

# REVOLUTIONARY WORKER

Voice of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

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*Dispatches: Report from the People's War in Nepal*  
Part 4:

## Rifles and a Great Vision

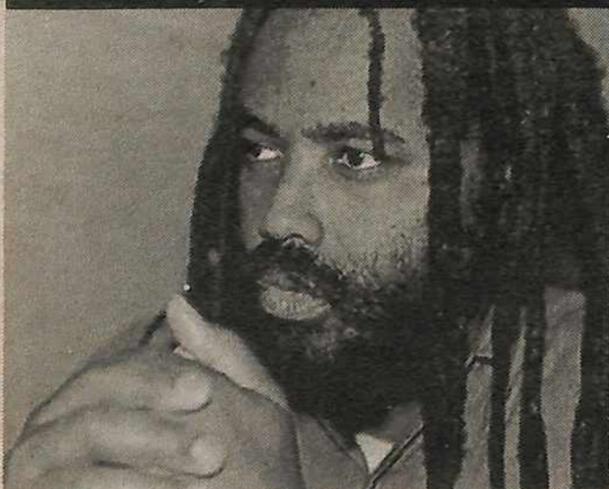


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People's army platoon clearing the ground for a memorial to the martyrs in the Eastern Region.

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The Struggle  
Continues**



As of August 1, 1999 Chairman Gonzalo (Abimael Guzmán) has been held in isolation for...

## 6 Years, 291 Days

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

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

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



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## Three Main Points

by Bob Avakian  
Chairman of the RCP, USA

*What do we in the Revolutionary Communist Party want people to learn from all that is exposed and revealed in this newspaper? Mainly, three things:*

1) *The whole system we now live under is based on exploitation— here and all over the world. It is completely worthless and no basic change for the better can come about until this system is overthrown.*

2) *Many different groups will protest and rebel against things this system does, and these protests and rebellions should be supported and strengthened. Yet it is only those with nothing to lose but their chains who can be the backbone of a struggle to actually overthrow this system and create a new system that will put an end to exploitation and help pave the way to a whole new world.*

3) *Such a revolutionary struggle is possible. There is a political Party that can lead such a struggle, a political Party that speaks and acts for those with nothing to lose but their chains: The Revolutionary Communist Party, USA.*

*This Party has the vision, the program, the leadership, and the organizational principles to unite those who must be united and enable them to do what must be done. There is a challenge for all those who would like to see such a revolution, those with a burning desire to see a drastic change for the better, all those who dare to dream and to act to bring about a completely new and better world: Support this Party, join this Party, spread its message and its organized strength, and prepare the ground for a revolutionary rising that has a solid basis and a real chance of winning*

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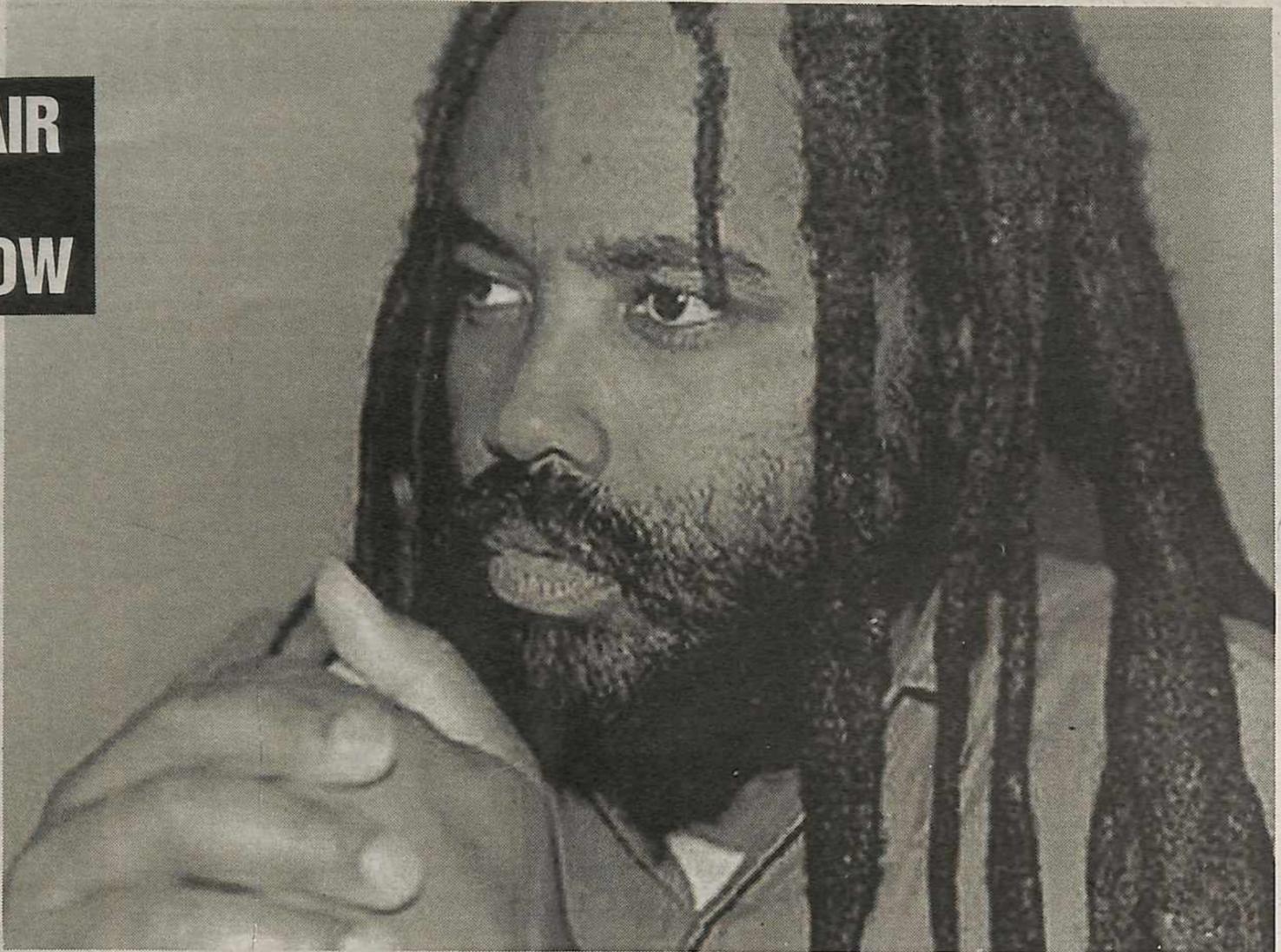
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**ON THE AIR  
FROM  
DEATH ROW**



Mumia Abu-Jamal

# Mumia Demolishes the Lies of the Enemy

Following is the text of a radio interview with Mumia Abu-Jamal on the Bill Anderson Show, radio station WHAT in Philadelphia. This interview was done after Vanity Fair magazine and the 20/20 show claimed that a new witness, Philip Bloch, had come forward with an absurd tale about how Mumia had "confessed" to him during a prison visit by Bloch in 1992, when Bloch was a volunteer with the Pennsylvania Prison Society. The WHAT radio interview was periodically interrupted by the prison authorities but these interruptions have been edited for the readers' benefit. For more on this story, see RW 1015, "A Myth Repeated: A Reply to Vanity Fair and the F.O.P." by C. Clark Kissinger.

**Mumia:** Good morning, and thank you for allowing me to join you this morning. I wanted to thank you, Bill, and your dad, and the WHAT and WCHJ family for being so supportive. Ask your questions.

**Bill Anderson:** Well, plain and simple, a lot has come out over the last couple of days over alleged statements that were made several years ago. When you first heard about Mr. Bloch's statements, what was your response?

**Mumia:** Anger ... anger and then a kind of amusement, I mean, I laughed. Laughing, of course, was not my first reaction, I was angry and then I laughed because it's utterly ridiculous. It doesn't pass the laugh test, as

they used to say about the OJ trial. How do you go from Socrates to, "Yeah, I did it." I mean it's incredible, it's not even logical. That's the point.

**Bill Anderson:** Did you have the type of relationship with Mr. Bloch that he claims you had?

**Mumia:** Well, he was an official prison visitor, that is, a member of the Pennsylvania Prison Society. These are people who can visit any prisoner in any prison in the Commonwealth, any state prison. So, I did visit with him on several occasions because I was telling him about things that were happening at Huntingdon. People were being beaten, people were being starved. It's a very vicious jail, I wrote about it in some detail in *Live From Death Row*. But he was one among many, I mean the question that must come to anyone is, why him, who is he? You know? And it's just patently illogical. I don't know what his motivation is, but I think we shall learn that in time. Perhaps it's his quest to have his 15 minutes of fame, I don't know and I really don't care. But I think it shows a kind of desperation on the other side. And it shows a kind of acknowledgment, in their minds at least, that people are not ... People do not believe the lie that two cops forgot a confession for two months. So this is their attempt to kind of supplement that lie with another lie.

**BILL ANDERSON:** There has been, and again as the media gets a hold of this they

have made statements that many people know not to be true, but one of the statements is that you have never stated publicly that you are innocent. Is that true?

**Mumia:** Well, all one has to do is, again, go through the transcript of the trial. I said that to the people who it mattered most to, not to the media, but to the jury. I told them that at my trial, it's in the transcript, it's in writing, you don't have to believe anything I say. Look at the transcript and see what it said. Again, people will say whatever they want to say, but the record is the record.

**BILL ANDERSON:** This person clearly is not a friend of yours.

**Mumia:** I would not say so, no.

**BILL ANDERSON:** OK, and that is what he is presenting. With all of this that is taking place and as long as you have been dealing with these situations, do you still maintain positive feelings about your struggle for a new trial?

**Mumia:** I have positive feelings about my people, about our supporters, about the need to battle and campaign for it. Do I have positive feelings about the Pennsylvania judiciary? I mean, come on, do you? Does anybody? But you do what you must, we do what we must because we understand the nature of the system. We understand that justice is not a right that is granted to people, that people must FIGHT for it, you see. And that's my reality and

that's yours as well, it's all of our realities. Also ...

**BILL ANDERSON:** I'm sorry, go ahead...

**Mumia:** ... I just wanted to say I heard you and Mary yesterday and I had a big belly laugh. It has been about 17 or 18 years since I talked to Mary, and of course we have never had the pleasure of discussing things—you and I. But the points that she was making and the points that you were making were absolutely on key. I mean, all one has to do is use their common sense. That's all you have to do. And, you know, why now?...

**BILL ANDERSON:** Um-hmmm.

**Mumia:** ... Ask yourself that question and then seek for that answer. I can't tell you that, I mean, I haven't heard from this guy since 1992.

**BILL ANDERSON:** One of the things that often comes up with me as we discuss this case is how you stay so focused on addressing so many other issues and continuing to write, recording the different segments on different issues, releasing statements on different injustices taking place in the country and in the world. How do you stay so focused on those issues when clearly you are in a daily struggle for your own life?

**Mumia:** Well, you know, aren't we all? I

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Philadelphia, 1996

## ON THE AIR FROM DEATH ROW

Continued from page 3

mean, we live in a situation... Ask yourself if the parents and cousins of Tyisha Miller now believe that they are in a struggle for their lives. They didn't think so before what happened to their daughter happened. Ask if the family, the mother and father of Amadou Diallo, from Senegal, thought they were in a struggle for their lives. They didn't think so until what happened to their son. But the reality of the situation is all of us, everyday, are involved in struggles for our lives. We may not perceive it that way because we are caught up in this kind of consumerist corporate culture, but one day Amadou Diallo was just an average guy, and the next day he was a martyr. So no one knows what today will bring, do they? And I'm involved, I guess, with movements of people around the world because we're all, we're all sharing the same life and the same breath. Because I feel for those people and they feel for myself. I want to thank also my sister Pam Africa, who has been there when I could not get there, been my voice and my spirit to people who could not be close to me and talk to me. She has been on top of the game, I mean really superb.

**BILL ANDERSON:** *There are a couple of people here in Philadelphia, a couple of talk show hosts here in Philadelphia, who are outspoken in opposing you and want to ask several questions. I am not going to dive into legal questions for obvious reasons, they are to be addressed by those with that legal background, but do you look forward to the opportunity to tell your side of the story if that opportunity is finally granted?*

**Mumia:** I look forward to a new trial, Bill. Something that... My lawyer, Len Weinglass, was the first to say it but obviously he wasn't the first to think it... This is a guy who taught at law school for a while, was a lawyer, has been a lawyer for perhaps 25, 30 years... When he read the transcript and reviewed the case he said, "You haven't had a trial." And that's because all of the so-called protections and rights that this alleged constitution grants to people, it looks

fine when you read it on paper, it looks great when you read it in a law book, but when you walk into a courtroom and say, "This is my right and I demand this," they look at you like you've come from Mars or from the moon. The right to self-representation, the right to examine and cross-examine witnesses, the right to have witnesses in your defense, the right to open and close to a jury. The right of self-representation or representation by a lawyer of your choosing. None of those are really rights. They're words on paper that like any other amendments to the constitution that have been written in there for hundreds of years, when you apply them in a courtroom you find out they are legal fictions, they don't exist.

**BILL ANDERSON:** *Another thing that has come up, and Pam and I have had constant interaction with and is very quick to say, is that anybody that has questions she is happy to debate them and discuss the details of the actual case.*

**Mumia:** Absolutely.

**BILL ANDERSON:** *Have you maintained that same level, I mean obviously not the same level of accessibility, but have any of these individuals who are so outspoken in opposition to you, particularly in the media, ever reached out for you?*

**Mumia:** No, no, they have not. No, no, no. In fact, this recent so-called now remembered confession... I learned about it when you learned about it, by reading about it in the paper, hearing about it on the radio, you see. So, no, no, no, no, no... no, no, no, no. We're involved in what I like to call snuff journalism, and that means a journalism that supports one side of the story to the exclusion of any other side. There is only one side to them and that is the system's side, the media's side. And I mean you can see that every day. Those who have money and have power, they are the people that the media supports. Those who are poor and powerless, who don't have money, they're the potential bad guy in the situation. And the reality of the situation is that the media supports power as it is structured and it doesn't support those who challenge those power elites or those power interests. It demonizes, in fact, it demonizes. Look at it this way... if you examine critically what Phil Bloch claims, then doesn't that sound kind of diametrically opposed to what those

## Mumia Alert

Recently an article appeared in a Philadelphia newspaper speculating that a new death warrant could be signed for Mumia Abu-Jamal in August. On July 12, 1999, in the *Philadelphia Daily News*, columnist John Baer reported that the Governor of Pennsylvania could sign a death warrant as early as "next month" and that "state officials say they fully expect a new death warrant soon." The column on Mumia was printed together with a major article on state executions. As we go to press, the Pennsylvania governor's office has not contradicted Baer's statement.

Activists in the fight to stop the execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal have called for vigilance and preparations for a powerful response if a new death warrant is signed. The "September Organizer," a newsletter for Mumia Awareness Week, September 19-25, writes that "before any warrant is signed, people should phone protests to Governor Tom Ridge at (717) 787-2500, organize emergency response networks, raise money to take busses to Philadelphia, and if a new warrant is signed—contact media in your area the same day; hold a demonstration in your city the next working day; hold regional mobilizations the following Saturday; and build the Mumia Awareness Week into a nationwide response." □

two cops claimed they heard and forgot the night of December 9, 1981. Because on the one hand they say, "Oh yeah, Mumia said, 'Yeah I shot the m.f. and I hope he dies.'" And then they have this guy come out and say "Oh yeah, do you feel any remorse", "Oh yeah, uh-huh, yeah." I mean isn't that legally and logically inconsistent? It can't both be true, can it? You get my point?

**BILL ANDERSON:** *The whole situation to those who have read it, it doesn't make a lot of sense, and as I have pointed out before, not having ever met you but reading different statements and things, that would apparently, if it was true, would be a statement from just a silly person...*

**Mumia:** Yeah.

**BILL ANDERSON:** *... a fool. And that was not the presentation that I had been given. Why is it, and that's a question that comes up again and I don't know if it's for legal reasons or what have you, you write a lot of different statements, why haven't you addressed, even I guess with friendly media, the things that took place. Are you waiting for that legal opportunity, or...*

**Mumia:** I'm waiting for a new trial. I have a right to a trial, a new trial. I have a right to every right that that constitution says you have, not one, not two, not a half, not an eighth, you know. Or else just declare me a non-citizen. I mean it might sound absurd

but there are no rights, there are no rights until someone tries to exercise them. Then you find out truly what rights you have. Now of course Dred Scott told us that there are no rights that a black man has that white men are bound to respect. That was written in 1857 and we are supposedly in 1999. Those of us who know this system know that that's still the law. Well, you know, say it.

(PRISON: One minute remaining)

**BILL ANDERSON:** *Well, I hear that and we do need to go ahead and wrap it up, but it almost sounds like rather than compromise you'd be willing to pay the ultimate price. Summarize for us briefly and leave us with the messages you'd like the listening audience to have.*

**Mumia:** Well, I thank you for asking intelligent questions and I ask everyone to ask just simple questions like this. Is it logical, does it make sense, is it consistent. That's all. Because once you ask those questions, the answers have to come to you, and show that this is the latest fabrication, it is a lie standing on top of two or three other lies and it shows their sense of desperation that people don't believe their lies anymore. I thank you for this opportunity. I thank WHAT and WCHJ. Ona Move, Long Live John Africa!

**BILL ANDERSON:** *You stay strong.*

**Mumia:** And you. □



Thousands march for Mumia in San Francisco, December 1997.

# September Initiatives in the Fight to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal

**September 11:**  
**MUMIA 911, National Day of Art to Stop the Execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal.**  
This project involves many different artists and producers creating and performing works, and holding concerts, shows and exhibits devoted to Mumia's case, all on a single day. In addition to the special events, other artists and art institutions around the country will be dedicating their regular performances to stopping Mumia's execution. "Mumia 911—Emergency! On September 11, 1999, we will stomp the earth, lift our voices, write, sing, act and paint the walls. We will create a culture of resistance to stop the killing of Mumia Abu-Jamal."

**September 19-25:**  
**A CALL TO JUSTICE FOR MUMIA ABU-JAMAL—MUMIA AWARENESS WEEK.**  
A week of national and local initiatives around Mumia's case, culminating in a day of actions in 100 cities on September 25.

For more information contact:  
**Mumia 911**  
28 Vesey St. #2157, New York, NY 10007  
email: mumia911@mumia911.org  
website: www.mumia911.org  
NYC Office: 212-766-1356 Fax: 212-766-1867  
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**Mumia Awareness Week**  
511 Avenue of the Americas, #186  
New York, NY 10011-8436  
212-924-8585  
website: www.j4mumia.org

**International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal**  
Box 19709, Philadelphia, PA 19143  
215-476-8812 Fax: 215-476-7551  
email: Mumia@aol.com  
website: www.mumia.org

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The R&R Artists Network at rnrartists@hotmail.com

Organizers are determined that the effect of the week will be to make this case, and the issues bound up in it, a household word and a political dividing line in the United States and internationally. The call to the week states: "There is a growing awareness that the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal is a travesty of justice. His case has become the focus of a growing international movement. The issues bound up in this case include the death penalty, racial bias in the U.S. criminal justice system, and the punishment of political dissent. Where people stand on this case has become a benchmark of where they stand on social justice."

Plans for the week include: Student/Youth Day on September 21; and actions in the Black community set for: Sunday September 19—"Churches for Mumia"; Wednesday, September 22—"Housing Projects for Mumia"; Friday, September 24—high school and college walkouts to do mass leafleting for Mumia; Sunday, September 25—join major national actions for Mumia across the country.

# COLOMBIA: YANKEE INTERVENTION, YANKEE DOMINATION

In the early morning hours of July 23, a plane crashed in the remote jungle area of Putumayo in southern Colombia, near the border with Ecuador. This was no ordinary aircraft—it was a military spy plane, known as the RC-7. It was equipped with sophisticated radar and infrared sensors and was capable of eavesdropping on radio communications on the ground. On board were five U.S. Army soldiers and two Colombian Air Force officers—all died in the crash. News reports about the incident revealed that such U.S. air operations are now quite common. Last year U.S. military surveillance planes carried out 2000 flights in Colombia and other countries of the region.

Two weeks before the RC-7 crash, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)—the largest armed anti-government group in Colombia—began a large-scale military offensive. At one point, FARC forces battled government troops just 25 miles from the capital city, Bogotá. The FARC offensive rang alarm bells in Washington—and the U.S., the dominant imperialist power in Colombia, scrambled for ways to shore up the Colombian regime. Calling the situation a “serious and growing emergency,” Clinton administration officials proposed major increases in military aid—as much as *one billion dollars* for Colombia and other countries of the region.

These recent developments are focusing attention on the escalating U.S. military involvement in Colombia. Colombia is a major source of cocaine, and the U.S. government claims that its presence in that country is about “stopping the flow of drugs.” But this is a phony justification for the real aims of the intervention: backing the Colombian regime’s counter-insurgency operations and safeguarding U.S. imperialist interests.

The Colombian regime already receives more U.S. military aid than any other Latin American government—about \$300 million this year. In fact, it is the third largest recipient of U.S. military aid in the world, after Israel and Egypt. About 200 U.S. military personnel are stationed in Colombia to “train” Colombian troops, operate surveillance equipment and carry out other missions.

The U.S. military aid and military personnel are supposedly restricted to helping the “drug interdiction” operations of the Colombian army. The powerful drug cartels in Colombia control huge stretches of territory in the countryside where coca is grown and processed into cocaine. Colombia is also a major transit point for cocaine flowing from Peru and other Andean countries to the U.S. But increasingly, the U.S.-backed “anti-drug” operations are openly directed against FARC. According to the July 18 issue of the *Weekly News Update on the Americas*, “As combat raged throughout the week, the media reported that the administration of U.S. President Bill Clinton is now allowing the U.S. Embassy to ‘routinely’ provide the Colombian armed forces with intelligence information about guerrilla movements as they occur, instead of days later. Armed with this information—including U.S. satellite images and telephone wiretaps—the Colombian army is now able to know where and when the rebel troops are moving.”

The official line from the U.S. government is that FARC is heavily involved in the drug trade—making them legitimate targets for the “anti-drug” military operations. Gen. Barry McCaffrey, the head of the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy, said on July 16 that it was “silly” to make a distinction between anti-drug operations and the counter-insurgency war because the traffickers and FARC work closely together. But what is truly ridiculous is the attempt by the U.S. imperialists to portray themselves as the champions of “anti-drug” efforts.

This is the same U.S. ruling class that used heroin money from the Golden Triangle in Southeast Asia to run their secret war in Laos in the 1970s; the same ruling class that backed the pro-U.S. forces in Afghanistan in the 1980s who were deep into the heroin trade; the same ruling class that



General Barry McCaffrey, the U.S. “Drug Czar,” inspecting U.S.-trained Colombian troops at a military base near Bogotá, July 27.

was behind the Nicaraguan Contras who financed their reactionary activities in part through cocaine traffic into U.S. cities. Now, in Colombia, Peru and other countries of the region, the U.S. is using their “war on drugs” as a cover for counter-insurgency.

FARC is active and influential in almost half the countryside of Colombia, including coca-growing areas. And FARC has at times colluded with the drug trade and gained funds from this collusion. But FARC and other opposition forces certainly are not the cause of the drug problem or the main factors in it.

The cocaine economy in Colombia is tied to the fact that this country has long been totally dominated and distorted by imperialism. The major drug lords are part of the ruling elite in Colombia—the comprador capitalists and semi-feudal landowners who are closely tied to and subservient to imperialism. The narcotics trade deeply permeates the Colombian economy, and drug money flows through the veins of the Colombian ruling classes as a whole. There is widespread government corruption and complicity in the drug trade. Huge profits from the drug trade have gone into investments in cattle ranching, real estate and the tourist economy. And the drug money also flows to the U.S. where it is laundered through major banks and “legitimate” investments.

This flow of drug money only benefits a small section of society. The exploited and oppressed masses in Colombia are the victims of this setup. The Colombian economy is in a severe depression—the worst since the 1930s Depression, according to some accounts. Over 20 percent of the workforce is officially unemployed. According to *Z Magazine*, “Between 1990 and 1994, Colombians living below the poverty line increased by one million, to include about half of Colombia’s population of 33 million people. In the countryside, 48 percent of the land is owned by rich absentee landowners making up 1.3 percent of the rural population, while campesinos, comprising 63 percent of the rural population own less than 5 percent of the land...” Many landless campesinos are forced to work for large agrocultivators or farm small plots of coca for the drug barons.

The common people are targets of various reactionary armed forces that protect the interests of the ruling elite. These forces include not only the central army, but also the private militias of the drug cartels and paramilitary groups connected to the drug lords, coffee plantations, and other big landowners. These various armies often work hand in glove to commit

atrocities against the people. *NACLA Report on the Americas* (March/April 1998) described one paramilitary action in July 1997: “Over 100 heavily armed men in military attire occupied the town of Mapiripán, in Meta, for six days, killing some 30 local residents and virtually emptying the town as people fled in fear. According to Bogotá weekly *Cambio 16*, the paramilitaries first flew into the small San José del Guaviare airport, which does double-duty as the antinarcotics base, before going on to Meta. The installation, which is under the control of the Colombian army, is home to U.S. civilian pilots and other U.S. personnel. According to police chief General Rosso José Serrano, the U.S. embassy’s narcotics assistance section representative was at the base on the day the paramilitaries touched ground.” The paramilitary, narco-military and central army forces also join together in attacks on FARC and other anti-government forces.

The existence of various reactionary armies in Colombia is related to the lack of a unified national economy and a weak central regime. Historically, this situation has led to civil wars and complicated conflicts within the ruling classes, taking the form of conflicts between the central regime and sections of the ruling classes based in different regions of the country. The revolutionary internationalist journal *A World to Win* (1989/14) pointed out: “The drug barons have arisen within the context of the long-existing situation in the countryside and the country as a whole, of the thriving power of local despotic ‘warlords’ based on land, semi-feudal authority and private armies. ... the central state is able neither to impose its authority on the country as a whole, politically or militarily, nor to fully answer to the needs and interests of U.S. imperialism.”

This situation has led the U.S. to take an increasingly large role in Colombia, politically and militarily. The current president, Andres Pastrana, came into office with the direct backing of the U.S. And with U.S. blessing, he approached FARC for negotiations to end the armed struggle. The negotiations had the support of powerful sections of the U.S. ruling class. One indication of this: In June Richard Grasso, president of the New York Stock Exchange, flew into southern Colombia and met with a representative of FARC. Grasso told reporters he made the trip to make clear that the U.S. financial circles had great interest in the “peace process” and to discuss economic issues.

For its part, FARC combines armed struggle with negotiations with the govern-



ment and demands for political and economic reforms. FARC is associated with the Communist Party of Colombia, a revisionist (phony communist) party that was closely tied to the imperialist Soviet Union. With the collapse of the Soviet bloc, many pro-Soviet parties openly gave up armed struggle. FARC has not put down their guns—but it does not carry out a Maoist people’s war aimed at totally overthrowing the old rotten state, transforming the countryside through revolutionary mobilization of the peasantry and cutting all ties to imperialism.

The current negotiations between the government and FARC have broken down, for reasons that are not clear. The U.S. has responded with moves and threats to step up intervention in Colombia. Gen. McCaffrey is pushing for \$1 billion in “emergency” assistance to Colombia and other countries in the region that are “cooperating” in the U.S. “anti-drug” efforts. Jesse Helms, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said the U.S. must “bolster” the Colombian military by “expanding our training and intelligence assistance, upgrading communications, and increasing their mobility with Blackhawk helicopters.” A July 29 *New York Times* article focused on the U.S. training of a new “Anti-Narcotics Battalion” of the Colombian military. This unit’s mission is to openly go after the FARC guerrillas. A Colombian general said, “We are going to continue training battalions like this all over Colombia until we have what we need.”

U.S. intervention—under the cover of “war on drugs” or in any other form—can do no good for the masses in Colombia. The U.S. imperialists need a “stable” Colombia in order to protect their interests in what they arrogantly consider their “back yard.” But such reactionary “stability” can only mean more oppression, more death and more suffering for the majority of people in Colombia.

**U.S. Hands Off Colombia!** □

# KPFA: THE STRUGGLE

Last Wednesday night as I was heading over to the headquarters of KPFA radio in Berkeley to check in on the latest, things seemed pretty grim. Thousands of us had been in a toe-to-toe battle with the Pacifica Foundation after it seized this station 16 days earlier on July 13. The Pacifica management—who owns the station's license—had shut the station down, fired key broadcasters, threatened people with armed guards and police. Since then, 94.1 on the dial in the Bay Area had been stale recordings, reportedly piped in from Houston—while out in the streets a growing movement loudly supported the KPFA staff and denounced the foundation's moves.

And now the word had leaked out that the Pacifica board was considering just selling KPFA altogether—and the board vote was scheduled to go down that evening. I got out of my car and joined the crowd of 100 or so at "Camp KPFA"—the 24-7 encampment set up in front of the station. Then I heard the news: Pacifica had retreated big time! Mary Frances Berry, Chair of Pacifica's Executive Committee, had agreed that KPFA's staff could take back the station and begin broadcasting again—with no security guards and no gag rule forbidding them from talking about network matters. My first thought: *Wooh! The people have backed those suckers off!*

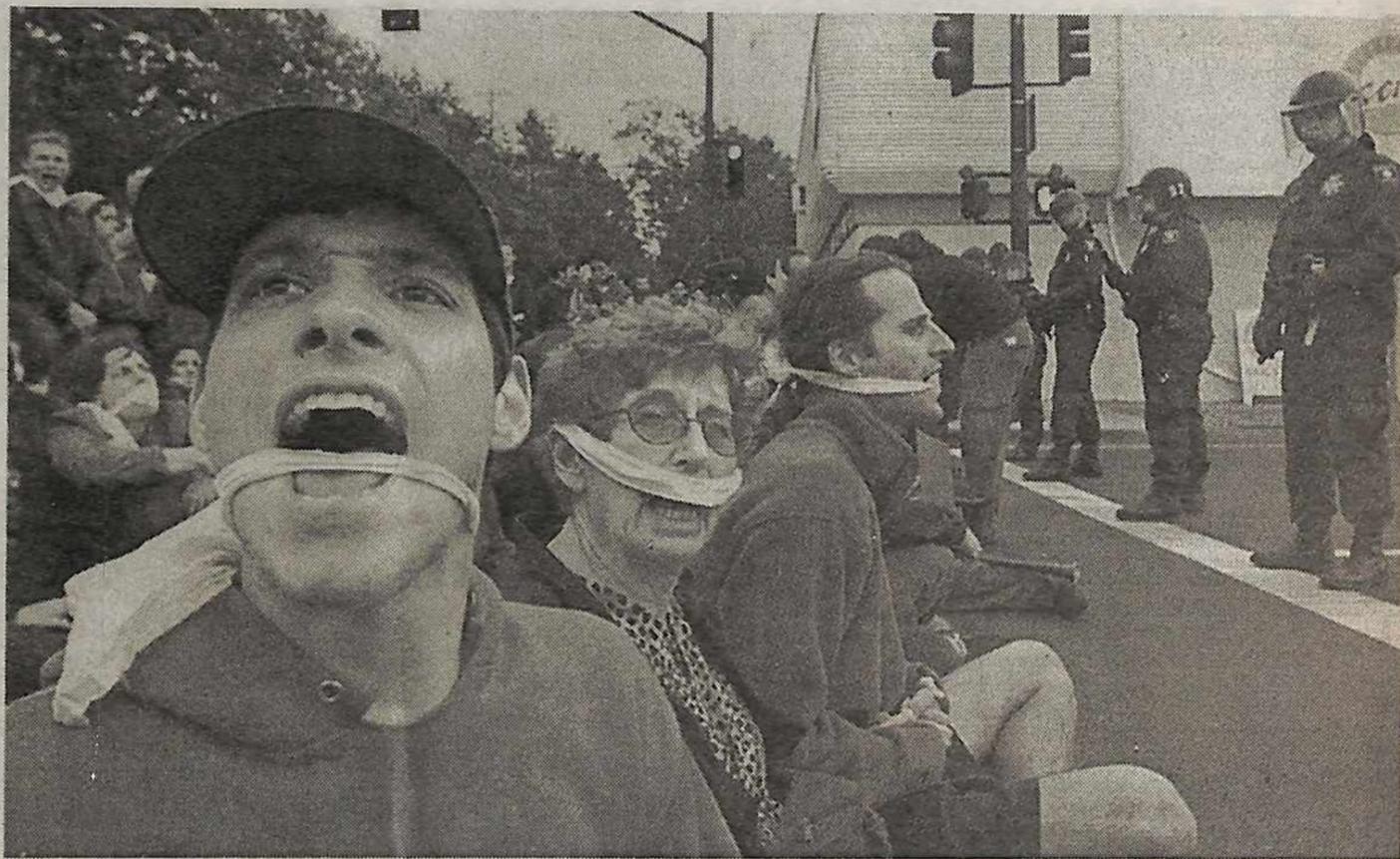
As I'm writing, the struggle to retake the station is still going. The staff of the radio station remain vigilant and wary of the concessions that are being offered. It is still not clear if Pacifica's management has abandoned plans to sell the station. There is still nothing in writing. And some key members of the staff—former station manager Nicole Sawaya and long-time broadcaster Larry Bensky—have not yet been offered their jobs back. And the foundation has announced it is relocating from Berkeley to Washington, DC—far from the eye of the current storm.

And people are pushing hard to keep the heat on. On Saturday, July 31, 15,000 people marched through Berkeley—supporting the staff of KPFA and denouncing plans to gut or sell or conservatize this important progressive radio station.

By the time this article hits the streets, KPFA may be on the air again. And if that happens, new alliances and new mobilizations will have created some favorable new conditions through struggle.

## A Deluge of Protest

I don't think Pacifica had any idea what they would detonate when they sent their takeover goons into KPFA. I don't think they really understood how many people valued that station, and how fiercely people want to see breaks and openings in the corporate-government-media monopoly on information and thought.



Protest in front of KPFA offices, Berkeley.

KPFA has never been revolutionary—much of its programming has been safe, and sometimes boring. But it is a significant alternative radio station—and one of a few major alternative stations in the country. When National Public Radio banned Mumia's "Live From Death Row" commentaries KPFA proudly broke the censorship and aired the tapes. Each time there is a new U.S. aggression in the world, KPFA airs announcements of antiwar actions and opens its airwaves to information and analyses critical of the U.S. government. It has provided openings for all kinds of progressive information and ideas—including occasionally the analyses of revolutionary communists.

KPFA has been an important crack in the official media wall. People relied on it—and when Pacifica tried to destroy it, people poured into the streets to defend it. Hundreds arrived in front of the station within minutes of the Pacifica coup. Day and night there were at least 30 to 100 people camped out in front, shutting down that block to traffic.

People found out that Pacifica was installing an ISDN high-speed phone line to KPFA's transmitter so they could control the station remotely. And dozens of people rushed up to stop this. Several were arrested, bringing the total arrests to

99 in two weeks.

One UC Berkeley student told me "the youth really want to represent" in this battle. I think she'd been doing what lots had: sleeping out one night, going to "Hip Hop for KPFA" another night, making signs other nights, and rushing to the KPFA's transmitter. Many middle class folks—in-

cluding in the mainstream media—were shocked that a listener-supported network would fire broadcasters for discussing the network's direction—all kinds of people have seen this as a "freedom of speech" issue and have supported the KPFA staff. And interestingly enough—all of this happened *without* the radio broadcasts of KPFA itself being available to spread the word.

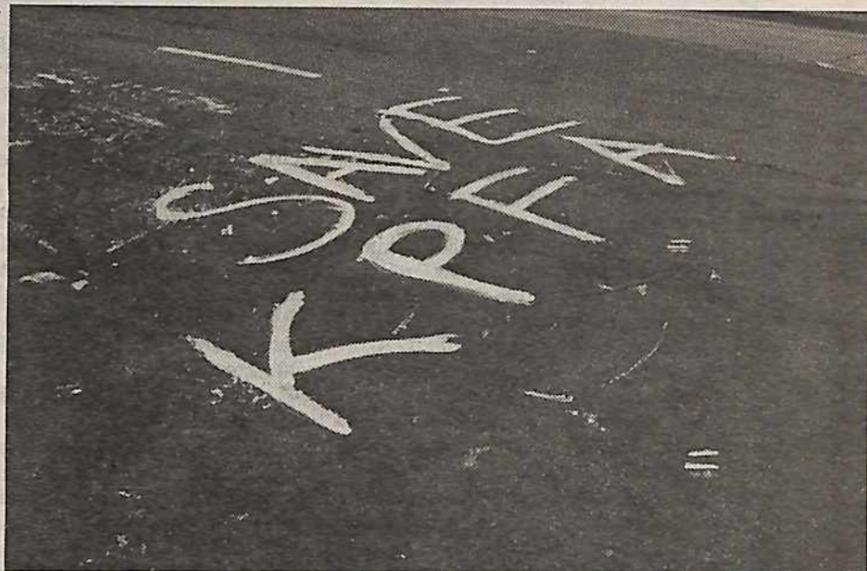
The singer/activist Joan Baez quickly helped pull together a concert featuring herself, Utah Phillips, Spearhead, Dr. Loco and others for July 19—less than a week after the shutdown. 3,500 people showed up.

The July 31 demonstration of 15,000 was also put together on the fly. "There are so many people working on it it's just mind-boggling," Leslie Kean, an assistant producer of the program *Flashpoints*, told the *RW*. "It's just awesome to me how many people all over the Bay Area are working night and day to mobilize for this."

Dennis Bernstein of the KPFA radio show *Flashpoints* told me, "It has gotten to the point where I can't walk out of my house without a neighbor stopping me and asking me, 'Are we going to save our free speech radio station?' I pull up at a red light and somebody rolls down a window and says, 'how are we doing?' ... 'I was on with the BBC, I've heard from the *Economist* in England. We've gotten emails from as far away as Hong Kong."

Pacifica *tried* to publicly justify its actions. Its management tried to claim that the staff only appealed to "50-year-old white men" and swore that *they* were just seeking to "diversify" the station's audience. They insisted that they were *not* planning to sell KPFA and allow it to become some typical

Photo: Jay



On the march to KPFA.

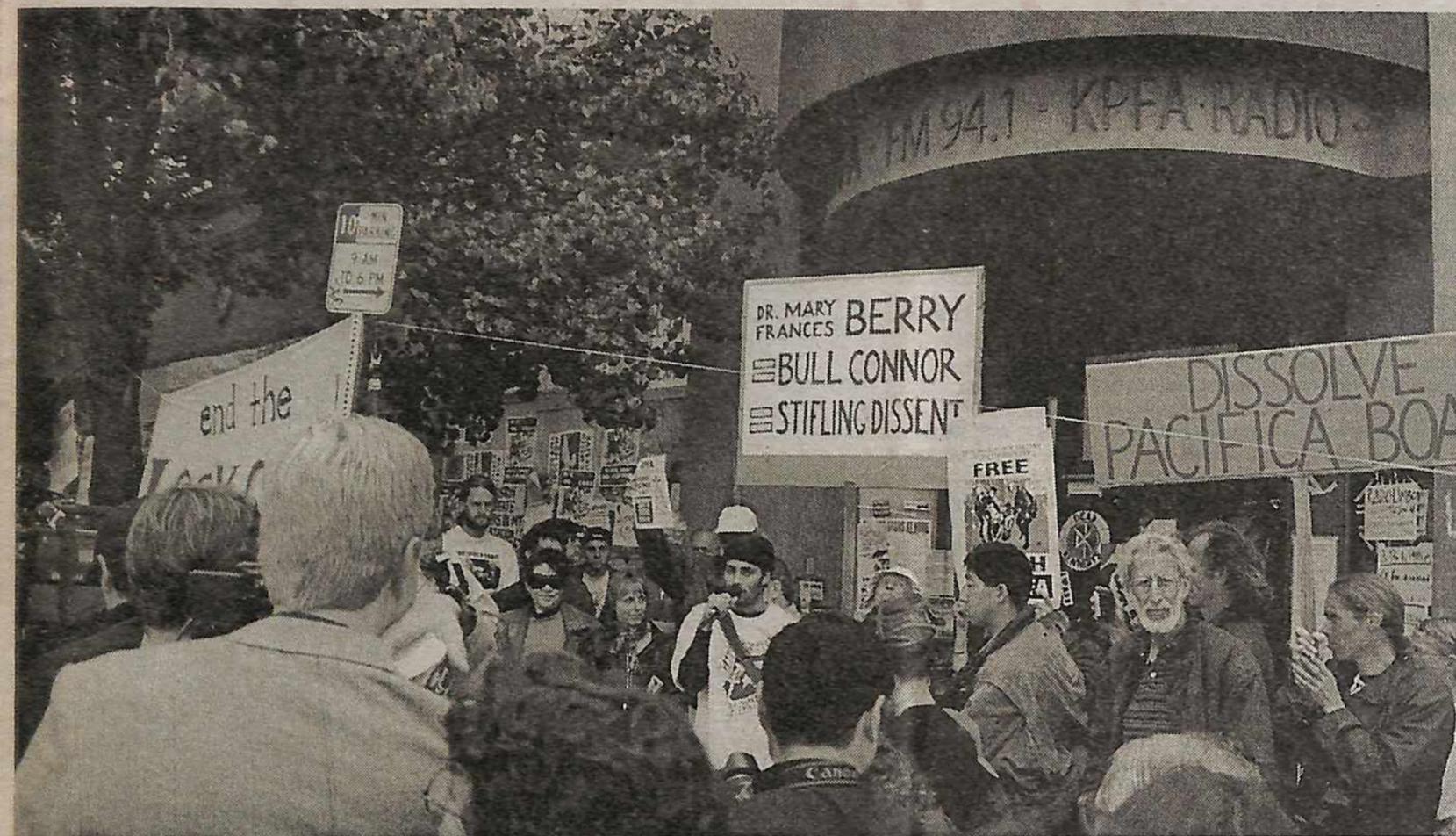


Fired KPFA broadcaster Larry Bensky addressing rally at UC Berkeley campus as 15,000 prepared to march on KPFA, July 31.

RWOR photo

# CONTINUES

by Larry Everest



Rally for KPFA, July 30.

commercial radio station.

But they were just scrambling to hide the truth—and most everyone could see that. One Berkeley student said to me, “I basically don’t believe anything they say. I think they’re just all liars. Their rhetoric has all been public relations. How can you trust anything they say now?” Davey D, a hip hop producer and music host on both KPFA and KMEL, told me, “The youth were always here, so there was a mischaracterization from jump street. People of color were always here, so there was a mischaracterization from jump street.”

A *New York Times* article wrote, “The Pacifica Foundation concedes that in the public relations battle, it is being flattened.” Pacifica fired its public relations agent and hired a new high-priced San Francisco firm specializing in damage control, but that didn’t work either. That firm quit after 10 days.

Michael Moore, host of TV’s *Awful Truth*, wrote Pacifica head Mary Frances Berry, “You must rue the day you decided to get involved in Pacifica Radio.... you will now be remembered as the individual who sent police in to shut down a newscast!”

## The Broader Backdrop

This whole coup at Pacifica is closely tied to forces with very close and high-level connections in the Democratic Party. The Pacifica Board also has a close working relationship with the government’s Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), which is run by the former head of CIA-directed Radio Marti, and the CPB has encouraged Pacifica’s centralization of power and efforts to mainstream its programming.

Mary Frances Berry herself is symbolic of all this. She is an African American woman who serves as the Board Chair of the Pacifica Foundation and Professor of American Social Thought at the University of Pennsylvania. She was arrested for protesting South African apartheid in the 1980s. But she’s also been a top government official, first in the Carter administration, and now under Clinton, where she heads the Civil Rights Commission.

Now in the heat of this struggle for control over KPFA, she quickly accuses her opponents of obstructing “diversity”—and this is so typical of the Clinton forces who specialize in combining the politics of cruelty and the economics of imperialism with the rhetoric of inclusion.

For the establishment liberals heading Pacifica, all the functioning and demands of capitalism are simply accepted as “the way things are”—and anything else is “unrealistic.” It’s interesting to read Pacifica’s own 5 Year Plan, because they accurately describe the capitalist pressures operating on them. They note that “Today five global, vertically integrated media companies dominate the information and entertainment economies: News Corporation, Disney, Time-Warner, Viacom and TCI.” They worry that Pacifica (despite its national audience of one million) will be “reduced to the media equivalent of a mom-and-pop grocery in a world of Wal-Mart superstores.” This report details how Congress has debated “whether the only vestiges of nonprofit broadcasting should be eliminated so that we may have a thoroughly market-driven system,” and how after Republicans took control of Congress in 1994 they openly attacked Pacifica in order to defund all public broadcasting.

Pacifica was influenced and shaped by the mass struggles of the ‘60s, and carved out a niche for itself by building a funding base among its listeners. But in a March 1998 interview, Pacifica Executive Director Lynn Chadwick explained that Pacifica’s management was now thinking that the time had come to accept corporate or foundation underwriting for the first time. “People on Capitol Hill are encouraging us to quit fooling around, call it advertising and go for it,” she declared.

They envision “modernization” along corporate lines—more top-down control, programming based on ratings, and content that will not disturb the flow of corporate ad dollars.

In short, the fight at Pacifica is part of the larger “cultural wars” that have raged in the U.S.—it is part of the campaign to steamroller everything away before the all-mighty dollar—to impose corporate brand labels and mindless obedience on all forms of media—to chip, erode, dilute, encircle, defund, denounce, and ultimately eliminate all pockets of alternative, critical, or unapproved information. According to Radio4all’s website, several Pacifica programmers have been pressured to soften their criticisms of Clinton and U.S. government policy.

In this battle at KPFA, the Clinton-Democrats-in-command are (as they are in the cultural wars generally) an active participant in the slide toward conservatism.

Around the KPFA situation (and everywhere else) they insist that *anything* to the left of them is ineffective and outdated, and that *they alone* form a viable alternative to the militant right—while all those who follow them find *themselves* drawn further and further to the right.

Thinking about all this, and about the intense corporate and market pressures on alternative media and arts—I was reminded about a remark by RCP Chairman Bob Avakian about some basic realities that affect the mass media: “In today’s world there are only two classes capable of handling the modern productive forces—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat,” he wrote.

Bob Avakian wrote: “Ultimately, it is only the proletariat that can utilize these productive forces in a forward-moving way. In a way that leads to the impossibility of a situation where one part of society dominates and oppresses another. In a way that brings into being a true ‘global village’ without the domination of many nations by a few, without national divisions and boundaries at all.”

The battle at KPFA is extremely important for the larger war against this system. It is a fight for a radio station that has provided openings in the seemingly monolithic wall of this system’s media.

And this battle at KPFA is important—not because it is possible to wrest the society or the media piecemeal, institution by institution, from the global gangsters who now own it—but because there is a larger revolutionary struggle here and throughout the world. And because the oppressed people of the world *need* each opening, every platform from which to speak, each ally, and *each* victory against their oppressors—to push ahead into new battles, to counterattack, to prepare for those life-and-death collisions that certainly lie ahead.

## The Struggle Continues

There’s a lot of unfinished business at KPFA. After damaging the station and running up huge bills for security goons, takeover lawyers, and corporate PR firms, Pacifica may have taken this network toward bankruptcy. The management is warning the staffers that they have six months to increase audience share or the Pacifica Foundation will take “appropriate measures”—meaning they may push ahead with selling the station.

But meanwhile the struggle has ener-

gized, awakened and unified many thousands, so the people are in a much stronger position to carry forward the struggle.

KPFA staffer Allison Rolls told me, “The other completely overwhelming aspect of this is the unity that has been created and the ties that have been forged between people who never spoke to each other before. There’s a whole dialogue that’s been opened about diversity at the station and the role of people of color in all aspects of it. For the most part everyone has come to it with a really open mind and they’re saying, ‘You’re right. Things do have to change, and even if that’s threatening to me personally a little bit, I’m going to listen to what you have to say.’ And we’re all going to have to like shut up and start listening to hip hop for awhile. It’s not an aesthetic that I adhere to, but these youth have things to say about what is happening, and they are us, and they’re all part of what’s happening at KPFA.”

Jay Imani, a young Black man on KPFA’s local advisory board, told me, “Young people recognize how important alternative media is. One of the things we definitely want to see is some way we can get out what young people are doing, how people are organizing, what are the struggles going on that concern young people, such as the criminalization of youth on a mass scale across the U.S., the militarization of the police force all across the nation, and what young people are doing to combat those sorts of things.”

Robbie Osman picked up the beat: “KPFA in exile has been a KPFA in healthy transformation. We were in contact with the community in one way, which was that our doors have always been open for people working for progressive causes to come in and use KPFA. But KPFA needs to be young and more vibrant and more open to community influence. And I think that has started to take place. KPFA in exile has been much more genuinely rooted in the community in that way than KPFA was before. And we need to make sure that that’s reflected in the way we go back on the air.”

As Dennis Bernstein put it at one of the many rallies: “Do we want change? We live for change! From the bottom up, not from the top down. Not from Washington, DC, not from Houston, but from here in the community, from the bottom up!”

Stay tuned. □



# Dispatches: Report from the People's War in Nepal

Part

# Rifles and a C

by Li Onesto

On February 13, 1996, a new People's War was launched in Nepal, led by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), aimed at sweeping away imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. Thousands of men and women participated in coordinated armed raids and attacks throughout the country. And for over three years now, the revolution in Nepal has continued to spread, sink roots and accomplish a lot. All this is a truly inspiring and significant development in the world and for the international proletariat. But it has remained a hidden story for most people in the United States and around the world. And for those of us who have been following the people's war in Nepal, there has been precious, but far too little news of this important struggle.

Now, the *Revolutionary Worker* has an exclusive story. *RW* reporter Li Onesto recently returned from several months in Nepal, where she traveled throughout the country with the people's army, meeting and talking with party leaders, guerrillas, activists in mass organizations and villagers—those waging this genuine Maoist people's war and beginning to exercise new people's power. The *RW* would like to give a "lal Salaam" (red salute) to all the people in Nepal who made this trip possible.

This is the fourth article of a new series of dispatches from this exciting trip. (See *RW* #1014, #1015 and #1016 for Parts 1, 2 and 3.)

## Eastern Platoon

When the People's War was initiated two categories of armed groups were organized—fighting squads and defense squads. In the beginning, these fighters were inexperienced and armed with only some single-shot local guns and khukuris (the traditional curved-bladed knife used by peasants). But in the course of three years of People's War, a qualitative development in army building has been achieved. Now the military forces of the People's War are classified into three categories—main force, secondary force and basic force. The people's militia, operating in the local areas, are the basic forces. Guerrilla squads with about nine members, which are to be developed into platoons, are the secondary forces. And the main force at this stage of the People's War is the platoon, comprised of about 27 guerrillas. Efforts are well underway to develop these platoons to the level of companies.

One of the platoons in this Eastern Region will be holding a mass meeting near the village where we are staying. They are scheduled to arrive late tonight and Shiva, my translator, and I will get a chance to talk with them.

A couple of hours after our evening meal someone comes to tell us it's time to go and we set off, single file. Soon, I see a crowd of people on the right side of a house in an area illuminated by a single, bright lantern. When we get close, someone motions for

Shiva and me to go around the house, to the left. And everyone else peels off to directly join the gathered group. We are moving at a very fast pace, not quite running, but my heart is pounding from excitement. We come around the side of the house and right before us is a platoon of the people's army, their backs to us, lined up in formation.

As soon as we appear a voice rings out a command and the guerrillas snap to attention, their rifles smartly raised to their shoulders. The platoon is standing in two lines and we walk down the aisle they have formed, up to where several people are waiting for us underneath the bright lantern. When I reach the front, the comrades greet me, one at a time—putting garlands of flowers around my neck and handing me presents. Each one grasps my hands firmly and gives me a "namaste" (traditional Nepali greeting) and a "lal salaam" (red salute). A young woman, a party leader in this district, draws me quickly to her and gives me a strong embrace. The platoon commander also gives me a big hug. All the while, a platoon member darts around snapping pictures with a small flash camera.

We go inside the house, take off our shoes and enter a small bedroom that has been prepared for the meeting. A table has been set up in between two beds, decorated with a bright cloth and two vases of flowers. Shiva and I sit on one side of the room on the bed and everyone else piles onto the other bed. Most of the platoon



People's army platoon clearing the ground for a memorial to the martyrs in the Eastern Region.

members remain outside, but two of them follow us into the room—a young man and young woman, who stand to my left, guard-

ing the door with rifles up on their shoulders. The party district leader comes in and sits to our right. The platoon commander takes his revolver out of his waistband, places it on the table in front of us, and sits down next to her.

There are formal introductions and I find out that the 10 or so comrades scrunched together on the bed opposite us are mainly local party leaders. The two guerrillas at the door are also introduced and they each give me a warm handshake. I greet people, expressing solidarity and proletarian internationalism on behalf of the masses and comrades back in the United States, and the district party leader also makes some brief initial comments. Everyone stands for a minute of silence for the martyrs. And then three platoon members come in to sing us a revolutionary song. Shiva whispers the words of the song in my ear:



Photo: Li Onesto

Villagers in the Eastern Region.

"Women are not denied any aspect of the revolution and I'm convinced that the new democratic system we're fighting for will provide equality for women."

# Part 4: Great Vision

*"We are internationalists  
Fighting to free the whole world  
History will be victorious for the people  
To those who die, following the path,  
To those who die, fighting the enemy."*

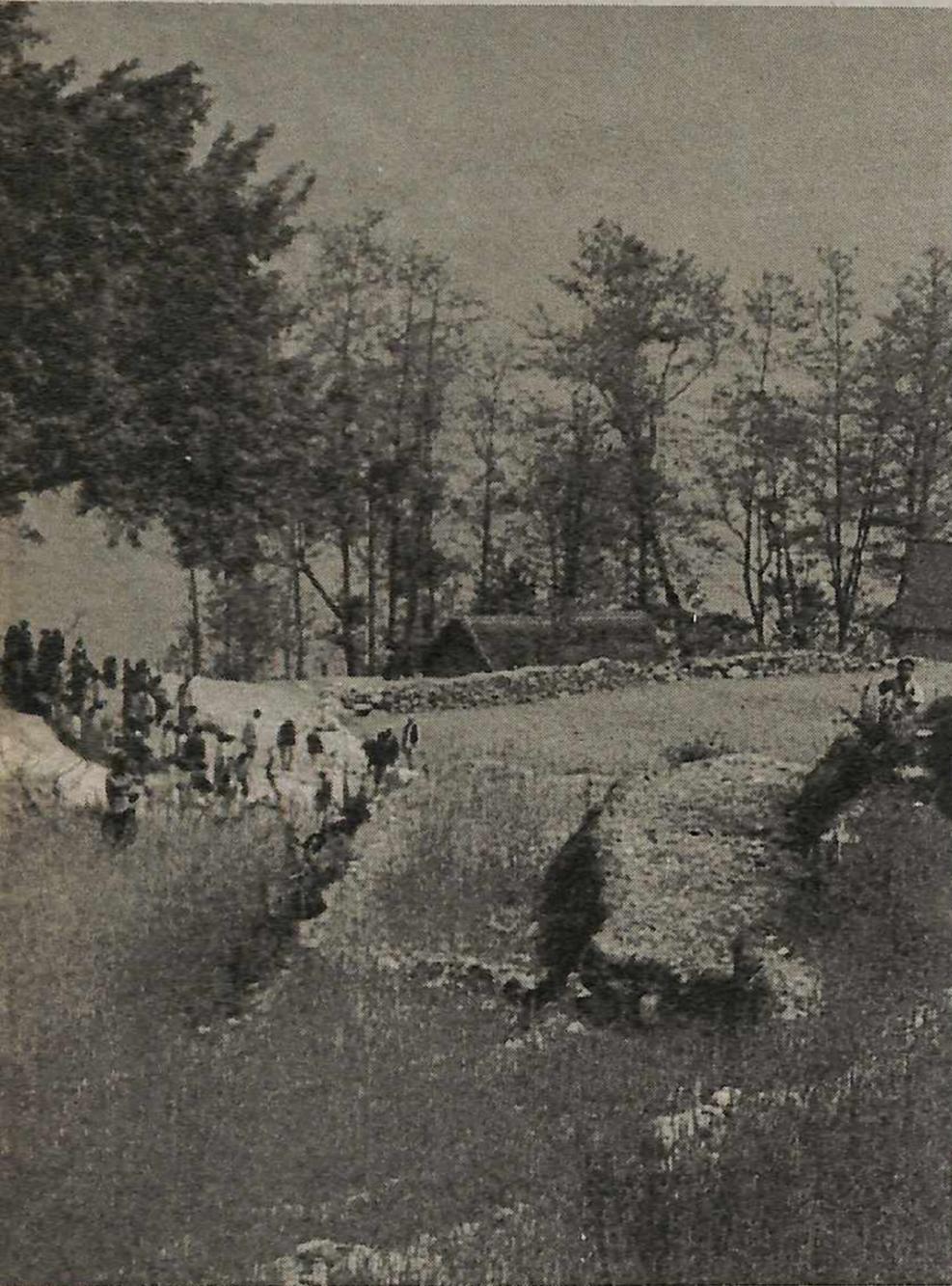


Photo: Li Onesto

mander of a squad. The party has noted this incident as one of the leading incidents of the Second Plan. With the Third Plan, aimed at 'developing guerrilla warfare to new heights,' we were able to raid another police post where we seized two rifles and 200 bullets, and no guerrillas were killed."

For the last couple of months the party has been implementing the Fourth Strategic Plan of developing selected areas toward becoming base areas. The district leader talks about how this plan is being carried out in this area:

"Now in the Fourth Plan, we raided a police post in this district in which one police was killed and we were able to seize four rifles, one made in the USA. We were also able to raid a police post where three police were killed and four rifles were seized, with no harm to our side. This action was done in the memory of the martyrs in Bethan. In all, we have lost some squad in all. But at the same time we have been able to take out 14 of the enemy—spies and bad elements, six of whom were police.

"We have designated certain areas as proposed base areas. The first thing we have to do in these areas is wipe out the enemy. If there are police posts we try to remove them, raiding them, taking guns and running the police out. The second thing is if there are spies and informers we will remove them also, which can mean elimination. And the third thing is to remove the feudal landlords. In the main zones we will do all these things. The other thing is we have asked all the leaders of the government Village Development Committees (VDCs), who have been elected, to resign. And we have appealed to all the

masses to boycott the elections.

"We have done all this with support from about 75 percent of the people. We went to the VDC chairmen and asked them to take part in the new forms of people's power, and none of them has refused to resign. We are centralizing and concentrating our forces to constitute and manage new forms of power. In these areas we are making different forms of mass organizations—among women, farmers, students, and children—in order to organize everyone."

### Joining the War

Next I talk to two groups from the platoon. Most of them are young, either teenagers or in their 20s, but there are a few older comrades, even two or three in their 40s. Just about all of them are from very poor peasant families and have experienced or witnessed a lot of police repression and brutality. Several first got involved in the revolutionary struggle as students. Two young men are from an oppressed ethnic nationality, and they talk about how the suppression of their culture and language was a big factor in them joining the revolution. Many of the guerrillas reiterate the point that they picked up the gun because there is no other alternative for someone who really wants to get rid of the reactionary government. One young man says, "This is our duty, as youth, to fight this war." A 34-year-old man sitting next to him explains what had compelled him to join the people's army:

"I became interested in the party and the people's army when I came to analyze the situation in our country—that there is no

Continued on page 10

*There is no certainty in life  
We may die today or tomorrow  
We may depart and hope to meet again  
There are so many martyrs  
We are proletarians and have rifles and a  
great vision  
And we do not like to leave each other  
In war there is bloodshed and insecurity  
We tell the fathers and mothers  
Don't weep, there is the sound of a bullet  
and people are falling and there are  
martyrs  
We are internationalists  
Fighting to free the whole world  
History will be victorious for the people  
To those who die, following the path,  
To those who die, fighting the enemy.*

Since we have a limited amount of time I ask the comrades to focus on three things: 1) What it was like in this area at the time of the initiation; 2) The kind of government repression they have faced; and 3) The current efforts here to move towards establishing base areas.

The district leader tells me that before the initiation the party was already very strong here and they were able to carry out the party's First Plan of initiating armed struggle with much success. She explains:

"The party made preparations to launch the armed struggle and at the same time we were doing open mass work and making people aware of the political situation. There was a lot of good political work done among the cadre about the need to pick up the gun and this helped us to make the leap from mass struggle to armed struggle.

"When the party came up with the plan to go to armed struggle we targeted the symbols of the enemy—the police, feudalistic landlords, compradors, and imperialism. The party has a long history of fighting against revisionist forces who want to keep putting off the armed struggle and instead work within the government. The party synthesized and analyzed the economic and political situation of the people and saw that there is no way to get freedom for the proletariat and the poor except by going forward to the armed struggle. The class struggle demanded that the oppressed pick up the gun. Because of government repression, the masses have no alternative but to pick up the gun. Now there is a sharp demarcation between, on the one hand, those waging the armed struggle, and on the other hand, all the revisionist forces. The kingship has ruled for 200 years in Nepal and for 200 years the people have been fighting against this oppressive rule. So now we are in the forefront of the struggle to continue that history.

"At the time of the initiation there was a raid on a police post and sabotage of landlords who had exploited the people. We completed the First Plan of starting armed struggle and the party gave us the next plan. This Second Plan was to wage guerrilla warfare, so our plan was to seize weapons. We successfully raided the police force in Bethan and in that action two police were killed and we seized 200 bullets and some rifles. Three brave comrades were killed—including Tirtha Gautam\* who was a district committee secretary and the com-

\* See RW 1015 for the story of Tirtha Gautam.



Photo: Li Onesto

Wife of a martyr with her two children.



# Dispatches: Report from the People's War in Nepal

Continued from page 9

health care, jobs, etc. Even the youth who leave the countryside and go to the city can't find jobs. And I asked, why does this situation exist? I came to see that it's because of the reactionary state power that is exploiting people in many different ways. And I came to see that there should be class struggle and that the poor will be able to win out because our numbers are big and we should be able to overcome all difficulties in organizing the masses of poor people.

"Then I met the party, it started the People's War and I joined the people's army. The second reason I came to join the People's War is that the reactionary government couldn't give us a chance to have a peaceful movement. When people went to them with their demands the government repressed the people and didn't even follow their own laws. In this way the reactionary government gave us no way but to start the armed struggle. So for the freedom of the oppressed masses, I took part in the 1996 initiation of the People's War."

There are only a few women in this group, but they are very eager to talk about how they came to join the people's army. They tell me they have been attracted to the People's War because they see that the Maoists are fighting for women's liberation. One of the first to speak is a young 18-year-old woman who says:

"I began to work with the people's army at the beginning of the initiation. Before this I was active in the student movement. I come from a very simple family with a small plot of land. I have a great feeling that there is no other option, if we want to wipe out inequality, the great oppression of women, expansionist India taking over our land. All this cannot be solved unless we fight the reactionaries. So in my heart I came to the conclusion that I had to pick up the gun.

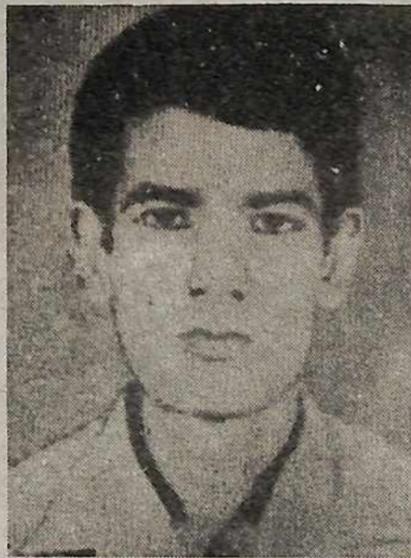
"The conditions in society are such that there is inequality between men and women. Sons can get the property of their fathers, but daughters cannot. If we get married and go to live in our husband's household there is suppression, so we can't be free. As far as the People's War and the party are concerned—they are working for equality between men and women. Women are not denied any aspect of the revolution and I'm convinced that the new democratic system we're fighting for will provide equality for women."

Several guerrillas mention how they had been inspired and emboldened by the bravery of the martyrs. One 40-year-old platoon member says: "I am from a poor farmer's family in Bethan. I did not get a chance to get an education, so I went to the city to work. When I was in Kathmandu I came to know about communism and I talked with many revolutionaries and became convinced that I should become a communist. So I got involved in the student movement, met some of the leaders and then joined the party's youth organization.

"I joined the people's army on the day of the raid on the Bethan police post. The main reason I joined was not only economic repression, but being from an indigenous ethnic group, we can't speak our language, read our mother tongue and are repressed by the Hindu government. So now I have great hope and determination that we will be able to establish a new democratic system that is for equality and will wipe out all the discrimination being done by reactionaries."

One 18-year-old woman recalls the impact of the raid at Bethan on her decision to join the war: "I was at home and in the revolutionary student movement, when the People's War was initiated. I was in 8th grade and was working as a member of a people's militia. I was very close to one of the martyrs who was killed in the Bethan raid. She was a friend in the revolutionary student movement, and when the People's War started she felt she had to take up more responsibility. When my friend went to go raid the Bethan police post she thought that if she became a martyr it would be a sacrifice to the women's movement and that this was her duty."

An 18-year-old man, also deeply affected by the raid at Bethan, says: "I have a duty to fight for the oppressed masses—to



Tirtha Gautam, who was martyred in a raid on a police post in Bethan, January 3, 1997.

make a new situation in the country where the people are not exploited. So with this commitment we have to overthrow this system and establish a new democratic system and I'll be fighting up to that time, as long as I have a drop of blood in my body. I have been inspired by the martyr Tirtha Gautam, who said it is better to be a martyr and be alive forever than to be alive but not be known by the people. I am following this same principle and I will live forever if I fight for the freedom of the masses."

It is getting already way past 3:00 a.m. and, too soon for everyone, we have to end. The district leader and platoon commander clasp my hands and draw me to their chests—conveying through this brief physical contact the utter seriousness and life-and-death nature of their struggle—and our connection to one another. They leave quickly and quietly.

After cups of tea are passed around we wait a bit and then we too head out into the darkness. At this hour we can't use our flashlights and we have to walk quickly in the dark. A comrade offers me his arm and guides my steps. We are going quite fast and I have to surrender myself completely to his skill, my feet moving swiftly over terrain that surprises me with each step. I stumble a few times and walk into some branches along the narrow path, but my guide seems to know exactly how to show me the way with the slightest movement of his arm and I am surprised how I can move so fast without seeing where I am going.

When we arrive at our next shelter, an older man lets us in and motions us to lay down on two beds which have been vacated for us. Shiva falls asleep immediately—by now it is past 4:30 a.m. But I can't get to sleep for a long time.

A few hours later, we get up and I thank the father of the house for giving us a place to sleep. He tells me, "No, it is nothing... whatever I can do to help the struggle." The family prepares a meal for us and then soon after this, someone comes to take us up the hill to where we will catch the bus.

"We have designated certain areas as proposed base areas. The first thing we have to do in these areas is wipe out the enemy. If there are police posts we try to remove them, raiding them, taking guns and running the police out."

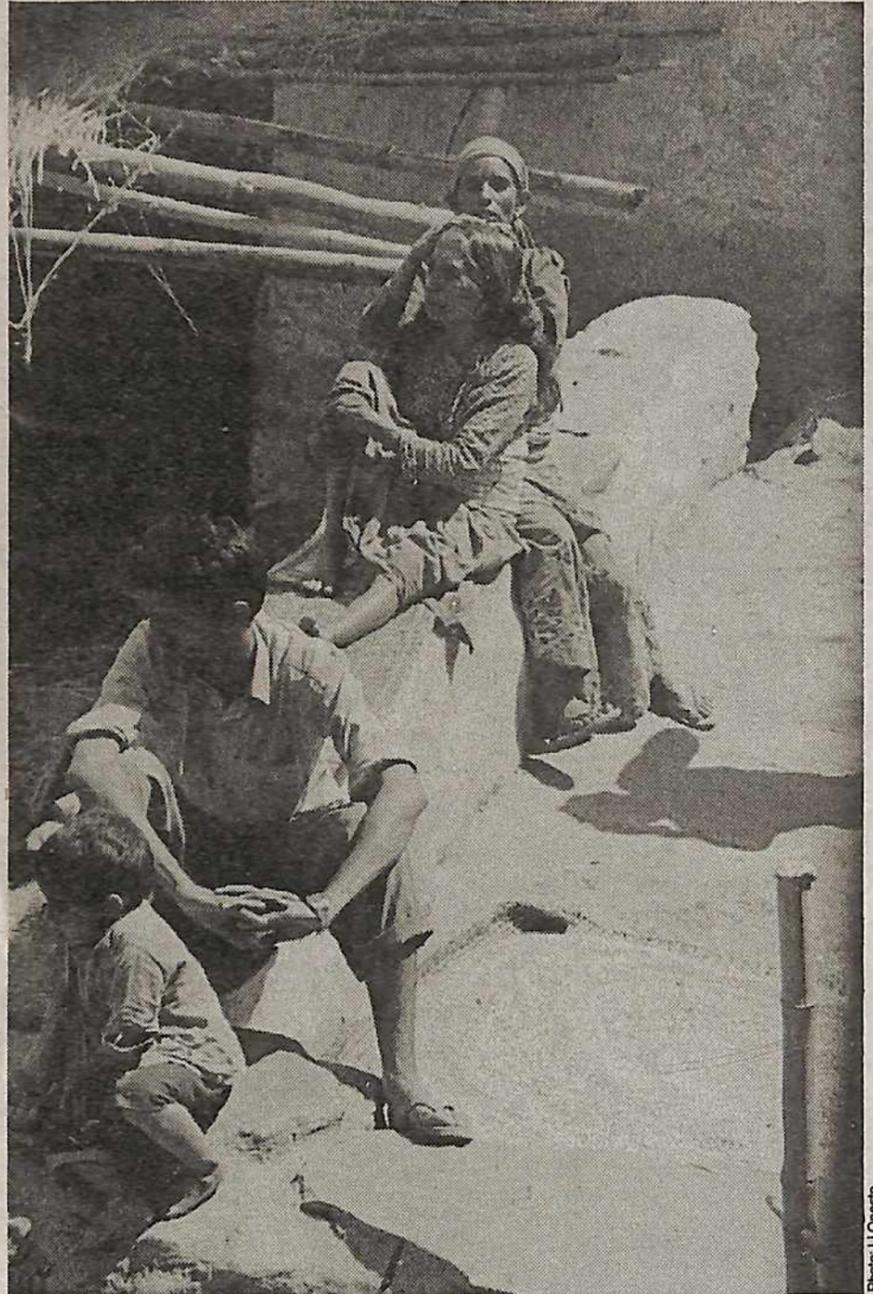


Photo: Li Oneato

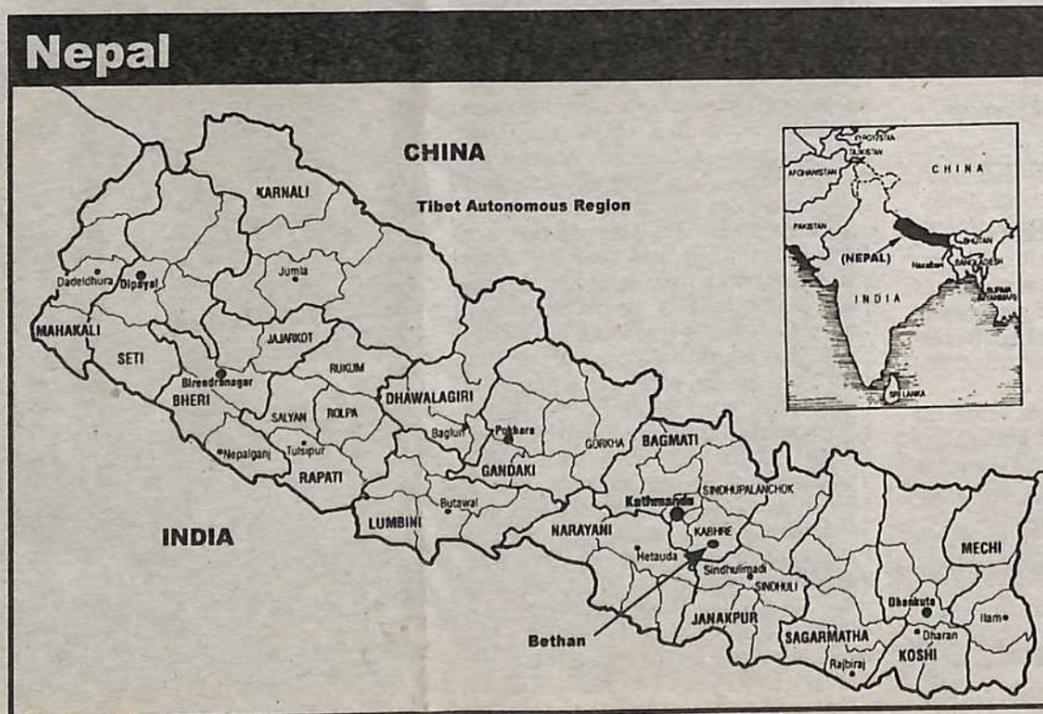
As we start out I look around and for the first time see the terrain I had traveled in the dark. We start off weaving through the small village, going past women sitting outside working, piles of wheat lying outside to dry and oxen and goats lying about munching grass. Then we head out into the vast fields of grain, where the paths are very narrow, just enough room to walk along the rows of precious food.

I look out in the distance across the

green, terraced landscape and see a big group of people who are working on the land. It's the platoon we met last night and they are clearing an area to build a memorial to the martyrs.

Incredibly, just as we reach the road at the top of the hill, the bus pulls up and we clamber on. There is only a brief moment in which I get a chance to look back and wave goodbye and then we are off.

To be continued



# A World to Win

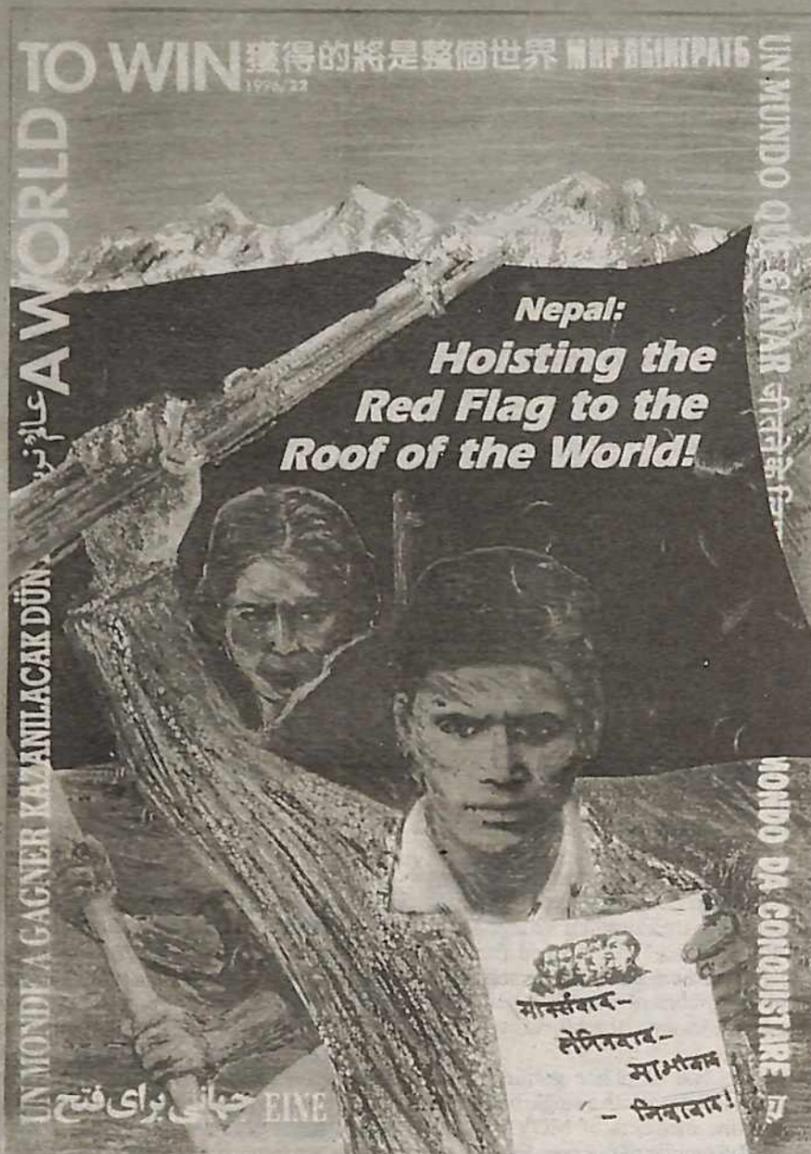
Featured in this issue (1996/22):

## Initiation of People's War in Nepal

February 13, 1996: "The sight of hundreds of thousands of peasants and workers in Nepal standing up and taking on their enemies cannot help but inspire the oppressed masses throughout the world. It highlights the decisive role and vitality of the revolutionary ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and gives further impulse to the forming and strengthening of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist parties and organizations united in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement. The initiation of the People's War in Nepal is a daring and glorious step forward for the world revolution."

## Two-Line Struggle in Peru

In the prisons of Peru itself, among the slum dwellers in India, in the "electronic world" of the Internet, debate is raging over the two-line struggle which emerged in the Communist Party of Peru (PCP). Let's carry the fight against the Right Opportunist Line through to the end!



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## MOVE 9 Demand a New Trial

# Free the

On July 8 a Post Conviction Relief Appeal (PCRA) was filed on behalf of the MOVE 9. They were framed for the murder of a cop who was killed during a police attack on a MOVE house on August 8, 1978. They have been in prison since. One of the MOVE 9, Merle Africa, died last year in jail under suspicious circumstances.

Attorney Paul J. Hetznecker filed the appeal for the MOVE 9. The appeal asserts that the MOVE 9 never got a fair trial. They were removed from the courtroom for most of the proceedings and court-appointed attorneys mounted an ineffective defense. There was never any evidence that MOVE people fired any weapons. The appeal argues that the attack on the MOVE house did not happen in a vacuum. Since the early 1970s, MOVE members were attacked by police, beaten, arrested hundreds of times and jailed. These systematic attempts to destroy the MOVE organization put the organization in a position of self-defense, an argument never raised at the original trial. And prosecutors withheld evidence of a secret FBI report written in February 1978 that laid out the plan of attack on the MOVE house.

The filing of this PCRA is the last round of appeals for the MOVE 9. The RW will have future coverage about the appeal and the prosecution's response when it is filed.

Following is the story of the MOVE 9.

August 8, 1978. That morning, hundreds of heavily armed police attacked a MOVE house located in the Powelton Village section of Philadelphia. They opened fire on the MOVE members inside. They pumped thousands of gallons of water and tear gas into the house to force the MOVE people out.

During the hail of police gunfire, cop James Ramp fell dead with a single bullet in his back. Nine members of MOVE were framed for the murder of this cop. Each was sentenced to 30 to 100 years in prison. The MOVE 9—Debbie, Janine, Janet, Merle, Delbert, Phil, Mike, Chuck and Edward Africa—have been in prison since 1978 for a crime they did not commit. They are now among the political prisoners listed by the Jericho '98 project.

### MOVE and the Power Structure on a Collision Course

MOVE was founded in 1972—the same year that Frank Rizzo became mayor of Philadelphia with a promise to clamp down on rebellious elements in the Black community, as well as white radicals, hippies and other “social misfits.” Rizzo was already infamous as the head of Philly's vicious police department during the turbulent 1960s. One of the most notorious

actions by Rizzo's cops was a raid on the Black Panther Party headquarters in 1970. In a sick attempt at humiliation, the cops lined up the Panthers against a wall and ordered them to drop their pants for a photographer.

MOVE—with their politics of denouncing the system and totally rejecting its authority—and the power structure were clearly on a collision course. The Philadelphia Inquirer described MOVE as “railing against anything that smacked of the system.... Its members were disruptive and tumultuous, abrasive and unyielding, hurling obscenity after obscenity at the system they despised.” The authorities began a campaign to destroy the MOVE organization. Between 1974 and 1976, there were over 400 arrests of MOVE members, resulting in bail and fines of more than half a million dollars.

MOVE women who were pregnant were a favorite target of the police. On May 9, 1974, two MOVE members were attacked by police, arrested and held overnight with no food or water—both women had miscarriages. On April 29, 1975, Alberta Africa was held spread-eagle by four cops and kicked in the stomach and vagina repeatedly by a fifth. As a result of this, Alberta had a miscarriage. On November 5, 1976, Rhonda Africa, who was nearly nine

months pregnant, was beaten by police. Rhonda went into premature labor and gave birth to a bruised and injured baby that died within minutes.

On March 28, 1976, police attacked Janine Africa and several other MOVE members in front of their Powelton Village headquarters. Janine was thrown to the ground with her 20-day-old baby Life in her arms and stomped on until she was nearly unconscious. Life died as a result of a crushed skull from this beating. The police denied they were responsible and claimed Life probably didn't even exist since there was no birth certificate. No charges were filed against the cops who murdered Life Africa. District Attorney Ed Rendell's office filed charges against six MOVE members who were beaten and arrested that night.

Many of the confrontations between Philadelphia police and MOVE members took place around their Powelton Village headquarters. The pamphlet “25 Years On the MOVE” describes MOVE's analysis of the situation in the spring of 1977: “MOVE foresaw the possibility that Philadelphia police could storm their 33rd Street headquarters, kill those inside, and blame the victims for their own deaths in an operation similar to the type of government terrorism used against the Black Panthers. Information from sympathetic sources inside city government confirmed that plans for some type of police operation had indeed been made. To safeguard the Philadelphia base, MOVE staged a major demonstration May 20, 1977 on a platform outside their house. They demanded the release of their political prisoners and an end to the violent harassment by the city.

“We told the cops there wasn't gonna be any more undercover deaths. This time they better be prepared to murder us in full public view, cause if they came at us with fists, we were gonna come back with fists. If they came with clubs, we'd come back with clubs, and if they came with guns, we'd use guns too. We don't believe in death-dealing guns, we believe in life. But we knew the cops wouldn't be so quick to attack us if they had to face the same stuff they dished out so casually on unarmed defenseless folk.”

### The Siege at Powelton Village

In her book “Attention, MOVE! This is America!”, Margot Harry describes how the major confrontation between MOVE and the police developed:

“Rumors flew through Powelton Village on May 20, 1977 that the police were on their way to evict MOVE members for its refusal to allow inspections.... Two hundred cops were dispatched to the MOVE house.... Police surrounded the house and began what would turn out to be a one-year siege of the MOVE headquarters. Police sandbagged apartment windows across from the MOVE house and also established an extensive blockade of several streets around the MOVE house.... A large percentage of Blacks in the community supported MOVE, as did a significant number of whites. For many of these, MOVE's headquarters became a center of resistance.”

During the siege, the authorities stepped up their attempts to crush the MOVE organization. On May 24, Judge Lynne Abraham issued warrants for 11 MOVE members for riot and possession of an instrument of crime. City personnel were telling MOVE off the record, “We'll kill all of you before we let your people out of jail.” A federal agent told MOVE the FBI planned to infiltrate and destroy their organization. On September 1, 1977 the FBI handed down indictments against MOVE founder John Africa and Alfonso Africa on phony charges of bomb-making and gun-running. They were based on “information” from an FBI informant. (On May 13, 1981, the FBI arrested John Africa and nine other MOVE members in Rochester, New York. They were extradited to Philadelphia. In July of 1981, John Africa and Alfonso Africa were found not guilty by a jury.) Philadelphia politicians and reporters went to Virginia where MOVE had purchased a large farm. They spread vicious rumors about MOVE. As a result, the realtor demanded MOVE pay off the entire mortgage at once. They were unable to raise the money and lost their farm.

Ten months into the siege, and with MOVE showing no signs of backing down, the authorities attempted to starve MOVE into submission. In March 1978, the city shut off water to the MOVE house and stopped deliveries of food to them. Hundreds of cops sealed off all access to the MOVE house. Sharpshooter posts and machine gun nests were set up on nearby houses. People who tried to rush the barricades to deliver food were beaten and arrested by the police. In a recent interview with the RW, Mumia talked about his experience in covering the siege as a radio journalist: “No one dared talk to the MOVE people. You talked to the police chief, you talked to the mayor, you talked to the district attorney.... I don't think it was so much officially verboten [to talk to MOVE] as the presumption that the other side had nothing to say that was worth hearing. Almost a dehumanization of the other side, if you will. And I think that was what irked me the most. These were people, literally, with their lives on the line. And I think that's also what irked my bosses the most, because that part of Philadelphia wasn't supposed to hear those voices.”

The radio station Mumia was working for criticized him for not being “objective”—and he was eventually forced to leave the job.



Rally to Free the MOVE 9, August 1997.



Phil Africa



Janine Africa



Delbert Africa



Chuck Africa

# MOVE 9



Police beat Delbert Africa during the 1978 assault on the MOVE house.

## The Police Assault

The attempt to starve MOVE out did not break the resistance of the MOVE members. A compromise agreement was hammered out by some officials who feared that the siege was sparking widespread anger at the police and support for MOVE. But on August 2, Judge DiBona ruled that MOVE had violated a 90-day deadline, and signed bench warrants authorizing police to arrest most known MOVE members, whether they were in the house or not. Three days later, police stormed into a Richmond, Virginia MOVE home at gunpoint and arrested Gail and Rhonda Africa for their alleged failure to leave a house they were hundreds of miles away from.

The police prepared to take MOVE out by force.

Margot Harry's book gives an account of the military-style police operation against MOVE: "The assault began in the early morning hours of August 8, 1978. Six hundred cops surrounded the Powelton Village house, including Rizzo's sharpshooters from the stakeout unit. A bulldozer first destroyed the protective fences MOVE had constructed around the house, then a crane was deployed as a battering ram, punching out the wooden slats MOVE had nailed across the windows. Cops actually went into the house at one point but found no one. All of the MOVE members were in the basement.

"Firemen then axed down the wooden slats across the basement windows and turned on their deluge guns. Within minutes water in the basement was so high that MOVE adults had to hold babies, young children and some of their dogs over their heads to prevent them from drowning. Shortly after 8 a.m. there was an outbreak of gunfire that lasted for about two minutes. Officer James Ramp fell dead and other cops and firemen were wounded....

"From 8:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. the deluge guns continued to flood the basement and minutes later the MOVE people climbed out through the basement windows, drenched, shivering, and staring down the barrels of the stakeout unit guns. The



Police assault on MOVE headquarters, August 8, 1978.

women and children went first. The last to come out was Delbert Africa, one of the most militant and well-known MOVE members. Naked from the waist up and with arms over his head to indicate he was surrendering and had no weapons, Delbert Africa was grabbed by one stakeout officer who smashed him across the face with his helmet, grabbed him by his dreadlocks and held him down while three other cops beat, kicked, and stomped him. Since the whole thing was being filmed by TV cameras, other cops pulled the four off Delbert Africa but he says the beating resumed once he was out of public view and in their custody."

In a column written for MOVE's newspaper *First Day*, Chuck Africa wrote: "I was shot twice in the arm by police with a automatic weapon.... I was thrown face first in the back of a police wagon and tortured during the ride to the roundhouse at 8th and Race. A stakeout cop and detective stayed in the back of the wagon and beat my heart with a leather slap-jack with steel inside and I was beat in the testicles."

## MOVE Members Railroaded, Cops Go Free

Nine MOVE members were tried for the killing of the cop Ramp. Even before the trial began, they were convicted and sentenced by the authorities and the media. At a press conference right after the assault, Mayor Rizzo declared: "The only way we're going to get rid of them is to get the death penalty back in, and I'll pull the switch myself."

When the trial began, the accused MOVE members were defiant. Several weeks into the trial, the judge told the defendants they could answer only yes or no to his question of whether they would obey his courtroom rules. When the defendants answered with "We'll do what's right," they were expelled permanently from the courtroom and tried in absentia.

As soon as MOVE members were arrested, the authorities destroyed the house. It was leveled by bulldozers on August 8. This prevented MOVE from proving conclusively that they did not shoot Ramp, but that he was killed by police gunfire. During a preliminary hearing, MOVE presented a motion to dismiss the charges based on this destruction of evidence. Their motion was denied. Just after the police attack, Mayor Rizzo held a press conference and dis-

played weapons he claimed were taken out of the MOVE house. But shortly after the May 20, 1977 demonstration in which MOVE members brandished weapons, police entered the MOVE house as part of the agreement reached between MOVE and the authorities. They found the "weapons" were inoperable dummy firearms or road flares disguised as dynamite. From May to August, the house was under 24-hour police surveillance. The police knew that MOVE had no weapons inside the house. No fingerprints of any MOVE members were found on the weapons that Rizzo displayed at his press conference.

MOVE points to videotape evidence that shows the police commissioner "actually handing, passing rifles through our basement window to fellow police officers!" This film was presented in a pre-trial hearing to dismiss the charges against the MOVE 9 but the judge denied the request despite the videotape.

The MOVE 9 were convicted largely on the contradictory testimony of the police who attacked them and a doctored pathologist's report. All the initial reports from the police, the press and the pathologist who conducted the autopsy indicated that the bullet that killed Ramp entered his body and traveled downward. Thus, it could not have been fired by any MOVE members, since they were all in the basement of their house at the time of the shooting. But the prosecution presented a pathologist's report that was altered so that it would appear MOVE had fired the shots that killed Ramp.

The accounts of two radio reporters, Richard Maloney and Larry Rosen, were disregarded by the judge. Both heard the first shot come from a house across the street, where they saw an arm hold a pistol out of a second floor window. Even the city's own negotiator, Walt Palmer, says the police opened fire on MOVE. He wrote in the Philadelphia Tribune: "I don't care if you don't like the way MOVE dresses, how they eat garlic or run their dogs, people have a right to live. The moment one person's rights are denied, all of our rights are in jeopardy. Look at Nazi Germany. It started with small deprivations of rights."

The nine defendants were convicted of murdering Ramp, of attempted murder, conspiracy and seven counts of aggravated assault on other cops and firefighters. And on August 4, 1981, almost three years to the day after the police assault on MOVE's

Powelton Village headquarters, a judge delivered the sentence: 30 to 100 years for each of the defendants, despite the fact that they had no prior felony convictions. Two people who had been in the house were not convicted because they were not MOVE members. Consuewella Dotson Africa was tried separately because authorities thought she was only a MOVE supporter. She refused to disavow MOVE and was sentenced in a separate trial to 10 to 20 years.

In contrast, the cops who beat Delbert Africa almost to death went free. One of the cops never stood trial. In the case of the other three cops, a judge intervened before the trial even started and acquitted the three, claiming that the cops were acting in "self-defense"—even though the police's own video showed that Delbert Africa had nothing in his hands when he came out of the MOVE house and was set upon by the cops.

Then, on May 13, 1985 the Philly police dropped a bomb on the MOVE house at Osage Avenue, setting an intense fire. Of the 13 MOVE people in the house, 11—six adults, five children—were killed. The fire spread through the neighborhood, leaving 61 row-homes totally destroyed or gutted.

## FREE THE MOVE 9!

The MOVE 9 appealed their case to the Pennsylvania and U.S. Supreme Court. These appeals were both denied. Most of MOVE's legal papers from the Powelton Village attack were destroyed when the authorities bombed the MOVE house on Osage Avenue on May 13, 1985. In July 1999, the MOVE 9 filed a Post Conviction Relief Appeal (PCRA).

The MOVE 9 and other MOVE members in prison have had to endure harsh treatment at the hands of authorities intent on forcing them to back down from their revolutionary beliefs.

MOVE describes the conditions of its imprisoned members this way: "At prison locations in the remote areas of Pennsylvania, MOVE members have endured years of repeated physical and mental abuse. Delbert, Carlos and Chuck Africa were kept in solitary confinement for over six years for refusing to violate MOVE belief by cutting their hair. MOVE women Janet, Janine, Merle, Debbie, Consuewella, Sue and Alberta Africa upheld their religious belief by refusing to give blood samples and were repeatedly put in solitary confinement, sometimes for as long as three years. Sadistic prison guards were delighted to inform Delbert, Janet, Sue, Phil, Janine and Consuewella Africa that their children were killed in the police assault on May 13, 1985."

Despite threats and years of solitary confinement, MOVE members have not backed down. In a letter published in MOVE's newspaper *First Day*, MOVE women held at Muncy Prison wrote: "MOVE people ain't in prison for committin' no crime, we ain't criminals, we're in prison for puttin out the truth about this corrupt government, for confronting this lyin' murderin' government uncompromisingly.... People should do whatever you gotta do to get justice and don't stop til you get it. People gotta stop believing these judges is right, just, fair because until you do you'll always have judges sanctioning the May 13th bombings, the Rodney King beatings, the extermination of the SLA, the Black Panthers, Wounded Knee and another whole race of people virtually extinct and enslaved on reservations like the government got the American Indians." □

Preaching

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BUT NOT TRADITIONAL

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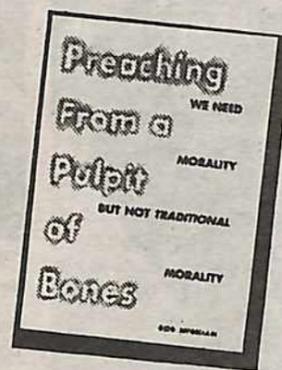
Bones

BOB AVAKIAN

Issues and invocations of morality swirl about us. The Christian Right and conservatives decry the "moral decline" of America and wage "cultural wars" against the antiestablishment political, social, and sexual values of the 1960s. Young people are bombarded with calls for "traditional morality." A presidential crisis is marked by inquisition-like tactics and puritanical moral codes.

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From *Preaching From a Pulpit of Bones, We Need Morality, But Not Traditional Morality*.

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# The Police Killing of "Chila" Amaya in Union City Brutality and Injustice in an "All American City"

"We are fighting so diligently because I don't want anyone else to know what it feels like, to share the experience that has ripped through our hearts."

J.J. Amaya, brother of Chila Amaya

On March 7, 1998, police in Union City, California, killed Lucilla "Chila" Amaya. Chila's death outraged the community and gave rise to a struggle against police brutality in this small city that is still continuing 16 months later. Typically, the city's officials—the city council, the chief of police, the district attorney—have rejected the demand for justice. Instead they all officially approved the killing of Chila and made it clear that they would oppose any attempts to rein in their police.

On June 26, Union City was one of ten cities that received the award for "All American City." These cities supposedly "exemplify the true American spirit at work, with the citizens actively committed to ensuring that the community is a safe nurturing place to live." Many people involved in the movement against police brutality in Union City are angry that this city would receive such an award.

## The Truth About Chila's Death

In the early morning hours of March 7, 1998, Chila Amaya was extremely upset, clutching a steak knife in each hand. According to her family, she found herself "in the midst of a relationship that had reached a state of uncertainty." She had experienced abuse, deceit and abandonment before—and she was sick of it.

Her brother J.J. was worried that she might harm herself, and so he called the cops. Chila's father Jessie says: "When we were in school they said 'Ask for help from a police officer.' Well, we did. And everything went wrong."

Police Corporal Todd Woodward arrived at the Amaya home at 6:30 a.m. When the cops arrived, Chila was inside the family's house, visible behind the wrought iron security door.

Chila yelled, "I'm tired of men using me!" The police simply shot her to death—within ten minutes after they arrived. Five bullets hit Chila in the back, hip and ribcage. Before the eyes of her family, including her 15-year-old daughter, Chila lay dying in her own living room.

After the shooting, the police came up with a justification. They insist they had to shoot Chila to prevent her from harming her family members. They claim that Chila was moving toward the room where her father and daughter were—and that she was a danger to them. They say that they thought she may have had a gun. And they claim they gave a warning before shooting.

The Union City Police Department and the Alameda County District Attorney's Office both ruled that the shooting was justified.

The facts dispute this police version of

events:

- Chila was shot at close range by the front door, and was far from the back room where her father and daughter were. The family insists that Chila never made any threats to her father or daughter.

- Eyewitnesses say that the police did not shout any warnings before shooting.

- It should have been clear that Chila did not have a gun—since she was holding a knife in each hand.

Chila's brother J.J. sees the police investigation as a sham. J.J. told the *RW*: "The police basically investigated themselves and then the District Attorney used the police report to come to its findings. The District Attorney never talked to any witness—it wasn't just me—no witness whatsoever... I was a witness to what took place and I was never interviewed by the police or the district attorney... When I saw the position that the police took in all this—it was like 'Wait a minute, they're not interested in seeking the truth.'"

## Two Union Cities

"Union City is expanding to include half-million-dollar homes and that's just happened within the last five years. You have a population explosion of those kinds of homes. As a Latino community we've always been a lower middle class community. Now we've been flooded with upper-class yuppie society... What we have been all of our lives is suddenly not good enough. The powers that be are catering to those surrounding communities more than those who have lived here for the long term—who have raised a family, grandchildren—that have spent their entire lives in Union City."

J.J. Amaya

Union City is located about 30 miles south of Oakland—in the San Francisco Bay area. The Decoto District, where Chila Amaya lived, is the heart of the local Latino community. Many residents moved there in the late '50s and '60s seeking factory jobs and affordable housing. This is a tight community—where a lot of people know and care about each other.

Today, however, city officials are aggressively trying to attract professionals working in the South Bay's computer industry. They advertise Union City as the "Gateway to the Silicon Valley." Signs along the major streets advertise "executive homes" in new real estate developments.

Residents in Decoto and other areas of Union City feel that they are being pushed out. But meanwhile, there is one city service that the Latino community gets more than its share of: the police. Latino people are 25 percent of Union City's population, but 41 percent of those arrested in 1997.

## Struggle Against Police Brutality

"The police shooting of a 35-year-old



J.J. Amaya (Chila's brother); Yvette Munoz (Chila's daughter); Lonnie Amaya (Chila's brother).

Decoto woman has left the close knit neighborhood in shock and raised fears that it will snap its tenuous relationship with police."

From article in the Union City press after the shooting of Chila Amaya

After police shot Chila Amaya, Union City officials feared the city would erupt in rebellion. There is a proud history of resistance to police murder in this community. Residents of Decoto still remember how the youth in Decoto rebelled in 1974—after Alberto Terrones, Jr. was shot to death by a Union City cop for allegedly stealing two hams from a market. Then the police chief William Cann was fatally shot, while attempting to justify the murder of Terrones at a community meeting at a Decoto church.

Over 600 people attended a memorial for Chila on March 12, a few days after her death. Deep love for Chila mixed with anger at the police who stole her life. "They messed with the wrong Mexican," J.J. Amaya said at the memorial. "We want the truth. We want justice."

In response to the police shooting, the Amaya family helped form Concerned Community for Social Justice (CCSJ) which has mobilized people in Union City against police abuse. "After my sister was killed, a lot of people here in the community came to us sharing bits and pieces of information about negative incidents with the police department," J.J. Amaya

told the *RW*. "We've lived here all our lives so the brutality and the misconduct of the police is no hidden secret."

The CCSJ has demanded a Civilian Review Board for Union City to monitor complaints against the police. The City Council at first agreed to explore the possibility of a Civilian Review Board—but did everything possible to keep evidence of police brutality hidden. The consultant they hired to hold public hearings explained that his goal was to "reaffirm the positive contribution that the police department makes to the community." The public meetings were poorly advertised, or were scheduled in remote locations or timed to coincide with CCSJ meetings. Large numbers of police showed up—to intimidate the community.

Despite this, residents turned out to denounce the way the police treat people in the community. "People kept on coming in greater numbers to the meetings. At the last public meeting we had over 100 people. The city recognized that the momentum was growing so they had to squash it. They hired another consultant to do a phone survey," J.J. said.

The phone survey was biased. It asked people if they supported a Civilian Review board—then it asked if they would still support it if it took money away from Parks and Recreation. The population of Union City is 27 percent white, but 47 percent of those interviewed were white.

"What's happening is that Hispanics and the Blacks are having the most contact with the police department and then we're turning around and asking the white people how they feel about it," J.J. told the *RW*. Finally in January 1999, the City Council voted to reject a Civilian Review Board. It was a slap in the face of the people.

Union City's power structure has made it clear that they will not allow the authority of the police to be challenged, even when that authority is used to kill people in their own homes. One Union City activist told the *RW*, "They are trying to teach people that we are powerless."

In fact, the determined people who are demanding justice—in Union City and in other cities across the U.S.—have shown that they are not powerless. Again and again, the system has responded by justifying police murder and defending their enforcers. And where people have responded to police murder and brutality with a fierce and united struggle, they have shown that the "blue wall of silence" can be broken and the authorities can be forced onto the defensive.

"What do we do as a community? Our position is that we continue to fight."

J.J. Amaya



October 22 National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality in San Francisco, 1998.

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Photo: Li Onesto

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