

Los Angeles riots usher in 'fascism with a human face'

by Kathleen Klenetsky

A move is afoot among liberal and conservative policymakers to exploit the Los Angeles riots as a pretext for ramming through a package of national policies that proponents themselves have described as "fascism with a human face." The national debate on urban policy that broke out in the wake of the disturbances is moving inexorably toward solutions that smack of a "liberal" fascism, which rely on community "self-policing" and other superficially democratic forms, rather than outright gestapo tactics, to enforce an assault on the already crumbling U.S. standard of living.

The possibility that the United States would move toward a system of "fascism with a democratic face," was first put forward publicly in the United States in the mid-1970s by the Trilateral Commission and related organizations, which bluntly stated that the coming collapse in the U.S. economy would necessitate doing away with those aspects of the American political system that would interfere with imposition of draconian austerity.

That possibility reemerged with a vengeance just days before the Los Angeles riots erupted, when the London *Daily Telegraph* published an article by Oxford University Professor of Modern History Norman Stone. Entitled "Coming Next on the Cards—Fascism With a Human Face," Stone discussed the prospects for a "financial meltdown followed by collapse of public welfare institutions everywhere" that would impel "panicky voters [to] opt for radical solutions. . . . Something like fascism with a human face could well be on the cards." Stone wrote, "There is already a certain school of thought in the U.S.A. for whom Mussolini was 'a developmental dictator'—the sort of figure who, by authoritarian government, 'modernizes' a backward country."

Exactly that kind of "modernization" is now being pro-

posed for America's inner cities. President Bush and other members of his administration, especially Housing and Urban Development Secretary Jack Kemp, have joined with leading Democrats, including presidential candidates Bill Clinton and Jerry Brown, to push an urban "aid" package that employs such feel-good terminology as "local control," "empowerment," and "community-based enterprise," as a screen for establishing virtual slave plantations in blighted urban areas.

The key elements of the urban program currently in the works include so-called free enterprise zones; welfare "reform" modeled on a recently implemented, Bush-backed Wisconsin experiment which takes away benefits from women who have more than one child; community-based policing; and tenant ownership of public housing.

Some Democrats have also proposed a public-works job program. But no one is talking about the real issue: how to regenerate the relatively high-wage, high-tech industrial jobs that have disappeared over the past 20 years due to insane post-industrial policies, rampant speculation, and usury. In the Los Angeles area alone, nearly 80,000 such jobs were lost in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Concentration camps for the cities

The centerpiece of the package is the enterprise zone idea, which was first introduced into the United States by Stuart Butler, a member of the "Big Brother" British Fabian Society and currently a top policy analyst at the "conservative" Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C.

Advocates of enterprise zones claim they encourage economic activity by doing away with government red tape and providing tax incentives. But their purpose is to create low-wage areas where existing regulations regarding worker health and

safety and other important protections have been lifted. The proliferation of enterprise zones will have a devastating effect on wage levels and local tax bases throughout the country, because they will tend to encourage businesses to relocate from places where they don't get these same incentives:

Although none of the major enterprise-zone bills now in Congress calls explicitly for wage reductions, that is a major intended goal. Syndicated columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak reported in the May 13 *Washington Post* that Bush Labor Secretary Lynn Martin has been pushing a jobs program that would "include inner-city waivers of big labor's cherished Davis-Bacon Act." Insofar as Davis-Bacon mandates that any project which involves federal funds must pay "prevailing wage," i.e., the average union wage in a given area, it has served as one of the most important protectors of wage levels.

Congress will likely pass some enterprise-zone legislation this year, judging by the zeal with which it is being promoted in the wake of the Los Angeles uproar. The sponsors of one of the leading enterprise zone bills, Sens. Robert Kasten (R-Wisc.) and Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.), held a press conference May 6 to call for immediate passage of their "Enterprise Zone Jobs-Creation Act." They said they would tack on the measure as an amendment to the next available piece of legislation, so that it could be enacted as soon as possible.

The bill, which the administration supports, would designate 50 economically distressed urban and rural regions as federal enterprise zones.

On their trip to Los Angeles following the riots, Bush and Kemp referred repeatedly to the importance of enterprise zones for impoverished urban areas. Speaking to a community group on May 8, Bush stated that his "first order of business" back in Washington would be to build support for his "action agenda," which prominently includes enterprise zones.

The Democrats have been no less enthusiastic. Democrat front-runner Bill Clinton, a member of the Trilateral Commission, to which Bush also belonged before he became vice president in 1981, not only supports enterprise zones and related measures himself, but lavishly praised Bush's comments on the issue in Los Angeles. "I like a lot" of what Bush said, Clinton told Cable News Network on May 8. "The themes the President struck today were the ones I have struck for years. . . . It sounded a lot like what I have been advocating for years, in terms of going beyond the gridlock that has paralyzed the Democrats and Republicans and getting back to grassroots empowerment and free-enterprise strategies in the inner city [and] a welfare system that works."

Balanced-budget amendment: Trilateral fascism

This bipartisan campaign for turning America's inner cities into concentration camps is one component of a much broader drive to impose austerity on the U.S. population.

The campaign for a balanced-budget amendment figures

prominently in this gameplan, as Bush administration Office of Management and Budget Director Richard Darman made plain when he testified in favor of the amendment to the House Budget Committee on May 6. The United States must adopt a balanced-budget amendment, because the democratic system has made it too difficult to cut the population's standard of living, he said.

"Our political system has demonstrated a consistent—a systemic—bias toward short-term political convenience at the expense of longer-term substantive responsibility," Darman testified. "The reality is that our representative democracy is not working satisfactorily. We are borrowing from the future—not in order to invest, but to pay for the consumption of the present. . . . Future interests require the protection of a constitutional amendment."

Darman's testimony mimicked almost word for word the argument employed by Harvard's Samuel Huntington in the study he wrote for the Trilateral Commission in 1975 on "The Crisis of Democracy." Huntington held that, since the United States was entering a period of zero growth, it would be necessary to limit democracy in order to curb citizens' demands for an increasing standard of living. "We have come to recognize that there are potentially desirable limits to economic growth," Huntington wrote. "There are also potentially desirable limits to the indefinite extension of political democracy. . . . A government which lacks authority"—that is, which is too democratic—"and which is committed to substantial domestic programs, will have little ability, short of a cataclysmic crisis, to impose on its people the sacrifices which may be necessary."

Darman's testimony comes as support for a balanced-budget amendment is gathering steam. As in the case of enterprise zones, liberals and conservatives have teamed up to push the measure through.

House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.) predicted in early May that "in all likelihood," both Houses of Congress would pass the measure this year. The amendment could take effect as early as 1995.

Darman's testimony to Congress should serve as fair warning to well-intentioned Americans who think that a balanced-budget amendment will put an end to the federal deficit, cut taxes, and bring about paradise on Earth. In fact, it will create a holocaust.

The idea behind the balanced-budget amendment is that it would constitutionally mandate massive austerity. As Darman indicated in his testimony, the first area that will take it on the chin if a balanced-budget amendment is adopted, will be the so-called entitlement programs, primarily Medicare and Social Security, since these, together with interest payments on the national debt and defense, take the biggest bite out of the federal budget.

Darman made it clear in his testimony that these programs are a principal target. Entitlement spending has "taken over the federal budget" to a "scandalous degree" and must be brought under rigid control, he said.