Dispatches: Report from the People's War in Nepal

Part 4:

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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, author and with 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 that is their attempt to kind of supplement that lie with another lie.

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 that is their attempt to kind of supplement that lie with another lie.

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...
ON THE AIR FROM DEATH ROW

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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 happened. Now, everyone is in a struggle 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 will just be an average guy, and the next day he was a Dummy. So no one knows what today will bring, do they? And I involved, I guess, with movements of people around the world because we’re all... All the struggles that happened before, not having ever met you but remember, are so important because we’re all involved, I guess, with movements of people around the world because we’re all involved with movements of people around the world because we’re all involved, I guess, with movements of people around the world because we’re... All the struggles that happened before, not having ever met you but remember, are so important because we’re all involved, I guess, with movements of people around the world because we’re...
COLOMBIA: U.S. HANDS OFF COLOMBIA!

in the early morning hours of July 27, a plane crashed in the remote jungle area of Mapiripán, in Meta, killing at least 14 people. This was no ordinary plane; it was a military jet, known as the R-77. It was equipped with sophisticated radar and infra-red sensors and was capable of evading detection on radio communication systems on the ground, and was flown by a five-man crew of Colombian Army Air Force officers. The plane had been shot down, and reports out of Bogotá revealed that such U.S. air operations are not unusual. Last year, U.S. military surveillance planes carried out at least 10 flights in Colombia and other countries of the region.

Two weeks before the R-77 crash, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) — the largest, most effective anti-government insurgent group in Colombia — began a large-scale military offensive. As one point, FARC forces battled government troops just 25 miles from the capital city, Bogotá. The FARC offensive targeted the U.S. military bases in Washington — and the U.S. government, in Washington — and the U.S. government, by the same token, responded by sending FARC and other opposition forces certainly are not the cause of the drug problem or the main factor in it.

The cocaine economy in Colombia is tied to the fact that the country has long been 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 peasants to the urbanist, the tourist economy. And the drug money also flows to the U.S. where it is laundered through major banks and financial institutions of the U.S. ruling elite. This flow of drug money only benefits a small section of society. The exploited and oppressed masses in Colombia are the victims of this system. The Colombian economy is in a severe depression, the worst since the 1930s Depression, according to some estimates. Today, 20 percent of the workforce is unemployed. According to a recent report, the average income in Colombia is about $300 million per year. And FARC has at times collaborated with the drug trade and has been accused of indirectly funding the FARC and other opposition forces certainly are not the cause of the drug problem or the main factor in it.

FARC guerrillas. A Colombian general said. "We are going to continue training battalions like this all over Colombia until we have what we need." The U.S. intervention is not on 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 the country and the region. The U.S. intervention has led to civil wars and complex conflicts within the ruling classes, taking the form of conflicts between the central government and sections of the ruling classes based in different regions of the country. The revolution is a world's war against the U.S. imperialist system. The 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 back-to-back battle with the Pacifica Foundation after it seized this station 16 days earlier on July 13. The Pacifica management—owning the station’s license—had shut down the station, fired key broadcasters, threatened people with armed guards and police. Since then, 94.1 on the dial in the Bay Area had been silent 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 announced 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 rules forbidding them from talking about network matters. My first thought: Woooooow! The people have kicked those suckers off!

As I’m writing, the struggle to reclaim 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 the foundation’s moves.

A Deluge of Protest

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

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 “Love From Death Row” commentary, KPFA proudly broke the censorship wall and aired the tapes. Each time there is a new U.S. aggression in the world, KPFA airs announcements of antiwar actions and analyses critical of the U.S. government. It has provided openings for all kinds of progressive information and ideas—incorporating occasionally the analyses of revolutionary communists.

KPFA has been an important crack in the official media wall. People relied on it—each night there were at least 30 to 100 people camped out in front, shutting down the station so they could control its airwaves to information and aired the tapes. Each time there is a new U.S. aggression in the world, KPFA airs announcements of antiwar actions and analyses critical of the U.S. government. It has provided openings for all kinds of progressive information and ideas—incorporating occasionally the analyses of revolutionary communists.

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commercial radio station.

But they were just scrummaging 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 image has been public relations. How can you trust anything they say anyway?" Davey D., a hip hop producer and musician based on both KPFA and KMOU, told me, "The youth were always here, so there was a mistrust relationship from jump street. People of color were always here, so there was a mistrust relationship from jump street."

A New York Times article wrote, "The Pacifica Board also has a close working relationship with the rhetoric of inclusion, and now via the Clinton administration. That firm's public relations battle, it is being flattened."

Pacifica fired its public relations arm 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 Paid, wrote Pacifica head 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 station in your name." Pacifica, all the functioning and demands of the network have been accepted as the 'right' things are—"and anything else is "unrealistic." It's interesting to read Pacifica's own Year-End Review, because they accurately describe the capitalism pressures operating on them. They note, "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 about 20 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 Republicans took control of Congress in 1994 they openly attacked Pacifica in order to defend 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 funding underwriting for the first time. "People on Capital Hill are encouraging us to quit feeling around, call it what it is, 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 war" that has raged in the U.S. for part of the campaign to steamroller everything away before the almighty dollars—to impose corporate brand labels and mindless obeisance on all forms of media—to ship,ordes, climate, electricity, defund, desensitize, and ultimately eliminate all pockets of alternative, critical, or unproven, information. According to Radiolab's website, several Pacifica programs 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 military right—while all those who follow them flounder 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 RFC Chairman Bob Avakian about some basic realities that affect the mass media: "In today's world there are only two classes capable of handing the modern progressive forces—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat," he wrote.

Bob Avakian wrote: "Ultimately, it is only the proletariat that can utilize these modern 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— not because it is possible to wrest the society or the media peacefully from institution by institution, from the global gentrifiers who now own it—but because there is a larger revolutionary struggle here and for all the world. And because the oppressed people of the world need each opening, every platform from which to speak, every ally, and each victory against their oppressors—to push ahead into new battles, to counterclockwise, 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 guards, takeover lawyers, and corporate PR firms, Pacifica may have taken this network takeover lawyers, and corporate PR firms, KPFA in exile has been a KPFA in healthy exile in its own right, and the ties that we've forged to each other, still hold. And we need to make sure that what's happening at KPFA is part of the larger "cultural war" that has raged in the U.S. for part of the campaign to steamroller everything away before the almighty dollars—to impose corporate brand labels and mindless obeisance on all forms of media—to ship,ordes, climate, electricity, defund, desensitize, and ultimately eliminate all pockets of alternative, critical, or unproven, information. According to Radiolab's website, several Pacifica programs 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.

But meanwhile the struggle has energized, awakened, and unified many thousands, so the people are in a much stronger position to carry forward the struggle for the liberation of the world.

KEPF 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 KPFA. So most everyone has come to it with a really open mind and they're saying, 'Yes, 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 lip 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 these young people are doing to combat those sorts of things."

Robbie Osman picked up the boot: "KPFA in exile has been a KPFA in healthy transformation. We were in contact with the community in one way, which was that our donors 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 one on 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.
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 bureaucratic 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, shock 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 a single-shot local guns and khukuries (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. 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 approach, voices ring 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—pointing garlands of flowers around my neck and handing me presents. Each one grasps my hands firmly and gives me a "chomai" (traditional Nepali greeting) and a "lal salaam" (red salute). A young woman, a party leader in the 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 darting 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 members remain outside, but two of them follow us into the room—a young man and young woman, who stand to my left, guarding 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 arranged 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:
"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."

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 proletarian and have rifles and a great vision. 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: "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 election."

"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 plains. 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 revolutionary struggle. 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. He became interested in the party and the people’s army when I came to analyze the situation in our country—but there is no..."
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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 will tell us how 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 joined the party's army at the beginning of the initiation. Before this I was active in the student movement. I came from a very simple family and I joined the party's army on a small plot of land. I have a great feeling that there are no other options, 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 repression, 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 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 depressed and embittered by the slavery of the army. 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 a martyr it would be a great honor for me. 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 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: "It was at home and in the revolutionary student movement, when the People's War was initiated. I was in 8th grade, but I started working as a member of 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 also 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 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 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 tenacity and life-and-death nature of their struggle—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 the 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'm 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—now it is past 4:30 a.m. But I can't get to sleep for long.

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.

As we start out I look around and see the first time the terrain I had traveled in the dark. We start off weaving through the thinning part of women sitting outside working, piles of wheat lying beside to dry and oxen and goats lying by mustard 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 ploton 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 climb onto. 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

"We have delineated 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."

Tirtha Gautam, who was martyred in a raid on a police post in Bethan, January 3, 1997.
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 impulsion 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 Opportunistic Line through to the end!

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U.K.
Rally to Free the MOVE 9. Augu^ 1977. Philadelphia with a promise to clamp down on rebellious elements in the Black community, as well as while radicals, hippies.

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.

By the 21st Century, the MOVE 9 were the most notorious radicals in the country, their politics of denouncing the system and totally rejecting its institutions and totally rejecting its institutions. 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 the 9 to District Attorney Abraham.

The Siege at Powelton Village

In her book "Attention, MOVE! This is a Police State," Margaret Harris described the major confrontation between MOVE and the police.

"Rumors flew through Powelton Village on May 20, 1977 that the police were on their way to evict the MOVE house for refusal to allow inspection... Two hundred cops were dispatched to the MOVE house, surrounded the house and began what would turn out to be a one-year siege of the MOVE headquarters. A police sandbagged apartment windows across from the MOVE house and also established an external sandbagged perimeter around the MOVE house... A large percentage of Blacks in the neighborhood supported MOVE, as did a significant number of whites. For many of them, 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 Lyman Abraham removed the 9 from the Philadelphia police force. One member of the 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.
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. That August 2, Judge DiBona ruled that MOVE had violated a 90-day deadline, and signed an agreement that they could stay in their house but could not shoot guns. The siege was sparking widespread anger at the police and support for MOVE. But on August 6, 1978, Judge DiBona ruled that MOVE had violated a 90-day deadline, and signed an agreement that they could stay in their house but could not shoot guns. 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 police were using excessive force.

The nine defendants were convicted of conspiracy and seven counts of aggravated assault. The nine defendants were convicted of conspiracy and seven counts of aggravated assault. They were sentenced to 10 to 20 years. But shortly afterward, the May 20, 1977 demonstration in which the MOVE members alleges were killed was filmed by TV cameras, and the police entered the MOVE house as part of the agreement reached between MOVE and the authorities. They found the "weapon" to be inoperable. The deluge of guns continued to flood the basement and cops and firemen were wounded.

The MOVE 9 were convicted largely on the testimony of two radio reporters, Richard Maloney and Lanny Rosen, who were convicted of forgery. Janice Africa Chuck AfricaPhil Africa

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From 8:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. the deluge guns continued to flood the basement and minutes later the MOVE people closed out through the basement windows, drenched, shivering, and staring down the benefits of the stakeout unit guns. The women and children were first. The last to come out was Deibert Africa, one of the most militant and well-known MOVE members. No sooner was he 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 his face with his helmet, grabbed him by his handcuffs 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: "The police have the police with a automatic weapon... I was thrown face first in the back of a police wagon and tortured during the trial to the MOVE house at 4th and Race. A stakeout cop and detective stayed in the back of the wagon and beat my heart with a leather strip, jpeg, and I was beat in the restrooms."

Police assaulted MOVE headquarters, August 9, 1978.

Police assaulted MOVE headquarters, August 9, 1978.

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 you'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 convicted. Several weeks into the trial, the judge told the defendants they could answer only yes or no to the question of whether they would obey their courtroom rules. When the defendants answered with "We'll do what's right," they were expedited permanently. When the courtroom and tried in absentia.

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 in a second floor window. Even the city's own negotiator, Walter 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. On August 4, 1978, almost three years to the day after the police assault on MOVE's Police assaulted MOVE headquarters, August 9, 1978.

Police assaulted MOVE headquarters, August 9, 1978.

Police assaulted MOVE headquarters, August 9, 1978.

Police assaulted MOVE headquarters, August 9, 1978.

Police assaulted MOVE headquarters, August 9, 1978.
Issues and invocations of morality swirl about us. The Christian Right and conservatives decry the "moral decline" of America and wage "cultural war" against the anti-establishment 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.

Preaching From a Pulpit of Bones, We Need Morality, But Not Traditional Morality could not be more timely. In two provocative essays, Bob Avakian brings his unique Maoist perspective to the question of morality. The first essay lays bare the social reality and political agenda lurking beneath conservative ideologue William Bennett's Book of Virtues. The second develops a far-reaching critique of the attempts by the advocates of "liberation theology" to construct a progressive, ethics-based politics according to Judeo-Christian scripture.

Preaching From a Pulpit of Bones, We Need Morality, But Not Traditional Morality is a significant intervention into the debate and struggle about the "moral crisis" in America. It is also an inspiring exposition of the principles and criteria for a radically new morality that can expose in its true light "traditional morality" and at the same time can illuminate the way to a far higher basis for human relations.

What is called for is nothing less than advancing humanity to a whole new stage of history, where it will have left behind the oppressive divisions which for thousands of years have brought horrendous consequences. And a crucial part of the battle to break tradition's chains is to bring forward the radically new morality that can expose in its true light "traditional morality" and at the same time can illuminate the way to a far higher basis for human relations.

For this clergyman who has struggled with the relevance of the Biblical faith in the face of the crises in our society, the critique of Bob Avakian comes as an urgent challenge. His thoughtful analysis underlines the urgency of recognizing how shallow has been our understanding and how futile has been much of our effort to work for a just society. There is insight and truth-speaking in this vital book which those of us of religious faith need to hear and to which we need to respond.

Bill Martin
Associate Professor of Philosophy, DePaul University, Chicago
Author of Humanism and Its Aftermath

What is ethical thinking in a time of social fragmentation and imperialist globalization? Bob Avakian convincingly argues that morality has to be tied to a vision of a good society, a society free of exploitation and every form of domination. Even more does morality have to do with the struggle to create such a society. Avakian points the way toward what some doubt is possible, a materialist ethics. Like Mao's, this is a Marxism that aims at a social analysis that is clear and systematic but not "cold"—a Marxism with heart.

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Reverend Dr. George W. Webber
Professor of Urban Ministry and President Emeritus
New York Theological Seminary

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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 Lucio "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 demands of the community. When officially approved the killing of Chila and made it clear that they would oppose any attempt to serve in their place. 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 in which the citizen actively committed to ensuring that the community is a safe and equal 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 residents, she was found herself in the midst of a relationship that had reached a state of uncertainty. She had experienced abuse, domestic and abandonment before—and she was sick of it. Her brother J.J. was worried that she might harm herself, so he called the cops. Chila's father Jesse 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 3:10 a.m. when the cops arrived, Chila was inside the family's house, visible behind the un gated iron security door.

Chila yelled, "I'm tired of men using me!" The police simply shot her before he could get within ten meters, and killed him. Five bullets hit Chila in the back, leg and rib cage. 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 he had to shoot Chila to protect her from harming her family members. They claim that Chila was moving toward the room where her husband 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 noted that the shooting was justifiable.

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.
- 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. saw 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—I wasn't just me—I'm witness to whatever happened. I was a witness to look into Chila and I was never interviewed by the police or the district attorney. I observed 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 until there's just happened within the last five years. There's a population explosion of these kinds of homes. It's a Latino community we've always been a lower middle class community. Now we've been flooded with upper-class upper class society. What we have been all of our lives is publicly not good enough. The large crowds that are entering 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 light community—where a lot of people know and love one another. The community is divided between police and residents, with the decal on the house and the community. It's a Latino community.

Residents of 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 Union City are Latinos.

Struggle Against Police Brutality

"The police shooting of a 15-year-old..."

Decoto woman has left the close knit neighborhood in shock and raised fears that it will spark tense times with San Francisco police..."

From an article in the Union City press after the shooting of Chila Amaya. Union City officials blamed 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 the murder of Alfonso Terme. It was shot to death by a Union City cop for allegedly stealing two cans from a market. Then the police chief William Cann was finally shot, while attempting to justify the murder of Terme 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. They love for Chila mixed with anger at the police who stole her life. "They killed the wrong Mexican," J.J. Amaya said at the memorial. "We want justice."

In response to the shooting, the Amaya family hired a Community 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 eventually agree to keep it closed. The consultant they hired to hold public hearings complained that the city was using the consultant to the positive contribution that the police department makes to the community. "The reports were poorly advertised, or were scheduled in remote locations or timed to coincide with CCSJ meetings. Large numbers of people showed up to intimidate the community.

Despite this, residents turned out to demand the way the police treat people in the community. "People kept oncoming 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 squish it. They hired another consultant to do a phone survey," J.J. said.

The CCSJ was bypassed. It asked if 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, while over 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 struggle 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 actions. And when people have responded to police murder and brutality with a fierce and united struggle, they have shown that "a 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
The RW creates revolutionary lines of communication. It links and experiences. It connects. Its readers to the revolutionary inquisition/power struggle in Washington, DC. Exposure Sane, Secretary-General of Philippines BAYAN eyewitness report from the guerilla zones of the fight to shutdown the School of the Americas...Talamantez, police brutality activist Margarita Rosario, Jamal; events, facts, plans and stakes...speeches by need for revolution...Maoist commentary on the Philippines...Life in Occupied New York; Police Brutality movement Nathaniel Santiago, former prisoner Luis Al-Jundi, RW reporter Li Onesto has returned from several months in Nepal — with the stories and pictures from the Maoist people's war, initiated in 1996. 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