

# FORUM

## Renegade Cops Terrorize America's Inner Cities

When proponents for Mumia Abu Jamal contend that he was a victim of a police frame up many within larger White society dismiss this view as mere fantasy. But recent revelations by retired Los Angeles police officer Mark Fuhrman again confirm what those who dwell in the occupied territories, the ghettos, barrios and reservations know all too well. There are renegade cops within police departments throughout this country that terrorize and prey on oppressed communities of color. Officer Fuhrman brazenly discussed the racism in the LAPD, the police brutality, the planting of evidence to frame those who fall in disfavor with the authorities, and the wall of secrecy/silence which protects the misdeeds of rogue cops.

The phenomenon of renegade cops is not confined to Los Angeles, however, and the litany of police misconduct is far greater than even Fuhrman revealed. Those who live in the occupied territories know that the numbers racket, prostitution, and the drug traffic could not exist without the knowledge, complicity and participation of elements within police agencies at various levels. And, people of color within police agencies are not immune from being consumed by this sub-culture of police brutality, police crime and corruption.

Investigations in New York City over the last two years have uncovered a cesspool of police cor-

ruption with scores of rogue cops involved in drug trafficking, taking bribes, and targeting victims for false arrest or liquidation. In Washington D.C., a ring of renegade cops was also discovered deeply involved in the drug traffic. Within the last month, the city of Philadelphia was stunned by revelations that a band of cops had terrorized a neighborhood for nearly two years, engaging in a range of criminal activities and targeting untold numbers of community residents for false arrests, thereby hurling them into the jaws of the prison-jail industrial complex. The horror stories emanating from Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia and Washington D.C. are merely a reflection of a pervasive problem in American society; the callous degradation, exploitation and oppression of communities of color, the ghettos, barrios and reservations.

This problem is not confined to local police departments, however. What is true of local police departments is also true of federal police and intelligence agencies. Racism within federal agencies



### VANTAGE POINT

By RON DANIELS

is rampant. The discovery of the "Good O' Boys Roundup" where hundreds of federal officers gather each year with racist banners and paraphernalia in full view is no doubt just the tip of the iceberg. Studies have also pointed to the connection between renegade federal officers and the international drug traffic. And, the propensity of federal intelligence agencies to target activist and dissenters through Cointelpro type operations is well known.

The point is that renegade cops at all levels are out of control, wreaking havoc on communities of color and acting to stifle dissent/opposition. In the ghettos, barrios and reservations, the problem is not just crime. All too often the problem is that the criminals are rogue cops.

Community crime watch programs and community policing alone will not solve the problem. In order to stop the victimization of our communities by cops out of control, police agencies and authorities must be accountable to and under the

control of the community. Therefore, we must struggle for community control of the police at the local level and the dismantling of the national security state at the federal level. The primary mechanism for police accountability at the local level is strong civilian police review boards with investigative authority and the enforcement power to back up the discovery of misconduct with appropriate discipline.

Good cops have nothing to fear from civilian police review boards. Unfortunately, police unions, under the guise of maintaining the authority and morale of the cops, vigorously oppose civilian police review boards. The police are often supported in this position by a naive public which still refuses to believe that there are significant numbers of cops who are capable of heinous acts of police misconduct.

These sentiments by police unions and the public notwithstanding, communities of color must wage a relentless struggle/campaign to control the police. Based on what we know in the occupied territories, we will either win the battle to control the police or renegade cops will continue to terrorize the ghettos, the barrios and reservations.

(Ron Daniels is a Nationally Syndicated Columnist).

## If Our Children are our Future...

If Jesse Jackson is right and the true measure of a nation is how we treat our children and our elderly, the recent statistics on U.S. children show that we don't measure up well at all. In a nation of great resources and great wealth, children in the United States are poorer than children in other Western, industrialized countries. Amidst great wealth our children suffer in great poverty.

The Luxembourg Income Study was recently released which showed that only in Israel and Ireland, two nations which have been caught up in war, are poor children worse off than our poor children. Indeed, the United States has the most prosperous children in the world, while having nearly the poorest.

The study measures the annual incomes of the poorest families, including government benefits like food stamps and tax credits. But the study does not include free government services, like free medical and child care services available in many European countries, which would probably push the U.S. even lower on the list.

These figures come at a time when 22 percent

of American children live in poverty. These figures come at a time when the government is about to dismantle food stamps, cut back tax credits for the poor and cut both child care and welfare benefits for single mothers.

As I write this, debate on welfare reform is swirling around in the Senate, where Senator Dole is still trying to get enough votes to pass his reform, which reflects the Contract with America's positions. Meanwhile, others, including Senators Dodd, Kennedy, Hatch and Breaux, are introducing amendments to put back into the budget child care funds, and to eliminate some of the most dangerous provisions of the Dole Bill. Still other Senators are introducing amendments which would further punish poor women and children, such as

including foster care and adoption assistance programs in the sweeping cuts.

But where in the Congressional debate is the voice of poor women? Where are the voices and faces of the children who will be most impacted by these cuts? Where is the voice of reason which reminds the nation that we are all measured not by the strength of how much we are able to cut the budget or cut taxes, for the wealthy, but by how we treat the most vulnerable?

The Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project has found that 13 million poor children under age 12 are hungry or at risk of hunger. Thirteen million hungry children in a nation of great wealth, in a nation that proposes to give tax money back to the rich. The Department of Agriculture recently estimated that had

food stamp programs been block granted as proposed, \$43 billion in benefits to needy people would have been lost and that states would have been forced to eliminate 17 million people - half of them children - from the food stamp program.

As a child growing up in the Nation's Capital, I vividly remember President Lyndon Johnson calling this nation into a War on Poverty. I remember his challenge that we as a nation must do better so that no child would be hungry, so that every child would have a bed and an opportunity to learn. How have we lost that commitment and that compassion in only a generation? If our children are our future, are we as a nation saying there is no place for poor children and, like the biblical Isaac, they must be sacrificed? Or, if poor children are to be part of our future, how can we sacrifice the future of our nation by not providing child care and food?

(Bernice Powell Jackson is executive director of United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice).



### CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

By BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

## Make Sure Your Home is Fully Protected

Your home may be the most important single investment you will make in our lifetime. So protect that investment by carrying adequate insurance.

How much home insurance do you need? These suggestions may help you decide.

Take time to learn what homeowner policies and coverages are available. Then carefully decide the type of policy and the amount of coverage that will be best for you.

If you are buying insurance for the first time, check with the leading institution, real estate firm, your attorney, or friends for the name of a reputable home insurance agent and company.

If your home is not new, ask the previous owners what amounts of coverage they were carrying.

If you already have homeowners insurance, call your agent concerning the amount of coverage you should be carrying on your home.

A homeowner's policy will state that to collect the full cost of replacement for a home, you must have it insured for at least 80 percent or more

of the full replacement value.

Since the purpose of insurance is to protect you against financial disaster, don't try to save money by underinsuring.

It could be the worst mistake you could make.

Tips to follow in determining total insurance needs:

- Make a complete inventory of household possession with estimated values both to help determine how much coverage to buy and to use in making claims.
- Find out the current replace-

ment value of your home and insure it at 80% of that value.

- Consider insuring your home for full value or more, or securing a special endorsement if household belongings and personal possessions exceed 50% of the value of your home.
- Consider larger deductibles to reduce premiums, particularly if you want

maximum coverage at lowest rate for major losses and are able and willing to sustain minor losses.

- Review coverage periodically. Property values, inflations, taxes and mortgage replacement cost and appraisal value should be considered in determining the amount of insurance.

Ask an unbiased insurance agent about the proper coverage for your needs.

(Joann J. Falls is the Home Economics Agent).



### HOME ECONOMICS

By JOANN J. FALLS

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