



the southern

# PATRIOT

VOL. 30, NO. 10

DECEMBER, 1972

PUBLISHED BY THE SOUTHERN CONFERENCE EDUCATIONAL FUND (SCEF), LOUISVILLE, KY.

## BATON ROUGE: BRING KILLERS TO JUSTICE

The killing of two students at Southern University in Baton Rouge, La., is the latest in a long series of murders of black people by public officials in this country. It affects everyone who is dissatisfied with things as they are.

At stake is the question of whether social issues will be settled in the political arena—or whether federal, state, and local police agencies will increasingly try to settle them by shooting people.

That was the issue when four black students were murdered in Orangeburg, S.C. in 1968, and when two blacks were murdered at Jackson State in 1970. At Kent State it was four whites.

No one was punished for those murders. This time it must be different. Baton Rouge comes as a judge in North Carolina says from the bench: "We're tired of all this protesting; we've got the guns, and we've got the money." (See page 5.)

Unless we stop the official murder now, soon the only safe people will be those who accept society as it is and keep their mouths shut.

The Patriot urges you to join in every possible protest demanding that the murderers be brought to justice.

(The protests at Southern University revolved around important issues that smolder on every black campus in the South. The next Patriot will carry a report on these issues and the background to the murders.)

## A Victory in Mississippi New Poultry Union Wins

By KEN LAWRENCE  
(Staff Correspondent)

FOREST, Miss.—Workers at Poultry Packers, Inc. voted 95 to 76 to have the Mississippi Poultry Workers' Union (MPWU) as their bargaining agent.

"It's the greatest victory for the people ever won in Scott County," said Merle Barber, union president. "The management must have thought they were going to win. They called everybody in to hear the count. And when the result was announced, you should have heard the people shout."

It was a major breakthrough in the gigantic chicken-processing industry that employs thousands of workers in Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia. Most of the plants are small, pay low wages, and have atrocious working conditions.

The MPWU was formed when black workers struck at Poultry Packers last May. (See May and June 1972 Patriot.) They rejected affiliation with the Amalgamated Meatcutters and Butcher Workmen of North America (AFL-CIO) when representatives from that union told them "We're with you, but we think you've done everything wrong."

These representatives indicated that poultry workers in Forest would not be allowed to have a local under their own control.

After winning a 10¢-an-hour raise, workers voted to end their strike so that they could strengthen their position in the plant. At the same time they asked the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to hold an election.

After the strike ended, the management at Poultry  
(Continued on page 4)



Mathew Nicks, Jr., vice-president, and Merle Barber, president of the Mississippi Poultry Workers Union, after the election.

Photo by Ken Lawrence

### In This Issue

"One of the most important parts of any person's life is what he or she actually does on the job that earns a living. Yet most of us who are trying to build a united working-class movement don't even know what each other do in the long hours of each working day," comments Patriot reporter Ken Lawrence.

So Ken asked several poultry workers to describe the work they do in the chicken-processing plants that dot the rural countryside in the Deep South. The answer is on page 4.

Elsewhere in this issue: women seek jobs in Appalachia coal mines, page 3; Virginia prison movement, page 6; the Wansley case, a letter to Southern white women, page 7; the continuing struggle of hospital workers in the Kentucky mountains, page 8.

## Kentucky Workers Rebel Against a Runaway Shop

By CARL BRADEN  
(Staff Correspondent)

Brownsville, Ky.—Southern workers are getting fed up with plants that run away from the North to take advantage of Southern labor.

This was shown by strikers at the Kellwood Co. clothing factory here. They also proved what can be done when workers have community support.

Kellwood closed the plant after a strike lasting more than three months. It sold some machinery and moved the rest of it elsewhere. About 75 scabs were thrown out of work and applied for unemployment pay.

This happened after Judge Earl Martin refused a request by the company to find 47 of 350 strikers guilty of violence.

This request had been made in the face of violence against the strikers, including the murder of one of them by the husband of a strikebreaker.

Community backing grew out of efforts of the workers themselves. They built support in the face of a barrage of company propaganda, including the scattering of news releases to every newspaper within 100 miles.

Like many places in the South, the City of Brownsville had built the plant to lure industry and provide jobs. Working people not only helped pay for the factory with their tax money. Many also bought shares in the project.

However, strikers and community supporters voiced no regret at the closing of the Kellwood operation. One woman summed it: "The way they treated us, we don't care if they never open up again. Maybe another company will come in and act decent toward its employees. We don't mean to be pushed around."

The Kellwood employees had organized themselves in May and June after the company cut their pay by speeding up the work and shifting them from job to job. Management seemed bent on making sure that the poor stayed that way.

The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) arrived on the scene in the midst of the organizing effort. It was like the 1930's, when all an organizer had to do was stand in front of the plant with handfuls of application blanks.

Forty application cards arrived at the ILGWU office in Bowling Green, Ky., in a single day. Within a month the workers asked for recognition of the union as their bargaining agent, but the company refused. The workers walked out.

About 80 percent of them are women, and a few are black. Edmonson County,  
(Continued on page 8)



Photo by Dave Portugal

Workers from all over Kentucky and from surrounding states came to Brownsville to join a memorial march when Eugene Hampton, one of the organizers of the union at the Kellwood plant, was shot and killed by the relative of a scab. The tragedy occurred at the height of the strike.



# Boop Notes

People wondering about the November election should read "Fat Cats and Democrats: The Role of the Big Rich in the Party of the Common Man." G. William Domhoff shows how those who own this country arrange to have the conservative Democrats run the South and the U.S. Congress while a conservative Republican runs the White House. Publisher is Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 07632; 176 pages plus bibliographic essay and index; \$5.95. (This book will be discussed in depth in a forthcoming issue of *The Patriot*.)

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George P. Rawick has edited and published narratives of ex-slaves collected by the WPA writers project in the 1930s under the title *The American Slave: a Composite Autobiography*. The complete set is in nineteen volumes. Volume I, Rawick's introduction, is titled *From Sundown to Sunup: The Making of the Black Community*. Eugene Genovese has called it "the most valuable book I know

## Deep South Report

"*The Mississippi Experience*," edited by Dr. Paul A. Kurzman, is subtitled *Strategies for Welfare Action*. It contains front-line reports of eight community organizers who volunteered for work with the Community Development Agency in Mississippi under sponsorship of the Michael Schwerner Memorial Fund.

The reports are designed to strengthen the skills that a worker brings to the community he or she serves, and to help increase sensitivity to the individual and institutional racism and class discrimination that must be dealt with. Association Press, 291 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10007; 189 pages; \$5.95.

of by a white man about slave life in the United States."

Volume I costs \$10 from Greenwood Publishing Company, 51 Riverside Avenue, Westport, Connecticut 06880.

\*\*\*\*\*

*The Hidden Contributors* by Aaron E. Klein is a book about black scientists and inventors in America, written for young people. Included are biographies of Benjamin Banneker, Norbert Rillieux, Elijah McCoy, Granville T. Woods, Jan Matzeliger, Lewis Latimer, Garrett A. Morgan, George Washington Carver, Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, Charles Drew, Ernest Everett Just, and Percy L. Julian.

If you and your children aren't familiar with these men and their work, order this book from Doubleday and Company, 277 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017, for \$4.95.

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The use of agents to provoke radicals to commit crime has long been used by police in Europe. Now the practice is becoming widespread in the United States.

A recent book tells what to watch for if you are with an organization or group that the police would like to destroy on criminal charges. It is also an important study of the lengths to which police will go to dispose of people they fear and dislike.

Author is Paul Chevigny, a New York attorney who represented a group of Black Panthers framed by the police. His book is based on the trial of these men, but he also goes into the history of agent provocateurs.

(*Cops and Rebels: A Study in Provocation*; 307 pages; Pantheon Books, Random House, 201 E. 50 St., New York, N.Y. 10022; \$7.95.)

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*The Days of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, by Jim Bishop, who sums up his subject this way: "He was shrewd; he was naive. He was courageous; he was cowardly. He was a leader, but not a strategist. Almost always, he was willing to settle for less than he asked for his people, but he got more for them than they had been able to achieve in three centuries of servitude." 496 pages plus sources and index; G.P. Putnam's Sons, 200 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y.; \$8.95.

## AT THE MISSISSIPPI STATE FAIR



Photo by Ken Lawrence

This was the SCEF booth at the 1972 Mississippi State Fair—a first for the organization. Copies of the *Patriot*, the *Appalachian People's History Book*, cards, calendars, posters, pamphlets and other literature were distributed.

## SCEF Cards and Calendars Still Available after Holiday

SCEF cards, inscribed with messages of struggle, will still be available after the holiday season for those who would like to use them year-round as note paper.

A complete description of the cards, which feature ten different designs, appeared in the November *Patriot*. If you missed this, write SCEF, 3210 W. Broadway, Louisville, Ky. 40211, for a descriptive brochure. The brochure includes miniature pictures of each design.

The 1973 SCEF calendar will also continue to be available after the holiday season. The calendar, as in previous years, marks dates of special interest in the history of people's struggles—but the

design is different from the SCEF calendars of other years.

This one is put together as an 8 x 11 booklet. It opens up to an 11 x 17 size to hang on the wall—with a picture at the top and the month's calendar at the bottom.

The pictures and accompanying text tell the story of SCEF's early history, from its beginning 34 years ago as the Southern Conference for Human Welfare. The cover design is from one of this year's cards—a drawing by E. Schnurr-Colflesh, illustrating Carl Sandburg's "The People, Yes."

Contributions of \$2.50 are suggested for each calendar and each dozen cards. It is also suggested that you add 10 percent to your order to cover postage.



Postmaster, send P.O.D. Form-3579 to:

SOUTHERN CONFERENCE EDUCATIONAL FUND (SCEF)  
3210 W. Broadway, Louisville, Ky. 40211

The Southern Patriot is published once a month except in July and August by the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF). Editorial and business offices, 3210 W. Broadway, Louisville, Ky. 40211; office of publication, 411 Cowan St., Nashville, Tenn. 37207; Eastern office, 507 W 111th St., Apt. 54, New York, N.Y. 10025; West Coast office, 5889 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, Ca. 90019. Back issues are available on microfilm from Serials Section, University Microfilms, 313 N. First St., Ann Arbor, Mich. 48103. Thirty cents a copy, \$3 a year. Second-class postage paid at Nashville, Tenn. The Patriot is typeset in our own plant on our own equipment by movement labor. Editor: Anne Braden.

Executive Committee: Modjeska Simkins, President; Julian Bond, Virginia Collins, Jan Phillips, and the Rev. Fred L. Shuttlesworth, Vice Presidents; Mary Britting, Secretary; Frederic Hicks, Treasurer; Laurie Grupper, Assistant Treasurer.

Executive Staff: Helen Greever, Executive Director; Mike Welch, Administrative Assistant. Western Representative: Lucy Fried. Eastern Representatives: Lenore Hogan and Ruth Goldberg.

### SCEF STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

SCEF is a Southwide interracial organization committed to the elimination of racism and sexual oppression; the abolition of an economic system based on the profit motive instead of on the needs of people; and the ending of imperialism—that is, the exploitation of the many by the few both in this country and across the world.

We believe that these changes will come about when powerless people organize at the grassroots; build their own democratic grassroots movements; and take control of their government, the earth's resources, and their own lives.

We believe that in the past the effectiveness of such movements in the South has been impaired by deeply rooted racism. This has kept us divided by color and ethnic identity, and has thus kept us powerless.

Therefore, the first priority of white participants in SCEF is to reach other white people, especially poor and working people. We believe that white people, in the course of their struggles, must vigorously combat racism and racist institutions, while seeking and creating alliances with the black liberation movement around common goals.

SCEF welcomes the cooperation of all persons who agree with these principles, goals, and approaches, regardless of any differences that may exist among them on other questions.

The Southern Patriot is dedicated to the task of reporting the activities of people and groups across the South who are building movements that help incorporate the principles stated here—and to providing information and analysis that can help them build.

### Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation

(Act of August 12, 1970; Section 3685, Title 39, United States Code)

Title of Publication: The Southern Patriot

Date of Filing: September 30, 1972

Frequency of issue: Monthly, except July and August.

Location of known office of publication: 411 Cowan Street, Nashville, Tenn. 37207.

Location of the headquarters or general business offices of the publishers: 3210 W. Broadway, Louisville, Ky. 40211.

Names and addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor: Publisher: Southern Conference Educational Fund, Inc., 3210 W. Broadway, Louisville, Ky. 40211; Editor: Anne Braden, 4403 Virginia Ave., Louisville, Ky. 40211; Managing Editor: none.

Owner: Southern Conference Educational Fund, Inc., 3210 W. Broadway, Louisville, Ky. 40211.

Stockholders: none.

Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding one percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities: none.

In accordance with the provisions of this statute, I hereby request permission to mail the publication named in Item 1 at the reduced postage rates presently authorized by 39 U.S.C. 3626.

s/ Anne Braden

### Extent and nature of circulation:

	Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months	actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date
a. Total no. copies printed	18,854	19,152
b. Paid circulation		
1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales	535	825
2. Mail subscriptions	13,101	13,233
c. Total paid circulation	13,636	14,058
d. Free distribution by mail, carrier, or other means		
1. Samples, complimentary and other free copies	5,138	4,974
2. Copies distributed to news agents, but not sold		
e. Total distribution	18,774	19,032
f. Office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing	80	120
g. Total	18,854	19,152

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

Anne Braden, Editor.



# Women Apply for Jobs In Virginia Coal Mine

(By Staff Correspondent)

DANTE, Va.—Four Appalachian women recently applied for jobs as coal miners at the huge Clinchfield Coal Companies' mining complex here.

The women have worked in the small runaway garment factories that abound in this area and have labored as housewives and mothers at the same time. They say they are tired of working for nothing and being badly treated.

## HOW THE WOMEN SEE IT

"I worked at the factory and came home and cleaned out the barn," said Ms. Alderson, "and then I stayed up half the night taking care of my six kids. I think I'd like to come home from the mine at 3:30 pm and sit around on the porch."

The four women are Katherine Tompa; her mother, Ms Alderson; Patty Osborn; and Helen Miller. All are from the area and are from mining families.

The company has not acted on their applications but has suspended all hiring, male or female, until the issue is settled.

The women have received a mixed reaction from other miners in the area, including their husbands. They have received the support of some but others point to the traditional superstition that women are "bad luck" around a mine and to the Bible to justify their opposition.

## THE CHANCES ARE DIM

The chances of the women being hired anywhere in the near future appear dim. Clinchfield recently laid off 77 men at its X5 mine, most of them young Vietnam veterans.

Company officials blamed low productivity for the layoff and a Clinchfield forman described the men at X5 as "Very militant. Just like the boys at Blacksville." Under the union contract these men will be put on a panel and will be given first chance at any jobs before anyone new is hired.

That women can perform the tasks of a

coal miner is without question. Since the beginnings of the use of coal in the Middle Ages until this century women have labored beside men in European coal mines (see Emile Zola's *Germinal*). And women working in the mines in the United States, although a rare occurrence, is not unheard of.

## IT'S BEEN DONE BEFORE

There are women alive today in West Virginia who worked in small "family" mines during the lean years of the 1950's and early '60's. The argument is often advanced that technology now makes it possible for women to work in the mines but this ignores the fact that for centuries women have known how to handle the pick, shovel, and shot of the mines.

With more cutoffs expected in the shortrun in this job-scared industry most miners are thinking only of keeping their own jobs and are not sympathetic at the prospect of women, or anyone else, competing with them.

And at this point in history the companies do not need to hire women workers. But in the future they will not hesitate to do so if it becomes necessary to maintain (or improve) their image in society, or if they need to develop a pool of lower-paid workers from which to draw scabs and strikebreakers.

## THE REAL ISSUE: DIVISION OF WORKING CLASS

This is much the same way that the corporate interests of America, and the coal companies in particular, first introduced black workers to the mines and the way that women have been used in other industries.

So the real issue in Dante is not whether women could or should work in the coal mines. It is rather the continuing division of the working class along color, and in this case, sexual lines.

Unless we can overcome this contradiction among ourselves we will never be able to adequately confront the ruling class and get on with the task of building a society with safe, decent jobs for everyone.

# News Briefs

In Florida, Sheriff Willis McCall was defeated in his bid for re-election. McCall, who has been sheriff of Lake County for 28 years, has long been notorious for terrorism against black people.

Earlier this year, he was indicted on a murder charge in the death of a black prisoner—only to be acquitted by a jury and win the Democratic primary in his race for re-election. In the general election, however, his Republican opponent labelled him a "17th Century character" and won.

In Jackson, Miss. a new record was set when Mississippians cast more than 2,200 votes for Linda Jenness and Andrew Pulley, Socialist Workers Party candidates for President and Vice-President. The previous high for a socialist presidential ticket was polled in 1912, when Eugene Debs got 2,017 Mississippi votes.

Most minor party vote counts were incomplete at *Patriot* press time, but the SWP got at least 15,241 in Louisiana, and in Texas some of its candidates for Congress and the state legislature received as much as 10 percent of the vote.

Maneuvers by officials kept the Communist Party off the ballot in Southern states, except Kentucky—even though it had gathered thousands of signatures to qualify in several of them. But Scott Douglas, a black worker who ran as an independent for Congress in Tennessee and campaigned as a Communist, called his 638 votes a "breakthrough for independent politics in this state."

Ramsey Muniz, the Raza Unida candidate for governor of Texas, got 6 percent of the vote—representing a balance of power between Republicans and Democrats.

(Other bits of news from the November election are on page 8.)

In Atlanta, Greyhound bus depot employees went on strike demanding recognition of the Amalgamated Transit Union as their bargaining agent and an end to discrimination against them. They say the company avoids giving them seniority rights and pension privileges by such tactics as classifying them as part-time workers when they work 39½ hours a week. The strike received widespread support in the Atlanta community, with students and others joining the picketline.

Also in Atlanta, a typical police raid against the Black Panthers sent 50 police to local Panther headquarters in November. Eight persons were arrested, and charges are being pressed against two, Ron Carter and Alton DeVille, who are accused of possession of explosives.

They deny that any explosives were in the house until police brought them. They claim the new attack on the Panthers is part of a cover-up by the City Administration because of recent charges that the mayor and his brother are

connected with organized crime and the drug market. The Panthers, in Atlanta as elsewhere, have an intensive program against drugs.

In Jackson, Miss., the trial of Imari Obadele, president of the Republic of New Africa (RNA) has been postponed indefinitely, and he remains in jail under high bond.

Meantime, RNA spokesmen said police harassment of RNA citizens has increased. Recently on the same day, in New Orleans and Jackson, RNA citizens were accosted by police on the street, searched, and detained for several hours.

In Norfolk, Va., wide community support developed for Jeffrey Allison, the 19-year-old sailor charged with setting fire to the aircraft carrier *Forrestal* last July. His supporters insist he is innocent and is being used as a scapegoat. The Navy has recently been plagued by rebellions within its ranks, over racism, the war, and caste and class privilege.

Allison's court martial took place the last week in November, and the Committee for GI Justice, formed by a coalition of black and white groups, leafleted and demonstrated. Allison is white. The verdict had not been announced at *Patriot* press time.

## In the Next Issue

As this issue of the *Patriot* went to press, balloting was just beginning in the historic election within the United Mine Workers. An analysis of the election campaign and results will appear in the next issue.

In Dallas, leaders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference have charged that there is a police reign of terror against the black community. Four blacks have been killed by police within a month's time. SCLC and other groups have been holding demonstrations and a sit-in at City Hall in protest.

In Memphis, another frame-up of black youths is brewing. Five young black men are scheduled for trial January 13 on charges of fire-bombing the Red Lantern Lounge during the tense period that followed police killing of Elton Hayes in October, 1971.

The *Tri-State Defender*, Memphis black newspaper, pointed out recently that all reports at the time of the bombing said it had nothing to do with racial tensions but was apparently the result of a feud among white patrons of the Lounge. The five black men were arrested later when the Police Department needed scapegoats, their supporters say. According to the *Defender*, terror tactics were used to extract a confession from one of them.

Also in Memphis, on November 15, an explosion demolished the house being used as living quarters by members of the Tennessee Chapter of the Black Panther Party. City officials have refused to do anything because the Fire Department reported that the explosion resulted from a faulty gas furnace. However, inspectors for the Memphis Light, Gas, and Water Co., said the furnace could not possibly have been the cause.

# Welfare Mothers Jailed



Charlotte mothers on way to court with sheriff's deputy

Charlotte News Photo

CHARLOTTE, N.C.—Eight mothers were sent to jail for the weekend here recently, charged with fraud in obtaining welfare. Judge William H. Abernathy then gave them two-year suspended sentences and fines.

The "fraud" involved continuing to draw welfare checks while they had temporary or part-time employment. A *Charlotte Observer* survey revealed that even with their wages all the women were still under the poverty level. One mother said: "I had to do something. I didn't want to see my children turn to theft."

The National Caucus of Labor Committees and the Charlotte Women United picketed the trial. A leaflet said: "The real criminals are not on trial here today. Banks, speculators, and defense corporations are the capitalist sectors which eat up taxpayers' money."

North Carolina's welfare commissioner has announced plans for a similar crackdown in 100 counties.

## Subscription Blank

The *Patriot* is sent to all persons who give \$3 or more annually to the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF), 3210 W. Broadway, Louisville, Ky. 40211.

I enclose \_\_\_\_\_, of which \$3 is for a *Patriot* subscription.

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# Poultry Workers Vote For Independent Union

Andrew Bates, a woodcutter and organizer for Gulfcoast Pulpwood Association and SCEF talks at meeting of poultry workers



Photo by Ken Lawrence

## Union President Sends Thanks

Merle Barber, president of the Mississippi Poultry Workers Union (MPWU) asked the *Patriot* to extend thanks to the many individuals who sent financial support and encouragement during their strike last May. It was this support, along with that of the Gulfcoast Pulpwood Association, SCEF, and the NAACP, she said, that enabled the workers of Poultry Packers, Inc., to win that strike and thus continue their organizing campaign.

(Continued from page 1)

Packers cracked down hard, trying to break the workers' militancy. Benefits granted to strike-breakers were withdrawn. Harassment of union sympathizers began.

The company's strategy backfired when another walkout in mid-September was led by white workers. Merle Barber explained: "A lot of them didn't understand the first time, but now they realize and understand that if you don't stick together you can't make it."

Mathew Nicks, Jr., vice-president of the union, said: "White women and men both would come to me. They said they were nothing but fools for staying in during the strike. They just didn't know. They see it now, that things are no better for them than they were for us. They were suffering just as bad as we were."

The new union didn't wait for the election to start expanding. Members began signing up workers, black and white, in the other poultry processing plants in Scott County.

On the Tuesday before the election at Poultry Packers, the union asked the NLRB to hold an election at Gaddis Packing Company, across the street from Poultry Packers. This has been set for December 21. Organizers expect to have enough workers signed up in another plant very soon.

## What a Chicken Plant Is Like: Mass Production on High-speed Lines

The following article, describing work in a poultry packing plant, is a composite, based on extensive taped interviews with Merle Barber, David Nicks, Estella Moore, and other employees of Poultry Packers, Inc., in Forest, Miss.

Most poultry workers make \$1.60 an hour, get no paid vacations, and during frequent machine breakdowns have to stay on the job but get no pay for it. These were the issues that caused them to go on strike last May and organize the Mississippi Poultry Workers Union.

All the workers I interviewed about their work have been employed in poultry plants for three to five years. Most have worked in other chicken factories besides PPI, and all have worked at several different jobs on the production line.

Their story clearly portrays the modern-assembly line methods used by the poultry industry. The experience at PPI is not

The chickens come in on a truck in coops. They may have about 360 coops on a small truck. There are a lot more than that on a trailer truck. After they throw the coops off the truck, there's a man who hangs the chickens. They hang by both legs.

Then there are the killers. They cut the necks to kill the chickens. Then the blood drains out of the chickens. All that happens next to the back dock of the factory.

Next the chickens go into the picking room. There they go through a scald. You have to scald a chicken before you take the feathers off. After the scald are about four or five pickers—little rubber things that go round and round, hitting the chickens and whipping the feathers off them.

### THERE AIN'T NOTHING IN PLANT THAT'S EASY

After they check the chickens to see that all the feathers are off, someone cuts the feet off. Then the chickens leave the picking room and go to the straight line, where someone rehangs them.

The first thing after the chickens are on the straight line, they cut the oil bags off the chicken at the tail. Then they recheck for feathers. If there are any feathers, they take the chicken off the line.

Next there's the buttonhole cutter. That's the person who cuts the hole in

the butt of the chicken so the people down below them can pull the guts out of the chicken.

The gut pullers get paid more money than the other workers. The company seems to think they have a more strenuous job than everybody else. But if you work in a chicken plant one time, you'll agree, ain't nothing in that chicken plant that's easy.

### YOU'VE GOT TO RAISE SAND TO GET PAID

Sometimes they ask somebody to substitute for a gut puller. But if you don't ask for gut puller's pay, you won't get it. You've got to raise sand to get that extra that gut pullers are supposed to get.

After the gut pullers there's the government inspectors, they inspect the chickens for broken wings, broken legs, bruises, and everything else. If they have anything like that, they throw them off. The people who work next to the government inspectors are called trimmers. They trim off the bad parts.

Behind the inspectors and trimmers there's the liver and heart cutters. They cut the liver and heart off the gut of the chicken and drop them into running water, where they go down through tanks from there to the packing line.

Next are the gizzard splitters. They have to cut the guts and stem out of the chicken, and then split the gizzard. They

unique. It is typical of the industry's practices throughout Southern Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia.

The tasks which were once performed by butchers in neighborhood markets are now done in modern factories on high-speed production lines. These factories are located in out-of-the-way places, mostly in the rural areas of the Deep South.

The poultry industry's revolutionary innovations in production have resulted in a tremendous increase in the industry's productivity. Over the last 20 years, the prices of poultry products have fallen sharply at a time when most other protein-rich foods (beef, pork, etc.) were rapidly on the rise.

In the situation being described here, 175 to 200 workers process approximately 48,000 chickens during an average work day.

—Ken Lawrence

wash the gizzard off and throw it into a trough.

Then the neck cutters have to cut the chickens twice up around the neck-up around the shoulders by the wings, and to cut the head off. After the neck cutters, the craw pullers have to reach up, pull down on the neck and reach up around the wings, and pull the craws and windpipe out of the chicken.

After that there's the gun runners. They have to suck the lungs out of the chickens with the guns—they call them lung guns. That's like a vacuum cleaner, to suck everything out of the inside of the chicken—lungs and sex organs and such stuff as that.

### NEXT COME THE INSPECTORS

After that they've got the house inspectors. If they find something wrong with the chickens, like if they still had some lungs left in them, they throw them in a tub to be rerun. Otherwise they let them go off to the chiller.

The chiller is a great big tank of water. It takes about 35 minutes for the chickens to go all the way around on it. It has two sections. The first part is about 60 degrees; the other part of it about 30 degrees.

After they come through the chiller, some more folks rehang them on the packing line. They go around to a person who cuts the neck all the way off (the

other neck cutters leave the neck hanging by the skin. Here they cut it off.) Other folks stuff them with the giblets. They get wrapped on the giblet table, one neck, one heart, one liver, and one gizzard for each chicken.

### ON THE CUT-UP LINE THEY BAG THE CHICKENS

The chickens get inspected one more time. If there are no marks on them they go all the way around to another part that weighs the chicken automatically. After it weighs the chicken it drops it into a little tub, where other workers box the chicken. They send them down to another scale to be weighed again, then they go all the way to the cooler. That's the holder for them until they're ready to go out on the truck.

The chickens that were pulled off the straight line because they had marks or bad parts trimmed off go to the cut-up line. On the cut-up line too, each person does a separate job. Some people cut legs off, some cut wings off, some split the breasts. Also on the cut-up line they bag the chickens, and they box the leftover livers and hearts each evening.

### SOMETIMES NOT EVEN A FIVE-MINUTE BREAK

Usually workers on the cut-up line put in longer hours than the straight line or the packing line. The cut-up line works until everything they throw off on the other lines gets caught up, no matter how late they have to stay at night.

Often they will be short-handed, and the workers won't even get four-or-five minute breaks. The foreman will come looking for them in the bathrooms and break rooms. When they are short-handed the people at the end of the line get behind, and the boxes that need closing get stacked up. Then they have to stop the line and get some of the others to help.

These are some of our problems. Some of the other poultry plants do things a little different, like giving vacation pay or something, but almost every job is the same.

## Workers Describe Company Tactics

"Harassment really started after the Labor Board hearing on Wednesday, September 20. We lost three people by Friday. Two were fired and one quit."

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"They fired one woman because she was late one morning. Her car had a flat tire on the way to work. Another woman was fired when she told them her hands were sore from pulling craws."

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"One woman was a house inspector. They took her down from house inspector and put her in charge of throwing chickens over in the chiller. They took her from there and put her on the line pulling craws. Then they moved her to the giblet machine.

"From there they put her way up at the head of the line cutting oil bags. When they told her to run a lung gun, she quit. That was all on the same day. They thought she was the leader of the white people who walked out."

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"The lead man's wife told one woman that if she joined the union, that she was going to whoop her. You know what the rest was she said? She said that the woman was a nigger-lover if she joined. That was the word she said."

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"The foreman called me into the office and said, 'I'm working for the company, but I'm working on y'all's behalf too. I want to tell you, I once have belonged to a union. Sometimes you have to pay four or five dollars dues. If you ever want to get out, they can fine you as high as 500 dollars, and you can't get out of it. You didn't know that, did you?'"

"He's been talking to a good many others. I don't know what he's told them. Our dues are two dollars a month, and initiation is two dollars. It doesn't cost anything to get out."



# Government Tries to Halt Aid To Veterans Against the War

(By Staff Correspondent)

GAINESVILLE, Fla.—The federal government has begun attacking people who come to the aid of Vietnam War veterans facing conspiracy charges.

Stan Michelsen is charged with "giving assistance and comfort" to the veterans "with intent thereby to hinder and prevent their trial and punishment."

Six members of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) are accused of planning to cause riots at the Republican National Convention last summer. John Briggs, a non-veteran working with the

VVAW, was recently added to the list of defendants.

Judge Middlebrooks of U.S. District Court has indicated that trial of the Gainesville 8 will be held in January, but a definite date had not been set at *Patriot* press time.

The judge warned the lawyers and defendants not to put out publicity before the trial. Carl Braden, information director for SCEF, charged that this is a violation of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

"I plan to be in Florida in January to help with publicity about these cases and I don't intend to be stopped by any gag rule," said Braden.

## Churchmen Support Wilmington 10

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Commission for Racial Justice (CRJ) has thrown its full support behind efforts to free 10 people sent to prison as a result of civil-rights activity in Wilmington, N.C.

The Wilmington 10 received sentences totaling 242 years on charges growing out of a protest in February, 1971. (See recent *Patriots* for background.)

The CRJ commissioners called upon the United Church of Christ "to put up the necessary appeal bond for the Rev. Ben Chavis and the nine others convicted with him, as well as provide funds for the appeal process."

Chavis is an organizer for the CRJ, which is a branch of the United Church of Christ. Bonds for the Wilmington 10 total \$400,000, which they are unable to provide.

## Black Prisoner Burned to Death

RALEIGH, N.C.—White inmates at Central Prison murdered Charles Richardson, a black inmate, by pouring a fiery liquid into his cell recently.

Another black prisoner reported: "The cell to which he was confined was completely engulfed with a red-hot, roaring ball of fire after several white prisoners, having literally flooded the isolated solitary cell with paint thinner, set the brother and his entire cell afire."

Black leaders charge that prison officials were at least negligent in allowing this to happen. Fletcher Sanders, prison superintendent in charge of security, said they are still trying to find out how the killers got hold of the liquid.

"We have two white inmates charged with first-degree murder and they will be tried in Wake County Superior Court," Sanders said. "They are being held in maximum security."

## The Sound of Fascism

WILSON, N.C.—"We're tired of all this protesting. We've got the guns; we've got the money, and we've got you outnumbered. We're going to stop you in this way or people are going to take things into their own hands."

So saying, Judge Harrell of Wilson County District Court sent four young black men and two young black women to jail for six months. The six, all 16 and 17, were among 16 blacks arrested after a clash between white and black students at Fike High School in late November.

The only white arrested was a youth who refused to obtain a warrant for a black youth with whom he had a fight.

Jerry Paul, attorney for the accused, is appealing the sentences and the students were freed under bond. Paul said Wilson County "is without a doubt the worst place for repression in North Carolina, and that is saying a lot."

Meantime, the North Carolina Court of Appeals heard arguments for lower bail for Jim Grant, T.J. Reddy, and Charles Parker, serving long sentences on charges of burning a riding stable in Charlotte.

Movement leaders say there is a joint effort by federal, state, and local authorities in North Carolina to crush the black liberation movement, especially independent political action.

## Charlotte Judge Set Down Again By Federal Court

CHARLOTTE, N.C.—Judge Frank Snapp of Superior Court has been set down by a federal court for the second time in five months.

This time U.S. District Judge James McMillan overturned Snapp's order barring outsiders from public-school grounds in Mecklenburg County. The effect of the order had been to deny people the right to talk to students or pass out literature on school property.

Snapp issued the order after a fight between black and white students at East Mecklenburg High School. The black students were later attacked by police and five of them arrested. This has been the pattern since schools were supposedly integrated here in 1970.

Judge McMillan's ruling held that Snapp's order violated the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. McMillan said the same thing last July when he overturned Snapp's order to stop picketing in front of the Mecklenburg County Courthouse.

Snapp tried to stop the picketing and leafleting during the trial of Jim Grant, T.J. Reddy, and Charles Parker, whom he later sentenced to 25, 20, and 10 years in prison. They were accused of burning a stable four years ago.

## 'Free All Political Prisoners'



Photo by Dave Portugal

At the Louisville meeting

(By Staff Correspondent)

LOUISVILLE, Ky.—Statewide meetings to support political prisoners will be held in North Carolina, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee and Alabama in the next few months.

The meetings are planned to strengthen the fight against repression in the South, to build a local base for a new nationwide political prisoners' organization.

Plans for these meetings came out of a recent conference in Louisville, attended by activists from around the South and called by the Southern Committee to Free (Angela Davis) and all Political Prisoners. Sessions were held at the SCEF Educational Center.

### 'THE LESSONS OF THE ANGELA CAMPAIGN MUST NOT BE LOST'

Charlene Mitchell, who worked on the Davis campaign, outlined plans for the new organization.

"The lessons of the Angela Davis campaign cannot be lost," she said. "They have to be put into action in movements around frame-ups and political prisoners around the country."

"We need an organizational form for the exchange of information and support on a national and international basis. Otherwise, we are scattering our forces."

Regional meetings are to be held across the country during the next few months, to discuss plans for building the organization and elect representatives to its founding convention. Because there have already been two Southwide conferences on political prisoners, the people meeting in Louisville decided to aim for meetings at the statewide level.

### NATIONAL ATTENTION IS PLANNED FOR PRISONERS IN NORTH CAROLINA

Then, sometime next March, a national conference will be called to set up the organization. Meantime, those meeting in Louisville agreed to a proposal from the national Angela Davis committee that three situations receive national focus.

The repression of black activists and their white friends in North Carolina is one of the three focus situations. Angela Davis was scheduled to speak in North Carolina early in December. National and world publicity, in conjunction with what SCEF is already doing, is being built. This is the kind of support the new organization will bring to bear on cases across the country.

The second focus discussed at the Louisville meeting was that of Billy Dean Smith, a black GI charged with "fragging" an officer. This case has since been won, with his acquittal. The third focus case is that of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War in Florida (see article on this page).

*(The selection of "focus" cases by the national organization does not mean that others will not also receive attention. But the focus ones dramatize the relationship between racism and war and will be used to point up patterns of repression. Regional and community groups will be asked to tie publicity about them into campaigns around other cases.)*

People at the Louisville meeting set up an organizing committee to carry out plans for the statewide meetings, and to contact activists in other states, urging them to arrange similar conferences.

A newsletter will be circulated, dealing with Southern and national cases. A fundraising tour of the South by Angela Davis is being planned for the spring. Organizers from the South will be available to speak in other parts of the country, especially on the situation in North Carolina and Florida.

For more information on how you can help build meetings where you live, contact the Southern Committee to Free (Angela Davis and) All Political Prisoners, Box 4235, Memphis, Tenn. 38104.

## SCEF to Push RNA 11 Defense

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.—SCEF board members from around the South have decided to work on setting up statewide conferences on repression this winter. The decision was made at SCEF's semi-annual board meeting here in November.

The SCEF board also decided to give special priority to the case of the Republic of New Africa (RNA) 11—who are being sentenced to life terms in Mississippi. SCEF said this case, like those of political prisoners in North Carolina, is key to establishing the right to organize for all who want to change the society.



# "The Officials Want a Riot" Virginia Prison Struggle

(By Special Correspondent)

RICHMOND, Va.—Prisoners at Virginia State Penitentiary here are engaged in a life-and-death struggle---against inhuman conditions, sadistic guards, and public officials who look the other way and pretend that none of it exists.

Their basic strategy is to get their story to the public and to resist what they claim are repeated efforts by prison officials to provoke violence inside the institution.

"The administrators of this penal system want a riot....They need violence to justify the lies they have been telling the public. They need a riot---don't give it to them," said Thomas H. Durkin, a prisoner, in a speech inside the institution.



Thomas H. Durkin

An unusual speech at an unusual graduation exercise

Durkin's speech was made when he and others participated in graduation exercises for inmates completing high-school work within the prison. It was leaked to the press, which for the most part ignored it, but the *Richmond Afro-American*, the state's leading black newspaper, published it in full; Durkin is white.

The situation in the Richmond prison is similar to that in penal institutions across the country where prisoners are demanding that they be treated as human beings instead of animals. However, here

"At this moment at Spring Street prison here in Richmond, there's approximately 1,200 men, young and old, black and white, that are like robots or human cylinders of TNT...We cry for your help. Without it, we have two choices: to lose our minds and become vegetables, or to explode and tear hell off its hinges, preferring to die or obtain better treatment."

—Richmond prisoner's letter

in Richmond, more than in most places, the story of what is happening is available to people outside—for those who want to hear.

This has happened because of a high degree of organization among the prisoners themselves, the existence of an active group called the Prisoners Solidarity Committee (PSC) on the outside, and court action brought by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which has aired prison conditions in federal court.

Among the recent developments:

\*44 prisoners were locked in their cells for three months last summer; it is believed that some are still locked up, but

supporters have not been able to get complete up-to-date information.

The lock-up was in reprisal for a work stoppage by prisoners who demanded changes such as an end to dehumanizing "strip searches."

\*Prisoners and their supporters charged that during the summer and fall, certain guards have purposefully allowed easily controllable incidents between black and white prisoners to get out of hand in the hope of creating a racial confrontation.

\*Members of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee appeared before the State Board of Welfare and Institutions, and presented a three-page statement charging that prison officials are trying to provoke a riot. The Board named a committee to investigate—but moved its next meeting out of Richmond to Roanoke and refused to admit PSC representatives.

\*PSC received word from relatives of prisoners that a 19-year-old prisoner had been brutally beaten by a high-ranking guard. The committee protested to the Board of Welfare and Institutions.

As time passed and nothing was done, PSC organized a demonstration at a meeting of the Board and presented a list of demands—including representation for prisoners, their relatives, and working people on the Board itself. These demands have been put on the agenda for the next Board meeting.

\*Phil Hirschkop, ACLU attorney who last year won a landmark decision in federal court ordering an end to some of the most brutal prison practices, asked for a contempt order against Richmond prison officials for not carrying out the order. A hearing on this was held in October before U.S. District Judge Robert R. Merhige; at *Patriot* presstime, no decision had been announced.

The current struggle has its roots in a prisoners' movement that started here four years ago. In 1968, there was a three-month strike by all the men at the prison. This resulted in severe beatings and gassings, and the death of one prisoner.

The strike remained solid, however, and some concrete gains were won. Racial segregation was ended, there was a slight increase in the slave wages paid for prisoner's labor; and eventually the ACLU obtained the federal court restrictions on brutality by guards and officials.

In October, 1971, prison officials seized upon the reaction to the Attica rebellion to begin a new campaign of harassment against the prisoners here. Authorities announced publicly that a rebellious plot was in the making in the penitentiary, and all prisoners were locked up for three days with no mail, recreation, or visitors.

All of PSC's contacts in the prison said the so-called "plot" was a total lie, dreamed up by top penitentiary officials.

The lock-up, however, led to a revival



"This is what it's like: you damn near suffocate from dry heat, because there are no fans, no air conditioning system, nor cold water to drink. So you suffer through the night knocking roaches from your bunk and body, in addition to picking the dead ones from between your toes, if you use the john during the night...In the winter months, we damn near freeze because of the inadequate heating system. You no longer have just roaches; the rats come to join them."

—Richmond prisoner's letter

of organization among the prisoners. In the spring, a prisoners' organization called Social Involvement and Research (SIR) drew up a well-researched proposal on reforms and requested a meeting with prison officials. Prison authorities responded by trying to seize and destroy all copies of the SIR report and proposal.

The *Virginia Weekly*, a socialist newspaper then being published in Charlottesville, began receiving a series of long letters smuggled out of the penitentiary. These included a new list of demands from a group called Men Seeking Progress.

The letters described in detail the living conditions in the archaic cell blocks—rats, roaches, heat in the summer and cold in the winter,—as well as brutality and racism by guards and administrators. A statement by Men Seeking Progress warned:

"We are a new breed of prisoners with youth on our side and long sentences ahead of us and we will no longer accept your 1932 treatment of us..."

A major boost to the prisoners' unity came in the summer when Thomas Durkin made his speech at the prison graduation exercises. Durkin, 38, is serving 45 years on larceny and other charges.

## Victories for the People

In Texas, two political prisoners from Dallas, Fred Bell and Ernie McMillan, were ordered freed from prison on December 11 by the U.S. Board of Parole.

The United Defense for Political Prisoners (UDPP) says the board's action resulted from "diligent efforts of community people in their behalf."

The UDPP adds, however, that "the Dallas power structure is trying to have Ernie paroled directly to the state on previous false charges relating to his SNCC organizing efforts at O.K. Supermarket in 1968."

Bell was sentenced to 10 years on a trumped-up charge of aiding in a bank

robbery, although the U.S. Court of appeals had ordered that his sentence not be more than six years. (See September *Patriot*.) The federal charge against McMillan is refusing to be drafted.

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Two movement lawyers who have been under heavy attack recently won victories. Phil Hirschkop of Virginia was cleared of a contempt of court citation he received for his actions in defending persons accused of ransacking offices of Dow Chemical Co. in 1970.

And in Kentucky, the State Court of Appeals reduced the suspension from law practice that had been recommended for

"We are prisoners—some black, some white. But we are all prisoners! Everytime the administration gets nervous they put out that race-riot crap. They know that if we start fighting amongst ourselves, we will forget that they are the cause of our frustrations."

—Thomas Durkin, speaking at prison graduation

About 100 prisoners, and a group of visiting relatives, top officials of the penitentiary, and other dignitaries were in attendance.

Durkin scrapped his prepared text and explained to the crowd what conditions in the prison really are. He said the rehabilitations programs are useless and available to only 5 per cent of the prisoners, that official attitudes are backward and repressive, that the guard force is corrupt, and that the authorities are attempting to provoke a race riot.

News of the speech spread quickly through the prison, and before long prisoners were circulating mimeographed copies and passing it on to friends on the outside.

As this is written, PSC is continuing its efforts to awaken the public in Virginia to the justice of the prisoners' struggle. Members of the PSC include ex-prisoners, relatives of prisoners, workers, and students. In addition to appearing before such public bodies as the Board of Welfare and Institutions, they leaflet, speak before citizen groups, and try to keep in touch with those inside the prison.

But at the present time, there is no indication that Virginia officials want to face the truth.

PSC says it is clear that penitentiary authorities are attempting to fight back against their losses in the court and the growing prison movement by provoking violence. Prisoners believe the officials figure that a bloody disturbance could

"PSC believes that the penal problem is not only the lack of rehabilitation, but also the society which manufactures criminals as well as bayonets, bullets, and atomic bombs...We do not condone anti-social acts, but we know that if every man and woman had an education and a job with pay sufficient to meet material needs of food, clothing and shelter, there would be no basis for crimes and all people could be productive members of society..."

—PSC statement of purpose

easily be blamed on the prisoners—and the officials releases would call it a "race riot."

In fact, the black and white prisoners have been solidly united since 1968, when the whites decided to throw their support behind black demands for an end to segregation. The leadership of the present movement is both black and white.

Atty. Dan Taylor by the Board of Governors of the State Bar Association. The recommendation had been a five-year suspension, which would have been tantamount to disbarment. The Court cut it to six months. Atty. William Kunstler, who represented Taylor, called it a victory. Taylor is a long-time defender of controversial clients.

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In Houston, Tex., all felony charges have been dropped against the Houston Eight, a group who chained themselves to the doors of the Federal Building last April in protest against escalation of the Indochina War. Their defense committee reports that victory on misdemeanor charges is in sight.



## Sounding Board

# The Wansley Case: an open letter to the white women of the south

By ANNE BRADEN

I am writing to you, my sisters throughout the South, to ask you to join with me and others in a campaign to free Thomas Wansley.

Wansley is a 26-year-old inmate in the Virginia State Prison. More than one-third of his life has been spent behind bars—since he was arrested at the age of 16. Thomas Wansley is black.

Whether we like it or not, he is in prison because of us. He is a victim of the myth of white Southern womanhood. We did not personally put him in prison—just as we did not create the myth. But by remaining silent as black men died or went to prison because of it, we have helped to fasten its shackles on ourselves.

For Wansley was imprisoned on a charge of rape. Rape—traditionally a crime in the South if the accused was black and the alleged victim white, but never a crime if the victim was black and the attacker was white, and scarcely noticed if both parties were white, or both black.

### MASSIVE MANHUNT IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

Wansley was arrested in 1961 in Lynchburg, Va. The sit-in movement was at its height, and Lynchburg was in turmoil. Black students, sometimes accompanied by whites, sat at lunch counters demanding not just a cup of coffee, but freedom and dignity.

In the midst of this, a 57-year-old white woman said she was raped. Wansley was arrested after a massive manhunt in the black community. The woman was not able to identify him, but it didn't matter. He was convicted on two counts and given two death sentences.

By 1964 a protest movement had been built around the case, and his convictions were reversed. But in a new trial he was convicted again and this time was sentenced to life. Meantime, the protests died down, the world forgot, and Wansley remained in prison.

Now there is a new movement demanding his freedom. We, the white women of the South, belong to this fight.

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I believe that no white woman reared in the South—or perhaps anywhere in this racist country—can find freedom as a woman until she deals in her own consciousness with the question of race. The awareness never comes easily—and it comes to each of us in a different way.

For me, it began 26 years ago as I sat in a courtroom in Birmingham, Ala., a young newspaper reporter. I watched a young white woman send a black man to prison for 20 years by testifying that he passed her on the other side of a country road and looked at her in an "insulting" way. The charge was "assault with intent to ravish."

Later, when I told the prosecutor how unfair I thought it had been, he said: "Now don't you worry your little head about things like that. As long as I'm prosecutor in this county, we're going to protect our women."

### A LIFETIME OF POVERTY AND DRUDGERY

At the time, I thought I was horrified only by what the white woman was doing to the man. It was only later that I realized the horror of what she was doing to herself. And realized that she and I were not in very different positions after all.

This woman, poor but dressed in her best for her day in court. Queen for a day—as the prosecutor, the judge, her father, all rallied round to defend her honor. Tomorrow she would go back to a life of poverty and boredom, waiting on that father, her brothers, and someday on a husband—paying with a lifetime of drudgery for those magic moments when she could achieve the status of a wronged white woman.

I thought I was different. By that time I had an image of myself as a "free" woman—today the term would be "liberated". I had grown up in Alabama but had rejected the traditional roles, chosen a career, and was doing well at it—able to gather the news better than other

reporters and able to write it. Yet, sitting in the prosecutor's office that day, I wondered vaguely if my newsgathering ability was real after all. Or was it just the result of the attitude of the white officials around the courthouse, who saw me as one more woman to protect?

I could not articulate this then—I only felt that I was smothering. It was later, when I became involved in the organized civil-rights movement, that I learned I was only one of many Southern white women who had been torn by these conflicts. A turning point in my life came when I became involved in the campaign to save Willie McGee.

McGee was a black man sentenced to die for rape of a white woman in Laurel, Miss. His accuser was another of the South's tragic women.

Laurel is a town whose political and economic life was dominated then, as it is now, by Masonite Corporation. Masonite workers at one time had a union that had the reputation of being the most militant in Mississippi.

McGee was arrested in November, 1945—at the height of the post World War II strike wave that was sweeping the country. His case, which went on until 1951 and brought 1,500 cheering whites to the courthouse lawn on the night he was finally executed, kept Laurel in turmoil for almost six years. It played an important part in maintaining the division between black and white workers on which Masonite thrives.

### 'WE WILL NO LONGER BE USED AS TOOLS OF HATE'

The McGee case became the focus for an international campaign. It didn't save his life—he was executed at the Laurel courthouse on May 8, 1951—but by raising the issue sharply, the campaign saved the lives of many other black men.

White women throughout the country mobilized around the case. They organized to say what the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching had said in the 1930's: "We are women, we are human beings. We will no longer be used as things, as tools of hate and white supremacy."

Several delegations of white women went to Mississippi. I went with the last delegation, the weekend before McGee was executed, in a final desperate appeal to the governor.

We were arrested—or taken into "protective custody," as the police called it. They put us in a jail cell; it struck me as symbolic of what the South's protection of its white women really means.

It was the first time I had ever been in jail. But on that day I felt free for the first time in my life. The moment of freedom came as I was riding to the police station in the patrol car. One of the burly officers "protecting" us turned on me in fury when he learned I was a Southerner. Before his mood had been contempt; we were all Yankees—but traitors are worse.



Daily Worker Photo

Some of the women who joined the movement to free Willie McGee

"And you're here on this," he shouted. "Why, you aren't fit to be a Southern woman. You ought to be killed!" He started to hit me, was restrained by another officer, and I stared him down.

"No, I guess I'm not your kind of Southern woman," I said.

Later, when I analyzed more fully what was happening to me in those years, it seemed that what I was really saying at that moment was, "No, I have had enough. From this time on, you and the society you represent will not define me. I will define myself."

For in that instant I changed sides. I was no longer the helpless victim of a "protective" society. I was now on the other side—the other side from the cop who at first wanted to protect me and, when I didn't want to be protected, wanted to kill me; from the prosecutor who took my brain and humanity away by granting me favors as a young reporter because I was an attractive woman; from the people in Mississippi who were determined to kill Willie McGee; from the rulers of the South who treated black people like children and put white women on pedestals—and turn on them both when they assert their humanity.

I was on the other side from the death and decay that gripped the society I lived in.

For in an exploitative society, there are always two sides—and at some point one must choose. That's why I

am writing to you, my sisters, in regard to Thomas Wansley.

You may say my own experience is something out of the past—and things are different now. I don't think so. Wansley's presence in jail belies the difference. And he is only one of many.

Racism has not declined in

this country since the early 1950's; in many ways it has embedded itself more deeply. What the myths do to us as white women may not come to everyone as dramatically as it did to me. But it impinges on all our lives.

For example, underpaid white women workers in a small factory in Memphis, Tenn., recently were persuaded to vote against a union because the company told them a union victory would mean associating on a basis of equality with the black men in the plant. This was an affront to their white Southern womanhood—and to preserve the ancient myth, they sacrificed the chance for better pay, food on their tables, and a more decent life for their children.

I am aware that my appeal to you comes at a time when the women's movement is struggling to make society recognize and deal with the crime of rape. My position is not at odds with this struggle; it is simply another dimension.

### THE PROTECTION RACKET: A PAWN IN THEIR GAME

For the fact is that rape traditionally has been considered a crime in the South—if the woman is white and the accused black. It has not been seen as a crime—and is not now—if the woman is black, or if both parties are white. Nor is it considered a crime if the victim appears to be an independent woman—not visibly someone's wife, someone's sister, or someone's daughter. Most real rapes go unpunished and often unreported—because of the contempt with which police treat the complaining woman. Police and the society extend "protection" only to women who are willing to be pawns in their game.

I don't think all this will change until women—organized and strong and asserting their humanity—demand it.

We haven't had that kind of strength—and don't now—because of the deep chasm that divides white women from black in our society, a chasm created by crimes committed in the name of white womanhood.

It may seem paradoxical—but in this racist society we who are white will overcome our oppression as women only when we reject once and for all the privileges conferred on us by our white skin. For the privileges are not real—they are a device through which we are kept under control.

We can make a beginning toward building a really strong women's movement as we openly reject and fight the racist myths that have kept us divided. We can begin by joining with our black sisters in a campaign to free Thomas Wansley—and go on from there to free others, and ourselves.

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(This article is excerpted from a longer letter by Anne Braden. The complete letter is available in pamphlet form from SCEF, 3210 W. Broadway, Louisville, Ky.)

## FREE THOMAS WANSLEY!

You can join the campaign to free Thomas Wansley:

1. Write SCEF for petitions aimed at getting Virginia Gov. Linwood Holton to pardon Wansley or cut his sentence to time served.
2. Write Governor Holton directly, at State Capitol, Richmond, Va., demanding Wansley's freedom.
3. Write Wansley himself, assuring him of your commitment to work for his freedom. Address: Thomas Wansley, 500 Spring St., Richmond, Va. 23219. Put his number, 89980 312-B, on bottom left corner of envelope.
4. Send contributions to SCEF, 3210 W. Broadway, Louisville, Ky. 40211, earmarked for Wansley campaign.



## Election Notes

Georgia State Rep. Julian Bond (a SCEF vice-president) summed up the election when he said on November 8: "It wasn't Democrats versus Republicans. It was a national referendum on what's going to be done to black people—and we lost." Most alert observers agreed that the main issue was racism.

Many people saw a bright spot in the election of the South's first two black members of Congress since 1901—the Rev. Andrew Young from Georgia and Barbara Jordan from Texas. J.O. Patterson almost made it in Memphis, receiving 45 percent of the vote.

Young, who ran in an Atlanta district only 42 percent black, won 25 percent of the district's white vote. He conducted a massive get-out-the-vote effort in the black community, and there was a good turnout even though it rained all Election Day in Atlanta.

As predicted in last month's *Patriot* blacks won a number of additional state and local offices. (A full report will appear in a later issue.)

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In Tennessee, blacks increased their number in the state legislature from six to seven—and because of the close division between Democrats and Republicans they now hold the balance of power in that body.

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In Vicksburg, Miss. for the first time in Mississippi history, an independent black candidate polled enough votes to defeat a regular Democrat in a national election. Eddie McBride, black-liberation leader in Vicksburg, rolled up 11,355 votes to 65,812 for Thad Cochran, a Republican from Jackson, and 60,768 for Ellis Bodron, regular Democrat from Vicksburg. They were running for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives.

McBride led a black boycott of businesses in Vicksburg earlier this year.

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In Georgia, independent black politics made some inroads also, with two candidates running for the legislature outside the two major parties. Arlon Kennedy and Eddie Webster received 10 and 12 percent of the vote, respectively. Fourteen blacks were elected to the legislature as major party candidates, a gain of one over the previous representation.

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In Arkansas, four black candidates were elected to the state legislature. Until now, Arkansas has been the only Southern state without any black legislators in this period.

(More election notes are in the "News Briefs" column on page 3.)

## Mountain Strike Continues Strong, but . . . 'It's Hard Fighting Millionaires'

(By Staff Correspondent)

PIKEVILLE, Ky.—It's cold now in the Kentucky mountains, but almost 200 hospital workers on strike here have built fires in big metal cans and keep their picketline going 24 hours a day.

Their strike against starvation wages and impossible working conditions at Methodist Hospital was six months old on December 10. The hospital administration refuses even to talk with their union representatives. (See October *Patriot*.)

The strikers, mostly women, have been shot at, run down by cars, subjected to court injunctions, threats and constant harassment.

"It's hard when you're fighting millionaires," said one of them recently. "But we're not going to give up. We can hold out as long as the rich people can."

Pike County, with a population of 60,000, has 50 millionaires. The entire local power structure is arrayed against the hospital workers—knowing that if they win the whole community will "go union."

But working people here are still strong behind the strike—and the hospital has been desperately combing Kentucky for scabs.

In the midst of their own struggle, Pikeville strikers have reached out to support other workers. Some of them traveled to Charleston, W. Va., to back city workers on strike there (see November *Patriot*); in turn, Charleston workers came to Pikeville. Most of the Pikeville strikers are white; most of those in Charleston, including the leadership, are black.

With the help of the Council of Southern Mountains, a march was organized in Pikeville, drawing participation by workers and students from five states.

Pikeville hospital is run by a board of

local businessmen, but receives money from the Methodist Church. Strikers note that the 1972 general conference of the United Methodist Church went on record in support of the right of hospital workers to organize. "All we are asking is that the Methodist Church live up to its own creed," said one picket.

People elsewhere can support this request. Write to Bishop Frank L. Robertson, Kentucky Conference, United Methodist Church, 1115 S. Fourth St., Louisville, Ky. 40203. Urge him to use his influence to get the hospital board to bargain collectively.

You can also help by writing to Casper Weinberger, new head of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

(address: just Washington, D.C.). HEW administers medicare and medicaid funds, and hospitals have to meet certain standards to qualify. The Pikeville hospital no longer meets these standards; the administration's refusal to negotiate has drastically crippled services. Demand that HEW cut off funds until the situation changes.

The Pikeville strikers are part of the Communications Workers of America (CWA), and the union is giving full support, including strike benefits for essential living expenses. But many strikers have large families—and extra holiday gifts would be welcome. The address is Hospital Strikers Welfare Fund, Box 2337, Pikeville, Ky. 41501.)



The sign behind these women on Pikeville picketline asks: "Is this the best the Methodists can do?" Another sign says "Blow for a Union." Many motorists passing on busy Highway 23 respond by sounding their horns, and the women wave at them and cheer.

## Workers Build Community Support And Say 'No' to Runaway Shop

(Continued from page 1)

of which Brownsville is the county seat, has about 10,000 people whose families have lived here since the early 1800's.

The strikers say that most of these people are related to them by blood or marriage, and that many have worked for Kellwood during the nine years it has been here.

"They know what kind of company it is," said a woman picket, "and they don't like it. The merchants in this town also know what side their bread is buttered

on. We let them know that they had better be for us or they're not going to get our business."

Several business and professional people bore out the striker's statements. They wouldn't allow use of their names, but it was plain that they were lined up on the side of the strikers.

One merchant said he had talked with public officials and helped to convince them in favor of the workers. This was after the strikers themselves had called upon the officials and told them not to play ball with the company.

One result of this was passage by the Fiscal Court, governing body of the county, of a law barring the importing of professional strikebreakers into the county. This was identical to an ordinance passed by the City of Louisville, about 100 miles north of here.

The strikers also enlisted the support of hundreds of other union members in the area. Many residents of the region belong to unions engaged in building superhighways, reservoirs, and other construction projects within 30 or 40 miles.

More than 1,500 union members and sympathizers marched in the rain as a tribute to Eugene Hampton, who was murdered on the picket line in July. (See September *Patriot*.)

Picket lines are sacred to these people, as shown by the reaction to a report that

Louie Nunn had crossed a line at Russell Springs, Ky., about 75 miles east of here.

Nunn, a former governor and an ardent Nixon man, was running for U.S. senator. He not only crossed an ILGWU picket line, but he congratulated some of the scabs in the struck plant at Russell Springs.

As the *Patriot* went to press, it was learned that another clothing maker, Fairfield-Noble Co. of New York, has leased the plant formerly used by Kellwood Co. "We'll organize them, too," said Barbara Janis, union representative.

Nunn was beaten in the November election, although Nixon won in Kentucky by a big margin.

"It wouldn't take much more to make me turn Democrat," said one of the Kellwood strikers.

She reflected the fact that three fourths of the people in the county are registered Republican. This is a heritage from Civil War days, when most of the residents were with the Union.

For Brownsville lies along the line between North and South. Events here may be a warning to runaway industries from the North as to what to expect when aroused workers and community people get together.



Photo by Carl Braden

Some of the women who said 'no' to Kellwood Company