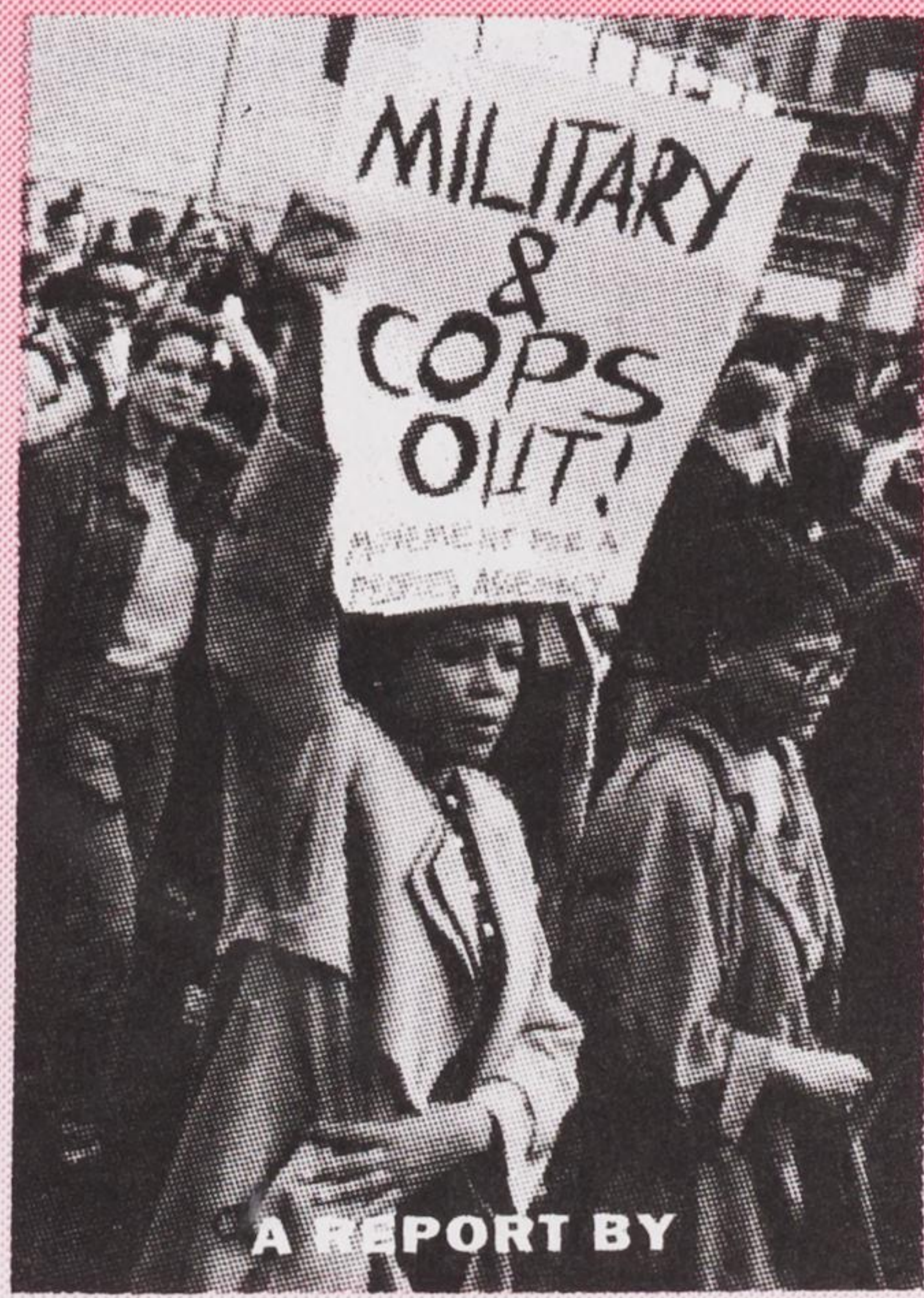


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THE LOS ANGELES REBELLION

THE LOS ANGELES REBELLION AGAINST RACISM



A REPORT BY

Movement for a Peoples Assembly

Includes a special statement by the
Emergency Committee for the Release and Amnesty
of the 16,000 Los Angeles Political Prisoners

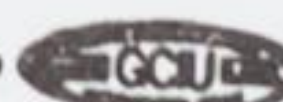
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THE
LOS ANGELES
REBELLION
AGAINST
RACISM

A REPORT BY
Movement for a Peoples Assembly



Los Angeles, May 2.

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About this publication

Inside you'll find a unique collection of material on the rebellion that shook Los Angeles and the country following the Rodney King verdict on April 29, 1992. Nowhere else is there such a clear statement on the justice of the rebellion against racism and oppression.

The day after the verdict, with the rebellion in full swing and spreading around the country, and with the media attacking the people of South Central Los Angeles rather than the racism of the courts and police, the Movement for a Peoples Assembly issued a leaflet declaring "To rebel against racism and poverty is justified."

If the Los Angeles rebellion had happened in South Africa, no one in this country would doubt its justness. But the media and the politicians and other officials have confused many. A rebellion is not always clearly understood at first.

But here is a record clearly giving the view of poor and working class people in this country who are fed up with the decade of greed that's made the rich super rich and everyone else poorer. This is an account that makes sense of the rebellion.

Included here is material prepared by the Emergency Committee for the Release and Amnesty of the 16,000 Los Angeles Political Prisoners. The committee has been established nationwide. After its formation news conferences and demonstrations were held in eight cities including Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco and Boston. **To reach the committee's national office call (212) 777-1246 or write the Emergency Committee National Office, 36 East 12th Street, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10003.**

Statement by the Emergency Committee for the Release and Amnesty of the 16,000 Los Angeles Political Prisoners

May 8, 1992—There is a civil war currently being waged against the people of Los Angeles. Military troops, the National Guard, the notorious L.A. police, with tanks, helicopters and weapons of all kinds, continue to occupy the city.

As of today, 16,000 people have been arrested, 55 are dead and over 2,000 wounded, 200 critically. Throwing the U.S. Constitution out the window, the California state legislature overturned the law that said prisoners must be arraigned in two days and extended it to seven.

Massive sweep arrests—from house to house and without search warrants—are arbitrarily being made. This is a dangerous form of collective punishment. To make matters worse, the INS has also made 2,000 arrests and 500 have been deported already.

And there continues to be a ban on all protests in L.A.

For decades the LAPD has waged war against the Black and Latino communities. In fact, police brutality in Los Angeles has been the subject of many investigating commissions, and there was not one incident where justice prevailed.

Rodney King was just one among thousands of victims. The exoneration of the racist cops this time, however, provoked massive, international outrage. Nonetheless, a campaign is being waged to portray the victims as the criminals.

How can we stand by while those arrested for protesting racist police brutality are in the hands of these same police? How can people call for healing yet allow the same justice system that freed the white cops who brutalized Rodney King to now beat, kill and jail more people of color?

What kind of justice can be expected from George Bush who waged an openly racist presidential campaign and now blames the rebellion on welfare and other social programs? Or from California Governor Pete Wilson who can call out National Guard troops to attack the poor, but yet cannot find ways to provide jobs for them?

We have formed an Emergency Committee to demand the following:

- 1. The immediate release and full amnesty for all those arrested.**
- 2. An end to the INS raids and deportations.**
- 3. The removal of all troops from the communities now.**
- 4. The establishment of community control and civilian community review over the police. The immediate jailing of the cops who beat Rodney King.**
- 5. A moratorium on all budget cuts and layoffs in California.**
- 6. Full no-strings-attached compensation to all victims of police violence, to store owners and to the community at large.**

The responsibility for destruction lies in the brutality of the police department and the state and federal governments. Bush bailed out the rich with \$500 billion to the Savings & Loans banks; now he can bail out our communities.

Preliminary signers: Ramsey Clark, former U.S. Attorney General, Head of Investigation of the 1965 Watts Riots; Colin Moore, Attny; Teresa Gutierrez, Movement for a Peoples Assembly; Michael W. Warren, Attny; William M. Kunstler, Attny; Iris Johnson Bright, Attny, National Conference of Black Lawyers (NCBL) L.A.; John Britain, Pres., National Lawyers Guild; Joan Gibbs, Attny, Center for Constitutional Rights; Wilhelm Joseph, U.N. delegate, NCBL; Lillian Mobley, So. Central Services Citizens Center, L.A.; Margot Kidder, actor; Michael Ratner, Attny, Center for Constitutional Rights; Don Jackson, former L.A.P.D. Sargeant (victim of police brutality); Ben Chaney, James Earl Chaney Foundation; Samori Marksman, World View Productions; Barbara Davidson, Pres., AFGE Local 476; Steve DeCastro, League of Philippine Students; United Labor Action; Rueben Quiroz, Coalition for Immigrant Rights; Guy Victor, Pres., 10th Dept.; Rev. Paul Washington, Rector Emeritus, Church of the Advocate, Philadelphia; L.A. Rebellion Action Committee; Central America Refugee Center, L.A. Chapter; David Richardson, State Rep., PA; Salvadoran Center of N.Y., Maude Leblanc, Editor, Haiti Progrés; Judge Bruce Wright; Elombe Brath, Patrice Lumumba Coalition; Workers World Party; Kim Ives, Haiti Commission; Laura Nieves, mother of Frederico Periera slain by police in N.Y.C.; Dianne Mathiowitz, Buffalo United for Choice; Grace Waite-Jones, Coord., Cleveland Trans-Africa; Adeeb Abed, Palestinian Americans for Peace with Justice; John Jones, Jersey City All-Peoples Congress; Ronald Robinson, Attny.; Gary Murchison, Pres., United Steelworkers of America Local 8751; Larry Holmes, Movement for a Peoples Assembly; Sissy Farenthold, Houston, Texas; Maria Rodriguez, L.A.; Father Lawrence Lucas, Resurrection Church, NYC.

Emergency Committee, 36 E. 12th St., 6th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10003

The battle of Los Angeles

May 6, Los Angeles—Here, where the racist cops beat Rodney King, rage exploded into rebellion.

Spontaneously, people took to the streets at news of the “not guilty” verdict on April 29.

The government’s response to the rebellion consisted of more racism and police brutality. But although a huge deployment of military force repressed the rebellion after five days, the rage—against the racist oppression, poverty, unemployment and injustice that are integral to U.S. capitalism—remains.

Clearly, it will erupt again.

Fury in the streets

At an emergency April 29 demonstration at police headquarters at Parker Center, Black and Latino youths chanting “No justice, no peace” took the lead.

They stoned the building and smashed police cars. The sound of helicopters, sirens and alarms filled the air.

The angry demonstration then moved through the downtown area. City Hall, the state court building and the civic center were targets. Angry at the media’s role in whipping up racism and covering up police brutality, demonstrators also attacked the Los Angeles Times building.

That same evening, another spontaneous demonstration targeted the precinct where the four cops who brutalized Rodney King are based. Their drunken celebration of the racist acquittal ended hastily as police rushed to erect barricades against the hundreds of angry people attacking the building.

The anger went far beyond the organized political movement. And it had roots far deeper than this latest atrocity.

In South Central Los Angeles—the heart of the African American community—fury swept through the streets and erupted into a virtual insurrection. Tens of thousands of people took part.

The rebellion quickly spread to other areas of this sprawling city of 3.5 million, especially the Latino community. Where most people own nothing—denied jobs, education and decent health care—the demand for justice meant expropriating a fraction of the wealth stolen over generations in this racist society.

The rebellion was broad and deep, resulting from poverty, anger and alienation in broad sections of the population. The most oppressed led the way. But white youths also joined the uprising.

“This ... has to do with economics,” Hector Perez Pacheco of East Los Angeles told the Associated Press. “You want to prevent riots, prevent poverty first.”

More than 5,500 buildings were burned. Oppressed people shot at police stations. Seventeen government buildings were destroyed.

The heavy hand of the state

The First AME Church, located in the heart of the Black community, called a demonstration for May 2 at the Parker Center police headquarters to protest the escalating police brutality. The city banned the rally and cordoned off the entire area.

But more than 300 students from the Chicano student group MECHA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicanos de Aztlán) and from Black Student Unions from various campuses started to demonstrate anyway, several blocks away. They were immediately surrounded by National Guard troops, not allowed to leave and arrested.

Everyone at the protest was taken to jail—even an 8-year-old child. Arrested for demonstrating, they were listed as looters in the official records, and charged with felony burglary.

The city also ordered the annual Cinco de Mayo commemoration in the Chicano/Mexicano community canceled. The date marks Mexico's victory over a French invasion in 1862. This year, a march "to protest 500 years of looting and murder of our people" was planned.

In collusion with the federal government, the state had quickly instituted emergency powers to mobilize the entire city police force, state police, then the National Guard. Finally, the president federalized the National Guard—put it under Pentagon control—and sent in the Army and Marines to crush the escalating rebellion.

As of May 5, military roadblocks and checkpoints barricaded, every intersection in South Central Los Angeles. Tanks, armored personnel carriers and troops pointing automatic weapons patrolled the streets.

There are more than 20,000 armed forces involved in the vast repression. This includes 8,000 police and 9,800 National Guard troops.

Gen. Covault, a specialist who helped devise rapid deployment strategies, is in command of the 2,500 Army and 1,500 Marine troops here, most of them Gulf war veterans. Covault reports directly to Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney.

The U.S. government has thus declared war on the oppressed communities of Los Angeles. The Pentagon, at President Bush's command, is carrying out a military occupation as if in enemy territory.

That point is not lost on the people here. Activist Joan Sekler told Workers World people are even angrier now than when the rebellion began.

Despite the overwhelming display of repressive force and continuous police brutality, resistance has continued. According to the Associated Press, police stations continue to be targets of sporadic gunfire, as are Marines standing guard at roadblocks.

Although there was a massive police presence during the height of

the rebellion, almost no ambulances or firefighting equipment were sent into the oppressed communities. Fifty-five people were killed and 2,400 injured.

Few questions are asked publicly about the circumstances or cause of the 55 deaths reported. How many were at the hands of the police? How many died because no ambulance would come?

Community activists say it is likely that many or most of those dead were killed by police, who embarked on an orgy of killing and brutality—a war against African Americans and Latinos—once enough reinforcements had arrived to back them.

The wheels of “justice”

By May 5 more than 12,000 people, primarily African American and Latino youths, had been rounded up in massive sweeps of the city streets.

Without search warrants or any basis in law, random searches of homes are now being conducted. Holding people at gun point inside their own homes, cops decide whether a VCR, a box of diapers or food in the refrigerator might be “stolen goods.”

The police powers, originally overwhelmed by the spontaneous, widespread character of the rebellion, now seek to restore order through random terror. A Latino motorist was killed when he hit a barricade after curfew May 3 and was shot 14 times by National Guard troops on patrol.

The racist court system that was unable to provide justice for Rodney King was able to spring into action in repressing the oppressed people of Los Angeles. Special court sessions have been going on all day every day since May 3.

No evidence is presented in these “arraignments,” which last about 30 seconds per defendant. The charges, uniform for everyone arrested, are already inserted on preprinted forms; just the name must be inserted.

Felony burglary charges and average bails of at least \$5,000 are slapped on lines of prisoners caught up in the arbitrary police sweeps. The bail, impossibly high for most poor people, means they will spend months in jail awaiting trial. Families, homes and jobs all will be lost in this process.

The media totally ignored a May 4 demonstration against the curfew by a number of progressive organizations and student groups from UCLA. They also ignored a news conference on May 2. Nor were student walkouts from high schools through southern California considered newsworthy.

In fact, any voices in solidarity with the rebellion—anyone who refuses to go along with the attempt to make the oppressed rather than the cops the criminals—have been silenced. That is the case nationally, but even more so here in Los Angeles because it is vital for the ruling class to block unity among the workers and poor of all nationalities in order to stop the rebellion from spreading any further.

Behind the rebellion against racism

A national and international mass campaign demanding an unconditional general amnesty for the some 16,000 L.A. prisoners is necessary, as is a demand for government compensation for all who lost jobs.

This is not a new demand. Didn't the international community support such a call during the 3.5-year repressive state of emergency in apartheid South Africa? In that case over 9,000 activists, mostly Black youth, were detained indefinitely without bail, without charges and without notification of their whereabouts. And their "crime"? Rebelling against a system of racist oppression and capitalist slavery.

Isn't this the same situation in L.A.? In the case of the predominantly African American and Latino detainees in Los Angeles, the courts have set bail for most at the exorbitant figure of \$5,000 for felony burglary charges. Some bails are as high as \$25,000 for attempted murder.

And what is these prisoners' crime? According to Michael Demby, head deputy public defender, "They're calling them burglaries but in some cases, it's people who came out of a grocery store with food, or parents in the area looking for their children."

In other words, the police arrested many people for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. The pending cases are expected to take months and probably years of trials, jail and probation, costing taxpayers millions and millions of dollars.

Meanwhile, the police continue to harass the residents of the oppressed communities. They are going door to door, often demanding receipts for any items that look new.

No standing to try the oppressed

The looming question is this: Does the U.S. criminal justice system have any legitimate right to try these victims?

Let's go back some 14 months. The whole world was shocked and sickened by the videotape of Black motorist Rodney King being savagely beaten by four racist white Los Angeles cops.

King suffered many broken bones in his legs, skull fractures, a damaged eye socket and lacerations. The cops hit him with 56 baton blows in 81 seconds.

This was not the usual case of taking the word of the police over the victim's—an everyday occurrence in the U.S. The tape helped to expose a truth many already knew: Police brutality is embedded within the social fabric of this society.

From the very beginning the trial of the police was viewed as

suspect. The venue was moved from Los Angeles, where the King atrocity took place, to remote Simi Valley—an 80 percent white suburb and home to at least 2,000 Los Angeles County cops.

And then there was the jury. It was composed of 10 whites, one Latino and one Asian. Not one Black juror was selected—itsself a violation of the constitutional right to due process. At least two jurors were relatives of cops.

The prosecution's whole perspective was thoroughly racist—at-tempting to portray King as the dangerous aggressor and the cops as the threatened victims. Never mind the fact that as the blows were raining down on King, the cops were also hurling unmentionable racist epithets—which were recorded.

And then finally there was the verdict. The unbelievable verdict of not guilty sparked justified rebellion, and not only in Los Angeles.

It quickly spread to Atlanta, San Francisco, Las Vegas and other cities. And then there were demonstrations in solidarity with these rebellions, many of them of a multinational character, in large and small cities.

The Los Angeles rebellion was not only a social expression of outrage over one racist verdict. It was also the accumulated response of a deeper, growing mistrust and hatred of the entire capitalist legal system—courts, jails, etc.—which is riddled with the diseases of racism and bigotry and which uphold private property of the rich.

The rebellion tore off the hypocritical mask of bourgeois democracy, U.S. style, for the whole world to see. No one will ever view the U.S. judicial system the same again or without thinking of this particular trial. Nationally oppressed people will think twice before believing they can rely on the courts to receive any real justice.

The Bush administration actually had the nerve to blame the existence of social welfare programs for the rebellion. The Wall Street Journal said it was the fault of the minimum wage.

Such reactionary nonsense can't change the objective reality. The oppressed have no other recourse but to rebel against a system that does not represent their class aspirations and needs.

It is right to rebel

What happened in Los Angeles at the end of April and beginning of May may have been spontaneous for the most part. Nevertheless it is an embryo of open class warfare between those without any power—the majority—and those in power—a tiny minority of the transnationals and banks that are the real looters. The minority controls all the wealth in society, which the multinational working class creates.

And standing between these two fundamental class camps are the armed bodies of men and women who defend the interests of finance capital and private property.

An examination of the events leading to the rebellion leads to only one possible conclusion: The whole system is illegitimate. Bankrupt. Biased to the core. Therefore, all charges and bail against those who were arrested should be dropped.

Subsequently, people's trials should be organized all over the country. They should put the real criminals on trial—starting with Bush and including the U.S. Justice Department and the Los Angeles Police Department, beginning with its notorious police chief Daryl Gates.

The media's lies and distortions

Terminology can be a very powerful weapon. Nobody knows this better than those who own and operate the instruments of mass communication, particularly the media.

"Thugs on a rampage." "Ugly crowds." "Roving packs." "Hooligans."

This is some of the terminology that has appeared frequently in the national media in the last few days.

Has it been used to describe the cops who mercilessly beat Rodney King? No, characterizations like "wolf packs" and so on are never used to describe killer cops or racist attackers. In fact, they're never even called criminals.

However, these labels are always used to describe the oppressed, especially its youths. And when they rise up in rebellion as they just did in Los Angeles and elsewhere, then the media really turn it on. Not a report is written without some kind of reference to "lawless looters" and the like.

Indeed, within a span of just a few hours, the media had turned the racist acquittal of the four cops completely around. All of a sudden it was the oppressed who were on trial.

Forget the exposés on police brutality. Forget the landlords and the extortionate rents they charge. Forget the banks that red-line and loot the community every day.

Forget all that, the media said—there is the law to protect!

This kind of racist coverage is both deliberate and systematic. The big business media have done something they have done for centuries—make the oppressed the criminals, not the victims.

Moreover, the media report on racism in U.S. society as though they're somehow above the problem. They let themselves completely off

the hook. But the media are not neutral with respect to racism. In fact, they are one of racism's most fundamental organs.

Malcolm X talked about this in his last speech, delivered in Detroit on Feb. 14, 1965. He said: "[The government] uses the press to create images. They create an image by feeding statistics through the press showing the high crime rate in the community.

"And once the public accepts this image it also paves the way for a police state type activity in the Black community. They can use any kind of brutal method to suppress Blacks because they're criminals anyway.

"And what has given this image? The press." (From "The Last Message of Malcolm X," published by the New Afrikan Institute of Political Science.)

Media speaking in one voice

Perhaps the most striking thing about media coverage of the recent events is their absolute uniformity. It's a classic example of the ruling class speaking in one voice and being united on one theme.

And that theme is: Show "understanding" for the anger, appeal for "harmony," downplay the repression and portray the military/police occupation as necessary to "keep the peace."

In doing this, the mass media censor virtually everyone who supports the rebellions around the country, even though there are obviously many who do.

The media everywhere are also downplaying the fact that the rebellions, while unquestionably led by the African American community, have been joined by Latinos, Asians and whites. Even Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley had to acknowledge this.

But the media never want to show this kind of unity. On the contrary, they seek to intensify divisions, to make whites afraid of the oppressed.

This is because racism is the main way the capitalist ruling class maintains its control and power. And since the media are simply an arm the bosses own to perpetuate their rule, their news coverage reflects this.

But it is evident in the rebellions and many of the support activities across the country that the masses of people are finding their own way to communicate: with their bodies and in the streets.

Response around the country, around the world

While rage burned in Los Angeles, the rest of the country sizzled, and people all over the world hailed the rebellion.

Brush fires of protest and rebellion broke out in almost every major city—from Tampa, Fla., to Boise, Idaho, from Boston to Seattle. No community was untouched. High schools and colleges were particular centers of protest.

While Los Angeles was the common spark that set the country ablaze, local “Rodney King” injustices added fuel to the fires. Most of the actions were led by African Americans. People from other nationalities also participated in most cities.

Ames, Iowa, and Warrensburg, Mo.—two relatively small communities—became centers for pitched battles. There was a two-day uprising in the Illinois capital city of Springfield.

Thousands clash with police

People from many San Francisco area communities—led by youths—marched, rallied and stood up to police-state measures. In the first two days almost 1,500 people were arrested, including 78 felonies.

On the afternoon of April 30, college and high school students from Berkeley marched on the freeway toward San Francisco. Police arrested 400 on the Bay Bridge, a site of protests against the Gulf war.

San Francisco State and City College students blocked Interstate 280. Then they marched to the Mission district for a Roots Against War rally and feeder march to the State Building, where over 1,000 people gathered at an All-Peoples Congress rally.

Attacked by cops, the crowd exploded in justified anger from many African American, Latino, Asian and white youths. The windows of expensive shops were broken and merchandise was liberated.

That night, former police chief Mayor Frank Jordan declared a “state of emergency” with a 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew, selectively enforced “at the discretion of officers.” Racist police brutally rounded up hundreds of youths in sweeps of the downtown area. But people defied the “state of emergency” and protested all May 1. Hundreds were arrested.

At noon the next day, the Board of Supervisors met in emergency session and voted 7-to-1 to remove emergency powers from the Mayor and police. On May 4 they voted to dismiss charges against those arrested in sweeps of the Mission district.

On April 30, a protest of the King verdict in Atlanta escalated into running skirmishes between the police and Clark Atlanta University students. A police invasion of the campus the next day provoked continued battles. Youths from the community joined the rebellion against racism. Panicked officials and business managers closed government offices, downtown stores and banks and evacuated workers.

On May 1, Atlanta police—reinforced by state and county police and the “special operations unit” of the state prison system—confined students to the campus of the five-college Atlanta University Center to try to stop a rally. Cops moved onto campus with tear gas.

The day-long standoff was broken as angry youths threw rocks and burned two police cars. “The police invaded our campus,” said Diana Johnson. “They were choking people. . . . They provoked this.” In two days police arrested 370 people, mostly African American youths.

Thousands took to the streets of Washington in a series of protests. The Justice Department, the White House and the Fraternal Order of Police headquarters were just some of the institutions protesters targeted.

On May 4, the city was virtually shut down. Mayor Sharon Kelly was forced to close all but essential government agencies to allow city workers to vent their frustration at the King verdict at one of the many rallies taking place in the city that day.

Demonstrators at the Justice Department met students marching from the Washington Monument and converged on the White House. There, protesters blocked Pennsylvania Avenue for several hours.

At rush hour the marchers proceeded to block all traffic on the 14th Street Bridge—a main thoroughfare used by drivers who commute to D.C. from Virginia. The protest turned into running skirmishes with police, who were under orders from the mayor not to arrest anyone.

By May 1, New York City was ready to blow.

Students at a dozen Brooklyn high schools walked out. Chanting, “No justice, no peace,” 1,000 African American, Latino, Asian and white youths marched across the Brooklyn Bridge to City Hall and then Times Square.

In the African American community of Harlem over 500 protesters gathered at the State Office Building to express their anger. The crowd marched down key thoroughfares demanding justice and an end to police brutality.

In midtown Manhattan, news of a demonstration called by the Movement for a Peoples Assembly spread rapidly. MPA leaflets declared, “To rebel against racism and poverty is justified.”

In an effort to stunt the apparent solidarity that had arisen among many nationalities in the wake of the verdict, the media spread rumors of violence. Workers in the area were sent home by early afternoon; store windows were boarded. The area was barricaded and pedestrian traffic re-

routed. Cops were out on horseback, in riot gear and undercover.

But despite all the attempts to sabotage the demonstration, a multinational crowd held a rally at Times Square, then headed for the Port Authority bus terminal, shouting "Shut it down!" Police locked the terminal. The next target was Madison Square Garden. The crowd, which now numbered about 4,000, spontaneously rushed the Garden, declaring it their own. Inside, Sahu Barron asked the people, "Who built it?" and the crowd responded, "We built it!"

Led mostly by African American and Latino youths, the marchers then tore down Seventh Avenue, chanting "Whose streets? Our streets!" During the day, 78 protesters were arrested.

Roll call against racism

In Boston's Roxbury neighborhood, 800 cheered school bus driver Lendy Ware as he presented the MPA message that poor and working people need an alternative to the current government structure. The crowd, organized by the youth group Free My People, booed politician Ted Kennedy off the stage when he tried to speak.

Mahtowin, an Oglala Sioux representing Workers World Party, spoke of the strong solidarity that has existed between African American and Native peoples in their struggle against racism and colonial oppression for over 500 years.

On April 30, the Movement for a Peoples Assembly held an emergency picket line in downtown Baltimore that quickly grew as Black youth joined from the street.

On May 1, in Rochester, N.Y., police arrested 39 people and the city imposed a curfew after angry youths overturned a police car. Students from three college campuses joined demonstrations May 1 in Buffalo, N.Y.

In Cincinnati, fear forced the Ku Klux Klan to cancel a May 2 rally. An anti-Klan march went on as planned, with slogans like "Kan Racist KKKops." There were large contingents from the National Organization for Women and ACT UP. On April 30, a group picketed in front of the Cleveland city hall.

Two hundred people demonstrated in downtown Chicago on May 1. In nearby Milwaukee, police closed down the Grand Avenue Mall in fear of a rebellion.

In the Philadelphia area, students demonstrated at the University of Pennsylvania, Drexel and Temple University campuses and at Central High School. A protest at the police administration building focused on the newly appointed Los Angeles police commissioner, Willie Williams. Demonstrators charged him with failing to stop police brutality in Philadelphia.

In Hartford, Conn., downtown businesses, including banks, insurance companies and department stores, announced they would shut at 3

p.m. May 1 in fear of a 4 p.m. rally called by the Movement for a Peoples Assembly.

Despite racist rumors of looting and rioting, nearly 300 people, mostly African American high school students, turned out. Speakers blasted the killing of 14-year-old Eric Reyes by an off-duty East Hartford police detective.

At an April 30 news conference, Hartford's African American Mayor Carrie Saxon Perry said she was more shocked by the racist verdict than by the Los Angeles rebellion, which she called "justified."

In Austin, Texas, young people took over the state capitol building. In Madison, Wis., windows of 34 police cars were smashed.

In San Diego high schools, African American, Latino, Filipino and white students walked out and demonstrated April 30 and May 1. Five hundred University of California students marched onto Interstate 5 May 1, stopping traffic for almost two hours. San Diego State students staged two campus sit-ins and then snarled traffic on busy College Avenue.

On April 30 and May 1 African Americans and other oppressed people led multinational evening marches to Seattle's gilded downtown. Chanting "No justice, no peace," the angry protesters smashed windows at department stores, sporting goods and jewelry stores.

Earlier on May 1, a thousand Black, white and Asian students from the University of Washington seized the I-5 freeway, stopping all traffic. And some 4,000 people joined a Mothers Against Police Harassment demonstration at the Federal Building.

In Olympia, Wash., hundreds of protesters seized the state capitol rotunda. Two thousand rallied in Portland, Ore., while demonstrators seized the federal building in Eugene.

In Boise, Idaho, 200 people, almost all white, protested inside the state capitol. In Las Vegas, the National Guard was called out to put down a major uprising. The government imposed a curfew.

There were reports of rebellions from dozens of cities in the states of Alabama, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Tennessee and Texas. There were also reports of actions in Minneapolis; Baton Rouge, La.; Boulder, Colo.; Omaha, Neb.; and Newark, N.J.

Worldwide solidarity

Across the border in Toronto, Canada, hundreds of Black and white people first demonstrated at the U.S. consulate, then stormed through downtown. In Berlin, Germany, 8,000 May Day demonstrators carried "Congratulations Los Angeles" banners as they fought with police. In Delhi, India, demonstrators outside the U.S. Information Center shouted "Death to racism" and "Stop attacks on Blacks."

Speakers at Cuba's May Day rally hailed the Los Angeles rebellion. Iraq's United Nation ambassador called for a special session to investigate

racist brutality against the Black community of Los Angeles. Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi said the King verdict proves there is no justice in the United States.

Facts and figures on racism and killer cops

Millions of people know in their bones the police departments are cesspools of racism and corruption. The entire U.S. "criminal justice system" actually offers no justice for workers and oppressed people. Here's some of the recent evidence.

THE COPS

- ▶ Nearly one-third of the cops in Los Angeles had brutality charges brought against them in 1989 and 1990. Only 42 of the 2,152 complaints—less than 2 percent—were upheld.
- ▶ In 1990 the LAPD killed 34 people and wounded another 38. Six people "died in custody."
- ▶ New York City cops killed 41 people in 1990. Most were people of color. Only two killer cops were even indicted. But both were let off.

SOME VICTIMS

- ▶ Jan. 30, 1988: Juan Rodriguez, a Dominican worker, beaten to death in his Brooklyn, N.Y., home by four policemen. All cops exonerated. On May 7, 1992, one of Rodriguez's killers, Thomas Mascia, was indicted in Suffolk County on Long Island for operating a cocaine distribution network with five other NYC cops.
- ▶ Feb. 6, 1990: Jose Sanchez killed by New York City police; there are 16 shotgun wounds on his body.
- ▶ March 13, 1990: Cop in Nashville, Tenn., kills African American woman, Jacque Brooks. She is shot four times. Court rules it "justifiable homicide."
- ▶ April 19, 1990: Harris County grand jury refuses to indict Houston police officer Scott Tschirhart for killing Byron Gillum—the third African American Tschirhart has killed.
- ▶ Feb. 5, 1991: Federico Pereira choked to death by gang of New York police. Despite medical examiner's testimony, every cop is exonerated.
- ▶ April 10, 1991: African American teenager Phillip Pannell killed by

white cop Gary Spath in Teaneck, N.J. Pannell's hands are up in the air when he's shot. Spath is acquitted by an all-white jury; four jurors are related to police officers.

- ▶ Aug. 24, 1991: Sixteen-year-old Cory Horton shot four times in the back by New Orleans police as they pull him out of a car.
- ▶ March 1992: East Hartford, Conn., Detective Proulx kills 14-year-old Eric Reyes.
- ▶ April 9, 1992: Haitian cab driver Jacques Camille shot by cops on 14th Street in Manhattan while his hands are on top of the cab. Camille is the only person on this list who is still alive.

THE PRISONS AND DEATH ROW

- ▶ There are over 1.1 million people in jail in the United States. Forty-four of every 10,000 people are in a prison cell. This is the highest rate in the world—one-third higher than apartheid South Africa.
- ▶ Prisons in the United States are overwhelmingly reserved for the poor. There are more African American men in prison than in college.
- ▶ Forty-two percent of African American men aged 19-35 in New York state are either in jail or on probation. In Washington, D.C., the rate is 58 percent.
- ▶ In the last 60 years, only two whites have been executed for killing African Americans. In contrast, the next five prisoners scheduled to be strapped in the San Quentin, Calif., gas chamber are all African Americans.
- ▶ Georgia has executed more people than any other state. Eighty percent have been African American.
- ▶ There has not been one recorded instance in U.S. history of a millionaire getting the death penalty.

The entire system is criminal. Its object is not justice, but repression of poor and working people.

As ye sow ...

Everyone agrees the events in Los Angeles reveal a grave social crisis. Over the last few years, the poor and oppressed have been hit with an unrelenting series of attacks that has left no alternative but to rebel.

Here's some of what fuels the rage.

THE LATEST CROP OF CUTBACKS

- ▶ Last Oct. 1, the states of Maryland, Michigan and Ohio threw 247,000 people off General Assistance.
- ▶ New Jersey Gov. James Florio recently moved to cut women's welfare payments when they have more children.
- ▶ Maryland Gov. William Donald Schaefer wants to cut Aid to Families with Dependent Children by another 30 percent. It has already been cut 7 percent. In October 1991, Schaefer announced plans to shut

down the Maryland School for the Blind.

- ▶ This fall will bring another \$500 tuition hike to over 200,000 students at the City University of New York. Forty percent of CUNY students come from households that earn less than \$16,000 per year. Sixty-five percent are Third World.
- ▶ Over the past 12 years federal funds allotted to welfare have decreased 27 percent.

RICH GET RICHER, THE POOR ...

- ▶ According to a General Accounting Office study released on March 4, 1992, income for the richest 1 percent of households rose by over 77 percent in the 1980s, while 40 percent suffered a drop in income. The poorest 20 percent saw a 9 percent decline—to an average of \$8,400 in 1989.
- ▶ According to the New England Journal of Medicine, the average male in Bangladesh has a longer life expectancy than an African American male in Harlem.
- ▶ According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the average life expectancy of African Americans is ten years shorter than whites'.
- ▶ The infant mortality rate for Black children in New York City is higher than that in Havana, Cuba, or Shanghai, China. One-quarter of all mothers here receive inadequate or no prenatal care.
- ▶ The infant mortality rate for African Americans is twice as high as for whites.
- ▶ Only 50 percent of all inner-city youth have been vaccinated against measles. The huge drug monopoly Merck & Co. charges \$25 per shot.
- ▶ The U.S. government admits that 31.5 million people live below its absurdly low official "poverty line."
- ▶ A four-person household has to make less than \$13,359 annually to be declared officially poor. This works out to 38 cents per hour for each person.
- ▶ At least 18 million people live in households trying to survive on less than \$10,000 per year. Ten million people pay half their income for rent. Eight million pay 70 percent of their income for rent.
- ▶ From 1980 to 1989 the number of millionaires rose 14 times.
- ▶ According to the July 10, 1991, issue of *Forbes* magazine, 64 individuals and 32 families are each worth more than \$1 billion.

"As ye sow so shall ye reap." No class of expoliters has ever heeded these words. And the ruling class in the United States is no exception.

Bush's response

The Bush administration was able to mobilize thousands of troops and equipment at a moment's notice. And it's not just troops, tanks and guns that were organized quickly. It's medical supplies, food rations, sleeping facilities and much more. The same thing was done on a much wider scale in the murderous U.S.-led war against Iraq.

This shows what the capitalist U.S. government is capable of doing—and all through executive edict. The problem is, of course, that this kind of mobilization is carried out for war and repression, not for people's needs.

Where is the emergency aid to fight AIDS? Where are the executive edicts for housing for the millions of homeless?

When it comes to providing jobs or decent, affordable health care, the government always tells us: "This takes time. We've got to study the problem; committees need to meet." But when it comes to protecting private property and gunning down the oppressed, it's done at the snap of a finger.

As for emergency measures, one demand that should be leveled at Bush is to immediately bar any banks, insurance companies, real estate brokers and the like from profiteering off the rebellion. All the money to rebuild the communities should be tax-free grants. The government should pay.

The sum being tossed around regarding "property damage"—\$500 million to \$1 billion—is paltry compared with the \$500 billion handout the government gave the Savings & Loans. But none of the money should be at the expense of any other social program. And the jobs to rebuild areas should be given to the oppressed, too.

But Bush's response was significant in another way. His call for "investigating" the possibility of leveling federal charges against the cops who were acquitted was not a response to the brutality against Rodney King. Nor was it a response to the outrageous verdict.

No, what made Bush and the entire bourgeois establishment take notice was that the masses rebelled. Bush was forced to make his promise as a concession to the uprisings. Of course, his promise is mainly lip service and won't amount to a thing. But one thing is certain: Without the rebellions, Bush would not have done or said anything.

Herein lies one of the most important lessons for the struggle. It shows how the masses, through their bold action, can force even the most reactionary president into doing something. The rebellions have put the bosses on notice and struck fear in their hearts.

And even Bush feels the heat.

Introducing the Movement for a Peoples Assembly

The working class, the oppressed communities and poor people in general are facing the worst crisis since the Great Depression. To address the urgent need to fightback, 400 organizers from around the country gathered for a strategy meeting in Baltimore on March 28, 1992.

There it was agreed that the current racist, pro-rich U.S. government was both unrepresentative and illegitimate. A call was issued to begin the formation of a new power, one that truly represents and fights for all poor and working people, especially the most oppressed sectors.

This new power was named the Movement for a Peoples Assembly (MPA).

The MPA seeks to bring representatives from all the battles being waged everywhere—health care, anti-intervention, AIDS, pro-choice, etc.—towards a massive Peoples Assembly in New York City in the Spring of 1993. In addition, international delegates will be invited so that alliances can be formed with struggles the world over.

And from that assembly an attempt will be made to do something never done in the United States—create a new organ of people's power with enough strength and authority to challenge the government and turn things around.

In keeping with this task, the MPA took up the challenge in one of the most decisive moments in U.S. history: the mass rebellions in Los Angeles following the acquittal of four racist cops who brutally beat Rodney King.

When the government and media went on the offensive against the rebellion—in effect, making the victims of police terror the criminals—the MPA declared: To rebel against poverty, brutality and racism is justified.

An Emergency Committee was set up to fight for the immediate release and amnesty of the over 16,000 taken prisoner in L.A. And press conferences and support activities were set up across the country.

This is an example of what the Movement for a Peoples Assembly is all about. Join us.

The Movement for a Peoples Assembly has more than 30 organizing centers nationwide. For more information, contact the national office: MPA, 36 East 12th Street, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10003. Or phone (212) 777-1246 or (212) 741-0633.

THE LOS ANGELES REBELLION AGAINST RACISM

- **The acquittal of the four cops who brutally beat Rodney King was the natural product of a racist, anti-poor justice system**
- **Uprisings are the inevitable and justifiable responses to decades of police terror, racism and poverty**
- **National and international outrage over racist verdict**
- **Amnesty campaign started for 16,000 L.A. political prisoners**
- **The battle of Los Angeles—a news report**
- **The role of the racist media—making the victims the criminals**
- **A brief review of police and economic brutality**
- **People's power needed to combat the system**