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Blood on the Border

Southwest vigilantes hunt Mexican immigrants

See page 4



A Mexican family crossing the border at night.



3 Election Madness in Peru

6 The Yankee War Machine in Puerto Rico



8 Educators Demand New Trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal

As of June 4, 2000 Chairman Gonzalo (Abimael Guzmán) has been held in isolation for...

7 Years, 234 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.

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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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Election Madness in Peru

Last month's presidential election in Peru featured a U.S.-backed dictator and a U.S.-groomed challenger. By the final vote on May 28 the challenger—Alejandro Toledo—had dropped out, charging massive election fraud by the dictator Alberto Fujimori and his regime. Fujimori claimed overwhelming victory in what was essentially a one-man race. But about a third of the people who voted turned in spoiled or blank ballots. And millions simply did not vote—in a country where failure to vote can result in a heavy fine or trouble from the police.

Anti-Fujimori protests mounted before election day—and continued afterwards. Ten days before the election, Fujimori had to flee a campaign appearance in Ayacucho, in the Andes highlands, when dozens of people shouting "Get out, tyrant" stoned the car he was riding in. On election day, thousands of protesters clashed with police in Iquitos, in Peru's Amazon region. There were many other protests around the country that day—including in the capital city, Lima, where students tried to march to the presidential palace which was guarded by 1000 riot police.

In this election, the usual official corruption and manipulation by the Fujimori regime reached new levels of madness. First of all, Fujimori's bid for a third term as president was a violation of Peru's current Constitution. This was a Constitution that Fujimori himself had imposed in 1993 after he led a military "self-coup" and installed his own Congress and judiciary, in response to major advances by the people's war led by the Communist Party of Peru. When three constitutional judges ruled in 1997 that Fujimori could not run for a third term, he had them dismissed.

Vladimiro Montesinos—notorious CIA operative and the head of Peru's political police—directed a campaign of dirty tricks against the opposition. Hired goons and electrical black-outs disrupted rallies by Fujimori opponents. The tightly controlled TV and radio refused to give time to opposition candidates, and the tabloids ran smear attacks against them. Fujimori supporters forged over a million voter registration signatures. Fujimori used government funds to distribute food and land in order to buy votes.

The Electoral "Choice"— Another Lackey of Imperialism

The leading candidate against Fujimori was Alejandro Toledo of the *Perú Posible* coalition. Toledo put himself forward as an "outsider" to Peru's official politics—born poor and with indigenous roots. In reality, he has deep connections to ruling circles in Peru and to the imperialists. He received his doctorate in economics at Stanford University. In the 1980s he served as the chief economic adviser to Peru's Central Bank and the minister of labor. He has worked for the World Bank, the international financial institution dominated by the U.S. He headed a financial consulting business to service domestic and foreign capitalist investors in Peru.

In short, Toledo represents and serves

Peru's big capitalists and big landlords—class forces that are closely tied to the imperialists, especially the U.S. imperialists, that dominate Peru. He is basically no different from Fujimori, who was also promoted as an "outsider" when he first became president in 1990.

Toledo's campaign platform promised to stick to the basic course of Fujimori's economic program. As the Committee to Support the Revolution in Peru (CSR) points out: "What does this mean for the people of Peru? It means that more than 50% of them would continue to earn incomes below the official poverty level.... It means that the government of Peru will continue to privatize Peru's natural and economic resources—selling the wealth and future of the country to the highest international bidder (at a fraction of the value). A Toledo presidency will not provide the Peruvian people with any real resolution to the grinding poverty imposed by the imperialists under the auspices of the IMF and World Bank." (From "Peru Action and News," May 2000.)

Toledo's candidacy was designed to capitalize on the growing hatred for Fujimori among broad masses of people in Peru—and to channel those sentiments toward electoral activity safely within the current system.

U.S. Imperialist Godfathers Step In

The first round of the presidential election took place in April. Under Peruvian law, a presidential candidate winning a majority of votes in the first round does not have to face a runoff. During the first-round vote, early projections predicted that Fujimori was short of a majority and would need to face Toledo in a runoff. But then, the vote count suddenly slowed down. Vote tally sheets disappeared during shipment to

the central computer center. Fujimori operatives were caught with pre-marked ballots. The media began reporting that Fujimori apparently had won a majority after all.

This was when the U.S. stepped in. The White House, the State Department, and the ambassador to Peru all declared that there must be a second round of voting. A Lima political analyst commented, "The moment I saw the American ambassador on TV saying emphatically that there should be a second round, I knew there would be one." Several days later, Peru's federal election agency announced that Fujimori had failed to get the 50% needed for a first-round victory.

The U.S. concern is not about "fairness" of the "democratic process" in Peru. After all, these are imperialists who have supported and carried out phony elections, coups, assassinations, and outright invasions all over the world. After Fujimori carried out the "self coup" in 1992, the U.S. imperialists wagged their fingers and talked about sanctions—and then continued to back him and help him carry out a brutal counter-revolutionary war against the Communist Party of Peru and the Maoist people's war.

The real U.S. worry is that Fujimori's strong-arm tactics may further erode support for the regime, even among sections of the ruling classes in Peru, and lead to more instability. The *Washington Post* spoke openly about the stakes for U.S. imperialism in Peru's election: "Unless the Peruvian public accepts the second round as legitimate, the country could plunge into a version of the same political chaos that has already enveloped neighboring Ecuador and Colombia. Mr. Fujimori has offered a kind of quasi-authoritarian alternative to such chaos; now however his tactics have themselves become a source of potential instability."



Anti-Fujimori protest by construction workers and teachers, Lima, May 25.

More U.S. Maneuvers

Fujimori and his thugs continued their dirty tricks campaign after the first round vote. A few days before May 28, armed men broke into the office of a reporter who had made it known that he possessed a videotape showing Vladimiro Montesinos conspiring with government election officials. The reporter said the intruders tortured him, demanding to know his sources in Montesinos's intelligence unit.

Immediately after Fujimori announced his "victory" in the runoff, a U.S. State Department official said the vote lacked "legitimacy." There was talk in Washington, D.C. of economic sanctions against Peru and other actions by the U.S.-controlled Organization of American States (OAS).

But by the end of the week, the media was reporting that Clinton administration officials were "soft pedaling" their criticism of Fujimori and the election. Once again, the real issue for the U.S. is maintaining "stability" in Peru in order to protect its imperialist interests. The *New York Times* quoted one administration official: "Peru is such a pivotal country for us.... Kissing off Fujimori in any time frame is bad. At this moment, it's particularly acute. We have ulcers over what's happening in Colombia."

The U.S. is preparing to greatly escalate its imperialist intervention in Colombia (see the article "Blackhawks, Pirañas, and Yankee Imperialism" in last week's *RW*, available online at rwor.org). Increased turmoil and crisis in Peru would greatly complicate the situation for the U.S. in Colombia and the region more generally.

Imperialism Is the Real Problem

Toledo is taking his case to the U.S. and other powers. He is demanding a third round of voting and threatening to continue with "peaceful resistance." Whatever the final outcome of this election madness, one thing is clear: the electoral process offers no real solution for the oppressed people of Peru. This is because the real problem for the people in Peru is not fraudulent elections—the real problem is the old, rotten state power and domination of the country by imperialism.

There is a real alternative, a real path to a liberated future, for the people in Peru—the people's war and New Democratic Revolution led by the Communist Party of Peru.

As the CSR points out: "No matter who sits in the [presidential] palace, the Peruvian state can only serve the interests of the big capitalist and landowning classes closely tied to imperialism—especially U.S. imperialism. The interests of these exploiters are directly opposed to the interests of the vast majority of the Peruvian people, and replacing Fujimori with some other face, even with one who claims Indian origins, can only mean continuing poverty, brutality, and U.S. domination. The role of the elections is to strengthen and legitimize the rule of the exploiters and oppressors over the people." □



Fujimori posters go up in flames in front of the Presidential Palace, Lima, May 25.

Blood on the

Southwest vigilantes hunt Mexican immigrants

Racist vigilantes in southern Arizona and Texas have declared open season on immigrants.

On May 12, two Arizona ranchers on horseback, armed with high power hunting rifles, shot and critically wounded 20-year-old Miguel Angel Palofox, an undocumented Mexican worker who was trying to cross the border near Sasabe, Arizona. Four other men who were with Miguel remain missing and could be dead.

Miguel told the Sasabe, Sonora authorities that his group was suddenly ambushed by two vigilantes. Miguel was able to get a good look at the shooters before a high impact bullet tore through his neck and exited through his ear. He said he remembers seeing his companions fall after also being shot. But so far, no bodies have been recovered.

When Miguel regained consciousness, he was on the ground bleeding profusely. He was able to drag himself to the border crossing station at Sasabe where he was given medical attention and taken to a hospital at Caborca, Sonora. At this point, it is still unclear if the four men with Miguel survived the attack.

Deadly Agenda

On May 13, a group of Arizona vigilante ranchers were joined by white supremacist groups from California for a meeting at Sierra Vista, Arizona. The explicit purpose of the gathering was to discuss a plan of action to deal with what the ranchers call "a Mexican invasion" by undocumented workers.

White supremacist Glenn Spencer led a contingent of California anti-Mexican racists to the meeting. Spencer, who leads Voices of Citizens Together and a militia called American Patrol, has a long history of racist activity aimed at Mexican immigrants. Through the Internet, radio and other propaganda, Spencer warns against "Mexicans trying to takeover the United States." Vigilante rancher Roger Barnett also attended the meeting, joined by the Arizona 9th District of the Imperial Wizards of the Ku Klux Klan.

According to the Mexican newspaper *La Reforma*, a proposal surfaced at this meeting to place anti-personnel land mines at strategic places along the border in order to deter illegal immigration by Mexicans. The meeting was heavily policed by the Sierra

Vista Police Department and by the Arizona Rangers.

Political and economic domination of Mexico by the U.S. has forced millions of poor people in Mexico to leave their families to search for jobs in the United States. And the U.S. has continually escalated its militarization of the border, hunting down and brutalizing immigrants.

Campaigns like "Operation Gatekeeper" in California and similar "border protection" programs in Texas have forced many immigrants to try and cross the border in Arizona. In response the U.S. Border Patrol has recently been authorized to bring an additional 180 officers to Arizona. And now these official government attacks against immigrants on the border are being aided by the mobilization of racist vigilantes.

Hunting Humans

In 1984 James Huberty targeted Mexicans and massacred 22 people at a McDonald's restaurant at the border in San Ysidro, California. Huberty was an unemployed security guard who blamed Mexicans for his inability to get a job. On the day of the massacre, Huberty's wife said he put on military-style camouflage clothes, picked up his assault weapon, and said "Society's had their chance. I'm going hunting. Hunting humans."

In this same racist, vigilante spirit, ranchers in Arizona recently sent out an invitation to white supremacist groups around the country to come on down to the border to "hunt" for undocumented Mexican workers.

Ranchers in this area are facing a long and devastating drought and many are being whipped up around the lie that Mexican immigrants are to blame for their economic problems.

Now many U.S. citizens of Mexican descent living in Douglas, Arizona are afraid to come out of their homes in fear that they will be mistaken for undocumented Mexican immigrants and attacked by racist vigilantes.

Roger Barnett has been a major figure in the anti-immigrant movement. In June of 1999 Barnett appeared before a congressional subcommittee on immigration to call for a National Guard presence along the border. More recently, he stated in an interview that he was ready to "kill Mexicans" if it became necessary.

Barnett, who is a former deputy sheriff

turned cattleman, has a 22,000 acre ranch at Sierra Vista, Arizona—next to the Mexican border. For Barnett and dozens of other ranchers, the Sunday sport of choice has been to stalk undocumented immigrants, round them up with trained dogs, then—at gunpoint—hand them over to the U.S. Border Patrol.

"Humans. That's the greatest prey there is on earth," said Roger Barnett. He recently posed for a network news team that filmed him and his brothers capturing nine undocumented immigrants out beyond their barbed wire fence. Barnett boasts that his record "haul" is 86 in one morning. And he claims that he and his group arrested over 174 Mexicans in just one weekend and thousands over a two-year period.

Out of 25 recent attacks on immigrants, Roger Barnett and his brother Don have been involved in at least 14. Like Roger, Don Barnett lets his cold, racist heart speak freely. He told one reporter, "The bottom line is if some Mexican is squatting behind a bush on private property, he gets what's coming to him."

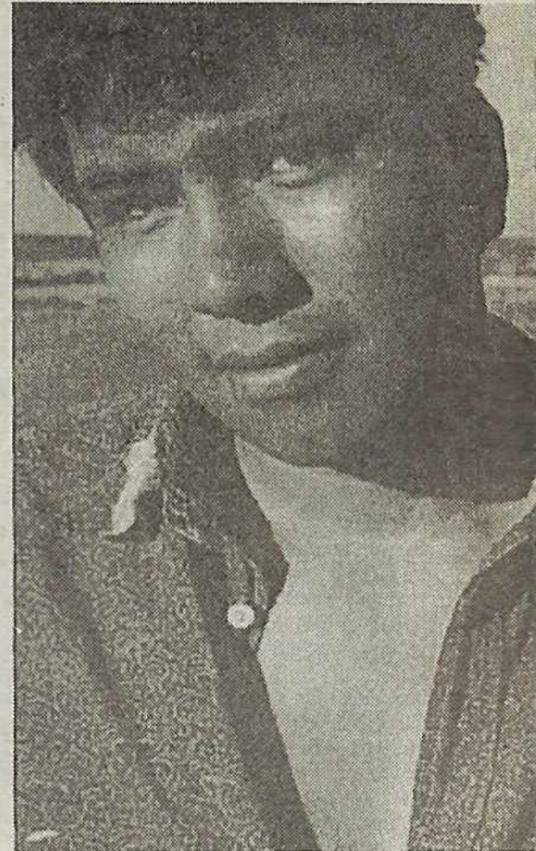
These vigilante ranchers recently sent out a flyer inviting militia types and other racists from throughout the U.S. to come down to Cochise County to "hunt" for Mexican immigrants on their ranches. They offered free board on their land to any "tourist" wanting to have "some fun in the sun."

The flyer proclaims: "This vacation is for the winter visitor that wants to help an American Rancher keep his land protected while enjoying the great southwestern desert at the same time. Just the great outdoors and good 'ole western individualism spirit of private property." The flier goes on to suggest the proper equipment for the trip: RVs, infra-red scopes and trip-wire flare launchers to "locate and expose the invaders."

Blood on the Border

The Mexican government recently filed an emergency "complaint" with the U.S. Department of Justice through its embassy in Washington D.C., and the Mexican Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Rosario Green, has announced that the government of Mexico will file suit in U.S. Federal Court against the Arizona vigilantes who shot Miguel Angel Palofox Aguerin.

In a press conference held in Mexico



Mexico/U.S. border.

City, Secretary Green stated that since January 24, 1999 through May 15, 2000 there have been 32 incidents of violence against Mexican undocumented immigrants by U.S. citizens. Twenty-seven of the incidents occurred in Arizona. Ten happened in 1999—and the rest have occurred this year. Of the 27 cases in Arizona the vigilante ranchers Roger Barnett and his brother Don Barnett were involved in 15. Another rancher by the name of Andreas Muller was involved in 3 cases.

The 32 cases involved a total of 451 immigrants. Seven of these immigrants have been physically injured and two have been murdered.

In the past five years, nearly 500 Mexican immigrants, unprepared for the stark conditions of the desert, have died from exposure trying to cross the border. And for those immigrants who manage to survive the dangerous desert conditions—they must face the threat of armed vigilantes.

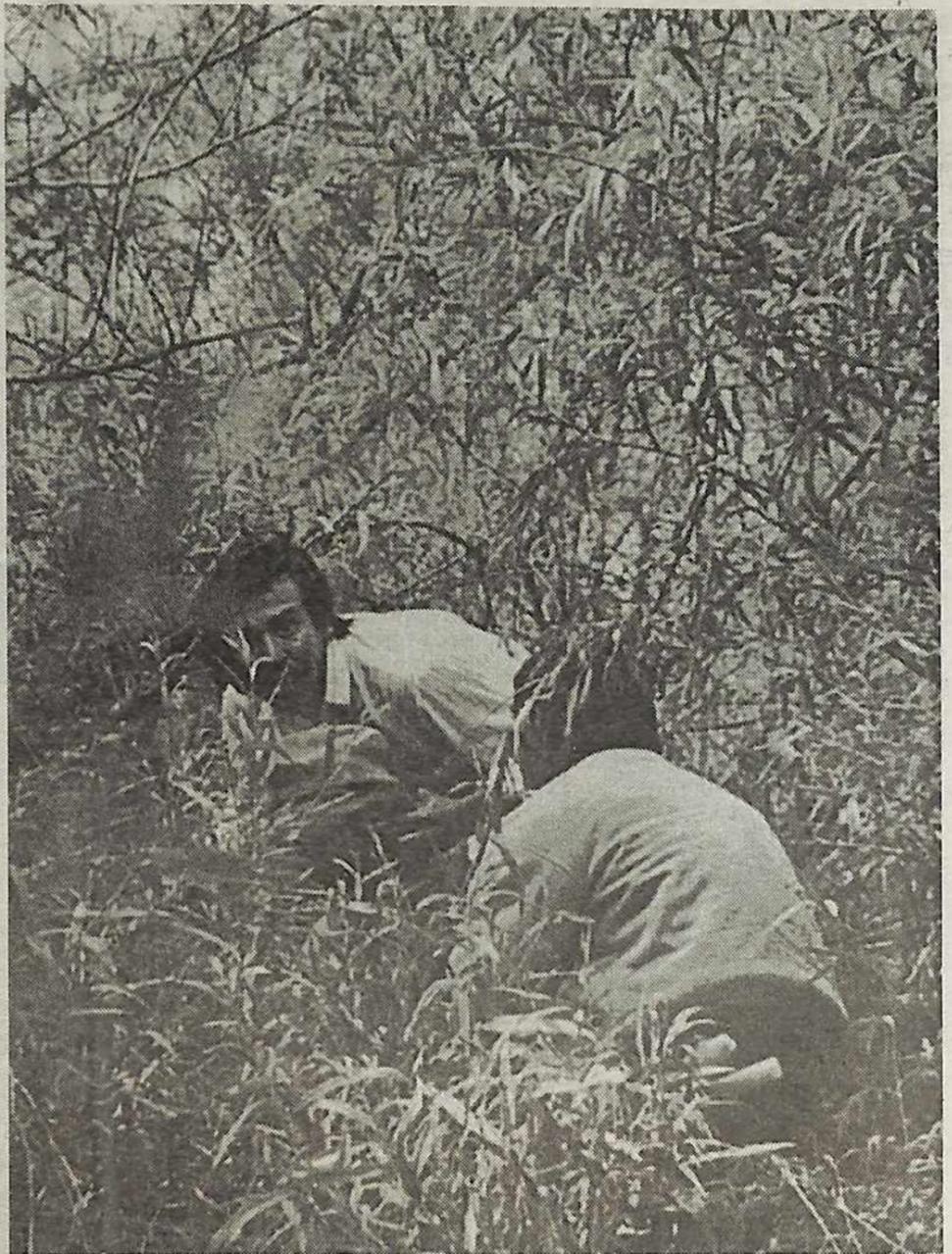
A report on KOLD TV station in Tucson, Arizona, showed a ranch hand detaining five men, apparently undocumented immigrants. The ranch worker was shown

Sin Fronteras y Sin Banderas/No Borders, No Flags



On May 20 people held a march to oppose the murder of immigrants on the border and denounce the ongoing military/paramilitary attacks against immigrants. People marched on both sides of the border and then met up together. The group from Mexico climbed to the top of the wall and put up banners that read: "Sin fronteras y sin banderas" and "Alto a la caceria de inmigrantes" ("No Borders and No Flags" and "Stop the killing of immigrants.") After joining at the border, protesters from both sides marched through downtown Nogales, Sonora and ended the march at "Placita Miguel Hidalgo."

Border



Waiting to cross the border.



Photo: Jose Pallfox

Vigilante rancher Barnett.

Welcome to America: Shot on Sight

Some of the immigrants shot in the past year in the Del Rio sector of the U.S. Border Patrol, which covers 41 counties and more than 59,000 square miles:

- May 13 near Brackettville. Eusebio de Haro, 23, of Guanajuato, Mexico, bleeds to death after being shot in the leg by Samuel Blackwood. De Haro was looking for water.
- April 10 near Rocksprings in Edwards County. Juan Mauricio Gonzalez was shot in the buttocks by Coy Brown, a military retiree. Brown marches the wounded Gonzalez and two other immigrants two miles to a ranch house where he calls the Border Patrol.
- Nov. 1, 1999, Vega Verde community near Del Rio. 16-year-old Luis Armando Chavez Vaquera, of Ciudad Acuña, Mexico, was shot in the back of the head on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande. His body was found in the river 11 days later. Patrick Glenn Bordelon, already out on bond for an earlier charge of aggravated assault, was arrested and later indicted for this murder.
- June 6, 1999, Vega Verde community. 16-year-old Ivan Mendez-Sepulveda, was shot with a shotgun twice in the chest and once in the ankle on the U.S. side near the border. Patrick Bordelon, a welder at nearby Laughlin Air Force Base, is charged with aggravated assault.
- Jan. 25, 1999, near Eagle Pass. 18-year-old Abenego Monje, a migrant worker from Michoacan state in southwest Mexico, was shot in the back near the Rio Grande and left paralyzed. Wilbur Honeycutt, a local law enforcement officer working for federal drug authorities, said he shot Monje because he thought he saw him holding a gun.

pushing one of the men from a seated position onto his stomach and the men were held at gunpoint until the U.S. Border Patrol arrived.

In the area around Brackettville, in Texas, at least five immigrants have been shot—two killed—in a little over a year in the borderlands around Del Rio and Eagle Pass.

As ranching has become less profitable in this area, many old-time ranchers have started dividing up their land into small parcels and selling it to hunters and retirees. Many of these new land owners have been involved in attacks on immigrants.

According to a District Attorney near Del Rio, virtually all of the shootings in the area have occurred when the person was some distance away and walking in the opposite direction. In other words, the victims have been shot, cold-blooded, in the back.

The most recent incidents happened within a month of each other. On May 13, 23-year-old Eusebio de Haro Espinosa, from the central state of Guanajuato made the fatal mistake of stopping near Rancho Leona, in Texas, to ask for water and food at the end of a 20-mile hike along the border near Piedras Negras in Mexico. The temperature on May 14 was over 100 degrees. By 4 p.m., Eusebio and his companion, 25-year-old Javier Sanchez, were sweltering and between them had nothing left to drink. They stopped at the home of 74-year-old Sam Blackwood to ask for water. Blackwood told the two immigrants to get off his land and called the Border Patrol.

Javier Sanchez said the old rancher started pursuing them and firing his gun. Eusebio was hit in the groin. Instead of immediately phoning for medical assistance, the rancher called the police and, when a patrol car from the county prison arrived 40 minutes later, Eusebio had already bled to death. Blackwood was charged with murder, arraigned and released after post-

ing \$10,000 bail.

Eusebio's father, Paisano de Haro Bueno, makes fireworks in the village of San Felipe, Guanajuato and has 13 other children. When he got the news about the murder of his son, he said, "They killed my son like a dog. He was determined to find work so he could bring money back home."

The murder of Eusebio de Haro came less than a month after an incident just to the north in neighboring Edwards County, where 56-year-old Coy Brown shot a Mexican immigrant, Mauricio Gonzalez.

According to the District Attorney, Gonzalez was with two other men when they encountered Mr. Brown. Brown held the men at gunpoint, marched them off his property, and then shot Gonzalez in the back. He then walked the men, including the wounded Gonzalez, at gunpoint for two miles to a neighboring rancher's house.

Gonzalez was hit in the buttocks and might have been injured much more seriously if the bullet had not hit a can of beans that was in his backpack.

These are only the most recent incidents in the area where immigrants have been shot at by ranchers. Patrick Glenn Bordelon has been charged in two separate shootings of Mexican immigrants near a riverside community just north of Del Rio called Vega Verde. And in January of 1999, Wilbur Honeycutt, a local cop participating in a federal Drug Enforcement Administration program, shot a Mexican teenager in the back along the Rio Grande.

Cipriano Ramirez saved up his money for years in Temoac village in central Mexico, earning \$4 a day mostly selling sweets. Finally he got together \$1,600 needed to pay a professional smuggler (a "coyote") to take him over the U.S. border.

Along with a dozen other migrants, Cipriano repeatedly tried to cross the Arizona border. On his third try, on March 23, he was shot and ended up in a hospital in Hermosillo, Mexico. The bullet entered

his right buttock, nicked his tailbone, and perforated his large intestine. The doctors told him it would take six months to heal. And now Mr. Ramirez, who is only 32, worries that he may never walk or work again.

"There were 12 of us and we walked all night long," said Mr. Ramirez. "But we did not know there were ranchers hunting illegals. Some time after daybreak, I felt a sudden pain in my belly and began to writhe on the ground. The rancher, Mr. Major, said it was all a mistake. He was firing his gun at a dog walking three feet away from me."

Some politicians are now trying to use these vigilante incidents to bolster their arguments for further militarization of the border. U.S. Rep. Silvestre Reyes, an El Paso Democrat and former Border Patrol chief, argues that the recent shootings by vigilantes in Texas and Arizona are caused by the "frustrations of local residents in areas that are underserved by the Border Patrol." And he goes on to complain that the Immigration and Naturalization Service

has not been able to comply with a directive by Congress to hire 1,000 new agents each year.

La Resistencia points out: "The actions of the vigilantes are right in line with the U.S. government's murderous policy of border militarization. Operation Gatekeeper in California alone has claimed over 500 immigrant lives since October, 1994. The U.S./Mexican border has been turned into a war zone where the Border Patrol hunts down unarmed immigrants. Recent anti-immigrant laws as well as politicians' calls for protecting America's 'endangered borders' have emboldened these vigilantes.

"Now these racist Rambo types are adding their deadly force to the combined resources of the Border Patrol, U.S. military, and various other police agencies which are carrying out the official U.S. government policy of 'deterrence.' They are following the lead of the U.S. Border Patrol which has itself shown by a rash of recent shootings in the San Diego/Tijuana area that immigrants crossing the border can be shot at and murdered as part of discouraging unauthorized border crossing." □

The Yankee War



Marchers in Vieques protest the U.S. operation against the encampments at the U.S. military base, May 4.

A powerful movement has emerged among the Puerto Rican people—demanding that the U.S. Navy leave the island of Vieques. It started after April 19, 1999 when a U.S. Navy jet killed a civilian, David Sanes Rodriguez, with a 500 pound bomb during practice bombings. Protesters occupied the island for many months—until they were removed by federal agents on May 4, 2000. And the U.S. military resumed training on its bases there. All kinds of schemes are being floated out—to pay the people of Vieques for their land, to promise some kind of referendum in the future. But in the final analysis, the U.S. government is determined to keep its operations on Vieques, and the masses of Puerto Rican people are increasingly determined to drive them off. The following article describes how the U.S. military uses Puerto Rico to maintain its domination over people throughout the Western Hemisphere—and shows the tremendous importance of the current struggle of Puerto Rican people against U.S. occupation of their land.

On July 25, 1898, U.S. troops landed in the southern Puerto Rican port of Guánica and occupied the island. They never left. The U.S. invaders turned Puerto Rico into a military watchtower for their empire. The U.S. has over 20 active military installations in Puerto Rico and the small neighboring island of Vieques. They occupy over 10 percent of its land. Vieques has been virtually taken over. About 75 percent of its land is used for bases, munitions storage, and the mass destruction of weapons testing.

Over a century, Puerto Rican soil has been used as a staging area for U.S. in-

vasions, a listening post for their spies, a training school for their death squads, a target zone for testing their weapons, a command post for their nuclear war-fighting forces and a staging ground for invasions against the people throughout Latin America.

Forward Base for the Empire

In 1904, six years after U.S. troops landed in Puerto Rico, the U.S. ruling class moved out the people of San Ildefonso—and took their land for a new naval station, Roosevelt Roads. The nearby island of Culebra was used as a base, during 1903 and 1904, for sending the U.S. Caribbean Squadron to threaten Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, and to steal Panama from Colombia.

This became a pattern over the next century: Puerto Rican people were forced from their farmland and communities by the U.S. war machine, while the territory of Puerto Rico was used to stage aggression against the people of the whole region. The island was viewed as a Caribbean “Gibraltar”—enforcing U.S. control of sea lanes and the entrance to the Panama Canal, which was built on land the U.S. stole from Colombia. Puerto Rican bases played a key role when the U.S. occupied Haiti in 1915 and the Dominican Republic in 1917.

Puerto Rico’s “strategic value” had become so important to the U.S. empire that in 1917 the federal government imposed U.S. citizenship on the Puerto Rican people (against the unanimous wishes of the island’s assembly). The island’s youth were themselves dragged into the military—to kill and die in many of the U.S. wars.



New York City protest against the U.S. invasion of Vieques, May 5.



Protester stands on an abandoned tank in the U.S. firing range on Vieques, May 2.

In 1938, U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt was preparing for world war and wanted a base on Puerto Rico’s eastern coast patterned after U.S. naval facilities in Hawaii—he called for a “Pearl Harbor of the Caribbean.” The plan was to build a base big enough to house the entire British navy, in case Nazi Germany successfully invaded Britain. The U.S. Navy simply seized another 7,000 acres on the main island of Puerto Rico and 29,000 acres on Vieques—to turn Roosevelt Roads into the largest naval base in the world.

Intervention Staging Grounds

“Puerto Rico is the major naval and staging base for conducting training, fleet deployments to the region, and testing weapons ranges. It also provides port, airfield, and logistics facilities to support naval operations during contingencies. Roosevelt Roads is a training ground for surrogate security forces from Central America and the Caribbean and also serves as a base for military interventions in these same regions.”

Humberto García Muñiz,
“U.S. Military Installations in Puerto Rico:
Controlling the Caribbean”

Puerto Rico became a military and intelligence nerve center for U.S. counterinsurgency against rising anti-U.S. forces throughout Latin America. In 1954, bases in Puerto Rico played a key role in the U.S. destabilization of the government of Guatemala. After 1959, Cuba faced U.S. naval blockades, espionage overflights, threats of invasion, and countless covert actions—and Puerto Rico was a key base for that intense campaign. When the U.S. invaded the Dominican Republic in 1965 to suppress a popular uprising, Puerto Rican bases were used for the military airlift. When a powerful mass movement threatened the government of Trinidad in 1970, dozens of U.S. naval ships were kept on alert in U.S. bases in Puerto Rico—preparing to attack the people of Trinidad.

Meanwhile the U.S. directed counterinsurgency against the Puerto Rican people themselves—hoping to suppress their struggle for independence and freedom. In October 1950, when Puerto Rican people rose up in the armed rebellion of Jayuya, they were bombed by planes of the National Guard, directed by U.S. commanders and accompanied by U.S. pilots. And when the revolutionaries were captured in nearby Utuado, they were executed in cold blood by National Guard and U.S. Army soldiers. Afterward, FBI terror and repression was ruthlessly applied to the independence movement, and the National Guard was used repeatedly against striking workers.

U.S. naval incursions into Nicaraguan waters during the 1980s started from Roosevelt Roads and Vieques. In 1981, the *RW* exposed secret U.S. war maneuvers on Vieques, called Operation Universal Trek, that prepared the 1983 invasion of Grenada. During that invasion the troops embarked from Vieques.

The U.S. Navy’s annual maneuvers called Ocean Venture 86, involving 20,000 troops in 1986, practiced six different scenarios for U.S. interventions, including a simulation for reconquering Puerto Rico in the case of an uprising of its people.

U.S. bases in Puerto Rico also trained assassins, informants and torturers for the U.S. empire. Until 1985, the U.S. stationed its School of the Americas in Puerto Rico, training officers from Latin American armies in counterinsurgency, coup-making, and death-squad activity. In 1984, the FBI conducted a month-long training school on



A Puerto Rican vet stomps on his U.S. Navy uniform at the Veterans Memorial in San Juan, Puerto Rico, May 29.

Puerto Rican Veterans Denounce U.S. Military

May 29, 2000—U.S. veterans from the Puerto Rican island of Vieques turned in their medals on Memorial Day to protest the U.S. military occupation of their island. About 30 vets packed their ribbons and discharge papers in a wooden box during a ceremony at the Veterans’ Memorial in San Juan, Puerto Rico’s capital city. The veterans plan to return their honors to President Clinton in protest—with a letter demanding that the U.S. Navy stop bombing runs and other military exercises on Vieques.

One Vietnam veteran, Jose Soto, who spent 20 years in the U.S. Navy, turned in 10 medals. He said, “The moment I heard of them using depleted-uranium shells, that’s when I stopped feeling pride for having served.”

Machine in Puerto Rico



Roosevelt Roads for the police of El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Honduras and Puerto Rico.

The U.S. bases on Puerto Rico serve as "hosts" for a nuclear weapons "infrastructure." In the 1980s, researcher William Arkin charged that U.S. nuclear policy in Puerto Rico violated the Treaty of Tlatelolco—an agreement forbidding nuclear weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean—and documented "the U.S. intention to bring nuclear weapons into Puerto Rico in crisis or during wartime." Five military communications facilities in Puerto Rico have nuclear weapons functions, particularly in the use of very low frequency radio transmissions for submarines. A "Mystic Star" transmitter at Fort Allen and a receiver at Salina are used for the communications of airborne command posts (including the Presidential Air Force One) and would transmit wartime orders to fire nuclear weapons. In case of the destruction of U.S. bases on the mainland, Roosevelt Roads has been designated as an alternative command center for missile submarines in the Atlantic. In short, Puerto Rico has been integrated into Pentagon plans for nuclear war-fighting and, as a result, has become a key target for any nuclear rival.

The Craters of Vieques

"Only in the Roosevelt Roads complex can we train, simultaneously in all varieties of missile firings, air-to-ground ordinance, surface gunfire support, underwater, surface and air launched torpedo firing, submarine calibrations, amphibious operations, and electronic warfare. All this... makes the complex our university of the sea for training our Atlantic Fleet and allied navies."

Rear Admiral Arthur Knozen, Congress 1980

"At night, ships firing from as much as 18 or 20 miles at sea sounded like thunder. They aimed for a bulls-eye at the tip of Vieques, and they used a mix of live and

dummy ammunition—an average of 3,400 bombs a month. The bombs fell on islands that are as splendid as any in the Caribbean. The ocean is always warm and blue and always surrounded by red, pink, yellow and white flowers of remarkable variety. In Vieques, you can lie on a two-mile stretch of beach any day of the week, see no one and feel overwhelmed by the mountainous backdrop that towers over the Caribbean."

Ronald Fernandez, The Struggle for Justice in Puerto Rico

"They practice there just as if it was a war. And it is a war against us."

Anti-Navy activist on Vieques

In the 1950s, the U.S. Navy moved key naval war training facilities from the U.S. eastern coast to the colonial territory of Puerto Rico. Roosevelt Roads and the nearby island of Vieques were turned into "one of the most exclusive and sophisticated control centers for weapons training in the world"—the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility (AFWTF). Vieques and nearby Culebra are called the "Inner Range"—and used as the targets for massive bombing runs and artillery barrages. Radiating out from those bases are 194,000 square miles of sea that the U.S. Navy calls the "Outer Range"—U.S. imperialism's university of naval warfare. Under the surface, the U.S. Navy has staked out its "Underwater

Range"—the main U.S. submarine practice field in the Atlantic.

In Vieques, the U.S. Navy drove thousands of Puerto Rican people from their homes, cane fields and fishing areas. Then it started pounding their island—demolishing coral reefs, lagoons, mangroves, beaches and fishing beds. Large parts of this beautiful island are pock-marked like the moon. During the Vietnam war, the U.S. sent pilots here to develop bombing skills for carpet bombing. Over 6,000 aircraft flew over 35,000 bombing runs on the island. And it was here that the military conducted massive testing of their notorious napalm—the jellied gasoline used against the Vietnamese people.

Cancer rates rose in the Vieques population in the late 1970s—so that most recent surveys show a cancer rate 26 percent above Puerto Rico as a whole. Many people blame this on toxic compounds which have traveled from the bombardments into the ground water.

The people of Vieques have fought against this occupation of their island and against U.S. domination of their country. Repeated mass struggles have confronted the U.S. authorities, exposed their crimes in Vieques, and rallied support all over Puerto Rico.

In the 1970s, the chief of staff at Roosevelt Roads said the U.S. Navy had

passed on the names of local activists to the FBI. One activist, Angel Rodríguez Cristóbal, arrested for demonstrating on naval property in Vieques, was transferred to prison in Tallahassee, Florida where, it is reported, he was assassinated by the authorities. While this was going on, the U.S. military dropped 27,000 bombs on Vieques in just eight months of 1979.

In April 1989, Navy men and federal marshals attempted to evict a Vieques resident, Camelo Félix Matta, from his land. This led to the burning of two navy vehicles by about 100 angry people. By late May, 300 families had taken over 880 acres of alleged Navy land.

More recently, the U.S. government has announced plans for a major new installation on Vieques, supposedly for their "war on drugs." It will be a "Relocatable Over the Horizon Radar" system (ROTHR) and would allow the U.S. imperialists to monitor aircraft as far south as Bolivia and Peru.

Military Reasons for Continued Domination

"I think the United States has to hold onto Puerto Rico for strategic reasons."

Henry Kissinger, 1981, as confrontation with the Soviet Union was intensifying

"Puerto Rico is not a domestic, nor an international issue, but a geo-political bastion and military strategic point that is not negotiable."

Jean Kirkpatrick, UN Ambassador for Reagan, 1980s

Puerto Rico's congressional-representative-without-a-vote Romero has described Puerto Rico as a "land super carrier" for the U.S. Navy.

When the U.S. ruling class debates its plans for the future "status" of Puerto Rico, the U.S. military planners say they have spent \$1.5 billion on the military infrastructure of the island, and that these installations are key to their military strategies for Latin America and the larger Atlantic Ocean. And that they do not intend to allow any future change in Puerto Rican "status," including any change to nominal independence, to interfere with their use of these islands.

All of this reveals the cold imperialism of the U.S. "association" with Puerto Rico. It shows how real independence and self-determination for Puerto Rico can only come through a radical break with the United States and a defeat of its occupying military forces. And it reveals how important the struggle to liberate Puerto Rico is to the people of this whole hemisphere—and to a future free from U.S. threat and domination.

A more in-depth version of this article is available at RW Online at rwor.org

U.S. Out of Vieques!

Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, New York Branch

With U.S. warships backing them up, masked FBI agents moved in on the people occupying a U.S. Navy bombing range on the island of Vieques, Puerto Rico. In a pre-dawn raid on May 4, they handcuffed and forced off hundreds of demonstrators who have camped out on the island since a civilian security guard was killed by a U.S. bomb last year.

Puerto Rico has been held as a colony since it was occupied by U.S. troops over a hundred years ago. In addition to exploiting Puerto Rican people in the fields and factories, the U.S. imperialists turned their island into a "stationary aircraft carrier" for their military. U.S. bases in Puerto Rico have been a staging area for repeated invasions; a storage depot for weapons, a nerve center for intelligence, radar and covert activities, and a training ground for international aggressions.

Vieques is a 22-mile-long island off the eastern coast of Puerto Rico. The island

was taken over by the U.S. Navy during World War 2, and since that time it has been abused as a target range for training bombers and naval artillery. Two-thirds of Vieques is now a Navy Base. On the western part of the island is one of the Navy's largest ammo dumps. The eastern part of the island has been systematically pounded and polluted as the Navy's bombing range. The North Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility there is one of the largest live weapons training grounds in the world.

There have been years of intense struggle by the Puerto Rican people of Vieques against the Yankee occupation of their land. Thousands of people have been forced off the island, leaving 9,000 people behind. They are now confined to a thin six-mile strip of land between the two large naval reserves on each end of the island. War games and bombardment have destroyed much of the fishing in surrounding waters, taking away the livelihood of many people

remaining there. The Navy itself only employs 99 civilians on the island and unemployment is about 50 percent. Many residents blame their unusually high cancer rate on Navy ecological contamination.

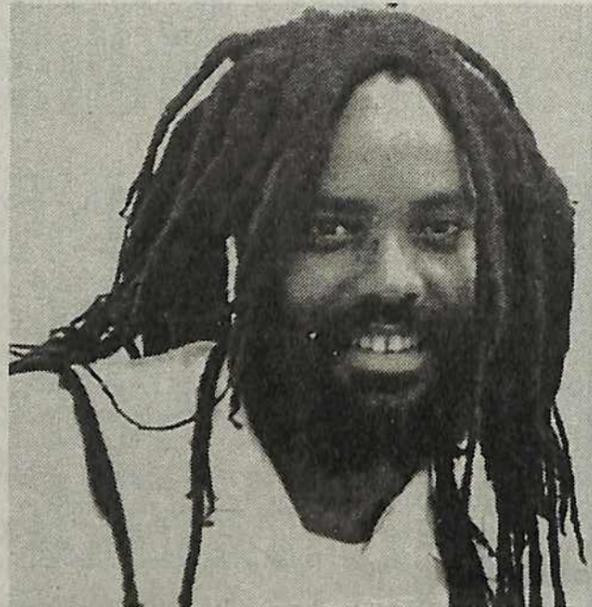
The death of David Sanes Rodríguez from a U.S. bomb on Vieques in April 1999 struck a deep nerve across the island of Puerto Rico. Once again, the Puerto Rican people had paid a bitter price under U.S. domination. Activists quickly decided to trespass onto the Navy Base and refuse to move—protesting the killing of David Sanes and the Navy's occupation of Puerto Rican soil and waters. The "People's Zone" encampments grew. The Navy denounced the activists for "trespassing" and warned that they were camping on land dangerously contaminated by military ordnance (which is itself an act of self-exposure by this toxic Navy). Fishermen from Vieques brought supplies to the encampments and defiantly sailed into "forbidden

waters"—challenging the Navy's claim to the seas surrounding Puerto Rico. In perhaps the largest demonstration ever in Puerto Rico, over 80,000 marched to demand the U.S. Navy out of Vieques.

Despite the overwhelming opposition of the Puerto Rican people, the U.S. Navy refuses to leave. The RCP joins with people in Puerto Rico and throughout the world in demanding the U.S. Navy get out of Vieques! On this occasion, the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA pledges again to make every sacrifice to overthrow U.S. imperialism here in the belly of the beast—and to construct a revolutionary society on the mainland of North America. As part of that struggle, we strongly uphold the independence and liberation of Puerto Rico and work to build support for that cause among the oppressed and progressive people of the U.S. itself.

Viva Puerto Rico Libre! Free Puerto Rico! U.S. Navy Off Vieques!

WE EDUCATORS DEMAND A NEW TRIAL FOR MUMIA ABU-JAMAL



MUMIA ABU-JAMAL is an African-American writer and journalist who has spent the last 18 years on Pennsylvania's death row. His demand for justice and a new trial is supported by heads of state from France to South Africa, by Nobel Laureates, the European Parliament, city governments from Detroit to San Francisco, scholars, religious leaders, artists, scientists, the Congressional Black Caucus and other members of U.S. Congress, and by countless thousands who cherish democratic and human rights the world over.

Working people have expressed their support for Jamal through their leading regional, national and international trade union bodies. The International Longshore and Warehouse Union closed down West coast ports for the day of April 24, 1999 to support Mumia's bid for a new trial.

Jamal's three books and over 400 published columns have been adopted as resource material for the teaching and inspiration of a growing number of students, youth, and educators who have come to see their futures as intimately tied to the outcome of this case. The 1982 trial that convicted Jamal of killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner has been challenged by leading legal analysts and scholars, from Stuart Taylor writing in the prestigious *American*

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Lawyer to Per Walseo of the Supreme Court of Denmark, to Amnesty International which issued a special report in February 2000, claiming that "justice would best be served by the granting of a new trial..." to Jamal.

Jamal's attorneys have presented compelling evidence that key witnesses were intimidated or coerced to provide false testimony, that a purported "confession" was likely fabricated by police, and that vital evidence pointing to his innocence was withheld from the defense. A key eyewitness has now recanted critical court testimony used against Jamal.

Jamal was forced to appeal his conviction before the same judge that sentenced him to death in 1982. That judge, Albert Sabo, is notorious for presiding over capital cases resulting in 33 people being sentenced to death (all but two, people of color), more than twice the number of any sitting judge in the United States.

WE EDUCATORS UNITE IN SAYING NO TO JAMAL'S EXECUTION. In a matter of weeks Mumia goes into Federal court facing his last chance to have considered the new evidence in his favor. We invite you to Philadelphia to join Mumia and thousands more at his first court date.

■ Jamal has long been a POLITICAL TARGET as a prominent journalist critic of police brutality and racism in Philadelphia since the days of Mayor Frank Rizzo.

■ Jamal is made more vulnerable by TODAY'S FREQUENT USE OF THE DEATH PENALTY. In 1997, the American Bar Association urged a moratorium on the death penalty, in part because of the risks of executing the innocent. Teacher and student actions—from Illinois, California, Washington, to Pennsylvania itself—have played key roles in freeing some of those among the 3,600 on death row.

■ The risk to Jamal's life is magnified in today's climate of GROWING POLICE REPRESSION. Brutality and "racial profiling" are epidemic in the United States, alive on our school campuses, neighborhoods and highways. The nation's largest police organization has shocked civil liberties advocates by publishing a list of the names of educators and other Jamal supporters (reminiscent of the McCarthy witch-hunt era) on its police-maintained website.

■ Jamal, often referred to as the "voice of the voiceless," has challenged the present political priorities of SPENDING MORE FOR PRISONS AND PUNISHMENT THAN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION. The youth who increasingly rally to Mumia's cause in the name of justice and fair play know that we build jailhouse cell blocks more rapidly than schoolhouse classrooms.

AS EDUCATORS, IN PENNSYLVANIA, ACROSS THE UNITED STATES AND THE WORLD, WE STRONGLY OPPOSE THE EXECUTION OF MUMIA ABU-JAMAL. While there are those who believe Mumia is innocent and should be freed now, and others who have no opinion about his innocence, we are all united in viewing Mumia's 1982 trial as a travesty of justice, and affirm that he MUST have a new trial!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Phone: (609) 497-7918

Web site: www.j4mumia.org

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Leonard Peltier Must Be Free

June parole hearing for Peltier

"I know what I am. I am an Indian—an Indian who dared to stand up to defend his people. I am an innocent man who never murdered anyone nor wanted to. And, yes, I am a Sun Dancer. That, too, is my identity. If I am to suffer as a symbol of my people, then I suffer proudly."

Leonard Peltier, *Prison Writings: My Life Is My Sun Dance*

As the June 12 date for Leonard Peltier's next parole hearing approaches, people around the world are demanding that he be freed. The Leonard Peltier Defense Committee (LPDC) reports that letters demanding his release are pouring in from around the world.

A representative from Amnesty International will attend Peltier's federal parole hearing to argue on Leonard's behalf, as will members of the National Council of Churches, the National Congress of American Indians, the Assembly of First Nations and Leonard's family.

Framed for Defending the People

Leonard Peltier was accused of killing two FBI agents, when government forces attacked an American Indian Movement (AIM) camp in July 1975. The AIM forces were there, organizing to defend Indian people on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota—who were facing an intense wave of assassination and government repression after the famous 1973 Indian occupation of Wounded Knee.

In 1977 Peltier was framed-up for the murder of the agents and railroaded into prison.

The authorities had no evidence linking Peltier to the killing of the FBI agents. So they manufactured it. And the judge refused to allow any testimony about the government violence against people at Pine Ridge, the FBI persecution of AIM, or the testimony from an earlier trial where two other AIM members were found not guilty of shooting the agents. Leonard Peltier was convicted of two counts of first degree murder on April 18, 1977 and sentenced to two consecutive life terms. (See "The Railroad of Leonard Peltier" on rwor.org)

Secret FBI documents have now surfaced that prove the FBI manufactured key "evidence" against Leonard Peltier. In addition, Prosecutor Lynn Crooks has admitted, "We did not have any direct evidence that one individual as opposed to another pulled the trigger." During Peltier's 1985 appeal in the Eighth Circuit Court, the U.S. attorney admitted, "We can't prove who shot these agents."

On October 5, 1987 the Supreme Court refused to review the case.

Then, in 1993, the federal courts denied Peltier's final appeal. They argued that even if there's no evidence of a "close-up killing," Peltier was guilty of "long-range aiding and abetting." After this, Leonard can only be released through parole or executive clemency.

Shortly after, Peltier was denied parole. The U.S. Parole Commission wrote, "The Commission recognizes that the prosecution has conceded the lack of any direct evidence that you personally participated in the executions of the two FBI agents." But they refused to grant Peltier parole because of his "evident decision not to accept criminal responsibility."

In other words, Peltier has been told he must spend his life in prison for just being present as the AIM encampment defended itself.

When Leonard Peltier was denied parole in 1993, the parole commission set the date for the next review for the year 2008—many years beyond what their own guidelines suggest. The commission is still required by law to hold hearings every two years to determine if new circumstances would change their original decision. This is the purpose of the coming June 12 hearing.

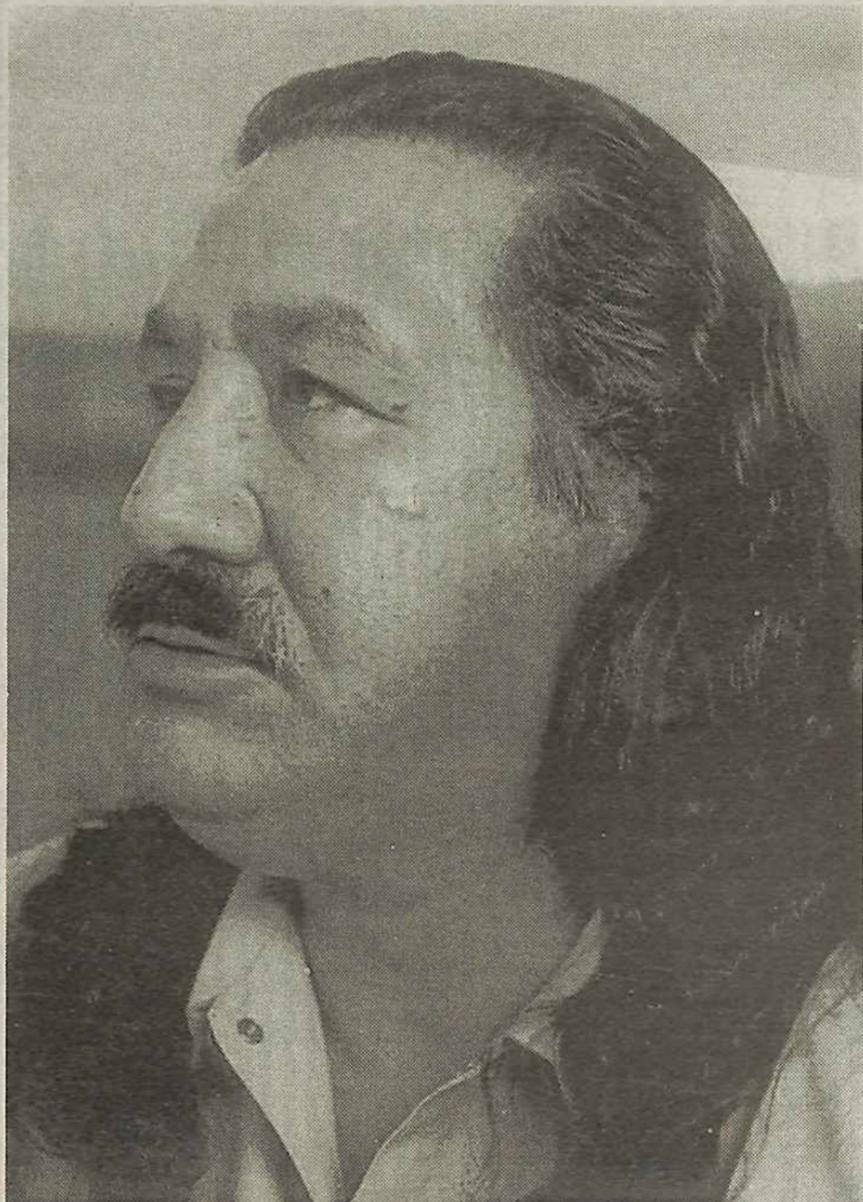
Peltier's attorneys will argue that the

commission has no evidence to support its earlier finding that Peltier "participated in the premeditated and cold-blooded execution of those two officers." They will point out that since that hearing the commission has said it "recognizes that the prosecution has conceded the lack of any direct evidence that [Peltier] personally participated in the executions of the two FBI agents."

From Behind Bars

Leonard Peltier has continued the struggle from behind bars—with his words, his paintings and his organizing efforts. Leonard is respected around the world as a voice for Native people and an inspiring political prisoner who refuses to be broken. Thousands of individuals and organizations have written to the parole commission demanding that he be released; and the list of prominent political figures and artists who have spoken out on his behalf includes: Nelson Mandela, Lou Diamond Phillips, Bishop Desmond Tutu, Bill Richardson, Robert Redford, Willie Nelson, Jackson Browne, Oliver Stone, Whoopi Goldberg and Jesse Jackson.

In the past six months the battle to free Leonard Peltier has intensified. Thousands of people traveled to Washington, D.C. for Leonard Peltier Freedom Month in Novem-



"Sundancer" (1998), a painting by Leonard Peltier.

ber. An article on prisons in the *Washington Post* in January featured a review of Peltier's new book, *Prison Writings: My Life Is My Sun Dance*. A Spring 2000 Awareness Tour featured Pine Ridge Reign of Terror survivor Jean Day, who spoke on college campuses around the country.

The system responded with an FBI disinformation campaign against Leonard. Newspaper, radio ads and a new website full of lies have appeared. On February 28, Senator Orrin Hatch introduced a bill that would make it more difficult for U.S. presidents to grant executive clemency.

There has also been intense activity demanding that Leonard Peltier receive the emergency medical care he needed. For four years he suffered from intense and painful jaw problems, while prison authorities prevented him from getting treatment. The Special Rapporteur on Torture for the United Nations included a report on this mistreatment in their annual report on possible torture cases. After international mobilization, Dr. E. E. Keller of the Mayo Clinic was finally allowed to perform a five-hour jaw surgery on Leonard Peltier on March 21, 2000.

Ed Asner: "More than any other person, Mr. Peltier has come to symbolize the tragic and disturbing relationship between the United States government and its own Native citizenry... I ask that urgent action be taken to set Leonard Peltier free at long last. I also ask that a thorough investigation of FBI misconduct in this case be carried out at once."

Kris Kristofferson: "The FBI goes ballistic every time someone has a benefit concert or rally for Peltier, responding with heavy statements in the newspapers and pickets at the events. It's been my experience that whenever officials overreact like that it's because they have something to hide.... Freedom for Leonard Peltier will not answer all the questions or heal all the wounds. But it would be seen—in the eyes of many who have been denied it—as Justice. And for Native Americans, positively life-affirming."

Center for Constitutional Rights: "A trial based on fabricated or concealed evidence does not constitute a full and fair trial... Under such conditions, [Leonard Peltier's] incarceration runs counter to our society's most cherished values."

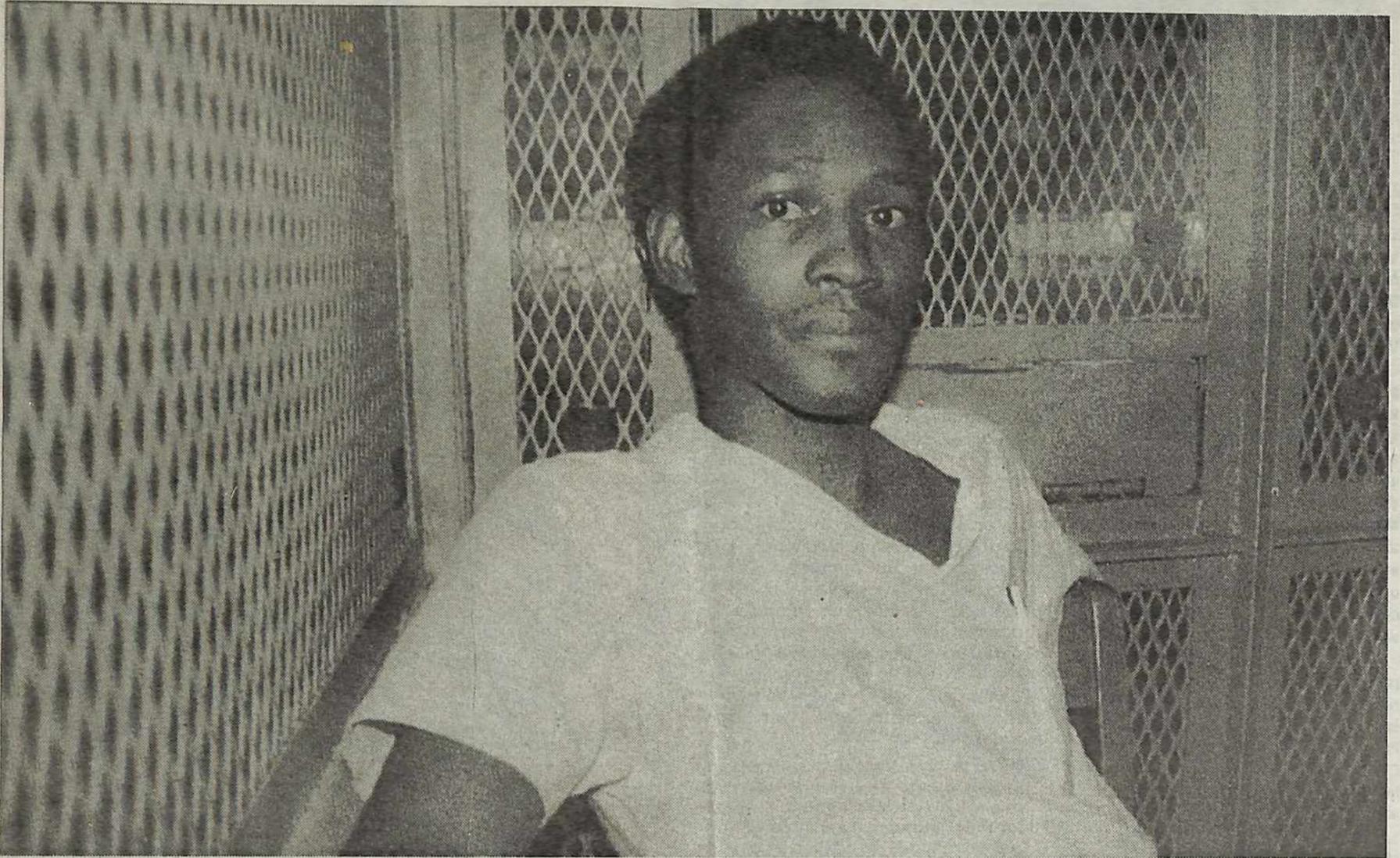
Ruth W. Mayden, National Association of Social Workers: "Mr. Peltier's incarceration represents so many people—disproportionately people of color—who are unjustly treated in the criminal justice system.... The National Board of Directors of NASW, representing 150,000 members in 55 chapters in the United States and abroad, strongly calls for Mr. Peltier's parole and clemency."

It is important for people to speak out for Peltier as this June 12 parole hearing approaches. The Leonard Peltier Defense Committee is calling on people to demand that he be freed on parole and also to demand that President Clinton grant Leonard executive clemency. Plans are already being laid to carry this struggle into the fall with a march in Washington DC on October 27.

Despite ongoing government attempts to intimidate Peltier supporters, Amnesty International sponsored a press conference in Washington, D.C. on May 17, at which survivors of the Pine Ridge Reign of Terror, Nobel Peace Laureate Rigoberta Menchu, author Peter Mathiessen and Ernie Stevens of the National Congress of American Indians urged the U.S. government to grant Peltier parole or clemency.

Peltier has now served 24 long years in prison. This is a great injustice and we demand freedom for this important fighter.

For more information: Visit the RW Online at rwor.org or contact the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, P.O. Box 583, Lawrence, Kansas 66044, www.freepeltier.org



Shaka Sankofa

Life and Freedom for Shaka Sankofa (Gary Graham)

by Mumia Abu-Jamal

Shaka Sankofa has spent more than half of his 36 years on death row. At age 17, Shaka (then known as Gary Graham) was wrongfully convicted for the murder of a white man in Houston. On May 1, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear his case and Shaka now faces a June 22 execution date.

Supporters are urgently fighting to save Shaka's life. On May 26, Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. and Rubin "Hurricane" Carter—who was unjustly framed up and imprisoned for 19 years—spoke on the Capitol steps in Washington DC to demand a new trial for Shaka Sankofa. Amnesty International USA has released an "emergency bulletin" on Sankofa's case, which talks about evidence pointing to Shaka's innocence and states that Shaka's death sentence "is illegal under international law which bans the death penalty for crimes committed by under-18-year-old." The International Action Center is organizing for "Emergency Days of Resistance" from June 16-19 and there are plans to protest at the the June 15-17 Texas State Republic Convention in Houston.

Shaka's lawyers are filing for clemency and The Gary Graham/Shaka Sankofa Coalition for Justice is calling on people to flood Texas Governor George W. Bush and the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles with e-mails, phone calls, letters, and faxes demanding clemency. (Information about this and other protest actions for Shaka Sankofa can be found online at <http://members.xoom.com/ccadp/garygraham.htm>.)

The following statement about Shaka Sankofa was written by political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal:

At the tender age of seventeen a youth named Gary Graham was faced with a terrifying reality. The state of Texas and Harris County district attorney picked him as another expendable black life form; a black youth to feed to the death machine. In a case of murder, where neither fingerprints nor ballistics nor any credible evidence points to any notion of guilt, Gary Graham faces a legal murder.

Over half his life spent in hellish and harsh Texas death cells, Gary Graham has grown into the man now known as Shaka Sankofa, a young man who is deeply conscious of his individual and collective self and of his place in history.

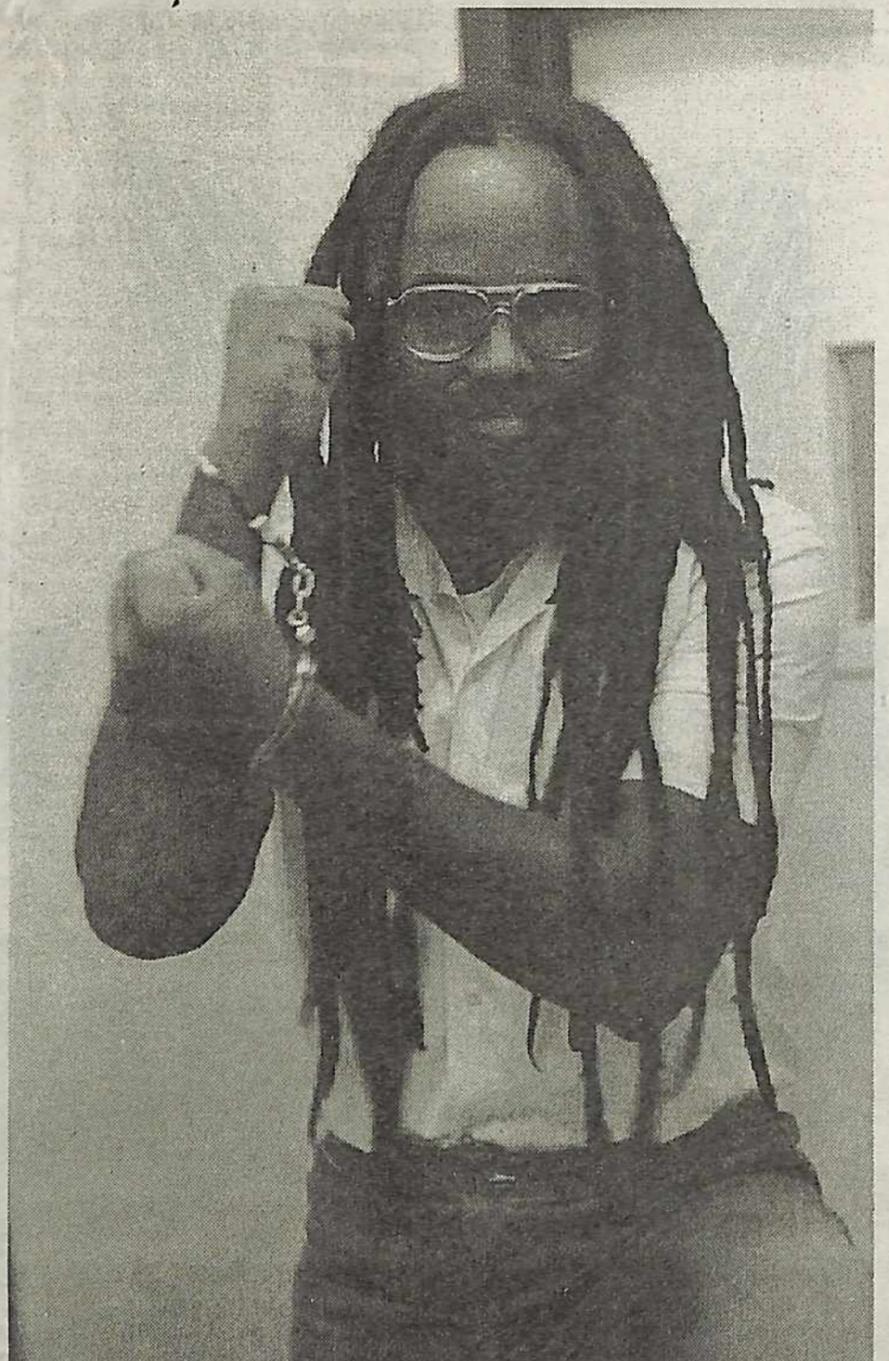
If there is a crime for which Bloody Texas seeks his death it is this: it is a crime in a racist nation for a black youth to be conscious and thinking in political and collective terms. For Shaka Sankofa innocence is not enough. The state and federal judiciary have, it is true, provided oceans of process, but not an iota of justice. His life, and the life of thousands of young men and women like him were expendable at birth not just at trial. Why should it be otherwise before the lily white and wealthy appeals courts?

The Sankofa case presents a challenge to all of us, not just those of us who steadfastly oppose the death penalty, but for those of us who say we believe in fundamental fairness and basic human rights. Under the terms of international human rights pacts (to which the United States is a party) the execution of a person who is a juvenile when the alleged crime occurred is a violation of international law. But the American Empire sneers at international law.

It is necessary to mobilize unsparing protests and stiff resistance to the death machine to bring about what should be our obvious goal: the life and freedom of Shaka Sankofa.

5/5/00

Copyright Mumia Abu-Jamal



Mumia Abu-Jamal

Illusions of

The Revolutionary Communist Party, USA announced last year its plan for forging a new Programme—a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist Programme—for making and winning revolution in the United States.

The RCP is calling on people to help produce this new Programme. The Party wants to work with people to do research and investigation into the class structure and social fabric of the U.S. It wants to engage people in discussion, wrangling, and debate: about issues of analysis, about its vision of a new society and about its strategy for creating such a new society. The Party wants to hear people's opinions and observations about the current (1981) Programme, and their suggestions for the new one.

To assist people in taking part in this project, the *Revolutionary Worker* is running a special reprint series which includes excerpts from the current Programme, from writings by the Chairman of the RCP, Bob Avakian, and from articles that have appeared in the Party press. The idea is to provide a background and grounding in certain Marxist-Leninist-Maoist principles, and in the Party's developing analysis of society and the revolutionary process.

We continue the series this week with an excerpt from the book by RCP Chairman, Bob Avakian, *Democracy: Can't We Do Better Than That?* This section looks at the political structures of capitalism, analyzes the class nature of "democracy" and shows how the political institutions and the official political processes of this society—like elections—reflect the needs and interests of the ruling class.

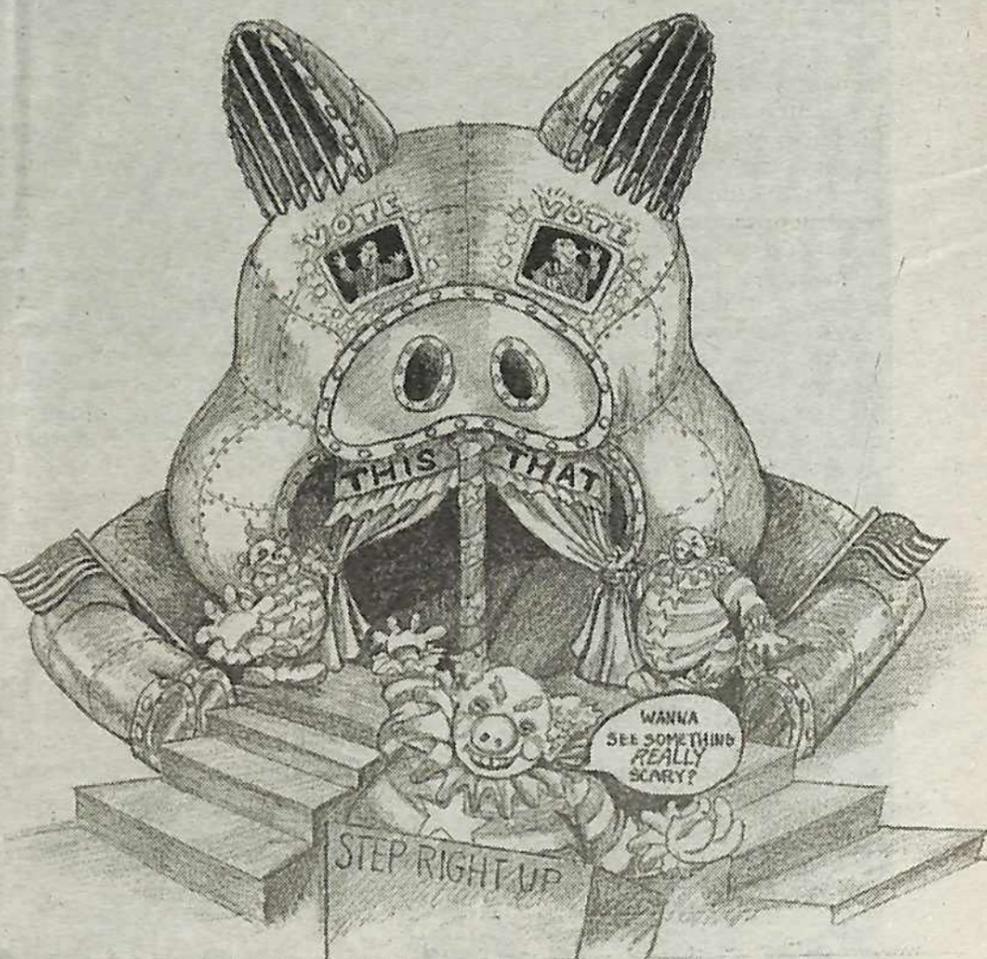
by Bob Avakian

It is conventional wisdom in countries like the U.S. that democracy and dictatorship are the complete opposite of each other: where there is democracy there is not a dictatorship and where there is a dictatorship there is of course no democracy. But in fact democracy is a form of dictatorship. In any state where democracy is the form of political rule, democracy is really only practiced among the ranks of the ruling class, while dictatorship is exercised over the oppressed class (or classes). In the present-day self-proclaimed "democratic countries" this is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat (and other oppressed strata and groups).

Lenin gave this comprehensive and concise definition of what is meant by classes:

"Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labor, and, consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it."

The division of society into classes is not a universal and inevitable feature of human society, and an examination of the earliest forms of society reveals that they are not characterized by a division into classes, as defined by Lenin—that there is not a situation where there are "groups of



people one of which can appropriate the labor of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy." But as the social economy develops, the social division of labor further develops to the point where, once surpluses can be accumulated (beyond what is required for mere survival) by distinct individuals or groups within the society, then antagonistic class divisions emerge.

In stressing that class antagonism and class distinctions generally "will fall as inevitably as they arose at an earlier stage" because "we are now rapidly approaching a stage in the development of production at which the existence of these classes not only will have ceased to be a necessity, but will become a positive hindrance to production," Engels also stresses that where and so long as society is divided into classes, there will of necessity be a state apparatus:

"The state, then, has not existed from all eternity. There have been

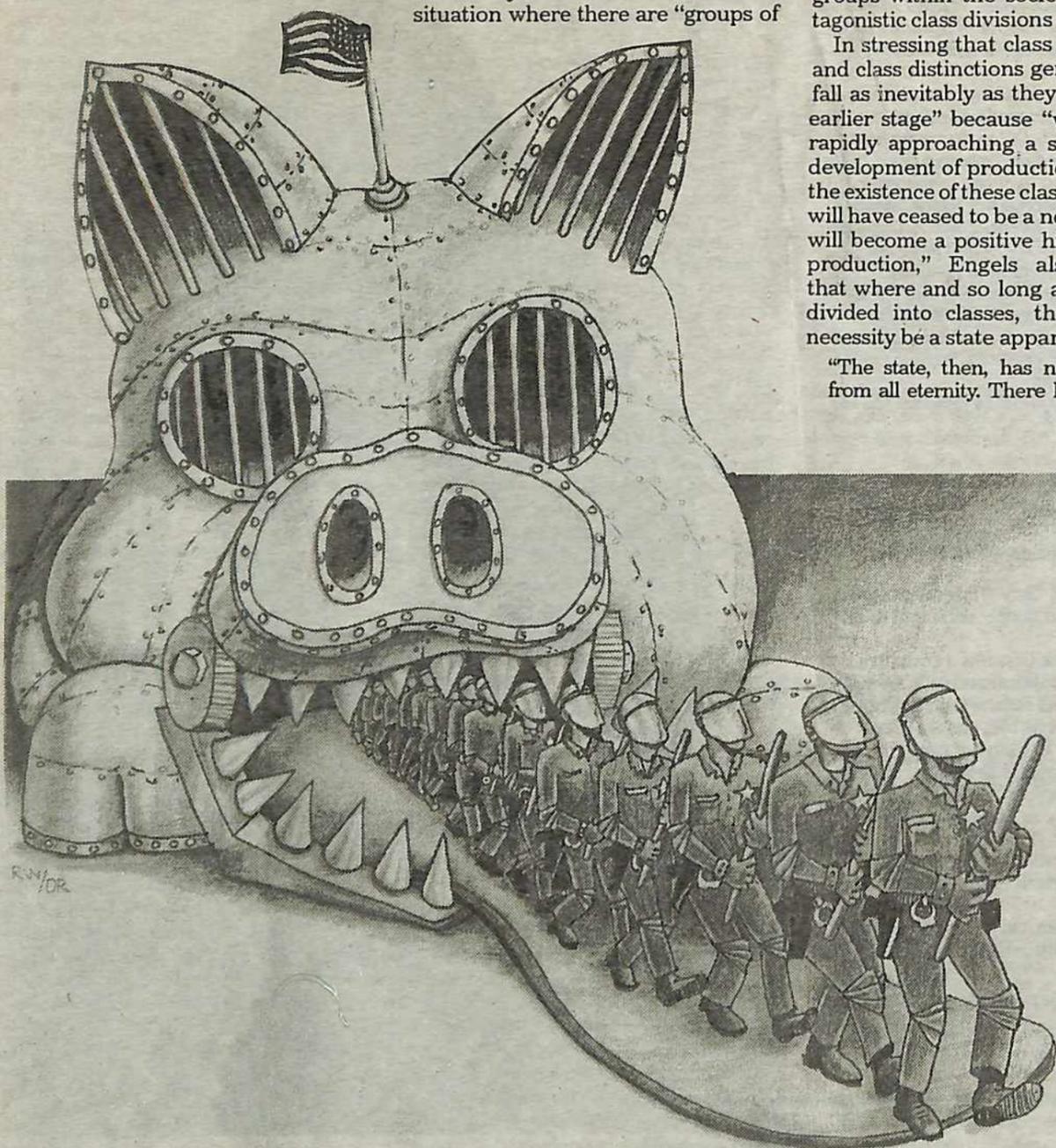
societies that did without it, that had no idea of the state and state power. At a certain stage of economic development, which was necessarily bound up with the split of society into classes, the state became a necessity owing to this split."

The state here means something very precise—it is not the same thing as government in the most general sense. A state, wherever it exists and whatever the form of government, is "essentially a machine for keeping down the oppressed, exploited class." The essential parts of this machinery are not legislatures and other similar vehicles of public discussion and nominal decision-making—these can be dispensed with when necessary, as they often have been—but are the executive power and the bureaucracy, the courts, and in particular the armed forces. These armed forces are the concentration of the power of one class over another: they represent a monopoly of force by the ruling class, and their purpose is to forcefully guarantee its interests (both within the country and, especially in this era of imperialism, anywhere else in the world those interests are contested).

All these things—the armed forces, the courts and laws, the executive and the bureaucracy (and the legislatures and so on, where they exist), the political institutions in general—belong to the superstructure, which in any society rests upon and reinforces the economic base. "In the social production of their existence," Marx wrote,

"men enter into definite, necessary relations, which are independent of their will, namely, relations of production corresponding to a determinate stage of development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation on which there arises a legal and political superstructure and to which there correspond definite forms of social consciousness."

In a society whose basis is capitalist relations of production, with its fun-



Democracy

damental class antagonism between the bourgeoisie—the capitalist exploiters—and the exploited class of propertyless wage-workers (the proletariat), the legal and political superstructure (and the dominant forms of social consciousness) serve to maintain the rule of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat and to preserve and protect those relations of exploitation. This truth, and its underlying basis, as made clear by Marx, is of such fundamental importance and bears so significantly on the class struggle between exploiters and exploited —on the whole question of how society and the possibility of radically transforming it is viewed—that it is not surprising that it is denied and distorted by defenders and apologists of the existing order. It would be extremely surprising if they did not do so.

Many will say: how can the political system in a democratic country like the U.S. “serve to maintain the rule of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat” when everyone has the right to choose the political leaders by participating in elections? The answer to this is that elections in such a society, and the “democratic process” as a whole, are a sham—and more than a sham—a cover for and indeed a vehicle through which domination over the exploited and oppressed is carried out by the exploiting, oppressing, ruling class. To state it in a single sentence, elections: are controlled by the bourgeoisie; are not the means through which basic decisions are made in any case; and are really for the primary purpose of legitimizing the system and the policies and actions of the ruling class, giving them the mantle of a “popular mandate,” and of channeling, confining, and controlling the political activity of the masses of people....

On the most obvious level, to be a serious candidate for any major office in a country like the U.S. requires millions of dollars—a personal fortune or, more often, the backing of people with that kind of money. Beyond that, to become known and be taken seriously depends on favorable exposure in the mass media (favorable at least in the sense that you are presented as within the framework of responsible—that is, acceptable—politics). These mass media are called that because they reach and influence masses of people daily and constantly. But they are certainly not controlled by the masses, nor do they reflect or serve their fundamental interests. They are themselves key pillars of the power structure: they are owned by major financial interests (where they are not owned by the state) and are in any case closely regulated by the state. By the time “the people express their will through voting,” both the candidates they have to choose among and the “issues” that deserve “serious consideration” have been selected out by someone else: the ruling class. Small wonder they are more than willing to abide by the results!

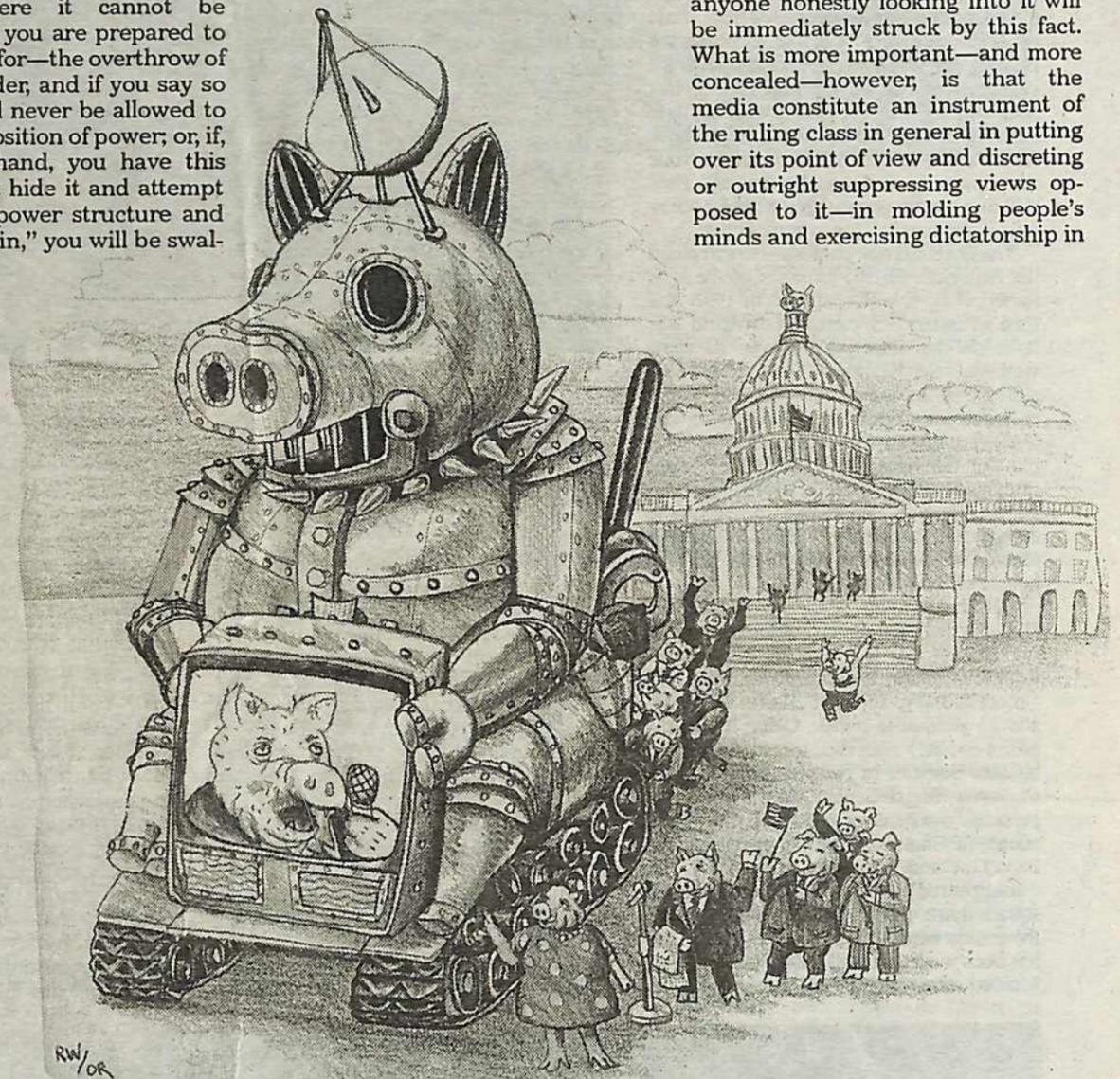
Further, and even more fundamentally, to “get anywhere” once elected—both to advance one’s own career and to “get anything done”—it is necessary to fit into the established mold and work within the established structures. This is partially because those already entrenched in positions of power and influence are thereby in a position to make others

conform and work through the accepted avenues, but more basically it is because, once again, the political system must serve the underlying economic system. This is not a mere theoretical abstraction, it has concrete meaning: policies and actions which work against or undermine that economic system *will in fact* cause disruption, disorder, chaos, breakdowns in the more or less orderly functioning of things—and unless you are prepared to see the entire order overthrown, with all that implies, you can only view such disruption, disorder, and chaos as something to be avoided or kept to the minimum where it cannot be avoided. But if you are prepared to see—and work for—the overthrow of the existing order, and if you say so openly, you will never be allowed to hold any real position of power; or, if, on the other hand, you have this perspective but hide it and attempt to “get in the power structure and work from within,” you will be swal-

point of this electoral process (in the USA specifically), that, regardless of everything else—and in particular, regardless of admittedly immense differences in wealth and economic power and social status—the ballot box is the great equalizer...that once you step into that polling booth, the vote of a common wage-worker and the vote of a Rockefeller count for the same thing. And, fundamentally, this is true—neither of these votes counts for a damn thing; Rockefeller (or the class of Rockefellers) doesn’t need to vote to exercise political power, and the common wage-workers will never exercise political power under

reasons—because the ruling class has a monopoly on the means of molding public opinion and because its monopoly of armed force puts it in a position to suppress, as violently as necessary, any expression of ideas, as well as any action, that poses a serious challenge to the established order. What Marx and Engels wrote in the *Communist Manifesto* is more true than ever in today’s conditions: “The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class.”

The control of the mass media by finance capital has already been mentioned: this is so obvious that anyone honestly looking into it will be immediately struck by this fact. What is more important—and more concealed—however, is that the media constitute an instrument of the ruling class in general in putting over its point of view and discreting or outright suppressing views opposed to it—in molding people’s minds and exercising dictatorship in



lowed up—or chewed up and spit out—by that structure. There is an abundance of historical experience to demonstrate this—and none which disproves it.

If, however, the electoral process in bourgeois society does not represent the exercise of sovereignty by the people, it generally does play an important role in maintaining the sovereignty—the dictatorship—of the bourgeoisie and the continuation of capitalist society. This very electoral process itself tends to cover over the basic class relations—and class antagonisms—in society, and serves to give formal, institutionalized expression to the political participation of atomized individuals in the perpetuation of the status quo. This process not only reduces people to isolated individuals but at the same time reduces them to a passive position politically and defines the essence of politics as such atomized passivity—as each person, individually, in isolation from everyone else, giving his/her approval to this or to that option, *all of which options have been formulated and presented by an active power standing above these atomized masses of “citizens.”* It is not infrequently said, as a major selling

this system no matter how many votes they cast or for what. There never has been and never will be “a revolution through the ballot box,” not only because the powers-that-be would forcibly suppress any such attempt, but also—and this touches on a very important function of elections in bourgeois society—because the very acceptance of the electoral process as the quintessential political act reinforces acceptance of the established order and works against any radical rupture with, to say nothing of the actual overturning of, that order. In sum, then, the electoral process and the notion that this process represents the expression of the popular will serves not to set or to fundamentally influence the politics that govern society but to reinforce the shackles binding the masses of people to the political—and underlying economic—interests and dictates of the governing dominant class.

Similarly, the much-vaunted freedom of expression in the “democratic countries” is not in opposition to but is encompassed by and confined within the actual exercise of dictatorship by the bourgeoisie. This is for two basic

the realm of ideas as part of its overall dictatorship. But it remains a fact that on any really significant issue (and, for that matter, most not very significant ones) the men (and the few women) of the media put forward the same viewpoint—and to a great degree seem to be reading from the same prepared text. Where they do disagree—with each other, or with a particular government policy at any given time—this too is from the point of view of the general interests of the ruling class and the established order as a whole. In part, this occurs more or less “spontaneously”; that is, these people—especially those who have climbed up the ladder to any position of real influence—can overwhelmingly be counted on to know what the basic interests of the ruling class are and how to present them as effectively as possible. But on any occasion where the system and its rulers are put to a severe test or find their interests threatened, then there is a marked “pulling together” around an orchestrated official line—which is often all the more insidious because it is done without the acknowledgment that it is an official line—and generally with the denial that such an official line even exists.

OAS: Tool of U.S. Imperialism

As we go to press, protests are planned at the June 4-6 meeting of the Organization of American States in Windsor, Ontario in Canada. The following excerpt is from a leaflet put out by the Revolutionary Communist Party, Detroit Branch:

The corporate empire-builders expected to quietly fly into Windsor for the meeting of the Organization of American States. They thought they would be hidden while they make their decisions that will change the lives of thousands and tens of thousands of the oppressed in this hemisphere. They hoped to meet out of the sight of the people over an agenda that aims to make the Americas an even stronger base area for U.S. capitalist/imperialists.

The decisions they make will mean the land of more peasants is opened up for sale to corporate agribusiness, while those peasants become part of the dispossessed finding any way they can to survive in the shantytowns outside the major cities like Mexico City and Buenos Aires. They will mean more extreme lopsided development, where a few in the countries benefit while the poorest are made much worse off. They will mean more wars against popular uprisings in the name of the War on Drugs.

The OAS has one purpose—to safeguard the Americas for the interests of the U.S. imperialists. It was chartered in 1948 at a time when the U.S. came out of World War II as the top imperialist power. Its roots were in the Monroe Doctrine—which stated that no one besides the U.S. could colonize Latin and Central America. The OAS has served well in helping the U.S. plunder the Americas, backed by Yanqui troops and death-squad dictators.

The OAS is chartered to “promote democratic institutions.” Just a few examples of what this has meant for the people of the Americas:

- In the 50 years of OAS existence, the U.S. has invaded country after country to impose its rule, including the Dominican Republic (with backing from an OAS “peacekeeping force”), Haiti, Grenada, and an attempt to invade Cuba. It has imposed dictator after dictator, including the butcher Somoza in Nicaragua, born-again Christian fascist General Rios Montt who presided over the genocide of the Indian people of Guatemala, killing over 150,000, Papa Doc and Baby Doc in Haiti The “disappeared” masses murdered by death squads have grown into the hundreds of thousands across the Americas. Genocide has been waged against the native people of Mexico and Central America. With the



Protesters burn the U.S. flag in Bello Horizonte, Brazil, where officials from various North and South American countries met to discuss setting up a “free trade area,” May 1997.

direct assistance of the CIA, the Chilean military massacred over 30,000 people under Pinochet’s rule. Peru’s government has used paramilitary forces to massacre peasants for rising up and supporting Maoist revolution...

- The OAS says that one of its main missions is to “combat terrorism,” a code word for developing specific steps to crush progressive and revolutionary uprisings. Its 1996 anti-terrorism meeting was held in Peru and hosted by President Fujimori, who wages genocidal campaigns against the villages which support the revolution led by the Communist Party of Peru and tries revolutionary leaders in military tribunals with black-hooded judges.

To survive against competition by other capitalists, the U.S. capitalist/imperialists must find the ways to better invest their wealth and extract more profits. With NAFTA, the U.S. opened up Mexico to even more exploitation. Now they want to do the same with the rest of the Americas.

The OAS is creating the Free Trade Area

of the Americas—FTAA. This is a plan to eliminate trade and investment barriers in the Western Hemisphere for the capitalists, to be finalized and implemented by 2005. The FTAA is closely linked with World Trade Organization and IMF policies that have already turned peasant farmers who used to support families with their crops into workers on cash crops for the U.S. markets, and have driven many of them off the land.

The FTAA aims to:

- Pry open the economies of Central and Latin America for the U.S. (and Canadian) capitalists to buy and reorganize any way they want. It will tremendously intensify the exploitation and suffering of the peoples in these countries. It will be accompanied by incredible destruction of the environment, including the rainforests;

- Maximize the freedom of action of imperialist capital—so that investments can be moved quickly from one location to another to maximize profits, sending even more people into ruin and desperation;

- And manage disputes and competition among the imperialist countries.

The FTAA is not about “free trade.” It is about creating a U.S.-dominated regional trade bloc...

RCP Chairman Bob Avakian has said:

“If you can conceive of a world without America—without everything America stands for and everything it does in the world—then you’ve already taken great strides and begun to get at least a glimpse of a whole new world. If you can envision a world without any imperialism; exploitation, oppression—and the whole philosophy that rationalizes it—a world without division into classes or even different nations, and all the narrow-minded, selfish, outmoded ideas that uphold this; if you can envision all this, then you have the basis for proletarian internationalism. And once you have raised your sights to all this, how could you not feel compelled to take an active part in the world historic struggle to realize it; why would you want to lower your sights to anything less?” □



Workers at a banana plantation in Costa Rica.



Pancho Gonzalez

LAPD Murder of Pancho Gonzalez

Alfonso Ruben Renteria worked as a street vendor selling jewelry. To his friends, he was known as Pancho Gonzalez.

On April 26 at 1:40 p.m., he went up to an off-duty LAPD cop who was having lunch at a restaurant in the city of Lynwood. Pancho asked the cop if he wanted to buy a gold chain. The cop, Jose Amaya, didn't want a chain so Pancho showed him some rings.

Amaya stated that he was a police officer and threatened Pancho—saying that selling was illegal and he would arrest Pancho if he didn't leave. Amaya kept the rings and chains he had been shown, even after Pancho demanded them back. According to one witness, Amaya threatened to shoot Pancho Gonzalez. Then, only moments later, he drew his gun and shot Pancho Gon-

zalez three times in the chest.

Alfonso Ruben Renteria Gonzalez was 23 years old on the day he died. His sister told a local newspaper, "He was tranquil and full of life." He lived with relatives in the immigrant barrio of Pico-Union, where the infamous Rampart Division of the LAPD is located. Two years ago he came to the U.S. looking for work, leaving his friends and family in the state of Michoacan in Mexico.

Pancho joined thousands of other street-vendors in L.A.'s poor neighborhoods, who make a living selling homemade tamales, ears of corn, fresh fruit, CDs and cassettes, clothes, toys and jewelry. This difficult job is made even harder by the non-stop harassment of the police. Cops arrest vendors or just steal or destroy their merchandise.

Rafael Perez, the former LAPD cop whose confessions started the Rampart police scandal, has said that cops try to pressure vendors to tell what they know about drug dealers and others. According to Perez, if the vendors insist they don't know anything, the cops plant drugs on them.

Lynwood is one of several mainly Latino cities just east of South Central L.A. Parts of Lynwood look like Mexico, with all the signs in Spanish. According to a cousin of Pancho Gonzalez, Pancho had only recently begun vending in the area where he was killed. He was trying to make extra money to help support his sister, who had arrived in L.A. a few months ago and didn't have a job.

The police version of the death of Pancho Gonzalez sounds like a hundred other stories told by the police to cover up their cold-blooded killings. Amaya said he felt threatened—even though Pancho was unarmed. He claimed Pancho "reached for his waistband" and that he "saw a shiny object." According to Pancho's cousin, a bottle was found in his pocket. The L.A. County Sheriff's Department, which patrols Lynwood and is "investigating" the shooting, said only that there was "something that could have been used as a weapon."

Even this flimsy official story quickly fell apart. An official from the Mexican Consulate in Los Angeles conducted

numerous interviews with witnesses who agreed that Pancho Gonzalez had nothing in his hands when he was shot. The Consulate also got a lawyer who helped Pancho's family file a claim against the City of L.A.

Other evidence has come to light that shows that Amaya lied to the Sheriff's officers. Amaya told Sheriff investigators that he called 911 from his cell phone for back-up. This was meant to support his statement that he felt threatened by Pancho. But reporter Bobbi Murray, writing in the *Los Angeles Weekly*, revealed that tapes of 911 calls showed that Amaya called only after the shooting. The only time his voice is heard on the tapes is when he's saying and repeating, "I just shot him."

When Sheriff's Department investigators were confronted with the fact that the cop had lied, they tried to talk their way around it—saying there was probably another 911 tape. But the California Highway Patrol has insisted that they released everything.

The cold-blooded police murder of Pancho Gonzalez has happened in the midst of the biggest police scandal in the history of the LAPD—where evidence continues to spill out about LAPD corruption, frame-ups and brutality. But while the authorities try to do damage control, with talk about investigating and getting rid of corrupt cops—the epidemic of police murder in Los Angeles hasn't slowed down one bit. □



Arriba from the October 22nd Coalition speaking at the police board hearing, May 18.

Chicago: Angry Protest Confronts Police Board

On May 18, about 80 people filled the auditorium of the downtown police headquarters for the monthly public meeting of the police board. At least 30 more people couldn't get into the room—unfortunately many of those turned away were the families of people murdered by the police. Practically everybody wore or carried a plastic fork—the alleged "weapon" police claim forced them to kill Arthur Earl Hutchinson.

In the weeks leading up to this meeting, there was a string of four shootings by the Chicago cops, two of them deadly. Joseph Zagar was murdered for holding a battery pack on his own front porch. And Michael Taylor was executed on the street because he dared to run from the cops at a traffic stop. According to several witnesses, Michael fell as he ran away. As he tried to get up, a cop shot him at arm's length. Michael was unarmed. A crowd of people shouted down the killer cops, demanding that they don't put a drop-gun on him (a gun cops have handy to plant on people they kill). In response, one cop aimed his gun at the whole crowd and told them to get lost! A couple days later the cops were exposed in the papers for snatching up one of the witnesses to this murder and harassing and threatening her into changing her story over the course of five awful hours in their interrogation room. She went straight to her lawyer and recanted that coerced testimony.

These most recent murders came shortly after cops in the Wrigleyville neighborhood

(where the Chicago Cubs play) murdered Arthur Earl Hutchinson—for the "crime" of holding a fork. Meanwhile, in the northern suburbs, a racial profiling scandal exposed by Black and Latino police in the department is still smoldering. And word is getting around how people arrested at a May 13 protest for Mumia Abu-Jamal were sexually harassed and abused by the cops. One young woman was eyed up and down and called a "hottie" by an older male cop. Another cop told someone, "Don't ask the police for help when you get anally raped!" The Greater Chicago Justice Coalition reports that even business leaders are concerned about the level of police violence in Chicago.

After 45 minutes of bureaucratic procedures at the police board meeting it was finally time for a long line of people to get to speak. The police board knew there was a lot of outrage in the room and they made it clear that they intended to adjourn the meeting if things got "out of hand."

Gwen Hogan, whose husband Kelsey Hogan was murdered by an off-duty corrections officer last year, said, "They put on bullet-proof vests to come into our neighborhoods and kill our youth... but they're intimidated by a battery pack or a fork. Why do we have to take to the streets and express our anger to get any action? I have to explain to my son how his father was murdered and nothing has been done."

Ed from the October 22nd Coalition said to Police Chief Hillard, "You fired a bunch

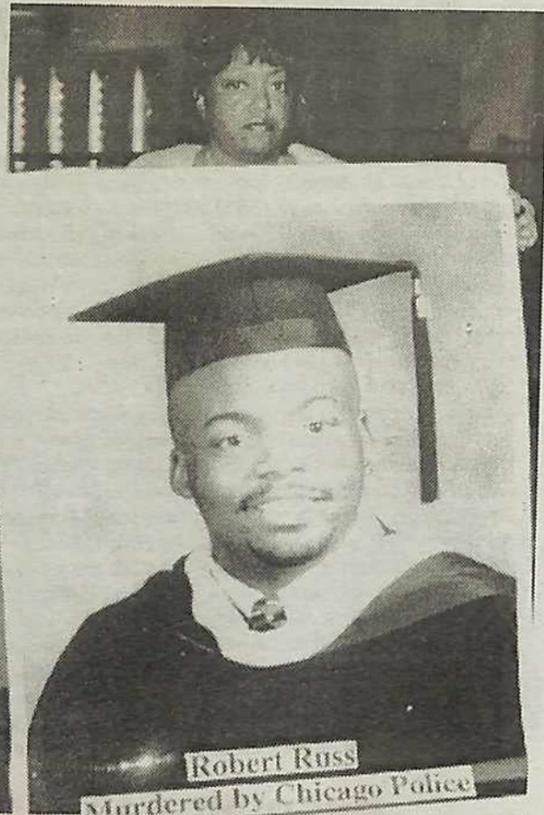
of them [the cops who killed LaTanya Haggerty], but they're killing people even faster... We're dedicated to making sure the cops who carry out these murders and the people who back them up do some jail time."

Mary Reed told the story of how her son Leroy was murdered by the cops. She told how the police told security guards to burn his bloody clothes—which may have been crucial evidence against the killer cops. She said, "Why did the police tell the security guard to tamper with evidence if they didn't have nothing to do with it? He left 5 kids!"

Arriba from the October 22nd Coalition held up a copy of *Stolen Lives: Killed by Law Enforcement*, which documents over 2,000 cases of people who have been killed by law enforcement officials around the country. She said, "Summer hasn't even started yet and your officers are off to an

early start. Thousands of mothers are wondering if their children will survive riding in a car, sitting on a porch, or just hangin' out!"

Many more people wanted to speak out against police brutality and murder. But only a handful of people who had registered the day before got a chance at the mic. Paris Thompson's name was called as he was downstairs trying to get in. A Green Party activist got up to the mic and spoke "out of turn." He was reading a statement he wrote about the death of his friend and neighbor Joseph Zagar at the hands of the cops. Using this as an excuse, the board hastily adjourned the meeting as a wall of cops formed up in front of their special exit door. As they fled the room, they were shouted down by the crowd with chants of "no justice, no peace!"



Patti Love holding a picture of her son, Robert Russ, outside the police board hearing, May 18.

Special to the RW/WR

