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“Coalition Rule in Danville”—the Danville Circular

STAUNTON VINDICATOR---Supplement COALITION RULE IN DANVILLE.

To the Citizens of the Southwest and Valley of Virginia :

We, the undersigned, of the merchants and manufacturers and mechanics of the town of Danville, Va., earnestly request that you will permit us to lay before you a few facts from which you can form some idea of the injustice and humiliation to which our white people have been subjected and are daily undergoing by the domination and misrule of the radical or negro party, now in absolute power in our town, and under the leadership of William Mahone, seeking to extend and perpetuate its power all over the Commonwealth.

By the census of 1880, Danville contained 7,526 persons, of which 4,397 were colored, and 3,129 were white. The population of the town has increased greatly since that time, and the proportion between the numbers of whites and blacks has also increased, there being a much larger proportion of blacks now than in the year 1880.

The taxes paid by the inhabitants of the town for the year 1882, upon property exclusive of license taxes for its corporate uses, exclusive of taxes paid by the State, amounted to over \$40,000 in round numbers, of which only 1,206.63 were paid by the blacks, making 38,894.00 more of the money paid for the support of the town by the white people than was paid by the negroes. Out of the total sum derived from taxation upon property, \$2,000 were appropriated to the education of the negro children of the town—a sum, it will be seen, \$794 more than the entire amount of tax paid by the whole negro population. So it appears that the negroes of town do not contribute one single dollar to the use of the town, towards paying the interest upon its corporate debt, the improvements of its streets, the maintenance of its public works, the pay of the officers, and its incidental expenses of government. But on the contrary, every dollar and much more besides, paid by the members of the race in the nature of taxes, is returned to them and applied to the education of their children.

Up to the session of the last legislature the town was not divided into wards, but voted in a single precinct, and in that way the council was generally kept in the hands of the white people. But the negro party, desiring to get complete possession of the town government that they might share in the offices as well as levy upon the treasury of the whites whatever they thought proper, applied to the Legislature and obtained an amendment to the town charter requiring that the town should be divided into three wards and that four councilmen and one justice of the peace should be elected from each ward. From the localities in which the negroes had hearsed themselves, it was totally impracticable to so run the ward lines without creating two wards in which the negroes had a large majority, and this they and their white leaders knew. The result was that they elected seven out of twelve of their candidates for the council and their candidates for the justice of the peace from each ward.

Then began the deeds which have so humiliated us in our own estimation, and made our town, once so noted for wealth and enterprise, a by word for shame and reproach from one end of this land to the other. Wherever it is possible for anything to be done by the council or its magistrates that would irritate and wound the pride of the whites, it was executed with the

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keenest relish. Out of nine policemen four *negroes* were chosen—something before that time unknown to the history of the town—two of them acting not only as *policemen*, but one as *health officer*, and the other as *weighmaster at the public scales and clerk of the market*. Out of the 24 stalls and stands at the market, 20 are *rented out by the council to the negroes*. The scenes about this important and attractive institution (attractive in all cities) will give any person visiting the town a fair idea of the general state of the government under the negro rule. The market once occupied in all its stalls by polite white gentlemen, with their clean white aprons, and the most enticing meats and vegetables upon their boards, is now the scene of filth, stench, crowds of loitering and idle negroes, drunkenness, obscene language, and petty thieves. The white men have been driven out and forced to take up private places for vending their meats and vegetables, and the public market, erected by the money of the white people and intended to be occupied by men at least courteous and cleanly, has been converted to the use of squalid negro hucksters, and presents a spectacle of loathsomeness positively repulsive to any person who has the least idea of how a market should be kept.

The whites of the town are powerless to prevent this outrage upon their rights. In fact, it is believed that their well-known objection to such an indignity is the principal cause of its infliction. The council, which has the power of regulating the conduct of the market, is presided over by a carpet-bagger—J. B. Raulston—Mahone's collector for internal revenue for the Danville District, and the patronage of his Federal office enables him to control the council with the same undisputed power that the General does his party. Raulston is exceedingly offensive to the white people, and it is well known he takes no pains to carry out their wishes. Two of the negro members of the council hold positions under him at the custom house, and they are as obedient to his will in the council as they are in the revenue office.

It is seen, therefore, that our town is practically in the hands of and actually controlled by the officers and slaves of the Federal government, not one of whom has a dollar's worth of visible property within its limits, and this too by the most shameless usurpation ; for the Constitution and laws of the State and the Presidential order by which the Norfolk postmaster was removed, all declare that such officials shall hold no office under the government of this commonwealth. The Federal government, through its internal revenue collector, and the negro councilmen hired by him to scrub the floor of the custom-house and make incendiary speeches against the white people of the town, make our town laws, levy and collect our taxes, distribute our money, and elect *negro policemen* to watch our town while its inhabitants are asleep. The revenue collector declared, when he was elected president of the town council, that it was his intention to use the patronage of the council to build up the radical negro party.

The police court of the town is another scene of perpetual mockery and disgrace. There the most active justice is a young negro named Jones, who first became famous by seducing a girl under the promise of marriage, and was only saved from conviction upon indictment by the evidence of his partner in a junk-shop, who swore that he had had criminal intercourse with her before Jones. This court, which before the negro *regime* came into power, was only open a few hours every morning, is now open from morning till night, and nothing but actual observation can convey the least idea of the travesty of its transactions. Malice and partiality, whenever there is a motive, and ignorance, in its absence, are rules of the decision. The officials of the court, justices and policemen, cooperate in the work to make fees, and every act of word or deed of the citizen, whether atrocious in its character or too frivolous for the law to take notice of is brought before a justice, and the party, if not fined, is required to pay the costs ; and if there is more than one party, the costs are doubled, and both parties made to pay costs. White men are

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arrested for the most frivolous acts by negro policemen and borne along to the Mayor's office followed by swarms of jeering and hooting and mocking negroes, and tried, fined and lectured and imprisoned by a *negro* justice, and then followed to the jail by the same insulting rabble.

At the October Court of this year two of the party magistrates were removed from office by the Judge of the Hustings Court, one for embezzling the money of the Commonwealth, the other for "causes sufficient to the court," and one of them has fled the town to avoid indictment.

The notoriety which this state of things has produced, has attracted to the town large numbers of idle and filthy negroes, from the border counties of North Carolina, and from Halifax, Mecklenburg, and Charlotte, Va.—Although there is a law against vagrants, they are never disturbed. They infest the streets and sidewalks in squads, hover about public houses, and sleep on the doorsteps of storehouses and the benches of the market place. They impede the travel of ladies and gentlemen, very frequently forcing them from the sidewalk into the street. *Negro women* have been known to *force ladies* from the pavement, and remind them that they will "*learn to step aside next time.*" In several cases where the lie has been given to a white lady to her face by a negro. It is a very common practice for the negroes who are employed about out houses to allude to white ladies and gentlemen as *men* and *women* and to negroes as *ladies* and *gentlemen*. This is a practice almost without exception with the negro women. They do it to irritate and throw contempt upon the white race. A short time since, when the town was in great excitement over the murder of a respectable gentleman and farmer of Pittsylvania county, in his wagon, while on his way home from Danville, by *throe negro highwaymen*,* a negro man in this town stood in the centre of a crowd of his friends, with a pistol exhibited on his person, and with threatening gestures and loud oaths, declared that he wanted to "start a row with some d—n son a b—h of a white man that he might kill him"

A few nights ago the negroes were very indignant because they heard of the earnest work that was going on by the whites to register all of their voting strength and called a meeting which addressed by an incendiary negro, named Pleasants, a postal agent; and one of the town councilmen, hired at the custom house, and they passed a resolution requesting the Governor to have Federal troops sent to our town on election day; to intimidate the white people at the polls.

They have also a scheme to amend the town charter, if they elect the Legislature this fall, and take into the town a large negro settlement, outside of the town limits, called Jacksonville, by which they will get several hundred more black voters, *and then it will be impossible for any white man to hold office in the town. We know this to be their plan.*

It is well known that hundreds of the North Carolina tobacco raisers who live within a few miles of Danville, and used to sell their tobacco in our market, now go five times as far to a market in their own State, *on account of the negro rule in our town.* At the negro meeting, referred to above, one of their speakers said they did not want the people of North Carolina to come here anyway.

Now fellow citizens of the Valley and Southwest, we cry out to you in our affliction to deliver us from this awful state of *humiliation and wretchedness.* We know that as a rule the cries of the wretched make but little interruption of the general progress of things. The sun rises and sets all the same, and the work of the government, and the work of the feast and the torture goes on with exactness and tranquility. But we appeal to you by that sympathy which constitutes the bond of union between honorable men, struggling in the cause of freedom, to help us throttle this viper of *Negroism* that is stinging us to madness and to death, *by voting against the Coalition-Radical candidates who are yelling and screaming with delight at the prospect of fastening its fangs into us forever.*

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We appeal to you to say. do you think it is just that we should contribute *every cent* to the maintenance of our town, pay our town *debt*, and *appropriate not only what the negro pays in the way of tax, but much more besides*, of our own money, to the *education of his children, whom he raises upon our money to be our bitterest enemies*, and then let him have possession of our town government too? Is it right that the negro should have all this given him then be allowed to control our offices and plunder our treasury besides?

It is an injustice at which we now know your humanity will revolt.

It is the injustice of the frozen serpent, which after being warmed into life by its benefactor, stings him to death.

Help us, fellow citizens, by voting for the Conservative-Democaatic candidates for the Legislature, for *unless they are elected we are doomed*.

W.T. CLARK, Merchant,	RUFFIN, WOOLFOLK & BLAIR,
JAMES W. BRUCE, Merchant,	Real estate and Insurance Agt's,
C. M. HENDRICK, Builder,	JOHN W. HOLLAND, Tobacconist,
J.G. COVINGTON, Tobacconist,	W. P. GRAVES, Warehouseman,
REDD & JORDAN, Warehousemen,	J.M. COVINGTON, Tobacconist,
DANIEL COLEMAN,	R.B. GRAHAM, & BRO., Builders,
J.E. SCHOOLFIELD, Merchant,	S.H. HOLLAND,
A.G. FULLER, Tobacconist,	E.L. & A. GERST, Tanners,
HAMLIN & HINTON, Merchants,	MOROTOCK MANUFACTURING CO.,
C.H. NORTON, Contractor,	BOOTH, WOODING & BOOTH, Merchants,
GEO. A. LEE, Tobacconist,	ESTES & WOODING, Merchants,
GRAVELY & BURTON, Grocers,	W.N. SHELTON, Tobacconist,
J.B. WESTERBROOKS, Foundryman.	LEE & JORDAN, Warehousemen,
THOMAS L. POINDEXTER & SON,	HARRY WALKER,
Warehousemen,	ED. S. RAGLAND, Foundryman.

*There is a typo, spelling three as throe. Also, the typesetter accidently set the y in an upside-down position, and it was printed that way.

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