

FOUR SHOT TO DEATH AT ANTI-KLAN MARCH

Ambush at a North Carolina Rally Starts Gunfight With Leftists

By **TOM STITES**

Two carloads of whites opened fire yesterday on demonstrators opposing the Ku Klux Klan in Greensboro, N.C., killing four persons and wounding eight. The police arrested 12 men they said were associated with the Klan and charged with murder.

"As the marchers were getting ready to move out, two vehicles pulled up, a van and a sedan, and about a dozen men jumped out and commenced firing automatic weapons and shotguns," said Charles Travis of WGHP-TV in nearby High Point, who was reporting on the march.

"The demonstrators started returning the gunfire," he said. "I saw two or three of them pulling handguns. I don't know how many there were. People were scrambling and ducking and diving for cover. It went on for about two minutes. It was continuous shooting."

First Such Killings in Years

The deaths were the first in Klan violence in at least five years, according to Steve Suits of Atlanta, executive director of the Southern Regional Council, a nonprofit organization that follows social and economic trends of the region. In a telephone interview, Mr. Suits called the shootings the most violent civil-rights in-

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cident since the height of the movement in the early 1960's.

Greensboro, where the lunch-counter sit-ins of the civil rights movement began on Feb. 1, 1960, has had a relatively untroubled racial climate in recent years, Walter T. Johnson Jr., a black lawyer who took part in the first sit-ins, said by telephone from Greensboro.

Victims Were Organizers

The dead were identified as Sandy Smith of Piedmont, S.C., and James Waller, William Sampson and Caesar Cauce, all of Greensboro. All were principal organizers for the sponsoring group, the Workers Viewpoint Organization, also known as the Communist Workers Party. Another organizer, Paul Bermanzohn of Durham, N.C., underwent surgery for a gunshot wound to the head and was listed in critical condition.

The protesters included both blacks and whites. Of those killed, the men from Greensboro were white and the Smith woman was black. One other demonstrator was seriously wounded, and two of the 12 persons in custody had suffered slight injuries; according to Capt. Jim Hilliard of the Greensboro police.

At a press conference, the Associated Press reported, Sally Bermanzohn, wife of the wounded protester, charged that the police had known before the incident that the Klan was planning violence — a charge the police denied — and she described the bloody scene.

"I heard the firing start," she was quoted as saying. "I ducked behind a car. I saw the person next to me pull back and he was shot. I think he was dead."

Attempt at Escape

The assailants jumped back into their vehicles after the shooting and tried to speed away, Captain Hilliard said, but officers stopped both vehicles near the scene and arrested the occupants. He said that the van was loaded with weapons. All 12 were charged with four counts of first-degree murder and one count of conspiracy to commit murder.

"We feel very strongly that all 12 are associated with the Klan in some way,"

the captain said, adding that the investigation was continuing and that more arrests were possible. He said that the Federal Bureau of Investigation had entered the case to investigate whether anyone's civil rights had been violated, and that the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation was also aiding the police.

The demonstration was advertised in flyers as a "Death to the Klan" march. A flyer that Workers Viewpoint used to advertise the march taunted Klan members as cowards, and members of the group had made other inflammatory remarks.

"We invite you and your two-bit punks to come out and face the wrath of the people," Mr. Bermanzohn said in a statement last month when plans for the march were announced.

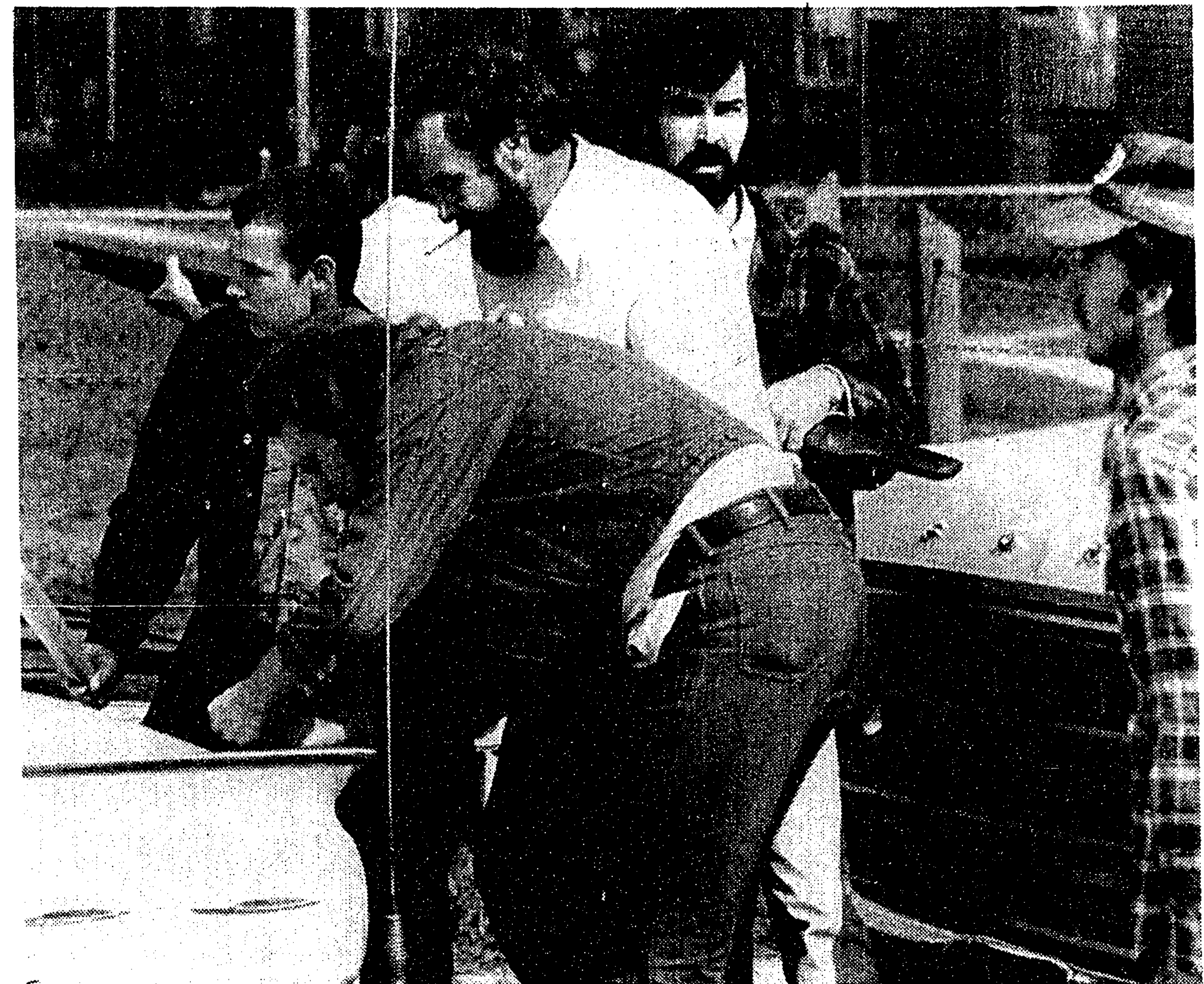
Efforts at Unionization

Workers Viewpoint has been engaged in efforts to unionize textile workers in the state. The group sponsored one other anti-Klan action, in China Grove, a community about 70 miles southwest of Greensboro. That also developed into a confrontation with Klansmen, but it stopped short of violence.

Captain Hilliard said there had been some reports that there would be trouble at the Greensboro march, but that none had been confirmed. He said a strike force of policemen was massed a minute away from the staging area for the march, and was not closer because the department did not want to make a show of force.

The staging area was at the Morning-side Homes public housing project in a heavily black neighborhood on the southeast side of Greensboro, a tobacco and textile center with a population of about 150,000. Captain Hilliard said a fight had broken out before the shooting started about 11:20 A.M. Mr. Travis, the television reporter, said that as the marchers massed, several of them threw sticks and stones at passing cars.

Nelson Johnson, a spokesman for Workers Viewpoint, was arrested on a misdemeanor charge of inciting to riot arising from the disturbance that preceded the shooting, Captain Hilliard said. Willena Cannon, one of the demonstrators, was charged with interfering



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A group of men removing weapons from a car before shootings erupted during a protest march in Greensboro, N.C.

with an officer when Mr. Johnson was being arrested.

The shootings occurred against the backdrop of increasing Klan activity and membership in recent years. The racist organization figured in confrontations with civil rights activists earlier this year in Decatur, Ga., and in other communities in 1978.

Charles Finch, an organizer for Workers Viewpoint, said at a news conference

in Manhattan last night that the group now generally uses the name Communist Workers Party but is not affiliated with the "bankrupt" Communist Party U.S.A. He said the group has been involved in efforts to organize economic and political action by working class people of many races, and had only recently begun anti-Klan efforts. The group's headquarters is at 1 East Broadway in New York.

Mr. Finch, who lives in Durham and

was not present at yesterday's incident, alleged that "it wasn't the Klan that did the attack." He said that "the assassin team was led by the authorities," meaning local, state and Federal police agencies. He said police officers accompanying the protesters had left the staging area for a few minutes, during which time the attack occurred, and cited as support for his allegation the attackers' apparent ability to single out leaders as targets.

Captain Hilliard called the charge "absolutely ridiculous and completely unfounded."

Klansmen Parade in Dallas

DALLAS, Nov. 3 (UPI) — Marching behind a Confederate flag and protected from an angry crowd by 300 riot-equipped policemen and four police helicopters, about 50 white-robed Ku Klux Klan members paraded through Dallas today.

Scuffles broke out and stones and bottles were thrown at several points along the 12-block parade route. An hour later, about 1,500 people staged an anti-Klan parade.