by Michael Novick,
People Against Racist Terror

More than any other scandal about police killings and shootings, the widening exposure of police brutality, criminality, perjury and murder growing out of disclosures at the LAPD Rampart Division exposes the systematic nature of the problem. It's not only the police drug thefts and drug sales, the police shootings and killings of unarmed men that were covered up with perjury and planted guns. It goes beyond the cops who acted as hired killers or who robbed banks. It involves not only the cops who do the crimes, but those who go along with the cover-up. It goes past the police department to the prosecutors, judges, public defenders and to the Mayor, City Council and Police Commission.

Quite simply, the system requires and protects police brutality. The only thing that will put a stop to it is independent, community-based control of all aspects of policing. Precinct by precinct, the people need to set the policies for the cops, and hold the cops to account for breaking the rules. But we can't stop with the cops. They are an occupying army in communities of color, an internal border guard in more privileged areas. To stop their violence, we have to go after the people in high places who trained these dogs to bite and sixed 'em on us — the political and economic elite whose wealth the police are designed to protect and serve.

Here's what the L.A. Times acknowledges has been exposed by the ongoing Rampart scandal:

"...in the since-overturned Rampart cases, prosecutors and judges -- most of whom are former prosecutors -- did what they routinely do. They offered discounts on punishment to those who agreed to sign those who agreed to plead guilty. [Innocent] defendants did what defendants typically do: they took their word against that of the police. And courts would then punish them more harshly, saying they deserved it in part because they had not shown remorse."

The cynicism of the judges and DA regarding police crime and perjury is evident in the court proceedings. In one of the Rampart cases now overturned, in which police perjury was evident from the start, prosecutors made the defendant "an offer he couldn't refuse." They would let him go if he would just say he did it — actively suborning his perjury to cover the lies of the arresting officers! He pleaded no contest to assault and battery to having been beaten (under a court ruling, "People v. West") that allows guilty pleas to lesser actions that the defendant did not commit in the interests of making a plea bargain! He was placed on probation after almost a year in jail pre-trial on a police frame-up.

But before Judge Robert O'Neill would accept the deal, he wanted to make sure it was OK with the cops! "I understand the basis for this disposition is the fact that there are factual difficulties," the judge said on the trial transcript. "Factual difficulties? What a euphemism for police perjury!" Indeed, this disposition has been null and void since the agency that employed the individuals in this matter, is that correct? Can't bring himself to name the LAPD! Told that the cops had signed off on the plea bargain cover-up, he let the deal go through.

How many lives would have been saved if anyone in the court, the LAPD, the press, had blown the whistle on this railroad and whitewash while it was happening? This problem is not a new one and is not L.A. Thirty years ago in New York, I did research which showed that in thousands of cases in the Manhattan Criminal Courts, virtually all were based on testimony by a police complainant identical in case after case — either the cop saw the suspect drop a bag of white powder, or the cop was solicited for sex in a subway toilet. No judge, DA or defense lawyer who heard such identical "testifying" for more than a day or two could have any doubt that it was perjury. And nothing has changed in 30 years. In 1999 in N.Y., cops 35,000 more arrests than there were reported crimes!

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It is stop this base of "small" lies that the big lies and big crimes that are being exposed in rampart rests. The notorious police killings and beatings, like those of Abner Louima and Rodney King, Tyisha Miller and Margaret Mitchell, Ricardo Cés and Julio Castillo, rest on the countless thousands of racial profiling traffic stops and street frisks carried out by police against Blacks and Latinos. To stop the killings and beatings, the perjury and drug gods, we must stop the every day lying and racism at the heart of the so-called criminal justice system. The system sends cops out to maim and to kill, and when they do so, the system protects them, except in a few rare cases where the individual cops are hung out to dry, scapegoats to divert attention from the system's crimes of colonialism and exploitation.

Only massive protests can get the cops who killed Margaret Mitchell, Irvin Landman or Tyisha Miller indicted. Only street confrontation can get the deputies who killed Julio Castillo or Ricardo Cés prosecuted. The Minneapolis system forced the system to try the cops who tortured Abner Louima. Even more widespread protest forced the murder indictment of the cops who killed Amadou Diallo; but as soon as things quieted down, the system moved their trial to mostly white Albany just as was done for the cops who beat Rodney King.

The system is gambling that our memories are short and our concern is fleeting. But police brutality is an open, festering wound that will not go away or be forgotten; it is a sore that is being irritated over and over again, by police racism and abuse, 24/7. Remember that the acquittals in Sams Valley for the cops who beat Rodney King were met by the most extensive and multi-racial urban rebellion in U.S. history!

Demand justice for the victims of police murder and criminality! Mobilize for community control of the police!

Establish an independent prosecutor to hold cops to account for their crimes!

Demonstrate Against Police Brutality and for Community Control of the Police!

Demonstrate at Parker Center, LAPD headquarters, Wednesday March 15, 1999, 5:00 PM

International Day of Action Against Police Brutality!
Beyond the Battle

On Tuesday November 30, the streets of Seattle became alive with the spirit of revolution when between 50,000 and 100,000 people turned out to protest the imposition of the WTO on nonviolent protesters. Between 20 to 50 people were arrested on Tuesday and the police repression only got worse as the week progressed. Even by Tuesday night, destruction of a few multi-national corporations' windows was imposed on all downtown.

The property destruction by protesters receives almost no coverage. The destruction of our environment, democracy, small businesses, labor rights, human rights and public health that the WTO is responsible for. In addition, it is worth pointing out that the damage by the protesters was to private property, whereas the damage by the WTO is to public property - the theft itself. Furthermore, compared to the violence and destruction carried out by the police against protesters, the protesters' actions are really pretty mild and perhaps even justified in the face of such police repression.

So why did so many people turn out to protest WTO? The WTO was established in 1995 with the purpose to eliminate "barriers to trade" which include environmental regulations, labor laws, consumer protection laws and public health laws. The WTO allows countries to challenge each other's laws and regulations as violations of WTO rules. Cases are decided in secret by a panel of 3 un-elected trade bureaucrats who are not screened for conflict of interest. If a country's law is found to be a barrier to trade, that country must either: change the law to conform with WTO requirements, pay permanent compensation to the other country, or face economic sanctions. The WTO has ruled that it is illegal for a government to use the method of production as a basis for discriminating against a product. This means that a government cannot treat a product made with child slave labor and an environmentally damaging way any differently than a product made by a high wage union worker in an environmentally friendly way. For instance, a provision of the US Endangered Species Act that forbids the sale in the US of all shark caught in ways that kill endangered sea turtles is to be illegal because it was discriminating against shrimp shrimper based on how they were produced.

The WTO has also ruled that governments cannot take into account the behavior of companies that do business with vecinos dictatorships like Burna when regulating products. This means that the laws that prohibited the purchase of products made by companies doing business with apartheid South Africa and were responsible for the full bankruptcies worldwide illegal today.

The WTO has found that environmental restrictions on goods must be the least adequately practical, and the restrictions must be "necessary." To prove that a regulation is necessary, a country must show that there is a worldwide scientific consensus on the danger, and a WTO tribunal of corporate lawyers must agree that the proposed regulation is a reasonable response to the danger. This puts an almost insurmountable burden of proof on any government that wants to protect its citizens and its environment from harm and could potentially overturn the ban on the sale of beef in the EU from cattle that had been treated with hormones that significant evidence, but not 100% certainty, has shown to cause cancer.

People were amazingly well organized. Every night there was a speakers council meeting where all of the affinity groups would a "spoke" to discuss and agree on strategy for the next day. These meetings involved hundreds of people discussing what a small group of people could do. Almost all of us were involved in some way. The people who marched in the downtown were surrounded by tear gas and violence. The police had to keep up with us. The property destruction was minimal. We marched through the streets completely surrounded by tear gas. We carried each other, each in a different state of trauma and pain. We regrouped and made decisions - as we had throughout all the actions - on an affinity group by affinity group process.

A group of hundreds several blocks down from us was being fired upon with rubber bullets and tear gas. What few would continue and get worse. The police were relentless. The defenders of power and privilege had to punish us for what we had accomplished. The next few days were consumed in marches, blockades, and military actions by the police. A state of emergency was declared by the Mayor, the national guard was called in and the tear gas was flying everywhere. The pepper spray was indiscriminate; the sound of the concussion grenades and helicopters flying above was a constant echo in my mind long after they stopped.

We marched on Wednesday with the Steelworkers and thousands of unionists - alongside grassroot activists from all over the world. Our march was met with tear gas and rubber bullets from the police. We were fired upon by the police and my affinity group was exposed to tear gas. As we tried to get out of there, I looked back and saw a conside from our affinity group buckled over on the street completely surrounded by tear gas. We carried each other, each in a different state of trauma and pain. We regrouped and made decisions - as we had throughout all the actions - on an affinity group by affinity group process.

While the media obsesses over anarchists who destroyed property, the real story was that anarchists were simply everywhere doing a hundred different things. Anarchists were doing jail support, media work, making meals for thousands, doing dishes, facilitating strategy meetings, leading workshops and discussion groups. Anarchists were doing medical support work, security at the warehouse space, communications between affinity groups and clusters, organizing musical and lock down and tripod sets and forming human chains. Anarchists were starting chats, designing posters and newspapers, playing music, negotiating with the police and police to get our comrades out of jail. Anarchists were squatters occupying an empty building and attracting national media to the issues of property, poverty and homelessness. Anarchists were held in solitary confinement for being such effective organizers of the non-violent civil disobedience that rocked Seattle and added the weight of history to the efforts of the WTO. And yet, anarchists targeted corporate chain stores.

Continued on page 5 WTO/Crass

Shutting Down the WTO and Opening Up a World of Possibilities

Closing the Gap In the Battle

I'd been standing, arms linked, with members of my affinity group by my side in a street blockade for several hours on Tuesday afternoon, when word was passed along that all WTO meetings for the day had been canceled.

The day had started early - 5:30 am - my affinity group joined hundreds of people at the park to begin actions that truly historic. We were part of the Cowborg cluster - clusters of affinity groups had been formed to take specific actions to oust the WTO. The city had been divided up into 13 pieces of pie and ours was 'Key Lime.' The Cowborg cluster was one of several clusters in our "team." The Cowborg and others who attended sections everywhere, the police are disoriented and can't keep up with us - we were told. We danced, we chanted, we sang, we celebrated. A street party had began several blocks up from us.

I went to check it out and soon found myself helping blockade the delegates from China. An organizer began speaking to the delegates in Chinese and there in the street, international talks were taking place between activists and representatives from 125 nations around the world about human rights, social and environmental justice.

The first announcement came - the morning sessions had been canceled, the opening ceremonies were off. I could hardly believe it. - we shut down the WTO! We hugged each other, we cheered. One of the most powerful organizations on the planet had been brought to a stand-still. We rested and then returned to the blockades for the afternoon. Groups of anarchists were everywhere holding intersections. We joined in a blockade a stood in solidarity with thousands of other activists working to keep the WTO shut down. Again the messages came that the entire day had been canceled, shortly thereafter we heard the concussion grenades and saw the tear gas. The day had started early - 5:30 am - my affinity group joined hundreds of people at the park to begin actions that truly historic. We were part of the Cowborg cluster - clusters of affinity groups had been formed to take specific actions to oust the WTO. The city had been divided up into 13 pieces of pie and ours was 'Key Lime.' The Cowborg cluster was one of several clusters in our "team." The Cowborg and others who attended sections everywhere, the police are disoriented and can't keep up with us - we were told. We danced, we chanted, we sang, we celebrated. A street party had began several blocks up from us.

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The failure of the WTO Ministerial meeting in Seattle was a historic watershed, in more than one way. First, it has demonstrated that globalization is not an inevitable phenomenon which must be accepted at all costs, but a political project which can be responded to politically. Fifty thousand citizens from all walks of life and all parts of the world were responding politically when they protested peacefully on the streets of Seattle for four days to ensure that there would be no new round of trade negotiations for accelerating and expanding the process of globalization.

Trade Ministers from Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean were responding for accelerating and expanding the process of globalization. They refused to join hands to provide support to a negotiations for which conditions of transparency, openness and participation were not ensured, developing countries would not be party to a contentious. This is a new context and will make bulldozing of decisions difficult in future trade negotiations.

The rebellion on the streets and the rebellion within the WTO negotiations has started a new democracy movement — with citizens from across the world and the governments of the South refusing to be bullied and excluded from decisions in which they have a rightful share.

The refusal of Third World governments to rubber-stamp decisions from which they had been excluded has brought into the open and confirmed the non-transparent and anti-democratic processes by which WTO rules have been imposed on the Third World and has confirmed the claims of the critics that WTO has carved itself as a true World Trade Organization because it enforces tyrannical anti-person, anti-nature decisions, to enable corporations to steal the world's assets through secretive, undemocratic structures and processes. The WTO institutionalizes forced trade not free trade, and beyond a point, coercion and the role of force cannot continue. Free trade is not leading to freedom. It is leading to slavery. Diverse life forms are being nullified through genetic life, farmers are being enslaved through high-tech slavery, and countries are being enslaved into debt, dependence and destruction of their domestic economies.

The thousands of youth, farmers and environmentalists who marched the streets of Seattle in peace and solidarity were not acting out of ignorance and fear. They were outraged because they know how the WTO is destroying the social and ecological impacts and, how the rules of the WTO are worth the objectives of establishing corporate control over every dimension of our lives: our food, our health, our environment, our work and our future.

When labor joins hands with environmentalists, women and farmers from the South make a common commitment to say "no" to genetically engineered crops, they are not acting in their special interests. They are defending the common interests and common rights of all people, everywhere. The divide and rule policy, which has attempted to pit consumers against farmers, the North against the South, labor against environmentalism, has failed.

In their diversity, citizens were united across sectors and regions. While the broad based citizens campaigned stopped a new Millennium Round of WTO from being launched in Seattle, they also launched their own millennium round of democratization of the global economy.

The real Millennium Round for the WTO is the beginning of a new democratic debate about the future of the earth and the fate of its people. The centralized, undemocratic rules and structures of the WTO, which are establishing global corporate rule based on monopolies and monocultures, need to give way to an authentically, democratic rule based on diversity and democracy. The rights of all species and the rights of all people must come before the rights of corporations to make limitless profits from timelessly destructive technologies.

A new threshold was crossed in Seattle — a watershed towards the creation of a global citizen-based and citizen-driven democratic order. The future of the World Trade Organization will be shaped far more by what happened on the streets of Seattle and in the non-governmental (NGO) organization events than by what happened in the Washington Convention Center.

To take one concrete example, the citizens' Seattle round, for the democratization of the food system, synthesized common concerns of people from across the world to ensure that the way we produce, distribute, process and consume food is sustainable and equitable. In the Third World and the industrialized world, common principles have started to emerge from people's practices to ensure a safe and healthy food supply. These principles enable us to shift from narrow-centered and people-centered food systems:

1. Diversity rather than mono-cultures to ensure higher output per acre
2. Decentralization and localization in place of centralization and globalization

PART'S Perspective

There's no doubt that the success of the mobilization against the WTO sets some new terms of struggle in the US and globally. What was a dream — coordinated international action against the economic and political program of imperialism — became a reality. What brought it about? Hard work, and disciplined militancy in the face of repression by the protesters. Overseas ambition and self-delusion by the corporate globalizers.

Where are we now? Contradictions were exposed within the WTO itself — between the US and other imperial powers, and between the industrialized countries and the developing world. In sectors of the middle class and organized labor, fissures opened in the support base for the US state and rulers. A new generation of activists was politically radicalized. First, by a taste of "the power of the people." Second, by a direct experience of the boot and truculence of state repression, and an instant education in the severe limits on dissent imposed by a system that fears class consciousness and people's power. That whiff in the air — it's not just tear gas; it's revolution.

But the evidence that tons of thousands of anti-imperialists can indeed put a wrench in the machine," while inspiring, is also a measure of the task before us. We should not be intimidated by the wealth and power of the rulers. All their wealth is stolen on a daily basis from the people and land they exploit. If their power is obtained from the people and nations they oppress and repress, But the very enormity of their wealth and power, the fantasy of days like November 10 in Seattle, shows that on most days, in most places, most people — oppressed and exploited people — go along with the system. The system obtains our consent and participation by coopting or coercing us, by any means necessary.

By any means necessary. That simple phrase provides the resolution to the heated debate the left seems to be engaging in — about tactics. A conflict over whether wearing a turtle costume and blocking traffic, or wearing a black ski mask and throwing rocks at the police, is a better form of street theater, is best left to theater critics. The real argument is about how to transform opposition to the current economic order and environmental excesses of imperialism into a movement that can dismantle the empire as a whole.

Because there is plenty of right wing and racist opposition to the WTO. And I'm not just talking about Pat Buchanan. listens to what Christian supremacists Matt Hoke, head of the World Church of the Creator, whose members have carried out vicious racist murders and shootings, had to say about Seattle:

"Many thousands of White people and a few muds gathered for many reasons varying to oppose the racist World Trade Organization. While there are those who say it happened there as something negative, the riots were incredibly successful from the point of view of our Church. They helped shut down the Jew World Order WTO Race!

In fact, the riots can be considered the first in recent memory by WHITE people, and unlike the sillyigger riots that only succeed in destroying the own self-hate neighborhoods, these riots, like the riots in Seattle succeeded in practically bringing the elitist forces to their knees. Rightfully angry White people have shown how it is done. What happens in Seattle is a purpose for the future — when White people in droves protest the actions of world Jewish, by taking to the streets. It is from the likes of the White people who protected the WTO (and who in some cases, went to jail for illegal actions) that our World Church of the Creator must look to for our converts...

H. he's remarks should be a sobering reminder to those who think we can form a united front of left and right, above politics, against the WTO. Our unity must be based on what we are for!

There is a kernel of truth in Hale's racist fanaticism, however. Seattle was chosen by the WTO and Clinton not only because it's home to Boeing and Microsoft. They thought it would be safe for them because it's the whitest large city in the whitest section of the US, farthest from large concentrations of Blacks and Latinos. It is very significant that the safety they were expecting was not forthcoming: and that large numbers of young white people, as well as organized workers of all races and nationalities, came out to oppose them. But this break, with whiteness must develop into conscious opposition to white supremacy: the break with globalization must develop into opposition to imperialism as a whole.

We must be sure that our opposition to the WTO, and our militancy, are in the service of human liberation, not narrow nationalism or chauvinism. In the US, we have a long history of putting every form of struggle and resistance, up to and including armed struggle, at the service of reformism, with the goal of striking a better, fairest deal with the empire. This just renewables the system's lease on life, ultimately at our own expense and that of the planet. This fatal weakness has bedeviled the labor movement, the women's movement, the environmental movement, even the Black and Chicano-Mexican struggle. So the question posed by Seattle is not whether property damage detracts from civil disobedience. The question is whether and how working and oppressed people, inside and outside the WTO, can mount a fundamental break with imperialism, capitalism and colonialism.
Hardly had the tear gas dispersed from the streets of downtown Seattle before an
acid struggle broke out as to who should claim the spoils. It's still raging. On one
side the [liberal-ho] pundits, [backs for] the [Washington Post] -type of policy wonks from the
Economic Policy Institute (EPI) -type, Michael Moore, a recycled binful of "social "liberals" who
disgustedly abandoned the respectable, police-sanctioned Direct Action Media Network (DAMN),
rude labor militants such as the folks at Jobs With Justice, hundreds of Longshoremen, Steelworkers, Electrical Workers and
Teamsters who disgracefully abandoned the respectable, police-sanctioned AFL-CIO parade and joined the street
warriors at the barricades in downtown.

At issue here is the liberals' craving to fortify the myth of Labor Revived -- a
"progressive coalition" of John Sweeney's AFL-CIO, Hoffa's Teamsters, mainstream
greens -- poised and ready to recapture the soul of the Democratic Party. The way
they're spinning it, the collapse of the WTO talks in Seattle was a glorious triumph
for respectable demonstrators, achieved despite the pernicious rabble smashing
windows, harassing the police and bringing peaceful mainstream protest into disrepute...

The Nation's Marc Cooper announced tremulously that "the media focus on a few
lines of the much-sought-after progressive guerrillas was 'the weakening of a
trend towards downtown where at that precise moment, the street warriors were desperately but
successfully preventing delegates from entering the Convention Center where the
opening ceremony of the WTO was scheduled to take place. It was touch and go as cops
steadily got rougher and the tear gas got thicker. Certainly the arrival of thousands of
labor marchers on the scene would have made it much more difficult for the cops to gas, heat
and shoot the activists with wooden dowels and rubber bullets. It would have diminished
the hundreds of serious injuries sustained by the street warriors.

The labor marchers approached and then, their own marshals turned them back. A few
rebellious steelworkers, longshoremen, electrical workers and teamsters did disobey
their leaders, push into downtown and join the battle. The main march withdrew in
respectable good order and dispersed peacefully to their hotels, where Molly Ivins
and the other scriveners began composing their denunciations of the anarcho-traders
who had marred their great event.

It would no doubt be polite to treat this
myth-making as contemptible but harmless... [but] take Media Benjamin of Global Exchange...Whoever caught Benjamin
by sneaking into a WTO session and being arrested and briefly addressing the delegates was
swiftlysquashed by her subsequent defeat, defending Nuketown. Benjamin and her
Global Exchange cohorts stood on the steps of Nuketown and sweatshop outlets in downtown
Seattle to demand to premises against demonstrators. At Benjamin herself poorly
described her shameful conduct to the New Left Review: "Here we are protecting the
McDonalds, the GAP and all the while I'm thinking, 'Where are the police? These anarchists
should have been arrested.'

Aside from the baneful consequences of this co-ground-collusion with the cops, the larger
political agenda of the liberals with their myth-making is far from benign either. By
falsely proclaiming a victory for peaceful pro-cop protesters, they now can move on
under a banner of "unity," and busk down with the government policy makers to rewrite the
WTO treaty to their satisfaction.

This is the core meaning of co-option, and certainly the writers at the London Economist
understand it well enough. In the wake of Seattle the Economist ran a long article
discussing the rising power of NGOs, which successfully challenged the World Bank, tank
the Multilateral Agreement on Investment and engineered the brilliant anti-landmine
campaign. But, the Economist contends, there's hope. "Take the case of the World
Bank. The Fifty Years is Enough campaign of 1994 was a prototype of Seattle (complete with
activists invading the meeting halls). Now the NGOs are surprisingly quiet about the World
Bank. The reason is that the Bank has made a huge effort to co-opt them." The Economist
went on to describe how World Bank president James Wolfensohn had given the NGOs a seat
at the table, and now more than 70 NGO policy works now work in the Bank's offices
world-wide, and half of the bank's projects have some NGO involvement. No one should
look at the NGOs without first reading Michel Foucault on co-option and internalisation of the
disciplinary function of the government institutions...

So Who Did Win in Seattle? Liberals Rewrite History (excerpt)
By Alexander Cockburn

Military Role in the Repression
By Mitch Cohen, Red Balloon Collective

Check out this CNN report that has received little notice: "Troops sent to Seattle as
part of terrorism contingency plan. SEATTLE (CNN) — In addition to hundreds of
very visible Army National Guard troops called up because of civil disturbance in
Seattle, more than 160 active-duty military personnel, including a small number of
Special Forces troops, were sent to Seattle by the Defense Department for the
meeting of the World Trade Organization."

"The military mission, according to the Pentagon, is to 'provide support' to the F.I.
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Secret Service and other
government agencies responsible for security there. The military specialists are in
place largely to provide expertise and assist in coordinating a federal response in the
event of a terrorist attack during such a high-profile event...

Four special forces troops from the Joint Special Operations Task Force were
deployed to Seattle to be on hand to advise F.I. 'crisis support' agents in the event
of a catastrophic terrorist event involving chemical or biological weapons or hostage
taking. Two of the four special operations experts have since left the city, according
to an informed Pentagon official who spoke on the condition that he not be named.

"Fifty-five military Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams, along with 25
explosive-detecting dogs and their handlers, were sent. The soldiers are 'operating in
civilian attire -- keeping a low presence,' the Defense Department documents say.

"The Domestic Military Support, or 'DOMS' as it is known at the Pentagon, is provided
through the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Office of the Chairman of the Joint
Chiefs of Staff at the request of other federal agencies." [End CNN report]

This raises some questions that must be answered. Who really was in command of all
police and military personnel since the city went into a state of 'Civil Emergencies'? Which
of any of these military personnel and their equipment and munitions are actually
involved in situations dealing with aquatic citizens? What specific role did these military
personnel and their equipment/munitions play?

It also raises the very serious questions as to why police were allowed to roam the streets,
with authority to use deadly force if necessary, without proper identification? Were some of
de these unidentified police in actuality military personnel, and is this the reason they refused to
give proper identification when asked?

Another important article comes from the news section of the official USAF web-site. The
article was written by Army Master Srgt. Bob Haskell and published on December 3rd, 1999

WTOPART Continued on page 5

We stopped a meeting and detailed a project of imperialism and corporate globalization. Now,
we must go forward to stop the day-to-day repressive operation of global empire. What
tactics and organizing campaigns can we adapt to prevent the execution of Mumia Abu Jamal
—and of everyone else on death row? What methods can we use to forestall the construction
of one more prison, or the execution of one more enemy of the state? How can we take
back the streets of the city? How can we free the people of the world from the domination of
the United States? How can we create a new world free of the war-mongers of tomorrow today
We need to apply the lessons of Seattle to answering those pressing questions without delay.
"The People, United, Will Never Be Defeated," was one of the most commonly heard chants in the days of marches protesting the WTO summit in Seattle. However, one of the most striking elements of the WTO protests was the level of conflict between adherents of a non-violent protest method, and those who preferred to express more concretely their feelings towards global capitalism. A tide of reaction has been swelling against the latter, with great importance on the part of the former. As a group of activist intellectuals, we feel the need to state our support for the group the media has been calling, only somewhat inaccurately, the Anarchists from Eugene.

We, the broad Left, anti-corporate, pro-livable world community controlled the streets of downtown Seattle from 7 am on Tuesday to roughly 7 pm. After that period, with Mayor Schell and Governor Locke's declarations of martial law and the violent offensive by local, county, state police and the National Guard, the streets were a war zone, beginning that period, they were a lab-quieted area. This is a key point that the media and President Clinton, among others, are trying to obscure: the crowd did not attack money and pop stores, but the physical manifestations of "McDomination."

Adherents to non-violent protest methods preach against corporate property. We feel that this is an uncritical acceptance of the dominant value system of American consumer society: private property has a higher value than life. At this time, we feel that as activists, we need to debate these issues further among ourselves.

As a spectrum of protest activities manifested themselves, some witnesses included non-violent activists linking arms to protect the corporate theme store Nike Town from the aggressive acts of a black bloc. Riot police, soon replaced the peace advocates, as if to say, "We'll take over now. You're only volunteering to protect property, we do it for a living." Elsewhere throughout the day, "non-violent" activists de오키메, and on at least one occasion beat, an individual who was acting against property.

Many elements of the broad Left, anti-corporate, pro-livable world community have been working, willing to distance themselves from the direct, militant forms of protest. The World Trade Observer, a daily newspaper published by a network of mainstream environmental and fair trade organizations, which features the writing of prominent figures such as Ralph Nader and Noam Chomsky, offers one example. In describing the previous day's festivities in their Wednesday, December 8 issue, they identified as a "triumphant theme" the practice of the police tingling out peaceful demonstrators for gathering and beating, while ignoring black-clad hooligans breaking windows and spraying paint. We witnessed other "non-violent" protesters criticize the police, not for waging chemical warfare to cleanse the streets of protesters, but for failing to enter into the crowd and evict the practitioners of militant protect. The implication of these statements is that the crowd would have been terrorized over some of its members to the police, if the police had only acted. We strongly urge progressive activists to reconsider this theme.

There will undoubtedly be repercussions from the fact that we took control of a major city for twelve hours, as the leading administrative body of global capitalism met to brainwash for the next millennium. It is unfair, and irresponsible, to offer "the Anarchists from Eugene" in the state as scapegoats. Without the support of the rest of the WTO protesters, the direct action practitioners are at great risk. The courts have become complicit in militant animal rights and environmental movements: we would not think it a surprising development for there to be an inquisition exposing conspiracies-to-notch charges for the day of well-directed rage in Seattle. Car-marks have been declared illegal in Seattle under Mayor Schell's martial law, and the domino of the housing is being explored by prosecutors in Eugene as a possible excuse for sentence enhancement. The price of protecting oneself and one's identity from police violence is rising.

As people who are interested in counteracting the ill effects of globalization and ensuring a livable world, we need to carefully confront the criminalization of radical political philosophies.

We feel that those who belittle and distance themselves from the actions of "the Anarchists from Eugene" have either ignored or simply did not realize the level of contributions anarchists -- black-clad and otherwise -- made towards bringing the WTO Festival of Resistance into reality.

Continued from page WTO/Fast?

Even labeling of products could be illegal by WTO rules. The European Union has passed a law requiring food containing genetically modified organisms to be labeled as such. However, the wine leaders at the Clinton/Gore administration have said that this is an illegal restraint of trade because there is no scientific evidence that genetically modified organisms are dangerous.

WTO/Silva

Continued from page 1

4. Food rights and food security rather than free-trade as the basis of distribution.
5. Democratic control rather than corporate control of the food system.
6. Patent-free and genetic-engineering-free farming to ensure the respect and protection of indigenous peoples and the integrity of ecosystems and traditional cultures. This involves excluding life forms from TRIPS and bio-safety regulations on the basis of importation.
7. Cultural diversity in place of the global monoculture of fast foods and industrial food chains.
8. Small farms and small farmers in place of corporate farms and absentee land owners.

WTO/Cochrane

Finally, the myth-breaking activity demobilizes radical struggles against the two party status quo, since it pretends that one of the two parties -- naturally, the Democratic Party -- can actually be redeemed.

But of course it's all a myth, which can be easily popped. If labor's legions had not shown up in Seattle, the direct action protesters would have had at least standing in the wind. But if there was an opening session on Tuesday, November 30, if the only protest had been that under official AFL-CIO banners, then there would have been a 15-second image of a parade on the national news headlines that Tuesday evening and that would have been it. The WTO would have gone forward with barely a ripple of dissent except for what the African and Caribbean nations had managed to foment from the inside.

Leave the last words to Jeff Crosby, the president of a union of local Union of Electrical Workers who flew to Seattle with 15 of his fellow union members from New England. Crosby works at a GE plant that is about to relocate in Mexico. After he went home, Crosby put up on the web this open letter:

"The decision by the AFL-CIO not to plan a demonstration was a mistake. The leadership of the AFL-CIO used for Seattle was unusable, with no edge. Despite heroic efforts by union folks in Seattle and other places, the AFL-CIO campaign was reminiscent of the old AFL-CIO campaigns against NAFTA -- remember the flurry of letters that went out in support of a campaign against the congressional Fast Track vote? We have lost that one too.

This is a period when on certain issues, mass, non-violent direct action is in order. In the demonstration at Seattle shows. Every member who went out last week supported for the demonstrations, even with the disruptions, is overwhelming. And just not from other workers in the shop, but family and other friends, regardless of what they do for a living. Since we came home, we're being treated like conquering heroes," marveled one of our group.
FOURTH OF JULY, 2000
Rally to Decolonize America
by Michael Novick

July 4, 2000, is a date with tremendous significance. The year 2000 is recognized as being the threshold of a new millennium. The future seems upon us with its prospect of a better world. The Fourth of July is the great myth-making holiday of U.S. independence, that actually marked the transition from settler colony to empire in its own right. The concurrence of the two dates calls upon us to rethink the American past in order to reshape the American future. Call it a Poor People's Campaign to Change the Face of America.

It's past time to unify the social forces with an interest in liberation and social transformation around a program of decolonization and direct democracy. We need a demonstration that can educate and consolidate the rising generation that is facing an increasingly ugly world and a bleak future. We need to carry forward with direct action to impede the operation of the forces of repression and exploitation. We must provide a counter-weight to jingoism and to the silly season of the corporate-dominated, media-driven electoral farce of the final US presidential selection of the 20th century on the eve of the Republican and Democratic Conventions in Philadelphia and L.A.

We can put a human face on internationalism and solidarity and build on the momentum of N30 in Seattle.

Here are five banners around which our forces can unify, not a laundry list, but a coherence of the claims of justice and liberation, of peace and end to empire.

DE-MILITARIZATION
Ban all nuclear power, nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the US
End all secret wars and covert operations
Dismantle the NSC, the CIA, the FBI, the School Of the Americas, and all agencies of international repression
Demobilize U.S. troops and bases around the world.

DE-CRIMINALIZATION
Community controlled treatment and rehabilitation of non-violent drug offenders
Alternatives to incarceration for restorative justice
Abolish the death penalty and control units
Decriminalize consensual sexual activity and use of intoxicants
End prison privatization.

DE-COLONIZATION
Recognize Native treaty rights
Independence for Puerto Rico
Respect Hawaiian Sovereignty
Reparations for the descendents of Africans forcibly enslaved
Self-determination for all oppressed people
End the domination of the Mexican people on both sides of the border
Amnesty for all political prisoners and prisoners of war in the U.S.

DE-DEMOCRATIZATION
Community control of police and of education
End police impunity!
Restore civic rights of convicts
Protect labor organizing and workplace rights, including the right to strike
Freedom of speech and conscience
Amnesty for the undocumented
World-wide Jubilee
Forgiveness of debt
Repeal NAFTA, block the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, and end the WTO
Replace corporate domination with cooperative economies.

Decolonize the Bio-sphere
Ban the privatization of seeds, life forms, and the human genome.
Building such a unified demonstration is an attainable goal.
Many streams and currents of dissent and community organization could unite in this campaign into a mighty torrent of social transformation from the grassroots up.

Although the demands are sharp, radical and anti-imperialist, they are simultaneously broad and encompassing of many diverse aspects of our struggle. Unifying significant numbers of people around this program would create a pole of attraction within an increasingly polarized society.

The initiative needs to come from forces with a broad scope of activity and anti-colonial politics, but much wider sectors can be drawn in, whether through organizational involvement or grass-roots participation.

The work of engaging people would be carried out by the dozens of local groups that are operating right now below the radar of mainstream media hype; but by unifying our forces we could create a human presence and a message of people's power and hope that could smash cynicism and despair.

We need to unite to set the agenda for the "new millennium" on the basis of realizing the goals of a society free of colonisation and exploitation. Share this proposal, to reshape and adapt it — but let's not fail to grasp a historical window of opportunity.

It's a moment in which we can converge our efforts on an uncompromising basis, with the potential for a tremendous effect on the consciousness of poor and oppressed people and on the balance of power on a global level between the forces of oppression and those of liberation.

Since this proposal first began to circulate, I have received a great deal of individual input, including proposals to strengthen the component of militant action at the demonstration itself, and particular suggestions about how to sharpen up the program and its components.

All of those things are possible, if significant social forces and organizations can come together to create a critical organizing mass and lay out a timetable for building such a manifestation. It is not too early to begin this process. Hopefully, it is not too late!
Join the
L.A. !Crack the CIA! Coalition
today!
The CIA has admitted its guilty knowledge of drug dealing and cocaine importation by its operatives and Contra clients. It knew and did nothing. Will you be guilty of the same crime?

We must act now and fight back. What we win will depend on our united efforts. If we do nothing, the next wave of CIA drugs — the heroin coming in from CIA protected dictators in Burma and Colombia — will be our own fault! If we do nothing, the next CIA dirty war for drug profits, already brewing in Colombia, will be our responsibility.

Join the !Crack the CIA! Coalition campaign to get the City Attorney, the City Council, and our Congressional representatives to take action against the CIA. Send a membership donation and your group's endorsement to !Crack the CIA!
today.

Don't delay!

Name: _________________________________________
Address: _______________________________________
City/St/Zip _______________ Phone/email: __________

CRACK The CIA! Coalition presents
An Educational Forum & Organizing Meeting
Thursday, February 16
7:00 PM
Holman United Methodist Church
3820 West Adams Blvd.
New Arlington, Room 5 Back Bldg.
History of CIA & Drugs
L.A. City Council Campaign
Intake for Class Action Lawsuit
Learn how you can get involved and fight for just reparations from the CIA. Come and bring friends!

L.A. !Crack the CIA! Coalition,
PO Box 34186, L.A. CA 90034;
tel. 310-495-2229;
crackcia@radio4all.org
www.radio4all.org/crackcia

JOHN BROWN 200/2000

John Brown 200/2000
Hunter College, NY, May 12-14

There's an increasing momentum of people's movements today, generating a new spirit of resistance to all facets of the system of empire we live within. Looking at and learning from historical movements, we have long been inspired by the example of John Brown, who took a militant position among white people to join in struggle with the masses of oppressed and uprising Africans. We are therefore calling, at the time of the two-hundredth anniversary of John Brown's birth, for an activist gathering of anti-racists and anti-imperialists.

We also hope that the conference will be forward-looking: a place to network, strategize, and plan future actions, to hear from leaders of the current liberation movements, and to engage in real discussion and debate — on the role of solidarity, the current organizing possibilities, and the need to rebuild. We want to celebrate with revolutionary cultural artists and honor the contributions of anti-imperialist North American freedom fighters who are locked down as political prisoners.

Currently the initiators of the conference are Resistance in Brooklyn (RnB) and the Student Liberation Action Movement (SLAM) at the City University of New York. Co-sponsors and participants in the planning committee include representatives of People Against Racist Terror, Anti-Racist Action, Out of Control, Prairie Fire Organizing Committee Chicago, and others. Scheduled speakers and workshop facilitators include representatives of the Movimiento de Liberacion Nacional Puertorriqueño, the Jericho Movement, the All African People's Revolutionary Party, the Hawaiian sovereignty movement, the American Indian struggle, and other liberation struggles.

At this time, we are asking organizations and individuals to join in making this Call to a John Brown 200/2000 Conference, and to help us spread the word. Your endorsement would include an agreement to set that weekend aside, planning to attend and participate with us. We are sure that other events will be planned around the same time, so would also like your assistance in keeping us informed, so that all activities are collaborative rather than competitive. Finally, we hope to make all decisions on the event in collaboration with the endorsers.

For more information, please contact
RnB
Resistance in Brooklyn
309 Park Place,
Brooklyn NY 11238
mmmarb@ig.org

John Brown
ANTI-RACIST ACTION
Southern California
Regional Meeting
Thursday, January 27
7:00
Cafe Luna Tierra Sol
2501 W. Sixth St. Los Angeles

Anti-Racist Action (ARA) is an international network of direct-action anti-racist groups, with over 100 chapters across the U.S. and Canada, and in several other countries. The Four Principles that unite ARA are:

We go where they go. Whenever racists or fascists are organizing or active in public, we're there. We don't believe in ignoring them or staying away from them. Never let the nazis have the street.

Don't rely on the cops or the courts to do our work. This doesn't mean we don't ever go to court. But we must rely on ourselves to protect ourselves and stop the fascists.

Non-sectarian defense of other anti-fascists. In ARA-Net, we have lots of groups and individuals. We don't agree about everything, and we have the right to differ openly. But in this movement, an attack on one attack on us all. We stand behind each other.

We oppose all forms of oppression. ARA-Net intends to do the hard work necessary to build a broad, strong movement against racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and discrimination against the disabled, the oldest, the youngest, and the most oppressed people. We support abortion rights and reproductive freedom for all, and the rights of working people everywhere. We intend to win.

For information on ARA internationally, check out www.aranet.org. For local information, contact PART; 310-495-0299.

Stop Police Abuse
Now!

People Against Racist Terror (PART) hosts an international e-mail distribution list of cases of police racism, sexism, and abuse: beatings, killings, shootings, perjury, corruption and crime by law enforcement and reports of the people's resistance, struggles for justice and community control of the police.

You can sign up for this list by sending an e-mail message to PART at <part2001@usa.net> or by subscribing yourself to the list on-line at: www.egroups.com/group/stop-polabuse. The list is free and is growing on a daily basis. There is a searchable archive of almost 2000 incidents and announcements, available on line to any-one with web access at the above address.

PART believes that the problem is not just police misconduct, but police conduct — that 'good cops' and 'bad cops' alike act as an occupying army in communities of color and as internal border guards in more privileged areas. They enforce a system of colonialism and exploitation, and the powers-that-be let them get away with murder! We believe the beginning of a solution is community control of the police.

Demonstrate Against
Police Brutality and for
Community Control of
the Police!
Wednesday March 15
5:00 PM
Parker Center - LAPD hq

Turning the Tide: Journal of Anti-Racist Action, Research and Education is the quarterly publication of People Against Racist Terror (PART). It has been coming out as a grass-roots voice of anti-racism, anti-sexism, anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism for a dozen years; an independent means of communication among forces of human liberation and planetary survival.

Turning the Tide receives no government funding, no foundation grants, no corporate sponsorship and no partisan or sectarian subsidies. It has survived entirely with the support of its readers and contributors for more than a decade, and we plan to keep it going strong in the new decade and into the new millennium and the Twenty-first Century with your continued support.

Turning the Tide pulls no punches. It provides analysis, poetry, news and information you will find nowhere else. If you appreciate the unique perspectives and resources you found in this issue or handout, won't you please join our project and help keep Turning the Tide strong by subscribing today?

Subscriptions are $15 a year for four quarterly issue; $10 will subsidize a prisoner subscription (Turning the Tide goes free to more than 400 prisoners around the US). Sustainers contribute $50 and can send us the names of 10 people to receive free samples.

Send your donation to: PART, PO Box 1055, Culver City 90232.
Name: _________________________________
Address: _______________________________
City: __________________ State: ______ Zip: ______
Telephone: __________________ FAX: __________
E-Mail: ________________________________
Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Free All Political Prisoners & P.O.W.'s!

People Against Racist Terror, POB 1055, Culver City CA 90232
310-495-0299 part2001@usa.net
Mumia Abu-Jamal is an African-American man who has been wrongly imprisoned for 19 years. Mumia is a former Black Panther, an award-winning journalist, a critic of police abuse. He is a supporter of the MOVE organization — a radical group in Philadelphia which protested police abuse, cruelty to animals, and political corruption. When MOVE members were attacked by police, when their home was bombed by the police (killing 6 adults and 5 children), Mumia was one of the few journalists in the country to speak up for the victimized MOVE members. He was known as "The Voice Of The Voiceless" for his insightful radio journalism.

Recently, a jury ruled that the assassination of Martin Luther King was a conspiracy. Well, there is a conspiracy going on today to execute Mumia, a conspiracy of police, prosecutors, and government officials. In 1980, Mumia was framed-up for the death of a cop who had been beating his brother. He himself was shot and beaten at the scene by police.

Mumia was targeted by the police, not just because he is Black, but because he was an outspoken and effective critic of police abuse. As a Black Panther at the age of 16, Mumia comes from a tradition of struggle, from a movement dedicated to the liberation and freedom of all people. That's why he was targeted by the police. And that's why he deserves our special attention.

Mumia is not the only victim of police abuse and frame-up. Tyisha Miller, Margaret Mitchell, Rodney King, and Gerominio Ji Jaga Prat are just a few more of the well-known individuals who have been imprisoned or killed by racist police and a racist court system. They represent thousands more who have also struggled with this unfair system.

Mumia is not just a victim, but a freedom fighter! As a Black Panther at the age of 16, Mumia comes from a tradition of struggle, from a movement dedicated to the liberation and freedom of all people. That's why he was targeted by the police. And that's why he deserves our special attention.

Mumia was sentenced to death. He has been on death row since 1982, but he has remained committed to the people and to justice. His spirit and his resistance are unbroken.

There is a growing international movement to overturn Mumia's conviction and save him from death by execution. We need everybody's help if this brother is to go free. Imagine if you had known in advance of the conspiracy to take the life of Martin Luther King Jr. What would you have done to stop it? We have a chance to save the life of Mumia Abu Jamal.

Mumia is not the only political prisoner in the United States. There are over 100 political prisoners locked up in the U.S. today. They come from the movements for social change — Black liberation, Puerto Rican independence, Native American sovereignty, anti-nuclear and anti-imperialist movements. Many were targets of COINTELPRO, a government program of infiltration and attacks on the Black Panthers, American Indian Movement, and other dissidents. But anyone who resists oppression, who fights back today, can become a political prisoner!

As with Mumia, the government says they are "criminals." But we know different. Like Nelson Mandela, these activists have sometimes broken laws while fighting for justice. And, like Mandela, they will only be freed when millions of people demand their release.

The Jericho Amnesty Campaign is a national movement, initiated in response to calls by political prisoners like former Black Panther Jalil Muntaquim, to educate the public about political prisoners in the U.S. and eventually win their freedom. In March 1998, Jericho brought 10,000 people to Washington DC to demand amnesty for the prisoners, and last year we held regional demonstrations in NY, LA, San Francisco and a dozen other cities.

In Los Angeles, we meet on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm at the offices of the Coalition Against Police Abuse, 2824 S. Western Avenue, L.A. Nationally, you can reach us on the internet at www.thejerichomovement.com. There are Jericho organizers all across the U.S., building now for the third annual Jericho mobilization in March 2000. Join us!
CONVICTIONS

A Call For Submissions From Writers and Photographers

by

Askhari Johnson Hodari

CONVICTIONS is an edited volume of essays, personal narratives, poems, short stories, and letters by people of African descent. CONVICTIONS will consider original poetry, fiction, essays, letters and photographs by prisoners/inmates and former prisoners/inmates of African descent. While inmate and former inmate writing will be the bulk of CONVICTIONS, We will also consider writing by attorneys, prison guards, and the family members of incarcerated persons. Unpublished previously published work will be considered.

CONVICTIONS looks to cover a variety of issues related to the prison experience. Following is a list of specific topics of interest, but this list is neither definitive or exhaustive:

- Dealing with the death of a loved one from prison
- Prison guard brutality
- Getting "out" of prison (or not getting "out" to prison)
- Comparisons between prison life and slavery
- The "American dream" and prison
- Solitary confinement
- Sexual abuse in prison
- Medical care (or lack thereof) in prison
- Trying to escape from prison
- Getting/gaining respect in prison
- Being gay/lesbian in prison
- Prison culture

WHAT KINDS OF WORK WILL BE PUBLISHED IN CONVICTIONS?

Essays and personal narratives. We welcome essays and personal narratives that are serious, sobering, humorous, erotic, introspective, investigative, and/or political. Narratives and essays may take on a variety of creative forms. Autobiographical essays, journal entries, experimental prose and memoirs are acceptable. Most importantly, We want thought provoking essays. We are NOT looking for editorials.

We expect to contact all contributors by May 2000.

Emailed work may be requested work by electronic mail or by floppy disk (WordPerfect or Word). We encourage you to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with sufficient postage if you would like your work/disks returned.

Please send your best work as early as possible. We are still looking for work/submissions relating to: solitary confinement, death row, strip searches, being a parent in prison, religion/spirituality, sexual assault, escape attempts or successes and dealing with the death of a loved one from prison. We are in particular need of work from women in prison. If you are able to submit work related to those topics, the deadline for submissions is January 15, 2000. However, TTT readers have been granted a special extension. If you found out about Convictions from TTT, you may send submissions until February 10, 2000. If you decide to submit material after January 15, 2000, but before/on February 10, 2000, please include the fact that you are a TTT reader in your cover letter, and please pay close attention to the submission format—otherwise your materials will not be reviewed. You can check for updates and other possible deadline extensions using our website: www.askhari.com.

Send submissions to: CONVICTIONS Editor, P.O. Box 3040, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20885. If you have additional questions, please send electronic mail to: skhari@igc.org; or visit our website: www.askhari.com.

All submissions must be postmarked by January 15, 2000. Please send your best work as early as possible. We are still looking for work/submissions relating to: solitary confinement, death row, strip searches, being a parent in prison, religion/spirituality, sexual assault, escape attempts or successes and dealing with the death of a loved one from prison. We are in particular need of work from women in prison. If you are able to submit work related to those topics, the deadline for submissions is January 15, 2000. However, TTT readers have been granted a special extension. If you found out about Convictions from TTT, you may send submissions until February 10, 2000. If you decide to submit material after January 15, 2000, but before/on February 10, 2000, please include the fact that you are a TTT reader in your cover letter, and please pay close attention to the submission format—otherwise your materials will not be reviewed. You can check for updates and other possible deadline extensions using our website: www.askhari.com.

Deceased and women behind bars; and about the women, men and children left behind.

Sample topics may include (but are not limited to): prison conditions, racism, sexism, prisoner-guard relationships, police-state brutality, prison-civilian relationships, freedom, life after prison, crime, punishment, parenting from prison, name changes in prison, prison medical care, guilt, innocence, prison sexual abuse and assault. CONVICTIONS explores various dimensions of the prison experience. CONVICTIONS is about freedom and the loss of freedom; about struggle and survival; about the men and women behind bars; and about the women, men and children left behind.

DEADLINE

All submissions must be postmarked by January 15, 2000. Please send your best work as early as possible. We are still looking for work/submissions relating to: solitary confinement, death row, strip searches, being a parent in prison, religion/spirituality, sexual assault, escape attempts or successes and dealing with the death of a loved one from prison. We are in particular need of work from women in prison. If you are able to submit work related to those topics, the deadline for submissions is January 15, 2000. However, TTT readers have been granted a special extension. If you found out about Convictions from TTT, you may send submissions until February 10, 2000. If you decide to submit material after January 15, 2000, but before/on February 10, 2000, please include the fact that you are a TTT reader in your cover letter, and please pay close attention to the submission format—otherwise your materials will not be reviewed. You can check for updates and other possible deadline extensions using our website: www.askhari.com.

CONVICTIONS Editor
P.O. Box 3040
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20885
www.askhari.com
In March 1998, political and trade union leaders from 18 African countries issued an Appeal to hold an "International Tribunal to Judge Those Responsible for the Murderous Course Imposed on the Workers and Peoples of Africa." The call for this International Tribunal on Africa was launched at a conference held in Bingerville, Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) that was organized by the International Liaison Committee for a Workers' Committee for a Workers' International (ILC). The first session of the International Tribunal on Africa will take place at Compton College in Compton, Calif., on February 5-6 of the year 2000. Compton is in the greater metropolitan Los Angeles area.

Why such an Appeal? African people today are threatened by a human and social tragedy unprecedented in the history of humanity. Average life expectancy in the African continent is devastatingly low, and the latest report of the UNDP (United Nations Program on Development) has warned that if nothing decisive is undertaken in the months and years to come, average life expectancy on the African continent will fall further by 20 years. Thus, the African continent's population would consist of orphans and decimated and disorganized families that are ruined by illnesses and epidemics such as AIDS and malaria.

Today, half of the African people are living on less than one dollar per day. If things continue to deteriorate, the African continent will be further ravaged by poverty. Murderous wars and conflicts -- which are developing one after the other and affect over half the countries in Africa today -- bestow upon the African continent untold tragedy and suffering. Because of these wars and conflicts, hundreds of thousands of civilians have been killed or uprooted. There are officially 6 million refugees, and 12 million others wander from one side of the continent to the other with only poverty and death as their future.

The destruction of industry and of the infrastructure across the continent is being accelerated. The peoples of the towns and countryside are faced with mass unemployment. The only future offered to youth is poverty or armed gangs who are tearing the African continent apart. (There are officially over 300,000 child soldiers.)

Fundamental choices must be made immediately and put into action to end the further devastation of the African continent and to create for Africa the possibility of reaching its full potential.

One need only look at the situation today to know what will happen if nothing is changed in the decade to come: (a) the only borders will be the ones imposed by armed gangs; (b) there will be no qualified people in Africa because future generations will have been sacrificed by these lost school years; (c) because of the wars, the only movements of people will be these mass displacements, not those involving increased trade; (d) people will die in the streets because they will be driven out of hospitals for which they have no money to pay; (e) men and women will be unable to contribute much to the national economy because of their short life span; (f) the African continent will everywhere become another Somalia; and (g) the continent's elite will, simply, leave.

From Slavery to Structural Adjustment...

When political and trade union leaders of 18 African countries took the initiative to issue a call for an International Tribunal on Africa, they emphasized that the dramatic devastation of the African continent and the plight of its people cannot be separated from the three successive plagues that have hit the continent -- the slave trade, colonial occupation and the "structural adjustment plans" imposed upon Africa for nearly 20 years by institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF and the European Union.

The people of Africa were devastated by the slave trade, but in the 1960s they were able to win independence for the African countries. The independence was short-lived. An ensuing succession of military coups took place. Their function was to establish governments willing to act as servants of the same interests as those which created slavery and colonialism.

The faces have changed -- it is no longer the colonial occupiers who are in charge - but colonial domination is still everywhere. It is now the "experts" from the World Bank and the IMF who have taken charge of the economies of the African countries and who rule its states. In all the ministries of the African governments, one can find "experts" who exercise genuine power. This is done in the name of "good governance" and, therefore, implicitly, in the name of the so-called inability of Black people to govern for themselves.

Poverty, economic collapse, and disintegration are first and foremost the result of the burden of the foreign debt payment. The figures are no secret: the global amount of the debt of the African continent totals $350 billion; the yearly payment on "debt" service alone by African countries is $33 billion. This so-called "debt" is mainly the accumulation of the debt service.

The debt service on the public debt in Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), for example, accounts for $3.7 billion of the $6 billion owed. We must stop this bleeding of the resources of the African continent. Taken as a whole, the debt service payments of the African states are four times higher than the combined budgets for education and health care. In 1997, Niger and Ethiopia had to use half their budgets to pay the debt service. Zambia used 44% of its budget, and Malawi used 35% of its budget. Fifty percent of export income is devoted to the payment of the "debt." A recent study by the World Bank shows that if the amount of money allotted to "debt" repayment had been used for real development, the yearly income per capita in a country like Zambia would have reached $10,000 dollars, instead of the $600 dollars today.

Today, Africa and the people of Africa are dying.

Why the First Session Is Being Held in the U.S.

We believe that the fate of the African continent and its people is inextricably tied to that of Africans all over the world. In spite of the official speeches and exorcising pageantry, slavery is far from being a closed chapter in world history. The legacy of the slave trade still weighs heavily on our present.

When the appeal for an International Tribunal on Africa was launched, political and trade union leaders from 18 African countries stated that it was impossible to understand the present drama in Africa without integrating the meaning of the slave trade and the mass deportation of African people from the African continent. Africa today still bears the scars from tens of millions of men, women and children deported from its shores. Loaded on slave ships in chains staved and whipped. Millions and millions died or committed suicide during slave transport, while millions of others died resisting enslavement or in slave pits before leaving the African continent. Africa was emptied of its living forces and of those who had the greatest ability to produce. Economic activity was plunged into chaos, and the most advanced forms of social and political organization were destroyed.

To all that, one must add that in Africa -- as well as in America and around the world -- Africans still suffer from the myth of an "inferior race," which was invented by slave traders to justify what can't be justified. Disorganized and maimed by slavery, Africans on the African continent transitioned to the evil of colonial occupation, while Africans in America transitioned to institutional racism -- the system of racial segregation and discrimination. Africans throughout the Diaspora have been used in wars which were not their wars. These wars were often characterized as "liberating" African peoples in their individual areas, but instead Africans were used as cannon fodder. Those Africans who were lucky enough to return from those wars discovered that "equality" did not exist for them.

Today, the African continent is torn to pieces and is crumbling. What is the official "image" given of this situation? According to official propaganda, the reason the African continent is crumbling is because it is populated in majority by Black people -- as if being Black should compel one to live in misery, illness, and war, as if being Black makes one incapable of governing and destroys one to degradation. Through the fake and lying depictions of Africa circulating in the official media, one can witness the emergence once more of all the features that were used in the past to justify discrimination against and oppression of Blacks throughout the Diaspora.
What we are aiming to accomplish by organizing the Tribunal will issue will enable the people of Africa to assist in financing international delegations.

The following people have come together to constitute the Organizing Committee of the International Tribunal on Africa:

- Jahabara Armstrong, member of the National Coalition of Blacks for Reaparations in America (NCORBA) and member of the BRC (Oakland, Calif.)
- Norbert Teteri Gbikpi-Benissan, general secretary of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Togo (UNIST)
- Alan Benjamin, member of the Editorial Board of The Organizer newspaper and vice chair, Golden Gate chapter of the Labor Party
- Miguel Cristobal, member, International Relations Committee, Workers Party of France
- Daniel Glaudstein, coordinator, International Liaison Committee for a Workers' International (Paris, France)
- Dedon Kamathu, Organizer, All Africans Revolutionary Party (Los Angeles)
- Julian Koonie, professor at the University of Arizona in Tucson
- Roy Lafortest, representative of the Haitian Mobilization to Defend Immigrant Rights in New York City
- Cajeuste Laxinteste, representative of the Haitian Mobilization to Defend Immigrant Rights in New York City
- Lybon Tyami Mahaba, president of the Socialist Party of Azania (South Africa)
- Morgan Mass, member of the Black Radical Congress in New Orleans
- Muslijah Shaikr, member of the BRC and many other fighting African-American organizations in Oakland, Calif.
- Connie White, member of the Black Radical Congress in Los Angeles

We invite you to attend the International Tribunal on Africa and to participate in the Tribunal Information Packet, which includes all the background documents from the Bingerville and Johannesburg preparatory conferences as well as the text of the Tribunal Acts of Accusation. Please add $10 (includes postage and handling) to obtain this Information Packet.

Mail to: Organizing Committee for the International Tribunal on Africa, c/o Connie White, Tribunal Organizer, 700 Box 303 2286 East Carson St., Long Beach, CA 90807. Checks should be made payable to 'Connie White, Organizer Africa Tribunal.' Please earmark on memo "For Africa Tribunal." You may contact us by phone at (362) 915-3510 (voice/call), or by fax at (562) 492-9139 or by e-mail at conscience@earthlink.net.

INITIATORS OF THE TRIBUNAL

ALGERIA: Ammar Takdjou, Director, Textile and Leather Division, General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA); Louisa Hanoue, National Deputy of Algeria

SOUTH AFRICA/AZANIA: Lybon Mahana, President, Socialist Party of Azania (SOPA); Patrice Mbizo, General Secretary, Azanian Workers Union (AZAWU); Mtshuku OUMI, Executive Board, Black National Convention.

CENTRAL AFRICA: Patrice Zacarias, General Secretary, National Teachers Union (SNE CNSL)

COMO: Simon Tsimangala NTombela, representative, CTU union federation

CHAD: Gaddi N’Garzamdjali, General Secretary, SIT (Workers’ International, Southern Chad)

CAMEROON: Alphonse Takbe, Coordinator, Autonomous Workers Federation of Comores (USATC).

COTE D’IVOIRE: (Ivory Coast): Francois Yao, General Secretary, National Autonomous Workers Federation (FESAC); Marcel Ette, General Secretary, FESAC; Kouame Kra, Executive Committee, FESAC.

GABON: Jean-Pierre Omba, Executive Committee, Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Gabon (CGSLN)

GHANA: Kwesi Prati Jr., President, Convention Party.

GUINEA: Sherif Aboubacar, Foreign Relations Committee, Electricity and Water Workers Federation.

MADAGASCAR: Zephyrin Razafimampidy, General Secretary, SYMPIMA federation, Georges Rakotondraza, Deian of the Order of Journalists and former National Deputy.

NIGER: Dadda Hadji Mahamun Mansur, General Secretary, National Workers Union of Niger (USTN). Sidibe Assane, Economic Affairs Director, USTN.


SENEGAL: Iba Ndiaye Dadjji, General Secretary, Confederation of Autonomous Workers Unions (CSA).

SWAZILAND: Jean-Marie Viane Ndzabakarian, Former Deputy General Secretary of the Rwandese Trade Unions Confederation - exil.

TOGO: Gbikpi Benissan Norbert, General Secretary, National Federation of Independent Unions of Togo (UNIST); Claude Amegavie, Org. Secy., Workers Party.
The preparatory documents for the Tribunal call for a journalist and political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal the complete cancellation of the devastating "debt" and number of key demands:

- to the jury.
- discrimination.
- activists from the Caribbean islands, South America, their roots in slavery and the past regimes of racial
- countries, corporations and militaries.
- are tens of millions of you in the Americas who
- determined by African people for past and present
- one can read:
- International Tribunal on Africa is to re-establish the
- enslavement holocaust of Africa, and the continuing
- can read:
- Beside delegates from all regions of Africa, Black
- Combat the super-exploitative "African Growth and
- Gbikpi-Benissan, General Secretary of the National
- Federation of Independent Unions of Togo (UNSI)
- Membership of Equivalent Rights in New York City.
- representative of the Haitian Mobilization to Defend Immigrant Rights in New York City.
- Cajeiste Lescato, representative of the Haitian
- Lyon Tiyani Molosa, president of the Socialist Party of
- Morgan Moss, member of the Black Radical Congress in New Orleans
- Mulbah Shaker, member of the ERC and many other
- "We are coming from Africa to Los Angeles because there are tens of millions of you in the Americas who share with us the common tragedy represented by the enslavement holocaust of Africa, and the continuing
the U.S. Congress and the repressive and regressive
World Trade Organization, will be developed. Quite
significantly, organizers have asked freedom fighter, journalist and political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal (who is fighting to win a new trial and freedom while currently held on Pennsylvania's death row), to serve as the honorary chairperson of the Tribunal.

The political and trade union leaders of Africa who issued the initial call for the International Tribunal on Africa are convinced that the judgment which the Tribunal will issue will enable the people of Africa to
call for the holding of a Congress of African Peoples that could enable the workers and peoples of the African continent to garner the strength to take the measures required to save themselves from this murderous course.

The judgment which the Tribunal will issue will be a means for Black people -- wherever they find themselves in the Diaspora -- to put an end to the racist and discriminatory policies of those who dare pretend that Africa is in crisis and dislocated by war because Black people are "savages" and are part of a race of inferior men and women. We will eradicate that lie.

With each passing day, it becomes more and more difficult to survive. Africans on the continent of Africa are demonstrating that they are a proud and courageous people who are standing up and fighting back against the war and plunder imposed upon them.

Who's Convening the International Tribunal on Africa?

The following people have come together to constitute the Organizing Committee of the International Tribunal on Africa:
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The February 1999 Johannesburg conference, which prepared the Tribunal, adopted a resolution in which one can read:

"Conscious of the devastating effects of slavery, colonialism and racial discrimination on the African peoples, the meeting endorsed calls for reparations for the African people in relation to crimes committed against them by the imperialist countries."

In addition to these important issues, joint action to combat the super-exploitative "African Growth and Opportunity Act" legislation, which recently passed in the U.S. Congress, and the repressive and regressive World Trade Organization, will be developed. Quite significantly, organizers have asked freedom fighter, journalist and political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal (who is fighting to win a new trial and freedom while currently held on Pennsylvania's death row), to serve as the honorary chairperson of the Tribunal.

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The next issue of *Turning the Tide: Journal of Anti-Racist Action, Research & Education* marks the third decade in which we will be publishing; Volume 13, Number 1, Spring 2000. Publication of this grassroots voice of anti-imperialism, anti-racism and anti-sexism started in the 1980's, and we have made it through the '90's without partisan subsidies, corporate funding, or government grants, nothing but the support of our readers.

But whether *TTT* continues to provide its unique anti-colonial perspective depends on you!

Unless you subscribe, the next issue of *Turning the Tide* will not see the light of day. *Turning the Tide* is like a print version of 'listener sponsored radio.' Many copies are distributed free to community organizations, prisoners, and anti-racist activists, but this is only possible if some of you who could receive the paper free choose to subscribe and make continued publication possible. Our appeal for subscribers, and particularly for people whose subscriptions had lapsed to renew, produced enough new subscription last issue to cover its costs and pay for this one. But we had had hopes of increasing the frequency of publication; instead we are still facing the prospect of curtailing the press run and/or the frequency of issues.

We hope your response will make those cutbacks unnecessary.

The next issue will finally focus on the question of land, and its importance to struggles for revolutionary social transformation. We are still soliciting submissions related to that theme, especially concerning the significance of land in struggles of colonized people in America. We also want to look at the social and economic relationships that arise from private ownership of land, and at the relationship between environmentalism and anti-imperialism. The issue will also include an index to the first 12 volumes of *Turning the Tide*.

One year (four quarterly issues) is $15; a prisoner subscription subsidy is $10. Sustainers contribute $50 a year, and can send us the names of 10 people to receive free samples. Please send a check or preferably a POSTAL money order today!

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