The Angry Streets of Indonesia

Nationwide Protests Target Suharto Regime

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May 1st 1998

What's Next in the Courts for Mumia Abu-Jamal

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As of May 10, 1998 Chairman Gonzalo (Alain Guzman) has been held in isolation for 5 Years, 208 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 can be legal 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 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 unrepudiated. 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!

Three Main Points
by Bob Avakian
Chairman of the RCP, USA

1) The whole system we now live under is based on exploitation—here and all over the world, 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 unrepudiated. 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.

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 and that of those with nothing to lose but their chains: The Revolutionary Communist Party, USA.
Nationwide Protests Target Suharto Regime

Anti-government demonstrations have erupted throughout Indonesia as tens of thousands are taking to the streets to protest price hikes and government corruption. The Asian economic crisis that started in Thailand last summer has continued to deepen. And Indonesia, like Thailand and South Korea, is being forced to implement drastic economic measures in order to receive a bailout from the International Monetary Fund. The United States and the IMF are demanding that in order to get $43 billion dollars to rescue its crisis-ridden economy, Indonesia must carry out drastic restructuring of its banking and economic structures and impose harsh austerity measures on the population. Economic "reforms" being implemented by the government will mean higher prices and more misery for the masses of Indonesian people—there are predictions that IMF-imposed measures will result in an additional two million unemployed workers. And the US/IMF plan for Indonesia will open the door for further imperialist penetration and domination of the Indonesian economy. (See accompanying article, "The US/IMF and the Crisis in Indonesia.")

Since last summer, students have been demonstrating against rising costs and demanding political reforms. At the beginning of May the students laid off with water cannons. The students were driven back to their campus at the Islamic University in West Jakarta, 500 students protested on the last two weeks of April, students from Northwestern University blocked the main road to the city by burning tires and clamped slogans against Suharto until security forces drove them off.

The next day, on May 1, 500 students protested in the city of Medan. Demonstrators threw stones and petrol bombs at the police, who responded with tear gas, rubber bullets and armored cars equipped with water cannons. The students were driven back to their campus in the Islamic University of North Sumatra, a mile from the city center. But the fighting continued as government troops chased behind armored cars while students continued to throw rocks at them from the campus.

This same day, about 1,000 students from the Institute of Technology blocked a road near their campus before they, too, were driven back by tear gas. And there were other protests in cities on Indonesia's main island of Java, including the capital, Jakarta, and Yogyakarta, Surabaya and Bandung.

On Saturday, May 2, tens of thousands of students at university campuses throughout Indonesia demonstrated. Protesters threw stones and Molotov cocktails and at least four police officers were injured. Police used tear gas and rubber bullets to keep protesters from leaving their campuses and in Jakarta, as many as 20 people were hurt in a demonstration at the Teachers' Training College.

In the northern Sumatra city of Medan, where clashes between demonstraters and police had been going on almost every day for the last two weeks of April, students from Northwestern University blocked the road outside their campus with burning tires. The students then attacked a showenroom displaying a car produced by a firm controlled by Suharto's youngest son, smashed the glass window, and pushed the car into the street and set it on fire.

On Monday, May 4, anti-government protests continued. At the Mentari Buana University in West Jakarta, 500 students staged a peaceful demonstration on the street outside their campus. Some of the students lay on the ground, calling for President Suharto to resign. But other protests were much more confrontational. In Medan, about 1,000 students confronted police officers at the Teachers' Training College. They hurled stones and petrol bombs at the police, who tried to beat back the crowds with tear gas and rubber bullets. Authorities said police on motorcycles clashed people into alleys and opened fire with pistols, injuring at least two.

Since Indonesia was hit by the economic crisis last summer, demonstrations have frequently targeted shops owned by ethnic Chinese. The Indonesian ruling class has a history of fanning this kind of anti-Chinese sentiment in periods of social and economic unrest. In fact, Suharto came to power in 1965 in conjunction with a wave of anti-communist and anti-Chinese hysteria. Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, even though they were born in the country, are discriminated against—they are not allowed to speak their own language, are banned from celebrating the Chinese New Year and are generally kept out of political positions in the government. At the same time, a lot of wealth and retail trade in Indonesia, and throughout South East Asia, is controlled by ethnic Chinese. When people are hit by high prices and unemployment, Chinese big businesses as well as small shops are frequently scapegoated. And the Indonesian government works to whip up this kind of animosity because it would much rather have the people's anger misdirected at the ethnic Chinese than at the oppressive and corrupt government, politicians, bureaucratic capitalists and their imperialist backers.

Throughout this last year, shops owned by ethnic Chinese have been looted and burned. And in this latest eruption of protest, ethnic Chinese-owned shops have once again been targeted by demonstrators.

In Medan, crowds set fire to Chinese-owned shops—while stores were spared on the outside. But the demonstrations have also had new targets—two police cars were among at least 13 vehicles burned, and two offices of the state electricity company, which has announced 66 percent price increases, were burned.

In Jakarta, 5,000 students at the Mentari Buana private university defied the military ban on street marches and hurled rocks at police. At the small private university of the state electricity company, which has announced 66 percent price increases, were burned.

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Continued on page 4
The U.S.-backed Suharto government in Indonesia came to power in 1965. And in the following months, hundreds of thousands—by some estimates, a half million—Indonesian leftists were hunted down and killed by government soldiers. Despite Suharto's bloody rise to power, he was hailed by the U.S. for his anti-Communist policies and economic policies that welcomed foreign intervention.

After years of stagnation, the Indonesian economy began to grow, in large part due to the world's demand for Indonesian oil. Much of Indonesia's economy is based on plantation crops and other natural resources, including oil, gas, timber, metals and coal. And foreign capital has flowed into the country for the last two decades. From 1970 until 1997, the Indonesian economy showed an annual growth rate of at least 6 percent. During this period, Indonesia was tied up in failed or stalled ventures. The real estate market was out of control—the cities were full of half-completed office towers. And the country's foreign debt was continuing to climb sky high. When the Asian crisis hit in the summer of 1997—starting with the devaluation of the bhat currency in Thailand—the Indonesian economy came crashing down.

The Indonesian currency, the rupiah, began to go down in value. By the end of 1997, it had fallen by about 50 percent. And this has made it more expensive and harder for the government and Indonesian businesses to pay back foreign debts. This devaluation has also meant a sharp increase in the price of basic foodstuff—prices for staples like rice, vegetables and cooking oil have gone up. Tens of thousands of workers have been laid off, and the unemployment situation is expected to only get worse. Officials and labor leaders estimate that as many as 2 million people in Indonesia will lose their jobs in the next year—which will add to the 4.4 million who are already unemployed and the millions more who live hand to mouth with part-time work. And some economists say the true extent of unemployment in Indonesia is even higher, since people who may work only an hour or two a week are officially designated as "employed."

The IMF "Rescue"

In November, the Indonesian government accepted a loan package from the International Monetary Fund. This loan, like all loans the IMF offers to poor, crisis-ridden Third World countries, demanded that in exchange for help, the government implement all kinds of austerity measures and open up its markets even further to foreign investment. In order to get the over $40 billion offered by the IMF, the Suharto government agreed to a austerity program that includes a gradual reduction of import tariffs, deregulation of some government-supervised commodities, a reduction of tariffs and other obstacles to exports, and a review of public spending.

Some IMF-imposed measures were aimed at restoring confidence in investors. But they were also likely to cause widespread bankruptcies, rising prices, massive job losses and tremendous suffering and hardship for the masses of Indonesian people—as well as further economic and political instability. And none of the IMF measures provided for lightening Indonesia's foreign debt burden—on fact this loan only added to the country's already huge debt. The IMF had made Suharto a "godfather offer" he couldn't refuse.

The Angry Streets of Indonesia

Demonstrations were also reported in several cities throughout the Island of Java including Bandung, Yogyakarta, Semarang, Ujong Pandang, and Sulawesi. In Surabaya, capital of East Java, thousands of students gathered at the Nusantara Muslim Institute and other university campuses to protest and were joined by workers and unemployed laborers.

Whole students fight the police with old-fashioned rocks and Molotov cocktails, they have also been using high-tech weapons—like cellular phones, plagers, computers and the internet—to organize and spread their struggle.

Indonesia is a country made up of 13,000 islands—which makes it difficult for different student groups to communicate and coordinate actions. But using the internet, the students have been able to spread their rebellions even to the most distant islands. And students are also using E-mail, pagers, cellular phones, pay phones and coded computer files in order to evade biggest home and office phones and other kinds of police spying.

One student organizer who talked about how they were trying to build networks between students all over the country said that during the latest wave of protests, reporters received almost daily E-mail reports and faces from students across the country, detailing 100 percent of protests and number of wounded by the police.

But the students are also learning that these high-tech gadgets cannot always be relied on. In one instance a member of a banned organization was arrested after the operator of his pager company informed the police. And the army has now demanded access to cell-phone-company systems, saying it has to monitor, cut off and, if need be, seize certain callers.

Since the Asian crisis hit Indonesia last summer, this is the first time there has been widespread government violence against demonstrations. Police opened fire on protesters at least three times, using small caliber rubber bullets. At least 17 students were injured by rubber bullets in Jakarta. Indonesian police shot and wounded at least two people in Medan when they opened fire into a crowd of people looting stores. There has been one report that six people have been killed by government security forces. And new exposure has recently come out about how the government is kidnapping and torturing political activists.

But the vicious, repressive moves by the Suharto government have not put a lid on the people's anger. While demonstrations in the last year have been almost completely students and mainly confined to campuses, the students are now taking their protests into the city streets. And many more sections of the population are being drawn into the action.

The newly implemented price hikes are limited to fuel and transport. But food prices are expected to rise as a result and several truckers are already refusing to deliver goods. Bus drivers in another town refused to drive students to school. And the government is worried that as more IMF-imposed austerity measures get implemented, anti-government demonstrations will grow.

One Indonesian police lieutenant colonel told the press, "It's not a pure student protest any more, because it involves workers, farmers, housewives, and there are thousands of angry people trying to burn homes. They are burning tires and turning over cars."

As we go to press, demonstrations continue in cities and towns throughout Indonesia. And there are reports that the students are increasingly being joined by others—including workers, farmers, bus drivers, doctors, nurses, and government employees.
Crisis in Indonesia

Gold miners on the Island of Sumaha.

The U.S. has been directly involved in training Suharto's brutal military forces. And there have been dozens of direct military exercises between the U.S. and Indonesia in this last year. Cohen's trip clearly aimed at strengthening this U.S./Suharto relationship.

The U.S. and Indonesia have a profound impact on the rest of the region. And the Pentagon has repeated that the Indonesian market of 200 million people, and the importance of its rich natural resources, means what happens here in the world's fourth-largest nation, the U.S. does not want to see the system failing, and militarily dominate the region.

The U.S. military's massacre in East Timor.

Since the late 1980s the U.S. government has been trying to prove the way for more diversified and convenient investment. Since then, the IMF has been trying to support the Asian economies. And one of the major ways it has pushed for such reforms is the "structural adjustment programs" used by the IMF and the World Bank.

IMF Plan: More Misery for the People. More Imperialist Domination

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Such measures will clearly create more false opportunities for U.S. foreign investment. And at the same time, these reforms will lead to increased misery for the Indonesian people, especially the poor. In order to pay off Indonesia's foreign debt, the IMF is telling Suharto that he must cut back more on the world market—which means cutting back on domestic spending, exporting raw materials, and making people poorer. And the IMF is demanding that Indonesia close down many of its banks and privatize 12 key state enterprises, including telecommunications, mining and cement companies. And Suharto is supposed to stop-by-stop shove harsh austerity measures, like the recent hike in fuel prices.

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The following are some initial news reports that we have gathered so far of this year's May Day actions around the world.

**Germany**

The NW received a brief correspondence from readers in Berlin about May Day in Germany. Among the many different actions and protests on May 1, the main ones were two major demonstrations in Berlin and a clash between fascists and demonstrators in Leipzig.

The correspondence from the readers in Berlin begins with an account of the struggle leading up to May 1:

"Before May 1st the police tried to impose many restrictions that would have amounted to a practical ban on all these activities. So there was a big struggle about this and also in the country. The groups joined together to issue a press release and leaflet against them this is a way of saying that revolution will also never be able to reach its end goal. They tried to do this by attacking the demonstration many times with clubs. Also, when they attack for no real reason other than their political goals—and people defend themselves against these attacks—they claim that the demonstration is violent, and this becomes the "grounded" for attacking again. So the demonstration took place with several thousand police in riot equipment on all sides. All these attacks were beaten back, and the demonstration was able to reach its planned end point at the Kottbusser Tor in Kreuzberg. This was a big political success for the revolutionary struggle and a defeat for the police and ruling class. (There is a big housing complex at Kottbusser Tor in Kreuzberg. A majority of the residents are immigrants. The city government has announced that half of the immigrant residents to leave and replace them with Germans, they will tear down the building But the building is not in bad condition or anything like that—one of course, it has been a symbol and rallying point for many years. The government says that in 1995 when Berlin becomes the capital of the new Reich and the government comes here, Kottbusser Tor must be "free from immigrants."

The other major May Day demonstration in Berlin started from the Tiergarten Park in the eastern part of the city and was mainly attended by students and German youth. According to the readers in Berlin: "The motto of this demonstration this year was "Enough Is Enough." This began with a rally that started at 6 p.m. The demonstration begins around 8 p.m. We think around 4,000 or 5,000 people were there. This demonstration was also given the same treatment as the demonstration in Kreuz- berg. There were many police attacks. Because of these attacks the organizers decided to officially call the demonstration before it reached its planned end point. At that time the police completely surrounded a part of the demonstration. The people defended themselves against the police attacks and beat baton reinforcements and fought against the police. This was some of the most fierce street fighting in Berlin in several years. The police wanted to beat the people into submission, but instead the people rebelled. This was a big political defeat for the ruling class."

In the aftermath of the Berlin demonstrations, the government is trying to hold back the readers in Berlin wrote: "Now after these defeats, the Interior Ministry for Berlin called for another big demonstration against the fascists. The press said 5,000 police were there. It is a big fascist movement in East Germany. This is a movement of the working class and encouraged and protected by the ruling class and police. No less than 5,000 police were there to protect the fascists—so altogether, at least 10,000 fascists! There was a big battle between the anti-fascists and the police. We must talk to people who were there to find out what really happened. But we can say now that this was a big battle and a very important point."

**Other Parts of the World**

**Turkey:** Riot cops known as "Robocop" because they wear full body armors arrested May Day marchers at the entrance of 70,000 people in Istanbul. According to a Reuters wire service report, "The clash began when the police used water cannon and tear gas to drive back the demonstrators and the police. They fired rubber bullets and tear gas at people who were trying to find out what really happened. But we can say now that this was a big battle and a very important point."

**South Korea:** Tens of thousands of workers and students marched in Seoul to protest the growing number of layoffs and unemployment. A group of labor leaders called for people from around Germany to come. They wanted to do this to take away the idea that May 1st is a "model" for Third World development. But these demonstrations are now being crushed by the police. The riot police attacked the May Day marchers with tear gas. According to the police, moh protesters were arrested and 200 were injured. The police rounded up the people who were chanting slogans against the police and arrested them."

**Denmark:** In Copenhagen, about 15,000 people rallied for May Day. Half a million Danish workers—about 10 percent of the population—worked in the middle of the night. The government passed a law declaring that the strike was "illegal." It looks like the laws will be enforced."

**Switzerland:** Hundreds of radical youth, many wearing masks, marched through downtown Zurich, burned imperialist flags, and targeted offices of monopolist capitalist corporations. Street fighting broke out as cops used tear gas to drive back the protesters against the May Day protesters at burning street barricades.

"In Munich, thousands participated in a rally led by Kisuanshiy Miyu (KMU—May Movement) Bryan and Aliens. There were demonstrations in many other areas around the country. According to KMU announced "the government's continued implementation of neoliberal economic reforms and threats food security.""
Red Flag Celebrations Coast to Coast

May First, International Workers' Day—Hundreds of people gathered for red celebrations in cities across the United States. From New York to Los Angeles, people repeatedly commented on how exciting it was to see so many of them band together for a purpose—liberating humanity! In city after city, business proclaimed, "We are human beings—We Demand a Better World! We Will Not Accept Slavery in Any Form!"

A special program was held in New York City to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Communist Manifesto. Over 170 people packed into Washington Square United Methodist Church and listened intensely to a talk by New York politico economist Raymond Lotta entitled "The Communist Manifesto." At Koos Cafe (a center for progressive culture in Orange County). In Seattle, an activist with the October 22nd Coalition announced the call for a new day of action, on October 22nd, 1998, against police brutality, repression and the criminalization of a generation. In Cleveland there were support statements from the Alianza Rastrera Defense Coalition, Art McCoy of Black on Black Crime 2000, and the Native American Group Committee of 400 Years of Dignity and Resistance.

Mary Ann Hispano New York: "Does the Communist Manifesto speak to us today? Yes, it does. It speaks to us through its analysis of capitalist society. It speaks to us through its vision of a world without classes. It speaks to us through the actual experience of proletarian revolution in the 20th century." What was accomplished and in what has been learned about what it is going to take to do away with this system. It speaks to us because here, at the dawn of the next millennium, nothing less than revolution will advance human society."

Joe Veale, RCP Los Angeles Branch: "The workings of world capitalism have created a 'Smoky Mountain' in every country in the world today. Smokey Mountain was a shantytown in Manila, an entire community of around a quarter million families rummaged through each day to find what they needed to survive. These are human beings like the homeless anywhere, including here, tossed out and treated worse than garbage... This system is a complete disaster... This system is a complete failure for the great majority of people on this planet."

The new rising generation put its mark on this May Day. May Day is a time, to join the celebrations of revolution and internationalism. They often expressed delight at having hooked up with something so utterly contrary to the official spirit of the day. "We're starting a new generation here."

One sister heard about this May First and during a walkout at her Bay Area high school. She said, "I think this is positive for the cause of community, and uprising and revolution here is amazing. When we get swept up in it, it's gonna be fun...I always believed in the communist philosophy, but I never saw any organization around it. It's awesome!"

Another Bay Area activist, whose relative was murdered by police, said he had learned about the oppression and struggle of people worldwide and added, "It's up to us to do it. It's up to our youth to take over."

Phil Farnum, RCP New York Branch: "Bob Avakian, the chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, has said that for those in the belly of the beast, there is a special responsibility and opportunity to bring this beast down... The Communist Manifesto says that capitalism creates its gravediggers. It does not say that capitalists dig their own graves. That's our job."

Washington Heights, New York City: The people of Washington Heights, a largely Dominican community, have been under police siege. After shooting down people in cold blood, the police have now set up barricades in the hood, demanding that people have ID to walk on their own streets. On May 2, the red flags of the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade flew high, as revolutionaries raised the chant: "Live for the people! Die for the people! Fight for the people! Power to the people!"

As they marched through the community, people raised their fists and voices in support: "We represent the people. We are the people. We love the people."

Cabrini Green Housing Projects, Chicago: May 1—Revolutionaries marched from building to building holding mini-rallies and reading Chairman Avakian's statement "Living the Spirit of the '92 Revolution—Forward from Rebellion to Revolution." Kids joined in—carrying red flags and chanting "Power to the people!"

They boldly crossed borders of various street organizations to unite with those on the other side—showing new unity among the people. One young man mentioned that revolutionary politics with the same breaking through chains had appeared all over several buildings—and wondered out loud how the building could get decorated...
What's Next in the Case for Mumia

by C. Clark Kissinger

"This standard is met if the petitioner can demonstrate either: (1) that the proceedings leading to the petitioner's conviction were so unfair that a miscarriage of justice occurred which no civilized society can tolerate; or (2) that the petitioner is innocent of the crimes charged." 

From Rule 524 of the Criminal Procedure Rules of the State of Pennsylvania

Protests continue as we wait the final decision of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. But many people are asking "what comes next," and rightly so. This court ruling will represent a major turning point in Mumia Abu-Jamal's case - a decision that could potentially speed up Mumia's appeals in the federal courts.

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court

What is before this court is an appeal of Judge Sabo's refusal to grant a new trial. This case has been contested for at least five ways the court can rule. First, they could find the Post Conviction Relief Act (PCRA) hearings before Sabo to have been so flawed by prosecutorial and political misconduct that they order Mumia to have the federal courts review the case. Second, they could find that the entire case against Mumia is so flawed by prosecutorial and political misconduct that they order Mumia to have the federal courts review the case. Third, they could find that the prosecution of Mumia was sufficiently flawed to require a new trial, and the case would be sent back to the trial court (again, not before Sabo). Fourth, they could find that only the sentencing portion of Mumia's original trial was flawed, and send the case back to the trial court level for a new sentencing hearing. In this case, Mumia's "guilt" would be taken as established fact, and a new jury would be empaneled to decide between life in prison and execution. Fifth, the court could rule that Mumia's case has no merit and deny his appeal for a new trial.

Pennsylvania's Supreme Court is more "politically driven" than most. Its justices are elected in partisan elections, and receive official endorsements from the same organization that campaigns for the governor's death penalty. But neither is the legal terrain totally unknown. There are laws, precedents, and procedures in place that allow the court to observe to some degree because many of its supporters believe in "the rule of law," and that their continued faith in the system is important to the state.

The Governor and a Death Warrant

Because former Governor Casey held off on signing death warrants for Mumia and a number of other death row inmates, the Pennsylvania state legislature changed the law to require the governor to sign a death warrant within 30 days that sets a death date within 60 days. Of course Governor Ridge requires no such legal prodding. He has promised to sign the death warrant for Mumia as soon as the Pennsylvania Supreme Court rules. The death warrant is an order to the prison authorities to carry out the execution. But under the new law, even if Ridge fails to sign the warrant, the death of the Department of Corrections is now empowered to carry out the execution anyway without a warrant. Executions have become administrative functions of the prison authorities.

The "Effective Death Penalty Act"

In April, 1996, the Congress passed and President Clinton signed into law the "Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996" (EDPA). This law was pushed through in the hysterical atmosphere following the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City. One purpose of this law is to severely restrict the ability of federal courts to overturn death sentences handed down in state courts. The effect of this law is to severely restrict the ability of federal courts to overturn death sentences handed down in state courts. The effect of this new law is to throw the U.S. judicial system back to the era of "states' rights," where federal courts did not interfere with judicial misconduct by the states. It was the news in the protests of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement that finally compelled the federal courts to step in and put an end to "cracker justice" in the South. The 1996 legislation restores cracker justice, north and south alike.

The "problem" the new habeas corpus law is meant to correct is that since 1977 the federal courts have overturned approximately 35 percent of all death sentences handed down by state courts, usually for flagrant violations of the defendants' rights. If it were not for this extra review process, there would be over 3,000 people on death row today.

A motion for habeas corpus (Latin for "let us have the body") in English common law was an appeal to a court to review whether the King's decision of somebody was legal. In granting the motion, the court told the King's sheriff to "bring the body" into court and justify why you are holding him. This concept developed into a general mechanism by which federal courts are asked to review criminal convictions by state courts. What it means in practice is that state governments do not have an absolute right to take away a person's freedom or life. Some of the various new provisions of the 1996 law apply to Mumia's case and will be acted on in months (not years) at each stage. These new political agenda of speeded-up appeals and swift executions.

Mumia's case spent 17 years in the state courts. That will not be the case in federal courts. In the new "rush to execution" climate, Mumia's appeals in the federal courts will be acted on in months (not years) at each stage. Mumia Abu-Jamal, San Francisco, October 6, 1997.
days to review the district court's decision. Death was to be on the fast track. Penney had said the states, quickly passed new laws changing its appeals process in order to get it on this track. They knew that the new strict time limits were the prospect of finding Mumia in the federal courts. However, quite unexpectedly, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court got into a suit and struck down the new Pennsylvania law in August of 1997, ruling that the state constitution gives the state Supreme Court alone the power to establish appeals procedure in the state courts.

Thus for the moment the new horrendous time limits do not apply to Mumia's case in the federal courts. But this does not mean the case will be dragged out over a long period of years. As mentioned above, its progress in the federal courts will be measured in months at most. Also the current political climate is one of swift, and often unthinking, rulings in favor of the state in the face of the case. Now the federal courts are not supposed to rule on the evidence. They are to presume whatever the state court found to be true. This turns the whole process around. It puts the burden on the prisoner to prove he is clearly innocent, rather than the state having to show he is guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Let's be clear on what this means. It means that all the new evidence that was presented in the three PCRA hearings is out—not to be considered by the federal courts—because the state court found it not credible. It means that Veronica Jenkins' testimony, that Mumia made a public confession the morning of the shooting, is not to be considered by the federal court. It means that Pamela Jenkins' refusal to subpoena key documents and to accept errors made by the state district court, is not to be considered by the federal court. It means that the entire federal court of appeals process in this case so unfair that a miscarriage of justice occurred which no civilized society can tolerate, is rather ironic. If ever there was a case where a federal habeas corpus motion, Mumia also has the option of seeking a "writ of certiorari" from the U.S. Supreme Court. A motion for "cert" in different from a habeas motion. It is not seeking the court to hear new evidence, but to simply look at the written record and rule on some particular points of law—usually motions for federally protected rights. While the Supreme Court normally grants a stay while such motions are being considered, these motions are routinely denied by the U.S. Supreme Court without oral arguments. Only occasionally will the Supreme Court hear such a case when an important question of law is involved. If the federal district court turns down Mumia's habeas appeal, the next step is the federal 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals, a court that also sits in Philadelphia. The federal court on habeas cases with a panel of three judges. They may or may not allow oral arguments, but they will mainly review the record of the federal district court proceedings. If the ruling by these three judges is negative, Mumia can then petition to have a panel consisting of all judges of the 3rd Circuit Court hear the case. Such requests are frequently granted, but the request itself will take some time to rule on.

At this point it should be evident that there is going to be a lot of action in Philadelphia over the next year or two, and that city remains an important focus for the Democratic Party National Convention is the year 2000. The final step in the federal appeals process is the U.S. Supreme Court. The Supreme Court accepts very few death penalty cases for review—usually only those that present new questions of law, or those involving conflicting rulings by different circuit courts of appeal. However, one thing to watch is how the Supreme Court rules on the "effective death penalty Act." There could be some old-fashioned contradictions in the Supreme Court on this question. It has been great over whether Congress has the power to restrict the appeals process. But in general we have to say that the political leaders of both major parties are united around their support and speeding up the death penalty.

The entire federal judiciary is now packed with conservative judges from the Reagan-Bush-Clinton presidencies. The trend has been to rubber-stamp the decisions of state courts, and speed up executions. The ruling elites in this country have a political agenda that revolves around more police, more prisons, and more use of the death penalty. Facing a Black revolutionary writer who was convicted of killing a police officer goes right up against that agenda. That is why the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal has become such a major issue in society. There is a great deal at stake for both sides. For them, the issue is so important that they find it preferable to execute a few innocent people than to contribute to any vacancies about the need for the expanded death penalty. This was the meaning of the infamous 1993 Herrera decision that ruled states could execute prisoners who were actually innocent as long as the state courts did not violate constitutionally protected procedures. (See my article on "Why We Can't Depend on the Federal Courts"—for WWP, October 19, 1997)

In Conclusion

Even if Mumia were to lose his current appeal before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, and to deny justice in the subsequent federal appeals up through the U.S. Supreme Court, Pennsylvania state law does allow for yet another PCRA hearing for a motion for a new trail. This brings us back to the quotation at the beginning of this article. That section from the Pennsylvania rules of criminal procedures, which sets out the criteria for a second PCRA appeal, is rather ironic. If ever there was a case so unfair that a miscarriage of justice occurred which no civilized society can tolerate it has been in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal. The fact that something so simple as a fair and an honest hearing of the facts, before a court that is not out to kill Mumia for political reasons, has been so utterly unacceptable should remind us every day of the nature of the system we are up against.

In conclusion I want to stress that what is discussed here is the legal aspect of our struggle. It is a critical arena for this struggle, but it is also their arena, run by their rules. The people are going to fight in that arena, but we also have a broader arena where WE set some of the rules. It is very important that we not ignore the critical moment when the Pennsylvania Supreme Court rules, and think: "Oh, it doesn't mean much, there's going to be a stay and more appeals." On the contrary, a negative decision would signal a political decision to go for Mumia's execution, and it will immediately be into the sped up federal execution mill Right now the Pennsylvania Supreme Court is gauging just how much injustice they think they can get away with. We have to create a public response which causes the court to feel their only option is to find a legal pretext for backing off from the execution of our brother Mumia Abu- Jamal. And we must be prepared to take the struggle to a whole new level if they rule against him.
Growing Up Chicano in America: Thoughts on Bilingual Education

In California, the fight is on for bilingual education. A new ballot initiative, Proposition 227, threatens to dismantle bilingual education programs in the California schools and force kids whose first language is not English to "talk or swim" in an English-only classroom environment. Prop 227 is opposed by a wide array of teachers, parents and educators, including all major teachers’ unions and many big-city boards of education, several school districts, immigrant rights organizations, the United Farm Workers Union, the Chinese for Affirmative Action, the Korean-American Educators Association, and the Northern California ACLU. Thousands of high school students have walked out of school in protest. And it will require much determined protest to stop this attack on the language and culture of oppressed peoples. (See RW Nos. 953 and 955.)

This week, the RW interviewed a veteran revolutionary who recalls what it was like to be a young Chicano, growing up and going to school in California.

RW: You went through school before there were bilingual programs and the schools practiced what they are now calling the "English immersion" method—just throwing kids into classes where just English was spoken. What was that like?

A: Like you say, I went to school at a time when no matter how little or how much English you knew, you just went straight into a class where all they spoke was English. And, from the time I was in the first grade until I was in the fourth grade, I didn’t know much English at all. It was especially hard the first few years. Remember getting into a lot of fights because I thought people were laughing at me. I remember being ridiculed. I remember that the teacher might call on me in class and ask me to read out loud, or to answer a question. To me, I was very humiliating and very embarrassing, and it actually changed my personality. I think it affected me for a very, very long time.

It was overall a very horrible experience. School wasn’t at all enjoyable. I yearned only because I had to go. And whenever I had the chance, I didn’t go. The idea that there’s people who want to take away the bilingual programs we have now—even though they are not nearly adequate—and force everybody to go through that kind of humiliation, it, I think, just egregious. And, I don’t want that for my country, for the people who I’m really involved, and what the supporters of Proposition 227 want to do, I don’t think a lot of people who support it now would support it. And I think a lot of people would really oppose it. I think it’s important that people do understand what it is that they are asking for.

That’s the reason why I’m talking in this interview—because I’m talking about some things that still hurt to think about—but it’s worth going through that if it will help people understand what has happened to our people back through all the broth, and run by people who were very intelligent, that may or may not have been the case, but they also saw themselves as being ignorant and stupid and that definitely was not the case. And, I think the one great thing about the other. If you don’t think you have any right to question the authorities and you don’t think you have ideas that are as good as theirs, you set up a really unequal situation. And your parents were always up against that. Especially my father. But even my mother didn’t like the idea of having to go up against the school authorities and call their judgement into question. It was a very hard thing, it was like people had learned their place and their place was doing what other people told them and not questioning what other people said.

RW: Back to what you were describing, about being thrown into a classroom where you didn’t understand what was being said by the teacher—Ron Unz, the Silicon Valley industrialist—the one who pushed for this initiative, will say that for kids like you, it’s simply a matter of putting kids into English classes. He’s never going to give up the idea, even if his proposition fails. He says kids who don’t understand English will do just fine. Do you think kids who don’t understand English will just fine?

A: You’re right. We were taught that the kids who were speaking Spanish were not. They were taught that they were being taught to be ignorant and stupid and that definitely wasn’t the case. And, I think the one great thing about the other. If you don’t think you have any right to question the authorities and you don’t think you have ideas that are as good as theirs, you set up a really unequal situation. And your parents were always up against that. Especially my father. But even my mother didn’t like the idea of having to go up against the school authorities and call their judgement into question. It was a very hard thing, it was like people had learned their place and their place was doing what other people told them and not questioning what other people said.

RW: What else do you remember about what it was like in school?

A: When I went to school, and it wasn’t that long ago, there was nothing written about Chicanos or Mexicans living in this country. I’m not saying everybody else didn’t have their history accurately dealt with, because that was true for most people of color, just to be straight up about it, and also a lot of other sections of society.

But because I was curious and I liked to read, I would go to the library and look through all the books. I remember one time looking and looking and looking for a book that had anything to do with Chicanos. I would go home and ask my grandmother, and my grandmother would tell me stories. And I would talk to my uncles, and they would tell me stories about working on the railroads and about helping build the roads and bridges. Then I knew people that had worked in the fields. But that wasn’t written about anywhere. It was like that didn’t matter. It made me feel really funny, because it was like you walk down the street and you have no shadow, you have no history—like you come from nowhere, and nothing that you ever did was of enough consequence that anybody bothered to write it down. And when you don’t have a yesterday, how can you dream about having a tomorrow? You don’t even have today that’s not written down.

And then a book came out, and it was written about Chicanos. I tell you what—it was written about what—people didn’t read about that book. You read it, five kids read around and one guy who would read the best, would read the book out loud. It was incredible. We were so proud, and it made us see good so when we read the book.

RW: You weren’t taught the history of the Mexican and Chicano people.

A: You’re right. We were taught that the United States "acquired" a lot of Mexico. They didn’t want to tell people that they stole land from the Indians. They committed genocide against them. They enslaved the Black people and brought them over here against their will in chains—the ones they didn’t throw in the ocean on the way over.

They took the lands of Mexico. For example, if I went into the Bank of America
said, and I know, I'm here to "study your mind. How long do you think it would be before I was in jail? They annexed whole states! Huge territories. And, by the way, when they settled the war with Mexico, one of the things they did was draft the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, under which the people who lived here of Mexican descent were guaranteed their civil rights, including their rights to their language and their culture. And that was respected just like the way they "respected" all the treaties they signed with the Indians—which is to say they didn't respect it at all.

RW: You told me earlier about what it was like when you were growing up in the United States of Mexico—coming out of the experience you had in the California school system. As I went with a friend of mine to the University of the Mexico, we drove from California to Mexico City. It was a really interesting trip. We got to Mexico City, and not too long after we got there, he took me on a tour of the University of Mexico. It's an incredibly beautiful campus. It's got some really fine schools of Engineering and Anthropology. It's really a first-rate university. And I think it existed almost a hundred years before the first university in this country.

When I got there, and we were going around, my mind was just such a great thing, I could see the students walking around on the campus. You couldn't help but think about the thing that had struck me when I looked down: It's such a beautiful country. And the other thing that it brought to my mind was the idea that this was impossible. That's what I'm seeing. It's such a beautiful country. They were going in and out of the school of Engineering, Physics, Medicine; it was all university classes. And I remember thinking, "I've been taught my whole life that this is impossible. This is impossible. This is impossible here.

So, what actually happened is I ended up going to school. I went to junior college for a couple of years, and then I got a chance to go to the University. At the college I went to, they had a class called "Spanish for Chicanos." It was really something very emotional. Just like I hated the beginning years of school, I loved the time I spent, especially in a class like this. The professor told us, "Look, nobody here speaks very good Spanish, or you wouldn't be here. There's two things that you have to understand. One, it's not your fault that you don't know how. Someone stole your culture. Someone stole your language. Somewhere, somewhere, they told you that it was inferior to other cultures and other languages. This is important for you to know." Then he said something else that was important: "You also have to know that you can get it back. It's you that's going to have to get it back. It's not going to be easy, and it's going to take years and years and years. It's a lifelong process but you can do it." And I did. So I was able to regain what had been stolen from me, what I had lost. But I don't think this is a way of doing it. I don't think people should have to go through the suffering and misery and pain and agony. There's no necessity for it.

RW: You were telling me about a class you took in junior college that was almost illegal.

A: Oh, yeah. I went to junior college in Los Angeles and I wanted to take a class that was taught in Spanish. I thought it was an anthropology class or something. And they had to teach the class at 7 o'clock in the morning so that it ended before the beginning of the official school day, because it was again the law in the state of California to see any language other than English in a language of instruction, except in foreign-language classes. Can you imagine that? On an university level?

RW: I was at a Reforma y Satán meeting recently that was discussing attacks on immigrants, and a white guy there asked a question. He said, "What I don't understand is, why don't they teach all the kids in our school system Spanish? You can't get along without knowing it." To which I replied:

A: That's a good idea. There's an interesting story I heard—on East Los Angeles they had something quite a while ago called the Malthur Project. It was a pilot program, where for one class they actually invested some money in a positive program. They asked the parents if in that school, in a largely Mexican, Chicano neighborhood, which language do you want your child do know? or languages? And overwhelmingly the parents said they would like their children to be able to read, write and speak both Spanish and English. And overwhelmingly the parents said they would like their children to be able to speak both languages. It makes sense. Both languages. And I think that's why they did it.

Then another example was that in a largely white, middle class suburb, they were going to offer bilingual classes starting in, I think, the first grade. But they could only do it in one class. And there was limited space, I read a story in the newspaper about how the parents were there starting at 8 o'clock in the morning, or some really early hour, waiting to enroll their children in one of these classes. I think there's a real hunger for it, and I think people would like to be able to communicate with people they see all the time.

And the question I have to ask is, why not? Why do we have to keep spending money for jails? And why aren't our children learning to communicate with each other? If you could speak three languages, it's even better than speaking two. But I don't think that's the attitude of today's people who are running society.

RW: Anything else you want to say to our readers?

A: The people putting things like the Unification initiative and the attacks against immigrants and people on the bottom—they keep pointing to the fact that not everything is low and all this. They should have to answer a couple of questions.

First of all, how is it that California, which was once the leading state in spending on education, now is next to the very last? There's only one other state in the whole country that spends less on education per capita and that's the state of Mississippi. Do you think that might have something to do with how poor the schools are doing?

The other thing is, the schools in richer districts sometimes spend twice as much money per student as educating people. And we're talking about situations where people already can speak English, and come from homes where learning is a part of everyday life. Where the parents graduate from college, and where there's an expectation that you're not only going to go to college, you're going to go on to the better colleges. I think that has something to do with what comes out of the schools. The idea that it has to do with the language students speak is nonsense.
This page is a discussion on the need for revolution and the role of the working class in the modern world. It highlights the struggle against imperialism, as well as the importance of solidarity and unity among workers. The text emphasizes the need for a radical change in the political and economic system, and the role of the proletariat in leading the revolution. It also mentions the importance of international solidarity and the need for a strong, united movement to overcome the challenges of globalization and capitalism.
Guerrilla fighters of the Communist Party of Peru.

RCP: Work with it, join it and help build it as part of getting ready for the great revolutionary storms that are on the horizon.

I especially want to say something to the young people in the audience. Cuz any serious revolutionary movement has got to have the youth at the forefront. It's good that we've got veterans like me and a party like the RCP who can impart our experience, our understanding, and be right there with you shoulder to shoulder struggling against the enemy. But it ain't mainly going to be the older generation that makes the revolution. It's going to be the young generation that does it. This is how it was back in the 1960s when my generation was young and when we forged the revolutionary movement that rocked the imperialist system back on its heels. Well your generation, you young people, have got to take up this responsibility today, and you've got to take it further than my generation. We need to just rock this system this time. We need to take it down once and for all. That's the responsibility your generation has got to take up.

In looking at it, it's positive that among the young people of this generation there are many fearless fighters. People ain't afraid to take on the enemy. But you gotta step it up. You've got to step up taking on the enemy. And you've got to rise up out of the trap of turning your rage on each other. But there's a way to do that—by coming together and taking on the real enemy. If you want to get on that tip, you've got an advantage that my generation didn't have back in its day. Because there's a party, a party that's got some experience in the struggle against the enemy, that you can work with, get down with. A revolutionary vanguard that can help lead in waging resistance against the system's attacks today as part of getting ready for revolution. Like I said, this is something my generation didn't have. Something that's very important and precious.

The RCP is our party—a party that's serious about winning and knows what winning means. A party that can take the pulse of the people and determine when the time to strike arises. A party that can handle the twists and turns that getting ready for revolution in a country like this will inevitably throw in our path. A party that can forge the alliances we'll need to have a real shot at winning. A party that has developed a strategy for taking on the military might that these imperialists have to throw at us...

The revolution we're talking about is the most radical, thoroughgoing break with all traditional property relations and traditional ideas. It's no wonder that carrying through this kind of revolution has been a process that involved advances and setbacks. But it's the only revolution that's based on the way society has actually developed and where things are really headed, and it's the only real way out of the madness of today. Like Mao Tsetung said, the road is tortuous, the future is bright.
Continued from page 5 of the 28 Army/Air Force exercises conducted since 1992 have involved KOPASSUS and other Indonesian governmental organizations. In the midst of this conflict, ABRI launched a crackdown on the opposition, the allegations of which allegedly began with a protest by the army. "It's simple. The U.S. is close to and loves Suharto's son-in-law, the Indonesian businessman and former Pentagon, State Department and CIA official, Prabowo. And his interference with the U.S. military exercises is not just a matter of national security; it's a matter of Suharto's continued efforts to maintain power in Indonesia."
A Chicago Department of Sewers official explaining the logistics of the system to a team of Marines.

A group of U.S. Marine Corps officers came to Chicago from May 5 to 7 to carry out urban warfare exercises. Marine officials said that they think future battles will be increasingly fought in cities because of the rising urbanization worldwide—and they want their forces to be prepared. The U.S. military certainly is not ignoring war and intervention in rural areas. Large areas of the world are still rural. Maoist peoples' wars are going on in the countryside of Peru, Nepal and the Philippines. But sending forces into urban areas presents special problems for the U.S.—remember the major problems U.S. troops had even in a small city like Mogadishu during the 1992 intervention in Somalia.

The Marine Corps denied that they were practicing for fighting urban warfare in the U.S. But the ruling class of this country was deeply shaken by the 1992 Los Angeles Rebellion, which showed the potential for revolution in the future. And they are still haunted deeply shaken by the 1992 Los Angeles Rebellion, which showed the potential for revolution in the future. And they are still haunted.

Chicago was chosen because it has features typical of the big, complex cities. U.S. forces could someday find themselves fighting in a river, shore access, subways, even a drawbridge.

"Our tactics, doctrine and technology have kept up with urbanization," Gen. Charles C. Krulak, the corps' commandant, told the Armed Forces Journal. "In future conflicts, our enemies will lure us into the cities in an attempt to mitigate our capabilities and make us fight where we are the least effective."

Fighting in the city requires different tactics than combat in open country, Marine officials said. Troops must learn to cope with, and take advantage of, skyscrapers, sewer systems, bridges, mass transit systems and tunnels if they are going to drive a determined enemy out of a modern city.

The Marine Corps Warfighting Center in Quantico, VA, will run the training program with the help of Chicago police, with about 60 Marine officers taking part.

From Chicago Tribune, May 7:
Lt. Col. Gary Schenkel was trained as a Marine officer and is now a June 5. After he entered the Marines 28 years ago. So he was prepared for about anything as he clambered down the narrow, damp, brick-lined tunnel into a sewer at South Des Plaines and Monroe Streets.

When he got to the bottom of the 16-foot drop, he was pleasantly surprised to see the sewer's potential as an urban combat situation. "I didn't think it had all the characteristics of an urban situation," he said.

Chicago was picked for an urban warfare exercise because of its size and its complex system of systems to keep the city running. For example, Chicago has 5,000 miles of sewers and 35 moving bridges.

"The city of Chicago has just about everything we could be interested in," said Col. Thomas O'Leary, "It has the lake, the infrastructure, it also has the expertise and training."

From Chicago Sun-Times, May 5:
The experimental project, Urban Warrior, is the second phase of a two-part program that began in 1995 with Hunter Warrior, which looked at fighting in open rural spaces. Urban Warrior began last summer and will culminate next year.

Chicago is the first city to host the Marines as part of Urban Warrior. News Corporation, Jacksonville, Fla., and Charleston, S.C., will hold events this year. The project will end with a major battle in an undisguised West Coast City.

In New York, the Marines will be exploring what is called "cross-canyon mobility." "How do you move from the 12th floor of one skyscraper to the ninth floor of another and then horizontal resupply?" said Maj. Holbert. "We're working with the British Royal Marines and the Dutch Marines on that."

Not only are the Marines here to learn, but in return they will be telling city officials about military techniques that might be helpful in civilian emergencies.

Holbert said the Marine Corps had no difficulty arranging the visit with the city.

"They've been absolutely wonderful," she said. "I don't think we could have picked a better city. They have really opened the doors to us and really helped us a lot. We're really going to be able to get a lot out of this about how a very complex city works."
Workers of All Countries, Unite!
On the International Communist Movement

An AWTW editorial leads off a section on the international communist movement (ICM).

Naxalbari

Thirty years ago the armed revolt of peasants in the area of Naxalbari ushered in a new chapter for the struggle of the masses in India. Led by Charu Mazumdar and other communist revolutionaries, the Naxalbari struggle constituted a dramatic break that transformed the political landscape in India.

People’s Wars in Peru and Nepal

People’s Wars are simmering in Peru and Nepal. The Nepali People’s War, in its second year, is sinking roots and spreading to new areas, amidst calls from reactionaries to bring in the army. In Peru, the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) is proving its ability to maintain the 18-year-old War, despite the losses inflicted on its leadership and attacks on its line. Both show the power of Maoism, and are bright new bases for world revolution.

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