

# TORCH

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Straight  
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**SECCION  
EN  
ESPANOL**

## Gov't Slashes Food Stamps as Jobless Rate Soars

By WILLIAM FALK

For millions of workers the current recession means **no jobs**. Over 800,000 people lost their jobs this April, pushing the official Labor Department unemployment rate up from 6.2 to 7 percent. That's the largest monthly increase since the recession of 1974-75. For factory workers, the jobless rate hit 7.9 percent in April, while Black worker unemployment rose to 12.6 percent. But even these high figures understate the case. The Labor Department itself admits that there are thousands of people who need and want a job but are not counted as "unemployed."

As the recession deepens hundreds of thousands more people will find themselves out of work. Most unemployed workers will turn for help to one or more of several government programs. But the truth is that the

most important of these—unemployment compensation, TRA and food stamps—cannot cope with serious unemployment. Today, only a few weeks into the recession, these programs are in serious trouble.

**Food stamps:** Right now, over 21 million people—nearly 10 percent of the population—use food stamps. Over 2.5 million people have started using them in the last 10 months alone. In a state like Michigan, where widespread auto industry layoffs have created Depression-like conditions, more people are now using food stamps than in the recession year of 1975 (despite a drop since then in state population).

Last year, Congress put a spending ceiling of \$6.2 billion on the food stamp program for the fiscal year 1980 (October 1979 through September 1980). But coupons distributed for this

May used up the last of this year's funds.

The food stamp program has run out of money for two main reasons. First, the \$6.2 billion figure was based on a 6 percent unemployment rate. Second, the aid each family gets has risen. The amount is adjusted twice a year to take rising food prices into account. The government planned on a 4 percent rise, but food prices have jumped at a 12 percent annual rate.

On May 8, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to raise the food stamp spending limit by \$3 billion for the rest of this year (the Senate had lifted the limit last July). But at the same time, Congress has begun changing food stamp regulations and cutting the program's budget for next year. The House has voted a cut of \$430 million over two years, the

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## Carter Raid Signals New War Threat

By PAUL BENJAMIN

On April 24, U.S. President Jimmy Carter launched an imperialist attack against the Iranian people. As we go to press on May 13, the debris from this incident is still falling. Carter attempted to portray this attack as a "humanitarian" mission to rescue the 50 U.S. hostages held captive in Iran. But if Carter had wanted to get the hostages released, he would have sent back the shah to be tried by the Iranian

people, apologized for U.S. crimes in Iran, and promised not to interfere in Iranian affairs in the future.

However, the fiasco of April 24 represented far more than a Keystone Kops-like attempt to rescue the hostages. Carter's raid on Iran is just the latest—and most spectacular—sign that the U.S. ruling class is becoming desperate in its efforts to shore up its crumbling world empire.

Ever since its humiliating defeat in Vietnam five years ago, U.S. imperial-

ism has been in retreat. U.S. economic power has continued to decline and the imperialists have been powerless to prevent the victory of national liberation movements that have overthrown longstanding U.S. allies like Anastasio Somoza Debayle in Nicaragua, Ian Smith of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and the shah of Iran.

But in recent months the ruling class has been preparing to launch an aggressive campaign to reverse the

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**Inside: Victory to the Glydons Strike!**  
An English/Spanish Supplement in Center Section



**our  
readers  
write...**

Send letters to:

TORCH, PO Box 1288  
New York, NY 10116

## Brutality at Green Haven

A long-time correspondent of the Torch/La Antorcha wrote us the letter below describing an attack on him by guards at Green Haven prison in New York.

Dear Comrades,

The immediate cause of the assault was an exchange of words between myself and several guards. When I was being frisked just prior to stepping out to the segregation yard, I yelled over to some comrades on another gallery. One of the guards began cracking idiotic jokes about their names (Henry and Rashid) and immediately the rest of the guards joined in the game. I responded by saying that none of them was the mental or physical equal of myself or my comrades. They then said something slick, and I said something slick. They again said something slick—or made a half-assed attempt to, anyway—to which I responded with the finger and walked out into the yard....

When I came in from the yard the guards who were escorting me were mumbling to themselves. But I didn't pay them any mind. I walked down the catwalk, as I always do,

stepped into the tank, as I always do, removed my hands from my pockets (we are required to keep our hands in our pockets in between the cell and the catwalk bars, but not within the tank area), as I always do... anyway, the incredible happened. One of the guards, Thompson, grabbed me from behind and said, "you done fucked up now," meaning that I had removed my hands from my pockets too soon. A flimsy pretext but it was all they had. And it was obvious they had planned the move in advance because no sooner had Thompson grabbed me than the rest of the guards were on the scene. I broke Thompson's grasp and spun around in time to see the twerp raising his stick, so to make my head inaccessible I stepped back into my open cell. I held ground for about five seconds, trying to keep them from entering the cell, but alas....

They all crowded in the cell—I'm still not certain as to number, but I'm sure there were at least six. One pig was choking me from behind, another was holding my legs (or perhaps two were, I'm not sure). (Continued on page 15)

# Russell Smith —coming home?

Dear Torch/La Antorcha,

It looks like freedom is in store for Russell Daniel Smith. Russell has been a federal prisoner for the past seven and a half years, the last two and a half for defending himself against rape and the threat of rape in prison. Russell is expected to be released to St. Louis May 30. The International Committee to Free Russell Smith has apparently succeeded in obtaining Russell's freedom.

Russell came to the attention of the gay community early in 1977 when he filed suit against Norman Carlson, director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Smith alleged that his first amendment rights were being infringed by a FBP policy excluding all gay literature from prison.

Smith's other prison activities have included work with other prisoners as well as educational and organizational work. He was one of the original Marion Brothers, a group of prisoners who are protesting conditions at America's most modern behavior control unit. He was elected secretary of the prison NAACP at Lewisburg and edited a prison newspaper.

Smith, a self-identified homosexual, has been assaulted and raped on numerous occasions. On July 7, 1977, Eduardo Bermudez-Martinez and three other prisoners marched into Smith's cell and raped him. Smith managed to slash Martinez with a sliver of glass. Although Smith was examined by a prison doctor and specimens of semen were found in his rectum, he was locked up in disciplinary segregation for the assault on Martinez. This treatment is quite common.

A few days after his release from solitary he was put on a

bus bound for the Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) at Terminal Island. En route, inmate Larry LeMar Simpkins began pressuring Smith for sexual favors. Smith refused. At Terminal Island Simpkins attempted to rape Smith. Another fight broke out. As a result of this incident Smith was charged with assault.

The trial brought out all the traditional problems gays and women have in defending themselves against rape. Simpkins testified that he was a heterosexual and therefore incapable of raping Smith. The prosecuting attorney described Smith as an "aggressive homosexual" and said that the attack was the result of "homosexual hysteria." Smith responded in his own defense: "This man is neither a heterosexual or a homosexual—he is a rapist. Outside of prison he rapes women and inside prison he rapes men." On April 17, 1978,

Last month we announced that we have a new address. Since then, the post office has renumbered zip codes for Manhattan, changing our zip code from 10001 to 10116. So, our correct new address is:  
PO Box 1288  
New York, NY 10116

Russell Smith was sentenced to three years in prison for assault with intent to commit murder.

In May 1978, Smith was transferred to Lompoc, California, where he was again threatened—this time by two prisoners who wanted Russell to prostitute himself for them. Smith told them that he understood "the place of prostitution in capitalistically oriented societies, where everything, including the human body, is a commodity," but, he explained, "I'm not into it." The two prisoners, Wesley Nakehai and Foster, continued to pressure Smith and eventually threatened his life. Not wanting another assault charge, Smith went to prison officials, explained the situation and requested to be placed in "protective custody" (i.e., solitary confinement).

During the summer of 1978, Barry Mehler, the secretary of the Committee to Free Russell Smith, was traveling in Europe. With the aid of the Gay Rights group in Hamburg and the newspaper *Arbeiterkampf* (Workers Struggle), an article, "Schwule Manner in U.S. Knast" (Gay Men in American Prisons), was published in Hamburg and distributed throughout Europe. As a result, the International Gay Association of Amsterdam

and the International Committee Against Torture, also in Amsterdam, mounted a major campaign to free Russell Smith. Soon the National Gay Rights Coalition of New Zealand, as well as groups in Australia, Canada and England took up the struggle. By mid-1979 a healthy stream of letters from all over Europe and North America began to flow in Russell's behalf.

Russell's situation did not improve, however. In September 1979 Russell was organizing a protest against conditions in the segregation unit at FCI Terre Haute. On September 22, 1979, according to sworn statements from prisoners at Terre Haute, "Russell was handcuffed and dragged from his cell by Lt. Scanlon. Officers Harris, Kealer and Walrab and others unknown to me by name grabbed inmate Smith and started choking and punching him." Another prisoner stated that "Officer Dyer kicked Smith in the stomach causing him to vomit, and that Smith was also heard to scream as if being pushed down the stairs." During the assault Russell had one of his teeth broken and was knocked unconscious.

In early October 1979, Russell began complaining of intense pain in his mouth. On October 18, after three weeks of complaining, he attempted to extract his own teeth. Protest from the Committee directly to Jim Mico, Assistant Director of Prisons, resulted in Russell being taken to the prison dentist where it was determined that he had three abscessed teeth and that the abscess had eaten into the bone in his jaw. Root canal work did not begin until November 8, 1979. On February 7, 1980, Russell was raped again, this time by a prisoner known as "Thunderbird Carter." Two weeks later he was transferred to Leavenworth where he has been in solitary confinement ever since.

Throughout this atrocious history more and more individuals and groups joined in the protest and demand that Russell be freed. The Revolutionary Socialist League and the Committee to Support the Marion Brothers have been especially helpful. On April 12, 1980, *Gay Community News* reported that the government is prepared to revise its position on gay literature. Shortly afterwards prison authorities began talking of the possibility of early release for Russell.

We would like to extend our appreciation to all those who have helped bring us this far.

International Committee to Free Russell Smith

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SUPPLEMENT IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH ON THE GLYDONS STRIKE IN CENTER OF PAPER; INCLUDES INTERVIEW WITH A STRIKER.

By an AUTOWORKERS  
CORRESPONDENT

NEW JERSEY—kiss of death... the choking us this... sponded one produ... er to the announce... the Ford Assembl... Mahwah.

On April 15, F... Company announc... manent closing of... ssembly plant in... foundry in Dearb... gan, and a castin... Windsor, Ontario... Over 15,000 worke... their jobs due to... downs.

These three clo... on top of the Feb... down of Ford's I... Assembly plant ne... geles. That plant... 1,700 people. The... closing was the fi... ssembly plant to be... since a shutdown... Texas, 10 years a...

The permanent... ings are part of Fo... out back the size... ing costs of its N... can Automotive (NAO) division.

Ford is the only... Big Three that do... a front-wheel-driv... pact in North Ame... car sales have c... most at a time w... automaker is c... Ford's 1980 sal... percent below the... last year, and its... is down from 23... January 1979 to... today.

The NAO pos... loss of \$41 mil... fourth quarter of 1... \$500 million in the... of 1980. The Wall... nal reports that th... mates of a total... billion for this ye...

## Ford's probl... deep-seated

One of Ford's... lems is that it's... make large cars t... large profits—wh... —but are a glut... market. Until re... thought it could... from its internati... tions to gather th... needs to remodel... This is similar to... doing.

But now Ford's... al sales are slow... U.S. losses are s... the company has... to adopt a plan... Chrysler's: cut b... duction capacity... borrow money fr... the company.

The plant closi...



## Depression Conditions Hit Auto Industry

# 15,000 Ford Workers Lose Jobs

By an AUTOWORKER  
CORRESPONDENT

**NEW JERSEY**—"It's the kiss of death...they're really choking us this time," responded one production worker to the announced closing of the Ford Assembly plant in Mahwah.

On April 15, Ford Motor Company announced the permanent closing of its big assembly plant in Mahwah, a foundry in Dearborn, Michigan, and a casting plant in Windsor, Ontario (Canada). Over 15,000 workers will lose their jobs due to these shutdowns.

These three closings come on top of the February shutdown of Ford's Pico Rivera Assembly plant near Los Angeles. That plant employed 1,700 people. The Pico Rivera closing was the first Ford assembly plant to be abandoned since a shutdown in Dallas, Texas, 10 years ago.

The permanent plant closings are part of Ford's plans to cut back the size and operating costs of its North American Automotive Operations (NAAO) division.

Ford is the only one of the Big Three that does not make a front-wheel-drive sub-compact in North America, and its car sales have dropped the most at a time when no U.S. automaker is doing well. Ford's 1980 sales are 31 percent below the same period last year, and its market share is down from 23 percent in January 1979 to 18 percent today.

The NAAO posted a record loss of \$41 million in the fourth quarter of 1979 and over \$500 million in the first quarter of 1980. The *Wall Street Journal* reports that there are estimates of a total loss of \$2 billion for this year.

### Ford's problems deep-seated

One of Ford's basic problems is that it's geared to make large cars that produce large profits—when they sell—but are a glut on today's market. Until recently Ford thought it could use profits from its international operations to gather the money it needs to remodel the NAAO. This is similar to what GM is doing.

But now Ford's international sales are slowing and the U.S. losses are so large that the company has been forced to adopt a plan similar to Chrysler's: cut back its production capacity and try to borrow money from outside the company.

The plant closings will re-



Workers leaving Mahwah plant April 15, the day Ford announced it would close permanently.

duce Ford's maximum production capacity by 448,000 vehicles per year, leaving the company about 85 percent of its present size. The shutdowns will cut costs by \$1.5 billion a year.

In addition to the permanent closings, Ford announced that it is temporarily closing plants in Chicago, Illinois; Louisville, Kentucky; and Wixom, Michigan. Truck production at its San Jose, California, plant is also scheduled to close. Second shifts have been eliminated at five other Ford factories.

### Mahwah closing affects 5,000

Of the recent closings, the one at Mahwah was probably the most surprising. The plant is one of the largest owned by Ford. Built in 1955, it is a modern one-story plant that houses 12 miles of assembly lines. The Mahwah plant drew workers from as far north as the Catskills, as far south as Newark, and as far west as Pennsylvania, as well as from New York City.

The closing of the Mahwah plant, scheduled for June 20, will put 3,359 workers out of work. (In addition, 373 management/salaried employees will lose their jobs.) An additional 1,100 people, who were laid off last summer when truck production was suspended, have now lost any chance of getting recalled.

The impact of the closing at Mahwah on workers' lives cannot be measured. As one production worker said: "When they need you, you work. But when they don't, that's it! They just care about the company, not what's going to happen to you." Joseph P. O'Hara, recently elected president of UAW Local 906, said: "This is a total, out-and-out disaster. It's something that cannot be comprehended yet." A production worker who had just received a gold medal for 25 years service said: "I didn't know whether to be

proud of it or throw it in the garbage. I still don't." When workers expressed their hope that the company would reopen the Mahwah plant, Ford's regional operations manager, Robert S. Rennard, responded: "This is a permanent closing." He said that Ford was ready to sell the plant and had already sent letters asking for bids. The workers were the last to know.

### Workers unprepared for fightback

Despite a history of rank and file activity at Mahwah, especially in the early 1970s, there appears to be little chance of any significant struggle over the closing. There are several reasons for this. First, and most important, most workers feel that nothing can be done. Only a few veterans of the militant struggles of the early '70s are still active. Even union caucuses that were formed over the last two years have fallen apart. An overwhelming sense of powerless-

ness dominates the workforce.

Union officials have been lobbying legislators to persuade Ford to keep the plant open. Most Mahwah workers understand that this is a pathetic and hopeless course, but they are closely following the progress of this effort anyway. This is because they feel there is nothing else that can be done.

Intensifying the feeling of hopelessness is the short time—60 days—between the announcement of the closing and the final boarding up of the plant.

A second reason why prospects for a fightback are dim is that the immediate effects of the dismissals will be temporarily cushioned. Workers with a year or more at Ford are eligible for Supplemental Unemployment Benefits (SUB) which guarantee 95 percent of a week's net wages for up to a year. However, the Ford SUB fund is very low and is not expected to last the summer. In addition, the government recently ruled the Mahwah workers eligible for the Trade Readjustment Act (TRA) benefits. As of March 1980, TRA

pays the difference between state unemployment benefits and the TRA maximum of \$269 per week. These benefits will soften the immediate impact of the plant shutdown, but are no substitute for a job.

### Anger defused in RCP incident

Finally, a good deal of the anger and frustration that built up in the week after the shutdown announcement was released in a recent series of incidents involving supporters of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP).

On Thursday, April 17, RCP supporters came inside the plant and began telling workers on the line to walk off. Workers from the chassis line began to chase the RCPers, who ran out of the plant as fast as they could. One RCPer was hit in the head with a hammer and taken to the medical department. Another was caught by the chassis workers and beaten. He was then escorted out by Ford security guards. A group of right-wing workers followed him, shouting: "Commie, stay out of here," "Go back to Russia," "Bring your asses back here again and we'll kill you." The workers then returned to the assembly line, where they resumed work. They were not disciplined in any way by management. A similar but smaller incident occurred one week later when the RCP returned and attempted to enter the plant parking lot.

These incidents dominated the life of the plant for several weeks. The company grounds became an armed camp, with cops and management patrolling to guard against "invaders." Some workers inside the plant put American flags on their tugs and fork-lifts. Plant security became very tight, and it became difficult if not impossible for left groups, many of whom have supporters at Mahwah, to distribute leaflets and newspapers.

Many people in the plant viewed the RCPers as unwelcome outsiders. The "battle against the reds," in which management and a number of workers joined, was a substitute for a blow-up against the bosses, who at that very moment were throwing the workers away like old shoes.

While some workers opposed the beatings and kept a distance between themselves and the right-wing hoopa, they were unorganized and expressed their sentiments quietly. □





## Nazi Leader Gets 56,000 Votes in N.C.

# It Can't Happen Here?

Fifty-six thousand people voted for a Nazi in the North Carolina Republican primary May 6.

Harold Covington, 26, the leader of the National Socialist (Nazi) Party of America, polled 43 percent of the vote in his attempt to secure the Republican nomination for state Attorney General.

Although he lost the primary to Keith Snyder, a former federal prosecutor, Covington had every reason to be pleased with the results. Republican state leaders had disavowed his candidacy, and he had waged only the meagerest of campaigns.

The chilling fact that a Nazi polled 56,000 votes in North Carolina was dismissed by Jack Lee, state chairman of the Republican Party, as "a freak."

We don't think it is.

### Klan is recruiting

The Nazis and the Klan are not just tiny, right-wing nut-groups on the fringes of society. While they are not yet mass organizations and do not yet have what could be called a mass base, their combined membership sur-

passes those of left organizations. In addition, the Nazis and the Klan have a large base of sympathizers throughout the country, are growing rapidly and are becoming increasingly active. Most important, they have an enormous growth potential.

Reliable estimates put Nazi membership at between 2,000-4,000. According to the Anti-Defamation League, the various groups calling themselves the Ku Klux Klan have a combined membership of over 10,000. We suspect the actual membership figure is higher. But even more important, the Klan has a base of sympathizers that is much larger. While the Klan's present mass base is not as large as it was in the 1920s and 1930s, it is large enough.

The Klan, contrary to some common misconceptions, is not just active in the South. It has members and sympathizers all over, including New Jersey, upstate New York, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Texas, California.

The social base of the Klan and Nazis (who are increasingly working inside the Klan organizations) consists primarily of petty bourgeois and middle class individuals. These people include small business owners and farmers,



Members of the Klan and Covington's Nazis arming themselves moments before they shot and killed five Communist Workers Party members in Greensboro, N.C., last November 3.

civil servants and professionals.

The Klan has a huge membership and sympathizership among police, prison guards and city government officials, especially in small and medium-sized towns and cities.

The Klan also enjoys support among white workers. For example, workers at the soon-to-be-closed Ford Assembly plant in Mahwah, N.J., and Ford Assembly in Chicago, report the existence of Klan supporters among the whites working there.

The Nazi and Klan organiza-

tions are growing, and fairly rapidly. According to the Anti-Defamation League, the Klan grew from 6,500 in 1975 to the 10,000 figure in 1979. That's over 50 percent in four years! Moreover, the Nazi and Klan organizations have become ever more active and conspicuous in this same period. In addition to demonstrating in the recent period in Kokomo, Muncie, and Ft. Wayne, Indiana; Oceanside, California; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Barneget, New Jersey, Klansmen and Nazis gunned down five militants of the Communist Workers Party in Greensboro, North Carolina, last November; beat up Black demonstrators in Wrightsville, Georgia,

this past April and are now active in Florida trying to exploit the racist backlash against the refugees coming from Cuba.

But the most important point to understand about the Klan and Nazis is not their present size or activity, but their potential for growth. This is enormous.

The overall political and social climate in the country is becoming more right-wing. While some sections of the population are resisting this, national chauvinism, militarism and racism are on the rise.

As the U.S. heads for its biggest economic, social and political crisis in 45 years, the Klan, Nazis and other right-wing racist groups are positioned for a substantial growth in the coming period. The vote in North Carolina is just a foreshadowing of what is to come.

### Liberals, reformists shortsighted

North Carolina Republican boss Lee is not the only one dismissing the threat of right-wing groups like the Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan. In an editorial on Tuesday, April 29, commenting on the events in Kokomo the previous Saturday, the **New York Times** argued that the Klan, while growing, is not really much of a threat because it is small and because the police have been protecting people from Klan violence. The **Times** says the Klan "is not likely ever

(Continued on page 15)

## Boston: Militant Defense Against Racists Needed

By KEN STOKES

**BOSTON**—A darkening cloud hovers over this city, which was brought to the brink of race war by the shooting of a Black high school student last fall (see **Torch/La Antorcha** Vol. 6 No. 10). The first signs of warm weather have brought renewed racist violence.

On March 17, in the Boston community of Dorchester, a family from the Cape Verde Islands awoke to the sound of crashing glass as teenage white youth threw stones at their windows. Police, who responded slowly to the family's call for help, arrested two youths. Ten days and another stoning later, the two were acquitted, when the arresting officers failed to show at the trial. The cops' failure to appear was a green light to future attacks. The very next night the house was fire-bombed. Although the family

had lived in the neighborhood without trouble for four years, no one came forth to help them. They were forced to move out because of the extreme danger to their young children.

On the same night as the firebombing, a Black man was attacked while waiting for a commuter train at Dorchester's Columbia Station. Michael Doherty, a 19-year-old white man from Dorchester, courageously attempted to stop the attack. However, he was chased from the station by the white teenagers. The racist youths pursued him onto the South East Expressway, where he was struck and killed by a car.

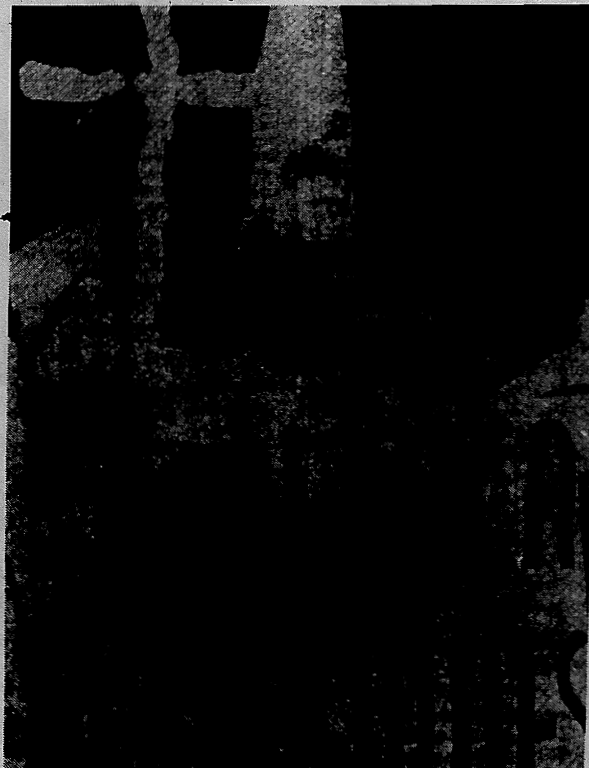
These sickening signs of spring pose sharp questions for Boston's anti-racist community. The cops, courts, and politicians have shown that they will be the enemies of any movement that is organized to stop the racist threat. The local clergy have been

pushing a pacifist approach. Their program is designed to keep the anti-racist community passive, while all signs indicate that only a militant mass movement combined with community defense guards will be capable of stemming the racist tide. We need a thousand Michael Dohertys, Black and white. We must begin to build the kind of movement and organization capable of taking the streets away from the racists, and putting them on the defensive. The Boston RSL will be working with the local anti-Klan coalition, independent groups, and any organizations or people that see the need to build a militant defense against the racists.

**Build the anti-racist movement!**

**Build community/worker defense guards!**

**Smash the South Boston Marshals and the KKK!**



Klan march in Florida, May 11: trying to exploit racist backlash against Cuban refugees.

# KI

# Ant Ho

On Saturday, Ku Klux Klan members attempt in 10 months recruiting march in Indiana. Thirty Klansmen came to Indiana, a town of 100 people, to hold a demonstration. But just as white supremacists attempt in Ft. Muncie, the Klan was met by a counter-demonstration of anti-Klan, anti-racist, and other revolutionary socialists. About 70 demonstrators confronted the Klan. 100 more anti-racist demonstrators arrived for a rally in Ft. Muncie.

The Klan claret marchers represent Klans of America in 10 Indiana towns: Alexandria and in Madison County, Dunkirk, Marietta, and Kokomo. New towns have been created because of the recession. Landon County's plants have made the town with the employment rate of 17.5 percent. These conditions given the KKK, a better life for whites at the expense of blacks and a chance to grow.

The majority of demonstrators who opposed the Klan march in Ft. Muncie, which included members of the Gay Discussion Group, RSL contingents, and Lesbian Sisters Network; a group of supporters in Indiana; and a number of residents.

### Campaign anti-Klan

The police arrested a group of demonstrators in Kokomo carrying a banner during April, on the day of the march to keep Kokomo from joining the demonstration.

On the morning of the march, downtown Kokomo was an armed camp. At the mayor's request, 43 officers in the streets surrounding the courthouse and command post.

On top of the courthouse stood cops with their machine guns and



# Klan Stopped in Kokomo, Ind.

## Anti-Racist Forces Hold Unity Rally

On Saturday, April 26, the Ku Klux Klan made its third attempt in 10 months to hold a recruiting march in northern Indiana. Thirty-eight robed Klansmen came to Kokomo, Indiana, a town of 44,000 people, to hold their march. But just as with its earlier attempts in Ft. Wayne and Muncie, the Klan was stopped by a counter-demonstration of anti-Klan, anti-racist and revolutionary socialist forces. About 70 demonstrators confronted the Klan and about 100 more anti-racist militants arrived for a rally after the Klan left.

The Klan claimed their 38 marchers represented United Klans of America chapters in 10 Indiana towns: Elwood, Alexandria and Anderson, all in Madison County; Muncie, Dunkirk, Marion, Indianapolis, Greenwood, Terre Haute and Kokomo. Nearly all these towns have been hit hard by the recession. Layoffs in Madison County's two big GM plants have made Anderson the town with the highest unemployment rate in the entire country—17.5 percent. It is these conditions that have given the KKK, who promise a better life for white Christians at the expense of all others, a chance to grow.

The majority of the demonstrators who confronted the Klan march in Kokomo were from the Chicago RSL contingent, which included members of the Gay Revolutionary Discussion Group; the Detroit RSL contingent, which included representatives from Lesbian Sisters Building a Network; a group of RSL supporters in Muncie, Indiana; and a number of Kokomo residents.

### Campaign against anti-Klan forces

The police and government in Kokomo carried out a campaign of fear and intimidation all during April, and especially on the day of the march, to try to keep Kokomo residents from joining the anti-Klan demonstration.

On the morning of April 26, downtown Kokomo, the site of the Klan march, was an armed camp. At the request of the mayor, 43 of the 45 businesses in the shopping district closed down. Parking and driving were banned on the streets surrounding the county courthouse square, the command post for the cops.

On top of the courthouse stood cops with videotape machines and cameras. They

photographed anyone walking into the sealed-off downtown area.

Kokomo mail delivery was suspended except for first class mail. And, as if to lend credibility to scare statements from the police about violence, the owner of an Army surplus store that carried guns and knives boarded up his store's windows. The only downtown car dealer pulled all his cars off the display lot.

In all, 111 uniformed police and 64 plainclothesmen were out on the streets.

A little before 1 p.m. the anti-Klan demonstrators began a rally at Union and Sycamore streets. The Klan's parade permit called for their march to begin at that same corner at 2 p.m.

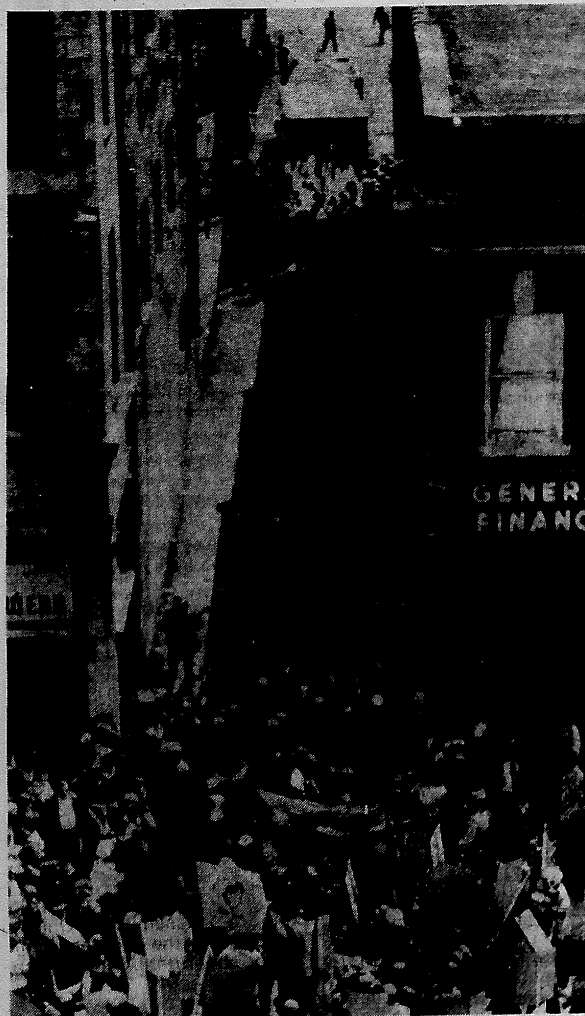
"We should turn the white power rally into a rally of unity," one RSL speaker told the rally, "what we want to do today is to fill the streets and oppose the Klan marching."

"They don't have the right to march, they don't have the right to exist," said Jim Hashiguchi, another speaker.

Joe Galanti of the RSL and the Gay Revolutionary Discussion Group spoke about the murder of four Black women by Klan members in Chattanooga, Tennessee, on April 20. He also denounced anti-union, anti-Latin organizing by the Klan.

At 1:50 p.m., the demonstrators learned that the details of the Klan's parade permit were being ignored—the Klansmen were at the heavily fortified courthouse square, two blocks away and were beginning to march. The demonstrators, many of them weighed down by helmets and heavy boots they wore for protection, ran up the street to meet the Klan.

The police had driven the Klan to a small alley just off the south side of the square and unloaded them there. The Klan had ridden in a Kokomo Senior Citizen bus and a



Klan leaves Kokomo while police hold back demonstrators.

U-Haul van, both paid for by the city.

When the anti-Klan demonstrators arrived, the Klan had already emerged from the alley and had begun marching clockwise around the square. The police stood guard and prevented the demonstrators from cutting across the grass to catch up, and so they began marching counterclockwise along the same circular route the Klan was on.

On the east side of the square, the two groups met. The Klan was protected by 40 fully equipped riot police in a

"V" formation. They carried signs reading "It's nice to be white" and "Support the fight against Communists."

The demonstrators surrounded the Klan, chanting "Black and white unite, unite to smash the Klan!" and "Death to the Klan." The Klan continued to march. Without stopping to make speeches, pass out literature, or anything else, the Klan, always surrounded first by an inner circle of cops and then by the anti-racist demonstrators, finished going around the square until they got back to their alley. They then went down the alley and into the waiting bus and van.

Fifteen minutes after it had begun, the Klan march was over.

Shortly after the Klan left, about 100 supporters of the Communist Workers Party (CWP) and Those United to Fight Fascism (TUFF) arrived at the scene. Both groups are members of the Midwest Coalition Against the Klan (as is the RSL), which had voted to gather at 12:30 at Union and Sycamore, and it is not clear why these groups arrived so late. Although their car caravan was quite late in arriving

in the Kokomo area, it is believed to have gotten in early enough to have been downtown before the Klan began to march.

Apparently a contributing cause to the group's lateness was that it unloaded several blocks away from Union and Sycamore and then marched to that corner, only to have to march to the courthouse square after that. This action corresponds to a plan discussed by the Midwest Coalition, but then rejected.

After some minor scuffling with the police over a victory march route, all the Midwest Coalition forces left to end the day with a rally in a park in a nearby Black community.

### What was accomplished

There were two main disappointments to the Kokomo actions.

First, not as many Kokomo residents as hoped took part in the anti-Klan demonstration. Although there were up to 800 people in the area of the demonstrations, most were not active participants. This was in contrast to anti-Klan actions in Muncie and Ocean-side, California, where local residents were the majority of demonstrators. To a large extent, the government scare plan was able to carry the day, despite several weeks of local work by RSL and CWP organizers.

The second disappointment was the late arrival of the CWP/TUFF group. This cut in half the size of the demonstration.

Despite these weaknesses, several things were accomplished.

1) The anti-Klan demonstration made it difficult for the Klan to recruit. The police protected their march, but at the expense of practically evacuating downtown, and not letting the Klan reach any audience. The fact that they were outnumbered by determined opponents is likely to demoralize some Klan members and supporters.

2) The demonstration broke down the fear that the government had instilled in Kokomo residents. It convinced people that it is possible to demonstrate and organize against the Klan.

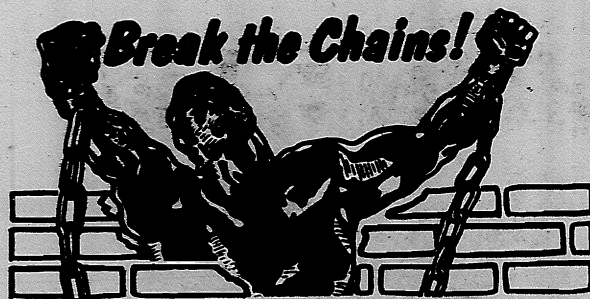
3) The demonstration may provide the basis for building up a nucleus of revolutionaries and anti-Klan fighters in Kokomo. The people who showed up despite the intimidation were determined to fight the Klan. Many of these people are still in touch with the RSL. Just as the Muncie counter-demonstration built a nucleus of organizers, the Kokomo demonstration may do the same. □



RSL contingent at Kokomo demonstration.

Photo courtesy of Carol Klammer





## Indian woman faces death penalty

Rita Silk-Nauni, a Native American woman, is facing the death penalty on charges of killing an Oklahoma City airport cop and wounding another. On September 19, 1979, the two cops stopped Silk-Nauni, 31, and her 10-year-old son Derrick, on the highway two miles from the airport. They said she was "littering." When she protested that she hadn't done anything wrong, officer Garland Garrison seized Derrick, threw him on the ground and tried to force him into the police car. The mother tried to defend her child, but officer Teresa Wells grabbed her. As they struggled, Wells' gun went off, wounding her in the thigh. Garrison let go of Derrick and went after Silk-Nauni. When she saw him reach for his gun, the distraught woman fired three shots wildly, killing Garrison. Then she took her child and fled in the police car. A whole fleet of Oklahoma City cops chased Silk-Nauni and rammed her off the road. They pulled the 90-pound woman out of the car and beat and stomped her so badly that she had a concussion, several broken fingers and cuts and bruises all over her body.

Despite the fact that Garrison had been reported numerous times for abusing minority people at the airport, and that Wells was known to like to pull her gun for parking violations, Rita Silk-Nauni was arrested, charged with murder and assault with intent to kill.

Since her arrest Rita Silk-Nauni has been held without bail in a windowless cell. The state wants revenge because this Native woman dared to defend her child against an attack by racist cops. We say she had every right to do what she did. We demand that the state drop all charges against her. **Free Rita Silk-Nauni!**

## MOVE members convicted

Nine members of a Black radical religious group called MOVE were convicted of third-degree murder on March 8 in Philadelphia. They are accused of killing a cop and wounding 18 cops and firefighters in a shootout August 8, 1978. They could get up to 100 years in prison.

The shooting happened when the city tried to evict the MOVE people, who had been fighting for months to keep their home. The cops started the shooting. They had surrounded the boarded-up house and sealed it off. When the MOVE people finally came out through the basement with their hands up, the cops pointed guns at their children. They beat MOVE member Delbert Orr Africa (all members of the group have the surname Africa). And then when he was face down on the ground, one burly cop stepped on his neck and tried to break his back. After the MOVE members were arrested, then-Mayor Frank Rizzo said they should all be executed. Even if there was such a thing as a fair trial, MOVE couldn't have gotten one in Philadelphia.

The nine prisoners and their supporters refused to abide by the court rules. They didn't want to keep quiet until the judge said they could talk. And so the accused were barred from the 19-week trial. They were finally brought into the heavily guarded courtroom—one by one, with their hands manacled behind their backs—to listen to the verdict. But with their friends joining in, they yelled and cursed at the judge until they drowned out his words.

## Protest to free Geronimo Pratt

On May 10, two mountain climbers went up to the top of the Statue of Liberty to get publicity for Geronimo Pratt, a political prisoner in San Quentin, California. Pratt was chairman of the Black Panther Party's Los Angeles chapter when he was arrested on a murder charge in 1968. He was framed as part of the FBI's COINTELPRO program to destroy the Panthers. In 1972, Pratt was convicted and sentenced to life in prison. This April 10 a petition was filed to overturn his conviction and release him.

The two mountain climbers were arraigned May 13 in a jammed courtroom. The judge wouldn't let them speak. "I'm a little worried about any statement from them," he said. Their trial hearing is scheduled for June 5.

—AL

# Overcrowding at the Connecticut State Prison at Somers

By RON SIMMAT  
Connecticut Prisoner 20197

Is the state prison at Somers, Connecticut, overcrowded? How many men must be held in a prison for the facility to be considered overcrowded? These are important questions in light of the recent riot at the New Mexico State Prison, where it is believed that overcrowding contributed to the riot.

## A definition

As a rule of thumb, a prison is considered to be overcrowded if it is holding more than 80 percent of the number of prisoners it was originally designed to house. Why is 80 percent considered to be "full" for a prison?

Many of the methods used to operate prisons and control prisoners depend on moving prisoners from one area of the facility to another, often quickly. For example, when a prisoner is released from segregation, sometimes after spending a year or longer in punishment status, he expects to be released quickly, say within a day or two of the release order.

At present two months pass before a man is released from segregation after he is told that he is eligible for release. The reason? The prisoner must wait for a cell to become vacant in the main area of the prison.

Another example is that of the man who has begun a course of study. Such a prisoner requests, often, to be moved to one of the quieter blocks, a request that at present takes months to answer. Frustrating? You bet.

One sure sign of overcrowding is arson. Prisoners begin to burn each other's cells. This is done for a variety of reasons, but it was unknown during the early years of this prison before overcrowding became a problem. Now it is a common practice. At least twice a week a man is brought to segregation because his cell has been burnt out.

## Prisoners packed into makeshift dormitories

The state prison at Somers now has more prisoners than it had beds when it was built. The room formerly used to "classify" prisoners has now been converted into a crowded

dormitory, and a second-floor hospital ward is now doing duty as a crowded dormitory. Prisoners are packed into these two makeshift dormitories tight, thus giving the prison an ability to hold more prisoners than there were originally beds.

Recreation facilities built to handle 800 men are now doing duty for over 1,000 men. Dining room facilities are now handling over 1,000 men. Punishment facilities designed to hold 40 men are now "accommodating" 60 prisoners. The educational area is now trying to serve over 1,000 prisoners. A neat little library meant to provide for 800 men is now falling to deal with over 1,000 prisoners. (Due to understaffing, the library is only open for two hours per night, three nights per week.)

Present plans at the prison are for building another dormitory in what is now the indoor recreation area. The authorities plan to build this dormitory during the summer months, when prisoners go outdoors for recreation, and then when next winter comes, the prisoners will be likely to "accept" less recreation space (so goes the plan).

## When overcrowding isn't overcrowding

The prison officials define overcrowding as having one or more prisoners than available beds. I, on the other hand, point out that for every prisoner sleeping at Santa Fe there was one mattress, so the New Mexico State Prison was by current and local definition not overcrowded.

A little over one year ago I spent three weeks at the prison at Santa Fe, New Mexico, while awaiting extradition to Connecticut. I was held in the segregation block, in a 6 x 9 foot cell with another prisoner. My mattress was kept under the bed during the day, and at night I pulled it out onto the main floor area in the cell.

As little as six months before my stay at Santa Fe, there had been as many as three men to a cell in segregation, but this had been reduced by court order. Progress had happened, you understand, and there is a sort of twisted logic to the situation. Fewer prisoners were at Santa Fe after the court order. So how could that prison be considered to be overcrowded?

At present the Somers pris-

on is just a bit less crowded than was Santa Fe at the time of the riot. However, whereas New Mexico put two men in a cell, Connecticut is building new dormitories where there is no space for them. Connecticut "corrections" officials will tell you that the problem at Santa Fe was double-celling of prisoners, not simply having too many human beings in a confined space.

And that, friends, is why Mr. Manson of the Connecticut Department of "Correction" will tell you, and does tell you, that his jails and prisons are not overcrowded right now, though some of them are "at capacity." So much for definitions. In this case, definitions are going to cost Connecticut millions of dollars, because the overcrowding at the Connecticut state prison is quickly moving towards a major riot in spite of official arguments over what constitutes "overcrowding." A riot will cost a lot of life, and a lot of money, and it will cost all of Connecticut the job of facing the fact that it has been caging human beings like they were cattle.

I am a prisoner at the Somers prison. I don't want to see a riot here, now or ever. But to be honest, I will not be able to fault anyone who takes part in the coming riot. I know it's coming. You may or may not believe it. But we are all sure as hell going to pay for it. □

## SUPPORT THE PRISONER LITERATURE FUND

In the past two years, the Torch/La Antorcha has greatly expanded its coverage of prisoners' struggles. The number of prisoners who read the Torch/La Antorcha and correspond with the Revolutionary Socialist League has also increased significantly.

The RSL provides revolutionary literature to prisoners to the extent that we can. Also, large numbers of prisoners receive free subscriptions to the Torch/La Antorcha.

Lack of funds keeps us from sending prisoners all the literature they want. Thus, to increase the amount of literature we can send, we have established a Prisoner Literature Fund. We encourage all readers of the Torch/La Antorcha to donate to this fund so that we can supply prisoners with revolutionary literature. Those who can make a monthly pledge, no matter how small, should do so. This money will be used exclusively for providing prisoners with revolutionary literature.

Send contributions to:  
Prisoner Literature Fund  
PO Box 1288  
New York, NY 10116

By ADELE L

Prisoners at State Prison in ... rose up on April ... guards and one ... supervisor hosta ... prisoners handc ... tags and plac ... cells. Another 2 ... caded themselves ... C.

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# Report From Michigan City Prison Tells Truth About Uprising

By ADELE LOHMAN

Prisoners at the Indiana State Prison in Michigan City rose up on April 27, taking six guards and one food service supervisor hostage. About 35 prisoners handcuffed the hostages and placed them in cells. Another 200 men barricaded themselves in Cellblock C.

The prisoners' demands included: better health care, better food, individual review of cases of prisoners in the security lockup, hearing of grievances against certain guards and amnesty for the participants in the rebellion. The uprising ended after 16 hours when state officials agreed to listen to the prisoners' complaints. But they didn't agree to do anything about them.

This was the sixth uprising in seven years against unbearable conditions in the 120-year-old prison, which is Indiana's only maximum security facility. In March of last year, when three hostages were taken following a four-day hunger strike by 27 prisoners, the grievances included a lack of hot water. An Indiana legislative report blamed the problems on low pay for the guards.

But a statement received by the Torch/La Antorcha from a group of participants in this April's rebellion puts the blame where it belongs.

## "We charge Warden Duckworth"

"The events that developed at the State Prison here 4/27/80, were not, at all, divorced from the hundreds of popular struggles of oppressed and exploited peoples sweeping the face of the planet today....

"For every rebellion or fight-back of prisoners here we charge Warden Duckworth & Co. for inciting them. We charge Warden Duckworth with overt acts of racism. The men in the lock-up units and B-10 are an example of the level racism is institutionalized and carried out by individual prison guards as general every day policy/practice.

"We charge Duckworth, etc., with conspiracy to commit murder and genocide against prisoners. We say this specifically in view of the medical treatment. Approximately eight months ago TB tests were administered throughout the prison. A large number of prisoners showed positive. There was a follow-up of calling these particular prisoners to the prison infirmary—to talk. Other than

that, nothing has been done—no medication has been made available. And there is a move to put two men in one-man cells. It is common knowledge among the nation's health agencies that prisons nationally are becoming TB pollution centers." [The TB rate in U.S. prisons is six times that in the population in general—Ed.]

"We say conspiracy to commit murder particularly because of the events/fightback that flared here yesterday and early this morning. We are certain that if not for the outside concern of our families, friends, and sensitive newspeople, and their willingness to act, we would not be here to present this today. As surely as the racist South African government gunned down and murdered unarmed students in 1976, and right-wing political forces gunned and murdered unarmed El Salvadorans just last month, we too would have been murdered."

The prisoners had good reason to think the state meant to murder them. Even

though the prisoners were unarmed; even though they released a hostage who complained of chest pains within three hours after the takeover; even though no one was hurt; state police forces massed outside the prison included at least 150 SWAT team members as well as trucks equipped with high-intensity searchlights.

The statement concludes: "We know that the social, economic, and political conditions in the world today have had their impact on prisons and prisoners, just as with the workers, students, and enormous numbers of permanently unemployed. Prisoners, like all other social groups, are victims of the vicious reality of politics.

"But prisoners, unlike other social groups, have no special interest group to lobby for them/us. The social government and political reality of prisons almost always pre-determines that an extreme atmosphere of violence must be created to resolve the most trivial as well as dire problems of day-to-day life in prison." □



State SWAT team arriving at Indiana State Prison during rebellion.

## FALN Supporters on Trial

# "PUERTO RICO MUST BE FREE"

By MICHAEL BLUMENTHAL

CHICAGO—The trials of 10 FALN (Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional—Armed Forces of National Liberation) militants started here April 28. The Puerto Rican nationalists, who were taken prisoner in Evanston, Illinois, on April 4, are accused of illegal possession of firearms and auto theft. Two of the nationalists are being tried in a separate courtroom on the additional charge of armed robbery. An eleventh prisoner, Maria Hayde Torres, was earlier flown to New York to face a murder charge.

On the first day the trial caused headaches for the Chicago and Cook County police. Over 70 people turned out to show solidarity with the FALN militants. The cops had three photographers taking pictures of all the protesters. Then, in a blatant act of racism, all non-whites trying to get into the courthouse were forced to go through metal detectors and were thoroughly frisked. Before being let into the courtroom itself, all, including this reporter, were frisked again and all buttons, books, pens, etc., were confiscated.

This reporter went inside the courtroom where eight of the nationalists were to be tried on the firearms and auto theft charges. The tone for the trials was immediately set when the crowd remained seated after being told "all rise." The judge addressed us sternly, saying that anybody who spoke would be thrown in jail for contempt of court. The courtroom was quiet—for a while.

## Prisoners of war

The FALN nationalists refused to listen to the judge and instead addressed the gallery: "We do not recognize this court. We are not criminals, we are prisoners of war, and we insist that we be tried by an international court." The judge tried to interrupt them and had the deputies grab their prepared statements from their hands.

He asked one prisoner: "Are you going to listen to me, or just speak?" "Just speak," he was answered. The crowd laughed and the judge threatened to clear the courtroom. It

became harder and harder for us to keep silent. When one prisoner said: "I'm here to protest colonialism," the judge said: "Believe me, I know how you feel." Everyone in the gallery burst into laughter, despite the threat of arrest. The judge blushed and the deputies jumped to their feet, clutching their billy clubs. We quieted down. But when one of the prisoners was dragged out of the courtroom chanting: "Puerto Rico Libre y Socialista!" a few spectators instinctively answered: "Arriba!"

Finally, after the last trial, when the prisoners in lock-up began to chant: "Esta lucha no se para!" (This struggle will not stop), we in the courtroom jumped to our feet and also began to chant.

## Police attack spectators

The cops herded everyone out of the courtroom and into the lobby. After a brief consultation, we went to the other courtroom just in time to see a line of cops running in and spectators staggering out,

some clutching their heads. A prisoner had been brought in bound and gagged, and when her legal counsel tried to speak, the judge had him arrested on the spot and jailed. The gallery had howled in outrage and the police attacked.

We stood in the lobby outside this courtroom and chanted and stamped. The police tried to break up and intimidate the crowd, but we stayed together and kept chanting. Eventually we were herded in little groups into the elevators, and rushed past a line of police photographers, through a channel of cops and into the street.

Once outside we started a picket line and chanted some more: "FBI, CIA, How many laws did you break today?"; "Puerto Rico must be free, Drive the Yankees to the sea!" Most of the Blacks going in the building raised fists in salute; some whites cursed us and yelled "go back there if you don't like it here." After about half an hour the picket line dispersed, carefully watched and escorted by the cops.

The trials will continue on May 19. □



# CBS's "Gay Power, Gay Politics"

By MARK KOSTOPOULOS

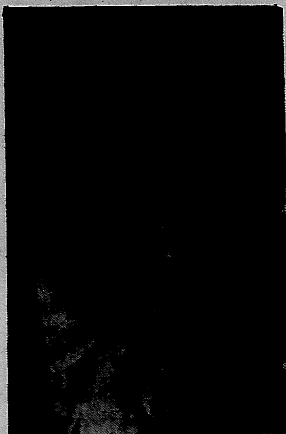
On Saturday, April 26, the right-wing opponents of freedom for lesbians and gay men were given a big boost in the form of a CBS-TV News special report called "Gay Power, Gay Politics."

The program, focused on San Francisco's gay community and the 1979 mayoral elections, was characterized by the television reviewer for the *San Francisco Chronicle* as "unprofessional, poorly researched and inflammatory . . . an example of the power of a national network news department to pass off the assumptions of a half-baked TV newsman without adequate research, and to rearrange the actual sequence of events to substantiate his suppositions." It certainly was that and much more.

The show has been criticized by San Francisco politicians and activists, both gay and straight, as a gross distortion of reality. The program of distortion, half-truths, and outright lies was in fact a call for all "decent" Americans to battle the growing power of "militant homosexuals." The show's commentator, Harry Reasoner, spoke of a backlash against gay rights. No indication of this was presented in the program, but the report itself promoted such a backlash.

## Feinstein and the gay community

The show's theme was that San Francisco Mayor Dianne Feinstein had lost the support of the gay community by stating in an interview with



Mayor Dianne Feinstein.

the *Ladies Home Journal* that gays must "respect community standards." Later, she found she needed the gay vote to win the upcoming election. She was then forced to apologize and accept the "public sex" and sado-masochism which CBS claims is rampant

in the city's gay community. This, along with deals made with gay leaders, gave gays a stranglehold on Feinstein and, with her subsequent election, on City Hall.

The program's view that Mayor Feinstein lost her gay support primarily because of one comment does not square with reality. The view that gays need to "respect community standards" is certainly insulting. It implies that gay men and lesbians are somehow not part of the community. Who sets these "community standards" referred to by Feinstein (and the Supreme Court and the right wing)? Certainly not working and oppressed people of any community. Rather the standards are those which the capitalists impose on the community, including lesbians and gay men, for the benefit of the capitalists.

But Feinstein's popularity in the gay community had in fact diminished long before her comment about "community standards." Six years ago, when Feinstein first ran for mayor, she did receive the support of most gays who voted, but as she gradually became more openly identified with the city's downtown business interests her gay support fell away. Later, when she took office after the murder of Mayor George Moscone, the turn away from Feinstein became a stampede. Shortly after she became mayor, the police stepped up the harassment of gay men and especially of lesbians. In one notorious case, two lesbians were grabbed while leaving a popular bar and held overnight on loitering charges.

Feinstein lost further support by her manner of selecting a replacement for gay supervisor Harvey Milk (who was murdered with Moscone). First she delayed picking a replacement for two months, effectively denying the heavily gay district representation. She then refused to appoint the consensus choice of the district.

The final blow to her gay and lesbian support was her comments and actions following the May 21 rebellion. Feinstein began a witch-hunt to "find the perpetrators" of the uprising that broke out after Dan White, the assassin of Milk and Moscone, was found guilty only of manslaughter. (Fifteen police cars were burned, a million dollars worth of damage done, and scores of cops injured in the rebellion.)

In last year's mayoral runoff (unlike the primary) Feinstein did recoup much of the gay vote. CBS believes this was due to the deals made between the mayor and gay power brokers. This analysis



Gay militants in San Francisco confronting cops during recent election campaign.

is highly questionable. More likely she got these votes because her opponent, Quentin Kopp, was one of the few San Francisco politicians who could make Feinstein appear "progressive." Traditionally the gay and lesbian vote in San Francisco has gone to the more "progressive" mayoral candidate.

## What CBS ignored

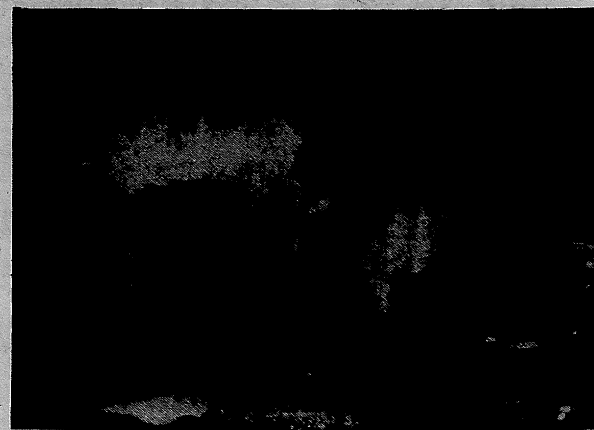
What CBS left out of the show is as important as what it put in. No lesbians, Blacks, Latins, Asians or Native Americans were interviewed. They were included in the film only when they couldn't be excluded from crowd shots. When questioned about it after the program, the producer stated that "women were insignificant" to the story. CBS portrayed San Francisco's diverse gay community with white, male professionals: lawyers, bankers, legislative aides and real estate agents. In fact, the majority of lesbians and gay men are parents battling for custody of their children, workers fighting for union representation, teenagers who hustle to survive, tenants trying to cope with ever-increasing rents in a housing market dominated by speculators and with the continual possibility of harassment from police or straight gangs. These lesbians and gay men were ignored. They too must have seemed "insignificant" to CBS.

private rooms at commercial establishments for S&M sex, like the one CBS showed, serve a straight as well as gay clientele. CBS used the testimony of the county coroner to imply that gay S&M leads to death. What the coroner actually said was that 10 percent of the homicides in San Francisco occurred in gay circumstances. Since this figure is roughly comparable to the official estimates of the gay population, no one should be surprised.

Many "respectable" gay and lesbian leaders have tried to dissociate themselves and the community from S&M. Such a tactic will only divide and weaken the gay and lesbian movement. To sacrifice any section of the gay and lesbian population to the right wing only opens the whole community to their campaign. S&M is a totally legitimate form of sexual behavior. What consenting individuals do for their sexual enjoyment or satisfaction is solely their business.

CBS also focused on "public sex" in San Francisco's Buena Vista Park. As with S&M, gays have no monopoly on "public sex." Lovers' lanes and submarine races have long been popular with heterosexuals. Beyond this, however, there are very real reasons why gay men have been forced to seek out parks for sexual companionship. Traditionally, society has provided no place for gays to meet and socialize. Parks and other secluded areas provide the only option. Gay "public sex" is not a result of "too much freedom" as CBS implies. It is the direct result of not enough freedom, of the oppression gays suffer.

The program dealt with the possible trauma of youth who might see men making out in the bushes. But how does this compare to the trauma of a gay or lesbian youth who is continually told his or her feelings are wrong and sick? Or the effect on all youth who are



Police cars burning during San Francisco gay rebellion last May. In all, 13 were destroyed.



# S" — Straight Garbage

taught that sex is dirty and shameful, something to be hidden away from view? Is the glimpse of two men making love more harmful than viewing women openly exploited in the explicitly sexual advertisements for topless bars in San Francisco's North Beach area? What of the reduction of women to purely sexual objects, to be used and abused, in the slightly more subtle advertising that surrounds all of us, including children, constantly?

"Public sex" is not the problem, but the way sexuality is dealt with in our society. Under capitalism, sex is something to make a profit on. Perhaps one of the most disturbing aspects of sex in the parks to those who control CBS is that it's free. No cover charge, membership fee or drinks to buy. No profit to be made. When sex is as consumerized as it is in this society, that may be a bit disturbing to some.

## "Spokesperson" trying to build career

To lend credibility to all this garbage, CBS had to come up with a "spokesperson" for the gay community who served their purpose. They found one in Cleve Jones. Interviews with Jones made up a major portion of the show. In reality, except for the Democratic Party and some city hall connections, Jones has little base in the gay community. CBS accurately summed up Jones' role as a gay leader when describing his activities on Castro Street Halloween night. The reporter described how, as police marched onto the street, Jones "struggled desperately to keep gays from fighting back." To keep oppressed and working people from fighting back is the typical job of liberal activists and labor bureaucrats.

Jones has found it necessary to sound militant in order

to maintain any support among lesbians and gay men. This is reflected in his current favorable comments concerning the May 21 rebellion. But those who knew him at that time remember a very different Jones. He refused to participate in the preparation for a demonstration planned by more radical activists for the night of the verdict. At city hall Jones futilely argued for no violence. Although now he would like full credit for the rebellion (referring to himself as Cleve "May 21st" Jones) he was not so eager when he spilled his guts to the Grand Jury soon after the event. Jones subsequently used the May 21 rebellion as a reason to urge strikers at a Castro Street restaurant to call off a mass picket, citing the possibility of more clashes with the police. Successful in this and other attempts to keep gay and lesbian workers down, Jones was rewarded with an appointment as a legislative aide at the State Capitol.

Now Jones and other spokespeople in the show are outraged at its producers. The question arises, why did they allow themselves to be used in such a manner? Gay men in Buena Vista Park knew enough to chase the film crew out of the park. Even Mayor Feinstein kicked the CBS reporter out of her office before the interview was half over. She knew what was going on. Why weren't the "gay leaders," some of whom spent weeks with the producer and reporter, equally perceptive? One explanation is that they were more concerned with furthering their own careers as "gay leaders" with free publicity than with the welfare of lesbians and gay men.

The fear of gay power the show tries to create in the public is not its only danger. Also dangerous is the illusion it created among lesbians and gay men that they have a real stranglehold on San Francisco's City Hall and, because of that, some security. The program perpetuates the illusion

that the liberal strategy of working through channels (particularly the Democratic Party) will lead to real power for lesbians and gay men.

In reality liberals have failed even on their own terms to develop gay power. CBS highlights the promise Feinstein made to gays during the election to appoint them to city commissions proportionate to their numbers in the city. But in the last year she has appointed only two openly gay people to city commissions. She makes an average of eight appointments a week. That hardly seems like "gay power."

Harry Reasoner closed "Gay Power, Gay Politics" by asking what the growing gay movement will mean for the country. "Will they [homosexuals] include the demand for absolute sexual freedom as they did in San Francisco . . .?" The answer is, of course, yes. Lesbians and gay men do demand freedom. The Revolutionary Socialist League also fights for freedom. We demand sexual freedom for all working class and oppressed people, young and old, gay and straight, Black, Latin, Asian and white. We demand not only sexual freedom, but the freedom to control our own lives, our work, homes and communities, the freedom, and the power, to run society in our interests. □



## 50,000 March for ERA in Illinois

CHICAGO, May 10—Well over 50,000 people rallied here today to push for the Illinois legislature to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Thirty-five states have ratified the amendment in favor of women's equality. Thirty-eight are needed.

The demonstration was built by the National Organization of Women (NOW) and other liberal forces. Many trade unions sent delegations. People came from practically every state, from NOW chapters, community groups, etc. Most of the marchers dressed in white, as in the 1978 march on Washington for ERA. Speakers from the platform were mostly politicians, like Chicago Mayor Jane Byrne, and show business personalities like Marlo Thomas.

The RSL brought a contingent dressed in red, under a banner that read: "Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution." Our signs and chants called for abortion rights, jobs, lesbian rights, and armed self-defense against rape, as well as for the ERA. Our leaflet explained that just passing the ERA would win only small gains for women, but its defeat would be a major gain for the organized right wing.

March organizers, who ran the whole affair very bureaucratically, tried to block us out of the march, to keep us at the back, or to take away all signs that went beyond the narrow issue of ERA. They did not succeed. Our contingent drew a lot of attention and a number of people joined it.

## ANTI-"WINDOWS" PROTESTS CLOSE THEATER IN MADISON

As we go to press 27 people are going on trial in Madison, Wisconsin, for protesting the showing of the movie *Windows* in early March. The protests, which began with a theater takeover and ended with the arrest of the "Windows 27," were the most militant response in the Midwest to the anti-gay movies *Windows* and *Cruising*. (See page 5 of the February 15-March 14, 1980, *Torch/La Antorcha* for articles on these films.)

The initial protest, called by Women Against Pornography, was held Friday, March 8, at the University Square Theater in Madison. At least 200 pickets circled in front of the theater. "The idea kept running through the crowd that we should just walk in and shut the film down," recalled one participant, Gwen Avant. "We watched people coming in and out. Finally somebody held one of the doors open and said, 'Let's go!'"

Some 50 people flooded

into the theater chanting: "Shut this down! Shut this down!" The police, intimidated by the size of the crowd, made no arrests. When the theater manager agreed to stop showing the film, the protesters left peacefully.

The next night, the film opened at the East Town Mall. This time only 20 protesters showed up. Having been told a lie by the police—that chanting was against the law—they picketed silently; but a few tried to force their way into the theater.

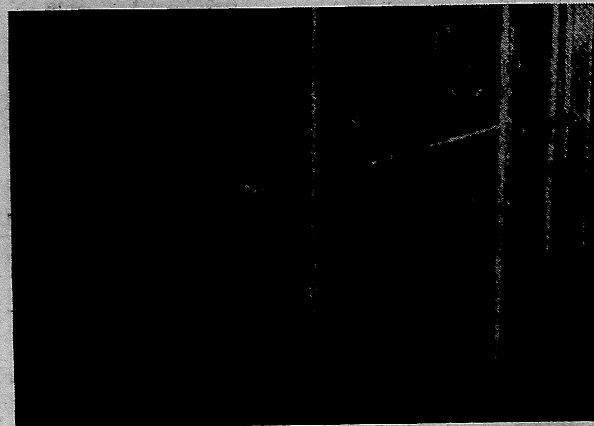
"The police were obviously getting back at us for their helplessness of Friday," said one protester. The cops were afraid to touch the women but they grabbed the men, "threw them on the ground and beat them up." Seven men were handcuffed and dragged away.

On Monday, even fewer people showed up, and the protests might have ended. But late that same night a woman was raped exactly the

way it's planned in *Windows*. As a result, 50 demonstrators decided to have a sit-in the next night. "We were determined; we had to do something," said one activist. Shortly after a showing started, 30 women linked arms and sat down in front of the theater entrance. When a police lieutenant informed them that they would be arrested, a spokeswoman for the group told him to go ahead and warned those afraid of arrest to leave. About 10 did. The remaining 20 demonstrators were arrested and taken away in a paddy wagon.

The 27 people arrested in the protests are to be tried separately on charges of disorderly conduct. The protests stopped after the arrests, but *Windows* has not done well, either in Madison or nationwide.

In fact, on the first night of the protest, when the theater was taken over by the pickets, there were more protesters than customers inside. □



Police charge in to wreck the Elephant Walk, a lesbian bar, in late hours of May 21 rebellion.



By ROD MILLER

"On May 1, 1980, millions of people will see or hear about something which will arouse, astonish and inspire them: On that Thursday, instead of going to work or school, or pounding the streets in search of a job, thousands of people, a significant section of the industrial workers and others among the basic masses, will march defiantly through the streets in major cities across the country in a mass revolutionary May Day."

—Revolution, magazine of the Revolutionary Communist Party, June 1979.

A little less than a year ago, the Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) announced its plans for "revolutionary May Day." In the words of RCP leader Bob Avakian, May 1, 1980, would be "the greatest political event in this country since years and decades."

Avakian predicted—right up until May 1—that "a force of thousands of class conscious workers and others will march on the streets, refusing to go to work, to go to school, to remain passive. . . ."

Avakian did not let any doubters deter him from his confident predictions: "Let them say that we are dreaming. Our dreams are based on reality. Those dreams will turn into a very real nightmare for the capitalist oppressor. On May 1, 1980 we'll start to see who's dreaming."

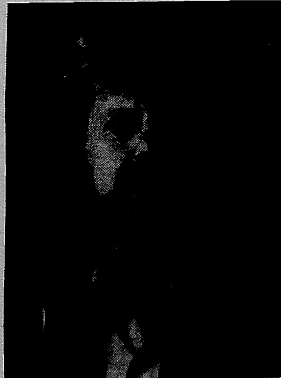
### Dreams become nightmares

May 1, 1980, has come and gone. If anyone is not sleeping well after the RCP's actions on that day, it can only be "Chairman Avakian" himself. The RCP, far from leading actions that would "sound the first powerful salvo of revolutionary mass struggle in the '80s," managed only to build a half-dozen or so small and dispirited marches, the largest of which (200 people) took place in Los Angeles. In Chicago, fewer than 100 people marched; 70 in New York; 60 in Detroit and 50 in Atlanta. If there were any other RCP-led demonstrations on May 1, they have thus far attracted as little attention as those mentioned.

It certainly wasn't that the RCP didn't try. For months prior to May 1, bands of RCPers roamed the country trying to generate support for the group's plans.

On March 20, RCPers in San Antonio, Texas, hoisted a red flag over the Alamo to gain publicity. In a number of cities, they invaded auto and steel plants, waving red flags and taunting workers with the refrain: "We Won't Be Work-

# May Day Actions Flop Why the RCP Is in Crisis



Avakian—the "biggest, baddest, meanest dude around"?

ing on May Day—Who Will You Be Serving?"

Frequently, these provocative forays erupted into fist fights with the very workers the RCPers claimed to be addressing. At the Ford Motor Company's huge Mahwah Assembly plant in New Jersey—scheduled for permanent closing on June 20—angry workers wielding lead pipes and other pieces of scrap, chased the RCPers out of the plant. (See article, page 3.)

If the RCP managed to accomplish anything by these actions—other than getting several of its supporters' heads bashed—it was to provoke sharp anti-left sentiments among workers confused and demoralized by the rapidly accelerating economic crisis.

The most tragic event in the RCP's frenzied May Day campaign took place on April 22 in Los Angeles. On that day, a contingent of RCPers staged a rally at the Pico Gardens housing project in the Boyle Heights section of the city. Operating in the provocative style used in the "factory invasions," the RCPers apparently encroached on the "territory" of one of the youth gangs in Boyle Heights, provoking an assault on the RCP contingent. In the fighting that broke out, two RCPers were stabbed. One, Damien Garcia, died from multiple stab wounds to his abdomen, chest and neck.

### Why?

It is not difficult to ridicule the RCP for its May Day cam-

paign. Nor does it require a great deal of political insight to point out that the projections the group made were wildly exaggerated and many of its actions more than a bit foolish.

Many of the RCP's Maoist competitors have already engaged in easy ridicule. For example, the April 2 and May 14 issues of the *Guardian* contain articles about the RCP's "ultra-left" antics." The April 28 issue of the *Call*, newspaper of the pro-China, Communist Party Marxist-Leninist (CPML), likens Avakian and his followers to Jim Jones and the Guyanese "People's Temple."

But the political evolution of the RCP is far more tragic than comic. It demands of revolutionary Marxists not a few snappy put-downs, but a serious attempt to analyze the group's degeneration and draw out as many lessons as possible.

### RCP roots

To understand where the RCP is at today, it is necessary to first look briefly at its political roots. The then-Revolutionary Union (RU, later RCP) was one of the major "Marxist-Leninist" tendencies to emerge from the mass anti-war, anti-imperialist student movement of the late 1960s and early '70s.

The mass student movement of the 1960s was made up primarily of radicalized young people attending college. As this movement grew, large numbers of people moved further and further to the left. The most serious of these people began to search for models, strategies and leaderships that would allow them to deepen their anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist outlook and actions.

Many of these people were attracted to China, the "Third World" and "Mao Tse-tung Thought" as an ideological guide. For most, Maoism represented the regeneration of revolutionary Marxism, a welcome alternative to the tepid and tired reformism of the "old left" Communist parties, the social democracy, and the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party.

There were good reasons for this attraction, no matter

how mistaken it would prove to be. Maoist ideology and practice—as perceived by many radicalized students and workers—corresponded to the genuinely left-wing, anti-imperialist sentiments of this layer of people. After all, wasn't China the most vociferous denouncer of "Soylet revisionism?" Wasn't the Chinese Communist Party exposing and denouncing the betrayals of the reformist, Moscow-oriented Communist parties around the world?

For "new leftists" in search of an alternative to the "old left," this was a powerful attraction. It was made all the more appealing by China's Cultural Revolution, taking place at the very time when revolutionaries in the U.S. were searching for answers. Certainly the Cultural Revolution and Mao's talk of "uninterrupted revolution" appeared to be the revolutionary alternative to the staid, bureaucratic conservatism of the Russian and Eastern European societies.

The fact the U.S. left was overwhelmingly petty bourgeois in its social origins made it easier for the new Maoists to ignore the class nature of countries such as China, Cuba, Vietnam and Kampuchea. Ideological rhetoric (the "correct line") mattered more than whether the real, live working class had made these revolutions in the first place and whether the workers and peasants actually controlled and ran these societies through factory committees, workers' councils, soviets or other forms of

working class rule.

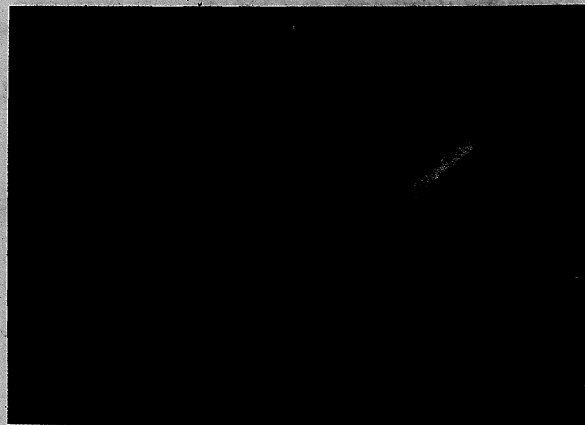
Consequently, many honest, sincere and subjectively revolutionary people wound up in various Maoist organizations. The largest and most significant of these groups were the RCP (led by Bob Avakian) and the CPML (originally the October League, led by one-time SDS National Secretary Michael Klonsky). The newspaper the *Guardian*, which had been steadily moving away from the CPUSA throughout the 1960s, sought to become the literary mouthpiece for this broad Maoist milieu. As the movement broke up into increasingly hostile tendencies, the *Guardian* came to represent its "own brand" of Maoism.

### From Maoism to Stalinism

As this layer of the "new left" embraced Maoism as an alternative to the reformism of the Communist Party, it inadvertently accepted the same political assumptions that underlay CP "revisionism." In opposing Khrushchev and his talk of "peaceful coexistence" and "the peaceful road to socialism," Mao tried to place himself under the banner of Stalin. But Stalin no more stood for proletarian revolution than did Khrushchev.

It was Stalin who turned the Communist International into a pliant tool of Russian foreign policy. It was Stalin who bungled the Chinese Revolution in 1925-27, subordinating the workers to Chiang Kai-shek and setting them up for a frightful massacre in Shanghai in April 1927. It was Stalin who, through his Popular Front strategy, crushed the Spanish Revolution in 1936-39 in the interests of maintaining his alliance ("peaceful coexistence") with the Western imperialist "democracies." It was Stalin who destroyed the Bolshevik Party by murdering tens of thousands of Old Bolsheviks, thus consolidating the state bureaucracy into a state-capitalist class in Russia.

Whatever Mao said Khrushchev said.  
(Continued on page 11)



Bottom: Mao Zedong and Richard Nixon exchange greetings during Nixon's 1972 visit to China.

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# TORCH

SUPPLEMENT  
May-June 1980

## Victory to the Glydons Strike!

**LOS ANGELES**—In this anti-union town, strikes are hard enough to win under the best of circumstances, but the Glydons strike has been harder than most. After three and a half months, 150 striking garment workers still have no union recognition, no contract and no jobs. But their militant determination and spirit have kept the strike alive longer than anyone believed possible. Even veteran organizers in the garment industry admit they've never seen a strike like this one before.

**SO WHY Glydons? What makes this strike different?** And how did the Glydons strikers end up on the front line of the class struggle in LA's garment industry?

This strike takes place in the context of a severe economic crisis of world capitalism. The recession doesn't just affect the bankers and big businessmen. Nor is it just the major industries like auto and steel which are being squeezed. Recession is shaking the whole economy, including garment. Middle and small garment bosses, like Glydons, have even less maneuvering room than their better-off, larger buddies.

And for garment workers, who are among the lowest paid of all industrial workers, another kind of desperation exists. With inflation rising far faster than the minimum wage, with Immigration raids and other racist attacks increasing on all sides, their fight is for survival. To them, union protection can mean the difference between eating or not, deportation or not, self-respect or on-the-job humiliation.

**AT GLYDONS, the lines are sharply drawn.** LA's garment bosses have decided to make this one the test. During the past two years, an organizing drive by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILG) has brought numerous shops and hundreds of workers into the organized labor movement. By focusing on the more militant, largely undocumented Latin workforce, the ILG has hoped to replenish its dwindling membership and clean up its tarnished reputation.

In labor circles, the ILG is considered one of the most racist, corrupt and conservative of AFL-CIO unions, and recent policy decisions made at the highest level confirm this. ILG leaders are now on record as favoring stricter enforcement of immigration laws—a slap in the face to thousands of its own immigrant members. On the local level, ILG organizers pretend to ignore the corruption at the top. In LA, ILG organizing among undocumented workers continues.

To the bosses, the showdown at Glydons means stopping the ILG and reversing the current industrywide unionizing drive. To the workers it means holding the line against a major union-busting attack, and preserving the meager gains which the ILG drive and other struggles by undocumented workers have won.

That explains the determination of the strikers—all Latin or Black, nearly all women—who have stood on picket duty for three and a half months facing harassment, arrests, and violence from police and scabs. They know what's at stake, just as clearly as the Glydons

reckon with was the fury of these specially oppressed workers. That anger, once organized and directed at a common enemy, has kept the strike alive despite the slow-moving conservatism of the union itself.

Support from outside the strike and

support for the plantgate rallies.

The ILG, with all its resources, has done almost nothing to make this strike the kind of issue it must become to win broad popular support. It has even failed to call other union locals in the area for endorsements or support on the picket line. When some strikers, with the help of the CRC, took action on their own to spread publicity about the strike, they were criticized by the do-nothing union leaders.

**NEVERTHELESS, support for the strike has grown rapidly** in recent weeks with a number of press interviews and offers of aid from other unions, student groups, and political organizations. Over 40 endorsements have been received so far and invitations to strikers to speak average about three per day.

The Glydons boss is making the most he can from the fact that revolutionaries are involved in this strike. He has told the union that he will not negotiate with them until they prove that they can control the workers. The union bureaucrats, who are themselves worried about controlling the strikers, are all too happy to cooperate.

On May 1, ILG organizers began to enforce a strict "no confrontation" rule. Picketers have been told not to talk to scabs entering the factory, and not even shout at them from a distance. Usually the union sends even less than the four legally allowed picketers to stand at each gate. The result: fewer trucks being turned away; more scabs are being hired (some not even knowing a strike is happening); and for the first time some scabs are walking into and out of the factory unescorted and unafraid.

For a week in early May the union leaders prevented strikers from gathering at the court-imposed distance of 100 feet from the gate. Then on May 8, a tougher injunction pushed back the

(Continued on next page)



Strikers and supporters at Glydons plant on April 16 Day of Solidarity.

boss. And they say, over and over: "This strike has got to win!"

**THE BOSSES' choice of Glydons as a test of class forces in the garment industry is no coincidence.** To the capitalists, the Glydons strike should have been a pushover. Here are the very most oppressed of an overall extremely exploited workforce: Latin and Black women, divided among themselves and from other workers by language and cultural differences, and all socialized as women not to fight. Many are undocumented and subject to deportation. Many are single mothers with children to feed. If the ILG drive could be stopped, here was the best opportunity. But what the Glydons boss didn't

outside the union has played an important role. The Comité Revolucionario de la Costura (CRC—Revolutionary Garment Committee), an affiliate of the Revolutionary Socialist League, has led in organizing outside strike support activities. These include plantgate rallies, mass leafletting, press coverage, fund raising, and speaking engagements for strikers.

In addition, CRC members among the strikers have pushed for a more militant strategy, for democratic control of the organizing committee, and for building broader support for the strike. They have had to argue against the timid and legalistic approach of the union leadership, and to fight to win official union

## Key Dates in the Glydons Strike

**October 1979**—Glydons organizing drive begins.

**December 1979**—Glydons workers vote 149-10 in favor of union representation by the ILGWU, but the company challenges the validity of the election and the NLRB overturns it.

**January 1980**—Comité Revolucionario de la Costura (CRC) is formed, made up of revolutionary workers from Glydons and several other factories. Leading union supporters at Glydons are harassed and fired.

**February 8**—Strike begins over unfair labor practices. Boss refuses to talk to union.

**March 14**—CBC and union co-sponsor a Day of Solidarity at the picket line, which draws first citywide support. Boss closes factory for half a day.

**April 16, 17, 18**—Three days of strike support rallies at the plantgate. Over 100 supporters picket each day while a court injunction keeps strikers 100 feet away. Eight people,

both strikers and supporters, are arrested during the rallies. On April 18 police declare the rally an illegal assembly and attack the crowd. Two strikers are injured.

**May 1**—A united front of several left organizations, including the RSL and the CRC, pickets the factory to commemorate May Day. Boss keeps factory closed all day and hints he may be willing to settle. In response to the hints, the ILG begins to enforce a "no confrontation" policy, keeping strikers away from the factory and dropping all strike support action except a boycott.

**May 8**—Boss gets more restrictive court injunction, forcing strikers to stay 1,000 feet from factory. Union bureaucrats denounce "extremists" among the strikers and propose two more weeks of "labor peace" as concession to boss. Faced with strong opposition from strikers, bureaucrats refuse to allow a vote on proposal.

**May 9**—CRC announces its strike support work will continue and pickets factory again.



## Interview With a Glydons Striker

# "Nobody has to be a slave"

The following interview with a striking Glydons worker took place on May 3. The striker's name has been changed for security reasons.

**Torch:** What are the Glydons workers fighting for?

**Olga:** The reason all of us at Glydons are fighting is because at this factory up until now we haven't had anything. Not with the old boss or the new ones. We've never, never, never, gotten anything—not a fair wage, no benefit in any area. We've had nothing in this factory.

**Torch:** Before you went out on strike, what were conditions like in the factory?

**Olga:** Since the factory got new owners, the person inside, Mrs. Collin, was a person who treated us not like people but like animals—demanding that we produce a daily minimum, snapping her fingers at us, pressuring us too much. Do you see what I'm saying? That was perhaps the most important reason we began to organize to have a union—because of the way they were treating us inside, an unfair way of treating us. Because we are not animals. We are not slaves in this factory or in any other factory. Nobody has to be a slave. The former boss used to use diplomacy to exploit us. But these new owners didn't even use diplomacy to do it. They came in demanding and pressuring people, doing many unfair things in the factory. This is why we rebelled and began to want to organize.

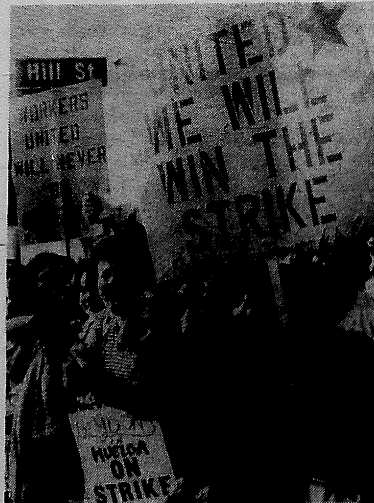
**Torch:** At the present time, what is the situation that the strike is in?

**Olga:** As I see it, at this time the strike is at a very critical, difficult point. Right now all the workers have to do everything we can and we have to try to pressure the union to do everything it can. Either the strike wins or it loses. We're at a very difficult point.

**Torch:** Up until now, how do you think the workers have functioned? How do you see people's morale?

**Olga:** Up until now, I have seen, and still see, the morale of my fellow

strikers as fairly low. And I don't blame them. I don't blame them at all, because the reason that everyone's morale, including my own, is low is the way this campaign is being carried out. Because unfortunately this campaign has been



Torch/Lois Aronson

very slow, very timid. The union has moved quite slowly in all aspects of the campaign. And don't think we're blind and don't see it. The union has given us no satisfaction in the course of this campaign. It's not fair, because we've struggled, and I think we haven't let the union down in any way. Instead, the union has let us down. Maybe because of our ignorance we haven't known how to pressure the union strongly enough from the beginning. We've never dealt with these problems. We've never organized for a union. And maybe that's why we haven't been able to demand from the beginning that the union move as it should have moved to avoid arriving at the point we're at now, which is a dangerous one, where we are about to be defeated. Either something definitive is done or this campaign that's

cost us so much will lose.

**Torch:** Up until now, what role have you seen the police play in the strike?

**Olga:** The role the police have played in the strike has been quite negative for us. It has always been 90 percent—100 percent—in favor of the company and against all us workers. It has been completely negative for us, completely negative in every way, because there have been so many arrests, so many injustices that they've committed and so many problems that we have had with the police. They are 100 percent in favor of the boss and the people inside.

**Torch:** And in reference to the courts?

**Olga:** In reference to the courts, that too is a thing that's completely lost. Of all the demands that we've made against the boss, not one has won. Not one. They've all been decided against us, every single thing has been negative for us. So regarding the laws, the labor board, the police, all these things, we are completely on the outside, because we've had no support, no nothing from the laws, labor board, police, etc. We have nothing except what? To defend ourselves. That is the only thing left for us.

**Torch:** During this strike, what do you think has been the role played by the Revolutionary Garment Committee [an affiliate of the RSL—Ed.]?

**Olga:** During this strike the Revolutionary Garment Committee has played quite an important and good role for us strikers. If it weren't for this League, we would be worse off than we are now, because we owe the major part of our morale, as much as our morale has been raised, to this League. Because they have supported us 100 percent—which the union has not. This is what I think, and I consider that I'm speaking for all the fellow strikers, who have the same opinion as I do about this League. If we have made progress, if we continue progressing in this campaign, it's thanks to them. Thanks to the comrade who has been struggling with us, and thanks to his League. I'll say this loudly and softly anywhere, I don't

care what the union thinks.

**Torch:** In this campaign, this struggle that is being waged, many undocumented workers are participating. What is it they hope to win as undocumented workers? What do they hope to gain from this campaign?

**Olga:** I think that we all hope to reap the fruit of what we've sown. This struggle has been very hard and we want to win it at all costs. We are not going to be defeated but we will win. We want what is just, what a worker deserves. That is what we all hope for. And we are not willing to let people, like the scabs inside, reap what we've sown.

**Torch:** Do the undocumented workers believe that the struggle is being carried out simply for economic reasons, or is there another reason why they are fighting? Is this basically an economic struggle or is this a struggle for rights for undocumented workers here in the United States?

**Olga:** I believe that this is a struggle to gain their rights as people here in this country, be they legal or

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The Glydons strikers need your support. If you can, send money—\$1, \$5, \$10, \$25 or more—to the Glydons Organizing Committee, 400 W. 9th St., Los Angeles, CA 90015; or Comité Revolucionario de la Costura, Box 327, Hollywood, CA 90028. Money sent to the Organizing Committee goes into the strike fund. Money sent to the CRC goes for strike support activities. Also—send messages of support to the two addresses above!

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illegal. We all have the same rights. It is not enough in itself to win having a union and a better wage; they have to give us the same rights as any other worker, legal or not.

**Torch:** As a last point, would you like to send a specific message to your fellow strikers through the newspaper the Torch/La Antorcha?

**Olga:** The only thing that I can say to my fellow strikers is that we have to continue fighting onward for the same cause, for a just cause. Because we will never let ourselves be conquered by anything. We have to keep going forward, and we have to keep our morale up, because we have to win this struggle and this campaign. If we don't win, I can assure you that the boss is not going to keep on making a living off of us. That factory is not going to remain there. This is the message that I want to send my comrades. Keep going forward and let's all stay united as we are now, raise our morale and don't get discouraged by what's happening. In the long run this struggle is going to help us a lot and bring us our reward.

**Torch:** Thank you very much. □

## Victory!

(Continued from previous page)

legal distance to 1,000 feet, and the union tops breathed a sigh of relief.

The union leaders say they have to prove to Glydons that the revolutionaries in the CRC/RSL don't run this strike. They are willing to make any concession to show how nice "their" strikers can be, even if it means destroying the militancy and momentum built up over the past three and a half months.

THE CRC and its supporters are determined that this strike will not be sold out nor killed off quietly. They are working to broaden support for the strike on all fronts. They say the best way to win is to step up the struggle. For three months the boss wouldn't talk to the union. Now he is doing so

(privately, off the record). The reason he's willing to talk now is because previous militant strike actions, like those during the three days of solidarity in April, have had an impact.

More actions like those are needed. But the union bureaucracy stands in the way. They would rather lose the strike than allow the strikers to democratically control their own organizing committee and decide on the best course of action. They are desperately trying to isolate CRC supporters among the strikers and they are preparing to negotiate a deal with the boss which would prevent certain strike leaders from ever getting their jobs back.

But the CRC, which was born out of the organizing drive at Glydons, is in this strike to win. Throughout this campaign, CRC supporters have pointed to the limits of reformist trade union work, to the corruption of the ILG bureaucrats, to the slow-moving and unserious way the ILG has led this strike. To revolutionary garment workers the union is a

vital weapon in the class struggle. It must be defended and built. But the present middle class leadership of the ILG cannot do it. They don't even know how to build a campaign to win this strike, and have left much of that work for the CRC to do alone. They must be thrown out.

THE FUTURE LEADERSHIP of the union movement exists today among the spirited, militant rank and file engaged in strikes like the one at Glydons. They are the ones who keep a sagging strike alive, who dare to defy the timid union bureaucrats and their legalistic strategy. The Glydons strike continues, long after all predictions said it should have failed, because of such working class leaders. Many of these people are recognizing and joining the CRC. Some will continue their political development into the RSL. That is the way the union movement will be built. And that's the way all the bosses, at Glydons and everywhere else, will be finally defeated. □

### Special Offer!

For a FREE three-month introductory subscription to the Torch/La Antorcha, just write us at: PO Box 1288, New York, NY 10116.