

REVOLUTIONARY WORKER

Voice of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

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\$1

The Homeless Are NOT Criminals, The System IS!

Millions are forced to live on the streets and EVERYTHING the rulers do creates a worse situation for the people. Funds for social programs and housing continue to be cut. The media aims to create a mean-spirited attitude toward the homeless. In cities like New York and San Francisco tent cities are met with brutal raids, arrests and fascistic laws. "War on Drugs" propaganda says the homeless and poor are criminals to be beaten up, locked up and shot down in the street. Thousands of youth have been arrested, no questions, no answers. And meanwhile real criminals like HUD officials steal billions of dollars in federal housing funds and what do we get? Polite hearings and careful investigations. This is a sick and dying system and it needs to be overthrown.

On October 7 thousands of homeless will march on Washington, D.C. to protest the outrageous housing situation in this country. There is growing rage. And there is a fierce spirit of "nothing to lose." The homeless are determined their voice will be heard.

8 Voices on the March to D.C.

12 Tompkins Square Park 15 S.F. "Camp Agnos"

Homeless in San Francisco demonstrate at city hall after being evicted, 1986.

Outcasts, Downcasts, Slaves, Illegals and Rebels—It's Right To Rebel!

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No U.S. Intervention in South America!



4

Biko Lives! Festival 1989





"I have been on the street or waiting in line somewhere and wished that I had a paper, a paper that I'm interested in, a paper that's really going to tell the truth, the real deal..."

**Revolution is the Hope of the Hopeless!
Put the RW in the Hands of the Homeless!**

Special Project of the RW to spread revolutionary politics among the people who are homeless.

Support! Funds are needed to see to it that copies of the RW can be made available to homeless people on a regular basis for street distribution and at drop-in centers and shelters.

Checks and money orders should be sent to the *Revolutionary Worker* distributors listed below earmarked "Homeless."

"A lot of people wonder, 'how did I become homeless?' They're constantly being told that they made a mistake somewhere down the line. When homeless people that I've come in contact with read the RW, they understand that, yes, we all make mistakes but those mistakes are not the reason why we are homeless...."

"Every week, every time an issue comes out—or leaflets, every time a leaflet comes out. Anytime something that revolves around the RCP comes out, it needs to be read and understood by homeless people."

Reader on the streets of Chicago

"The paper can help galvanize homeless people, can help unify homeless people into a common view, a common goal, a common objective. I think this is very necessary, because the homeless population is a very diverse group, from many different backgrounds and different situations."

"The more people who are aware of a need for revolution, the more who are aware of the route which a revolution must take, increases the chances of success. The RW at this time is an important weapon in our battle against the system."

A homeless reader

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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Other	1,100
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No U.S. Intervention in South America!

WORDS FROM THE ENEMY:

This is the confession of a government so hated around the world—and so haunted by the Vietnam War—that they have had to invent a Big Lie to justify their military intervention:

"A melding in the American public's mind and in Congress of this connection [between drugs and revolutionary insurgency] would lead to the necessary support to counter the guerrilla/narcotics terrorists in this hemisphere. Generating that support would be relatively easy once the connection was proven and all-out war was declared by the National Command Authority. Congress would find it difficult to stand in the way of supporting our allies with the training, advice and security assistance [in other words, weapons and troops] to do the job. Those church and academic groups that have slavishly supported insurgency in Latin America

would find themselves on the wrong side of the moral issue.

"Above all, we would have the unassailable moral position from which to launch a concerted offensive effort using Department of Defense (DOD) and non-DOD assets. The recent operation in Bolivia is a first step. Instead of responding defensively to each insurgency on a case-by-case basis, we could act in concert with our allies. Instead of wading through legislative snarl and financial constraints that characterize our security assistance posture, we could act with alacrity to the threat. Instead of debating each separate threat, we can begin to see the hemisphere as a whole and ultimately develop the vision that has been sorely lacking."

U.S. Col. John D. Waghelstein, from an article in *Military Review*

PEOPLE'S TRANSLATION: THE WAR ON DRUGS IS A COVER FOR U.S. MILITARY INTERVENTION IN LATIN AMERICA.

The powers in the U.S. are trying to stop the PEOPLE'S WAR in PERU—a war of liberation led by the Communist Party of Peru. The men in power in the U.S. tell lies about the revolutionaries in Peru. The powers say that because the people's war is winning in the areas where peasants grow coca that the revolutionaries are drug traffickers or working with drug traffickers. But this is a BIG LIE. The TRUTH IS: the only way the peasants will ever be able to stop growing coca and take the future in their hands is through the victory of the revolution.

The TRUTH is that the GOVERNMENTS of Peru, Colombia and Bolivia are the ones hooked on drug money. These governments are backed up by the United States. The U.S. government has already used drug profits from Latin America to support their Contra wars against the government of Nicaragua. Now they want to use the War on Drugs to intervene in Colombia and to stop the revolution in Peru.

- The U.S. military opened a new, fortified firebase in the Upper Huallaga Valley of Peru. This is an

area where the people's war is fighting and winning. U.S. congressmen who visited the firebase said: IT REMINDED THEM OF VIETNAM.

- This summer President Bush signed a secret directive to send U.S. Special Forces combat troops to the Upper Huallaga Valley base.
- The Bush/Bennett so-called "antidrug" plan calls for hundreds of millions of dollars in military aid to the oppressor governments in Peru, Colombia and Bolivia.

The oppressed people in Peru—our revolutionary class—are waging a real people's war to free themselves from the imperialists and oppressors and to take state power into their hands. The powers fear this war and want to put it down. But for the proletarians and oppressed people in the belly of this beast—and people who want liberation all around the world—the PEOPLE'S WAR IN PERU is OUR fight.



Guerrilla fighters of the Communist Party of Peru.

Support the People's War in Peru!

BIKO LIVES!

Festival 1989

By Margot Harry



Saturday, Sept. 23, the Biko Lives! Festival. The Willis Ave. Methodist Church fills up with an unusual mix of people. It is not a gathering the rulers of this system want to see, especially not here in the heart of New York's South Bronx. Black, Latino, white people. . . much youth. . . rappers, rockers and reggae toasters. . . folk singers from Puerto Rico, the southeast African country of Malawi, and New York's East Village. . . revolutionaries from different countries. Women fresh from a protest against Operation Rescue pass out "Our Bodies/Our Choice" stickers to Black youth. Homeless people from Tompkins Square Park hang a banner from the balcony of the church: "Free the Homeless, Free South Africa!"

The altar of the church has become a stage. A giant portrait of Steve Biko—the Black revolutionary murdered by the South African government twelve years ago—hangs from a second-floor balcony. Two symbolic coffins stand on either side. On one is written in Spanish: "Steve Biko/Presente"—Steve Biko is here! The other has the names of Yusuf Hawkins and many more whose lives have been snuffed out by racist murderers. "Azania on Fire, Take It Higher" dances from the stage in red and yellow. And banners in bright colors hang all around: "Biko Lives!" "Free South Africa! Free South Bronx!" "Free the Homeless, Free South Africa!"

The festival is an act of open defiance against the powers-that-be—not to mention the forces of nature! In the last two days festival organizers have had to hustle to reorganize with Hurricane Hugo knocking at the back door. Hundreds of

posters announcing the new indoor location flew onto the walls. The day before a talk show host on WLIB urges people to attend and remarks that, after one rain-date and Hugo on the way, anybody else probably would have given up—but not this festival.

Police have tried to intimidate—beating up one Black youth and threatening an RCYB organizer with death. But the stakes are too high. Situation urgent. Resistance by the masses in South Africa has erupted again. And in this country the people have begun to give The Power a taste of their outrage against the oppression coming down on Black people. The Biko Lives! Festival stands with this struggle and vows to take it higher.

A 70-year-old proletarian woman sends a message to the festival: "Bensonhurst: South Africa! South Bronx: South Africa! New York: South Africa! Another Africa Brother, Henry Hughes, lies dead along with Brother Yusuf Hawkins. . . . Could we believe that this pig system, which is more deadly than the plague, would ever convict one of their own for murdering one of the people? I say No! I say HELL NO! For we all know that this is wake-up time in AmeriKKKa! And we are not taking no more of their bullshit!"

A spokesperson for the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania tells the festival: "Biko lives in the revolutionary consciousness of the Azanian youth as they continue to engage the racist settler-colonial regime on a day-to-day basis. . . . He lives in the revolutionary enthusiasm and revolutionary fervor demonstrated by this gathering here today in the South Bronx. . . . Let us



Fab 5 Freddy



Latin Empire with Crown Rapper.

Margot Harry is a correspondent for the *Revolutionary Worker* in New York and author of the book *Attention, MOVE! This is America!*—the real story of the murder of MOVE members in Philadelphia in 1985.



remember Biko by rededicating ourselves to all the struggles of the oppressed all over the world. . . ." He has sharp words against those forces who are now pushing for negotiations with the South African government and its new president. He quotes Biko: "When you choose to come to a round table to beg for your deliverance, you are asking for contempt from those who have power over you. This is why we must reject the beggar tactics that are being forced on us by those who want to appease our oppressors."

This sentiment is echoed by the speaker from the New Afrikan Peoples Organization: "Right here we have a similar kind of situation. Because after the death of Yusuf Hawkins, people in this country, inside this city, wanted to do what? They wanted to take the fire higher. And so what we found was about 10,000 youths out in Brooklyn who said we were gonna take over the Brooklyn Bridge. And it was no chants about 'No Justice, No Peace.' But the chants were 'F the police,' 'F the politicians,' 'F the system.' So what did the system do? . . . One of the ways to cool that out was to make sure that Ed Koch would lose and that now we would have a Black face in a higher place. Whether or not that's going to change our situation, most of you should understand that it will not."

It's that kind of festival: uncompromising against apartheid and oppression. And the festival rocks as a diverse line-up of performers and speakers take to the stage. Representatives from dif-

ferent political groups have come to speak: from the South African Azanian Student Movement; Carl Dix of the Revolutionary Communist Party; Joey Johnson of the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade and defendant in the flag-burning case; Father Lawrence Lucas, pastor of the Roman Catholic Resurrection Church in Harlem and representative of the December 12th Movement which has organized the Days of Outrage; Refuse & Resist; the Coalition Against Censorship in the Arts.

Rebel music pulses out of the stained-glass windows. Black youth dance in front of the stage. They dance in the aisles. They shout "Fight the Power." Some punk-styled women who are white boogie to the floor. A Black youth stops dancing for a second to inspect one woman's purple bangs.

A sister from the Free South Africa/Free South Bronx Network speaks about Steve Biko. "Biko taught that the oppressed must stop blaming themselves for their oppression, must stop seeing themselves through the eyes of the oppressor and most of all must rely on themselves for liberation."

"What we mean by Free South Africa, Free South Bronx," a proletarian woman writes to the festival, "is if you look at it correctly, we are both being enslaved. There is a movement that feels what you feel if you want to be free. We are your only living hope. Become one of us." A

Continued on page 6



Fabiyenne



Dancing to Faith and Rebel Force



Stephan of False Prophets



Spiritland

Biko Lives! Festival 1989

Continued from page 5

guest emcee for the festival, Fab 5 Freddy, host of "Yo! MYC Raps," tells the *RW* backstage, "The festival can serve as a kind of cattleprod... something to alert people to the urgency of the situation."

Word of the festival has traveled through the housing projects across the street. Hundreds of Black and Latino youth have flocked to the church—not a place you'd expect to find a lot of youth on a Saturday night. Two banners made by youth during the festival hang on the walls: "Fuck Police" and "Fight the Power." Youth have signed up to do security for the stage. Two youth go through the audience collecting donations as an emcee declares, "This festival is a festival of the oppressed. And the oppressed take care of their own business. We don't look to anyone else. We look to ourselves for liberation."

A Black youth tells the *RW* about how sorry he feels for the Africans getting killed. But death is not far away. He tells how his 22-year-old brother was recently shot to death in the Bronx. Another youth says why he's at the festival: "First of all, cause what the cops is doing to Black people, beatin' em up for no reason. Like my cousin. He was in the park. The cops came over there and told him to get out of the park. But he didn't so they arrested him. Took him up to the roof and then they started to beat him up. They threw him off the roof... They killed him... Prejudice should stop." Another young Black man told the *RW* that recently a 60-year-old white man in Manhattan's upper east side came after him screaming that he hated "niggers" and was going to kill him. The white man went and got a gun and started shooting at him. And now that white man and the



authorities are trying to say the Black youth tried to rob him.

From the stage, Carl Dix, spokesperson for the Revolutionary Communist Party, calls on the youth to make revolution: "We know that many of you are bold enough to say, 'There is nothing that this system can do to me that I'm afraid of.' Well, right on to that. But we say you gotta think about what needs to be done to this system. Why not take all your anger and rage and direct it where it needs to be directed: toward hurting the real enemy as much as possible now while we gather the forces to do them in once and for all. We know that this is dangerous to do. But remember Yusuf Hawkins. Life under this system is dangerous anyway. Isn't the best way to live and to die being out in the streets, rocking this system and getting in position to get it out of here once and for all?"

Apartheid builds barriers and locks down the oppressed. The Biko Lives! Festival knocks down barriers and unites proletarians and their allies—not to make peace with apartheid, racism, and national oppression but to *fight it—together*.

Initiated by the Free South Africa/Free the South Bronx network, the festival has been endorsed by a wide array of groups and individuals: art galleries and churches in the South Bronx; MOKAM (Mouvman Otonom Kiltire Ayiti Monde/Autonomous Cultural Movement—Haiti World); Fela Anikulapo Kuti, the incurably rebellious performer from Nigeria; Joseph Papp, head of New York's Public Theater; Vernon Reid of Living Colour; and many others.

Messages of solidarity are read from exiled poet from South Africa Dennis Brutus; noted Black civil rights attorney Conrad Lynn; theater director Peter Sellars; Defense for Children International—USA; homeless people from Tompkins Square Park; and proletarians of the South Bronx. It is announced that Adam



Jesse West



Abdul Hakeem, also known as Larry Davis, had planned to send a message again this year to the festival, but he was abruptly transferred to an upstate prison. People are urged to send telegrams of protest against the transfer and the vicious beatings from prison guards he has been receiving.

You can feel the power of the people—the power of fighting *our* way. This year festival organizers have sent out principles of unity for invited performers. A festival organizer told the *RW* the principles: "One, that our performances and speeches from the stage will be in accordance with the spirit of Biko Lives! And two, the Biko Lives! Festival belongs to the people. There are many voices and performances that need to be seen and heard. We pledge to work together so that each of us can contribute to insure that the festival as a whole embodies the aspirations that have brought us together."

Emcee Crown Rapper JC, a South Bronx rapper, brings youth from the audience onto the stage. "I gotta make a point... Yo, listen... These young brothers and sisters right here, this is the first time I met them. But they are my brothers and sisters, not through the blood but through the heart and through the mind... Young Black brothers and sisters are gettin' dogged, beat up for no reason. This Sunday they had Rap Against Racism. I thought it was a beautiful thing. But the thing is they should've had some rock groups and things like that to go to Bensonhurst and make that point stressed out there 'cause us Black brothers and sisters, we are not racist... They should've went to their neighborhood and told them to stop the violence, not us... They're trying to destroy brothers and sisters like this... We have to wake up. Don't just hear the music. Listen to the music. Listen to the words, you know what I'm saying. We are the music. We are the words."

Tony Bird, a white folk singer from the southeast African country of Malawi, sings about South Africa and the situation of the homeless of New York City. Spirit Land—a band with members from the U.S. and South Africa—comes on with South African township jive. Backstage they tell the *RW* that the racist atmosphere in the city has to stop, "And there's only one way to do it. And that's to act up. So we're here."

Bronx rapper Jesse West does a rap on the generation of youth coming up after Malcolm X, "The Black Bomb."

"What they thought that they had ended had only just begun
Because now over 20 years later I'm living proof
That all they did was light the fuse
To the Black bomb."

Latin Empire, wearing caps and medallions with the flag of Puerto Rico, play Latin hip-hop, and Cumbalaya comes on with native Puerto Rican folk music. A militant song from the Michael Hill's Bluesland remembers the police



Snuky Tate



Michael Hill, Bluesland

murder of Eleanor Bumpurs.

False Prophets, wild rockers from the East Village, do their version of Peter Gabriel's "Biko"—and as they play "Biko" transitions into "Yusuf." After "Do You Remember the Days of Slavery?" a member of Faith tells the youth in the audience, "We never played up here before. And everybody was saying 'they won't like you' and stuff. You guys have been so responsive!" A tape is played from East Village "anti-folk" singer Roger Manning. There are performances by Snuky Tate, who designed the Biko Lives T-shirt; reggae toaster and poet Fabienne; Rebel Force; Rebel Souls; and reggae poet Ras Tschaka.

As the finale approaches, the festival has brought into view a different kind of future than this dog-eat-dog system. It shows what the people can accomplish when we fight *our* way.

It is the closing of the festival—the "Naming of the Names." Festival organizers and performers stand together with Azanian activists on the stage. The two symbolic coffins are out front. An Azanian woman calls on everyone to stand and raise their fists. The names of those murdered by the South African regime are read out loud. Then the names of Black and Latinos murdered here. The names continue to be read, one after the other, as the enemy and their racist enforcers are condemned. The names hit the air like pledges of resistance. The people are strong and together. Here and there you can see the T-shirts saying: "Biko Lives Because I Do." □

From Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party

An Appeal To Those The System Has Cast Off

To those whose life is lived on the desperate edge, whether or not they find some work;

To those without work or even homes;

To all those the system and its enforcers treat as so much human waste material:

Raise your sights above the degradation and madness, the muck and demoralization, above the individual battle to survive and to "be somebody" on the terms of the imperialists—of fouler, more monstrous criminals than mythology has ever invented or jails ever held.

Become a part of the human saviors of humanity; the gravediggers of this system and the bearers of the future communist society.

This is not just talk or an attempt to make poetry here: there are great tasks to be fulfilled, great struggles to be carried out, and yes great sacrifices to be made to accomplish all this.

But there is a world to save—and to win—and in that process those the system has counted as nothing can count for a great deal. They represent a great reserve force that must become an active force for the proletarian revolution, to destroy the old world and create the new.

From the book A Horrible End, or an End to the Horror?

Stakes are going up.

Attacks are coming down from the powers that be.

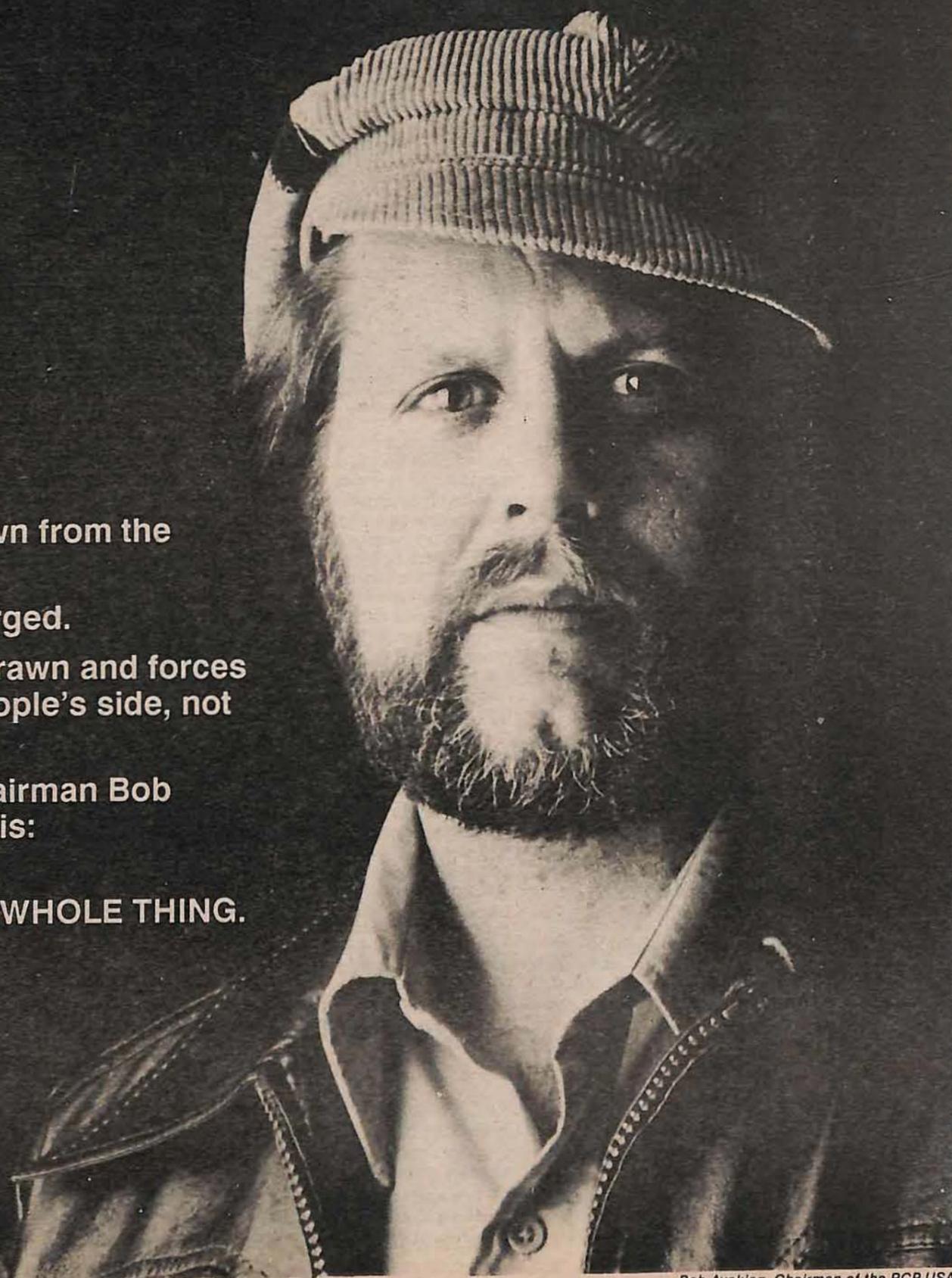
The atmosphere is charged.

Battle lines are being drawn and forces are lining up—on the people's side, not just on theirs.

In this situation our Chairman Bob Avakian said our stand is:

FEAR NOTHING.

BE DOWN FOR THE WHOLE THING.



Bob Avakian, Chairman of the RCP, USA.

The Homeless are NOT

Voices With No Homes

September 19 over 200 homeless people and activists left New York for a 16-day march to Washington, D.C. They were on their way to D.C. for the October 7 Housing Now! National March on Washington. An RW reporter met up with the march in Philadelphia:

I got off the train in Chester, PA, a predominantly Black town near Philadelphia where many proletarians and oppressed people live. I wondered how to find a group of about 250 homeless people who were somewhere in town. They were at the midpoint of a two-week trek from New York to Washington, D.C., for a big homeless demonstration. Only minutes after I hit the street, a Black man in his late forties came up and handed me a flyer that said, "Housing Now!" And when he learned that I had come down from New York for the RW to talk to people on the march, he took me to the Chester East Side Ministry, a Presbyterian mission where the marchers were camping for a couple of days.

On the grounds of the church, people are enjoying a break, sitting on the steps talking, spreading out hand-washed clothes to dry on clotheslines and across the lawn, talking in small groups about the events of the past week and what needs to be done. Inside, the scene is one of good spirits and chaos. Some marchers are sleeping, some playing cards or basketball in a recreation area, others are engaged in lively political discussion. Many are taking their shifts doing security, medical assistance, or kitchen detail, assisted by local people. The scene is so cheerful and well organized that the first news I hear makes me surprised as well as very angry. The marchers had arrived in Chester a full day early. And after a couple of marchers were found to have lice, Philadelphia city authorities told the marchers to pack up and get out of town. No one offered them any medical assistance. Instead, people were treated like something less than human, and were escorted out of Philly by the cops.

This outrage came after a week of walking, often without adequate shoes or clothing, through major rain and wind storms. Overcoming this crisis and the warm welcome they received in Chester combined to strengthen the marchers' sense of purpose. Their spirit of self-reliance and overcoming problems to get the job done, the degree of unity they had won through confronting ongoing challenges, and their desire to connect their immediate struggle with the struggle of other oppressed, stood out in what they had to say.

We're Not Going to Quit!

Walter

To survive in this society you have to adjust to your environment, and adjusting to your environment it's impossible to be honorable, it's impossible to be honest, it's impossible to be sentimental, really. Because you lose.

Standing on a soup line is a *job*. There's a place in New York City on 28 Street and 9th Avenue where there are so many of us that you have to get up from wherever you are, off your cardboard box, off your park bench, out from under some shed or under somebody's garage or out of a doorway and make it to this place by 9 o'clock or 9:30 in order to be there to receive a ticket that they start issuing at 10:00 and start serving the food at 11:30, for lunch. That's a *job*. They go from place to place for a meal. And it's a *job* to travel all over town, and it's expensive to travel all over town just to get a meal.



Marchers on the way to D.C.

The march overall is absolutely fantastic. We still have so many people here after the almost unbelievable tornado-type first two days. . . . When any of these people (organizers of the march) make me mad, when these people do something that upsets me, when somewhere in the system something happens that upsets me, when something doesn't follow through that somebody promised, for whatever reason, the first thing goes through your mind is "I want to go home." But what are you goin' home to? Back to your spot, your park bench, or your cardboard box and you haven't accomplished a damn thing. At the same time what makes me say, "No, I'm not going home," is that memory of the first two days and what I put my body through in that tornado-type storm—I *cannot* have done that for nothing. That was atrocious. I don't remember seeing rain quite that dense.

We are not a gang of people that's on a panhandling excursion. We are not a gang going across the country looking for the opportunity to take something off, rip somebody off, rip off a bank, create an epidemic of mugging, as a traveling unit. That is not what we're about. We are in route for a specific purpose, it's a selfish purpose because it's all about us. And we expect results, we're presenting it ourselves and we're not going to quit. We're intelligent enough to know that it may or may not have any direct effect, except the fact that it will *definitely* be brought a little bit more upfront.

Coming Together Like Hurricane Hugo

Tom, a Black man in his late forties, was active in the civil rights movement and spent time in Chicago with the Black Panthers. He is a Muslim now.

In a way, I don't *have* to be here, because I do have commitments. But when it comes to the gratification of the whole of a people, you've got to move, you've got to

move, to get in there and do whatever you can do to get it done. Even if nothing don't come out of it, history will come down, because you will be among those who have been in it and taken part in pushing it by you, pushing it on. That's why I made the decision to travel in this march. I love it really. I traveled from Manhattan to Princeton without my shoes. Yesterday I finally got some shoes. A man in his fifties came by and put some food out in the road for us. I was jogging in my bare feet, but you know my feet felt great.

The students at Princeton were great—they took over like they're supposed to.

I believe we should have just gone on the road, and into the poorest communities, the ones who are down just like us. I know what we would find. That's the people who will do the most to support us. Like there was a lady in South Philly who was all set up to meet us. . . we had a opportunity to tell the truth. We don't need no one to speak for us, tell lies. We are capable of telling the plain old truth: we are hungry, we need a place to stay. . . what's so difficult about that? When we started, all my stuff was stolen. Does that mean I'm supposed to give up and turn back? No way, man. I took a shower in the rain, and kept on.

I believe this march is in place. When something meets the eyes and ears of people as a whole, those in authority have got to do something.

I see things coming together just like Hugo. I see it. Forces gathering. . . you have a mixture there. We are like the babies of the mixture. The most phenomenal is the anti-apartheid thing, what is going on in South Africa. That is *phenomenal*. But when you look at it as a whole, we're part of that too. They're doing the same identical thing to us. So when we get to Washington, the people who are there from South Africa, they're going to be our brothers. Wholeheartedly. And it's going to be just like we knew each other all our lives.

Criminals, The System IS!



Marching, Heart and Soul

Leroy, young man, on the homeless security team:

Everybody realizes what they're here for, they know what they want. Slowly but surely we are getting to know each other, getting to know the groups that are here, getting to know the representatives, the leaders. We're coming together, making a community, making a family. We have meetings of groups, and meetings of the representatives, so everybody knows what's going on and can be heard, and we can solve our differences and problems. No matter what size group you have, there's always going to be problems. The main thing is that we're working on it together to make it better. They say that one bad apple will spoil the whole bunch, but that's wrong. The majority of the people here now have reasons, ambitions, things in their hearts and their minds, and things that they feel will be good for all of us. We're not going to be stopped. Each of us that's marching is marching in body for many people who couldn't make it physically but are here mentally. I'm carrying about 75 people specifically in my heart and soul who told me before I left, "Don't give up on this thing." I was ready to give up and I didn't. Cause I thought of them first, and I thought they need me. We, as homeless people, are trying—we're not trying, we're doing it—we're doing what we feel is best for everybody. We want the mayors, the cities, the president, all of them to know one thing: We may be homeless, but we're not helpless. Every place that we have went through, they were clean, but they weren't as clean when we came as when we left them. Different places have offered individual people jobs, but nobody has left the march to take them, because we're marching for affordable housing for everybody, that's our purpose, and we can't be swayed from our purpose. We're gonna do what we have to do, for everybody, because nobody needs to be out on the street, nobody needs to be living out of a cardboard box.

I've been on the street four years. . . . I was living in

Continued on page 10

The housing situation in America shows the fundamental rottenness of the imperialist system.

THE CRISIS IN HOUSING IS EXTREME:

- Over THREE MILLION people are homeless, 25 percent more than last year.
- Families with children are the fastest growing sector of the homeless population.
- 25 percent of homeless adults are employed full-time and still unable to find affordable housing.
- 1978-1980: Rents went up 30 percent for people in the lowest income sector. The poor pay 50, 60 or even 80 percent of their income for housing.
- Over 100,000 are homeless in New York, over 90 percent are Black and Hispanic.
- Nearly 40 percent of women in New York City shelters have been abused by husbands, boyfriends or family members.
- New York City: 200,000 names are on the waiting list for public housing. There are only 175,000 public housing units available. Waiting time: EIGHTEEN YEARS.
- Chicago: Out of 41,000 units of public housing, 5,600 are unoccupied because the Chicago Housing Authority won't fix them up. 30,000 are on the waiting list for public housing.
- Charleston, S.C.: family requests for emergency shelter doubled in 1988 from the previous year. In Phoenix they increased 60 percent, in Detroit 35 percent.

THE SITUATION IS GETTING WORSE:

- A study funded by Congress estimated NINETEEN MILLION people will be homeless in the U.S. by the year 2003.
- For every homeless person there are many more living on the edge. Over EIGHT MILLION households pay more than half their income for rent. THREE MILLION families now live doubled up.
- A recent study by Rutgers University estimated: Over TEN MILLION families in the U.S. would become homeless overnight in the wake of a mild recession.

THE CRISIS OF CAPITALISM, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, HAS MADE MILLIONS OF PEOPLE HOMELESS:

- In 1985 a HUD deputy assistant secretary stated: "We're getting out of the housing business. Period."
- Since 1980 the government has cut HUD funds by \$25 BILLION. It's gone from \$32 billion to less than \$8 billion.
- DEMAND for government-subsidized, low-income housing increased an average of 43 percent in 1988. SUPPLY of housing for the poor *shrank* 19 percent between 1978 and 1985.
- 1981: 200,000 units were built by Federal housing programs. Since 1986: An average of only 25,000 units have been built per year.
- 500,000 units of low-income housing are lost every year to condominium conversion, abandonment, arson and demolition.
- TWO MILLION jobs in steel, textiles, and other industries have disappeared each year since 1979. Meanwhile, nearly half of all new jobs created from 1979-1985 pay poverty-level wages.
- Federal funds for social programs like job training, education and childcare have been drastically cut. Minimum wage has not been increased for seven years.

THIS SYSTEM'S ANSWER TO THE POOR IS MORE OPPRESSION

- Under the guise of the "War on Drugs" a brutal campaign has been launched against Black people in public housing. Projects have been raided and put on "lockdown" status. People not officially on the lease kicked out or arrested for "trespassing." Residents, including children, required to wear IDs on chains around their necks. Curfews and outrageous restrictions put on visitors. "Getting rid of drugs in public housing" has provided a convenient cover for eliminating low-income housing in projects the government considers too "volatile."
- The armed forces of the law have been sicced upon the masses of homeless. Tent city communities are torn down and regular gestapo sweeps harass and arrest those who have nowhere to sleep but the sidewalk. New laws have been passed aimed against the homeless.

THIS SYSTEM IS THE REAL CRIMINAL

Millions are forced to live on the streets and EVERYTHING the rulers of this country do creates a worse situation for the people. Government funds for social programs and housing continue to be cut. Vicious media campaigns are aimed at creating a mean-spirited attitude toward the homeless. In cities like New York and San Francisco authorities have responded to tent cities with brutal raids, arrests and fascist laws. "War on Drugs" propaganda tells us the homeless and the poor are criminals that deserve to be beaten up, locked up and shot down in the street. Thousands of youth have been arrested, no questions, no answers. Meanwhile *real criminals* like HUD officials steal billions of dollars in federal housing funds and what do we get? Polite hearings and careful investigations. This is a sick and dying system and it needs to be overthrown!

OUTCASTS, DOWNCASTS, SLAVES, ILLEGALS AND REBELS — IT'S RIGHT TO REBEL!

REVOLUTION IS THE HOPE OF THE HOPELESS!



Marchers on the way to D.C.

Voices With No Homes



Marcher on the way to D.C.

Continued from page 9

the South part of the Bronx. The landlord of the building where I was living said we weren't paying the rent. We showed in court that he was getting the money. But he said no. Anyway, he kicked us out to turn the building into condos or something to make more money. I'm gonna tell you, we are people and we don't like to be criticized for our situation: called dummies, ignorant, don't like to be called selfish or nothing. We're not selfish. We're trying to get something that we all need. When you've got landlords that are trying to play games with raising rents, trying to cut us down to size, make us look like we're nothing, people who've got no sense of the person, of the individual human being, people who only know their own greed, their own profits, their own self, their greed for profits don't help nobody, it hurts everybody. Jobs are obvious, jobs that pay enough so you can afford the cost of living, in affordable housing. The problem isn't just New York, it's everywhere. They're gonna pay us \$3.50 an hour and our rent's \$450 a month—you can't make it.

Doing It Our Way

Sue, a young woman:

They say we need security, now we got our own security, we're doing it our way. We don't need no police or anybody else taking care of our problems. The real problem is that we need housing for the homeless, and that's what we're marching for. We've got people in cardboard boxes, with gangrene in their legs, a grandmother, 81 years old, living on the streets in New York. I have a job in New York, \$5.50 an hour, but I don't have a place to live. So I said this march was more important, and I left my job to come on this march. . . . There are people here who are not homeless, some of the white people here just came to help us. I am amazed at how many have come out to help us on the way.

We've Achieved a Lot

Manuel, young Hispanic man, homeless for a few months, has been living in a tent in the Bronx.

We have kept going because we have achieved a lot of unity about our purpose. But we still have problems with listening to each other, not everybody gets a chance to speak. . . . We are having a drug-free march, and part of what people have been saying about some people being greedy isn't coming from them being greedy. We have people who have only been clean for a few days, because they wanted to make this march. And they really need more food than some of us, because their body is demanding something to replace the drugs. It is great what we are achieving in these conditions."

I went to Battery Park just to see people off, but when I got there I thought, why not go with them?

Read the RW!

Jake, a young Black man originally from Philadelphia, has been homeless in New York for fifteen months. He's been training as an auto mechanic.

I used to be on drugs, but I got fed up and decided to change things. . . it's been my experience that when you live things, you experience things, it's better than anyone telling you about it. . . a lot of us here realize that, and some of us are on this march because of that. I want to learn what's going on by doing it, not just observing from the sidelines.

I read that (referring to the RW). I think it's a very for real, down-to-earth, informative paper. It speaks about the real facts. I've been reading about the coal miners, and also about developments in Tompkins Square Park and the views of the *Revolutionary Worker*,



Marchers on the way to D.C.

From the New Programme of the RCP Housing After the Revolution

One of the most pressing questions the proletariat will face as it takes control of society will be providing housing for the masses that is fit for the shelter and comfort of human beings. One of its first steps will be to take hold of the remaining mansions of the capitalists, as well as their fancy hotels, convention centers, and even office buildings—much of which are unused—and move in masses who are literally homeless; some of these structures will be permanently transformed into housing for the masses, while as rapidly as possible new housing is also built. With regard to apartment buildings and complexes, those which are owned by large capital, “slumlords,” etc., will be taken over quickly and without compensation by the state, and in these situations as well as in the emergency housing described above, the masses will be mobilized to protect and manage them. Small landlords, who own only one or a few units, will be allowed to continue collecting rents on them for a period of time, but they will have no power to evict and the rents will be set by the state. As soon as possible, in conformity with the overall construction of housing and development of the economy as a whole, the state will buy out these small landlords and convert these units into state property.

Those among the people—the working class and its allies—who own their own homes (or, more often, are still buying them from the bank, etc., while living in them) will have the right to live there and all debts connected with them will be canceled. Where they own more than one home and are employing one or more as rental property, the policy toward small landlords will be applied to those properties where they do not live.

...As most cities have decayed, their major financial and big business sections have been lavishly built up and, in fact, with the capitalist tax structure and the policies of the banks, the deterioration of the masses' conditions in the cities is the necessary and inevitable accompaniment of this capitalist parasitism.

This grotesque distortion, a fitting product of capitalism especially in its imperialist stage, will be put to an end. The massive land speculation will be ended. Such things as red-lining, which stops construction dead in many oppressed people's neighborhoods, will be abolished. The arsonists, and particularly those who hire them to destroy buildings for speculative profit, will be stopped by force. These huge structures will immediately be put to the use of the masses—quickly converted to basic housing where that is required—and the focus will be put on reconstructing the neighborhoods which have been forced into decay. Many workers skilled in construction for example—who, as it is now, largely work on these glass palaces when they are allowed to work at all—will immediately be shifted into reconstruction and further construction of housing for the masses. The absurd contradiction represented by the ever-visible sight of masses of unemployed people hanging out on the street of their broken down neighborhoods—this too will be overcome at the stroke of the fist that knocks over capitalism. Instead of being held apart by the law of profits, these unemployed people will be put together with the materials needed and set to work on these neighborhoods. Not only will segregation be outlawed but the financial policies previously employed by the banks and insurance companies which feed and profit off it will have been ended along with their control of financial resources.

and it's more or less as if I was just talking to one of the people and experiencing what they are going through. I'm not saying it's exact, but it's really as close to exact as you're ever going to get. And I would encourage everyone to read the *Revolutionary Worker*.

In this situation, we're dealing with two different groups. We're dealing with the government and we're dealing with the oppressed. To me this is a big meet. So that we can help to put our views, and our numbers, to the government, and we can see their response. Now when we see their response, we'll know about how we're going to deal with it, and formulating our ideas about what we need to do.

We need to organize more. A lot of people are freelancing, they're on their own, they're by themselves. We need to get more into the organizations like the RCP, and not stop what we're doing with this march. We're expecting about 500,000 people in D.C., estimated in the *Post*. But we definitely got to use this march to push forward, not to go back home and sit on our butts.

Going to See the Man, Looking Good

Brenda, a Black woman in her mid-thirties, with five kids—two in one child care center, three in another. Says this is her first time marching for anything.

I've been putting in applications for housing help since 1974, but I haven't been homeless for that long, just having trouble. Every time you go check on your application, they say you got to wait. How long you got to wait? For the rest of your life? It don't make no sense. I like what we're doing now. We're getting ready to do the right thing for the homeless. Things are not getting better, they're getting worse. We need to stand up for ourselves. I stay at the shelter, the women's shelter at 51st and Lexington. I've been going back and forth, back and forth from that shelter trying to see if something can be done. I thank God that everybody here is pushing it, pushing it. It's time for housing, now. Not yesterday. I want to get my kids back, I need a place for us to stay. I tell myself, you gonna do something about this, we're gonna be together again. Last place we had, the ceiling was falling in and even so I couldn't make the rent. I would go from place to place, if I couldn't get an apartment, then I settle for a room. They would put my kids in a home. I've done cleaning for people so I could sleep on a couch, but it's no place for my kids.

This is the first time I've been marching. I feel it, I feel a change coming, it makes me so happy. We're going to a righteous war. I feel the spirit in us. . . . I going to see the Man and tell him, what's going on? Why all of us with no place to stay? I be thinking about my kids, and my oldest, how when I told him I was going, he say to me that I look good, that he ain't seen me look so good. A lot of people been killing ourselves. . . . I'm looking for a different way. . . . I feel like this, we got to march on, not stopping to fight each other. . . . The road is going the right way for us, and we're not going to turn back, because if we turn back—oh man. I been walking the whole way and I feel good about it. We met all kind of people on the road, and they want to know what it's like. I been hurt a lot of times, I been hurt deeply. Now when people try and boss me or talk bad to me, I say, “Who are you?” I need my respect, then I'll respect you. We are going to war, not with each other, but with them who's taken everything from us. □



Up Against the Cruel Rules

New York. The East Village section of the Lower East Side is a volatile place, a cultural hotbed of the challenging and unconventional: hard-edged punks, squatters, anarchists, revolutionaries, artists, musicians, writers, and filmmakers all work and live in the area. At night there is the sound of punk rock, reggae, and jazz bands drawing people from around the city and the suburbs. It's the place to go to get anti-establishment literature, wild clothing, and bootleg tapes. It's where long-time residents such as immigrants from Eastern Europe share the park with kids wearing spiked hair. And in the midst of this are Black and Latino proletarians living in tenements and housing projects and the homeless who shun the decrepit and dangerous shelters of the city for the trees and benches of Tompkins Square Park.

A major part of the scene in the East Village over the last year has been the fierce and ongoing battle over Tompkins Square Park. On one side of the barricades: Hundreds of homeless people and others who hang out and live in the park. On the other side: The dictatorial city authorities and the NYPD shock troops.

Mid-July, 1988:

A 1 a.m. curfew in public parks is announced.

August 6, Saturday night: Over 200 people march defiantly through the park. The cops form up ready to enforce the curfew. Anarchists, punks, squatters surge onto Avenue A blocking traffic. Word of the protest spreads through the neighborhood and more people head towards the park. The police move in and charge the demonstrators, grabbing protesters and bashing people with nightsticks. They beat anyone and everyone in their path. A fierce confrontation continues until dawn.

The battle of Tompkins Square Park shook the city and beyond. And it laid bare a profound weakness of the rulers' system: Their efforts to impose a measure of social control only succeeded in arousing broad anger and creating new enemies of the system. Over a hundred complaints of police brutality were filed, but to this day not one cop has been prosecuted.

The people will never forget the brutality of the pigs that night in Tompkins Square Park:

"It was like we have no rights. We were treated like cows, like pigs. And there was nothing you could do. It was like going to South Africa."

Young immigrant from South America

"They were going crazy. All I saw was nightsticks flying in the air. . . . They were so racist. Against women, against Black people, against everybody. This one girl said a cop called her a 'stupid nigger bitch.'

"What the cops are doing, it's for the developers, so the rich can move in. And maybe move the poor people even further and further. Then they're going to end up in the river 'cause there's not any place to go. It's ridiculous. You can see it everywhere. There's people sleeping in the park and the rich don't want to go off for their brunch in the morning and see needles on the floor and these homeless people laying around. I believe that's why this whole thing happened."

Young woman whose leg was nearly broken by a cop

"I was strip-searched, told to bend over and spread my cheeks, before my rights were even read to me. And I insisted that they read me my rights. I said do yourself a favor and cover your own ass and read me my rights. 'Cause I didn't feel safe. When they threw me out in the street, put their boots on my neck and my face to the ground, it was like some KKK ordeal. Like I'm gonna get shot in the back of the head."

Young Black man who was beaten and arrested

"When we were collectively threatened by the police riot, all of a sudden people who hated each other recognized each other as al-



August 6, 1988

lies. . . . I saw a junkie who had pulled an axe on me a month and a half earlier fall down in the street during the first police charge. And I saw the picture of American Corporate Womanhood scoop him up out of the streets and keep him running up the block. Then a couple of hours later, something similar, a young woman who looked like she was probably a student at NYU fell off her bicycle in the face of the fifth or sixth or seventh or eighth police charge, and two skinheads and a Rastafarian scooped her up and kept her running. Five minutes later, a bunch of hip hop kids, Black kids who like rap music, came up the block with her bicycle going, 'Yo, where's that blond girl with the bicycle? We got your bike. Hey, where are you, we got your ride.'"

An East Village activist

Summer, 1989:

The New York City Park Department proposes new cruel rules aimed at the homeless. The proposed rules say: No one will be allowed to keep their belongings in the park or "give the appearance" they intend to live in the park. No one will be allowed to "lie on or spread possessions upon a bench so as to interfere with its use by other persons," sleep overnight, or build any kind of shelters. Asking for money will be prohibited. The new rules also propose a permit be required for any gathering when "more than twenty persons may reasonably be expected to be in attendance." (The city has since backed off, at this point, from passing a law prohibiting sleeping in the park.)

When a new park rule goes into effect that forbids tents and such from being put up in the parks, the authorities move in to enforce it. This sets off another battle.

July 5, 1989: Police and Parks Department personnel move in, seal off the park and dismantle people's tents. This touches off street demonstrations and a number of flags are burned. A banner raised in the night's heat reads: "Tompkins Square/Tiananmen Square/Uprisings Everywhere." The protest ends with a bonfire made of wooden police barricades blazing in the street.

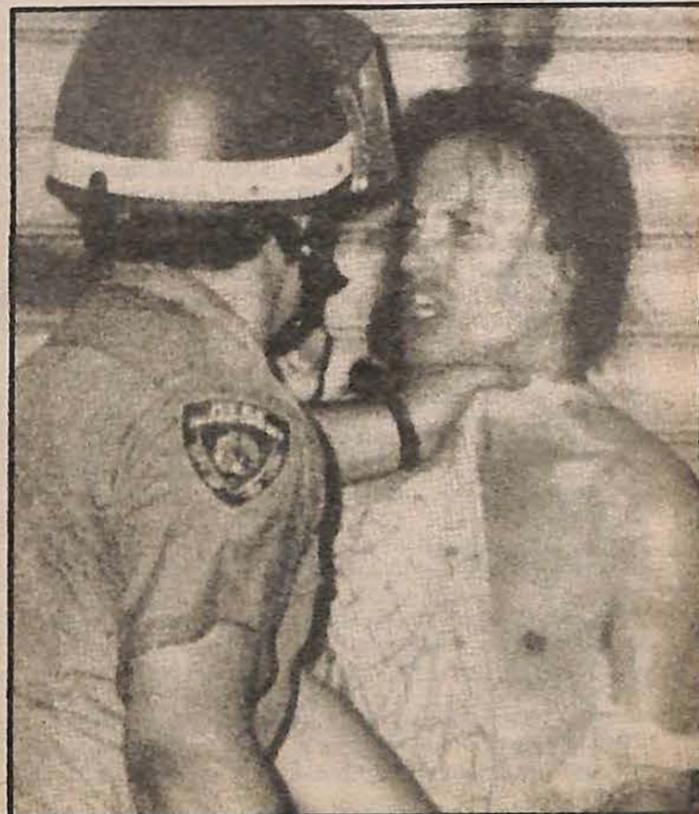
July 8: People gather to rebuild the homeless shanty town the police had torn down. There is a march to the police station. A banner in the lead says: "No Evictions! No Curfew! Take Back the Park!" Another banner reads, "Revolution Is the Hope of the Hopeless." The pigs charge into the park and protesters form a human barricade. Three times the structures go up, are torn

down by the cops, and then rebuilt again by the people. Other signs are put up: "Homelessness is a problem their system can't solve!" and "Homelessness reveals the true colors of the system at home."

Among the people there is an even stronger sense of unity and determination to defy and defeat the new cruel rules:

"I've seen so much unity. They talk about Blacks and whites don't get along together. That's a lie. The white people, they made me proud. They bring us food. They stand out there protesting with us. A lot of them have homes but they're staying out there with us. The majority of the homeless are Black and all the white brothers and sisters supporting them—that makes me feel good."

Black homeless man



August 6, 1988



"They came in from all different sides. They came in real sneaky but quick. Nobody was aware of them coming in. There was no warning or nothing. . . . They told us to pack up the stuff that we would need, but the only thing important to me is the people, the homeless, the hungry, that's why I'm out here. . . . Everything we had is gone. But we came here with nothing."

A Latino homeless activist

"They throw you out and where are you going to go? The shelters are unsanitary. There's no room for anybody. Where are you going to go? Then people come and live in the park and they come and arrest you. They had a fire truck up here like in the '60s. What are they gonna do? Bring out the hoses, bring out the dogs? What the fuck is this world coming to? And then they wonder why people want to burn the flag. How can you respect something that takes things away from you? I can't respect that. I can't love that. You can't respect something that oppresses you."

Young Black woman

"Last August was so beautiful. We all came together from all walks of life. At the risk of ourselves being beaten up, at the risk of even innocent people being beaten up, we still all came together. Now they're talking about enforcing the park rules and kicking out the homeless by June 1. Well, history doesn't repeat itself but I think that conflict which was not dealt with will rise again. Who are the real criminals? The NYPD only protects the interests of people with money. I'm hoping more people come and see, more people come to our aid and wake up, come down to Tompkins Square Park before we have one more police state park."

A Puerto Rican internationalist living in TSP

"I used to be a pacifist. Now I feel we have to figure out the ways to push people a bit, make some noise. . . . Before, when I was growing up, I was always totally dependent on my boyfriends. I was terrified about being alone, and I wouldn't leave one boyfriend unless I definitely had another. And I put up with a lot of junk because of that. Then, when I was married, I was terrified to leave the house. I would never think of leaving my husband. I thought I needed him to protect me. Now I don't need anyone anymore. I've learned so much being out here. Not just about survival, about getting food and shelter, but also emotionally, what it means to be a leader, how to get along in a group of people. I'm so much more confident of my own abilities and independent than I was when I was married."

"I've been thinking, as bad off as we all are, we have a basic desire for some sort of order. You know, like we share whatever food we have with each other. We take care of each other. If

we have a problem, we discuss it. We vote on it. We have leaders. We have followers. But we're all in it together. . . . Some of it just seems natural, unspoken, like we just know what we have to do. And some of it we talk about, organize. Anyway, I was thinking, you know when

we were talking about people running society, couldn't it be something like this? Proletariat—those who have nothing to lose but their chains. I like that. That's definitely me. That's the way I feel." □



July 8, 1989
(Above) Homeless people and supporters rebuild and defend shanties in the park.
(Left) Marching on the police station.

Confessions of a Pig in the War on Drugs

The War on Drugs is a war on the people. Check out these words from the pig's own mouth! These are quotes from a September 24 *New York Times* front-page article on George Bush's drug program which was based on interviews with top government officials.

These officials conceded that an all-out effort to get large numbers of addicted people off drugs, whether they are in inner cities or outside them, is not being planned: that aim, they said, is too complicated and the problems in reaching it are too intractable to be achieved anytime soon.

Several Administration officials said they rejected the concept of treatment on demand, which many experts say is critical to reducing drug use in the inner city.

Another senior White House official... bluntly said there was little hope for weaning from drugs large numbers of young people who are at the heart of much of the current crisis.

Exactly where this start would be on the serious addiction problem itself, beyond controlling the inner city crisis and resulting crime with added law enforcement, remained unclear from the interviews. Seventy percent of the proposed new drug budget would go for law enforcement, with the rest going for prevention, education and treatment.

John H. Sununu, the White House chief of staff, said the anti-drug effort would not 'undo all the social problems of the inner cities.'



This is the real deal on the War on Drugs:

- The War on Drugs has nothing to do with helping people who are addicted to drugs. It is a heartless and brutal program that doesn't even pretend to address the social and economic problems of this system which have given rise to the use of drugs.
- In the name of the War on Drugs the ruling class is trying to bring even more repression down on the people, especially against the oppressed who lived in the heart of the cities. It is a plan for more police, more jails, more evictions, and more apartheid control over housing projects. This is what they mean by "controlling the inner cities."

The War on Drugs is a war on the people, and it must be stopped!

San Francisco Raid on "Camp Agnos"



"The Goddess of Free Food"

San Francisco's Civic Center Plaza is a tree-lined park right in front of City Hall. It's next to the Civic Auditorium and the old main library, and strolling distance from the opera, symphony and the Museum of Modern Art. This summer it became the site of an intense battle between city authorities and hundreds of homeless people.

Dozens of homeless people had been sleeping in the park for over a year. But by June the encampment had become a full-fledged tent city of 200 to 300 people. The plaza was renamed "Camp Agnos," after the mayor, and people lashed oil cloth and blankets as windbreaks in between trees and brought in couches and chairs. They created "living rooms" and sleeping areas, and there were even some small businesses—like a bicycle repair shop. There were all kinds of people, young and old and a real sense of community and mutual support. The *SF Weekly* wrote: "In fact, far from being the dangerous place portrayed in the media, Camp Agnos at its best had the feeling of a '60s commune or a late-night college bull session, with long philosophical discussions being carried on over a bottle of wine."

The media responded to Camp Agnos

with a mean-spirited campaign. One *San Francisco Examiner* columnist captured the prevailing attitude in the press when he wrote, "If the civil libertarians would allow it, they should be rounded up, given showers and confined to drying-out stockades until it's possible to see whether there is anything left to salvage."

Meanwhile, the SFPD was sent in to attack the camp. Keith McHenry of Food Not Bombs (FNB) described how the pigs attacked at the end of June: "Police started coming in and beating people. In the middle of the night, they'd come in with loud-speaker systems telling people they had to leave no matter what. They flooded some of the camps with fire hoses. And at the same time police attacked Tompkins Square Park (in New York) and the parks in Oakland. There was this whole rash of police invasions of parks to get rid of homeless all across the whole country. . . . We were hearing all these gruesome stories of the police coming in and kicking people in the head, so we moved in. . . . And we just didn't leave for about three weeks."

Mayor Agnos, elected on a platform of liberal reforms, promised a comprehensive plan for "viable alternatives" to homelessness. But while he wore the mask of "friend to the homeless," his real concern was how to evict the encampment without looking like a fascist.

Food Not Bombs, a group of radical activists, was at the center of this battle on the side of the homeless. Last fall FNB members were arrested in Golden Gate Park for distributing food to the homeless. FNB doesn't beg for city permits and will not be told by the city where, and when, to distribute food. They view the meals they serve as "food actions," shining a bright light on the question of homelessness in the "land of plenty." For this feisty and unbending stand, FNB is hounded and harassed by the city bureaucracy—and respected and supported by many progressive people.

Toe-to-Toe Battle

The SFPD wanted to take immediate action to clear the plaza, but the mayor favored a more tactical, careful approach. On July 6 Agnos issued a statement saying people could stay but that by July 11 the tents would have to go. When July 11 came, early in the morning, cops distributed flyers to people in Camp Agnos saying people had to be out by noon or their stuff would be trashed. Over 100 people from Camp Agnos stormed into city hall to confront the mayor, and this bold action made the front page of the newspapers.

On July 13 the city cited FNB for "illegal food distribution" and the TAC squad was sent into Camp Agnos. Large containers of soup were confiscated and

several servers were arrested. The next day a temporary restraining order was issued against FNB. But FNB continued to distribute food and a ten-foot statue, the Goddess of Free Food, was erected in "Tenement Square." The figure, which held a carrot in one hand and a shopping cart in the other, was quickly "arrested" by the pigs.

For several weeks this battle was a major story in the news and the media played a big role in trying to create public opinion against FNB and the homeless. But in spite of this FNB drew broad support. All kinds of people who sympathized with the homeless joined in to defy the injunction against giving away food in the plaza. A restaurant owner from wealthy Marin came to lend a hand, bringing food she had cooked. Young people were seen quickly handing out bag lunches in the plaza. Another woman from Marin, who made up fifty sandwiches, opened the back door of her station wagon, distributed the food, and then headed home, saying she would be back.

As the city focused their fire on FNB, open attacks were accompanied by an underhanded campaign of disinformation and lies. Keith McHenry told the *RW*, "They had narcotics agents trying to buy crack from the food tables and lots of undercover cops grabbing and arresting people when we had demonstrations. And they used a whole infrastructure of undercover cops to dismantle what was going on, to start random rumors. They would run these rumors that the tactical police was going to invade any minute. And they would run all kinds of rumors like that. They were the ones who started the lies about food poisoning from Food Not Bombs to try to get a scare about that. That is the only way they could deal with it, covertly, and in an underhanded manner."

In the midst of all this the Police Activities League sponsored a carnival that plopped down right on top of the encampment, displacing many of the homeless. The scene was like something out of a strange movie: Kiddie rides with bright lights whirling next to homeless living quarters and the cops and press surrounding the Food Not Bombs table while fun-seekers tried their luck at a coin toss a few feet away. The police announced the carnival would provide jobs for the homeless and suddenly in the press the SFPD became the "friend of the homeless." Over 100 people were hired on a temporary basis by the carnival chain which then bussed most of them to another carnival site many miles away. According to some of the homeless who took these jobs, they were paid \$1.90 per hour. It was nothing but an attempt to paint the police in rosy colors and get some of the homeless out of the

plaza.

On July 19, with the carnival still going on, FNB held a pre-announced meal serving and rally. This was attended by hundreds of people including many youth from the Anarchists Convention in town. Riot police formed cordons around the homeless and prevented food from being brought into the park. Soup was confiscated and police started making arrests. An American flag was burned and twenty people were arrested.

The press tried to isolate and attack Camp Agnos and FNB by calling the demonstration a "near riot" and quoting some homeless people who denounced Food Not Bombs for being "political." Later some people who had been quoted in the press told the *RW* they had been blatantly misquoted. And there was no mention in the press of the fact that many homeless people had joined FNB in the course of this battle.

On July 20, on the mayor's orders, the police invaded "Tenement Square," demolishing shelters and filling garbage trucks with people's belongings. People were attacked by the pigs and lost personal belongings as well as tents and furniture. Someone saw a pet hamster thrown into a trash compactor and one man had to dig through the garbage to rescue his false teeth that had been thrown away. People were only allowed to take what they could carry. The press reported this whole gestapo action as a "gentle roust." And city officials praised Mayor Agnos for handling the whole affair in a humane and masterful manner.

The *SF Weekly* summed up the cold-hearted attitude of Agnos and the press: "What we really feel, what Ronald Reagan made it socially acceptable for Americans to say out loud (even liberal democrats) is that it's not our fault or responsibility. We've got a safety net. We've got programs somewhere. Why can't we eat lunch in the park anymore? WE pay taxes. Get these people out of view: they're spoiling our lifestyle."

In the wake of this battle, the city extended the original restraining order and FNB members have been arrested almost every time they distribute food. But while the authorities would like to crush FNB, a lot of middle class people and others have come forward through this battle to defend FNB and stand with the homeless. And many of the homeless have themselves gotten stronger and more determined through this latest round of struggle. One revolutionary white proletarian who is homeless told the *RW*, "I understand there's a million people homeless right now (in the U.S.). And that number is gonna keep growing every damn year. It's gonna turn into a civil war. It's gonna become a government of the people for the people cause the people are gonna take it right over."



During the police sweep.



**No More
Evictions!**

**No Curfews!
No Roundups!**

**We Will Not
Be Crushed!
Fight the Power!**

**We Won't Be
Cast Aside,
We WILL Be
Imperialism's
Gravediggers!
REVOLUTION IS
THE HOPE OF
THE HOPELESS**