



REVOLUTIONARY WORKER

Voice of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

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AZANIA ON FIRE - TAKE IT HIGHER!



February 13—On the way to Soweto!

The racist oppressors in South Africa (Azania) are in deep trouble, and the end of the apartheid system is on the horizon. The black people's struggle forced the apartheid regime to back down and release ANC leader Nelson Mandela from prison. Opportunities are rising in South Africa for the black people to take the struggle higher and fight a real revolutionary war to break all the chains. The enemy is on the run. It's time to seize the time!

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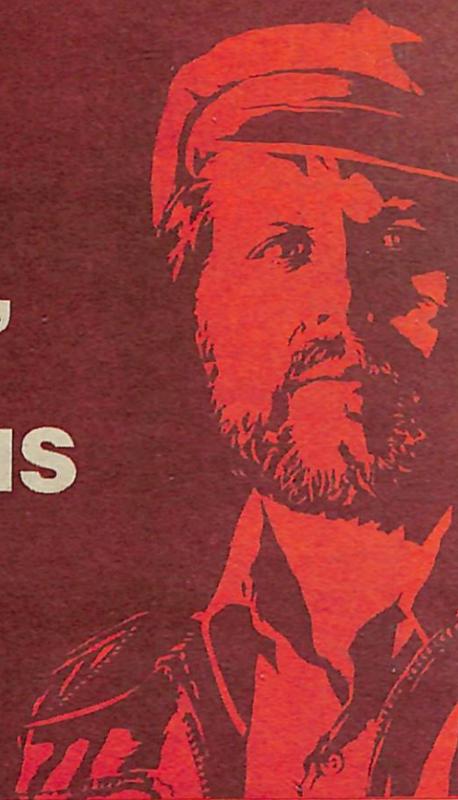
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Black Panthers in Oakland in the 1960s.



Bob Avakian, Chairman of the RCP.

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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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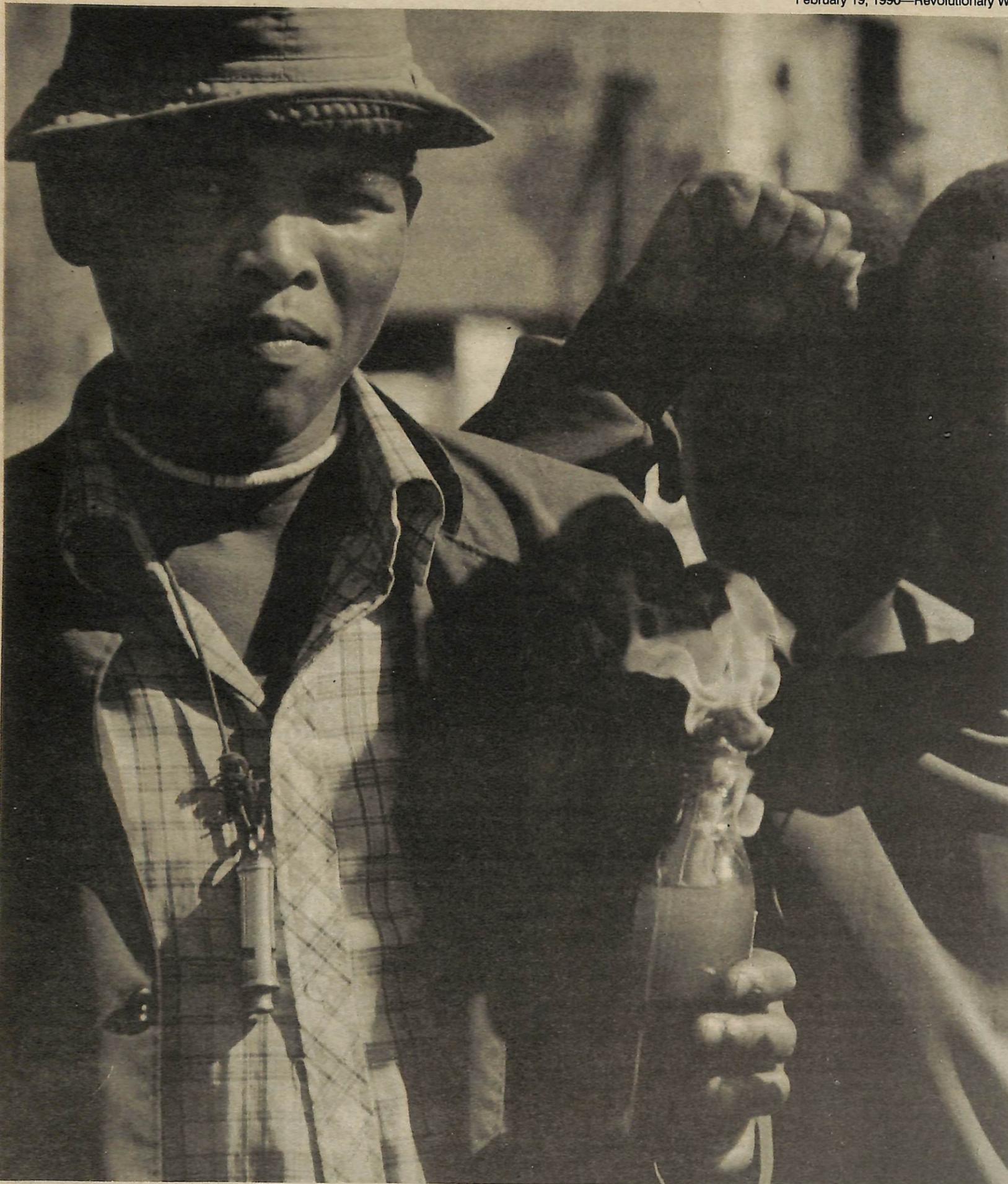


Photo: David Turnley

AZANIA ON FIRE - TAKE IT HIGHER!

All eyes are on South Africa. People can see that the hated apartheid regime is on the run. After 27 years of unjustly imprisoning ANC leader Nelson Mandela, the South Africa government had to let him go. Not out of any change in their oppressor hearts, but because they are staggering from the blows delivered by the courageous struggle of the black people in South Africa and the millions around the world who support the overthrow of apartheid. The racist oppressors and their system are in deep trouble. The end of apartheid is on the horizon.

The struggle of the Azanian people (the oppressed black people in South Africa) inspires the proletarians in the USA in our struggle. We can see that the apartheid rulers and the U.S. and other powers who back them are NOT all-powerful and in full control. And we can see the hypocrisy of the U.S. imperialists who rule over a system in this country which locks oppressed people into bantustan ghettos and housing projects and murders Black people every day in cold blood. The way the Azanian people forced the apartheid rulers to back down makes us think about the possibilities for seizing the power here in the USA.

Mandela and the ANC are calling for negotiations with the apartheid government. Their program and strategy are not

for complete liberation but for accommodation. By talking with the ANC, the South African rulers want to do an end run around the masses and stop a new mass upsurge.

But opportunities are rising in South Africa for the black people to take the struggle higher and fight a real revolutionary war that will do away with the whole structure of oppression in South Africa. Opportunities too for the masses to break the chains.

To break the chains of a system where a white settler-colonial minority owns all the riches, resources, and 87 percent of the land and lives off the blood of the black masses.

To break the chains where the white settler regime controls the politics and the gun and has the power of life and death over black people.

To break the chains where the multinational corporations and imperialist powers prop up the apartheid murderers and get profits out of the black people.

To break ALL the chains of oppression.

The enemy is on the run. It's time to seize the time!

Down with Apartheid and Imperialism from S.A. to U.S.A.!
Fight the Powers, Seize the Power!

AZANIA ON FIRE, TAKE IT HIGHER!

Azanian People's Struggle On the Rise Once Again

Winds of change are blowing in South Africa.

The apartheid regime came down on the 1984-87 upsurge with brute force—emergency laws, hundreds of black people killed, thousands rounded up and thrown into jail, press blackout. But the fires of mass struggle are rising once again in South Africa. Reports point to increasing clashes between black people and the South African police all around the country. There is a widespread mood of defiance against apartheid, including among sections of whites.

Many people around the world who long for the fall of the apartheid system are looking with great expectation at the events in South Africa. Among them there are those who hope that Nelson Mandela and the ANC will lead a struggle for revolutionary change.

For 27 years Mandela was unjustly held in apartheid prisons. He became a symbol of the oppression of the apartheid system and resistance against it. But Mandela's way is not the way to all-the-way liberation. The problem is not that he lacks courage or principles. The problem is that his principles are not *revolutionary*. His political line and strategy are aimed at reaching compromises with the oppressors, not overthrowing the system and building a completely new society.

The oppressed need to take a good look at what Mandela and the ANC are putting forward and ask if their road will really lead to all-the-way liberation for the Azanian people.

Let's look at some key statements made by Mandela since his release from prison.

"Sharing the Wealth"... Or Smashing a Reactionary Fortress?

Mandela says: "South Africa is a wealthy country. It is the labor of black

workers that has built the cities, roads and factories we see. They cannot be excluded from sharing the wealth. The ANC is just as committed to economic growth and productivity as the present employers came to be. Yet we are also committed to ensure that a democratic government has the resources to address the inequalities caused by apartheid."

Mandela speaks a truth when he says that South Africa was built on the labor of black people. But fighting for a "share" of the wealth will not lead to liberation for the black people. The settler-colonial state, and the U.S. and other imperialist powers behind it, have gotten huge profits out of the exploitation and oppression of the Azanian people. The white minority rulers live like parasites, and they control the state and the military which protect their privileged position. Any government, even one that calls itself "democratic," where these types still have a big say and power will not bring real freedom for the masses of black people.

It is an outrage that black people have no political rights in South Africa. But fighting for the right to vote is not a solution. Black people need to fight to liberate *the whole country*. And this will require a war.

The settler colonialists are not going to be talked into giving up their power and privileges. They will defend their position with the guns that they control. Power will have to be violently taken from their hands by a revolutionary war of the masses—a people's war. There has to be what Mao Tsetung called a "new-democratic revolution" that overthrows and smashes the whole structure of apartheid, national oppression, and imperialist domination and builds a new society based on the real interests of the people.

What does it mean to say that the black people's goal should be to "share the wealth" in South Africa? It can only mean *buying into* the oppressive system. Today the settler-colonial rulers and the Western imperialists face a crisis of capi-

talism in South Africa which comes in part out of the very way they have squeezed and oppressed the black masses. The inferior education for black youth, the huge numbers of black workers forced to lead a shadowy and desperate existence for survival in the townships, the horrible health conditions—and the rebellion of the masses against these outrages—are increasingly cutting into the ability of the oppressors to squeeze out profits. So they want to "modernize" their system of super-exploitation by expanding education, improving skill levels of black workers, and so on.

Mandela's program of taking part in the "economic growth and productivity" of South Africa can only mean helping the oppressors out of their crisis. It means keeping the basic foundations of this structure, which is built on downpressing the masses of black people and serves the interests of the South African rulers and the Western powers. It means that some aspiring black bourgeois forces might become part of a South Africa that will still be a fortress of imperialism and reaction.

Why should the oppressed people help save the system of their oppressors?

Just and Unjust Violence

Mandela says: "Our resort to the armed struggle in 1960 with the formation of the military wing of the ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe, was a purely defensive action against the violence of apartheid. The factors which necessitated that armed struggle still exist today. We have no option but to continue. We express the hope that a climate conducive to a negotiated settlement would be created soon so that there may no longer be the need for the armed struggle."

Why do the oppressed people need to be defensive about taking up arms against the oppressors? The violence of the oppressors is reactionary and unjust and must be condemned and fought

against. The revolutionary violence of the oppressed against the enemy is just and uplifting. One problem in South Africa is that there is not enough revolutionary violence. The oppressors do not give up their power willingly—the masses have to wage revolutionary war to take power out of the oppressors' grasp.

In 1960 the ANC started its own brand of armed struggle. But it was not an armed struggle waged on the basis of self-reliance, based on the strength and initiative of the masses and with the goal of seizing revolutionary state power—it was not a genuine people's war. The ANC was backed by "aid" from the Soviet imperialists, and the occasional sabotage attacks by the Umkhonto were a tactic to pressure the government into negotiations. Under Gorbachev's "new thinking" the Soviets have cut back on such "aid" to groups like the ANC, and the ANC is putting even more emphasis on a "negotiated settlement."

After coming out of prison, Mandela said that he and the ANC still uphold the armed struggle. But as Mandela also says, the ANC is ready to give up all armed struggle as soon as a "climate" for a "negotiated settlement" is reached. A high-ranking apartheid official recently said that the government does not feel "threatened" by the ANC's "defensive" armed struggle. When the enemy says that they are not threatened by an armed struggle supposedly being waged *against them*, there is a serious problem with that armed struggle!

Some forces, like Bishop Tutu, focus on the fact that hundreds of black people were killed during the upsurge of 1984-1987 and say that the only way is the "peaceful road." Mandela has also said: "I am disturbed by the specter of a South Africa split into two hostile camps: blacks on one side and whites on the other, slaughtering one another."

But hundreds of black people in South Africa—as in the USA—are murdered by the system every year, whether or not they rebel. The apartheid rulers are also known for trying to stir up fighting between different black groups. Much of the so-called "black on black" violence in South Africa is instigated by the police.

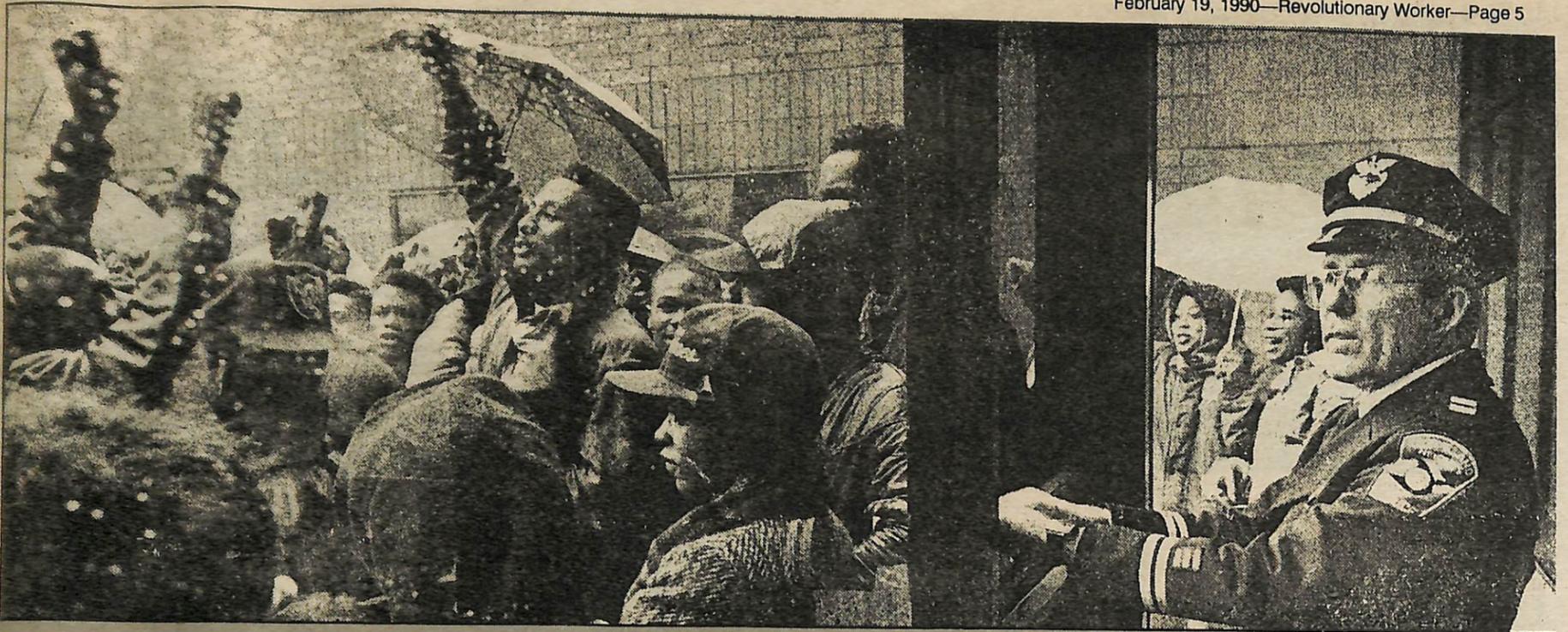
As Bob Avakian, Chairman of the RCP, USA, pointed out: "It's far better to make those sacrifices, in order to contribute to the overthrow of the system and to moving beyond the horrendous conditions that people face under it every day through its normal workings, than it is to suffer casualties and repression and murder and other forms of brutality silently and simply accepting this system—or still worse...helping to perpetuate this system with all of its horrors."

Black Liberation and Whites in South Africa

Mandela says: "The fears of whites about their rights and place in a South Africa they do not control exclusively are an obstacle we must understand and address. I stated in 1964 that I and the ANC are as opposed to black domination as we are to white domination. We must accept that our statements and declarations alone will not be sufficient to allay the fears of white South Africans. We must clearly demonstrate our good will to our white compatriots and convince them by our conduct...that a South Africa without apartheid will be a better home for all."

Mandela and the ANC have been trying hard to ease the "fears of whites." They are offering the white minority "structural guarantees" under a new political arrangement in South Africa. This business of assuring the white settler colonialists and considering them "compatriots" is very much a part of the ANC's program of *buying into* the system instead of *overthrowing* the system. White domination is the reality in South Africa. So-called "black domination" is a code word used by the white South African rulers to oppose black libera-





Cleveland Heights cop holds front door of City Hall to keep students from entering.

Cleveland: 1,000 H.S. Students Walk Out

"Mandela Is Free, Why Can't We Be?"

Close to 1,000 Black students, joined by about forty white students, broke out of Heights High School. This high school, which is in an integrated suburb of Cleveland, is 60 percent Black and 40 percent white. The issue was straight-up racism. Carrying signs that said "Mandela Is Free, Why Can't We Be?", "Fight the Power," and "Prejudice and Injustice are Not Part of the Schools' Curriculum," students busted out of school in a planned 10 a.m. walkout. The students blocked traffic on the street and marched to City Hall to demand a meeting with the police chief about the complicity between the school and police in the harassment and expulsion of Black students.

One student said, "It only took one day to organize this, that's how pissed off people were." Students were angry after a Black student was suspended for a fight which had taken place over the weekend. Black students are constantly suspended, beaten by police and school security, and expelled. "They're more interested in punishing than educating," said a woman student who exposed the fact that school authorities and police share records to kick students out of school for incidents that happen off campus. Youth said that Black and white students are treated differently. One example: a Black youth was defending himself from being jumped. First he was suspended for two weeks and then expelled for eighty days. A white student said, "When two white students fight in school they get suspended. When two Black students fight, they call the police."

Students found out about this suspension on Monday, the day after Mandela was freed. Black students had come to school wearing red, black and green, the colors of Black nationalism. The Student Council had done up posters for Black History Month which said "Blacks United," "Black By Nature, Proud By Choice," "By Any Means Necessary." The principal, who is white, had the signs taken down fourth period and told the students they were not allowed to wear the African colors, Black liberation T-shirts and African medallions. All Black History Month events were canceled.

Seniors put out a flyer calling for the protest to take all this on. Students began to gather in the courtyard, and by 10:30 hundreds of students were gathered in front of the school. As one student who walked out said, "We're not just talking about Black History Month. We're saying Black History YEAR." Then the whole thing went out into the street. People were chanting "Fight the Power!", "Too Black, Too Strong!" The word went out to march to City Hall. There were so many people the march stretched out for almost a mile in freezing rain. A delegation of parents and some students went inside City Hall to talk to the police chief and the school superintendent. Everyone wanted to get into City Hall to express their views, but the doors remained locked for over two hours. Saying that they were being locked out and lied to by those in City Hall, students formed into a big circle and started a mass meeting on the spot to figure out what to do next. It was decided to have a sit-in the next morning at 8:30 to continue to press for equal rights and against unfair school policies.

A Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade leaflet called "Black History Month—Fight the Power" was distributed widely at the walkout. Hundreds were passed out—there weren't enough to go around but students passed them around and shared them. A leader of the walkout announced to the crowd to come into Revolution Books nearby to pick up materials to further the struggle. Many students did come in to the store, and then went back to school for the sit-in with hundreds more leaflets, issues of the *RW* magazine "Cold Truth, Liberating Truth," new T-shirts, and "No Peace for Racists" stickers. The stickers were put up all over the school and teachers were even wearing them. Some of the youth are now seriously thinking about joining the RCYB. And the struggle is continuing. A sit-in on Friday, February 16 issued thirty-three demands to the administration. As a leader of the students said, "If we can't sit at the table, we're gonna knock the legs off." Before the walkout he had been approached by an administrator and asked to call off the protest. But he replied, "The revolution has started." □

tion.

Bob Avakian pointed out: "South Africa is a state whose fundamental basis is the exploitation and oppression of the black masses in that country. That's what defines South Africa as a state. . . . In South Africa, it's not only because black people are a majority but because of their position in society, their defining role in society as a whole in South Africa, that a revolutionary uprising with revolutionary leadership based on a proletarian program and outlook which brings forward the black masses in revolutionary struggle in South Africa is the road to revolution there. And this involves both achieving the national liberation of the Azanian people, the black people who are oppressed by the South African state and the whole system there, and involves moving on to the socialist revolution and carrying forward the class struggle to achieve socialism and move forward toward the goal of communism as part of the worldwide struggle of the international proletariat. The bringing forward of the masses of people under that revolutionary banner is what is involved, and is the essence of what's involved, in a revolution in South Africa."

A revolutionary movement based among black people can and should unite with other people—the Indians and the so-called Coloureds—who are oppressed in South Africa, and also seek allies and unity with whites who break with the system. But as Bob Avakian said, "To put it in a certain provocative way: even if no white people in South Africa take a stand in support of the

revolutionary movement, even if they all oppose it, that is not going to be enough to stop the revolution in South Africa."

The actual situation is much more favorable. The ugliness of apartheid and the struggle of the black masses have propelled some white people, like youth opposed to the draft, into serious opposition to the government. There is a real basis for a revolutionary movement to win over sections of whites. But if they are to become allies of, and not obstacles to, the revolutionary black masses, white South Africans must become *traitors* to the racist settler-colonial system.

Unleashing the Fury of Women and Youth for Revolution

Mandela says: "Step up the struggle." And then he says, "Not a single one of you should do anything which will make other people say that we can't control our own people."

There are great openings for stepping up the struggle in South Africa. The question is: what kind of struggle? The strategy of Mandela and the ANC is to force the government into negotiations through demonstrations and other political actions, with some talk of armed struggle as a little added pressure. The ANC leaders have made it clear they do not want a revolutionary mass upheaval and are calling on people to "control" themselves.

In various ways Mandela has tried to quiet the anger and limit the initiative of

the masses.

In Soweto, Mandela lectured to the youth that they should stop the boycott of apartheid schools and return to classes. The youth have been at the forefront of the struggle against apartheid. The black youth of the townships prove their fearlessness every time they fight with stones and barricades against the apartheid troops with their guns and hippos (armored military vehicles). They show that there is plenty of basis to build a revolutionary people's army in South Africa. Yet Mandela is now telling these youth to go back to school.

Mandela's patriarchal outlook towards women has also come out. A news report quoted Winnie Mandela, who married Nelson Mandela before he was imprisoned: "I've been giving orders, and now I have to take them. . . . It is fun, and very strange indeed at my age, to wake up in the morning and I am told, 'Fetch my shirt, what shirt have you prepared? Where are my shoes? Where's my tie? What should I wear?'" Some forces try to justify such male chauvinism by saying it is part of "traditional African culture" and therefore an expression of opposition to imperialism. But this is a totally backward view. How can maintaining the oppressive relations between men and women lead to anything else but *strengthening* imperialist domination and reactionary rule?

Women have also been at the forefront of the struggle in South Africa. It's estimated that the arrest rate of black women for political reasons in South Africa is the highest in the world. A sharp example of the oppression of

Azanian women is that one black woman is raped every 30 seconds! Anyone serious about really changing the oppressive system in South Africa would want to liberate the black women—not put them "in their traditional place."

If there is to be real revolutionary change in South Africa that breaks ALL the chains, the fury and initiative of women and youth must be *unleashed*, not shut down.

The political program put forward by Mandela and the ANC cannot lead the masses in revolutionary struggle. But this is no reason for anyone—even those who hoped that Mandela would play a revolutionary role—to become discouraged. Mandela and the ANC have worked for years for negotiations and "power-sharing" with the government. In any revolutionary struggle, the people must deal with forces who try to keep things from going all the way and want to patch up a rotten system. And now the apartheid powers, trying to save their system, are engaging the ANC in talks. This is a sign that the enemy is weak and that there are openings to take the struggle higher and fight a real revolutionary war.

The racist South African rulers and their imperialist godfathers are desperate. . . . their system has no future. The future is with the oppressed black people. If they organize politically and militarily under revolutionary leadership and take independent revolutionary action, they can really be free. □

Youth Take On Barricades

Thursday, February 1, the government escalated its War on the People in Los Angeles. Once again, under the cover of the "war on drugs," the Police Department set up barricades around a large neighborhood surrounding Jefferson High School in South Central L.A. This is the fourth area to be blocked off by police since barricades first went up around "la Centroamericana" (in the Pico-Union district) in October 1989. And they made this move right after the L.A. Sheriff's Department murdered Oliver X. Beasley, a Black man and a Muslim, in South Central.

The RCYB in L.A. has responded to this by leading the youth to take on the barricades. The Brigade participated in demonstrations in the la Centroamericana district. And when the barricades went up in South Central the RCYB led a rebellious march through the neighborhood where people confronted the police and kicked down the barricades. They also challenged Mayor Bradley at a community meeting called to show the "support" of the people in the neighborhood they were about to barricade. Even though they brought some of their flunkies and cheerleaders to this meeting, the tables were turned on them right from the beginning when the RCYB, La Resistencia, and others called them out and disrupted their plans for an orderly and polite meeting.

Following is an interview with Brigade youth and others who were part of "dissing that Bradley boy!" (as one Brigader described the "community meeting") and the march against the barricades on February 1:

Question: I wanted to interview you about what's been going on with the barricades going up in South Central, and also Pico-Union. I think people who read the *RW* would like to know about it, and about what the RCYB has been doing about it. The government is saying the barricades are about drugs and gangs, and that the people want them. So why doesn't somebody just explain what this bullshit is really about.

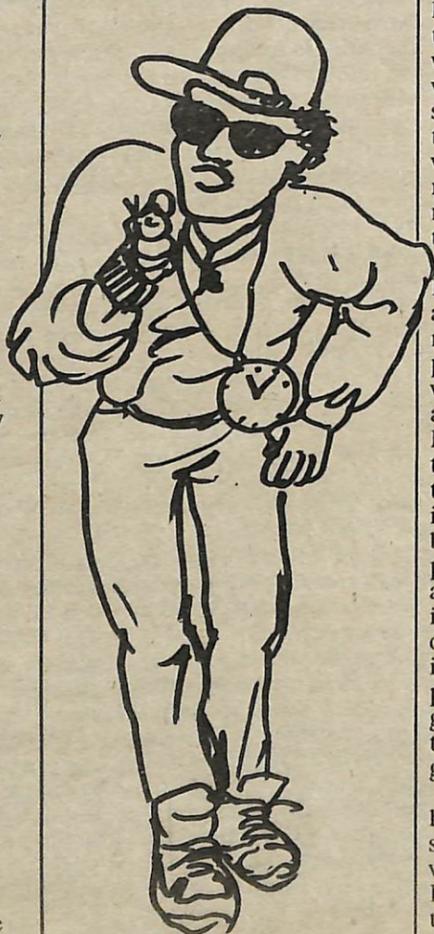
L.: Why don't we start with what happened at the meeting with Mayor Bradley?

M.: We went into the neighborhood with the Brigade before the meeting and talked about how they're trying to hammer us down and lock us down. We said we have to stand up and fight for a whole different kind of future. In five or ten minutes we had about fifteen people who wanted to go to the meeting. People who hate this shit. A bunch of people had Brigade T-shirts on and we went inside the meeting. And from the time we put our foot in there we were playing "Fight the Power"

and making it clear that there was people out here who are not going along with this.

L.: The meeting got started with a prayer by a reverend. Then Mayor Tom Bradley was introduced. He gave a speech that added up to nothing. He introduced the assistant police chief or some cat like that to go ahead and explain what their motive was for the barricades. He gave some bullshit excuse about the war on drugs. He said they interviewed 560 people and 558 of them agreed with it. So that's why they were going to put up the barricades.

Question: The police went door-to-door, right? What do you expect people to say when a policeman knocks on your door?



C.: Well, you know, they knocked on our door and we said fuck the barricades. Mostly it was old people who they went to, and you know how old people is about gangs and drugs. But I don't think it's really that. It's that they don't want us to have our freedom.

L.: So the meeting takes place and they open it up for questions. And they were asking people to give their names and addresses before they came up and asked a question. They were doing that and they were limiting people to like one question. When I went up to say what I had to say, the guy who was holding the microphone said, "Well, I'm going to hold the microphone." I knew he was going to take the microphone away, so I went right smack into the middle of the auditorium.

I just started going off. I said I was there to denounce police action. That the barricades was nothing but a war on the people. It's not actually about war on drugs. I also came out and said that George Bush, Manuel Noriega, Oliver North, the Israelis and many other parties were all in cahoots in trading weapons for drugs and bringing them into the U.S. and pumping them into the Black and Latin neighborhoods. So it's not actually a question of a drug problem. The problem is in the White House, and I pointed that out. And don't forget, I'm screaming this at the top of my lungs while they're getting very pissed.

I went ahead and said what I had to say in English, and then I said it in Spanish also. And while I was speaking in Spanish I also came out and directed this toward the Spanish-speaking people—that because of the barricades, under all the hype,

they were deporting people. They were deporting Central Americans. They were sending them back to El Salvador, and we all know what happens when they send them back to El Salvador, Guatemala and all those other countries.

A lot of people agreed with me and a lot of people disagreed. Tom Bradley and all these other guys were very uneasy and, sure enough, they started calling in police. More cops came towards where we were. When I was talking, I said I'm a resident of the Pico-Union area. I'm a witness to these barricades. I've lived it already. And the people of South Central are going to go through it. Mayor Tom Bradley, all he has to say is, "He doesn't live here. He has no right to say what goes on in this neighborhood because he doesn't live here. Well, if he actually thought about it, he doesn't live there either. And he's up there trying to represent the needs of the people, saying this is what they want. He doesn't live there and he attacks me because I don't live there. He's a god-damn two-faced hypocrite.

Question: So they claim everyone who lives there wants the barricades.

C.: That's not what everybody wants. It's what THEY want. And usually they get what they want automatically, no matter what nobody say. Tom Bradley tells them what to do and all that. I don't think it's right.

They sweat us for no reason. We could be walking up the street. They asks us where we going. When they ask me, I ask them where the fuck they going? I told them it wasn't none of their business where I'm going. So they gave me a ticket. I ripped it up in their

face and I said take me to jail. 'Cause it's none of their business. They got to talking a lot of shit. Matter of fact, it was two white cops. They went over to the car, talking about what you gonna do to him and all that shit. I told them you can do what you want to me 'cause you don't scare me at all.

My cousin was walking down the street and they said, "Hey niggers, where you going?" One of my other little cousins said, "Who you talkin' to?" and they just kept on riding by. See, they wouldn't like it if we went up to them when they were driving down the street and said, "Hey honkies, where ya going?" They'd be ready to arrest us. They don't want us to do nothing to them... they shouldn't do it to us.

One day me and the posse was walking down the street and this old lady was telling these police officers, "How come I got to walk way around here, I could get robbed or something." And the white man told her, "I don't give a fuck." We just stopped to listen and he said, "What the fuck are you doing staring?" It was a Black lady. And I just started thinking, this ain't right what they tryin' to do to us. Like they don't want us to have no freedom at all..."

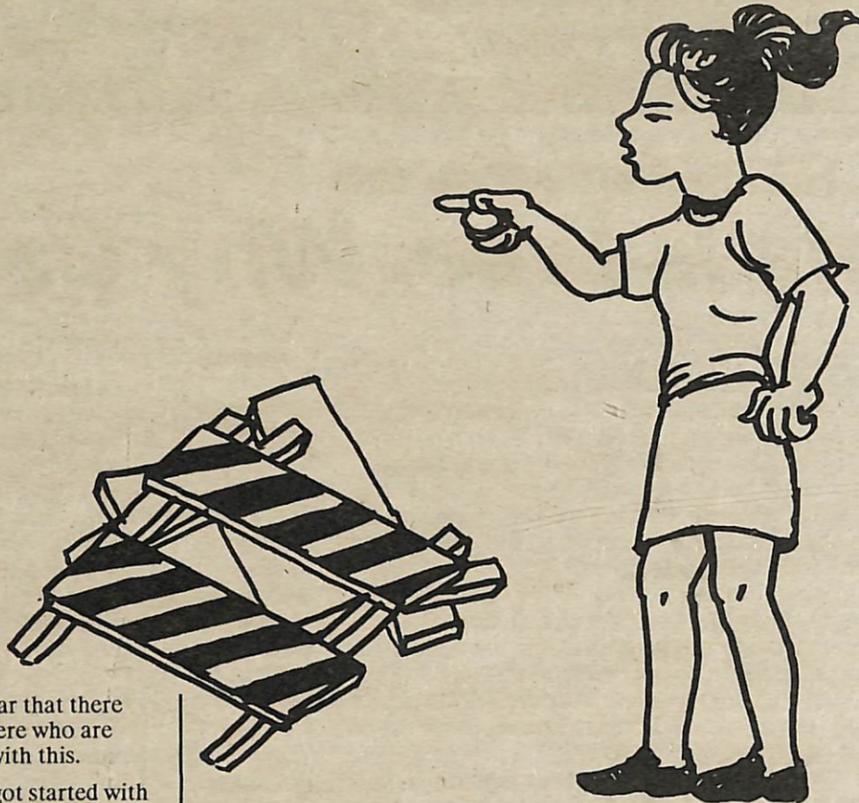
Question: With the barricades it seems they're trying to divide people to fuck them up—Blacks, Latinos—against each other. And they hope to have the white people with them. But I heard about some good examples of people breaking through this—especially at this meeting called by Mayor Bradley. Like when you spoke out. And I heard there was some controversy because one of the people from the RCYB who was there was white.

L.: The RCYB is a mixed group of people who want change.

M.: There was a white RCYB member there. And one of the Youth Gang Services guys came over and tried to split us up and said, "You're still in slavery, you're still following white people." And this one brother came over and said, "No, she's my people."

L.: There were a lot of Latin people there. And I feel they're trying to put a wedge between them with this war on drugs. They're trying to say to Latinos, "Oh, gangsters and drug dealers." It just so happens that many of the Black youth, because of the fucked-up situation that exists, have no other recourse but to sell drugs. It's a matter of survival and some people are forced into it. And it just so happens that a lot of Black youth are forced into it. And what a lot of Latino people see is a lot of Black youth selling drugs. And so they're trying to divide the Black and Latino people.

A lot of the Latino people



the in L.A.

are immigrants from El Salvador and Mexico. They come to the U.S. believing all the hype about jobs and opportunity and whatever the American dream is supposed to be. And when they do get here it's very disillusioning. And the cops are regrouping here and trying to get their support to put down Black people as well as Latin people. They want to use them to put them down. And because they're so new to



this country, they're hoping that their naivete will lead to that.

I had to let people know that, hey, these guys have a trick up their sleeve. Don't believe the hype! They've deported many people. That is one of the causes for this War on the People. To deport people, to jail people and keep people locked in. That's the reason for these barricades.

Question: White people who aren't racist have a responsibility to speak out against this shit, too. The RCYB needs to challenge white kids to speak out against this.

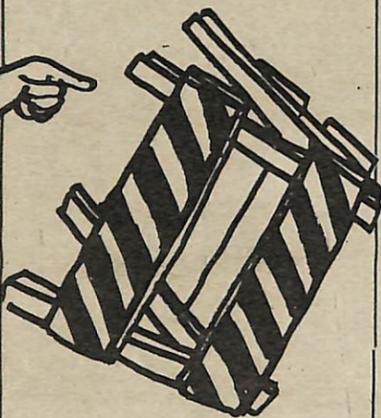
L.: There were some white residents of this community there and a lot of them opposed the barricades. There was a white guy who was very active in being heard. He was against the barricades. He said they were trying to splinter us, divide and conquer.

C.: The last fifteen minutes or so, when I was there, people came out saying, "Fuck them, fuck Tom Bradley, he ain't gonna do shit." I was like, "What's going on?" Then they finally told me. I was like, "Fuck Tom Bradley, trying to be white!" It's like he's doin' all this to get the white man off his back.

Question: During all this the RCYB was running around with your banner, "The War on

Drugs Is a War on the People." I heard one of the guys went up on stage with his RCYB T-shirt on and stood right next to Mayor Bradley showing his T-shirt. So, now tell about the march the RCYB had when the barricades went up.

C.: I wasn't with 'em when it first started. I thought they wasn't gonna show up. My cousin went out looking for them, and my friend and my brother. Then as they was walking up Hoover we met up with them. People was kicking down the barricades. . . . We was marching all around the neighborhood. As we got farther down,



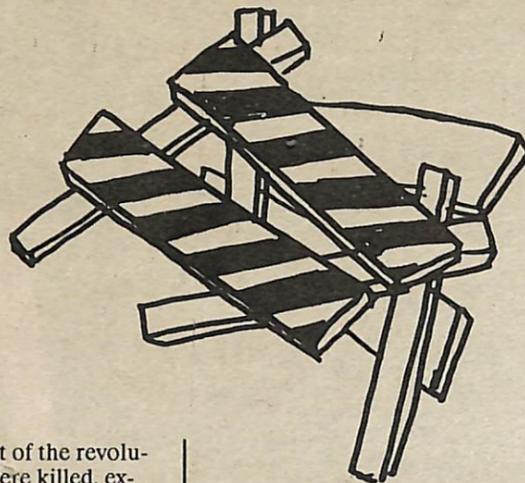
going back towards where everybody met at, the pigs sweated us. They started chasing us, telling everyone to come here, and all kinda stuff. They were chasing a couple people up and down the street.

Me and my relative told them we wasn't running. We got our rights to the street just as much as they do. We got all the rights that they got. But they don't feel that we got the rights that they got 'cause they police officers and we Black. So they had us all sitting down. They told us they was gonna give us tickets and all that stuff. They said they don't mind what we're doing, but don't walk in the street! That's why they said they pulled us over. They set us on the street. They came to me and asked me what was my last name. I looked at him crazy and said I don't have no last name. So he said, "So you don't have no last name." I said no. They let us go and we kept on marching. Most places we went there was a lot of people.

Question: When the older people see the kids fighting the system, doing something revolutionary, that makes them do better. The police play on the gangsters shooting each other and stuff.

C.: It is some gangsters shooting each other, but it's not as bad as they say it is. The drug dealing, well, it is killing people but that's no the real reason for the barricades, they're just trying to lock up the people. I don't think it's right at all.

Question: The government wanted to get over with the barricades and make it look like everyone would go for it.



L.: Just for the record, there was a complete media blackout on the meeting. It was supposedly a community meeting, which the whole town was supposed to hear about—this is what's going on in this neighborhood. Uncle Tom comes out to speak so it must be of some significance. But there was a complete media blackout. It seems to me they don't want anyone to know about this until the barricades are up.

Question: But their shit did get taken on. In a lot of ways, that's because of what the RCYB and the people who went with them did. Would that kind of thing have been possible without the RCYB? Isn't this what you're about: Get your posse together, fight the power everywhere—show the people revolution is the solution. Fear nothing, be down for the whole thing.

L.: Being from the RCYB, the solution is revolution. That is our solution. That is our only solution. Four hundred years and nothing has come out of it. There has to be a time for radical change, and that will happen only with violent means. Like it or not, that's what's going to happen. Historically, look at Russia in 1917, at China and Cuba and Nicaragua. It's going to be violent. There's no going around it. The '90s are going to be a very explosive ten years.

It's a matter of organizing the people and bringing out political consciousness. There must be political consciousness. That's one of the first things we have to do. And it's a hard job. We have the LAPD, with their battering ram and helicopters and SWAT teams and modern communications systems. We're fighting a battle that will be very complicated, but we will have the support of the people. In many areas, they do not have that. We're relying on the people and we believe the people will come through. . . .

There will be an awakening. During the '60s when the Black Panthers were doing their thing, the entire time it was very explosive. Vietnam was going down, Nixon, Watergate—so many things were happening during the '60s. It was one of the few times in the twentieth century, it's been a long process, but during the '60s I feel it hit a peak and there was the potential for a revolution here in the United States. But the power came up very strong,

as we know. Most of the revolutionary leaders were killed, exiled or jailed. . . . We have to get the resources we have, the knowledge we can get from books and talking to people, talking to the older people who have been there, and restructure the process. The '90s is going to be a very explosive time. It's going to be a good ten years.

C.: It's going to come down to revolution automatically because what Tom Bradley's doing isn't right. I thought he was Black, not white. The Black people and the white people and the Mexicans have their own rights. We ain't done nothing wrong to be locked up on our own streets.

L.: Inclusion into this political system is just jumping into bed with these decadent, crooked politicians—taking part of everything they do. That's no change for the people. It's part of appeasement.

Question: For a lot of youth, it's heavier to step out there for revolution than it is to join a gang. A lot of the youth aren't afraid to die, even for some-

thing like stealing a car or something, they say I'm not afraid to die. Then you say, "Let's live and die for revolution," and they say that sounds kind of heavy. It is heavier to stick your neck out, to cross that line. To fear nothing, be down for the whole thing. Not just acting bad but getting the people ready for revolution.

C.: I do think they need to join the RCYB. But some people don't want to go that deep into it.

Question: So what made you feel like you have to join? Some people will say you're too far out there, too crazy.

L.: It's a crazy world. Living in this crazy world you might have to take supposedly "crazy" actions. But, once again, the police are clampin' down harder. There's more of a police state happening in the U.S. They want us to believe that. But it's about economics. Who's gonna have what. And once again capitalism is based on inequality. For one to have, one must not have. It's getting down to some fundamental things.



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REFLECTIONS SKETCHES PROVOCATIONS

What do you say about a leader of a revolutionary party who can analyze the style of play and attitude of one of the teams in an NCAA basketball championship game in order to draw lessons about revolution? And what do you say about a self-described communist and Marxist-Leninist-Maoist who can address some fundamental questions to Carl Sagan and Stephen Jay Gould concerning the character of intellectual inquiry and debate in socialist society, while at the same time he can decry the ossification of Marxism into a state religion? Well, you can say that his name is Bob Avakian and that he is one of the most original and provocative thinkers of our time.

Reflections, Sketches, and Provocations is a collection of articles and essays written over a period of seven years, a kind of political compass of the 1980s. Consistently fresh and vibrant in his perceptions, Avakian can look at a movie like *Fort Apache, The Bronx* and launch into a discussion of liberalism; or take the opening lines of a speech by Ronald Reagan and tear apart its historical, even its geological, assumptions; or contrast two different kinds of "festivals" occurring simultaneously in Miami: the Orange Bowl hoopla and a rebellion in the Black community.

Yet as broad-ranging as these writings are, certain basic themes run through them: the obscene hypocrisy of the imperialists, the limits of reformism, the shifts in the world since the 1960s and the strategic weakness of imperialism, the need to oppose war with revolution, and the nature and necessity of revolutionary preparation. And if Avakian is passionately concerned with the revolutionary seizure of power, he is no less absorbed with the difficulties of exercising that power and of advancing to communist society where there would be no class distinctions and no state—no power exercised by one part of society over another.

From a piece that extends no more than a paragraph to an expansive essay, Avakian has that rare ability to not only offer up insights but to force his reader to argue with him. For those unacquainted with the work of Bob Avakian, this collection will serve as a splendid introduction. For those who have encountered him before, here brought under one cover are some of his most engaging writings.

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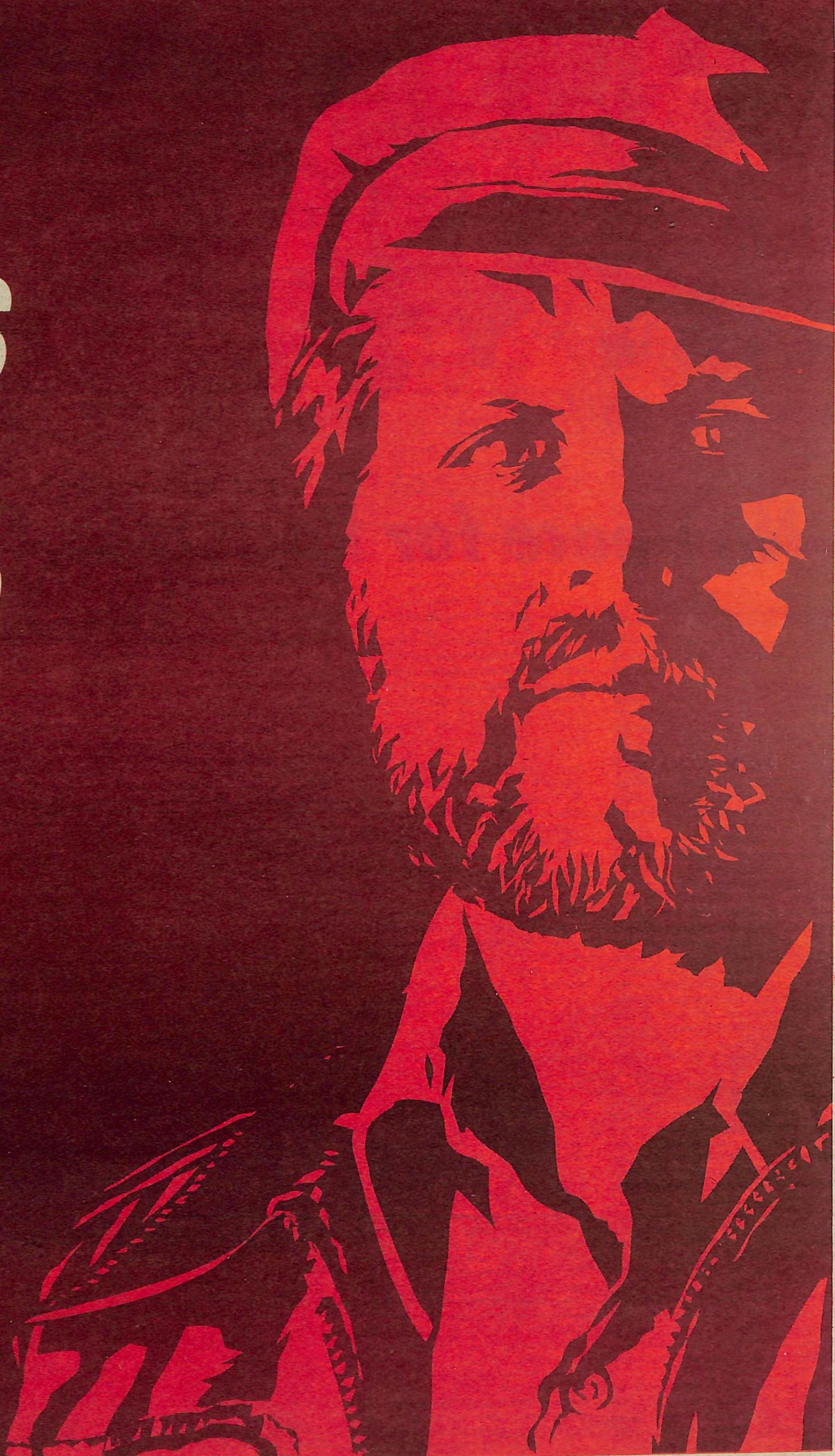
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Remember Malcolm X

"I'm not an American. I'm one of the 22 million Black people who are the victims of Americanism. One of the 22 million Black people who are the victims of democracy, nothing but disguised hypocrisy. . . . And I see America through the eyes of the victim. I don't see any American dream; I see an American nightmare."

Malcolm X April 3, 1964

Malcolm X was telling it like it is. America, then and now, is a prison for Black and other oppressed people. Malcolm X came from those oppressed people, and they looked to him for leadership.

It was for his uncompromising stand—for giving voice to the deepest feelings of the most oppressed—that Malcolm X was hounded and finally assassinated by agents of imperialism, 25 years ago this week, on February 21, 1965.

Malcolm X shook up Amerikkka. His bold defiance of the system, his intolerance for the oppression of Black people, his exposure of the rottenness at the core of the U.S. empire, and his basic revolutionary stand of fighting for liberation "by any means necessary" helped change the political climate in the country and the world. He was a revolutionary nationalist, but he is remembered by proletarian internationalists as a heroic fighter in the struggle against oppression and imperialism.

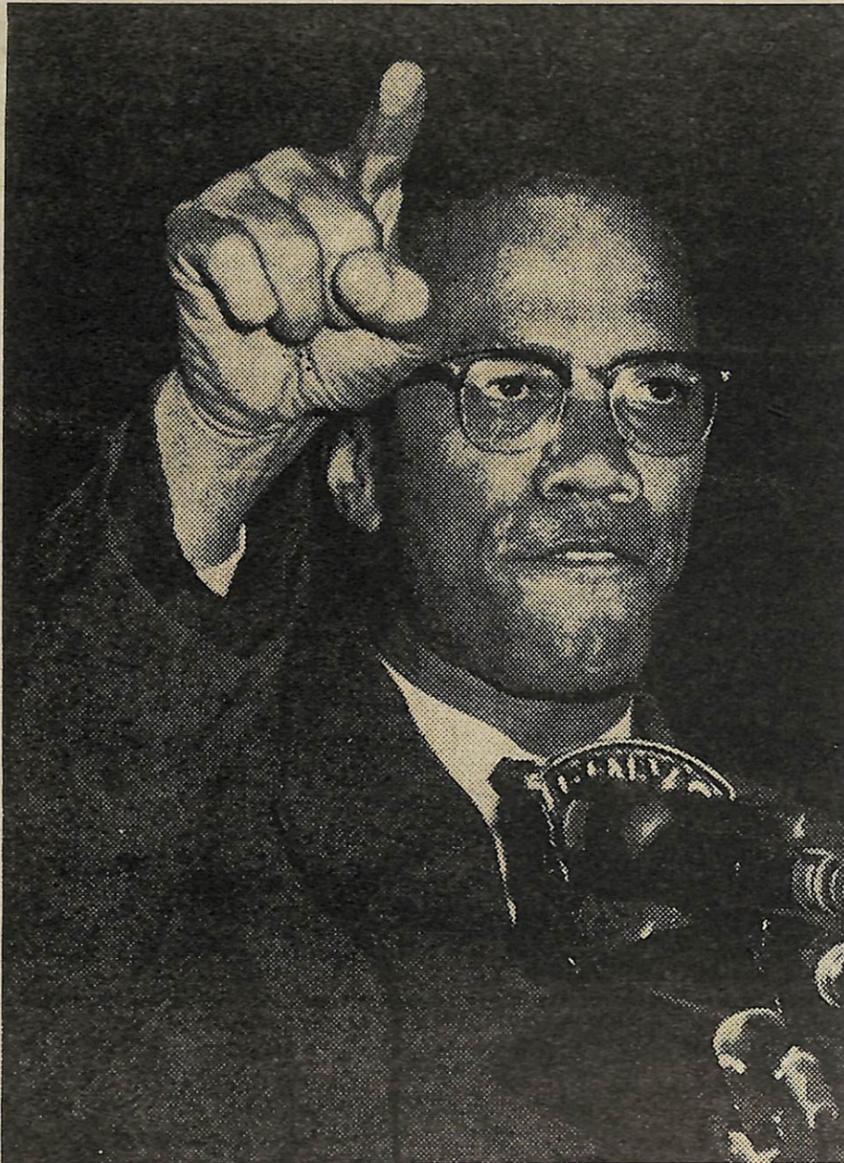
Malcolm X was righteously hostile to the American system. He always reminded his listeners that the Black people had been brought to America in chains and are still enslaved there today. He taught that chains of oppression can not be eased off; they must be broken.

"Revolution is bloody, revolution is hostile, revolution knows no compromise, revolution overturns and destroys everything that gets in its way. And you, sitting around here like a knot on the wall, saying, 'I'm going to love those folks no matter how much they hate me.' No, you need a revolution. Whoever heard of a revolution where they lock arms. . . . singing 'We Shall Overcome'?"

November 9, 1963

Malcolm X came up in a time of upsurge and ferment. He was one of the millions of Black youth who are treated like "nobodies" under this system. An eighth-grade dropout who hustled the streets in Lansing, Michigan and Harlem, he got into a life of petty crime and drugs. During six years in prison, he began to read hungrily, especially about the history of Blacks in America. Influenced by the Nation of Islam ("Black Muslims"), he took up the Islamic religion and changed his name to "X" to symbolize his true African family name that had been erased by white slavemasters.

Once out of prison, he became the most active minister of the Black Muslims. In his fiery speeches, delivered on sidewalks or inside theaters and temples, he exposed the white supremacist society and spoke out against daily outrages faced by the Black masses. He was like a lightning rod, attracting the most rebellious, disaffected, militant people of the ghetto, especially among the youth. He sensed their mood, and when he stood on the streets among angry crowds, there was always the threat of sparks being fanned into a general conflagration.



Malcolm X

Even later, after he had become world famous and traveled the globe on political projects, he wrote that he never left the ghetto in spirit, and never left it physically more than he had to. Because he stood with the oppressed people at the bottom of society, he was impatient with anything that would delay total liberation.

Today, in 1990s America, we see a vicious police clampdown on the oppressed communities being carried out in the name of a War on Drugs. Anybody who is confused about this "war"—anybody who thinks this war is something other than a war on the people—should check out how relevant Malcolm's words read today, as he spoke to people of Harlem during the summer of 1964:

"The more cops we have, the more crime we have. We begin to think that they bring some of the crime with them. . . ."

"In many instances, when you unite in this country or in this city to fight organized crime, you'll find yourselves fighting the police department itself because they are involved in the organized crime. . . ."

"They've passed a law that gives them the right to knock down your door without even knocking on it. Knock it

down and come on in and bust your head and frame you up under the disguise that they suspect you of something. Why, brothers, they didn't have laws that bad in Nazi Germany. . . ."

"When a person is a drug addict, he's not the criminal; he's a victim of the criminal. The criminal is the man downtown who brings this drug into the country. Negroes can't bring drugs into this country. You don't have any boats. You don't have any airplanes. You don't have any diplomatic immunity. It is not you who is responsible for bringing in drugs. You're just a little tool that is used by the man downtown. The man that controls the drug traffic sits in city hall or he sits in the state house. Big shots who are respected, who function in high circles—those are the ones who control these things. And you and I will never strike at the root of it until we strike at the man downtown."

June 28, 1964

Despite attempts today to distort the real story on Malcolm and Martin Luther King, he remained firmly opposed to the role played by King and all others who tried to collaborate with the system and cover up the reality of the so-called "American Dream"—which is a nightmare for the oppressed. He compared Black leaders who cozied up to the

power structure with the house slaves of plantation days.

"I just read where they planned to make a Black cabinet member. Yes, they have a new gimmick every year. They're going to take one of their boys, and put him in the cabinet, so he can walk around Washington with a cigar—fire on one end and fool on the other. . . . When people take to the streets in their explosive mood, will that one, that they're going to put in the cabinet, be able to go among those people? Why, they'll burn him faster than they burn the ones who sent him."

January 7, 1965

Early in 1964, a year before he died, Malcolm X broke with the Black Muslims. He felt the Muslim leaders had betrayed certain tenets of Islam, and he disagreed with their political passivity and their reluctance to antagonize the white power structure. He founded an organization to link the African-American struggle to the struggles of the Third World, and his political thinking further developed after extensive tours of Africa and the Middle East. He said, "I for one will join with anyone, I don't care what color you are, as long as you want to change this miserable condition that exists on this earth." He drew great inspiration from the Chinese Revolution led by Mao Tsetung, which he said "took a whole generation of Uncle Toms and just wiped them out. . . . No more Toms in China." He delighted to see the U.S. Army pinned down by Vietnamese freedom fighters. He firmly supported liberation struggles that broke out in Congo, Kenya and other countries, and condemned the sending of U.S. forces to put them down. There was in him a sense of exhilaration that the enemy was being assaulted from all corners of the planet.

"Here in America, we have always thought that we were struggling by ourselves, and most Afro-Americans will tell you just that—that we're a minority. By thinking we're a minority, we struggle like a minority. . . . as beggars, with our hat in our hands. . . . While if we understand what's going on on this earth and what's going on in the world today, and fit America into that context, we find out she's not so bad, after all; she's not very invincible."

December 20, 1964

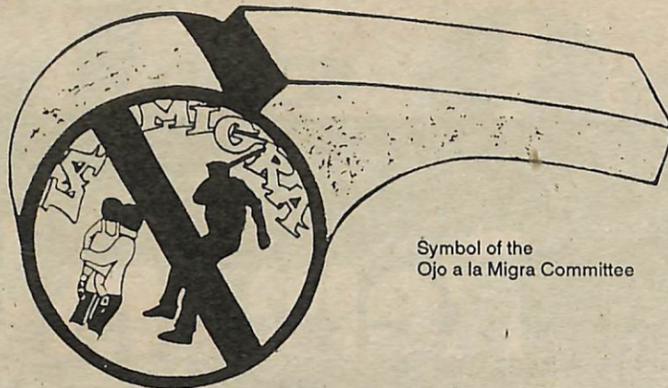
Malcolm X was a revolutionary and he should be remembered for that! But to make the revolutionary changes that need to be made, it is necessary to go beyond the philosophy of Malcolm X. As the special magazine section of the RW "Cold Truth, Liberating Truth" said: "The program and ideology of the revolutionary proletariat are the weapon and guide in the fight against the oppression of one nation by another and all the chauvinist and racist garbage that is spewed out to 'justify' this oppression. Even more basic, the proletarian line and program are the weapon and guide in the fight to finally end all forms of oppression and exploitation."

So as we remember the contributions of Malcolm X, it is:

**TIME TO TAKE THE STAGE,
TIME TO MAKE OUR RAGE
SERVE THE ONE AND ONLY
REAL SOLUTION
ALL-THE-WAY-LIBERATING
REVOLUTION**

Ojo a la Migra Committee Denounces LAPD Murder

JUSTICE FOR GABRIEL



Symbol of the Ojo a la Migra Committee

On February 1 an outrageous cold-blooded police murder took place at the Placita Olvera Church in Los Angeles. According to homeless day laborers who are sheltered at the church, Gabriel, a Mexican youth about 20 years old, and another homeless Mexicano were attacked by a drunk with a broken bottle. The police came and Gabriel and his friend were chased through church property. When they tried to climb a wall to escape, Gabriel fell down. He was lying on the ground when a LAPD Sergeant came up and shot and killed him.

Witnesses told *La Opinión* newspaper, "We were laying down in our sleeping bags when we saw two guys that were running and the sergeant who had his pistol in his hand. The one who was detained hid behind me, but Gabriel tried to jump the wall and slipped, falling to the ground. That is when the sergeant shot the first shot pointblank. Then, seeing that the boy was moving, he gave him another bullet and that is when the boy lay dead." Another immigrant witness said "This was death in cold blood."

The LAPD is saying Gabriel and his friend had stabbed someone. They are also saying Gabriel tried to stab the sergeant and that it's a clear case of "self-defense." The pigs say they even have the weapon Gabriel used, a filed-down screwdriver. However, one of the witnesses, who talked to *La Opinión* said the pigs came up with the screwdriver later, after they had searched all the immigrants in the area at gunpoint.

The following letter about the masses' response to this outrage is from the L.A. Migra Watch Committee (Ojo a la Migra). It was written in Spanish and the English translation is by the RW.

Comrades:

On February 8, at the entrance to the "Placita Olvera" church in Los Angeles which is a sanctuary for immigrants, there was a rally called by the Ojo a la Migra (Migra Watch) Committee, together with immigrants who stay at the church and nearby, to denounce the murder of a youth by the filthy Los Angeles pigs.

The youth, whose name was Gabriel, was shot by an LAPD officer on February 1. When some of us who work with Ojo a la Migra read the news in *La Opinión* (a Spanish-language paper—so far the English press has kept its mouth shut) we went to the scene of the crime to investigate and to respond to this criminal act. The Committee, together with the immigrants who live there, put together a leaflet right there on the street where the killing took place. We called a rally to show our rage and to expose the murder of this youth.

There was a lot of discussion. Everybody was angry but some said, well, there's a lot of theft going on, a lot of drugs; just a lot of confusion about what can be done and whether poor immigrants actually have any right to speak out. Our leaflet was distributed by young immigrants at La Placita and on the corners where

day laborers gather. There was broad distribution, lots of debate and discussion.

On the day of the rally, we arrived an hour early. The mood was of great impatience and anticipation. Some of the youth were distributing leaflets inside the church and outside, others used the leaflet as a megaphone, calling out "Rally, 4:30; Rally 4:30." About 35 people attended the rally, some came from other places, among them street vendors and factory workers, but the majority came from the area by the street and alley where Gabriel was killed. They are the most oppressed of the immigrants and they are often attacked by the authorities.

At the rally people had the chance to unleash their fury and anger, defying the police right up in their face. When the police arrived, people blew their whistles and shouted and chanted, "MURDERING DOGS, COWARDS, YOU MURDERED GABRIEL!" pointing right at them with their fingers. Then a Committee activist read a statement that said:

"We are the Ojo a la Migra Committee. We are here to denounce this cowardly act. They say we don't have the right to speak, that we have to have faith in the authorities, that they are in charge of the investigation. . . but we believe that we have every right to express our outrage, we have every right to denounce the murder of Gabriel. To the authorities, the lives of immigrants like Gabriel are worthless. We are chased by the Migra on the corners, in the factories and the neighborhoods where we work and

live, and we are murdered in alleys by pigs. This is what happened to Gabriel. The truth is that the English-language news media has said nothing about this. Of course, 'He's just a Mexican, who could be concerned about his life,' but we in the Ojo a la Migra Committee will not permit or tolerate these brutal attacks. The Committee is made up of immigrants and oppressed people, and our aim is to fight back and resist pig attacks by the Migra/police against our people."

After this another activist shouted, "A moment of silence now, followed by a lifetime of struggle." During the moment of silence you could see the people were very firm, very committed. Then there was another round of blowing whistles and pointing at the uniformed gunmen, shouts of "Dogs, murderers," and everybody dancing and showing their defiance.

The rally was very enthusiastic, it raised people's spirits, and it broke through the atmosphere that immigrants are victims and can't do anything. Later a reporter from *La Opinión* came and the witnesses to the murder firmly demanded that the newspaper tell the whole truth. One witness said the police have threatened them but that they fear nothing.

Some activists in the Ojo a la Migra Committee, Los Angeles

On the border

We received the following leaflet that was put out by THE CAMPAIGN TO SHUT DOWN INS CONCENTRATION CAMPS initiated by La Resistencia, P.O. Box 2823, Houston, Texas 77252-2823, (713) 662-4036:

On February 7, 1990 the INS announced an \$11 million clampdown against Central American refugees in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas, complete with mass roundups, detentions in concentration camps, and deportations. Armed troops are stationed outside the concentration camp. IT'S TIME TO SOUND THE ALARM!! IT NOT ONLY CAN HAPPEN HERE, IT IS HAPPENING HERE. The stark parallels to Germany in the early 1930s call out for us to RESIST.

The government has locked up thousands of immigrants in concentration camps and detention centers across the country and has put in place contingency plans to round up 400,000 immigrants and thousands of political activists in times of "national emergency."

- Last March 200 Central American refugees in the Bayview detention center in the Texas Rio Grande Valley tore down the fence and chanted: "¡Queremos Libertad!" (We want freedom.) This concentration camp has become the centerpiece of the INS's Detect, Detain and Deport policy.

- This January 50 Haitian refugees in the Laredo, Texas detention center went on a hunger strike exposing mistreatment and discrimination and demanding freedom. The guards responded with riot gear and arrested 17.

- In November and December dozens of people joined La Resistencia in Los Angeles and defied the barricades the L.A. police and la Migra have put up around a section of town populated largely by Central American immigrants. This is a scene starkly reminiscent of the Warsaw ghetto of the 1930s.

- Other demonstrations against new or expanded immigrant detention centers and jails have taken place recently in Chicago; Queens, NY; Houston; and the Las Viejas Indian reservation near San Diego, California.

Now what is called for is a national mobilization to shut down the INS Concentration Camp in Bayview, TX, north of Brownsville, a mobilization of all those who are ready to say, ¡Basta! Enough! and put it on the line and ACT upon that urgent conviction.

IF YOU'RE DOWN FOR IT, AND MEAN IT, JOIN US IN THE TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY MARCH 2 AND 3. TAKE ACTION AT THE BORDER IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY OF SOUTH TEXAS TO SHUT DOWN THE BAYVIEW INS CONCENTRATION CAMP NORTH OF BROWNSVILLE



Saturday, March 3, 11 a.m.

RALLY: Friday, March 2, 2:00 p.m., Brownsville, TX Elizabeth St. and International Blvd., entrance to the New International Bridge

DEMONSTRATION: 3:30 p.m. on the New International Bridge between Matamoros and Brownsville.

**SHUT DOWN INS CONCENTRATION CAMPS!
NO DEPORTATIONS!
FREE ALL DETAINEES!**

In Memory of Keith Haring

Keith Haring died February 16 at the age of 31. He was one of those rare artists whose heart was with the people and whose art really connected with the masses of people while he was alive. One New York filmmaker and friend told the *RW* he was a genuine "warrior artist for the people."

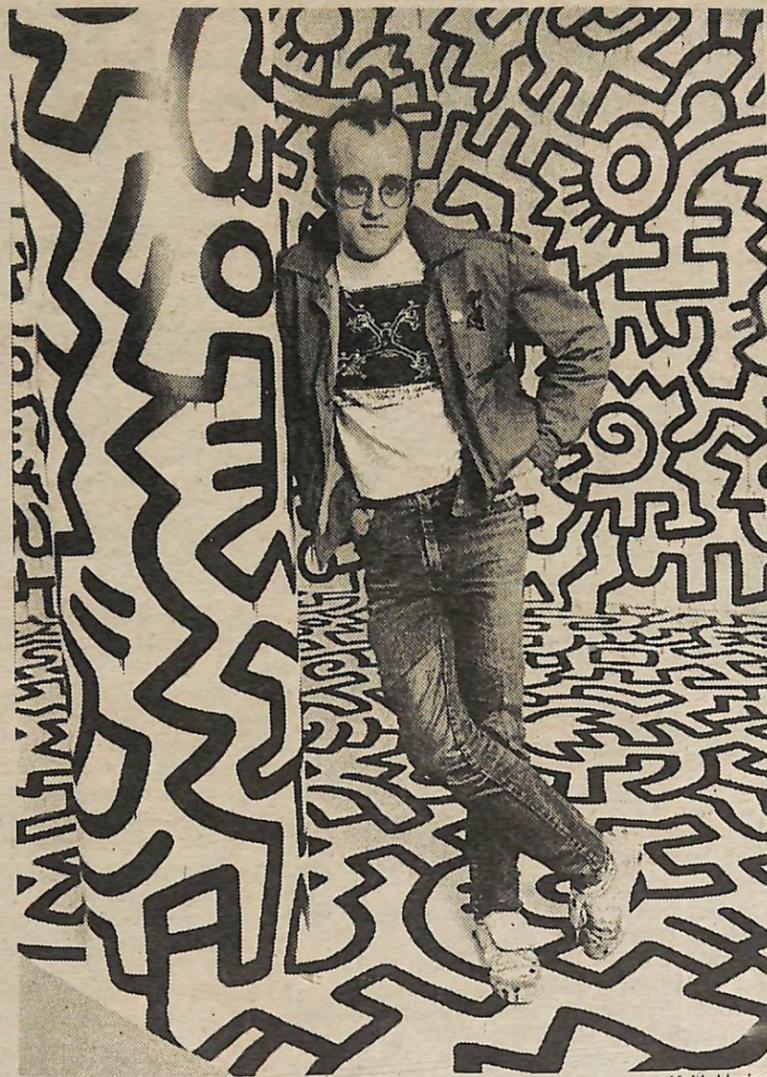
Last year when Keith went to Chicago to paint a mural with 300 high school kids, a reporter witnessed this exchange: "One girl in a cluster of seniors says to him, 'I really got to thank you.' Another pipes in, 'Yeah, not many people pay attention to us.' The first girl says, 'Most people consider us an eyesore.' A tall boy who has been silently watching adds, 'Like we don't exist.'"

When Keith arrived in New York City in 1978 from a small town in Pennsylvania, he found that much of the most exhilarating art of that time was happening underground, literally, in the subways, created by the graffiti artists, the

"eyesores" of the moment who the authorities WISHED didn't exist. The "writers," as these unruly youth called themselves, were transforming the trains and making brilliantly clear what has always been true: everything new comes from the masses, who are irrepressible. Soon they would storm the art world and Keith was part of that assault.

Keith wrote later: "I was immediately attracted to the subway graffiti on several levels—the obvious mastery of drawing and color, the scale, the pop imagery, the commitment to drawing worthy of risk, and the direct relationship between artist and audience."

He did not become a graffiti writer but instead took for canvases the empty black panels in the train stations where the ads were supposed to go. In white chalk, he did drawings of crawling babies, barking dogs, leaping dolphins, flying space ships, and sometimes exploding atom bombs. Haring's vision was a



Keith Haring

humanist vision of the world, a longing for social justice and a hatred of the crimes being perpetrated on the people. The now-famous "radiant child" was intended, he said, to symbolize "human power." Haring had buttons made and when passers-by stopped to watch him do the chalk drawings he would give them away. "I wanted to have something to make some other bonding between them and the work," he told an interviewer for the *Rolling Stone*. "People were walking around with the little badges with the crawling baby with glowing rays around it. The buttons started to become a thing now, too; people with them would talk to each other, there was a connection between people in the subway."

Many, many people connected to Haring's art; he became immensely popular throughout this country and the world. He continuously fought to keep his art from ending up where most paintings and sculpture do, locked up in the galleries, segregated from the masses of people. His aim was a different one: in a fundamental way, he wanted his art to serve the people. While he was not a revolutionary, the art he created objectively "helped the people fight the enemy with one heart and one mind," as Mao Tsetung put it in his *Yenan Forum on Literature and Art*.

To keep his art in the people's hands, Keith was constantly doing public murals and billboards; he started a store, the "Pop Shop," which sells his T-shirts, buttons and posters; and he created dozens of images and logos for progressive organizations and events.

The "Free South Africa" poster was perhaps his most famous image. It featured a giant black figure breaking the chain held by a tiny white figure who is X'd out in red. Many people still have this poster hanging up—for years Keith donated tens of thousands of them to be handed out free (rolled up with a rubber band) at anti-apartheid events, from Central Park rallies to the South Bronx Biko Festival.

Keith was gay, and in a vicious social climate—where traditional family roles have been imposed on the people (including gay-bashing and murderous government policies for people with AIDS)—he offered up daring and often humorous images promoting safe sex and advertising AIDS hotlines. He was active early on in the pro-choice movement.

As Keith's art became a powerful weapon in the battle for public opinion, the other side also tried to get a piece of the action. In the early phases of the authorities' "War on Drugs," his "Crack

Is Wack" imagery was drafted into service in this "war," which is really just an excuse to crack down on the youth, especially in the ghettos and barrios. In recent days, this war has become more broadly exposed as a reactionary campaign, especially as the forces who are actually behind pushing drugs on the youth have become increasingly apparent. Last year Keith made this observation: "What's most repulsive is that I don't think the powers-that-be really want to stop the crack problem. For them it's the perfect thing. It makes people very easy to control. After all, the government is really the one controlling the source. They're supposedly having a war on drugs now, but the whole time Bush was vice president the amounts of cocaine coming into this country were phenomenal."

In late 1988, Refuse & Resist!, an organization fighting the whole reactionary clampdown in the U.S., asked Keith to make a logo for their upcoming "Resist in Concert." He created a radiant dancing fist busting out of handcuffs, an image which continues to turn up at pro-choice demonstrations, protests against concentration camps for immigrants, anti-racist marches, and on the backs of various flagburners... In an early discussion about what the logo might look like, an R&R! activist asked Keith what he thought about the Refuse & Resist! statement. Keith responded, "Yes, of course I agree with it. That's what my whole life is about—resistance."

With great courage in the last years Keith Haring fought a battle against AIDS. And even though it killed him, it never killed his spirit. Last summer he said, "No matter how long you work, it's always going to end sometime. And there's always going to be things left undone. And it wouldn't matter if you lived until you were 75. There would still be new ideas. There would still be things you wished you would have accomplished. You could work for several lifetimes. If I could clone myself, there would still be too much work to do—even if there were five of me. And there are no regrets."

He will be remembered and missed. □



1986—Keith Haring's posters are distributed at the Biko Lives! Festival, South Bronx.

SEATTLE DEFENDANTS ON "WHY I BURNED THE FLAG"

The "Flag Protection Act of 1989" made it a crime to burn the American flag. But just since this law went into effect (October 1989), flag burning has become even more popular as a way to express hatred and contempt for the crimes of U.S. imperialism.

The government is now pursuing two test cases of this law in Washington, D.C. and Seattle. In both cases the defendants have filed Motions to Dismiss saying the law is unconstitutional. The D.C. case stems from a protest on the Capitol steps on October 29, three days after the Flag Act went into effect. Four people, including the notorious Supreme Court flagburner Joey Johnson, defied the law right up in the face of Congress. The others were Dave Blalock of Vietnam Veterans Against the War Anti-Imperialist (VVAW-AI); Shawn Eichman, a revolutionary woman artist with Refuse & Resist!; and Dread Scott, the revolutionary artist, who did the photomontage "What is the Proper Way to Display a U.S. Flag?" Joey Johnson was not charged—a blatant case of "selective non-prosecution," as attorney William Kunstler put it.

The Seattle case grew out of a demonstration the night the Flag Law took effect. Called by VVAW-AI, hundreds of people destroyed thousands of flags. Four people were charged under the Flag Law and also with "destruction of government property" (because a post office flag was dramatically burned as it was raised up the flagpole).

Oral arguments in the Seattle case were heard on February 14 but as we go to press the judge has not yet come down with a decision. (This could come down any day now.) The arguments in the D.C. case are scheduled for February 22. The Flag Law mandates that the decisions from these hearings must be immediately reviewed by the Supreme Court, probab-

ly this spring or fall.

The Emergency Committee to Stop the Flag Amendment and Laws is calling for people to come to the D.C. hearing, both inside and outside the court. For more information about these cases, contact the Emergency Committees at their national office at 189 Franklin Street, New York, NY 10013—(212) 941-5474, or contact the San Francisco Committee at (415) 267-6923.

The following are excerpts from legal briefs received by the *RW* that were filed by some of the Seattle defendants on "Why I burned the flag:"

Jennifer Proctor Campbell:

My reason for burning the flag of the United States of America was highly political, intentional and designed to make the people of this country wake up and take notice of what is going on around them. It seems to me that the American public has become too preoccupied with symbols, and, rather than questioning what the flag stands for, instead chooses to march in lockstep behind it, never questioning where we are going, or the effect our national policies have on the homeless, the poor, and those disenfranchised minorities and women, who to this day continue to be the victims of racial and sexual discrimination.

Burning the flag for me is one way to strip off this blindfold of unquestioning allegiance and to cause people to focus on the suffering of people, both at home and abroad, and to thereby move America closer towards everything it is supposed to be.

Whenever I look at the flag, I cannot help but picture the spilled blood of American Natives, the enslavement of African-Americans, the internment of Asian-Americans, and the breaking of the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo which

previously entitled Chicano-Americans to retain their land and culture.

Rather than demanding admiration and respect, the flag, in my view, cannot be separated from its history, and therefore deserves to be burned.

I burned the flag knowing full well that there are those who believe that my patriotism and respect for the flag is something that can be coerced through the passage of a law making it a crime to burn or deface the flag. I do not agree with these people and believe that my view towards the flag is inseparable from my view of America, and that to prohibit me from burning or defacing the flag is the equivalent of legislating how I should feel about this country's sordid history.

Darius Strong:

On October 28, 1989, I was involved in a rally and demonstration in front of the United States Post Office located at Broadway and Denny in Seattle. At the rally a number of what looked like American flags were burned. It is claimed that a United States flag belonging to the Post Office was burned. My involvement in that demonstration was for political purposes. It has been my belief that the flag of the United States is a symbol of certain values commonly held by United States citizens; those values have produced the nation which the flag represents. Among those values is a tolerance of expression of opinion, no matter how extreme or objectionable the expressed opinion may be.

My involvement at the demonstration and rally, which is the subject of this prosecution, was consistent with my belief that the burning of a United States flag is an expression of my disagreement with the Government's policy that you cannot burn a flag because a flag is somehow sacred. My involvement also constituted an expression by me that destruction of the flag is an exercise of my right to be free to express objectionable ideas, a right guaranteed to me and to all citizens of the United States by the Constitution of the United States of America. It was my belief in doing what I

did that I was communicating the idea that a person's freedom to express an opinion critical of the Government is of greater legal and moral value in America than the Government's authority to criminalize acts constituting demonstrations of or expressions of individual beliefs. I believe that flag burning can be quite as fundamentally patriotic as flag waving.

Carlos Garza:

I am a 32-year-old Mexican-American who was born in Billings, Montana. I moved to the Los Angeles, California area at the age of 4 years old.

My formal education consists of having completed the eighth grade in the Los Angeles public school system.

I believe 40 to 60 percent of those with whom I attended grammar school are now either dead or in prison. My own brother was killed as a result of gang violence.

I spent most of my working hours on jobs in factories or as a gardener. It is almost impossible for Hispanics in America to earn a livable wage.

Hispanics in America are very mistreated. Hispanics in America are essentially struggling to survive on a daily basis.

America is a beautiful and rich country. There should not be any homeless people on the streets of America.

I blame the United States government for the problems of homelessness, hunger and unemployment in our country. I blame the United States government for the fact that 40 to 60 percent of those people I went to grammar school with are either dead or in prison.

I burned an American flag to speak out on the problems caused by our government in America. The American flag symbolizes the problems of our country. The American flag was with the United States troops that took the land that belonged to native Americans. While the American flag symbolizes good, it also symbolizes the misdeeds in which our government has participated. . . . □

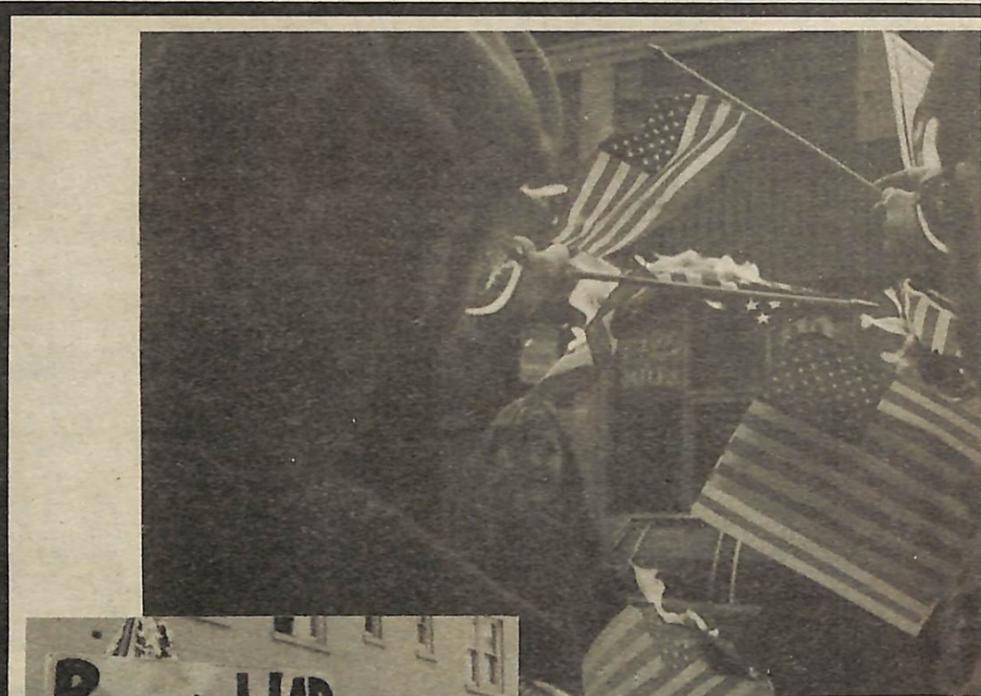


Pro-Choice Supreme Court Disrupters Jailed

On November 7, 1989 four militant supporters of women's right to abortion presented "oral arguments" to a very surprised session of the U.S. Supreme Court. They stood up and loudly exposed the Court's Webster decision as part of the government's ongoing efforts to take away women's right to abortion. According to court observers, this was the first time in history that the U.S. Supreme Court was disrupted by a political protest.

On February 16, 1990 the D.C. Superior Court sentenced the four "Supreme Court Disrupters" to four days in jail, with 26 additional days suspended, and one year of probation. This sentence stands in stark contrast to the extreme leniency shown by the same D.C. court toward hundreds of Christian Operation Rescue fascists who blocked streets in downtown Washington and attacked a number of Washington area women's clinics last November—they were all released within a matter of hours.

This outrageous decision and sentence once again demonstrates the support from the highest levels of government for crushing women's struggle for reproductive freedom. Defiantly unapologetic, Michelle Pahl from Refuse & Resist! said that she and her co-defendants "do not accept the proposition that the high court can encourage reactionaries who invade and disrupt women's clinics, and can prevent women from exercising control over their own lives, and then turn around and claim that their chambers are sacrosanct and that the court is above politics. As long as they do not respect women's institutions, we will have no respect for their institutions." □



1,000 Protest Panama Invasion at Bush Visit



Joey Johnson

Joey Johnson:

"They've Inspired the Flag Rejection Act"

Joey Johnson gave a statement to the press in Seattle on February 14, the day the court heard oral arguments in the Seattle flag-burning case. The following are excerpts from this statement:

When the powers-that-be brought down and bolted into place the 1989 Flag Protection Act they instead inspired the "Flag Rejection Act." Thousands of people have righteously enforced this flag rejection act by burning or otherwise "desecrating" the flag. The fascist flag law that was supposed to threaten and intimidate has been met by active, in-the-street defiance, rejection, scorn and ridicule. The government doesn't want to admit the amount of defiance that has gone on against their law, from coast to coast, because this fascist flag law is supposed to be the demand of a nation of contented citizenry and flag worshippers. So, they are aggressively prosecuting the case here in Seattle and the flag burning on the steps of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., while they ignore the hundreds of other flag burnings that have been going down.

I believe what happened here in Seattle October 28 was particularly inspiring because here you had Vietnam Veterans taking all the hatred for the red, white and blue brainwash they were put through, calling for a festival of defiance and napalming a thousand American flags and linking up with others—including a fresh '90s generation of youth who ain't got that 1963 naivete but instead have already got their eyes wide open and already seen through the patriotic hype! This is a fine mix to head into the '90s with. Today it is great to be standing here with these defendants who, for some of their own reasons and for some reasons we share in common, decided that this flag law had to be defied and

went out and did it.

The U.S. media has jumped on the crisis in Eastern Europe to score some big propaganda points and say that Western-style democracy is different, that political repression of dissidents is not carried out here. But these prosecutions here today show that this is a lie. I believe it's great that it became quite contagious: among the Romanian masses' rebellion against the Ceausescu regime to desecrate the Romanian flag by cutting the center out of the Romanian flag. To me, that was great! But the media here calls that "heroic" while those who burn and desecrate the American flag are called criminals. I hope the masses of people in Eastern Europe are hearing about this new fascist flag law here in the U.S. and the defiance that is going on against it, because they can get a real living example of American democracy's hypocrisy. In the world today phony communism is dead. But I say, "Long live real communism!", because we have seen the wonders of the free market and this Western-style democracy shit and it doesn't work.

Today I believe things are looking excellent for the opponents of the old order all over the world. And I believe there is tremendous basis for optimism in the world today for those who look beyond the way things are now. I know seeing American flags burn here in the U.S. in the belly of the beast brings joy to the hearts of millions and millions of the oppressed around the world. I am looking forward to the furthest horizon to the day when we can not only burn the flag of the empire but bring down the empire itself. Looking to the future, we in the RCYB say: Fear Nothing, Be Down for the Whole Thing. □



February 7, San Francisco Bay Area. George Bush was met by demonstrations wherever he went. About 200 anti-nuke activists and Greenpeace supporters protested his morning speech outside Lawrence Livermore Lab. Later, more than 1,000 people filled the streets in S.F. around the hotel where Bush was speaking. The protest was sponsored by ACT UP, BACAOR (Bay Area Coalition Against Operation Rescue), All People's Congress, CISPES and others. Police were out in force, on the streets and on the roofs, but the people had the day.

The crowd, mostly youth, condemned Bush and the U.S. government for many crimes: For attacks on people with AIDS, attacks on abortion, homelessness, the rape of the rain forests, for the Panama invasion, for Central America. And as one young woman said, "Just everything."

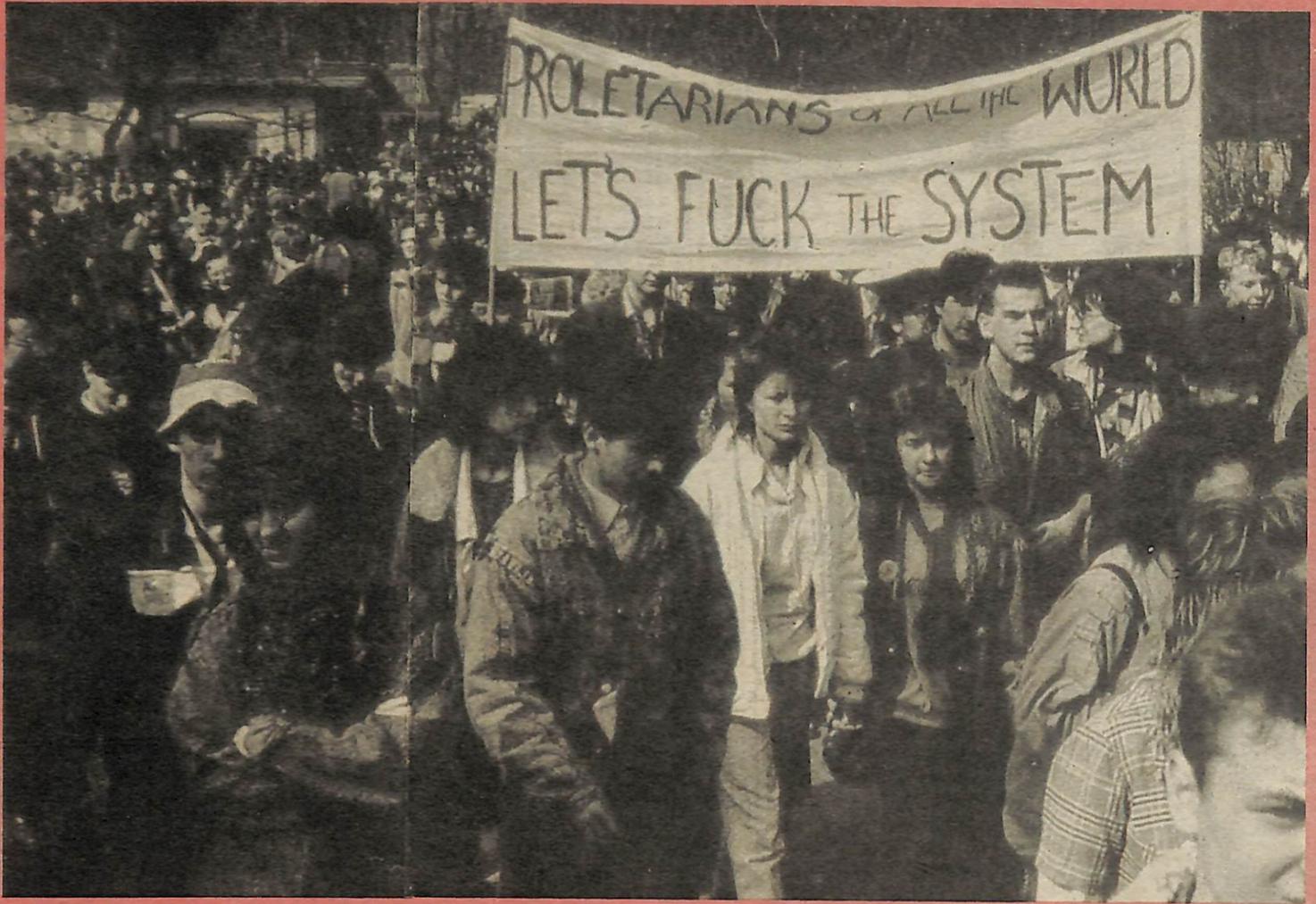
Mass flag burnings were the order of the day as hundreds of people defied the "flag law." This went right up in the face of current FBI investigations going on around recent flag burnings in the Bay Area. The Emergency Committee to



Stop the Flag Amendment and Laws led one flag burning that many people joined. Vietnam vets, students, an anarchist, and a woman who brought a flag she had gotten from the Nevada Test Site all gave statements as they burned large cloth flags. Someone brought a thousand paper flags ("points of light") which were passed out and burned. More than thirty cloth flags and hundreds of paper ones were set on fire. Bush effigies were also burned while people chanted, "Guilty, guilty, guilty." And Refuse & Resist! burned doors of a U.S. concen-

tration camp marked "Casual Users" and "Black Youth" as people chanted, "The war on drugs is a war on the people."

Demonstrators barricaded the intersections to try and block Bush's motorcade, and the authorities tried to use a decoy motorcade to divert demonstrators. But when the real motorcade took another route, Bush was confronted with people yelling and giving him the finger and his limo was pelted with eggs. □



Crisis in the Soviet Union:

A Call to Students and Intellectuals— Research to Understand and Change the World

The world is being rocked, and the epicenter today is the Soviet bloc. Yet most discussion and analysis of these earthshaking events—whether mainstream or “left”—is stale, superficial and suffocating.

In the West the upheaval is labeled the “collapse of communism,” and government and media figures gloat over the supposed “triumph of capitalism and democracy”—even as poverty, homelessness, misogyny, racism, political repression, fiscal crises and urban decay mount daily. In the East the turmoil is called a step toward “revitalizing socialism.” Both sides agree that what exists in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe is “socialism” and “Marxism.” Both, then, would have us believe that no higher form of society is possible; what we see today—whether Western-style capitalist democracy or Soviet-style “socialism”—is all we can get. Some even proclaim the “end of history.”

THE FORBIDDEN ANALYSIS—OR WHY REVOLUTIONARY MARXISTS CELEBRATE THIS SO-CALLED “CRISIS OF SOCIALISM”

There is another way to look at events in the Soviet bloc, one that doesn't make it onto the evening news and is all but outlawed even in most “left” discussions of the Soviet Union. This forbidden viewpoint holds that the Soviet crisis is not a crisis of genuine socialism and revolutionary Marxism but a crisis of state capitalism and revisionism. It welcomes the fall of bankrupt and reactionary regimes, socialist in name only, from East Berlin to Prague. It views the political/economic turmoil in the Soviet empire not as a “triumph of the West” but as part and parcel of a global crisis of imperialism that could grow to consume many other regimes—far from Eastern Europe—and herald possibilities for truly revolutionary change. But much depends on many of us understanding and seizing the moment. . .

We call upon students—grads and undergrads—to join in a major research project to study and analyze the roots of the current Soviet crisis.

We are a group of academics, intellectuals and activists who are united that the Soviet Union is neither a revolutionary socialist society nor working to advance revolution internationally. Some of us are Maoists who view the Soviet Union as an imperialist state. Our research focuses on the deep contradictions in the Soviet economy and their relationship to global political and economic developments. This project is no sterile academic exercise but a serious effort to put our skills and understanding to work to help answer the history-turning questions on the minds of millions: what is the cause of this political earthquake and where is it headed? Expertise (Soviet studies, economics) is welcomed but not required; general agreement with our approach and a serious desire to break out of the confines of mainstream discussion is. Much good work has been done; much more needs doing.

Let us revive the spirit of the students and intellectuals of the 1960s who fought the power not only in the streets but intellectually as well—through penetrating research, analysis and criticism that was not intimidated by established dogma or afraid of upending prevailing sacred cows.

For those who think history isn't over, but maybe just beginning...

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