

Ultra-left antics leave one dead

RCP road show ends in tragedy

Los Angeles—You will not see any pictures of the Pico-Aliso housing project on Southern California post cards.

Surrounded by freeways on three sides and by the concrete monstrosity that is the L.A. River on another, this downtown community is a self-contained poverty area. Poor people of all nationalities live here, including many Latino undocumented workers. Most residents are on welfare.

It was on a street corner here that Damian Garcia, 30, fell dead in a pool of blood, April 23. He was the victim of a fatal stabbing resulting from a confrontation between the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) and community youths.

Some may well ask, why should communists be attacked, beaten and killed by residents of one of the poorest projects in East Los Angeles? Why should militants who espouse the causes of the oppressed wind up on the wrong side of a young man's knife in an area like this, which has some history of class struggle and should be a base for revolutionary sentiments?

To understand this, one must look at what the RCP has been doing in Pico-Aliso. As part of their road show to build "May Day, 1980," the RCP had been continually besieging the project with impromptu rallies, postering and spray-painting, often hurling abuse at local people as they have done in provocative actions across the U.S.

"Every time they come, the police come," said ten-year-old Herman Rivera.

The ultra-"left" tactics of the RCP are based on their belief that the U.S. working class is too backwards to realize their own oppression and must be hounded and berated or "shocked" into consciousness by an elite band of heroes. The results, from an RCP attack on a West Virginia polling booth to their assault on a ghetto high school cafeteria in D.C., have been disastrous. In city after city, it has been the people, rather than the police, who have led the assault on the RCP.

Growing community sentiment against their bombardier tactics never phased them at Pico-Aliso and culminated in the fatal confronta-



IN THE aftermath of the fatal shooting of RCP member, angry community residents forced RCPers out of Pico-Aliso housing project as the LAPD riot-squad appeared on the scene. (Call photo)

tation. Fed up with their harassment, community youths—some said to be gang members—told them to leave. When Garcia and others, probably believing that they were being true to the revolutionary cause, refused to pay attention to community sentiments, the situation turned into open fighting and finally Garcia's death.

Also stabbed and wounded was Hayden Fisher, 31. Both Garcia and Fisher were members of the three-man, Texas Revolutionary May Day Brigade that raised the red flag at the Alamo in San Antonio recently.

The RCP held a hasty press conference the next morning on a nearby street corner, where they berated reporters, blamed the government for the killings and called the youths the "bootlickers of the ruling class."

Then the RCP returned later in the afternoon to make a desperate

plea of support from the community. What they found were a lot of doors slammed shut, an even more militant and angry contingent of community youths and about 65 members of the infamous LAPD riot squad. When the situation finally appeared hopeless, the RCP made a hasty retreat and drove off.

Most people interviewed by *The Call* were shocked at the killing. They hate gang violence and are concerned for their own safety and look on the RCP as disrupters.

"(The RCP) got some sympathy after the stabbing, but why did they return?" asked one Black youth.

"They just like to make noise," asserted a woman.

Still another Afro-American mother of two commented, "They shouldn't come in here. There's too much killing."

Liz Garcia, 17, said the RCP frequented her high school nearby.

"They would talk about the Alamo, world war and the stealing of Mexican land. They played on our Chicano pride. But there must be another way."

The RCP claims it is the sole adherent to the ideology of China's Mao Zedong, but the Pico-Aliso incident shows how this paramilitaristic band has little in common with Mao, who constantly urged his comrades to integrate with the poor and serve their interests.

In contrast, not one resident recalls the RCP linking their ideas to the demands of the community. They were known in the project only as the "Red Flag people."

Many people who knew Garcia personally felt that as an individual he was deeply committed to the working class struggle. But his life and death say as much about RCP's phony leftism as about his personal courage and commitment.