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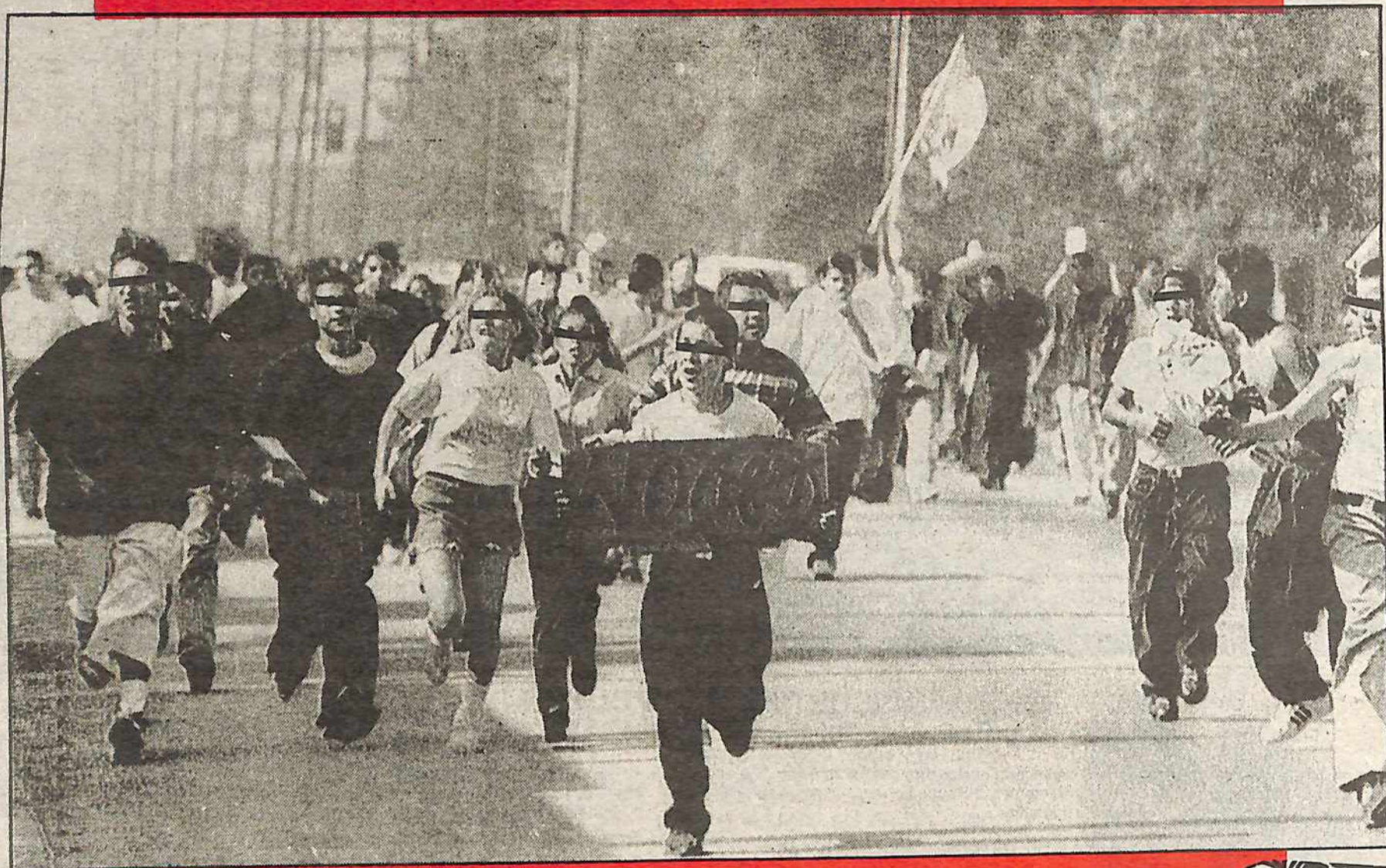
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California's SOS Law Sparks a Mass Movement

Resist the War on Immigrants



High school walkout against Prop 187, Los Angeles.

See page 3



4

Against *The Bell Curve*: Inequality Is Not in Our Genes! Let's Go All the Way in the Fight Against Racism!

8

Special to the RW/OR Part 3: Shantytown Conversation in Capitalist China



11

Black Youth Rebellion Against Police Murder in Lexington, Kentucky





As of October 30, Chairman Gonzalo (Abimael Guzmán) has been held in isolation for...

2 YEARS 19 DAYS

In October 1992, Chairman Gonzalo—leader of the Maoist Communist Party of Peru—was sentenced to life imprisonment by hooded military judges of the U.S.-backed regime in Peru. The fascist regime in Peru is holding this revolutionary leader of the Peruvian people under very brutal conditions in an underground concrete dungeon at a naval base. He is being denied visits by lawyers, doctors and relatives and deprived of proper medical care and reading materials. Peru's President Fujimori has publicly threatened to execute Chairman Gonzalo and boasted of applying psychological torture on him. And a new Constitution, made official last year, reinstates the death penalty which could be used against Chairman Gonzalo and other revolutionary prisoners. The Peruvian regime must be prevented from killing Chairman Gonzalo through the death penalty or by other means.

Fujimori has repeatedly claimed that Chairman Gonzalo has made a call for negotiations from prison. In this situation, what possible excuse can Fujimori now offer for continuing to deny Comrade Gonzalo independent contact with lawyers, doctors and friendly and neutral visitors from outside the prison in a way that meets the basic international standards for treatment of political prisoners and prisoners of war? It is vitally important for people in Peru and around the world to hear what Chairman Gonzalo's views are from Chairman Gonzalo himself—directly and unimpeded. This heightens the urgency of the fight to create an international political climate which compels the Peruvian government to grant access to Comrade Gonzalo by his legal representatives and other friends who can meet and talk directly with him.

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.

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California's SOS Law Sparks a Mass Movement

Resist the War on Immigrants



High school students at Van Nuys court house, October 28.

A powerful mass movement of resistance has risen up in California! Hundreds of thousands of people are awakening to political struggle, organizing themselves and taking action. And in the lead are the high school students—especially those from immigrant families, who the authorities often treat as “illegals,” “nobodies” and “gang members.”

All over California, anti-Proposition 187 marches have taken place—a thousand here, two thousand there. Then, in Los Angeles on October 16, the largest march in southern California history brought an estimated 100,000 people into the streets denouncing Proposition 187 and demanding an end to the war against immigrants. “I read about these things for years,” one college student said the day after the L.A. march. “But it wasn’t until yesterday that I felt involved in a mass movement of people. People of my generation haven’t experienced that.”

In mid-October the organization La Resistencia estimated that at least 6,500 high school students throughout California had walked out to protest the anti-immigrant ballot initiative called Proposition 187. Now the media is reporting that at least 8,000 students walked out *in one day alone*, on October 28. The struggle is mushrooming.

In Los Angeles, San Diego, Berkeley, Oakland and Anaheim, high school walkouts spread from school to school. The walkouts often start with students from immigrant families, but over and over students of all nationalities have joined in. They’re furious that the government is considering expelling 300,000 kids from school for being “illegal”! It is no accident that this movement is centered in Los Angeles—where a whole generation was schooled in the great 1992 Rebellion.

These new fighters are facing increasing police attacks, threats by school authorities and all kinds of manipulation and divide-and-conquer tactics. The students are work-

ing to put clique warfare behind them—this struggle is too important to be broken up by meaningless old hatreds! These days are creating new consciousness, organizations and alliances.

The struggle has also spread deep among the middle classes. Many thousands of professionals have denounced Proposition 187 requirements that would turn teachers and medical workers into snitches for the immigration police. And many have signed pledges of resistance—saying they will refuse to comply with these Nazi measures, even if Proposition 187 passes. It is a big deal when thousands of professionals promise to break the law and defy the state!

The struggle against 187 has spread into Mexico as well—2,000 people demonstrated on October 26 in Mexico City.

TV news reports say that California authorities have plans to put the National Guard on alert. After long ignoring the growing resistance, the media admits that these demonstrations are now the force “shaping public opinion” in the struggle over Prop 187.

This situation is excellent!

Far too often, the struggle between classes in the United States has been a *one-sided* thing. The ruling class pumps out cut-backs, lock-downs, round-ups, shut-downs, lay-offs and take-backs. Well, in California these days, it ain’t going down like that.

The “nobodies” are taking the stage. It’s a *two-sided* struggle now. Let’s get it on!

A Rising Resistance

Where did this resistance spring from? Proposition 187 is a big power move by the ruling class itself that *pulled* the people into political struggle. Maoists have a saying: “The enemy picked up a stone and dropped it on his own feet.”

If Proposition 187 becomes state law, undocumented immigrants will be cut off from all social services and medical services (except for emergency medical treat-

ment). Kids from undocumented families will be expelled from school—affecting an estimated 300,000 kids! Proposition 187 requires all kinds of professionals—including teachers and medical workers—to act like secret police. They will be required to report “suspected aliens” to the immigration authorities.

The drive to pass Proposition 187 was supposed to push the whole state toward an apartheid-like clampdown. Instead, their cruel plans and racist lies have stirred up powerful sections of the people.

There is still a serious danger that the ruling class will try to impose Proposition 187. But now, a real *struggle* over these issues has broken out, and important sections of the people are not under the control of the political establishment.

This struggle is greatly increasing the chances of beating back Proposition 187—and it creates a much better situation for organizing mass defiance *even if Prop 187 passes on November 8.*

Militant Mass Struggle Changes the Political Landscape

As soon as people took to the streets to oppose 187, they have been told to chill. The word has been put out: “If you demonstrate, if you walk out, if you defy the cops, if you wave Mexican flags, if you show too many brown faces in the streets, if you wave banners showing Pete Wilson as a Nazi pig—then you are only hurting yourselves.” Some people say that high school walkouts and demonstrations are only a distraction from the “real task” (which they say is to get out the vote). They say that *any* militant resistance will only hurt the cause by “frightening the mainstream voters and cause them to vote for Proposition 187.”

The truth is that the militant mass struggle in the streets of California is *already* changing the political landscape. The more struggle there has been, the more the question has been seriously debated and the more people *who are confused or unaware of the real provisions of 187* have changed their minds. More people in unions and professional associations have pledged to not comply with this law if it passes. And the powers-that-be have fretted, more and more, about 187 “going too far.”

All of history shows that to bring real change, the masses of people must struggle

fiercely for their interests.

Civil rights sit-ins and anti-war draft card burnings in the ‘60s brought the issues to millions of ordinary people who had to wonder why the convictions of the protesters were so strong. When GIs heard about violent confrontations going on all over campuses at home, and put it together with their treatment in the army, thousands refused to fight the war. The ‘60s rebellions in Watts and Detroit, the Rodney King Rebellion and the armed uprising in Chiapas are all examples of how the people win respect and support, nationwide and worldwide, when they stand up to fight the power structure.

In the 1930s, conservative Jewish leaders in Germany often urged Jewish people *not* to resist or protest the Nazi laws passed against them. The official “Jewish community leaders” often said that such protests would just stir up anti-Jewish feelings—they said it would be better for Jewish people to keep a low profile, show that they were loyal to the system and hope for the best. This was deadly advice to give people facing persecution.

In California, the very people whose fate is being decided—who have enriched and fueled the sunbelt economy with their labor and taxes—will not be allowed *any* say at the polls. It is outrageous for anyone to suggest that those people *targeted* by Prop 187 should not use all available means to speak out and resist.

For people who do vote, the *least* they could do is reject 187. This will help deprive the government of the mandate they want to use against the people. But we say: if you do vote, don’t vote for politicians, vote *against* 187. For many, this may be a first act in taking a stand opposing the clampdown on the immigrant people.

While the denial of a mandate can be an important defeat for the government, people need to learn through this process that this war against immigrants will never be decisively defeated by *just* voting. Voting cannot settle this issue, because elections are not the basic means through which the real decisions are made. Initiatives like 187 come from the needs of the imperialist state which is driven by dire necessity to continue to press for and implement such police-state measures.

Even if 187 gets defeated on Novem-

Continued on page 12



Students face off against cops in Downey, Los Angeles, October 21.

**The Bell Curve Book:
A Justification for Class
and National Oppression**

Inequality Is Not in Our Genes!



DNA: Strands of genetic material, here magnified approximately 20,000 times.

Part 1: The Stupidity of IQ Theories

America is a society of haves and have-nots—a class society—where things are extremely polarized. People live on the streets while others live in luxury. High-tech computers whiz in downtown skyscrapers and affluent suburbs while malnutrition and illiteracy infects the ghettos. Millions of people feel more and more alienated, dissatisfied and angry because this system offers them no future but poverty, unemployment and jail. Millions of working people—who once made peace with a system that offered them a factory job and a house in the suburbs—now face an uncertain future in a rapidly shifting “rust belt”



economy. In 1992, the L.A. Rebellion signaled the deep anger and contempt for official society from those on the bottom. And in 1994 the U.S. ruling class is increasingly worried about their future.

Enter into this picture the new book by Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray, *The Bell Curve*. This is a freaked out, ruling class view of society full of poisonous and wrong ideas.

For the last few weeks, TV, radio and magazines have been full of discussion and debate about this book. And Charles Murray has been doing numerous interviews, defending his thesis that “IQ” scores measure “intelligence,” that “IQ” is inherited and that Black people have lower IQs. (The other author, Richard Herrnstein, died in September.)

The Bell Curve has provoked a storm of debate. Racist and ludicrous arguments in *The Bell Curve* have been given serious consideration in various articles and editorials where completely unscientific ideas are repeated as fact. And at the same time, others have stepped forward to try and take on the dangerous and wrong ideas in the book.

This 850 page book is so full of bogus arguments that a polemic could be written against almost every sentence. There are tons of charts and statistics that attempt to give the book a disguise of “hard facts” and “scientific research.” But at its core, *The Bell Curve* is totally unscientific and wrong in its assumptions, method, conclusions and “solutions.”

The ideas in *The Bell Curve* are far from new. Throughout history there have always been theories to justify class society and oppression. The pseudo-science of sociobiology that says things like “intelligence” are inherited through genes has been treated as a serious science for decades. Funded by major oppressors and institutions it has been promoted to justify inequality in society. And the specific argument that “IQ” scores are a valid way to measure human beings has been used for a long time to explain and justify oppressive social policies, from tracking in the schools to the sterilization of poor and Black people.

In particular, *The Bell Curve* tries to rehabilitate old racist theories that claim that Black people are inherently inferior. In *The Bell Curve*'s distorted world, the reason why the Black masses continue to

live in misery and poverty is not because of the bone-crushing, systematic oppression they face but because they have lower IQs. In a twisted way Murray and Herrnstein take the growth of a Black middle class since the mass upsurge of the 1960s and throw this back in people's face to condemn the masses of Black people to second class status.

This is not the first time people have had to wage a battle to defeat these ideas. In the 1970s, university “intellectuals” like Arthur Jensen and William Shockley promoted theories of “racial inferiority” based on IQ scores. And Richard Herrnstein had been saying much of what's in *The Bell Curve* for over two decades. In 1971 he published a major article about the “heritability of intelligence,” predicting a future in which the “tendency to be unemployed may run in the genes of a family about as certainly as bad teeth do now.”

And this is not the first time that people have come forward to protest and take on these theories. In the 1970s and since, there have been people within the scientific community like Stephen Jay Gould and Richard Lewontin who have written many excellent books and articles, thoroughly demolishing these racist and unscientific theories. A national campaign was organized to take on and confront people like Jensen, Shockley and Herrnstein whenever and wherever they tried to promote their unscientific and racist theories. Students boycotted their classes. Lectures were invaded and totally disrupted. And people mobilized to demonstrate against and shut down programs where these racists were scheduled to speak.

But old reactionary ideas will never be finally defeated as long as the material underpinnings of those ideas—the prevailing social relations—remain fundamentally intact. And ugly books like *The Bell Curve* will come out as long as this ugly system exists. So once again, it is necessary for the people to enter the “IQ” debate and wage a campaign against the bourgeois and racist ideas (and social policy) being put out in *The Bell Curve*.

The ruling class and the elite in this society would like the common people to not be a factor in this discussion. But the masses of people have a real necessity and class interest to enter into this whole debate. This book comes at a time when ugly winds are blowing from many quarters



to justify increased oppression, incarceration and brutality against the poor and oppressed people—commonly referred to as “the underclass.” And people from all fields of science and education need to unite with the masses to organize and wage a big public campaign to defeat this book from many different angles. By looking at, evaluating and defeating the thinking and practice behind *The Bell Curve*, the people can learn more about the real nature of the problems in this society and the real solutions.

We hope this article will be a contribution to this debate. There are many angles to be explored. For instance, one could expose how imperialist economics and military power have far more to do with the wealth and power of those termed the “cognitive elite” by the authors of *The Bell Curve* than their brain power. But in this two-part article and the accompanying article, “Let's Go All the Way in the Fight Against Racism,” we will concentrate on some of the central “scientific” themes put forward by Herrnstein and Murray around “race” and IQ.



The Basic Theory of The Bell Curve

First, let's look at some of the basic ideas in *The Bell Curve*.

1. The authors claim that "intelligence" is the driving force determining social and economic class in America. They say, "Social class remains the vehicle of social life, but intelligence now pulls the train." They say America is becoming rapidly polarized—between a class of "cognitive elite" at the top and a huge underclass whose thinking abilities will never match the future needs of most employers. They say that, increasingly, American society and the world is dominated by sophisticated machines and "smart" people who run them—and that this high-tech society has less and less use for people with low IQs. They say this new underclass may be permanently doomed because of their low IQs to welfare dependency, poverty, and crime; that people with low IQs are strongly outbreeding people with high IQs and that this is hurting America's ability to be maximally productive and compete economically and deal with social problems.

2. At the foundation of *The Bell Curve* is the belief that "intelligence" is something human beings have that can be measured and evaluated through IQ tests. Murray and Herrnstein believe this "intelligence" is at least partly inherited. And that a person's "IQ"—more than their class background, how rich or poor they are, what kind of neighborhood they grew up in, whether or not they are a member of an oppressed nationality, whether or not they went to a good or bad school, etc.—say more about

how well a person will/can do in society in terms of school and jobs. They argue there is a strong correlation between IQs and things like crime, unemployment, rates of birth, divorce, "illegitimate" children, welfare dependency, "bad parenting" and whether or not people vote. They argue that Black people have lower IQ scores in large part because of their genes. They say the government needs to restrict immigration because immigrants with lower IQs are coming into this country. And they say "low IQ" people should be discouraged from having children while people with "high IQs" should be encouraged to have children.

3. *The Bell Curve* says improved environment, like better schools, better nutrition, better living conditions, etc., can improve IQ, but not very much. Murray and Herrnstein say environmental changes cannot adequately counteract the fact that some



people have lower IQs, because "cognitive ability" is largely inherited. And they argue that even if IQ is not inherited, it is still extremely hard, if not impossible to change IQ by changing people's environment.

4. Therefore, *The Bell Curve* argues, social programs designed to counteract things like racism, discrimination and lack of opportunity are a waste of time. According to them, no matter how much help people with low IQs get, they will never be as smart and productive as others with higher IQs. So, they say, society should just accept this reality and organize accordingly. They say

the government should get rid of affirmative action and government programs like Head Start. They say the real problem in the American educational system is that not enough money is spent on finding and developing the "gifted" high IQ students so that they can reach their full potential in society.

As people can see, this is a ton of wrong, dangerous and horrendous stuff. Here, we can only begin to take on some of it.

IQ Tests: What is their function, what do they really measure and how are they used in society to justify and perpetuate inequality

The Bell Curve is built on a very wrong foundation from the very beginning—the idea that IQ tests and scores are a valid measurement of human beings.

Herrnstein and Murray argue that human beings have something called "intelligence" (or cognitive ability). They say this can be measured through tests and that IQ scores are the best predictor of how well people will do in school, jobs, etc.

But standardized tests cannot adequately measure the broad range and complexity of human thinking and problem solving. As Ardea Skybreak, (*RW*, December 7, 1984 "Not In Our Genes: A Breath of Fresh Air In the Scientific Sphere") points out, "IQ theories objectively (sometimes even explicitly) define intelligence as whatever IQ tests measure! And it can be clearly shown that—whatever it is that these tests measure—it has little to do with a person's mental capacities and abilities and everything to do with reflecting existing social relations."

Stephen Jay Gould's book, *The Mismeasure of Man*, shows how IQ tests have been developed and given in a culturally-biased and unscientific way. And he argues that IQ scores are invalid as a measure of a person's thinking abilities. As Gould says, "determinist arguments for ranking people according to a single scale of intelligence, no matter how numerically sophisticated, have recorded little more than social prejudice."

The idea and practice of testing for "intelligence" has always been used against the people. Ever since the beginning of this century, IQ tests have been used, among other things, to channel working class and minority children into educational dead ends, to justify forced sterilization programs for the poor and to set up restrictive immigration quotas. In the early 1900s, testing in the U.S. was linked to the passage of compulsory sterilization laws aimed at people the system said were "genetically inferior degenerates." And in the last 50 years IQ tests and scores have been widely accepted and used in schools to "track" children—giving some students higher educational opportunities, while closing the door to others.

The idea that "IQ" scores are valid has also been used to justify economic and social stratification in society. People are told they are rich or poor because they are "smart" or "dumb." We are told there are different classes in society, not because of the way capitalism is organized, but be-

cause some people are just "losers" while others, because of their "intelligence" are able to "rise to the top." We are told that Black people don't do well in school, not because there is national oppression and discrimination, but because Black people have "low IQs." In other words, the whole idea of people having an "IQ" is used to justify class and national oppression.

In the book *Not in Our Genes*, R.C. Lewontin, Steven Rose, and Leon J. Kamin take on the whole idea that human beings have an "intelligence" that can be measured. And they show how the whole institution of "IQ" testing and scores is wrong. They demonstrate how the mental capabilities of human beings are the product of an ongoing process of thinking and practice in life, and that there is no such thing as "intelligence" as a discrete measurable object or a fixed, underlying property of human beings.

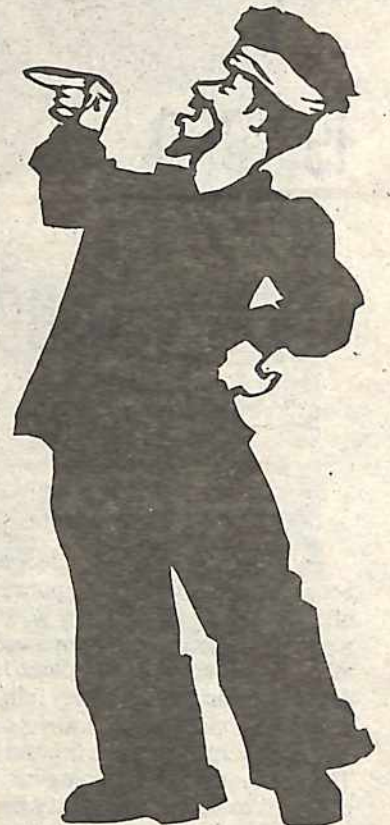
Yet all the arguments in *The Bell Curve* are made based on accepting IQ scores as a real measure and predictor of human achievement.

The Genetic/IQ Argument

The Bell Curve cites studies that estimate from 40 to 80 percent of an individual's intelligence stems from genes, and then takes a mid-point of 60 percent. The book claims that as environmental differences narrow, heritability rises. Murray and Herrnstein write, "success and failure in the American economy, and all that goes with it, are increasingly a matter of the genes that people inherit."

They go on to say that smart people, intermarrying, will produce smart children; the disadvantaged will pass down their intractable handicaps; and the gap between the classes will grow.

But as Skybreak has pointed out, "there



A poor inner-city school.



Students watch a laser demonstration at a wealthy suburban school.

Inequality Is Not in Our Genes!



Continued from page 5

is no valid study demonstrating the inheritance of whatever it is that intelligence tests measure (certainly not intelligence!)."

No scientist has ever been able to relate any aspect of any human social behavior to any particular gene or set of genes. And many (if not most) psychologists recognize that differences in "IQ" between various groups of people cannot be interpreted as having a genetic basis. The main factor that determines how well people do in "IQ" tests is their environment and experiences—not what kind of genes they have inherited.

In a review of *Not in Our Genes*, that appeared in *Revolution* magazine, 1985, Skybreak explains: "In fact there is no validity to the notion that individual difference in what are termed abilities are determined by genes. For one thing all aspects of an individual reflect the constant interplay between its phenotype (i.e., the sum of the characteristics manifested by the individual, resulting from the interaction of its genes and its environment—the phenotype is not fixed, but in a constant state of change) and the external environment. It is this dynamic interplay which brings to the fore (or suppresses) the endless variety of individual human behaviors. The individual is not in a vacuum but in a social context from its earliest inception."

In other words, inheriting certain kinds of genes cannot predict how a human being

The 3 Ours:

Our Ideology Is Marxism-Leninism-Maoism
Our Vanguard Is the Revolutionary Communist Party
Our Leader Is Chairman Avakian

will in fact develop and live their life. And in particular, there is no scientific evidence that something like "brain power" or "intelligence" is inherited.

The Bell Curve argues that IQ scores reflect different "intelligences" among different ethnic groups. But there is no scientific basis for "race" categories of human beings. The human species arose only a hundred thousand years or so ago—only a drop in the bucket, in terms of the evolution of life on this planet. This means that any differences among different groups of people must have emerged since then.

Jim Holt, in a recent article in *The New York Times*, points out that, "Among the ideas that have harmed mankind, one of the most durable and destructive is that the human species is divided into biological units called races and that some races are

innately superior to others." And Holt goes on to argue that, "Superficial adaptations like skin color can evolve very quickly, in a matter of several thousand years. But changes in brain structure and capacity take far longer—more like hundreds of thousands of years. There is no evidence for such changes since *Homo sapiens* first appeared on the fossil record. Innate differences in intelligence among the races have simply not had enough time to evolve."

In fact, genetic diversity among different groups of people is very, very small. Molecular biologists can now examine genes in different geographical populations. And what they have found shows that the whole concept of "race" is very unscientific. All humans are striking in their high degree of genetic similarity. And 85 percent of human genetic variation can be

National Oppression is Not a "Race" Issue

Let's Go All the Way in the

This article, first published in RW No. 481, is a timely counter-attack to the theories of race and intelligence being debated in the recent furor over the book "The Bell Curve." The article deals with some very crucial points: How we need to fight the domination of oppressed nations by oppressor nations in today's world; how this historical/political problem is not a matter of "race"; how the whole concept of "race"—which has been used to justify the oppression of millions of people—is a totally unscientific concept that does not explain any real differences among the human species.

the point has been made that if our whole species went extinct except for one small population of people somewhere in the world, this population would contain something like 85 percent of all the genetic variation existing in the entire human species and could therefore reconstitute it in its totality, except for a few rare mutations which might be lost here or there. As the authors of *Not in Our Genes* put it: "Human 'racial' differentiation is, indeed, only skin deep. Any use of racial categories must take its justification from some other source than biology."

Throughout history, peoples who have been dominated have been portrayed, and often made to feel, as if they were in some way inferior to those who oppress them—more ugly, animal-like, dumb, socially degenerate, and so on. Phony religious and scientific arguments have always been invented to perpetuate these lies and slanders. This is a form of ideological warfare, designed to bolster and justify the oppressors and to weaken the resistance of the oppressed. To go up against this, oppressed people have justly struggled to cultivate self-pride and a righteous identity as part of fighting for liberation. In today's world this continues to be a legitimate and crucial concern in the fight against national oppression, but it must be done from the standpoint of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism or it will inevitably be limited and will not be able to lead to full liberation.

In the world today differences between nations and peoples are of real importance, and it is crucial to draw the distinction between oppressor and oppressed. The current relations of oppressor to oppressed nations do not fall out merely along "racial" lines. They are the products of history, and they reflect the clashes and conflicts within and between different political and economic systems. None of these systems and relations are permanent.

So it is not a simple question of the White Man lording it over Black people and other people of color from time immemorial. The particular forms of oppression and exploitation that mark today's world are a product of only a few hundred years of very recent history. The economic and political system of capitalism, which dominates today's world, developed and was originally centered in Europe (for various reasons, not rooted in "racial" characteristics) and has resulted in the exploitation and oppression of the masses of people in that region

and the colonial enslavement of entire peoples in Asia, Africa, and the Americas. In its expansion, capitalism encountered many different kinds of social systems, including many with their own sets of oppressive relations between peoples, between different classes, and between men and women. Capitalism at one and the same time shattered or radically changed these systems and integrated their remnants into a global system of intensified exploitation and oppression which today is the worldwide system of imperialism.

It is only now that humanity has reached the point where the material conditions exist to be able to do away with all forms of exploitation and oppression on a world scale (including between oppressor and oppressed nations and between men and women) and to move beyond this phase of history. This is what we're about doing.

To succeed in doing this it is necessary to understand where different social systems come from and what makes them tick. Again, as an important part of that, it is necessary to understand the crucial distinction between oppressor and oppressed nations and how this relates to "racial" distinctions.

The Concept of "Race"

First some things must be said about the concept of "race." There is no such thing as either an "inferior" or a "superior" race of people. No "race" of people is "better" or "worse" than another in any physical or intellectual capacities. This is a matter of scientific fact which has long been proved, much to the dismay of all those (mainly from the oppressor nations) who have tried hard to "scientifically" prove the opposite, and have failed.

All human beings belong to a single biological species. We are the product of biological evolution and in this way are related to all other forms of life on this planet. Among the mammals our closest living relatives are the chimps and gorillas. We share with them a common ape-like ancestor, from whose evolutionary line our own "hominid" line split off around four million years ago. Some branches of this line eventually became extinct but one survived, distinguished by such things as its fully erect posture, its extremely agile

hands, its prolonged infancy and social dependency, its complex brain, and in short, its unprecedented ability to understand and transform matter and the world around it. *Homo sapiens sapiens*: This is the one and only biological species of modern human beings. Our species evolved in Africa, so the ancestors of all people living today (Black, white, American Indian, Asian, etc.) are African. Our species spread out fairly rapidly throughout the African continent and into Europe and Asia, and even reached Australia by about 35,000 years ago and the Americas by about 15,000 years ago.

As it spread around the globe the human species showed some minor superficial differences such as variations in skin color which were probably an adaptation to different amounts of sun exposure at different geographic latitudes. But essentially our species has remained biologically very little changed since its origin in Africa, and, most importantly, has remained one single biological species.¹

Skin color today itself says little of historical origins. The present-day Europeans are thought of as one race, but they are apparently a mixture of Huns, Ostrogoths, and Vandals from the East, Arabs from the South, and Indo-Europeans from the Caucasus. And to further stress just how much we continue to be one single species,

1. In fact, we are so much the same species that it has now been proved that there is more genetic variation among individuals within any one human population than between any two groupings of people in different parts of the world. The small differences that exist in things such as the proportion of people with different blood types (A, B, AB, or O) in populations of people in different parts of the world don't correlate with what we think of as "racial" groupings. For instance the Kikuyu people of East Africa are more similar in that sense to the Japanese than to their Masai neighbors, even though by social and historical criteria the Kikuyu and Masai are considered to be part of the same "race." (For more on this and more examples showing how the concept of "race" has no real biological validity for human beings, see for instance *Not in Our Genes* by Lewontin, Rose, and Kamin, Pantheon Books, 1984, pp. 119-127. Another very useful source on this subject is Stephen Jay Gould's *Mismeasure of Man*, W.W. Norton, 1981, especially the last chapter.)

Racial Theories Don't Stand Up

So racial characteristics do not reflect any significant biological differences and we truly are all brothers and sisters of African descent in that sense. Everything we have ever accomplished in the world, good or bad, has been through the medium not of biological change but through the development and change of our forms of social organization. But are some "races" better able to produce some kinds of social systems than other "races"? In a word, no. To the racists who argue, for instance, that Black people or American Indians were not capable of developing highly complex advanced civilizations like the white Europeans, suffice it to point to the highly complex and advanced civilizations which flourished in Egypt or Mesopotamia long before any comparable systems developed in Europe. You can point as well to the great civilizations in China, Turkey, India, the Americas, etc., which all developed and flourished long before "white Europeans" began their colonial expansions.

The peoples in these non-European regions were also just as capable as anyone else of bringing forth relations of exploitation and oppression. Wherever there have been kings, queens, and empires there have been masses of people exploited and oppressed, peoples and nations enslaved, and women subjugated by men. The great dynasties of Egypt and China and the Aztec and Inca empires are all examples of societies which were not created by white Europeans but which developed and flourished on their own on a basis of exploitation and subjugation of the many by the few.

Today the main oppressor nations are to a large degree made up of people of white European ancestry. But there are other oppressor nations. It is not always the case that the oppressor nation is white and the oppressed nation is non-white, and an oppressed nation can even be of the same "race" as the people who oppress them. For example there is the oppression of the Irish by the English (white on white), or the oppression of the Eritreans by the Ethiopians (black on black). You cannot make sense of this through some "racial theory." Another



Differences in thinking ability among human beings are not "natural," inherited, or unchangeable. And most natural scientists argue that such differences can be made to shrink and even disappear with a better understanding of how environment determines the formation of our brain.

And in capitalist society, the oppression of whole groupings of people—not their genes—has a profound effect on whether or

not and how people are able to develop their thinking skills.

The Bell Curve cites statistics that show that Black people in the U.S., on the average, score about 15 points lower than whites on IQ tests. Murray and Herrnstein argue that much of this is due to inherited genes. In countries around the world, oppressed minorities, like the Maori people in Australia and New Zealand and the so-called "untouchables" in India, score about 15 points lower on IQ tests than the majority group. In Northern Ireland, the Catholics, who are oppressed and discriminated against, score about 15 points lower than Protestants on IQ tests. And in Japan there is an oppressed caste of

Japanese people, called the Buraku people, who also score about 15 points lower than the majority of Japanese people in Japan. When these Buraku people came to the United States and were not distinguished as a different group of Japanese people, but were treated just like other Japanese-Americans, this "IQ differential" disappeared. This shows the powerful impact of environment, especially in relationship to groups of people who are systematically oppressed. □

TO BE CONTINUED: Part 2 will take on The Bell Curve's distorted views of why Black people are oppressed and why there are classes in America.



found within *any* local group. We are a single species with variations. And if our whole species went extinct except for one small population, this group of people would contain more than 85 percent of the genetic variations in human beings. (See article: "Let's Go All the Way in the Fight Against Racism," page 6.)

The *RW* encourages people to check out the following books and articles which are helpful and interesting on the question of IQ tests and genetics and make powerful arguments against wrong views on the relationship between genes and social behavior:

The Mismeasure of Man by Stephen Jay Gould

Not In Our Genes by R.C. Lewontin, Steven Rose and Leon J. Kamin

Exploding the Gene Myth by Ruth Hubbard and Elijah Wald

"Not in Our Genes and the Waging of the Ideological Counteroffensive" by Ardea Skybreak in *Revolution Magazine* (available through RCP Publications)

"Not In Our Genes - A Breath of Fresh Air in the Scientific Sphere" by Ardea Skybreak, *Revolutionary Worker*, December 7, 1984. (Back issues of the *RW* may be available at local Revolution Bookstores or ask them if they can to make copies of this article.)

Fight Against Racism!

example: In China under Mao the Chinese people related to each other and to other peoples in the world completely differently than in China under Deng Xiaoping today. Again, no "racial" theory can explain this.

"Racial" categories as we know them don't have a valid scientific basis. But they do have a real *historical and social* basis, and how people are treated in society has a great deal to do with these "racial" categories. Exploitative social systems thrive on discrimination and oppression based on these "racial" distinctions!

In the final analysis, relations among people, including "race relations," are fundamentally determined by the nature of the economic and political system. This economic and political system is also the fundamental and decisive thing which determines the character of relations between different nations and groups of people.

For hundreds of thousands of years human beings organized themselves (typically as small bands of foraging gatherer-hunters) without recourse to strict social

stratification, hierarchies, or domination among peoples or between men and women. It is important to realize that it is only in the last few thousand years (a very brief and recent part of human history) that this happened. Greatly expanded productive technologies and populations called forth the kind of radical transformations of social structure which allowed unprecedented material and cultural advances, but only on the basis of the creation of all sorts of relations of exploitation and oppression and strict social stratification.

We are now approaching the end of this exploitative-oppressive phase of human history because, for the first time, the material basis exists to go beyond this on a world scale. But to accomplish this we need to go beneath the surface and get an accurate scientific understanding of the world to guide us.

**CHECK OUT MARXISM-LENINISM-MAOISM!
CHECK OUT THE 3 OURS!**



Special to the RW/OR

Down and Out in Capitali

Part 3: Shantytown Conversation

The Western media portrays today's China as a country rapidly moving toward a "modern society"—full of capitalist "entrepreneurs" trying to strike it rich, new hotels and highrises going up, foreign businessmen looking for big profits in the "world's biggest market." But there is another side to this picture. As some supporters of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) who recently travelled to China point out, the gap between the rich and poor is growing very sharp, peasants are being driven off the land and into shantytowns in the city, and homelessness, drug abuse and other signs of a sick capitalist society have returned.

In this year of the Mao Centenary—the 100th anniversary of the birth of Mao Tsetung—no one can deny the great contrast between the revolutionary China that existed under Mao's leadership and China since 1976, when a coup led by Deng Xiaoping restored capitalism. Oppressors everywhere see this change as a good thing—because a socialist country which inspired oppressed people worldwide with its revolutionary vision has been ripped out of the hands of the proletariat and dragged back into the web of capitalist oppression and imperialist domination. For the workers and peasants in China, the return of capitalist chains means the need to make Maoist revolution to overthrow the system and seize power once again from the oppressors and exploiters.

This is the last of a three-part report from the RIM supporters about their trip to China. The first part focused on the situation among the poor in Shanghai, the biggest city in China. Part two described the return of "coolie labor" and other aspects of life under capitalist China.



Construction site in Haikou.

It is reported that 10 percent of China's peasant-farmers—70 to 80 million people—are now in the cities. Today's city folks in China look down on these peasants flooding into the cities in search of survival, calling them the "blind wave." We heard that some of these people ended up living in small shantys they put up along the side of the road or in empty lots while they worked on construction projects. We saw some of these shantys in one city, and we went to talk to the people living there.

The shantys are temporary structures thrown together out of pieces of corrugated green plastic and chain link fencing. When the people who live in them finish a project in one area, they tear down the shantys and reassemble them wherever they work next.

We had a long discussion with one group of peasants—all originally from a rural province in central China—who are now working and living in the city.

Their shantys sit right at the side of one of the main streets. The back of the shantys are built up against the wall of a factory or apartment building, and the front sticks out into the street. Everyone who walks by the area has to go right past the front entrances to the shantys. The complex we went to is probably no larger than eight feet wide and maybe 40 to 50 feet long. It is divided into three or four separate rooms and is home to 15 to 20 people.

We got there about dinnertime. People were just hanging out, relaxing after work and starting to eat. Going up to the entrance

of one of the rooms, we told the people we were from overseas and didn't buy all the bullshit in the media about how everyone in China was getting rich now. We asked if we could talk to them about the lives of the basic people.

They immediately agreed, warmly inviting us inside and making room for us on a small wooden bench up against one of the walls. One of the younger guys ducked outside for a minute, then reappeared with a pack of cigarettes and offered us a smoke. There were a half a dozen people inside when we first showed up, but another eight to ten quickly moved inside or crowded around outside the doorway to check out the scene. Everyone in the group were men—except for one middle-aged woman who apparently stayed back at the shacks during the day to watch their few possessions and do the cooking and cleaning.

The room was sparsely furnished and very cramped. A small wall partially divided the room into two sections. The section we were in had a set of double-decker beds along the back wall, and it looked like the same was true of the other section of the room. A couple of the guys sat on the bottom bunk in our section of the room, and several more occupied crude wooden chairs and stools. A small, low wooden table filled up the remaining space in the middle of the room and was used for their meals. They had a boom box up on the shelf on one wall, a few extra clothes strung up on clotheslines up near the ceiling, and a small charcoal cooking stove topped by a large iron wok back in the other section of the room.

These were definitely poor people. Dinner was steamed rice, a small bowl of cooked beans and bowls of wheat noodles served in plain boiling water with a little hot sauce and MSG added for flavor. But they didn't hesitate a second to offer us food. After dealing with the rude clerks, impatient drivers and all the other people so caught up in the dog-eat-dog "don't give a fuck about anyone else, just look out for yourself" atmosphere of capitalist China, we had to say that these proletarianized peasants were some of the most friendly and compassionate people we met throughout our trip.

They all came from the same small village and were now working on installing pipes for the new water system in that area of the city. The first ones to leave the village had been in this city for six or seven years now. They had gone back home to visit their families at various times over the years, each time bringing a few additional villagers back to the city with them. A few of them were in their 30s and 40s, but most were in their late teens or 20s.

Driven to the City by Poverty

They told us they had farmed the land before coming to the city. But they just could not make a living at that, because of the tiny size of each family's plot of land, the rising taxes and cost of fertilizer, and the low price the government paid for their crops. Most of them have wives, children or other relatives who are still trying to farm the land back in the village. But all of the families depend on them to send back a little extra money during the year from their city jobs.

They try to go back home once or twice a year. But the nearly two-day train ride costs 200 yuan each time—a full month's salary for workers like them. So they simply can't afford to go back very often. How do they deal with having to be separated from their families for such long periods? They admitted that it was difficult—especially the first couple of months after they got to the city—but that later they learned to get used to it.

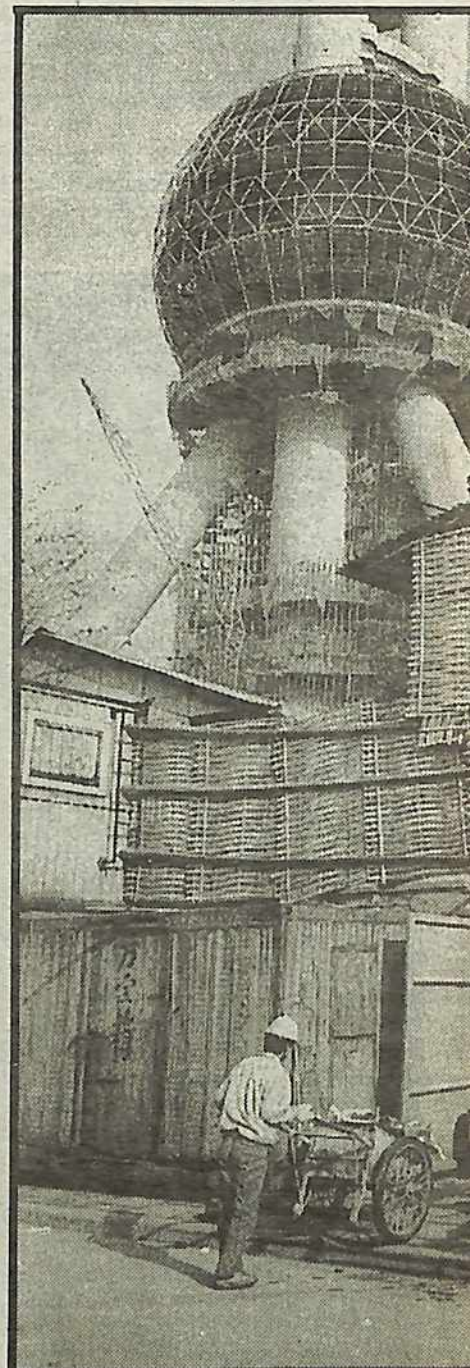
We asked why they moved so far away—couldn't they get jobs in a town much closer

to their village? They explained that there is a lot more industry in the city and therefore more jobs that need to be filled. The cost of living is higher in the city, so they have to pay more for food and other necessities than they would be charged back home—but the wages are also higher. They hope to make enough money in the city to add to the income from farming back in the village, and in this way give their families a decent standard of living.

We asked, "So, is your plan working?" Everyone immediately and adamantly shook their heads no. They made enough extra money to keep them and their families from starving, but that was about all they could accomplish.

We asked why it was so difficult to make a living at farming back in the village, since the region they come from is known for having some of the richest soil and highest agricultural yields in China. A couple of the older guys explained that the land is indeed productive, but the problem is that people don't have enough land to make a living on. Land is allotted based on family size—between one-half and one mou (about one-eighth to one-quarter of an acre) of land per person. Taxes might run anywhere from 100 to 200 yuan per family per year, and the government had raised the taxes in recent years. They also have to buy things like fertilizer or other supplies, and those prices also keep going up.

On top of this, the government assesses families additional money for various public works projects—for example, 50 yuan per family to build a road or a bridge. These projects are supposed to be paid for out of the tax revenues collected by the



Shacks near a new television tower in Shanghai.

st China

government from the peasants. But all the bureaucrats and officials of the ruling revisionist (phony communist) party skim money off the top and put it in their own pockets. By the time it gets down to the lowest level of officials, there is never enough money left to build the project. Then they would hit the peasants up for the extra funds—but this simply becomes one more source of funds for corrupt officials. So more often than not, the projects *still* never get built. They told us about three such projects in their village alone: a road, a biochemical factory and a glass manufacturing plant.

All this makes it impossible for them to survive from farming alone, and that's why they are forced to come to the city to look for work. They thought it was kind of funny: Here they were in the city, far from home—and they were having a discussion about the situation back in their village with some visitors from a foreign country.

Speaking Bitterness About City Life

We told them we heard some city dwellers and government officials quoted in newspaper articles talking about a rise in crime and pinning the blame on the peasants who came into the urban areas looking for jobs. One of the older men said the problem is that people in the city look down on the peasants: "They think we have no knowledge and no culture."

We asked them how all this came down. This unleashed a storm of "speaking bitter-



ness." One guy said that people move away from them when they get on the bus, like they do not want to have any physical contact with them. If they get off the train and drop a cigarette butt on the ground, they would get fined by the security police. City people would do the same thing and the cops would completely ignore it.

One of the youth became very agitated and told the story of a peasant who got on the bus with a live chicken under his arm. (People in China don't buy packages of chicken parts in grocery stores but buy live chickens to butcher themselves.) People bring all kinds of packages on the bus, but the conductor made the peasant pay the 60 cent fare, plus another 20 cents for the chicken.

But perhaps the most bitter and telling story of all was one that an older peasant told us. They had just finished connecting some of the new water pipes to the houses in one neighborhood in the city. They had been working hard and it was a hot day, so they asked people in the neighborhood to give them a glass of water. Every single person they asked refused to do it! He told us how angry it made them when these kinds of things happen—and he said that such things happen all the time. But he said

they feel so isolated in the city that they don't think there's anything they can do.

We told them about the way immigrants and other oppressed people are treated in the rich Western countries—how they also face harassment, get fined for doing things that other people can get away with, are looked down on because of the way they look or dress or talk. They all nodded and said that yes, this was exactly the kind of things they faced. And they asked us to please make sure to bring their story back to the people in other countries.

Rebelling for Justice

We mentioned that we had seen some coverage on CNN and BBC TV about a rebellion of 10,000 peasants somewhere in Sichuan Province in May 1993. The rebellion apparently grew out of an incident where peasants came to sell their grain to the government and were given IOUs instead of cash. They told us that the government does this kind of thing all the time. They had not heard about this particular rebellion, but they said they would not be at all surprised if uprisings like that happened.

The youth who told the story about the peasant and the chicken on the bus asked

whether there are any protests in the Western countries. We asked him if he had heard about the 1992 Los Angeles Rebellion in the United States. He said he had, but he had not really watched any of the news coverage because he was working, and so he really did not know what happened.

We asked if others had heard about the L.A. Rebellion, and several said they had. Then the older man—the one who told the story about asking for a glass of water—asked us whether the Rebellion was justified. We answered by explaining what led to the Rebellion—the video of the Rodney King beating, the poverty and police brutality that Black and Latino people face, etc. And then we said that we definitely thought the Rebellion was a justified response by the masses.

The older man said he had heard something about this and indicated that he agreed with our assessment. But he said that people could not do something like that in China because the officials did not listen to the complaints from the masses, and if they took action like in L.A., they would be jailed. We told him that hundreds of people had been arrested after the L.A. Rebellion

Continued on page 10

Down and Out in Capitalist China

Continued from page 9

and that many had died. He nodded and then said, with real feeling and admiration, "Those people were willing to die for justice."

Rule of the Capitalist Fat Cats

We had seen a lot of articles in the Western press talking about the "Mao fever." These articles quoted many people saying that things were better when Mao Tsetung was leading China. We asked the people in the shanty about the growing gap

grain went up and taxes (mainly payments of grain to the government) went down in 1978. The revisionists (those like Deng Xiaoping who pretend to be "communist" but are in fact capitalist oppressors) tried to claim that this was an example of their "concern for the well-being of the people." But what actually happened is that the government cut back on the amount of grain that the peasants were required to sell to the state—and made up the difference by using up the tremendous surplus in grain that had been generated under socialism. (Especially during the Cultural Revolution, there was a great mass mobilization to "store grain everywhere.") This deception by the revisionist regime was a way of bribing the peasants—no doubt to keep the vast countryside, where most Chinese people live, under control during the crucial first few years after the 1976 coup, while the revisionists rounded up the genuine revolutionary leaders and dismantled socialism.

However—as the guys who said things were better after Mao pointed out them-



Villagers traveling to the city to find work, carrying the tools of their trade.

between the rich and poor Chinese today that we had seen ourselves. The older man said that during Mao's time, the peasants worked together and ate together—and then at the end of the year, they shared the income from the harvest. He said that when there were problems with the Communist Party rank-and-file, the party leadership would send someone to investigate the situation and correct the problem.

A couple of the other older guys said they thought things got better after Mao died—because the prices they got for their

selves—by the mid-1980s the government was once again raising taxes and cutting the prices of the grain purchased from the peasants. By that time, the revisionist/capitalist rulers had completely used up the surplus built up under socialist China. And they also faced a serious crunch due to the huge interest payments on their growing debt to foreign countries and international financial institutions.

Directing our questions back to the older man, we asked him exactly what he thought was better under Mao. He referred to Deng

Xiaoping's statement that "it doesn't matter if it's a white cat or a black cat, as long as it catches mice." (Deng had used this saying to attack Mao's revolutionary line and leadership and promote the capitalist outlook of caring only about "meeting production goals.") And he talked about how "getting more production" is supposed to be the main thing people are concerned with now.

We joked that the "cats" on top seem to be getting rich. He smiled and agreed that they were getting fat. We told him that some people in the U.S. call the capitalists "fat cats." He grinned and said, "Black cat, white cat, fat cat." Everyone in the room cracked up.

We tried to probe more around the question of how things were under Mao. One of the things we remember about Mao, we told them, is that he said the communist party and revolutionary leaders had to be concerned with the conditions of the workers and peasants. The older man talked about the growing gaps in society: "Like between the people in the cities and the peasants in the countryside. Before, that gap was being closed. Now, it's getting wider and wider." He and the others were very bitter about all the corruption among the officials today, and how the officials and the rich only look out for themselves. One person mentioned that Mao's son died during the Korean War—he was among the Chinese troops who went to Korea to help fight against U.S. aggression. And he contrasted this

with how the leadership's kids today use their "connections" to make lots of money.

Then we said that Mao did not just say the leaders had to be concerned about the masses—he said that the workers and peasants should be *masters of society*. The older guy again raised the point about how the communist party leadership during Mao's time would send someone to investigate and solve any problems that developed in the rank and file. One of the younger guys broke in and said, "That's what was so great about Mao."

"Now, nobody listens to us," the older man finished. Then he launched into a very passionate series of comments about the corruption of the officials, the widening gap between the rich and the poor and how the officials don't give a damn about the masses. He got very worked up and walked out of the room.

Among the basic people in China—like these peasants now working at "coolie" type jobs in the city—there is probably not a very deep understanding of the 1976 coup that overthrew socialism and put and brought capitalist rule back to China. But they are increasingly coming up against the brutal realities of today's China—like the destruction of the collective economy and the institution of the dog-eat-dog "family responsibility system," the steadily widening gap between a handful of corrupt officials and the rich on the one side and the broad ranks of peasants and workers on the other, and the huge migration of poor peasants into the cities in a desperate search for survival. The very conditions of life among the masses in China are beginning to compel more and more of them to question the whole setup of society. □



Poor peasants in the countryside.

Lexington, Kentucky: Black Youth Rebellion Against Police Murder

A righteous rebellion by hundreds of Black youths shook Lexington, Kentucky last week after police killed a young Black man in cold blood.

On Tuesday, October 25, five cops entered the Bluegrass-Aspendale housing project in search of 18-year-old Antonio Orlando Sullivan. The police say they had a warrant for Sullivan's arrest in connection with a shooting in September. The cops claim they entered Sullivan's apartment and found him hiding in a closet. With their guns drawn, the cops ordered him to come out. As Sullivan walked out, one of the cops fired a shot which struck him in the head and killed him. At least one witness has reported that Sullivan was shot while his arms were raised.

Word of the shooting spread quickly through the Bluegrass-Aspendale project. News accounts describe the project as a complex of one- and two-story garden apartments, each with a small back yard surrounded by a wrought-iron fence. By the afternoon, hundreds of young people had gathered and began marching to the downtown building about a mile away where the city government offices are located.

Surging into the city council chambers, the youths demanded to talk to the mayor and get an explanation for the shooting. The only "explanation" they got was from the police chief, who said: "As Sullivan was in the process of stepping into the living room area, a police officer's weapon was accidentally discharged, striking Sullivan in the head."

This callous and outrageous justification for a police murder made it clear to the

youths that talking with city officials would get them nowhere. For the next several hours, the youths took over the streets of Lexington's downtown and near east side. Police cars were overturned and damaged, rocks flew in the air and building windows were smashed. An Associated Press report said that as many as 500 people were in the streets.

The police quickly deployed about 100 riot cops in response to the rebellion. Several people were reportedly hurt. There were also reports that at least one cop was injured.

Lexington officials had wanted to sweep the police killing of Antonio Sullivan under the rug. But the action of the youths forced even the federal authorities to take notice. The next day the FBI announced that it was starting an investigation into the shooting. The official in charge of the FBI in Kentucky said, "Anytime a situation like this occurs, it causes great concern throughout our entire nation."

When this federal police official talks about "a situation like this," he does *not* mean the deadly police brutality that kills so many of our youth. After all, how many police murders around the country go uninvestigated by the FBI every year? He and others in the power structure are worried that the rebellion has put a spotlight on the deep-rooted nature of national oppression in this country. Lexington is supposed to be one of the most "livable" cities in the U.S., according to many boozwah magazines. Per capita income in the city is 30 percent higher than national average. But behind such statistics is the reality that there is a deep divide between the haves and have-



Lexington, October 25.

nots—in Lexington, and throughout this system.

What happened in Lexington also shows the continuing effects of the shockwaves from the L.A. Rebellion. The refusal of the

Black youth in Lexington to quietly accept the police "explanation" of the murder of Antonio Sullivan is part of the "new day" among the people that the Rebellion ushered in. □



Youth shout with anger at the cops.



Lexington, October 25.

**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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Resist the War on Immigrants

Continued from page 3
ber 8, the ruling class is certain to press forward with their war on immigrants and many other anti-people plans—from their “three-strikes-you’re-out” laws and building of more prisons, to their plans to militarize the Mexican-U.S. border with new walls and armed forces. The provisions of 187 are already being enacted by the system in other ways: some are being written up as law, other are being proposed by the courts, bipartisan panels and legislative committees, and others are simply carried out extra-legally through police and Migra actions.

Elections are used to legitimize the system and the policies of the ruling class. Election are a way of giving oppression the mantle of “popular mandate.” And elections are used to channel and control the political activity of the people. But a defeat for 187 can deprive the power structure of the mandate they want and play a positive role in the movement—if many people also learn through this that their actions cannot be left there. And if 187 passes, people must prepare themselves to understand that its provisions still have absolutely no legitimacy and must be resisted.

For people to stay true to their convictions and to really defeat the police-state measures, large numbers of people must decide to stand outside the law. Pledges of resistance are being signed and these

pledges need to be put into action—if 187 passes and even if it does not pass.

The more the oppressed themselves fight back, the more militantly we stand up—united to demand to be treated as human beings—the more allies we will have and stronger the movement to defeat the war on immigrants will be. The great revolutionary Mao Tsetung said: “The people, and the people alone, are the motive force in the making of world history.”

Divisions and Maneuvers in the Ruling Class

Within days of the powerful October 16 Los Angeles march, forces inside the U.S. ruling class were saying that Proposition 187 might not be such a good idea. The Clinton White House came out against Proposition 187. Clinton’s Attorney General Janet Reno suggested that even if 187 passed, the Supreme Court might be asked to overturn it. Prominent conservative Republicans Jack Kemp and William Bennett came out to say that Proposition 187 is dangerously divisive and might lead to a civil war in the United States between the different nationalities.

These top ruling class forces are not allies of the people. All of them—both Republican and Democrat—support plans to clamp down on immigrants and militarize the border. All of them consider undocumented workers to be “criminal lawbreakers” and “illegal aliens.” All of them support various plans to prevent undocumented workers from getting jobs. But they have come out against the specific Prop



Anti-187 protest at U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, October 26.

187 plan because they are afraid that this law would ignite more struggle and weaken the system.

The original intention behind Proposition 187 was to create a reactionary, racist polarization that would isolate immigrants. For a long time the pro-187 people said

they had public opinion on their side—but they are not so sure about that any more. The struggle of the people has created the possibility of a new polarization that lines up many different sections of the people against the ruling class and its plans. That is why resistance to Prop 187 has deepened the concerns and splits within the ruling class—and weakened the forces pressing for making Prop 187 a law.

At the same time, Prop 187 has hardly been defeated yet. California Governor Pete Wilson stepped up his efforts by announcing that the passage of Prop 187 would require a special ID card for all documented people in the state—so that it would be easier to keep track of everyone and expel undocumented people.

How dare the ruling class deny health care to people who harvest their crops and clean those offices where bankers ruin lives with the click of a computer button! Look at California Senate candidate Mike Huffington—a zillionaire businessman who loves Prop 187. He now admits that he hired an undocumented woman to care for his children while still insisting that the children of women like her should be driven out of schools! This government says poor people have no right to cross borders for survival—when it is the U.S. imperialists who bled their home countries dry and made survival there impossible. Look at



San Francisco Mission District, October 8.



San Francisco Mission District, October 8.

WALKOUT! RCYB Interviews L.A. High School Revolutionist

Opposition to Proposition 187, the proposed anti-immigrant law in California has brought a new generation of proletarians into action. The youth are getting organized and revolutionized—facing intimidation from police and school officials and dealing with a whole new set of contradictions. The Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade talked with a black high school student from Belize about the recent walkouts in the Los Angeles high schools:

A: I’m in a group, and I’m one of the junior leaders of SAR, South American Revolutionists, and we’re cliqued on to another group called MEChA who are Latinos and Mexicans. SAR is mostly people from Belize. MEChA at our school is about 500 deep. SAR at our school is only about 200 deep, and we do get Hondurans people, El Salvador people....

We was organizing a walkout against

Proposition 187—nobody likes that—and Pete Wilson.

It was the 12th. We went to another high school. Then another high school, then two junior highs. We was trying to organize everybody to go against Proposition 187 because we know it ain’t right.

We got to the first high school and everybody was jumping around, playing around, and the police was trying to get us to fight with each other cuz they didn’t like what we was doing. So they told the Mexicans, “What does this SAR care about the Proposition 187? It ain’t none of their business. It’s mainly about Mexicans, Hispanics, and not really about blacks.”

So the cops got MEChA to start dissin’ black students. They got ‘em to start talking about, “Why y’all staying with them niggers?” We wasn’t gonna stay there and let them call us “niggers” so we went back on



RCYB banner at the October 16 anti-187 demo in L.A. says, “¡Aquí estamos! ¡Aquí nos quedamos! ¡No nos vamos!”

em calling em “tacos” and all that. And then we got in an argument and somebody said, “What’d you talk to me, cuz,” and then somebody said “blood” and they got into another argument. It was gangs, and everybody was gonna get into a fight that was from different gangs. We was trying to settle down everything.

Finally when we got everybody settled down, we was about to leave the XX high school and go to another one and the police said that the people from the XX high school we were at had walked out already and had went to another one that we hadn’t planned on going to, and they’d be back. They told us to wait for about an hour. So we was stupid, we waited.

Then we noticed the police cars were gettin’ deeper and deeper. I asked the police officer, “Where’s the students from this

high school?” He said, “They’re out there, just wait about an hour or so.” They was just trying to make us wait so the police could get deeper and catch us.

So after that we just left and the police was catching everybody who slows down, tries to leave the crowd. When we got to the next high school, the same thing happened.

Usually in a walkout we walk to certain high schools and then elementaries and got as much people as we can to walk out. Sometimes, like last week, we walked to downtown and paraded around downtown.

RCYB: How deep were you then, about 500?

A: Yes. Several schools, all the schools stand together.

RCYB: That was last Monday.

A: And then today we had a walkout.

RCYB: Is this the first one since last

RESISTANCE!

As we go to press, different ad hoc coalitions in Southern California are calling for the following mass actions to protest Prop 187:

Nov. 2—School walkouts citywide

Nov. 7—"Don't buy, don't sell, don't go to school, don't go to work"

Nov. 9—March to demonstrate at L.A. City Hall

how this capitalist government tries to shut the borders to the people, while they themselves cross those borders every day to rob and invade other countries.

If You've Ever Been Abused, You Know What We're Talking About

Supporters of Proposition 187 brag that they have convinced sections of the people to support their war on immigrants. Everyone knows there is some truth to this: that some dog-eat-dog hatreds have been built up to divide different nationalities of poor and working people from each other. But why should we fight each other for control of some street-corner, to get some more burger-flipping jobs, or a better place in line at County Hospital? It's not really so hard to see the connection between the way the system portrays Black youth as a "criminal underclass," and the way they portray Latin and Asian immigrants as "gang-bangers" and "illegal aliens."

It's wake-up time. We have to help all our brothers and sisters see these issues clearly. This situation calls for proletarian internationalism. Proletarian internationalism means that the oppressed class—those who have nothing but their labor to sell—don't have any interests in being divided by borders, nationalities and colors. The proletarian class, of all nationalities, have a common enemy and a common struggle.

Anyone who thinks that stopping illegal immigration will help them get a good paying job or more benefits or a government-built house needs to answer this question: Why do you think a government that builds more prisons than schools—all of a sudden—has the interests of poor people at heart?

Anyone who thinks their tax dollars are "supporting illegals" should answer this question: What makes you think immigrants don't pay the same taxes everyone else pays?

Anyone who thinks they should support police state laws for immigrants should explain: What makes you think they won't come for you next? And why should anyone stand up for you when they do?

Anyone who says "immigration laws don't affect me, I was born here" needs to answer this: Can we allow the state to rip away the humanity of millions of oppressed people? Back in the time when run-away slaves were "illegals," the law required everyone to turn them in to the authorities. If we allow these practices to return, this will affect the lives and conditions of all the oppressed.

Anyone poor or oppressed or even a middle class person who thinks their life will be improved by a racist law like Prop 187 is being played for a chump. Anyone who does not firmly stand with the struggle to defend immigrants cannot claim to be a true fighter against the system.

La Resistencia—an organization working to build a mass movement of resistance to the war on immigrants—has put forward some basic beliefs that are the basis for a powerful united front.

1) People are driven from their homelands and come to the U.S. to survive.

2) All people have the right to survive regardless of legal status.

3) Being an immigrant is not a crime. Human life is more important than laws.

4) People with legal status have the responsibility to defy and resist unjust laws, struggle alongside our sisters and brothers who have been deemed "illegal" and protect them.

A Fresh Wind of Struggle

Right now, the struggle is building in the streets of California. How things will turn out is far from settled. But the noisy divisions within the ruling class and the talk of National Guard troops show how much they are afraid of what the people may do.

The immigrant people of California are not helpless "victims" here—they are an

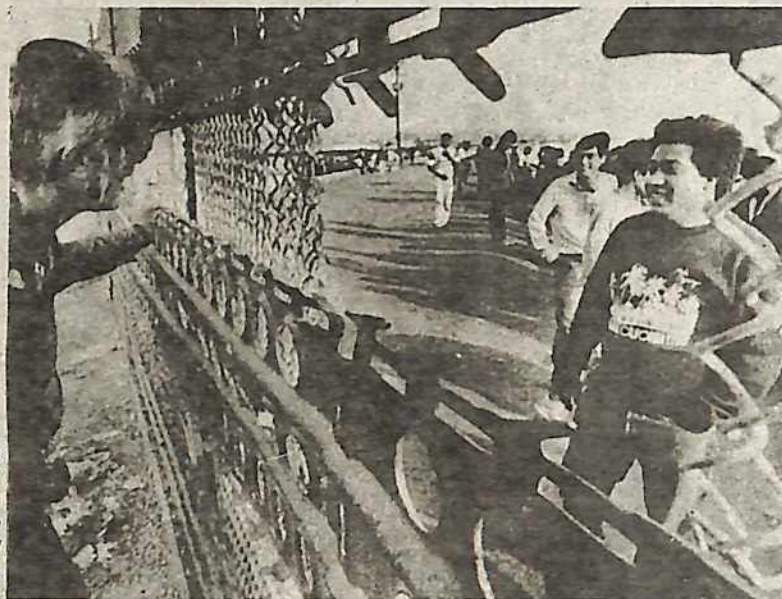
important part of the rising revolutionary class, the proletariat. The whole economy of California, the Southwest and much of the U.S. feeds on their labor—and it could all come tumbling down if these immigrants and other proletarians found the ways to use their great power.

This fresh wind of struggle in California is exactly what is needed. The nobodies, the kids they call "gang members" and "illegals," are beginning to set the agenda. This struggle must spread and deepen—in the days before November 8 and afterward. People of all walks of life must step forward to play their role.

Already there are calls for mass actions on the day after the elections. The moves of this system must be fought and the revolutionary mass movement must be built.

The only future this system offers is more poverty and misery for the majority of people on both sides of the border. This is a system that hunts people like animals and denies them basic rights because of their class and nationality. Those who know what it is to be downcast and treated as slaves—must stand together and strengthen our ability to defeat police state programs like SOS. □

Todos somos ilegales! We are all illegals!
Stop the U.S. Government's War on Immigrants!
The unity of the people is more powerful than the government's police-state program!
No compliance!
Serve the people regardless of the law!
Don't be a snitch for the INS!
Down with 187!
Down with Operation Gate Keeper and the Militarization of the U.S.-Mexican Border!
Aquí estamos! Aquí nos quedamos! No nos vamos!



Mexicans watch border patrol through a hole at the border at Otay Mesa, California.

week?

A: No, there was one yesterday but everybody got arrested so we didn't count that one. Everybody walked back to another high school and they [the police] be gettin' ready for us. They know what gate we leave out of and they know which way we head—we head for this one other high school. We try to get all the students from that school out because that school tried to get us out like a month ago. When school first started that school tried to get us.... So now, we tryin' to return a favor. We tryin' to get them. Everytime we go there the cops mess it up.

RCYB: How many people got arrested yesterday?

A: About 45 people got arrested. What the cops do is when they roll by you they just observe who's the leader and all—you see em writin' it down on a piece of paper, how you look, what you wearin' and who's leadin' the group. And then when they get that after they arrest you they bring you down. If you a member you just get suspended. Now if you was one of the leaders you get expelled. And if you get expelled, no school is acceptin' nobody because the schools is filled now. Los Angeles Unified School District is full—everywhere, all the high schools are too full now—and you just missed a semester of school. And people still take that chance.

RCYB: Cuz it's important.

A: Yep....

And what we realized and what the system don't want us to realize is there's more kids than grown-ups. We way deeper than the police. If all of us would get together from all the schools, police couldn't catch us—we way too deep. They couldn't do nothin with us, that's why they wanted us to wait until the police get deeper.

RCYB: What happened today? Today people walked out again, right?

A: After lunch. Everybody ate lunch and everybody walked out. We walked out—we was gonna parade.

RCYB: The school wasn't locked down?

A: No, they opened the gate for us and told us if we wanted to walk out, walk out but don't come back. And then school police was arrestin' everybody. They was tryin to get everybody, tryin to get em in a police car and all.

They didn't get too many this time—only about 10. Everybody started runnin'. Everybody ran into a field and when we ran into the field we was just gone. Then we went to another school and we got some people out. The leader of MEChA is a girl and she's really cool with everybody, she really in deep about Proposition 187. Cuz, I believe, she said she got an auntie or something that they arrested for illegal immigration. We was on our way downtown until the police stopped us and the police was deep. They told us, "No you ain't comin' this way this time." Then we walked back around and we left. We kicked it for a little while and everybody was just like, 'OK, we did enough, we going to do another one Monday, next Monday comin up and everybody went they own ways.

Really the main subject about 187 cuz everybody should be able to get an education no matter where you're from or no matter what color your race is, you should be able to get some kind of knowledge, if you don't you ain't gonna be able to make it when you grow up and they tryin' to deny people of that. Personally I don't think you should deny nobody of education.

RCYB: What happened in terms of the RCYB flyers?

A: The flyers about slavery. I passed out about four of them. I don't know who but somebody snitched on me. And then school police took my flyers away. They shredded them in the office. They tried to suspend

me, but they just took my flyers away. And then they told me they didn't want to catch me passin' out no more cuz they gonna expel me just like they do the rest of the people. They said what I'm organizin' is like a cult.

RCYB: That's what they call revolutionaries. Like a religious thing. Fuck them.

A: Then at the announcement today they said they gettin tired of our revolution. They said, "There is no revolution. All the revolution is is what the system makes it"—that we shouldn't even fight the system cuz we can't win.

RCYB: They said this over the loudspeaker?

A: Uh-huh. Told the school that. The principal.

RCYB: So basically they're trying to put fear in you.

A: And it is working. Because some of the people is droppin' out. Like this one guy told me today, "I'm down for the revolution and all but my mom said I can't get in trouble." [Laughs] "I can't get arrested, I can't get in trouble."

RCYB: You told me that the school administration has students that are failing their classes who they use to snitch and they give em credit. Is that right?

A: Uh-huh. They give em like about 20 credits to snitch on somebody. They want the important people, the leaders, so they make the snitches go undercover, fake like they down with the revolution and all that, then they just s'pose to try and catch us. And it's been sorta workin'. And then the people that they arrest, they tell em, "We won't call your parents or nothin just give us one name of the main leader." They tell you like that and some people get worthless and they will tell the name.

RCYB: Who's doin' this, the school police or the LAPD?

A: The school police and the XX police (from another school).

RCYB: What are you going to do now?

A: That's mainly just about it, we'll keep on tryin to get together at the schools and try to get something goin'....

RCYB: How did you get involved in the struggle?

A: When I first got started is when I would watch the news about the Haiti people cuz they was hittin' em, one guy got beat to death and he was right on the ground. And I'm lookin' at the Americans and they ain't doin nothin. Watchin' people get beat up. I couldn't stand that—watch nobody get beat up like that. So I was lookin for a group to get with.

Then this was some years before I met y'all. Well this was before Haiti and all that, I was 12. I was also trying to organize, I was tryin to organize myself, I didn't have no kind of connections, I started a little group of about 45 members and that was about the Rodney King thing—cuz we was way against that. The Rodney King beating, then there was the Somalian people. After Somalian, there was 3 Strikes, after 3 Strikes it was Haiti. From Haiti now it's 187.

RCYB: What did y'all call yourself around the Rodney King thing?

A: We didn't really call ourselves nothin, we just called us revolutionists.

RCYB: What is your understanding of revolution?

A: Well my understanding is, people gotta try to fight against the system about something they don't like or they don't get along with. Well, that would be my definition. And I just searched around and found some people just like me.

RCYB: You were trippin' when you met us. Like "where y'all been?"

A: Yeah I was happy. Where y'all been? Yeah. □

Los Angeles: The Police Murder of Sonji Taylor — Another “Justifiable Homicide”

On September 28 the Los Angeles County District Attorney issued a report on the investigation of the killing of Sonji Taylor—a 27-year-old Black woman who was gunned down by LAPD cops last December. The DA's outrageous decision: another “justifiable homicide” by the police.

Sonji Taylor had done what the system says a young Black person should do—she finished high school where she was a cheerleader and homecoming queen, sang in the church choir, graduated from college and was getting ready to start on a new job. But last December 16 she became another victim of the LAPD's Rampart Division, which has the highest rate of shooting per officer of any division in the department.

She was shot nine times, including seven times in the back.

Like many people who go shopping in the Pico Union neighborhood, Taylor had parked at the St. Vincent Medical Center. Her family said she was planning to shop for Christmas presents that day. According to press accounts, a janitor at the hospital saw her and her three-year-old son Jeremy around 8 p.m. in a stairwell leading to a roof-top helicopter landing area. The janitor spoke to her, but because of his limited English he could not understand her reply, and he called hospital security. By the time the security guards arrived, she was on the roof. They contacted the LAPD.

The only witnesses to the final minutes of Sonji Taylor's life were the cops and the medical center's security guards and administrator. The non-police witnesses were not close enough to see all that went on, and the only account that has come out is the police version. The police claim that Sonji Taylor was holding her son and had a knife in her left hand which she was waving around as she was surrounded by seven cops. They described her actions as “threatening” to her son and said that she was incoherent and kept repeating the words “For the blood of Jesus.” The cops sprayed her in the face with tear gas and grabbed her son. Seconds later, two cops opened fire and shot her. They said that she had “lunged” at one of the cops and that she was “in the attack mode.”

The official police version began to fall apart within days of the cold-blooded killing:

- The cops said she was “waving” a knife for over half an hour before they tear-gassed and shot her. If she had really wanted to hurt her son, there was plenty of time to do it. Her family said that she cared very much for her son and would not have hurt him. Why did the police tear-gas her, take her son and shoot her?

- The police said she attacked with the knife in her left hand, but she was right-

handed.

- The expression “the blood of Jesus”—which the LAPD said showed she was incoherent—came from her Pentecostal upbringing. She would repeat it whenever she was afraid.

- The LAPD and the media make it sound like it was very mysterious that she was at the medical center. But she had parked her car there to go shopping, and she may well have been looking for her car.

- The knife that she was allegedly “waving” was part of a set—two others were in a bag she was carrying. The *L.A. Times* called the knife set a “sign of the violence to come.” Her family said the set was a Christmas present she had bought.

The final blow to the cops' story was an autopsy report that showed that seven of the nine bullets that ended Sonji Taylor's life hit her in the back. At least one bullet showed signs of “mushrooming”—which means she might have been shot while lying face down. The police tried to explain by saying she had twisted around as a reaction to the first shots. The lawyer for the family noted that the police have used this “whirling dervish theory” before to explain why people end up with bullets in the back from cops' guns.

The DA's report, issued after a nine-month “investigation,” admitted that the police version of the killing was contradicted by the facts, especially the autopsy report. It asked, “How could Taylor lunge forward at the officers and yet be shot in the back?” But the report concluded there was “insufficient evidence” to prosecute the killer cops. One of the justifications the DA gave for the decision was that the evidence was “circumstantial.” How many oppressed people are locked up in prison on evidence a lot weaker than seven bullet holes in the back? The decision not to prosecute was based on the system's need to keep its brutal armed enforcers in the streets.



Toy Guns Don't Kill Kids, Cops Kill Kids

On the night of September 27, Nicholas Heyward, a 13-year-old Black youth, was playing with his friends in his building in the Gowanus Homes in Brooklyn. He was playing cops and robbers with a toy gun when he ran into the real thing, a dangerous thing—a cop. Nicholas was running down the stairs when he came upon a housing cop. Friends reported that Nicholas yelled, “We're playing,” and raised his hands in the air as soon as he saw the cop. But the cop wasn't listening. He shot Nicholas and killed him.

This blatant killing sparked outrage throughout New York City. The media and other mouthpieces of the system immediately went to work on damage control. First they talked about the “anguish” of the cop and how he could no longer be a police

officer—as if the mental state of this killer was even the issue. Then they really got going, claiming that the whole problem is that there is too many toy guns. Nicholas' grieving parents were enlisted to make calls for major chains like Toys ‘R’ Us to stop selling toy guns. But at the project where Nicholas was killed, people's anger was focused on the police and the city officials. People posted up signs saying things like “Whose 13-year-old is next for Robocop?” (Robocop is the nickname of the cop that shot Nicholas) and “Shoot kids first, ask questions later, eh Mr. Mayor?”

A 13-year-old kid had his life taken from him by some puffed-up cop, and the powers talk nonsense about controlling toy guns. It wasn't a toy gun that killed young Nicholas—it was the police. □

Police Killing in Jamaica, Queens

The New York State Corrections Department has an armed team (called the absconder unit) that is sent out to hunt down people who walk away from work release programs. Jason Nichols, a 27-year-old Black man, was not the man the absconder unit was looking for on October 18—but they killed him anyway.

The cops from this unit were going through the South Jamaica Houses, a housing project in Queens, when they spotted someone they thought was Gary Smith—who had allegedly walked out on the work release. (Ironically, Jason Nichols reportedly had walked out of work release also, but these cops didn't know that.) They chased Jason, and one of them caught him and pinned him to the ground with his knee. A witness told the *New York Times*: “He sat on the man a couple of seconds before

‘Pow’.... He was helpless. He was on his stomach with a man's knee in his back and a gun at his head.” This is not the first time these Corrections cops killed someone other than who they were after. Last May they mistakenly thought Israel Alicia Jr. was someone they were looking for and chased him. That chase ended with the victim going off a four-story building to his death.

The authorities moved quickly to try to chill out the anger of the people at this latest cold-blooded killing. They indicted the Corrections cop for manslaughter. But they are only interested in figuring out how to keep the situation cool, not in justice. In the meeting the day after the killing, people in the community demanded to know why the charge wasn't straight-up murder. Meanwhile, the cop was released on \$3,500 bail.

Seattle: Taking Opposition to Haiti Occupation to the GIs

The following is taken from a correspondence from a supporter in Seattle, Washington:

On October 15, as the U.S. returned Aristide to Haiti, the media machine spun out the message that the U.S. had "returned democracy to Haiti." In Seattle, Haiti was also the top story on the evening news on all the local TV channels—but a slice of truth also made it onto the airwaves as part of the story. The news showed people protesting against the U.S. occupation of Haiti at the gate outside Fort Lewis, a major military base south of Seattle near Tacoma. They quoted members of the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade saying that "liberation never comes from the barrel of U.S. guns" and that "the people of Haiti need a revolution." More than 300 leaflets got out to the GIs.

The protesters included students, proletarians, an activist from the Vietnam Veterans Against the War Anti-Imperialist, the RCYB, supporters of the RCP, a supporter of the IWW, and other movement activists. They were heartened by the reception they got as they leafleted cars at the Fort Lewis gate. Many were eager to get copies of VVAW AI's "Message to the Troops in Haiti."

The protesters found that there is a lot of questioning going on among the troops, and that overall many GIs aren't "pumped up" about the Haiti invasion. Black GIs especially had things to say. Many GIs talked about how they hated the military and were waiting to get out. There was a lot of talk about how bad things are in this country—and also comments about how



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the U.S. has been sending troops to so many places and nothing good is coming out of it. Some GIs said they and others were against the invasion of Haiti and angry about it, but that they felt they had no control over it—that they are forced to do whatever they are told.

Specifically on Haiti, most GIs' comments went along these lines: 1) They were against the U.S. invasion and occupation because "we should be working on solving our own problems at home"; 2) They were against it because the U.S. shouldn't be playing world cop or the U.S. didn't have the right to dominate the world; 3) They don't know what the U.S. is up to in Haiti (which shows they aren't buying the government's line about "restoring human rights and democracy"). Some specific comments by more advanced GIs: "The U.S. is not about restoring democracy"; "You're against the military? You guys should stay out here



Special to the RW/WR

Ft. Lewis, October 15.

all the time"; "It's totally racist—that's not 'our backyard.' We don't have any business running all over the world telling people what to do"; "Aristide is just another U.S. puppet, they've been running all over the world creating puppet governments."

The protesters also marched through the small economically depressed town directly across the freeway from the base. Many people came out to get fliers.

The government is clearly worried about anti-war protesters mixing with GIs. At a previous action at Fort Lewis, the military held and interrogated protesters who had taken a wrong turn in going to

the protest. This time, the military was forced to play a low-key role, as major TV and printed press was covering the event.

Those who took part in the action are making plans for more protests against the occupation of Haiti, as well as the U.S. war threats against Iraq. They are networking with VVAW AI and the Anti-Intervention Network. They saw that their action at Fort Lewis had a real effect, and they are determined—along with others—to persevere to make breakthroughs in raising the level of resistance to U.S. intervention.

"Quality of Life" vs. the Vendors of Harlem

The clampdown on the people in New York City—in the name of "protecting the quality of life"—has hit the streets of Harlem. At 6 a.m. on the morning of October 17, about 500 cops in riot gear moved onto the main commercial strip on 125th Street and set up barricades in order to prevent street vendors from selling. Vendors who tried to set up were busted. The vendors countered by taking to the streets in a march. Twenty-two people were arrested in the course of a day of confrontations with the police.

125th Street is the heart of Harlem, the world's most famous Black neighborhood. It attracts Black and other people from all over the city and around the world. Along with the commercial storefronts on 125th, there are street vendors who sell everything from incense to African artifacts. Over the past few years the number of street vendors has increased and now there are hundreds lining the street. The atmosphere is lively, festive and a little bit out of control. No wonder the authorities want to shut it all down!

The authorities have tried to play off sections of the people against each other in order to further their own aims. They say they are acting on complaints that the vendors block sidewalks and depress property values. There are also some store owners

who feel that the vendors are cutting into their business. (Some of these stores are owned by large chains such as Woolworth's.) Apparently, at least some of the store owners requested that the city government remove the vendors. The authorities used these requests to justify their attack on the vendors.

The city has been messing with street vendors intensely for the past few years. When David Dinkins was mayor there were repeated attacks on vendors—including the Senegalese vendors who sold watches, scarves and bags on the boozehaw shopping strip of Fifth Avenue. Many of those vendors moved to Harlem as a result. Dinkins had tried to move on the Harlem vendors at one point, but he was forced to back down after the vendors took over 125th Street, blocked traffic and disrupted business as usual.

The current mayor, Giuliani, is taking things further by developing a master plan to limit and control over 10,000 unlicensed vendors in the city. (The city gives out only 3,000 licenses for food vendors and 853 for general vendors.) The city is already implementing a plan to limit the number of food vendors and locations they can operate in. The city is also pushing to totally eliminate non-food vendors—not only from the main business districts but also

from the neighborhoods of Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx. The plan is to relegate vendors to fenced-in lots. The vendors would be charged \$5 to \$8 to sell inside these restricted spaces. If vendors don't go along with this, they will be subject to having their merchandise confiscated and/or being arrested.

The power structure promotes the "entrepreneurial" outlook—saying that this system gives people who want to "get ahead" and are willing to "work hard" the opportunity to start small businesses and

make them grow into big, successful enterprises. But the cold reality is that this is a system ruled by monopoly capital. It makes billions off the sweat and blood of working people from Harlem to Haiti to India. And it continually crushes small businesses into the ground.

The sending of 500 cops to shut down the vendors in Harlem shows the ruthless nature of this system's rulers. But it also shows how afraid they are of the power and resistance of the people. □



Protesters confront police as they kicked out vendors from 125th Street, October 18.

Pig Skins

The New York police are getting new uniforms for the first time in 20 years. The change is supposedly designed so that the police can project a more intimidating presence among the people. The last time there was a uniform change was after the rebellions and turmoil of the '60s—when the police, attempting to adopt a "softer" look, started wearing powder blue shirts. The new uniforms change the shirts to a darker, more imposing, navy blue. According to the *New York Times*, the aim is to make the NYPD look more like a military organization. That is the image that these armed enforcers want to project as they attempt to keep control in the uncertain times ahead. All in all the uniform changes will make New York cops look more like L.A. cops, who already look like Nazi stormtroopers. The N.Y. police will then look more like what they actually are.



The new New York police uniform.

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