Police Riot in Venice

When some of the old-timers and hangers-on in the Venice Canal district decided to cancel the traditional Venice Festival and stage a funeral for the canals instead, they thought they would be dramatizing the plight of their neighborhood—an area where real estate speculators have been picking up rents and buying up property to create a quaint ghetto for the pseudo-hip set.

Instead, they attracted the lavish attentions of the Venice Division of the LAPD, complete with swinging billy clubs, cracked heels, arrests and jailings. What was dramatized was not a local problem, but the police-state nature of life in Los Angeles today.

According to all accounts, things started out fine. In the morning, several hundred people gathered in a mock funeral procession intended to symbolize the death of the annual canal festival, which had been a celebration of the continued existence of the embattled Venice community.

Several people acted as pall bearers for the fake coffin. The bearers wore costumes and placards identifying them as members of the destroyers of the canals—a policeman wearing a pig mask, a “high-tax assessor,” a tax collector, local city councilperson Pat Russell, a real estate investor, and an “afflu-hip,” the term coined by an old-time canal resident to describe the “beautiful people” who are willing and able to pay the exorbitant rents (as high as $600 per month) being charged by real estate investors for the ramshackle structures that line the waterways.

Wreaths were dropped from bridges into the canals, speeches were made, and plans announced to take the rent and property battle to the state Coastal Commission at its next public meeting.

Amazes to avoid any “law enforcement” problems, the funeral participants kept the event off the main street—Dell Avenue—so no parade permit was required.

After the ceremony, a crowd of several hundred people began to gather on Dell, a narrow, badly-paved, one-way street which runs from Venice Boulevard south through the canals and over some high, rounded bridges to Washington Street in Marina del Ray. A band began playing an impromptu concert. Most observers note that in years past, Dell had been closed down by the Canal Festival and the police did nothing. But the festival was a commercial activity—this time, there were political overtones.

Thus, no sooner did the band concert begin than masses of police in full riot gear (helmets and clubs) began assembling outside the canals. A helicopter began circling low overhead, drownning out the music.

Before long, the police declared the happy gathering of poki-heads downer freaks, canal aficionados, and others to be an “unlawful assembly.” They gave everyone ten minutes to disperse and began counting.

Many people left immediately. Others said they never heard the order because of the roaring helicopter. But finally the police moved in, sweeping down the street in a shoulder-to-shoulder phalanx.

Not surprisingly, this invasion angered many in the street. Some chose to hold their ground (Free Venice didn’t get its name for nothing, after all). They were arrested on various charges. Others moved on to their own or neighbors’ yards. In two short sweeps—one down to Washington and once back to Venice Blvd—the police had the street cleared, but they weren’t content to leave it at that.

They turned then to the yards along the sides of the street and told the owners and renters and their friends to “get in your houses.”

One young man, James Roberts, allegedly protested that it was his property, and he would remain on it. Several witnesses reported that police officers pushed their way into the yard then attacked him. Roberts was held by some officers while others beat him around the neck and body, even after he had been handcuffed. Several people who witnessed the incident report that when the officers began the gang attack on Roberts, a black sergeant who had been standing in the yard turned his back and walked away.

This incident—one of several which took place that day—was recorded by several video cameras, including those of K employee, which ran the segment for two days on its evening news program.

Roberts, like several other victims and canal residents, is reportedly planning legal action against the (Continued on page three)
Delighted

Dear Editor,

What a delight to open the September 10-17 issue and find not only the ad for WBL's 1977 Peace Calendar, but the excellent story on my old friend Dorothy Healey. I've known her for very close to a quarter of a century, first as an antagonist, then as a political ally, but always as a friend. I'm so glad Ron Richardson did the story.

One thing which the story highlights, in this period of popular, chic, "consciousness-raising," and "salvation through selflessness," is the work of Dorothy Healey. She has swept through the middle class which can afford to pay for the experience of "spiritual peace"—despite all the heartbreak and work involved. Healey has nothing which is as able to give meaning to one's life as the involvement with reality represented by Dorothy. There is a cost, and not one of us who has committed to a new career and sacrificed and burned, but I think we are stronger for having acquired broken, and the scars we have taught us something about the world we could never learn by the contemplation of self.

Fraternal,
David McReynolds
War Resisters League

Trojan horse

Dear Editor,

American workers and pensioners are threatened seriously with the most unfair and regressive tax yet— and not, as you might suspect, by Senator Ford and his fellow reactionary—but by the chairman of the Democratic Congress' tax-writing Ways and Means Committee, Al Ullman.

Chairman Ullman has proposed imposition of the infamous ad valorem tax, a favorite of taxing authorities in Europe. His proposal would be unfair and easy to collect, although unjustly harsh on the poor.

The ad valorem rates of taxes imposed on the same item, as it proceeds from producer to consumer. Thus the grain dealer pays a tax on the wheat he buys from the farmer; the flour mill pays another tax when it buys from the dealer, the baker another when he buys the flour, and the wholesaler adds his tax and profit on each loaf of bread he buys from the baker. The grocer piles on his layer of tax and profit, and you and I pay all of the taxes and swollen prices when you buy bread for the table. Actually, this new multiple tax on a loaf of bread is in addition to the many you now pay on this and other necessities. They are called "hidden" taxes.

Like the sales tax, it falls heaviest on those who must spend the lion's share of their income for the necessities such as food, clothing, and fuel. They cannot afford the luxury of servants, of plumbing repairs, of expensive restaurant meals, of savings to hide from the tax collector in the loopholes created for rich by an intelligent Congress.

The only tax the rich man fears is the personal income tax, with no loopholes. He is quite sure that, quite long as lawyers and lobbyists make the laws. The farmer loses twice on the ad valorem tax. Because the raw products he sells adds multiple new layers of layers of tax and consequently more profits are added, consumers must pay higher prices for them. At a consumer, he pays more for what he needs to buy at the store. As a producer, he has the share of the consumer's dollar shrinks. Higher prices also mean smaller markets for his products.

The ad valorem tax is both highly inflationary and a cause of unemployment. Higher prices bring inflationary pressure for higher wages. They increase costs of government. By putting goods and services out of the reach of many consumers, they reduce demand and production, thus eliminating jobs. Higher unemployment means higher welfare costs, and the whole tragic process of recession and decline has started again.

California has two committees, one on the Ways and Means Committee. It has the power to decide the tax. They are Fortney H. Starks of Oakland and James C. Carman of Los Angeles, both Democrats. Ullman is from Oregon.

The time to exert maximum pressure on Congressmen to obtain commitments for an end of the exercise of the power to tax is now, before November 2.

Ken Wittersen

Corporate executives and government bureaucrats have developed the fine art of lying by misrepresentation in congressional hearings so that they can avoid the threat of a perjury conviction. They do this with a little help from their congressional "friends." The trick is to tack a little disclaimer into any testimony which runs something like, "...to the best of my knowledge...." Then, if and when new information comes to light which shows earlier testimony was incorrect, the individual can say, "Look in the record. I said at that time, 'to the best of my knowledge.' I just didn't know about that incident before." No one in congress seems willing to press matters further.

The latest example of this questionable behaviour comes from the office of Congressman Bella Abzug (D-NY). Abzug reports that Thomas S. Greenfield, executive vice president of Western Union International, "changed his testimony" in answer to the question, "Did Western Union International make its cables available to authorities in any country other than the United States?" Greenfield had first said simply "No." He later wrote the committee that the correct response should have been, "No, except for the United Kingdom."

Greenfield has not been charged with perjury, because, according to Abzug, he said "misunderstood." Ms. Abzug's question.

But that's not all. Also testifying before Alquist's Sub-committee of the House Committee on Government Operations was George Knapp, president of ITT World Communications. Knapp, responding to the same question, said that he had "no personal knowledge" ITT had never made communications available to any foreign government.

The key word is "personal knowledge." Knapp's audacity becomes apparent when one remembers that other ITT officials along with executives of RCA Global Communications had testified that between 1947 and 1975 had turned over nearly all their overseas communications to the National Security Agency. The problem is that Congress will harass a newspaper like

Daniel Schoe for doing this or her job—gathering and publishing information—but these deceptive national leaders and corporate executives seem to get away with anything.

Dave Lisker

Don't Watch What We Say

On letting lying dogs lie

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Police for the assault

Police riot

In a written statement, the group said, "The police chose to assault the crowd because they took the situation as an affront to their authority. Poor people, working people, blacks, and Mexicanos are not supposed to live this close to the ocean. Last year, when a picket line organized by real estate companies came into the canals and blocked the street without a permit, the police did not arrest them—instead they provided a heavy police escort. We pay the taxes to pay the police...and we resent that the Venice Division of LAPD has allowed itself to take sides in a community struggle."

Venice residents believe the police riot was pre-meditated. "What may be the police reason should they have had for bringing in 25 cars, 12 motor cycles and a police van?" asked Mary Lou Johnson, who originated the idea of the funeral. She observed that the police had immediately set up a command post outside the canals on Venice Boulevard and had moved on the area en masse.

Although he disputes the residents' estimate that 60 to 80 police were involved, Police Sergeant John Deanics, who personally declared the assembly unlawful and ordered the dispersal action, confirmed most of the story told by witnesses. Only his wording is different.

Deanics said he had come to the area first when some residents complained that the street was blocked and they couldn't get through. "I drove over and agreed," he said. "As soon as we cleared them, we left." Asked about the orders to residents to vacate their yards and "go inside," Deanics explained, "You can order people to get inside and you are allowed to do that when you give a dispersal order. We had to do it because people were jumping on private property and saying they lived there."

Others disputed his loose interpretation of the sanctity of private property. Fred O'Connell, legal director of the Southern California ACLU said that while police might have the right to tell people on private property to disperse, "They can't tell them anywhere to go."

In any case," O'Connell said, "they had no right to jump onto someone's property and beat him. That could never be justified by any order."

Bret Lohnes, deputy city attorney for the Westside, admitted that there were ambiguities in the unlawful assembly law. He said that dispersal meant "to leave the immediate area," but "It's hard to know where to disperse to in some circumstances."

There were ten people arrested during the incident, on charges ranging from failure to disperse to "assault and battery" on a police officer (no police were injured). The city attorney's office is preparing charges against some of those arrested.

Times misses again

The Los Angeles Times may be first with the news but it sure can be wrong with it too.

The day after the police riot in the Venice canals, the Times ran a story on page three attributing everything to a "racial incident." The Times claimed that following the funeral, a black woman, Angela Carter, was attacked as she drove through Dell Avenue, and her car was vandalized.

The woman reportedly drove through the narrow crowded street at a relatively high speed, revving her engine and forcing people to jump aside. Venice Town Council member Bob Wells claims she got out of her car and fought with several people and then left, but returned later. The second time, her car was trash. The Times story claimed that the police came to the area in response to that incident, though no arrests ever revealed.

In fact, the incident occurred after the riot was over and the last police car had departed, and according to Venice residents and Venice police alike, it was not a "racial incident."

Police Sergeant John Deanics, who had personally declared the "unlawful assembly" and ordered dispersal of the crowd on Dell Avenue, told the Vanguard, "The Times was completely inaccurate. There were no racial overtones in that incident, as far as I have found.

He added that the incident had "nothing to do with the police coming to the canals. Asked to comment on how the Times could have been so inaccurate, Deanics said, "You know how it is. Anything to sell papers!"
FIGHT BACK

Seeing red on redlining

Cubby Singh

"Redlining" is the term that describes geographical discrimination in the granting of loans. A lending institution will refuse to make a conventional loan, or adjust the terms of the loan unfairly because of the location of the property, regardless of the creditworthiness of the individual. It occurs mostly in non-white areas, integrated or racially changing areas. It is also used to squeeze out lower-income people from areas that are " unofficially" marked for future residence by higher economic bracket populations.

This is currently most evident in areas such as Venice and the City Hall area in Compton. Redlining, in those instances, keeps the folks out and leaves the area open for speculation and developers.

The effects of redlining are devastating for our cities. People who want to live in an area, who care about that area, are denied financing which is, in effect, the right to live where they choose. Persons who live in redlined areas, who frequently have their life-savings sunk into the property, are not able to sell because the lending institutions will not finance the buyers. Persons who want to improve their homes are not granted improvement loans.

As a result, neighborhoods begin to fall apart and vandalism increases. The abandonment rate goes up and boarded-up homes appear. Stores move out of the area and city services are cut. School systems begin to fall apart. Eventually, the area is cited as a 'blight area' and becomes the target for redevelopment. This happens only because the flow of money that is necessary to keep any neighborhood healthy and viable has been cut off. It is a vicious cycle of hoarding funds.

Publicly, it is a crime. Lending institutions are ready with a smile, sugary words and little sensual gifts to take an individual's money in the form of a checking or savings account. But when the people of the redlined neighborhood go back and ask for a loan they are turned down. Lending institutions tend to feel that any money that crosses their counter is no longer the depositor's, but is theirs to make interest from. They use the patronizing rationale that they know what to do with the deposits. Lending institutions say that they are protecting the mortgagors of their depositors.

The Coalition Against Redlining was started a little over a year ago as an outgrowth of the hearings that were held by the California Business and Transportation Agency about the then-proposed state regulations concerning redlining. At that time the Center for New Corporate Priorities, Community Information Project and Western Center on Law and Poverty were the only groups in Los Angeles working on the subject of redlining. These groups were invited to testify at the hearings. They contacted other groups and individuals that they knew would be interested in working on the subject. The first meeting was held in June 1975, one week before the hearings, to draw up strategy for testifying. We met again after the hearings to follow-up and have been meeting twice monthly, on the first and third Mondays, since then. The meetings are at the Protestant Community Services, 1221 S. Western Ave. at 7:00 P.M.

The Coalition has been working through all possible channels to end redlining. We had considerable input into the new State Regulations due to our testifying at the first and subsequent hearings held about them. Thirteen out of the 14 points included in the regulations were at the suggestion of the Coalition. We recognize that the regulations are full of loopholes. They apply only to savings and loan associations, not to Federal Chartered institutions. The Savings and Loan industry has fought the regulations every step of the way. The Coalition has been working on the community level. In view of the death of the bill and the absence of any refusal to redlining on the books, these efforts have taken on the utmost urgency.

We have started a campaign to be grass-roots organized as a direct action. We call this campaign L.C.E.N.D. (Lend Equally—No Discrimination). We are using pressures from both banks and educational institutions, and local and national government. We are also getting in touch with the community organizations that are working with us to show the amount of support we have. At the culmination of negotiations, we will publicize the names of the lenders, those that co-operate and those that do not, and change lending practices. We will not make public the names of those who consider bad lenders. At that time, a pledge will be taken that their accounts are not to be deposited with a bad lender. The pledge will be asked to move its business to the institutions that we recommend.

Right now we have over 500,000 million in pledges from the lenders. We urge all pledging organizations to join us in this struggle.


If you would like to find out more about our programs, you would like to pledge your business or you have questions, please contact us. Our number is 474-7342. Our address is 1516 Westwood Blvd., L.A. 90024.
Informative Sources

The new law gives artists royalties

Legislation providing royalty payments to visual artists, painters and sculptors has been signed into law by Governor Brown.

The new law provides a 5% royalty on the selling price of an original painting, sculpture or drawing by the artist if the work is sold at a fair price and that the artist is paid royalty. If the work is sold at a price that is more than the price at which the same artist's work is sold in California or the sale occurs in the state of New York, the artist must be paid royalty.

The law was introduced by Assemblyman Alan Sieroty, D-Los Angeles, but the bill, said "This program will be the first of its kind in the United States, and I hope it will set a standard for other states to follow."

The law also provides for the establishment of an artist's royalty fund to be available for artists to use to further their careers.

Workers gain tenant support

Maintenance and custodial workers and painters at the University of California, Los Angeles' housing complex for "service students" won support from the tenants' association there at the last monthly meeting of the association.

The workers told the tenants that they were not permitted to take vacations, were ordered to work on holidays without getting an extra day off, and were required to stay within 30 minutes of the buildings for seven 24-hour "on call" every week. They also wanted improved ventilation in the workshops, as recommended by the UCLA Office on Environment two months ago.

Representatives from the various apartment buildings, located along Sawtelle and Sepulveda Boulevards between Wilshire and Wadswood, voted overwhelmingly to recommend that the workers' grievances be dealt with by management."Immediately."

The tenants also went on record as supporting the workers' new union--a local of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Union.

The association's resolutions are advisory, and can be ignored by management, but they indicated a strong sense of solidarity between the students and the workers there.

Dave Lippold
San Quentin & re-trial sought

San Francisco attorney Charles Garry has filed a motion for a new trial for Johnny Spain, the only San Quentin Six defendant convicted of murder. According to Garry, the motion contains "real dynamite."

Before Garry could file the motion, Spain, a Black Panther, was sent out on an unprecedented punishment by prison authorities of 22 years segregation inside the dreaded San Quentin Adjustment Center. The punishment, which exceeded established limits, was explained by prison authorities: "We feel that the maximum term is insufficient due to the extreme seriousness of his offenses..."

Garry's latest move in his quest to win a new trial for Johnny Spain was to ask Judge Brinckerhoff to throw the case out of the county.

Jeff Cohen

Bill would fuel oil, gas giants

A bill which would amount to an $11.5 billion subsidy to giant oil and natural gas companies is being quietly considered in congress.

Called the Synthetic Fuel Guaranty Act (H.R. 1211), the measure would provide federal loan guarantees to the oil and natural gas monopolies so they can develop synthetic fuels.

The bill was drafted originally by the oil and gas lobby and introduced by Rep. Olin Teague (D-TX), who is the powerful chairman of the House Science and Technology Committee.

Besides the $11.5 billion subsidy in federal loan guarantees, and $500 million in construction grants to the energy corporations, the bill would also provide $45.5 billion in price supports and $500 million in construction grants to the energy corporations.

Supporters of the bill, including the Ford Administration, had contended that only $6 billion would be needed in loan guarantees between 1976-77 to produce 300,000 barrel equivalent per day by 1985.

However, the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) estimates that the total package would cost the taxpayers closer to $11.5 billion.

According to ERDA's figures this would mean that taxpayers would pay $90 per barrel. The current Oil Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) price averages about $12.45 per barrel.

If the bill becomes law, financial risks for the oil and gas companies will be kept at a minimum. The taxpayers will take all the risks in this venture, while the energy monopolies reap all the profits.

Construction grants authorized by the measure would build experimental synthetic fuel plants at taxpayers' expense. However, depending upon the venture's degree of success, these plants could be turned over to oil and gas companies for commercial purposes. All profits will go to the corporations.

Not surprisingly, supporters of the bill include the same oil and gas companies which vigorously protest federal intervention in energy affairs.

Local supporters include Union Oil, Southern Calif. Gas Co., the California PUC and Pacific Lighting. Others include Exxon, Gulf Oil, Sunoco and Shell.

They claim that government financing is needed for this project to lessen America's dependency on excessive foreign oil. The capital, they say, isn't available in the private sector.

There is a degree of truth in that, since the private sector has few lenders willing to give money away.

The Ford Administration and oil companies have been promoting the expensive (12.45 per barrel) price of foreign oil. However, $90 per barrel derived from domestic sources apparently sounds fine to them.

Bel Bela

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