the local Lee St. Methodist Church in its resolution Saturday attacking integration policies of the Methodist Church.

"Rev. Maples, the non-Klan member who spoke, sounded a call for 'all red-blooded Americans who are proud of their white race' to uphold the teachings of the Bible which he said showed no evidence of integration. He quoted passages from Genesis, Leviticus and Joshua designed to support his belief. He said that segregation is God's law and that it will withstand court rulings and any other stress.

"The other main speaker, a Klansman and minister, called for unity of purpose against integration. He said that through unity the Southern way will survive. He also urged that 'nothing be done through strife or malice.' "

Because some newspaper accounts gave the impression that we were accepting the Klan's offer, we issued the following statement a few days after the Klan's visit:

As a result of the recent visit of the Ku Klux Klan to Koinonia there has arisen considerable confusion about Koinonia's intentions. We should like to make it absolutely clear where we now stand and our reasons for doing so.

"The Koinonia Community is unanimously agreed that we must continue to bear witness here in Sumter County to the way of life to which God has called us. We express this intention firmly not in defiance or stubborn lack of consideration for the feeling of our neighbors, but because we feel there are basic principles at stake which we cannot forsake at any cost.

"The current attack upon Koinonia community is an attack on the most sacred principles of American democracy. The very roots of our country's greatness lie in the struggle for the freedom of a minority group to practice its religious faith regardless of how unpopular it might be. In spite of recent charges made against us by Atty. Gen. Cook, Koinonia has no official connection with any other organization anywhere in the world.

"We are deeply loyal to the basic principles of American democracy and we call upon the citizens of this county and the nation to protect our freedom not because of what we are or what we believe in, but in order that the greatness for which America has stood so long might not be jeopardized.

"There is a further reason for our continuing here. The most grievous result of the present struggle centering around Koinonia is the fear and bitterness and hate that have arisen in the hearts of those who misunderstand and oppose us. These are the most destructive agents in the hearts and souls of men. In the spirit of Jesus Christ to whom we are committed we know that the only way to heal these

injuries in the hearts of men is through patience, forgiveness and sacrificial love, even though these may need be expressed in pain and suffering.

"We say this not in self-righteousness; we too are sinners under God and want to take upon ourselves the responsibility for the misunderstanding and ill will around us.. It is therefore in acceptance of our responsibility as Christians and Americans and in deep concern for the people of Sumter County as well as our own souls that we express these intentions.

"We call upon the citizens of this county and all others who share the Christian calling or loyalty to American democracy to join us in asking God to open our minds and hearts to the truth and to free us from all bitterness and ill will."

In order to keep a closer watch over our property, we have put up several lights along the highway. One night most of them were shot out with a shotgun fired from a passing car. It is practically impossible to maintain a watch along the entire front of our property which stretches more than a mile. Almost nightly last week our fences were cut and gates removed, allowing our hogs (we have about 300) to roam the highway. Lest some passing motorist, travelling fast at night, be seriously hurt, it might be necessary to equip each of our pig's tail with a reflector button.

Flashlights won't do, as John Eustice can vouch for. He was on watch during the early hours of March 5. Seeing a car stop about half a mile up the road opposite the hog field, John drove up to investigate. The car sped away, but then turned around and came back. As it approached, John got out of our car and stood beside it until the other car passed. He then put his flashlight on the tag in an effort to get the license number. After proceeding a hundred yards or so down the road, the car turned around quickly and came at John fast. Just before getting to him it slowed to about 10 m.p.h. and shots rang out in rapid succession. Two bullets shattered the outside rear-view mirror near John's shoulder. Two more smashed the flashlight he was holding in his hand, slightly injuring him. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation agent who investigated the incident told a TIME reporter that it was a "phony." Move over, William Tell.

Last week Georgia's Attorney General Eugene Cook told the United Press that the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) had been probing the possibility of "subversive activities" at Koinonia for over a year. "Communists have been known to visit the farm a number of times," he said, but added that the state has been unable to "ascertain whether the Koinonia operation constitutes a conspiracy to overthrow the government." This charge of receiving "Communist visitors" came just a few days after the visit from the KKK.

In a letter to Atty. General Cook, Koinonia stated that it has no official connection with any other organization; that it has an "open door" policy, gladly welcoming any visitor, whether he be Republican, Democrat, church member or States' Righter. We further stated that those who use violence are practicing one of Communism's primary tenets; that Koinonia is committed to non-violence.

We close by reminding you--and ourselves--that the Gospel of Jesus is a Gospel of Hope. There is no despair, even when a lamb is engaged in mortal combat with a dragon. We, too, are "persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."