

# Registration Campaign Among Negroes in South Aids Johnson

By JUNIUS GRIFFIN

Throughout most of the South Negroes are prepared to deliver on Nov. 3 what civil rights workers call the largest bloc vote in history.

Intensive registration campaigns conducted by civil rights organizations and related groups appear to have assured a record Negro vote in the South, except for Alabama.

In South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi, Negroes have pledged more than a million votes to President Johnson, according to a survey by The New York Times.

Voter registration workers in the seven states praised the response of poor rural Negroes but decried what they described as apathy and complacency in the ranks of Negro professional and middle-class communities.

Despite recent international and national developments, Southern Negroes appear collectively to be still determined to vote the Democratic ticket.

Dr. Reginald A. Hawkins, a dentist in Charlotte, N. C., said: "I still don't think Mr. Goldwater will get 20 Negro votes in the state of North Carolina."

Across the South, rural Negroes reflected the effectiveness of the grass-roots approach used by registration officials.

"Lordy, honey, I'm going to vote for L. B. J.," said an old Negro woman puffing on a corn cob pipe and stirring boiling clothes in a black iron kettle behind her two-room shack, between Fort Motte and St. Matthews, S. C., in Calhoun County.

"He's a Southerner just like us colored folks, and the Good Lord must have sent him to lead us out of bondage," she said.

She did not know who Senator Barry Goldwater was, but she said, "I'm against that other man. He ain't no good for us colored folks."

## County Backed Nixon

In 1960, voters in the county gave the Republican Presidential nominee, Richard M. Nixon, 852 votes compared with 536 for Senator John F. Kennedy. This year the Negro registration has risen from 450 to 650.

"We had only 111,000 Negroes registered in 1960," Dr. Thomas said, "and now we have some 175,000 on the books. We should have more, but the professional Negroes did not lend us their support."

President Kennedy carried South Carolina by only 9,471 votes in 1960. It is estimated that there are 772,000 white voters now in the state.

In Calhoun, Orangeburg, Charleston and Beaufort Counties the most effective political propaganda in Negro communities seems to be anti-Goldwater stickers that read: "Goldwater '64—Hot Water in '65—Bread and Water in '66."

Negroes in these areas have plastered the stickers on cars, farm machinery, shacks and fence posts. Many of the Negroes earn a meager income from individual farms of three to five acres. But most are tenant farmers, and others have been unemployed for so long they cannot remember the last time or type of job they held.

Charleston County voted Republican almost 2 to 1 in the 1960 Presidential election. From January until the registration books closed earlier this month, more than 2,000 Negroes were put on the voter list.

In Tennessee, where the Republicans have carried the state since 1956, a record registration of 200,000 Negroes is expected to put the state back in the Democratic ranks.

A Negro lawyer, Avon Williams of Nashville, said he was confident that "the Negro vote will make the difference."

In 1956 the Republicans polled 462,288 votes to 456,507 for the Democrats, and in 1960 the Republicans again edged the Democrats, 556,577 to 481,453.

The most important Negro registration gains in the state were made in two major counties, Davidson and Shelby. In Davidson the Negro registration doubled, from 12,000 to 24,000, and in Shelby it increased from 70,000 to 95,000.

Mr. Williams said that these figures were impressive but that he believed registration would have been greater had "the middle-class Negro played an active role in the campaign."

In North Carolina, the hub of the Negro registration drive is in Charlotte. There Dr. Hawkins has sparked a statewide campaign through his Mecklenburg Organization on Political Affairs.

Dr. Hawkins's organization, working with the N.A.A.C.P. and the Congress of Racial Equality, has added more than 50,000 new Negro registrations to the rolls. The Negro registration in that state is now 234,000.

In 1960, Democrats outvoted Republicans by 47,712. Dr. Hawkins said that he believed the race would be closer this year because of Senator Goldwater's popularity in the state.

Dr. Hawkins gave credit to Negro ministers throughout the state for supporting the voter drive.

"There will be more Southern Negroes going to the polls this year than ever before," said the Rev. Calvin A. Hood, an instructor at the Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte.

"In time," the Presbyterian minister said, "Nov. 3, 1964, will be as significant in American history as July 4, 1776. Negro participation in this Presidential election marks an important milestone in our struggle for full equality."

In Georgia, one of the most extensive registration programs was centered in Savannah, the state's oldest and second largest city.

Hosea L. Williams, director of the Chatham County Crusade for Voters, headed the drive, in which more than 10,000 new Negroes were enrolled to vote.

He described Chatham County as "Goldwater country and a key area in making a stand for Democratic principles."

In 1960, the county voted 17,935 for Mr. Nixon and 16,240 for Mr. Kennedy.

"This year the edge should go to President Johnson with our vote and the aid of a few white votes," Mr. Williams said.

He estimated that more than 250,000 Negroes were enrolled in Georgia, which has 1.5 million registered voters.

The largest concentration of voter registration workers has been in Mississippi and Louisiana.

In 1960, Mississippi voted 108,362 to 73,561 for Mr. Kennedy and Louisiana voted 407,339 to 230,980 for him.

Because of President Johnson's strong stand for civil rights registration workers predict the states will go Republican this year.

When the registration books were closed this year, Louisiana had 1,191,021 persons enrolled —1,027,981 white and 163,040 Negro. The registration of whites increased from 979,275 in 1960 and Negro voters increased from 159,550.

Ronnie Moore of CORE said that at least five times as many Negroes would have been enrolled but for "threats and official obstruction on the part of registration officials."

In St. Francisville, some 35 miles north of Baton Rouge, capital, Negroes talked about their efforts to become registered voters.

"They said if I come back and try to register, they would get me and my mother," a frightened woman said. "But I'm going again anyway because all our men are scared and someone has to try."

Two miles outside St. Fran-

cisville, in Hardwood, six Negro men said they were the only registered persons in a community of 400. They are sawmill workers, who said they would have been discharged if they had not owed so much money to their employer.

Although Negroes make up 60 per cent of the county's population, only 73 have been registered to vote. Last year, the Rev. Joseph Carter became the first Negro to register since 1902.

The price of attempting to vote is high in Madison County, Miss. In Canton, the county seat, Mrs. Annie Belle Devine said, "we have registered 500 Negroes in the county, but there are more than 10,000 qualified to vote."

In a cotton field just outside town, Mrs. Alberta Kelly, said that she had been dismissed from her job because she tried to register.

"After 14 years," she said, "I now find myself picking cotton for \$2 a hundred. I only wanted to vote."

In 1960, the county voted 753 to 525 in favor of Mr. Kennedy.

In Jackson, the Secretary of State said that there were 525,000 registered white voters in Mississippi and from 20,000 to 32,000 Negro voters.

Edward Hollander, a 24-year-old CORE field worker, said it was reasonable to predict that "every registered Negro voter will go to the polls and vote for Johnson."

Throughout the South, the Negro voter registration workers are looking toward Macon County, Ala., for guidance. There, Negroes outnumber white voters almost 3 to 1.

At Tuskegee Institute in the county, C. G. Gomillion, president of the Tuskegee Civic Association, said, "We are trying to convince all citizens that political power should not be used as a vengeance vote."

"We will vote for the best qualified man regardless of his race," Mr. Gomillion said, "but in the Presidential race it is Johnson, if the Governor decides to put him on the ballot."

38 Park Row • New York, N. Y. 10038

