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# Southern Exposure

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MARK  
OF THE  
BEAST



# Southern Exposure

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Cover photo of Klanswoman and child by Nancy Warnecke/*The Tennessean*

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John Spragens

# from our readers. . . .



Illustration by Leslie Udry

I was recently shown a copy of "Generations: Women in the South," and was filled with pride, nostalgia, and enthusiasm. As a Black native of Mississippi, I could relate to many of the articles. I was also pleased to see that women and life in the South are being exposed in a positive way. As one who is very much interested in women's concerns, I have been disillusioned because national media reporting on the women's movement has failed, until very recently, to recognize that not all women can be generalized into the same "bag" that they are wont to put them in. I am especially pleased to note that Southern Black women are receiving due recognition.

— Millie A. Byrd Grey  
Somerset, N.J.

I'd like to offer the following information for your readers. We hope you'll be able to include it in your fine publication as it offers people a constructive way to put their faith and commitment to justice into action.

Laos — meaning the "Whole People of God" — was founded during the Civil Rights struggle in Mississippi to encourage laypersons to get involved in the social ministry by sending volunteers to work in urban and rural development, education, public health, community organizing and public advocacy. This year Laos is offering two training sessions for prospective volunteers: June 2-6 and September 1-5. If

you are interested in becoming a Laos volunteer and attending one of the training sessions, write us — Laos Volunteer Program, 4920 Piney Branch Rd. NW, Washington, D.C. 20011.

— Larry P. Ebner  
Washington, D.C.

Recently I was loaned a copy of *Southern Exposure* having in it an article entitled "It's Good to be Home in Greenville. . . It's Better If You Hate Unions" (Vol. VII, No. 1). I grew up in Greenville during the years of its development and knew most of the people mentioned and found the article most interesting and in spots enlightening — tho I knew most of the facts, my father's father having been the treasurer of the Greenville Mill during the War Between the States, and my father deeply involved in Southern development. He would not have wanted unions either but Thomas Parker, who first put in welfare work, and controlled the Parker Mills before Lewis Parker (if I remember rightly) did. In about one year around 1922 he amazed me by saying to me that he felt a great need for unions in the mills.

— Clara Hurd Rutledge  
Lillian, Alabama

Deep in the lower level of Princeton University's library, I found you shortly before Randy Newman performed a

concert. (Newman likes to parody the South.)

I work for a textile company you profiled in an earlier issue and am hoping I can transfer to N.C. soon. I am somewhat naive or ignorant about the real South but your magazine will help me understand the region.

— Mark Isenberg  
Metuchen, N.J.

Your "Through the Hoop" issue was superb. I only wish that some attention had been paid to the old textile baseball leagues. Not only were they a lynchpin in the paternalism of the mill villages but they produced some pretty damned good ball players — Shoeless Joe Jackson among them. Jackson was so impressive in Greenville's textile league that he quickly drew a following, and it came from both sides of town. Alester G. Furman, Jr., raised in one of Greenville's wealthiest and most prestigious families, was then a youngster and fondly recalls shagging balls for Jackson for hours on end. Jackson left the mills to become a White Sox slugger — and was ultimately expelled from major league baseball in the 1919 Black Sox scandal in which he and seven teammates threw a World Series in return for bribes to supplement their meager wages.

— Cliff Sloan  
Washington, D.C.

When I was 17 years old I was arrested and booked for the robbing and murder of a Black woman who was at the time a service station attendant. The witnesses they supposedly had against me and some other brother claimed to have seen me robbing the service station attendant. We were together at the time this incident is supposed to have taken place. This caught me by surprise. I wasn't aware of what happened until I heard a gun shot once, and that told me to run.

So after the other brother and I snap to what had just went down, we all ran back to the car. And then I asked the brother what he shot the sister for. He said that she wouldn't give him the money, and I asked him what he meant by that. He said that he was trying to rob the sister. So I said why didn't he (let me know) what was happening? That he couldn't answer. So three days later I saw it in the news where they said that sister got killed in a robbery holdup.

So I think it was the 4th of September, about 9 o'clock, I was coming from one of my ladies' when I turned and saw about 9 car loads of police and detectives. So I went downtown (with them). They took me through the lineup about 6 times, and no one identified me, because they knew and I knew that they had the wrong man. But when they brought the other brothers that they said were with me they were framed into throwing the weight off on me. The brothers that were with me told me themselves that the police told them if they said that I did everything that the police would get them cut free. So I asked them, Were they going to lie about me for the police, and they said No. But it didn't come out that way. They lied about me for those pigs.

I got thrown in the hole for no reason at all, and they kept those three brothers together to plot against me. One of those police told one of my so-called associates that if he didn't say that I did it he was going to send him to prison.

Concerned Brothers and Sisters: I have been struggling so hard to regain my freedom out in society where I belong, and I will continue to struggle until I get what I'm after or die trying.

I also have been having a hard time in Court trying to gain access to a copy of my trial transcript, which I

have tried to do on several occasions, but they always give me the run-around about it. It's the same thing when I filed several times for an appeal in my case. My first sentence was death by electrocution, but my case was ordered (?) appealed, and they changed it to life without parole, and ever since I have still been struggling to gain my freedom. So, Brothers and Sisters, I need your support to help me regain my freedom. Do whatever you can!

— *Elzra Wiggerfall, Jr.*

*"Kamau" Shabazz*

*Holman Prison, Alabama*

P.S.: Put this in with the rest of my missive: I realized that I was sentenced to life without parole and that I was to

come face to face with the vicious inside world. For all that I have heard taking place within this prison here. Since I was only 17 years old to the time I arrived in prison it made me the subject of all that I had heard in the past on how youngsters had to go through constant fighting to keep their manhood, as well as staying alive. I couldn't avoid the facts that dudes here tried to turn me out. It is inevitable to every Black youngster in here. It is a common expectation that each one of us has to look forward to. We must fight or die in the process of defending ourselves — kill, and be charged with murder in the first degree or become a homosexual, which I wasn't about to become. I have killed no one. I hope I never will.

#### IN SEARCH OF A SHORT POEM FOR MY GRANDMOTHER

Last time I left you pulled your chair  
before the window glass to wait until  
the bus had passed from view. All evening  
I have moved from memory to photograph  
searching the riddle of pain to find  
an answer to the stringent indignities  
you knew. I've tried to count your losses  
as if a sheer sum could buy you time  
for life to recompense all that it extracted.  
I've tried to celebrate the calm with which  
you slowed the late bad news that sped  
across the waiting room. "How d'you spell that?"  
you said. No word brave enough will come.  
A snapshot of you at five, in soft batiste,  
has come alive within my hand:  
in the side yard, by the oleander bush,  
you've been surprised at tears, your cheek is smudged,  
a ribbon loosed; the amateur's flash has fixed  
the shape to come of small outcries unheard,  
scattered like a flush of birds from a bruised tree.  
I cannot phrase an answer to the raveling  
of your days. Here, from the ironwood chair,  
I offer your name to the keep of anonymous air;  
I dream you abroad in the night's vast maze,  
pressed against the membrane of the world,  
mouth open to these syllables of praise.

— *Louise Hardeman*

*Louisville, Georgia*

Mance Lipscomb (1895-1976): Texas guitarist, songster, farmer and bluesman. Listed in Who's Who In America. Born by the Navasot River in an arm of the Brazos bottoms 75 miles northwest of Houston. Planted, plowed, chopped and picked cotton from 1906 to 1956. Played Saturday Night Suppers in the Brazos bottoms from 1912 to 1956, where he developed the knack for playing 18 hours straight and a repertoire of 350 songs spanning two centuries.

"Discovered" and recorded by Arhoolie Records in 1960. Played his first folk festival at Berkeley in 1961, before an audience of 41,000.

Went on to play most of the major folk and blues festivals from 1961 to 1973, including Berkeley, Newport, Monterey, Ann Arbor, Miami, Los Angeles and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington, DC. Played in most of the 48 continental states and Canada.

Recorded eight-and-a-half albums and appears on several blues anthologies. Starred in the biographical movie "A Well-Spent Life," by Les Blank and Skip Gerson.

Some musicians Mance Lipscomb learned from: Blind Lemon Jefferson and Blind Willy Johnson.

Some musicians who learned from Mance Lipscomb: Taj Mahal, Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin, Frank Sinatra, and Fiddlin' Mary Egan of Greezy Wheels.

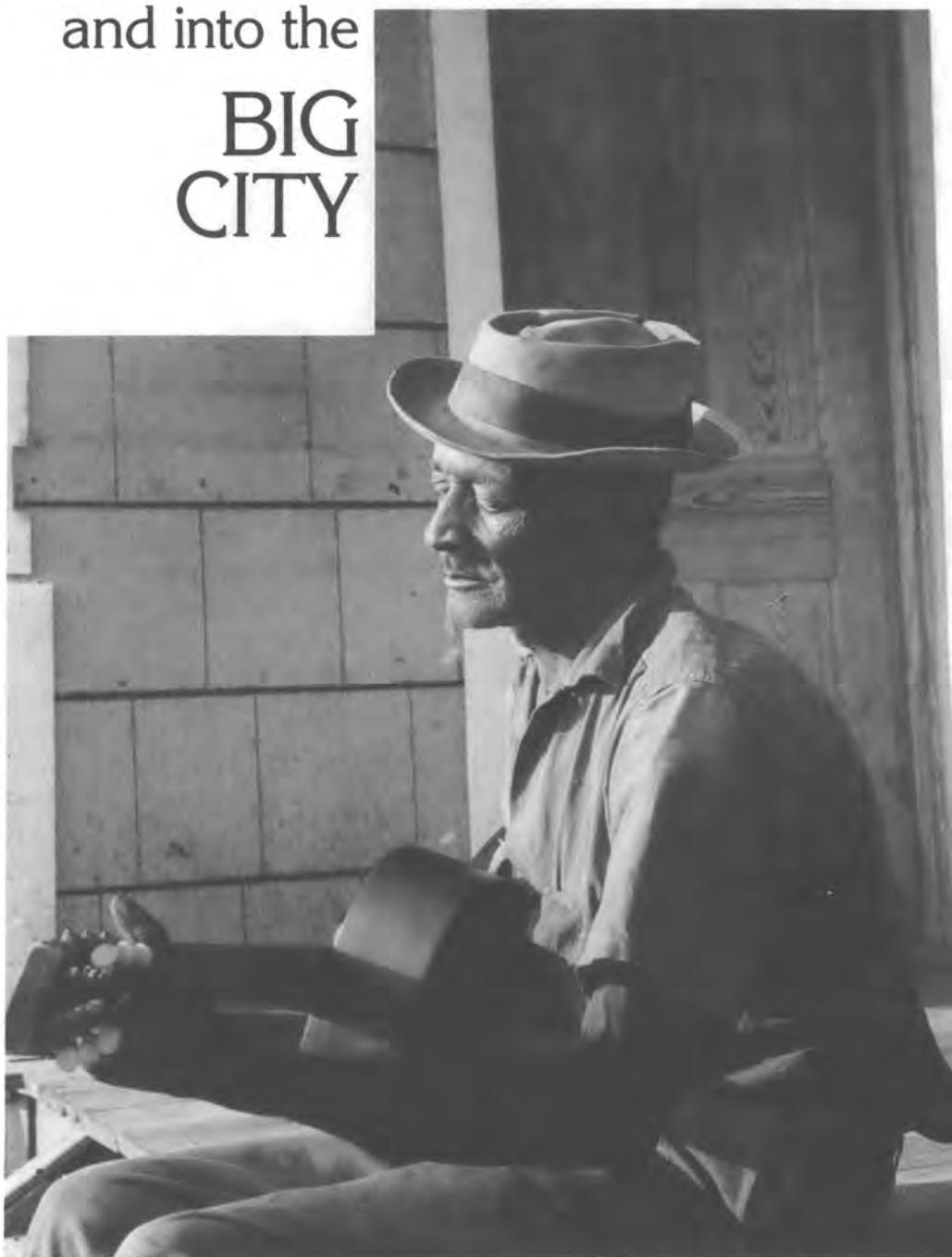
The following story tells why and how Mance Lipscomb brought his family to Houston in 1956, and what he found there. It is his unique story, while also being representative of the great rural migration of the '50s into the Southern urban centers. It is excerpted from the forthcoming autobiography, *I Say Me For A Parable*, by Mance Lipscomb and A. Glenn Myers, and edited by Don Gardner. The biography is an oral history in Mance's own words and in his own rhythm and musicality of saying things. In his speech, one can detect the counterpoint, accent and syncopation of the blues, its roots, and thus the roots of much of modern music. Especially if read aloud, one will sense and hear these same echoes and rhythmic reflections in the following excerpt.

Ed Baudoux

## out of the **BOTTOMS**

and into the

# BIG CITY



Mance Lipscomb on his front porch in Houston, 1960.

by Mance Lipscomb  
and A. Glenn Myers, edited by Don Gardner

*Editor's note: The spelling used in this article is not based on a strict phonetic system, but is merely intended to reflect the characteristic accent and rhythm of Mr. Lipscomb's speech. The authors acknowledge that no one speaks English exactly as it is ritt'n. The particularly musical quality of this story-teller's language, however, seemed to justify an attempt to capture the spoken word in writing.*



This house is typical of the neighborhood in Navasota where Mance and Elanora Lipscomb lived prior to 1960.

**S**o I had it hard all my days. Farmin, plowin. Cuttin and choppin an thangs. Playin them Saturday Night Suppers for fifty-nine years. But don't never give up. A quitter loses. Just keep on. Doin the right thang. I lived so hard, til I cried. An I studied, an I sweated an give out. Tryin to make a increase. I buried my mother, my daddy, my sister's kids. Still I was behind.

See, I was born a slave an didn know it. My daddy was eight years old when slavery time declared freedom. An the white people didn change it then. I call myself a slave until I got somewhere long about forty-five years of age. I had da go by the landowner's word. Do what he said da git a home to stay in. We didn know nowhere da go. Now I say me for a parable, cause if I put you in this house an fasten you up, you caint git out. Well we wadn fastened up in the house but we was

fastened up on their fawms. Not only me: all the colored folks.

Plantations was a big fawm. A plantation wouldn specify bein a plantation unless you had about twenty families on your place. They git fifty or maybe sixty hands on their place, an put old piece a houses up there some way. They furnish you feed an a team: You have to work their team. An their team pays for half a the money out that crop. An then they take half a the crop an pay for yo indebtments: You paid for your groceries, what clothes you wore, doctor bills, shoes — or whatever you got — outa yo half.

Sometime we come ta town, git what we need at a store. An sometime they haul em out from town in a wagon an put em in a commissary. Wouldn call it a store. It would stay lockt up til Saturday. You come up to the commissary an they issue your

food out. Enter it on a book an you paid the end a the year.

How you gonna do any better when all the colored folks was doin the same thang? An they thought they was gittin somewhere. We was hemmed up. When I make my crop he would buy it. You couldn sell it. An he just give you what he want for it. Figgered it out his own way, you see. I jus kep acomin out in debt.

One year I cleared five hunud dollas. An he wanta keep my money an give it to me if I needed it, like he wanted da give it ta me.

I told im "I thought you say I done paid you? An when I pay you: the money you owe me is my money. Not you keep it."

Say "Oh you gonna throw it away."

I say "Well if I do it's mine."

See after I done, made five hunud dollas, an cleared an paid the indebtments, to him what I owed him, was I out a debt? An that five hunud dollas was mine in the clear. But he didn want me ta have it, unless he give it ta me like he wanta. An keep me in debt.

An that was the man I workt under when I run off an slipt off, an went to Houston. An I was eleven years, an never did see daylight. No mown when daylight come. Here me up on the Bluffs in Washington County, an he had him a overseer — a strawboss — lived down in old Washington. Bossman stayed up in Dallas, didn hawdly come down here. What you call a absent bossman. He an his brothers got that

gin up there on the Bluffs.

An I never could pay up my indebtedments. Every year they run up higher an higher. See what he done: When I went ta his place I had leven head a cows an foe mules. An he bought a old tracta an brought it down here an sold it ta me for \$500. He made me sell the mules an buy the tractor. An tuck mortgage on my cows.

He was allowin me \$24 a month. An I git that once a month. But I would skip around an hunt, an pick up pecans, tryin to make my income ta take care a myself an Elnora, an all them kids. An I was give out. Man I done so much hard work for them it's apitiful. I dont see why I'm livin today.

In fifty-six I say "You know, it's time for me to make a change. This man takin everythang I can inhurit — my crops — an they bring me out in debt mow and mow every year. I believe I'm gonna move up." Talkin to myself.

One night I laid down, I just rolled an my wife woke up an says, "You sick?"

I say "I'm sick inside."

She said "What? Inside?"

I said "I'm studyin my way out."

Say "What you talkin bout, yo way out?"

Them days, when you go off an leave a man on a fawm: owed him a nickel, they would try to come git you. Make you come back. An if you didn come back — cording to where you was — he'd whup you an make you come back.

Now my daddy was a sensible man, but he wadn no good provider. But I listened, took what he said: "If you caint pay a man in the full, well you pay him in distance." You know what distance means? You can walk out of it. Slip out of it.

I went, an studied that night, an that whole week. I didn eat much. I say "I'm tired a this man takin my earnins, an treatin me just like I'm a chile. I'm gonna move."

My wife say, "That man goin come an git you."

An I say, "That's what he'll have to do."

That Sunday, I wrote my grandboy a letter. See I raised a grandboy went to Houston an had a job. I say, "Get a trailer, an come up here next Sunday

evenin befoe night, an load my thangs up, an move me to Houston. Cause I'm tired a bein, you know, doin what I'm doin an treated like I am."

An so, I played every Satidday night an Sunday for a beer joint for a dollah, or whatever I could git outa it. An I was settin there, when somebody said "Who is that comin yonder with a trailer?"

I say "I don know." When he got closer to me, the mow I could reelize who it was. Cause he had a '55 Shivolay truck. Got a trailer. I didn want the people to know what the boy was comin up there after cause the talk gits out.

I said "Ohh, that's my boy Sonny Boy. You know what he huntin?" I throwed em off, I say "He huntin some cone. Any a y'all got any corn around here to sell?"

They say "No, we ain't got none to sell."

I say "Well that's what he huntin." But he's huntin me. See, I knowed nobody didn have any cone cause it wadn the time a year fur it.

So, he liked to drink beer an he stopt there. Come in say "Aw, here's Daddy." They all called me Daddy. That was my sister's boy, Louis Coleman.

I say "Well, you wanta go up to the house?"

He say "I . . ."

"Wait a minute. Dont say 'I' nothin. Just say you wanta go up to the house. You say sumpm I don want you to say." An I pulled him on outa there, foe he let sumpm slip out.

Sundown come, we drove on up to my house. My thangs in there ready. My wife had packt up what she could: skillett an lids an dishes. Had over a hunud chickens. Had about 35 hogs. An I give some a them away an staked out what was left with Jude, that's my son's wife. An I said "Now when you sell em you give me some a the money. I'm gone."

I had few people I could trust. I had some hogs weighed two or three hunud pounds. Two, three sows are goin find pigs. I killed about fifteen hens it was kinda cool you know, night: carried em to Houston put em in the deepfreeze. That's what I lived offa about two weeks, them chickens.

Man I had buckets an pains on the trailer, loaded up just like cotton. Put

them pains an lids an rockers an cains on the trailer an we had thangs wasted all the way from Washinton to Houston. An every time we hit a rough place: a pan or a bucket'd fall off, I said "Keep on." But what we got there with, why we got there with that. I didn stop. Cause I uz runnin off. The Man liable to overtaken me, you know.

An day come: we was settin in Houston. An my grandboy couldn git in the house he rented for us, til day so they could come there an git the key for me. We got there on the truck.

Directly, Sonny Boy come up an sot out there with us. Said "Well, I tell ya: I aint got no place fur y'all to stay here tonight, but your thangs'll be took care a. Aint nobody gonna bother em. I'm gonna carry you over here to some people's house an let y'all lay down."

Mownin come. Open the doe to the house, an we moved the thangs in there, an that where we stayed at. On East Thirty-Eighth Street. In nineteen fifty-six.

In Houston. I didn know one street from another. But I know I done left that fawm. Couldn find no job. There I was: stranded. I had foatteen dollas I never will furgit it, in my pocket. That foatteen dollas didn last over two days. I been buyin little bits an thangs toward them chickens I kilt. Said "Now I got to get me a job somewhere."

So finely, this music is one thang all ways got me by. When I got to Houston, about the first week I got there, colored guy heard me playin. An news gits around.

Say "You know, Lightnin Hopkins around here." He was a famous player in Houston. He had all the places he want to play. Places he didn want to play.

Ohhh, they uz talkin bout "Lightnin Hopkins Lightnin Hopkins." I had seed him two or three times. He didn worry me cause I had sumpm in my fingers for Lightnin. He couldn never play the music I play.

They said, "I want you to play, with Lightnin."

I say "No, you want me to play with Mance. Last night he played with hisself."

Say "Aww, I heard he could beat



you.”

I say “Well, he’s got sumpm to do an I got sumpm to do. He’s doin his number, I do mine.”

Lightnin didn wanta mix up with me, he saw me play in Galveston. Nineteen thirty-eight, first time I seed him down there. I was seein Coon an Pie, my brother an sister. They’s twins, last ones born in the family.

Finely, one night, a fella say “I’ll tell ya whut. I like yo music. I’ll give you ten dollas a night to play at my beer joint.” Oh man, that was a lot of money in them days. That’s mown I ever made in my life, ten dollas a night.

I went there on a Friday night, he

know. An they come up an down, check on thangs.

An the first thang you know I seed two polices, lookin in the doe. I said “Now, sumpm gonna happem here.” An I checkt up playin.

Two polices walkt in. I said “Uh-oh. I’m gonna git arrested here.”

He say “What your name, fella?”

I had to tell em, said “Mance Lipscomb.”

Say “We been listenin at you out there, on the street.”

I said “Listenin at me for what?”

He say “Boy, you play some damn good gittar.”

I say “Show nuff?”

Say “We had to come in there ta

Finely one boy said “Mister, where you come from?”

I say “I come from Navasota.”

Say “We show do like yo music.” That’s one of the band boys.

Othern walkt up an say “Aww, he aint nowhere.” That was one of the band boys criticizin me.

An the othern say, “Man, he aint nowhere. He’s somewhere. We caint touch this man. That’s the reason we aint got nobody over at our place. All the people over here where this man at.”

Another say “You know whut? You done moved in on us, evawhere around in this precinct. We aint got nobody over there. This man done



The Allan Farm, c. 1930-1940. Also known as Tom Moore's Farm, which is the title of a song played by Mance Lipscomb.



Loading cotton at the Allan Farm, c. 1930-1940. Tom Moore is at far right.

say “You can come back Satidday night. Man, you make twenty dollas in two nights.”

Well that’s what I lived outa: twenty dollas, for about six months. My boy come down from Navasota an got a job, an my grandson he already workin there at a fillin station. So they kep me goin, along with that twenty dollas.

Finely old fella playin the fiddle — I was playin for his son had that little beer joint, right on the street — he played some real good fiddle. Old time fiddlin. His name Bill. An he got stuck off on me, playin that guitar behind that fiddle.

An the polices had that beat, you

see how you look. We aint never heard no gittar played like that. We’ll walk that beat, up an down. An evertime we hear you playin a different song. This is our beat: go ahead on an play.”

I said “Thank you. I didn know what was up.”

Said “What’s up: we like to hear you play.”

Oh them people just dug in there, little small place hold about a hunud people. That boy did well: in a week’s time, all them joints round there broke up. Comin down to hear me play. The people had them little bands come over there an some of em like me an some of em hated me, cause I broke their joints up.

drawed all the people over here.”

An the boy what hired me, Milton say “Well, we got thangs goin, aint we? You doin right.”

I played there for him about six months. An his daddy joined in, commenced to rehearsin with me. See that fiddle was sumpm new to em round in Houston. An I would just bass him, backin him up an that fiddle would sound out so good.

The polices was dancin out on the street. Said “Boy, you got sumpm goin here! Where you git them people at?”

Milton said “My daddy playin the fiddle, an Lipscomb is playin the gittah.” I was playin lectric gittah

then. Since about foedy-nine.

Say "Well, you doin good, since you have no fussin an fightin here. Man we caint hardly quit comin up an down this street, listenin at that music."

So, I stayed down in Houston, long about two years. An all the while, they up in Navasota, scratchin round for me, huntin me like a dog hunt a rabbit. He said I owed him five hund dollas, an I dont owed him five cents. See they put that book on ya. An then "There, you done well this year. You may do better next year." That's what I got made to do better. But I was doin worsen every year.

Then I come home — wait a minute, before I come home: this fiddler he was workin at the lumbayard. An he liked me, cause he wanted me ta be with him evy Satidday night.

He said "Boy, I can git you a job." He was a handyman there, been workin there about ten or twelve years. Say "Do you know anything about the grades a lumba?"

I said "No. I don know one piece a lumba from another."

Say "Well I'll learn ya."

I didn know much about no lumba deal, I was just workin tryin to make some money in Houston. So, that's where I got hurt. An I like ta got kilt ta git where I am now. But you know when sumpm gonna happem to ya when it's hurtin ya it's fur ya. Good or bad, I ut my bad bill made me whole, ta git good thangs to happen to me. Cause I was in the hospital with a fractured neckbone, an my awm in a sling.

So any way, first thang I was doin handin up lumba to the truck driver. I was on the ground, an the truck driver was on top a the truck, stackin lumba. An I was just crazy as a cricket.

Truck driver says "Man, hand me this two by foe."

I'd git a two by six or a two by eight.

He say "Put that down! That's not a two by foe!"

I workt myself down, pickin up the wrong pieces a lumba. Three days, I caught on. An they put me as a helper in a carbox, unloadin lumba off a train, up on the truck. I workt there six months. I was thrifty, I was a good man them days, I had plenty strength. I was goin on sixty years of age, then. Makin fifty-eight dollas a week. Man, I

had money then. An all the boys commenced ta likin me, cause they heared me play on Satidday nights an I talk wid em an all.

Six months, it come one Saddy moanin, long about nine o'clock I never will furgit it: three trucks was there. We'd load this truck, an move the other one up. We had two truck-loads a lumba that moanin. Two trucks out an the last load finish up by ten thirty.

An finely, the last truck driver pulled up to the side a the doe, an I was slidin the lumba off a roller dolly to him. He catch the end an whup it round.

The boy say "I done loaded the front end, Lipscomb. Wait a minute. I'm gonna pull the truck up, so I can load the back end."

An I had foe pieces a two-by-foes, one on top a the other one, an I helt it with my hand on the dolly until he moved the truck up. An the end a that lumba, I stopt it inside. But the roller dolly, when he pulled up, was stickin out too fur. The truck hit it, goin by. An knockt that five hund pound dolly down, in the flow. That thang cockt up an all that lumba — foe pieces — flew up the top a the carbox: alllllLLAM! an shot back by me, cut me on the leg an hit me on the awm. Knockt me out the bed a the carbox an fractured my neckbone. Didn break it, but knockt it outa place.

An then the boy what's drivin the truck went on down bout ten steps further, an say "Well, we ready." I could hear him.

An the man what handed some lumba to me, on the flow so I could shoot it out the doe, he heard the truck pull up an that lumba hit the back a that caw: A—llLAM! Now I'm layin there in the flow. Out. Man lookt around an say, "HEY, MAN! COME HERE QUICK! This man in here dead!"

I was dead out but I could hear evathang. But I couldn move. That's the last thang I remember him to say.

They commenced ta gittin under that plank an comin in there to get me. They rusht me to the first-aid place at the lumba cumpny. Wouldn haf ta go ta the hospital unless you was really injured. An I was show nuff injured.

So when I woke up I was layin on the operatin table. I'm layin up there with my leg buckled down, my hands buckled down. I commenced to twistin. An was a lady standin on this side, an one on this side: nurses.

An I opemd my eyes, said "What I'm doin up here? Well, wheresomever I'm at."

An they smiled at me. Feedin me ice, an ice was comin out my mouth fastern you put it in cause: my mouth was closed, I was in a way of out. An they was pushin it in my mouth to keep the fever outa me. An they says "Oh, why you in good hands."

I say "Well — good hands where? What all this water down in my bosom?"

They laught. They knowed I didn have no business knowin where I was cause a patient git scared when they find out they in a critical condition. An they tryin ta keep it hid from me. They did have it hid from me.

Finely they unbuckle them thangs off my awms an legs an I sot up on the table. I said "Can you tell me where I'm at?"

Say "You in the first aid hospital."

I say "Yeah? Well I wanta go home."

So it was a Satidday moanin about twelve o'clock when I got outa that first-aid place. My wife Elnora was sweepin up the house, when we drove in front a there just as nice an quietly. Thank two or three a my friends was with me. An one was drivin. An here my awm was bind up in a sling, an my legs was bind up so you couldn see my leg. An I was cut on the leg an I didn know that.

Myno come to the doe, and I was gittin out the caw: two men was on each side of me my wife says "Ohh, Lawd! Look at my husband! Lord, my husband is hurt!" An she went out the back doe hollerin she couldn stand that.

I said "Aw, I aint hurt." Kids an the folks commence to comin, wanta know what's the matter. She didn come back there in a hour or two.

An direckly she come in the room, an they had put me in the bed. She come to the door an lookt at me. Say "How you feelin?"

An I told her "I'm all right."

When the news got over Houston, a whole lot a people was there, day an night. I was well cared fur. See I had a

good reputation all my life. I had mow friends, in Houston might near I did in Navasota where I was raised. Cause I carried myself that way.

So about three or foe days, I commenced to movin round in the house, I thought I was all right. I went to the doctor at the first-aid place, an they checkt me. Say "Yeah, you all right. You kin go back to

He said "How'd you git hurt?"  
I tole im.  
He say "You been back on the job?"

I said "No. They give me a certain limit a time to come back."

An he tole me said "Man, you don't know what you can do."

I said "What you talkin about?"  
Say "Yo awm's in a sling. You

I tuck him at his word. I said "Okay."  
"Monday I'll be on my way down Houston, see my lawya, an I kin put yo complaint in, an he'll vouch fur ya da git you some money outa it."  
I said "Well I ain't got no money to pay no lawya."  
He say "You don't need no money."  
So he carried me up there that



Mance Lipscomb on his front porch in Houston, c. 1972.



Mance and Elanora Lipscomb in the living room of their Houston home, c. 1972.

work, in about a week."

Well I wanted my job cause I was makin seventy-five dollas a week! But they give me half a my wages to live on, you know. So I left the first-aid place — I could walk a little. An I walkt down on the streets to catch me a way home. Stood on the kohna.

After while a stranger come by, pulled to the side. Colored fella. Say "What's yo name?"

I tole im.

crippled in your leg. Ef you got hurt on the job, an then went back — I works for a lawya. I kin git you some money outa that hurt."

I say "How'm I gonna git any money outa this?" I was green, ya know.

He say "You let me take you to my lawya. An this case you got: if you aint been back on the job, you kin show git some good money outa that. Dont you go back."

Monday mownin. An his lawya was upstairs. We went up on the elevator. I didn know where he was carryin me. Houston's too big for me.

Finely here his lawya settin up there in a chair with his foot up on the table an his legs crosst. I said "This man's fixin ta shoot pool. This idn no lawya." Thats what I had in mind.

An the colored fella knockt on the doe. He was workin fur that lawya. Git them clients to come in.

"Come in! Come in!" Lawya looks at me, an tuck his foot down off the table. "Oh. You got a good patient here." Talkin bout me. Say "Yeah, well, what's his name! Set down! Set down!"

I saddown, tole him my name.

He said "Yeah. You's a good fella. You a whole lot bettern these fellas what I been takin cases, just perjured an makin me lie an do thangs."

He lookt at me and said "When did

He say "Listen: I dont need no money. I got a case win. An if you need any money, tell me now an I'll loan you some money."

I didn say nothin.

So he told me ta go to a real hospital, so they could verify I was hurt. I stayed there, three weeks. Then that made that lawya had a strong case.

An about two weeks after that, the cumpny lawya come. To take a check-

one another. One of em told my lawya say "You got this boy Lipscomb trained. You gonna make a lawya outa him."

An he said "Well, I hope so. But I aint gonna let you doublecross im."

So I stayed about two months before I heard from im again. An I thought probly they was gonna come across in two weeks. Well, they first offer you a settlement. An if you take that bid, they pay you off.



Bill Records

you get hurt?"

I said "I got hurt, on July the seventh. Ten thirty. On a Saturday."

He never stopt writin. "M-hm. So you aint been back on the job?"

"No."

An askt me a few mow questions, he wrote em down. An I give all those thangs straightened out. That was nineteen fifty-seven.

Said, "Well, if I take the case: fur a certain percentage."

I say, "Well lawya I dont have any money."

up on me. An had ta go through coat with my lawya an the cumpny's lawyas.

It's two lawyas: one is askin you one question one is askin you another. Cross-examine ya. That's confusion, you see. No it don't confuse me cause, I'm ware a them thangs. People try you out. I been tried out many cases. They tried me a lot a times ta double-cross me.

So my lawya an them got it all straightened out, an they laught it off you know, an drankin coffee. Guyin

But that lawya set out to git something. He called me says "Lipscomb. I got a offer for seven hund dollas on your case. But, I wont take that. I tole em 'Go an come again.' He'll come back. They got three times to come here, an if they dont come to my requirements, then I kin sue em. They aint gonna stand no suein. It a big cumpny, an got good lawyas. They tryin you out, gonna see what would you accept."

I said "Well, you the lawya. I'm just the patient."

So they stayed away a certain length of time, an offered him eighteen hunud fur it.

He said "I hear you in this ear but I dont hear you in the other ear. I want to hear you in both ears." So when he got to hearin in both ears that was the third time.

About six months: I was broke. But I tried to hang on, with my grandkids an thangs an let them took care a me. Well it was purty well gittin ready

money. A hunud dollas wont go ten minutes with ya."

I say "Yeah, but I aint got the hunud. I'll take anything."

He laught say, "Lipscomb, why dont you git you foe or five hunud dollas?"

I say "Oh, no man! I dont git no foe or five hunud dollas, in yo debt."

He say "Thats yo money I'm payin you."

I said "Well, I aint got no payment yet."

He said "But you got a case. You just as good as got some money. Christmas, man! Git you some money."

Well I didnt see what he was feelin at. See he had a win case an I didnt know it. I coulda got a thousand dollas, good as I did the hunud.

He said, "Why dont you take a hunud an fifty, anyhow? For Christmas?" An he fooled around an made me take a hunud an fifty, stid of a hunud. An that last me up until I went back to Navasota.

Cause I done tuck the lawya's advice an come back here to Navasota, somewhere in August. They sunt me word of a man had some tractors wantin me to cut the highway. They knowed I could drive tractors purty briefly.

I come up here makin a dolla an a quota a day an, dolla an a half a day an I rose up to five dollas a day an I was gittin somewhere. I'm gittin rich five dollas a day.

An I kep aworkin on that highway. Said "Well, I just as well furgit about that lawya." Cause that's all I got outa that lawya, for about a year. I lived on that hunud an fifty, til I went to work on the highway. But you know I all ways had some place to play on Satidday night, little or much. An some time I lived pretty good outa it: seven dollas a nite.

So finely one Friday evenin, when I come offa work a man come down there on a bicycle with a telegram. An it said "A lawya something wants you." I forget his name. An say, "Come at once."

I say "Now I wonder what he want in a year's time? I'd go through a motion in talkin to the other lawyas, an I'm tired a that. I aint gittin nothin outa it."

But I took his advice. An the next mownin, I cot the seven o'clock bus,

an went on down to Houston.

An went upstairs. He settin at his table, lookin out the winda. An I knockt on the doe.

He say "Come in!"

I opemd the doe, he turned around, said "Well doggone! Here's old Mance! Boy, I'd a flew down here if I'd a been you."

I said "How'm I fly down here? I aint no bird."

He said "Git you a airplane."

"Nooo, man I aint comin up here ona a airplane. I comin ta see what you want."

Had a big ole envelope layin up on the table. He said "Well, here's a present for you. Open that envelope."

An I lookt over it. Opened it an that check was, thirty-five hunud an five dollas in there. Made out in my name.

An I went over to the bank an casht it an he counted up his money: I owed him that hunud an fifty dolla indebtment, an owed him for that lawya fee, an the hospital fee. That checkt me down from thuddy-five hunud to seventeen hunud an fifty dollas.

He didnt do no purdy good job, he done a good un: thuddy-five hunud dollas! I appreciate what he done. He done sumpm for me that I couldn do for myself. An then I didnt git all the money. But, it hadn been for him, bein a good lawya, an knowed his grounds, I wouldn a got nothin. See?

An that caused me to be right at the house I'm at now. I bought it all. Free an clear. I been livin there somewhere long about, since sixty in the fall I believe. So, you never know whats gonna happen to ya. But I can tell you sumpm: you just try da live right. One a these days a little right come comin to ya. □

*A. Glenn Myers, a native Texan, folk musician and Vietnam veteran, met Mance Lipscomb in 1972 at a folk festival. He committed himself to being Lipscomb's biographer in 1973, and lived in Mance's homelands for five years. Since 1977, he has devoted all his efforts to the Lipscomb biography, with the aid of a grant channelled through the Texas State Historical Association.*

for Christmas.

An I had it to telephone my lawya I said, "I need a little money. I'm behind in the rent. An I dont have a job."

He said "I tole you you could git some money the first day you come here."

I said "Yeah, I done without it until now but, I need a little Christmas money."

He say "How much you need?"

I say "Oh, about a hunud dollas."

He say "Oh man, that aint no



Bill Records

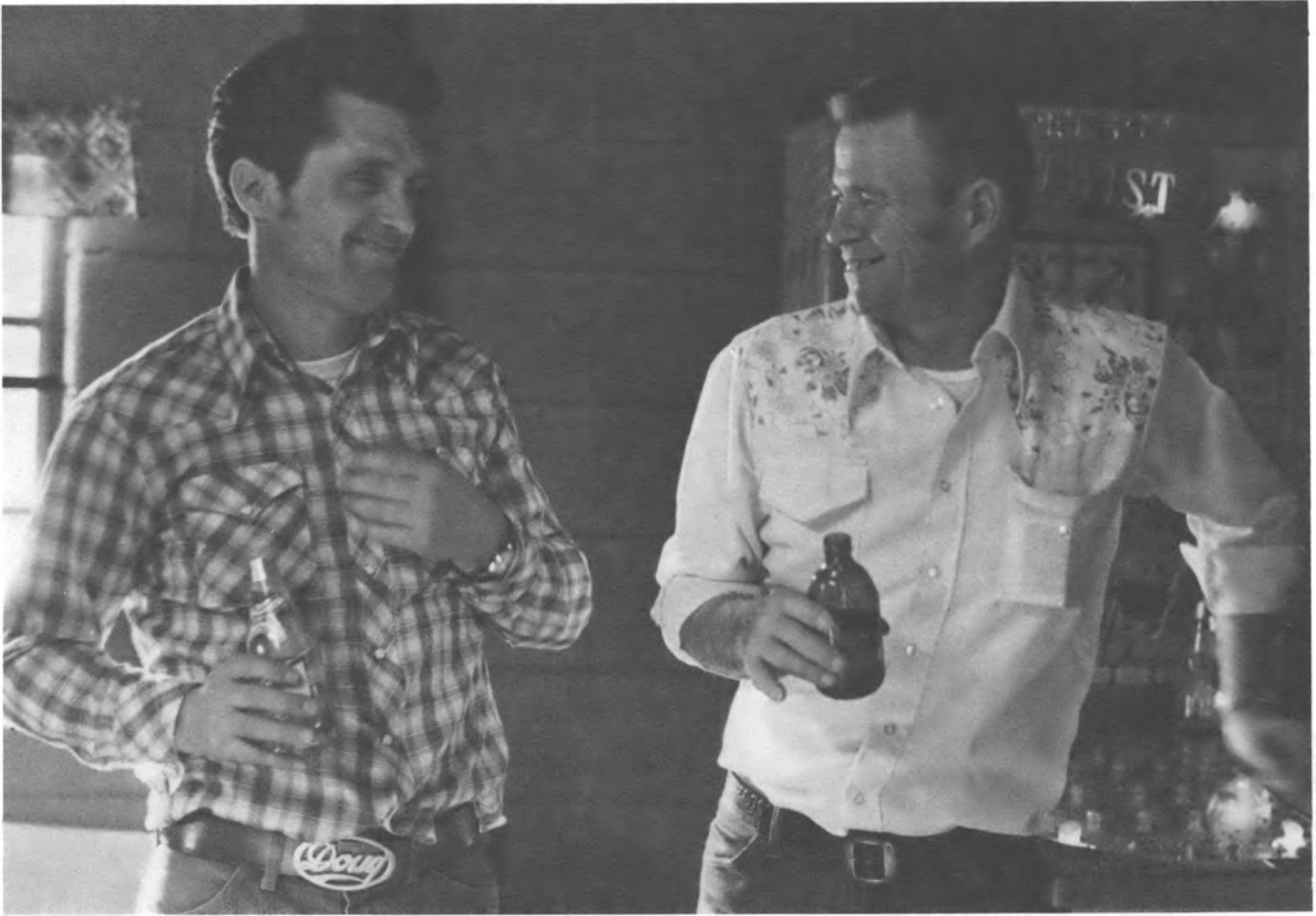


# RELATIONS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BILL BAMBERGER

These photographs come from Bill Bamberger's continuing documentation of a Southern farming community, which is funded partially by the St. Anthony Education Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.







A mile down the road, within walking distance of the Mount Carmel Church, I stop to talk to an old man who is raking leaves into a burning pile. The smoke is what stops me. What a wonderful photograph it will make. But R.A. Walters has never been photographed and never will be. He refuses to let anyone take his picture on account of his glass eye. He will not tell me how he lost his eye; he says it doesn't matter.

I ask him about the community and he says, "Most everyone gets along here. They can't afford not to cause they live so close together. But some people are far away even though they live like neighbors. Being walking distance don't always make a difference." Walking is important to Walters. The first thing he remembers is walking — walking to see his girlfriend when he lived in Georgia. He was 13 years old and she was a couple of years younger. He says he used to walk miles to see her. "You see distance don't matter if you want to be close together." They would sneak away in the barn when he visited her. They would tell each other private things. One day she told him that she was through "men . . . , mena . . ." He asks me for help.

"Menstruation."

"Yeah, and she didn't want me to touch her you know. She asked me to walk home. Next time I saw her it was in a car. We didn't own one. I always walked to see her. But my

cousin went to pick her up. We were in the back seat. I put my arm around her like this. And then she picked up my hand and put it right back where she said it belonged. On my lap. I'll never forget that; I know I'll never forget."

We stand together and watch the rake as it continually turns the leaves over. The fire smolders and flames, smolders and flames.

"I left after that," he says.

"You moved to North Carolina?"

"And then I walked some more. I walked around Europe. Now I walk around Bahama. When I was younger I used to get confused. I was always a little confused. I used to think about the moon and wanted to go there. Not really, but you know like that astrology stuff, I knew like the moon when things was right. That little, beautiful girl was right. I think about her."

"Where is she now?"

"In Georgia."

"You could drive there."

"No, I'd walk, but it's too far away."

I leave R.A. Walters as I found him, standing by the burning leaves. I will not return to his house to talk with him. I know that I will not be welcome again. He has said too much. □







John Spragens

## A FAMILY FARMER'S CALENDAR

# from can 'til can't



photos by John Spragens

Tom Mitchell

It is the winter season slack time, and there's not much work on the Mitchell farm but feeding the cows and tending to odd jobs in the shop. Two dozen people from farming families here in Navarro County, Texas, have taken advantage of the slowdown in farm work to join the 1979 farm protest in Washington. Three tractors from the county drive the whole way in the American Agricultural Movement tractorcade. Though Tom Mitchell is not among them, he is following the protest — and the results it achieves — with more than casual interest. He has been active in AAM, too, in his own ways.

Like others in the movement, Tom joined because his farm was being caught in the crunch of costs rising faster than income. His farm lost \$8,000 in 1975. The next year it was \$20,000. In 1976 and 1977 he had to refinance some of the family land which was almost paid off. This allowed him to catch up on some of the equipment payments the bank had been carrying for him. But it was a painful sacrifice. Most of the land he farms is owned by landlords, and the bank holds notes on most of the farm's equipment. That family land was a source of pride. It was also the most tangible fruit of his parents' long years on the farm.

## january

*Keeping the cattle fed is the major accomplishment of the month. There are four small herds — 79 "momma cows" and four bulls in all — on pastures in four different directions from the tiny East Texas community of Barry. Tom checks up on his stock from time to time, but leaves most of the hay-hauling to the two full-time hands who work through the winter. It's an every day of the week job, but the work is usually done before the morning is over. A junior college student from nearby Corsicana who works for Tom during the summer comes out to the farm every so often to keep in touch and help out with the work. Pay, feed, repairs and fuel for the month cost \$5,202. There is no income.*

## february

*The sodden weather continues, and getting hay, straw and cotton seed to the cattle remains the major chore. There is also shop work, getting equipment ready for the planting, which should start in March. Two tractors go to Corsicana for repairs. The operating loan of \$72,000 comes in, allowing Tom to make the annual payment of \$1,115 on the mortgaged family land and pay off an \$8,000 fertilizer bill. In all, the expenses come*

to \$15,217. There is no income. The farm is running \$20,419 in the hole.

Like a growing number of younger farmers, Tom did not have to be in the fields. He chose to. With a BS in education and a master's degree in biology, Tom had carved out a successful teaching career — 12 years in all at high school and college level. "I enjoyed teaching and still miss teaching, but I began to want to be my own boss," he recalls. His father, George Mitchell, was about to retire from the farm started by his grandfather a century before, so in 1974 "with about \$5,000 and a pick-up truck," at the age of 35, Tom went back to the farm.

Even when Tom was a boy, a "family farm" was not something one family could handle on its own. But beginning with the years just after World War II, the face of farming has changed almost beyond recognition. The hand labor which dominated the farm in his boyhood days gave way to increasingly sophisticated machines.

"I can almost see my father get up at four in the morning and go into Corsicana to pick up blacks to hoe the cotton," he recalls. "He would make the east side, picking them up at their houses. They would stop at Lee's Grocery, and he would loan the hands enough change to buy summer sausage and a pack of crackers for lunch and bring them out to the farm to go to work."

About 30 hands, hired on a day labor basis at cotton chopping time, hoed the weeds out by hand. This work was done early in the cotton cycle, and a smaller crew was brought out later for some clean-up weeding. All 30 were needed again when it came time to pick the cotton. Tom's own work included chopping cotton, scooping feed and throwing bales of hay on and off trucks. He remembers driving a tractor through the cornfields at the age of seven or eight while farm hands pulled corn and tossed the ears into the trailer behind him. "One of the hands had to put in the clutch," he recalls. "I couldn't reach the brakes; I could only steer it up and down the row." He drew water by hand from a well to fill two 30-gallon water flasks they took to the fields for the hands to drink from during the cotton-picking season. And he babysat for the small fry who came to the fields with their mothers.

The family farm back then — land worked by his father and his grandfather both — never added up to more than 250 acres, and cotton was about the only cash crop. Now Tom and his father (when a farmer says "retired," it always has quotation marks around it) work 1,550 acres. 1,150 acres of crop land are divided among cotton, grain sorghum and wheat. The rest of the land is pasture, hay meadows and waterways.



It seems paradoxical to see someone like Tom — drawn back to the farm in a search for independence — linking himself with other farmers in a movement like AAM. But the very existence of AAM is a paradox. Virtually all the farmers in it are as independent-minded as Tom. Some are older, some younger; some are firebrands pushing for direct action, others quiet like Tom. Some see farming as a way of life; others see it merely as one way of several that they can make a living. All have a sense that the family farm, even in its modern-day mechanized incarnation, is in danger.

"For years and years farmers were a most individual kind of person," Tom says. "But in the last two or three years a large number of farmers have discovered that they can no longer remain independent. If we're going to continue to exist, we're going to have to get together. If you consider a world of labor unions demanding their wages, if you consider we're living in a world where large corporations are paying lobbyists for legislation oriented in their direction, then independent, individualistic farmers must realize they have to get together to accomplish the necessary goals in the agricultural world."

*Henry "Pie" Davis takes the wheel of the tractor and trundles out to the fields. After years of practice he makes the intricate planting maneuvers look simple. The throttle never moves. Pie shifts the gears, touches the hydraulic controls, mashes the right brake pedal to the floorboard and spins*



*the steering wheel. The huge tractor pivots on the motionless inside set of twin rear wheels; the plow quickly lowers again into the moist but crumbly soil; the blades bite in, turning another ribbon of earth. The wheat in this field was stunted by a herbicide used to keep grass out of last year's sorghum, and Tom has decided to plow under about 100 acres.*

*This year Mitchell will set up test plots to see whether the Miloguard – a pre-emergent herbicide designed to keep grass out of grain sorghum fields – can be used in lower doses. On some plots he will try a post-emergent herbicide, too.*

*Those experiments will help Mitchell plan for future crops, but for this year there's nothing to do but plow the stunted wheat under and prepare the fields for cotton.*

*The weather allows them about seven days work in the fields.*

*They are able to "top dress" all the wheat – about 230 acres – with ammonium nitrate fertilizer. They have to make three trips across the land they are changing from wheat to cotton to get it ready for planting.*

## march

*Rains keep Tom and his crew on edge most of the month. Planting should have started by the tenth, but the fields remain too wet all through March. There are enough dry days to get fertilizer spread*

*in the wheat fields. The cattle are wormed, treated for ear ticks and sprayed for lice. The calves are ear-clipped for identification and vaccinated against black leg. And the bull calves are castrated; steers gain weight faster than bulls. The month's expenses total \$4,815. There is still no income, so Tom's farm is \$25,234 in the red.*

## april

*It was touch and go, jockeying with the persistent rains, but Tom Mitchell got all his milo seed in the ground this month.*

*A week and a half ago Tom was on the tractor himself, spelling his hands while they went for lunch, 311 acres of planted grain sorghum behind them. And the rains returned.*

*"I planted the last three acres at seven miles an hour with the windshield wipers going," he says. "That was the fastest planting I've ever done. Some people may wonder what we need windshield wipers on a tractor for. You can tell them about that."*

*Not all the farm's tractors have wipers. Most don't even have cabs. But the newest, fanciest, largest tractor is the one which does the planting. It can carry an eight-row cultivator on the front and the planting attachment behind, doing two jobs at once. There were only nine days this month when the fields were dry enough to work. On the busiest of those days, four tractors were running at*



once, spraying pastures for weeds, fertilizing milo fields with anhydrous ammonia, planting the milo, and rolling the earth over the seeds to hold in the moisture.

Even Tom's "retired" father, George Mitchell, was in the fields, on that final tractor, rolling the fields. Tom was supervising and picking up the loose ends.

There is no way Tom can keep up with all these chores without his trusty pickup, but the pickup gave up this month. The camshaft wore out. The new pickup adds \$7,000 to April's expenses, which total \$19,670. The year's first income flows in, from the sale of 28 calves and a few bales of hay. It adds up to \$11,340. The farm ends the month \$33,564 in the red.

The longer Tom stays with the farm, the easier he can remember things he needs to know when he is on the run. The reason he can tell you that last year he spent \$5.63 per hour of field time, though, is the records he keeps.

These records begin with the small pocket notebook Tom carries with him to record tasks to be done and field notes to be transferred to the thick ledgers waiting at home.

There, he charts the inputs — seed types, type and amount of fertilizer, chemical applications — and the yield.

After a period of years, to give time for weather variations to smooth out, he can pull out numbers from these records showing which crops respond

better to fertilizer, or which fields are better for which crops.

Or at the beginning of a year, when he expects perhaps 20 pounds of lint per acre and a price of maybe 53 cents a pound for cotton, he can review the costs of planting the crop and harvesting it, and see whether it will pay.

"This is the ultimate to record-keeping," Tom says, "knowing that break-even point."

Some things changed for the Mitchell family when Tom went back to the farm. For one, they had to give up their garden. That had been Tom's project, and now there is no time. Right when the garden would need the most attention, Tom is working "from can 'til can't" on the farm. The family's schedule changed, too. Tom's wife Zoe Ann laughs as she recalls Tom's wishful thinking when he first went back to the farm: "Tom said, 'I plan to have a schedule where I can get through about five in the afternoon except in the heavy times.' That slipped. Now he keeps hours like his dad did."

Other things have stayed the same. The Mitchells still live in a comfortable ranch-style brick home in Corsicana, county seat of Navarro County. Tom commutes the nine miles to Barry. Zoe Ann still teaches physical education and coaches at Collins Middle School in Corsicana. She leaves the farming to Tom. It doesn't interest her. It is increasingly common for the women in farm families to work. Like Zoe Ann, over 41 percent of these women were part of the labor force in 1977. This com-



At left, three generations of Mitchells at the family home in Barry, Texas; above, Christi Mitchell bolts bracket to tractor.

compares with 29 percent in 1960. Two-thirds of the working women, like Zoe Ann, have jobs outside agriculture, and that percentage is growing.

Christi, now 17, is the only other family member who shares Tom's interest in agriculture, and that is not a direct result of Tom's farming. A school friend got her interested in showing cattle, and she's now active in 4-H and FFA. She's of two minds about what she wants to do in the future. "One of these days I'd like to have a registered herd of Herefords," she says, "but I'd also like to teach." In the spring and summer she sometimes shows up at the farm to help out and learn a little more about the operation — but on her own, not drafted, as Tom was when he was a boy. Even the simplest of the tractor-driving jobs is not so easy as it looks. The tractor starts bucking as Christi tries to turn at the end of the row. "Clutch, girlie, clutch!" Tom shouts, though there is no way his voice can carry all the way across the field. Gradually she's getting the feel for it, but it takes time.

Brian, 13, shares his mother's interest in sports. He pays little attention to the farm. "Sometimes I go out and ride with Daddy on the combine," he says early in the year. "And I like to watch — like when they move cows from field to field. I like to get little sticks and poke the cows in the trailers." Later in the season he shows more interest, and even learns how to pilot the smaller tractors. But Tom is not sure whether Brian is really interested in the farm or whether he is just motivated by the extra pocket money he gets for helping with farm chores.

The uncertain pace of farm work cuts Tom out of family activities more than he might like. "It's hard to say, 'Yes, Christi, I'll take off. I'll be happy to transport calves and equipment to San Antonio

for you,' and be gone the three or four days of the livestock show there," Tom says. The show in San Antonio, right at spring planting time, is one of the three biggest in the state. "So instead you say, 'If I'm not busy and you need some help, feel free to holler at me.'"

Tom tries to be as available as possible, though, especially outside of planting and harvest seasons. "Zody (Zoe Ann) and I both talked along the lines there'd have to be some give and take both ways when I went back to the farm," he says. "I have to realize that she's working and some of the take-the-kids-to-practice, a certain amount of pick-em-up-and-carry-them-to-school are my responsibility as well."

## may

*Most of the cotton is planted. This includes 80 acres which had to be planted a second time. Rains and chill weather conspired to keep the seed from sprouting. The sorghum has grown from tiny seedlings to foot-high plants. Already there are insect problems in many of the sorghum fields, and Tom's father George is spraying insecticide to knock out greenbugs. Fuel allocations are announced, but so far Tom has felt no impact on the farm's fuel supplies. Expenses for the month are \$2,534. There is no income, so the balance for the year now stands at a negative \$36,098.*

## june

*The month is nearly half over and 60 acres of cotton land still need to be planted. There is hay to cut and bale. And the wheat is ready for harvest. Tom, George, three full-time hands and eight part-time and seasonal workers get little rest for nearly three weeks. They are busy 14 hours a day, six days a week, and they barely slow down for Sundays. The wheat crop is good, though — better than 41 bushels an acre. Prices are good, too — as high as \$3.90 per bushel, with an average of \$3.50. Fuel supplies have not been cut, but fuel prices are going up. Total expenses for the month are \$14,774. Income is \$28,349. For the first time the monthly balance is in the black, but for the year expenses are still \$22,523 ahead of income.*

As he runs between jobs, Tom stops at Barry's combination filling station and general store for two Dr Peppers and a pack of cheese crackers. "Days like this we live on these," he says. "I didn't even get a cup of coffee before I came out." Tom sees his role on the farm as that of manager, but it's no desk job. His office, more often than not,

is the front seat of a pickup. And especially during the busy season he does a lot of plain and simple tractor driving. One day in June he reconstructs a list of all the work he did that day. It fills four pages of notebook paper. The jobs include jockeying pickup trucks around so tractor drivers working in four different directions from town can get back to the shop if they have problems, taking care of flats on two tractors, bringing in a load of fertilizer from a nearby town, getting two pickups to a field to jump-start a tractor with a 24-volt electrical system, buying hay seed, checking with the veterinarian who had to do a caesarian section on one of his cows, and item after item of emergency repairs to equipment or transporting hands from one field to another.

At the end of each month, Tom's budget promises him \$600 for his trouble. In good years he will have more from farm profits. In bad years he may go into debt to cover just the \$600. But in either case, his hands have much smaller paychecks. Tom pays the going rate in the area. For a full-time hand, that's about \$200 a month. Some informal fringe benefits soften the stark prospect of trying to provide for a family on that wage. These can include use of one of the farm's pickups, emergency loans, or free rent and utilities in one of the deteriorating houses still standing on the farm. Sometimes a hand is given a share in the profits of part of the operation. The job is nothing someone would do solely for the money, though, and because farm work itself requires an increasing level of mechanical skill, working on a farm is becoming much more like working in a factory.

Many who used to work on farms have gone north to Dallas for jobs. Over the course of the year both of Tom's full-time black workers leave for city jobs. It's not the first time they have left, and as before they return to the farm. In Navarro County, though, being a black farmworker is usually a dead-end street. Pie, who is Tom's main combine operator, is hoping for better.

Pie has worked on the Mitchell farm far longer than any other hand who is still there. He was working for Tom's father George before Tom came back to the farm, and operates the heavy equipment with a deft touch which shows his years of practice. Tom trusts him with equipment and jobs he won't let any of the other hands touch. Pie takes care of basic field repairs, too, though he leaves more complicated work to Tom.

Pie's family comes from neighboring Henderson County. The southeast corner of the county, now half flooded by a huge reservoir, is unusual because of an enclave of black farmers who struggled and saved to buy their own land. Pie's grandfather was among them. When the lake — Lake Palestine — was built, Pie recalls, his grandfather refused to sell

any of his land. "They can flood it, but I'm not going to sell."

Pie's own dreams are rooted in this spirit of proud independence. For years he and his family have been living in one of the old farm houses which dot the countryside. Some area farmers (though not Tom) still refer to them as "nigger houses." Pie's is bigger than most, but the porches are collapsing, the carcass of an abandoned automobile sits in the weed-choked front yard, and the chill of blue northers whistles through the clapboard walls. Rent and utilities are free.

During the course of the year Pie moves. With Tom's help on the paperwork, and a parcel of land his brother has given him, Pie has built a new brick home on an FHA loan.

The new home adds to Pie's needs and hopes. "I told the boss I'd like to have a little more share in things," he says. "I just borrowed \$25,000 for that house, and I don't want to be paying on it for 30 years." Pie does have part interest in one cow, and would like to expand on that. "I might get me some cattle if I can find some land to put them on," he says. Land is not easy to come by, though. And Pie is limited, too, by the fact that he does not particularly like reading and paperwork. They are skills even a small farmer needs these days.

Late in the season Pie and Tom come to an impasse in discussions about Pie's "share in things." He leaves the farm for an unskilled job at the county hospital. It is not the first time he has left, but Tom is not sure whether he will be back or not. In a month, though, he returns. He likes the work of farming — more, at least, than the city jobs he has tried so far. Pie is torn between that preference and the desire to make a better life for himself and his family. It remains to be seen how long he will stick with the farm. But in a time when it is difficult for a college-educated farmer with sales of more than \$100,000 to stay in business, Pie's chances of gaining the kind of independence his grandfather did are slim.

Other workers on the Mitchell farm are students — usually white — from the high school or junior college in Corsicana. They work part-time in the school year and full-time in the summer. For them the work is a stepping stone — a chance to learn the ropes and perhaps get a toe hold in farming for themselves. Steve Ragsdale, for example, already owns several head of cattle. Tom puts him in charge of hay cutting and baling this year — both the work on the Mitchell farm and "custom" work done for other farmers. This gives Steve some management experience and a chance to share in the profits from the custom work.

Besides this year-round labor force, Tom's operation still needs some less-skilled seasonal labor in the summer months for chores like hoeing weeds,





At left, Mexican seasonal workers repair a fence; at right, Henry "Pie" Davis.

mending fences and clearing brush. Some area farmers hire women and children from rural black families for these jobs. Tom, like most, depends on migrants, most of them Mexican citizens. It's not a matter of choosing them over local black workers. There aren't that many local people who still hire on — not for that kind of work, and not for the wages that farmers pay.

Tom finds it hard to imagine what the farm labor force of the future will be. He sees the full-time workers in the area slipping away, and he doesn't blame them for leaving. He knows they can make more in the cities. "I would like to pay better wages, but if I paid what I'd like to pay, I'd be out of business," he says. This skirts the question of whether he could afford to pay more — and whether he would be willing to buck community pressure, which decrees low wages.

It is true, though, that labor costs are the second largest item in Tom's budget. The only thing larger is rent. Tom's farm is pieced together from parcels, none bigger than 240 acres, owned by nine landlords. On the crop land, his rent is a share of the crops — a third or a quarter — and so it varies from season to season.

## july

*This turns out to be the best month of the season for a vacation. The wheat was harvested in June, and the sorghum will not be ready until August. "Evidently we've had our vacation and just didn't notice," Tom laughs. The month has been spent in keep-up and catch-up chores — equipment maintenance, fence repairs, weed cutting and generally keeping tabs on the crops.*

*For a while Tom had three tractors in the shop*

*in Corsicana at once. One had a radiator problem, another needed work on the hydraulic pump, and the third had to have the fuel injector pump fixed.*

*He took the generators off a fourth tractor and one of the grain trucks and sent them in for overhaul. The welding equipment at the farm's shop was enough to take care of a pasture shredder which broke.*

*Now that the seed is in the ground and the plants are up, the cotton and milo crops are, to a certain extent, at the mercies of the rains and the sun. The good, unusual rains put more moisture in the soil and greatly improved this year's crop prospects, Tom says. On the other hand, heavy rains in July increase the chances of root rot in cotton plants. When the root rots, the plant dies. Some of the soggy spots in cotton fields around Barry are already beginning to turn brown.*

*Fuel bills hit hard, adding \$2,360 to the month's total expenses of \$7,813. There is no income, so the balance at the end of the month is \$30,336 in the red.*

## august

*The sorghum harvest begins. It isn't spectacular. Because the planting season was so stretched out, the harvest has to be stretched out, too. In some fields Tom decides to combine the grain before it is completely dry just to get it done and out of the way so the fields can be prepared for next year. This means the grain has a high moisture content, and prices are lower. The check for the sorghum he's sold will not come until September, so the cash flow for the month is all outbound — \$4,999. The deficit now stands at \$35,335.*

"They say a farmer spends 364 days a year producing his crop and one day selling it," Tom says,



“while a buyer spends 365 days of the year buying or looking at the markets.” The big buyers on the agricultural commodity markets may be as far away as Chicago or New York or as close as Fort Worth. They calculate the possible impact of flooding in the Dakotas or droughts in the Soviet Union, then forecast commodity prices a year and more into the future. “The buyer knows a whole lot more about the potential income from our products than we farmers do,” Tom says. “So a great deal of farm marketing becomes taking the product to the buyer and saying, ‘Here, what’ll you give me?’ rather than knowing what our product is really worth.”

It’s a marketing system with so many middlemen that a loaf of bread on the store shelves contains only about three cents worth of wheat. Farmers who want to survive will have to become much more canny in the market, Tom believes. One way — a method which will short-circuit at least a stage or two in the marketing chain — is a new computerized, cooperative marketing system Tom helped bring to the county in 1979. So far it is used only for selling cotton, though it may expand to other crops in the future. It allows a cotton farmer to put his crop on the block before some 47 major world cotton buyers, who handle 90 per-

cent of the cotton produced in the United States.

The system is an indirect result of AAM. “We became united through the agriculture movement and continued with this because we knew we could get something done together,” Tom says. It’s hard to tell this first year what the effects of the new system are, but Tom is optimistic.

AAM was, for the first two years of its existence, a nebulous not-quite organization. There was no formal membership, and people participated at various levels. Meetings were irregular, and depended on what was happening and what needed to be planned for. From his comments Tom seems to be one of the quieter supporters who gave money, attended local meetings and helped with pressure on legislators. Tom and others like him supported the AAM goal of making the public and legislators aware of the plight of the family farmer, but shied away from what Tom calls the “agitative” approach: blocking traffic, for instance.

## september

*The sorghum is all harvested and most of it is sold this month. This is also the time to start preparing the land for next year’s crops, which means Tom*

*has to decide what will go where. To some extent this follows naturally from his three-crop rotation, but not completely. Expenses run \$10,223. Income is \$31,420. For the year Tom is only \$14,138 behind now.*

## october

*In a "normal" year the cotton would have been harvested this month. This year the harvest has just begun by the end of October. Most of the month is taken up with planting wheat for winter grazing, working cattle and getting the cotton strippers and trailers ready. Expenses are \$5,417. Income, from the sale of four old cows, is \$1,655. The year's deficit takes a jump to \$17,900.*

The cotton harvest begins with the application of a chemical which, in the right amounts, dries the leaves without killing the plant stem so the bolls can continue to ripen. This handy chemical is an acid compound of arsenic. It is dangerous. It can cause rashes, swollen eyes and nausea. Tom handles it himself rather than entrusting it to his hands. If he thought there were a safer substitute, he would use it. But Tom is no organic farmer; he believes that at the right times and in the right amounts, chemicals are necessary to modern agriculture. He also uses chemical insecticides and herbicides, not to mention chemical fertilizers – nearly \$20,000 worth of fertilizer for the year. He uses non-chemical controls when he can, though, like the insect-resistant strain of sorghum he tested this year. When herbicides used on last year's sorghum stunt some of this year's wheat, he looks for a better way. "I don't think chemicals will ever take the place of some manual labor," Tom says. "Excess use of chemicals will deter the plant you're trying to propagate. I find you need to back off chemicals and spend some time hoeing."

Although Tom follows some basic soil conservation techniques – he is a leader in the county in introducing wheat into the cotton-sorghum rotation, and he plows most of the stubble from his crops back into the fields – he thinks we have already come close to hydroponic farming, or growing crops in chemical solutions, like laboratory cultures in petri dishes. "From the standpoint of natural productivity, we and our ancestors have pretty much worn out the soil," he says. "My question – and it would lead to gigantic discussion – is should we spend our finances in an attempt to return organic matter to the soil or spend it on chemical fertilizers? I've got a certain amount of money to spend. Where do I put it?" The more crop residues are plowed into the land, the more fertilizer he needs, because some of the nitrogen

fertilizer is used by bacteria during the process of decomposition.

"If our grandfathers could see our farming practices, it would simply be unimaginable to them," Tom says. "If we could look a generation into the future, that would be our first impression – like our grandfathers – to say we've advanced as far as it's possible to advance.

"But in my short farming career I've seen changes unimaginable four or five years ago," he continues, ticking off just a few examples:

- electronic seed counters on planters;
- electronic grain monitors for combines;
- chemical control of weeds;
- twin seeding of grain sorghum to increase production; and
- new markets for farm products, such as selling grain for the manufacture of gasohol.

"There is in the experimental stage right now a machine which moves on tracks through the fields," he says. "It plows, fertilizes, applies weed control, plants and irrigates electronically, all on one pass."

Those 60- to 80-row behemoths will be used for very high intensity vegetable farming – beyond the reach of the family farmer. It will be corporate farms which put them into the fields.

"There will always be a place for the family farmer – the individual – but it will definitely decrease," Tom says. "It will reach the point where the corporations control the agricultural economy, where they control the prices."

## november

*The cotton harvest is nearly finished this month. Tom plows 60 acres under because there isn't enough cotton on the plants to make it worth harvesting. Over all, though, he brings in better than a half bale an acre on 400 acres. It's no record, but it isn't a bad harvest. He also gets the wheat for next year's harvest into the ground and spends a lot of time in the shop, putting plows and brush cutters into shape. Cattle have to be rotated to new pastures, and the sorghum fields are prepared for the next crop.*

"In a 'normal' year – depending on how heavy the dew is and when it dries – it may be one o'clock before we can get the strippers into the fields," Tom says. "This year it's short lunches and the weekends kind of run together."

On a good day there will be three strippers in the fields. Tom drives one, and Steve Ragsdale and Lawrence Moore are on the others. Tom's "retired" father, George Mitchell, shuttles back and forth from the fields to the gin in Barry, hauling the full cotton trailers in and making sure there are empties for each stripper.

*With repairing and re-repairing, the Mitchell farm can count as many as 14 cotton trailers. Sometimes that's enough; sometimes it's not.*

*"Sometimes you reach the point where there are no trailers," Tom says. "They're all on the gin yard. But there's a lot of sharing and 'Loan me trailers you're not using' – a lot of cooperation between people. It makes it kind of nice."*

*The money has not come in from the cotton, so the month's books only show the \$4,290 in expenses. For the year Tom is \$22,190 in the red.*

## december

*"We have made the cycle," Tom says. "We are at the point where just feeding the cattle is the daily routine again. And it's greener on the other side of the fence. So we've done some fence repair – sometimes before and sometimes after they got out."*

*Some of the cattle that got out turned up as far as five miles away by the time they were tracked down.*

*Other cattle had to be moved to winter pastures, herded down the dirt road from horseback; 10 calves went to market; and Tom hired outside help to brand and work some of the calves.*

*It is time for the whole herd – 72 cows and four bulls – to be wormed and de-loused, but that work will have to wait until the schedule allows. And about 20 baby calves need to be castrated and ear-marked.*

*The last of the cotton comes out of the fields, the cotton stalks are cut in next year's milo fields and the land is plowed and bedded into miniature hills and valleys stretching across the landscape. It happens later than it would in a "normal" year, but the books start showing some pluses. Expenses this month are \$30,066, but there is also \$71,755 on the income side of the ledger. For the year Tom comes out \$19,499 ahead.*

If every year turned out like 1979 did for Tom, farming would be a more attractive occupation. Tradition says, though, that a farmer will have one bumper year, then scrape through for the next nine. To evade that risk, American farming has been moving in two directions. On one end are the massive corporate-owned agribusinesses like those in Texas' Rio Grande Valley and in California. Fifty-three percent of the farm market in Texas is now dominated by six percent of the farms.

On the other end are people who hold down a city job and farm as an evening and weekend sideline. Tom and most other members of the American Agriculture Movement teeter somewhere in between. To make a living from their farms, they

need gross sales of \$100,000 or more. Tom's gross sales in 1979 were almost \$140,000.

Though Tom believes that the AAM has made some legislative progress, it clearly has not succeeded in its main goal – having target prices set at 100 percent of parity. (At full parity, sale of a bushel of wheat would give the farmer the same purchasing power it did in 1914.) AAM has settled in for the long haul. It has incorporated and elected formal officers, and it will concentrate on lobbying national and state legislatures.

In the meantime Tom and other family farmers have to find ways to keep going. The main elements for Tom are: (1) more sophisticated management of the farm, which begins with keeping careful books; (2) better understanding of the complex commodities market and an increase in cooperative buying and selling by local groups of farmers; (3) "custom" combining and hay work for extra income; and (4) Zoe Ann's salary. These, plus the simple fact that he wants very much to continue farming, will probably keep Tom going.

"I don't think you can take the esthetic values out of farming," Tom says. "If you're paid a wage, that's fine and good. It gives you a certain amount of assurance. But in my case there's more to living than knowing that if you do a job each day, at the end of the month you'll get paid regularly no matter how you do the job.

"I'll never get rich. Still, I've got a desire to reach a point where what I own is paid off, where I'm not bound by anybody, where I'm independent. But that's off in the future. That gives me a goal to shoot for. The old farmer has got to be the eternal optimist."

Tom doesn't feel sorry for himself and doesn't ask anyone else to. The fact is, for all the uncertainties each year brings, Tom and his family live a pretty comfortable life. But he and other AAM members have raised fundamental questions about the changing structure of American agriculture. It already takes more than four times as much land to have a survival-level farm as it did just a generation ago. The next generation's chances of farming their parents' land are diminishing year by year. If the balance is not tipped back in favor of family farmers, a way of life – one which has been a bedrock of American culture – may in fact vanish. More than that, as one county agricultural agent put it, "When Ford and General Motors own that land, they will say potatoes are 80 cents a pound, and if you want potatoes you will have to pay 80 cents a pound."□

*John Spragens got to know the Mitchell family while working as Farm Editor of the Corsicana Daily Sun. He is currently co-director and Indochina specialist of the Southeast Asia Resource Center in Berkeley, California.*

# UNION BUSTERS

When John Beecher wrote the poem below in 1942, labor organizers risked their lives to bring the message of economic democracy to some towns in the South. Today, brass knuckles have given way to a new breed of professional union busters who carry briefcases and know how to walk along the fine edge of the law. They are masters at using the National Labor Relations Act and its loopholes to cajole workers and tie up their union adversaries in endless court battles. They hide behind sanitized, impersonal claims of “maintaining an environment of open communication between employee and employer” for

## NEWS ITEM

*poem by John Beecher, 1942*

I see in the paper this morning  
where a guy in Gadsden Alabama  
by the name of John House  
who was organizing rubber workers in a lawful union  
against the wishes of the Goodyear Rubber Company  
and the Sheriff of Etowah County  
was given a blood transfusion  
after being beaten with blackjacks  
by five parties unknown.  
The Police Chief is “investigating”  
and I have a pretty good idea of what that will amount to.  
A few years ago they took Sherman Dalrymple  
President of the United Rubber Workers of America  
out of a peaceable union meeting in Gadsden  
and right in front of the Etowah County court house  
before the eyes of hundreds including the Sheriff  
the deputies  
beat him almost to death.  
Plenty more  
who have tried to organize workers in Etowah County  
have had the same thing happen to them.

The Government of the United States  
should know about John House  
but maybe they won't notice the little item  
on the back pages of the Birmingham paper  
because the front pages are all filled up with Hitler  
and how he is threatening democracy  
so I am asking  
the Government of the United States  
to pay a little attention to this.

To defend democracy  
the Government of the United States  
is building a lot of munitions plants around the country  
with the people's money  
because the people want democracy defended  
One of these plants is being built at Gadsden  
in Etowah County Alabama –  
twenty four million dollars worth of plant to be exact –  
twenty four million dollars of the people's money  
going into a county  
which isn't even a part of the United States  
Or is it?

I think it would be a good idea  
for the Government of the United States  
to look into this  
and see if they can't persuade Etowah  
to come back in the Union  
If persuasion won't work they might try a little coercion  
because the laws of the United States ought to be made  
good  
and as luck would have it  
there's a great big army camp at Anniston  
just thirty miles away  
Not long ago I drove through this camp  
and I saw new barracks and tents all over the scenery  
and thousands upon thousands of soldiers  
getting ready to defend democracy  
They looked to me  
as if they could do it  
and they looked to me  
as if they wanted a try at it  
Maybe they could get a little practice over in Etowah  
before they pitch into  
the foreign fascists

the sake of "industrial harmony and mutual prosperity."

Yet for many workers in the South and across America, the tactics employed by this new breed of professionals are as effective and personally threatening as any beating delivered by an Alabama mob. "You still get sheriffs scaring people away during an organizing drive," says Harold McIver, Organization Director of the AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Department, "but the biggest headache now is these damned lawyers and their consultants."

Consider these cases, for example:

- In Laurel, Mississippi, women who earn slightly more than the minimum wage for cutting up five chickens a minute for Sanderson Farms went on strike in February, 1979. "Little Joe" Sanderson, grandson of the poultry firm's founder, allowed only three bathroom breaks a week, docked workers a day's pay if they were six minutes late for work, made them operate cutting machines without safety guards, and arbitrarily transferred, fired or promoted "my people" without regard for seniority. When the mostly black women and their union, the International Chemical Workers, demanded better conditions and wages, Sanderson hired a New Orleans anti-union law firm: Kullman, Lang, Inman and Bee.

The law firm proved especially effective when the resulting strike spread to a petition drive for a union election at Sanderson's nearby Hazlehurst plant. Anti-union letters and

leaflets barraged workers with carefully phrased threats (for example, your plant *may* close, rather than your plant *will* close, if a union wins) that violate the spirit though not the letter of the law. If the union comes in, one pamphlet said, "You could lose some of your present benefits, your pay could be cut, your job could be eliminated. . . ." Another featured a picture of a black worker with the caption, "I'm voting *No* union for my family and myself. I'm voting *No* dues, *No* fines, *No* violence, *NO* UNION!" The union lost the election at Hazlehurst by a vote of 101 to 85; demoralized strikers at Laurel have begun trickling back to work, though a handful continue to hold out. (For other examples of anti-union tactics by attorneys Kullman, Lang, Inman and Bee, see the box below.)

- In Newport News, Virginia, 14,000 black and white workers at the largest shipyard in America finally lost their highly publicized strike in April, 1979. The defeat followed 11 weeks of police harassment and the legal ingenuity of Seyfarth, Shaw, Fairweather and Geraldson — the law firm hired by the shipyard's owner, Tenneco, Inc. By a substantial margin, workers along the two miles of docks, warehouses and fabrication centers voted in January, 1978, to be represented by the United Steel Workers of America (USWA). "We need a union," electrician Ronnie Webs, Jr., told Phil Wilayto of *Southern Changes*. "There's a lot of safety

hazards in that yard. The scaffolding we work on is dangerous. There's no ventilation in the paint areas. We need a grievance procedure."

Blacks, who comprise 40 percent of the workforce, had asked the Steel Workers to help organize Newport News in late 1976 because they felt it would take a big union to tackle the mammoth Tenneco, the nation's nineteenth largest industrial corporation. They were right. Tenneco proved its toughness by adopting a new strategy — the "management" strike — which has become the trademark of its legal advisors. The Chicago-based law firm sells a 300-page "Strike Planning Manual," and its tactics worked like a charm against the Newport News workers. By refusing to recognize the USWA's election victory, the company forced the union to call a strike; lawyers from Seyfarth, Shaw then delayed settlement of the strike with clever legal maneuvers that contested the union's bargaining rights. Disheartened by the prospect of long court delays, workers began crossing the picket line in increasing numbers, up to 30 to 40 percent by the end. USWA president Lloyd McBride finally confessed it might have been a "tactical blunder" to call the strike as a "test for organizing the South." Eyeing the dwindling strike fund and diminished rank-and-file support, he announced that the strike would be "suspended" until the legal battles ended. After a total of 23 months of litigation, the courts ruled invalid Tenneco's refusal to recognize the union's election victory. Finally, on March 31, 1980, the Steel Workers and Tenneco signed their first contract, but the union will have a hard time regenerating the solidarity lost during the Seyfarth, Shaw-inspired "strike."

- In Durham, North Carolina, the liberal Duke University hired a team from Modern Management Methods to snuff out the flames of unionism at the school's huge hospital complex. They were "communications experts," explained Richard Jackson, head of personnel at the Medical Center. "Their function was to educate our supervisors in the best ways to communicate to the employees the many good things that Duke was doing and to counter, by legal means, the arguments of the union." In fact, the \$500-to-\$700-per-day consultants from "3M" subtly engineered a vicious

## AN EIGHT-FOOT SQUARE BOX

**T**he New Orleans law firm of Kullman, Lang, Inman and Bee received special attention at recent hearings on union busters held by the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Labor-Management Relations. IBEW president Charles Pillard described a campaign at the Oster Corporation in Tennessee which Kullman, Lang guided:

*"During that campaign the company reassigned the leading employee organizer. He received a cut in pay. The company assigned him an eight-foot square area in the shipping department and instructed him to sweep that area until the painted lines on the floor were gone. Another union supporter, who was left-handed, was transferred to a side of the production line on which she had to work primarily with her right hand. When her production fell, the company found a pretext to discharge her. Oster also used a rather navel lactic. One weekend, shortly before the election, the entire supervisory staff came into the plant and completely removed two assembly lines, moving them to another plant several miles away. When the employees came in on Monday, they found only empty space in that part of the plant. This maneuver was apparently designed to demonstrate to the employees that the plant could and would shut down, and its operations would be moved, if the union prevailed. After the election, which the union won, these assembly lines were returned."*

campaign of rumors, threats and intimidation that reversed the pleasant relations between administration and union which had characterized the early stages of AFSCME's organizing drive.

Through a crash program of personal interviews and group seminars, 3M cajoled supervisors into becoming frontline advocates for management's newly articulated anti-unionism, and trained them in the use of various key phrases designed to fuel anxiety among Duke's 2,100 hospital employees. The campaign worked. Workers became fearful of discussing unions on the job and began to worry about how secure their jobs would be if they were identified as AFSCME supporters.

"Oh Lord, the rumors they were spreading around were unreal," says one pro-union employee. "Supervisors told the people if they went with the union they might lose their jobs whenever someone with more seniority wanted it. They were told that the first thing the union will do is go on strike, and you'll never get another job, and you won't get unemployment, and you won't get food stamps. People were scared to death. People would come up to me and say, 'I think this is a good thing, but I can't talk to you.'"

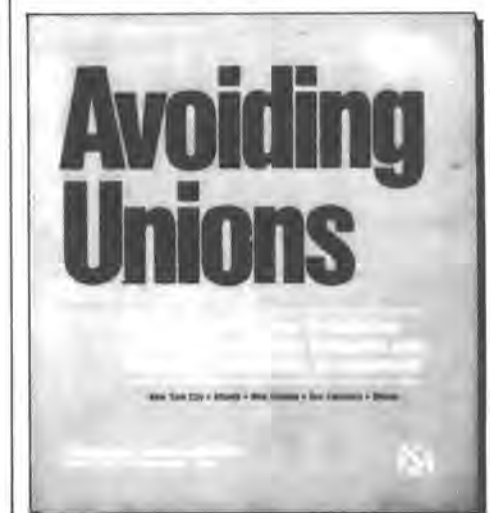
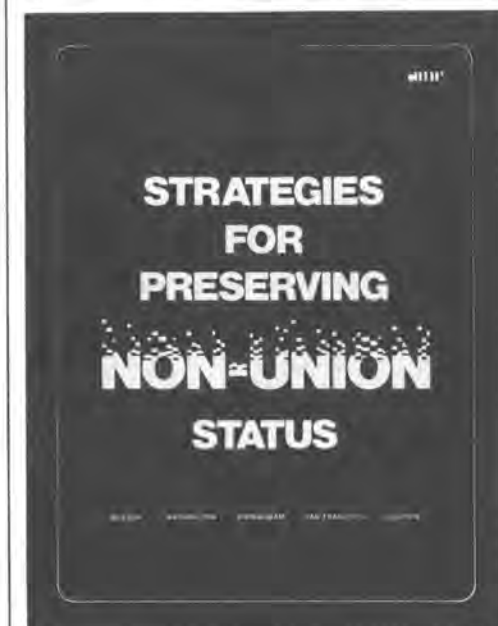
On February 16, 1979, the hospital workers voted 995 to 761 to reject AFSCME.

From election manipulation to stonewalling the bargaining process to sabotage of union contract renewals, these three campaigns illustrate the pervasive and pernicious use of attorneys in every phase of modern management-labor relations. With the help of attorneys like Kullman, Lang and consultants like 3M's Raymond Mickus, corporations are increasingly determining the outcome of each of these phases in labor relations. Nationally, unions won only 46 percent of the representation elections held in fiscal 1978 (it was 57 percent 10 years ago); and they have watched the number of annual decertification elections swell from 239 a decade ago to 807 today, with unions losing three-fourths of them. Back in the '40s, when John Beecher wrote his poem, unions won over 80 percent of their elections, and by the end of World War II represented nearly 36 percent of the non-agricultural workers in the nation,

compared with 23.6 percent in 1978.

Lawyers and right-wing consultants are not the only reason unions are losing ground nationally and barely keeping up with the expanding number of industrial and service jobs in the South. Economic instability, traditional reluctance among Southern white workers to join organizations, and the failure of union hierarchies to take risks, adopt innovative strategies or commit substantial funds to organizing all hurt. But the increased boldness of national corporations like Tenneco and liberal employers like Duke University to assert anti-union positions has crippled labor's old style of organizing. Instead of holding its own in the North while gaining contracts with national companies who move South, labor now finds the Southern bosses' strategy of "fight em tooth 'n nail" spreading across the nation. As Alan Kistler, director of field services and organization for the AFL-CIO, says about the proliferation of anti-union lawyers, consultants and right-wing lobbies, "They are creating a Frankenstein monster that is doing damage to the entire fabric of labor-management relations."

On the national level, the Business Roundtable — composed of such old-line unionized and supposedly forward-thinking corporations as U.S. Steel, General Electric, DuPont and General Motors — recently joined forces with a hodgepodge of right-wing committees, led by Robert Thompson (J.P. Stevens' Greenville, South Carolina, attorney) to smash the union-backed 1979 Labor Law Reform Bill. With this defeat of the proposed changes in the National Labor Relations Act, which included stiffer and swifter penalties for violators, the legal protections of workers' right to free speech, petition and assembly remain shamefully inadequate. Companies can save themselves the cost of a union contract by simply breaking the law — threatening or firing their pro-union workers — and then paying a relatively small fine. This situation is frustrating not only to unions but to many judges. After reviewing the frequency with which corporations ignore the rulings of the NLRB, an Appeals Court judge declared, "It raises grave doubts about the ability of the courts to make the provisions of the federal labor law work in the face of persistent



violations.”

On a state level, labor suffers the handicap of “right to work” laws (every state in the old Confederacy has them), which are kept in place by the organized right wing and the corporate elite. The laws prohibit the closed shop, and encourage the freeloader. workers in an organized plant need not pay union dues to get the same benefits as union members. While the laws inevitably erode the union’s membership and weaken its bargaining strength, supporters successfully appeal to the white Southerner’s general belief in “freedom of choice.” A host of state-level employer associations, business lobbies and conservative organizations also capitalize on the rhetoric of state’s rights and the conservative impulse against “outside interference” to keep labor on the defensive. There are now even conservative black consultants who, for a fee, instruct companies on how to improve their image in the black community and persuade black workers to vote against labor organizations (see box page 32).

On a local level, labor faces the growing specter of two-fisted attacks from any company it attempts to organize. For example, when the United Steel Workers began organizing Clark Equipment’s runaway plant in Richmond County, North Carolina, in 1977, they fell victim to Modern Management Methods’ precision training of supervisors inside the plant and an assortment of good-ole-boy anti-union tactics from Clark’s newly courted friends in the larger community.

To dissuade workers from visits and meetings, the Richmond County sheriff began parking his conspicuous Lincoln Continental outside the organizers’ motel rooms. The Chamber of Commerce of Rockingham had a motel clerk monitor their telephone calls. Police set up random road blocks near a bar owned by one of the pro-union workers, a man the company eventually fired. The husband of another pro-union worker was fired from his job at a local service station because “he was talking union.” And many others were threatened and told to vote against the union for the good of the community. The day before the election, the real estate agent who sold Clark the land for its plant took out a huge ad in the local newspaper, signing

it only “Concerned Citizens of Richmond County.” It proclaimed:

*Richmond County has lost numerous new industries because of the interest of unionism at Clark Equipment Company. . . . Please think of the position you were in before your employment at Clark. Richmond County needs new industries for continued growth. . . . Vote NO February 2.*

Meanwhile, inside the plant, Modern Management instructed the supervisors and foremen to interview each worker, carefully noting their union sympathies. “The front-line supervisor is the best possible communicator in a campaign,” says Herbert Melnick, chairman of 3M. “He can talk to somebody without fear of breaking the law” — and he can be “easily fired” if he fails to do management’s bidding. Clark increased its supervisory personnel until the ratio of workers to supervisors dropped from 30-1 to 15-1. Beginning with those most loyal to the company, the supervisors conducted one-on-one interviews with workers, stressing the importance of the campaign to the individual’s job. Each day they reported their progress to 3M.

“The interrogation and pressure from supervisors was unbelievable and it ultimately turned the election against us,” says Mike Krivosh, the AFL-CIO organizer in charge of the campaign. “Modern Management stayed so far in the background, we never knew they were around. All we saw was a very polished pressure campaign to isolate and intimidate pro-union workers.” By the time the union realized 3M was behind the strategy, the union had lost the election 355 to 249.

The blatant instances of community interference — including the newspaper ad and sheriff’s harassment — ultimately led the NLRB to throw out the results of the February, 1978, election. The union also sued the sheriff and other business leaders for operating illegally as agents of the company in violating workers’ rights to support collective bargaining. The suit was dropped when the NLRB overturned the election, but, says Krivosh, “It effectively neutralized community interference in the second campaign. It became a fight between

us and Clark.”

The pressure inside the plant during the second campaign remained intense. In the months following the first election, Clark hired 200 more workers who were screened for their union attitudes. Supervisors continued to call workers in for daily one-on-one “conferences.” Without any witness and separated from any support, each employee was grilled about work habits, job aspirations, family commitments, loyalty to the company and willingness to fight “outside threats” to his or her job. Meanwhile, the union organizers tried to keep up morale and build momentum in the departments where their committee members worked, hoping that the core of pro-union sentiment would influence less supportive workers. But the union’s second defeat — 409 to 391 — essentially reflected a difference between who controlled which department in the plant.

Clark gained a final edge by following a pattern often used by companies: it escalated its campaign in the days before the election, introducing a barrage of new arguments against the union. During the final 22 days, 26 pieces of Clark propaganda were sent to the homes of workers, posted on bulletin boards or distributed at the plant.

Later in this report we will review some of the techniques which consultants teach supervisors and personnel managers to use in screening, interviewing and influencing workers. But first we turn to an in-depth look at the anti-union propaganda which so often turns the tide and which remains a central tool in the attorneys’ and consultants’ bag of tricks.

## MESSAGE OF FEAR

**A** detailed look at the vast network of anti-union forces stretching from Southern communities to the halls of Congress appropriately begins with the nuts and bolts of the union-busting campaign on the local level. Behind the dramatic and often crucial part played by community leaders like the county sheriff and Chamber of Commerce head, the core of a company’s



day-to-day battle against a labor organizing drive involves a steady barrage of leaflets, letters, posters, speeches and special events.

The company's propaganda attempts to personalize management's power and draw the employee into the corporate "family" while reducing the union to those stereotypes which evoke the most fear and revulsion. Paradoxically, workers are made to feel both valued and expendable. They are wholly dependent on the company for their livelihood, but have an important role in deciding whether it will prosper and their job remain secure. Meanwhile, the union is portrayed as an alien organization with selfish interests set by outsiders which are divisive to the community's harmony and ultimately lead to strikes, violence and loss of jobs.

With great finesse, the modern company's attorneys and consultants design each form of communication to maximize the force of this message while narrowly avoiding an overt break with the law (e.g., by not specifically promising more money to workers if they vote against the union). And in the latter stages of a close campaign, they may even recommend conscious violations of the law in order to save the election. Some consultants, like Whiteford Blakeney, demand total control of a company's propaganda — or accountability to only one or two top managers — so they can adjust the message to suit their reading of the campaign and the law. Other consultants take a less aggressive role, but still review all materials distributed by management and offer standardized letters or phrases for the company to follow.

Whiteford Blakeney's propaganda illustrates several aspects of the appeal. The senior partner of the Charlotte, North Carolina, firm of Blakeney, Alexander and Machen, Blakeney is well known among union organizers. The wording, even the punctuation, of the "Blakeney letter" or "Blakeney notice" often do not change regardless of the particular company which signs it. Invariably, Blakeney plays on the themes of personal security and community harmony versus strikes and violence. Portions of the one sent by Perfect Fit Industries to its employees three weeks before an election are reproduced at the right.

Perfect Fit Industries, Inc.  
P.O. Box 100  
Memphis, Tenn. 38102  
Phone: 708-221-1412

MEMPHIS 11 1978

Dear Sirs:

As you may already know, on Monday, October 29, you will have an opportunity to decide whether you will join the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) union. This could be one of the most important decisions you will ever be called upon to make — important not only to you but to those who depend upon you — important to your future and the future of your family.

For that reason I am writing this letter to you to make that you have all the facts before you make up your mind about this important matter.

In the first place, I want you to understand that I am not asking you to do any favor for the Company in this matter. Your decision on whether to join the AFL-CIO union should be based completely upon what is in your best interest.

In considering whether a union would be in your best interest here, I ask you to bear in mind one basic thought:

Our whole future here together — our hope for making Perfect Fit a continued success and our hope for protecting your job, your satisfaction with your work and your security in these jobs — all of this ultimately depends upon our working and willing together and not pulling apart. A close personal relationship of mutual respect and good will between

us is absolutely essential. And, anything which tears this relationship down will in the long run prove fatal.

Would this union tear down that relationship if I were to get in here? MY SINCERE BELIEF IS THAT IT WOULD BE EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE. And I will tell you why I believe this to be true.

That is because an union would come in, in theory, or even what, in such an atmosphere as we are trying to maintain here. Everyone knows that in order to survive unions must create and maintain acrid, heated, hostile, smelly and bitter. They usually have their own agenda, their own and family against family to achieve their purpose. Such a condition as that surely cannot be approved to benefit either you or Perfect Fit.

This is the basic reason why I oppose the Union. And this is also the basic reason I believe it is in your best interest to oppose the Union.

We understand that the union organizers have tried to mislead our employees into thinking that if the union is voted in that, as if by magic, increased wages and all sorts of benefits would begin to fall in — automatically. This idea is absolutely false!

The truth is that if the Union were to get in here, it could not force us to do anything that we are unable or unwilling to do on our own. We believe in our own ability to take care of the Company. And the only way the Union could try to force us to do anything that we are unable or unwilling to do is to pull you out of the streets. Everyone knows that strikes mean trouble and dissension, strike and misery, lost work and lost pay and friends turned against friends and family against family. You should not forget that strikes often end in violence and bloodshed through the use of dynamite, high-powered rifles and other dangerous weapons.

Now is violence the only danger when a union pulls employees out on strike. While union officials keep their jobs and salaries, the striking employees stand around for days and weeks earning nothing. This common sense does not seem to be common to you.

-2-

Remember, remember that the Union owes you to meet wages and automatic payments for every week because you, as an employer who comes back to work before the union calls off the strike may be fined several thousand dollars by the union.

And generally, when the union has given up these strikes and told the people to go back to work, they find there are no longer any jobs available for them. They find they have been replaced.

You should be fully aware that if a union calls people out on strike in order to try to force the Company to agree to what the union wants, it is definitely the right of the Company to fill the jobs of those who can't go out on strike. And those whose jobs they filled while they are out on such a strike will have no automatic right to get their jobs back — even when the strike has ended.

I want you to know also that the Company has every intention of exercising this right if it is able to do so. Without meaning to be blunt, I do not want you to know now before it is too late — that Perfect Fit has no intention of accepting the way you want to go.

We hope that you will think carefully about all these things. As I have now stated at Perfect Fit, you have a wide job of good wages and good working conditions. We will do our best to make things even better. Do you see any good reason for bringing this outside union on, say your money to it, and at the same time, your job of working apart, everything that you can have?

If you will study this simple matter thoroughly, we believe you will surely come to the conclusion in your own good judgment — that you stand to lose if you allow the union to get in here and that you stand to gain by keeping it out.

Sincerely yours,  
*Joseph Vignola*  
PERFECT FIT INDUSTRIES  
Joseph Vignola  
President

**MARGMONT**  
EXHIBIT 100  
April 5, 1978

Dear Sirs:

I know by now you are getting tired of hearing about this union business you want to get it over and done with. I feel the same way but there are still some important subjects that you need to consider before the election. You have noticed that some to mind is job security.

There are thousands of workers and workers each year who do not plant crops and harvest. Did the unions give those employees job security? Who gave their kids more than a jump into a job? Will the unions have that?

The death of the union is that they let thousands come only from safety, their maintenance and given unions. If the unions maintain union rules you give you guarantee no benefits, so that you will be able to hold your job without anything kind of coming to work. They are not telling you the truth.

The next subject that must be considered is benefits. The aluminum union negotiates probably but not tell you the whole story about benefits. That's because benefits, because benefits are not a guaranteed subject. The union would rather avoid this issue, tell you that it won't happen, and hope that you don't find out the truth about the situation. However, I want you to be aware of benefits and the benefits that the union can give you and your family before you vote on April 19th. Benefits are not something that everyone knows that every citizen is aware of. A union is aware of this. But the union is aware of this. But the union is aware of this.

- 1) If the aluminum union union rules out out of state, benefits from the Company after unemployment, and so do your benefits.
- 2) There is no law that guarantees your obligation to the union after having a strike. Even though you pay from the Company after, your benefits continue.
- 3) If the union rules a strike over wages, hours, and working conditions, the Company has a right to continue the operations by using replacement employees to fill the jobs of strikers. Benefits when you are filled by replacement employees will be 1/2 of what you have after the strike is over. It's up to the Company to decide if you want to stay in the union.

Remember our vote, your... TRIM... and remember the job security and benefits that you are going to lose with the union. The union is aware of this. But the union is aware of this. But the union is aware of this.

Sincerely,  
M. J. Vignola  
Vice President  
Perfect Fit Industries

## PROMISES, PROMISES

Sure, the union is going to promise you more money. They'll promise you just about anything to get you to sign one of their union cards.



But just try to get them to give you a written guarantee of higher wages. They won't do it.

THEY WON'T DO IT BECAUSE UNION PEOPLE KNOW THAT THEY CAN'T GUARANTEE HIGHER WAGES OR MORE BENEFITS. THEY KNOW THAT THE LAW DOESN'T REQUIRE A COMPANY TO AGREE TO ANY UNION DEMANDS THAT IT CONSIDERS UNACCEPTABLE. THAT'S WHY THEY WON'T GIVE YOU A WRITTEN GUARANTEE.

What they can guarantee on paper is that when the union won't accept a Company proposal, they can call a strike. Heard any promises about strikes lately?

## WHO IS THIS MAN?



## AND WHY IS HE SMILING?

He's Joseph Tonelli, Vice President of the AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Department--the organization which is attempting to bring Thomasville Furniture employees under union control.

Tonelli probably isn't smiling now. On Wednesday, July 19, 1978, he was indicted in New York City for:

- EMBEZZLEMENT OF \$360,000 OF UNION MEMBERS' MONEY
- RACKETEERING
- CONSPIRACY
- AND 25 OTHER COUNTS!

**F**ear is probably the greatest weapon a company uses in its anti-union campaign. In addition to constant talk about job loss, company propaganda instills anxiety in workers by emphasizing "the uncertainty the union would bring into your future." An atmosphere of disorder and potential chaos is heightened inside the plant with rumors, unexplained shifts of production or people and the presence of police or other authorities. Meanwhile, company literature presents workers with ugly images of union officials, contracts and rules. Collective bargaining, for example, is consistently pictured as a mysterious process by which "you can end up with less wages and benefits than you now have." Similarly, all union dues are said to go directly to New York to "feed the coffers of union bureaucrats and fat cats."

Among the most popular stereotypes used by the companies is that of the greedy union. It is an image

that appeals not only to workers' fears but also to their pocketbooks. Martin Marietta's Sodeyco division successfully fought a drive by the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers in North Carolina with an elaborate booklet featuring the cartoon figure "Sam Sodeyco" spouting the company arguments. One two-page spread titled "High Paid Union Organizers" contained a list of OCAW staff, their salaries and expenses, with cartoon Sam saying, "109 OCAW representatives, plus directors, publicity people, clerks and analysts need your dues. . . ." On the next page, Sam complained, "In 1978, local OCAW members coughed up over 12 million dollars (\$12,489,685.00) in per capita taxes. Plus another \$213,544.00 in Employee Fees!"

A letter to employees of Dunlap Slacks in Dunlap, Tennessee, signed by three company officers, and written with the guidance of attorneys Bradley, Arant, Rose and White of Birmingham,

Alabama, posed a series of weighted questions to drive home the company's point about union greed:

*Did the union tell you it has the right at any time to charge you fees and assessments in addition to monthly dues? Did the union bother to tell you that you could be forced to pay money in addition to monthly dues to support strikes in other parts of the country or to put money into the union treasury when it gets too low? Did the union tell you that the International Union in New York City has over 280 employees and that those 280 employees are paid an average of over \$35,000.00 each year by the union? Did the union tell you that it pays over 10 million dollars of your dues money each year in salaries to its officers and staff members in New York City?*

## BLACK, BROWN & GREEN

**A**t the height of a 1978 union campaign at a branch of Thomasville Furniture Industries in Brookneal, Virginia, a well-dressed black man named James Mack visited the homes of several Thomasville employees to ask how they felt about the company. Mack is president of B&C Associates, Inc., of High Point, N.C. and Washington, DC, and he was a paid consultant of the furniture company. The union supporters who received this visit thought it was an attempt to garner inside information for the company about how black people could be placated. They filed a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board charging Mack with spying. But all they got for their efforts was an agreement by Thomasville Furniture to post a notice on its bulletin boards stating, with Catch-22 logic, that it was not guilty of this alleged violation of the labor law but that it would never again repeat the offense.

B&C Associates, Inc., claims not to be a union-busting firm but rather a black public relations consulting agency, run for profit, which companies hire when they want to improve their image and their market in the black community and to gain a better understanding of their minority employees. The firm is retained by several national corporations that have strikingly bad images among minorities — including Coors Beer, Woolworth's and Sambo's Restaurant. (Other major B&C customers are Nabisco, Hanes Corporation, Johnson's Wax, Southern Railway, Wachovia Bank and Citizen's Bank in South Carolina.) For Sambo's, stuck with its provocative name, B&C recommended contributions to the SCLC and NAACP and lecture series at black colleges and universities.

Many people charge that one of B&C's major functions for its clients is to keep minority employees in line. B&C's

founder and chairman is a North Carolina native, Robert Brown, a former narcotics agent whom Richard Nixon appointed in 1969 to be "Ambassador to the black community." That appointment, which was made without consulting North Carolina political leaders, aroused a furor of protest from the NAACP and state labor officials who questioned Brown's civil-rights record and his bias against unions. Union leaders claimed that Brown had personally escorted strikebreakers across a picket line in 1967 during a labor dispute at Boren Clay Products in Pleasant Garden, North Carolina. He had also inaccurately represented himself to black workers as an official of the NAACP. One Greensboro client of B&C confided to a *Charlotte Observer* reporter, "We consider that we are buying protection. [Brown] can communicate with Negro employees and keep them quiet and keep trouble from generating with that group. He renders no public relations service for us, and in fact no other service. We just give him a payoff to keep down trouble."

One B&C consultant is Rodney Sumler, a black Republican politician in Winston-Salem and chairman of the local NAACP's political action committee. In June, 1979, he issued a statement for the committee urging that the Teamsters Union not be permitted to organize Winston-Salem's police force because the effort would bring about "corruption, brutality and racial isolation." This statement was read to the press despite the fact that the NAACP chapter president is a Teamsters member and a supporter of the organizing drive.

"Obviously, blacks have historically had problems dealing with labor unions," says one civil-rights activist who followed the controversy, "but hiring a black face to talk workers out of joining a union is just another one of management's games."



ranty Coupons." "Protect yourself against the rash promises by some irresponsible organizers," the coupon urges; a space is left for the union official to sign his name to such statements as: "I guarantee you will get a pay raise of \_\_\_\_\_ an hour in the very first contract we get with your company."

Lately, union organizers have turned the tables on management by passing out warranty coupons of their own — before the company gets a chance to pass out theirs. In a recent successful election campaign at the YKK Zipper Company in Macon, Georgia, an organizer with the Cement, Lime and Gypsum Workers International passed out a two-sided leaflet. On one side he listed guarantees the union could legally make and signed them; on the other side he listed several for management to sign: "If you will vote against the union, I promise and guarantee that — I'll stop all harassment and get rid of all the petty work rules; — I'll pay every worker the average wage that unionized workers in Macon, Georgia, now receive; — I'll never again show favoritism to anyone in hiring, wages, job assignments and promotions. . . ."

Management uses dozens of other materials to undermine the image of labor unions — from Peanuts cartoon figures sticking out their tongues at union "trash" to stock booklets that tell "The True Story" to posters claiming, "The professional union organizing distortion will continue between now and the election." Says James M. Miles of South Carolina's anti-union law firm Haynsworth, Baldwin and Miles: "Of all the issues involved in a campaign, one issue, credibility, is absolutely critical to success. When the employee goes into the voting booth, the decision often comes down to the answer the employee gives to the following question: 'Who should I believe, the company or the union?'" Miles tells his clients — which included Clark Equipment in the campaigns discussed earlier — that "Every union statement or letter should be read carefully" and information in them should be contradicted "wherever possible." In addition, the company should make special use of newspaper "articles depicting union insurance and pension fraud, fines, strikes and violence" to show that

other authorities challenge the union's credibility.

**W**ithout a doubt, however, the favorite theme in anti-union propaganda is the strike — long, costly, violent and disruptive — called by union outsiders and invariably leading to new workers replacing old. The message comes through letters, like this one sent to employees of South Carolina Electric Corporation.

*We believe there is something vitally important to your future. The subject is "STRIKES"! Sometimes, unions and union pushers try to get people to believe that all they have to do is vote for the union and — as if by some wonderful type of magic — higher pay and better benefits and other changes in the operation of the plant will automatically result. We all know that this is simply not true! . . . The only thing the union could do to try to force the company to give into these demands would be to PULL YOU OUT ON STRIKE.*

The destructive image of strikes also comes across in flyers and booklets, such as the two pictured here — one showing a series of newspaper articles with huge headlines about union violence; the other featuring a distraught woman with the caption "A Striker's Wife Speaks Her Mind About the Cost of Strikes." The inside of the second booklet displays a list of the companies and towns where the union in question went on strike, and the length of the strike; the company can buy quantities of the outside and print a list inside to match the union they are fighting.

Several anti-union consulting firms also supply companies with the "Strike Counter," a device distributed to workers so they can calculate "what would a strike cost you." By using a complicated table, the worker can compute the number of weeks of work "it would take to get back what you lost" by striking for a five or 10 cent hourly wage increase. The impact, in the midst of a heated union campaign, is to further confuse workers about the benefits of union membership.

More visual and straightforward

anti-union literature projects the picture of pervasive strikes. For example, a two-sided flyer passed out by a Dyersburg, Tennessee, manufacturer of electrical equipment showed a map on one side dotted with miniature picket signs marking strikes by IBEW; on the other side was the warning, "Don't Let the IBEW Put Dyersburg On the Map."

In addition, companies use strikes as their strongest themes in captive audience speeches, slide shows and films. Perhaps the most bizarre and effective device used in recent months appeared in Salisbury, North Carolina, in a Fiber Industries' offensive against Teamsters organizer Viki Saporita. A couple of days before the election, the company mailed a 20-minute record to each employee. The astounded workers listened to a *War of the Worlds*-style dramatization of a strike in their town, at their plant. The record opens with a radio show being interrupted by the emergency news that a strike has begun at Fiber Industries' Salisbury plant. An on-the-scene reporter, describing the walkout in frantic tones, begins what becomes a tension-filled, "realistic" portrayal of a lengthy and bitter strike. The soundtrack includes interviews with anxious workers, several scenes of gunfire and fights between pro- and anti-union workers, and speeches by the sheriff, local ministers and the actual Salisbury plant manager — all denouncing the disruption of the community's previous harmony. At the end of the record, the announcer explains that what you've just heard is based on an actual strike which occurred when the Teamsters tried to organize the Murray-Ohio Manufacturing Plant in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee. "This dramatization is sent to you," the announcer intones, "as just one example of what the Teamsters Union has done to employees and their families who put their trust in the Teamsters."


The record capped a bitter campaign by Fiber which the Teamsters lost by a vote of 1,272 to 883. The NLRB later set aside the election results because of Fiber's intimidating tactics — but the company succeeded in keeping the union out. "That record was the key to their campaign," says Chris Scott of Teamsters Local 391. "It not only made strikes and violence a real threat, it also made it seem like

any worker who was pro-union would be betraying their community. And having the whole thing come across as scenes from a radio broadcast gave it legitimacy as a real event, something that could really happen."

A year later, in the week before the new election was held, Fiber again sent a record to its employees. But this time the tactic backfired, and workers voted 1,002 to 990 for a Teamsters contract. "After the '79 experience," says organizer Bill Grant, "it was an insult to the people's intelligence" to send another record. Workers also refused to accept the plant manager's promises of better conditions for a second time. "They [the company] started clamping down on us, and I know that made a lot of people mad," employee Bobby Campbell says. "LeGrand [the plant manager] asked us to give him a chance, and I did in the first election — but not twice."

Playing on the workers' loyalty to community harmony and desire not to hurt their neighbors is another theme running throughout anti-union campaigns. The positive, paternalistic approach, which stresses the company's commitment to the town and its employees' welfare, is illustrated by this portion of a captive audience speech delivered by the manager of the West Jefferson furniture factory:

*Now here's the main reason I called this meeting here this week. It's because I'm upset, I'm disappointed that after all the years that we've worked together side by side suddenly our friends and neighbors who work here are ready to throw our good relationship out the window and turn to some stranger outside. Let's look at what Thomasville Furniture Management has done. Sure things are not perfect here, but look how far we've come since 1964 when Thomasville Furniture Industries bought the plant. I was here then and so were some of you. I can remember the working conditions were very poor. Benefits was low. Thomasville Furniture Industries has put five million dollars in this plant, to make it a better place to work, and I think you all agree that this is the best place in Ashe County to work.*



**THE I.B.E.W.**

**WHAT HAS IT DONE TO OTHER EMPLOYEES?**

**IT'S TOLD THEM...**

**FPL strikers drifting back**

**Strike Closes - LR Plant/Union Is 'Surprised'**

UNION KEEPS ITS MEMBERS OUT ON UNPOPULAR STRIKE!

LITTLE ROCK PLANT STRUCK ON ORDERS FROM INTERNATIONAL!

UNION FINES MEMBERS WHO WANT TO WORK!

**THE KANSAS CITY TIMES**

**Phone Contract Leaves Strikers in Limbo**

Most Workers Stay Off Jobs At Teletype

RESORT TO VIOLENCE!

NO JOBS FOR STRIKERS AT END OF STRIKE!

**FP&I Strike**

**200 on Strike at Pine Bluff**

**IBEW Strike of Utility Seems Likely**

**Strike Enters Third Week**

FROM THE I.B.E.W.'S OWN MAGAZINE!

Strike Enters Third Week

**IT'S BROUGHT THEM VIOLENCE**

**Chester strikebreaker abducted, tied to tree**

**2 union men charged**




**Off to jail**

**Violence at the hands of I.B.E.W. officials!**

**... AND MORE VIOLENCE!**

**Threatened worker knows life of fear**

THE STORY OF A MAN WHO HAS "BEEN THERE!"

Three guilty in abduction

THIS TIME THEY GOT CAUGHT!

**53 I.B.E.W. STRIKES**

**Area Around Dyersburg**



**DON'T LET THE I.B.E.W. PUT DYERSBURG ON THE MAP!**

**The Only Guarantee You Have Against This Happening At ERARCO Is To VOTE NO**

On the other hand, pressure tactics about the union's harm to the community appear in ads like the one in Rockingham (p. 30) and the suggestion from attorney James Miles of Haynsworth, Baldwin & Miles that "business leaders and local government officials . . . contact the close friends and relatives of employees in the company which the union is attempting to organize and discuss with them the disadvantages of having a union in the community."

An appeal to the worker's individuality, "manhood" and self-pride ironically often accompanies these calls for greater citizenship and community loyalty. For example, in the same captive audience speech at West Jefferson, the plant manager chided the workers: "You don't need a union organizer to come in here and speak to me for you. . . . You've always been able to talk for yourself as an individual. I sincerely hope that before you sign one of those union cards or support a union and give up your right to talk for yourself that you think real hard." Other attorneys and consultants emphasize "the loss of individual freedom is a high cost to pay," and soberly warn, "You should carefully consider whether you are willing to pay the bill of turning your right to speak for yourself over to the union."

## TEACHING THE TRADE

Thirty years ago, union busters learned their tactics through trial and error and from such books as *How to Meet the Challenge of the Union Organizer*, written by Joseph Lawson, founder of the first anti-union consultant firm, SESCO (see box, page 41). Despite the reservoir of pre-designed leaflets, today's union busters must still experiment with new tactics that capitalize on weaknesses in, or new rulings regarding, labor law enforcement. Today, the principal medium for learning the business is the management seminar. In a dozen or more cities each month, groups of 10 to 60 consultants, attorneys, personnel managers and other company officials pay \$175 to \$600 to learn the latest anti-union tactics. Much of the content of these seminars focuses on crass manipulations of labor law and the NLRB, but most of

them adopt a public posture of offering clinical sounding lectures on "positive management" techniques.

*Any management that gets a union deserves it — and they get the kind they deserve. No labor union has ever captured a group of employees without the full cooperation and encouragement of managers who create the need for unionization. Management language does not even have a positive word for operating non-union. The positive approach is: MAKE UNIONS UNNECESSARY.*

So says Dr. Charles Hughes, an alumnus of "two of the most successful non-union companies in the country," Texas Instruments and IBM. Hughes is probably the nation's most popular lecturer on the art of fighting unions. He travels over 350,000 miles a year, appearing at anti-union symposia sponsored by two New York City firms — Executive Enterprises, Inc., and Advanced Management Research, Inc. (AMR). The two- or three-day seminars, in cities like Atlanta, Dallas, New Orleans and Houston, cost top executives \$450 to \$575, and they get a fact-filled pep talk on the techniques for keeping employees happy, productive and non-union.

Billed as "one of the best-known behavioral scientists working with industry," Dr. Hughes teaches each class of executives how to use behavioral modification to keep employees away from unions. Workers are viewed as "loveable bears" who can be controlled by a "jelly bean" method of rewards and punishments. Hughes' technique requires management to classify each employee by his/her value system, under such categories as "tribalistic," "manipulative" and "conformist." Dr. Hughes then advises management to use an assortment of "carrot and stick" favors and reprimands to bring the alienated, disaffected or lonely worker into the tribe. If these ploys fail, that worker will become a prime target for the union's values.

Hughes' brand of industrial psychology is increasingly imitated by consultants, lawyers and management teachers across the country. Labor Relations Associates, based in Houston, features a two-day "Union Organizing

Game" (for \$350 per player) which uses role-playing and group therapy techniques to emphasize that "supervisors must be trained in how to recognize and deal with the very early signs of union interest." Fran Tarkenton, former Minnesota Vikings quarterback, set up Behavioral Systems, Inc. (BSI) in Atlanta to teach behavior modification techniques to supervisors and other management personnel. His firm's 25 "management consultants" conduct intensive training programs stretching over months for companies ranging in size from J.P. Stevens (40,000 workers) to Alba-Waldensian in Valdese, North Carolina (1,500 employees). BSI also offers training on a crisis basis for companies "caught" in the midst of a union organizing drive.

A New Jersey outfit, Professional Seminars, Inc., which includes New Orleans, Atlanta and Dallas on its itinerary of two-day, \$350-per-person seminars, also promotes the "preventive" method of "maintaining a non-union environment." One of its principal lecturers is Raymond Mickus, executive vice president of Modern Management Methods, who claims involvement in over 1,000 union elections and bases his advice on his consultant firm's credo: "We don't believe workers vote for a union. Rather, they vote against management."

The psychological approach in these behavior-modification programs actually recognizes the legitimacy of workers' desire to join unions and accurately identifies its roots in a system of management insensitivity that goes deeper than a particular wage dispute or single grievance. But, perversely, the pop-psychologists of the seminars are determined to reject unions and the idea of workers' collective power, and inevitably adopt hard-line anti-union advice in their own presentations. At Charles Hughes' seminars sponsored by AMR, attorneys from the New York law firm of Jackson, Lewis, Schnitzler and Krupman follow the behavior analysis sessions with the nuts-and-bolts lessons of how to destroy a union campaign. Among the chief elements:

- Stall and delay when workers request a representative election. "Time is on the side of the employer," the lawyer-instructor says.
- Fire workers who might be receptive to unionization. "Weed them

out. Get rid of anyone who's not going to be a team player. And don't wait eight or nine months. I'd like to have a dollar for every time there's union organizing and the employer says, 'I should have gotten rid of that bastard three months ago.'"

- Exclude groups of workers most sympathetic to unions from the proposed bargaining unit. And then "stack the deck" by adding new workers before the election.

- Use legal and illegal means, including threats, exaggerated promises and spying, to discourage workers from voting for the union. Even if you are caught by the NLRB, Raymond Mickus tells his seminars, "you have to put penalties for unfair labor practices in perspective." Getting fined for firing a worker, or being ordered to post a sign saying the company will not commit any labor law violations in the future, is a cheap price to pay for defeating the union. Even if the election is set aside and a new one ordered, "You will probably win the second election," says Mickus. And few unions try a third time.

The advice from another Northern expert who regularly visits the South is even more explicit. At a recent seminar in Charlotte, North Carolina, sponsored by Wake Forest University, Woodruff Imberman of Chicago's Imberman and DeForest consulting firm told a group of furniture, textile and other manufacturing executives:

*It's absolutely legal to scare the beejesus out of your female employees with threats of strikes, violence and picket lines, and I suggest to you that this is a very good way to scare the hell out of them.*

Imberman recommended that companies hire more women because of their vulnerability to anti-union propaganda. "You have to give the females some idea of some input," he said, and he advised creating the proper psychological climate by keeping the plant clean and maintaining "feminine bathrooms." Imberman further suggested that companies establish their own grievance procedures not only to resolve complaints, but also to keep management in touch with its own weaknesses and to strengthen employee morale. From this progressive-sounding advice (which several textile

and furniture managers at his Wake Forest seminar pooh-poohed), Imberman slipped back to a cornerstone of union-busting: racism.

*It is my strong finding that blacks tend to be more prone to unionization than whites. Now you have EEOC these days and you have to follow the EEOC laws and have whatever the percentage of blacks you are supposed to have. There is no reason for you to be heroes about this, and interested in abstract justice or upraising the downtrodden. So don't be heroes about the whole goddamn thing and fill up the work force with blacks. If you can keep them at a minimum you're better off.*

Then he added, "I feel the same way about Indians that I do blacks. . . . Stay the hell away from Puerto Ricans." The goal, Charles Hughes said in another seminar, is "hiring beautiful people who do what they're told" and who are so "programmed that the union can't even communicate."

**A**nother old management tactic — the lockout — has taken on a new twist under the tutelage of lawyer-consultants from both North and South. Even if the union wins the election, "It doesn't mean you have to sign an agreement," Atlanta attorney McNeill Stokes told a group of building contractors at a Los Angeles seminar. A company can offer meaningless concessions at the bargaining table until the frustrated union either quits or calls a strike. If it doesn't quit, "You goad them into a strike," says Stokes, and then hire new workers.

At another meeting, this one sponsored by the Illinois Chamber of Commerce, the prime architect of the "management strike" spelled out illegal techniques to break a union. "If you say we say it, we didn't say it," warned attorney James Baird of the Chicago firm of Seyfarth, Shaw, Fairweather and Geraldson, which represented the Washington Post and Tenneco's Newport News Drydock Company in their union battles (see page 28). "Off the record," Baird discussed how a strike can weaken the union, create disenchantment among

## How to Make Unions Unnecessary

EXECUTIVE ENTERPRISES, INC.  
presents

### the original **HOW TO MAINTAIN NON-UNION STATUS**

with  
Dr. Charles Hughes  
Alfred T. DeMaria

**IN ATLANTA:**

October 17-18, 1977

November 10-11, 1977

December 1-2, 1977



some of its members and open the door for the suggestion from management that a decertification election is possible. It is completely illegal for a company to promote an anti-union drive among its workers, but Baird detailed "how to set it up so the employee comes in and asks all the important questions on his own."

At sessions like his Wake Forest seminar, Woodruff Imberman also promotes management's illegal involvement in the "Vote No" committees and decertification elections. He tells the assembled executives to support the employee's efforts by "slipping \$20 bills in their pay envelopes" and by telling local merchants the company will make up the difference if they agree to charge the decertification committee only token amounts for printing and supplies. Significantly, Imberman's co-instructor at the Wake Forest seminar was Robert Valois of Raleigh, the attorney representing the J.P. Stevens Employee Education Committee (see box, page 44). In his part of the seminar, Valois made it clear that managers should encourage workers to form pro-company committees and guide the direction of community support by keeping a "tight rein" on activities by other businessmen and "concerned citizens" ranging from the Ku Klux Klan to local ministers.

## RIGHT-WING NET

Consultants like Bob Valois operate through an elaborate network of state, regional and national anti-union organizations. In contrast to the newer consultant firms and for-profit corporations, these organizations have roots deep in the older right-wing establishment and often perform other functions for the conservative businessmen they represent. For example, attorney Valois arranged for the non-profit North Carolina Fund for Individual Rights (NCFIR) to help raise money for his client, the Stevens Employee Education Committee. NCFIR sent out fundraising appeal letters over the name of Stevens employee Gene Patterson and in short order pumped \$36,000 into Valois' campaign to

decertify the union in Roanoke Rapids. Since it is illegal for Stevens to support the activities of its anti-union employees, the NCFIR served as a convenient – and tax-exempt – conduit for contributions for other businessmen and company foundations, including those of Blue Bell, Chatham Mills and Deering-Milliken.

NCFIR was established in 1975 "to further the defense of the rights of individual men and women who are suffering legal injustices as a result of unlawful government action." Union busting apparently falls within NCFIR's idea of defending individual rights; suits by the non-profit group also contest the right of the University of North Carolina campus newspaper to endorse political candidates, and the UNC student legislature's policy of allocating two of its 20 seats to blacks. Similar cases upholding "white rights" against minority hiring and admission policies make up the greater part of NCFIR's docket.

The organization's director is Hugh Joseph ("Joe") Beard, Jr., a young Charlotte attorney active in Ronald Reagan's campaign and the North Carolina Conservative Union. The president is Wilson J. Bryan, a sales manager for the staunchly anti-union Sodeyco division of Martin Marietta. Bryan speaks glowingly of the growth of NCFIR (it had an operating budget of \$30,000 in 1978) and the "fantastic guys" in the state Republican Party, Conservative Union and Conservative Society who have made it go. Bryan himself was the first president of Charlotte's Mecklenberg County Conservative Union, and he replaced NCFIR founding president Richard J. Bryan, who moved to Washington to serve as Jesse Helms' Administrative Assistant. The right-wing links of NCFIR people are too numerous to list here, but it is noteworthy that union-buster Bob Valois' law partner Tom Ellis has been the chief strategist behind Jesse Helms' several campaigns and multitude of off-shoot organizations.

Another state-level non-profit organization sponsoring a host of anti-union, anti-black and other conservative causes is Frank Krieger's Capital Associated Industries, Inc. (CAI). Bob Valois has worked through CAI on several occasions, but the Raleigh-based group differs from NCFIR in being a mem-

bership organization for employers in the eastern and central part of North Carolina. Member companies share a common labor pool, and CAI represents their interests through preaching the gospel of anti-unionism at civic clubs, promoting political candidates hostile to labor and attacking those with AFL-CIO endorsement, sponsoring union-busting seminars and distributing to members a "Confidential Bulletin" on labor trends and union activities in their area. While the association is chartered as a non-profit organization designed to "promote industrial development and . . . the friendly exchange of information among" its members, in fact much of its work borders on the illegal.

In 1974, for example, CAI president Frank Krieger helped the personnel manager of Rockwell's Raleigh plant engineer a decertification election which ousted the International Association of Machinists (IAM). In apparent violation of labor law, Krieger helped an employee of Rockwell drum up support for the decertification campaign inside the plant. The personnel manager at Rockwell, Robert Click, also retained Krieger's friend, union-buster Bob Valois, to file the decertification petition with the NLRB. On July 22, 1974, IAM was formally voted out by a margin of 136 to 74. Later Click left Rockwell and, with the help of Krieger's network, became personnel manager of a Texfi Industries' mill. When he left that position, he became a free-lance personnel consultant operating through Krieger's CAI. His experience with company-inspired anti-union workers' committees quickly served him well, since his most important client soon became Valois' J.P. Stevens Employee Education Committee in Roanoke Rapids (see interview with George Hood, page 44).

Capital Associated Industries belongs to a much larger network of conservative business organizations coordinated through the Washington-based National Association of Manufacturers (NAM). NAM represents 12,000 companies and 260 manufacturing trade associations. NAM is best known for its straightforward pro-business lobbying on Capitol Hill, but it is far more heavily dominated by the right wing, and more preoccupied with the anti-union crusade, than even the regular



leaders of the business press may suspect. NAM directors include such John Birch Society council members as F. E. Masland and Ernest Swigart as well as National Right to Work Committee directors M. Merle Harrold and C. Neil Norgren.

NAM's own "Strike Force for Business" is the National Industrial Council (formerly the Council for Industrial Defense), composed of about 150 member associations — like Capital Associated Industries — organized according to regional identity rather than type of product. Under a non-profit status, businesses in a given area pool their resources to fight state and local government regulation, promote right-to-work laws, oppose increases in workers' compensation benefits and minimum wages and combat unions active within their geographic boundaries. Others in the South, besides CAI, go by such names as the Georgia Business and Industry Association, the Texas Association of Business, Associated Industries of Alabama and the Tennessee Manufacturers Association.

North Carolina, one of the best organized states in the country, has five separate associations, each with a clearly defined territory: they are headquartered in Raleigh, Gastonia, High Point, Charlotte and Asheville. Frank Krieger's counterpart in Charlotte, for example, is Edward J. Dowd, president of the Central Piedmont Employers Association, which represents about 350 area companies, making it the largest of the five NAM-affiliated "industrial relations groups" in the state. The membership list covers everything from metal fabricating plants to hospitals. Though born and educated in Massachusetts, Dowd has been Charlotte's watchdog against unionism for 21 years.

Dowd's office is spacious and tastefully furnished with couches and coffee tables, and he has a battery of secretaries to impede an intruder's progress. Dowd has not had particularly good luck with reporters, and when asked recently about his duties as co-chairman of yet another NAM-related anti-union vehicle, the Council for A Union Free Environment, he ordered the tape recorder off and said, "If I had known you wanted to talk about unions you wouldn't have gotten in the front door. The unions have been trying to get something on

me for years."

Among other things, Dowd's staff will conduct "attitude surveys" inside a member's plant to diagnose employees' morale problems and to pick out key workers for management to groom for "future positions of leadership" — or throw out as potential agitators. The "lack of contamination" in the South is a topic he is not reluctant to talk about, and the region's "pure stock" who take their work seriously, have a low rate of absenteeism, and have limited North Carolina's unions to a 6.9 percent slice of the work force — lowest in the nation — are a source of pride for him.

Over at the Dixie Village Shopping Center, R. Thurman Taylor, president of the six-county Associated Industries of Gastonia, is more forthcoming about the actual purpose of the organization. "Of course most of the companies coming into our area from the North are coming to escape unionism. And when they come in here, we tell them very frankly if you don't come with the determination to stay un-organized we don't want you. And if you do come, we want you to hire a Southern personnel man. And also, if you're followed, as we fully expect you to be, we want to recommend a Southern labor relations attorney who understands the psychology of the Southern people. And they're all buying that philosophy."

The 175 companies which each pay \$100 plus \$2 per employee a year to be a member of the Association are pledged "to champion the free enterprise system, which is the American Way of Life . . . to assist in the preservation of the largest measure of industrial freedom consistent with the rights of others . . . [and] to oppose undue encroachment of governmental authority on the Freedom of Industry, labor, individuals or groups."

"Associated Industries, Inc., is more or less a policeman," its brochure states. "Its work is a constant protection of the whole community, but like the police, it assists those who need help in specific problems." Those include "securing information" on the rank and file, checking references for personnel departments, advising on "labor unrest" and generally fostering "an atmosphere in which profitable businesses can be encouraged."

"Only two companies have been organized in this county," Taylor says

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**Fighters For Freedom . . .**

**Waitresses' Court Testimony Smashes Union Hiring Hall Prostitution Ring**

"Where, as here, a person is in a position of power to grant or withhold employment opportunities, does that authority to attempt to induce . . . job seekers to submit to sexual advances, prostitution, and pornographic entertainment . . . the fact of willful infliction of emotional distress is committed."

**United States Industrial Council**

**Anthony Harrigan**  
**SENSING THE NEWS**  
A Newspaper Column published in Leading Papers Nationwide

UNITED STATES INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL, 400 BOK BLDG., HOME FEDERAL BLDG., ANDWELLS, IN 47016

**NAM**  
**COUNCIL ON**  
**"UNION FREE**  
**ENVIRONMENT"**

**LABOR**

**YOU'VE GOT TO ADMIT "UNION FREE ENVIRONMENT SOUNDS GENTLE!"**

with pride, "and I don't feel like they wouldn't have been organized if they had listened to us."

Ideology and militant anti-unionism also pervade material distributed by the Birmingham-based Associated Industries of Alabama. "You cannot maintain a non-union status with an attitude of indifference," asserts a program brochure for a recent AIA-sponsored seminar. "A continuing vigilance, a periodic review of your policies and practices are necessary steps to retaining the important right to make unilateral judgements in the control of your business." AIA president Gilbert Mobley joins Thurman Taylor, Ed Dowd and 75 other union busters on the board of something called the National Labor-Management Foundation.

The National Labor-Management Foundation is one of the oldest of the non-profit anti-union lobbying and propaganda groups operating independently from, but overlapping with, the sprawling NAM network. Now headquartered in Washington, it has been coordinating legislative efforts since 1947 for about 3,500 companies and employer associations against what it calls the "increasing arrogance of union officials in the use of their monopoly power in the economic and political arenas to exert control over governmental bodies." For many years, the organization was relatively inactive, but it has taken on new life under the direction of a new president, S. Rayburn Watkins, who operates out of Louisville, where he is the president of the NAM-affiliated Associated Industries of Kentucky.

The National Right to Work Committee has harassed the labor movement since 1955. Created by Congressman Fred Hartley (of the Taft-Hartley Act) and a Virginia manufacturer and John Birch endorser, Edwin S. Dillard, the Committee continues to focus primarily on the preservation of open shop and "right-to-work" laws, with help from affiliated state committees and front groups like the Women Organized for Right to Work and the Citizens Committee to Preserve Taft-Hartley. It publishes a newsletter with a circulation of 175,000, about 150 press releases annually and the *Right to Work Digest* for about 7,000 legislators and local politicians; its films "And Women Must Weep" and "Springfield Gun" are widely used by

companies to prove to their workers that unions lead to strikes and violence.

The organization rapidly expanded with the formation in 1968 of the tax-exempt National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation (NRWLDF). The Foundation now raises millions each year from direct mail contributions, runs ads for workers allegedly victimized by unions and takes many publicity-worthy cases to court each year with its in-house staff of 15 lawyers. In 1976, the Committee created the Employers Right Campaign Committee to raise money for key conservative candidates. Today, the National Right to Work Committee and Foundation boast a staff of about 130 in spacious headquarters just outside Washington (Springfield, Virginia) and an annual income of over \$9,000,000 — most of it raised through direct mail appeals.

Its board of directors features several prominent anti-union attorneys, including Whiteford Blakeney, the notorious North Carolina union buster who represented J.P. Stevens for years (see page 31). Jesse Helms' chief strategist, Tom Ellis, has helped the NRTWC in the past through his law firm Maupin, Taylor and Ellis, and Helms himself has signed letters for the organization's direct mail efforts.

Helms also serves on the advisory board of a similar non-profit outfit, Americans Against Union Control of Government (AAUCG), which is itself a division of Jim Martin's Public Service Research Council. Reed Larson, president of NRTWC, helped Martin set up AAUCG in 1973 with a number of other right-wingers; it focuses its anti-labor program on opposing unionization or collective bargaining rights for public employees on municipal, state and federal levels. After six years, its annual budget already approaches \$3.5 million, although much of that goes into the cost of more direct mail appeals.

Outside the NAM network, the most important association of union-busting companies is the Nashville-based United States Industrial Council. The USIC, formerly known as the Southern States Industrial Council, was founded in 1933 when John Edgerton, a Tennessee textile magnate and former president of NAM, decided the South needed an ultra-conservative business organization to resist child labor laws and oppose the National

Recovery Act's goal of raising wages in the region. In order to reflect its expanding constituency, it became the United States Industrial Council in 1971. The Council now claims 4,600 corporate members drawn from every state, employing more than 3,000,000 American workers.

Edward J. Walsh, public affairs director for USIC, says many of these corporations also belong to NAM, but they support USIC because of its "principled stand for the free enterprise system." Larger companies like GM and U.S. Steel may contribute as much as \$10,000 annually, but Walsh declined to estimate the organization's total budget. Eighteen of the 27 USIC executive members are still presidents or chairmen of Southern corporations, but Walsh is correct in noting that the hardline approach taken by the organization and its tax-exempt USIC Educational Foundation has attracted businessmen from every region.

The USIC takes positions on nearly everything: SALT II, pornography, the death penalty, encroaching socialism, the financing of education, the erosion of the middle class, the price of welfare, the troubles of small business and, of course, the "monopoly power" of trade unions. USIC president Anthony Harrigan, a former Gannett newspaper reporter, authors many of the position papers, which are then printed by the thousands in pamphlet form and distributed as ideal "cheat sheets" for dinner speakers at Toastmasters and Rotary Clubs all over America. Member companies can purchase pamphlets in quantity at a discount and insert them in pay envelopes and executives' mailboxes. Harrigan "is sensitive to the pulse of America," Walsh says. "He travels all the time, rides all over the country, stopping in small towns and visiting with local businessmen, newspapermen, educators and ordinary people, getting the feel of what people are thinking out there in the 'provinces.'" Twice a week Harrigan mails out his views on current events to 250 daily newspapers, and about 100 routinely use the column.

Harrigan takes a dim view of the "arrogant regimes of the Third World which have little capacity to create wealth on their own but a huge appetite for the wealth produced by a dozen generations of Americans," and he calls on the United States to

## "IT IS OUR PHILOSOPHY "

Joseph W. Lawson now sports a full head of white hair, but sitting in his office at the SESCO building in Bristol, Tennessee — its walls lined with Civil War memorabilia, old books and hunting trophies — he still speaks vigorously about his 35 years as a union fighter, and about the ills and strengths of the U.S. SESCO is the Southeastern Employers Service Corporation, and Lawson founded it in 1945. He had been born to a farm family in Elkins, W.Va., had graduated from Marshall University, and had spent the war years as an investigator for the Department of Labor.

In its early years SESCO specialized in fighting unions in Appalachia, but it now represents more than 1,500 firms across the United States and offers a range of services such as pre-employment reference checking, evaluating wage and salary policies and conducting supervisor training programs. But running "union vulnerability audits," countering union campaigns and negotiating contracts are still the heart of its business. One of its most popular handbooks is "How To Meet the Challenge of the Union Organizer." In 35 years of opposing unions, SESCO claims a success rate of 95 percent for management.

Clients, who pay \$50-\$1,500 a month, include: American Apartment Management (Knoxville), Appalachian Christian Village (Johnson City, Tenn.), C&C Coal Company (Pennington Gap, Va.), Camden Mills (Camden, Ala.), Deal Buick (Asheville), Kentucky Hospital Assoc. (Louisville), National Medical Care, Inc. (Brookline, Mass.), St. Thomas Hospital (Nashville), Virginia Intermont College (Bristol), Vulcan Corporation (Cincinnati, Ohio).

Letters from some of its happy customers appear on a SESCO brochure. One from a Bristol lumber company reads: "I knew you were most benevolent but I didn't know you were Santa Claus. What a Christmas present!

"Your gift of getting the union off my back was indeed the most cherished present I received or probably will ever receive. I have been plagued with the union in Bristol since 1943 — much too long. The question I put to myself, 'Why didn't I engage Joe Lawson's services earlier?'"

So popular is SESCO in East Tennessee that little labor consulting business is left over for the local bar. As a result, the Tennessee Bar Association charged SESCO with the unauthorized practice of law, but a Chancery Court judge dismissed the case in 1978, saying that the line between labor consulting and true legal advice was too hazy for him to see.

Joe Lawson is now retired, but he conducts four or five management seminars a year and will still help out an old client "in an emergency." SESCO now rests in the hands of his son, Joseph W. Lawson, Jr. The following conversation is excerpted from an interview Tony Dunbar conducted with Joseph Lawson, Sr., in the summer of 1979. Tony's questions are in *italic type*.

*Do you attribute the drop in the productivity of the American worker to anything in particular in our character as a people?*

Yes, I would say so. You do things because of love and fear. It is quite evident that there is not as much love for our country as there used to be, which inspires people. And the fear of failure, or the fear of not having enough to eat

or a place to live, or not having medical services, has been removed by the social tendencies of the federal government. So you don't have the inspiration today to go out and dig and work. More people are prone to accept the freebies of life rather than to go out and work for them. . . .

*SESCO is a management consulting firm. Can you tell me a little bit about the range of its activities?*

We cover the whole United States and Canada. We work with management. We have a philosophy here that in every company there has to be three partners: the owners that make a tremendous investment in building and land, supplies, payroll, machinery and raw materials. The second partner naturally are the customers. The third partner is really the most important partner of all: it's the people who put it all together. It is our philosophy to work out cooperation and understanding between the first partner and the third partner. . . . With a union you've got a fourth partner. A union makes business very expensive, and that's one reason costs are rising higher and higher today. Productivity, with a union, levels out.

It is our philosophy at SESCO that unions are caused — they don't happen. Caused by poor management; caused by not being fair to your employees; caused by not recognizing seniority. . . . Good management has to realize that the other fellow is "me" under different circumstances, and if you recognize the dignity of man and, bless your heart, do something about it you don't have a union. . . .

*Employers will retain you when confronted by a union?*

Yes sir. We'll come in, and we'll set up a program for them: how you communicate. We'll find out what the benefits are. Then we let them know. You haven't had to go on strike to get these. You haven't had to throw a stick of dynamite. You haven't had to throw acid in somebody's eyes. You haven't had somebody shotgunning your house. You've gotten this because management appreciates you. Now the only thing the union wants from you is \$9 a month or \$12 a month in dues. And of course that goes out of the community.

*You must have well-trained people who work here who are trained in communications.*

Yes, we train our own people. They have to have the philosophy of Americanism in their hearts.

We do have one philosophy of our firm, too, that you'll be interested in: One — we are only limited by our inspiration, our perspiration and our desire in America. There's no competition in America for the man who wants to get ahead. I don't care his color, his attitude, his education or training. If he really wants to be honest and put out, he can get ahead.

Two — we have another thought that we give to be successful, and it goes like this:

Bite off more than you can chew, then chew it.

Plan for more than you can do, then do it.

Pledge more time than you can spare, then give it.

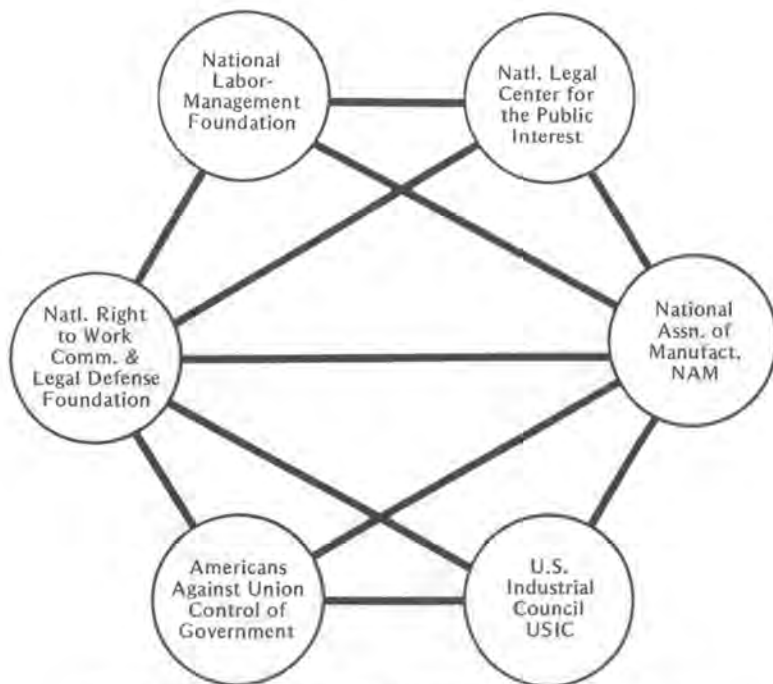
Hitch your wagon to a star, take careful aim, and there you are.

Build your mansions in the air, then build a ship to take you there.

This will give you American success beyond your fondest dreams. Period.

*Did you draft that?*

Yes. That's the way we inspire men, you know. . . .



**THE RIGHTWING/ANTI-UNION NET.** *The lines connecting two organizations indicate they share at least one member of their boards of directors, advisors, trustees or officers. For example, W.L. Thornton, president of the Florida East Coast Railway, is a board member of the National Right to Work Committee and of the U.S. Industrial Council. The latter's executive director, Anthony Harrigan, is a board member of Americans Against Union Control of Government, whose own board chairman, Carol Applegate, is on the board of the National Right to Work Committee, NAM directors J.R. Fluor, G.J. Williams and Joe Coors are on the National Legal Center, while W.J. Grede and C.R. Sligh, Jr. are on the Labor-Management Foundation.*

"maintain and widen the distance between the advanced and retarded nations."

Of the last three booklets published by USIC, however, two deal with successful employer resistance to unions. (The third is an expose of "The Anti-Nuclear Movement" and the "burnt-out hippies" who command it.) One details how Chatham Manufacturing Company of Elkin, North Carolina, won a 23-year struggle with the textile workers union. The second recounts the story of the failing union drive at J.P. Stevens; it was purchased in bulk by the Stevens company, a USIC member. Other USIC anti-union pamphlets include: "An Employers' Guide to Staying Non-Union," "Excessive Union Power," "Fighting for Free Enterprise" and "Unions Are Obsolete." All hold to the basic theme that unions possess "intolerable privileges and immunities" which imperil America.

Through its Educational Foundation, the USIC tries to "broaden the younger generation's understanding of

the conservative philosophy." The Foundation establishes "free enterprise study groups" on campuses, has a summer intern program for "young conservatives," gives grants to "free enterprise scholars" and promotes national lecture tours of such well-known conservatives as Michael Ivens, a British opponent of nationalization (1978), and Peter Clarke, a Scottish enemy of socialism (1979).

The USIC strongly supports the new "free enterprise" curricula being offered on some U.S. campuses, usually courtesy of an endowment by big business — for example, the Center for Private Enterprise Education at Harding College in Arkansas. The first private enterprise chair at a state university was created in Georgia, where such unionized but conservative corporate giants as the Georgia Power Company and Southern Bell had long been active in the USIC's predecessor, the Southern States Industrial Council. Other businesses and universities are following the Georgia State University model. Kent State and the Univer-

sity of Akron each now have a Good-year Professor of Free Enterprise, and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga has a private enterprise chair bequeathed by a local attorney. It is the hope of the USIC that the days of the liberal educational establishment are numbered. By way of contrast, an attempt by unions and liberal educators to establish a Labor Education Center at North Carolina Central University in Durham, a branch of the University of North Carolina, was soundly crushed in 1978 through the efforts of a coalition of conservative and business interest groups.

**T**he newest "non-profit" network threatening unions is an inter-related group of foundations which initiates conservative suits working on a combined budget of over \$3 million. Begun in 1972 in California to defend Governor Ronald Reagan's welfare cutbacks, the Pacific Legal Foundation and its backers — chiefly the Fluors of the Los Angeles construction-engineering combine, Fluor Corporation — moved eastward with what they considered a good idea. The Fluor Corporation itself bought up Daniel International of Greenville, South Carolina, a power-plant builder and one of the South's top non-union general contractors. Meanwhile, the Foundation became the National Legal Center for Public Interest, opened headquarters in Washington under the direction of right-wing corporate attorney Leonard J. Theberge and set out to mirror Ralph Nader's network with a string of regional foundations sponsoring court suits against minorities, women, the environment and labor. The Southeastern Legal Foundation is directed by former Republican Congressman Ben Blackburn and counts among its trustees the heads of Lenox Square, West Lumber Company, and Redfern Foods, all of Atlanta. The office was funded with \$25,000 "seed money" from the National Legal Center, and its first major victory was an Appeals Court ruling upholding an Atlanta factory owner's right to shut the doors on any OSHA inspector without a search warrant.

The Southeastern Legal Foundation also sought — unsuccessfully — to persuade the Supreme Court to allow construction of the Tellico Dam despite the snail darter's protection

under the Endangered Species Act. The Foundation is now challenging Virginia Commonwealth's affirmative action policy designed to add new women faculty. The national office in Washington now concentrates on providing backup services, fundraising, research and expert witnesses for regional affiliates. The Center's chairman is founder J. Simon Fluor's son, J. Robert Fluor, now president of the Fluor Corporation. He joins another Center trustee, Joseph Coors of Coors beer, on the board of the ultraconservative Heritage Foundation, which Ben Blackburn chairs.

**T**here are countless other non-profit institutes, centers, foundations and committees that subvert the struggle for human rights, including labor rights, with deceitful studies, direct mail appeals (often guided by the master of right-wing direct mail lists, Richard Viguerie) and strident lobbying. In their most recent major victory, the organizations named in this report, plus other giants like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Business Roundtable, concentrated their full energies on defeating the 1979 Labor Law Reform Act. "They literally blew it out of the water," confides one insider in Congress. "They had every small businessman, medium-sized company and corporate leader in the country flood us with letters. They came in person. They came in groups. They twisted arms till there were no arms left to twist. I've never seen lobbying like that in my 20 years on the Hill."

On a local level, these groups provide the necessary network for union busters — both modern and old-fashioned — to share information, personnel and money. Our study revealed nearly all the consultants and employer-sponsored associations discussed here are violating provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act by failing to report that their time and money go to "persuade employees to exercise or not to exercise . . . the right to organize and bargain collectively" and "to assist employers in presenting their point of view to employees in connection with organizational activities by labor organizations." Furthermore, *any* employer who spends money for outside help to influence *any* employee's union beliefs is supposed to file a form

LM-10 with the Department of Labor. Failure to file carries a minimal fine, and the government has been lax in enforcing even this anemic provision.

If companies *were* forced to report, however, and if the myriad of non-profit union-busting organizations were forced to state on their membership and appeal letters that contributors must file with the government, these regulations might discourage some employers from subsidizing the present framework of anti-union consultants. Making union-busting professionals and their supporters register, and thus become possible targets for union-sponsored lawsuits, would obviously influence the kind of support a Fund for Individual Rights or Capital Associated Industries receives. In recent months, congressional hearings on union busters, and increased enforcement by the Labor Department, have slightly improved the situation. But at this point, local organizers still confront hostile companies at an extreme disadvantage, often not even aware of the cast of consultants, lawyers and industrial psychologists that stand behind the company.

The fact that labor can face these odds and still occasionally win is testimony to the determination of workers in many locations to have the full rights of collective bargaining. The bristling array of company tactics also suggests why modern unions depend increasingly on their own lawyers and consultants. The UMW's Brookside strike of 1973 and 1974 pioneered many techniques — including a sophisticated media campaign, consumer organizing and Wall Street pressure tactics — that have since been adopted by other unions. But organizing efforts are still shaped all too often by management's force and strategy. The J.P. Stevens campaign, which has taken many turns in strategy over the last 17 years, has been most affected by the company's willingness to fire, transfer or otherwise intimidate pro-union workers. Before the union could establish its credibility as an organization that helps workers in the South, its lawyers first had to prove a more basic reality — that workers who express an interest in union affiliation will not be singled out and victimized with impunity by their employer. Hence the union and company have spent incredible energy fighting each other in courtrooms over the proper

redress for Stevens' obviously illegal behavior. Courts bound by the limits of the NLRB can still do very little to stop Stevens — or any other company — from firing, spying, buying off or harassing employees.

Until major reforms come to the NLRB, a union can win only through the dogged persistence of its entire organization and the self-conscious commitment of the local workers who want its benefits. Without reforms in the nation's labor-management relations laws to ensure swift and substantial punishment of employers who repeatedly break the law, unions in America and the South face a difficult — nearly impossible — task every time they attempt to organize workers in a company advised by shrewd consultants. And even if the reforms pass — which is doubtful unless rank-and-file union members and unorganized workers join the sorely outgunned union lobbyists in pressuring Congress — even then, the only factor that will keep a union in a local plant will be a well-trained, active local which is ready to withstand the deadly plotting of management to co-opt, weaken and ultimately silence the collective voice of workers. In the evolving dynamics of American labor-management relations, labor must continue to pit committed people against the ever-changing array of agents hired by big business. It took a massive movement of dedicated workers to pressure Congress to harness company gun thugs in the 1930s; today, only a united effort at the local and national levels can effectively challenge the power behind the corporate attorneys, crafty consultants and right-wing lobbyists. □

*Tony Dunbar is a freelance writer. Bob Hall is managing editor of Southern Exposure. In addition to their research and interviews, this report is based on work done over the last several years by interns and staff members of the Institute for Southern Studies, including Patty Dilley, Margaret Lee, Bob Arnold, Jim Overton and Susan Angell. The authors would also like to thank Dick Wilson and Charles McDonald of the AFL-CIO's National Organizing Coordinating Committee, which publishes the monthly RUB Sheet: Report on Union Busters.*

## George Hood: "I'm the Leg Man"

The following interview with union buster George Hood was conducted by Tony Dunbar in the summer of 1979. It provides an unusually candid picture of the perspective, problems and personality of a modern anti-union professional. It's also an example of a skilled interviewer at work. Tony Dunbar's questions are set in *italic type*.

*I'm in a position right now of being able to write about things that particularly interest me, and one of these . . . is to do sort of an examination, or re-examination, of "Southern Individualism" as a movement and as a philosophy. . . . I am going to publish it, but I'm not sure where or when. I had a good talk with the folks at the North Carolina Fund for Individual Rights, and they suggested you.*

Well, let me just tell you something first. I was born in Columbus, Georgia, but my folks are New England Yankees, and I grew up there. We moved up when I was six, so I guess I'm kind of inclined to tell things like they are. I'm not very good at covering up anything.

The story of the SEE-Fund at this point is principally the story of the J.P. Stevens thing. We're working with other people. In fact, I made two stops coming over. I would have stopped in Salisbury and seen some Fiber Industries people I'm working with, but they're in good shape, and I can pass them by this time. But the Textile Workers Union . . . has been working on Stevens people for 16 years, since 1963. Right here in Shelby was one of the first places where they made any real attempt — at the Cleveland plant of Stevens. They arrived here, I think, in '64, and I believe it was about '67 or '68 when they petitioned for an election here, and then apparently just prior to the date of the election the union asked that their petition be withdrawn. One man here, one hourly employee (a loom fixer) pretty well, near as I can tell, gets the responsibility or the credit for discouraging the union back at that time from proceed-

ing with the election.

They disappeared for a while and came back again a few years ago. I don't know just when. And this same fellow was still here, still on the same job, and is still battling with them. I'm here every other week trying to give this fellow some material and moral support. At least he isn't having to pay whatever his expenses are today, as he used to have to, whether it was handouts, or ads, or T-shirts, or whatever. He's done it himself, and now that's the kind of job we're taking on.

*SEE-Fund exists, then, to give material and moral support to the employees who are trying to stay out of the union?*

Right. Roughly two or two-and-a-half years ago the union announced a boycott as a means of bringing Stevens to their knees. And at that time that was a terrible tactical mistake in my opinion because it hasn't really accomplished very much for them. In the big cities apparently they get a little publicity, but the sales figures show that the business is continuing to grow more than inflation.

But why it was really a mistake was that up to that point many of the employees had been kind of lethargic. People at Roanoke Rapids had a union and some negotiating going on, but the employees were unhappy, really. Then the boycott came along. This was a threat to the employees' jobs; that's the way they interpreted it, and this was what the union hadn't perceived. And the union continues to ignore this fact. But all of a sudden this just brought many of them out in the forefront, and they formed an Employee Committee in Roanoke Rapids. They formed one in the Greenville area — several plants there; Bill Blanton was already working here in Shelby, and a group formed in the Stuart, Virginia, area where there are four Stevens plants.

And in each case there were business people and others in the community who were interested in helping them, mostly in a small way. But some of them provided a little money. T-shirts would show up being delivered by UPS, and nobody knew where they came from. Bumper stickers, badges and that sort of stuff.

Most all of them have stayed anonymous, except one fantastic guy in Martinsville, Virginia, who's not a

Southerner, Julius Hermanes, who owns Martin Processing Company, has claimed, and there's no question in my mind about it, to have spent more than \$10,000 supporting Stevens people up there.

We also think that he's been responsible for some of the bumper stickers, badges and things that have showed up in other places. And I've got probably 75 or 100 T-shirts in my car right now that came from him that I picked up in Roanoke Rapids last night and will take to Wagram, North Carolina, when I get back from Greenville and Anderson, South Carolina, Thursday.

The group and their advisors in Roanoke Rapids, and the group and their advisors in Greenville both about the same time got to thinking, "Gee, we ought to formalize this thing and provide a vehicle which people could make tax-free donations to." So that's where the SEE-Fund started, and it didn't become at all concrete until last August at which time one of the attorneys, Bob Valois in Raleigh, who had been working with the thing, said to some folks, "Why don't you see Joe Beard in Charlotte. He's involved in

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*"I've got probably 75 T-shirts in my car right now that came from him that I picked up in Roanoke Rapids and will take to Wagram."*

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raising money for some good causes, and he's not the busiest lawyer in the world. He can put together your corporation and get your IRS status and so forth." So that's what happened.

*How was Bob Valois involved?*

Valois was hired when the Roanoke Rapids people got upset about the boycott and said, "Those bastards are going to take our jobs." They went to several lawyers in Roanoke Rapids and said, "We've accumulated about \$530 among ourselves, and we want to hire a lawyer to help us get this damn union out of here." They all said, "Well, we work with J.P. Stevens one way or another, but we'd recommend Maupin, Taylor, Ellis, Valois in Raleigh. They specialize in labor law." So they went over and saw Bob Valois and laid their \$530 and some-odd

dollars on the table and said, "Will that get rid of the union?" He said, "Hell no, nowhere near," but he was impressed of course with their determination, and he is one of those rare, if you'll pardon my bias, lawyers who's motivated by something other than just money.

*That does make him a rare lawyer.*

Right. He said he would help them. He said they would have to find ways to raise more money because it would cost a lot of money, and his being a partner he couldn't very well do everything he did for them for nothing. So that's where the North Carolina Fund for Individual Rights came in. I think NCFIR has been paying Bob Valois for some of his work, but nowhere near all of it apparently.\*

*Is there a guy named Click?*

Bob Click.

*Someone told me that I should speak to him, too.*

Well, yes, if he'll speak to you. He's trying to stay underground. Bob was an unemployed, middle-aged personnel guy just like me who lived in Raleigh. This law firm in Raleigh that was handling, representing, working with the hourly employees at Stevens in Roanoke Rapids was also the labor attorney for Bob Click's former employer, and so they knew each other. And in the interests of trying to help Click while he was looking for a job Bob Valois said, "Hey, I think I can get you a little money on a fee basis if you want to help these folks at Roanoke Rapids — help them with writing handouts and a newsletter, and so forth." So Bob did it.

Then another middle-aged personnel guy came into the picture. He knew Bob Click, and this guy was unemployed, and Bob said, "Hey, why don't you take on this. It'll give you something to do while you're looking for a job" — fellow named Norton Wilcox. So Norton did it from October until the first of February this year.

Bob Click left just at the time the SEE-Fund got started, but Norton came along as an employee supposedly of the SEE-Fund, though he never got but one month's salary. Then he left,

\* Joe Beard is executive director of NCFIR and sent out direct mail appeals to raise money for the Employee Education Committee in Roanoke Rapids.

and he and I knew each other (I was working as a personnel consultant) and he said, "George, how about helping these folks down in Greenville for a couple of weeks. They've got a rally scheduled. They need some help, and now I'm leaving them holding the bag."

*Well, tell me how you got involved. You were in Massachusetts at the time?*

No, no, I'd been in North Carolina for 16 years. I've been a personnel guy for 20 some-odd years. I was in manufacturing originally in the aircraft industry in Connecticut — production foreman, shift foreman, night plant superintendent, then plant personnel manager, and then 16 years ago we moved to Sanford, North Carolina, where I became corporate personnel director of the Roberts Company, textile machinery manufacturers. In 1970 Roberts went broke, and I went into business, and I've been self-employed ever since as a personnel consultant. Mostly working with smaller employers who aren't big enough to have a personnel manager, and so I'm their part-time personnel manager.

*Were you working for your own concern, George Hood, Inc?*

Associates. As I say, Norton knew about me, and I knew about him, and he called me right after the first of February and he said, "George, I don't know if there's any money in this thing or not for you," but he said, "If you'll give a couple of weeks of your time you might get compensated and you'd have a hell of a time, and maybe learn something new and make some new contacts."

So I went to Greenville, which is really the headquarters of the anti-union Stevens work because of one person: Mildred Ramsey. In other words, of all the various leaders that have sprung up around Stevens among their hourly people, Mildred is the one that's head and shoulders above all the rest as a leader, as a public relations person and all. She just has a lot of talents that most of the others lack.

Well, I went down there, met with Mildred and a fellow named Jack Grier who is 70 years old, founded Texize Corporation sometime after World War II, I think, made a bundle of money, sold out to Norwich Chemicals five or six or seven years ago, and got his bundle, and now his younger son start-

ed up Intex Corporation, which manufactures industrial chemicals.

Jack Grier is one of the people who's been fighting unions all his life, both in his own business and helping other people to do it, just a matter of principle. He heard about Mildred Ramsey and what these folks were doing, and he started helping her, providing her with printed copies of things for handouts, paid for an ad, and a year and a half ago they had their first big Stevens Employees Rally in Greenville just prior to the J.P. Stevens [1979] stockholders meeting. Probably \$1,000, \$1,200, \$1,500 expense involved in that, and Jack Grier footed the bill.

Along about that time he got the idea for what became the SEE-Fund. At the same time the Roanoke Rapids people and Bob Valois were thinking the same way, so the two men met in Joe Beard's office in Charlotte, and that's kind of how it got started.

*And that was what year?*

That was August, 1978. They applied in January for the tax-exempt status and received it in April, I think it was. And I went to work for them the fifteenth of February. I was hired to be the leg man, to be the people-employee-relations guy, to be the expert helping these people organize, finding leadership among them, *finding leadership among the business communities where they were who would hopefully contribute money and help and advise and so forth to the cause.* The idea was that in most locations where we were helping people to fight any union — and, of course, immediately when the thing got formalized they realized that it couldn't be just Stevens; it needed to be anybody and everybody, and so the charter calls for us to help any hourly employees who ask for our help where there is a union attempting to get in or where there is a union and they want to decertify. I'm working with a couple of groups where they want to decertify where they have a union. But I've gotten only one month's pay.

*What has been the problem? You have your tax exemption. Why would an organization like yours be having the trouble attracting the support from other businesses?*

Okay. The union has already, back a year and a half or two years ago, I guess, filed a suit against six or eight

individuals and companies for collusion with J.P. Stevens. This Julius Hermanes in Martinsville, Virginia, is one of those people. He openly came out and said, "Sure, I'm helping their people. I'm not in collusion with J.P. Stevens, but I'm helping their people. They don't want a union."

*Is there something illegal about that help, or is it just the collusion?*

Oh no, it's perfectly legitimate. I don't go looking for publicity, but I don't hide the fact that I'm around. What we're doing has never been done formally before. Typically in the South the Chamber of Commerce and some influential and interested businessmen get together behind closed doors and kind of do some of the things that we're doing, but we're the first formal group that's come out and said, "Yeah, this is what we're doing." I've handed out handouts, I don't think it's good business, and I don't plan to do it as a rule, but in a couple of emergency situations I've handed out handouts with the employees at the gate.

*Why doesn't Stevens support you?*

They can't. Because that would be an unfair labor practice.

*Surely the company realizes the value that you have to them and can use moral suasion on other interested parties.*

That's a great theory. I wish it worked that way. Frankly, I never felt that Stevens would have to do anything. I felt that ----- (this isn't the sort of thing that I would like to have quoted especially) but nevertheless, he represents the textile industry in the South. He's certainly the foremost individual in the textile industry, and he's very much of an individualist and very much anti-union, and very much employee-relations oriented. He runs the best organization in the textile industry, in my opinion. That guy should have put in \$50,000, \$100,000, to the SEE-Fund six months ago. Now maybe nobody's asked him, but I know it has been discussed with him — the fact that this organization exists, that there are some good people behind it. But see, that suit a year and a half or two years ago chilled the efforts of people like ----- . They're afraid of being involved with the union.

I don't know how old Joe Beard is, but he's pretty young. And don't know what his experience is, or his motivation is, or anything else, but he put the organization together. And he picked the board of directors. They're all friends or "cause workers" of his. None of them, literally, have any particular interest in what we're doing. I don't know who the directors of NCFIR are. . . .

*I can show you the list.*

The only one I know is Hamilton Horton, who's also a director of the SEE-Fund, but my feeling is that Joe felt that this was going to be another NCFIR.

Now, he's the Executive Director of that, and I'm the Executive Director of this, and it's just a matter of getting a bunch of friendly people who sign where we tell them to sign or whatever. Three of our people are Stevens people: two hourly employees at Roanoke Rapids and Mildred Ramsey at Greenville. Hamilton Horton is an attorney . . . and someone who's a housewife but apparently a big Republican Party worker, whom I've never met. She's never been to a board meeting. We've only had one meeting of the board. Richard Hines from Spartanburg, who runs the family moving van business but is head of the Conservative Union in South Carolina. Jack Grier. A fellow named David Poole from Greenville who is self-employed, a yarn salesman. Jack Grier was just elected chairman at this one meeting we had, and the vice-chairman is Executive Director of the Mecklenberg County Medical Society.

*Who is that?*

Will something-or-other. I've got it in my car. I have a traveling office. My trunk, my back seat, and part of my front seat are covered with files. . . .

As I see it, Joe simply picked people who were names that would be harmless, that nobody would object to, that Internal Revenue wouldn't fuss about when we tried to get the tax-exempt status, and so forth. But that's not the kind of board that we need.

*I don't see why businessmen aren't supporting you.*

They're afraid. They're afraid. Okay. The job hasn't been done. In desperation my wife and I and Mildred Ramsey put out a mailing about a

month ago. We went through the North Carolina State Industrial Directory. Mildred Ramsey wrote it as "weaver, third shift, Stevens plant, Greenville," and she writes a fine letter. I wrote the solicitation, and the explanation about SEE-Fund. . . . We hand-addressed 1,000 envelopes . . . to employers of fewer than 250 people, and only where there was a president named. Hosiery companies, the tool shops, concrete people, typical small manufacturing concerns where the president probably owns most of it and can write a check or can say, "write a check." I felt that many of these people shared my concern. They're all non-union, and they desperately want to stay that way. And if they can get some help from someone like us — maybe buy a little insurance policy — though goodness knows we haven't tried to blackmail anybody. But we sent 1,000 of those things out, and we've gotten 38 responses. They've averaged \$72.60. We picked up a good group of people as far as the amount of the gifts were concerned. Still, 960 of those people threw it in the waste basket.

Joe Beard was instructed by this one meeting of the board of directors that we had probably two months ago to hustle to get out a mailing to get some money in to pay George Hood. Well, it got out about three weeks ago, and this is why in desperation I got mine out about 10 days before he got his out. And so far (Joe has not exactly leveled with me, and I have not put him on the spot) but apparently (the SEE-Fund now owes me better than \$5,000, most of it in expenses because my salary is not what it ought to be) Joe has not been able to pay me anything out of his mailing. The only money I've gotten, other than \$1,000, is the money that I've raised myself.

My point is that I am in fact self-employed. Fortunately for me and the Fund, Mr. Jack Grier, our chairman, and David Poole, another director, have personally guaranteed my salary and \$500 a month toward my expenses for the months of May, June and July.

*Let's talk about the structure of the groups that you have going, the offices that you have.*

The three large groups that I work with are Wagram, where there are two plants with about 2,000 employees;



Roanoke Rapids, where there are seven plants and employment there (people think it is down about 1,200 from the time of the election) is something in excess of 2,000; and then Greenville, where there are, I think,

*“Typically the Chamber of Commerce and some influential businessmen get together behind closed doors and do some of the things we’re doing.”*

nine plants and 12,000 people.

We’ve got in each of these locations, I would say, on the order of 25 to 30 people that we kind of consider the “area committee” and who work doing handouts, writing handouts, drawing cartoons for handouts, buying and selling T-shirts with the “Stand Up for Stevens” on them.

*Do they have weekly meetings?*

Most places they’re every other week or once a month. Roanoke Rapids meets every other Tuesday night in Freedom Hall. Wagram plants meet the opposite Tuesday nights. Greenville-area plants meet the second Sunday afternoon every month.

*What is Freedom Hall?*

Freedom Hall is a former store that we rent in Roanoke Rapids where we have meetings every two weeks of the non-union committee, the Stevens Employee Committee.

*A point of clarity: the rent for something like that, since your outfit is broke, would have to be paid by?*

There’s a slightly different situation there. They formed a organization called the J.P. Stevens Employees Education Committee back a couple of years ago, and that is the organization that raised \$30,000. They’ve still got a little money, a few hundred dollars, and they are paying \$65 a month rent, and they’re paying the \$15 to \$20 a month phone bill. SEE-Fund is supposed to be giving them about \$350 a month for expenses and promotion, and so forth, but so far — well, SEE-Fund did give them \$600 out of this \$9,000 Joe raised back in January — there isn’t anything else to

give them.

*Where else do you have offices?*

We have one in Greenville, South Carolina. That one we don’t pay any rent on. It’s a very fine office building that is for sale, and we were told that we could use it until it was sold. We do have the telephone there, and Jack Grier is personally paying for the telephone there. There’s no other overhead of that sort there. The power is on in the building so we had heat this winter, and we’ve got air conditioning now. It’s a very nice temporary place.

I’ve worked toward establishing an office here in Shelby, and I plan after you and I get through this afternoon to do some more work on that because we’ve found that there are several material things that do help the cause: having an office, or Freedom Hall, as they call it, if you can keep the overhead down, is a worthwhile thing.

Fiber Industries people don’t meet on any regular schedule, but meet every two to three weeks. They have two meetings: one in the morning and one in the evening.

*Is that a Stevens subsidiary?*

No, that’s an entirely different operation. The Teamsters are trying to get in there.

There are others. In the next 24 hours I’ll be meeting with people at Badische, a German yarn firm in Anderson, South Carolina. The Textile Workers are trying to get in there. I met with them about two weeks ago — we had probably 40 people out that night. It’s a new activity, a lot of enthusiasm; if it goes on for four years we’ll be lucky to have 10 of them.

I would say out of the 25 to 35 people we’ve got at these other Stevens areas we probably average about 10, maybe 12, at a typical meeting. Some of the faces are there every time; some rotate.

*What would you say normally is the motivation for people who come to your meetings?*

Most of them are people who have a union story to tell. For instance I have just picked up a couple of new black workers down at the Wagram plants of J.P. Stevens. I put out, they put out a handout three or four weeks ago that I put together about black people and how the unions have

traditionally taken advantage of black people and ignored them when it was to the unions’ advantage. Both these black people that have just come forward (no one knew about them before) have worked in greater New York where they had to belong to a union in order to hold a lowly job. The woman had a job working for a dry cleaner making the minimum wage, and out of that she had to pay union dues.

Mildred Ramsey is a very good typical situation — typical of the middle-aged people who remember as children the violence and the horror stories that they heard as the Textile Union marched through the South.

*At the meetings that you have with the employees have you ever brought in any outstanding speakers to address them?*

Oh yeah. We’ve had three rallies since I’ve been involved with the thing. One in Greenville, one in Laurens, and one last Sunday in Waltersboro. And we had a labor consultant from Winston-Salem, Bill Craig, speak at the Greenville rally and the Waltersboro rally. The Laurens rally two weeks ago we had Norton Wilcox, my predecessor, speak. He did a real fine job. We billed him as a consultant though he’s now a corporate personnel guy. Mildred Ramsey got her pastor to speak at the Greenville rally, a Dr. Greer, pastor of one of the big Baptist churches. He quit high school, went to work in a Stevens mill, and he now has a Ph.D. in religion which he earned. Fantastic guy, great speaker. And he’d been one of them and could tell it the way it was.

Of course, the people who really get the point across are the hourly people who speak. At each one of these we get people to speak — starting with Mildred Ramsey, and ending . . .

*How can she afford to travel around?*

She is very well paid. Probably half the year she works six days so she gets a fair amount of overtime. She’s one who’s not discriminated against in that regard. She makes somewhere in the neighborhood of \$275 a week on the average, I think, as a weaver. She owns her own house free and clear. Sure it’s a mill house, but she didn’t always live there. Her husband used to have his own business. They had a very nice

brick home out in the country. But he had a stroke 15 or 16 years ago and has been more or less a vegetable ever since. She sold the house, took the equity out, and bought free and clear a mill house in the old mill village a block and a half from where she works.

She owns about a year-old Dodge, which is paid for. She dresses very well, and she lives very well. But her only expense, other than her clothes and the beauty parlor once or twice a week, is the expense of doing what she's doing. And she spends a fortune of her own money on gasoline and tires and postage. She's a fantastic writer, and I bet that gal writes six or eight letters a week to other chairmen at other Stevens plants.

She wrote an eight-page letter the other night to an old guy, a 97-year-old guy in Alabama, who supposedly is going to fund this thing of ours. Well, I've learned to ignore — well, not ignore — old men, but it's all in their heads, even if they've got the money.

*Who is this man? Does he exist?*

Name is Taylor. I think it's J.L. Taylor; lives in Chickasaw, Alabama, outside of Mobile. I've met him. He flew to Greenville about a month ago to meet Mildred and me and talk with us and find out about what we're doing. Because he had an idea to do the same thing, and then he found out we were already doing it. I don't know whether he's got \$200,000 or \$200,000,000, but he's obviously got means. I don't think he'll come through with a thing.

*Talking about the material support that you can give these people — beyond the T-shirts, help with the literature, organizing the rallies, and giving what spiritual counsel you can, what other kinds of, . . .*

Tell them what they can do. They can do most anything the union can do. And by that I don't mean slashing tires. I don't find there's any interest in that kind of thing. In fact, they really want to avoid anything that might provoke violence of any kind.

They try to win souls. Of course, religion plays a big part in this, and I try to get some of the people to tone it down a little bit. Mildred, Leonard Wilson up in Roanoke Rapids, shoot, they'd be quoting Bible every other sentence if they hadn't been convinced

that perhaps it wasn't good business.

I advise them about what they can do. We are now filing unfair labor practice charges against the union, which has never happened before because they didn't know they could do it. They thought they had to take these threats.

The first one was a guy down in Laurens [David Taylor]. The people told me a few weeks ago about this fellow who had written a letter for his committee, and we had reproduced it as one side of a handout, and he'd signed it: telling about his experience in another textile mill where the Textile Workers have had a contract since 1930-something [Pacific Mills in Columbia, South Carolina]. And he was doing the same job, making less money, having fewer paid holidays, less group insurance, and fewer benefits generally in that mill with the Textile Workers, and paying dues, than in his present job in the Stevens plant. . . .

He got some flak about it, so he wrote another one telling a little bit more, and we put that one out as one side of a handout . . . and this time, one of the paid organizers (of course, as you know at Stevens they are allowed by court order to go into the break rooms two hours a day and do their damndest) said, "Look, buddy, you better smarten up. If you don't cut this stuff out we're going to sue the ass off of you. We know that you don't have any money and can't afford high-priced lawyers so you're going to be in trouble." Well, that's an economic threat. So they asked me, "Isn't there something we can do?" And I told them, "Sure, unfair labor practice." That's what I've been preaching to them for four months; let's get some unfair labor practice charges going. There's plenty of material to work with. But they've been reluctant to take that step.

*How do you think it's all going to come out, George?*

I'm afraid it's going to go on forever, really, I don't see an end to it. I think the Roanoke Rapids situation will get straight eventually because I think eventually they'll get decertified there. We've just recently learned that J.P. Stevens told the union people in June of last year after they agreed on an increase and an improvement in benefits which was being

granted at all the other Stevens plants, Stevens said, "Now, because of all the difficulties we're going through, the trouble this is creating, the expense, the unhappiness among our employees, the inefficiencies, the second-quality product, all these things, we've determined that it's in our best interests not to grant any future raises or improvements in benefits at these plants where you represent the employees until such time as you, the union, sign a contract."

Now that was kept very quiet by everyone until it came to light about five or six weeks ago. The people up there heard a rumor to that effect, and I investigated and found a copy of a memo from NLRB where the union had apparently quietly filed a charge against Stevens for an unfair labor practice by saying that they were not going to give any more raises there. . . .

So we did a handout which reproduced part of this four-page memorandum that advised the people up there they weren't going to get a raise or improved benefits and so forth, and the employees' feeling is that now the union has no choice but to sign a contract on some terms.

I assume Stevens is thinking along the same lines, and I suppose their thinking is they know the employees want to decertify. They feel reasonably confident that the union no longer represents a majority there.

Once there's a contract, my understanding is that we would be able to, the employees would be able to, petition for a decertification election. These unfair labor practice charges would no longer block a decertification election.

*So Stevens is now trying to nail down a contract?*

We believe, we assume so. Then we would have the decertification. So I would continue to work with these people. Work harder, probably, toward building more support to decertify because we'd like to have surely 75 or 80 percent of the people in favor of decertification so it would go through without any problem.

Getting the union out is tough. One of their tactics is to say, "Give us a try for a year or two. If you don't like us you can vote us out." It sounds good, but in practice it's tough. It does happen a lot, but it's a lot of work. □

# MARK OF THE BEAST

For over a hundred years, black and white people have fought the Ku Klux Klan. In these pages, we focus on what the Klan does and says (including the prayer below), and on strategies for fighting its menace. But as Anne Braden's "Lessons From A History of Struggle" and other articles reveal, the Klan is only the mark of a larger beast – institutional racism and other forms of corporate exploitation. If the Klan is allowed to spread its venom unopposed, it will grow to proportions which threaten unions, community organizations and decent people everywhere. Armed with this section, we hope that you will not only oppose the mark but also destroy the beast.

– Pat Bryant, Special Section Editor



Alpha Blount

## KLANSMAN'S PRAYER

*In the tradition of the Ku Klux Klan and the white race we will have a word of prayer. All Klansmen and white people bow your heads:*

*Our Lord we thank you for the opportunity to assemble here today and exercise our free rights that our forefathers fought and died for. That right to assemble and worship God and love one another as white men and women and to gather together and stand up for our rights.*

*Lord help us to be men and women and help us not to be afraid. Give us victory over the race mixers, the communists and the liberals. Give us victory over the politicians who sell their souls out for a vote. Give us victory over the socialists and communists.*

*Lord protect the Klan and bless our leadership. We thank Him for us being here; make everything that is said and done here today be for the honor and glory of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and may we always be thankful to Him, for we pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

– June 9, 1978, Decatur, Alabama

# THE MENACE

KIRK LOGGINS AND SUSAN THOMAS

The tension in the Muscle Shoals, Alabama, Omelet Shoppe suddenly was electric that night, last October 29, when the two black ministers entered and sat down in a booth near the cash register.

At the counter, every seat was filled by white Klansmen, dressed in street clothes and wearing baseball caps bearing the KKK emblem.

When the Klan members noticed the black men sitting there sipping coffee, voices lowered for a few moments, then their conversation became loud and boisterous. The word "nigger" repeatedly echoed across the dining room.

"It was like a scene from a 1960s sit-in," said a federal officer who later investigated the pick-ax handle assault on the ministers. "Every patron knew something terrible was about to happen. But it was like everybody was paralyzed, except the Klan members. Of course," the officer said, "the ministers weren't there to prove anything. They were just there to have a cup of coffee."

It was sheer coincidence that the Klansmen were there that night. They had just come from picketing TV station WOWL in nearby Florence. They were protesting because it was airing *Freedom Road*, a film starring Muhammad Ali.

The Reverend Otis Nelms had come to the Omelet Shoppe in his home town of Muscle Shoals that night to chat about church matters with the Reverend Roger Pride from the neighboring community of Courtland.

Abruptly, Klansman Ricky Lynn Creekmore pushed away from the



Kevin Bell

counter and strode to the booth, glaring down at the two ministers. He tossed a small, white Klan "calling card" into Nelms' lap.

Nelms looked at it. His eyes met Creekmore's.

"Is this for me?"

"It's for you," Creekmore replied. He walked back to the counter where the other Klan members were watching. For a few minutes the conversation at the counter continued — more loud talk which included racial slurs.

When the black ministers rose to leave, the Klansmen surrounded them and elbowed them as they went outside to the parking lot.

A patron of the restaurant ran to the phone and called the police, but by the time the wail of sirens was heard in the parking lot, the Klansmen had grabbed pick-ax handles from their cars, assaulted the two ministers

Civil rights demonstrators face the Klan in Decatur, Alabama.

and bashed in the side of their automobile. The Klansmen fled as the police cruisers arrived.

Later Creekmore and Charles Jethro Puckett, identified as one of those swinging a pickhandle on Pride, were arrested. They pleaded guilt in federal court and were sentenced to a year in prison. At least three more Klansmen — perhaps five — are sought by authorities on assault charges.

# RETURNS



Kevin Bell

**W**henever members of the “new” Klan movement march these days, violence — the Klan’s traditional ally — may walk just a half a step behind.

In 1971, the Ku Klux Klan had slightly more than 4,000 members, according to FBI estimates — a sharp drop from the 16,810 Klansmen which a congressional committee had reported in 1967. But nine years later, in 1980, the Ku Klux Klan is coming back. The Anti-Defamation League of B’nai Brith estimates Klan membership at around 10,000. Officials of the U.S. Justice Department say the 10,000 figure “may be on the low side.” For

the year ending September, 1979, the Community Relations Service of the Justice Department reported a 450 percent increase in Klan-related activities from the year before. In the first two months of this year, the CRS has reported that the number of Klan incidents in communities across the nation is still on the rise.

Always, it seems, violence follows in the shadow of the hooded members of the Ku Klux Klan: killings, shootings, beatings, vandalism. “There is a direct corollary between the increased Klan activities in the streets and the upturn in violence related to the Klan,” says William Gralnick, director

of the American Jewish Committee office in Atlanta, and a constant Klan watcher. “We show a clear trend — an increase in serious incidents,” echoes Gilbert Poma, who is director of the Justice Department’s Community Relations Service in Washington. “I fear there will be more violence.”

While most of the acts of physical violence have occurred in the South, there have been cross burnings and gunfire in some Northern communities in recent months. But the most publicized incidents of violence in recent months both occurred in Southern communities: Greensboro, North Carolina, and Decatur, Alabama. A group of Klansmen and neo-Nazis gunned down and killed five radical anti-Klan protestors in a broad daylight shootout on a Greensboro street in late November. A few months earlier, in Decatur, two blacks and two Klan members were shot down, again in broad daylight, in a bloody street confrontation.

Other incidents in 1979 include these acts of violence:

- In Sylacauga, Alabama, a few months before the Decatur assault, a Klan klavern declared war on two black leaders. Gunshots were fired into the homes of Charles Woods, state president of the NAACP, and local NAACP head Willie James Williams, a retired Army sergeant. Twenty Klansmen were rounded up and charged with federal counts of violating the civil rights of citizens through acts of terrorism. In addition to seeking to intimidate the NAACP leaders, the Klan klavern also sought to become the enforcer of community morals: gunshots blasted the house where two interracial couples were living, and a man whose neighbor told the Klan he had engaged in child abuse was given a “nightride” and flogged. Thirteen of the Klan members were either convicted or pleaded guilty to civil-rights charges in their reign of terror.

- In Cullman, Alabama, in September, 1979, a Klan klaliff (vice president) called a rally to protest because two Vietnamese refugees had been employed at a local textile mill. The klaliff, Clarence Eugene Brown, also employed at the mill, threatened the Vietnamese workers on two occasions and, according to federal prosecutors, finally warned them: “If you come back to work I’ll kill you.” Later, in the company of another Klan member, 300-pound Myron (Tiny) Marsh, he

pulled a knife and menacingly waved it at them, according to testimony in the trial at which Brown was convicted of violation of civil-rights laws.

- In Carbon Hill, Alabama, May 8, police instituted a nine p.m. curfew after a black man, James McCullman, 24, was shot in the face at a Klan gathering. A man at the meeting, Roger Dale Patmon, 34, was charged with assault with attempt to commit murder. A Klan leader praised Patmon for behaving "admirably."

- In Tupelo, Mississippi, opposing marches between civil-rights activists and Klan members erupted into a fight last June when a KKK member began beating a black with a heavy chain.

In every one of those situations and in dozens of others that have occurred from California to Georgia, Texas to New Jersey — there is the potential for the sort of bloodshed that came in Greensboro and Decatur.

**A** tiny independent Klan faction in North Carolina was involved in the worst episode of Klan violence in more than a decade. There had been little public activity in North Carolina's Piedmont area before two small Klan factions in the Winston-Salem area began competing for attention early last year. They demonstrated, held news conferences, put displays of Klan regalia in public libraries and burned crosses. An integrated group of protestors — some of them members of the Communist Workers Party — marched on a Klan meeting in the small town of China Grove in July, chanting "Kill the Klan!" They burned a Confederate flag and forced armed Klan "security guards" to retreat into a building where they were preparing to show the film *The Birth of a Nation*.

The Communist Workers Party, whose college-educated members had had only limited success in organizing workers in the Piedmont area's textile mills, announced plans in mid-October for a "Death to the Klan" rally in the black community of Greensboro. The group challenged the Klan to appear and told police, in a public statement two days before the march, to "stay out of our way."

Police say they planned to provide security for the march, which was scheduled to start at noon, but most of the officers assigned to it were still at lunch when a surveillance officer

reported, shortly after 11 a.m., that a nine-car caravan of Klansmen and neo-Nazis was headed for the anti-Klan rally. The Klan caravan drove down a narrow street into the midst of the gathering protestors, who were shouting "Death to the Klan!" The Klansmen began shouting "Nigger," "Kike," and "Communists," according to witnesses. Some of the protestors began hitting the Klan cars with their signs, and a shot was fired.

The Klan members were not hit and almost all the shots that followed came from the Klansmen and their Nazi friends, several of whom got guns from the trunk of the car and coolly fired at the demonstrators. TV cameras recorded the deaths, including Klan members firing point blank at fallen protestors. Five members of the Communist Workers Party were killed, and another CWP member, Dr. Paul Bermanzohn, was shot in the head and remains partially paralyzed today.

Both sides blame the tragedy on the police. "This was an organized, planned assassination, carried out with the cooperation of the Greensboro police," said Bermanzohn, 30, who had become involved in left-wing politics when he and two of the men killed were students at Duke University Medical School.

"We were set up," said Virgil Griffin, the Klan Grand Dragon who was in the caravan. Several of the Klansmen said after the shooting that they had planned only to heckle and throw eggs at the marchers. "We did not expect a fight. If we had, we wouldn't have had our guns in the trunk," Griffin said. But, he added, "We don't believe Communists have a right to be on the streets of Greensboro or anywhere else. I don't see the difference between killing Communists in Vietnam and killing them over here."

The deaths in Greensboro gave added impetus to the organization of an anti-Klan network, which conducted a giant march in that city on February 2. The march attracted several thousand people from across the eastern United States. The Klan stayed home.

**T**he seeds of a gun battle at Decatur last May had been planted a year before and had been nurtured to maturity by the Klan. The first sign of trouble came in 1978 following the arrest of Tommie Lee

Hines, a severely retarded black, on charges of raping three white women. Despite considerable evidence that he was mentally incapable of driving a car involved in the crimes, he eventually was sentenced to 30 years in one of those cases.

After blacks staged several marches protesting Hines' conviction, Klan Wizard Bill Wilkinson recognized Decatur as a target for national publicity and announced plans for an August 12 rally. Among the 7,000 whites who turned out — only 50 of them were robed Klansmen — none could have known the truth of Wilkinson's words when he said, "A race war is coming." Tension in the town continued to build last February when about 150 robed Klansmen taunted city officials with a pick-up motorcade through the middle of town, waving shotguns and pistols — in defiance of a new ordinance banning weapons in demonstrations. On May 26, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference marched to protest the Klan, and the KKK put on their robes and loaded their guns for a counter-march.

In early afternoon it happened.

"Help me boys, I'm shot!" shouted David Kelso, 24, a white-robed Klansman, moments after 50 black protestors ran head on into a barrage of 200 Klansmen at a downtown street corner.

"Fall back! Fall back!" someone screamed as three others — Larry Lee Smith, 41, white; Berdice Brown, 27, black; and Berdice Kildo, 41, white — stumbled bleeding to the ground.

The violence stunned the city. Two days later, 200 heavily armed Klansmen headed by Wilkinson rallied at the city hall and burned a seven-foot cross while Wilkinson was telling the town, "Arm yourselves against the niggers."

Such racist militancy has led Wilkinson to become known as the Klan leader whose organization is the most aggressive in recruiting new members. Justice Department spokesmen refer to him as "wild" and "dangerous." The Anti-Defamation League says he is "lawless." He apparently is ready to move into any community where there is racial difficulty to try to organize a Klan chapter. Other Klan leaders, unhappy with his tactics and jealous of their territory, call him an "ambulance chaser."

**A** stumpy man who wears glasses, Wilkinson is a tenacious advocate of white supremacy, an adequate public speaker and a hard-nosed businessman. He was recruited into the Klan in 1974, when he was 34, by David Duke, who is nine years his junior. Later in 1975, the two men had a bitter break involving a dispute over funds Duke collected during a rally organized by Wilkinson. Wilkinson initiated his own "empire" — called the Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan — named himself Imperial Wizard and opened headquarters on a 10-acre plot he owns in Denham Springs, Louisiana, just outside Baton Rouge.

Today, Wilkinson flies his own plane ("The Klan bought it for me") to rallies and marches. He often goes armed, and he has been arrested four times in the last two years, though convicted only on a misdemeanor for parading without a permit. On at least two occasions, he was present at Klan events when gunfire broke out.

Among other national Klan leaders, Robert Shelton has the largest membership — but he has served time in federal prison for failing to give Congress Klan records, and much of the fire seems drained from his faction. He calls Wilkinson "foolish" for "taking people out in the streets with guns and getting them arrested." Shelton, 51, the Imperial Wizard of the United Klans of America, is a veteran of the violent 1960s in the South, and was the best-known KKK figure for many years. His organization's membership reached an estimated 15,000 before he was sent to federal prison in 1969.

The FBI admits today that Shelton was accurate in complaining his Klan was infiltrated, harassed and undermined by a Cointelpro campaign of "dirty tricks." Years of controversy and conflict have now made him guarded around reporters, suspicious even of his own members ("We give all new members a lie detector test") and jealous of other Klan competitors ("Duke runs a mail order Klan and Wilkinson is irresponsible.") A tough, taciturn man, he is less media-oriented than the "new" Klan leaders, but observers still say his United Klans of America has more active members than other groups. Shelton's headquarters are now located in a two-year-old 7,200 square foot metal building on a dirt road in the piney woods

north of Tuscaloosa; the land is owned by the Anglo-Saxon Club, a Klan front, of which Shelton is president.

If the Ku Klux Klan has a "new" image behind the old hood, it is largely because tall, muscular, mustachioed David Duke has become something of a "media personality." An attractive college graduate who operates as Grand Wizard of his Knights of the Ku Klux Klan — based in Metairie, Louisiana, just outside New Orleans — Duke delivers a carefully polished pitch on "white rights" that often has made him shine against TV newscasters and interviewers who come unprepared, expecting him to spew traditional racial hate, slurs and slogans.

Duke publicly disavows Klan violence, but he paid a \$500 fine last year for an inciting-to-riot conviction and is still on probation. A recent edition of his newspaper, *The Crusader*, called for freeing the "Greensboro 14" Klan and neo-Nazi members charged with gunning down the five CWP members. He has pledged to raise money for their lawyers, and he allows his members across the country to make their own rules about guns.

Duke's Texas Grand Dragon, Louis Beam, has a Klan chapter that is armed and trained as a paramilitary unit. Klan watchers like Irwin Suall, director of fact-finding for the Anti-Defamation League, say they think Beam's Texas Klan organization has "the greatest potential for violence" of any in the country. Beam provides a full military training program — using surplus Army ordinance — to Klansmen who join his Texas Emergency reserves.

He is 33, a Vietnam War veteran and a graduate of the University of Houston. He boasts that Klan members from nearby Fort Hood say the training his "army" provides is "at least twice superior to what they get at Fort Hood." Beam's Klan members hand out "Nigger Hunting Licenses," and his mimeographed Klan newspaper *The Rat Sheet* features a drawing — captioned "the Only Way" — of a masked Klansman with a U.S. flag in one hand and a rifle in the other.

Former Duke associate Tom Metzger, the Grand Dragon of his own Klan realm in California, has organized some of his followers into a black-uniformed, helmeted "security force" which has had several violent clashes with groups of leftist protestors. During a clash in Castro Valley on August 19, 1979, 30 anti-Klan protestors fought



Dramatizing their call for a race war, Klan members carried these weapons with them on their August, 1979, march retracing the Selma-to-Montgomery route followed by civil rights demonstrators in 1965. The arms were confiscated by Alabama police.

Klansman wielding clubs and plywood shields, sending one Klansman to the hospital for treatment of a head injury. More recently, Metzger's men were involved in a street fight at Oceanside, California.

Klan-related violence is not limited to the South and West. In February this year, in Barnegat, New Jersey, one of Duke's followers, Aaron Morrison,

18, was sought by police for questioning regarding some shots fired into a black home. Police say they found a cache of weapons — including four high-powered rifles, seven knives, brass knuckles and a blowgun — when they searched Morrison's home.

**T**he resurgence of the Klan and its potential for violence cannot be ignored. They are real, as we learned firsthand in the course of a four-month newspaper series for the *Tennessean*. After interviewing a Klan leader in New Orleans, a reporter and photographer found that the four tires on their car had been slashed.

There is nothing new about the economic frustrations, racial tension and crude anti-Semitism that contribute to the growth of the Klan, nor is there anything new about the message of the Klan in the 1980s: racial hatred. What is new and frightening is that this message is being delivered by Klan leaders who are becoming expert at generating publicity and manipulating the media, and who are promoting the "new" Klan as a family affair. By appearing on national television and inviting women and children to join, the "new" Klan hopes to make itself respectable. But there never was and never will be a way to make the Klan and its racism respectable.

There are those who fear that the "exposure" of the "new" Klan will only encourage people to join, or will promote anti-Semitism, or magnify white racism. But history shows that to wait until there are 20,000 Klan members — and until the corruption again pervades society — is to ignore a cancerous growth until it cannot be arrested without major surgery. The Klan is most dangerous when it is left alone and its leaders — old and new — can spew their racist venom unchallenged. That is when the Klan can poison a community and the country. □

*This article is adapted from a series on the Klan written by staff reporters Kirk Loggins and Susan Thomas of the Tennessean in Nashville. Photographs are by Nancy Warnecke, and the material here, in the box on this page and on pages 91-92 are reprinted by permission of the Tennessean's publisher. The 14-part series was reissued by the newspaper in a tabloid and is available by writing publisher John Seighenthaler at 1100 Broadway, Nashville, 37202.*

# KLAN KASH &

The black mayor of New Orleans didn't know when he became honorary chairman of the France-Louisiana Festival that a national Ku Klux Klan leader would publish the festival's monthly newspaper. "He was completely unaware of it until this moment," said Jay Handleman, press secretary to Mayor Ernest Morial. Nor did the mayor know that when his administration agreed to give the festival free rent in the International Trade Mart building that the same Klan wizard would sell advertising for the newspaper *Festival* from those offices.

The first edition sold more than \$12,000 in ad space, according to the *Festival* rate card. Under his agreement with festival officials the Klan leader received 85 percent of the ad sales revenue and paid publishing costs. The festival got 15 percent.

"Published by E.C. Promotions, 339 ITM Bldg.," reads a subscription ad in the initial edition of the news-

paper last July. Only a handful of people — perhaps only two — knew that "E.C." stood for Elbert Claude, the name given at birth to the man now known as Bill Wilkinson, 37, Imperial Wizard of the Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. The "339 ITM Bldg." address was the suite of plush offices to which the city gave Wilkinson access while he conducted his business for *Festival*. Wilkinson was one of the two who obviously knew. Another was a former Klan wizard and Klan editor named Jerry Dutton, a member of the *Festival* board.

Those close to Wilkinson in the past say E.C. Promotions was a Klan front name he used to raise money for his Denham Springs, Louisiana, KKK operation. Wilkinson himself will not discuss E.C. Promotions or his relationship with *Festival*.

"I have no comment about that," he told reporters.

Dr. Donald Landry, a well-known New Orleans area dentist and active civic leader, is chairman of the France-Louisiana Festival. He told reporters he had no idea that the man introduced to him as "E.C." was actually Bill Wilkinson, the Klan leader. Sometime later, Landry said, he saw Wilkinson on television during a Klan march.



courtesy The Tennessean



# KARRY: "NO COMMENT"

"I ended the relationship at once," he said.

As Morial and Landry were unaware of the Klan connection to the festival, so were Louisiana Governor Edwin Edwards and Gilbert Bochet, consul-general of France, who, with Morial, were listed in *Festival* as honorary co-chairmen.

The E.C. Promotions deal with the France-Louisiana Festival is one example of the diverse ways leaders of the "new" Klan generate funds to sustain their competing and growing organizations. What Wilkinson had in mind there seems clear. More clouded is a recent transfer he made of his property — including the site where his new Klan headquarters is under construction — to something called the Universal Life Church of Modesto, California. Universal Life is known as a mail-order church, granting pastories by mail.

The transfer was recorded at the Livingston Parish courthouse January 2, 1980. On its face it appears to be a search for a tax shelter, but it could be that the Klan leader thinks he is protecting himself against a lawsuit or some other future effort to take his property. He was smilingly evasive when a reporter told him the transfer had been discovered by an investigative news team.

"It could release me from any encumbrances that could influence any decision I might make in the future," Wilkinson said of the transfer. "It could release me from having any, let's say, financial conflicts with my beliefs... a wide range of things that could get very complicated."

His deal with the France-Louisiana Festival is much easier to understand.

Landry, the France-Louisiana Festival chairman, readily explained to reporters how Wilkinson got into the deal. Landry had met an antique dealer named Gerald Dutton — the same Jerry Dutton, it develops, who had been David Duke's Klan Grand Wizard before leaving and becoming editor of Wilkinson's newspaper, *The Klansman*. The festival committee Landry chaired was not doing well financially. Dutton, says Landry, offered to help. He

brought in "E.C. Wilkinson" with the suggestion that "E.C. Promotions" sell ads and publish a monthly bi-lingual festival newspaper. Landry thought 15 percent would be better than nothing, so he took the deal, not knowing Dutton's past. He also put Jerry Dutton on the festival board.

The first edition went over big, with plenty of advertising. But after the first issue, the ads dropped substantially. Then Landry saw "E.C." involved in a Ku Klux Klan conflict — but a TV newsman said his name was "Bill" Wilkinson. Landry was startled. As a Catholic, he felt the Klan was an affront to what he believed in. "I hate the Klan," he told the Nashville *Tennessean*. "I spit on the Klan."

Wilkinson, who had put out two editions of the newspaper, gave up his role in the publication. Dutton, who was involved in typesetting, continued to lay the paper out and set the type. He still is doing so, and Landry has had a hard time believing that his festival board member, Gerald Dutton, is Jerry Dutton, a former Klan Wizard and Klan newspaper editor.

Dutton was active in protests against the civil-rights movement when he was a member of the far-right National States Rights Party in Birmingham in the early 1960s. Four times during the turbulent '60s he was arrested and convicted for engaging in protest actions against blacks, including a resisting arrest charge. He was sentenced to two years — four separate 180-day sentences. Dutton spent several years on the West Coast, then moved to New Orleans in 1976 at the invitation of an old friend from his Birmingham days, anti-Semitic publisher James K. Warner, who was then "national information director" for Duke's Klan.

After Dutton split with Duke in 1976, Dutton says, he took a copy of Duke's mailing list to Wilkinson and began serving as editor of Wilkinson's Klan paper. Dutton appeared with Wilkinson on the platform at the Invisible Empire's "Fire Andrew Young" rally in Plains, Georgia, in 1977. A sports car rammed the speaker's platform and sent them sprawling.

He has recently used a Metairie post

office box number, 8862, to mail out a sheet entitled, "The Truth About David Duke." When E.C. Promotions gave the France-Louisiana Festival board an address, it was Box 8862, Metairie. Despite his past activism, Dutton has managed to keep his Klan-related ties concealed — at least from Landry and others associated with the festival. Landry, after accepting the idea for the newspaper, asked the mayor's office for rent-free space and got it at the ITM building. "I simply will not believe that Jerry is involved in all that."

When Wilkinson and his E.C. Promotions were severed from the festival, Landry asked Dutton to find him another person to sell ads. Dutton did so. He also continues to do the layout and typesetting of *Festival* at his own company, Image Typesetters, located in Metairie.

Landry, Mayor Morial, Governor Edwards and French Consul Bochet had similar responses when asked about their knowledge of Dutton's Klan past, Wilkinson's identity and the two men's relationship.

"Somebody wrote me a letter and asked me to serve as honorary chairman and I said I would," Edwards said. "I'm totally unaware of any of the rest of it. There are good Cajuns who may be Klansmen, but there are no good Klansmen who are Cajuns," he added, referring to the French-American ethnic background of many citizens of his state.

Bochet said that if the Klan tie proved to be an embarrassment, "the French government will have to withdraw" from the festival. "I will have to investigate," he said.

Dutton was highly agitated when he learned that the press had learned the story of E.C. Promotions and his ties with Wilkinson. He would not discuss it with reporters who telephoned. His wife said he would not answer any questions asked by reporters. □

ANNE BRADEN

# LESSONS FROM A HISTORY OF STRUGGLE

Recently 10,000 people, black and white, marched in Greensboro, North Carolina to say "no" to the Ku Klux Klan and racism. They came to express outrage at the massacre of five anti-Klan demonstrators by Klansmen and Nazis in Greensboro on November 3, 1979. The murders took place on the street, in broad daylight, in front of TV cameras — a new level of open racist terror in America. More and more people now recognize the Klan resurgence cannot be written off as a lunatic fringe, and that we must organize to stop it. The Greensboro demonstration was called by the National Anti-Klan Network, a coalition that emerged from meetings organized in late 1979 by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO). The coalition is attracting broad support — church groups, trade unionists, community activists, representatives of the political left. More than 300 organizations co-sponsored the Greensboro action.

If the struggle to isolate the Klan and ultimately destroy it is to succeed, we must understand the long and bloody history of the Klan; we must sift out the lessons we can learn from that history; and we must understand why it keeps reappearing in our land, like a cat with nine lives.

Next, we must analyze why there is a revival of the Klan at this particular time and the danger it represents. And we must develop an approach to fight it that goes deeper than the Klan itself.

First, the lessons of history. In the first place, each period when the Klan attempted and sometimes achieved growth was a period of economic and social turmoil. This was certainly true in the South after the Civil War, when the Klan was initially organized. That was a time of upheaval, a revolution-

ary time, and for a short moment a very promising time. Free slaves were literally setting up new governments in the South. And, as the history books usually overlook, at least some of the disinherited whites of the South, who never had a stake in the slave-owning society, joined with blacks to form those new governments and institute programs that met people's needs.

But other whites were confused and feared economic competition from the freed blacks, so they joined the Klan — which was started in Pulaski, Tennessee, in 1865, by the sons of the old ruling class who wanted to regain their power. With the poor as their troops, they did indeed eventually regain that power, overthrowing those new governments by force and violence. After that, the Klan disbanded — not because its ideology had been abandoned by the ruling class, but because they didn't need it anymore. The Klan ideology simply became the prevailing force in the official governments of the South, and indeed of the country, in the following decades.

The next period when the Klan experienced great growth was the 1920s. It reached its greatest numerical strength, an estimated five million, with the ability to elect mayors, city councilmen, state legislators and members of Congress; the Klan was really running the country.

Sometimes people don't think of the '20s as a time of turmoil: it was also a time of repression, and by the end of the decade things were quiet. But the beginning of the decade was tumultuous: black veterans returning from World War I expecting to enjoy some of the democracy they had supposedly fought for; workers organizing unions; people afraid of depression; and on the world scene a recent major revolution, as the ruling class was ousted in Russia. The Klan presented itself as a great force for stability,

attacking blacks, Jews, Catholics, Bolsheviks and finally anyone it did not consider properly moral. And it recruited many people who were confused by the uncertainty of the times.

Both these times of great Klan growth — the post-Civil War period and the 1920s — were periods when great numbers of people felt overwhelmed by problems, in their lives and society, which they saw no answers for.

On the other hand, we miss an important point if we conclude that in any period of turmoil the Klan will become strong. It's not that simple. If that were true, the Klan would have experienced great growth in the 1930s, and it didn't. Yet that was a period of one of the worst economic crises this country has ever known. The Klan tried to re-organize in that period, and it was very violent and dangerous. But in the 1930s, it never really recruited great numbers of people.

Again, consider the 1960s — a time of great social crisis in this country. The Klan again tried to build a mass movement. Again it was violent and dangerous, but again it never really built a mass base. Membership for that period was estimated at 20,000 to 40,000 — too many, but nothing like the millions of the '20s. Ultimately public opinion turned so strongly against the Klan in the 1960s that some Klansmen were actually prosecuted and sent to jail.

So the second lesson we can learn from history lies in what characterized those periods when the Klan, despite great efforts, did not achieve great strength. Both the 1930s and the 1960s were times when (1) strong mass movements advocated real answers to social and economic problems, and (2) there was a strong offensive against the ideology of racism.

In the 1930s, powerful people's movements, like the new labor unions and the unemployed councils, were preaching the necessity of black-white

*Each period when the Klan attempted and sometimes achieved growth was a period of economic and social turmoil.*

patterns of history is that, although the Klan has most often drawn numerical strength from the poor, it has been encouraged, and probably financed, by those with wealth and power. This was certainly true in the early days of the Klan after the Civil War. And it was also true in the 1930s, when the Klan was not gaining many members but was viciously attacking labor unions. All of a sudden it had funds from somewhere to open a flashy Atlanta headquarters and hire a lot of organizers. Undoubtedly, the same thing is going on today.

The fourth lesson we can learn from the Klan's history is that when an aroused citizenry forms a counterforce against it, it *can* be stopped. That happened even at its time of greatest strength, the 1920s. The Klan became so violent and cruel that finally decent people, white as well as black, organized and said *no* — and they prevailed, temporarily.

But the final lesson we must recognize is that although it has declined, the Klan has never totally disappeared. It keeps rising again, because we have not yet defeated the ideology that gives rise to it. That ideology is racism, which has poisoned the minds of the white people of this country and caused poor and working-class white people again and again to work against their own best interests.

**W**hich brings us to the present. We see a resurgence of the Klan today because again we are in a period of social and economic turmoil. But this time it's worse than at any other period in our history. We are living at a time when our society is really falling apart. Our economy is in deep trouble, there are not enough jobs for our young people, our cities



Nancy Warnecke/The Tennessean

unity. And in the 1960s, the black freedom movement generated a moral fervor around a program of human rights. That fervor was not just mobilizing blacks; it stirred the whole country. Young white people found meaning in their lives in the fight for justice and against war; poor whites learned that they could join *with* blacks and

fight for a better life. White Appalachians weren't joining any Klan because they were joining the Poor People's Campaign organized by the SCLC in Washington; and white workers organizing unions in the South were coming to civil-rights groups for help.

The third thing we notice in the

are decaying, our school systems are deteriorating, the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer, more and more people are having to struggle just to survive. It has become quite obvious that the people who are running our society are simply not willing — and perhaps not able — to make the fundamental changes necessary to make this society function to meet the needs of its people. And if you are running a society that is not working, and you are not willing to change, you have only one other choice: you've got to find ways to keep people under control.

That's why a batch of repressive laws are pending in Congress. That's why those in power are building 500 new prison and jail units across the country, at a cost of from \$35,000 to \$50,000 *per cell*. That's why there is a rash of new capital punishment laws on the books, and Death Rows are filling up all over the nation.

But to keep people under control, you've got to go further than that. You've got to explain to large sections of the population why they are having problems, and that explanation has to preclude their looking for and finding

the real reasons. In other words, you have to create a scapegoat mentality among the majority group in the population. And if you do that successfully, you create the basis for something we've never had before in this country — a *mass* fascist movement. And once you have a mass fascist movement, you are on your way to something else we've never really had (except, to a certain extent, in the South before the civil-rights movement): a police state.

Because of the racism that undergirds our society, the potential scapegoat is built in: black and other minority people. If we understand all this, we understand *why* the Klan is growing again today. The cause of the problem is *not* a few criminal individuals who don sheets and hoods and set out to kill. These people are dangerous and they've got to be stopped. But they are an effect, not the cause. The cause of our problems lies with the people in high places who are creating a scapegoat mentality among this nation's white people. It's the powerful people — from the halls of Congress to the board rooms of big corporations — who are telling white people, for example, that if taxes are

eating up their paychecks it's not because of our bloated military budget but because too many government programs benefit blacks and other minorities; that young white people are unemployed because blacks are getting all the jobs; that crime in the streets is caused by black people. *That* message from powerful propagators is creating the climate in which the Klan grows today; that's what is laying the basis for a mass fascist movement in the 1980s.

But that movement does not *have* to grow. It is fully possible instead to build in the 1980s a people's movement that deals with real problems and has the strength to turn this country around in the next decade. But to do that, we've got to fight not only the Klan but the Klan mentality, the ideology that undergirds the Klan.

**L**et's analyze that ideology. The new Klan leaders are saying they are *not* racist, that they *don't* hate black people, that they are *not* against equality for all people. In fact, they say, they are *for* equality. But the problem, they say, is that now black people are getting everything, they've made "too much progress," and now

# 111 Years of KKKronology

**Spring, 1866:** Confederate veterans formed the Klan in Pulaski, Tennessee.

**1867:** With General Nathan Bedford Forrest as Grand Wizard, the organizational structure of the KKK developed to accommodate its spread across the South. Invasion of black homes, flogging of blacks and whites became commonplace.

**July 4, 1867:** Klansmen, most of whom were ex-Confederates, marched in major Southern cities in full regalia.

**1871:** 297 blacks lynched in one month in New Orleans.

**1871-1872:** Congressional investigations led to a few hundred Klansmen being brought to trial for violence. Congress passed the Ku Klux Klan Act that made it a crime for anyone to deprive citizens of their constitutional rights.

**1874:** 200 blacks killed in one week before elections in Vicksburg, Mississippi.

**1866-1875:** 3,500 blacks killed in the South by the Klan.

**1877:** President Rutherford B. Hayes pulled federal troops out of the South in a trade-off for crucial Southern support in his bid for the Presidency.

**1877:** Southern states began to pass "black codes" eroding the newly won freedom of the black slaves.

**1896-1900:** Ku Klux Klan and Red Shirts (another paramilitary organization) conducted campaigns of terror to break up white-black political coalitions.

**1896:** The U.S. Supreme Court upheld segregation and Jim Crow laws in the case of *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, saying "separate but equal" facilities were constitutional.

**1900-1914:** The KKK lynched 1,100 blacks.

**1909:** The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) organized to combat Jim Crow laws and anti-black violence.

**1915:** *The Birth of a Nation*, Hollywood's first full-length motion picture, glorified the role of the Ku Klux Klan in saving the South from "carpetbaggers and niggers." President Wilson was given a private showing of *Birth of a Nation* and remarked "It is like writing history with lightning." One of the most controversial and racist films ever marketed, it generated an enormous furor because of its anti-black stereotypes.

**1915:** On Thanksgiving Eve, William Joseph Simmons invited 15 friends to the top of Stone Mountain, near Atlanta, built an altar, and set fire to a wooden cross. This ceremony launched the Invisible Empire of the Ku Klux Klan, which became the largest KKK organization in the history of the United States.

**1918-1921:** Twenty-eight blacks burned alive. Some of these had just returned from World War I and were murdered in their military uniforms.

**1920:** The Invisible Knights of the KKK grew to an estimated three-and-a-half million members and directed their wrath toward blacks, immigrants, Catholics, Jews and "nigger lovers."

**December, 1921:** 6,000 people attended a public rally of the Ku Klux Klan in Portland, Oregon.

**1920-1930:** Klan-supported candidates won top political offices throughout the nation.

**July 4, 1923:** David C. Stephenson was sworn in as Indiana's Grand Dragon before a crowd of 100,000 Klansmen.

*The Klan has never totally disappeared. It keeps rising again because we have not yet defeated the ideology that gives rise to it.*



Steve Murray



This sign, taken down in 1977, welcomed visitors to Smithfield, N.C., for decades.

it's *white people* who are discriminated against. *Somebody*, they say, has got to protect the rights of white people—and that's what the Klan is for.

If you listen carefully to that argument, you realize that it's precisely the same thing being said by all the forces advancing the concept of "reverse discrimination." Bakke and others say it politely in academic classes and in the halls of Congress, and the Klan says it with violence in the streets — but they are saying the *same thing*.

If we are to defeat the Klan ideology, we've got to take on the whole idea of reverse discrimination and expose it for the hoax that it is. We've got to find the forums — and most often those arise in the context of struggle — to say to the white people of this country that the whole idea of reverse discrimination is a snare and a delusion and just a plain lie.

It's a lie because it is based on at least two myths. The first says black people have now made "too much progress." That's easy to explode with a few facts and statistics, but often white people don't have that information, and the media is not giving it to them.

For example, a few years ago,

**August 8, 1925:** 40,000 Klansmen marched through the streets of Washington, DC, past the Washington Monument, one of the largest demonstrations of its kind in the nation's capitol.

**1930:** The Ku Klux Klan was on the road to collapse from internal pressures, and a broadening of opposition from anti-Klan groups.

**1944:** The Internal Revenue Service filed suit against the Invisible Empire for \$685,000 in back taxes.

**1947:** Stetson Kennedy exposed the Klan in his book *I Rode With the Ku Klux Klan*.

**1948:** President Franklin Roosevelt was pressured by blacks into issuing an executive order banning racial discrimination in the armed forces and war-related industries.

**1954:** The U.S. Supreme Court's *Brown vs. the Board of Education* held that segregated schools were in violation of the Constitution.

**December, 1955:** Alabama woman named Rosa Parks, supported by the Montgomery Improvement Association, sparked a protest movement that spread across the South when she refused to give up her seat on a city bus in Montgomery, Alabama.

**October, 1957:** Blacks in Monroe, North Carolina, opened fire on Ku Klux Klan night riders, a strategy that would be followed by Native Americans in Robeson County, North Carolina, months later.

**1954-1965:** U.S. Justice Department figures show that the Klan was responsible for 70 bombings in Georgia and Mississippi, 30 black church bombings in Mississippi, the castration of a black man in Alabama, and 50 bombings in Birmingham.

**1961:** Freedom rides began to force desegregation of public facilities in the South.

**1963:** The Sixteenth Street Baptist Church was bombed in Birmingham and four young black girls killed in their Sunday School class.

**1964:** The Mississippi Freedom Summer project brought scores of

white students from the North to work with the Council of Federated Organizations. The whites became the target of KKK terror which had frustrated COFO's progress.

**1964:** Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman and James Chaney, young civil-rights workers, were killed by the Original Knights of the Ku Klux Klan near Philadelphia, Mississippi.

**1965:** Viola Liuzzo, a Detroit housewife, was killed by four Klansmen (including FBI informer Gary Thomas Rowe, Jr.), following the historic march from Selma, Alabama, to Montgomery, Alabama. The march brought pressure on Congress to pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which brought federal protections in elections across the South.

**1965:** Deacons for Defense and Justice organized to patrol the black community in Jonesboro, Louisiana, and to defend the community against Klan night riders.

**1966-1969:** The House Un-American Activities Committee held hearings on the KKK. Several leaders were sentenced to jail for contempt of Congress for refusing to turn over records of finances and membership. The Klan went underground.

**1969:** A Charlotte federal district court ordered the Charlotte School Board to bus school students to achieve racial balance in schools. Klan-led violence began but then subsided, a pattern duplicated across the South.

**Mid-1970s:** Klan membership increased in the North following integration of schools through crosstown busing. The most violent attacks on black students occurred in Boston and Detroit suburbs.

**1977:** 250 Klansmen rallied in President Jimmy Carter's hometown of Plains, Georgia. The event ended when a speeding car crashed into the speaker's platform.

Sources: John L. Stewart, *KKK Menace: The Cross Against the People*, 1980; Robert P. Ingalls, *Hoods, The Story of the Ku Klux Klan*, Putnam, 1979; Ted Quant and John Slaughter, *We Won't Go Back: The Rise of the Ku Klux Klan and the Southern Struggle for Equality*, Equal Rights Congress, 1980.

*Every step forward by blacks has opened up new opportunities for a better life to white people, especially poor and working white people.*

10,000 demonstrators marched against Klan terror in Greensboro, North Carolina, on February 2, 1980.



Pat Bryant

unemployment among blacks was one to one-and-a-half times as great as among whites; now it's two to two-and-a-half times as great — the gap is getting worse. A few years ago, median family income among blacks was 62 percent of the median income for whites — bad enough. Now it's 57 percent — the gap is getting worse. A few years ago, 25 percent of black people lived in poverty; now it's 28 percent, and 42 percent of black children live below the poverty line. The gap between white and black infant mortality has *increased* since 1950. One could go on and on. Today, by official figures, unemployment among black youth is about 35 percent, and more accurate unofficial figures put the percentage at 60 to 65 percent, and in some cities 75 to 80 percent. A whole generation of black youth is being systematically destroyed. That's not progress; it's a national disaster.

The truth is that, because of racism, those in power have made a de facto

decision: Since there does not seem to be enough for everybody (which is a myth too), black people can do without. If there aren't enough jobs for everybody, let blacks be unemployed. If there's not enough decent housing for everybody, blacks can live in slums. If there is not good health care for everybody, blacks can die young. This is the essence of racism — the premise that if there are problems to be borne, black people can bear them. So much for the myth of too much black progress.

The second myth that feeds the notion of reverse discrimination says whatever progress blacks *have* made has in some way taken something away from white people. This is simply not true. In fact, the opposite is true. Every step forward by blacks has opened up new opportunities for a better life to white people, especially poor and working white people.

Many white children, for example, do better in school today because they were able to attend Headstart programs.

Twenty years ago there was no Headstart; like all the compensatory programs in education, it began because black people struggled for better education. What they won is only a pittance compared to what is needed, but in what they won whites shared. Many low-income white young people now attend college because of Basic Educational Opportunity Grants (BEOG); these grants didn't exist until blacks struggled for educational opportunity. Many unemployed whites have found a lifeline in a CETA job; CETA, like all jobs programs, as meager as they are, happened because blacks demanded jobs. They haven't won much, but what they won whites share. Many poor white people get help on legal problems today from public service law programs. These developed and expanded in the wake of the movement of the '60s, which pointed up the lack of legal services available to blacks. Blacks struggle for health care, a community clinic is set up — and

whites too have access to better health care. Many similar examples can be cited.

**T**he truth is that the struggle of black people for freedom arising in the '50s and '60s shook up this whole society and made it possible for all people to struggle for a better life. It arose when the country was paralyzed by what we call McCarthyism and we were experiencing the Silent '50s. It broke the pall of the '50s; it made possible the anti-war movement of the '60s; it made possible the new women's movement; it opened the way for other minorities to struggle for *their* rights, which they are now doing; it made it possible for workers, white and black, to organize unions in the South, as they are now doing; it paved the way for the elderly of all races to struggle for a decent life, as they are now doing; it opened the way for handicapped people to demand *their* rights, as they are now doing. It shook the society to its very roots. And that is why those in power were so afraid of it and why they tried so hard to destroy it in the late '60s and early '70s. *But it never took a thing away from the disadvantaged white people of America.*

It has always been this way. The turmoil following the Civil War, for example, didn't hurt poor white Southerners: it gave them free public education for the first time. It gave them, for a brief period, governments concerned with human needs. This process is built into the structure of our society. Blacks are at the base of it, because black slave labor created America's first wealth. So it is only natural that when blacks move upward and outward everyone will move. It is as if the foundation stone of a building shifts, and the whole structure moves. And when the day comes that this society has been stretched to the point that it really has *room* for black people, it will be a society that has room for everybody.

This is the basic truth that explains our society; if we understand this, we understand everything and have the basic key to our problems; if we don't understand it, we can't understand anything and will do all the wrong things and work against our best interest. Some of us who are white have been lucky enough to learn this great truth because we were a part of the civil-rights movement or have inherited

## KKK vs. Labor: A Sampler

**W**hen the CIO announced in 1935 that it was coming South to organize the unorganized – whites and blacks in the same unions – the KKK replied, "We shall fight horror with horror!" In 1934, there was the case of Fred Norman. He and his wife were trying to help the citrus workers around Lakeland, Florida, to form a union. One night a car stopped at the Norman home; Norman was asked to go with [the men] "to identify the body of a Negro." He entered the car; it drove away – and Frank Norman hasn't been seen or heard from since. Evidence purportedly linking Klan kleagle Fred Bass to the disappearance of Norman was twice presented to a grand jury, but the jury did not return an indictment. . . .

1939, Anderson, South Carolina – "They said they were beating me because I didn't give my wife enough money and because I beat my five-year-old boy; but I have never been married and have no children," said one of several union men flogged by the Klan.

March 31, 1942, Holt, Alabama – In a whirlwind climax to weeks of flogging and terror, the Klan planted fiery crosses in front of the CIO Steelworkers Organizing Committee hall and in front of the union leader's home, on the eve of an NLRB election at the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company (a U.S. Steel subsidiary).

September 15, 1943, Apopka, Florida – "Hey, you nigger, we've got your union button and know you're a CIO member!" yelled one of the Klansmen in the parade of masked men who drove through the Negro section on the eve of an NLRB election at the Phillips Citrus Packing House. A number of soldiers (from the North) stopped several carloads of Klansmen and commanded them to "Take those damned hoods off! You ought to be saving that gasoline for war use!"

– Stetson Kennedy, *Southern Exposure*, 1946

its spirit. We say to our white brothers and sisters all across this country that we as white people have been fooled for too many generations by a pack of lies; we've been told that we could beat an unjust system because our skin is white if we would just help keep black people down; now we are being told we can beat an unjust system if we can just keep blacks from discriminating against us. But it won't work; it was never a moral answer and really not practical, and now it won't work at all. The problems today are too deep-going, too basic. The only real answer for white people is to recognize that our fate and the fate of our children is totally interwoven with the fate of black people in America – and that when we fight the Klan, when we fight against racism, we are fighting for our own survival.

As we fight the Klan today, we are really fighting all the forces, all the ideas, that are giving motor power to the current right-wing drive. We hear it said often that there is a drift to the right in America. There's no drift to the right, there's a *drive* to the right – financed and organized by powerful forces. But it can *only* succeed by selling to this country's white people

those myths about reverse discrimination and convincing them that it is black people who are causing their problems. In short, it can only succeed on the basis of racism. Or to put it another way, it is only on the basis of racism that a mass fascist movement can be built in America.

We can thwart the rise of such a movement if enough of us who are white join with our black brothers and sisters to tell the truth to white America. What is at stake is the very soul of America – and the future of every one of us, and of our children. □

*Anne Braden is a journalist who has been active for more than three decades in Southern movements for social justice. She is currently co-chairperson of the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice and a vice-chairperson of the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, and was one of the organizers of the February 2 anti-Klan demonstration in Greensboro, North Carolina. A longer version of this article, based on a speech she made at a national anti-Klan conference in Atlanta in December, 1979, appears in Freedomways magazine, Volume 20, No. 1.*

# 1872: VISITOR FROM HELL

**T**hey had gowns on just like your overcoat, that came down to the toes, and some would be red and some black, like a lady's dress, only open before. The hats were made of paper, and about 18 inches long, and at the top about as thick as your ankle; and down around the eyes it was bound around like horse-covers, and on the mouth there was hair of some description, I don't know what. It looked like a mustache, coming down to the breast, and you couldn't see none of the face, nor nothing; you couldn't see a thing of them. Some of them had horns about as long as my finger, and made black.

They said they came from hell; that they died at Shiloh fight and Bull Run.

They said they wanted [my horse] for a charger to ride into hell. He was a mighty fine charger. They said they came from hell, and wanted to ride him back to hell. They said they had couriers come from hell nine times a day, and they wanted that horse to tote them.

— Joseph Gill  
Huntsville, Alabama

*The above testimony captures the ghoulish terrorism that typified the early days of the Ku Klux Klan. With brutal insistence, the post-Civil War Klan terrorized the black community, running off political leaders and maintaining a climate of fear throughout the South.*

*In 1871, a congressional committee convened site hearings on the Klan's activities in the Southern states. Published in 1872 under the title "Testimony Taken By the Joint Select Committee to Inquire Into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States," the resulting committee report contains the stories of hundreds of individuals' experiences with the Klan. The stories below, all taken from the hearings in South Carolina and Alabama, reveal the cowardly forms of terrorism the Klan pursued and the total absence of effective attempts to control its violence.*

*Most of the early Klan's efforts centered around driving out the reconstruction governments of the post-war period. The "radicals" of the Union League and other groups had instituted progressive changes in government and defied the white supremacists. Klan leaders and their cohorts often tried to buy off, scare off or murder the leaders of the black community. James Alston of Tuskegee, Alabama, recounts one assassination attempt:*

I was elected a representative of Macon County. I was threatened every day. I was threatened by a good many white persons, and I was threatened by colored persons

that they had appointed. I was offered, by Mr. Robert Johnson, \$3,000 to use my influence in the county against my constituency.

I told him that Jesus Christ was betrayed for 30 pieces of silver, only one to the thousand he offered me, that he wanted me to do the like; but that I wouldn't do it for \$3,000 or to save my life; that I held my life more dear to me than anybody else, but I wouldn't betray my people to save my life.

I was shot, I reckon, about 16 months ago. My shutters were closed, and I was in the house, sitting on the side of my bed, and they fired through the windows; I didn't see the men at the time. Two hundred and sixty-five shots were counted outside in the weather-boarding of my house the next day, and 60, as near as we could count, passed through the window, and five through the head-board of the bed I was sitting on and two through the pillow my head would have laid on, and four in the foot-roll of my bed, and two in my body. I now have buck and ball that injures me a good deal, and I think it will be for life; and my wife [and one of my children] have been injured a good deal. I have been in this place about 16 months, not allowed to go to my own property, and I am suffering. My horses, one of them, is killed. Taken away from me and the buggy cut up. My house and lot is there, and I am not allowed to go near the county.

*As South Carolinian Harriett Simril relates, the Klan also took out its fury on women:*

The first time they came, my old man was at home. They hollered out, "Open the door," and he got up and opened the door. They told him to come out, and he came out. These two men that came in, they came in and struck matches to a pine stick and looked about to see if they could see anything. They never said anything, and these young men walked up and they took my old man out after so long; and they wanted him to join this democratic ticket; and after they went a piece above the house and hit him

N.C. State Archives



about five cuts with cowhide. He told them he would rather quit all politics, if that was the way they was going to do him.

They came back after the first time on Sunday night after my old man again, and this second time the crowd was bigger. They called for him, and I told them he wasn't here; then they argued me down, and they told me he was here. I told them no, sir, he wasn't here. They asked me where was my old man? I told them I couldn't tell; when he went away he didn't tell me where he was going. They searched about in the house a long time, and stayed with me an hour that time; searched about a long time, and made me make up a light; and after I got the light made up, then they began to search again.

They were spitting in my face and throwing dirt in my eyes; and when they made me blind they bursted open my cupboard. I had five pies in my cupboard, and they eat all my pies up, and then they took two pieces of meat; then they made me blow up the light again, cursing me; and after awhile they took me out of doors and told me all they wanted was my old man to join the democratic ticket; if he joined the democratic ticket they would have no more to do with him; and after they had got me out of doors, they dragged me into the big road, and they ravished me out there.

*The post-war years also saw many acts of violence against blacks that weren't necessarily Klan-related. Instead, they seemed more a holdover of the plantation mentality. John Childers of Sumter County, Alabama, told of the death of his daughter:*

My wife hired [my daughter] out to a man while I was gone. She was hired out as a nurse to see to the baby; she had taken the baby out in the front yard among a parcel of arbor vitae; and, being out there, the baby and she together, she was neglectful, so as to leave the baby's cap out where it was not in place when the mother of the child called for the cap, and it could not be found. That is what she told me when I came home that she was whipped for.

[When I came home] she was sitting in the door, and I asked her how it come she was not playing with the rest of the children. She says, "Papa, I'm so sore I can't play."

I say, "What's the matter with you?"

She says, "Mr. Jones has beat me near to death."

I says, "He did?"

She says, "Yes." She pulled up her coat here and showed me. "Look here, papa, where he cut me," and there were great gashes on her thighs, as long as my finger. [Later] I commenced examining her, and I found bruised places all over her body, up here, you know [indicating the waist].

She died seven days after I got home. I buried her with scars that long: a finger-length.

*But if a victim tried to prosecute, he soon found the hand of the Invisible Empire at work. Said Childers:*

Mr. Jones, who had employed her from my wife, he was the one that did it. I aimed to prosecute him at the last gone court, but the witnesses, by some means or other, was run away. I don't know; I could not tell how they got them out of the way. There was no case made of them.

*The Klan had a vise-like grip on the entire legal system and made a mockery of the judicial process. William K. Adams, a former member of a South Carolina Klan chapter known,*

*ironically, as the Black Panthers, explained the code that dictated a Klansman's activities.*

He is bound to do all he can. Suppose a case was got up — a murder case. I belonged to the party. Well, if they were to arrest a man, and he was charged with this murder, and I was to be called on as a witness to prove that he was with me that night, although I had not seen him at all, I would have to go and swear that he was with me that night, although I had not seen him at all, I would have to go and swear that he was there that night with me; that's the plan of operations. Several cases have been got up here on suspicion of Ku Klux Klanism, but they are always proved out, because they can produce abundant proof; that is the principle of the party. They are bound to clear each other at the risk of their lives.

[A juror] has to do all he can for the prisoner; it makes no difference what capacity he is in, he is bound to do all he can for him.

I say if I am arrested or charged with Ku Kluxing a man, I go to a courthouse; I subpoena two or three witnesses; I can go there and take my lawyer to question these men and ask them where I was that night, and I can make them turn around and prove that I was 20 miles from the scene of operations that night. That is the plan of proof — that is the only thing, by undeniable evidence, to throw the prosecution.

*With the odds overwhelmingly against them, politically active blacks were forced to flee their homes by the hundreds. Even the witnesses at the congressional hearings feared for their lives after testifying against the Klan. Said John Childers:*

Well, gentlemen, I am delicate in expressing myself. I feel myself in great risk doing these things. I have no support in the State of Alabama. I am a citizen here, bred and born; and have been here 42 years. If I report these things, I can't stay at home. I am in a tight place where I am, and I wish to give you gentlemen all the satisfaction I can but, in the same time, I must be particular in saving myself, because it is just as well to be in one gunboat as another.

*In the face of such violent intimidation and weak federal support, blacks soon lost the progressive gains they had made following the Civil War. Reconstruction governments crumbled, and white supremacy reigned again. With this accomplished, the Klan slipped into the background, leaving behind a climate of fear.*

*But even the strongest efforts of the Ku Klux Klan could not dampen the determination of many blacks to continue struggling for equal treatment. In fact, the words of many witnesses foreshadowed the power and commitment of the civil-rights movement almost a hundred years later. Concludes James Alston:*

But I will go back there when I have the authority to carry that county republican; whenever I am protected by the Thirteenth and Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments as a man amongst men, I am willing to go back any day, if I have the authority to do as Mr. Colfax told me to do when I was in Washington last. I was in a convention, sir. I was one of five men that went up to Washington City when one hundred white men went, and I am the only man that is living. Every one is killed or dead that went there to the inauguration of Grant. Mr. Abercrombie said I should not live, but God Almighty said I should, and I am living. □

# THE MURDER OF JOSEPH SHOEMAKER

ROBERT INGALLS

On November 30, 1935, at about nine o'clock in the evening, a group of Tampa policemen, without a warrant, entered a home at 307 East Palm Avenue and seized six men who were holding a political meeting. After a brief interrogation, the men were released, but three of them — Eugene F. Poulnot, Sam Rogers and Joseph Shoemaker — were abducted by a gang waiting in cars outside police headquarters. These three, all unemployed, and known for their opposition to the city administration, were taken to a wooded area some 14 miles from Tampa. There they were undressed and flogged, after which hot tar and feathers were applied to the wounds. The three were then warned to “get out of town in 24 hours or we’ll kill you.” Poulnot and Rogers were able to make their painful way back to Tampa, but Shoemaker, who had suffered the worst beating, collapsed and spent the night in a ditch alongside a deserted country road. The following morning, Shoemaker’s friends found him and rushed him to a hospital. According to one of the doctors, “He is horribly mutilated. I wouldn’t beat a hog the way that man was whipped. . . . He was beaten until he is paralyzed on one side, probably from blows on the head. . . . I doubt if three square feet would cover the total area of bloodshot bruises on his body, not counting the parts injured only by tar.” In a desperate attempt to save Shoemaker’s life, doctors amputated his left leg, but to no avail. The victim died on December 9, nine days after the flogging.

Radicals and union organizers have frequently encountered defeat in the South. However, the setbacks for labor and the left have not been

due to their inability to attract a following among Southern workers. Indeed, some of the most radical mass movements in America, such as the Populist Party and the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, had Southern roots. The Ku Klux Klan and other violent vigilante groups, often encouraged and aided by more “respected” members of their communities, have played a continuing role in repressing these progressive movements.

Vigilante violence has erupted in every section of the country, but it has proved especially popular in the South. This is particularly true when the challenge to the status quo comes from peaceful groups operating within the law. Faced with this situation, defenders of the local establishment often resort to violence as an illegal but effective way of eliminating “undesirables.”

In a few cases during the 1930s, vigilantes created formal organizations that were widely publicized. In Atlanta, for instance, a group calling itself the Black Shirts carried on a brief campaign of threats against workers. A self-styled White Legion was behind much of the anti-labor violence in Birmingham.

The best known of the many vigilante organizations was, of course, the Ku Klux Klan. The KKK had a relatively small following during the Depression years, but in some areas of the South it was still the chief enforcer of the established order — which excluded industrial unions and radical politics. The Klan also tried to revive its fortunes through appeals to anti-labor and anti-communist sentiment.

The worst outbreak of Klan anti-labor violence came in Tampa. Long a center of KKK activity, Tampa also experienced a variety of anti-radical



Joseph Shoemaker

confrontations. In 1931, over half of Tampa’s 10,000 cigar workers joined a Communist union, the Tobacco Workers Industrial Union. City fathers went to the rescue of cigar manufacturers in a union-busting campaign that included police raids, arrests, a sweeping federal court injunction outlawing the union, and deportation proceedings against alien radicals. All this was backed up by vigilante action. One of the Communist organizers, Fred Crawford, was kidnapped and flogged. Leading Tampans also formed a “secret committee of 25 outstanding citizens” to help cigar owners “wash the red out of their factories.” Under these pressures, the workers’ Communist union was broken.

Four years later another radical movement emerged in Tampa. This time it was led by unemployed socialists who formed a political party, the



Pallbearers carrying the body of Joseph Shoemaker.

Modern Democrats, to challenge the city's corrupt political machine. In the 1935 municipal election, the Modern Democrats fielded a slate of candidates who ran on a socialist platform calling for reforms such as public ownership of utilities. The Modern Democrats went down to defeat in the election, but they continued to organize and demonstrate on behalf of workers and the unemployed. The kidnapping and flogging of Eugene Poulnot, Sam Rogers and Joseph Shoemaker, all leaders of the Modern Democrats, followed the election by several weeks.

**A**s soon as the papers carried the news of the attack on the three Modern Democrats, several national groups demanded that the floggers be punished. In the first report of the attack by the Associated Press there was no hint of police complicity, but Tampa's two newspapers quickly learned from Eugene Poulnot that he had recognized a policeman among the mob. Fearing that Tampa authorities would not vigorously pursue the case, friends of the victims appealed for help from national organizations. Norman Thomas and the Socialist Party took the lead since Poulnot and Rogers were members, and Shoemaker had been a former member. To focus attention on the case, socialists in New York organized the Committee for the Defense of Civil Rights in Tampa, a coalition headed by Norman Thomas and supported by socialist groups and unions. They began a fund-raising and letter-writing campaign designed to "bring down

upon the heads of government in the city of Tampa the full force of public indignation everywhere." The American Civil Liberties Union offered a \$1,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the guilty persons. Additional support came from the American Federation of Labor (AFL) which had scheduled its 1936 convention for Tampa. Following Shoemaker's death, William Green, the president of the union, issued a statement saying it was "altogether probable" that the group would transfer its convention to another city unless those involved were tried and, if found guilty, punished.

As pressure mounted, many Floridians condemned the floggings. In communities across the state, newspaper editors deplored the crime. The Tallahassee *Daily Democrat* found the crime "so revolting that no civilized community or state can permit it to go unpunished." The *Miami Herald* declared the mob responsible "as venomous as a mad dog, and its leaders should be dealt with just as dispassionately as we would a rabid animal." The *Tampa Tribune* reported: "No crime in the history of Hillsborough County has brought so great a clamor for punishment of the guilty." The city's papers joined in the rising tide of protest by giving front-page coverage to the case. Numerous editorials argued that the city "must ferret out and punish the perpetrators of this outrage." Resolutions deploring the crime and calling for action came from many local groups including labor unions, the Junior Chamber of Com-

merce, the American Legion and the Hillsborough County Bar Association. On the Sunday afternoon following Shoemaker's death, Tampa's leading ministers held a public memorial service in the municipal auditorium which was attended by about 1,000 people and was broadcast over a local radio station. Walter Metcalf, pastor of the prestigious First Congregational Church and the head of the local Ministerial Association, became chairman of a group calling itself the Committee for the Defense of Civil Liberties in Tampa, which pledged cooperation with other organizations in the campaign to ferret out and punish the floggers.

A number of reasons help explain this public outcry. Although similar in some ways to other acts of mob violence that went largely unnoticed at the time, the Tampa case had several unusual features. As the *New Republic* observed, "When Southern white men lynch a Negro, that's not news. When Southern white men, under the eyes of local police and apparently with tacit approval, kidnap a white man and beat him so badly he dies, that is perhaps something else again." The nature of the crime resulting in Shoemaker's death undoubtedly stirred many people. As one newspaper pointed out, "Even calloused minds might flinch from a thing so horrible — tar and feathers, a gangrenous leg, amputation and death that closed mumbling lips." The citizens of Tampa also saw their city's reputation on trial; this incident was only the latest in a series of lawless acts. Since 1931, at least three labor organizers had been beaten in Tampa, and a variety of violence had plagued recent city elections. Therefore, in the wake of the flogging of the three Modern Democrats, the *Tampa Tribune* warned: "Tampa cannot afford to 'pass up' this latest outbreak of local lawlessness."

**B**y 1935, Tampa was a growing urban community with a population of some 100,000 people. Its port was particularly active, exporting citrus and phosphates. Tampa's main business was cigar-making, which produced a net profit of \$273,000 on almost \$10,000,000 in sales during 1935. However, Tampa's richest source

of profits may well have been gambling. In a 1935 study of this well-organized but illegal business, the Junior Chamber of Commerce estimated that the numbers racket, known locally as "bolita," took in over \$1,000,000 a month and employed approximately 1,000 people. Exposing what it branded "Our Biggest Business," the *Tampa Tribune* reported that the peak load on the local telephone service came around nine o'clock in the evening when the players called to find out the lucky number for the day. Syndicates which controlled Tampa's gambling allegedly insured a steady flow of illicit profits by paying local authorities for protection. As a result, public office could prove highly rewarding, and Tampa politics degenerated into battles to determine which faction would win access to the graft. Although difficult to document, this view of Tampa was widely held.

The 1935 municipal primary revealed Tampa politics at its worst. Since the so-called "White Municipal Party" had long governed the city, victory in the primary was tantamount to election. In 1935, two political factions bitterly fought for control of Tampa's city government. The primary resulted in victory for the incumbent Robert E. Lee Chancey administration, but at a heavy price. Two men were shot, and over 50 people — including city employees — were arrested for stuffing ballot boxes. On the morning after the primary, the *Tampa Tribune* warned: "Tampa must get away from this sort of thing — when, with no important issue or interest at stake, the selfish rivalry of competing factions of politicians and of grasping gambling syndicates, each fighting for control of the offices and the law-breaking privileges, can involve the city in a heated, disrupting and discreditable fight such as we experienced yesterday."

One close observer of the primary was Joseph Shoemaker, who served as a poll watcher for the city administration. Disturbed by what he saw, Shoemaker organized a new party to challenge the city machine in the November general election. Although he had moved to Florida only a few months earlier, Shoemaker had been active in the Socialist Party in Vermont until he was formally ejected in 1934 for endorsing the New Deal and Democratic Party candidates. In Tampa he created a party called the

Modern Democrats, dedicated to "production for use instead of profit." Drawing on the ideas of moderate socialists such as Upton Sinclair, Shoemaker explained the platform of the Modern Democrats in a series of letters published by the *Tampa Tribune*. He called for a 10-point program including public ownership of utilities, free hospital care for the needy, monthly investigations of city departments, an effective referendum law and a system whereby the unemployed could produce goods for their own use. He promised a "new deal" for Tampa if voters elected Miller A. Stephens, a mechanic who was the mayoral candidate of the Modern Democrats. In addition, the party offered a candidate for tax assessor and another for the board of aldermen.

Shoemaker's Modern Democrats picked up the support of local socialists, especially those in the Workers' Alliance, a national organization of relief workers which had strong ties to the Socialist Party. It also had the support of the American Federation of Labor. Florida's branch of the Workers' Alliance was headed by Eugene Poulnot, an unemployed pressman who had been labeled a troublemaker by local authorities. After the flogging of Poulnot and his two political allies, Mayor Chancey remarked: "From the time Tampa's local Relief Work Council was organized in 1931 and until the present time, Eugene Poulnot has been an agitator, consistently trying to stir up strife among relief clients." Poulnot's activities included organizing the Unemployed Brotherhood of Hillsborough County and leading demonstrations for higher relief payments. At one such rally in 1934, he was arrested by the police and charged with a breach of the peace after allegedly telling a crowd of fellow relief workers: "If they don't give us the relief we want, let's go open a warehouse and take what we need." The charge was subsequently dropped, and Poulnot continued his work on behalf of the unemployed. As Socialist Party members, both Poulnot and his close friend, Sam Rogers, campaigned for the Modern Democrats.

Although their candidates were defeated in November, 1935, the Modern Democrats remained active. They held rallies and formed a permanent organization in preparation for county and state elections the following year. Shoemaker also continued to have his

letters published in the *Tampa Tribune*. He used them to explain a new cooperative system based on the ideas of the American Commonwealth Federation. His last letter, offering to debate this plan with anyone at any time, appeared four days before he and his friends were kidnapped and beaten.

In its first public statement, the national Committee for the Defense of Civil Rights in Tampa declared: "The man who was murdered and his friends who were tortured and kidnapped were marked for only one reason: they had the courage to organize workers and to oppose a corrupt and tyrannical political machine. They took seriously their rights as workers and citizens and by their activity became undesirable to certain persons in the community of Tampa."

Official investigations of the crime lent credence to these charges. Tampa authorities initially reacted to accusations of police complicity by attempting a coverup. After a two-day inquiry, Tampa's chief of police, R. G. Titsworth, reported that "no member of the police department had any participation directly or indirectly with the flogging." Although the city seemed reluctant to press the case, county and state officials, under orders from Governor David Sholz, pushed ahead. The sheriff of Hillsborough County, J. R.

**THE KU KLUX KLAN RIDES AGAIN**  
**Your Country Is Calling You**

The Klan Rides to  
Save America!



Stop! Look! Listen!  
Think! Pray!

**Communism Must Go! America, Wake Up!**

YOUR COUNTRY	COMMUNISM
Love, Peace, Freedom, God, Home, Husband, Wife and Children, Free Schools and Patriotic Thought, Free Speech and Free Press, Government of the People, The Slave and Strive Forever, Right to Worship God as we Please.	Hate, Bondage, Prison and Starvation, Free Love, Chaos and State Property, Outcast Thought by a Few, Fear to Express Thought by Speech or Press, Overthrow of All Government, The Red Flag of Destruction, Overthrow of All Religion.

You have read of "The midnight ride of Paul Revere," calling the Minute Men to arms to free our free country.  
This is the MIDNIGHT RIDE OF THE KU KLUX KLAN, calling you to save our country and its institutions.  
The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan is determined to drive out of the United States those vicious alien radicals and to awaken their radical thought from every nook, cranny and group of the American people, through a nation-wide concerted campaign. In this job, they are assisted by the hearty support of every true American citizen.  
The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan receive and provide for your help to save our country before it is too late.  
We do not want money but we need YOU and your support.  
**MODERN COMMUNISM CHALLENGES ALL DECENCY AND CIVILIZATION**  
This organization is determined to fight to the last ditch and the last man against any and all attacks on our government and its American institutions. If you are a Real Blooded, Native Born, American Citizen and believe with us, fill out the coupon below.

THIS OFFERING IS NOT TAX DEDUCTIBLE

P. O. Box 1975,  
Tampa, Florida.

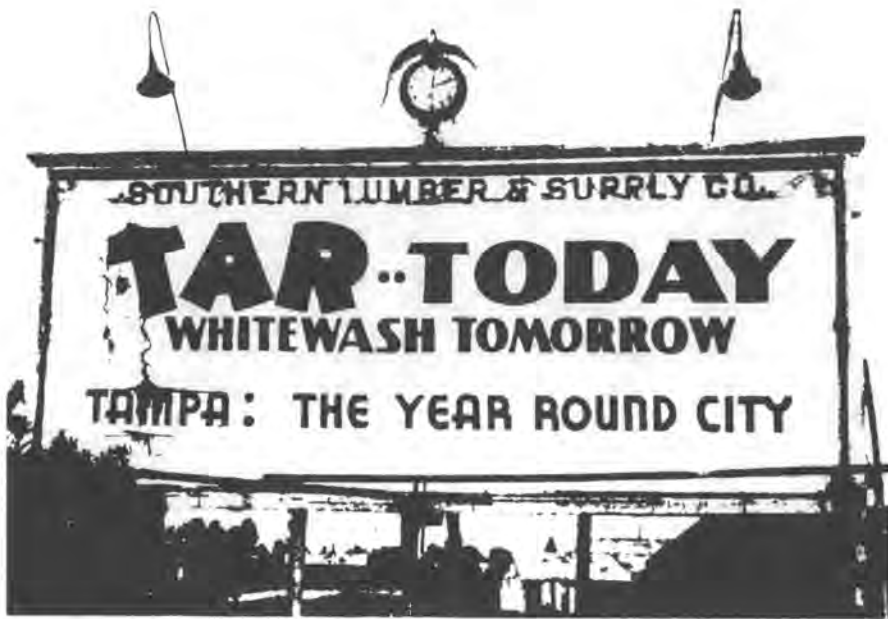
I want to help save our country and am ready to ride with you.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_ (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

RESIDENCE ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Klan leaflet distributed in Tampa



McLeod, had no political ties to the city administration. Formerly a Tampa newspaperman and district director of the Works Progress Administration, McLeod had been recently appointed to office by Governor Sholz, who had dismissed the previous sheriff for "drunkenness, incompetency and neglect of duty in office."

McLeod and state attorney J. Rex Farior began collecting evidence. As they proceeded with their investigation, McLeod and Farior revealed pieces of incriminating evidence that indicated the attack was premeditated. Evidence showed that one of the six Modern Democrats originally picked up by the police was John A. McCaskill, a city fireman and the son of a policeman. A recent convert to the cause of the Modern Democrats, McCaskill had briefly left the fateful meeting on November 30 in order to find Poulnot, who had not yet appeared. Shortly after Poulnot arrived with McCaskill, the police carried all six Modern Democrats to headquarters, where their names were entered in the detention book. However, McCaskill's name was later obliterated and a fictitious one substituted.

As evidence of police involvement mounted and demands for arrests increased, local officials were forced to take action. On December 9, the day of Shoemaker's death, Mayor Chancey started his own inquiry, and he threatened to discharge any police officer who withheld information. A week later, Sheriff McLeod and state attorney Farior began presenting evidence to a grand jury. Mayor Chancey then

suspended city fireman John McCaskill. The mayor also suspended the five city policemen and two special policemen who had allegedly raided the meeting of the Modern Democrats without a warrant. The following day, December 18, five of the seven policemen were arrested and charged with the premeditated murder of Joseph Shoemaker. The list of charges was later expanded to a total of six, including the kidnaping and assault of Poulnot and Rogers. A sixth person indicted was another policeman who had been tried and found innocent of vote fraud in the September primary. With the announcement of these indictments, Chief of Police Tittsworth announced that he was taking an indefinite leave of absence. A month later he was indicted as an accessory after the fact for attempting to block investigation of the crime.

**M**eanwhile, additional evidence had been uncovered that pointed to the participation of the Ku Klux Klan in the crime. Joseph Shoemaker's brother revealed that shortly before the flogging he had received a telephone call with the warning: "This is the Ku Klux Klan. We object to your brother's activities. They are communistic. Tell him to leave town. We will take care of the other radicals, too."

The *Tampa Tribune* printed a copy of a Klan circular that was widely distributed in the wake of the brutal attack. Declaring "Communism Must Go," the leaflet proclaimed, "THE KU KLUX KLAN RIDES AGAIN." The

Klan pledged "to fight to the last ditch and the last man against any and all attacks on our government and its American institutions." The circular concluded with an appeal for help and gave a Tampa post office box as a mailing address. Three days after publication of this leaflet, Sheriff McLeod arrested two Klan members from Orlando and charged them with assaulting Shoemaker. Another Orlando man was subsequently taken into custody and also charged with participating in the flogging. According to McLeod, all three Orlando men were Klan members who had served as special policemen in Tampa's September primary. The indictment of a police stenographer, as an accessory after the fact, brought to 11 the number of persons charged in the flogging case. At one time or another, all 11 had been employed by the Tampa police department. The eight who worked for the city at the time of the flogging were part of the local establishment, although none, except perhaps Police Chief Tittsworth, could be considered a member of the community's elite.

Prominent Tampans went to the aid of the accused. The chief defense attorney was Pat Whitaker, Mayor Chancey's brother-in-law, who was widely considered as a possible candidate for governor in 1936. Bail bonds for the accused, amounting to almost \$100,000 in all, were provided by a group of local businessmen, including Eli Witt, owner of Hav-A-Tampa Cigar Company; D. Hoyt Woodberry, secretary-treasurer of Hav-A-Tampa; E. L. Rotureau, president of Tampa Stevedoring Company; and Edward W. Spencer, owner of Spencer Auto Electric, Inc.

The indictment of the policemen brought praise from Norman Thomas, the perennial candidate for president on the Socialist Party ticket. On Sunday, January 19, 1936, Thomas arrived in Tampa, where he spoke to a cheering crowd of 2,000 people at a rally sponsored by the local Committee for the Defense of Civil Liberties in Tampa. Thomas attacked the "men higher up" who "protect and maybe order [floggings]; the politicians who profit by such things; the economic interests who are intent upon putting fear in their workers." Yet he praised Tampans also. "This is the first time in

American history," he declared, "that any floggers ever have been brought to justice, and perhaps some of the higher-ups reached." He attributed the indictments to the courageous efforts of Reverend Metcalf, Sheriff McLeod, the *Tampa Tribune* and the *Tampa Times*.

Seven of the accused policemen went on trial in March, 1936. Defense lawyers won a change of venue to Bartow, in neighboring Polk County, because they believed that the extensive publicity would make it difficult to find an impartial jury in Tampa. Six of the seven defendants were charged with four counts each relating to the kidnapping of Eugene Poulnot. Former Police Chief Tittsworth was charged with being an accessory after the fact. Prosecution witnesses, including Poulnot and several policemen, identified five of the defendants as participants in the kidnapping that had occurred in front of police headquarters. The police officers who testified for the prosecution testified that they had originally concealed the facts of the case because they feared they would lose their jobs if they told the truth. However, after Tittsworth stepped down as police chief, they had told prosecutors all they knew. In cross-examination defense attorneys tried to paint prosecution witnesses as liars or communists. Asserting that "communism stands for social equality of all races," a defense lawyer made the point that police raiding the meeting of the Modern Democrats had seized a picture showing a white man and a black man shaking hands under the caption, "Equalization." In rebuttal, prosecutors exhibited records which showed that the Modern Democrats advocated change through legal political methods. Furthermore, minutes of their meetings disclosed that they regularly sang "America" and read excerpts from the United States Constitution.

At the end of the long six-week trial the defense presented its case. It first moved for a directed verdict of acquittal which Judge Robert T. Dewell granted for two defendants, the former police chief and Robert Chappell, a policeman, whom no one had directly linked to the kidnapping. Judge Dewell also reduced the charges against the remaining five defendants by eliminating counts related to an alleged conspiracy to kidnap Poulnot. Left with a single charge of kidnapping, the defense provided only 27 minutes of testimony, all designed to attack

the credibility of Poulnot. In final arguments to the jury, the prosecution appealed for conviction in order to preserve the constitutional rights of free speech and freedom of assembly. Pat Whitaker claimed that the real issue was the communist threat to Anglo-Saxon civilization.

In a surprise decision, the six-man jury returned verdicts of guilty. The outcome astounded the defense and prosecution alike, because no one had expected any local jury to convict in such a case. But the jurors, who deliberated less than three hours, told reporters there was no question in their minds. One juror commented, "Communism and all that stuff had nothing to do with the case." Another, a former deputy sheriff, declared: "What got us was the way those policemen, supposed to be the law enforcement officers, went right out and participated in an unlawful act." Each of the five policemen was sentenced to a four-year prison term, but was released on bail pending appeal.

Many observers believed that the guilty verdicts represented a turning point in Florida justice. The American Civil Liberties Union hailed the convictions as "a victory in the fight for civil rights in Florida and the beginning of a drive against the Ku Klux Klan." A socialist newspaper called the jury decision "the most stunning blow against vigilantism ever struck in Florida." However, this journal warned its readers that the trial was only the first round in the fight for civil liberties because the "convicted kidnapers may still be cleared by legal maneuvers in the Florida Supreme Court."

This suspicion proved correct. On July 1, 1937, over a year after the guilty verdicts were handed down, Florida's highest tribunal overturned the convictions because the trial judge had failed to inform the jury that it could not consider evidence related to the charges of conspiracy to kidnap which the judge had dismissed. Therefore, the Florida Supreme Court ordered a new trial for the five policemen who had been found guilty of kidnapping Poulnot. While awaiting retrial on the charge of kidnapping, the five defendants were prosecuted in October, 1937, for the murder of Joseph Shoemaker. After severely limiting the admissible evidence, the same trial judge, Robert Dewell, directed verdicts

of acquittal. In June, 1938, a retrial on the kidnapping charge resulted in a jury finding of not guilty.

The apparent success of vigilantism encouraged its further use in Tampa. Although the Modern Democrats disappeared, vigilantes continued to violate the civil liberties of radicals and labor organizers. During the period of 1936 to 1938, the American Civil Liberties Union annually ranked Tampa as one of the worst "centers of repression" in the United States.

The flogging case indicates that the violence in Tampa was not random or meaningless. On the contrary, it was a systematic, though illegal, method of protecting the existing order from any perceived threats, even legal ones. As such, the failure to punish the vigilante murderers of Joseph Shoemaker remained, in the words of the *Tampa Tribune*, "a grim and ineradicable indictment of Florida, its courts, its citizenship." □

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*Robert Ingalls is an associate professor of history at the University of South Florida, Tampa. A fuller account of the Tampa flogging case appeared in The Florida Historical Quarterly, July, 1977.*

#### SOURCES

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# THE POLICE JUST LAUGHED

The following interviews detail how an Atlanta policeman who brutalized a black man in 1940 was tried and acquitted. The policeman was one of the few ever brought to trial for brutality. The mother of the woman speaking below testified on behalf of the beaten man and later joined the Commission on Interracial Cooperation, which among other things monitored police brutality. (The policeman's comments are in regular type, the woman's in italics.) The interviews are part of the Living Atlanta Project of radio station WRFG. The project, funded with a grant from the National Endowment of Humanities, produced 50 programs on life in Atlanta from World War I through World War II. The project's executive producer is Harlan Joye and co-producers are Cliff Kuhn and Bernard West.

My partner and I were patrolling around one o'clock in the morning and we saw this black man walking down the street and, as was customary back in those days, we called for him to come over to the car. So here he is, he ran. We didn't know what the boy had done, so we ran after him, and we caught him right in front of a big apartment house on West Peachtree.

*There was a little Negro man who was the janitor in the apartment house across the street from us. It was called Spanish Court at that time. We all knew him, he was just as nice as he could be. He had an apartment in the basement of the apartment. He also had a friend who lived about a block and a half away who lived in one of these servants houses, and he'd go down and visit with him at night. He'd gone to see this fellow and it was about a quarter to 12 when he started back. And these two young policemen, one of whom was a neighbor only 18 years old, they saw him and grabbed him. They were just going to have fun with him.*

He started hollering for somebody, hollering for somebody to come out, and the manager of the apartment came out and told us to take him away. So we started to take him away and by that time several people had come out and we had to scuffle with him. He grabbed the chains that went around the lawn and held on to that and the chain broke and we carried him chain and all.

*The apartment had metal posts and chains between the posts with the links I imagined about two inches in diameter. They grabbed one off and they just beat him unmercifully with that. For nothing! And he had not done a thing! And we heard him scream, and the people in the apartment wouldn't come out. But we and some of our neighbors*

*from across the street went flying over there trying to stop them and we couldn't stop them and I ran back into the house. I called the police before I realized it was the police beating him, and they told me they'd get somebody out there sometime. And then I went out and saw it was the police beating him and I went back in and called the police again and they just laughed at me, they wouldn't listen to me at all. But they took the fellow to jail, to prison.*

We took him to the car and put him in the car and I struck him a time or two with my open hand but I never used a blackjack on him. We carried the black to the hospital and he was treated for a cut lip and transferred over to here and tried the next morning.

*He was badly beaten. And of course they beat him worse when we got over there and tried to help him. And that got to me I think worse than anything else. Mother had said she was going to court when this came up and we couldn't even find when the case was coming up. And finally she got a lawyer, I believe in the church, to get into it and find out for her when it was coming up.*

But in the meantime there was a lawyer. I think he wanted maybe a little notoriety or maybe someone paid him something. Anyway, he pressed the charges.

*When we got down there the two policemen were standing there by the door watching everybody in the courtroom, and they told mother that she'd never have police protection for any reason whatsoever. Mother said, "We'll see about that!" and she walked in. And she stood up for him.*

He was found guilty. They had him for disorderly conduct and resisting arrest. And the judge found him guilty and fined him. And then he went, the lawyer went over to Fulton County Court and had a case made against me. Some of the people from the apartment came down and they were under the wrong impression. They testified, some of them did, that I hit him and we mistreated him and all that sort of thing. But I didn't do it, and the judge believed what we had to say. And then, like I say, I was exonerated.

*After it happened I called Wright Bryant, editor of the Journal. He let us have it with both barrels of what was going on in the city, that the papers couldn't even write about it. It wasn't Mr. Bryant who'd be hurt, it was his reporters, and he had a responsibility there. So it never was publicized, and unless we had known the Negroes involved as people, we wouldn't have known what was going on. □*



1957: *THE*

# SWIMMING POOL SHOWDOWN

*ROBERT WILLIAMS*

When I got out of the Marine Corps, I knew I wanted to go home and join the NAACP. In the Marines I had got a taste of discrimination and had some run-ins that got me into the guardhouse. When I joined the local chapter of the NAACP it was going down in membership, and when it was down to six, the leadership proposed dissolving it. When I objected, I was elected president and they withdrew, except for Dr. Albert E. Perry. Dr. Perry was a newcomer who had settled in Monroe and built up a very successful practice, and he became our vice president. I tried to get former members back without success and finally I realized that I would have to work without the social leaders of the community.

At this time I was inexperienced. Before going into the Marines I had left Monroe, N.C., for a time and worked in an aircraft factory in New Jersey and an auto factory in Detroit. Without knowing it, I had picked up some ideas about organizing from activities around me, but I had never served in a union local and I lacked organizing experience. But I am an active person and I hated to give up on something so important as the NAACP.

So one day I walked into a Negro poolroom in our town, interrupted a game by putting NAACP literature on the table and made a pitch. I recruited half of those present. This got our chapter off to a new start. We began a recruiting drive among laborers, farmers, domestic workers, the unemployed and any and all Negro people in the area. We ended up with a chapter that was unique in the whole NAACP because of its working-class composition and its non-middle-class leadership. Most importantly, we had a strong representation of returned veterans who were very militant and who didn't scare easily. We started a struggle in Monroe and Union County to integrate public facilities and we had the support of a Unitarian group of white people. In 1957, without any friction at all, we integrated the public library. It shocked us that in other Southern states, particularly Virginia, Negroes encountered such

violence in trying to integrate libraries.

We moved on to win better rights for Negroes: economic rights, the rights of education and the right of equal protection under the law. We rapidly got the reputation of being the most militant branch of the NAACP, and obviously we couldn't get this reputation without antagonizing the racists who are trying to prevent Afro-Americans from enjoying their inalienable rights as Americans. Specifically, we aroused the wrath of the Ku Klux Klan, and a showdown developed over the integration of the swimming pool.

## The Ku Klux Klan Swings Into Action

The swimming pool had been built with federal funds under the WPA system and was supported by municipal taxation; yet Negroes could not use this pool. Neither the federal government nor the local officials had provided any swimming facilities at all for Negroes. Over a period of years several of our children had drowned while swimming in unsupervised swimming holes. When we lost another child in 1956 we started a drive to obtain swimming facilities for Negroes, especially for our children.

First, we asked the city officials to build a pool in the Negro community. This would have been a segregated pool, but we asked for this because we were merely interested in safe facilities for the children. The city officials said they couldn't comply with this request, for it would be too expensive and they didn't have the money. Then, in a compromise move, we asked that they set aside one or two days out of each week when the segregated pool would be reserved for Negro children. When we asked for this they said that this too would be too expensive. Why would it be too expensive, we asked. Because, they said, each time the colored people used the pool they would have to drain the water and refill it.

They said they would eventually build us a pool when





courtesy Charlotte Observer

they got the funds. We asked them when we could expect it. One year? They said no. We asked, five years? They said no, they couldn't be sure. We asked, 10 years? They said that they couldn't be sure. We asked finally if we could expect it within 15 years and they said that they couldn't give us any definite promise.

There was a white Catholic priest in the community who owned a station wagon, and he would transport the colored youth to Charlotte, North Carolina, which was 25 miles away, so they could swim there in the Negro pool. Some of the city officials of Charlotte saw this priest swimming in the Negro pool and they wanted to know who he was. The Negro supervisor explained that he was a priest. The city officials replied they didn't care whether he was a priest or not, that he was white and they had segregation of the races in Charlotte; so they barred the priest from the colored pool.

Again the children didn't have any safe place to swim at all — so we decided to take legal action against the Monroe pool.

First we started a campaign of stand-ins of short duration. We would go stand for a few minutes and ask to be admitted and never get admitted. While we were preparing the groundwork for possible court proceedings, the Ku Klux Klan came out in the open. The press started to carry articles about the Klan activities. In the beginning they mentioned that a few hundred people would gather in open fields and have their Klan rallies. Then the numbers kept going up. The numbers went up to 3,000, 4,000, 5,000. Finally the *Monroe Inquirer* estimated that 7,500 Klansmen had gathered in a field to discuss dealing with the integrationists, described by the Klan as the "Communist-

Inspired National Association for the Advancement of Colored People." They started a campaign to get rid of us, to drive us out of the community, directed primarily at Dr. Albert E. Perry, our vice president, and at myself.

The Klan started by circulating a petition. To gather signatures they set up a table in the county courthouse square in Monroe. The petition stated that Dr. Perry and I should be permanently driven out of Union County because we were members and officials of the Communist-NAACP. The Klan claimed 3,000 signatures in the first week. In the following week they claimed 3,000 more. They had no basis for any legal action, but they had hoped to frighten us out of town just by virtue of sheer numbers. In the history of the South, in days past, it was enough to know that so many people wanted to get rid of a Negro to make him take off by himself. One must remember that in this community, where the press estimated that there were 7,500 Klan supporters, the population of the town was only about 12,000 people. Actually, many of the Klan people came in from South Carolina, Monroe being only 14 miles from the state border.

When they discovered that this could not intimidate us, they decided to take direct action. After their rallies they would drive through our community in motorcades and they would honk their horns and fire pistols from the car windows. On one occasion, they caught a colored woman on an isolated street corner and they made her dance at pistol point.

At this outbreak of violence against our Negro community, a group of pacifist ministers went to the city officials and asked that the Klan be prohibited from forming these motorcades to parade through Monroe. The officials of the county and the city rejected their requests on the grounds that the Klan was a legal organization having as much constitutional right to organize as the NAACP.

### Self-Defense is Born of Our Plight

Since the city officials wouldn't stop the Klan, we decided to stop the Klan ourselves. We started this action out of the need for defense, because law and order had completely vanished — because there was no such thing as a Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution in Monroe, North Carolina. The local officials refused to enforce law and order and when we turned to federal and state officials to enforce law and order they either refused or ignored our appeals.

Luther Hodges, who was later Secretary of Commerce, was the Governor of North Carolina at that time. We first appealed to him. He took sides with the Klan; they had not broken any laws, they were not disorderly. Then we appealed to President Eisenhower but we never received a reply to our telegrams. There was no response at all from Washington.

So we started arming ourselves. I wrote to the National Rifle Association in Washington, which encourages veterans to keep in shape to defend their native land, and asked for a charter, which we got. In a year we had 60 members. We had bought some guns too, in stores, and later a church in the North raised money and got us better rifles. The Klan discovered we were arming and guarding our community. In the summer of 1957 they made one big attempt to stop us. An armed motorcade attacked Dr. Perry's house, which is situated on the outskirts of the colored commu-

nity. We shot it out with the Klan and repelled their attack and the Klan didn't have any more stomach for this type of fight. They stopped raiding our community. After this clash the same city officials who said the Klan had a constitutional right to organize met in an emergency session and passed a city ordinance banning the Klan from Monroe without a special permit from the police chief.

At the time of our clash with the Klan only three Negro publications — the *Afro-American*, the *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, and *Jet Magazine* — reported the fight. *Jet* carried some pictures of the self-defense guard. Our fight occurred two weeks before the famous clash between the Indians of Robeson County and the Klan. We had driven the Klan out of our county into the Indian territory. The national press played up the Indian-Klan fight because they didn't consider this a great threat — the Indians are a tiny minority and people could laugh at the incident as a sentimental joke — but no one wanted Negroes to get the impression that this was an accepted way to deal with the Klan. So the white press maintained a complete blackout about the Monroe fight.

After the Klan learned that violence wouldn't serve their purpose they started to use the racist courts. Dr. Perry, our vice president, was indicted on a trumped-up charge of abortion. He is a Catholic physician, and one of the doctors who had been head of the county medical department drove 40 miles to testify in Dr. Perry's behalf, declaring that when Dr. Perry had worked in the hospital he had refused to file sterilization permits for the County Welfare Department on the ground that this was contrary to his religious beliefs. But he was convicted, sentenced to five years in prison, and the loss of his medical license. □

*This account of how the black community in Monroe, North Carolina, armed for its defense is excerpted from Negroes With Guns by Robert F. Williams. As president of the Monroe NAACP, Williams organized a heated and protracted struggle, beginning in the mid-1950s, to end discrimination in housing, employment and public facilities. Those organizing drives soon made Monroe's black community the target of Ku Klux Klan attacks. Police often accompanied the night riders, leaving no legal protection for the town's black citizens.*

*The community armed for its defense, although Williams' rhetoric of self-defense was often mistaken and distorted to mean meeting Klan violence with violence. But he spread his message far and near with his own publication, The Crusader. Williams' leadership soon drew the attention of both the media and established civil-rights figures including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Roy Wilkins, Executive Secretary of the NAACP.*

*During a Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee-led demonstration at the county courthouse in 1961, an angry mob of several thousand whites attacked demonstrators and followed protestors into the black community. A white couple, caught by armed blacks inside the black community, was rescued by Williams, given refuge in his home and later released unharmed. Charged with kidnapping the couple, Williams fled to Cuba. He later traveled to Algeria and China, where he published The Crusader in exile.*

*Williams returned to the United States in 1969 and to North Carolina after a lengthy extradition proceeding which ended in 1976. The charges against him were dropped. He now resides in Michigan and is a campus lecturer.*

## "HE GOT THAT HOOD."

The boy's name I don't remember but he was crippled, he walked like he had a short leg. He made this expression, "I reckon I'd do most anything to get me enough money to go to that dance tonight."

Well, Iron Pete, he heard him, he said, "What did you say?"

He said, "I'd do anything to get me some money to go to that dance tonight."

He said, "If you get one of them hoods" — they still passing through — "off one of them Ku Klux we'll see that you go up there in grand style."

And everybody laughed, nobody paid the boy any attention, they just thought it was a statement being made. He toddled out there and caught a Ku Klux by his hood — it was tied around his neck like a bonnet — and liked to pulled him out of that jeep. But he got that hood. And the procession did not stop. He brought that hood back to Auburn Avenue and dropped it on the sidewalk and said, "Here it is." And how much money he got I don't know but I know he got somewhere about 10 or 15 dollars cause boys just kept throwing dollars and half-dollars.

And I didn't want to be in no riot because I was a little kid when the other riot was here in 1906 I can remember it very vividly. I got my hat and coat and caught the street-car cause I waited for the Ku Klux to get up reinforcements and come back and tear up Auburn. But nothing ever happened.

*— a black barber talking about an incident from the mid-'30s to WRFG's Living Atlanta Project*

## KU KLUX

They took me out  
To some lonesome place.  
They said, "Do you believe  
In the great white race?"

I said, "Mister,  
To tell you the truth,  
I'd believe in anything  
If you'd just turn me loose."

The white man said, "Boy,  
Can it be  
You're a-standin' there  
A-sassin' me?"

They hit me in the head  
And knocked me down.  
And then they kicked me  
On the ground.

A klansman said, "Nigger,  
Look me in the face —  
And tell me you believe in  
The great white race."

— Langston Hughes

# M

RESISTING THE KLAN

# MISSISSIPPI ORGANIZES

ANDREW MARX and TOM TUTHILL

If anyone ever writes a history of the anti-Klan movement of the late '70s and early '80s, Decatur, Alabama, and Greensboro, North Carolina, will undoubtedly stand out as crucial early battlegrounds — the Fort Sumter and Bull Run in this latest eruption of a Civil War as old as the presence of white people on this continent. But, as in the history of other battles between white and black Americans, the state of Mississippi must again receive special attention. For it was there, months before Klansmen opened fire in Decatur and Greensboro, that more than 2,000 demonstrators from across the country gathered on Thanksgiving Day of 1978 to march against the Klan.

For many of those who came, and for many millions more who read about the event in the newspapers or saw a few seconds of it flash across their TV screens in living color, the Tupelo protest marked a first. Outside the history books, few had ever seen pictures of fully robed Klansmen, brandishing rifles and confederate flags, chatting amiably with uniformed police officers. ("Are those from now?" was the incredulous response to photographs of the scene from one white activist in New York.) Perhaps fewer still, prior to the march, had ever encountered, or even heard of, the organization that sponsored the demonstration — the United League of Mississippi.

But the march was hardly a first for the United League. The group, defined by its founder and president, Alfred "Skip" Robinson, as "a priestly, revolutionary, human rights organization," has been marching, meeting and boycotting in towns like Tupelo for more than a decade. It has elected blacks to local office. It has won jobs for blacks through affirmative action.

And it has left the white-owned business district of at least one particularly stubborn town populated only with "Store for Rent" signs.

In Mississippi, 13 years of such activity means, by definition, 13 years of experience in dealing with the Klan. And people who traveled to Tupelo to march with the League on Thanksgiving, 1978, got a first-hand look at the two key elements of a strategy for combating the Klan that League leaders have extracted from that experience — grassroots mobilization and armed self-defense.

The visitors were warmly greeted by hundreds of local blacks, farmers, students, ministers and factory workers who marched alongside them through the streets of Tupelo and treated them afterward to a Southern-style Thanksgiving dinner. They saw Robinson climb on one of the pickup trucks leading the march to announce through a bullhorn that the marchers weren't looking for trouble... while two rifles prominently displayed in the pickup's gun rack announced with no need for amplification that they were, however, ready for any trouble the Klan might start. And they heard the message that Robinson and other League leaders have delivered at countless rallies in Mississippi and across the country — a message that Robinson repeated to these reporters when he first heard about the Greensboro massacre nearly a year later in November, 1979: "The only way you can defeat the Klan is by building a strong base in the community and letting them know you will fight back. That's what we've done in towns like Holly Springs [where the United League was founded and still has its central office]. And we haven't seen the Klan here for several years. Because they know we'd be ready for them."

## Building a Community Base

En route to an August, 1979, march in Ripley, Mississippi, to protest the police beating of a young black man arrested for drunken driving, Skip Robinson outlined the League's methods for building grassroots support.

"I never just go someplace. I wait till someone calls me with a problem." After the initial contact has been made, the legwork begins. Robinson and other United League members go house to house, street by street, through the black community. "We have workshop meetings. I might never mention the United League. We go by streets. Sometimes we'll have three meetings in one night.

"Seventy-five percent of the people have problems," he continued. "If you talk about those, people listen. A lot of problems can be solved, dealt with. But somebody's got to offer hope. After I tell them what they can do themselves, then I tell them about the United League."

It takes time to build a strong organization, of course, and it isn't easy. But the United League is committed to the slow and difficult process of building from the grassroots up, rather than playing for a few splashy headlines and messages of support from Washington or New York. League activists point out that passage of the Civil Rights Act did not give blacks freedom and equality, that the Civil Rights Movement of the early '60s barely reached many small towns in the Deep South, especially majority white towns in north Mississippi like Ripley.

"In Ripley, at first, I couldn't get five people together," says Robinson. "Now [less than a year later] I fill the funeral home at every meeting. That's

300 people.”

The United League has seen the same pattern played out in towns throughout the northern half of the state and reaching up into Tennessee. “Usually one or two people contact Skip when they have a problem,” explained George Williams, another long-time League organizer and leader. “And usually every town in Mississippi has the same problems — police brutality, the Klan, thefts of black-owned land.”

Once people like Robinson and Williams have come to offer hope, help and experience, a local chapter is established. In most instances, the mainstays are women. “Just about every chapter we start, we get more women involved than men,” Williams observed. And they are the ones who carry on the task of building the organization, planning protests and boycotts, and above all convincing people that they can stand up against the social violence symbolized by the Klan.

In Ripley, for example, the first stop for a United League car driving into town is the beauticians’ school run by Mrs. Hazel Foster Christmas. She is the person who organizes meetings and reminds those who come that “We can talk all year, but we have to do something. . . . My son is in sixth grade and he’s having more problems the older he gets. I won’t stand for my boy to go through what I did. It’s going to come down soon, and we’re going to have some kind of action.”

After a local black man was beaten by whites at the factory where he worked, Christmas recalled, “I told him to tell them he was not afraid to die. Because they think they can scare you.”

Much the same sentiment was expressed by grassroots League activist L.B. Groover as he stood outside the Holly Springs Fire House on election day, 1979, passing out campaign literature and sample ballots for candidates supported by the United League. A confident man who runs his own masonry contracting business, he responded without hesitation when asked how he coped with life among Klansmen and other racists. “You walk up to them and tell them what you know. That it doesn’t scare you, that you are going to be yourself. I just be what I am.”

When a man named House was mentioned in connection with the Klan, Groover replied, “House used to



Tom Tuttle/LANS

be in the Klan. But he may not be now. A black guy put him down, beat him up good a couple of years ago, right up in town. The guy had to be pulled off him. For a while blacks boycotted his auto body shop and put him out of business. When he opened up again, he treated people better.”

Such boycotts, frequently directed at an entire downtown business district, have been a regular and powerful tactic of United League organizing against Klan and police violence. In Byhalia, for example, “There had been a black killed nearly every week” when Robinson was asked to help put together a local chapter in June, 1974. “People took their guns,” Robinson recalled, “and we laid it out to them. We told them that if any more people were killed, it would be a life for a life. We said the last black had been killed in Byhalia. And there has not been another since then.”

At the same time, the League began a boycott of white-owned businesses in town and presented the mayor with a list of demands, which included the hiring of blacks in stores and schools. The boycott lasted more than a year and a half. It was a bitter, often violent, confrontation. Without black dollars, many businesses closed their doors, and most of them never reopened. Those that did open again did so away from what had been the downtown business district. What was the center of Byhalia in 1974 now

looks like a Western mining town after the gold ran out. The buildings stand deserted, some with merchandise still piled inside.

There was no total victory for either side. But United League activists insist the essential message got across. “Folks said it was a kinfolk town, we couldn’t do anything. But we waved that cardboard around and they had to do something,” said Perry Anderson recently. He had been chairman of the United League in Byhalia during the boycott. “We didn’t get all we wanted. But we showed them Negroes was something.”

George Williams points out where a huge wooden cross still stands in a field on the outskirts of Byhalia, where another, this one strung with electric lights, perches on top of the town water tower. But the lights haven’t been turned on recently to announce a Klan gathering, nor have blacks spotted any dead rabbits placed along the road — the sign formerly used to announce that the Klan would be gathering under the wooden cross.

And the United League still meets regularly in a black church in Byhalia, where on occasion members hear Skip Robinson deliver his own version of liberation theology. Robinson is a skilled preacher who knows when to use the Bible . . . and always has one handy in case the occasion arises. “If you want to organize people in Missis-



*“Just about every chapter we start, we get more women involved than men,” said George Williams, a United League organizer.*

issippi, you’ve got to be associated with a church,” he explains. “If people stop going to church, it’s because they’ve lost faith in the leaders, not in a Supreme Being.” He does not preach nonviolence, however, and is generally critical of black religion. “Most black preachers are still preaching slave religion,” he maintains.

If Robinson relies heavily on the Bible for his style of oratory and organizing, he does not rely on it for protection. “I’m like one of those old-time Western preachers,” he said with a laugh one day during the November, 1979, election campaign. As he spoke he held out his open briefcase. Lying at the bottom were his Bible and a .38.

The pistol in the briefcase and the insistence on a strategy of armed self-defense were both Mississippi traditions before the United League came along. Reminiscing about the civil rights movement of the ‘60s, Julian Bond recalled “a big debate in SNCC once about carrying guns.” The debate came to an abrupt end after “two or three guys from Mississippi said, ‘This is all academic. We been carrying guns. I got mine here.’”

The young SNCC workers had simply learned the lesson preached by older Mississippi supporters like Hartman Turnbow, an almost legendary figure who once warned Martin Luther King that “this nonviolence will end you up in the cemetery.”

“This old guy, Hartman Turnbow,

I remember him,” Bond recalled. “He used to carry an army automatic in a briefcase, and it’s funny to see a man who looks like a farmer and is dressed like a farmer in coveralls and boots and, let’s say, an old hat, with a briefcase. And he opens the briefcase and nothing’s in it but an automatic.”

Skip Robinson dresses like the highly successful building contractor he once was, but he comes out of the same tradition of unflinching resistance. And the gun in the briefcase has stood him and the United League in good stead.

“The Klan has not been seen in Marshall County since early ‘78,” he said recently. “We was ambushed when we came out of the office in Holly Springs. There were six Klans standing across the street and when four of us came down the stairs they started shooting. I jumped over my brother’s car and got my gun out of the briefcase. When I started shooting, they took off and one of them dropped his rifle. I was hit in the leg, but not bad. The bullet just glanced off my leg.”

The United League members jumped into a car, roared past a police car that was giving desultory chase to the fleeing Klansmen, and blocked the getaway car’s escape. One of the young men inside turned out to be the police chief’s son. Nobody was ever arrested in connection with the incident. But the police chief’s son “hasn’t been seen since.” And neither has the Klan in Marshall County.

The United League’s 13-year history has been marked by several similar incidents. Right around the time of the Thanksgiving Day march, for example, a black man was shot by a Klan member in Okolona. According to Robinson’s account of what followed, several hundred blacks prompt-

ly gathered, guns in hand. An apparently nervous chief of police called up local United League activist Dr. Howard Gunn and asked him to come down to the police station to talk things over. Against Robinson’s advice, Gunn decided to go. But in keeping with United League tradition, he decided to take along some friends with their guns. That proved to be a wise decision. When he arrived at the police station, the lights were out and the police chief was nowhere to be seen. As the United League members tried to make their way home, they were ambushed.

“Twelve Klans opened fire into the station wagon,” Robinson recounted. Gunn and his companions fired back. “Over 100 rounds were fired. And when the shooting was over, six Klans were lying in the street and six were running. One of the six in the street was dead.

“The Klan never said anything about it, the police never said anything about it, the press never said anything about it,” Robinson continued. “But after that we never saw no more Klan in Okolona. We know they’re still there but we never did see any signs of Klans in uniform.”

## Beyond Fighting the Klan

By relying on grassroots mobilization and armed self-defense, the United League has been able to stop the Klan in several counties. But that, in the view of League leaders, is only a beginning, just as the Klan is only a symptom of the problems confronting blacks in Mississippi and across the United States. “The Klan isn’t our main problem,” Robinson states categorically. “You have to look at the system that allows it to happen. This

country is moving to the right, and the system is encouraging it to happen. I'm worried about the man in the three-piece who is elected to the Senate, or the judges and the doctors who send our people off to prisons and carve them up in hospitals. They are more of a threat to us than the Klan dressed in white sheets."

Robinson grimly predicts, "There is going to be a civil war in this country in the '80s," a sentiment echoed by a young United League activist who was driving voters to the polls on election day. "Now with the Klan coming up again," he remarked, "black people won't take that anymore. There's going to be a big shootout. I hope it doesn't happen, but sometimes I have a feeling it will take a real shootout to wake people up that they have to live and work together just to survive."

As the United League sees it, the Klan is just one of many mechanisms used to keep blacks powerless and afraid. "Fear has been used to take thousands of acres of land from blacks," Robinson contends. "And now black and colored people don't control nothing. From 19 million acres, we only have two million left."

The only way to free people from fear and powerlessness, in the view of Robinson and other League leaders, is by building pride and power. That is what marches and meetings and boycotts are all about, aiming to awaken not "the conscience of white America" but the "sleeping giant" of black America.

"Our strategy is to use whatever it takes for people to organize a grass-roots movement around their needs," Robinson explains. "Boycotts and demonstrations never change people's hearts. That's the mistake Dr. King made.

"But black people are a sleeping giant who lies in a shallow grave. And there is one thing I am proud about. For all the time we have been enslaved, there was one thing the system didn't understand — that one day we would come back after it, with blood in our eyes." □

*Andrew Marx and Tom Tuthill are staff writers for the Liberation News Service, 17 West 17th St., New York, N.Y. 10011.*

VANESSA  
GALLMAN:

# KLAN CONFRONTATIONS

OFFENSIVE, DEFENSIVE TACTICS

**O**n November 3, 1979 — the same day five Communist Workers Party members were shot down by Klansmen and Nazis during an anti-Klan rally in Greensboro, North Carolina — Klansmen were literally being run out of town by protestors in Dallas, Texas.

About 40 Klansmen participating in the "March of the Christian Soldiers" would have actually been marching off to war if police had not whisked them away from the jeering, hostile crowd of 3,500 people chasing them.

After herding the Klansmen into the courthouse's heavily guarded basement to disrobe, police put them on a chartered bus that took them outside the city limits and then escorted them home in police cars.

"The crowd just got bigger and bigger and more violent," said Lieutenant Charles T. Burnley, who directed the Dallas police's 100-member tactical unit that day. "And we did have on all our riot gear, you can believe that. I think if we had stayed on the street for another 30 minutes, we would have had a big street brawl."

**T**he Dallas incident is only one recent example of Southern communities reacting aggressively to the Klan. The "ignore them and they'll go away" attitude is increasingly being rejected. And in some communities — China Grove, North Carolina, and New Orleans, for instance — the emerging attitude is "Get them before they get you."

"Not only are blacks no longer afraid of the Klan," says Ozell Sutton, Atlanta Regional Director of the U.S. Justice Department's Community Relations Service, "but they are antag-



onistic against the Klan. And now we have situations of blacks heckling Klansmen like Klansmen used to heckle blacks."

Sutton cited the Greensboro killings as an example of what heckling could cause. "I don't know where the end is," he said. "In the foreseeable future and as the economy gets worse, I see an increased antagonism between the Klan and black demonstrators. It just makes you quiver."

Unlike the situation in Dallas, where people reacted to Klansmen coming into their community, the Greensboro killings were the result of Communist Workers Party taunts that dared the Klan to come and get them. The Greensboro November 3 rally was publicized as a "Death to the Klan" rally, and the CWP had held a press conference two weeks before in Kansas, North Carolina, a Klan stronghold. There, CWP member Paul Bernanzohn, later wounded in the shooting, challenged the "Ku Klux Klan cowards and two-bit punks to come out and face the wrath of the people."

Greensboro residents, particularly those who lived in the low-income housing project where the shooting occurred, felt that their turf had been desecrated for a cause that was not their own. The rally had been scheduled for another site, but was changed to the Morningside Housing Project at the last minute for security reasons. Many residents said the CWP protestors shouted insults at carloads of whites driving slowly through the community, minutes before the shooting.



New Orleans policeman keeping anti-Klan demonstrators and Klan marchers apart.

"I think if the Communists had not done all of that instigating like they did, it would never have happened," said Charlotte Ramseur, who rushed her two children into the house when the shots rang out.

CWP members reject that reasoning, calling it "bourgeoisie propaganda." Nelson Johnson, a Greensboro CWP organizer, said the group's verbal attacks on the Klan were merely political statements; accepting the idea that the Communists provoked the incident, he said, "lets the Klan off the hook and turns it into a CWP issue. But it's a Klan issue."

**T**here had been efforts to keep the Klan from marching in Dallas. On October 26, the Dallas City Council had approved a resolution urging the Klan not to march and ordering city staff to find some way to cancel the Klan parade permit. But Dallas Police Chief Glenn King contended he could find no legal grounds for canceling the permit.

Gerald Weatherly, a Dallas civil-rights attorney for more than 20 years, filed an unsuccessful suit in federal court charging that Chief King violated federal and state law by allowing the march. Weatherly's claim was that the Klan should not be allowed first amendment rights because it works in disguises against federal laws on desegregation.

The leader of the Dallas Klan mobilization was Addie Barlow Frazier, a 73-year-old grandmother known to most as "Dixie Leber" (that's "rebel" spelled backwards). To anti-Klanners, she is simply "Granny Hate."

At the hearing on Weatherly's charge, Mrs. Frazier said the march was to "save an endangered species — the white race." The hearing went much like a comedy routine. Mrs. Frazier held her nose and frowned as Weatherly approached her for questioning. At another point, she kicked aside and refused to sit in a chair he had sat in, declaring, "It needs to be fumigated."

At least two factions of Klansmen participated in the march — the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan led by James Venable of Stone Mountain, Georgia, and the National Knights of the Ku Klux Klan led by David Duke of Metairie, Louisiana. Three anti-Klan protesters were arrested for disorderly conduct and one for trying to use a policeman's nightstick on a Klansman's head.

Despite the crowd's vehement reaction to the Klan's march in Dallas, a broad-based group called the Coalition for Human Decency was able to pull off a nonviolent anti-Klan rally as a response to the Klan march. But they faced opposition from local government leaders.

"From the beginning, we had trouble with city government and the status quo," said Kwesi Williams, a Coalition leader and a former organizer for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. "They were saying, 'If you leave them alone and don't draw any publicity, they will go away.' But we knew some kind of strong, mass response had to be done. At first, we had to decide to put aside our differences and petty squabbles. We crossed a whole lot of traditional political lines that were typically taboo and came up with a grassroots movement."

The Coalition's approach was to adopt an attitude that could be termed "anti" but not hostile or violent. "We didn't come out just against the Klan," said Williams. "We agreed it wasn't just a white-black issue. We were able to pull together a very broad base of people — blacks, whites, Mexicans, rich, poor. The nuns were there in their habits and everyday people in their jeans. And they were all talking about the Klan."

**O**rganization was the watchword for anti-Klan protestors in China Grove, North Carolina, a town of 2,100 about 30 miles north of Charlotte. But protests there hovered dangerously on the brink of violence.

On July 8, 1979, about 100 demonstrators — armed with shotguns, pistols and billy clubs — surrounded the China Grove Community Center where Klansmen were showing *The Birth of a Nation*, the 1915 film glorifying the Klan. The group of protestors, which included members of the Communist Workers Party, burned two of the Klan's Confederate flags and beat two of the center's pillars with tire irons while Klansmen waved guns and exchanged insults with them. China Grove police pushed the Klansmen inside the center. Gorrell Pierce, grand dragon of the North Carolina Federated Knights of the Ku Klux Klan — carrying a .45 caliber automatic pistol in his belt — insists, "We were a millimeter away from violence."

Despite the protestors' aggressiveness, they had not planned any physical confrontation with the Klan, says Nelson Johnson, a CWP organizer who escaped with wounds from the Greensboro massacre four months later. "The plan," Johnson says, "was to establish publicly that these racist views should be denounced forthrightly and in the presence of those propagating it."

Believing that Klansmen were following them after the incident, protestors stationed a round-the-clock guard around the town's black community. More than 75 armed and helmeted guards, working four-hour shifts, watched the narrow entrance to the black community for more than a week. All media and strangers were thrown out of the area; even earnest inquiries and statements of support were met with silence or ridicule.

Community organizers of the security still refuse to discuss their efforts. Some point out they have reason to be on guard — their sheriff, Rowan County Sheriff Robert Stirewalt, campaigned as a Klansman when he was elected to office in 1966.

"I think the organization of the community patrol served as a deterrent to crime," says Johnson. "And it made a very good political statement — a group such as the Klan should not be granted permission to spread or act on its racist views. The spirit of the people to fight this and protect

themselves was absolutely necessary.”

But now, since his experiences during the Greensboro slayings, Johnson feels that confrontation with the Klan actually works against the anti-Klan movement by distorting a view of the true enemy — capitalism.

“The economy is falling apart,” he says. “People have to be convinced that other people are causing their problems. It’s a scapegoat mentality that escalates a broad-based conflict between different ethnic groups. That’s the political danger of confrontation.”

In New Orleans, however, some anti-Klan protestors have accepted confrontation as the only viable strategy in dealing with the Klan.

On November 26, 1978, about 100 of David Duke’s Knights of the Ku Klux Klan marched from the French Quarter to Liberty Monument, site of a Reconstruction-era battle between white supremacists and police. The

monument commemorates a September 14, 1874, battle in which the White League took over the state house. It was surrendered a week later when President Grant moved in with the Navy and more federal troops. But the monument continues to stand as a tribute to white supremacy — despite the words “Black Power” spray-painted across it, and a plaque the city added in 1974 saying that the inscriptions “are contrary to the philosophy and beliefs of present-day New Orleans.”

The Klan could hardly have picked a more explosive moment for their march. The city was packed with 75,000 blacks fans attending the football game between Grambling State University and Southern University, and with a big crowd celebrating a festival of black food and culture.

Mayor Ernest Morial, the city’s first black mayor, tried in vain to dissuade blacks who said they would hold an

“educational rally” at the statue and await the Klan. “The mayor and everybody else came out and said that both groups marching to this little plot of land would cause confrontation,” says Jim Hayes, an organizer of the anti-Klan protest. “We knew that from day one. It was elementary that little plot of land could not be shared by two groups. We wanted a confrontation. You can’t deal with the Klan passively. They are men who will turn to violence and destroy a man anytime.” Hayes, vice-president of the National Tenant’s Organization, pulled eight low-income community organizations into the Black Committee for Action. Feeling certain that the city would try to stop their march, the group didn’t even apply for a parade permit.

“It wasn’t no parade,” says Hayes, chuckling over the way the group side-stepped the legal hurdles. “We just all decided we were going to meet at a certain place at a certain time and just started walking. Just 500 individuals all walking in the same direction. That’s all.”

But when the protestors approached the statue, police were already escorting the Klansmen away, having persuaded them to rally two hours earlier than publicized. A few catcalls and punches were exchanged, but a show-down was averted, and the Klan’s attempt to gain public attention as a potent organization failed.

Hayes is convinced his direct-action approach works and is accepted by the majority of black people. And he may be right. Effective direct-action strategies, like those used throughout the history of resistance to white vigilante terror, include considerable community education before a mass-based “collision” (see box) works as a defensive tactic. Anti-Klan groups in Dallas and New Orleans succeeded by focusing day-to-day organizing on the threat of the Klan and the need for united action. Their tactics stand in marked contrast to the rhetorical calls issued in Greensboro for the Klan to “face the wrath of the people.”

“I hope the Klan comes back to New Orleans,” says Hayes. “I think we would like to set an example of how we should deal with them.” □

*Vanessa Gallman is a black writer who covers government for the Charlotte Observer and who covers Klan activity throughout the South.*

## 1867: MIDNIGHT COLLISIONS

*Bat. Maj. Genl. John Pope  
Commanding 3rd Military District  
Georgia, Alabama and Florida*

*Calhoun, Georgia  
August 25th 1867*

*We the Colored people of the Town of Calhoun and County of Gordon, desire to call your attention to the State of Affairs that now exist in our midst.*

*On the 16th day of this month, the “Union Republican Party” held a Meeting in this Town, at which the Colored people of the County attended “En Masse”, and since that time we seem to have the particular hatred, and spite, of that class who were opposed to the principles set forth in this Meeting.*

*Their first act was to deprive us of the privilege to worship any longer in their Church. Since we have procured one of our own, they threaten us if we hold meetings in it.*

*There have been houses broken open, windows broken, and doors broken down in the dead hours of the night, men rushing in, cursing and swearing and discharging their pistols inside the house. Several times came very near shooting the occupants. Men have been knocked down, and unmercifully beaten, and yet the authorities do not notice it at all. We would open a school here, but are almost afraid to do so, not knowing that we have any protection for life, or limb. We would humbly make this our petition to you, that something be done to secure to us the protection, we so much desire.*

*We do not wish to complain, but we feel that our lives are no longer safe. Therefore, we feel compeled to ask your protection. We wish to do right, obey the Laws, and live in peace and quietude, and will do so if we are permitted to, but when we are assailed at the Midnight hour, our lives are threatened, and the Laws fail to protect, or assist us, we can but defend ourselves, let the consequences be what they may. Yet we wish to avoid all such collisions, and if possible will do so until we hear from you.*

*We would respectfully ask that a few Soldiers be sent here, believing it is the only way we can live in peace, the only protection we can have, until after the Elections this fall.*

*Hoping you will take such action in the premises, that will conduce to the best welfare of the people, as well as to secure peace and protection to ourselves, we most respectfully submit the foregoing to your consideration.*

*— Signed by 24 black citizens, each affixing his mark.  
Document from the Freedmen & Southern Society  
Collection, University of Maryland*



# JUSTICE vs. THE MOVEMENT

PAT BRYANT

November 3, 1979 — Caesar Cauce, Jim Waller, Bill Sampson and Sandy Smith lay dead; Mike Nathans would be dead soon; several other Communist Workers Party (CWP) members and supporters were seriously wounded. Klansmen and Nazis had made the assaults, but the whole incident had the distinct earmarks of state complicity.

Police had known that armed Klansmen were driving into Greensboro, North Carolina, to confront the CWP at its “Death to the Klan” march. A few days earlier, they had released information about the march’s starting point to a Klan representative, but continued to press CWP heads to leave their guns at home. On the day of the scheduled march, while police inexplicably sat two blocks away, Klan and Nazi cars entered the area where demonstrators were gathering and opened fire on the CWP members.

As a response to the murders, the CWP called for a funeral-protest march, to be held in Greensboro on November 11. Some CWP members had carried guns the day of the murders, and party spokesperson Nelson Johnson said that, as a result of the killings, the CWP would never again disarm its marchers. He believed the police had deliberately failed in their duty to protect the marchers.

Before long, the CWP was not the only group looking towards government agencies with anger and suspicion. While CWP members were making plans for their funeral march, an assortment of human-rights organizations chose November 18 as the date for a religious service and a peaceful, unarmed demonstration to protest the killings. These groups included the Greensboro Pulpit Forum (a black ministers’ group), the Equal Rights Congress, Greensboro Coalition Against the Klan, the North Carolina Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union and the Southern Conference Educational Fund.

But other forces besides these human-rights organizations were making their presence known in Greensboro in the days following the massacre. A “conciliation” team of the Community Relations Service — a little known agency of the United States Justice Department — had invited itself into the city. The team’s mission, ostensibly, was to help



Greensboro, N.C., February 2, 1980

maintain civil order, but the actual effect of its activity was to sow seeds of dissension among the organizations trying to provide a nonviolent alternative to the CWP’s armed funeral march. Ultimately these factors forced the abortion of the planned November 18 gathering.

**T**he Community Relations Service (CRS) team was headed by Robert Ensley — a 51-year-old black agent whose efforts had already proved highly successful in previous agency “interventions” in northern Mississippi, Louisville and other communities across the South. Ensley says that when his Atlanta-based team arrived in Greensboro, the police were disorganized and “did not know at what level or who had the responsibility for doing what.” The CRS team immediately began holding daily “briefing sessions” with the police and other government agencies, discussing with them what steps to take to keep the lid on a volatile situation. The initial reports of the killings, including televised pictures of Klan and Nazi members firing on defenseless demonstrators a few yards away, led to a unanimous outcry from the media, human-rights organizations and average citizens — all directed against the irresponsibility of police authorities and the unrestrained brutality of racist organizations. The pressure on the police and city officials to account for their failure to stop the Klan seemed destined to intensify as groups issued statements and called for demonstrations. But within two days, following the arrival of the CRS “conciliators,”

the focus of attention shifted to the violent rhetoric of the Communist Workers Party, and news stories began describing the killings as “a shootout” between “two extremist organizations.” Increasingly, anyone critical of the Klan murders or the city’s handling of the event was linked to the CWP and their admittedly provocative rhetoric.

Ensley said his agency plotted a “contingency plan” to cope with various responses in the community. But it soon became clear that the purpose of the plan was not to promote civil order by preparing protection for the participants in the nonviolent November 11 and 18 rallies; instead, these government agencies worked to scare off potential marchers with images of more “violent confrontations” and to divide one group of actors against another — ministers against “leftists,” local leaders against national organizations, students against community residents.

For increased efficiency, Ensley and the CRS team divided responsibilities among the various government agencies. The team’s own role was to keep tabs on the college student population, while the Greensboro Human Relations Commission and the North Carolina Human Relations Commission were assigned to contact high school students and local leaders before the November 11 funeral march. The message they used was essentially the same to

each audience: “Beware, there may be violence.”

Ensley’s first task — a relatively simple one — was to discourage local college students (mainly at A&T State University) from participating in the November 11 march. Most of the students were anxious to express their outrage over the murders, yet they feared further violence and, very often, were leery of becoming involved with a Communist group. Ensley’s message played on those fears. Lynn Wells, a Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF) organizer, recalls that Ensley told the A&T students, “Oh, we’re not telling you not to take a position. We’re not telling you not to march. We just want to tell you that on Sunday there will be 5,000 National Guardsmen, there may be a state of emergency — and all of the guns will be aimed at you.”

Ensley remembers telling the students, “If you are going to get involved, get involved on your own terms.” He says, “I tried to give them some idea about the role of the National Guard and the state police and the sheriff’s department.”

These “warnings” effectively built on memories of the 1969 National Guard siege of an A&T dormitory. One student, William Grimes, was killed during that siege.

Largely as a result of CRS activity, very few students

## COINTELPRO SPIES

*Covert intervention in the legal activities of U.S. citizens is nothing new for the U.S. Justice Department. The FBI’s counterintelligence program, or COINTELPRO, was the best known of these secret intelligence and disruptive operations. COINTELPRO began officially in 1956 to monitor the Communist Party, USA. But its targets were soon expanded until the operation was dissolved around 1972. The following description of the program is excerpted from the April 26, 1976, “Final Report of the Senate Select Committee To Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities.”*

**F**rom 1956 until 1960, the COINTELPRO program was primarily aimed at the Communist Party organization. But, in March, 1960, participating FBI field offices were directed to make efforts to prevent Communist “infiltration” of “legitimate mass organizations, such

as Parent-Teacher Associations, civil organizations and racial and religious groups.” The initial technique was to notify a leader of the organization, often by “anonymous communications,” about the alleged Communist in its midst. In some cases, both the Communist and the infiltrated organization were targeted.

This marked the beginning of the progression from targeting Communist Party members, to those allegedly under Communist “influence,” to persons taking positions supported by the Communists. For example, in 1964 targets under the Communist Party COINTELPRO label included a group with some Communist participants urging increased employment of minorities and a non-Communist group in opposition to the House Committee on Un-American Activities.

The FBI’s initiation of COINTELPRO operations against the Ku Klux Klan, “Black Nationalists” and the “New Left” brought to bear upon a wide range of domestic groups the techniques previously developed to combat Communists and persons who happened to associate with them.

The start of each program coincided with significant national events. The Klan program followed the widely publicized disappearance in 1964 of three civil-rights workers in Mississippi. The “Black Nationalist” program was authorized in the aftermath of the Newark and Detroit riots in 1967. The

“New Left” program developed shortly after student disruption of the Columbia University campus in the spring of 1968. While the initiating memoranda approved by Director Hoover do not refer to these specific events, it is clear that they shaped the context for the Bureau’s decisions.

These programs were not directed at obtaining evidence for use in possible criminal prosecutions arising out of those events. Rather, they were secret programs — “under no circumstances” to be “made known outside the Bureau” — which used unlawful or improper acts to “disrupt” or “neutralize” the activities of groups and individuals targeted on the basis of imprecise criteria.

The stated strategy of the “Black Nationalist” COINTELPRO instituted in 1967 was “to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit or otherwise neutralize” such groups and their “leadership, spokesmen, members and supporters.” The larger objectives were to “counter” their “propensity for violence” and to “frustrate” their efforts to “consolidate their forces” or to “recruit new or youthful adherents.” Field officers were instructed to exploit conflicts within and between groups; to use news media contacts to ridicule and otherwise discredit groups; to prevent “rabble rousers” from spreading their “philosophy” publicly; and to gather information on the “unsavory back-grounds” of group leaders.



marched on November 11. And the National Guard, together with state and local police almost outnumbered the approximately 1,000 demonstrators.

Having successfully undermined the funeral march, CRS began orchestrating a covert intelligence operation aimed at sabotaging the nonviolent religious service and rally planned for November 18. Although it is difficult to obtain hard proof about who was behind each instance of spying and intimidation, the tactics used were astoundingly similar to those the FBI and the CRS together directed during the 1960s against such figures as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., James Forman and Fred Hampton. These tactics included anonymous phone calls, red-baiting, spreading rumors and secret displays of gun caches and government files on various activists (see box on COINTELPRO.)

Vital to the success of the planned November 18 gathering would be the support – and participation – of local black ministers. Without their involvement, the tensions in the city and disagreements with the CWP's use of arms would discourage many members of Greensboro's black community from taking part in the service and rally.

No sooner did the ministers start making plans for the service they were sponsoring than they began receiving clandestine phone calls and unsolicited advice from city officials saying that their efforts might result in violence. This particularly alarmed the ministers, who had envisioned their service – and, initially, the subsequent rally – as a positive alternative to the CWP funeral march. While the deaths shocked and grieved the ministers, they – like many other human-rights advocates – strongly opposed the CWP's willingness to bear arms and feared that the CWP would provoke confrontations.

On November 13, just one day after the ministers had publicly announced the service, Reverend George Gay of the Greensboro Pulpit Forum began to receive threats against his life. Another minister belonging to the Pulpit Forum – Reverend George Brooks – said that his support for the November 18 rally diminished after supposedly "leftist" groups indicated to him a willingness to disrupt the rally. "These people were only talking about being vindictive and seeking revenge," Reverend Brooks said in an interview with Jim Lee, director of WVSP Radio in Warrenton, North Carolina. "They were not interested in any kind of real display of concern other than to show they would be militant. . . . They said . . . that you all go and have your church meeting, but stay there cause you're going to need to pray for the dead."

Somebody (the ministers refused to say who) also took several ministers aside and showed them caches of weapons supposedly belonging to "leftists." The ministers were also shown secret government files on several key organizers of the rally, including SCEF's Lynn Wells and Jerome Scott of the Equal Rights Congress. The files alleged that Wells and Scott were Communists – an allegation which tarred them with the same brush as the CWP and undermined the ministers' confidence in the rally's organizers.

The result of this covert intimidation and innuendo was predictable. First, the ministers announced that the service would be held completely separate from the rally; that they disassociated themselves from the rally and its organizers. Then they canceled the service altogether, a move which sealed the fate of the whole event. The Equal Rights Congress – a key sponsor – withdrew its support of the proposed rally. A flurry of other cancellations followed until finally the rally was "postponed."

Kelvin Buncum, A&T State University student body president, blamed the postponement on "lack of community support." But while there were genuine fears in the community about a possible recurrence of violence during the rally, to a large extent the dwindling local involvement was caused by a divided leadership – a leadership whose members were effectively splintered and played off against one another.

The damage done was not merely the immediate effect of the postponed rally; the suspicion and discord built up during this period would remain a stumbling block for civil-rights organizers in the area during the months to come. Only through great effort was unity achieved for the massive February 2 demonstration sponsored by the National Anti-Klan Network. That rally not only protested the five murders, but also commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the Greensboro sit-ins, which many recognize as the birth of the 1960s civil-rights movement.

Although the CRS and other government agencies did not succeed in thwarting the February 2 Mobilization, their failure was not from lack of trying. On the contrary, the orchestration of covert activities escalated during December and January. It gradually became clear to many activists that – despite government denials – covert intelligence operations are still being used to derail human-rights and civil-rights movements in this country. It also became clear that the CRS is being used as a crucial weapon in this operation.

What is this innocuous-sounding Community Relations Service? What was it created to do, and how and when did it start being used as an intelligence-gathering and



Cliff Berlet

Klansmen awaiting United League demonstration, Nov. 25, 1978

information-sharing operation?

**G**ilbert Pompa, director of the Community Relations Service, often has to answer charges that his agency gathers intelligence and is involved in activities disruptive to the civil-rights and human-rights movements. These critics, he replies, just don't know the agency's mandate.

CRS was established as a result of Title X of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 "to provide assistance to communities and persons therein in resolving disputes, disagreements or difficulties relating to discriminatory practices based on race, color or national origin..." Agency staff were supposed to mediate or conciliate problems in racially troubled communities with the goal of upholding the endangered rights of minorities. Congress denied CRS any investigative or prosecutorial functions. In fact, by placing the infant agency within the Commerce Department, Congress deliberately isolated the Community Relations Service from these functions of the Justice Department, which was responsible for enforcing the new Civil Rights Act.

In a major speech on March 30, 1964, supporting the passage of the Civil Rights Act and describing how CRS would function, Senator Hubert Humphrey gave the following example:

*Individual restaurant or hotel owners may be reluctant to admit Negroes unless assured that their competitors will do likewise. Through the good offices of the Community Relations Service, or of comparable state or local organizations, it may be possible to achieve agreement among all or substantially all the owners. Failing that, it may be necessary to sue a few holdouts — let us say, as an example, under Title II — while relying on agreement of the rest to act voluntarily if the suit is successful.*

Thus, it is very important to realize that CRS was established to function as an aid to civil rights struggles — not as a means to thwart and disrupt them.

CRS followed its original mandate, as far as we know, until 1966, when President Johnson proposed to move the mediation forces from Commerce to the Justice Department. When Congress did not oppose the reorganization,

the transfer became law. Soon CRS's mediating role became altered by government officials shaken by the urban rebellions, particularly in Detroit and Newark. Joseph Califano, an assistant to President Johnson in 1967, told the Senate Committee on Governmental Intelligence Activities that these insurrections were a "shattering experience" for the Justice Department and the White House. The White House insisted that there must be an effective way to gather information to predict these insurrections. Attorney General Ramsey Clark responded by ordering Assistant Attorney General John Doar to review how the Justice Department maintained and collected information "about organizations and individuals who may or may not be a force to be taken into account in evaluating the causes of civil disorder in urban areas." Doar concluded that a new intelligence clearinghouse was required.

In December, 1967, the Justice Department's Inter-Division Intelligence Unit (IDIU) was organized according to Doar's recommendation. The FBI and other divisions of the Justice Department — including the Community Relations Service — were to operate "a single intelligence unit to analyze the FBI information we receive about certain persons and groups who make the urban ghetto their base of operations." Doar's recommendation suggested that the CRS "funnel information to this unit." He acknowledged that CRS risked losing "its credibility with people in the ghetto" by becoming an intelligence-gathering operation. Yet when the IDIU began, it was placed under the supervision of a Committee composed of the director of the Community Relations Service (then Ben Holman) and the Assistant Attorneys General in charge of the Civil Rights, Criminal and Internal Security Divisions.

CRS' current director is Gilbert Pompa, a Mexican-American who had previously served as assistant city attorney in San Antonio and assistant district attorney of Bexar County. Pompa took his prosecuting and detective skills to the CRS, and was appointed associate director in 1970. He rose to deputy director in 1976 and finally became director in 1977. Few people know the agency better than Pompa; he insists that he has no knowledge of CRS or its previous directors, Roger Wilkins and Ben Holman, ever participating in intelligence gathering. Speaking about Roger Wilkins, Pompa adds, "Roger is black and certainly his sensitivity as I know it and knew it then would not lead me to believe or conclude that Roger would ever be a part of any intelligence operation, and certainly the people in the agency including myself would never have been a part of any intelligence-gathering operation."

But Pompa does admit, "It becomes necessary from time to time to share information in a preventive sense [with the FBI and intelligence agencies]. For example, I was director of operations during the occupation of Wounded Knee, where it became necessary to dispute assessments from other elements of the Department. You know, the FBI might conclude that the Indians were armed in such a way that it would require, you know, better types of weaponry to respond in the event they had serious problems. It became incumbent upon people like myself to dispute that."

Pompa doesn't think telling the FBI exactly what kinds of weapons the Native Americans had in their possession performed an intelligence function for the FBI. "That was merely setting the record straight for the purpose of preventing an overreaction to an already serious situation," he says.



150 club-wielding Klansmen broke up an SCLC march in Decatur, Ga., May 26, 1979; two weeks later, 2,000 civil rights supporters marched as 500 state police lined the streets.

**W**alking the thin line between “sharing information” and “gathering intelligence” has become a refined skill for CRS agents. In cases of marches or rallies, this often means calling activists known to the CRS and asking them if they are going to participate. The experience of receiving a sudden phone call from an official of some mysterious government agency can be quite chilling — an effect which CRS agents deny they exploit.

Atlanta-based CRS conciliator Robert Ensley freely admits that he called Southern Christian Leadership Conference organizer Golden Frinks just days before the Communist Workers Party's funeral march in Greensboro, North Carolina, on November 11, 1979. He says he wanted to see if Frinks intended to participate in the demonstration and bring SCLC members from South Carolina. “I called Golden. And it's only because when you call people you know to see if they're coming, you've already established contact with them. You don't call them to discourage them from coming. You only call them because you feel comfortable in knowing that they're there and that you have worked with them before and you know the methods they will employ and what they will do and normally what they will not do. And that is the only reason why you do it, but not for any intelligence purposes. You don't call them to persuade them not to come.”

However, some people canvassed by police departments, state police, the Justice Department's CRS, the FBI and the North Carolina Human Relations Council said they did feel intimidated by what seemed to them an intelligence-gathering operation. Carrie Graves, a Charlotte activist, got a call from an employee of the Charlotte Police Department asking if she planned to go to the CWP funeral march. This was a part of the “contingency planning” — finding out who was coming — which the CRS had convinced the Greensboro Police Department was necessary. Mrs. Graves says she was not frightened, but she did not attend the march.

This procedure of determining who will attend demonstrations was established as one of the functions of the previously mentioned IDIU, which was later renamed the Civil Disturbance Unit (CDU). Pompa says he doesn't remember when the CDU has met, although the CRS director sits on the CDU board. Whether the CRS has ongoing intelligence connections with the FBI and other

Justice Department divisions isn't clear, but it is clear that the CRS does gather “information” or “intelligence,” an investigative function which runs directly counter to its original mandate and limitations. And it's becoming increasingly clear that the information the CRS gathers does not support the legal rights and legitimate struggles of human-rights activists. On the contrary, the agency has become a primary force in squelching the minority rights it was created to protect.

**C**ommunity Relations Service agents generally come into a community polarized over an issue, where a strong likelihood of physical confrontation exists. The agency does not need an invitation from activists on one side or the other to enter a community. But in Byhalia, Mississippi, CRS agents Robert Ensley and Marge Curet were invited to come in by State Senator George Yarborough and the local white merchants who had been successfully boycotted by the town's blacks, organized by the United League of Mississippi (see page 73).

The boycott began following the June, 1974, death of Butler Young, a 21-year-old black shot to death while in the custody of three county law enforcement officers. Two predominantly white grand juries refused to indict the officers, who claimed they shot Young when he tried to escape. Beyond demands to prosecute the officers, the list of grievances grew to include increased hiring of blacks at the U.S. Post Office and the replacement of two white city councilmen with two blacks. The white merchants refused to budge. The boycott was set. At the time when the CRS team entered Byhalia, several stores had gone broke and several white merchants had filed an unsuccessful lawsuit against the boycott.

The United League and most of Byhalia's black citizens opposed bringing in Ensley and Curet to mediate the dispute. Their suspicions of the pair proved well-founded, as the CRS agents proceeded to collaborate with the white merchants and white politicians in a series of shady manipulations of the law to try to force the demise of the boycott. Ensley and Curet held several high-level meetings with representatives of the white merchants, including one session in the office of then-Governor William Waller. During this session, held on January 31, 1975, Senator Yarborough outlined for the group (which included the state attorney general, the director of the Mississippi Highway Commission and Robert Moore, the mayor of Byhalia) a detailed strategy for ousting the United League and ending the boycott.

Marge Curet's confidential CRS report, dated February 4, outlined the planned attack. First, citizens who CRS and the white merchants alleged were being threatened or intimidated from shopping in the boycotted stores would be aided to shop there without reprisals. State investigators would be called in to record CRS encouraged testimony that the United League was using illegal methods to enforce the boycott. And highway patrolmen would be called in for a show of force. In another part of her memo, Curet describes how Senator Yarborough made a phone call to federal judge Omar Smith and obtained his inside, and potentially illegal, advice about what kind of injunction might be filed to halt the boycott.

Asked if the CRS didn't seem to be in a precarious position as a meddler rather than a mediator in the governor's office, director Pompa replied:

*It does, but you've got to understand that we probably were not privileged to what was being done if that was in fact done. We don't know what either of the two sides is doing outside of what we know when we're meeting with them. So you know, we were meeting, we were also meeting with members of the United League at the same time, you know, to try to see if there was some kind of resolution that could be worked out.*

The United League responded to the CRS's series of meetings with merchants and government officials with a lawsuit against Ensley, Curet, the town of Byhalia, the FBI and several agents of the state of Mississippi. The lawsuit charged that CRS agents attempted "to coerce and intimidate . . . members of the League and black citizens of Byhalia into breaking the boycott." In court testimony as well as interviews with reporters, director Pompa and agent Ensley denied the charges made by the United League. The suit was finally resolved in an out-of-court settlement in which neither side could claim a clear victory.

**C**RS intervention in communities is by no means limited to frustrating activists' organizing attempts. Most of the agency's time is devoted to police, court and school disputes. Prison protests form an increasing part of the agency's case load.

In June, 1975, inmates at the Women's Prison in Raleigh, North Carolina, went on strike. After three days of protest, including a work stoppage and a refusal by the inmates to return to their dormitory, all of the parties — corrections management, inmates and outside supporting organizations — met to consider a resolution of their grievances. The negotiations were going well.

At this juncture, enter CRS agents Ensley and Earnie Jones, to "mediate."

One central figure, Larry Little, then coordinator for the Black Panther Party in Winston-Salem, had been actively involved in the negotiations and saw the CRS team simply as meddlers:

*In the height of the struggle to get some people to listen to real basic simple human requests, two individuals who I remember as salt and pepper [Ensley is black and Jones is white], who were members of the Community Relations Service of the Justice Department, came in, supposedly expressing a concern for what we were doing, and wanting to know if they could in any way be of assistance to the people protesting the conditions.*

*Their offer to help was met with skepticism because people in the Movement have had reason to be skeptical of anything coming out of the Justice Department, especially considering the types of dirty tricks that were played on us — outright lies, things done to imprison people in the Movement and frame people, by the FBI during its infamous COINTELPRO stage.*

At one point the outside groups demanded that prison officials agree to five demands, and that they acknowledge in writing certain changes in work assignments, new safety procedures in the laundry rooms and a promise to upgrade the prison health care system. Ensley and Jones came back

with the agreement typewritten on prison stationery but not signed by prison administrators. The demands were sent back for signatures, and management refused.

Following this deceptive show of willingness to "negotiate," prison officials suddenly took the offensive. At a press conference, they accused the inmates of being unreasonable; the talks were off. Two hundred riot-armed male guards were brought in to subdue the women and to forcibly break the strike. This accomplished, the progress made toward resolving the problems went down the drain. Almost 100 inmates were loaded on prison buses and held in isolation about 150 miles away. Some were without adequate medical care, and none had access to the press or to their families. Months later, when the inmates were returned to Women's Prison, 36 of them were held in solitary confinement in a dreary cell block. Inmates and supporters filed a lawsuit to obtain release from solitary confinement, but the petition withered and died in the federal courts. (For more on the strike, see interview with Nzinga Njeri in "Still Life: Inside Southern Prisons," *Southern Exposure*, Volume VI, No. 4.)

While all of these things were happening, the CRS agents did not offer to mediate on behalf of the inmates.

Ensley recalls the breakdown in the talks, but his recollection differs from Little's. Ensley recollects that the agreement was all worked out. But jealousies, says Ensley, between Larry Little and Reverend Leon White (a commissioner of the North Carolina Inmate Grievance Commission) caused the alleged agreement to fall apart.

"We were prepared to bring one of our mediators from our New York office to sit down and come to some agreement as to what would be put on paper about conditions at the prison and what the officials would do and what the inmates would do," recalls Ensley, implying that nothing had been written down. But he contradicts this statement later in the interview by saying that the agreement was written and signed by the parties, but that the alleged jealousies subverted a settlement.

Little and White both deny that any rivalries on their part made the effort fail. Little concludes that the breakdown was purposeful:

*I don't think there is an appreciable difference in the CRS officers now and the FBI. . . . Very frankly, they've just moved into a more sophisticated way or more underhanded way of doing things. It reminds me of just another smoother version of COINTELPRO. They come in like they're legitimately concerned but are designed just to get people going around in circles and going nowhere.*

**V**eteran activist Anne Braden recalls the fall of 1975 in Louisville, Kentucky, as a time of "real community tension." Cross-county busing opponents had developed a mass movement. Anti-busing rallies attracted as many as 10,000 people. Merchants who did not place anti-busing signs in their windows received threats that their windows would be broken.

There was also activity among groups supporting desegregation and busing, but pro-busing forces faced great opposition. "There was a terrible atmosphere of fear that gripped people that had not been present for many years," says Anne Braden. "People were afraid to speak out, and if they did speak out they were threatened."



Klansmen shout at protesters during confrontation in China Grove, N.C., on July 9, 1979

One pro-busing group, Progress in Education (PIE), was formed mainly by self-avowed radicals to organize support for school desegregation. PIE organizers planned a rally and march to the Jefferson County Courthouse. But there was tremendous community pressure against the demonstration. Adding to that pressure were the activities of CRS agent Robert Ensley. This time Ensley paid visits to potential PIE supporters and rally speakers.

"It would be hard to prove," says Braden, "but my feeling is that Ensley was telling people they should not associate with people who had the reputations of being radicals. The net result was that he [Ensley] was actively undermining the only opposition in sight to the Klan and the right wing in Louisville."

In a pattern similar to the one in Greensboro five years later, several PIE supporters and rally speakers began backing out following Ensley's visits in the community. On this occasion, however, the rally succeeded in spite of Ensley and the CRS. It attracted a surprising 1,000 people and was considered very effective. Says Anne Braden: "The significance of that rally and march was to break through the fear that held people captive."

Recently asked if he had discouraged people from participating in the Louisville march and rally, Ensley responded, "That's a damn lie. How well do you know Anne Braden? What do you know about her past in Birmingham and Louisville?"

He didn't stop there. Continuing, he cautioned, "You look back at Anne Braden, her husband, her daughter, and it goes back a number of years. Everybody in the

world knows Anne Braden." He then gave the name of a Louisville woman who could fill in the details. Despite his claim that he did not spread rumors about march leaders, Ensley subtly got his message — red-baiting — across, casting doubt on Braden's credibility without addressing the question of what *he* did in Louisville.

How does the Community Relations Service continue these operations against the interests of the communities it enters? When tensions are strained, and conflicts volatile, a supposedly neutral party can often come in proposing to settle the dispute. CRS's approach is to obtain a consensus of community leadership interested in avoiding confrontation. Pompa describes how CRS arrives at a consensus, explaining the strategy Ensley and the CRS team used in the Louisville desegregation dispute.

"What frequently happens in situations like this is . . . we might be working with a particular group that has been identified as the leadership group by a consensus of the community as the group to work through. We latch onto that group and we begin to work with them and try to bring them together with the school administration and the court and everybody else."

To the exclusion of other activist groups in a community, CRS frequently "latches onto" the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and cooperates with this civil-rights group to resolve confrontations. Ensley says the SCLC is used frequently because CRS is familiar with the group, can predict what actions they will take and has developed a high level of trust with them. Reverend Fred Taylor, SCLC director of chapters and affiliates, says that CRS is successful in many situations when "they talk with white folks, talk to us and try to negotiate the differences."

Helping SCLC obtain march permits, and serving as middle men to sometimes hostile local law enforcement officers is often done. But Taylor says the CRS agents aren't invited. "They just show up."

Even though the agents promote the organization as the "leadership group," SCLC organizers remain cautious when dealing with the agency. Taylor says he trusts CRS agents, but with reservations: "What I'm going to do is above board anyway. You know I ain't got nothing to hide. . . . I mean in a sense I trust them. Let me put it like this. I wouldn't invite the folk from Justice Department to sit in on a meeting of the Movement. But whatever we decide to do in terms of direct action, I trust them to tell them what our public activity is going to be. Where we're going, what time we are going to start, and what we will need in terms of getting to the point where we are going. I trust them to that extent, but at the same time I realize they work for Uncle Sam. I also realize that Uncle Sam does not have our best interest at heart."

In case after case, we have found that the CRS operates to undermine the unity and effectiveness of people trying to combat the racist abuses of our society. There are many unanswered questions about CRS's role in subverting the response to the Klan massacre in Greensboro. We cannot be certain of the exact role the CRS played in events leading up to the aborted November 18 march and rally, but the covert operation strongly resembles the pattern of CRS-FBI activities of the late 1960s and '70s which a Senate Committee recommended legislation to prevent in 1976. Like COINTELPRO agents, Robert Ensley and his CRS colleagues deal routinely in half-truths, rumor mongering, red-baiting and innuendo. They may say they walk the fine line between legitimate information-gathering and illegal spying on the lawful activities of American citizens — but our investigation calls into question their mastery of that distinction.

Our research indicates the CRS's presence in Greensboro was less visible after the aborted November 18, 1979 march. The next mass demonstration called to protest the Klan grew out a series of meetings in Atlanta. Calling itself the February 2nd Mobilization, a broad range of 150 organizations — from the United Methodist Women's Division to the Communist Labor Party — chose that date to rally in Greensboro to protest the Klan and to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the birth of the student sit-ins.\* Again black ministers in Greensboro shied away from joining the coalition, and the tensions between the obviously disparate groups remained open to manipulation by forces opposed to the march. Organizers for the February 2nd Mobilization did their best to control rumors, and in the end succeeded against great odds: 7,000 black and white students, church people, radicals and community residents did march together peacefully on that cold Saturday afternoon.

During the weeks preceding the march, CRS agents kept a low profile, perhaps because Lynn Wells and other rally organizers were increasingly vocal in their criticism of the agency's actions in the city.\*\* Nevertheless, CRS continued to spread divisive rumors about the people and organiza-



Kevin Bell

tions involved in the February 2nd rally. Once again, Robert Ensley appeared to be the man at the helm. During a four-hour interview in Atlanta on January 8, 1980, Ensley's phone rang repeatedly, with questions about what Ensley thought was going on in Greensboro at the time. One call in particular confirmed what many people had already suspected: Ensley was actively spreading rumors designed to chill support for the upcoming march. The caller was not identified, but Ensley's part of this phone call was recorded:

*"Hello, I'm doing fine." He listens intently, taking notes on his pad, and responds, "Um hum, um hum." Finally, "Well, this is about as much as we have heard. Exactly what the SCLC has more or less determined is that they would not participate. The NAACP also."*

While the SCLC had indeed expressed some doubts about the march, they were mainly concerned about the perceived lack of support from Greensboro ministers. And at the time of the phone call, the organization was in the process of organizing a meeting to talk things over with the ministers. SCLC remained a co-sponsor of the February 2nd Mobil-

\* On February 1, 1960, four students from A&T University sat in at the segregated lunch counter at Woolworth's, launching a wave of student sit-ins that led to the founding of SNCC (see *Southern Exposure*, Volume VI, No. 3, p. 78).

\*\* CRS's regional director in Atlanta, Ozell Sutton, became so concerned about these allegations that he paid a visit in late December to SCLC president Dr. Joseph Lowery to deny Wells' charges, which had been published in newspapers.





These weapons were carried by Klansmen on their Selma-to-Montgomery march, August 12, 1979

ization and participated fully. Moreover, contrary to the “information” Ensley had handed out, the Greensboro branch of the NAACP had, in fact, endorsed the February 2 action.

This incident might conceivably appear to have been an innocuous mistake, except for one very striking set of coincidences. On the same day that Ensley answered this phone call, two television stations broadcast the statement that the SCLC and the NAACP had pulled out of the march. Steve Leeolou — a reporter at WTVD in Durham, North Carolina — said he got his information from a high-level official in Greensboro’s city hall. He describes this official as a “good source” who had always proven accurate before. The station later corrected this misinformation, but the damage was already done. Once again, Ensley had succeeded in planting seeds of mistrust and division among the various allies working together for a meaningful response to the menace of the Klan and the racist right-wing.

Ironically, the weeks before the February 2 march in Greensboro provided not one but several prime opportunities for the CRS to act on its original mandate: to mediate

in a racially troubled community, in order to protect the rights of minorities and advance the cause of civil rights. Significantly, the CRS did not even ask to mediate the growing disputes over a parade permit, lease of the municipal coliseum and proposed repressive changes in the city’s parade permit. Greensboro’s City Hall, the city and state police, and the State Bureau of Investigation were all clearly — and publicly — involved in efforts to obstruct the people’s rights to peaceful assembly and free speech; yet Ensley and his cohorts elected to remain silent on these issues and thus mutely to affirm the offenses.

Congress did not intend for the Community Relations Service to serve as an intelligence operation aimed against the civil-rights movement. In fact, the agency’s original mandate was quite the opposite — to aid the civil-rights cause, which implies fighting the Ku Klux Klan. As we have seen, CRS has engaged in intelligence-gathering activities far beyond its legitimate purpose and has created an intelligence network that its own agents now boast is more extensive than any other agency’s. “We know who the real leaders are as opposed to the announced leaders,” Ensley claims. “We know when we go into the most rural area who to contact, who to see if there is any given problem or situation.”

How does the CRS know all this? Does it keep files? Does it share files with other intelligence agencies? Agent Ensley and director Pompa both deny the existence of CRS files on individuals. But the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence documented that at least during the early 1970s CRS director Ben Holman was involved in efforts to gather information on the legal activities of many Americans. We also know from our research that the spider web of city, county and state “human relations councils” forms an essential part of the CRS operation — both the gathering of intelligence and the dispensing of rumors and threats. Much of the leg work was done for Ensley and his cohorts by these sister agencies — as we saw in the Greensboro and Mississippi interventions — and many of the local contacts are made on this level. The exact relationship between CRS and various local, state and federal agencies remains unclear, and the degree to which they conspire to thwart legal actions of citizens in the interest of maintaining a tightly controlled “civic order” must be further examined.

A full-scale investigation of the CRS and its intelligence network is obviously long overdue. The agency’s involvement in illegal activities, and its possible role as a replacement for the FBI’s COINTELPRO in conducting outlawed intelligence functions must be scrutinized; its purposes must be clarified or the agency dissolved. The CRS’s exact role in Greensboro in covering up mistakes, mismanagement or worse abuses by city and police authorities also demands exposure — as well as the agency’s possible violations of the civil rights of the very organizations it was created to protect. Only after these investigations are completed will the cloud left by CRS involvement in the Greensboro killings be lifted. □

*Pat Bryant is a staff member of the Institute for Southern Studies and an organizer for the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic Justice. Documentation of the CRS role in Mississippi was provided by the Anti-Repression Research Team of Jackson. Directed by Ken Lawrence, the team was responsible for de-classifying the John Doar and Ramsey Clark memos.*

# THE KLAN SPEAKS:

BILL RICCIO

It is good to see that out there in front all these good white people have gathered to tell Washington that they are sick of the government niggertickerton and trying to get the nigger and the liberal vote. We are sick of supporting the blacks while they multiply like rats. (*Applause and catcalls.*)

And the Ku Klux Klan will monitor the schools in this state and this country that the government has put black apes in our high schools and elementary schools with our precious superior white children and forced them to mix. And the day that a black ape lays his black paw on a little white girl, the Ku Klux Klan will move in and trim that paw back. (*Applause and more catcalls longer than before.*)

We will not tolerate government oppression. They have said that we cannot roadblock on the roads. But let me ask you, who are the working people of this country that pay the tax on those highways? (*Applause: "We are."*) Who has kept America from going communist for the last 100 years? (*"We have."*) Who has kept the Christian religion free in America? (*"We have."*) Who has kept a nation such as America from becoming a nation of little yellow mongrels? (*"We have."*) Who has kept the niggertickerton politicians from taking over this country and selling us down the tubes to Russia? (*"We have."*)

We will not tolerate race mixing. We will not stand for it. If necessary we will spill every drop of our blood on these streets to defend the red, white and blue flag of the United States of America. (*Applause.*) Our politicians have forced our law enforcement officers to do that which is against most of their own will. The majority of law enforcement that I talked to today this morning, both Decatur, the county and state of Alabama especially, said they wish they could be off today so that they could be out here wearing one of these white robes. (*Applause.*)

We have got some fine law enforcement officers in this country. Unfortunately we have politicians that the communist and the nigger have put in there that will sell their souls to the gates of hell for one vote. And now the government is giving them illegal orders. One thing is certain, as long as there is a white man in America and as long as we got one red-blooded American and white enough to wear one of these white sheets, we are going to stand here, we will not be moved, and we will not tolerate communist oppression. (*Applause.*)

— June 9, 1979  
Decatur, Alabama

BILL WILKINSON

It is a pleasure to see the fine turnout of men and women that we have here today and law enforcement. We have traditionally in the Ku Klux Klan arisen in time of crisis in this nation when the people are being oppressed.

The first emergence of the Klan in 1865 was in answer to the call of the white people as a result of the tyranny of the carpetbaggers and the scalawags of the radical party of the North that came down to punish the South for the Civil War. Let me say that at that time conditions were intolerable. The white people of the South had been disenfranchised and they could not vote. They had been removed from office. Only the Negroes held the offices and they were controlled by the white people that were out to suppress the South. Bands of Negroes roamed the countryside. They looted, robbed, raped and killed. This is the call that the Klan answered.

In later years the Klan has answered other calls. And the call that we answered today is that of a suppressive government once again. One that forces affirmative action. One that forces busing. One that deteriorates our military superiority. We break treaties with long-standing allies. We give away United States property such as the Panama Canal. All of these things the government is doing. All of these things are in direct conflict with the wishes and wills and the interests of the people of the United States of America. For this reason the Klan is growing in strength.

Last year on June 25 in Tupelo, Mississippi, standing on the steps of the courthouse I said that that would be the beginning of the civil-rights movement for white people and again today we prove that. Two weeks ago brave Klansmen and Klansladies stood up in this town for their communities and their country and were shot down in cold blood. We do not expect to see a repetition of that. We know that we are ready, and we know regardless of what the officials of Decatur say the population of Decatur is behind the Ku Klux Klan.

It was the white people in Decatur and even some officials who requested the Klan to come on the scene as the Negroes camped on the lawn, took over the courthouses and desecrated city and county property time after time, day after day and week after week. The officials would not put a stop to it. But in a gathering right here in front of this building last year we instigated an ordinance for the City. We convinced them to pass an ordinance to put a stop to this. The Klan put a stop to the marching and camping of the Negro in Decatur last year and will do it again this year.

We are continually accused of being outsiders. I am the only outsider, if you will, here. The other men and women standing beside me, behind me and in front of me, the majority of them are from Decatur and Morgan and they are



Kevin Bell

good men and women and they believe in the cause. So we are going to stay in here. I have come simply for direction and to help them to keep out of trouble with the authorities. It has become a very strong and hard fight. The Justice Department in Washington is our enemy at this time. They are not interested in the rights of white people.

As I have pointed out repeatedly, we have been attacked. One of the most open and blatant attacks was in Boston, Massachusetts, where we held an anti-busing rally. We were attacked by communists and Negroes. Three Klansmen were hospitalized, a policeman and several innocent bystanders. A federal judge says, and a U.S. attorney says, no violation of a federal law. I visited Washington, D.C., last fall and I visited the main Justice Department building and met with trial attorneys. And according to their information and their beliefs we are not protected by federal law. We are starting to ask and even demand that the civil-rights laws title 242 and 245 start being enforced for the benefits of those who oppose busing, as well as those who are in favor of it. And this we are going to continue to demand.

One day, maybe in the near future, we will find someone

in the Justice Department who believes in true justice. We will find someone who believes that the people have a right to be protected while peacefully opposing the government policy, which we are not protected in that way at this time. This makes the laws unfair and therefore unconstitutional. And eventually when enough thousands, and tens of thousands, and hundreds of thousands of people continue to gather as they are today, the people in Washington will see that they had better heed our warning. They are beginning to understand that we are here to stay.

One thing that is disturbing them more than anything else is the increasing number of law enforcement and public officials that are joining the Klan and lending their support 100 percent.

I am not here with that statement to bring any pressure or any discomfort on any law enforcement officer in this country. Unfortunately, I know that it will because the Justice Department is constantly and continually trying to prove conspiracy between the Ku Klux Klan and law enforcement agencies. The only conspiracy that exists is simply that we are law-abiding citizens, and we attempt to cooperate with them in every manner that is possible, and the other side does not. So it looks like a conspiracy. Maybe it is a conspiracy, to uphold law and order.

I will conspire with anyone at any time to uphold law and order. We met with Justice Department officials last evening to try to mediate a solution. The Negroes have traditionally refused to meet with Community Services and other government agencies which quite frankly I am in favor of disbanding and putting out of business. I don't think that we need mediators from Washington to come down here and mediate our problems. We know what they are and we can take care of them.

I for one am sick of Negroes and other minorities being given jobs that I deserve. I am sick of the government saying that the next 40 state troopers you hire in Alabama gonna be black. If they have some qualified black people that apply for the job that is one thing. But to spend our tax money out beating the bushes trying to find something that doesn't exist, that is another.

Judges are beginning to be of the opinion that whatever passes their lips is law. It is not. Their job is to interpret the law, not to make law. They do not have the authority to tell people in a state such as Alabama, you will spend this money to upgrade your prisons. Prisons are not meant to be a vacation home. They are meant first of all to punish. Second to rehabilitate if they are interested. But first prisons should be to punish.

I have spent a few days in prison myself, only four, in England early this year. My crime was being in the country. England at the time was under the Labour Party, which is a communist organization. They are in favor of race mixing,

of course. They bring the colored immigrants from all over the world to Great Britain so that they can buy their vote with a dole of housing, with food subsidies, rent subsidies and all of these other manners of redistributing the wealth. The people of Great Britain don't want niggers any more than we do, believe me. In fact they are so fed up with their government that they have just replaced it with another which says they are going to stop colored immigration, and they are going to go in the opposite direction of socialism, and go back to a free enterprise that we enjoy here.

I think that we had better take a message from them. They have tried socialism. They have tried government nationalization of railroads, the shipping industries, the coal mines. The government can't run them as good as free enterprise. They have tried social health programs. It really disturbs me when I hear people like Edward Kennedy talk very frank and openly about redistributing the wealth. That's communist talk. I don't believe that the wealth should be distributed by the government. I am not going to give them my wealth to redistribute, what little I have. What about you?

You know we are in for a long hot day. I believe we are going to see something that will show America exactly where the government stands. The Justice Department has demonstrated repeatedly right here in Decatur that they are not interested in the rights of white people. When Griffin Bell sent the agents down here three weeks ago, all that he wanted to investigate was the possibility that the Negroes had been denied their right to march. They weren't interested in the Klansmen that were shot down. They were not interested in the fact that Klansmen never fired a shot. They are not interested in white businesses that were fire-bombed and one of them burnt down to the ground in the black section of town. They are not interested in the other stores that were shot up, white stores that were shot up and looted. These things don't come out. They don't come out to the public attention. The only way people find out about them is from people like us telling you. And these men and women, I am not in favor of catering to the Negro with a store or anything. But in all honesty we have to admit these people who have businesses in the Negro section of town have been serving these Negroes well for years. They were there simply to make a living. But does the Negro care? This is going to show a lot of the white liberals just where they stand. When they get mad they are going to burn out anybody as long as they are white. It's what the color of your skin is going to be that they are interested in.

I have said for years in gatherings such as this that as our movement grows and as white people in this country start assembling themselves against the government and start putting an end to these social programs and welfare, and start making the Negro start earn his money and earn his job — I have stated repeatedly when this happens and we gain this strength and they start having to work for a job, that they are going to start turning to the one thing that they understand. That is violence, burning and looting and shooting. It was demonstrated last evening. There was shooting all over town, primarily in the Negro section. Most people will deny it but it was there. It will not be publicized. They were having a party. They were getting ready for their party today. But one thing that I have also repeatedly said, we will not, if the Klan has any facilities to do anything about it, we will not have a repetition of what we had in the '60s where the Negroes went into sections of

town and burned it to the ground when the law enforcement were ordered to stand back and watch. If the mayors and governors and the President tell the police not to act, then the white people in this country led by the Ku Klux Klan will act.

This property that they are destroying doesn't belong to the mayor or the governor, or the President. It belongs to you and me. They don't have the authority from someone to go and burn it. I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that the movement is coming. Everything is swinging to the right. In foreign countries, not only Great Britain, but Canada, many other countries are going to conservative governments, the right-wing governments. They are fed up with socialism and they are fed up with the government. They want rule by the people. The same thing our government demands in black-dominated Rhodesia, they refuse to accept in this country, and that is majority rule.

You know, one dark and dreary morning, President Carter could wake up and find that he will have to be the house guest of the Shah of Iran if he doesn't start responding to the will of the people in this country. This gathering today is small, but it is significant. We don't have over 500 people here, maybe 600, but it represents a strong will in the face of the odds. The mayor and the government have tried to intimidate us with the troops and the state police. But let me say that we consider them to be our friends. We have so many Klansmen in their ranks that we consider them our friends. We know that they have a law to uphold. We will not put them in jeopardy. We will not back them up into a corner where they cannot come out. But at the same time we will not accept illegally issued orders.

It is being hinted that if people in robes congregate after this gathering, then it could be considered an unlawful assembly. I have pointed out, and I will point out at this moment that our Constitution guarantees us among other things the right to peacefully assemble. And nowhere does it say you cannot wear white.

We will certainly be in Decatur for many years to come.

*Slick demagoguery accompanies the hate message most Klan leaders feed a growing number of poor whites, urging them to take the future of America in their own hands, by violence when necessary. E. C. "Bill" Wilkinson, Wizard of the Invisible Empire of the Ku Klux Klan, delivered this speech to about 100 whites gathered on the steps of the Decatur, Alabama, municipal building on June 9, 1979. Two hours later members and supporters of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and law enforcement officers stood on the same steps, defying threats of a return of Klan violence they suffered two weeks earlier.*

*Wilkinson's headquarters is in Denham Springs, Louisiana, just outside Baton Rouge. U.S. Justice Department sources believe that Wilkinson is now attracting more new members to his Invisible Empire than any other Klan leader. Before breaking with David Duke, Grand Wizard of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Wilkinson spent eight years in the Navy. After his discharge he opened a small electrical contracting firm, but gave that up when he split with Duke and became Imperial Wizard of the Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.*

# JUST LIKE THE SCOUTS



Nancy Warnecke/The Tennessean

*"I pledge allegiance to the flag . . ."  
The young voices, solemn and sincere, echo in the large, chilly room.*

*" . . . of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands . . ."*

*They extend their left hands in a military gesture reminiscent of a Nazi salute, but directed toward the American flag.*

*" . . . one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."*

*The children, dressed in "White Power" Ku Klux Klan T-shirts, solemnly shuffle to their seats.*

This could be the opening recitation in any class in any school in America — but it isn't. It is a meeting of the Klan Youth Corps. And instead of reading, writing and arithmetic, the "students" are taught white "superiority," black "inferiority" and "beware the 'enemy' — the Jews."

The "students" are also told that they are losing all their rights to minorities. Youngsters in some Klan youth groups are instructed in the use of firearms, from pistols to sawed-off shotguns, in preparation for the day when "weapons may be the solution to the race problem." Unlike students in some academic schools, these

youngsters listen eagerly to the lectures, perhaps because it is a parent who does the "teaching." And with constant encouragement from their elders, the children, aged 10 to 17, take an active part in the discussion.

"There was this black girl, and she hit a white girl," says a freckled, red-headed youth. "She ordered her in a vulgar manner to get out of her seat. I would like to know what has been done about this problem." It sounded as though the boy had memorized the question at home.

Gene Russell, den commander of the Tuscumbia, Alabama, chapter of David Duke's Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and father of the Youth Corps chairman, replies: "We went and talked to the principal about it. His first attitude was that we didn't have any business up there at the school. But we took the girl back who had been abused, and he was a different person. He said we wouldn't have any more problems of that nature."

Although this meeting was designed to allow the children to air grievances against black students and teachers sympathetic to minorities, the children also gather once a month for "social" meetings, where they play games or go bowling and eat pizza.

"We try to tell the kids the way it is," says Tony Anderson, 22, of Birmingham, youth organizer for Bill Wilkinson's Invisible Empire. "We want to teach them to fight back, stick together and take up for each other, whether that's through verbal or physical help. We tell them that we have to keep going with what we believe in, because if we don't, we will lose everything we've got."

Literature especially written for children is handed out at meetings. It is not the sort of reading provided youngsters in the schools. One flier asks:

"Have you had it with blacks following you home to beat you up or holding you up for your lunch money? Are you fed up with special privileges given by the school administration simply because they are black? Are you really uptight because white girls have to submit to being molested by crowds of grinning black thugs?"

Says a Birmingham schoolteacher, "Such material is hurting our ability to keep order in schools. It puts a chip on the shoulders of youngsters who absorb it."

The same flier states the "program" of the Youth Corps:

- "Organize white youth in every school along white lines."
- "A get-tough policy with arrogant non-whites."
- "Force school administrators to drop their appeasement policy toward minorities by threatening public exposure followed by possible boycotts."
- "Implement 'tit for tat' policy by demanding equal rights for white students."
- "We want segregation of classes, followed by eventual segregation of schools."

Another pamphlet is almost a call to white violence: "Racial integration into the school system has brought crime, drugs, forced sex, disease and general havoc. Murder of white students by black students is on the increase. It is time that the nation's white youth go on the offensive and organize to protect themselves in the schools."

The Klan Youth Corps is only one of many strategies the "new" Klan em-

loys in an attempt to make the KKK a "family thing."

- In Texas, a Duke-related Klan teaches women members to shoot pistols, but will not allow them to take part in the more rigorous paramilitary training offered to men.

- In Ohio, young Klan organizers — kleagles — of Wilkinson's group move in on their high school classmates and recruit them for Klan work.

- In Alabama, Robert Shelton, Imperial Wizard of the United Klans of America, teaches "survival training" to Youth Corps members.

- In California, a KKK leader who is a minister holds services in his home for Klan families.

- In Louisiana, Klan families are urged to attend church together.

- Wilkinson's Klan has "summer camps" for children at which there are racial indoctrination sessions and firearms training.

"The Klan is the only organization that's going to stand up for the white children," says Betty Mize of Wylam, Alabama, state secretary for Wilkinson's Klan. "We work together and help each other out just like a big family."

Last summer Klan youth put on "a carnival" in Summertown, Alabama.

"They had a booth for throwing darts, one for a fortune teller and other things like that," said Ms. Mize. "About 12 kids did it, and they made about \$230." This Youth Corps has its own checking account.

The women of the "new" Klan also take more active roles. "I have a state secretary up in the Riverdale area," said Tom Metzger of Fallbrook, California. "I call her and tell her to give orders to the various men around. And so she's not only a secretary, but she's also giving orders."

David Duke's Knights also encourage "family" membership by placing women in leadership roles and offering special programs designed for children.

Reporters covering Klan events have heard female Klan members bark orders during a Georgia cross burning, make phone calls to solicit Klan support in Louisiana and deliver hard-hitting racist speeches at a North Carolina Klan rally.

Klan leaders are also trying to involve the young recruits in more activities than classroom lectures. Metzger says his vision of the future places the Klan Youth Corps in the category of "the Boy Scouts or the Girl Scouts, only racist. What I've been trying to

develop for the past couple of years is a youth corps where we have kids marching to national monuments and things on the weekends with Klan flags and T-shirts or whatever."

One of Metzger's teen-age daughters has her own view of the Youth Corps. "Oh, let's see," she said. "I like everything about it. I like the social functions. It brings us all like in one white family together. We're brothers and sisters. You're with people that are like you. They understand. They're the same."

Guns — at least in Metzger's and Wilkinson's Klan Youth Corps — play a definite, frightening role. "We have to use real bullets because you can't target practice without them," said Wilkinson. "We believe the kids ought to know how to use guns. They may have to, someday."

*As the Youth Corps meeting in Gene Russell's workshop winds down, Russell's son stands and offers a ceremonial benediction: "Open the portal of the world and go your way as Klan youth ready to die."*

*The youngsters file out. Within minutes, they are playing tag on the lawn, children again. □*



Wekesa Madzimojo

## MARILYN ROAF INTERVIEWS BROTHER YUSUF SET A POSITIVE EXAMPLE

*He arrived dramatically in Durham, North Carolina in 1974 — swept away from a Baltimore street corner and a heroin habit by an old friend and fellow musician, Imam Kenneth Muhammad, who headed Masjid Muhammad in Durham. Today, Brother Yusuf Salim is one of three owners of a business just down the street from the masjid. The Sallam Cultural Center is a restaurant and showcase for local jazz, blues and other musicians. It is also headquarters for Brother Yusuf's many civic projects, including the Durham Neighborhood Council and the Clean-Up Squad.*

*Brother Yusuf's perspective on the Ku Klux Klan differs*

*significantly from those of other community activists whose voices are heard in this issue. His philosophy — of concentrating on positive growth rather than aggressive reaction — is rooted in his lifestyle as well as his words.*

**I**t's the Clean-Up Squad, you'd better watch out. . . ." After two years, children on Durham's West End still sing these words written by VISTA Volunteer Veronica Templeton for a community festival at which this group of children sang.

More often, however, they are seen with brooms, rakes



and trash cans, trundling down the street under the tutelage of jazz musician, restaurateur and broom-handling expert Brother Yusuf.

"All right, Brother Pat and Brother Kenny," he tells the kids, "you sweep it into piles while Sister Sherry picks it up in the dust pan — where's the dust pan? We lost three last week."

"Brother Yusuf, can I have a quarter?"

"A quarter? I haven't seen your lazy self doing anything to deserve it all summer." He reaches into his pocket anyway and distributes some quarters.

"Here, Brother Yusuf," says one girl. "I want to give you a quarter cause you're always doing a good job."

The days have their ups and downs. But the Clean-Up Squad has, as Brother Yusuf says, "set an example." People from other parts of town and other cities have asked his advice on setting up similar groups. Volunteers have offered to work with the children on other projects, such as painting a mural. And Brother Yusuf is proud of the changes the Squad had wrought in the neighborhood itself. Older people, previously mistrustful of the children's behavior, have started asking Squad members to run errands. Local businesses have given some of the children odd jobs. He is especially proud of the time one boy ran to his house to enlist his help for someone spotted lying hurt in a ditch. These incidents shine out among setbacks of fighting, family feuds, trouble with the police. Brother Yusuf is optimistic about the future of the Clean-Up Squad. Oddly enough, though, efforts to get city funding for this youth project have not succeeded.

On one occasion, having been told the wrong time, Brother Yusuf and I arrived too late for a city council committee meeting at which we were going to present one more proposal in our continuing efforts to get some money for the Clean-Up Squad. The council members were heading out of the room, so we had to swing into action quickly. Or rather, Brother Yusuf swung into action, and I stood there holding copies of the proposal. "Good afternoon Brother Councilman." The mellow diplomat reached out his hand and then embraced one liberal-leaning councilman, who turned beet red. But he recognized Yusuf, and com-

mented, "I hear you've been doing good things over there in the West End." A conversation ensued while Brother Yusuf shook a few more hands and passed out copies of the proposal. A more conservative council member managed to slip quickly around the edge of the circle, but one of his cohorts seemed at least somewhat enchanted with Yusuf's demeanor. They all recognized him from the times he had given speeches at City Hall in support of the Clean-Up Squad and the Carolina Builders Institute (a low-income housing and jobs program). These speeches invariably include statements about self-help and words to the effect that: "We aren't coming here begging; we just want some recognition if you think we deserve it. We are going on ahead, anyway."

On the way home from this encounter, Brother Yusuf chuckled about the conversations in the lobby. "I guess that's how they got the word 'lobbying.'"

Brother Yusuf has strong faith in his one-to-one effectiveness, and this is evident in his attitude towards the Ku Klux Klan and its recent resurgence. He expressed his views on the subject during a recent series of taped conversations.

*In my 50 years as an African-American, I remember when the Klan was to be reckoned with. When the Klan was the Klan, this wouldn't have been possible [being interviewed in his home by a Caucasian woman]. Now, you may be getting a reaction. . . . This diabolic mentality that wants to keep us at our throats, 'Let's try to create separation again.' [But] the human consciousness is too awakened now to let any little, small, isolated ideology destroy it.*

Brother Yusuf has known the world and the human consciousness through his wide experiences as artist/musician, addict, and as a follower of Al Islam. As a jazz musician in the '50s it was easy for him to become part of the circle of musician/addicts. Already at this point he had been influenced by Al Islam, which was then in its nationalistic stage. He describes his addiction as an ironic blessing.

*I feel kind of blessed to have gone through the nationalistic period kind of sober. As a heroin addict I had something that kept me from becoming a fanatic racist. Because I was so dependent on my socializing — half of the people I was getting high with were Caucasian brothers, and they used to trust me to cop for them. Even in the nationalistic period I feel that God blessed me to not become fanatical so I wouldn't become cut off from relations at all levels. . . . Everyone was equal when withdrawal time came.*

Today, coffee with honey, *not* sugar, is the strongest drug Brother Yusuf will touch. But he still has great confidence in his ability to socialize. "Give me a little time with a Klansman — I'll make him turn in his card."

The only part of the February 2 civil-rights/anti-Klan march in Greensboro which pleased Brother Yusuf was the endorsement of the event by Reverend Iberius Hacker of the Council of Southern Mountains and the Urban Appalachian Council. Reverend Hacker said that the poor and working class whites were the ones who should be leading the march: that the Klan was an embarrassment to them. Brother Yusuf commented:

*I'm just hearing about this. To me, something like that is very significant in human rights. Cause these are Caucasian brothers from Appalachia. That's beautiful. See, that's showing growth in consciousness. Let them grow. Ku Klux Klan brother, let him incubate awhile — he'll probably be a human being. It's a juvenile mentality — they've got to grow. He may have a brother or relative in the same household that feels 180 degrees from him. It's simply a matter of purging people's minds, and it's not going to happen by antagonizing them.*

Brother Yusuf disagrees with the tactics of the Communist Workers Party (members of which were slain in the November massacre) as well as those of the February 2 Mobilization Committee. There are, however, important differences between him and others who oppose the strategies of mass opposition. Brother Yusuf is deeply and creatively involved in the community — or rather his several communities of neighborhood, masjid, restaurant clientele, the music world, the city. He belongs to or holds office in several organizations: Carolina Builders Institute, West End Community Action Group, Durham Neighborhood Council, Troy House (a half-way house), the Islamic community. He also holds tutoring sessions for young musicians, helps with musical notation, plays at numerous benefits, and hosts a jazz series on a local educational TV station. Whatever money he manages to come by in any of these endeavors usually goes right back out again to someone in need.

His two favorite organizing methods, though, are greeting everyone as “Brother” or “Sister,” often with a friendly hug — and his role as broom ambassador. Often, he takes his broom and goes down the streets near his home and business sweeping up trash and talking to neighbors. He figures that continuous exposure to his example will get other people concerned about each other and their community.

Although he disagreed with their anti-Klan strategies, Brother Yusuf admired, as people, the five Communist Workers Party members killed in Greensboro last November. He had known some of those who died; most likely had greeted them at his restaurant/nightclub or at one of the many benefits at which he volunteers his skills on the keyboard. And he considers their deaths a tragic waste:

*I think we should analyze our strategies, not just throw our energies up blindly. I don't want to see no more martyrs. . . . Those were good people. I didn't necessarily go along with the way they did things, but I dug their energy and that they were some beautiful human beings. I sensed love in them. Here's doctors and things. Either a cat's got to be a lunatic or a real human being to sacrifice things like hanging out a shingle and not having to worry about nobody shooting him. I knew these were human beings. I think that is enough martyrdom there for dealing with the Ku Klux Klan. . . . Let the thing die. I do not see the Klan as a threat.*

His experiences as an addict, and even more so, his continuing career as a musician have put the personable Brother Yusuf in contact with an array of classes, races and creeds, and he thrives on this intermingling. His faith in Al Islam, however, is what he claims as his guide.

*Since we are all actors on this stage of life, the problem has got to be that we have not made reference to our scripts. And my particular script happens to be the Quran. I see the problem [today] when Caucasian brothers and sisters are reaching out and being rejected because of a residue nationalist mentality that's out of date, and not in time with the universal motion of the '80s. When the Honorable Elijah Muhammad died, that was the signal of the end of so-called black nationalism. That was sign enough for me. His son came right in and turned the whole movement around 180 degrees to universality. The Islamic movement, as long as it has been here, has always been the vanguard of the African-American community. As the Islamic movement goes, so goes the leadership of the African-American community.*

In an article on the murders in Greensboro, *Bilalian News*, the paper of the World Community of Al-Islam in the West, the editor Ghayth Nur Kashif expressed a view that is in harmony with Brother Yusuf's:

*It should be worth noting that the spate of the recent events comes against a backdrop of encouraging advances in some social and political areas by minorities. Just days prior to the Greensboro killings, Birmingham, Alabama, a former bastion of racism — with a Caucasian population of 60 percent — elected its first Bilalian mayor in history.*

*Certainly, America is entering a critical era. Change is inevitable. No less the backlash that comes on the heels of change. It is a time for sober reason. It is a time for unity among all Americans in the face of negativism, confusion and despair. Progress in moral development, racial harmony and meaningful education leads along the road to such a worthy ideal.*

Brother Yusuf thinks that the spiritual and moral strengthening of the African-American is the most effective strategy against groups like the Klan.

*The nigger mentality de-africanized the African. They wore sheets because they knew we were scared of spooks. The Klan was invented to scare niggers, not Africans.*

*We've got too many things to be worrying about [to think about] somebody like the Klan that might be meeting in some club talking about what they want to do — just as long as they don't do it.*

*The way I fight the Klan is to communicate with my Caucasian brothers and sisters that are reaching out, and create that positive energy, so we can hold hands and roll up our sleeves and do something together. While that mentality that is dying is dying, we can be working together to make the tombstone of racism.*

He stops and smiles, as he so frequently does. “Al Humdulillah.” (All praise is due to Allah.)□

*Marilyn Roaf has worked for two years as a VISTA organizer on Durham's West End, and has collaborated with Brother Yusuf on several community projects, including the Clean-Up Squad.*



STUDS TERKEL  
INTERVIEWS  
C. P. ELLIS

# WHY I QUIT THE KLAN



*We're in his office in Durham, North Carolina. He is the regional business manager of the International Union of Operating Engineers. On the wall is a plaque: "Certificate of Service, in recognition to C.P. Ellis, for your faithful service to the city in having served as a member of the Durham Human Relations Council, February 1977."*

*At one time, he had been president (exalted cyclops) of the Durham chapter of the Ku Klux Klan.*

*He is fifty-three years old.*

**M**y father worked in a textile mill in Durham. He died at 48 years old. It was probably from cotton dust. Back then, we never heard of brown lung. I was about 17 years old and had a mother and sister depending on somebody to make a livin. It was just barely enough insurance to cover his burial. I had to quit school and go to work. I was in about eighth grade when I quit.

My father worked hard but never had enough money to buy decent clothes. When I went to school, I never seemed to have adequate clothes to wear. I always left school late afternoon with a sense of inferiority. The other kids had nice clothes, and I just

had what Daddy could buy. I still got some of those inferiority feelins now that I have to overcome once in a while.

I loved my father. He would go with me to ball games. We'd go fishin together. I was really ashamed of the way he'd dress. He would take this money and give it to me instead of putting it on himself. I always had the feeling about somebody looking at him and makin fun of him and makin fun of me. I think it had to do something with my life.

My father and I were very close, but we didn't talk about too many intimate things. He did have a drinking problem. During the week, he would work every day, but weekends he was ready to get plastered. I can understand when a guy looks at his paycheck and looks at his bills, and he's worked hard all the week, and his bills are larger than his paycheck. He'd done the best he could the entire week, and there seemed to be no hope. It's an illness thing. Finally you just say: "The heck with it. I'll just get drunk and forget it."

My father was out of work during the Depression, and I remember going with him to the finance company up-

town, and he was turned down. That's something that's always stuck.

My father never seemed to be happy. It was a constant struggle with him just like it was for me. It's very seldom I'd see him laugh. He was just tryin to figure out what he could do from one day to the next.

After several years pumping gas at a service station, I got married. We had to have children. Four. One child was born blind and retarded, which was a real additional expense to us. He's never spoken a word. He doesn't know me when I go to see him. But I see him, I hug his neck. I talk to him tell him I love him. I don't know whether he knows me or not, but I know he's well taken care of. All my life, I had work, never a day without work, worked all the overtime I could get and still could not survive financially. I began to see there's somethin wrong with this country. I worked my butt off and just never seemed to break even.

I had some real great ideas about this nation. (Laughs.) They say to abide by the law, go to church, do right and live for the Lord, and everything'll work out. But it didn't work out. It just kept gettin worse and worse.

I was workin a bread route. The

highest I made one week was \$75. The rent on our house was about \$12 a week. I will never forget; outside of this house was a 265-gallon oil drum, and I never did get enough money to fill up that oil drum. What I would do every night, I would run up to the store and buy five gallons of oil and climb up the ladder and pour it in that 265-gallon drum. I could hear that five gallons when it hits the bottom of that oil drum, splatters, and it sounds like it's nothin in there. But it would keep the house warm for the night. Next day you'd have to do the same thing.

I left the bread route with \$50 in my pocket. I went to the bank and I borrowed \$4,000 to buy the service station. I worked seven days a week, open and close, and finally had a heart attack. Just about two months before the last payments of that loan. My wife had done the best she could to keep it runnin. Tryin to come out of that hole, I just couldn't do it.

I really began to get bitter. I didn't know who to blame. I tried to find somebody. Hatin America is hard to do because you can't see it to hate it. You gotta have somethin to look at to hate. (Laughs.) The natural person for me to hate would be black people, because my father before me was a member of the Klan. As far as he was concerned, it was the savior of the white people. It was the only organization in the world that would take care of the white people. So I began to admire the Klan.

I got active in the Klan while I was at the service station. Every Monday night, a group of men would come by and buy a Coca-Cola, go back to the car, take a few drinks, and come back and stand around talkin. I couldn't help but wonder: Why are these dudes comin out every Monday? They said they were with the Klan and have meetings close by. Would I be interested? Boy, that was an opportunity I really looked forward to! To be part of somethin. I joined the Klan, went from member to chaplain, from chaplain to vice-president, from vice-president to president. The title is exalted cyclops.

The first night I went with the fellas, they knocked on the door and gave the signal. They sent some robed Klansmen to talk to me and give me some instructions. I was led into a large meeting room, and this was the time of my life! It was thrilling. Here's

a guy who's worked all his life and struggled all his life to be something, and here's the moment to be something. I will never forget it. Four robed Klansmen led me into the hall. The lights were dim and the only thing you could see was an illuminated cross. I knelt before the cross. I had to make certain vows and promises. We promised to uphold the purity of the white race, fight communism, and protect white womanhood.

After I had taken my oath, there was loud applause goin throughout the buildin, musta been at least four hundred people. For this one little ol person. It was a thrilling moment for C.P. Ellis.

It disturbs me when people who do not really know what it's all about are so very critical of individual Klansmen. The majority of em are low-income whites, people who really don't have a part in something. They have been shut out as well as blacks. Some are not very well educated either. Just like myself. We had a lot of support from doctors and lawyers and police officers.

Maybe they've had bitter experiences in this life and they had to hate somebody. So the natural person to

tion's gonna die. So I contacted certain kids in schools. They were havin racial problems. On the first night, we had a hundred high school students. When they came in the door, we had "Dixie" playin. These kids were just thrilled to death. I began to hold weekly meetins with em, teachin the principles of the Klan. At that time, I believed Martin Luther King had communist connections. I began to teach that Andy Young was affiliated with the Communist party.

I had a call one night from one of our kids. He was about 12. He said: "I just been robbed downtown by two niggers." I'd had a couple of drinks and that really teed me off. I go downtown and couldn't find the kid. I got worried. I saw two young black people. I had the .32 revolver with me. I said: "Nigger, you seen a little young white boy up here? I just got a call from him and was told that some niggers robbed him of fifteen cents." I pulled my pistol out and put it right at his head. I said: "I've always wanted to kill a nigger and I think I'll make you the first one." I nearly scared the kid to death, and he struck off.

This was the time when the Civil

*'Here's a guy who's worked all his life and struggled all his life to be something, and here's the moment to be something.'*

hate would be the black person. He's beginnin to come up, he's beginnin to learn to read and start votin and run for political office. Here are white people who are supposed to be superior to them, and we're shut out. I can understand why people join extreme right-wing or left-wing groups. They're in the same boat I was. Shut out. Deep down inside, we want to be part of this great society. Nobody listens, so we join these groups.

At one time, I was state organizer of the National Rights party. I organized a youth group for the Klan. I felt we were getting old and our genera-

Rights Movement was really beginnin to peak. The blacks were beginnin to demonstrate and picket downtown stores. I never will forget some black lady I hated with a purple passion. Ann Atwater. Every time I'd go downtown, she'd be leadin a boycott. How I hated — pardon the expression, I don't use it much now — how I just hated that black nigger. (Laughs.) Big, fat, heavy woman. She'd pull about eight demonstrations, and first thing you know they had two, three blacks at the checkout counter. Her and I have had some pretty close confrontations.

I felt very big, yeah. (Laughs.) We're more or less a secret organization. We didn't want anybody to know who we were, and I began to do some thinkin. What am I hidin for? I've never been convicted of anything in my life. I don't have any court record. What am I, C.P. Ellis, as a citizen and a member of the United Klansmen of America? Why can't I go to the city council meeting and say: "This is the way we feel about the matter? We don't want you to purchase mobile units to set in our schoolyards. We don't want niggers in our schools."

We began to come out in the open. We would go to the meetings, and the blacks would be there and we'd be there. It was a confrontation every time. I didn't hold back anything. We began to make some inroads with the city councilmen and county commissioners. They began to call us friend. Call us at night on the telephone: "C.P., glad you came to that meeting last night." They didn't want integration either, but they did it secretly, in order to get elected. They couldn't stand up openly and say it, but they were glad somebody was sayin it. We visited some of the city leaders in their homes and talked to em privately. It wasn't long before councilmen would call me up: "The blacks are comin up tonight and makin outrageous demands. How about some of you people showin up and have a little balance?" I'd get on the telephone: "The niggers is comin to the council meeting tonight. Persons in the city's called me and asked us to be there."

We'd load up our cars and we'd fill up half the council chambers, and the blacks the other half. During these times, I carried weapons to the meetings, outside my belt. We'd go there armed. We would wind up just hollerin and fussin at each other. What happened? As a result of our fightin one another, the city council still had their way. They didn't want to give up control to the blacks nor the Klan. They were usin us.

I began to realize this later down the road. One day I was walkin downtown and a certain city council member saw me comin. I expected him to shake my hand because he was talkin to me at night on the telephone. I had been in his home and visited with him. He crossed the street. Oh shit, I began to think, somethin's wrong here. Most of em are merchants or maybe an attorney, an insurance agent, people like

*"I'd go home at night and I'd have to wrestle with myself."*

that. As long as they kept low-income whites and low-income blacks fightin, they're gonna maintain control.

I began to get that feeling after I was ignored in public. I thought: Bullshit, you're not gonna use me any more. That's when I began to do some real serious thinkin.

**T**he same thing is happening in this country today. People are being used by those in control, those who have all the wealth. I'm not espousing communism. We got the greatest system of government in the world. But those who have it simply don't want those who don't have it to have any part of it. Black and white. When it comes to money, the green, the other colors make no difference. (Laughs.)

I spent a lot of sleepless nights. I still didn't like blacks. I didn't want to associate with em. Blacks, Jews or Catholics. My father said: "Don't have anything to do with em." I didn't until I met a black person and talked with him, eyeball to eyeball, and met a Jewish person and talked to him, eyeball to eyeball. I found out they're people just like me. They cried, they cussed, they prayed, they had desires. Just like myself. Thank God, I got to the point where I can look past labels. But at that time, my mind was closed.

I remember one Monday night Klan meeting. I said something was wrong. Our city fathers were using us. And I didn't like to be used. The reactions of the others was not too pleasant: "Let's just keep fightin them niggers."

I'd go home at night and I'd have to wrestle with myself. I'd look at a black person walkin down the street, and the guy'd have ragged shoes or his clothes would be worn. That began to do somethin to me inside. I went through this for about six months. I felt I just had to get out of the Klan. But I wouldn't get out.

Then something happened. The state AFL-CIO received a grant from the

Department of HEW, a \$78,000 grant: how to solve racial problems in the school system. I got a telephone call from the president of the state AFL-CIO. "We'd like to get some people together from all walks of life." I said: "All walks of life? Who you talkin about?" He said: "Blacks, whites, liberals, conservatives, Klansmen, NAACP people."

I said: "No way am I comin with all those niggers. I'm not gonna be associated with those type of people." A White Citizens Council guy said: "Let's go up there and see what's goin on. It's tax money bein spent." I walk in the door, and there was a large number of blacks and white liberals. I knew most of em by face cause I seen em demonstratin around town. Ann Atwater was there. (Laughs.) I just forced myself to go in and sit down.

The meeting was moderated by a great big black guy who was bushy-headed. (Laughs.) That turned me off. He acted very nice. He said: "I want you all to feel free to say anything you want to say." Some of the blacks stand up and say it's white racism. I took all I could take. I asked for the floor and I cut loose. I said: "No, sir, it's black racism. If we didn't have niggers in the schools, we wouldn't have the problems we got today."

I will never forget. Howard Clements, a black guy, stood up. He said: "I'm certainly glad C.P. Ellis come because he's the most honest man here tonight." I said: "What's that nigger tryin to do?" (Laughs.) At the end of that meeting, some blacks tried to come up shake my hand, but I wouldn't do it. I walked off.

Second night, same group was there. I felt a little more easy because I got some things off my chest. The third night, after they elected all the committees, they want to elect a chairman. Howard Clements stood up and said: "I suggest we elect two chairpersons." Joe Beckton, executive director of the Human Relations Commission, just as

*“Here I am all of a sudden makin an about-face and tryin to deal with my feelins, my heart. My mind was beginnin to open up.”*

black as he can be, he nominated me. There was a reaction from some blacks. Nooo. And, of all things, they nominated Ann Atwater, that big old fat black gal that I had just hated with a purple passion, as co-chairman. I thought to myself: Hey, ain't no way I can work with that gal. Finally, I agreed to accept it, cause at this point, I was tired of fightin, either for survival or against black people or against Jews or against Catholics.

A Klansman and a militant black woman, co-chairmen of the school committee. It was impossible. How could I work with her? But after about two or three days, it was in our hands. We had to make it a success. This give me another sense of belongin, a sense of pride. This helped this inferiority feeling I had. A man who has stood up publicly and said he despised black people, all of a sudden he was willin to work with em. Here's a chance for a low-income white man to be somethin. In spite of all my hatred for blacks and Jews and liberals, I accepted the job. Her and I began to reluctantly work together. (Laughs.) She had as many problems workin with me as I had workin with her.

One night, I called her: “Ann, you and I should have a lot of differences and we got em now. But there's somethin laid out here before us, and if it's gonna be a success, you and I are gonna have to make it one. Can we lay aside some of these feelins?” She said: “I'm willing if you are.” I said: “Let's do it.”

My old friends would call me at night: “C.P., what the hell is wrong with you? You're sellin out the white race.” This begin to make me have guilt feelins. Am I doin right? Am I doin wrong? Here I am all of a sudden makin an about-face and tryin to deal with my feelins, my heart. My mind was beginnin to open up. I was begin-

nin to see what was right and what was wrong. I don't want the kids to fight forever.

We were gonna go 10 nights. By this time, I had went to work at Duke University, in maintenance. Makin very little money. Terry Sanford give me this 10 days off with pay. He was president of Duke at the time. He knew I was a Klansman and realized the importance of blacks and whites getting along.

I said: “If we're gonna make this thing a success, I've got to get my kind of people.” The low-income whites. We walked the streets of Durham, and we knocked on doors and invited people. Ann was goin into the black community. They just wasn't respondin to us when we made these house calls. Some of em were cussin us out. “You're sellin us out, Ellis, get out of my door. I don't want to talk to you.” Ann was gettin the same response from blacks: “What are you doin messin with that Klansman?”

One day, Ann and I went back to the school and we sat down. We began to talk and just reflect. Ann said: “My daughter came home cryin every day. She said her teacher was makin fun of me in front of the other kids.” I said: “Boy, the same thing happened to my kid. White liberal teacher was makin fun of Tim Ellis' father, the Klansman. In front of other peoples. He came home cryin.” At this point (he pauses, swallows hard, stifles a sob) I begin to see, here we are, two people from the far ends of the fence, havin identical problems, except hers bein black and me bein white. From that moment on, I tell ya, that gal and I worked together good. I begin to love the girl, really. (He weeps.)

The amazing thing about it, her and I, up to that point, has cussed each other, bawled each other, we hated each other. Up to that point, we didn't know each other. We didn't know we

had things in common.

We worked at it, with the people who came to these meetings. They talked about racism, sex education, about teachers not bein qualified. After seven, eight nights of real intense discussion, these people, who'd never talked to each other before, all of a sudden came up with resolutions. It was really somethin, you had to be there to get the tone and feelin of it.

At that point, I didn't like integration, but the law says you do this and I've got to do what the law says, okay? We said: “Let's take these resolutions to the school board.” The most disheartening thing I've ever faced was the school system refused to implement any one of these resolutions. These were recommendations from the people who pay their taxes and pay their salaries. (Laughs.)

I thought they were good answers. Some of em I didn't agree with, but I been in this thing from the beginning, and whatever comes of it, I'm gonna support it. Okay, since the school board refused I decided I'd just run for the school board.

I spent \$85 on the campaign. The guy runnin against me spent several thousand. I really had nobody on my side. The Klan turned against me. The low-income whites turned against me. The liberals didn't particularly like me. The blacks were suspicious of me. The blacks wanted to support me, but they couldn't muster up enough to support a Klansman on the school board. (Laughs.) But I made up my mind that what I was doin was right, and I was gonna do it regardless of what anybody said.

It bothered me when people would call and worry my wife. She's always supported me in anything I wanted to do. She was changing, and my boys were too. I got some of my youth corps kids involved. They still followed me.

I was invited to the Democratic women's social hour as a candidate. Didn't have but one suit to my name. Had it six, seven, eight years. I had it cleaned, put on the best shirt I had and a tie. Here were all these high-class wealthy candidates shakin hands. I walked up to the mayor and stuck out my hand. He give me that handshake with that rag type of hand. He said: “C.P., I'm glad to see you.” But I could tell by his handshake he was lyin

to me. This was botherin me. I know I'm a low-income person. I know I'm not wealthy. I know they were sayin: "What's this little old dude runnin for school board?" Yet they had to smile and make like they're glad to see me. I begin to spot some black people in that room. I automatically went to em and that was a firm handshake. They said: "I'm glad to see you, C.P." I knew they meant it — you can tell about a handshake.

Every place I appeared, I said I will

listen to the voice of the people. I will not make a major decision until I first contacted all the organizations in the city. I got 4,640 votes. The guy beat me by two thousand. Not bad for 85 bucks and no constituency.

**T**he whole world was openin up, and I was learning new truths that I had never learned before. I was beginnin to look at a black person, shake hands with him, and see him as a human bein. I hadn't got rid

of all this stuff. I've still got a little bit of it. But somethin was happenin to me.

It was almost like bein born again. It was a new life. I didn't have these sleepless nights I used to have when I was active in the Klan and slippin around at night. I could sleep at night and feel good about it. I'd rather live now than at any other time in history. It's a challenge.

Back at Duke, doin maintenance, I'd pick up my tools, fix the com-

## CLEAN UP THE BOTULISM

A SPEECH BY  
WILL CAMPBELL



AT CLAVIN

The resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan has to be taken seriously. But I think there are some things that we need to remember as we are discussing that. I am reminded of something Jesus said one time. He was talking to some people, good people, religious people, civic leader-type people, and he said you remind me of folk who wash dishes. They wash the dust and fingerprints off the outside of the bowl, but yesterday's chili has got botulism and is poisoning their younguns and they don't even put a dish rag to it. Or you remind me, he said, of the nice painted above the ground, bone-dry resurrection morning out at Woodlawn Cemetery. Nice and pretty, but inside the sepulchres are full of bloated bodies with gaseous guts, rotting, draining out the lower orifices of the torso.

The Ku Klux Klan is certainly the outside of the cup. Jesus didn't say don't bother with the outside of the cup. But he did talk about what is inside the sepulchre, too. What is inside the sepulchre where we in Nashville are concerned? What is inside the sepulchre which we sometimes forget in our zeal to stop the menace of the KKK? What is inside — and that we can never forget — is the fact that we as a nation stole this country from the dark-skinned people, killed them or put them in concentration camps to keep them from taking any part of it back, brought some more dark-skinned people to build it, fought world wars to preserve it and to make sure that we got the biggest share of the dark continent that we had brought the people from in the first place — and the Ku Klux Klan had nothing to do with any of it.

What is inside of the sepulchre is that there are more than 600 people appointed to die by the state. A dispropor-

tionate number of them are black, and all of them poor, none of them put there by the Ku Klux Klan. Inside the sepulchre are half a million people locked up in prison, a disproportionate number of them black, virtually all of them poor, none of them put there by the Ku Klux Klan. Inside is the fact that when we go to the parking lot tonight, don't be afraid because we are being protected by the police. I know because I am on the committee that is sponsoring this meeting, and we decided that to protect ourselves from the people we are here discussing in the event they should show up, we should have the police nearby. Inside the sepulchre is the fact that four black people were gunned down in recent weeks, none of them by the Ku Klux Klan. Nobody can ever convince me that if we can capture an elephant alive without shooting it, we can't capture a fellow human being alive without shooting it. Particularly if its hands are cuffed in front of its body. What is inside of the sepulchre is that the good jobs are still secured in the normal day-to-day social intercourse in clubs, golf courses, etc., where many black people don't go with us.

What is inside the sepulchre is the people that we are here talking about, who are so often referred to as crackers and kluxers and woolhats. They are born into the pathology of the white ghetto and are as powerless to get out of it as people born in the black ghetto. In their frustration they join the KKK.

In my judgement what is inside the sepulchre is this. What we are doing here tonight we ought to have done without leaving the other things undone: clean up the botulism. Or another way of putting it might be: Let's talk about the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan in the weeks and months to come in this town, but let's do it in the context of the resurgence of Exxon and J.P. Stevens, and the resurgence of Nashville's Belle Meade Country Club.

*Will Campbell is a preacher from Amite County, Mississippi. He now lives in Mt. Juliet, Tennessee, where he is the Director of the Committee of Southern Churchmen. He has many friends who are Klan members, and he ministers to them as he does his liberal and radical friends. He is the author of Brother to a Dragon Fly, and his writings reflect a keen understanding of the "white ghetto." The above is an excerpt of a talk Campbell delivered on April 10, 1980, to a panel on Ku Klux Klan resurgence, sponsored by the Nashville Panel, the Interdenominational Ministerial Fellowship and the Nashville Association of Rabbis, Priests and Ministers, with funding from the Tennessee Committee for the Humanities. □*

mode, unstop the drains. But this got in my blood. Things weren't right in this country, and what we done in Durham needs to be told. I was so miserable at Duke, I could hardly stand it. I'd go to work every morning just hatin to go.

My whole life had changed. I got an eighth grade education, and I wanted to complete high school. Went to high school in the afternoons on a program called PEP — Past Employment Progress. I was about the only white in the class, and the oldest. I began to read about biology. I'd take my books home at night, cause I was determined to get through. Sure enough, I graduated. I got the diploma at home.

I come to work one mornin and some guy says: "We need a union." At this time I wasn't pro-union. My daddy was anti-labor too. We're not gettin paid much, we're havin to work seven days in a row. We're all starvin to death. The next day, I meet the international representative of the Operating Engineers. He give me authorization cards. "Get these cards out and we'll have an election." There was 88 for the union and 17 nos. I was elected chief steward for the union.

Shortly after, a union man come down from Charlotte and says we need a full-time rep. We've got only 200 people at the two plants here. It's just barely enough money comin in to pay your salary. You'll have to get out and organize more people. I didn't know nothin about organizin unions, but I knew how to organize people, stir people up. (Laughs.) That's how I got to be business agent for the union.

When I began to organize, I began to see far deeper. I begin to see people again bein used. Blacks against whites. I say this without any hesitancy: management is vicious. There's two things they want to keep: all the money and all the say-so. They don't want none of these poor workin folks to have none of that. I begin to see management fightin me with everythin they had. Hire anti-union law firms, badmouth unions. The people were makin \$1.95 an hour, barely able to get through weekends. I worked as a business rep for five years and was seein all this.

Last year, I ran for business manager of the union. He's elected by the workers. The guy that ran against me was black, and our membership is 75 percent black. I

thought: Claiborne, there's no way you can beat that black guy. People know your background. Even though you've made tremendous strides, those black people are not gonna vote for you. You know how much I beat him? Four to one. (Laughs.)

The company used my past against me. They put out letters with a picture of a robe and a cap: Would you vote for a Klansman? They wouldn't deal with the issues. I immediately called for a mass meeting. I met with the ladies at an electric component plant. I said: "Okay, this is Claiborne Ellis. This is where I come from. I want you to know right now, you black ladies here. I was at one time a member of the Klan. I want you to know, because they'll tell you about it."

I invited some of my old black friends. I said: "Brother Joe, Brother Howard, be honest now and tell these people how you feel about me." They done it. (Laughs.) Howard Clements kidded me a little bit. He said: "I don't know what I'm doin here, supporting an ex-Klansman." (Laughs.) He said: "I know what C.P. Ellis come from. I knew him when he was. I knew him as he grew, and grewed with him. I'm tellin you now: follow, follow this Klansman." (He pauses, swallows hard.) "Any questions?" "No," the black ladies said. "Let's get on with the meeting, we need Ellis." (He laughs and weeps.) Boy, black people sayin that about me. I won 134 to 41. Four to one.

It makes you feel good to go into a plant and butt heads with professional union-busters. You see black people and white people join hands to defeat the racist issues they use against people. They're tryin the same things with the Klan. It's still happenin today. Can you imagine a guy who's got an adult high school diploma runnin into professional college graduates who are union busters? I gotta compete with em. I work seven days a week, nights and on Saturday and Sunday. The salary's not that great, and if I didn't care, I'd quit. But I care and I can't quit. I got a taste of it. (Laughs.)

I tell people there's a tremendous possibility in this country to stop wars, the battles, the struggles, the fights between people. People say: "That's an impossible dream. You sound like Martin Luther King." An ex-Klansman who sounds like Martin

Luther King. (Laughs.) I don't think it's an impossible dream. It's happened in my life. It's happened in other people's lives in America.

I don't know what's ahead of me. I have no desire to be a big union official. I want to be right out there in the field with the workers. I want to walk through that factory and shake hands with that man whose hands are dirty. I'm gonna do all that one little ol man can do. I'm 52 years old, and I ain't got many years left, but I want to make the best of em.

When the news came over the radio that Martin Luther King was assassinated, I got on the telephone and begin to call other Klansmen. We just had a real party at the service station. Really rejoicin cause the son of a bitch was dead. Our troubles are over with. They say the older you get, the harder it is for you to change. That's not necessarily true. Since I changed, I've set down and listened to tapes of Martin Luther King. I listen to it and tears come to my eyes cause I know what he's sayin now. I know what's happenin."

*POSTSCRIPT: The phone rings. A conversation.*

"This was a black guy who's director of Operation Breakthrough in Durham. I had called his office. I'm interested in employin some young black person who's interested in learnin the labor movement. I want somebody who's never had an opportunity, just like myself. Just so he can read and write, that's all." □

*This interview is from the forthcoming book American Dreams: Lost & Found by Studs Terkel. © 1980 by Studs Terkel. Reprinted by permission of Pantheon Books, a division of Random House, Inc.*

### SOURCES ON THE KKK

Materials used in compiling this special section include: Stetson Kennedy, *Southern Exposure*, Doubleday, 1946; Patsy Sims, *The Klan*, Stein & Day, 1978; Robert P. Ingalls, *Hoods, The Story of the Ku Klux Klan*, Putnam, 1979; John L. Stewart, *KKK Menace: The Cross Against the People*, 1980 (available from P.O. Box 3511, Durham, N.C. 27702); and Ted Quant and John Slaughter, *We Won't Go Back: The Rise of the Ku Klux Klan and the Southern Struggle for Equality*, Equal Rights Congress, 1980 (a 44-page booklet available for \$1 from: ERC, 560 Dauphin St., Mobile, AL 36602).

For further information on educational materials and organizing strategies to use in opposing the Klan, contact the Anti-Klan Network, P.O. Box 741, Durham, N.C. 27702.

# REVIEWS



## In Mine and Mill

Photographs by Earl Dotter. Pilgrim Press, 132 West 31st St., New York, NY 10001, 1980. 20 plates. \$15.00.

*The photographs appearing on this and the next few pages are part of a portfolio of coal miners and textile workers by Earl Dotter. His photos have appeared in numerous issues of Southern Exposure, and he is now the photographer for the American Labor Education Center. The following text is drawn from an introductory essay by Walter Rosenblum which accompanies the portfolio.*

In this portfolio, Earl Dotter has used photography to pay homage to the miners and mill workers of America. He moved from home to workplace in order to show us heroism and simple dignity in a series of images alive with compassion and meaning. The resulting photographs are exceptional in contemporary photography.

Much modern photography is involved either with personal symbolism, where only the interior mind becomes the subject worth exploring, or with the ugly superficialities of a consumer economy. . . . Dotter has chosen a different and more meaningful path. Refusing to see people as victims of hidden neuroses, he regards them instead as individuals of unlimited potential. To this humanist philosophy, Dotter brings a sense of compassion expressed simply in the credo: "I feel rage when people are not properly treated. I want my photographs to convey the intensity of feeling that I experienced." The images in this portfolio are visual evidence of what he so deeply believes. □

# The Klan

By Patsy Sims, Stein and Day, 1978.  
355 pp.

By Joe Pfister

Those of us who were doing civil-rights organizing in Southwest Georgia in the '60s remember the cross burnings, the pick-up trucks with guns in the gun racks, the burned churches and the house we rented in Dawson that had been bombed and riddled with .50-caliber machine-gun fire in 1963. By some miracle, no one was killed when the bomb blew away the front half of that small wood-frame house. Four years later when I was living there, the front of the house had been rebuilt with brick, and the only visible scars were stray bullet marks on a neighboring house. But deeper scars remained. Dawson, the county seat of "Terrible Terrell" County, was one of the most dangerous and frustrating communities for organizers. Fear of reprisal etched the faces of the residents to whom we spoke. We never were able to mount any sustained successful efforts there.

But had we been attacked by the Ku Klux Klan? Did the machine gun come, as we had speculated, from the National Guard Armory in Dawson? We never had these questions answered; nor did we ever know who were Klansmen in the area, or how many belonged to the secret society.

It does not take much to see that the Ku Klux Klan is still alive and Klucking today. Confrontations in Mississippi, court battles over first amendment rights and the recent murders in Greensboro have all focused media attention on the Klan.

But the question remains, "Who is the Klan?" In her first book, experienced journalist Patsy Sims sets out to answer this question and to find out what makes the Klan tick. "Do they ever fall in love and get spring fever?" she asks. "Do they laugh at jokes and, sometimes, at themselves? Do they cry at funerals and sad movies? Or do they only hate? Is there good in them or only evil? What are they *really* like?"

*The Klan* is a product of two years of research and thousands of miles of traveling. To a certain extent Sims penetrates the cloak of secrecy surrounding the Klan. She interviews Klan leaders and rank-and-file members, goes to rallies, listens to speeches

and talks to the victims and investigators of Klan violence and harassment. Around first-person accounts of interviews profiling Klan leaders — Bob Jones, Robert Scoggin, Robert Shelton, J.B. Stoner, David Duke, Calvin Craig, James Venable and others — Sims weaves a framework of appropriate historical background and comments from law-enforcement officers, other Klansmen or investigators. If you have ever wondered what a Kleagle is, or a Klabee, Klaliff, Klavern or Night Hawk, Sims provides a glossary of Klanspeak. She has also compiled a short bibliography and a list of names of important members of the "Invisible Empire" with a description of their more notorious deeds and/or current titles and Klan organizations.

What emerges is a complex composite of good-ol'-boyism; military discipline; anti-semitic, anti-black, anti-communist rhetoric; twisted scientific and philosophic logic; factionalism and religious fervor.

"We are not anti-Jew, we're pro-Christian," says Dale Reusch, the six-foot, four-inch, 280-pound former Grand Dragon of the West Virginia Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. Reusch then sits down with some Klan buddies in a discussion of the Jewish stranglehold over the U.S. government and delights in uncovering little-known "Jews" Franklin Roosevelt, Lady Bird Johnson and that Swedish Jew, Dwight D. Eisenhower.

"We are not anti-black, we're pro-white," says one Klan leader. Robert Shelton, head of the United Klans of America, says, "I *do* think of myself as a racist. That's nothing to be ashamed of. I'm proud I'm white."

Sims seeks to discover what attracts people to join the Klan, and she finds a variety of answers. Some are born into Klan families and are brought up in the Klan tradition. Some are consumed with hatred and need a vehicle to express it. Some are drawn by the drama, secrecy and ritual. Others are bored and in search of some excitement in their lives. Still others are searching for religious fulfillment. "This is pure Jesus," says one Klanswoman after a fiery speech and cross-burning at an Alabama rally.

Sims does not try to give a political or social analysis of the Klan. Rather she gathers together the strands of information to present a picture of where the Klan has been and where it may be going. The faces and personalities emerge, giving shape and meaning to the sheets and hoods that cover them. The complexities and contradictions of the Klan movement come

alive to make it more believable and understandable for those of us who fight against the radical right mindset. She shows that we cannot take lightly the very real appeal of the Klan to some whites who have come to believe that the entire social and political world has turned against them. The Klan is an alternative which gives them power, if not over their lives, at least over those whom they victimize.

Sims points out that there is not one Klan but many. Groups continually reorganize, splinter off from other groups, reorganize and splinter again. The leadership continues to change: a grand dragon today may be banished tomorrow. Bickering develops among leaders in the pecking order, and one may become disgruntled and break off to form his own Klan organization. The major groups such as the United Klans of America and the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., have spawned a seemingly endless number of smaller splinter groups, amidst charges and counter-charges of misconduct, financial mismanagement, excessive drinking, stealing or lining one's pockets. And contributing to this factionalism, Sims notes, is the infiltration of various Klan organizations by the FBI, which plants agents to gather information and to sabotage Klan efforts by pitting Klansmen against each other.

But for all her openness and attempted objectivity, Sims could not learn much about membership in the "Invisible Empire." None of her interviewees reveals even in round ball-park figures their strength in numbers. All boast of many more members than the low government estimates and all claim continual growth. None will say how many.

Sims conjures up a frightening and sinister atmosphere in her attempts to unravel the mystery of the Mississippi Knights of the Ku Klux Klan — perhaps the most violent and secretive of all the Klan movements. The murders of Goodman, Chaney and Schwerner, the three civil-rights workers in Philadelphia, Mississippi, in the summer of 1964, countless bombings and other atrocities are attributed to the Mississippi Knights. But while most Klan groups talk reasonably openly to Sims to promote their aspect of "Klanecraft" (their philosophy and beliefs) and to advertise themselves, the Mississippi Knights remain silent. The author is unable to get an interview with any Mississippi Klan leaders and comes away not certain she has even spoken to any actual members.

Reading *The Klan* brings the nag-



ging realization that the Klan has never died or gone away. It has always been amongst us, thriving during periods of racial tension and economic hard times, smoldering at others. When the time is right Klan leaders can fan the flames and play on the fears of white America. Former Grand Dragon of Georgia Calvin Craig boasted to Sims, "I can take five men in a city of twenty-five thousand, and that is just like having an army. That five can almost control the political atmosphere of that city." Sims says, "Maybe therein lies the answer to the Klans' true size. Maybe their growing visibility is an illusion. . . . Maybe today's Klansmen are more publicity-oriented, more open, more willing – and eager – to be photographed and quoted. Or maybe there are more Klansmen – and women – that the public is aware of or the FBI is willing to admit. I don't know. But whatever their numbers, are they to be any less feared?" □

*Joe Pfister was a field worker for the Southwest Georgia Project for Community Education from 1966 to 1976 and is currently a staff member of the Institute for Southern Studies.*

## Been in the Storm So Long

By Leon F. Litwack. Knopf, 1979. 651 pp. \$20.00.

By Jonathan M. Weiner

At the end of the Civil War, a black regiment marching through North Carolina stripped off their clothes before crossing a stream. "The secesh women watched with the utmost intensity, thousands of our soldiers in a state of nudity," one of them wrote. "They thronged to the windows, porticos and yards, in the finest attire imaginable. Our brave boys would disrobe themselves, hang their garments upon their bayonets and through the water they would come, walk up the street, and seem to say to the feminine gazers, 'Yes, though naked, we are your masters.'"

Leon Litwack writes that his study of Southern blacks in "the aftermath of slavery" seems to capture "the countless ways in which freedom was perceived and experienced by black men and women." It is a story of great



"complexity, conflict, contradiction, and ambivalence." Litwack resists all simplistic conclusions: some blacks stood by their masters, fulfilling the most romantic Southern myths of "the faithful slave;" some feared freedom, others were puzzled by it; most blacks were not heroes, most whites were not devils. In the end, however, Litwack is not content to show the endless variations in black and white responses to emancipation. This is a book of controlled passion, a methodical and relentless expose of the cruelties and injustices forced upon ex-slaves, a book deeply sympathetic to the extraordinary efforts of the freedmen and freedwomen to create a more human life for themselves and their children.

Litwack writes the "old history." He tells a story with striking characters and moving incidents. He does not test hypotheses or put forward an explicit theoretical framework. But *Been in the Storm So Long* is rooted in the concept of paternalism as the basis of master-slave relationship, a relationship illuminated by the blazing light of what Eugene D. Genovese has called "the moment of truth" when slaves went free. Time and again Litwack returns to the masters' new perceptions of their former slaves, and to the freedmen's actions as evidence of what their consciousness of slavery had been. He explores with particular skill the many dimensions of the events planters pointed to as examples of the blacks' "insolence," "impertinence," "impudence" and "ingratitude." Litwack's book has a second implicit theoretical basis: as he tells his story of the aftermath of slavery, he points to "class antagonisms," and to the South's wealth "created by unpaid

black labor," "accumulated through generations" by the planter class.

Although Litwack is a University of California at Berkeley professor, he is less vulnerable than most Northern historians to the charge that he reserves his criticisms only for the South. His first book, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860* (1961), explored racism in the antebellum North. Relentlessly, he showed how Northern whites denied their black neighbors the right to ballots, decent jobs and equal protection of the laws; he showed how whites established racial segregation "in virtually every phase of existence," prohibited interracial marriage, and refused to permit blacks to testify in trials where whites were defendants. He pointed out that race riots appeared first in the North, not the South. Litwack thus turned to study the South fully aware that racial oppression had deep historical roots in the North.

Litwack combed through a mountain of primary sources for his new book with great thoroughness and sensitivity. He draws on manuscript collections in 14 different archives, relying especially on the WPA slave narratives – the recollections of ex-slaves recorded by the Federal Writers Project during the 1930s. These pose numerous problems, arising out of the fact that the interviewers were white and sometimes held racist assumptions and that the elderly blacks, interviewed in the depths of the Depression by government officials, sometimes had good reason to conceal or distort their recollections. Particularly annoying are the unsuccessful efforts of some interviewers to transcribe the interviews according to their notions of

Southern black dialect. But Litwack has surmounted the problem of the reliability of these materials, partly by a judicious use of the narratives themselves, partly by moving back and forth between them and other primary sources.

*Been in the Storm So Long* begins with a picture of slave life on the eve of the war that was to destroy it. Subsequent chapters examine black participation in the war, including a particularly powerful account of the entry of black Union regiments into the areas of the great slave plantations; the "moment of truth" when slaves faced freedom for the first time; the growing counterattack on this freedom led by planters; the move "back to work" under the new sharecropping system; the creation of black schools and churches; and the first efforts at political organization.

Throughout, Litwack's goal is not to present new interpretations, but rather to deepen our understanding of the experiences and actions of black Southerners. The book's one weakness is that Litwack does not use this rich

material to illuminate the conflict now raging between neoclassical economists and neo-Marxist social historians over the character of this period – the former arguing that blacks made significant gains by participating in the free market, while the latter trace the development of new forms of exploitation in post-war society.

But potential readers should not be mistaken; this book contains some strong stuff, much stronger than usually appears in history books. We hear a master questioning his slaves for a foreign visitor, asking "Are you happy?" "Yes, sar," he replies without hesitation. "Show how you're happy," the slaveholder demands. As if he had acted out this scenario many times before, the slave rubs his stomach and grins with delight, "Yummy! Yummy! Plenty belly full!"

A young slave and his mother are shot at by the master's son. The mother escapes, but her son is killed. She recalls, "My poor baby is shot dead by that young massa I nussed with my own body. They was both babies together. Missus made me nuss

her baby, an set her little girl to watch me, for fear I'd give my baby too much. Many times I wasn't allowed to take him up. And now that same boy has killed mine."

An ex-slave recalls the master's response to the news that his son had been killed in battle. "Marster jumps up and starts cussin' de War and him picks up de hot poker and say, 'Free de nigger, will dey? I free dem.' An he hit my mammy on de neck and she starts moanin' and cryin' and draps to de floor. . . ."

Black union soldiers capture a leading Virginia planter, known for his brutality toward female slaves. They strip off his clothes, tie him to a tree, and hand him over to the black women he had whipped. Each gives him 20 lashes, "bringing the blood from his loins . . . not forgetting to remind the gentleman of days gone by."□

*Jonathan M. Weiner is the author of Social Origins of the New South: Alabama, 1860-1885. He teaches at the University of California, Irvine.*

### *the death of st. valentine*

fell on the first warm day of the year.  
i put a different jacket on  
and headed downtown,  
at the bus stop  
a lady with highlands in her voice  
smiled at the spring;  
riding in,  
i felt a tapping on my knee:  
confidentially, he nodded  
across the aisle, "what makes people  
be that way?" the other had the window  
open, "and me with my sinuses."  
around the city, faces opened.  
at supper, conversation drags.  
under the table, the dogs  
eye each other suspiciously.  
is it too soon  
to be glad it's over?

— Archie Hobson  
Washington, D.C.

## Personal Politics

by Sara Evans. Knopf, 1979. 274 pp.  
\$10.00.

### By Len Stanley and Sunshine Southerland

Young women in the 1960s arrived at their feminist consciousness through involvement in other causes. In the 1970s thousands of women have become politicized first through awareness of their own oppression . . . and have extended their social concerns into other arenas as well.

*In preparation for writing this article we called together 12 women who had all been active in some combination of the movements Sara Evans' book Personal Politics describes. Some of us are close friends of Sara's. The group was representative of the scope and resonance of the women's movement: some are involved in women's health issues, including occupational health; some are in anti-death penalty and anti-draft organizing jobs; some are lawyers;*

others, like Sara, teach women's studies courses — even women's labor history. It was an exhilarating evening of personal reflection and discussion; each woman traced her own roots in the various political movements which led to her involvement in the women's movement.

As the subtitle — The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left — indicates, *Personal Politics* is much more about tracing the roots of women's liberation through women's involvement in other liberation struggles than about feminism itself. But by tracing the personal experiences women had in those earlier movements, the reasons and the need for a separate women's liberation movement emerge with bittersweet clarity.

Because the subject matter of Sara's book is "so close to the heart," and given the affirmation of "personal politics" that is the theme of this book, we decided to share with you what *Personal Politics* meant to us, rather than just tell you what it is about. Because it is about our movement, something so personal and unique that it requires a new language and style to talk about it. As veterans of the civil-rights and the anti-war movements, our own stories attest to the universality of the shared history, or rather herstory, which Sara's book traces.

Len Stanley; As I re-read Sara's book to sharpen my "objectivity" from earlier reactions to reading it ("It's so true! That's exactly how it was with me, too") I found myself taking voluminous notes. When finished, my overriding feeling, as a summary, was: "It's so true. That's exactly how it was." And of course those are the feelings of personal identification which ultimately exploded the women's movement into one of the most exciting, exhilarating and enduring experiences of many women's lives.

I especially identify with the chapter, "Southern White Women in a Southern Black Movement," which traces the beginnings of the involvement of Southern white women in the civil-rights movement through church-related programs; the chapter describes the startling and moving experience of knowing black peers for the first time as human beings "just like us." Evans also wryly depicts our early naive and evangelical feeling that racism, once exposed, would crumble, and poignantly describes parental fears and threats, especially toward their

daughters.

My own transformation, from growing up in Greensboro, North Carolina, came in the summer of 1965 in a New York City program for Northern and Southern college students to work in interracial teams with "ghetto" kids through churches and community centers. My father, from Birmingham, Alabama, and mother from Jackson, Mississippi, opposed it, but grudgingly capitulated when the minister of our church (at my desperate request) came and talked to them.

That summer turned my provincial head around permanently: I had never known such committed people, never had such intense "real life" learning. The next summer, when I wanted to drop out of my Southern white college to live and work in a black ghetto community in North Carolina, my father's reaction ended up recorded in *Personal Politics*: "The father of one white woman who announced that she wanted to leave school to work in a small-town black community accused her of being a whore and chased her out of the house in a drunken rage, shouting that she was disowned."

After working a year and a half in that community, I came to know and love "some of the most real people I ever met," as another Southern white woman in the book says. Above all, my new identity became infused with "the spirit of adventure, daring and commitment" which overrode the also very real fear.

Racing on through Sara's book, I particularly smiled (smugly) to myself as she traced the movement of Students for a Democratic Society off the campuses and into the ghettos and describes how "it was the women who could really relate to community people while the ideological men hung back," or even competed with community men. While the men endlessly strategized, we organized. **BUT WE STILL GOT NO CREDIT FOR DOING THE "RIGHT" WORK!**

I cringed anew as Evans delved into the SNCC and SDS "rethinking" period between 1965 and 1968 when the racial and sexual tensions interwove with class and cultural differences to splinter the original feelings about the "purest movement." I remember the pain and confusion when black women, particularly, struck out against white women in the movement and when black power/nationalism became the rallying cry for an important separation of SNCC from SDS. Even then it may have been white males who catalyzed that need for separation; blacks may have refused to be engulfed

by the same sophisticated posturing and rhetorical articulation skills that made women feel "insignificant and invisible." But it wasn't until we had the strength and support of our own movement that I could articulate the alienation and irony I felt sitting through meeting after meeting of men expounding an ideological critique of our society when I knew the very people these movements were about — the oppressed poor and black — could no more relate to these discussions than to a Wall Street board meeting.

In the meantime, I had become a caseworker in a Welfare Department defying the administration by organizing recipients. But the campus and organizational radicals who should have been my support community gave no respect or recognition to my welfare rights organizing — until Black Power and "look in your own backyard, Whitey," stopped them cold. Amid discussions about "how to reach poor whites," I suggested that they (SDS-ers) might want to come to a mass public hearing I had organized about food stamps. It was the first time that most of them had ever seen or heard "real" poor people, and they were very radicalized by the experience. Awkwardly and apologetically, they confessed, "Wow, you know, I didn't know you could, you know, relate to these kind of people so well. . . ."

By the time of the first stirrings about women's oppression, movement women had gained important new strength, self-worth and skills, "tools the movement itself had given: a language to name and describe oppression; a deep belief in freedom, equality and community; a willingness to challenge any social institution that failed to meet human needs; and the ability to organize." With those skills — the beliefs, the language and the organizing ability — and the model of separatism for oppressed groups, "what was required to produce a movement was only for women to apply the ideas directly to their oppression."

Well, as Sara titles the chapter, the dam burst. And girl, was I glad! Begun by "radical" women from these earlier movements, almost overnight hundreds, thousands of women, had the same amazing "instantaneous love" for the women's movement. Having traced the forces that brought us there, Evans' book ends where the women's movement begins.

But it hasn't ended. "They have extended their social concerns into other arenas as well." Community



organizations have always had good strong women leaders, but labor movements, significantly, have not. In my five years as an organizer with the Brown Lung Association, through which Southern textile workers are fighting for a safe, healthy workplace, it has been gratifying to see that wherever there are organizers with a feminist consciousness, strong women leaders develop. Wherever women are encouraged, they make great leaders. When they are discouraged or ignored, they may remain invisible.

*Sunshine Southerland:* Listening, fascinated, as each woman recounted her own emergence into feminism, sharing our stories about then and now, I was again struck with the amazing similarities among us, so many different women. We were a fitting gathering to discuss Sara's book: Southern women, Northern women transplanted South, women who grew into feminism from other movements, and women whose feminism grew up with the movement itself. We discovered again that bond

that is the stuff of consciousness-raising: women going to their cores, using personal experience to talk about their oppression. As Sara quoted one feminist's reaction to the early consciousness-raising, "Our feelings will lead us to ideas and then to actions."

I read Sara's book with nostalgic glee. It is difficult to traverse those prickly memories, but in documenting our beginnings *Personal Politics* does justice to the memories and to the nascent spirit of the feminist movement.

My own political consciousness was jarred awake in the late '60s, when I left the stultifying confines of Southern high school life. Having been raised in a military town — Jacksonville, North Carolina — the Vietnam War was a way of life by the time I graduated in 1967. I particularly remember the desperation I felt after talking to the returning vets at the USO. Realization of the horror and lies they had seen in the faces of death — American and Vietnamese — combined with my own disillusionment with this country's *Pentagon-Paper*-thin lies about the war, moved me profoundly to "do something."

I became deeply involved in the anti-war movement. That was the beginning, for me, of noticing, and feeling compelled to act. As Sara reminded me, "For women, the [anti-war] movement . . . opened up the process of radicalization to thousands and sharpened the ideology women would eventually use to describe their own oppression."

But while I was spending my energies immersed in the anti-war movement, my feminist consciousness was running smack into a new machismo, in the guise of a Marxist-Leninist line. I lived in an anti-war collective adjacent to a Southern military base, organizing GIs and the young people of the community (mainly draft-age men). Although my political work was strongly male-identified, my female identification chafed at the hard rhetoric and barely disguised machismo of leftist intellectualism. Poignant memories were stirred when I read Mimi Feingold's comment in *Personal Politics*: "[I was] immediately turned off to the role that women were playing in the Resistance, because it finally . . . dawned on me that here was a movement where women were playing this unbelievably subservient role, because that was the only role women could play, because women couldn't burn draft cards and couldn't go to jail so all they could do was to

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relate through their men and that seemed to me the most really demeaning kind of thing."

Sara validates my own herstory by documenting the incipient feminism of my predecessors in the new left — the women whose changes and discoveries and disenfranchisement, experienced in male-dominated parent movements, had sparked a separate women's liberation movement. This process created the context in which my generation of women blossomed into a full-fledged movement based on personal politics. As one woman said in our discussion of the book, "I know we lived it; it was just so, well, exciting, amazing, to read it as history."

Even through Sara's almost academic treatment of that period of feminism, I could remember and feel again the anger we women felt. We saw our selves as living in two worlds — the personal sphere of our own oppression and of needing and wanting a liberation movement, and the sphere of new left politics which denied us these basic needs.

The nature of the anti-war movement meant that to be deeply involved in it, women had to be untrue to their own needs. We had to deny them — for the higher cause of saving men's asses. As Sara says, "Men could resist the draft . . . and it was the women's role to support them." All too often, this meant supporting men who saw their asses as being in an altogether different class from ours.

I remember vividly the heated, jargon-laden discussions — every night! And I recall the three main criticisms made by my male "comrades" in the collective: I was too personal; I didn't have the right line; I didn't make political connections for people. They never realized that people need to make their *own* political connections; that's what leads to action rather than just ideology.

But at that time I was incapable of articulating that fact. I hadn't had consciousness-raising experiences yet to validate my own thinking and perceptions. In Sara's words, "Women experiencing ambiguity and strain in their roles . . . in the movement, sharing a new left history, suddenly discovered each other. The private experience of oppression and the intellectual perception of sexual inequality merged in the emotional realization: 'I'm not alone.'"

I left the collective; essentially left the anti-war movement. In the vernacular of the '70s, I went looking for me. The last chapter of Sara's book captures this period of feminism, and develops a sound and compelling

theory of why and how the sub-cultures of women within the different movements coalesced into the women's liberation movement. Women in our discussion group also attested to the needs that had driven them to seek an explanation within our own camp — women's space — for the deep, personal contradictions we felt as we realized that new left politics were, in actuality, stifling to women's consciousness.

Ten years have passed since the time Sara writes about in the latter section of her book. For myself, much of that time has been spent trying to create a balance between the personal and the political. I retreated into myself, found strength there, emerged a radical feminist with my first priority now and evermore feminism — and mothering the girl-child I had along the way: actually a large part of my feminism. I'm active in the anti-war/peace movement again, but this time the organization I work with, the War Resisters League, defines itself up front as a feminist organization.

Sara has expressed the essence of the lessons we had to learn, and her book is an invaluable legacy. What we've learned from feminism has been essential to our growth and is a harbinger of how any strong movement in the '80s will be shaped.

**When I read the book, I just wished there could be another movement. . . . Women individually are stronger now but collectively we still need the support of a movement.**

Inevitably, our discussion of *Personal Politics* led to a discussion of what lies ahead. Facing the '80s with variations of optimism and pessimism, women responded to what they felt about feminism now and in the future.

"I'm involved in consciousness-raising on a deeper level now, asking what is it psychologically to be a woman, facing questions of competence in my work and autonomy in my relationships with men."

"Just like all the times of crisis, the times ahead will be a return to home and my family. I'm afraid of anti-ERA forces and the major retrenchment of the right wing. Recent gains are the first ones to be lost — women and blacks are expendable."

"I'm excited by the changes women's liberation has made in home and family. I think it's a great time to work on raising non-sexist children."

Over half the women participating in the discussion have children. We're also, many of us, forging new identi-

ties about motherhood and see the struggle to raise non-sexist children as an emerging personal political challenge. We're appalled at the rampant sexism in almost all child development books, and at least one '60s veteran said, "I think the new political arena will be public schools and the awful process they force children to go through. I believe in public schools and I'm going to fight for good ones, not elite alternatives."

The resurgent militarism, with its attendant echoes of the '60s anti-war movement, was also a main topic of discussion. We were sobered and refreshed by one younger sister's comments. Expressing shocked disbelief at the slogan "Girls say yes to boys who say no," she nevertheless encouraged us by reporting that in this anti-draft movement, at least on college campuses, the leaders are mostly women. Ironically, a month later, she spoke at a national anti-draft rally in the wake of Stokely Carmichael.

"For me the great gift of Sara's book," she commented, "is that it puts together things that took 20 years to develop — essentially the first 20 years of my life — the history while I was growing up, and it is crucial to me, for thinking about the '80s, to know those things." The story *Personal Politics* tells is the best kind of history — making personal sense of a time and movement that has changed the character of American life. Reading it, we feel how history was made through our own personal efforts. And *Personal Politics* is an ongoing story. The women of the '60s and their sisters of the '70s are incorporating their feminism into every other social concern. The tradition that Sara's book at once describes and carries on — that of women writing their own herstory — is the lifeblood of feminism. It is important to remember that only in the last 10 years have we been blessed by a plethora of women's writing. And, significantly, all the women in our discussion group — like most women — learned of feminism, or were supported in their search for it, through such reading.

Sara ends *Personal Politics* on a note that admits the reality of today's women's movement but also inspires us with what feminism has meant. She says, "The new feminism has not abolished sexual discrimination and sexual division of labor . . . but it has fundamentally changed the roles of the sexes. And sisterhood, powerful in its infancy, holds the potential to transform the future." □

# Home

Album by Si Kahn, Flying Fish Records.

By Chip Hughes

*Take us by our lives  
And follow where we go,  
Through the forests of the past,  
Till time has called us home.*

—Motherless Child  
Si Kahn, 1979

Missing it, loving it, seeking it, and sometimes “Wondering what the hell we’re doing here,” Si Kahn has served up his latest offering, subtly weaving the ambivalence, the joy and the elusiveness of finding a home. For many of us, home was always something to take leave of, run from, rebel against. But breaking the bonds of childhood and seeking the freedom of the highway did not come without costs. Stability and security, the foundations that make a house into a home, were often thrown by the wayside in the wandering search for excitations and experience.

*Home* may represent a new maturity and a new coming of age for Si and a generation whose feelings he vocalizes and evokes. As the economic recessions of the '70s slide downward to the economic depressions of the '80s, the preciousness and the precariousness of finding and keeping a home have increased. Whether it be a political home, a cultural community, a nuclear family or a place “to plant the seeds of children,” the personal costs of creating a home and the price that must be paid have been ravaged by inflation just as surely as the cost of a loaf of bread or a gallon of gas. The one thing we do know this time around is that home is not a house with 2.4 kids, a gas-guzzler and a clean, clipped lawn.

Still, there ain't no place like it and it may be where the heart is, but it doesn't necessarily have to be someplace geographically specific. Home may be in Medicine Bow, Wyoming, with the Queen of the Cowboy Cafe doing “all the things that I'd wanted to do, which I'd told all my friends that I'd done.” It may be memories of a mountain farm “driven like snow before the storm,” or maybe a stable place “to hide all your dreams in the closet and . . . hang all your fears on the line.”



Obviously, the questions posed by “the seeds of children” have further complicated the quest for a personal home. To build a fragile shelter for nurturing, to make a permanent commitment in a time of transition, to risk another “till time has called us home” — these are all the difficult challenges presented by “homemaking” in the '80s — be you black/white, male/female, young/old, gay/straight, single/attached.

The coming of *Home* also signals

the advent of a new musical home for Si Kahn — on Flying Fish Records of Chicago — as well as a new, more serious commitment to the pursuit and practice of music. It should be a pleasure to many more ears, now that Si has emerged from the solitude of his living room, while still retaining the “down home” feel in the concert hall or bar. Another of the benefits of Si's renewed seriousness about music is evidenced by the quality of performance and production on his

latest disc – the recordings are cleaner, pitches clearer and backup vocals slipped in more tastefully.

Two weeks ago, I had the pleasure of hearing Si sing at a benefit concert in Chapel Hill. He seemed more comfortable on stage, more confident, and more “at home.” As always, his pun-y humor is intact, his effervescent blend of personal and political, ever critical and irreverent. He left me sobbing quietly in my seat that night, shedding tears of recognition, “thinking about the time gone past, and wondering what the years will bring.” Four years ago, he had penned that song for my wedding: “For love like freedom is a hard won thing, only struggle makes it last.” After four years’ passage, an emotional dam was burst on hearing it sung again.

Looking back now, ’76 was definitely a time of hope and new possibilities. Jimmy was quietly coasting along towards the White House, taking us all gullibly along with him. For a wedding toast that day, Uncle Dub from Jackson, Mississippi, emotionally

pleaded for “burying the sword that had long divided North and South.” New relationships were blossoming and new political possibilities among textile workers in Southern mills seemed to be taking root in previously barren land. We thought that J. P. Stevens was on the run and that the end – and maybe a new beginning – were in sight.

Four years later, there needs to be a time for crying and looking back, for keeping moist the emotional grounds upon which homes and people networks are built and nurtured. Tears should be shed for all that was, and all that might have been. Maybe a few more textile workers will be saying “goodby Monday blues, goodby card-room fever,” as the struggle to clean up the mills of the deadly dust moves forward with maddening slowness. We wonder whether it is worth it “to store up love to warm us growing old. In the winter of our lives, will you be here to help me drive away the cold?” For the workers struggling in silence in the Roanoke Rapids mills, it may

already be too late to plead: “Don’t let them wait too long!”

If there is one message that the songs of *Home* leave with us, it is that, although things must pass, friendship and love – the foundations of home-making – must be struggled with and preserved in the midst of the ephemeral flow of events and people. As a fighter, a battler and dreamer, Si knows only too well that the struggle is long and arduous, and the outcome still unclear and uncertain. I only hope that by the time my hair turns from brown to grey, my visions either sour or bear fruit, my baby either grows up or grows old, that Si Kahn, his poetry and music, will still be around to ease the passage of years and soothe the struggle towards home. It is people like Si who help people like me go on, go on. . . . “People like you, help people like me, go on, go on, go on, go on. . . .” □

*Chip Hughes, a long-time staff member of the Institute for Southern Studies, recently became a father.*

## Encyclopedia of Southern History

Edited by David C. Roller and Robert W. Twyman. Louisiana State University Press, 1979. \$75.00.

By Frank Adams

Encyclopedias and ancient country hardware stores both have the same compelling attraction for me. I can’t pass one by, and will wander among either the pages or aisles for hours, absorbed by the genius of people, their history and their tools. So when word reached Gatesville, North Carolina, where I work and live, that after a dozen years historians David C. Roller and Robert W. Twyman and the progressive editors at Louisiana State University Press were about to publish *The Encyclopedia of Southern History*, I immediately began covetous speculation about the hours I’d devote to learning from this volume. I fully expected it to be monumental in scope, rich and balanced in detail, and a seminal tool for those of us who presume from time to time to write about our life in the South.

The *Encyclopedia* arrived this

spring. It was massive, as anticipated, and, in that sense, is a weighty contribution to the region’s letters. On page one, there is Abbeville, South Carolina, called by the Chamber of Commerce boosters there and some historians, “the cradle and grave of the Confederacy.” On page 1371 there is Zwaanendael, the first Dutch settlement in the colonies, near present-day Lewes, Delaware. About one-fifth of the book’s space is devoted to general historical essays on each of the 16 states determined by the editors to be Southern. Even the dry, terse writing style cannot hide the cultural and economic diversity which characterize the South today, nor those common threads of race and exploitation which bind Southerners to their region. These essays offer no new interpretations of Southern state histories, but rather concise restatements of currently acceptable academic views.

Scores of persona, famed and infamous, are included in the *Encyclopedia*, beginning with Robert Sengstacke Abbot, a man born a slave on Georgia’s Sea Island who became, in the eyes of Gunnar Myrdal, at least, “the greatest single force in (modern) Negro journalism;” and ending with John Joachim Zubly, who was banished from Georgia for preaching and writing against American indepen-

dence from England. The editors pointedly include the seldom heard of – women and blacks. They note, “To provide the necessary space for such persons, articles dealing with such famous and well-known figures as Robert E. Lee and Woodrow Wilson are often deliberately brief, tend to be interpretative in nature, and emphasize bibliographic materials.”

Topical articles on the South’s geography, industrial development, literature, historiography, reptiles, crops, commercial expositions, all find space in this assemblage. This is the stuff and substance of Southern life and includes such fascinating data as hog production records from 1850 to 1966, and the date the first patent medicines were imported to the region. Additionally, and to the editors’ credit, less materialistic and sometimes downright controversial subjects are detailed: sectionalism, Southern hospitality, yeoman farmers, academic freedom, labor unions and even the Communist Party’s role in the South.

No, the editors can’t be criticized as their predecessors have been for failing to include this town, that state, a whole class, race or sex, or for skirting some forbidden topic. But although their choices of topics are admirable, in dozens of instances their documen-



tation of those topics is mysteriously lacking.

Take the two anemic essays on academic freedom and Selma, Alabama, for examples. No mention is made of the most famous struggle to preserve academic freedom in the South in this past quarter century. One of my Gatesville neighbors, who was at the time speaker of the North Carolina House of Representatives, urged his fellow legislators to prohibit any person determined to be a "radical" from speaking on any University of North Carolina campus run with tax dollars. The Speaker Ban Law was eventually repealed, but only after a long, bitter fight. And as for Selma, the Encyclopedia lists two events in 1848 as having altered the town's history. The Alabama & Tennessee Railroad laid track into the riverside community, and a colony of 300 skilled German ironworkers arrived to

take up their trades. Not a word to record that a civil rights march there in the '60s altered not only Selma's history, but the nation's too.

But my chief problem with the *Encyclopedia* is a matter of tone. The editors have tread admirably where previous colleagues have feared to step and have included the *verboten* — blacks, a few heretics, women — in order not to present an all-male, white, all corporate or Bourbon paternalism. But they have done so, it seems, almost as if they wished history had not forced such a change, as if they longed for a more sure and stereotyped past — and present. The frontispiece, to my utter dismay considering the literally thousands of symbols of the South available, depicts five flags of the Confederate States of America. They have collected scores of uncritical profiles of such infamous racists as Theodore G. Bilbo. And I see

no justification for the list of colloquialisms and nicknames they chose to include: nigger, blacky, boy, buzzards, corncrackers, crawthumpers, geechy and others. Was it necessary to immortalize these epithets? Or were they included to remind us that the South's academic community really has yet to adjust to present-day realities?

Certainly the editors have recognized that history has forced us to use the term Southern to encompass more than the lives and accomplishments of a handful of white men. However, they missed a grand opportunity to help commence a needed, and inevitable, redefinition of the South and its history. □

*Frank Adams is a large fellow with an ever-present look of far-off optimism who provides us with many of the far too few bursts of enthusiasm we receive in this business.*

## BOOKS on the SOUTH

*This list consists of books published since January, 1980. Book entries include works up to May, 1980. All books were published in 1980. Dissertations appeared in the Dissertation Abstracts Index between December, 1979, and February, 1980.*

*The entries are grouped under several broad categories for your convenience. Mention of a book here does not preclude its being reviewed in a future issue. Unsolicited reviews of publications of general interest to our readers are welcome. Recent works are preferred.*

*Copies of the dissertations are available from: Xerox University Microfilms, Dissertation Copies, P.O. Box 1764, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. The cost is \$7.50 for microfilm and \$15 for xerographic.*

### ECONOMICS, HISTORY AND POLITICS

"A Behavioral and Biographical Portrait of the Federal Middle District Court, Greensboro, North Carolina, 1972-1977," by Joseph Roy Archer, Jr. Duke University, 1979.

"Black Healers During the Colonial

Period, Early Nineteenth Century America," by Jean Wealmont Robinson. Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, 1979.

"Blacks in North Carolina During Reconstruction," by Jacqueline Baldwin Walker. Duke University, 1979.

"Central Appalachia in Advanced Capitalism: Its Coal Industry Structure and Coal Operator Associations," by David Stuart Walls. University of Kentucky, 1978.

"The Challenge of Texas Politics," by Ernest Craig et al (St. Paul, MN: West Pub. Co.) \$8.95.

"The Choctaws: Cultural Evolution of a Native American Tribe," by Jesse O. McKee and Jon A. Schlenker (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi). \$17.50.

"Collective and Individual Problems of Feminist Leaders: An Inquiry Into Social Process Factors Affecting Women's Concerns in the Southeastern U.S.," by Carolyn Jones Hadley. Florida State University, 1979.

"Electricity for Rural America: The Fight for REA," by D. Clayton Brown (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press). \$22.50.

"Gentlemen Without a Country: A Social and Intellectual History of South Carolina, 1860-1900," by Howard Joseph Marshall. UNC-Chapel Hill, 1979.

"Henderson County," by G. Tillman Stewart (Memphis: Memphis State University Press). \$10.00.

"A Historical Study of Southern Baptists and Race Relations, 1917-1947," ed. by Foy D. Valentine and Edwin S. Gaustad (New York: Arno Press). \$20.00.

"A History of the Texas National Guard Between World War I and World War II," by Harry Lynn Krenek. Texas Tech University, 1979.

"The Houston Business Community, 1945-1965," by Leah Brooke Tucker. Uni-

versity of Texas at Austin, 1979.

"Implementation of the Atlanta Community Development Program," by Catherine Inez Williams. University of Georgia, 1979.

"In Mine and Mill," by Earl Dotter (New York: The Pilgrim Press). \$15.00.

"An Index-Guide to the Southern Historical Society Papers, 1876-1959," by James I. Roberts, Jr. (Millwood, NY: KTO Press). \$75.00.

"The Influence of the Roman Catholic Church on Slavery in Colonial Louisiana Under French Domination, 1718-1763," by Mary Veronica Miceli. Tulane University, 1979.

"The Institution of Slavery in North Carolina, 1860-1865," by Tracy Whitaker Schneider. Duke University, 1979.

"Louisiana Parishes: Their People and Governments, A Developmental Analysis," by Grace June Savoy. Louisiana State University, 1979.

"'Love of Order': The Origins and Resolution of South Carolina's First Secession Crisis," by John Gibbes Barnwell, Jr. UNC-Chapel Hill, 1979.

"Loyalism in Virginia During the American Revolution: The Norfolk Area and the Eastern Shore," by Adele Holt. University of Iowa, 1979.

"The Nashville Convention: Southern Movement for Unity, 1849 to 1850," by Thelma Jennings (Memphis: Memphis State University Press). Price not set.

"The Occupational Choice Among Low-Income Southern Youth: A Longitudinal Analysis," by Larry Dale Hall. University of Kentucky, 1979.

"Partners in Progress: The Galveston Wharf Company and the City of Galveston, 1900-1930," by Thomas Truel Barker, Jr. Texas A&M University, 1979.

"Politics in Wilmington and New Hano-

ver County, North Carolina, 1865-1900: The Genesis of a Race Riot," by Jerome Anthony McDuffie. Kent State University, 1979.

"Preventive Care in Rural Virginia: Predictors of the Prenatal Health Seeking Pattern in Blue Ridge County," by Charlotte Diane Fitzgerald. University of Virginia, 1978.

"The Quest for Racial Harmony: Race Relations in Birmingham, Alabama, 1947-1963," by Robert Gaines Corley. University of Virginia, 1979.

**Race and State in Capitalist Development: Studies on Southern Africa, Alabama, Northern Ireland and Israel**, by Stanley B. Greenberg (New Haven: Yale University Press). \$35.00.

**Richmond: The Story of a City**, by Virginius Dabney (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press). \$12.95.

**Segregationist Violence and Civil Rights Movements in Tuscaloosa**, by Anthony J. Blasi (Washington: University Press of America). \$13.95.

"Slavery and the Churches: The Old Southwest," by David Thomas Bailey. University of California-Berkeley, 1979.

"Southern Commercial Conventions: Continuity of Perceptions, Values and Leadership, 1837-1871," by Vicki Lynn Vaughn. University of Missouri-Columbia, 1979.

**The Southern Common People: Studies in Nineteenth Century Social History**, ed. by Edward Magdol and Jon L. Wakelyn (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press). \$27.50.

"Southern Political Culture: A Test of Elazar's Conceptualization," by Samuel Reece Freeman, Jr. University of Kentucky, 1979.

"The Travail of Freedom: Mississippi Blacks, 1862-1870," by William Leon Woods. Princeton University, 1979.

## BIOGRAPHY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

**The Alexander Letters, 1787-1900**, ed. by Marion A. Boggs (Athens: University of Georgia Press). \$16.95.

**Governors of Mississippi**, by Cecil L. Summers (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Co.). \$12.95.

**John M. Brooke, Naval Scientist and Educator**, by George M. Brooke, Jr. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press). Price not set.

"John Sergeant Wise: A Case Study in Conservative Readjuster Politics in Virginia, 1869-1889," by Otho Carlino Campbell. University of Virginia, 1979.

"Louis D. Newton: A Baptist Spokesman of the Twentieth Century," by Robin Winston Smith. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1979.

"Park Trammell of Florida: A Political Biography," by Stephen Kerber. University of Florida, 1979.

**Prelude to the Presidency: The Political Character and Legislative Leadership Style of Governor Jimmy Carter**, by Gary M. Fink (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press). \$22.95.

"Prophet Without Honor: A Biography of Edmund Ruffin," by Betty Lou Mitchell. University of Massachusetts, 1979.

"Richard B. Russell: Democrat from

Georgia," by Karen Kalmar Kelly. UNC-Chapel Hill, 1979.

**Selma, Lord, Selma: Girlhood Memories of the Civil-Rights Days**, by Sheyann Webb and Rachel W. Nelson (University: University of Alabama Press). \$8.95.

**Slave and Citizen: The Life of Frederick Douglass**, by Nathan I. Huggins (Boston: Little, Brown & Co.). \$9.95.

**Sojourner Truth: Slave, Abolitionist, Fighter for Women's Rights**, by Aletha J. Lindstrom (New York: Messner). \$7.79.

"A Study of William Henry Green: Carpetbagger, Politician, Land Developer," by Lewis Hoffman Cresse, Jr. University of South Carolina, 1979.

## CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

**Colonial Baptists and Southern Revivals: An Original Anthology**, by William L. Lumpkin and Lyman Butterfield (New York: Arno Press). \$34.00.

**The Epic of Negro Baptists and the Foreign Mission Board**, by Edward A. Freeman (New York: Arno Press). \$23.00.

"A Fantasy Theme Analysis of Negro Spirituals," by Roy Lester Clark. Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, 1979.

**The Gardener's Calendar for South Carolina, Georgia and North Carolina**, by Robert Squibb (Athens: University of Georgia Press). Reprint of 1787 edition. \$9.95.

**Giants of Black Music**, ed. by Pauline Rivelli and Robert Levin (New York: Da Capo Press). \$5.95.

**A History of Southern Baptist Landmarkism in the Light of Historical Black Ecclesiology**, by James E. Tull (New York: Arno Press). \$52.00.

**Louis Armstrong**, by Hugues Parnassi (New York: Da Capo Press). \$17.95.

**Of Outlaws, Con Men, Whores and Other Artists**, by Larry L. King (New York: Viking Press). \$10.95.

**Relations Between Northern and Southern Baptists**, by Robert A. Baker (New York: Arno Press). \$20.00.

**A Southern Renaissance: The Cultural Awakening of the American South, 1930 to 1935**, by Richard H. King (New York: Oxford University Press). \$13.95.

**Suwannee River: Strange Green Land**, by Cecile H. Matschat (Athens: University of Georgia Press). \$17.50.

**Twenty-Four Negro Melodies**, by S. Coleridge-Taylor (New York: Da Capo Press). Reprint of 1905 edition. \$22.50.

## EDUCATION

"Compliance With Title IX by Tennessee Public Schools During 1975-76," by Joel Allen Turetzky. University of Tennessee, 1979.

"A Comparison of Mexican Americans and Non-Hispanic Whites in Higher Education in the Southwest," by Majel Dean Dominguez. Arizona State University, 1979.

"The Current Socioeconomic Status of Black Football and Basketball Athletes Who Enrolled as Freshmen at Bethune-Cookman College and Florida A&M University During the Year 1965-1970," by Bobby Alfred Frazer. Florida State University, 1979.

"An Historical Analysis of Desegregation of Miami Public Secondary Schools, 1968-1977," by Michael Nathan Kesselman. University of Miami, 1979.

"The History of the Black Student Union at Florida State University, 1968-1978," by James Louis Palcic. Florida State University, 1979.

"The Migrant Education Program in Polk County, Florida," by Barbara Jean Blake Malone. Indiana University, 1979.

"North Carolina Governors and Public Education, 1933-1961," by Carolyn Bond Earp. Duke University, 1979.

"The Organizational Structures, Funding Patterns and Future Trends for Women's Programs at Two-Year Colleges in Florida," by June Marie Gordon. Florida State University, 1979.

## LITERATURE

"Black Fiction: To Discriminate or Not to Discriminate," by Mary Frances Sisney. University of Southern California, 1979.

"The Characterization of Women in Tennessee Williams' Works," by Chalermrie Jan-Orn. University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1979.

"The Conflict Between the Physical and the Ideal in the Plays of Tennessee Williams," by Salahuddin Hariri. Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, 1979.

"A Critical and Textual Study of William Faulkner's *Flags in the Dust*," by George Frederick Hayhoe. University of South Carolina, 1979.

"The Dream as the Creative Imagination in Mark Twain's *The Mysterious Stranger Manuscripts*," by Mary Holland McGraw. Oklahoma State University, 1979.

**Faulkner: The Transfiguration of Biography**, by Judith B. Wittenberg (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press). \$17.50.

"Image of the Black Woman in Black American Drama, 1900 to 1970," by Willye Bell Udosen. East Texas State University, 1979.

"The Louisville Children's Theatre: A History," by Carol Thompson Sgroi. Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, 1979.

**Nineteenth Century Southern Literature**, by J.V. Ridgeley (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky). \$9.95.

"Richard Wright and His American Critics, 1936-1960," by Jerry Washington Ward, Jr. University of Virginia, 1978.

**Richard Wright: An Ordeal of a Native Son**, by Addison Gayle, Jr. (New York: Doubleday & Co.). \$14.95.

"Sexual Symbolism in the Short Stories of Eudora Welty," by Elizabeth Rose Lemieux. SUNY-Binghamton, 1979.

"The Slave Narrative: Prototype of the Early Afro-American Novel," by Marva Jarrett Furman. Florida State University, 1979.

"The Theatre in Mississippi From 1840 to 1870," by Guy Herbert Keeton. Louisiana State University, 1979.

"Women on the Color Line: Subversion of Female Stereotypes in the Fiction of Cable, King and Chopin," by Anna Williams Shannon. University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1979.

Emily Herring Wilson

## ON THANKSGIVING DAY IN LEWISVILLE, N.C.

*Fields wane mellow with light:  
the grass stubbles low.  
Distant, stripped branches.*

*The sky draws the earth up  
to a thin radiance,  
then throws down shadows.*

*Centered across the morning,  
Mr. Tucker follows Angel.  
Slowly, the horse turns*

*her head; slowly the hand  
moves. His hair is another  
cloud, her coat dapples the*

*air. The rope, like the  
horizon, holds firm the man  
and horse and field. In*

*their silence the planet spins,  
the morning breathes.  
An old, mild sun tethers the day.*



Susan Muldady Weil

**Southern Exposure** is a quarterly journal that lets the South speak for itself. Sometimes it's through the voice of a new poet or the testimonial of a tobacco farmer, or maybe it's through the words of older Southerners, whether sharecropper or suffragist, who made their contribution long ago for a better South today.

What holds **Southern Exposure** together is our passion for this place and its people, our belief in being rooted in a culture in order to transform it into a new future. We use everything from investigative journalism to oral history to understand the region, and like the populists and freedom fighters of old, we're not afraid to name the culprits who chronically destroy it, nor too meek to recommend a few alternatives for its improvement.

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