



REVOLUTIONARY WORKER

Voice of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

No. 985

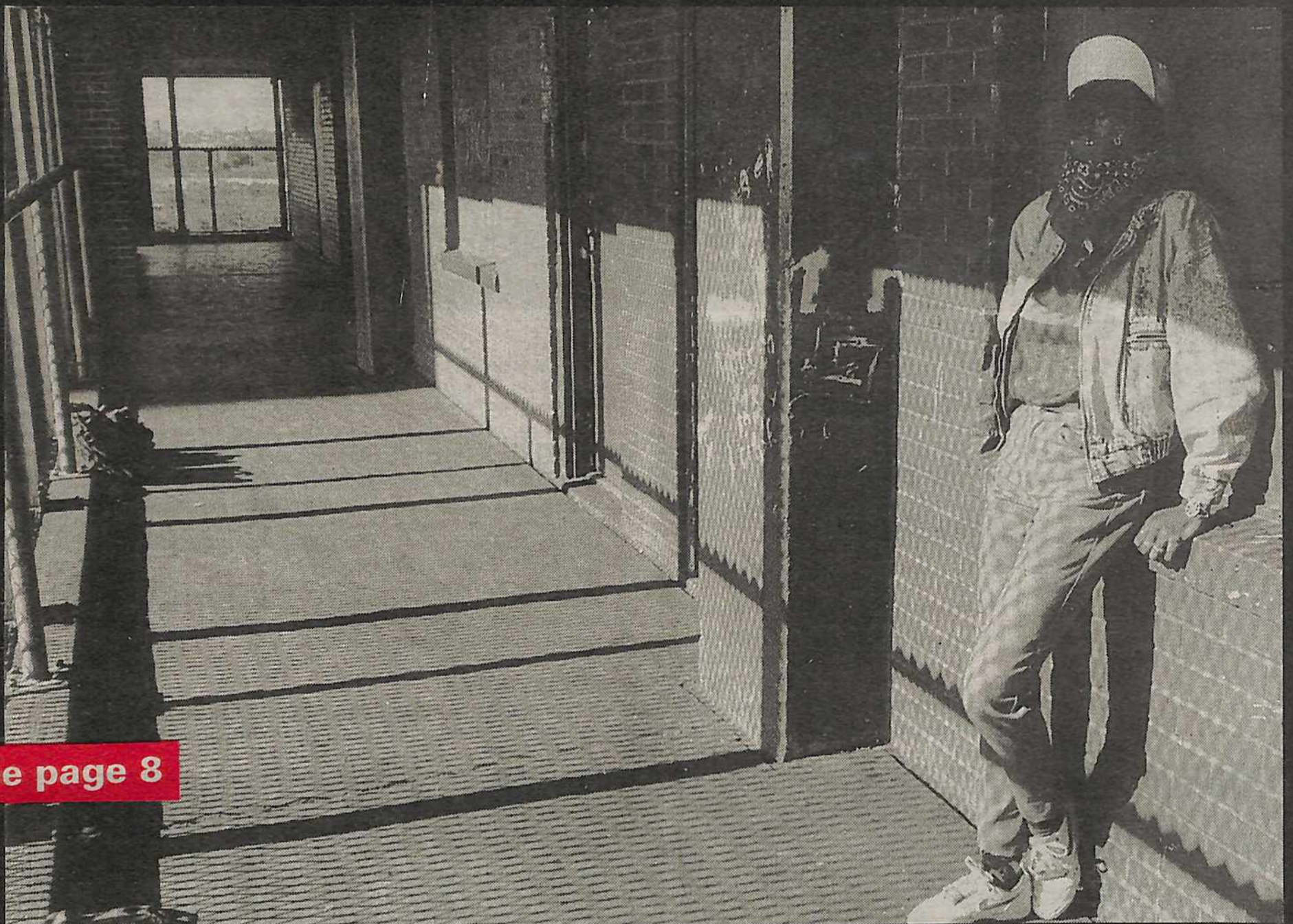
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New York City vs. MYM Resisters

On November 17, a New York grand jury handed down indictments against six people for resisting the police attack on the Million Youth March (MYM). The grand jury was called at the prompting of Mayor Giuliani and his top cop Howard Safir, and it has been "investigating" for over two months. These indictments are one more outrage in a series of Gestapo moves against the thousands of Black people and others who took part in the September 5 MYM in Harlem.

The city tried hard to prevent the MYM from happening at all, but they were unsuccessful. Then on September 5, over 3,000 cops occupied the streets of Harlem. People going to the event were corralled in barricaded pens reminiscent of the days of slavery. The city declared that the march permit expired at 4 p.m.—and at that time police attacked the stage. They shut down the sound system. They maced and beat people and threw them off the stage. Skirmishes broke out as people defended themselves and expressed their anger at this police-state attack. At least three police helicopters buzzed the crowd, at times dip-

ping dangerously low.

The day after the march, a SWAT team of 100 cops with automatic weapons sealed off a section of the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood in Brooklyn. They said they were looking for Shaheed Muhammed (AKA James Washington) in connection with an alleged assault on a police officer at the MYM. Shaheed is a member of the December 12th Movement, one of the organizations that organized the March. The charge against him was the lowest level misdemeanor, but this SWAT team sealed off the entire neighborhood. They busted into Shaheed's apartment and threatened people at Sista's Place, a cafe associated with the December 12th Movement.

Now the grand jury has brought charges against six Black men. Shaheed Muhammad is the only person actually named in the indictment. The other five are identified as "John Doe," "Green Shirt," "Yellow Shirt," etc. One is charged with felony attempted assault and reckless endangerment; the other five with misdemeanors. The way these charges are framed gives the police a green light to go snooping for in-

formation—including by encouraging snitches—and to harass anyone who "fits the description."

As we go to press, there is a report that one person has been arrested as one of the "John Does" and will be arraigned on November 30.

Michael Warren, attorney for the MYM, said, "Our position is that the only criminal actions out there were exhibited by the police officers and their bosses—Howard Safir and Mayor Giuliani—who both admitted that they were responsible for what the police did. If [Manhattan DA] Robert Morgenthau had any principles at all, he would indict them for felony assault based on their actions as provocateurs."

Victims of the police attack at the MYM held a press conference the day after the grand jury indictments were announced. These victims, who were pepper-sprayed, maced, beaten and thrown off the stage—said that they are filing a complaint against the city for violating the Handschu Consent Decree. This Consent Decree came out of protests against political police surveillance in the 1970s. It prohibits cops from routine-

ly filming demonstrations as long as a crime is not in process. The cops illegally filmed the MYM, and the grand jury in the case looked at 26 videotapes of the end of the MYM when the police attacked the stage.

On November 23 a "people's tribunal" was held outside the federal courthouse in Manhattan. Organizers and supporters of the MYM indicted Giuliani on various charges, including felonious assault, illegal use of a police helicopter, entrapment, false arrest, contempt, endangering public safety, defamation, and violation of the Handschu Consent Decree. Giuliani was found "guilty as charged."

The system worked overtime to criminalize the MYM—just like they have been criminalizing this whole generation of Black and Latino youth. The police brutally attacked the march—just like they brutalize people on the streets every day. And now they are using their legal machinery to go after the MYM resisters—just like they use their whole system of courts and law enforcement to carry out injustice against the people.



As of November 29, 1998 Chairman Gonzalo (Abimael Guzmán) has been held in isolation for...

6 Years, 46 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. Fujimori changed Peru's constitution to legalize 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.

Support the People's War in Peru!
Support the Communist Party of Peru!
Defend the Life of Chairman Gonzalo,
Fight to Break the Isolation!

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Correction

In RW #984 there was an error on page 5. A quote was wrongly attributed to Charles Carney. Charles Carney read the statement which was from Rev. Michael Yasutake, executive director of the Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience Project (IPOC).

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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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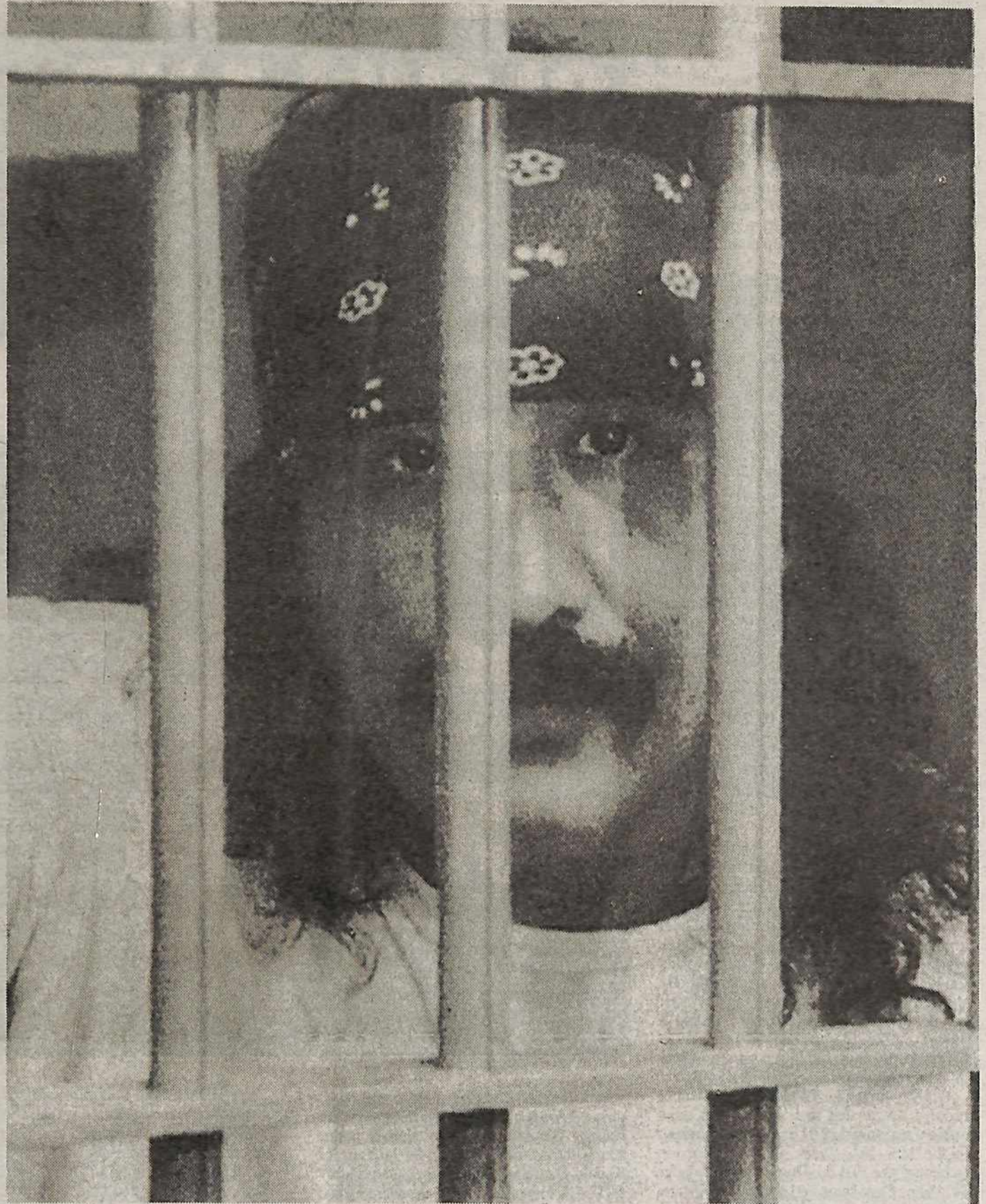
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Leonard Peltier Demands Urgent Medical Care



Leonard Peltier

Prison Denies Treatment at Mayo Clinic

Federal prison authorities are continuing to deny Native American political prisoner Leonard Peltier treatment for a potentially life-threatening health problem. Since 1996, Leonard has had something seriously wrong with his jaw. He is unable to open and close his mouth. He has a half-inch gap between his teeth through which he eats. He cannot chew his food and is in excruciating pain. Leonard recently told a supporter that the pain is unbearable.

One of Leonard Peltier's attorneys, Ramsey Clark, reports that because Leonard can't open his mouth he can't receive treatment for two abscessed teeth. If left untreated, the infection from these teeth could spread through his bloodstream and become life-threatening. Prison medical authorities at the Springfield Federal Medical Center claimed Leonard had cancer and gave him jaw surgery twice and high doses of radiation.

A press release issued by the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee describes the "treatment" Leonard received from the prison medical center in 1996: "During the surgery, Leonard almost died from blood loss. He went into a coma for 14 hours. After the surgery, while he was still weak, he was put in the 'hole' which was infested with cockroaches and ants. He was forced to stay in the 5'x7' cell for 23 hours a day and was not given adequate writing materials or use of a telephone. During this time doctors convinced him that he needed radiation treatment on his jaw or he would die. He was not diagnosed with cancer. He was given radiation treatment for five days straight, making his condition even weaker.

The operation was largely unsuccessful as his jaw is now in worse condition than it ever was before. For obvious reasons, Leonard refuses any further 'treatment' from Springfield."

According to Leonard's supporters, when the records were reviewed by another doctor it was found that the radiation treatments were not the type usually given for cancer. Prison authorities won't allow an outside doctor to treat Leonard and he refuses to sign a release to get treated again because the prison authorities could then decide *who* treats him. A doctor at the famous Mayo Clinic has petitioned the Bureau of Prisoners on Leonard's behalf, but so far has been denied permission to treat Leonard.

Leonard's health has continued to deteriorate. His defense committee has put out a call for people to demand Leonard be treated by the Mayo Clinic. After letters and messages of protest were sent to prison authorities last summer, Leonard was told "unofficially" by a prison official that he would be transferred for treatment. But months went by and no action was taken. So Leonard Peltier filed a lawsuit against the prison for "cruel and unusual punishment." On October 14 the prison dismissed the lawsuit—on the outrageous grounds that "medical neglect or malpractice does not constitute cruel and unusual punishment." Leonard's defense committee has called for lawyers to step forward to take up this aspect of his case before the statute of limitations on the lawsuit runs out.

In the early 1970s, Leonard Peltier joined the American Indian Movement

(AIM)—an organization which brought revolutionary, anti-system politics to the masses and linked up with the youth and older, more traditional people on the reservations. In 1973, people on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Indian reservations in South Dakota rose up against government repression and attacks on the people. Hundreds took over the buildings at Wounded Knee. They were blockaded by GOONS, U.S. Marshals, FBI SWAT teams, troops, BIA officials, armored vehicles, and sharpshooters. Firefights went on for over 70 days and brought AIM's struggle worldwide attention and support.

After a negotiated "settlement," FBI agents flooded the area."

These agents presided over a death-squad campaign: In the three years after the occupation of Wounded Knee, more than 60 AIM supporters died violently on or near the Pine Ridge reservation. On July 26, 1975, a fire occurred in an AIM encampment. Two FBI agents were killed. Three men were charged with the murder. Two were acquitted by an all white jury. A 1976 FBI memo then called for directing "full prosecutive weight of the federal government—against Leonard Peltier." Witnesses were intimidated and evidence was fabricated. Leonard was found guilty and sentenced to two life terms. All of Leonard's appeals have been denied. Four years ago, he petitioned for clemency (release with time served) from President Clinton.

Leonard has maintained his innocence for 23 years. He has also refused to back away from his political beliefs and instead

has done what he can to speak out about the injustices against Native people and others from whatever prisons he's been held in.

The Leonard Peltier Defense Committee is calling for civil disobedience and protest around the world on December 19 to demand that Leonard be granted clemency and freed. They have also issued a new poster titled "The Indian Wars Are Not Over" with a picture of Leonard and a list of 55 people who were murdered by the authorities on Pine Ridge. Across the bottom is the slogan "Free Leonard Peltier and All Political Prisoners!" To order posters or get more information about Leonard's case, contact the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, P.O. Box 583, Lawrence, Kansas, 66044. Phone: 785-842-5774; Fax: 785-842-5796; E-mail: lpdc@idir.net. (For more information about Leonard's case also see RW #968.)

The Leonard Peltier Defense Committee has asked that people contact the following officials to demand he be granted medical treatment and his phone privileges be reinstated: Ms. Kathleen Hawk, Director, Bureau of Prisons, 320 First Street, Washington, DC 20534, FAX: 202-514-6878; Warden Booker, Leavenworth Federal Prison, PO Box 1000, Leavenworth, KS 66048, 913-682-8700. To demand clemency, contact US Pardon Attorney Roger C. Adams, 500 First Street N.W. Suite 400, Ref: Leonard Peltier #89637-132, Washington D.C. 20530, 202-616-6070; President Bill Clinton, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington DC 20500, 202-456-1111.

On October 23, 1998, Dr. Barnett Slepian, a doctor committed to providing abortions as part of offering all-around reproductive health care for women, was brutally murdered by an anti-abortion assassin in his Amherst, N.Y. home. A day later, 250 people attended a pro-choice night time vigil for Dr. Slepian outside his Amherst clinic.

Robert Stauber and Michael "Malikee" Gingerich—well-known and respected activists in the Cleveland area who have been involved for years in the struggle for reproductive rights and part of the movement to oppose the politics of cruelty in general—joined the vigil with a beautiful banner from Refuse & Resist! that said, "We Won't Go Back, Defend the Right to Abortion!" Little did these two men know at the time that, almost a month later, they would be targeted and persecuted by the FBI. That they would become the subjects of a nationwide FBI search. That the authorities would imply they were possibly linked to the murder of Dr. Slepian. That they would be slandered in the Canadian and U.S. press.

What follows is not fiction. It is a real life story of how the FBI is "investigating" the murder of Dr. Slepian. It is a story that shows once again that *nothing good* can come from the involvement of government agencies like the FBI in solving the problems of the people.

On October 24, after mistakenly thinking the vigil for Dr. Slepian was at the doctor's home, Gingerich and Stauber encountered some police in the vicinity of the house. From this point on, the local authorities have been aware that Gingerich and Stauber are pro-choice activists. And later press reports indicate that the FBI has known this as well. The *New York Times* reported on November 22 that, "Moskal [an FBI agent] said the two men apparently showed up at Slepian's house the day after his death. They were trying to attend a prayer vigil for Slepian but had been sent to his house by mistake, and a police officer on duty took their names, Moskal said."

On November 21, Gingerich and Stauber became aware that their names had gone out in a nationwide FBI bulletin. According to the *New York Times*, this bulletin was issued by the FBI on Thursday, November 19. The Canadian Press Service in the Hamilton, Ontario *Spectator* began reporting it on November 20. And on Saturday, November 21, the story was picked up by the AP wire and Reuters.

The press reports amounted to vicious slanders of Gingerich and Stauber and they were put in a very dangerous situation. News items in papers and on the internet reported, "The FBI is on a nationwide

CLEVELAND: FBI PERSECUTION OF PRO-CHOICE ACTIVISTS

search looking for two more people who may be connected with the murder of Dr. Barnett Slepian...They've alerted police across the country to be on the lookout for Ronald Stauber and Michael Gingerich." (MSNBC News) The two men were named in most press accounts. It was stated that the federal Justice Department had posted a half-million-dollar reward for information leading to the arrest of the sniper who killed Dr. Slepian. And it was reported that the FBI bulletin indicated there were possible links between the two men and James Charles Kopp—the anti-abortionist being sought as a material witness in the case.

The FBI issued this bulletin *in spite* of the fact that they *already* had a lot of information indicating that Gingerich and Stauber were pro-choice activists and *not at all* likely suspects in the murder of Dr. Slepian.

Before the FBI issued their bulletin they had confirmed, through interviews, that Gingerich and Stauber were pro-choice activists and had borrowed a car to go to the vigil. FBI agents harassed the woman who had loaned the car to the two men—they visited her three times, banged on her neighbors' doors and at one point threatened her, saying that if Stauber and Gingerich were arrested and charged with Dr. Slepian's murder, she would be named as an "accessory."

Also, given the FBI's long history of spying on progressive and revolutionary movements, it is hardly far-fetched to assume the FBI had access to the arrest records and files on Stauber and Gingerich that clearly indicate they have been involved in pro-choice and other progressive activities.

Before the FBI put out their bulletin, Stauber's lawyer had contacted the FBI, saying his client had no obligation to talk to them. And later, Stauber and his lawyer met with the FBI to make it clear that, while Stauber did not have anything to say to the authorities, he was not trying to hide. Still even after this, the FBI continued to make outrageous statements to the press and allow it to go totally uncorrected, the impression being put out all over the news that these two activists were being sought and somehow "may have known James Charles Kopp, an anti-abortion activist being sought as a material witness in the case." (Associated Press 11/22)

From the beginning the FBI was very antagonistic toward Stauber and his lawyer. They visited the attorney's home even though he had told them he was going to be out of town. And at one point they made a point of asking how people found out about and got to the vigil within 24 hours after the murder. With this question, the FBI attempted to turn the investigation of Dr. Slepian's murder into an investigation of organizing within the pro-choice movement. In fact, the FBI initiated their investigation of two pro-choice activists because

they had gone to the vigil. An FBI agent told the press, "They were being sought for interviews just because they were literally in the area after the homicide." (AP Wire 11/23)

The question needs to be asked: What is the FBI up to here? Are they carrying out this outrageous persecution of two pro-choice activists so that they "look like they're doing something" to solve this murder? Are they up to something even more evil, like a conscious attempt to reverse right and wrong, attack progressive pro-choice people, while letting the murderers of Dr. Slepian go free?

While Stauber and his lawyer were meeting with FBI agents they did not know, nor were they informed, that the FBI had already issued their nationwide bulletin. As Stauber said at a news conference on November 24, asking the FBI: "How come on the day I refused to talk to you—sat right across the table from you—you issued to the Associated Press a statement that you didn't know our whereabouts? Why did you let this continue for days in the news?"

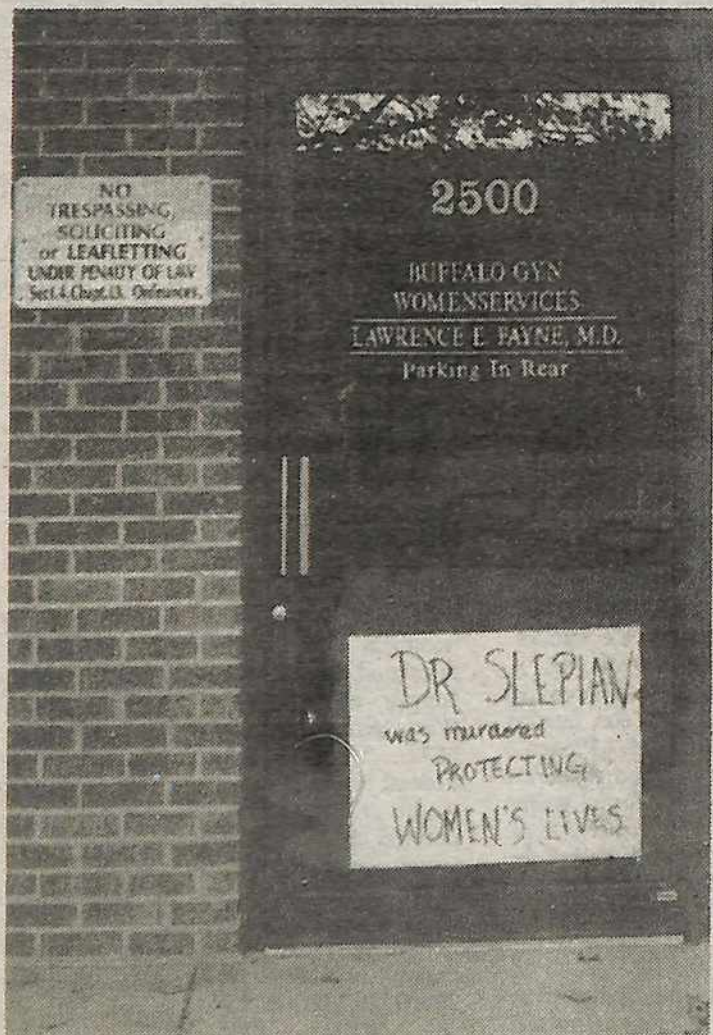
After Stauber and Gingerich became aware of the FBI bulletin on November 21, their attorney immediately contacted the FBI. When the lawyer questioned the agency's lies to the media, the FBI threatened him, saying if his clients don't come in today and talk that today's media will be nothing compared to what's coming out tomorrow. This was an open admission by the FBI of using the media to harass the two men and punish them for exercising their right to have a lawyer and not talk to the FBI. And to this day, the FBI has not stated verbally or in writing that they have withdrawn the nationwide search.

On Tuesday, November 24, a press conference was held in Cleveland outside the Federal Building that houses the FBI. Robert Stauber opened by saying he had some questions for the FBI: "Why did you pick out two activists who support women's right to abortion? Why are you pretending you didn't know that? Didn't you look in the files that you keep on us? (and probably everyone else out here today). Why has only our names surfaced from your 'hundreds of interviews'? And if in fact, you are trying to find the attackers of abortion doctors, why haven't you solved ONE case in the five years of these attacks which have resulted in the injury of four doctors and the killing of Dr. Slepian?... Why did you portray us essentially as fugitives because I wouldn't talk to you?" Michael Gingerich also spoke and said, "They [the FBI] made no attempt to find me and Mr. Stauber had met with the FBI the very day they issued this national BOL for us. Through the media, both locally and nationally, the FBI implied we were fugitives, putting both myself and Mr. Stauber's life in danger. To associate us with the heinous murder of Dr. Barnett Slepian is outrageous and preposterous. I view Dr. Barnett Slepian as a hero and all abortion providers are heroes."

Statements opposing the FBI persecution of Stauber and Gingerich were also given by Deb Petten, one of the cofounders of the Cleveland Pro-choice Action League; Cheryl Lessin, spokesperson for the Cleveland Branch of the RCP; and a member of Workers World Party. A statement was also read from AntiRacist Action at Kent State University.

After Dr. Barnett Slepian was murdered the FBI was brought in to investigate the crime. One month later all they have produced is a vicious and massive attack on pro-choice activists. This is another striking example of the cold truth that the masses of pro-choice people must rely on *ourselves* to protect and defend abortion providers while fighting on many fronts to change the whole reactionary political climate which encourages and produces attacks like the assassination of Dr. Slepian. Nothing good can come from cooperating or involving the government in the fight against attacks on abortion clinics and doctors. Big Brother is watching—but he's watching the resisters.

Stauber and Gingerich are demanding a formal announcement that the nationwide search is over, that they are no longer suspects, and a public apology from the FBI. When contacted by local news on the night of the press conference, the FBI in Cleveland refused to comment. □



Buffalo clinic where Dr. Slepian provided abortion services.



Mzwakhe Mbuli

South Africa

Mzwakhe Mbuli: Rebel Voice Behind Bars

*"My underpants pulled down
My private parts exposed
Is this a 'New South Africa'?
Is this the 'Rainbow Nation'?
My intelligence is beyond humiliation
My resilience is beyond malicious
allegations
My spirit cannot be broken."*

Mzwakhe Mbuli,
Pretoria Prison, South Africa, 1998

Under the apartheid regime of South Africa, the deep voice of Mzwakhe Mbuli—and his incendiary mix of music and the spoken word—was outlawed. Today it is a bitter comment on the New South Africa that Mzwakhe Mbuli is incarcerated in Pretoria Prison—framed up on bogus charges of bank robbery, facing 15 years in prison if he is convicted.

Mzwakhe came up in the youth upsurge at the time of the Soweto uprising; and for his outspoken anti-apartheid stand and his support for Nelson Mandela, Mzwakhe's poetry was routinely banned by the apartheid regime. Known as the "people's poet," Mzwakhe fought the apartheid system with his words. He survived prison detentions, torture, six months in solitary confinement, and three attempts on his life.

The release of Nelson Mandela from prison coincided with the first time an album by Mzwakhe was not banned. He became internationally famous on a world tour—six of his eight albums have gone 'gold'—and he was a recent contributor on Peter Gabriel's AIDS album. After the '94 elections Mzwakhe was invited to recite his poetry at Nelson Mandela's inauguration. But Mzwakhe expressed deep disappointment with the program carried out by Mandela's regime and remained an outspoken critic of injustice and government corruption.

Since October 1997 he has been held at Pretoria Central Prison, denied bail three times and held in maximum security for five months. But he remains defiant. In a recent interview with two journalists, Ron Sakolsky of *Beat* magazine, and Sheila Nopper of *Rhythm* magazine, Mzwakhe shared his story.

Mzwakhe believes he was set up because he was planning to denounce government corruption, arms smuggling and drug trafficking. He had contacted local Security authorities and was scheduled to see Mandela himself when he was arrested. The tale of his arrest smacks of political intrigue and the methods of the South African political police.

On October 28, 1997, Mzwakhe received an anonymous phone call. The caller claimed to have information about a 1996 attempt on his life—which left Mzwakhe's car riddled with bullets—after Mzwakhe protested government corruption. The police never discovered the shooters, and Mzwakhe publicly condemned them for this. The October 1997 phone call, promising information on his would-be assassins, lured Mzwakhe to Pretoria. There he was handed an envelope which was supposed to contain the names of the assassins. But Mzwakhe was quickly jumped by police, who examined the envelope and found 15,000 Rand which they claimed was stolen from a nearby bank. Mzwakhe was arrested and police confiscated a gun he carried to protect himself—citing this as evidence in the robbery.

At 6'4", Mzwakhe is as recognizable as he is famous—an unlikely candidate for committing a bank robbery which netted less than \$4000. As a best-selling recording artist, he regularly gets \$3-4000 per performance; and before his arrest he had just banked a check for \$100,000 for a music spot he did endorsing the national railway system.

Mzwakhe told Ron Sakolsky: "I maintain my innocence. I have no doubt in my mind that the people behind my arrest are politicians who are involved in the drug trade. Given my stature and popularity it is not possible to go and rob a bank without even some form of disguise. Police have abused their power and issue wild, tarnishing and malicious statements to ruin my reputation. However, they only succeed in enhancing it. It is a sorry state of affairs that the Mandela-led government has inherited apartheid police who were previously in-

involved in acts of terror and atrocities. Public support is overwhelming since I was arrested. I remain the victim of a grudge and political vendetta."

Mzwakhe's trial in June was a travesty of justice—reminiscent of the courts which tried and convicted Steven Biko and so many opponents of the apartheid regime. None of the key witnesses could identify Mzwakhe, and the bank security cameras were conveniently not activated the day of the robbery. Witnesses recanted testimony—one said he had been bribed by police. And one of the arresting officers committed suicide just before the court date. Delays by the court, day after day, led to a rescheduling of the trial until January 1999. And Mzwakhe remained in prison.

In Maximum Security Mzwakhe was put in a cell on Death Row, 50 steps from the gallows. Sharing his cell was Janus Walusz—the admitted murderer of Chris Hani. Hani was head of the ANC military wing and a close personal friend of Mzwakhe's—whose funeral oration for Hani is featured on *Resistance Is Defense*. In April 1997 Mzwakhe led a hunger strike calling for expansion of visitors' rights and he was moved from maximum security. "Presently, I share my cell with 64 other prisoners with only one toilet." Mzwakhe told Sheila Nopper, "We use a bucket of water to flush." The prison is constantly cold.

Mzwakhe has had more than 1,000 visitors; and each time he appears, the courtroom is packed with supporters and fans. His case is being considered for investigation by Amnesty International. In a full-page birthday greeting published in the *Mail and Guardian*, dub poet Benjamin Zephaniah wrote, "I truly believe that a nation can be judged on how it treats its poets."

"The justice system is still the same as under the apartheid regime," Mzwakhe says, "Apartheid appointees—judges and magistrates—continue to run the country through the courts. The so-called 'Independent Judiciary' is just a myth. Human rights in South Africa is a circus. Here in

prison people question my sacrifice and dedication to the past, and, because of my imprisonment, express their doubts about the sincerity of the present regime." The ANC has maintained a cool distance from Mzwakhe.

*"I am vulgar-proof No regime can take
away my dignity
No police force can arrest my talents
Oh, beloved South Africa
The truth is yet to come
And the truth shall set me free."*

Mzwakhe Mbuli, Pretoria Prison, 1998

Unlike other ANC members now in government office, Mzwakhe has continued to stand with the poor, raising his voice in the hopes that the Mandela regime would change its course. He told Ron Sakolsky: "I am like a mirror in the society and reflect the true situation. I do not fictionalize. I do not worship leaders nor governments. The struggle is not yet over. The material conditions of the people in the townships are deteriorating. Silence is no longer golden when taxpayers' money is daily squandered by government officials. Corruption and rot has reached unprecedented levels.... Failure to alleviate unemployment, homelessness and untold poverty in the townships will result in an uprising. Our situation is like a powder keg. The people on the ground are angry. In the future mass anger will transform itself into civil disobedience. Life after Mandela won't be rosy, but thorny. The government of the day has failed us. People were promised heaven on earth and this promise has become a mirage. The South African people cannot be fooled all the time. The absence of war does not mean peace...."

On January 26, 1999, Mzwakhe Mbuli is scheduled to stand trial. He has vowed that until his release, his "pen will roll without a stop." And he has appealed to the international community to "get to the bottom of this vicious conspiracy." □

Reporter's Notebook

On the Road to Corcoran

A Living Hell in California's Prisons

The RW received the following report from a correspondent in the San Francisco Bay Area:

On October 17, hundreds of people from all over California converged on Corcoran Prison in the state's largely agricultural central valley. Prisoner rights activists, family members of prisoners, former prisoners, relatives of those who have died at the hands of brutal enforcers (both police and prison guards), attorneys, health care professionals and revolutionaries caravaned from diverse parts of the state, stopping at prisons along the way. The caravan, sponsored by California Prison Focus, California Coalition for Women Prisoners, Families to Amend California's Three Strikes, and others was the first protest ever held at Corcoran Prison—which has become notorious for nightmarish brutality by the guards. Conditions at Corcoran Prison are by no means unique and the participants in the caravan were determined to stop the abuse of men and women in the prison system and challenge the way the system criminalizes youth.

As the car I was in wound its way from the San Francisco Bay Area to our first stop at the huge prison complex for women in Chowchilla, we passed through cotton fields and I thought about how, after the U.S. Civil War, former slave states passed the infamous "Black Codes" which said that certain acts like "mischief" or "insulting gestures" were crimes if committed by "a free Negro." Mississippi's Vagrancy Act defined "all free Negroes and mulattos over the age of eighteen" as criminals unless they could furnish written proof of a job at the beginning of every year. These and other laws were used to imprison many former slaves. The former slaves were either bound in virtual slavery to former slave owners or other contractors who paid their fines or they were leased to railroad companies, coal mines, plantation owners and the like. The conditions for a leased Black convict were so brutal that they rarely lived for more than a few more years.

I also thought about how today, during another period of big changes in the U.S. economy, the prisons are again swallowing up a generation of our youth. I thought about how in California between 1984 and 1992 over 1,000 new laws have been passed increasing penalties for all sorts of crimes. Like the Black Codes of yesterday these laws, together with the "war on drugs," have resulted in an unprecedented number of Black and Latino youth being put in prison. In California between 1977 and 1998 there was a eight-fold increase in the number of people in prison—growing from 19,000 to 159,000. Over 70 percent of the prisoners in California are Black, Latino or of another oppressed nationality.

Today as you travel down the highway that runs 400 miles between Sacramento, the state capitol, and Los Angeles you are never more than 40 minutes from one of California's prisons—Folsom, Mule Creek, Vacaville, Stockton, Tracy, Chowchilla, Coalinga, Avenal, Corcoran, Delano, Wasco, Tehachapi, Lancaster. The California Department of Corrections now runs 33 prisons, 21 of which have opened since 1984. Each of these concrete dungeons houses thousands of our sisters and brothers.

Sisters Behind Bars

According to California Prison Focus and the Center for Juvenile and Criminal Justice, the prison complex at Chowchilla is the largest women's prison in the world. It is made up of two prisons—the Central California Women's Facility (CCWF) and Valley State Prison for Women (VSP). Approximately 7,000 women are locked up in these two prisons. The number of women in prison nationwide has more than quadrupled in recent years—there are now 116,000 women locked up in prisons in the U.S.

Seventy-eight percent of the women in California's prisons are there for drug, property and other non-violent offenses. Many women are compelled to commit the offenses that land them in prison by the increasingly desperate economic situation they face, including attacks on AFDC and other benefits. One woman prisoner told the Center for Juvenile and Criminal Justice, "When I talk with my kids they have told me 'please don't steal, we can do without.' But my kids never did without. I stole for need. I would go to a store and open a package to get diapers." Many women are also in prison for killing abusive husbands or boyfriends. It is estimated that in California alone there are 600 women in prison for killing an abuser in self-defense.

Women in California prisons face inhumane health care and sexual abuse by guards. In 1995, 24 women prisoners, many with life-threatening illnesses, filed a suit against California Governor Pete Wilson and the Department of Corrections charging them with systematic denial of necessary medical care. Clarisse Shumate, the lead plaintiff in the lawsuit, suffers from sickle cell anemia and was denied basic medical care forcing her to go into repeated health emergencies. The case was settled in 1997 and the state promised to improve the medical care given to woman prisoners. In a recent article in the California Coalition for Women Prisoners Newsletter, *The Fire Inside*, Clarisse Shumate says that in many ways health conditions in the prison have gotten worse since the court settlement.

Sexual abuse of women in state prisons across the U.S. is widespread and condoned by the system. In December 1996, Human Rights Watch released a 347-page report documenting sexual abuse of women in state prisons. In the prisons in Chowchilla, strip searches are often conducted in full view of male guards. Women prisoners are prohibited from covering the windows to their cells for short periods of time while they are changing clothes. Male guards routinely watch women using showers or toilets.

Conditions are even worse for women in the Security Housing Unit (SHU) at VSP. If a woman needs to go to the bathroom during an exercise period she must use a toilet that is directly below a guard tower that is usually staffed by a male guard. The showers are constructed so that male guards have an unobstructed view of the women showering. Women prisoners receive their medical exams, including their gynecological exams in the presence of male guards.

In recent months both California Prison Focus and Amnesty International received letters from women prisoners in the SHU (Security Housing Units) at Valley State charging an increase in sexual harassment and abuse in recent months. A spokesperson for California Prison Focus said, "We are alarmed by the reports of daily abuse

and mistreatment of women SHU prisoners. This mistreatment, which includes sexual assault, improper touching, leering at women in showers, intimidation and constant verbal harassment must be stopped." The program director of Amnesty International's Americas Regional Program wrote a letter to the Director of the California Department of Corrections asking for an investigation of the women's charges.

As the caravan parked along the road that separates the two women's prisons in Chowchilla I heard a loudspeaker from inside CCWF call all women out of the yard. Apparently, the prison officials did not want the prisoners to know that there were hundreds of people that had come to support them. A picket line was formed in the middle of the street. Every few minutes a car would turn into the entrance of the prison. Someone, almost always a Black person or a Latino, was coming for a visit with a loved one held behind bars. Chants rang out: "The Human Rights Problem in the World Today is Right Here in the USA!" and "Health Care is a Human Right!"

Some women who had been in the prison in Chowchilla stepped up to speak. "I left this prison three years ago after spending 14 months inside of it," said a woman named Dana. "From what I saw I'm very fortunate that I didn't get sick. There are women in there who are very sick and can't get help. I see a poster going around here: Alice Quihuis. Alice Quihuis is a woman I knew. She died in that prison. Not because she had a terminal illness. She died because she couldn't get treatment for a disease that was treatable. Her three year commitment became a death sentence."

Cynthia Martin is another former Chowchilla prisoner. "I spent three years in this prison right behind me. I came into that prison in October of 1992 with 54% of my body burned....I laid in a hospital facility for approximately a month, where the doctor would come in once a day and I would continuously give him the list of things I needed—one of them being pressure garments that I was to wear so I wouldn't have badly scarred tissue....I'm lucky since I've been home I've had three plastic surgeries and I look okay. But I didn't know at that point how I would look. It's very frustrating when a doctor comes in and you tell him what you need and he walks out of the room and acts like it's a bizarre request. I was

Cynthia Martin speaking at Chowchilla Prison complex. Cynthia was imprisoned at Chowchilla with burns over much of her body and received inadequate medical care.

denied crutches. Because of the lawsuit I was given crutches just a couple of months before I came home. I spent four and a half years in a wheel chair and didn't know if I'd walk again or not. I still have a cast on my foot because I didn't get casting that I needed done while I was in there. We need to change medical care in the prison. I saw people that had critical things wrong with them die needlessly. They would go with heart problems to the medical facility and they were told to take a Motrin and go back to sleep and they would die of heart problems. I've seen people go into seizures and a medical technician would just kick them aside onto the grass..."

A statement to the rally from women political prisoners in the Woman's Federal Prison in Dublin was read. "Love and solidarity to everyone here and all men and women inside the California system. Because all of us have been locked up for over a decade in the women's federal system we are well aware that conditions within the California state system for men and women are even worse. We are excited and strengthened by the increased mobilizations about justice for prisoners and we hope everyone here will commit themselves to the long term fight for prisoners' rights." The statement was signed by political prisoners Dylcia Pagan, Alicia Rodriguez, Lucy Rodriguez, Carmen Valentine, Marilyn Buck, Susan Crane, Linda Evans and Laura Whitehorn.

As the demonstration got ready to leave, some women were seen walking across the prison yard and people shouted out our love to our sisters on the other side of the barbed wire fence. Before the caravan left every one tied ribbons onto the fence.

"Welcome to Hell"

I was particularly glad to demonstrate at Corcoran because I was aware of its record of brutality. Corcoran Prison lies midway between Los Angeles and San Francisco. It is the site of one of California's Security Housing Units (SHUs), supermaximum security prisons within a prison. Prisoners in the SHU are locked in their cells 23 hours a day.

Between 1989, when Corcoran prison first opened and 1995, guards staged hundreds of gladiator fights in the small exercise yard of the SHU. Prisoners were let into the yard with known enemies. One guard would often play the role of "an-



Women prisoners at Chowchilla.





Protesters outside of Corcoran prison Oct 17.

nouncer" calling out the combatants' names as they entered the yard. Supervisors from other units in the prison would come to watch the fights. Guards would bet on which prisoner would prevail.

Guards would sit in the tower above the exercise yards at Corcoran armed with gas guns which fire wooden blocks and 9mm rifles that fire bullets that explode in the body on impact. Guards would use the fights that they set up, which almost never produced any serious injuries, as a pretext to fire on the prisoners who were involved. Seven prisoners were killed and 43 were wounded by officers firing assault rifles at Corcoran during these years. One man lost his teeth from a wooden bullet. Another lost his eye. One guard, who has spoken out against the gladiator fights, told the *Los Angeles Times*, "I think they liked shooting some of the trouble makers. They wanted to get that little ounce of revenge."

The policy of mixing known enemies in the exercise yard at Corcoran was not merely an exercise in brutality by sadistic guards. It was a deliberate policy by prison officials. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, "by forcing such explosive combinations and cultivating an atmosphere of fear, officials believed that the gangs would brutalize each other into submission, according to internal memos and interviews with SHU staffers." The *Times* quotes a 1989 internal memo from Associate Warden Gary Lindsay which said, "The integrated yards [integration here refers to the prison policy of putting members of enemy

gangs in the same yard—RW] are doing just what they were intended to do and inmate gang structures are left in confusion." In the same memo Lindsay predicted that prisoners would be shot and killed but didn't see this as a reason to stop the policy.

Another incident at Corcoran that has received attention is the use of inmate enforcers to rape prisoners. Eddie Dillard was a 23-year-old first time offender. While at Calpatia prison he was accused of kicking a woman guard and ended up in the Corcoran SHU where he was a marked man. A sergeant ordered 120 pound Dillard to be placed in the cell of Wayne Robertson, a 6' 3", 230 pound inmate with the nickname "Booty Bandit." A guard who accompanied Dillard to Robertson's cell told the *L.A. Times*: "Everyone knew about Robertson. He had raped inmates before and he's raped inmates since. He would tell us, 'If you have any loudmouths or any inmates you can't control and need to be taught a lesson, put them in the house with me.' The Booty Bandit was just one of the tools of punishment that we used." Robertson was given extra food and tennis shoes by the guards in return for his services.

Over the next two days Dillard was repeatedly raped by Robertson. Guards ignored his repeated pleas to be let out of the cell. One guard even laughed in his face. Today Eddie Dillard is attending a Junior College. He lives with his wife, who is studying for her master's degree in psychology, and their young son. He told

the *L.A. Times*, "They took something away from me that I can't replace. I've tried so many times to forget about it but the feeling just doesn't go away. Every time I'm with my wife it comes back what he did to me. I want to close the story. I want some salvation. But it keeps going on and on."

One guard who accompanied Dillard to Robertson's cell and who has since spoken out against the abuses at Corcoran said, "I didn't care if someone got raped or killed by the staff. It was just another day's work."

Other incidents of brutality at Corcoran have also come out:

- November 1989, guards assembled an "extraction team" to inspect the cell of Reginald Cooke, who had allegedly spit on a guard and exposed himself to a female guard. After Cooke was beaten and shackled he was carried to the unit's rotunda. More than 20 guards watched as a lieutenant ordered Cooke's pants lowered and delivered a jolt to his genitals with a taser gun.

- One rite of passage for rookie guards—used to prove their loyalty and brutality—was a ritual called "greet the bus." A team of guards would surround a bus arriving at Corcoran from another prison, don gloves, place tape over their name tags and beat the arriving prisoners. According to one guard, "We'd place them in a chin hold and tell them to look skyward, and any flinch to the left or right was reason to take them down. Whatever force was necessary we used. All the while we're yelling at them: 'Welcome to the Corcoran SHU! This is a hands-on institution. You're in our house now. Whatever your life in prison was before it's over. Welcome to hell.'"

In one incident inmates arriving at Corcoran were forced to stand barefoot on scorching asphalt until they collapsed from third degree burns. One prisoner had no bottoms of his feet left. The guards told the

medical staff that the injuries had occurred while prisoners were playing handball.

- There is a 10 cell unit in the Corcoran SHU for those with physical disabilities that is supposed to be equipped in accordance with the Americans with Disability Act. An article by Doctor Corey Weinstein of California Prison Focus on an April 1997 visit to Corcoran sums up the conditions in the 'ADA SHU.' "This middle aged man is a quadriplegic as a result of strokes. He has partial use of his right arm and right thumb. He must crawl on the floor of his cell, eat with his thumb, and is unable to get up onto the toilet or his bed. He lives in his own excrement. Ants invade his large open bed-sores that receive no regular nursing care. He gets no help with eating, bathing or self care. The guards abuse him. He injured himself when guards forced him to give himself a haircut with electric clippers. When he got angry about that two guards dumped him out of his wheel chair and beat him before throwing him back in his cell."

Despite these things becoming exposed, the brutality at Corcoran continues. According to the article by Dr. Weinstein, "Rather than taking heed from the discipline of the few guards finally punished for murder and mayhem, the staff taunt the prisoners saying the new abuses are in retaliation for the demotions and firings." The article documents more brutal "greet the bus" incidents, continuing setup fights in the SHU yard, and brutal cell extractions for trivial reasons with the beating of prisoners who are fully restrained and not resisting.

Cover-up and Indictments

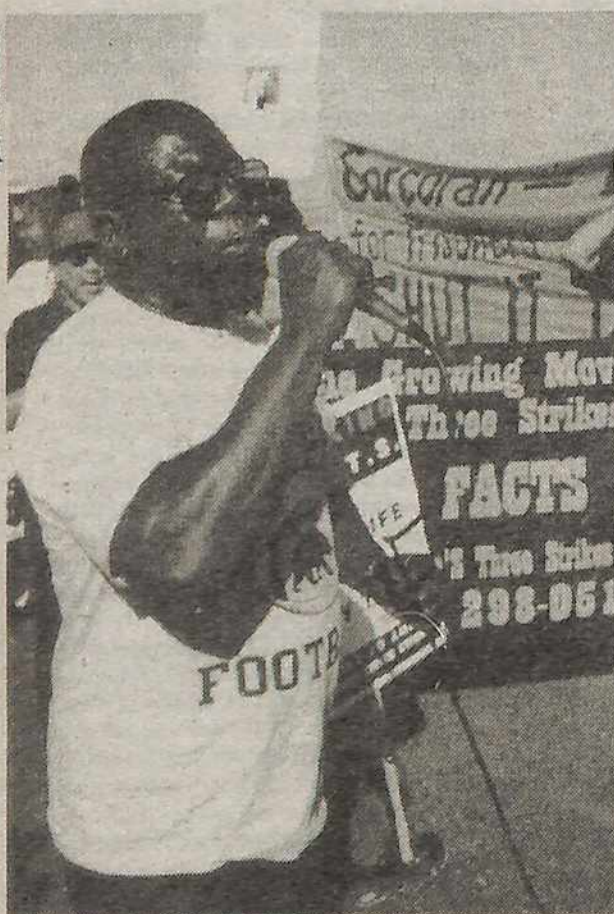
The barbaric abuses at Corcoran came to light because of actions by prisoners who spoke out despite retaliation by guards, prison rights activists on the outside, attorneys representing prisoners and the families of prisoners killed by the guards, investigative reporters, and a few guards who have spoken out against the abuses. Every step of the way the prison authorities and the state officials have sought to cover up the brutality at Corcoran.

It took seven years and seven deaths for the state to finally open an investigation into the killings. The corrections officer who supervised the investigating team has revealed that the governor's office and the prison guard's union sabotaged the investigation. "The union and the governor's office ran the investigation," Jim Connor, the corrections agent who supervised the team told the *L.A. Times*. "We would try and question a witness and the union was there blocking us. The union even told us how many interviews we could do, and our bosses in Sacramento backed them. This was no independent inquiry. It was just a sham."

Instead, the state investigations focused on the guards who had spoken out against the brutality at Corcoran. According to the

Continued on page 12

Special to the RWOR



Bill Tate speaking at Corcoran Prison. Tate's son Preston was shot by a guard during a "gladiator fight" at Corcoran.

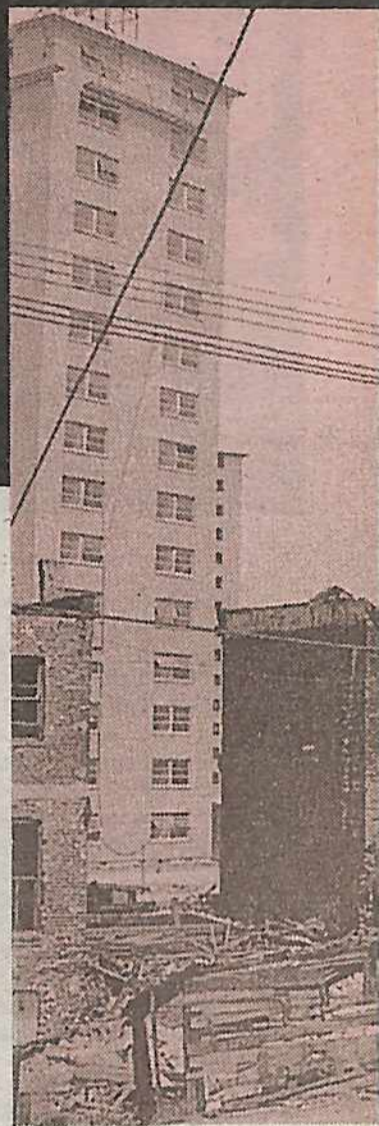


A scene from the video Maximum Security University showing 2 prisoners in a "gladiator fight" staged by prison guards.



Downtown Chicago seen from one of the Horner Homes.

How Ghetto Black



Highrise housing projects replacing the e

Thoughts on Reading *Making the Second Ghetto*

The *Revolutionary Worker* received the following correspondence from a reader in Chicago:

"Locked in a desperate struggle for survival, the city's large institutions used their combined economic resources and political influence to produce a redevelopment and urban renewal program designed to guarantee their continued prosperity."

"Decaying neighborhoods were torn down and their inhabitants were shunted off to other quarters, and the land upon which they stood was used for middle-class housing and institutional expansion."

"The [Chicago Housing Authority] also engaged in 'checkerboarding'—the movement of relocatees from one temporary home to another 'as though they were checkers or chessmen'—when a single family remained in a building scheduled for demolition."

These quotes sound like a description from 1998. Every word here rings with truth about the struggle today facing the people of Chicago's public housing—the tooth-and-nail battle that they (and their allies) are engaged in with the Chicago Housing Authority, the federal agency for Housing and Urban Development, the city government of Chicago and the real estate developers.

Yet the observations I have just quoted were taken from a book called *Making the Second Ghetto, Race and Housing in Chicago 1940-1960* by Arnold R. Hirsch. The ghettoization of Black people in Chicago went through two previous shapings—and it is chilling how much about these earlier events is interchangeable with the battles people are fighting today.

Chicago has been a pioneer in housing experiments and policies—aimed at containing and controlling the masses of Black people. In the past, the plans to create large-scale public housing in Chicago became models for nation-wide federal housing policies. And now, the Chicago plans to destroy public housing are being promoted as a model for the rest of the country as well.

I have been involved in the battle against the government's drive to "end public housing as we know it" for the last several years. Every day we learn something new about the maneuvers, lies, false promises, threats and tricks that are used to divide the people—about the underhanded deals and cold blooded police murder which have framed the lives of the people fighting to stay in public housing.

Reading this excellent book *Making the Second Ghetto* caused me to take a fresh look at the struggle people all over the country are waging for housing for all and at the role Chicago has played as a flagship for the vicious efforts of the government.

I am writing this article for the *Revolutionary Worker* because I want to share some of the history revealed by this book. I want to pull people's coats to the conclusions I drew and encourage people to

look at the book themselves — all as part of preparing to struggle even harder against an enemy whose interests are entirely opposed to those of people.

Frontlines in a Difficult Struggle

During the 1990s, some very courageous people have protested and resisted the physical disintegration, emptying and demolition of the housing projects which have been their homes and community for years. The battle is made even sharper by the fact that—as rundown as the Chicago Housing Authority has allowed these buildings here to become—they are part of a dwindling supply of housing that is affordable to poor people.

Some victories have been won. Mae Francis Johnson and her family in Horner Homes have inspired many by standing strong in the face of eviction—a fight which continues today. A lot of people have risked everything to defy police sweeps through their buildings, beatings and jailings of countless youth, point-blank shootings (for example, 26-year-old Shaunnay Royal in March 1997) and even killings (like that of 21-year-old Michael Russell in April 1998). Young revolutionary activists have taken their stand with the people of these projects, working to rally allies to this cause, and themselves facing arrest and threats.

Collective forms for living and resisting have been developed, like the "Fix 'Em Ups" in 500/502 Oak Street in the Cabrini-Green complex—where people put the slogan "Fix 'Em Up, Don't Tear Them Down" into practice. Residents shoveled, mopped, nailed and painted together—through ice floods, heatless or waterless winter nights, and weeks of no garbage collection. They managed to keep the structures livable and functioning for many months longer than the powers-that-be planned.

Young men, who the authorities dismiss as "gangbangers," have stood knee-deep in icy floods in Chicago winter weather, fighting to cap frozen bilge surging from aged pipes. Mothers have banded together to protect their children as buildings have been forcibly emptied rendering them dark, dangerous caverns for the remaining families.

And yet, so far, all the buildings under the gun from CHA/HUD have eventually been closed, and have either been demolished or slated for demolition. And the people in several buildings have eventually been driven out. Such residents have often been scattered throughout the city, making it harder to band together to fight. While some have gotten replacement housing in the same areas, the buildings are flimsy and come with extremely expensive utility costs.

The struggle over people's homes remains very much alive. But at times, it feels like the forces of resistance are stand-

ing on a railroad track with a train bearing down, and in spite of every effort, the train keeps coming.

After reading *Making the Second Ghetto*, I know three things very clearly:

First: We should not be surprised by a single dirty trick, maneuver, plan or under-the-table deal the CHA/HUD or the Chicago city government attempts. They have done them all before in one form or another. This is a way of life for them; they have been developing their techniques over years of practice. We should be furious at their total disdain for the poor and especially Black people—at the way they view human beings as just checker pieces on their board. But not surprised. As the revolutionary leader Mao Tsetung said: We must cast away illusions, prepare for struggle.

Second: Public housing policy is not meant to "help the poor." It has always been designed to strengthen the system's social and political control over the people. In Chicago, Black people, in particular, were forced from one ghetto to another—all according to the needs of profit and wishes of the Captains of Capital—the ruling class, federal, state or local.

And third: Violence has been the midwife of every change in the lives of the people, and in particular any change in housing patterns of Black people, including public housing.

Arnold R. Hirsch wrote *Making the Second Ghetto* as a dissertation at the University of Illinois at Chicago in the early 80s, and republished it with a new foreword in 1998. He has real sympathy for the people whose lives are at the center of this story. And yet, I should be clear, he does not draw the same conclusions I do. He does not see the repeated ghettoization of Black people as the product of a system, which by its very nature, requires the oppression and exploitation of Black people. However, his book has given me valuable insights into the workings of this system.

Making of the First Ghetto

In the twentieth century, Black people poured out of the former plantation areas of the Deep South—and millions passed through a historic transition from rural sharecroppers to urban proletarians. The railroad that ran straight north from the Mississippi Delta carried hundreds of thousands to Chicago, carrying cardboard suitcases filled with dreams.

This history of the Black migration from the South was tumultuous. And what the people found "up North" was far different than the opportunities they dreamed of. Their experience is concentrated in the history of housing in Chicago—where people live, or are allowed to live, determines much about the rest of their lives. It affects the education their children get, and the work they are able to find.

Under capitalism, housing does not exist

simply to provide human beings shelter—but it is a means to accumulate wealth and control the people. Interwoven through this picture are two continuing threads—the wealth accumulated and wielded by the rich (especially land developers), and the deep involvement of every level of government in carrying out the strategies of the developers, using law, policy and violence. In short, this is a story about the workings of capitalism—and of the ruling class's methods of enforcement and repression.

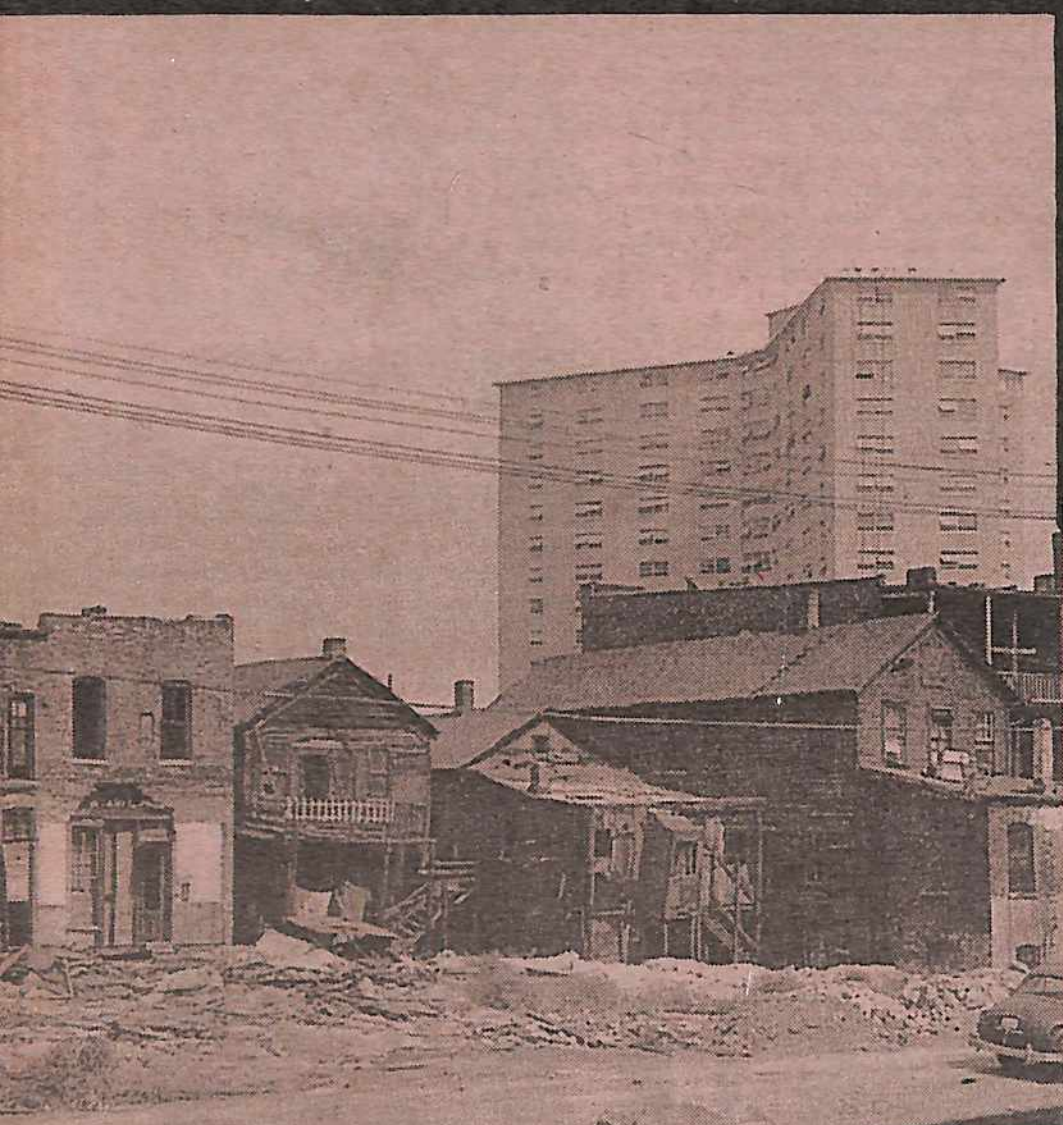
Black people poured out of the South in two great waves that accompanied the two world wars of the twentieth century. When wars cut off immigration and the creation of large armies caused a labor shortage—Black people were drawn, by capitalism, from the fields of the South into the factories of urban areas.

This Great Migration was a complicated push and pull of many factors: the deterioration and mechanization of the rural economy caused a forced removal from plantations in some areas, and violent attempts to keep Black folks on the plantations in other areas. Dreams of freedom in the North were spelled out by the *Chicago Defender* newspaper and others—and thousands of Black people were drawn by the powerful lure of wages and life without Jim Crow north of the Mason Dixon Line.

In Chicago alone, the numbers speak volumes. By 1920 Chicago's Black population was already 109,458. Between 1940 and 1960, it grew from 277,731 to 812,637—one of the largest concentrations of African American people in North America.

But the trip North did not mean an end to segregation. Black people were tightly confined into specific communities—at first, just a narrow sliver of land called "the Black Belt" on Chicago's Southside. As the hundreds of thousands arrived by train at the Union Station seeking a new life, they were forced to move onto these same few streets—producing some of the most intense and horrific overcrowding in modern

The System Ghettoized People in Chicago



ghetto housing around Michael Reese Hospital in the 1950s.



Family living in a condemned building at 2818 S. LaSalle without heat electricity or water, 1948.

sketched this process in an article called "Forced Segregation: A Neighborhood Story": "The place became a dump, and then Black people, and others who were previously kept out, were brought into the neighborhood, or allowed to come in there. And it was systematically turned into a dump, not by the new residents but by the banks, insurance companies, real estate concerns, and others who speculated in land and housing, along with the government. The new residents not only were not the cause of this, but they were not able, not allowed, to do anything about it." (*RW* #895, also available on RW Online)

By manipulating all the factors, the speculators raised prices for Black home owners with markups from 35 to 115 percent. Also the speculator usually retained title to the house, so that if the new home owners couldn't make their payments, the house reverted to this "thief with a pen."

Violence is as American as Apple Pie

Many fairy tales have been spun about the might of the pen, but in reality, behind every successful pen lies the might of the sword. To fully understand the dynamics of

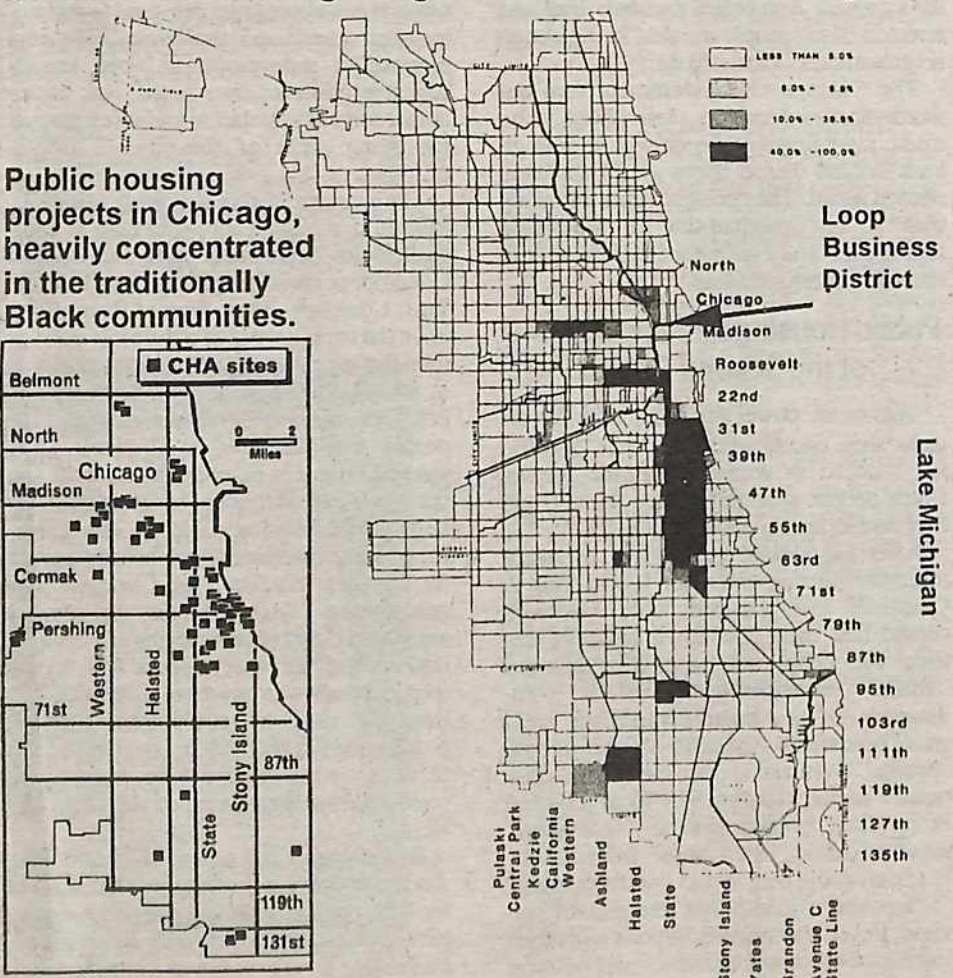
this process, we have to look at the systematic savagery used to prevent the free movement of Black people.

Chicago's history (like the history of many American cities) is riddled with "race riots," starting with one in 1919—racists rampaged through the Southside and the downtown Loop beating and killing Blacks. Black people defended themselves. In all, 38 people were killed and 537 injured—and borders dividing up the city had been marked by blood.

During the 40s and 50s, thousands of white people, including many new immigrants who had just graduated to their first non-slum housing, were organized into racist networks that attacked Black people. All through this period there was an intense battle over where Black people would be allowed to live and socialize. Many attacks took place at public facilities and beaches along the lakefront, which were traditionally considered "whites only." In 1957, 7,000 whites surrounded and beat 100 Black picnickers in Calumet Park.

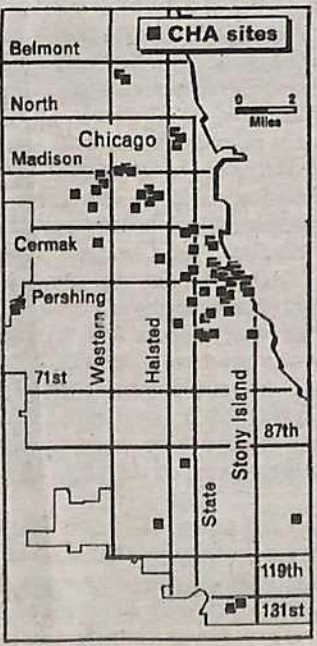
At the fringes of Chicago's Black areas, brutal attacks took place all year round, especially in the spring and fall when leases traditionally change. "From May 1944 through July 1946, forty-six black residen-

The Black communities of Chicago, 1940—the Southside and the beginnings of the Westside community.



Source: CHA

Public housing projects in Chicago, heavily concentrated in the traditionally Black communities.



history. Housing deteriorated even while high rents extracted fortunes out of people who had no freedom to move. Real estate speculators and absentee landlords made killings by dividing up buildings and large apartments into many small "kitchenettes," some separated by no more than cardboard. Many units lacked plumbing. Often many families had to share one bathroom. The movie "Raisin in the Sun" sharply depicts these conditions. Many people were forced to squat for shelter, but they were not the only ones to face the Windy City's famous "Hawk" without heat.

Disease was widespread. The infant death rate was 16 percent higher in the Black community than for the city as a whole. Rats infested the ghetto like a plague: 29 tons of the rodents were killed in 1940, the first year any control effort was made. There was constant threat of fire in the ramshackle and crowded buildings. Many started accidentally, as people were forced to use dangerous methods of heating and cooking. But (then as now) some fires were deliberately set. One landlord was shot by a tenant after he set fire to his building as a means of eviction. The tenant's four children perished in the flames.

Decade by decade the housing got more overcrowded, and the ghettoized conditions became more intolerable and outrageous. The Depression of the 1930s brought a sharp decline in Chicago's housing industry. "Not only was there little construction during the 1930s, but the city began a demolition program in 1934 that destroyed 21,000 substandard housing units; about one-third of the demolition occurred in black areas. Even the steps taken to relieve the poor housing condition of the black population were hardly unmitigated blessings. The construction of the Ida B. Wells public housing project destroyed nearly as many apartments as it supplied. When the project finally opened in 1941, 17,544 ap-

plications were received for its 1,662 units." (MSG, p. 18)

Something had to give. Black people, quite simply, started pushing out from their established communities into surrounding areas—in the face of great threats and violence. And war-like confrontations broke out. The search for decent, affordable housing brought Black people into direct conflict with real estate speculators, downtown banks, developers, and networks of racists, all organized (or at least backed) by Chicago's notorious Democratic Party political machine.

Neighborhood by neighborhood, mainly to the south of what-was-then the "Black Belt" on the Southside and spreading west, the cold-hearted drama of "racial succession" played itself out. *Making the Second Ghetto* describes this process.

As the borders of the city's expanding "Black Belt" approached a previously-white community, a "stagnant" period would set in. "Rents and purchase prices were lowered in a futile attempt to attract white residents, lending agencies refused to grant mortgages to whites in such 'threatened' areas and, of course, they demurred in providing financing to the first blacks to 'break' a block. With the future of the area uncertain and income restricted, landlords and homeowners often cut back on the maintenance of their properties. Deterioration thus frequently set in before blacks stepped into the neighborhood. Vacancies began to appear and the economic pressures of the dual housing market pushed white property owners to rent or sell to blacks. It was at this point the speculators stepped in." (MSG, p.32)

People influenced by racist thinking often argue that "Black people allow their communities to become rundown," but the history of Chicago shows vividly that this view is upside down: the communities were run down and then (and only then) were Black people allowed to come in—and buy up the rundown housing at inflated prices.

RCP chairman Bob Avakian once

Chicago Youth Battle Eviction at Historic House

The ties between Mississippi and Chicago's Black communities have always been tight and direct. The rails connecting the Mississippi Delta with the city ghetto run both ways. And Black folks from Chicago have always gone "down home" to reconnect with family and friends who had stayed behind.

Emmett Till went visiting with his family in 1955. He was 14 years old, and had grown up in the Black community of Chicago—and he was not schooled in the hateful racist ways of the Jim Crow South. He was overheard making a flip remark about a white woman in a country store and was taken by Klansmen. His lifeless, mutilated body was eventually found.

The killing of Emmett Till exploded like a bombshell in the Black communities—especially in Chicago and Mississippi. Many Black people and their allies made up their minds that *this* time there would be justice. This time the killers would be pursued, the hideous face of Jim Crow lynch law would be exposed and the Mississippi courts would be forced to publicly recognize the value of a young Black life.

In this struggle, a young Black lawyer in Jackson emerged as a spokesman for "the Movement" in Mississippi. His name was Medgar Evers. And he too rode those rails—travelling north to Chicago to interview the family of Emmet Louis Till.

There are people in the Cabrini-Green

neighborhood who remember Medgar well—because on one of his visits to Chicago he stayed at 1142 N. Orleans Street, at the edge of Cabrini's complex of highrises. This was a time when the surrounding streets were one of the battlegrounds over housing—as Black people pressed out from this strip on Chicago's Near North Side to confront the raw racism of the status quo.

On these summer visits, people say that Medgar would sit on the front steps of 1142 and talk to the people of the community—comparing notes about the intense struggles brewing in Chicago and the growing Civil Rights movement that he was helping to create in the segregationist stronghold of Mississippi.

Many of the older generation in Chicago's Black community remember, too, that bitter day in 1963 when news came north that Medgar Evers had been assassinated by a Klan sniper outside his home in Jackson, Mississippi. This leader of the people—so disciplined, bright and utterly fearless—had risked everything to overthrow Jim Crow segregation in Mississippi and push forward the great historic struggle for the liberation of Black people in the U.S.

Fighting for 1142 Orleans

These memories, these links between the

struggle North and South, are precious to the people.

In Cabrini-Green these days, people are demanding that the unique, historic building at 1142 N. Orleans, where Medgar Evers stayed, be preserved—and that the City of Chicago stop its heartless bulldozing of this Black community.

The building at 1142 N. Orleans is today an important center of organizing resistance around issues like the destruction of Cabrini-Green, police brutality and the struggle to free Mumia Abu-Jamal. It is known as "the Brigade House"—because it is home to activists from the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade (RCYB) and is used for study circles, video showings, distribution of revolutionary literature and political meetings.

The City of Chicago simply took over ownership of 1142 N. Orleans from its previous owner, Patricia White, a Black woman, using its laws of "eminent domain." City spokespeople openly insist that the city's wrecking crews will destroy this building. Behind these city moves stand the speculation and the profiteering of huge banks and real estate interests. The city's moves are being fought. Their "Cabrini Redevelopment Project" is being denounced as "urban cleansing"—the kind of ruthless destruction of communities created by Black people and poor people that has marked the whole modern history

of Chicago.

AK Small of the RCYB says, "The fight to save this house has become a way people are taking on the oppressor now—not letting them just beat everyone down and drive everyone out."

Over 200 people of the Cabrini-Green housing projects have signed a petition supporting the Brigade House and demanding that it be made into a historic landmark honoring Medgar Evers. Their petition says: "We the undersigned are against the destruction of 1142 N. Orleans. This 105-year-old building is structurally sound and in occupiable condition. It is historical because of its age and because of the fact that Medgar Evers, an early martyr in the Civil Rights struggle, used to stay there. We are opposed to the city's policy of tearing down everything in the community and feel that this policy is part of a two-part attack on less affluent Black residents of the Near North Side. One part is getting rid of our history. The other part is erasing everything in the neighborhood so that the physical community itself is gone."

Grant Newberger, a resident of the Brigade House, said at a recent court hearing, "The house is literally and figuratively in the middle of an issue about the displacement of Black people from the land. It stands in the way of the national model for eliminating public housing and breaking up the communities of the oppressed." □

Chicago

Continued from page 9

ces were assaulted (nine were attacked twice and one home was targeted on five separate occasions)... (MSG, p.53)

For over a year, there was one attack a month. There were 29 arson-bombings. Three people died. The worst incident was the "Cicero Riot" in 1959, when a mob of "2,000 to 5,000 angry whites assaulted a large apartment building that housed a single Black family in one of its twenty units. The burning and looting of the building's contents lasted for several nights until order was finally restored by the presence of 450 National Guardsmen and 200 Cicero and Cook County Sheriff's police." (MSG, p.53)

A whole chapter of *Making the Second Ghetto* is devoted to the history of violence against Blacks who sought to move beyond the confines of the ghetto. This brutal establishment of boundaries was reinforced by the media which collectively decided not to publicize the incidents. Police allowed racist crowds to terrorize Black families for days on end. And police routinely beat and arrested Black people caught "in the wrong neighborhood" (and still do!)

The Chicago city government sent out word when agreements were about to be made, signaling that the crowds should go back behind closed doors until they were needed again. The constant threat of attack was a key mechanism for enforcing segregation and confining Black people to specific ghettoized areas.

Public Housing and the Building of the Second Ghetto

The racist power structure and the attacks they encouraged could not, and did not succeed in containing Black people. Black people were in Chicago to stay, and they had to have a place to live.

After the second great wave of Black migration during and after World War 2, Chicago's local business elite was concerned that their downtown business district, the Loop, not become a deserted "island" surrounded by Black communities. In their mind, many Black areas were potentially valuable—if they could "retake" them and reverse the middle class exodus to the suburbs. The local Chicago ruling class wrote a plan to "redevelop" some so-called "slum areas" inhabited by Black working people and middle classes.

"Locked in a desperate struggle for survival, the city's large institutions used their combined economic resources and political influence to produce a redevelopment and



The Southside Chicago corridor of housing projects, Stateway Gardens (foreground), Robert Taylor Homes (in the back).

urban renewal program designed to guarantee their continued prosperity...The real purpose of redevelopment, one knowledgeable observer later noted, was 'to re-attract solvent population and investment to the dying areas of the city.' (MSG, p. 100)

The masters of this war were Milton C. Mumford, assistant vice-president of Marshall Fields department store and Holman D. Pettibone, president of Chicago Title and Trust Company. They dressed their efforts up in the lamb's wool of public interest—as they formed a wolf pack to make a killing in previously Black areas. Mumford and Pettibone needed some place to put the people they intended to displace. They worked intensely among various local and state political forces to build support for huge public housing projects. They established two principles which became part of the "public mission" for Chicago's city government: (1) that the city government absorb the "cost of assembling and clearing land for private redevelopers who would then purchase the property at a price less than the cost of acquisition." (MSG, p. 106) and (2) that public housing be built to house poor Blacks who were to be removed from areas targeted for redevelopment.

In Chicago, the ruling class had long worked to prevent the outward expansion of the Black community—so they developed a plan to house and concentrate Black people by stacking them upwards in a huge network of highrise housing projects. After initial

opposition, the ruling class embraced federally-subsidized housing in a big way as a key part of their plans for Chicago.

The first project was for an all-Black middle class highrise called Lake Meadows on the Southside lakefront. The planners intended to "anchor" the area with profitable business concerns, starting with an office complex for New York Life Insurance. The plans flowered in consultation with two monied interests in the area, Michael Reese Hospital and Illinois Institute of Technology, who were already carrying out aggressive expansion to "reclaim" the Southside.

In this period, right after World War 2, "redevelopment" meant moving Black people off "valuable property" into a "second ghetto"—within huge housing projects of highrise buildings. Today, "redevelopment" also means moving the people from their homes on "valuable property"—but this time, by targeting the highrises of public housing and trying to disperse the concentrations of poor people.

Some of the same capitalist interests have been involved in both periods. Today, the Illinois Institute of Technology is seeking to invest millions to "redevelop" the "Southside Corridor"—which is now the site of miles of highrises, including Robert Taylor Homes, the largest housing project in the country.

People Removal

The creation of the housing projects after World War 2 represented a callous new

"checkerboarding" of people's lives to suit the needs of profit. In the name of providing housing for the poor, the poor were moved out of their homes before there was permanent housing to receive them. Rules were amended, eligibility standards were stretched as needed, people were shuffled from place to temporary place, and some families were broken up to form smaller groups that would fit into limited space. It is a scenario all too familiar to people in Chicago today.

There were originally regulations that required new projects to be racially integrated. But this never happened. Jane Addams Homes (part of the ABLA Homes now slated for demolition) was the only housing project that was integrated.

Harold Ickes, who headed Roosevelt's Public Works Administration (and for whom Ickes Homes was named), first posited the "neighborhood composition rule" which demanded that government projects not alter the racial composition of their host neighborhoods. Only two projects were built in white areas, Lathrop and Trumbull Park Homes, and they were designated "whites only."

By 1976, a huge complex of public housing had been built. It contained over 40,000 apartments, housed in 1,273 separate buildings. These projects were the homes of about 5 percent of the city's population. And these inhabitants were overwhelmingly Black people. The local ruling class had built itself a "Second Ghetto." □

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Putting An End to 'Sin'

Putting An End to Inequality

by Bob Avakian

"From whatever vantage point one looks, it is unmistakable that there is what could be called 'a moral crisis in America.' There has been, to a significant degree, 'a breakdown of traditional morality.' But the answer to this—at least the answer that is in the interests of the majority of people in the U.S. and the overwhelming majority of humanity—is not a more aggressive assertion of that 'traditional morality' but winning people to a radically different morality, in the process of and as a key part of radically transforming society and the world as a whole. It is not the tightening but the shattering of tradition's chains that is called for."

Bob Avakian

In light of the power struggle around the impeachment of Clinton, the 1996 essays by Bob Avakian on the 'crisis of morality' in U.S. society are both timely and insightful. These important essays include: "Preaching From a Pulpit of Bones: The Reality Beneath William Bennett's 'Virtues,' Or We Need Morality, But Not Traditional Morality" and "Putting An End to 'Sin' Or We Need Morality, But Not Traditional, Morality (Part 2)." In the following excerpt from "Putting An End to 'Sin'" he discusses communist morality.

Other selections from Avakian's essays will follow in future issues and the entire series will soon be available on our website at www.mcs.net/~rwor.

Communist principles include, as decisive aspects, the goal of overcoming all inequality between men and women and between different peoples and nations. The communist viewpoint and methodology makes clear that the oppression of women is inextricably bound up with the division of society into classes and all the exploitation and oppression that has accompanied this for thousands of years, and that the abolition of this exploitation and oppression and of class distinctions themselves is inextricably bound up with the emancipation of women. In other words, the emancipation of women is a vital part of the "4 Alls,"* and all aspects of sexual and family relations must be evaluated essentially in terms of how they relate to this emancipation.

Communist morality supports those things that advance the fight for that emancipation and opposes everything that debases women and that reinforces their oppression in any way—including both "end-of-the-empire" sexual decadence and "traditional morality," the degradation of pornography and the degradation of the Bible.

Similarly, while the ultimate achievement of communism will mean that not only hostility between nations but even the separation of humanity into different nations will have been overcome and replaced by the cooperative association of people throughout the world, this can only come about through a determined struggle to achieve equality between nations as a crucial part of the transition to

communism. And, in turn, the achievement of equality between nations means, in its most concentrated and decisive aspect, the right of self-determination of oppressed nations and in particular the liberation of the great majority of the world's nations, throughout the Third World, which are still subjected to all-around imperialist domination.

Communist morality opposes those things that uphold imperialist domination and inequality between nations—including discrimination against the languages and cultures of oppressed nations and minority nationalities and all chauvinist notions of the superiority of one people or nation over others—and communist morality supports those things that foster unity between the masses of people of all nationalities, on the basis of the fight for equality between nations, the right of self-determination and the liberation of oppressed nations.

Both the examination of particular social questions and the discussion of general principles illustrate that communist morality does have both a definite basis and concrete application in the world in this era. As Engels explained, for the first time in history, the development of human society—with its foundation in the material forces of production—has reached the point where, for humanity as a whole (as opposed to relatively small and isolated groups of people in previous epochs), there is the basis for people to relate to each other, and to meet their material and cultural needs, on an increasingly ascending level without the division of society into different classes and without oppression and social antagonism. And that is not all: Engels went further to show that not only is the division of society into classes and the monopolization of wealth and power and of intellectual life by a small handful no longer necessary, but such division and monopolization has now become "economically, politically, intellectually, a hindrance to development."



Bob Avakian, Chairman of the RCP, USA.

(*Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, emphasis added)

Thus, while communist morality—like all other morality—is not transcendental, in the sense of being independent of any historical and social basis and being applicable in any era, it *does* have the quality of universality precisely for this era: it corresponds to the leap that humanity must make in this era and to the means for making that leap.

Communist ideology is *not*, as its opponents often claim, a "new religion" (although it has at times been degraded into something like that by revisionists, and into something like a "state religion" by revisionists who have risen to power). On the contrary, it is based on a scientific approach to understanding the actual forces operating in nature and in society—it points the way to an historic advance in humanity's ability to understand and to transform these natural and social forces—and it provides a real and firm grounding for principles and morality that correspond to the great leap that humanity has already begun to make.

Communists, Mao said, should have largeness of mind; they should be bold and resolute in fighting for revolution and should put the revolution above everything else in their lives, subordinating personal interests to the revolutionary interests of the masses; they should consistently "adhere to principle and wage a tireless struggle against all incorrect ideas and actions, so as to consolidate the collective life of the Party and strengthen the ties between the Party and the masses"; and they should be more concerned about the Party and the masses than about any particular individual and more concerned about others than about themselves. (See "Combat Liberalism.") This encapsulates the essence of communist morality in the historic era of transition from the bourgeois epoch to the epoch of world communism, of radical rupture with tradition's chains, both material and ideological. □

* The basis for communist morality is contained, in a concentrated way, in what Maoists refer to as the "4 Alls." This is drawn from the summary by Marx of what the communist revolution aims for and leads to: the abolition of all class distinctions (or "class distinctions generally"); the abolition of all the relations of production on which these class distinctions rest; the abolition of all the social relations that correspond to these relations of production; and the revolutionizing of all the ideas that result from these social relations. (See "What Is Communist Morality?" RW No. 981.)

The Dalai C.I.A. Lama

The organization of the Dalai Lama issued a statement on October 1 admitting that it received millions of dollars from the CIA during the 1960s to send armed squads of Tibetan exiles into Tibet to undermine the Maoist revolution. According to the *New York Times* (Oct. 1), the Dalai Lama's organization said they received \$1.7 million a year to arm, train and pay their contra forces. This statement also revealed for the first time that the Dalai Lama himself was a paid CIA agent during this period, receiving an annual paycheck of \$186,000 from the U.S. intelligence services.

This Tibetan contra war was started in

1959, after feudal forces attempted a counterrevolutionary uprising in Tibet. The Dalai Lama fled his throne as god-king of Tibet and went into exile in India. The CIA then used the Dalai Lama as the frontman for their covert operations into Tibet and western China. Over a decade later when the CIA called it off, this covert war had been a complete failure. The Maoist movement had developed significant roots in Tibet during land reform and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, while the Lamaist/CIA operation had developed very little support among Tibet's people. The Lamaist forces leading this covert opera-



The Dalai Lama in exile.



A CIA-backed Tibetan contra unit.

tion were notorious for their corruption and passivity.

For 30 years, Maoist revolutionaries have claimed that the Dalai Lama and his family worked with the CIA, and directed an exiled mercenary army that carried out sabotage, espionage and assassination in Tibet from bases in neighboring Bhutan and Nepal.

Over the same period, the Dalai Lama has promoted himself as a man of peace and a fighter for justice. Many people in the West have been taken in by this, and have even been influenced by Tibetan Lamaism's extremely conservative form of Buddhism. A movement has developed in the West supporting him—often believing that he represents the cause of self-determination and justice in Tibet. Meanwhile, after capitalism was restored in China following Mao Tsetung's death in 1976, the focus of the Dalai Lama's work has been to seek an accommodation with the new revisionist rulers in Beijing that would secure a posi-

tion within their power structure for himself and his followers.

Now the Dalai Lama's own organization has confirmed that in the 1960s he was involved in the covert CIA military operations that were fighting to extend U.S. domination in Asia. The only defense raised by the recent October 1 statement is that the Dalai Lama did not personally enrich himself from those CIA funds. The statement claims that he used his CIA salary to finance offices in New York and Geneva to promote the Lamaists' feudal cause. In other words, they admit that the Dalai Lama was a paid CIA agent, but deny he was a corrupt CIA agent.

The *RW* series "The True Story of Maoist Revolution in Tibet" documents the contra war waged by the Tibetan Lamaists, as well as the counterrevolutionary role of the Dalai Lama in all the many stages of his career. It is available at RW Online, www.mcs.net/~rwor. □

On the Road to Corcoran

Continued from page 7

L.A. Times the investigations gathered more than 1,000 pages of information on the whistle-blowers. In fact, the corrections officials ended up investigating and disciplining only one officer involved in a shooting at Corcoran. Richard Caruso, one of the whistle blowers, was docked 90 days pay for firing wood blocks at a prisoner in 1993, a shooting that resulted in no injuries. Caruso told the *L.A. Times*, "I think it says a lot that out of 2,000 shootings [of wood blocks or bullets] they investigate just one, mine. After coming forward and losing my career as a correctional officer the state launches an investigation and comes after me."

The officers who spoke out against their fellow guards at Corcoran have faced intimidation and death threats which have been ignored by prison authorities. Lt. Steve Riggs, one of the guards who spoke out, told a state panel, "I am a whistle blower and I'm not sorry for the action I took. I am sorry that I put my family through the horrors of the reprisals and harassment we have been subject to. My career came to an abrupt end. I am sorry I have been threatened with death or harm. I am sorry that my wife is frightened to sleep in our home at night and often sleeps on the bathroom floor fearing an ambush."

Exposure and outrage at the conditions at Corcoran have forced charges to be filed against some prison guards and officials. However it is clear that powerful forces in the state are determined to stop any efforts to punish any guards.

In February, eight officers were indicted by a federal grand jury for setting up fights at Corcoran "for amusement and blood sport." The indictments focused on only two of the many fights and shootings at Corcoran. The head of the state Department of Correction, C.A. "Cal" Terhune, has announced that he will spend more than one million dollars in state funds to defend the eight guards. Terhune said to not defend the guards would have "shook the whole foundation of our correctional system." He has also put six of the eight accused guards back to work. The other two guards took an early retirement and are now receiving a pension from the state.

In September, a judge overturned a disciplinary case against guards who beat

prisoners coming off a bus from Calpatia prison in 1995. The judge ordered the guards reinstated and that they be given back pay. Five guards have also been indicted on charges related to the rape of Eddie Dillard. And the California Legislature has recently concluded a series of hearings into the abuses at Corcoran. During the hearings former Corcoran Warden George Smith, who presided over Corcoran during most of the prisoner deaths, and who has likened prisoners at Corcoran to garbage, took the fifth amendment, refusing to answer questions that might have incriminated him.

On November 25, a panel commissioned last summer released a report after examining events at Corcoran. Of the 31 fatal or serious shootings that were occurred at the prison from 1989 to 1995, 24 were found to involve the unjustified use of deadly force. The panel found that when it came to questionable shootings, no one outside the prison system scrutinizes them and "no one is required to render a decision concerning the legality of a shooting."

Protest at Corcoran

"Right now, behind us in these cement cells, brothers are being tortured. I want to let the god damn warden know that this ain't no show. We mean business here. If you think we're going to stand by and watch you pigs kill somebody else you got another think coming."

Alade Djehuti-Mes, son of Charles Vaughn, Sr., murdered by Seaside Police, speaking at Corcoran Prison October 17

The car caravan from San Francisco met up with a car caravan from Los Angeles at Corcoran Prison. They were joined by other people who had come from throughout the San Joaquin Valley. A line of guards, including the warden, prevented people from getting close to the prison gate. A large number of people had loved ones either in Corcoran or in another prison and many people carried signs with their names and pictures. The October 22 Coalition to Stop Police Brutality set up the Stolen Lives Wall, which lists the names of those killed by police, prison guards and Border Patrol, along the side of the road.

The L.A. caravan stopped at Wasco prison on the way to Corcoran. Gerry from the L.A. chapter of Families to Amend



Tying ribbons on barbed wire surrounding Chowchilla prison.

California's Three Strikes spoke about why they stopped at Wasco: "We got a letter, in an unmarked envelope from prisoners inside Wasco, announcing they had a lawsuit against the CDC and that they were calling on us for help because of the history of retaliatory action against prisoners in Pelican Bay, Corcoran and other institutions who have dared to speak for their rights. We were out there in front of Wasco. They saw us. We were loud and hopefully they got the message.... We have to do what it takes to get the point across that we don't have to live this way."

I talked with a woman whose brother was in Corcoran. He had been shot three times by the San Francisco Police but he was the one who was doing time. She told me how he had done everything he was supposed to—he graduated college, he got a good job, he had never been arrested or even gotten a parking citation. Then he was railroaded by the courts and cops. She told me how when he arrived at Corcoran he had to sleep on a concrete floor for months. "They're railroad every day citizens and it has to stop," she told me. "It's time for a change. I'm willing to do whatever it takes."

Bill Tate's son Preston was shot and killed by guards in one of the staged gladiator fights at Corcoran. After four years federal authorities have indicted eight of the guards involved in Preston's murder. "I'm glad to be in death valley compliments of the warden over there and his fellow sharks," Bill Tate told the rally at Corcoran. "They brutally murdered my son four and a half years ago but now with eight indictments they are going to go down.

Things have got to change...Warden, I've got you by the balls."

After the rally in a park I talked with Bill Tate who spoke about what has been accomplished in the years that he has been fighting for justice. "I've been involved in my son's case for almost five years and I've never let up because I thought that some good would come out of it. Organizations like California Prison Focus, the Critical Resistance Movement and October 22 have gotten involved. There was a lot of blood, sweat and tears involved. I was lucky that some whistle blowers inside the prison system came forward to aid me—without them I don't know where I'd be. It's not over yet but I'm optimistic that some good is going to happen. Eight indictments have already gone down [in my son's case] and five more indictments in the rape case."

Bill Tate told me that his life has been changed forever by his fight for justice. "When Preston's case is finished I think my whole life is going to revolve around prisons and jails and fighting injustice. I would tell other families don't give up."

On the four hour drive back to the Bay Area I thought over and over again about the 1.75 million of my sisters and brothers that are locked in prisons across the U.S. I thought of the young people, with bright minds and their whole life ahead of them being locked down and tortured. I thought of their families and friends. And I swore that I would do whatever it takes to rid the world of these prisons and the system that locks up a generation of our youth in such barbaric conditions. □

Special to the RWOR

The San Francisco Police Execution of John Smart

John Smart was a 46-year-old advertising agency executive in San Francisco. He worked for Interbrand, which develops corporate images for major companies like BMW, KFC, Compaq and MasterCard. He had recently bought an \$800,000 house in Napa, north of San Francisco. He drove an elite model of a 1996 Mercedes Benz. Well-to-do, white, corporate executive—John Smart was not someone who would be considered a “typical” victim of police brutality. But on October 6, Smart was killed in his Mercedes Benz by S.F. cops who fired at least 13 shots at him.

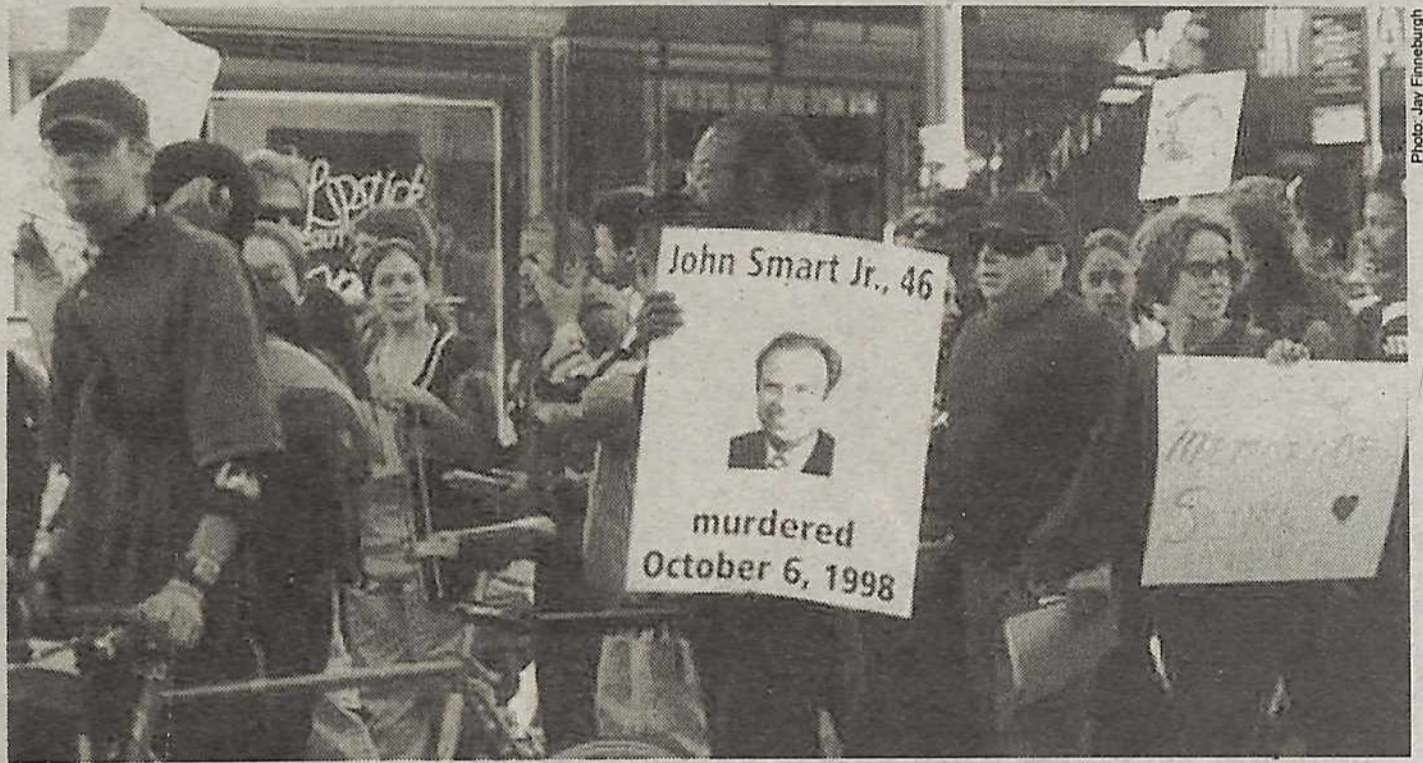
The two cops who killed Smart are under department orders not to talk. But the official story, as it has trickled out in the mainstream media, is that the cops approached Smart around 11:30 at night near the corner of 6th and Howard Streets in downtown San Francisco. The cops claim they saw Smart pulling a woman out of his car. According to the police, while the cops were investigating the incident, Smart got into his car and backed up, pinning one cop against a parking meter with an open car door. Then he drove off.

The police claim that the cops fired on Smart because he was trying to run one of them over, and then his car crashed. But evidence uncovered by reporters and Smart’s friends indicate that the cops pumped two bullets into Smart after his car crashed. Larry Buck, a close friend and golf partner of Smart, said, “It looks like an execution.” Buck said that he and others “spoke to several witnesses who said there were two shots fired at close range 10 seconds after the rest of the shots... It appears they may have finished him off.”

One woman who witnessed what happened from her window was quoted in the *San Francisco Examiner* as saying, “It looked like they shot him up close.” Another witness quoted in the *Examiner* said, “When he took off it looked like they were shooting from the side, and maybe the back.”

The most damning evidence against the cops are two shell casings from their guns, found by reporters next to Smart’s crashed car. The *Examiner* reported that the shell casings were found “near the car’s final position (on the east side of the street), about 40 to 50 feet away” from where the two cops were supposedly standing when they shot at him. A police department forensics expert said that shell casings from automatic weapons—like the .40-caliber Baretts used by the cops who shot Smart—eject to the right and behind the person firing the gun, and most eject less than 10 feet away. This is clear evidence that the cops fired at Smart at close range, and after his car crashed.

When confronted with this evidence contradicting the official story, S.F. Police Chief Lau said lamely, “Where shell casings land is not an exact science.” And homicide Lt. David Robinson told reporters, “Once the car was across the street making contact with the wall, there’s no indication any officer fired again.”



San Francisco, October 22, 1998.

Epidemic of Police Shootings

John Smart is the second person this year killed by S.F. police in incidents where the cops claimed the driver was trying to run them over. The other victim was 17-year-old Sheila Deto. On May 13, Deto was a passenger in a car driven by a man who was the subject of a police stake-out because he had a bench warrant out on him. Police shot her in the side as the car she was in drove by them, and she was killed. In that incident, too, the police claimed “their lives were in danger.” But a witness to that shooting stated that “At no time were the officers in the path of the car nor were they ever in any danger from the car.” The bullets fired by the cops who killed Sheila never hit the front windshield of the car—they hit the side and the back of the car. And an autopsy showed that the fatal bullet that killed Sheila was fired from the side.

The killing of John Smart was the 12th police shooting this year in San Francisco—and the third resulting in death. This is twice the number of police shootings that occurred in San Francisco in 1997, and six times as many as in 1996, according to official police records.

The brutal shooting of John Smart has sent a chill into sections of society where police murder and brutality are not at all everyday facts of life. And more broadly, the killing has provoked questions about the epidemic of police murders.

Police Justifications and People’s Protests

In order to justify the killing, the police have tried to portray Smart as straying from “white-bread and mayonnaise land.” One front-page story in the *Examiner* was headlined, “Shooting Victim: A Double Life.”

The article quoted an unidentified “law enforcement source” as saying, “We can’t ask Smart and we don’t want to vilify anyone, but... cops are telling us they recognize him.” Is this law enforcement insider saying that the police have an “open season” on anyone who is simply “recognized” by cops?!

Other “unnamed law enforcement sources” claimed that “certain items of contraband” were found on Smart—although so far the police have not said they found any drugs or weapons in Smart’s car. Several news stories featured the fact that Smart had once been convicted of drug possession and was a member of Narcotics Anonymous. Other news stories played up the fact that Smart was driving through the Tenderloin, an area where many basic masses live and which the authorities call a “high crime” district. The police first claimed the woman Smart was with was a prostitute—but then said only that the woman is “known within the criminal justice system.” Homicide investigators even announced they were doing a so-called “psychological profile” on Smart.

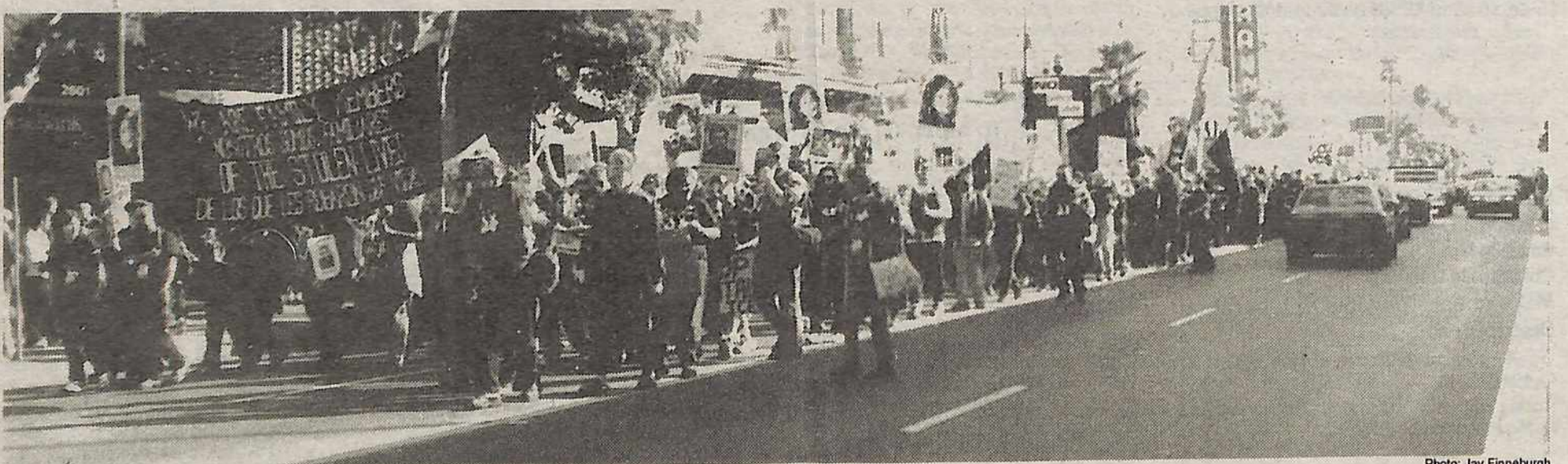
These are all attempts to blame the victim while exonerating the cops who shot John Smart in cold blood.

Many of Smart’s friends, business associates, and family stepped forward after the murder to refute these attacks from the police. Smart’s colleagues pointed out that there was nothing inherently “suspicious” about driving through the Tenderloin district after a dinner at a downtown restaurant—this is the normal route many of them take to the freeway. Larry Buck told the *S.F. Chronicle*, “To say they [the cops] were threatened or thought their lives were in danger is just absolute crap. If he had a prostitute, had drugs, to me those are not

issues. To me the question is, is it necessary to fire 13 rounds into a guy who is unarmed.” In a letter to the *Examiner*, one man wrote, “Frankly, it sounds as though John Smart was shot in cold blood by officers Furminger and Sawyer, who failed to use proper police procedure to detain Smart. Why the two shots 10 seconds later, with shells found far from the original scene?”

The police and their friends have dragged out every alleged flaw in Smart’s character to slander him and justify his murder. At the same time, there has been only the briefest mention in the media about the background of Ian Furminger, one the cops who shot Smart. Furminger, who is 6’8” and weighs over 200 pounds, was sued by a couple who said he was part of a group of four men who brutally beat them in 1995. Just after this incident, Furminger was accepted into the SFPD. One of the victims of this assault said, “I can’t believe that [Furminger] was allowed to become a cop.” Police Chief Lau’s comment on this revelation about Furminger was, “No matter what the police officer’s history was, does that neutralize the fact that the suspect [Smart] tried to cause him serious injury or kill him?”

Smart’s friends and family have hired an investigator and filed a complaint with the S.F. Police Commission’s Office of Citizen Complaints. On October 14, protesters mobilized by Bay Area PoliceWatch—along with October 22nd Coalition Against Police Brutality and others—went to the Police Commission meeting to demand answers and protest Smart’s killing. The commissioners quickly adjourned the meeting before most of the protesters even entered the hearing room.



San Francisco, October 22, 1998.

Photo: Jay Finneburgh

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