



REVOLUTIONARY WORKER

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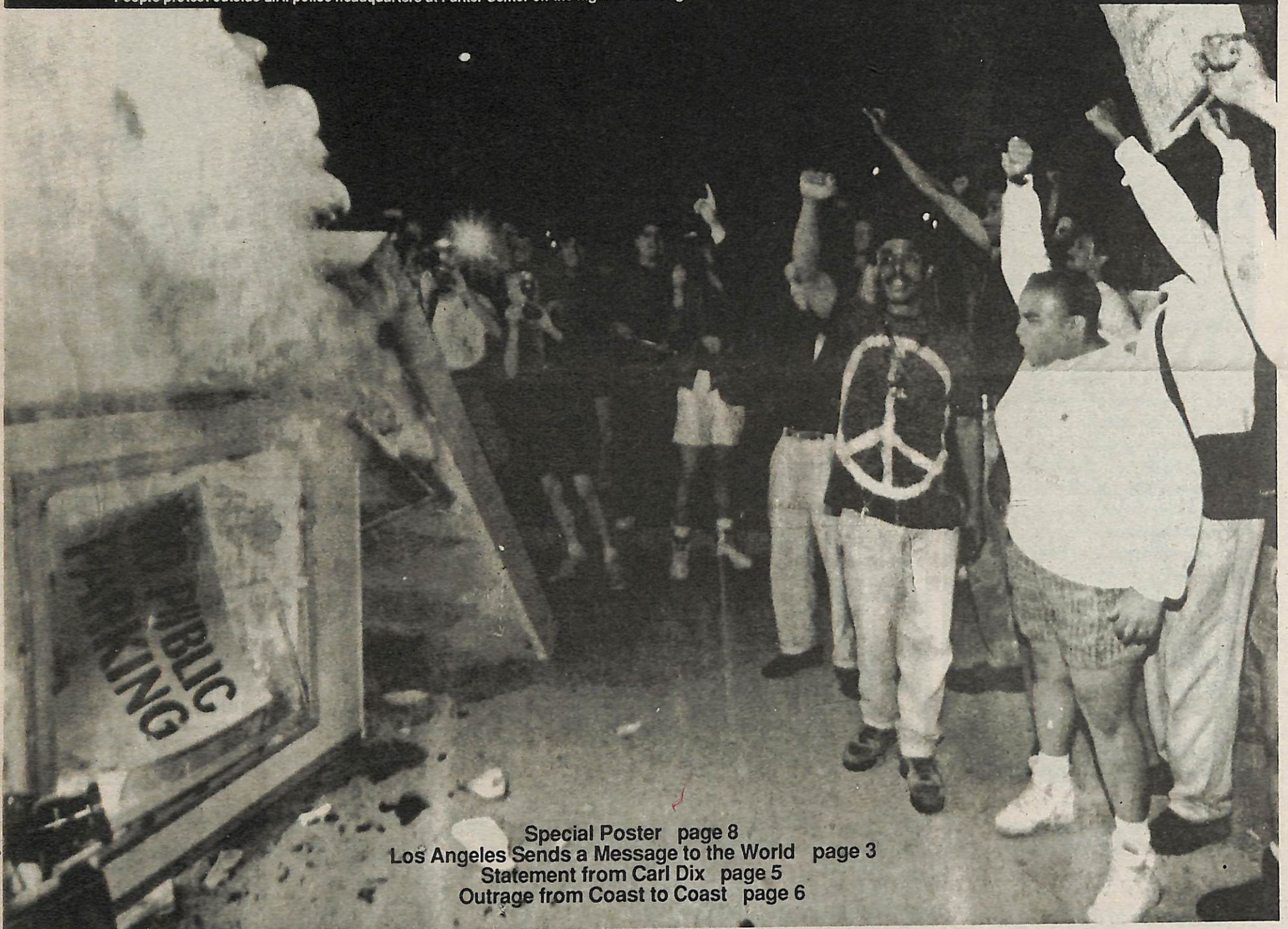
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Los Angeles

It's Right to Rebel

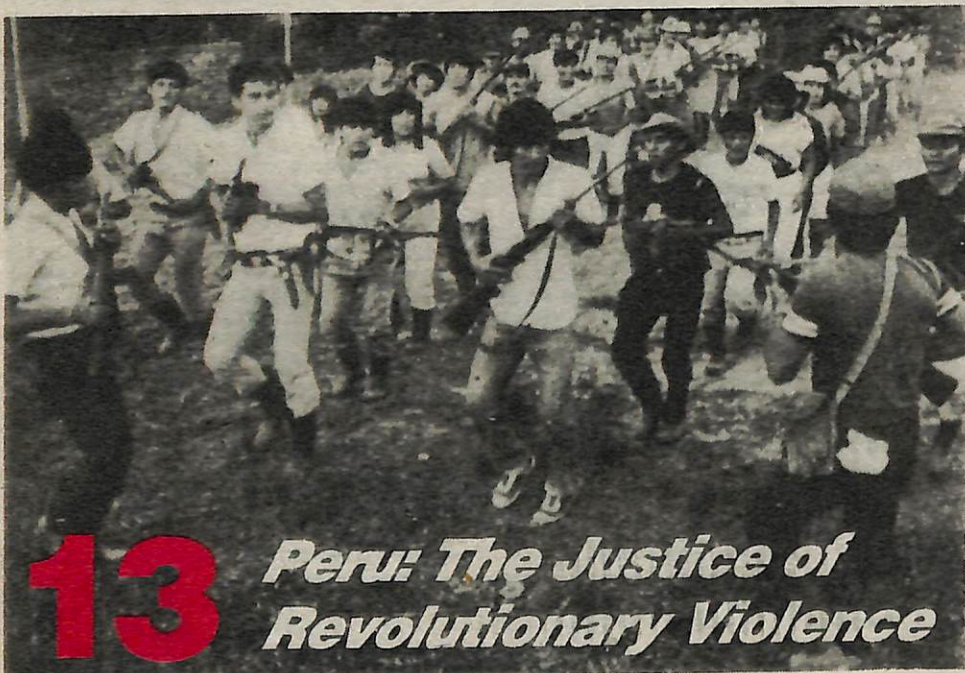
The People's Verdict on Rodney King Trial

People protest outside L.A. police headquarters at Parker Center on the night of the King verdict.



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Photo: Press-Telegram/Juanito Holarcoz



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Victory in Buffalo: A New Beginning

Three Main Points

by Bob Avakian
Chairman of the RCP, USA

What do we in the Revolutionary Communist Party want people to learn from all that is exposed and revealed in this newspaper? Mainly, three things:

1) The whole system we now live under is based on exploitation—here and all over the world. It is completely worthless and no basic change for the better can come about until this system is overthrown.

2) Many different groups will protest and rebel against things this system does, and these protests and rebellions should be supported and strengthened. Yet it is only those with nothing to lose but their chains who can be the backbone of a struggle to actually overthrow this system and create a new system that will put an end to exploitation and help pave the way to a whole new world.

3) Such a revolutionary struggle is possible. There is a political Party that can lead such a struggle, a political Party that speaks and acts for those with nothing to lose but their chains: The Revolutionary Communist Party, USA.

This Party has the vision, the program, the leadership, and the organizational principles to unite those who must be united and enable them to do what must be done. There is a challenge for all those who would like to see such a revolution, those with a burning desire to see a drastic change for the better, all those who dare to dream and to act to bring about a completely new and better world: Support this Party, join this Party, spread its message and its organized strength, and prepare the ground for a revolutionary rising that has a solid basis and a real chance of winning.

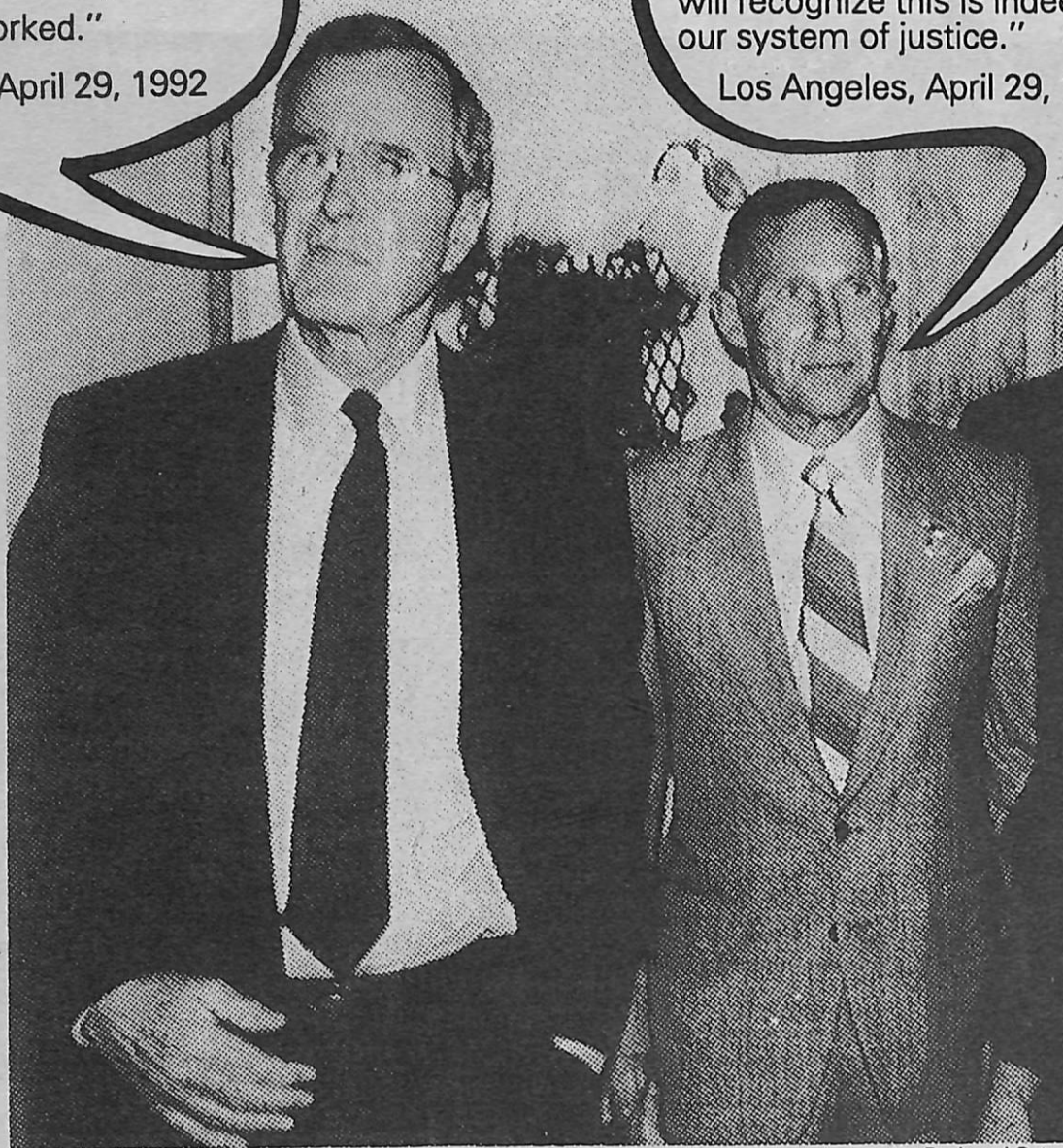
The System Speaks

Bush:
"The court system has worked."

April 29, 1992

Gates:
"I hope the people of this city will recognize this is indeed our system of justice."

Los Angeles, April 29, 1992



Bush and Gates.

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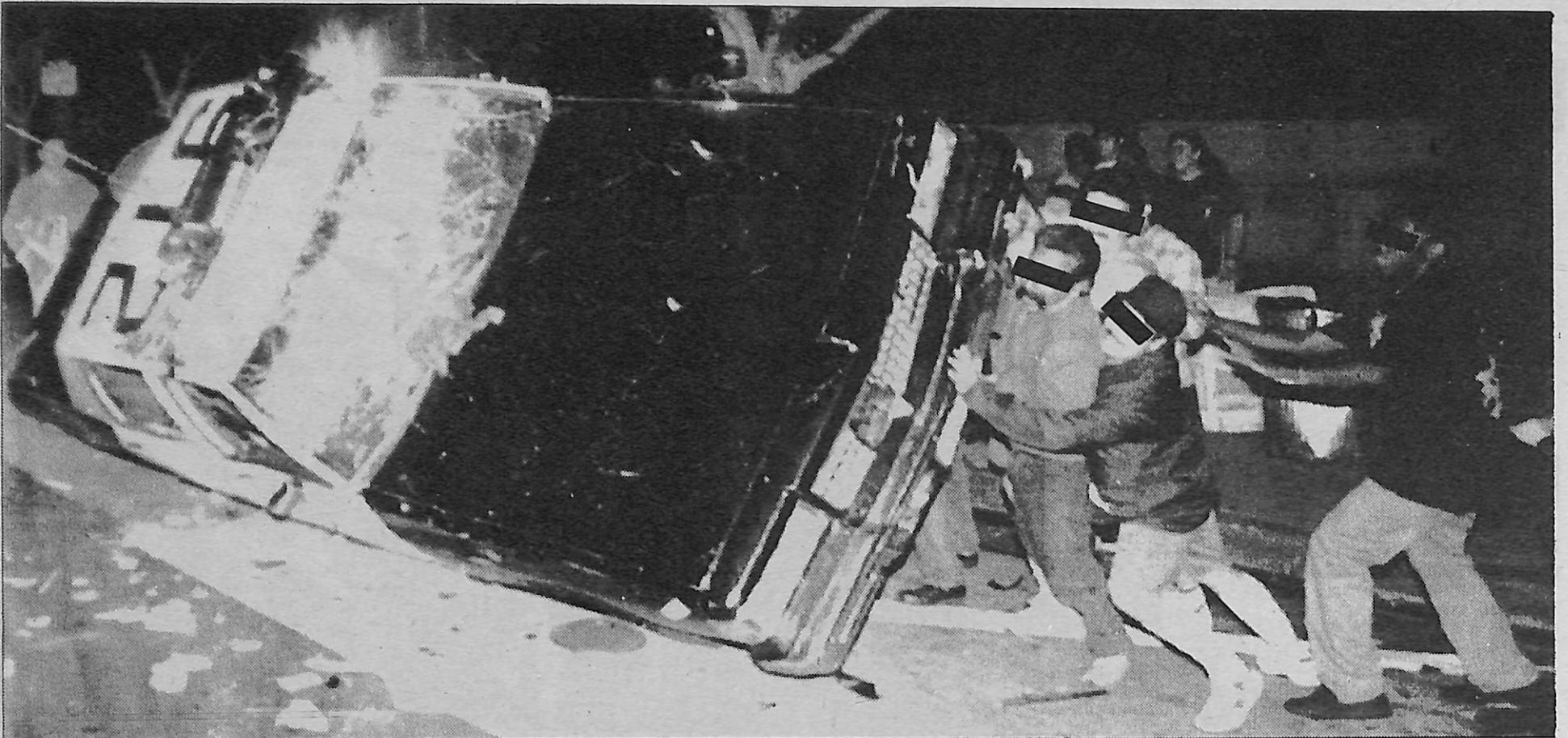


Photo: London Times

Los Angeles, April 30.

Los Angeles Sends a Message to the World

Occupied Los Angeles, Sunday May 3—As the *RW* goes to press, the U.S. government has moved thousands of armed forces into the Los Angeles area. National Guard troops—who took part in the 1989 Christmas invasion of Panama—are on the streets with live ammunition. As they took up their positions, one National Guard joked, “Welcome to Beirut, West.” Thousands more Federal troops—who invaded the Persian Gulf—have entered the city. As of Saturday afternoon, the Guard was marching, in massive numbers, down the streets of the oppressed communities like South Central and Pico Union and occupying Koreatown in force. Under cover from the National Guard, the LAPD began to take back control of the streets with armed force. By Sunday more than 9,000 people had been arrested. The media has reported more than 40 people dead, but they are covering up how they died. In the coming days and weeks it will surely come to light that many were shot by police. The number of police killings acknowledged by the press has doubled in the last 24 hours, but we have not yet seen the full restoration of the old order and the cowardly revenge the LAPD is certain to attempt after their humiliating retreat. Here is an initial report on the high tide of rebellion that occurred for days over a vast area and involved millions of people:

Following the acquittal of the police who beat Rodney King, the tension that has been building during the past year—the anger at police murder, brutality, racism, and the desperate conditions of life for the masses of people—exploded over Los Angeles, throwing sparks across the U.S. The results have been spectacular.

The macho thugs of the Los Angeles Pig Department ran squealing for cover, their “secret million-dollar plans” for dealing with “repercussions in the inner-city” swept away by the fury of initial outbreaks. People reveled in a brief taste of freedom and felt their power in a way that has not been seen within the U.S. for two decades. In the forefront of these actions have been proletarians and those at the bottom of society, of all nationalities, with some middle-class people and students not far behind. The powers-that-be have been shaken to their highest level, and have moved to restore their murderous order with armed might—the bottom line of their system of organized greed.

At 1:09 p.m., Wednesday April 29, local radio and TV stations announced that verdicts had been reached in the Rodney King beating trial in Simi Valley, the nearly all-white town in Ventura County to which the trial was moved. By the time the verdicts were read at 3:00 p.m., 500 had gathered at the courthouse and dozens stood in front of Parker Center, the LAPD headquarters in

the Civic Center, just north of Downtown L.A. In Simi Valley, as the police left the courthouse after the acquittals, people shouted “pig,” “racist,” and “guilty, guilt.” A mainly-white crowd of over 100 tried to get their hands on Stacey Koon, the sergeant who supervised the beating, and Lawrence Powell, the pig who delivered most of the blows. John Singleton, the director of *Boyz n the Hood*, who drove to Simi Valley for the verdicts, said “They don’t respect us and we’re not going to respect them. We have to create our own system and we’re not going to follow their rules any more.”

Meanwhile in Los Angeles, by 5:00 over 600 had blocked traffic at Parker Center—the scene of many protests last Spring following the King Beating. This crowd included white, Chicano and Black youth (many wearing Malcolm X and Africa tee shirts), revolutionaries, activists from ACT UP, police-reform-through-elections forces, college students and artists. By this time, an overwhelmingly Black crowd had gathered at Normandie and Florence in South Central L.A., stopping traffic and starting fires.

By 7:30, rebellion had spread to many areas of South Central. Cars drove through the area with hand-lettered signs reading “No justice, no peace,” “By any means necessary,” and “Rodney King.” As it became clear that the police were not going to enter the area, larger targets were attacked. People began to take food, clothing and

other necessities of life from supermarkets and other stores. Empty shoe boxes and discarded worn-out tennis shoes were piled in front of chain shoe stores. By sunset, the first of many huge columns of smoke rose in the sky as some of these huge structures went up in flames.

Targeting the Enemy

At Parker Center, the crowd grew to over 1,000. Forces from various reform social movements tried to contain the rebellious spirit of the crowd by organizing a picket line and chanting “Gates Must Go.” But as one homeless man told the *RW*, “It was time to go beyond that.” People debated what to do with their anger as the crowd confronted the pigs at the front doors. Some said, “Take the streets,” but a youth replied, “We’re in front of Parker Center! We’re gonna take Parker Center where we are right now.” Rocks, dirt clods, lighting fixtures ripped from the ground and other objects flew against doors and windows. The U.S. flag was taken down, torn to pieces and burned as people chanted “The flag, the flag, the flag is on fire. We don’t need no water, let the motherfucker burn!” A parking lot kiosk was turned over and the youth danced a joyous war dance on it before it caught fire.

Once the police had inched their way to the street, the crowd broke away to target other buildings in the Civic Center. Traffic control sawhorses flew through the windows of the *L.A. Times* building. City Hall, the L.A. County Hall of Administration, the Federal Courthouse and INS building were dealt with. As the crowd walked past the Criminal Courts building a Black man shouted, “Get this motherfucker! This is where they railroad the brothers.” The windows and doors received the fury of the people. More U.S. flags were seized and went up in flames. Small groups continued to march around the area until 1:00 a.m.

A meeting was held at the First AME church, which was called to protest of the verdicts but was also intended to serve as a forum and “command post” for Black preachers and an assortment of Black loyal opposition politicians to influence events. The officials tried to keep out some people who showed up with the RCP’s leaflet on

Rodney King but when others saw the leaflet, they helped sneak in both leaflets and leafletters. A thousand copies were snatched up in minutes. Far from being a “cool it” command post, First AME became a place of sharp struggle, as carloads of youth cruised by taunting the politicians (and trashing the car of a City Councilperson). While the major Black public figures like Jesse Jackson, Arsenio Hall and L.A. Mayor Tom Bradley faithfully condemned the rebellion (with a little militant-sounding rhetoric), some less prominent Black establishment types could not bring themselves to urge calm and work within the system. Many of those inside First AME tried to speak out in favor of the masses in the street and protested angrily when they were censored from doing so.

In the San Fernando Valley area of Pacoima, one of the furthest points in northwest L.A., hundreds demonstrated in front of the Foothill Division of the LAPD, home of the pigs who beat Rodney King.

In the south Central housing project of Nickerson Gardens, an area known for its high political level since the days of the Black Panther Party, two people were shot to death by the pigs in what the police called “a gun fight.” There were three others killed in Compton and Inglewood, cities that border south Central.

Windows were broken in Westwood, a shopping area near the UCLA campus, and demonstrators gathered at the Westwood Federal Building and blocked traffic on Wilshire Boulevard. Westwood was the scene of a youth rebellion immediately after the beating of Rodney King.

Pico-Union—a Latino barrio that has been the scene of fierce struggle against the LAPD’s police state program and a strong area for revolutionary politics—erupted in advanced political action. This neighborhood—where police have tried to create a walled-off ghetto with barricades around the area—became a center of revolutionary action and upsurge as people targeted the “old authority.” Homeless people pushed their shopping carts in the street, defying the police. “Venceremos” (we will win), “Revolución Sí,” “Fuck the Police” and

Continued on page 4

Los Angeles Sends a Message to the World

Continued from page 3

"Fuck LAPD" were seen on the walls. Dumpsters and garbage cans were set on fire in the street. Police barricades—set up around the neighborhood as part of the so-called "war on drugs"—came under attack. At the corner of 11th and Alvarado, the corner nearest the former INS concentration camp which was the target of determined protest in 1990, a car was rammed into the police barricade and set on fire.

Breaking Thru the Lies and Confusion

Local TV stations offering non-stop



People confront cops in South Central L.A., April 30.

Photo: Don Emmert/Agence France-Presse

coverage of the rebellions repeatedly showed a video tape of the beating of a white truck driver at the Normandie-Florence outbreak. They compared it to the beating of Rodney King, saying the Black youth were the same as the cops. Seizing on the beating incidents, the *LA Times* wrote that the rebellion marked the end of hope of racial harmony, but in fact the random beating of whites occurred only in the first hours of the rebellion. What stood out in all reports was the multinational character of the crowds. And one Black homeless man told the *RW* that he hoped the sense of community and unity among the rebellious masses would last beyond the rebellion.

Throughout the rebellion people with a clear anti-system orientation struggled over which targets to hit and tried to get the message across to the media that this rebellion was aimed at the system. In one scene as TV cameras rolled, an older woman stood in front of a group of youth and pointed to the police. "Y'all should stop killing each other," she said, "and start killing THESE motherfuckers!"

Standing across the street from a burned out grocery store, a reporter asked a guy from the neighborhood how he felt about not being able to shop at this store. The man told him, "The flame and steam coming from that building is no worse than the heat and rage coming from my heart. And you don't have to like it and you don't have to understand it." A Korean woman told TV reporters that she was sorry her shop got burned but she understood how people felt. She said that the people in the rebellion were *her* people too and she was just going to rebuild her shop.

White protesters tried to point out to the media that they were united with the Black people. Two fourteen-year-old women from a Catholic school demanded to speak to the TV cameras at Parker Center to say that a lot of white people hate racism and to condemn the genocide against Black people and other oppressed peoples. At a militant demonstration on Fairfax Ave, traditionally a Jewish community shopping area, white members of Queer Nation said that police brutality affects everyone, but it's worse for Black people, and that's why they were out.

The Rebellion Spreads

The Santa Monica Freeway, at about 20th St., divides the ghettos and barrios of South Central, Crenshaw and Baldwin Hills from the business districts of Downtown and Mid-Wilshire. By Wednesday night huge columns of smoke rose on the southern side of the Santa Monica. And as Wednesday night turned into Thursday morning, it became clear that the rebellion would not be "contained" as the Watts Insurrection was. Bus service, which is the only form of transportation for poor people, was canceled. Schools and offices were closed in South Central. Many stores were closed and barricaded, while business ground to a halt in other stores as the owners stood outside and discussed the rebellion.

Thursday was one long festival of the oppressed. One revolutionary commented that it was "the day of smiles,"—there was a light in people's eyes and a smile of their face. People were proud that they had delivered a message to the world. One Black man told the *RW*: "The way this system is, we have to work harder because of our race. A lot of people didn't believe us, they thought we were just going to talk and talk. It caught them by surprise."

In many areas, like South Central, Mid-Wilshire and Pico-Union, the police were not to be seen. In others, like Expo Park, near the University of Southern California, they made quick arrests of twenty to thirty people and got away as crowds jeered and pelted them with rocks.

On a normal day in Los Angeles the youth talk about not riding around "four deep," meaning that if you have more than a couple of people in the car, the pigs will sweat you. But Thursday, people were 4 and 5 deep, cruising the whole city. There was "unauthorized shopping" in many areas of the city, with mothers and fathers getting clothes for the kids. The city was blanketed with smoke from hundreds of fires. This was not "mindless looting." Banks were trashed as well as supermarkets. "Rodney King" and "Fuck the Police" appeared on many walls. Pico-Union was a Zona del Pueblo, a liberated zone. People told the *RW* that the best thing was having no cops around, far better than a new coffee maker or some bottles of cologne.

In addition to the five people killed by police, the authorities attribute other deaths to "rioting," creating the impression that they were killed by other masses. These include two people who died in traffic accidents. While the circumstances of all these deaths are unclear, even the authorities have mentioned the drop in gang-related killings. There were numerous reports to the *RW* and in the bourgeois press of gangs that had been at war getting together during the rebellion—clearly not the solution to "gang violence" that the powers wanted.

Isolated press reports have attributed the majority of the killings to the police but these reports have been quickly suppressed and the media is putting out the line that masses are killing masses. Even Black Congresswoman Maxine Waters disputed this theory, saying that many youth gangs had been under a peace treaty for weeks prior to the rebellions.

By Thursday night, rebellion had been reported in Long Beach, Hawthorne, Pomona, San Bernardino, El Monte, Pasadena, South Pasadena, San Fernando, Torrance and Sepulveda. As the scope of the rebellion increased, so did the mobilization of pigs. A 7 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew was imposed on the entire city. The first of 4000 National Guard troops appeared on the streets. These were not "weekend warriors," but the 7th light infantry, which participated in the Panama invasion. By Friday morning 1000 federal pigs were on the streets from the INS (Tac squad pigs that were used to protect the INS concentration camp in Pico Union), Federal Marshals (riot pigs that were unleashed against anti-war demonstrators in 1991), and the Bureau of Prisons. The U.S. Marines were ordered to stand by outside the city after George Bush declared he would use whatever force was necessary to put down the rebellion.

As we go to press, it is unclear what will happen when the police and troops try to reimpose the old order. People have had a taste of freedom, have spent a day or two walking around with their heads up. That's hard to stamp out. One man told a reporter from National Public Radio: "These military and National Guard around here, they don't scare us. And they're not going to stop us. We knew what we had to do and we knew that we had a couple days to do it. This is serious business here... maybe it will start up again."

May Day in Occupied L.A.

April 29, the day of the Rodney King verdict: That night RCP May Day Manifestos went up on walls throughout the city next to slogans that had been spraypainted by the masses, like "Fuck the Police." The next day it was taken to different areas where people were rebelling against the verdict. A call went out for people to come to Seventh and Alvarado on Friday to get more Manifestos to distribute.

Friday afternoon the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade took the Manifesto to Pico Union with a huge red flag. A corner, that has been the scene of sharp struggle against LAPD barricades in recent years, was decorated with Manifestos and slogans from revolutionaries and from the masses like: "Viva el 1º de Mayo. La revolución es la solución. Fuck LAPD. Fuck Gates." When cops tried to surround RCYB members, people backed the pigs down an alley-way and they were forced to split.

Thursday and Friday afternoon, revolutionaries united with the masses to take out the Manifesto. At one point people ran into some Black people who were using the Manifesto to try and make a connection with immigrants in the area. Masses had written slogans on the walls like "La revolución es la solución." Some of the people who took up the Manifesto included youth who had fought the U.S. in Central America. One of them commented, "This is why they're afraid of having us here." A shopowner who had been burned out and was boarding up his store united with the revolutionaries' agitation about the need for the people's anger to be focused on the system and invited the revolutionaries to

put Manifestos all along the boards that were covering his shop.

Friday afternoon huge banners decorated the corner of Damián García Park. The largest one said, "Viva el 1º de Mayo Día Internacional del Proletariado. Festival de los oprimidos." An immigrant came by with two large cardboard skeletons and said, "This is what the pigs do to my people." He hung the skeletons up on either side of the banner. Other people came by and took stacks of leaflets and Manifestos. Some pigs came and ripped down two of the banners but they were confronted by a crowd of people who put the banners back up.

At 6 p.m. the RCYB marched through the barricaded zone in Pico Union carrying red flags and RCP flags chanting, "No más puercos, no más arrestos. Rodney King no más. Disciplina. Adelante al 1º de Mayo" and "Zona del pueblo no zona de la chota." Some 150 people stood on four corners during a rally and people shouted, "Fuera la represión" and "La pinche placa vayase a la mierda." Later the pigs moved in to arrest some masses half a block from the rally. Fifty people from the neighborhood together with the Youth Brigade ran to the location. Some of the people who had been arrested got away and the pigs backed up and called for reinforcements as bottles shattered around them. By 7:30 p.m. 30 pigs had arrived and riot-clad pigs lined up on one side of the intersection. Four RCYBers stood opposite them raising huge red flags. The police chased the RCYBers into the barricaded zone and six youth were arrested. □

**Statement on the Rodney King Verdict from Carl Dix,
National Spokesperson of the Revolutionary Communist Party**

**The System's Verdict –
Police Brutality Is No Crime.**

**The People's Verdict –
It's Right to Rebel!**



Carl Dix.

This racist system delivered its statement this week.

The system cut loose the cops who brutally beat Rodney King, even when the whole world has seen the tape of their crime. The system is saying straight up that a pig beating the hell out of a Black man—or any oppressed person—is no crime. The whole trial was a set-up to deliver that message from the start. That's why they moved it to a lily-white neighborhood. That's why they put two ex-cops and two relatives of cops on the jury. And the prosecution's case agreed with the cops that Rodney King was a "monster" who needed to be beaten. They only disagreed about how many times they should have hit him. But this whole trial and verdict wasn't just about Rodney King, the individual. This was a billy club to the head of the oppressed and exploited people—everywhere.

But the people are delivering their own message. It was delivered at LAPD headquarters—where youth of all nationalities stormed Parker Center and the Hall of Injustice among other places and torched American flags and police buildings. It was delivered outside the courthouse in lily-white Simi Valley where Black, Latino and white youth joined together to go after the 4 cops as they left the courthouse. It's being delivered throughout South Central L.A. and all over the city. It's a message that the people are not going to stand for this abuse anymore. And that's the stand that they got to take.

The representatives of the system condemn violence and looting. But how can they talk about such things? This system is based on robbery and violence all over the world.

Those the media has dubbed "responsible leaders" are heard everywhere telling the people to chill out. They're saying we should "put the Rodney King beating behind us." They tell the people to "channel your anger into something constructive"—like voting to change the police department or waiting for the new Black police chief, Willie Williams. **THIS IS A CLASS SOCIETY.** The big capitalists who rule over this system are afraid of those they exploit and oppress. That's why the police—the rulers' first line of defense—are trained to treat whole sections of the population as the enemy.

And a Black police chief won't change any of this. In fact, both Willie Williams and the so-called "reforms" they are promoting are designed to tighten up and increase the brutality and repression of the police department against the Rodney Kings of L.A. Their hyped-up plan for "community-based policing" means more concentration-camp neighborhoods behind barricades and a snitch network to help the cops brutalize the people on the bottom even more.

A lot of people in the streets of L.A. haven't bought their hype and that's better than good. This outrage has to be fought. And more, while we're battling them back,

in rebellions like these, we got to make this part of getting ready for The Time—and it could come soon—to wage revolutionary war.

In order to get ready for the time, as the May First Manifesto says, "You have to lead the people to fight back, you have to move masses of people to battle the system in a way that is guided by revolutionary ideology and serves revolutionary aims; and through all this you have to build up the revolutionary consciousness and organization of the masses, with the Maoist vanguard Party at the very core, and prepare the revolutionary people to wage the people's war when the conditions for that are ripe."

That's the message we're uniting with the people to deliver. And it's especially strong on May First, the revolutionary holiday of the proletariat—the class of people of every nationality that can and will free itself by freeing all humanity. People need to get organized to act together with the Party and get its manifesto up everywhere so that the people can see it and the enemy will fear it.

**No More Racist Police Brutality!
Revolution Is the
Hope of the Hopeless!
It's Right to Rebel!
The SYSTEM is Guilty!
The PEOPLE Will Bury the System!**

**To the National
Guard and
Federal Troops
Sent to LA:**

**You came back
from the Gulf War
to the video of
Rodney King.**

**Now they send
you to enforce the
verdict!**

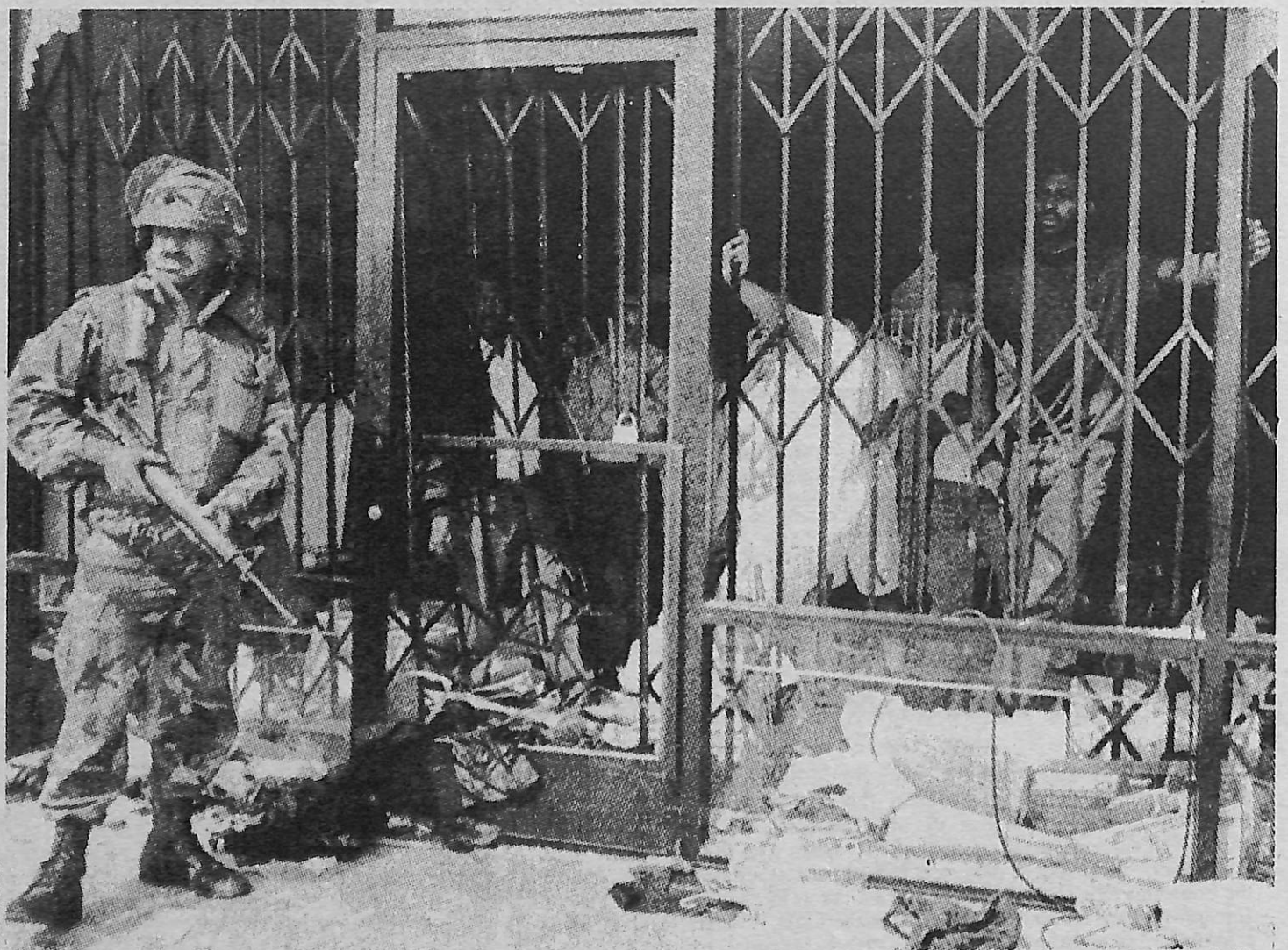
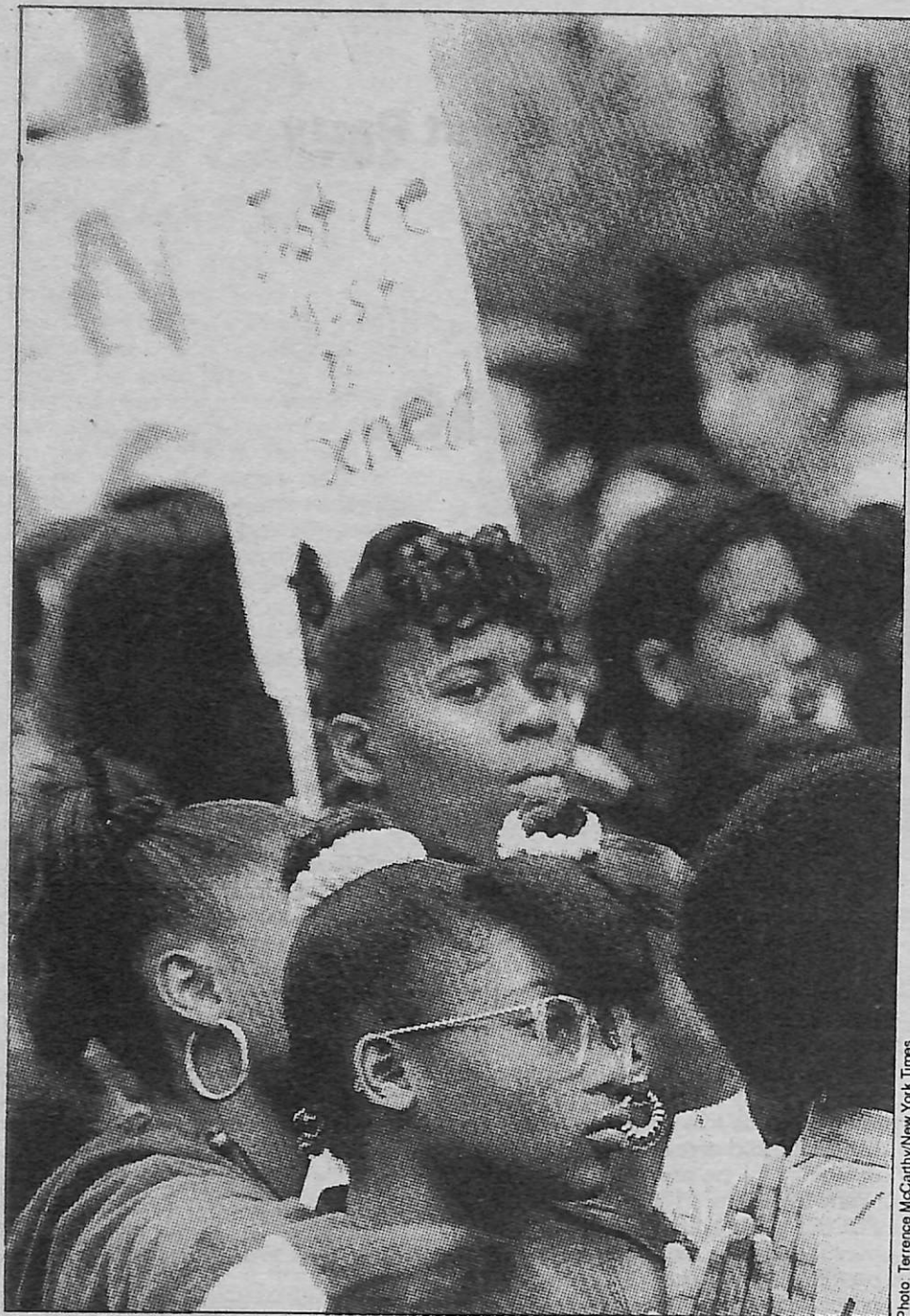


Photo: Reuters

National Guardsman with people he arrested during rebellion.



April 30—Berkeley High School students demonstrate against Rodney King verdict at police headquarters.

Photo: Terrence McCarthy/New York Times

Outrage from Coast to Coast

The shameful verdict in the Rodney King trial touched off angry explosions all across the USA. In cities and towns from coast to coast, people rebelled, protested and clashed with the forces of the powers that be. Not since the storms of the '60s has this country been shaken to its foundations in this way. And in the middle of this, revolutionaries and basic people in many cities celebrated May Day, and the RCP's May Day Manifesto was distributed widely. The spirit of the the holiday of the international proletariat merged with the rebellion in L.A. and other cities. As the slogan raised by the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade in Cleveland said, "May First, Rage On L.A., Revolution Is the Hope of the Hopeless." Check out next week's *RW* for reports on May Day.

This is a roundup of the the righteous response to the King verdict, based on news we have received as of press time. The information comes from *RW* reporters and correspondents, news accounts and wire service reports:

San Francisco Bay Area

Wednesday, April 29: A few hours after the King verdict went out over the airwaves, there were protests and rallies in San Francisco, Berkeley and at Stanford University. After midnight, 200 San Jose State University students rallied at the campus and took off for the downtown area where store windows were smashed. At the University of California campus in Santa Cruz, a midnight protest of 400 students surged through the campus. Graffiti, broken street lights and a dumpster fire were left behind in the wake of the march. The protesters went into the town of Santa Cruz where windows at the county government center, the police station and other buildings were broken.

Thursday, April 30: Students all over the area stopped school-as-usual. Two hundred walked out of El Cerrito High and marched on police stations. One hundred Oakland Tech students marched to downtown Oakland, taking up the chant

"Seize the Power, Fight the Power." At San Francisco State, students rallied and many classes were shut down. The main intersection near the university was blocked several times during the day by about 500 people, and kids from the middle school across the street busted out and joined in. Students from S.F. City College and other schools marched onto Interstate 280 and blocked it for about an hour.

At least half the students at Berkeley High staged a walkout and demonstrated at the police station where they were joined by several hundred seventh and eighth graders from King Jr. High. Then they joined UC Berkeley students and others in a rally on the campus and a march across town to the I-80 freeway. They continued onto the Bay Bridge and shut down the traffic. Protesters chanted, "Justice... Now!" and "Freedom... Now!" They blocked the bridge until surrounded on both sides by riot-gear California Highway Patrol. As buses full of arrested protesters passed the commuters stuck on the bridge, many people got out of their cars to cheer and yell in support.

As the Bay Bridge was being blocked, 2,000 more protesters marched down University Avenue in Berkeley. That night an angry, militant crowd of mainly Black youth stormed down Berkeley's Telegraph Avenue, which police had shut down for business at 6 p.m. Store windows were smashed, and a cop car burned. In downtown Oakland, Black youth protested during the day and into the night. Police arrested 100. Three BART subway stations were shut down by the authorities.

In San Francisco, 2,000 protesters marched from the Mission District to the State Building. Hundreds of youth then raged on Market Street and the downtown area on the edge of the financial district. Many posh shopping and tourist spots were left with windows smashed out. All downtown BART stations were shut down and buses rerouted. For hours the situation was beyond the control of the authorities. Hundreds were arrested, and police shot one

The *RW* received the following statement from Refuse & Resist!:

No Justice, No Peace!

That is the cry of the people in the streets, and we stand with them and the people's verdict. The outrageous acquittal in the Rodney King case proves there is no justice in this country if you are Black, or Latino, or foreign born, or gay, or homeless. The media and the government might like to cover this fact over, but that is the reality of our legal system.

How many times have we seen oppressed groups suffer brutal beatings at the hands of cops across the country? Enough with telling people to "stay calm"! Unless we directly stand up against these attacks—like the people in ghettos and barrios of L.A. are courageously doing—it will only grow worse.

We hold President Bush, his henchmen at the Justice Department, and the whole reactionary "New World Order" they have fostered, responsible for an environment in which police "wilding" is tolerated. The government has sent out a clear message to the law enforcement community—go ahead and do whatever it takes to keep the oppressed in line. Just six days after the beating of Rodney King, Bush called L.A. Police Chief Darryl Gates "an all-American hero." Only in a Nazi-like climate would you identify your nation and government with someone responsible for promoting a lethal chokehold that has killed Black citizens. This is the same climate that sends religious zombies to terrorize women at clinics in Buffalo and across the country, where people have also taken to the streets to fight back.

Refuse & Resist! calls on people of conscience to directly confront police violence: expose the attacks, intervene where possible, and refuse all cooperation with racist police and courts.

WE HATE YOUR POLICE STATE. WE WILL FIGHT BACK. REFUSE AND RESIST!

It's all one attack! The current war on women, the concentration camps for immigrants, the censorship of the arts, the resurgent racism, the police state measures, gay bashing, and compulsory patriotism. One organization says NO to the WHOLE package: *Refuse & Resist!* It's time to go on the offense with a movement that is more than fragmented responses. Join *Refuse & Resist!* Refuse & Resist! 305 Madison Ave., Suite 1166, New York, New York (212) 713-5657 FAX (212) 532-5239

Message Sent...Message Received

The Kreuzberg district in the German city of Berlin is known for its radical May Day protests, and this year was no exception. Thousands of people, mostly young, battled 4,000 riot police on May 1. This year, the May Day battle in Kreuzberg was also marked by a message of support for the people in Los Angeles who rose up against injustice. A news report said, "A number of protesters carried banners referring to the continuing rioting in the California city. And, as in Los Angeles, rioters threw stones and set overturned cars on fire with molotov cocktails." One of the banners said, "Congratulations Los Angeles." And a Kreuzberg demonstrator told the press, "There is a connection between what is happening in Los Angeles and poor people oppressed by fascism all over the world."

Photo: Nancy Stone/Chicago Tribune



May 1—Protestors disrupt traffic in downtown Chicago.



May 1—300 students march across Brooklyn Bridge to New York City Hall to protest King verdict.

ver a just response.

Thursday: 700 people rallied at the Martin Luther King Center in the downtown area. At 1 p.m., students from the University Center met again to denounce the verdict. When some students and activists called for people to present a petition to the governor protesting the verdict and police brutality, many in the crowd openly jeered them. "We've got to stop forgiving!" and "It's time to stop singin' and start swingin'!" was the sentiment of many people.

The protest grew to over 1,000 people as students from University Center were joined by Georgia State University students, Black youth and other basic masses. They did go to the Capitol and downtown—but not to deliver a petition to the governor! The press denounced what happened as a "wilding spree." But clearly what happened was an angry response to the powers that be. One man in the projects said, "Hell, we're not burning our own neighborhoods, we're going after downtown!" For hours, armies of youth engaged in battles with the police and targeted many businesses like Macy's. Underground Atlanta, the tourist-trap shopping center in the heart of downtown, was also hit by protest. Youth stormed through it, overturning planters and shouting, "No Justice, No Peace." People also trashed the Capitol building, overturned cars at the Fulton County Government Center and threw rocks through the windows of the Law Building and the Legislative office building.

The press played up some incidents where white people were beaten up. But it was the police that did most of the violence against people. Many Black youth were clubbed and hog-tied by the cops who attacked the demonstration. Political firemen like Mayor Maynard Jackson and Rev. Joseph Lowery from the SCLC pleaded with people to "pray" or "sing"—anything but rise up in rebellion. At the same time, the powers made clear they would use violent force to put down the protests. The mayor declared an emergency and imposed a curfew, and the governor of Georgia put the State Patrol in riot gear around the Capitol and downtown.

Friday: The authorities tried pre-emptive action. The police and Georgia State troopers surrounded the University Center and covered all the exits. When protesters

tried to leave the campus around 2 p.m., they were driven back by the pigs. The students tried to march again several hours later. The riot police fired tear gas, and the students fought back with rocks and bottles. After an hour the police were forced to withdraw, and students made it off the campus. The city announced that 17 cops had been hurt and that 50 protesters were arrested. Some basic people apparently managed to join the students. TV reporters talked about "kids who look as young as 11" fighting alongside the college students. The mayor declared a curfew for the second night in a row.

New York City

Thursday: 700 students at Erasmus High School, in the heart of the Caribbean immigrant community in Brooklyn, walked out in protest. A thousand students walked out of St. John's Prep in Astoria, Queens. Protests and walkouts were also reported at the CCNY campus in Harlem, Harry S. Truman High in the Bronx, Franklin Lane High in Brooklyn, Manhattan Center for Mathematics and Science, and at high schools in Maplewood, Newark and East Orange in New Jersey.

Friday: Protest marches hit various parts of the city. A thousand people came to Times Square for a march called by the Movement for People's Assembly. The police had ordered most businesses in the area shut down early, and hundreds of cops surrounded the protesters. There was a wild mix of people: Black proletarian and middle class youth, white college students, social movement activists of all nationalities, and a few still in business suits.

Demonstrators broke out of the police encirclement and marched into the streets. About 200 forced their way past police lines and into the Madison Square Garden to cause a big disruption. One 18-year-old woman told the press, "It was great running through there. You felt like you were a part of something. We're sick and tired of this whole system." As the marchers headed downtown toward Greenwich Village, the police began attacking the protest. But the people resisted—the police were pelted with rocks, bottles and garbage, and store windows were broken. The march was finally stopped at Tompkins Square Park

Continued on page 12

man in the leg. At least three cops were injured.

At 9 p.m. the mayor declared a state of emergency in the city and imposed a curfew. This was the first time since the big 1906 earthquake that city authorities had taken such a drastic step. By late Thursday about 1,400 people had been arrested around the Bay Area.

Friday, May 1: The S.F. mayor declared a second night of curfew. Roots Against War had called for a march to start from the Mission District at 7 p.m. in defiance of the curfew. Police Chief Hongisto declared it an illegal assembly. The police surrounded the demonstrators and arrested over 400.

There were more protests among students around the Bay Area. A noon rally at Pinole Valley High School turned into a ten-mile march by 250 students who blocked a part of Interstate 80. They marched on to Richmond where they were joined by students from Kennedy High and Contra Costa Junior College.

Five hundred Marin County high school students attempted to close down the Golden Gate Bridge. They were intercepted by the highway patrol and eventually allowed to walk across the bridge in smaller groups. Hundreds of students at Lowell High in S.F. walked out and marched to S.F. State University. In Oakland, students from Skyline High, Fremont High, Lowell Middle School and Frick Junior High held protests. Students from Cal State Hayward marched into downtown Hayward to block traffic. At Stanford University 1,500 students marched into Palo Alto. In Watsonville south of the Bay Area, 300 high school students blocked the entrance to the courthouse annex.

City officials in Berkeley also imposed a curfew, and Oakland declared a "voluntary curfew." Seven shopping malls in and around the Area were closed by authorities fearful of groups of youth. They included Eastmont mall in Oakland (in a largely Black neighborhood) and Stonestown mall (near S.F. State).

Atlanta

Wednesday: Students from the Atlanta University Center—the site of five Black colleges—led a march from their schools to the Capitol, where many bitterly denounced the jury's verdict and promised to deli-



May 1—Protestors clash with riot police at Morris Brown College, Atlanta.

Magic Weapon for May Day

Dear RW:

The evening of May 1st I was on my way to a May 1st celebration, waiting for a train in the subway. I was quite aware that I was practically alone except for one young Black woman several yards down the platform, but I was caught off guard by three Black proletarian youth who started hassling me. They started calling me names like white bitch and then went further by pushing me around and grabbing at me. Because of all that was learned in the past few days while talking to people about the Manifesto and about the Uprising in L.A. I didn't turn to run away, but instead knew that what they needed right there on the spot was some Marxism-Leninism-Maoism ideology. If I didn't hit them with it right then and there, they'd be missing out on a chance of a lifetime. First I told them that I wasn't their enemy, and they ought to be fightin' the real enemy. As I pulled out some RCP May Day Manifestos from my

bag, I told them that today was May 1st, International Workers Day—the Holiday of the Oppressed, and if they wanted something different than this shit, they ought to be making revolution. I right away wanted to link this up with L.A. For a few seconds they all backed off and looked at me like I was crazy, and then one of the guys said, "Give me one of those, I want to read it!" I opened it up and read two paragraphs to them that were in bold type about how for everyone who refuses to be beaten down let's do it right and do something that will really make a difference. If we are going to fight and we are willing to die for something, let it be for revolution. We have got to be down for and be doing work for this revolution right now, acting under the leadership of the Party and according to its strategic approach. After talking for a few minutes about the Rodney King verdict, they ended up buying two Manifestos, taking about 20 Rodney King leaflets, and

then apologized for hassling me, as they jumped onto the next train.

After that, I stood there and thought a minute about all of those people who think that it's human nature that people can never change, those people who have no confidence in the masses, that Communism sounds good, but it will never happen, and I knew I was going to write this letter as soon as I could—to let people know that the ideology of the Revolutionary Communist Party, MLMism, is the way of correctly understanding the world in order to radically change it.

Remember the young woman who was standing down the platform? She came walking up to me, tears rolling down her cheeks, and said "I saw everything that happened. I'm sorry I couldn't help you, but you know, everything is just so messed up, I've been thinking that the whole world is coming to an end. Everybody's fighting between themselves." Just as I was about

to tell her that REVOLUTION IS THE HOPE OF THE HOPELESS, she asked me, "What was that paper you gave those brothers anyway? It was like some kind of a magic weapon!"

**Fear Nothing—
Be Down for the Whole Thing!
It's Right To Rebel!**

A revolutionary in Chicago

Get your hands on the 1992 May Day Manifesto:

To order the May 1 Manifesto in full color, send \$1 postage, plus 25¢ each for less than 20 Manifestos; 10¢ each for under 100; and 5¢ for over 100. Please specify ENGLISH or SPANISH. Send orders to: RCP Publications, PO Box 3486, Chicago, IL 60654.

LOS ANGELES: IT'

The People's Verdict

The verdict on the Rodney King beating was a cold and hateful declaration by this system. And the people everywhere felt it *HARD*. Could the people accept a "not guilty" for these four brutal and racist cops? No way! The oppressed of L.A. showed real heart. And their actions gave heart to the oppressed everywhere.

The police brutality case of four cops had its "day in court." And the system worked the way it was set up to work: the system freed the cops and approved the beating of Rodney King. "The system has spoken," the powers all said after the verdict, "now everyone must accept it."

But the oppressed people of Los Angeles DIDN'T accept it. People from the ghettos and barrios of L.A. rose up in righteous rebellion to give the PEOPLE'S verdict on Rodney King. They spoke clearly in the rude language of nothing to lose. They don't own TV stations, so they sent their message to the world using flames. And as the armed forces of the old order faded from the streets, poor people took what they needed from stores.

When the people rose up, they spoke for millions everywhere who were tasting tears of anger. The rage of L.A. was immediately echoed across the country as people swore "This CANNOT be accepted!" It was no business as usual in cities across the country.

A suffocating silence has been shattered. A new political force has broken free at the bottom of society with great force. A new fearless generation has risen up to challenge the system.

The outrageous action of the powers and determined resistance of the people has changed the political landscape. The rebels of L.A. won themselves new supporters and allies in many corners of society. Knee-jerk supporters of the verdict often found themselves isolated. Everyone everywhere was forced to take a stand, and they will be judged by the stand they took.

This is the single greatest internal crisis and uprising faced by this U.S. capitalist-imperialist system since the hottest days of the 1960s. It comes at a time when the U.S. rulers say their "free market" system is the only model for the planet. Now, while the whole world watches, the people have spoken—and revealed the USA is a brutal class society breaking apart at its seams.

The pig police of L.A. were overwhelmed for two days. Political establishments across the country—including the White House itself—were rattled and defensive.

The whole system is looking bad. To change that, the powers portray the people as a murdering, mindless mob. They throw out a few slippery promises of reform. But all this is just a cover as they move their armed forces into the scene. Today the streets of L.A. are invaded by National Guard troops—trained in urban combat during the U.S. invasion of Panama—and by Marine troops fresh from the American-made killing fields of the Persian Gulf.

Amerikkka today is not the same Amerikkka it was before the King verdict. The chickens are coming home to roost after long years of injustice and suffering. Oppressed people from coast to coast have created a new situation through determined and courageous struggle. It shows the deep truth of Mao's words: "It is right to rebel."

Chickens Coming Home to Roost

The video meant that everyone everywhere knew the deal: this was a savage beating of a defenseless Black man by a gang of pig-cops. And everyone thought, this trial will show if there is ever justice under this system for Black people and other oppressed people.

A year later, the system gave its official approval. All four cops acquitted on virtually all charges. One juror claimed: "The policemen just were not guilty of any abuse, in our mind."

That verdict was set up by powerful forces from the start: The appeal courts moved the trial to Simi Valley, so the cops could get a fair trial. This meant they got a pro-cop jury from a lily-white "cop suburb."

The whole trial was set up to acquit these cops: Police experts explained that this beating was exactly what the police are trained to do. And as the trial ended, the judge ordered the jurors to examine the whole event *only* from the viewpoint of the accused cops, *not* their victim. The jurors then did what they were told—just like the "Good Germans" who loyally followed Nazi orders in the 1930s. And the system got its verdict.

The system had given a verdict on itself. Black people could see how little has changed since 1857 when the Supreme Court ruled that the slave Dred Scott had no rights that white authorities needed to respect. And for millions of other people in society it was a shocking education in basic realities. People of all nationalities could see that brutal abuse is the officially approved all-American way. If they had managed to ignore this reality before, they had to deal with it now. The fundamental injustice of this system stood center stage.

In moments like this, illusions and false hopes lie shattered by real life. Bill Cosby fantasies moved aside for Rodney King realities. The system had taken its stand, and everyone everywhere was challenged: Are you going to accept and support THIS?

There is world of difference between the force and violence of the oppressors trying to keep the oppressed down and the force and violence of the oppressed rising up. One is degrading but the other is liberating.

The problem in the world today is not that there is too much violence; the problem is that there is too much counterrevolutionary violence and not enough revolutionary violence. But that is changing and will change even more.

The People Rocked the House

The people took on the challenge. From the moment of the verdict, people responded. They gathered in the streets and took aim at symbols of authority. They built a new unity for themselves. They seized the streets. They raged. And they took action.

The powers screamed, "L.A. is out of control." But their class has one outlook. And our proletarian class has another. For many oppressed people there was a rare taste of being *IN CHARGE*.

Youth saluted passing cars with raised fists and were answered back by honking horns. Youngbloods packed "six deep" in pickup trucks flashed each other power salutes. People who yesterday jammed each other over petty disputes suddenly stood together. The joyful solidarity of Black, Latino, Asian and white youth outside LAPD headquarters at Parker Center said it all. And throughout society, including among millions of privileged middle class—white as well as Black—there was outrage against the system and support for the people.

Cars drove by in South Central L.A. with hand-lettered signs in their windows: "No justice no peace," "By any means necessary," "They're guilty!" On the walls new tags now read: "Fuck the Police," "Black thang Brown thang," "Revolución Si!" "Revolution is the Hope of the Hopeless!"

The flames that lit the sky were on TV screens from Moscow to South Africa. They sent this message around the world: A system without justice creates its own gravediggers—even here in the belly of the beast itself! And immediately there was proof that this message was received. In Berlin, the revolutionary street fighters of Kreuzberg waved a new banner in their May Day battle: "Congratulations Los Angeles!"

Counterattack from High Places

This system has its enforcers, its mouthpieces and its paid bootlickers. And immediately they all jumped to put down the rebellion of the people.

The media described Los Angeles as a horrible nightmare filled with senseless violence and innocent victims. Various bootlickers tried to chill it all out—saying that people were only hurting their own communities, that anger may be justified but rebellion was not. The people were told to pray. They were ordered to be patient and have faith in the system. Meanwhile government officials mobilized thousands of armed troops.

L.A. mayor Tom Bradley said the streets had been taken over by "thugs and hoodlums." President Bush said that the rebellion was the action of thieves who didn't care anything about Rodney King. The purpose of these lies is clear. The powers want to portray the rebels as mindless killers to justify any murderous violence their armed troops may use to restore their dog-eat-dog order. And they want to drive a wedge between the basic people who rebelled and the broad middle classes who said they could understand the rage of the people.

Over and over again, the media showed small stores being looted and two white truck drivers being beaten. The media tried to say that even the pigs who beat Rodney King weren't as brutal as the street youth.

Let's be clear: Great upsurges of struggle cannot be neat and controlled. All kinds of forces were drawn into the rush of rebellion. That is a good thing. Some forces in the rebellion were

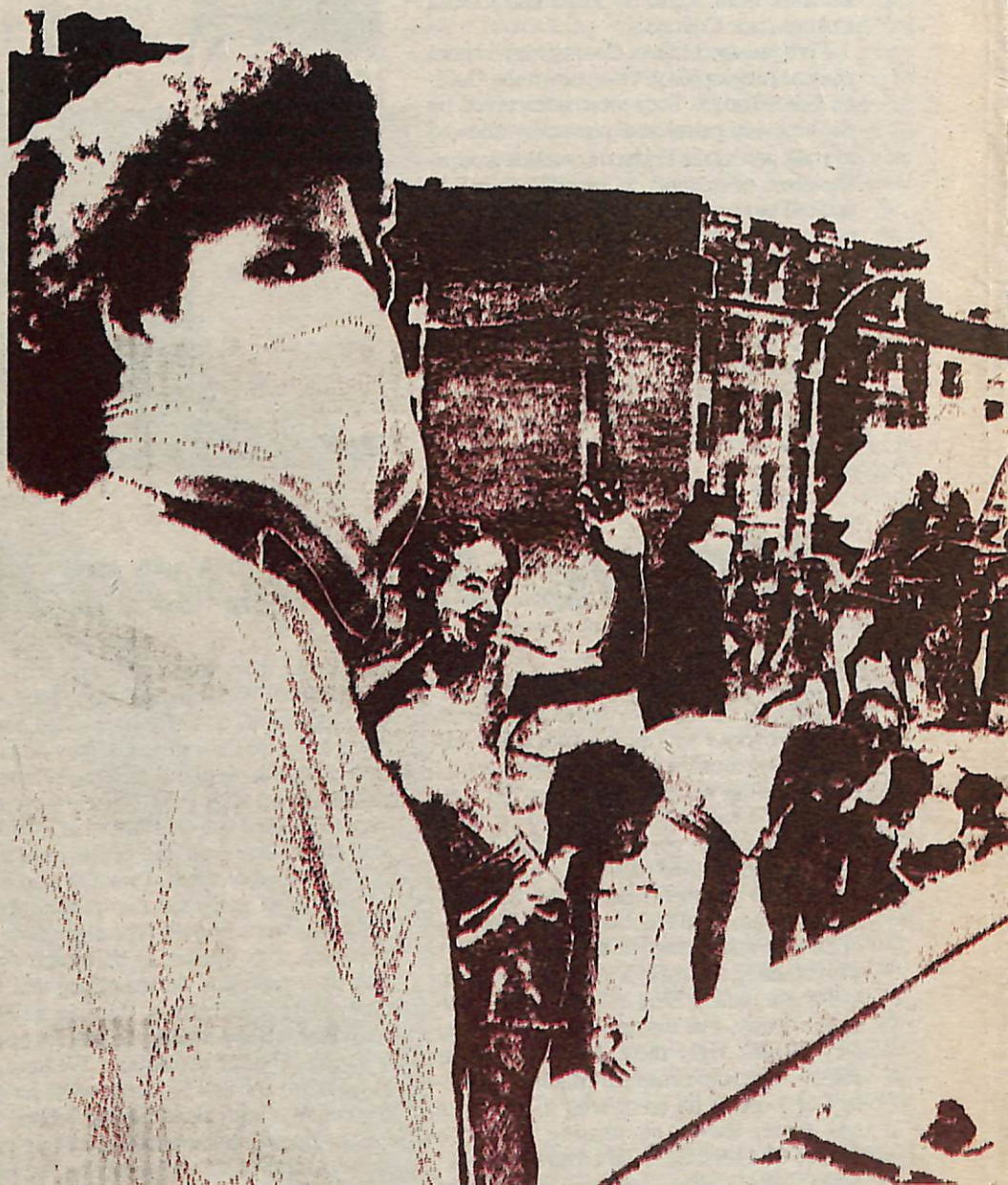


Illustration from 1991 RCP May 1st Manifesto.

PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO REBEL

on Rodney King Trial

politically confused and hit the wrong targets. But this system has no right, *EVER*, to accuse *ANYONE* else of "senseless violence."

There is no comparison between an armed cop trained in brutality and an outraged street youth misdirecting his anger. They represent different forces. The youth are our oppressed brothers and sisters who can learn to recognize and target the real enemy—the system. The pigs are enforcers of this system—they will never learn to direct their force against the real enemy, because in order to do *that* they'd have to self-destruct.

Chairman Bob Avakian has written: "Lifting some bottles of whiskey or television sets is never the heart and essence of these rebellions, and everybody, the bourgeoisie included, knows that very well. It is the *political* fact that the oppressed have dared to rise up, if only for a few days for now; it is the example this sets and the shock waves it sends throughout the empire, that sends the emperors into a frenzy and that must be strangled and smothered."

Overall, a refreshing, new politicized sense of purpose stood at the core of people's actions. And people debated tactics, targets, and slogans as they attacked the old authority.

Keep Your Eyes on the Prize

Those who say "You are only hurting our own communities" cannot have deeply thought through the situation. Can anyone seriously argue that peaceful protests, prayer, or voting is a *better* response? Imagine what would have happened if the masses had *not* taken to the streets. Imagine the swagger of the pigs and the bitter despair of the people.

When the verdict came down, people seized the tactics and targets that were on hand to send a message. This was not the time to worry about getting to work or getting groceries. Lines were drawn.

Some shopowners think their property is their life. When they cry to the media they are helping the government clampdown on the people. They should stop letting themselves be used. It is this capitalist system—not the people—that ruins small businesses and turns tidy neighborhoods into bombed-out warzones on a daily basis.

Under this system, a Black man in Harlem has the same life expectancy as a man in Bangladesh. This is a society that builds prisons and bombers, not houses and schools. Why *shouldn't* the people write their urgent message in flames?

We ask: If you want a cleansing rain, how can you curse the growing waves and the stirring winds?

Everyone must think these issues through carefully. Because there is more to come. The time may be approaching when the struggle becomes even more powerful, more sweeping, and more cleansing—a time when protest may give way to an armed revolutionary struggle for power. The people must be prepared for the sacrifices and the complexities of that historic conflict. As Mao said "Cast away illusions—prepare for struggle!"

BE POSITIVE! TAKE IT EVEN HIGHER!

A few minutes of freedom are not enough. It is not enough to drive back the hated police—only to back up before the march of armed troops. Send-

ing a powerful message on the Rodney King verdict is just a first step.

We can see in this big rebellion how the actions of the people can change history.

But this system and power structure is completely dedicated to oppressing the people. In the final analysis, nothing will solve the problems of the oppressed people but a real revolution—a mass armed uprising of the oppressed people that shatters the old order and creates a new way of life. And to make *that* revolution possible people have to build on the events of last week—and go much, much further.

In the streets of the USA these past days, it was not a revolutionary war. But in the charged political firestorm, it was possible to see the potential *outlines* of a great future civil war between the forces of oppression and the rising power of a new world.

Look at how outrageous actions of the ruling powers and the just cause of the rebellion created a momentary polarization that was quite favorable to the uprising. Even the bourgeoisie's own polls claimed that 89 percent of the population thought the King verdict was wrong.

Look how the raw material for a great revolution has been gathering below the surface. A fearless generation has now taken to the streets. Will they be trained as a hard revolutionary core? Will they learn to even more forcefully target the real enemy? Will they learn to unite all who can be united against that real enemy? Will they be trained in a vision of a revolutionary new communist society? Will they further develop their fighting strength?

In short, will the work now be done to forge a revolutionary movement out of the crisis?

If the oppressed are going to go beyond a taste of freedom to complete satisfaction—there is much work to do. Revolutionary organization needs to be built deeply among the people. Oppressed communities need to become living political base areas of the Revolution. A powerful, growing, revolutionary movement needs to grow through struggle—fighting the powers today *and* preparing through those battles for *THE TIME* when this whole system can be overthrown. The RCP has the line and leadership to carry this through.

Mao Tsetung said: "Many deeds cry out to be done." Be there.



From the Writings of RCP Chairman Bob Avakian

On Police Brutality, the Rodney King Verdict, and the Rebellions of the People: Words That Ring True

These stories come from a book by RCP Chairman Bob Avakian *Reflections, Sketches & Provocations*. The stories were written a few years ago, but they speak true to the questions now on the agenda.

Why We Call Them Pigs

"...I had a magnum, too, man. I shot one of them tires. *P-voom!* The tire said, 'O-o-oh, O-oh, Ooh.' It got good to me; I shot another one—*P-voom!*—'O-o-oh, O-oh, Ooh.' And that vodka I was drinkin' said, 'go ahead, shoot somethin' else.' I shot the motor, the motor fell out the motherfucker. Motor said, 'fuck it!' Then the police came: I went into the house, 'cause they got magnums too—and they don't kill cars, they kill *nig-gars*."

Richard Pryor on shooting his car, from *Richard Pryor Live In Concert*, 1978.

Recently I was reading reports of police assaults on Black people and of Black people fighting against the police in Memphis and Miami. This called to mind a story I was told a while back. A rookie cop was riding in his police car with his veteran partner when a report came in that there was a Black man in the vicinity with a gun. As their car screeched around the corner, a young Black man suddenly appeared sprinting up an alley—into a dead end. "Shoot him!", the older cop screamed. "Go on, shoot him—it's free!"

"It's free!" Think about that for a second. "It's free!" In other words, here's a

chance that gets a pig to sweating and salivating with anticipation—a chance to "kill a nigger" with the already provided cover that a Black man—a Black man, *any* Black man—was reported in the area with a gun. This is an opportunity too good to pass up: "Go on, shoot him—it's free!"

Well, in this case, the rookie was not ready for that—perhaps he was one of those rare ones who joins a police force actually believing the "serve and protect" bullshit—and that particular Black man did not die that day. But one of the most telling things about this whole incident is the fallout from it: The rookie cop had to resign. If he wasn't ready and willing—if he didn't have the proper attitude to do what his veteran partner was calling for, what came naturally to the seasoned "peace officer," what any pig in his place and in a pig's right mind would do—then there was no place for him on the force. It was *he*, the rookie who hadn't learned, and couldn't learn it seems, what it's all about—it was *he* who was the outcast and felt he had to resign.

Perhaps this whole story helps give an inkling of the answer to the question: Why do we call the police "pigs"?

Pigs are pigs. Of course, that's an image, a symbol—in the most literal sense they are human beings, but they are human beings with a murderer's mentality, sanctioned, disciplined, unleashed by the ruling class of society to keep the oppressed in line, through terror whenever necessary and as the "bottom line," as they like to say. Terror against the oppressed is even a special

reward for "carrying out the dangerous and thankless duty" of being the "thin blue line" between "civilization on the one side and anarchy and lawlessness on the other." Think about it once again: Terror against the oppressed is not just part of the job, it's also a reward. That is one of the deeper meanings of the story at the start: "Go on, shoot him—it's free!"

But maybe some liberals (of the "left" or "right") will object that these stories I've recounted are after all only stories, and even if we allow that they themselves are true stories, still they are only a few cases—the famous "isolated incidents" perhaps. Well, anyone who still really thinks that, or says it, has got to answer one basic question about the following Richard Pryor routine:

"Cops put a hurtin' on your ass, man, you know. They really degrade you. White folks don't believe that shit, don't believe cops degrade;—'Ah, come on, those beatings, those people were resisting arrest. I'm tired of this harassment of police officers.' Cause the police live in your neighborhood, see, and you be knowin' 'em as Officer Timpson. 'Hello Officer Timpson, going bowling tonight? Yes, uh, nice Pinto you have, ha, ha, ha.' Niggers' don't know 'em

¹ This material is reproduced here as it was performed by Richard Pryor at the time, including the use of the word "nigger"; this is for the sake of accuracy and not out of any disrespect for his feeling, after a trip to Africa, that he should no longer use the word "nigger" because it is dehumanizing.

like that. See, white folks get a ticket, they pull over, 'Hey, Officer, yes, glad to be of help, here you go.' A nigger got to be talkin' 'bout 'I AM REACH-ING INTO MY POK-ET FOR MY LICENSE—'cause I don't wanna be no motherfuckin' accident!'

"Police degrade you. I don't know, you know, it's often you wonder why a nigger don't go completely mad. No, you do. You get your shit together, you work all week, right, then you get dressed—maybe say a cat make \$125 a week, get \$80 if he lucky, right, and he go out, get clean, be drivin' with his old lady, goin' out to a club, and the police pull over, 'Get outta the car, there was a robbery—nigger look just like you. Alright, put your hands up, take your pants down, spread your cheeks!' Now, what nigger feel like havin' fun after that? 'No, let's just go home, baby.' You go home and beat your kids and shit—you gonna take that shit out on somebody."

from *That Nigger's Crazy*, 1974

The question is this: Why, at the crucial points of this routine, does Pryor's audience erupt in tense, knowing laughter, coupled with prolonged applause? Can it be for any other reason than the fact that Pryor has indeed captured and concentrated—with humor, higher than life, as art should be, but the stone truth, all too true, at the same time—a situation that is *typical* for the masses of Black people in the U.S.? Something which, if it has not happened directly to them (and the odds are pretty good that it has), is subject to happen to them tomorrow, or the next day, and has already happened to a relative or friend. To anyone who wants to defend the police, to say nothing of prettifying them, showing them as just ordinary human beings, etc., etc., ad nauseam; and even anyone who wants to raise pious doubts and petty amendments about calling them what they are, without reservation or apology; you can't get around this question: you have to confront it straight up. And don't tell me Pryor's audiences aren't a fair representation: The response will always be the same from any audience that includes a significant number of the masses of Black people, or other oppressed masses (as, in fact, is the case with the audience for Pryor's live performances)...

"Police in L.A., man, they got a chokehold they use on motherfuckers. Do they do it here, do they choke you to death? (Voices from the audience, *many* voices from the audience: 'Yeah!') That's some weird shit. Cause I didn't know it was a death penalty to have a parking ticket."

But for the masses of Black people in this "great land of freedom and justice for all" it can be—and it has been for hundreds, at least, every year. Of course, this kind of freedom and justice is not reserved for Black people alone in the U.S., though they are special "beneficiaries" of it. It also lashes out and ensnares millions of the masses of other oppressed nationalities, immigrants (so-called "legal" as well as so-called "illegal") and in general those who are without wealth and therefore without power, including many white people, for whom Officer Timpson is hardly a friend, either.

In short, the armed force of the bourgeois state exists for the purpose of suppressing, by force and arms, the proletariat and all those who would step out of line and challenge this "great way of life" founded on

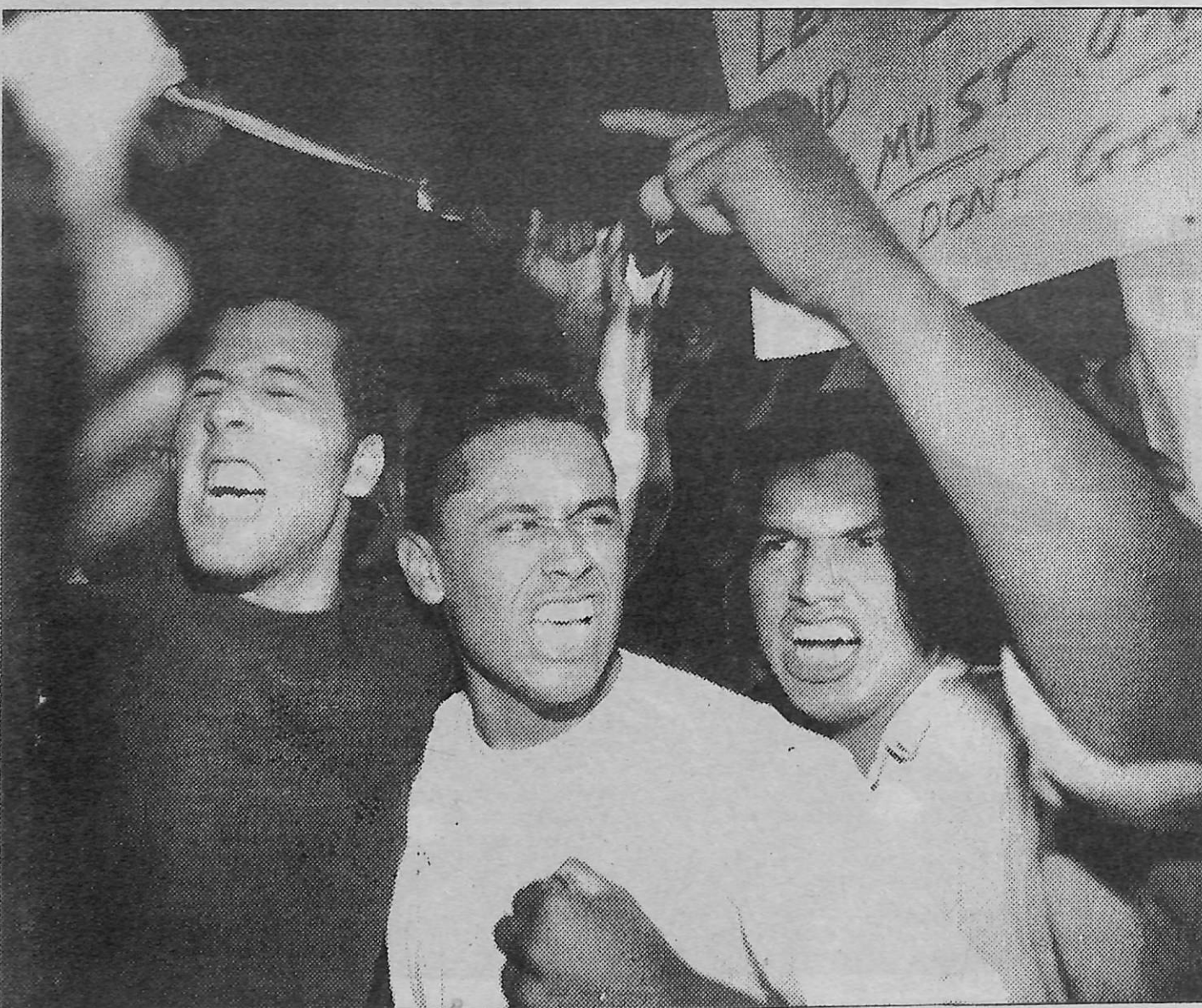


Photo: Rosemary Kaul/Los Angeles Times

Protesting the King verdict outside L.A. police headquarters, April 30.

robbery and murder, not only within the U.S. itself but throughout the world. And that, simply, is why pigs are pigs, and will always be pigs—until systems that need such pigs are abolished from the earth. A hard truth—but a liberating truth.

From "Hill Street Bullshit, Richard Pryor Routines and the Real Deal," *Revolutionary Worker*, No. 193, February 18, 1983

Festivals of the Oppressed— Two Opposing Views

In 1983 the people in the Black ghetto of Overtown, Miami rose up in rebellion to protest an unjust verdict where a cop was let off for killing a Black man.

While the authorities were able to contain this particular rebellion and the spontaneous flame more or less burned itself out after raging several days, nothing has extinguished the smoldering anger—or the sparks of joy—that this rebellion shot through the hearts of proletarians and oppressed people wherever they learned of it.

Yes—joy. For just as the murder of a Black man is a cause for celebration among the pigs who enforce that way of life—so the uprising of the victims of this way of life is a genuine, joyous festival of the oppressed.

Of course, whenever the suppressed anger does explode into rebellion, then along with the tear gas and bullets, along with the SWAT squads, cordoned streets, and states of emergency come the shuffling or even blustering bands of "Black leaders" (formerly "Responsible Negro Leaders") to smother and speculate off the burning rage. From the liberals downtown come the hand-wringing "whys?", the calls for more studies, the promise of petty reforms. And from all these comes the pious sermonizing about how it is "the Black community that suffers most" from such "civil disturbances"—this in counterpoint harmony with the threatening howls against "lawlessness" and the inevitable attempts to distort and discredit by braying about "senseless violence" and supposedly selfish "looting." As if the greatest plunderers in the history of the world had the right to condemn the poor, their victims, for appropriating goods denied them by the normal working of the system—as if they had a right to chastise others for ill-gotten goods! Here I can't help thinking of a story I read in a passage by St. Augustine (of all people!):

"Indeed, that was an apt and true reply which was given to Alexander the Great by a pirate who had been seized. For when that king had asked the man what he meant by keeping hostile possessions of the sea, he answered with a bold pride, 'What thou meanest by seizing the whole earth; but because I do it with a petty ship, I am called a robber, whilst thou who doest it with a great fleet are styled emperor.'"

But the lifting of some bottles of whiskey or television sets is never the heart and essence of these rebellions, and everybody, the bourgeoisie included, knows that very well. It is the *political* fact that the oppressed have dared to rise up, if only for a few days for now; it is the example this sets and the shock waves it sends throughout the empire, that sends the emperors into a frenzy and that must be strangled and smothered.



April 30—Buildings burn in South Central L.A.

Photo: Associated Press

"Blacks do not have access to the system here and until they do there will be unrest. Until you strengthen this link, the whole chain is going to break from time to time." Thus spake the head of a Black businessmen's association in Miami, as quoted in the *New York Times* (January 16, 1983). Well, the fact is that, for the masses of Black people, there will never be "access to the system." And how fitting the imagery of this Black bourgeois—that of chains. What he means to say is that, until the "Black middle class" is built up more and can act more effectively to divert and help suppress the masses of Black proletarians, there will be the danger of Overtowns and Liberty Cities. But the truth is that the basis for building up those bourgeois and even petty-bourgeois strata, among Black people—and other oppressed peoples in the U.S.—is being undermined by the very crisis that grips the system as a whole, even though the ruling class will still devote efforts to underwriting and puffing up these "middle class" elements, and will devote even more efforts to entice and coerce them into playing the role of ventriloquist dummy and fireman.

This situation of crisis for the empire is indeed a very good thing, not only for the masses of Black people, but for the proletariat as a whole in the U.S. and throughout the world. It means that the basis will be strengthened for a proletarian internationalist line to take firmer root and find powerful expression in the coming period among the masses of Black people as well as other proletarians and oppressed masses (and, by the way, it also means that there will be more basis not only for winning leadership away from the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois elements among the oppressed peoples but also for winning sections of them to the revolutionary cause, or at least to a position of neutrality). This is an important part of the overall development that will present, in the time ahead, rare opportunities to break many links in that worldwide chain of imperialist enslavement. And this will be the more true, the stronger that proletarian internationalist line and force is.

From "The Streets and Festivals of Miami—Two Opposing Views," the *Revolutionary Worker* No. 194, February 25, 1983

The Way Things Are, and the Way Things Change

Something jumped out at me in reading the article "20th Anniversary, July 1967: Rebellion in Detroit" (*RW*, No. 415, July



Los Angeles, April 30.

Photo: Associated Press

20, 1987). It got me to thinking again about how the people on the bottom are forever being told that if they rise up the great majority of people will oppose them. And I'm sure that, right before that Detroit rebellion, the people at the top could have come up with one of their polls showing that "the majority" didn't want to see any such rebellion. But, fortunately, the masses of people who rebelled in Detroit didn't look to any such polls to tell them whether it was a good idea, and they definitely didn't ask anybody's permission to rebel. No, they rose up in righteous rebellion, as the oppressed always do, sooner or later, because they have had enough and they want to make a statement that nobody can miss: This shit is wrong, and it can't go on like this!

But what really jumped out at me was remembering how the minds of many people—including many, many white people—were dramatically changed when there were such rebellions. Then, because people *did* rise up and fight back militantly, many more people were won to a position of supporting the struggle of Black people and other oppressed people. This would never have happened if the oppressed had just engaged in peaceful protests and orderly attempts at "working within the system."

And if this is true, if such great changes were brought about through militant rebellions in the '60s, how much more would this be the case for a real, all-the-way revolution in these desperate times! Such a

revolution would meet with more stubborn opposition, and more ruthless repression, from those who run this system and those who really do *like* this way of life and are willing to go down to defend it. But more importantly, it would call forth more committed involvement from those who oppose this system and those who hate this way of life, and it would gain greater support from those who at least see that such a system and way of life hold no hope for a better future.

A revolution is different from a rebellion in two very important ways. First, a revolution aims not just at hitting back at the system and its enforcers—it aims at overthrowing them and replacing them with a new system. And second, a revolution is led by an organized force with a clear vision and political program that can unite its strongest supporters with still broader numbers to win the battle for power and to create a new society and help create a new world. That is why, even more than the most righteous rebellion, a revolution can win huge numbers of people and can change the minds of millions and millions of people. And that is why those who want such a revolution and are working for such a revolution must urgently approach everything, including righteous rebellions, as part of the process of preparing for and then waging the real, all-the-way revolutionary struggle for power and for a new world.

Revolutionary Worker, No. 420, August 31, 1987

Outrage from Coast to Coast

Continued from page 7

when the police lined up five-deep and barricaded people into a side street. News reports said seven pigs were injured and 116 people were arrested. A large red flag flew at the march, and copies of the RCP May 1st Manifesto were distributed.

A march to the Harlem State Office Building, called by the revolutionary Black nationalist group December 12 Movement, was joined by two hundred mostly white students from Columbia University. Some workers from Harlem Hospital also joined. Marchers blocked traffic, and Black youth in the neighborhood taunted cops with chants of "Fuck the Police."

Many more students walked out of schools. Erasmus High School students joined with students from other Brooklyn high schools and Long Island University in a protest march across Manhattan Bridge to City Hall. Students at three high schools in the Bronx and Jamaica—Roosevelt, Clinton and Morris—walked out and fought with police at Fordham Road, a major shopping area. In Jamaica, Queens 100 youth marched through the streets. Three students at Evander Childs High School in the Bronx were arrested and charged with inciting to riot for allegedly turning over tables in the school cafeteria.

The following are brief reports of outbreaks of protest in other places around the country:

West

• **Las Vegas:** A mainly Black area near the gambling strip went up in flames. On Thursday night 92 fires broke out, including a state parole and probation office at the Gerson Park housing project. One police officer was shot and four police cars were hit by gunfire. There were reports of groups of youth armed with rocks, bottles and baseball bats roaming the streets and fighting with police. The City Council declared a state of emergency and a curfew. The governor of Nevada ordered 400 National Guard troops to move into the city.

• **Seattle:** On Thursday students at Lake Sammamiah High, a mainly white suburban school, walked out and blocked streets. That night 200 Black youth marched through the downtown and engaged in running battles with the authorities for several hours. Department store windows were broken and cars were overturned. Friday afternoon, 300 students from the University of Washington occupied the main freeway through Seattle. Students at Garfield, a predominantly Black high school, walked out.

• **Olympia, Washington:** Hundreds of students interrupted filming of Madonna's latest movie. The director stopped the production, filmed the students' speeches and promised to make the film available to the media.

• **San Diego:** 500 university students blocked Interstate 5 north of downtown for about two hours.

Midwest

• **Detroit:** Thursday, 200 people were at a demo called by Michigan Up and Out of Poverty Now in front of the federal build-



Photo: Jon Sall/Chicago Sun-Times

May 1—Chicago protest against Rodney King verdict.

ing. On Friday a multinational crowd of students and community activists at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor held a march which grew to 600 people. Also in Ann Arbor, 100 Black and white students walked out of a middle school.

• **Madison, Wisconsin:** Someone shattered the windshields of 34 police squad cars parked at a garage. A note at the scene said "Justice for Rodney King" and "All pigs must die."

• **Cleveland:** 300 people, mostly Cleveland State University students and other Black college students, marched to the Justice Center. On Thursday 100 protested at City Hall.

• **Chicago:** 200 demonstrated outside police headquarters Friday morning. At noon 100 people succeeded in blocking traffic downtown for a short period, and a U.S. flag was burned at the Federal building.

• **St. Louis:** The St. Louis County Municipal Police Academy in Wellston, MO, which trains police officers for suburban police departments, was fire-bombed.

• **Normal, Illinois:** 200 people, including students from Illinois State University, blocked a major intersection in this central Illinois city and marched against the police.

• **Omaha, Nebraska:** Young men shouting, "It's Rodney King Day," stopped traffic and tossed bricks and rocks at passing cars.

• **Toledo, Ohio:** Two squad cars parked at a municipal garage burned and several vacant houses set on fire in the inner city area. A message painted on the street next to the car fires said "A cop next."

• **Bloomington, Indiana:** 200 blocked traffic at Illinois State University.

• Protests were also reported in: Peoria, IL; Springfield, IL; Minneapolis; Kansas City; Gary, IN.

East

• **Buffalo:** Almost all Black students at Buffalo State University left class on May 1. One hundred students marched to the City Hall and through the downtown area. Earlier, 200 students from Erie Community College converged on the City Hall and demanded to speak to the mayor. A slogan

was broadly taken up among pro-choice forces battling the anti-abortion Christian fascists: "From L.A. to Buffalo—This Fascist Shit Has Got to Go!"

• **Washington, DC:** On Thursday, 400 high school students walked out of Mount Vernon High in suburban Virginia. One hundred students at University of Maryland burned an effigy of Daryl Gates. One hundred demonstrated in front of the

Appeal Denied in Flagburning Case, Cheryl Lessin Faces Prison

On April 23, the Ohio Court of Appeals ruled by a 2 to 1 decision to uphold Cheryl Lessin's 1990 flagburning conviction. This is another outrageous move by the powers to railroad Cheryl Lessin, local spokesperson for the Revolutionary Communist Party. She was originally convicted for burning the U.S. flag in one of the first demonstrations opposing the deployment of U.S. troops to the Persian Gulf in the fall of 1990. She was sentenced to one year in jail.

At the time of Lessin's trial, the Supreme Court had already ruled in the Joey Johnson case that flagburning is a form of political expression protected under the Constitution. To get around this, the government charged her with "inciting to violence," a third-degree felony.

After the April 23 ruling, Cheryl Lessin's defense immediately started the process of an appeal to the Ohio Supreme Court. Lessin faced the possibility that her appeal bond would be revoked and that she would be thrown back into the state prison. If this had happened, she would have had to serve out the rest of her term before the Supreme Court even heard her case. But on May 1 the Appeals Court granted continuance on the appeal bond.

The government and the courts are trying to railroad Cheryl Lessin. They are going after her because of her righteous protest

against U.S. intervention in the Persian Gulf and because of her revolutionary communist politics and stand. Free Cheryl Lessin!

• **New Rochelle, New York:** 200 youth blocked an exit of a mall garage, overturned cars and threw bricks. A Molotov cocktail was thrown into the window of a police station and "Rodney" written on the window.

• Other protests were reported in: Rochester, NY; Philadelphia; Hartford, CT; Jersey City, NJ.

South

• **Miami:** At North Miami High, 300 students walked out Friday, marched to the police station and sat down in the street. Students at North Miami Beach High left school after lunch and ran through an indoor shopping mall.

• **Tampa:** Shots were fired at police. Up to 200 youth threw rocks and bottles and set abandoned houses on fire.

• **Warrensburg, Missouri:** About 100 Central Missouri State University students broke windows and overturned a car.

• **Birmingham, Alabama:** Protesters set fires, attacked news crews and fired shots.

.....
This roundup gives a sense of the tremendous scope of the upsurge. We are sure there are protests we have not heard about yet. And we will continue to monitor and gather the news about further developments. *There should be no secret upsurges!* Readers are urged to send us correspondence about protests and rebellions to: RCP Publications, P.O. Box 3486, Merchandise Mart, Chicago, IL 60654. Or fax to RCP Publications Public Relations Office, (312)227-4497. □



Cleveland—Flag burns at recent demonstration to support Cheryl Lessin.

Photo: C.O.C. Photography



Cold Truth Liberating Truth:

How This System Has Always Oppressed Black People, And How All Oppression Can Finally Be Ended

"The masses of Black people in this country suffer oppression two times—oppression as a nation and as proletarians, concentrated in the most exploited sectors of the proletariat. This is the result of the whole long experience living the 'American Nightmare.' But this also puts basic Black people in a strong position. A strong position in the fight to bring down the system that is the cause—the problem. A strong position to strike at the heart of the system, to help bring forward and unite the exploited and oppressed people of all nationalities and to help win the greatest number to the program that can deal with the problem—the program of all-the-way revolution—proletarian revolution."

Anyone who is serious and honest knows that the enslavement and exploitation of Black people has been a big part of building up the wealth and power that the rulers of this country have in their hands—wealth and power that these suckers use to further exploit and oppress people here and all over the world. And anyone who is honest and serious knows that for revolution to have a chance in this country—a revolution to do away with all this oppression and exploitation and to change society from bottom to top—Black people must and will play a big part in this revolution.

COLD TRUTH, LIBERATING TRUTH gets into it deeper, knocking down lies and

bringing out the real facts. We use knowledge of the past to shine a light on the present and point the way toward the future: a future that does belong to us—all of us who have been counted as "nothing" but who shall be all—if we dare to seize it and know how to seize it. Getting it fully clear on how and why Black people have been enslaved, discriminated against, oppressed, and exploited throughout the history of the USA, right down to today, and how all that can finally be ended—this is a key part of knowing and daring. It has everything to do with emancipation that is all-the-way and real, not a sham or half-way deal, not only for Black people but for all exploited and oppressed people, not just in the USA but worldwide.

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Guerrilla fighters led by the Communist Party of Peru.

PERU: The Justice of Revolutionary Violence

"The emperor can burn down a thousand villages, but the people can not light a candle."

An old Chinese saying

"It is right to rebel against reactionaries."

The great revolutionary Mao Tsetung

The oppressed people in Peru are rising up in a just war of liberation against the reactionary Peruvian government and the Yankee powers that back it up. They are waging a *people's war*, under the leadership of the Maoist Communist Party of Peru—often called the Sendero Luminoso or Shining Path in the press. For this, the revolutionaries in Peru and their vanguard leadership are being attacked viciously by the enemy.

Down through history, the oppressors have claimed the "right" to use violent means to protect their wealth and power and keep the people down. And they have denied the oppressed any right to rise up in righteous armed struggle against their chains. Those who dared to rise up have been called "bandits" and "terrorists" and have come under merciless fire:

- The slavemasters in the U.S. South said Nat Turner and other rebel slaves were outlaws and hunted them down like animals.
- When the masses in Russia overthrew the bloody Tsarist rule in 1917, the U.S. and thirteen other capitalist countries sent troops to gang up on the revolution.
- The U.S. resorted to massive bombings, napalm, massacres and other despicable crimes against the Vietnamese war of liberation—but in the end the Vietnamese people defeated the U.S.
- Led by Mao Tsetung, the Chinese revolution liberated a quarter of humanity. The U.S. tried to strangle the new People's Republic with economic blockades and

threatened it with atom bombs. Refusing to back down, Mao said: Imperialists and reactionaries are paper tigers.

Now, the big powers and oppressors are aiming their guns at the Maoist people's war which is advancing against the Peruvian regime. And they are spreading outrageous lies to justify brutal counter-revolution in Peru.

One major lie is that the guerrillas in Peru are "linked with drug trafficking." The "war on drugs" has been the main excuse used by the U.S. to step up military intervention against the people's war. In reality, the rulers of Peru are the ones who are totally hooked on drug profits to pay off large debts to the imperialists. And their messed-up economy forces many peasants to grow coca in order to scratch out a living. The Communist Party of Peru is leading the peasants and their allies to overthrow the whole *system* that is the source of the drugs, poverty and other problems that confront the people in Peru.

The powers also justify their bloody attacks against the revolution by labeling the Communist Party of Peru as "terrorist." Some "human rights" groups and "leftists" say they are against the brutality of the Peruvian regime and the U.S. intervention in Peru, but they actually end up helping the enemy by repeating accusations about "terrorism." They criticize the revolutionaries for attacking so-called "progressive" politicians, government-backed "aid" programs, and "peasant self-defense groups." The enemy is creating much confusion around these issues, so it's important to get clear on them:

• Some mayors, other government officials and politicians in Peru claim to be "progressive" or "leftist." They say they are against the worst "abuses" of the Armed Forces. But they oppose the revolutionary overthrow of the rotten system and instead tell people to have faith in elections

and reforms. Then these demagogues whine about "terrorism" when they become targets of guerrilla attacks. But they are part of the ruling power structure and are enemies of the people. In every national liberation war and revolution around the world, officials of the old state have always become targets of the struggle.

• The Peruvian regime says that the "aid" programs in the shantytowns surrounding Peru's cities "help the poor." But these programs are funded by money from the U.S. and other imperialists. Such "charity" is a cynical counterrevolutionary tactic to make people dependent on the authorities. And it goes hand-in-hand with violent suppression of the poor.

• In the countryside, the Armed Forces use the cowardly tactic of coercing peasants into "self-defense groups" (known as "rondas") which are used as shields in battles with the Maoist guerrillas. Those who refuse to join are accused of being "subversives" and persecuted. When these peasants are killed in military clashes, the government claims they have been "massacred" by the guerrillas.

What it comes down to is that there is a *civil war* in Peru—a two-sided armed struggle for power. On one side, the Communist Party of Peru is leading the masses of poor peasants, workers and their allies in a new democratic revolution—for a new society free from the clutches of the big powers and exploiters. On the other side, the bourgeoisie and landlords in Peru, backed by the U.S. and other imperialists, are desperately trying to protect their power and privilege. The lines are drawn sharp, and everyone is being called on to take a stand on one side or the other.

The oppressors want people to swallow their reactionary logic: that the powers have a "natural," "god-given" right to use armed force to protect their rule. They say that those dissatisfied with their condition should make reforms peacefully and

"through the system." They preach that revolutionary violence "dehumanizes" people. This brainwash is backed up with a threat: If people do take up militant struggle that goes up against the interests of the ruling class—and especially if they take up revolutionary war to overthrow the system and create a new revolutionary power—they will face all-out armed suppression and be hammered down like nails. This is the reality of bourgeois class dictatorship, enforced at the point of the gun.

Mao Tsetung pointed out a deep truth when he said, "Without a people's army, the people have nothing." Before the people's war in Peru started in 1980, the oppressed in Peru had no army to fight for their interests and their future. They had no armed force of their own to go up against the big landlords and exploiters and their military which is equipped with imperialist-supplied weapons.

But the people of Peru have now built up a mighty revolutionary army of their own—an army of fearless women and men fighters. The People's Guerrilla Army of Peru is winning great victories in the battlefield against the enemy. And in the growing base areas all over Peru, the communist vision of a revolutionary society is becoming a reality. The people's war is advancing toward a time when the final offensive to seize countrywide power can be launched. With a revolutionary army, the people of Peru have achieved a great deal.

Our sisters and brothers in Peru are proving the *justice of revolutionary violence*. They are showing that the war of the oppressed is *liberating*—through people's war, power can be *taken out* of the hands of the oppressors and *put in* the hands of the poor and oppressed. And they are showing that when the people take up the ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and translate it into revolutionary action, they can challenge and *defeat* the armed might of the oppressors. □

Victory in Buffalo: A New Beginning

The anti-women, anti-abortion stormtroopers of Operation Rescue came to Buffalo on April 18. They came in for "another Wichita," a repeat of last summer when thousands of Christian fascists attacked abortion clinics and grabbed headlines for weeks. They hoped to go unopposed. They wanted free rein to spout their ugly lies and rally people around their whole program that subordinates and oppresses women. They wanted to bolster current moves by the Supreme Court to make abortion illegal. But this time...their venom did not carry the day!

For three weeks, Operation Rescue was confronted, hounded, put on the defensive and exposed. Buffalo has clearly NOT been "another Wichita." Operation Rescue came, threw down with all their ugly tactics, slinking around the city—but they were not able to close down one single clinic. Everywhere they turned they were met by a strong counteroffensive force—hundreds of women and men who were determined to keep the clinics open; who were clear in their demand: Abortion on Demand and Without Apology!

By the time Operation Rescue hit town, local pro-choice forces, as well as groups from around the country, had been organizing for weeks to launch a strong counter-offensive. Buffalo United For Choice pulled together a broad coalition for clinic defense. And national groups such as Refuse & Resist!, Women's Health Action Mobilization (WHAM), ACT UP, the Fund for the Feminist Majority, the Bay Area Coalition Against Operation Rescue (BACOR), and the National Women's Rights Organizing Committee, brought people in from around the country for the showdown.

The battle in Buffalo has been a real victory for the people. It has launched a new spirit of militant mass resistance—a determination to go on the offensive—that has been sorely missing from the pro-choice movement in recent years. And its impact and significance has reverberated throughout the country. It put the powers of this country on notice that women and men across this country are determined to fight and rebel against the efforts to enslave women. And it has begun to set a new standard for the level of resistance and organization that will be necessary to wage an even more determined fight to beat back the powers' continuing attacks on abortion rights.

For weeks, hundreds of people (from 300 to 1,500 each day) showed up beginning at 5 a.m. to defend the clinics. People took off work and cut classes repeatedly because they just "had to be there." People were determined that the clinic doors would stay open, that not one woman would be denied the right to an abortion. And the stakes in the battle were very high. The eyes of millions were focused on Buffalo, at the very time that the U.S. Supreme Court was set to hear arguments on Pennsylvania's anti-abortion law—a case which could give the court the opportunity they've been waiting for to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. In recent years demoralization and defeatism has infected sections of the pro-choice movement, and the stifling, dead-end politics of "working within the system" and relying on politicians and elections has led to a deadly state of affairs. But the battle in Buffalo has started to point the way off this treadmill. By relying on the masses of people, and waging a fierce toe-to-toe battle that politically took on the anti-abortionists, the pro-choice forces in Buffalo were able to not only deliver a defeat to Operation Rescue but to begin to strengthen the resolve, understanding, and determination of the pro-choice movement overall.

Toe-to-Toe with Operation Rescue at the Clinic Door

Operation Rescue set out to blockade and close four clinics, three in Buffalo and one in suburban Amherst. Operation Res-

cue lieutenants were in the area for months, photographing clinic entrances and doing surveillance on doctors' houses and offices. They held training sessions on how to break through clinic defense lines and use the various bullying tactics they've used in the past.

Clinic defense was organized by the Buffalo United for Choice coalition: There were Chase Teams with car phones to track Operation Rescue's movements. Infiltrators went into Operation Rescue's rallies. Careful plans were made for defensive formations to secure doors and escort women into the clinics. And communication networks were set up, aided by radio headsets for site leaders.

Clinic defenders were at every site each morning for 14 days. Operation Rescue had their people crawl out onto the streets and lie down, and several times they tried to rush the clinic defense lines. Hundreds of them were arrested for blocking the streets or parking lots in front of clinics. But they were never able to actually shut down any clinics.

When Operation Rescue started to employ more aggressive tactics, things started looking more and more like the typical "police-Operation Rescue" hits, where the police allow Operation Rescue leaders to move on clinics, block the entrances and only then move in to slowly arrest people. In places like Wichita, the cops have basically allowed Operation Rescue to block the entrances to clinics and harass women trying to go inside. In two cases in Buffalo, police removed pro-choice defenders from clinic doors, inviting Operation Rescue to move in for symbolic blockades. While these efforts were not successful in closing down the clinics, it did make it more difficult for patients to get inside without being harassed and it gave Operation Rescue the media attention and arrests they wanted.

A lot of times the police kept things under control by doing everything they could to keep the pro-choice and Operation Rescue people separated. To seize the offensive in these stand-off situations where defense lines were being held around the clinics, and Operation Rescue was massed to make a move, pro-choice activists utilized the technique of "shadowing" Operation Rescue leaders to politically expose them and call out their lies. Refuse &



Pro-choice demonstrators outside church where Operation Rescue was meeting.

Photo: C.O.C. Photography.

Resist! activists in particular played a leading role in dogging Operation Rescue leaders relentlessly with "in-your-face" verbal attacks. This served to get a clear pro-choice message out in the media, combated the anti-abortionists' lies and set a defining edge of "Abortion Without Apology!" It put the Operation Rescue leaders, who were trying to strategize for their attack, on the defensive and demoralized and confused their troops.

From the high school students taking their first political action ever, to the veteran feminist fighters for women's rights, everyone on the pro-choice side was electrified with the sense of being on the frontlines and going on the offensive. Many people were emboldened by the sense that they were acting for millions more across the country who are sick and tired of the way these Operation Rescue stormtroopers have been supported by the government and unleashed to create public opinion and pave the way for attacks on abortion. For some people on the clinic defense line this was the first time they had ever faced down the

"other side" directly.

Understanding the Stakes in Buffalo

Buffalo United for Choice, arising out of the mainstream women's movement, was very clear on the importance of the bottom line objective of clinic defense: to keep the four clinics open, and get patients inside for health care. They mobilized very widely, printing a two-page ad in the Buffalo News signed by thousands of people, demanding that Operation Rescue stop its efforts to close clinics. They organized thousands for clinic defense, and put out 50,000 flyers at the April 5 pro-choice March on Washington calling on people to come to Buffalo to take on Operation Rescue. Their call galvanized a lot of unity among people who understood the importance of thoroughly defeating Operation Rescue on this front. For years now, we have seen the impact Operation Rescue has had on abortion rights. We've seen how they've used their "clinic hits" to humiliate women and grab



Two members of Refuse & Resist! "escort" anti-abortion minister away from a clinic in Buffalo, April 18.

Photo: C.O.C. Photography.

a national media stage from which to promote their anti-woman views. The terror tactics of Operation Rescue have led to a situation where there are fewer and fewer abortion services and many women no longer have access to abortion at all. For all these reasons, people understood that if Operation Rescue was to be delivered a decisive defeat, the bottom line was that the clinic doors would have to stay open, no matter what.

At the same time, there were different views on how to look at clinic defense and the overall stakes and goals of the battle in Buffalo. Those who looked at clinic defense more narrowly tended to reduce the whole struggle to keeping the clinic doors open and their tactics didn't flow from a more strategic view of building a mass militant movement that fundamentally relies on the masses and not the politicians and "working through the system." For this reason some of the BUC mainstream leaders ended up working with the police and promoting the view that the people should rely on things like legal injunctions against Operation Rescue. They also put out the line that there should be no arrests among the pro-choice forces, and this contributed to a certain amount of conservatism in terms of really taking on and confronting Operation Rescue. In at least one case this led to coalition leaders even negotiating with the police during an Operation Rescue hit to pull clinic defenders away from a clinic door. This went against the rich experience of many people who have been involved in clinic defense around the country and have seen how the police assist Operation Rescue. And more fundamentally, it worked against people understanding what is really required to beat back Operation Rescue and the powers-that-be that stand behind them.

There were many on the frontlines in Buffalo who, in a beginning way, saw the importance of raising new political (and tactical) standards for the whole pro-choice movement. They wanted to rout Operation Rescue out of Buffalo and deliver them a sound political defeat. Refuse & Resist!, which formed a local Buffalo chapter and mobilized activists from as far as Hawaii and New Orleans, led in uniting other organizations to really go on the offensive and hound Operation Rescue in an uncompromising way. One hundred people met Randall Terry on April 17 at his first rally in Buffalo and gave Operation Rescue a taste of what it feels like to be harassed while trying to enter a building. R&R! also called a demonstration at the mayor's house and 350 people came out, refusing to leave until the mayor took a verbal and written indictment from the crowd.

At the clinic doors, there was always a section who refused to give in to Operation Rescue. As the police began to more openly side with Operation Rescue, they also began to clamp down on the most militant pro-choice activists. Saturday, April 25, some 1,500 pro-choice forces gathered in Buffalo. During this demonstration a member of Refuse & Resist! who had been dogging an Operation Rescue leader was suddenly grabbed by five cops, thrown into a police van, punched and called a "white nigger" and later charged with resisting arrest and disorderly conduct. And on April 28, five members of NWROC were brutally arrested when cops waded into a defense line after a woman from Operation Rescue complained that someone had broken her fingernail after she tried to blockade the clinic. More and more clinic defenders began to see the role the police were playing in their charade of "even-handedness" and were outraged at what was, for many of them, their first up close and personal taste of police brutality.

At 5 a.m. Thursday, one clinic defender posted a sign near the clinic that read: "Rodney King WAS ASSAULTED!" On the line there was a heightened sense of collective rage—at the Rodney King verdict and, for many, at the whole way this system treats the masses of people. Chants were raised against both Operation Rescue and the cops and many commented that they now knew more than ever why the masses hate the police. On Saturday, May 2, when Operation Rescue hit the main downtown clinic the police were complaining that they couldn't spend any more overtime at the clinics because they had to be ready to put down any responses to the Rodney King verdict. A Refuse & Resist! banner was circulated throughout the weekend for people to sign that read: "From L.A. to Buffalo, This Racist Shit Has Got to Go!" And many people went



Pro-choice demonstrators outside Buffalo mayor's house, April 22.

directly from the clinic defense lines to demonstrations being held to protest the King verdict. As debate went on around how to fight the oppression of women and Black people, more than one person voiced out loud that the attacks on women which escalate everyday from the system should be met with the same kind of rage and anger that was coming out around the Rodney King verdict.

Building Off Buffalo

The challenge was answered in Buffalo and the ugly forces of Operation Rescue have been delivered a significant defeat. This is an excellent beginning that must be built off and learned from in order to do what must be done to beat back the powers' continuing attacks on abortion. Operation Rescue will have a more difficult time mobilizing their forces in New York City, where they are planning actions in July at the Democratic National Convention. But the people must be vigilant—these Christian fascists have the support, backing and are led from the highest offices in the land. And they are a crucial component of the overall efforts by the ruling class to enforce the oppression of women. Operation Rescue's actions, time and again, have become more desperate and vile when they've been on the defensive, from clinic bombings to stepped-up harassment of women, clinic staff, and doctors. Everywhere they go, the people must continue to hound and expose their ugly lies.

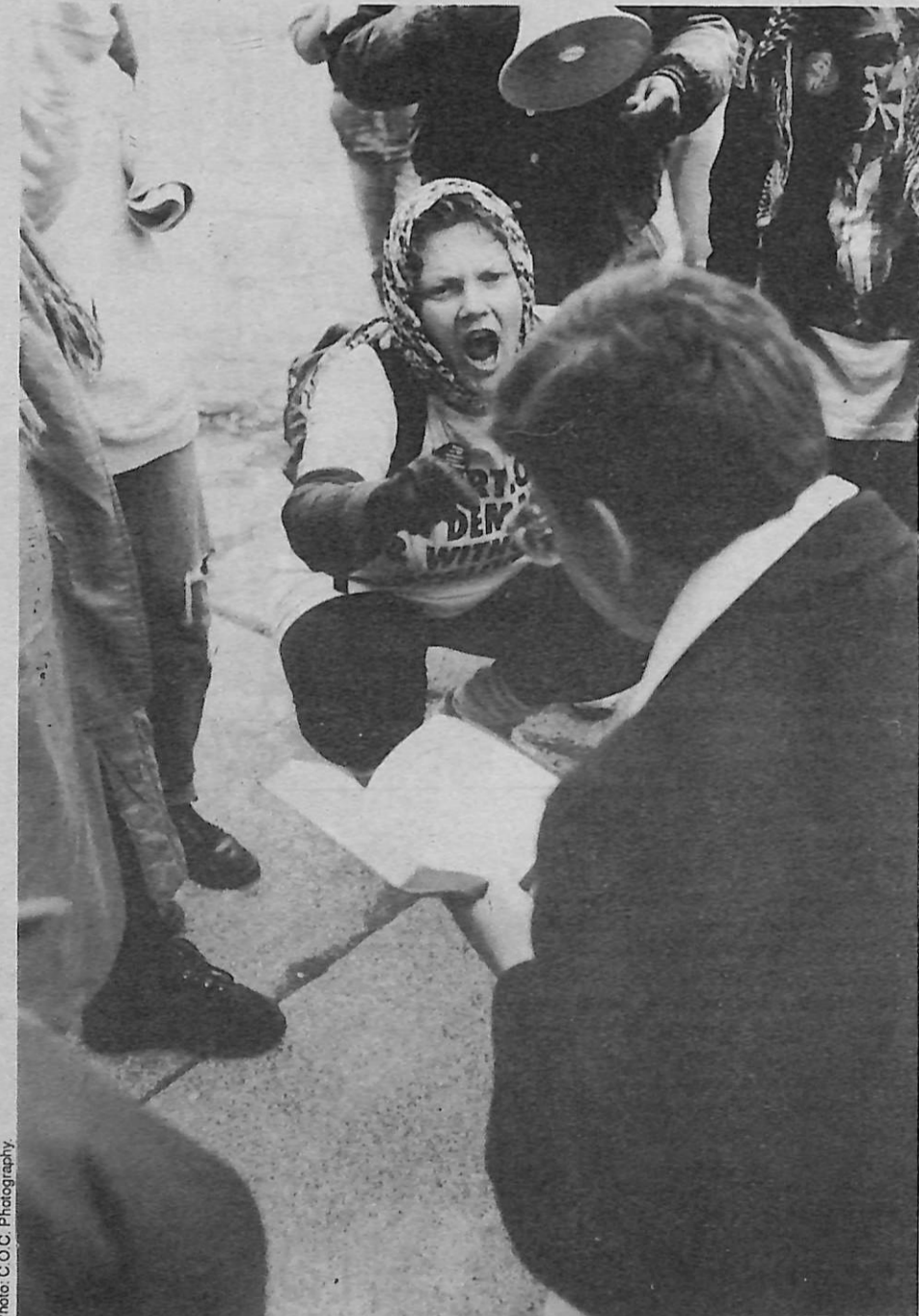
The new standards set in Buffalo must be developed and spread. This is a significant, if beginning, departure from the stifling and demoralizing politics of working within the

system—a path that would only end up sacrificing women's lives by channeling people's energy into dead-end electoral politics.

Having risen to the challenge in Buffalo, and won a lot, we still have a challenge before us. In July the Supremacist Court will announce its ruling on the Pennsylvania case. As the RW said, "Some people think there is nothing the people can do to stop the Supreme Court from overturning *Roe v. Wade*. But this is not true.... What is really required to win this battle is putting the powers in this country on notice that they will have to pay a very high political price if they take away the right to abortion. They must face the specter of broad social upheaval and 'no business as usual' resistance" "Showdown in Buffalo" by Li Onesto, RW No. 650).

Refuse & Resist! has put out the call: "Prepare now for mass demonstrations the day of and the day after the Supreme Court decision. Make it clear that if they touch *Roe* again, they will pay the highest political price."

...a member of Refuse & Resist! who had been dogging an Operation Rescue leader was suddenly grabbed by five cops, thrown into a police van, punched and called a "white nigger" and later charged with resisting arrest and disorderly conduct.



Anti-abortionist reading the Bible confronted by clinic defender.

Statement from Mary Lou Greenberg on May 1st, International Workers' Day, 1992



Mary Lou Greenberg, April 1989.

To My Sisters and Brothers on the Front Lines in Buffalo:

On this day, May 1st, the revolutionary holiday of the international proletariat, the people are on the offensive from Los Angeles to Buffalo! It's a fine day for the red flag of revolution to be raised from the clinic defense lines where women are boldly defying their would-be enslavers, to South Central Los Angeles where Black people are sending their own verdict on the acquittal of the thugs in blue who assaulted Rodney King. The stakes are high and the world is watching: will people here seize this opportunity to push the whole struggle to a higher level? Can we seize this time to push back the whole reactionary agenda—from assaults on women to assaults on Black people—and do it in a way to strengthen our forces for future battles? We can and will!

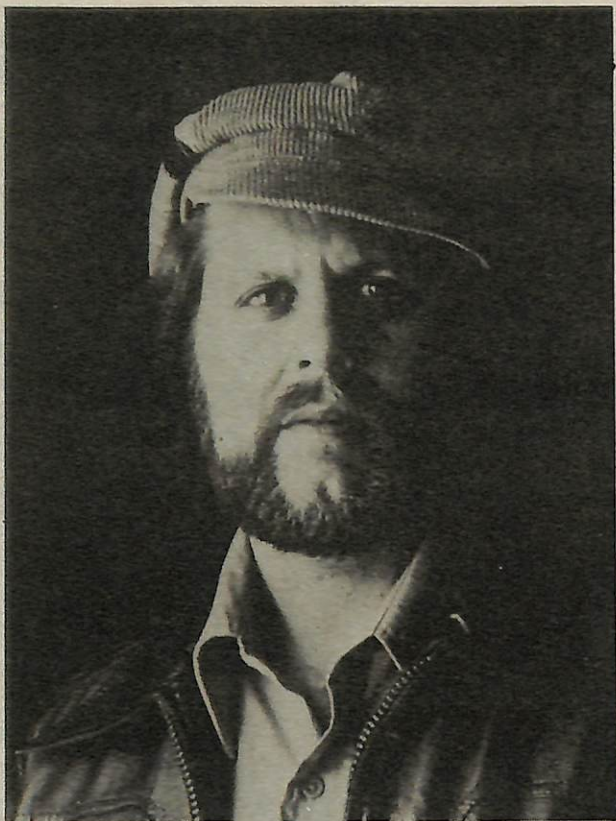
I came to Buffalo three weeks ago as part of the effort by Refuse & Resist! in solidarity and unity with others, to defeat the woman-haters and send a message to their high government backers and to all those who would force women to breed: "We will defy you and we will not be stopped!" Not a day has gone by that I haven't been proud to be part of all those—clinic defenders, providers, and medical personnel—who have stood their ground and refused to be intimidated by the fascist stormtroopers. But people need to go farther, bust loose all the way from what holds them back, including the view that they can rely on politicians, the courts or the cops and that it's possible to make the system work in the people's interests. The cold truth is that this system is built on the oppression of women and the oppression of Black people and needs to be overthrown!

The powers would have us believe that this is impossible; that the collapse of the Soviet Union has meant "the collapse of communism" and with that, the collapse of any hope for another future. But it was phony communism that collapsed last year; we in the Revolutionary Communist Party say, "Long live real communism!"

The good news that May 1st brings from our class, the proletariat, is that possibilities do indeed exist for another, quite different future than what the powers offer today. That revolution really is the hope of the hopeless. And that it's not an impossible dream but realizable. It's been done before, in revolutionary China under Mao Tsetung. And it's being done today in the mountains and cities of Peru where the people's war, led by the Communist Party of Peru (known as Sendero Luminoso or Shining Path in the media) is advancing toward victory, bringing new hope and raising the sights of people worldwide.

So on this day, let us join our voices, our hopes and dreams, our strength and militancy with the struggles of peoples across the country and around the world. Let May 1st ring with the promise of a different future!

Mary Lou Greenberg, Spokesperson, Revolutionary Communist Party, New York City Branch



“There is nothing more uplifting than communism —nothing which gives greater scope to human imagination and creativity, to the vision of a vastly different world, and to the initiative of the masses in creating such a world. That the rulers of the Soviet Union could not inspire people with this ideal is a condemnation of them. But more than that, it is a reflection of the fact that they had abandoned and betrayed the principles of communism and become but another group of enforcers of the old order.”

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