

## IN THE NATION

## GAYS

## Civil rights for gays set back by Miami vote

By Christine R. Riddiough

"Tonight the laws of God and the cultural values of man have been vindicated," said Anita Bryant as voters in Dade County (Miami), Fl., overwhelmingly passed a referendum June 7 repealing gay rights legislation that had been enacted earlier this year by the Dade County Board of Commissioners. The vote (202,319 to 81,569) was the culmination of a six-month campaign by anti-gay forces and paves the way for a national "Save Our Children" campaign.

The controversial legislation would have prohibited discrimination against gay people in employment, housing and public accommodations. Similar laws have been passed in several small communities including Berkeley, Ann Arbor, and Champaign, Ill. Passed initially with little notice, the legislation soon became a target of a referendum campaign.

## Save Our Children.

The anti-gay forces were led by Anita Bryant, a former Miss America runner-up and public spokesperson for Florida citrus products. Her group, Save Our Children (SOC) collected 65,000 more than the 10,000 signatures necessary to force the referendum and began to receive broad media coverage as Bryant toured the nation.

SOC literature charged, among many other things, that the law would lead to gays openly recruiting children to homosexuality. As the campaign heated up even more vitriolic attacks occurred. Bryant called gays "human garbage"; bumper stickers reading "Kill a Queer for Christ" appeared in Miami.

As SOC began to pose a real threat to gay rights not only in Miami but around

the country, gays mobilized to fight back.

Supporters organized fundraising efforts in many cities. Demonstrations were organized to protest Bryant's public appearances (in the Twin Cities Bryant dedicated a fruit market and 1,200 pro-gay demonstrators designated it "National Fruit Day"). In some cities groups promoted a Florida citrus boycott. Experienced political campaigners joined the Dade County Coalition for Human Rights, which directed the fight to save the ordinance.

Bryant's close connections with the right wing and her conservative views on God, country and motherhood were reflected in SOC's campaigning.

Bryant has spoken out against the ERA. "I don't like the fact that many of the proclaimed leaders of the ERA are lesbians," she says. SOC's campaign also parallels right wing anti-ERA efforts such as those of Phyllis Schlafly. Both share an emotionalism and tendency to stereotypes.

The ERA was defeated in Florida during SOC's campaign; some legislators who had been expected to vote for ERA were quoted as saying that SOC propaganda influenced them to vote no.

While Bryant was the most visible spokesperson for SOC, she was not alone. Gov. Reubin Askew of Florida spoke against gay rights as did several Miami newspapers.

Among SOC's most powerful allies were conservative religious groups—Baptists, other fundamentalist Protestants, Roman Catholics and orthodox Jews. SOC and Bryant frequently quoted the Bible in their support and even suggested that the drought in California was God's punishment for passing pro-gay laws there.

The reading of a pastoral letter to Catholic congregations calling for repeal of the legislation a few weeks prior to the election was crucial. The Catholic church has done this before to defeat gay rights legislation and to defeat pro-abortion state legislators.

SOC is only one part of a rising anti-gay backlash around the nation. Passage of gay rights bills in Minnesota, Illinois, New York and elsewhere has been blocked. Courts have upheld the right of employers to fire someone solely because they are gay. The Supreme Court also recently upheld a Virginia law that denied gays the right to privacy and allowed states to enforce sodomy laws only against gays.

This represents the beginnings of a turn away from an earlier trend toward liberalization when local communities passed gay rights laws with relatively little public furor. Dade County is only the first target. Bryant, for instance, has vowed to carry her campaign to such cities as Minneapolis and San Antonio.

## Media boost.

The media boosted the upsurge of anti-gay sentiment. Series in the *Chicago Tribune* and other papers, for instance, on the sexual abuse of children focused almost entirely on the abuse of boys by male homosexuals in spite of statistics showing that the vast majority of child molestation (over 90 percent) consists of attacks by men on girls.

Directing concern with child abuse towards anti-gay attitudes, the series helped lead to hearings at local, state and national levels on child pornography and was immediately picked up by SOC in their Miami campaign.

One other result of the Miami cam-



Anita Bryant in her kitchen: What will she cook up next?

paign was that the gay community was united as never before; support for the Dade County Coalition for Human Rights came from groups and individuals that were diverse geographically and politically.

To Bryant's theme of "Save our children from homosexuality" gays responded that the real threat to children were the lies, distortions and anti-human attitudes and behavior of SOC.

The Dade County Coalition, whose slogan was "A day without human rights is a day without sunshine," saw the fight as linked to other human rights struggles and received some support. A group called Latinos for Human Rights helped the coalition, in spite of harassment, including the fire-bombing of a car owned by the group's leader.

Although the Bryant victory is a setback for gays, activists believe the newly unified movement will do better in future battles. The willingness of gays to come "out of the closet" and actively work for gay rights, even at the risk of harassment and physical violence, indicates growing self-confidence of the movement, and potential to combat the rising backlash.

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## ENERGY

## New department a victory for energy giants

By Judy MacLean  
Staff Writer

Round one of Carter's battle for his energy plan clearly went to the multinational energy corporations last week as the House overwhelmingly (310-20) approved a bill creating a new Department of Energy (DOE). The Senate passed a similar bill in mid-May and a joint committee is now drafting the final bill, which Carter is expected to sign soon.

Seen as a prerequisite for implementing Carter's larger energy plan, the new department centralizes pricing, regulation, distribution, research and development under a new Secretary of Energy, almost certain to be James Schlesinger.

Among the bill's provisions:

- The new Energy department will take on all powers now held by the Federal Power Commission (FPC), the Federal Energy Administration (FEA) and Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA), which will all be abolished as separate agencies. The department will also gather energy powers from a scattering of other federal agencies.

- A "semi-autonomous" regulatory body will set wellhead natural gas prices and rule on matters of interstate electric power, the only energy powers not directly under control of the secretary.

- The new department will have ultimate authority over the Interior department's ability to lease public lands for energy development.

- The new secretary will have authority

to use the armed forces to "carry out his functions."

An amendment introduced by John Conyers (D-Mich.) that would have given the new department the sole authority to import oil was defeated after much industry pressure.

The Carter plan would tie the price of domestic oil to OPEC prices, which are negotiated by the oil companies. Ev Ehrlich of Conyers staff, who worked on the drafted amendment, described how the energy multinationals "use OPEC as a veil to set higher base prices and victimize American consumers."

The OPEC countries, Ehrlich says, want a long term arrangement in which they could trade their mineral resources for technology. But the multinationals now do all they can to restrain development there to keep those countries "hooked" on Western technology.

If the federal government became the sole oil importer, it would have no interest in higher base prices. It would have to "face the fact that we have to rely on foreign sources of oil and begin a new and more equitable economic world order," Ehrlich says.

## Schlesinger's control.

The new department inherits 20,000 employees from the agencies it replaces. A highly placed source says that to ensure his personal control of the new agency Schlesinger is recruiting top administrators from former associates at "think tanks and the

multinationals."

The semi-autonomous regulatory board for natural gas and interstate electricity is a result of an amendment by Rep. John E. Moss (D-Ca.). Claiming the bill vested too much power in a single individual, Moss successfully championed a five-person commission to take over regulatory powers now held by the FPC.

Conyers attempted to introduce an even stronger measure, making regulation of oil and uranium, as well as gas and electricity, the province of a commission totally outside the new DOE. That proposal failed.

"As it stands now," says Ehrlich, "the new commission will be just down the hall from Schlesinger." The commission's decisions, however, will fall under the "sunshine laws," while Schlesinger's can be made behind closed doors.

The new department's influence in federal lands-leasing could yield a windfall for the energy industry. Federal lands have the great bulk of the nation's future energy in the form of coal, offshore oil and uranium.

Theoretically, the government could make its own decisions on how best to exploit these resources and then contract management and operation functions to corporations. But current leasing agreements leave decisions to the multinationals, and their consideration is profit, not conservation or low energy prices for consumers.

In the past land leasing has been the

province of the Interior department, where Secretary Cecil Andrus is considered relatively sympathetic to environmental and consumer concerns for safety and fair prices. Shifting final authority away from Interior (which does retain some immediate authority), to the new Energy department is viewed with apprehension. Schlesinger is considered to be less responsive to environmental concerns and more responsive to the needs of the energy multinationals.

## An energy secret police.

Many observers have also voiced fears that the new department's ability to use the armed forces to "carry out its functions" will lead to widespread abuse. They fear that such police powers might be invoked against those, like Native American groups in the West, unwilling to see their lands destroyed for the needs of the energy companies.

Others fear that the department's police power might easily be used to create "energy secret police." Such a police force could easily interpret its preventive functions broadly, and like the FBI during the anti-war days, infiltrate, spy on and sabotage groups opposing the administration's energy policies.

Ehrlich, for instance, questions whether the new department might be a step on the way to a more authoritarian state. "It's state planning for energy, but planning in a way that pursues the private sector's planning objectives," he says. ■



## URBAN DISORDER

# Police provoke Chicago riot

**By David Moberg**  
CHICAGO—Early in the day the flags were up. They were red, white and blue, but they were the banner of Puerto Rico, not the United States. They were flying across the streets of the Humboldt Park neighborhood on Chicago's near-northwest side. They were stuck in the grilles of cars crawling down Division Street.

Saturday, June 4, was Puerto Rican Day in Chicago, time for a parade of commercially sponsored floats and aspiring politicians down State Street, time as well for the usual picnic afterwards in Humboldt Park. Like nearly every other ethnic group in this city of strong ethnicities, the Puerto Ricans were granted their day of harmless celebration of heritages.

By nightfall the picnic had turned to riot. Angry police were burning the flags and taunting the people who live in the crowded apartments above stores on Division Street, the broad commercial avenue near the park made famous by Studs Terkel's book. Young people from the neighborhood, where a majority of Chicago's estimated 300,000 Puerto Ricans live, were stoning the police and breaking into a few stores—the Fair Share supermarket, White's department store, the currency exchange—and setting fires.

Two young Puerto Rican men were killed, shot in the back—at least one and perhaps both—by the police. Eventually at least 85 people, including 43 policemen, were injured, over 100 arrested in disturbances that were renewed again on a small scale Sunday night. Later in the week police discovered the body of a man burned to death in one of the fires.

Far less serious than the urban riots of the '60s, the incident was mainly a confrontation with police over what most people in the community—even those angry at the gauge—thought was excessive police force.

Thousands of people had gathered in the large park for a hot day of eating, drinking and partying, which had been marked by occasional rowdiness but no serious problems until late in the afternoon. Although accounts given are conflicting and murky, this appears to be what happened:

Late in the afternoon a group of about a dozen members of the Insane Spanish Cobras painted the name of their gang across a green and black flag. ("Insane" is a favored gang name in Chicago, implying someone so unpredictable that sane people will stay clear, as in "Insane FBI Gangsters.") As they paraded their "colors" through the park, they encountered a group of 30 to 40 Latin Kings, according to the Cobras. A fight erupted when the Latin Kings tried to pull down the flag. One Cobra was shot.

According to the Cobras, the fight was cooled out and they left the park.

One witness said that police began arriving in force 10 minutes later—roughly 6 p.m.—and told everyone to leave the park. There were also accounts of police roughly breaking up a game of dice and arresting a man with a beer bottle who said he wasn't leaving. At one point someone threw several bricks at the police, who put on their riot gear and



Resident Rafael Rosado describes police attack on his community.

Jane Melnick

## Witnesses describe police breaking up the pavement and throwing fragments at people and cars.

charged into the crowd, striking people with clubs.

Confusion surrounds the shooting of Julio Osorio, 26, and Rafael Cruz, 25. Police gave two possibly conflicting accounts. At one point they said two officers were threatened by a "kneeling gunman" aiming at them and they opened fire. The other story was that Cruz was shot by Osorio, who then was shot by police. Evidence that both men were shot in the back with .38 caliber bullets, the standard police issue, raises serious questions

about the two official stories.

There were reports that the fighting died down after police were withdrawn, but the police returned and the conflict spread to Division Street, where small groups of young men broke into the stores.

Although in most instances there was only a crowd of 200 to 300 throwing rocks at the police, other people in the neighborhood reportedly cheered them. The police were the main target of the anger, especially after they started sweeps into the park and through the streets, beating and ar-

resting bystanders.

Community leaders accused the police of overreacting.

"We concluded that the incident—although there are different versions as to who triggered the riots—was the responsibility of the police superintendent and Mayor Michael Bilandic for really unnecessary showing of police in the area, which triggered tremendous hostility," Mecca Sorrentini, a member of the Puerto Rican People's Rights Committee, said. "They used excessive force on those doing wrong and then attacked innocent civilians."

There was some speculation that police may have been angered by a small bomb blast set off in the County Building earlier in the day. It was reportedly claimed by the FALM (Armed Forces of National Liberation), a secretive group that advocates bombings as a way to win independence for Puerto Rico. Also, some Puerto Ricans in the neighborhood were angry about police searches and harassment during the previous week, following the shooting of a narcotics agent in the neighborhood.

People in the neighborhood said that police stationed in the area Saturday night and Sunday beat up, insulted and harassed passersby. Mrs. Genoveva Vasquez, who came to Chicago from Puerto Rico 25 years ago, said, "The police brutality was real bad. They were real aggressive, pushing people with clubs. They were very inhuman. They didn't act like people who had any feelings for other people. A young guy was sitting eating food and five or six policemen grabbed his hair and beat his head and his genital parts with their billy clubs."

"The Americans (Anglos) passing in cars, they let go. But anybody who was Puerto Rican they would call names and beat on their car, especially if they had a Puerto Rican flag. They told one young woman she couldn't pass them. 'You Puerto Rican?' they asked. She said, 'Yes.' 'We could smell you a block away, you Puerto Rican bitch,' they said. They weren't protecting. They were provoking."

She and other witnesses said that police broke up the pavement and threw concrete fragments at people and cars, broke windshields, smashed a car into a nearby telephone pole, called people insulting names, hit old people and bystanders, burned Puerto Rican flags while singing the U.S. national anthem and taunted people in the apartment buildings saying, "Chicken, come and fight."

Sunday, after a morning of leisurely picking usable items out of the rubble of the burned stores, a small crowd formed in the park. After a day of tension between the crowd and police, another fight erupted Sunday night. But by Monday the situation had returned to near normal.

Police handling of the Humboldt Park incident contrasts sharply with their response to an incident last summer when a crowd of more than 1,000 whites pelleted police and a group of black and white marchers with bricks, bottles and sticks for almost an hour. In that case the police neither pulled their guns nor charged the crowd.

## Multiple problems underlie Chicago disorder

The two-day riot in Humboldt Park was over and the Insane Spanish Cobras were back to playing basketball in the makeshift dirt court behind the Checker Burger stand. A few broken windows on buildings and cars were the main reminders of the clash between police and some residents a few nights earlier.

Across the street a small group of neighbors were excitedly talking about police abuse and the problems of the community. "More than anything we need better housing," one woman said. "My landlord doesn't want to fix nothing. The city inspectors wouldn't come. I had to move."

Jose Becerra, 28, who learned to be a paramedic in the army after dropping out of high school, said, "The assistant

principal at the high school is not like a principal. He's more like a policeman. That kind of person you're not supposed to have in school."

Carlos Flores, 22, another drop-out now going to community college, griped that "the junkies get more welfare than the old people. Also, I'm trying to learn how to play tennis. The tennis court here has been the same for 15 years—rough cement and the nets aren't fixed."

Rafael Rosado, 19, who left high school in his senior year because "I didn't like how it was run," complained that a bank employment director changed the requirements for the job when Rafael showed up an identified himself as Puerto Rican. "I've applied for lots of jobs. The first thing they do is look at me and

then they say, 'We'll call you tomorrow.'"

But the main problem, Rafael, an articulate young man with a goatee, said, is that "we need someone political to back us up. The first thing we need is an alderman."

The Humboldt Park neighborhood, part of a larger community immediately northwest of Chicago's downtown that is also called West Town, does have an alderman, or actually two of them. Officially their city council representative is Adeline Keane. Unofficially it is her husband, Thomas Keane, for years the second most powerful man in the Daley machine.

Now Keane runs the aldermanic post—referred to by his wife as "the family business"—from federal prison, where he's

serving a five-year term for his conviction on 17 counts of mail fraud and one conspiracy charge.

Although Humboldt Park is now between 40 and 60 percent Puerto Rican, with a few blacks and Mexicans and the balance older Italian, Polish, Ukrainian and other East European families, the Keane machine has taken little notice of them or their needs. Asked once what she intended to do for the Latinos in her district, Adeline Keane responded, "We'll teach them Latin when they get to school."

Chicago's block of Latinos—encompassing Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, Cubans and a sprinkling of immigrants from other South American countries—is gen-

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