

## The Greensboro Killings

# THE DEATH OF A REVOLUTIONARY

R. BROWN

In the aftermath of the brutal slayings in Greensboro, the death count totals five, nine were wounded and one is still hospitalized. The police have in custody 14 people, including a 16-year-old boy, all with ties to the hodge-podge of North Carolina KKK klaverns or the Nazi Party.

In broad outline, what took place last Saturday morning at the anti-Klan rally, touted as a "Death to the Klan" demonstration called by the Communist Workers Party (formerly the Workers Viewpoint Organization), needs little additional attention here. Who in North Carolina, or for that matter, the nation, the world isn't already familiar with what happened? The Klan/Nazi cara-

van arrived at the low-income housing project, the gathering point of the planned march, and moments later opened up with shotguns, rifles, pistols, gunning down 14 demonstrators, all members of the radical left CWP.

Nonetheless, a general knowledge of what took place is not sufficient for an understanding of the event. There are too many details within

the framework of the killings which remain murky or completely hidden.

\*How did the KKK/Nazi caravan of nine vehicles know the precise location of the demonstration when the CWP only two days previously, changed the origin point?

\*Why were police not on the spot in a situation which had clear violent ramifications? Challenges from the CWP were sent to top Klan leaders to attend the rally. The police were aware of these communiques which were destined to draw a response.

\*While the CWP advocated the use of physical force and self-defense, the leadership assured the police they would carry no firearms at the demonstration as part of an agreement to receive a parade permit. Apparently they honored it, though in some recent reports, one CWP member may have been armed with a pistol.

\*The police acknowledge they had under surveillance the Klan/Nazi caravan as it entered Greensboro. They followed the vehicles to the demonstration area, but took no action even as the caravan turned into the street which was the staging point of the demonstration. Instead, the police stopped more than a block away. A more explosive situation is difficult to imagine.

\*There are many more details which require answers - the response time of the police to the shootings, for example. Reports indicate stop-watch timing of the violence on video tape show, more than a minute of shooting. Yet the police claim to have had five cars on the scene in that time. The tapes and eyewitness reports dispute the claim.

\*But a last detail and the most important, is that despite the radical rhetoric of the CWP, they had worked through the system to hold the demonstration. They had a permit, agreed to certain restrictions and were entitled to express themselves. Instead, five were murdered.

I know some of the people who were shot through various progressive activities during the past ten years. They were all activists and hence newsworthy participants in civil rights on through to the recent protests against the school competency tests. But one of the dead was a friend. Jim Waller. Dr. Jim Waller.

When I met Jim five years ago, he had come down from New York after completing his residency. He was a good man and I liked him immediately. We didn't always agree on the topics discussed, but he was the kind of solidly committed person who could laugh at my sometimes pointed jibes at his "ideological ice cream."

He was an intense man, thoughtful. He seemed preoccupied with heavy intellectual probings: looking for answers. His concern was to help, to be human and do what he could.

When a disastrous fire burned my



Photo By Jim Stratford, © 1979 Greensboro Daily News

Sally Bermanzohn Aids Unidentified Wounded Demonstrator

## What a difference two years makes

ANVIL STAFF REPORTS

Two years ago Bill Smith received 7,000 votes to lead the at-large race for three Durham City Council seats. Voter turnout was 35 percent. The 1977 city elections tipped the council in favor of the progressives for the first time in years.

Last week incumbent Paul Bland got 7,781 votes in the at-large seat, according to unofficial returns, and finished out of the money in fourth position. Voter turnout was roughly 42 percent. The leader was Duke administrator Paul Vick with 9,838 votes.

And so it went as the conservative/business forces turned out their folks. Moderate/conservative voters have always outnumbered liberal/black voters, but the conservatives seldom voted or cast their

votes as a bloc.

The conservative slate, headed by accountant and former school board member Harry Rodenhizer, swept the mayor's post and six council seats. The council is now back where it was prior to 1977 with an 8-5 margin for the conservatives. The number of black representatives dropped from five to two. C.E. Boulware and Carolyn Thornton did not seek reelection and Bland was defeated.

"You can't say we didn't work," commented a Durham Voters Alliance precinct worker. "We turned out our folks, probably better than we've ever done. but it was to no avail. We couldn't match the advertising blitz and phone bank, backed by the new conservative political group, Voters for Durham's Future. Our goals and objectives are so well defined that we're drawing on a small

pool of voters, much smaller than they are. Our potential is limited...

"Nobody's throwing in the towel, however, there are county and state elections next year, and another council election in two years. We're not going to sit back and let the conservatives steamroller us. We'll be working on voter registration and other projects, but we'll be at committee meetings, public hearings and council sessions too. They may ignore us and vote against us, but our presence will be seen day in and day out..."

"The Durham Committee (on the Affairs of Black People) did an excellent job, along with Carolina Action, N.C. PIRG and others, but the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4