"HAVERFORD 4" WIN IN COURT (continued from page 1)

On March 31, 1980, nearly a year after the incident, Bob, Diane and Lenny appeared in Delaware County Court for the appeal; Lynn Sereda, who by that time had moved out of state, was not present, although her case was presented in absentia. Haverford Director John Fong and two of the arresting officers testified against the Alliance. The prosecution complained that the defendants had been "soliciting" on "hospital" grounds, which is not permissible. ALMP attorney David Ferleger reminded them that the arrests had been for trespassing, not for soliciting.

When the proceedings broke for lunch, a march and rally in support of the defendants was held in downtown Media by about 25 members and supporters of the Alliance. The demonstrators carried signs which proclaimed that "Forced drugging is torture" and "Haverford inmates support ALMP" as speakers addressed the issues at hand. Lenny Lapon spoke about an inmate who had been tied to a bed for several days at Haverford and discussed other "horrible atrocities" he witnessed while working there as a "patients'" rights advocate. Former Haverford inmate Bob Harris told horror stories about forced drugging at Haverford. Jenny Collins spoke about the social and political causes of "mental illness," explaining that "patients" are usually women, minorities, and poor people. David Oaks, a member of Mental Patients' Liberation Front in Boston, discussed the psychiatric inmates' liberation movement in general. Speaker Bob Sanders urged the audience to boycott products of the SmithKline Corporation, a firm which reaps outrageous profits from the sale of Thorazine and other dangerous drugs.

The demonstration, which took place in spite of the cold, rainy weather, was concluded with shouts of "1-2-3-4--We won't take your drugs no more! 5-6-7-8--Smash the therapeutic state!" Also attending the trial and rally were reporters from the Bulletin, Inquirer, Delaware County Daily Times, Community, channels 3 and 10, and WUHY radio.

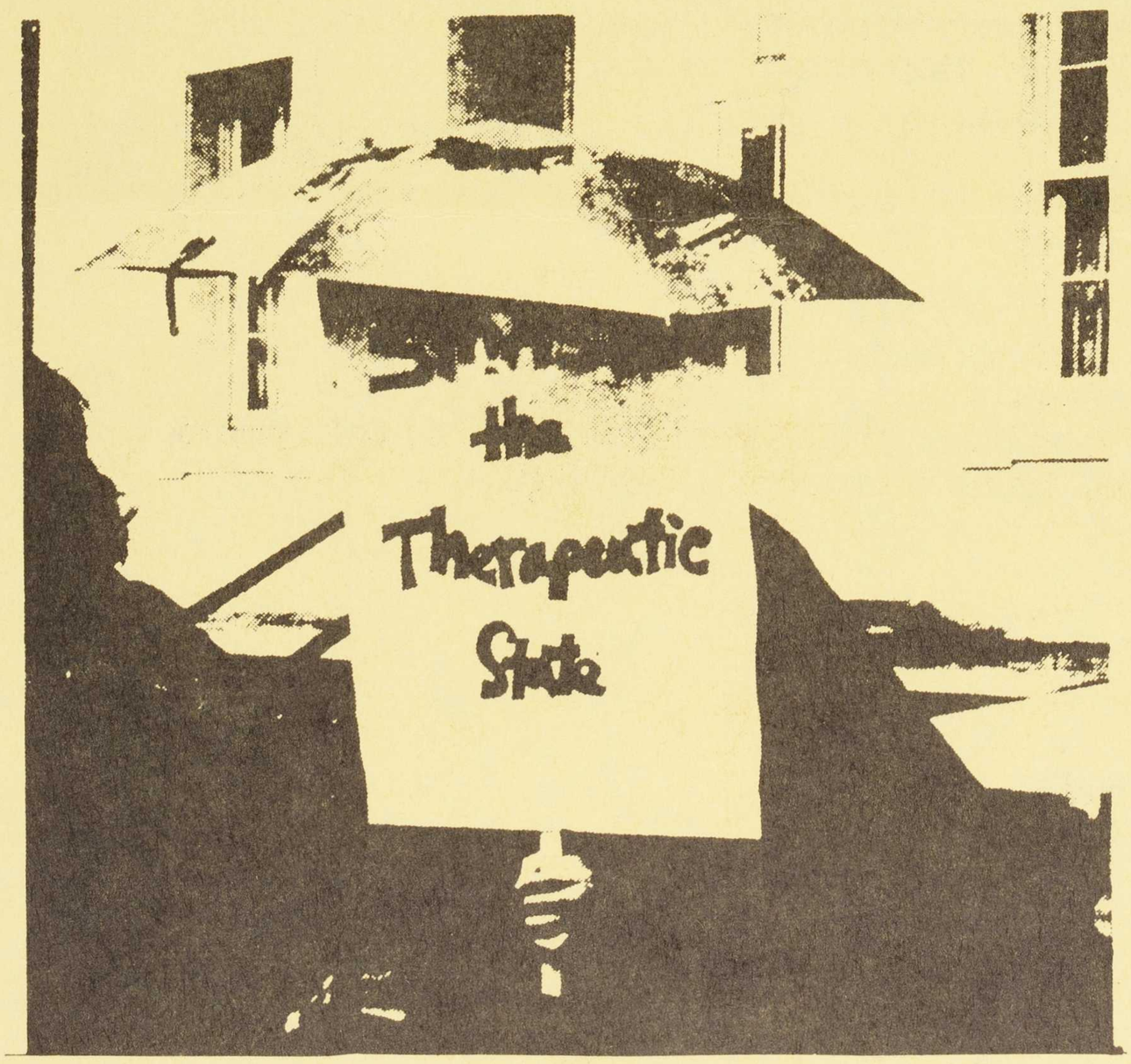
When the trial reconvened, the prosecution presented its closing remarks, claiming that the "trespassers" deserved their convictions since they committed the "crime" after being adequately warned by "No Trespassing" signs as well as by officer Mills with his imaginary line.

In response to the charges, defense attorney Ferleger noted that several local reporters had crossed the arbitrary line while covering the incident and that none of them had been arrested. He argued that ALMP's visit to Haverford was not inspired by criminal intentions; the defendants were simply exercising rights granted by a 1975 consent decree between the Mental Patients Civil Liberties Project and the Pa. Dept. of Public Welfare, which states that "patients have the right to meet with representatives of groups interested in the civil liberties of patients." Ferleger concluded with a motion that the charges be dropped.

Judge DeFuria ended the trial by dismissing the trespassing charges, noting that Haverford State grounds are public property which "is owned by you and me, not just Dr. Fong." The decision resulted in thunderous applause from the 40 or so spectators in the courtroom who had come to support the Alliance.

The Alliance would like to thank everyone who came to Media on March 31 to show their support for us in the courtroom and in the streets of Media.

--Brian Linder



"SMASH THE THERAPEUTIC STATE":

Unidentified ALMP supporter makes his point in the rain.

(Photo by Walt Chernokal, Delaware Co. Daily Times)

FOR KAREN

Like the wildflowers
Whose brilliant blues
Evaporate when guillotined--
The lithe young girls languish
On psychiatric couches
And day by day
Their colors fade.

--Sheila Brennan-Willoughby