

# O.J. Simpson *Commentary*

## The State Vs. Simpson: The Racist LAPD Is The Issue

BY MONICA MOOREHEAD  
WORKERS WORLD NEWS SERVICE

It took the jury less than four hours to come back with a ruling of not guilty on two counts of murder against O.J. Simpson. Coming from a panel that included 10 women, eight African American and two white, this ruling is widely seen as a stunning rejection of racism—especially the racist role of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) in their handling of the evidence presented to the jury.

In particular, the testimony of former LAPD Detective Mark Fuhrman, a key prosecution witness, feel apart when the defense played tapes showing him to be a violent racist.

The verdict is a fairly accurate barometer of how racism in the U.S. has impacted on the mass attitude, particularly of African American and other oppressed peoples, toward the cops and the courts.

In this case, especially after the public heard the outrageous parts of the Fuhrman tapes not played to the jury, racism eclipsed the other critical social issue in the spotlight—domestic violence. Had Simpson not been a wealthy person with the means to afford an aggressive team of lawyers, it is unlikely that the racist conduct of the police would ever have been exposed.

### Racism Of LAPD Put On Trial

It was the false testimony of Fuhrman that ultimately put the LAPD and its racism on trial. The defense presented recorded statements by Fuhrman that exposed his hatred of both African American and women—he is the founder of a group called Men Against Women. This was used by the Simpson defense team to show how the LAPD was more than capable of manufacturing evidence to frame O.J. Simpson or

any person of color.

Fuhrman's remarks had to have impacted on the jury, even though Judge Lance Ito did not allow them to hear the entire Fuhrman tapes. The capitalist courts have complete jurisdiction over what is and is not submitted as evidence.

The big-business media could not hide their discomfort that so much attention was focused on the racism of the LAPD. They were also irritated to no end when Defense Attorney Johnnie Cochran referred to Fuhrman as another Hitler in his closing arguments. Why should they be so upset? Fuhrman certainly has a Hitlerite ideology and promotes violence against people of color, women, gays and Jewish people.

### Media, Courts And Cops Work Hand In Hand:

The last thing the media wanted to cover was the LAPD. They didn't want to reinforce the view, prevalent among the workers and oppressed, that the cops play such a repressive role in society.

The cops exist to keep the oppressed masses down and to protect the private property of the rich and super-rich. The LAPD in particular has gained an infamous reputation for brutality since the 1960s and the Watts rebellion. More recently, the whole world saw how they behave when the savage beating of Rodney King was recorded on videotape.

The Fuhrman testimony also helped to reconfirm that the cops and the courts work hand in hand, doling out unequal treatment to those of color. Usually their victims are poor and the police get away with it.

In a recent ABC poll, three out of four African Americans stated that if O.J. were found guilty, it would confirm their view he was railroaded by a corrupt system. They must have remembered that four racist cops were

at first acquitted in the beating of Rodney King.

Historically, the crimes of the police and especially white police are exonerated by the media and the courts because they are all part and parcel of the same repressive capitalist state apparatus.

### Issue Of Domestic Violence:

In the early stages of this case, the brutal murder of Nicole Brown Simpson brought widespread attention to the issue of domestic violence

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against women in the U. S. Survey confirmed that 3 million women are battered annually by their spouses and boyfriends, and thousands lose their lives.

For a brief time, there was a national discussion on the epidemic proportions of domestic violence and how to prevent it. But the big-business media soon lost interest in raising domestic violence as a general phenomenon, even though it remains a big crisis.

As we wrote shortly after the murders, the racist and sexist character of the state makes it virtually impossible for justice to be served. So the tragic murder of Nicole Brown Simpson has done very little to generate any effective laws to prevent domestic violence or strengthen those laws already on the books.

For instance, why isn't it mandatory for batterers like O.J. Simpson to get the necessary therapy and treatment they need? What recourse is there when women-hating judges acquit or give light sentences to male batterers? What about indicting cops who either ignore or belittle those battered women who call for help, as Nicole Simpson did? The LAPD has proven time and again that it is no friend of battered women. The same cops and judges also usually side

with gay bashers.

alinity is involved. With millions of viewers watching the daily coverage of the trial, corporate sponsors paid hundreds of thousands of dollars for 30-second ads.

At least 30 books have been published so far since the murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman—the first less than two weeks after the murders.

A TV movie based on the Simpsons' troubled relationship was aired several months ago. There will be more publications and movies flooding the market focusing on the trial and its outcome. But once the focus of the trial shifted to the notorious LAPD, the profit-driven media frenzy exploded in the face of the system.

For progressives, it is a relief to see this trail come to an end. It turned into a big distraction from those issues that the masses need to be organizing around—cutbacks in social services, layoffs, attacks on health care, union busting, reproductive rights and other right-wing initiated assaults.

But under capitalism, everything is political and the Simpson trial was no exception. It became a public forum that exposed some of the inequalities and injustices inherent within class society. But the capitalist state and media have attempted to pit one against another. If you're for acquittal, you must be insensitive to women. If you think O.J. was guilty, you're racist. That's how the media are presenting the response to the verdict, along with attempts to malign the jury and the jury system itself.

### Put The System On Trial:

Because race and racism played a central role in this case and its outcome, many in the African-American community across the country are happy with the acquittal because

it is not only the state that's at fault. The capitalist economic system itself perpetuates all kinds of violence against women. Neither racism nor domestic violence can be eliminated, root and branch, under capitalism.

When enormous profits are at stake, nothing is sacred to the media—all the more when a famous person-

O.J. "beat the system." It's a system that keeps down people of color and sends to jail every day poor people who can't afford a team of rich, experienced lawyers such as O.J. had at his disposal.

But no matter the extent of this accumulated wealth and fame, O.J. Simpson, like millions of other African Americans, was subject to national oppression. At least one corporation paid \$1 million to help the prosecution finance its case against him.

How can the damage to mass consciousness done by the racist and sexism surrounding this trial be undone?

A start could be made by launching a people's investigation into the crimes of the LAPD. They not only harbored a fascist but tried to cover up for him after he committed perjury. They should be in the dock.

What kinds of information would come out if the masses in L.A.—Black, Latino, Asian and white, women and men, lesbian, gay and straight, immigrant and native born—saw that a serious effort was being made by people from their own communities to expose the years of police terror and repression?

The first step would be to review all the cases of poor and oppressed peoples who may have been put in jail because of bogus testimony and the planting of phony evidence by the police.

The biggest problem with the Simpson case is that it helped the ruling class sow deeper divisions between whites and people of color. The challenge for progressives is to find ways and means to advance a united class struggle against racism, police brutality, sexism, lesbian and gay oppression—that are all part and parcel of the capitalist assault against the national working class.

## Vantage Point: The "N-Word" Is All Negative

BY RON DANIELS

The furor over the Fuhrman tapes, including his use of the N-word 41 times has precipitated discussions about the meaning of the word nigger and how it is used in the White community and Black community. The September 3 issue of the Charlotte Observer ran a major feature article entitled: The "N-word." History, continuing evolution. In the article the author correctly asserts that "When whites use the word, its meaning is almost always contemptuous, unmistakably conveying the notion that blacks are second-class citizens - and worse." However, the author goes on to point out that we as Black people frequently use nigger in our conversations and that it is often used "positively."

Citing the research of Robin Kelly, an African American history professor at New York University, the author notes that the N-word has be-

come prevalent in the musical lyrics and everyday language of the Hip Hop generation. Kelly observes that it is commonplace for young Blacks to greet each other as "nigga," and that he has even heard "White youth in New York's Greenwich Village cheerfully greeting their black friends in a similar manner." Kelly further observes that, "white kids into rap and Hip Hop music are known as 'wiggers' (white niggers). I recall that not so long ago one of the hottest rap groups in the country was NWA, Niggers With An Attitude. After having been virtually banned from the Black vocabulary in the 60's, young Blacks have resurrected the N-word and it flows from the lips of many of young people without any sense that the term is derogatory and self-defaming.

The argument advanced by some rap and Hip Hop artists is that the N-word now has a positive meaning. For example, Tupac Shakur claims

that nigga means "Never Ignorant Getting Goals Accomplished." In my view there is a better way to get our goals accomplished than embracing denigrating terms developed as an outgrowth of white supremacy. The venerable Queen Mother Moore, has devoted her life to teaching and preaching that we must reject degrading definitions and images of ourselves. Queen Mother has waged a long and relentless struggle against the term Negro, striving to "de-Negroize" our people as a basis for rescuing and restoring the race.

Negro, nigger, niggah, nigga, the N-word is all negative. A principal goal of The Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) of the 60's was to improve our self esteem by affirming our heritage and promoting positive images of our people. A critical aspect of the BCM was the rejection of the European standard of beauty. The terms Negro and nigger were deemed

to be destructive designations/identifications imposed on our people by white supremacy. We proclaimed that "Black is Beautiful" and accepted Black as a positive dimension of our identity.

However, Dr. Maulana Karenga, in keeping with the teachings of Queen Mother Moore, advanced the view that, "Black is necessary, but not sufficient" in defining our identity. All other people identify themselves in terms of culture, ethnicity and nationality, not merely color. We came to understand that our consciousness of our identity had been disrupted by the holocaust of enslavement and the systematic effort of the slavemasters to label our color, culture and land of origin a badge of degradation.

We rose up, as an act of Kujichagulia (self-determination), to declare that we are not niggers, we are not Negroes, and we are not just

Black. We are an African people, Africans in America with a proud history and heritage; a people who gave the world its first civilizations, produced the world's first multi-genius in the person of Imhotep (the real father of medicine), built the pyramids, bestowed upon the world astronomy, the decimal system, higher mathematics and developed Kemit/Egypt, the crown jewel of the ancient world that influenced the evolution of human history for thousands of years. We are not negroes, niggers niggas or niggahs. We are African with an Aptitude.

As Dr. Romana Edelin, President of the National Urban Coalition contends, we need a new cultural offensive which will recapture the vision and energy of the '60's in terms of what Dr. Karenga calls the "identity, purpose and direction" of our people. For whatever reason the history of what we attempted to

achieve in the 60's has not been passed on to the younger generation, or that history is dismissed as irrelevant. In some instances negative language, images and symbols have been promoted by the White controlled music industry via of Gangsta Rap and other forms of self-defaming "Black" music.

We certainly do not need to simply condemn Black youth and the young generation for what might be considered their wayward ways. But we should not patronize or capitulate to the destructive promulgation of negative popular culture either. Our task is to teach, instruct and guide with love, care and resolve. On the question of our identity the lesson must be clear. The N-word is all negative. We are an African people, determined to be free, proud and productive on the world stage of history and humanity. "Up you mighty race, you can accomplish what you will."

### Simpson Trial Recalls Portland History

I was returning home from Los Angeles, when the Mark Fuhrman tapes were released.

When I got home and read the Oregonian I was amazed, and some what upset to hear a spokes person for the Portland Police Department stating what happen in Los Angeles could never happen in Portland: Although Portland has changed some what, I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but I feel as a citizen who know that Portland isn't quite the haven against police brutality we would have the people of Oregon and the world to know that we are guilty of some of the same things that the L.A.P.D have done.

We forget quickly but the young men and women, who have been the victim of police haven't forgotten.

The reason the Black United Front was organized in 1978 was because a lot of our black men were being shot in unexplainable circumstances.

People were being shot, and killed and beaten, openly harassed by police, and nothing was done about it. They would investigate for a few weeks and would come back that ' what happen was justifiable.

I complained to previous mayors that black men were being beaten in the elevator when taken to jail, this is before we organized the Black United Front.

I also wrote a letter to the Observer about police beating a man so badly who lived next to me.

I also know that a black man was beaten so badly down town, where the officers stamped his bladder into a collapsible condition, took him to jail, luckily for the man some one called his family and she got an attorney to have him put in the hospital.

Also I got a lots of complaints about police congregation at and old Safeway store where they would beat men.

Over eight years ago a black man was beaten so bad that he is mentality unable to care for himself. And there are still complaints where police have physically as well as verbally abuse women as well as men, by calling them whores and bitches trying to make them angry, so they could arrest them.

I am not writing this to cause disruption but to let people here in Portland and this state know that our

laundry is not spotless.

The change came for Portland when Mayor Clark was elected Mayor and broke the yoke and bind of Stan Peters and the Police Union up, until that time they ran City Hall.

Mayor Katz's choice of Chief Tom Potter was also good for the city. And following him Chief Charles Moose is a plus.

But the barrel of apples needs to be checked on a regular basis because there are still some bad cop's who are telling these young offenders to plead guilty to felony charges when it should be misdemeanors, and with the three strikes you are out more of our young men will be put in prison.

The judicial is also a place where black men have told they have been called niggers and boy and other names in the court room.

Wake up Portland, if you don't won't your city to become what L.A. is.

I wrote this on behalf of those who can't speak for them selves.

Sincerely, Vesia Loving

Join us in celebrating our

25th

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