

# **BULLETS**

From the  
Writings, Speeches, and Interviews  
of Bob Avakian,  
Chairman of the  
Revolutionary Communist Party, USA.

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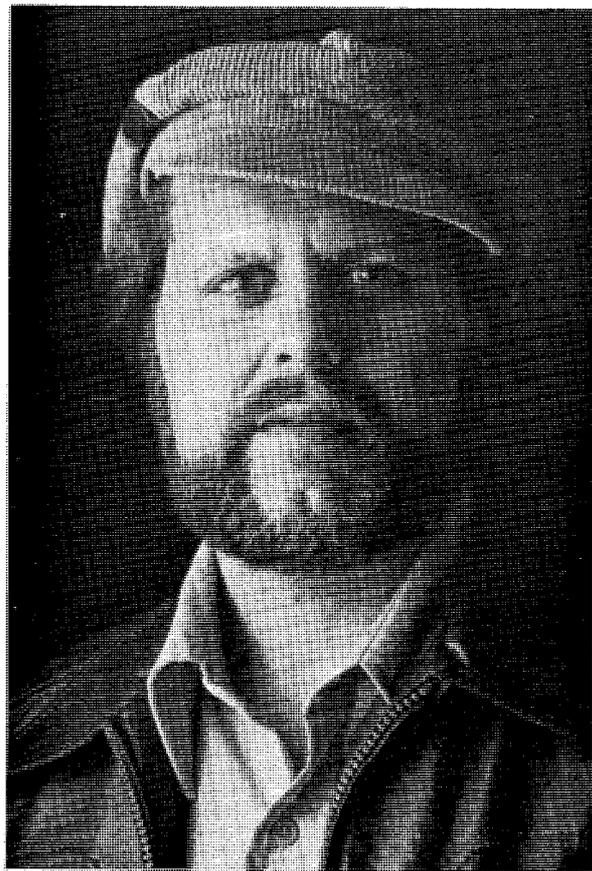
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Bullets is made up of material taken from published writings, speeches, and interviews by Bob Avakian over the past fifteen years along with some previously unpublished material.

**Below is a complete list of published works cited in the text. (Unless otherwise noted, all of these are from RCP Publications, Chicago.)**

**Books by Bob Avakian:**

*The Loss in China and the Revolutionary Legacy of Mao Tsetung.* 1978. Text of speech delivered at the Mao Tsetung Memorial Meetings held in New York and San Francisco, September 9 and 10, 1978, respectively.

*Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions.* 1979.

*Conquer the World? The International Proletariat Must and Will.* 1981. Published as *Revolution*, No. 50, Special Issue, December 1981.

*For a Harvest of Dragons — On the "Crisis of Marxism" and the Power of Marxism Now More Than Ever.* 1983. An essay marking the 100th anniversary of Marx's death.

*A Horrible End, or An End to the Horror?* 1984.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?* A forthcoming

book to be published by Banner Press, Chicago, in 1986. Editor's note: Due to the in-progress nature of *Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*, all cites to this work refer to the chapter of the book.

### **Pamphlets by Bob Avakian:**

*Our Class Will Free Itself and All Mankind.* 1976. Text of speech delivered in Chicago celebrating the founding of the RCP,USA.

*Communist Revolution: The Road to the Future, the Goal We Will Win.* 1978. Text of speech delivered at the November 1977 founding of the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade.

*Summing Up the Black Panther Party.* 1979. Excerpts from speech in Cleveland, Ohio as part of Bob Avakian's national speaking tour during 1979.

*How Can We Apologize for Taking History Into Our Hands?* 1979. Excerpts from speech in Cleveland, Ohio as part of Bob Avakian's national speaking tour during 1979.

*Iran: It's Not Our Embassy!* Excerpted from speech delivered at a rally for the Mao Tsetung Defendants in Washington, D.C., November 19, 1979.

*1980 — A Year, a Decade of Historic Importance.* 1980.

*Communists are Rebels.* 1980. A letter from Bob Avakian to his parents on philosophy, religion, morals, and continuous revolution.

*Coming from Behind to Make Revolution and Crucial Questions in Coming from Behind.* 1980.

*Bob Avakian Replies to a Letter from: "Black Nationalist with Communistic Inclinations."* 1981.

*Bob Avakian Speaks on the Mao Tsetung Defendants' Railroad and the Historic Battles Ahead.* 1981. Text of speech delivered at a rally for the Mao Tsetung Defendants in Washington, D.C., November 19, 1979.

*Bob Avakian on Anarchism: There's Nothing More Revolutionary Than Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought.* 1982.

*If There Is to Be Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party.* 1982.

### **Other sources used:**

*Revolutionary Worker (RW).* National weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA.

*Revolution* magazine. Propaganda organ of the Central Committee of the RCP,USA.

*Revolutionary Communist Youth (RCY).* The former newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade. Currently the RCYB publishes the bilingual magazine *Red Flag/Bandera Roja*.

*The Red Papers (RP).* Produced by the Revolutionary Union, forerunner of the RCP,USA.

RP2. 1970. Untitled.

RP5. 1972. "National Liberation and Proletarian Revolution in the U.S."

RP6. 1974. "Build the Leadership of the Proletariat and its Party."

*The Communist.* Theoretical journal of the Central Committee of the RCP,USA.

*Revolution and Counter-Revolution: the Revisionist Coup in China and the Struggle in the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA.* 1978.

*Break the Chains! Unleash the Fury of Women As a Mighty Force for Revolution.* 1979. Pamphlet of excerpts from

speeches, including one by Bob Avakian, delivered on the occasion of International Women's Day celebrations, March 8, 1979.

Skybreak, Ardea. 1984. *Of Primeval Steps and Future Leaps* (Chicago: Banner Press). An essay on the Emergence of Human Beings, the Source of Women's Oppression, and the Road to Emancipation.

**Publisher's Note:** In some cases different passages have been combined and some editorial changes have been made from the original source material.

The term Third World is used in this book because it has become widely accepted as a kind of shorthand for the peoples and countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Its use here has no connection with the use of the term by the revisionist rulers of China.

## 1. IMPERIALISM IS DOOMED! THE WORLD IS COMING UP FOR GRABS!

Imperialism means huge monopolies and financial institutions controlling the economies and the political systems — and the lives of people — not just in one country but all over the world. Imperialism means parasitic exploiters who oppress hundreds of millions of people and condemn them to untold misery; parasitic financiers who can cause millions to starve just by pressing a computer key and thereby shifting vast amounts of wealth from one place to another. Imperialism means war — war to put down the resistance and rebellion of the oppressed, and war between rival imperialist states — it means the leaders of these states can condemn humanity to unbelievable devastation, perhaps even total annihilation, with the push of a button. Imperialism is capitalism at the stage where its basic contradictions have been raised to tremendously explosive levels. But imperialism also means that there will be revolution — the oppressed rising up to overthrow their exploiters and tormentors — and that this revolution will be a worldwide struggle to sweep away the global monster, imperialism.

*Previously unpublished.*

Capitalism has long since outlived its usefulness, it can no longer contribute to the development of society, it will constantly force people to rise up in struggle against it. So capitalism, despite the vic-

tories it might score, and the temporary strength it may have here and there, can't last. It is doomed, and it is preparing now in its death-rattle to show once again — in world war — the real nature of the capitalist system. Such a system cannot last much longer.

"Look to the Future, Prepare for Revolution!", from December 30, 1978 speech, *RW*, No. 1, May 1, 1979, p. 11.

We have to recognize clearly what these motherfuckers have in store for us — the imperialists that run this country and their kind throughout the world, including especially their rivals in the Soviet Union — and the way the two of them are in fact getting ready and making active preparations to drag the whole world into World War 3, with all the nukes and everything else that they're getting ready to unleash to see which one of them can come out on top and loot and plunder most of the world and make themselves the big boss throughout the whole scene. This doesn't show their strength, it shows their weakness. It shows that, in fact, the crisis we're talking about is deep, it's heightening all the contradictions of their system, with all the madness we have to live under every day. And in this sense it is also preparing the stage for far greater opportunities to get rid of this whole system with all of its madness, once and for all, or at least to make tremendous strides toward doing that on a whole world scale.

"Bob Avakian on May First," text of a 1981 tape, *RW*, No. 103, May 1, 1981, p. 1.

The imperialist system — as it now exists, West and East — is through: either its whole framework will be shattered by revolution, forcing a whole new

world realignment sufficient to prevent world war, or this world war will occur and will destroy much of human civilization and the present imperialist framework along with it.

But what about the future of humanity? Any possible future besides the devastation of nuclear war — and on a different path than what produces such a horrendous thing — is and can only be proletarian revolution and the future of communism.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 39-40.

In the U.S. as well as the world as a whole the next years will hold a special opportunity — and a special obligation — to enter into decisive battle with the imperialists. That is a chance a slave dreams of. And they will hold the possibility of making decisive contributions to the world-historic struggle of this era to abolish all forms of slavery and the very division of society into slaves and slave-masters, in any form. *That* is something slaves in all previous historical eras could *only* dream of.

"Stepping Up...Stepping Out," *RW*, No. 151, April 16, 1982, p. 16.

Why do we call them imperialists? Because they exploit and oppress people all over the world. They have developed an empire and they will do anything to try and preserve it.

It is the same people robbing and exploiting, degrading and humiliating us every day that are doing that same thing, and want to do more of it, to people all around the world. That's why we call it *imperialism*, because that's what it is.

"Rhetoric...And Reality," excerpts from 1979 national speaking tour, *RW*, No. 235, December 16, 1983, p. 3.

A capitalist flunkey is someone who sees a vampire with blood on his teeth and another person with fang marks on his neck but doesn't know the relationship between the one and the other.

"Why Shouldn't We Shoot You?", from 1979 interview on *Barry Farber Show*, WMCA New York, *RW*, No. 239, January 20, 1984, p. 12.

If they can't maintain the lie that this system is the one that brings the best conceivable life to the greatest number of people, the capitalists resort quickly to the argument that this system brings the best *possible* life. This is also a lie — a more profound lie!

*Communists are Rebels*, p. 5.

Imperialism is a world system. You can go to the far corners of the earth and while there are vast areas that are maintained in a distorted and backward state by this imperialist system, fundamentally they are tied together by the strands and the tentacles of this imperialist system.

Under imperialism the different bourgeois classes, the different imperialisms that have grown up, rest on national foundations and are in fact rooted in particular countries, whether it's Britain or the United States or the Soviet Union or what have you, but at the same time they can only accumulate and they do accumulate on the basis of international investment, international accumulation — international exploitation and plunder.

Today a handful of these imperialist countries have monopolized the great bulk of the wealth of the world but more than that the *means* to wealth, the productive forces of the world. Wrenched out of their suffocating, deforming grip, this can be the

basis for creating not wealth for the private interest of a few but social wealth to actually advance the people of the world broadly to a whole new stage of human society.

"The Imperialist System and Proletarian Internationalism," from 1982 interview on WRFG Atlanta, *RW*, No. 187, January 7, 1983, p. 4.

To put it simply: we've reached the point now where not only is the world fucked up, but it's upside down when it doesn't have to be any longer. A handful of people, a tiny minority of people, control and dominate and monopolize, according to their own dictates, the wealth and the means to wealth for the masses of people throughout the world.

While millions of people are literally starving to death in Africa, a handful of people in a handful of countries are controlling and dominating and suffocating the means to a far higher life for the masses of people, not only in these African deserts or other societies, but throughout the entire world. So we have to turn the world rightside up. The only reason there are still deserts in the world, where people are forced to live, and that they're not fertile is because these same imperialists and exploiters control and dominate and wreck and ruin even the land and the other means to life for the masses of people. And it is no longer necessary.

"Bob Avakian on May First," text of a 1981 tape, *RW*, No. 103, May 1, 1981, p. 21.

In today's world with its oppressing and lopsided social and international relations, starving children in Africa — and for that matter, the great majority of humanity, which lives only a few short steps from starvation — do not have the right to make plans for

the distribution of the world's productive forces and resources in a way that could eliminate such starvation and misery and make possible a whole new life. Nor, for that matter, do the people in the "advanced" imperialist countries have this right (or even the right to take *practical, meaningful* steps to forestall mass starvation in the very short run) even if they wish to do so. Such rights, and whole new vistas of freedom, can become reality only through world-overturning revolution that in its ultimate achievement will sweep away the bourgeois notions of what constitute freedom and justice.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*,  
Chapter 3: "The Illusions of Democracy."

The "American Century" that spokesmen for U.S. imperialism triumphantly proclaimed at the end of World War 2 was not to be realized. The Western imperialist alliance has been battered by an unprecedented storm of national liberation struggles in the Third World — reaching its highest peak so far in the 1960s — and today it is wracked by severe crisis and is facing the challenge of a powerful imperialist rival in the Soviet bloc. A global showdown between these two imperialist blocs is looming directly ahead at the same time as the prospects for revolutionary struggle against imperialism are being heightened, in the Third World and even within the imperialist citadels themselves, the U.S. included. Today the U.S. is not "isolated" or "insulated"; U.S. imperialism is deeply involved, and exposed, in all parts of the world.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*,  
Chapter 4: "The USA As Democratic Example . . . Leader of the Pack."

This system is enmeshed in crisis and they're scrambling to try to keep it together and can't do it. They're like a juggler that's losing his grip, they might throw one or two more up, but each time it's clearer and clearer that the whole thing is going to come crashing down.

"This System Is Doomed, Let's Finish It Off!" speech delivered on May 1, 1979,  
*RW*, No. 50, April 18, 1980, p. 24.

The more unbridled and undisguised viciousness of the U.S. imperialists — throughout their empire, in every part of the world, and including within their own "home base" — must be taken as a sign of their growing vulnerability and an urging to step up the work and struggle to prepare actively for and advance toward proletarian revolution in the U.S. itself and the final goal of communism worldwide.

"Bob Avakian Demands Political Refugee Status in France," statement by Bob Avakian, *RW*, No. 97, March 20, 1981, p. 12.

The imperialists, and in particular the two superpowers with their huge arsenals of mass destruction, appear awesome, perhaps indestructible (or at least unoverthrowable). What is not seen spontaneously, what must be revealed from many different angles, is not only their strategic, long-term weakness but more specifically their greatly heightened vulnerability, especially at those times — occurring not that often but decisive when they occur — when all the contradictions of their system come to a head, on a world scale, and in particular

when they are forced to marshal their forces and put it on the line against each other.

"Crowns Will Roll by Dozens on the Pavements... There Will Be Nobody to Pick Them Up," *RW*, No. 115, July 31, 1981, p. 3.

By daring to reach "beyond our reach," perhaps the international proletariat will be able, as everything goes up for grabs, to seize crucial parts of the world and bring about a new great leap forward in the world revolution toward the goal of communism. Certainly it is "greatness and success" of this kind, and not the "pettiness and failure" of reformism, that we must strive for.

"What's Wrong with Impatience in the Service of the International Proletariat?," *RW*, No. 102, April 24, 1981, p. 3.

Fear — and fury, but fury without justice, and ultimately in vain — fear, that is the response that represents the imperialists, reactionaries, revisionists and all those who would desperately cling to the past; daring — the daring to seize the future out of the most tumultuous and wrenching conditions — that is the stand that represents the international proletariat.

"The Banner Has Been Held Brilliantly Aloft, A Call Has Been Righteously Sounded," statement on the heroic stand of Chiang Ching and Chang Chun-chiao, *RW*, No. 90, Special Edition, January 30, 1981, p. 3.

People are going to be knocking on your door for one class or another, on one side or another, and confronting you with a choice to stand one way or

the other. We're not going to be able to run from it. We don't want to and we don't need to, we don't have to hide from the future because the future belongs to us if we dare to rise up.

*Summing Up the Black Panther Party*, pp. 19-20.

In the world today there are ultimately only two forces that can rule and shape society. It's either going to be finance capital or it's going to be the proletariat in power advancing the revolution and building and developing it as a base area for the world revolution.

"Advancing the World Revolutionary Movement: Questions of Strategic Orientation," *Revolution*, No. 51, Spring 1984, p. 25.

In the period when Marx died, Lenin said, "after the defeat of the Paris Commune, history made slow organizational and educational work the task of the day. Nothing else was possible." Today that is anything but the case: the problem in this period is not that revolutionary possibilities may not arise but that they may not be seized — or may be thrown away. We must not be unprepared and must not leave the international proletariat unprepared for those great days in which decades are concentrated, and we must not repeat the historical error of sounding a retreat just when the opportunities no less than the difficulties are the greatest.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, p. 153.

Seizing and wrenching the future out of all the madness and destruction that will be there requires a synthesis of revolutionary romanticism and revolutionary realism, a synthesis that lies precisely

in the living science of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought.

*Conquer the World*, p. 44.

If one is conscious of the fact that the world is dominated by imperialism and if one has any inkling of the consequences of this for the great majority of the world's people, then one should feel compelled to help shatter the whole imperialist system and its entire framework, to remake social relations on an international scale.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*,  
Chapter 5: "Imperialism, Democracy and Dictatorship."

## 2. REVOLUTION IS THE ONLY SOLUTION!

The horrible end that could be brought about through world war/nuclear devastation is something to be actively, urgently fought against. But at the same time, it must never be forgotten that the daily workings of this system are a continual horror for the great majority of the world's people. Nor must it be forgotten that the only possible means of preventing such a horrible end, or in any case the only way forward in the face of it, is the advance of the world proletarian revolution.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 13.

What we need is not simply to strike back against the oppressor, not simply to get some revenge, but much more than that to rise up all the way, carry through and make revolution.

"Why a Little Taste of Freedom Is an Uplifting Thing and Why It's Not Enough," from a 1979 speech in Columbus, Ohio, *RW*, No. 54, May 9, 1980, p. 18.

When the working class and oppressed people rise up, we rise up as millions, not as a handful of exploiters, and when we overthrow and forcibly keep down and prevent the capitalists from restoring their system this will be the dictatorship of the *masses* of people representing the majority in society for the first time. But more than that, this pro-

letarian dictatorship is a dictatorship precisely to put an end to classes — to put an end to the division of society between rich and poor, between exploiters and exploited, oppressors and oppressed. And this is what we're aiming for.

"The Sham of Democracy & The Reality of Dictatorship," from a 1979 speech in Columbus, Ohio, *RW*, No. 55, May 16, 1980, p. 7.

Do we really dare do this? We dare not fail to do it.

"May First — Dare to Join Those Forging the Future," *RW*, No. 49, April 11, 1980, p. 14.

Our revolution, the revolution of our class, the international working class or proletarian people, cannot succeed, cannot go forward and accomplish its ends by bringing to power a new set of exploiters. It can only go forward and accomplish its ends and carry out its mission, and our class can only free itself, if it smashes to smithereens and abolishes forever every form of inequality, every form of exploitation and oppression, every form of domination by one group or one country over another. That's the only way our revolution can go forward, that's the only way the interests of our class, the great majority of mankind representing the future of mankind, the only way our interests can be served.

"This System Is Doomed, Let's Finish It Off!", speech delivered on May 1, 1979, *RW*, No. 50, April 18, 1980, p. 23.

There can't be harmony between the slaves and the slavemasters. There can't be harmony between the exploited and the exploiters because the slave-

master lives by exploiting the workers — that's his whole existence.

*Our Class Will Free Itself and All Mankind*, p. 4.

There can be no such thing as a "peaceful revolution." Revolution means the transformation of the economic base and superstructure of society; it requires the replacement of one ruling class by another. And no ruling class has ever voluntarily "stepped down" to make way for the class that was rising up to replace it. This is all the more true of the revolution in this epoch, the proletarian revolution, which aims at the abolition of all relations of exploitation, of all oppressive division of labor, and of all political institutions and ideological forms which reflect the division of society into classes. To think of carrying out such a revolution peacefully — particularly when it is up against the massive machinery of violence and destruction that is controlled by the bourgeois states in this era and up against ruling classes that have repeatedly demonstrated their ruthless determination to remain in power regardless of the cost in carnage and human misery — is the height of folly, at best. To promote such a notion as a political program and to oppose it to the necessity for violent proletarian revolution is deception of the greatest magnitude.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*, Chapter 3: "The Illusions of Democracy."

In short, the armed force of the bourgeois state exists for the purpose of suppressing, by force of arms, the proletariat and all those who would step out of line and challenge this "great way of life"

founded on robbery and murder, not only within the U.S. itself but throughout the world. And that, simply, is why pigs are pigs, and will always be pigs — until systems that need such pigs are abolished from the earth. A hard truth — but a liberating truth.

“Hill Street Bullshit, Richard Pryor Routines and the Real Deal,” *RW*, No. 193, February 18, 1983, p. 9.

These imperialists make the Godfather look like Mary Poppins.

*Communist Revolution: The Road to the Future, the Goal We Will Win*, p. 4.

Some people say that violence is degrading — that when the oppressed rise up against their oppressors, when the slaves rise up against the slave-master, that this puts them in just as degraded and just as corrupted a position as the slavemaster and the exploiter. We cannot agree with this. It is not true.

It fails to draw a fundamental distinction between the uprising of the oppressed to overthrow and finally bury their enslavement and all forms of enslavement, and the violence of the oppressor to keep the masses of people in an enslaved condition.

“Grasp Revolutionary Theory, Rely on the Masses,” *RW*, No. 58, June 6, 1980, p. 8; *On the Mao Tsetung Defendants’ Railroad and the Historic Battles Ahead*, pp. 42, 43.

If you want to deal with a vampire, you have to learn the laws of how a vampire operates, what is his nature, what are the internal contradictions within it, and how to deal with it. And there’s only one way. You have to get it in its casket, and you

have to drive a stake through its heart. That’s the only way you can deal with this *class* of vampires.

*Communist Revolution: The Road to the Future, The Goal We Will Win*, p. 10.

The role and the force of the state is never neutral: it is always an instrument for protecting and preserving the existing system, for enforcing the dominant relations and class structure, for backing up those who serve and support them, and for suppressing those who are in any kind of fundamental opposition. This is certainly no less true in a democratic form of state than in any other.

*Democracy: Can’t We Do Better than That?*, Chapter 1: “Democracy: Can’t We Do Better than That?”

In societies like the U.S., elections, and the “democratic process” as a whole, are a sham — and more than a sham — a cover for and indeed a vehicle through which domination over the exploited and oppressed is carried out by the exploiting, oppressing, ruling class. To state it in a single sentence, elections: are controlled by the bourgeoisie; are not the means through which basic decisions are made in any case; and are really for the primary purpose of legitimizing the system and the policies and actions of the ruling class, giving to them the mantle of a “popular mandate,” and of channeling, confining, and controlling the political activity of the masses of people.

*Democracy: Can’t We Do Better than That?*, Chapter 3: “The Illusions of Democracy.”

The cultural arena, the educational system (and the church structures), and all other spheres of

ideology are dominated by this capitalist ruling class and its viewpoint. Through them people are conditioned to view the world with the outlook of the ruling class and at the same time are prepared and conditioned to find their place and accept their fate within the confines of the system and according to the interests and demands of the ruling class. In the realm of ideas, just as in the political sphere and in the underlying social relations, there is no freedom and equality for everyone — there is class domination.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*,  
Chapter 3: "The Illusions of Democracy."

If you are prepared to see — and work for — the overthrow of the existing order, and you say so openly, you will never be allowed to hold any real position of power; or if, on the other hand, you have this perspective but hide it and attempt to "get in the power structure and work from within," you will be swallowed up — or chewed up and spit out — by that structure. There is an abundance of historical experience to demonstrate this — and none which disproves it.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*,  
Chapter 3: "The Illusions of Democracy."

The essential parts of the state machinery are not legislatures and other similar vehicles of public discussion and nominal decision-making — these can be dispensed with when necessary, as they have often been — but are the executive power and the bureaucracy, the courts and in particular the armed forces. These armed forces are the concentration of the power of one class over another.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*,  
Chapter 3: "The Illusions of Democracy."

Trying to tell people they can control an institution, a community or whatever, under capitalism is the *worst* kind of rhetoric because it's an *illusion*, even though it might seem very practical and realistic. Once you understand the nature of the system, you understand that these schemes are *not* realistic and can only deceive and demoralize people.

"Marxism and May Day 1980 vs. Economism and Reformism," from 1979 interview on WBAI New York, *RW*, No. 30, November 30, 1979, p. 17.

No! We don't want any consolation! The class-conscious slave does not want consolation for his or her enslavement. The class-conscious slave wants to unite with the masses of slaves and rise up and bury slavery once and for all so we don't need any goddamn consolation!

"They Can't Believe We'll Rise Above the Muck and the Mire," *RW*, No. 56, May 23, 1980, p. 14; *On the Mao Tsetung Defendants' Railroad and the Historic Battles Ahead*, p. 15.

We firmly refuse to try to mislead people into thinking, or even mistakenly try to console people into thinking, that there is some cheap and easy weekend special way that we are going to be able to get rid of all this oppression and make revolution. Revolution requires sacrifice, it requires people consciously putting themselves and their lives on the line for the future, for the cause of the working class and ultimately humanity.

"Grasp Revolutionary Theory — Rely on the Masses," *RW*, No. 58, June 6, 1980, p. 8; *On the Mao Tsetung Defendants' Railroad and the Historic Battles Ahead*, p. 59.

If you want to be emancipated, you're going to have to fight for your emancipation. If we want to be free, we're gonna have to free ourselves, and nobody else can do it for us.

*Summing Up the Black Panther Party,*  
p. 21.

We can bring a new society into being through revolutionary struggle — we don't have to put up with this shit any longer. This shit, this system, is not just an outrage, it's historically obsolete. Abolishing it is something we have to fight for, but it's possible. Think about a new society where all the backward conditions in society can be brought under attack and uprooted, where unity can be built with oppressed people all over the world in the fight to win control of and transform the whole world and advance beyond relations of exploitation and oppression, and all the rotten social relations and degrading ideas that go with it. Is that worth fighting for? Certainly it is. Is it possible that it can happen? Yes, beyond doubt it is, but we have to work and struggle for it.

*Coming from Behind to Make Revolution,*  
p. 26.

### 3. WORLD WAR, NUCLEAR WAR, AND REVOLUTION

The relation (or dialectic) between war and revolution is at the center of this historic drama being enacted in the world arena: a deadly serious struggle is going on between these two trends which will have everything to do with determining the direction of human society, and indeed the destiny of humanity itself. The question of revolution is very much alive, all the more so because the whole world and its future are this time, quite literally, at stake. Any other attempted solution to this, which will leave the foundations of imperialism untouched and bring no fundamental changes in world relations and social systems, is utterly incapable of providing a way forward out of this howling madness; *only* proletarian revolution holds the possibility for doing so.

*An End to the Horror,* pp. 9-10.

In the period ahead, with the gathering and exploding of the world contradictions of the imperialist system, it will not be possible, nor desirable, to avoid tremendous upheaval and radical ruptures in world relations and in many societies, nor can all this change come about any way except violently. But it may be possible to prevent through revolution a world war which would be senseless carnage and destruction of the greatest magnitude, unprecedented bloodletting and devastation solely in the in-

terests of perpetuating the very system that has produced such a monstrosity.

“World War Must Be Opposed with Revolution, Not Peace,” *RW*, No. 227, October 21, 1983, p. 4.

Much more emphasis must be given than has been up to now to the question of preventing world war — through revolution, which remains the only way to actually achieve such prevention as well as to eliminate the other crimes of this system.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 60.

We’re going to be called upon and threatened with jail, threatened even with death to get us to go into uniform and fight and kill other enslaved people to try to determine which one of these big gangsters will have the biggest loot in the world from robbing the most people. We have to stand up in the face of this and take a stand against it, and more than that work every day in opposition to it and build toward a different kind of war, a revolutionary war which can end all this madness.

“Why Profit Junkie System Breeds War,” from a 1979 speech in Seattle, Washington, *RCY* Vol. 3, No. 9, September 1980, p. 21.

As truly horrendous as world war would be, what would be even more horrible would be for such a war to take place and for the only people who came through it in a position to determine the future of society and enforce social relations and conditions to be the very imperialists responsible for it and their social base!

“World War Must Be Opposed with Revolution, Not Peace,” *RW*, No. 227, October 21, 1983, p. 3.

We’re not going to shed our blood to keep this system going so the next generation will have to confront World War 4.

“The Tomorrow Show,” from 1979 interview with Tom Snyder, *RW*, No. 234, December 9, 1983, p. 4.

We can see how important it is to emphasize what Lenin has emphasized: Opposition to and exposure of the *bourgeois* logical view that when a war starts, everything that happened before it and led up to it somehow should be set aside and considered to be irrelevant, and the war changes everything. Imperialist war is precisely the outgrowth of imperialist economics and imperialist politics. We have to hammer again and again at this point.

Who gives a damn who fired the first shot?

Points like that cannot be stated too many times. If we had a box in the *Revolutionary Worker* every week that said “Remember” and rammed this point home again and again, I wouldn’t consider it to be overdone: war is an outgrowth of imperialist politics and economics.

“A Talk with Bob Avakian on the Current World Scene,” *RW*, No. 40, February 8, 1980, p. 3.

They’ve got an empire that they not only need to protect, but to expand.

And it ain’t going to be what they were able to do before — step in and grab relatively quick, easy, and cheap victory.

“Overrule *This*, Motherfucker,” excerpts from 1979 national speaking tour, *RW*, No. 230, November 11, 1983, p. 7.

In regard to world war in particular: just because the imperialists start it does not make it certain that they will *finish* it — instead it may finish them, in at least some countries, including this one quite possibly.

*Coming from Behind to Make Revolution,*  
p. 6.

In the present world context, the different general (and contradictory) possibilities, or eventualities, concerning revolutionary war and its relation to world war are:

(1) Revolution prevents world war, or world war is transformed into revolutionary war (even if in some aspects this bears a resemblance to the situation in the movie *Road Warrior*, with civil war between two sections of the survivors playing a significant part).

(2) With regard to each of the two above possibilities, specifically in relation to (what is now) the U.S.: either a major impetus comes from revolutions in neighboring countries “spilling over” (minimally in terms of direct and immediate political influence) and sparking revolution in the U.S. itself; or the other way around, with the revolutionary struggle for power and revolutionary impetus coming first from within the U.S. itself and as it does so having great reverberations outward — indeed throughout the world as a whole but also very immediately and directly in neighboring countries. In all likelihood, things will go down through some combination of these two and with very powerful interaction between the revolutionary struggles.

(3) A third “two possibilities” arises, which is very important to take into account in relation to revolutionary war and the establishment of a revolutionary regime in at least parts of the (former)

U.S.: The possibility that the U.S. is hit with nuclear weapons as part of world war with the rival Soviet bloc (a very great possibility if such a war does break out), and/or one or another group of imperialists uses nuclear weapons to attack the territory liberated through revolutionary war.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 59-60.

There is no way to really oppose world war without opposing your own imperialist bourgeoisie, your own government, in its preparations for war and, if war does break out, in its carrying out of that war. Almost literally everyone, including the leaders of the imperialist countries, are opposed to world war, and particularly nuclear war, in words and in the abstract; but these imperialist leaders are, and can only be, *in favor* of such a war in the *concrete*, faced with the actual world relations and contradictions that confront them.

“World War Must Be Opposed with Revolution, Not Peace,” *RW*, No. 227, October 21, 1983, p. 4.

Whether or not there is a world war will not depend on whether anybody, or any group or even any ruling class, *wants* it; it will break out, unless it is prevented by revolution, because in the world today the ruling classes of the imperialist blocs *need* such a war and their most class-conscious and leading representatives *prefer* such a war to the alternative — to seeing their position in the world severely undermined and perhaps even overthrown by their rivals or by the revolutionary masses.

To those who would tend to dismiss this as rhetoric or dogma I can only say that it is the opposite of that — it is a concrete and scientific determination based not only on observation of the major

events in the world but on an analysis of the fundamental motive forces underlying all this.

“World War Must Be Opposed with Revolution, Not Peace,” *RW*, No. 227, October 21, 1983, p. 3.

Each of them likes to talk about peace so they can say, “It ain’t me, it’s him! I want to have peace and I understand that you all want peace, I’m not aggressive, I’m not war-like. Forget about Vietnam and Korea and the Dominican Republic and everything else. I just want to be peaceful. I just want to be me and be peaceful here. It’s them Russians. It’s them Russians — they want to take what we have stolen fair and square. Now, we can’t allow that, can we?” And, of course, you go over to the Soviet Union and they run the same thing at you only the other way. “We’re a socialist country.” (And that’s a lie. They once were, but power was stolen back from the working class there. But they tell people. . .) “Hey, we’re socialists, right? Socialists don’t need war. Socialists are for peace. This country is a powerful bastion for peace. It’s them imperialists over there. It’s that United States over there. Look what they did in Vietnam. Look what they did in the Dominican Republic and Korea.” But the really important thing is *they are both right* — both what the Soviet Union is saying about the U.S. and what the U.S. is saying about the Soviet Union, that they are the imperialist marauders, robbers, war-like aggressors — it’s true on both sides. They are both dogs: one pack of dogs, another pack of dogs, both canines, both dogs.

“The Strategic Importance of the Visit by Deng Xiaoping to the U.S.,” excerpts from 1979 national speaking tour, *RW*, No. 236, December 30, 1983, p. 3.

Military strategists and planners, as well as the overall political leaders, on both sides are attempting to find the means for fighting *and winning* a war, one that will involve large-scale nuclear exchanges, with the other bloc. It is very, very unlikely that all their planning and strategic thinking can accomplish the objective of fighting and winning such a war without in the process bringing about the destruction of much of human civilization as it exists today. This would not be the first time in history that such an attempt led to failure and destruction on both sides, though it would certainly be the most profound and cataclysmic instance.

In short, it is a deadly error — and deadly is far too weak a word given what the stakes are and what time it is on the clock of world events and world history — to be taken in by the reasonable assurances and pious declarations of the imperialists: they *will* do it, because they have to; they will do it...unless they are prevented by revolution.

♦ *An End to the Horror*, pp. 23, 25.

Both sides are imperialist. Both are driven by the same inner compulsion of the laws (or contradictions) of the imperialist system and the world conjuncture to which this is leading. Both will swear and are swearing with pious sanctity and an absolutely straight face that they do not intend to do and would never think of doing — that in fact they renounce — the very thing for which they are preparing: world war with all of its destruction. Yes, they *will* do it — go to war with each other and engage in major nuclear exchanges in an effort to win that war. They *will* do it — if they aren’t stopped — and every effort must be exerted to stop them!

*An End to the Horror*, p. 19.

The desire and attempt to prevent nuclear war through reasoned appeals to the general and higher interests of the human species definitely has its positive side, but the approach of appealing to reason and the general (and classless) interests of humanity would, to be effective, have to be addressed to and rely on what does not exist: a rational will divorced from and standing above human social and world relations. It seems that, instead of waiting for divine or interplanetary intervention, it is more realistic to address our appeals and our political efforts to mobilizing the masses of people throughout the world, including in the U.S. and other imperialist countries, to rise in revolution to sweep away the existing social and world relations and establish new ones that are not in fundamental conflict with the interests of the great majority of humanity and indeed of humanity as a whole.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 31-32.

There is the problem of the chauvinism of much of the masses — and frankly much of the “peace movement” — in the imperialist countries. This includes the fairly widespread notion that “all would be right with the world if only world war, especially major battles and nuclear exchanges, can be avoided in these countries” and that the daily suffering of the mass of people in the Third World can “just go on as it is, or at least must not be opposed in such a way as to drag the ‘advanced’ countries into a devastating conflagration.”\*

Another important form of this chauvinism is what could be called “imperialist chauvinistic fatalism.” This finds expression especially among the middle classes and generally the more privileged strata of the population in the imperialist countries who often are aware, sometimes even acutely aware,

of the real danger and the very real horror of world war/nuclear devastation but nonetheless say, “what can you do about it?” What the real meaning of that fatalistic sentiment comes down to is that it’s not worth really disrupting your life, taking any real risks, stepping out of line or going out on a limb to try to really do what’s necessary to oppose this at its source and have any real chance of preventing it.

This imperialist chauvinistic fatalism must be exposed and struggled sharply against. But more fundamentally, it shows why these strata — even the active antiwar, antinuke forces among them — can’t be relied on as any kind of basic force to deal with these questions and specifically to see the fight through to prevent world war, whatever it takes. They don’t have — and left to themselves can’t and won’t come to — the answer, the solution to all this, nor the strength and resoluteness to carry it through with their own efforts. Many among these strata can, however, be won and mobilized by a strong movement of the basic masses behind a proletarian revolutionary and internationalist line — which is the only force and the only line that can provide the necessary direction and fundamental resolution.

\*Editor’s note: Quoted from “World War Must Be Opposed with Revolution, Not Peace.”

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 29-30.

A kind of fatalistic nationalist sentiment that arises among the oppressed peoples and nations finds expression in the notion that if the imperialists blow each other up and destroy much of their own homelands, so be it and perhaps the world will even be better off as a result. The kind of fatalistic nationalism I am referring to here — part despairing, part self-seeking — is even self-defeating from the

narrow, self-seeking point of view because in fact a world war and especially large-scale nuclear exchanges would, to some degree immediately and to a tremendous extent over time, bring devastation to the "Southern Hemisphere" as well as the "Northern Hemisphere." But more fundamentally, and from the point of view of the revolutionary proletariat, such an outlook and approach is not only narrow and shortsighted but extremely harmful because it leads to political paralysis if not to bourgeois-aspiring opportunism; because it holds back the revolutionary struggle against imperialism, both in the Third World and in the imperialist countries; and because therefore it strengthens the hand of the imperialists in shaping the future of the world and its people according to their monstrous nature and in their grotesque image.

"World War Must Be Opposed with Revolution, Not Peace," *RW*, No. 227, October 21, 1983, pp. 3-4.

We have to work, it's our party's position and line and dedication and program and our constant activity that even if they blow up everybody but 500 people in the world, we know that among those 500 people there's still going to be class struggle, they're still going to struggle about how they're going to organize the society. Given the level where we are at, there's still going to be about 50 people that are going to jump up and say, "Let me run the whole thing and the rest of you work for me." And our party is going to do all its work so that, even if such a drastic situation developed, we'd have 50 communists organizing the rest of the 450 to rise up and overthrow the system.

"Nuclear War — Why Wait 'til Afterward to Make Revolution?", from a 1979 speech in Seattle, Washington, *RW*, No. 5, June 1, 1979, p. 11.

If there is world war, with massive nuclear devastation, there will still be fierce struggle, even in the aftermath of such a war, over what social system, what relations and values will be established and be in command. It would be better — far better — in such conditions to start on the basis of a kind of primitive communism and go forward from there to reconstitute and rebuild toward a fully communist world than to accept the division of society yet again into a system of class division, exploitation, and oppression.

Such an orientation — of fighting to begin society on a primitive communist basis and rebuild from that in a way to advance toward a fully communist world, in the aftermath of world war and nuclear devastation — is not idealist but would represent the only real alternative to the compounded horror of having such a war and devastation only to find the same social system, relations, and values once more dominating the world, with all too familiar consequences and leading toward all too predictable a future!

Far better primitive communism than the foundation of imperialism as a starting point in the aftermath of nuclear destruction, if it comes to that.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 38-39.

In our own way we can put forward the slogan from the Fram oil filter ad: "pay me now [for an oil filter — a comparatively minor cost] or pay me later [for a complete overhaul of a ruined engine]."

~~"Pay us now or pay us later":~~ join with us now in the struggle to make proletarian revolution and prevent world war in that way — the *only way* it can in fact be prevented — or wait and face the prospect of joining with those of our forces that do remain and are continuing to wage the revolutionary struggle

against the forces of the imperialists *during and in the aftermath* of world war with all its devastation.

If the accusation is made that it sounds “mercenary,” “cold,” etc., to address such a message to those it is intended for — in particular, middle-class people and generally the privileged strata in the imperialist countries — let’s recall that it is not we who say (in deed if not in word) that it is preferable to let world war happen (with all that means) rather than risk losing such a privileged position and putting everything on the line to prevent it — whatever it takes. So, with such people in mind especially, I repeat: “pay us now or pay us later.”

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 32, 33-34.

Changing the international political map and striving to prevent world war through revolution: actually seizing power through mass revolutionary struggle in as many places as possible — even making a revolutionary breakthrough to seize power in one country or another — is the crucial step that will reverberate throughout the globe like an earthquake under the whole structure of world relations. This is the key link in setting off a whole “chain reaction” in these world relations.

If, on the other hand, we (the international communist movement and the international proletariat) are not able to prevent world war through revolution and there is massive nuclear destruction, there will still be — and in some ways in concentrated form — the question of the future of humanity. This will then be a question acutely posed for resolution and will be resolved through armed conflict between forces representing diametrically and antagonistically opposed directions: back to the old relations, institutions, values, and ideologies to “reconstitute and rebuild” — *back to the same thing*

*that led to this in the first place* — or on a radically new road, beginning on a primitive level but having learned more deeply and searingly where the old road leads, and embarking on a completely different course.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 204-205.

Our basic orientation must remain that put forth by Mao in 1964:

“One must not become flustered in fighting with rifles, guns, or atom bombs. One will not become flustered if one is well prepared politically . . . . In general, we must be ready to fight, we must not become flustered when the fighting starts, we also must not be flustered in fighting the atom bomb. Do not be afraid. It is nothing but a big disorder throughout the world. It is nothing but people dying. Man eventually must die, he may die standing up or lying down. Those who do not die will go on with their work, if one-half meets with death, there is still another half . . . . Do not be afraid of imperialism. It will not do to be afraid, the more one is afraid, the less enthusiasm one will have. Being prepared and unafraid, one will have the enthusiasm.”

And I must say that after having gone deeply into and facing squarely this whole prospect of “nuclear winter” and the kind of devastation that I think you have to realize is on the agenda, if it’s not prevented by revolution — after all that I still found it tremendously uplifting and inspiring to go back and read this statement by Mao which, despite the greatly increased destructiveness of nuclear weapons today as compared to 1964, embodies a fundamentally correct and vital, liberating orientation.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 88.

#### 4. INTERNATIONALISM — THE WHOLE WORLD COMES FIRST

We are the proletariat, the propertyless class, we don't have a country, we live in it, but it's not ours.

"Bob Avakian on War and Revolution," from a 1979 speech in Seattle, Washington, *RCY*, Vol. 3, No. 8, August, 1980, p. 21.

The proletariat in advancing the struggle can *only* advance it by approaching it, and seeking to advance it, on a world level first of all. This doesn't mean of course that you try to make revolution irrespective of the conditions in different parts of the world or the conditions within particular countries, but it means that even in approaching that you proceed from the point of view of the world arena as most decisive and the overall interests of the world proletariat as paramount. And that is not merely a good idea. It has a very material foundation, which has been laid by the system of imperialism.

"Advancing the World Revolutionary Movement: Questions of Strategic Orientation," *Revolution*, No. 51, Spring 1984, p. 4.

Proletarian internationalism really is founded on a concrete material reality. There really is a world imperialist system that is the common enemy of people whether they reside in the citadels, the homelands, where the imperialist monster is centered and has its foundations so to speak, or wheth-

er they live in the vast areas of what's referred to commonly as the Third World, the colonial and dependent countries.

"The Imperialist System and Proletarian Internationalism," from 1982 interview on WRFG Atlanta, *RW*, No. 187, January 7, 1983, p. 4.

The working class has to be trained *concretely* as well as theoretically in proletarian internationalism, and unless it is, it will never be able to act in a class-conscious internationalist way when the decisive time comes — such as the actual outbreak of world war. It will never be able to play a class-conscious role, and most of all never be able to uphold a revolutionary defeatist stand and not only welcome the setbacks suffered by its own ruling class but actually work to take advantage of them to turn the imperialist war into a civil war to overthrow the imperialist system, unless it is trained in a thousand concrete instances both before and during that war.

*Coming from Behind to Make Revolution*, p. 15.

A lot of people are confused and say, "Listen, I don't like the Shah of Iran, but, hey, we can't let people do that to *our* embassy." To hell with that. I want to say I don't have *no goddamn embassy*. It's not *my* embassy. It's not *your* embassy. It doesn't belong to the working class and oppressed people in this country. It belongs to the imperialist ruling class. And more than that, we don't even have a goddamn *country*. We just happen to live here, that's all. This happens to be the place where they are enslaving and oppressing us.

We happen to live in the homeland of these imperialists, directly under their boot. And, yes, we

have to make revolution in this country, but not just for ourselves and not with our heads down and our vision narrow. We have to make revolution in unity with and together with and for the cause of the whole international working class and oppressed people around the world.

*On the Mao Tsetung Defendants' Railroad and the Historic Battles Ahead*, pp. 25-26; also *Iran: It's Not Our Embassy!*, pp. 5, 6.

One thing that comes up is you can't offend the national sentiments of people. Well, for Christ's sake, if we didn't offend the national sentiments of the American people how could we be communists and proletarian internationalists!

"Why We are 'What Is to Be Done?'-ists," *If There Is to Be Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party*, p. 8.

In these imperialist countries — in the United States and the rest of the imperialist countries of its bloc or in the Soviet Union and its bloc — you cannot defend your country without defending El Salvador, Afghanistans, and so on. And everyone will be put to the test whether or not to stand in fact with imperialism and its Afghanistans and El Salvadors or to rise up against it and move toward abolishing all that, along with the horrors of nuclear war which imperialism has now brought us to the threshold of.

"El Salvadors, Afghanistans, and World War 3," *RW*, No. 175, October 8, 1982, p. 3.

De Tocqueville, in his writings upholding the USA as a model democracy, poses what he sees as a perplexing contradiction: an American, he says, at one time "seems animated by the most selfish

cupidity; at another by the most lively patriotism. The human heart cannot be thus divided." Yet it is a fact of capitalist society that there is a fundamental unity between "the most selfish cupidity" and "the most lively patriotism." If the history of the United States of America has demonstrated anything, it is that.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*, Chapter 4: "The USA As Democratic Example . . . Leader of the Pack."

In their insistence not only on the universality of the principle of patriotism but on the fact that patriotism means placing one's nation above all others, the imperialist leaders of today are in fact carrying forward the ideas and traditions established by their "founding fathers."

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*, Chapter 2: "The Roots and the Rise of Modern Democracy."

I challenge anyone to give an explanation of why they are patriotic Americans or why patriotism for the USA is a good thing, which cannot be shown to come down to a statement of why they want to perpetuate a situation where they have a position of privilege — relatively greater or lesser, but privilege all the same — at the expense of, and at the cost of tremendous suffering on the part of, the great majority of people in the world. This, I am convinced, cannot be done, but the attempt to do it would, I am also convinced, prove to be very educational.

And in order to avoid falling over backward into chauvinism myself, but instead to act consistently with the spirit of internationalism, I extend this challenge to anyone who wants to make the same

argument about patriotism on behalf of any other imperialist country.

"Provocations," *RW*, No. 228, October 28, 1983, p. 4.

In an imperialist country, the national banner is held firmly by the imperialists. Underlying this is a very important point of Marxist-Leninist political economy. Imperialist capital must operate on an international plane; it requires this as a condition of its reproduction. And it does at times, as Lenin pointed out, speed up economic development in some of the backward countries. But this occurs in the framework of domination and oppression and, closely related, for all its "internationalism," imperialist capital *remains profoundly national* and anchored in its national market, and thus has a profound material stake in defense of the interests of its nation.

*Conquer the World*, p. 39.

It's got to be the case, more and more, that wherever oppressed people rise up in struggle, they clutch and raise in one hand the red flag of the international proletariat. Wherever people rise up in rebellion, raise up the red flag! When we do that it means that we're rising up with our heads up; we're rising up with our eyes really cast to the far horizon; we're becoming politically conscious; we know what our interests are, that they lie with the international proletariat in its struggle for communism throughout the world.

"Bob Avakian on May First," text of a 1981 tape, *RW*, No. 103, May 1, 1981, p. 22.

Overall, while particularly concentrating in the U.S., since that's where our party is, we're trying to

do everything we can to advance that worldwide struggle, and that's not just a platitude or even just a general principle — it means concretely examining things on a world scale to see where are concentration points and potential breaking points. And it means bending our work and our struggle toward helping to seize on such opportunities and generally to advance the worldwide struggle even if in the short run it might bring certain added difficulties for the revolutionary work in the particular country we're in.

"Advancing the World Revolutionary Movement: Questions of Strategic Orientation" *Revolution*, No. 51, Spring 1984, p. 27.

In an overall sense the development of the class (and national) struggle, the development of revolutionary situations, etc., in particular countries are more determined by developments in the world as a whole than by developments in the particular countries. In my opinion, this was not so before the advent of imperialism — or before bourgeois society (and the bourgeois epoch) became dominant (qualitatively) in the world, and changes in societies throughout the world became integrated in an overall way into a whole (single) process.

"On the Philosophical Basis of Proletarian Internationalism," *RW*, No. 96, March 13, 1981, p. 3.

Proletarian internationalism cannot be treated as something secondary or subordinate or something extended from the proletariat of one nation to others. It really has to be the foundation and starting point for the proletariat in all countries.

"Advancing the World Revolutionary Movement: Questions of Strategic Orientation," *Revolution*, No. 51, Spring 1984, p. 4.

It's important to focus on Marx's statement that human society is the *trustee* of the globe, and how insane it is for different nations, and even different individuals within different nations, to be battling each other for control over little parcels of this earth in a way which can only maintain anarchy and stand as a great obstacle to human society consciously deciding how to best use — and at the same time preserve for the future and develop — the globe of which it is the trustee. And already, by the way, it should be said that human society is confronted with the question of the relationship of the earth to other parts of the universe because human society, even through this lopsidedness, has developed to that point where that's becoming a real question.

"The Land Question in the Final Analysis Is a Global Question, or What a Look at a World Map Is Good For," *RW*, No. 173, September 24, 1982, p. 9.

Ignoring or rejecting the decisiveness of the world arena can only lead, sooner or later, to setbacks in the revolutionary struggle within a particular country, since its development is in fact determined above all by developments in the world as a whole.

Grasping and applying the understanding of the decisiveness of the world arena in no way downplays but in fact emphasizes revolutionary struggles in particular countries.

"Once Again on the Internal and External Causes of Change and the Material and Philosophical Basis of Proletarian Internationalism," *RW*, No. 229, November 4, 1983, p. 17.

Mao and all communists were and have to be internationalists. We can't be nationalists. As soon as

you say, my race, my nationality, my people first and above everything else, that's just another way of saying *me* first and above all else. And everybody else comes second. No, you've got to be all the way internationalist.

*Summing Up the Black Panther Party*, pp. 5, 6.

The democratic principle of the equality of nations and the right of nations to self-determination, while it must be upheld and fought for today, in opposition to the domination of oppressed nations under imperialism, nevertheless is historically delimited and in the final analysis is not sufficient even to illuminate the way to the abolition of national inequality and oppression. It falls far short of pointing to a world in which humanity is no longer marked by division into nations as well as classes.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*, Chapter 2: "The Roots and the Rise of Modern Democracy."

Such an ideology as nationalism can, at most, involve a vision of equality among nations or peoples, but in reality it cannot even consistently stand for that, since by definition it is the ideology of "*the nation*" and ultimately must include the idea of "*the nation*" (that is, the particular nation one belongs to) as "*first among equals*." For otherwise it would not be the ideology of "*the nation*" but of *no nation* — which in fact is the outlook of the proletariat, *internationalism*.

*"Black Nationalist with Communistic Inclinations"*, p. 6.

Nations are not, any more than classes, an eternal category. They had a beginning (generally modern

nations are associated with the rise of capitalism and are in an overall sense a phenomenon of the bourgeois epoch) and they will have an end, when communism has been established throughout the world, with the complete abolition of class distinctions. This does not mean that communists stand for the forcible assimilation or destruction of nations. In direct opposition to this, and as a crucial part of its internationalism, the proletariat (and its communist vanguard) is the champion, in word and deed, of the thorough abolition of national oppression in all its forms and the real achievement of equality between nations, which is an indispensable component part of the proletarian revolution and the advance to communism worldwide. Still, equality between nations, for a communist, is not the end point or the highest goal, but is exactly a component part of the struggle for a much higher goal: the abolition of classes and of national barriers (and nations themselves) and the advent of a whole new stage of human society and world history.

*"Black Nationalist with Communistic Inclinations", p. 6.*

Even for those countries where it is necessary to not only wage but to strive to lead the struggle for national liberation, I would say that you are better off as a communist going more horizontally than vertically. By that I mean you're better off seeking your links and your identification with the proletarians and the oppressed masses all over the world in the contemporary era than you are seeking your roots and identification going back decades, or even hundreds or thousands of years, within your own nation.

*"Advancing the World Revolutionary Movement: Questions of Strategic Orientation," Revolution No. 51, Spring 1984, pp. 4-5.*

If it is true that the greatest contribution to the communist goal of the international proletariat that can be made in the U.S. in this period is the overthrow of U.S. imperialism and the establishment of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat in its place, it is certainly no less true that the course of the revolutionary movement in the U.S. and even the prospects for victory will be decisively influenced by the overall course of the revolutionary struggles in the world as a whole.

*"On Reagan, the 'Rise of the Right' and the Decline and Fall of the U.S. Empire," RW, No. 116, August 7, 1981, p. 20.*

If you can conceive of a world without America — without everything America stands for and everything it does in the world — then you've already taken great strides and begun to get at least a glimpse of a whole new world. If you can envision a world without any imperialism, exploitation, oppression — and the whole philosophy that rationalizes it — a world without division into classes or even different nations, and all the narrow-minded, selfish, outmoded ideas that uphold this; if you can envision all this, then you have the basis for proletarian internationalism. And once you have raised your sights to all this, how could you not feel compelled to take an active part in the world-historic struggle to realize it; why would you want to lower your sights to anything less?

Previously unpublished.

## 5. ONE WORLD REVOLUTION — TWO STREAMS OF STRUGGLE

There are two main streams of the world revolutionary movement in this era: the proletarian-socialist revolution in the advanced countries and the anti-imperialist democratic (or new-democratic) struggle in the colonial and dependent countries.

“Advancing the World Revolutionary Movement: Questions of Strategic Orientation,” *Revolution*, No. 51, Spring 1984, p. 22.

In general the content of what we should be about is to seek a world front of revolutionary struggle against imperialism consisting of, in a basic sense, the unity between the proletarian revolutionary forces in the advanced countries and the revolutionary national liberation struggles against imperialism in the colonial and dependent countries.

“Advancing the World Revolutionary Movement: Questions of Strategic Orientation,” *Revolution*, No. 51, Spring 1984, p. 21.

There are different processes and dialectics to the revolution within different countries, and within different types of countries, but that does not negate the fact that all that is integrated into a single process which takes place overall on a world scale. The single process of the advance from the bourgeois

epoch to the communist epoch on a world scale is made up of very diverse streams and currents and processes, but they are integrated on a higher level into that overall process on a world scale.

“The ‘60s-’70s Shift,” *Revolution*, No. 53, Winter/Spring 1985, p. 23. Originally printed in *RW*, No. 154, May 7, 1982.

In the world today the advanced productive forces are concentrated in a handful of the advanced — that is, imperialist — countries while the economies of most of the countries in the world are not simply backward but distorted, disarticulated in their development because of imperialist domination and plunder. This is what I mean by “lopsidedness.”

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, p. 144.

Not merely is there a great, in fact qualitative, difference between the standards of living in the imperialist countries on the one hand and the nations they oppress on the other, but a relationship of exploitation and plunder in which the high standard of living of the one depends on and requires the low standard of living of the other.

There is also a clear political expression of all this: while in the imperialist countries the form of bourgeois rule is generally a democratic one, particularly since World War 2, in the countries oppressed by imperialism, dictatorship is exercised much more openly and ruthlessly, and bloody suppression of the masses is resorted to quickly and repeatedly, as a general rule. Just as in the economic sphere, here too there is not only a great difference but a direct relationship: the relative lack of open terror and brutal repression, at least much of the time, in these imperialist countries is dependent on

the pitiless repression of the literally billions of colonial (or neocolonial) victims of imperialism.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*,  
Chapter 5: "Imperialism, Democracy and Dictatorship."

In most of the world today — specifically in the Third World — the immediate transformations that must be carried out in social and international relations conform, as a general rule, to what can broadly be defined as democratic tasks: the winning of genuine national liberation and the elimination of various forms or vestiges of precapitalist economic relations and their reflection in the superstructure. In short, in these vast regions, containing the great majority of the world's people and constituting the most volatile areas under imperialist rule, what is immediately on the agenda is what Mao Tsetung defined as the new-democratic revolution.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*,  
Chapter 7: "Democracy and the Communist Revolution."

New democracy means not a bourgeois revolution, led by the bourgeoisie and leading to capitalist society — nor a revolution in the abstract, without class content and leading to a democratic state without a class character — it means a revolution against imperialism, precapitalist social relations and the domestic class forces that represent and uphold all this, and it leads to the political rule of the classes that unite to carry out this revolution, under the leadership of the proletariat and its communist vanguard. It leads, in other words, to a particular form of the dictatorship of the proletariat — involving a broad class alliance but firmly led by the class-conscious proletariat — and thereby opens the way

to socialism. In this way it forms a decisive component of the world-historic proletarian-socialist revolution and its ultimate goal of communism with the abolition of all class distinctions and all forms of the state.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*,  
Chapter 7: "Democracy and the Communist Revolution."

Now it is true that in the world of today there are ultimately only two classes that can rule society — the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. And in these oppressed nations, the colonial and dependent countries, what that means is that either the imperialists will ultimately rule them, having as their dependents the local reactionary forces, or the proletariat will rule them and make them base areas for the world proletarian revolution. But the fact that that's ultimately true doesn't deny or obliterate the fact that there are transitional steps in between. It is still correct to say that as a general rule (though not in an absolute way) there are two stages in the revolution in such countries, even though it's true that ultimately only the bourgeoisie or the proletariat are going to rule those countries — and that means not the *local* bourgeoisie or the proletariat, but either the proletariat or the *imperialists*.

"Lessons from Iran on Coming from Behind to Build the Party," *If There Is to Be Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party*, pp. 29-30.

The comprador bourgeoisies in these oppressed nations are national traitors, if you will; they are lackeys and retainers of imperialism. But the reason that it is correct to formulate it in that way and even to raise the question of national traitor is because

the national question is still on the agenda as the central question there, whereas in the imperialist countries it is not. The national question, as Lenin pointed out very clearly, is a thing of the past for the developed imperialist countries; whereas it is very much on the agenda now, historically and politically speaking, for the oppressed nations.

“Internationalism and the Mass Line,” *If There Is to Be Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party*, pp. 24-25.

What is most essential to grasp is not only the fact that imperialist domination in most of the world means brutal repression as well as life-stealing poverty for the masses of people; nor the fact that the reality of life in the imperialist countries themselves involves a genuinely horrifying pattern of repression for significant numbers of people, particularly among the nonbourgeoisified proletariat, oppressed nationalities, and immigrants; what is most essential is how all this fits together. When the political leaders and statesmen of the “advanced” countries insist, as they have been known to do, that all this is necessary to preserve their vaunted democracy and way of life, they are not telling a damnable lie: they are telling a profound and damning truth.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*, Chapter 5: “Imperialism, Democracy and Dictatorship.”

In the imperialist countries there are class forces favorable to proletarian revolution — and this is so particularly within the proletariat itself, including a significant number of immigrants and oppressed nationalities in most of these countries.

Here the national question — and in particular

rupturing with the framework of the imperialist nation and taking a firmly internationalist stand both with regard to the world as a whole and also with regard to oppressed nationalities, immigrants and so on within the imperialist countries themselves — is a crucial aspect of the problem. Only by making such a rupture, and by viewing things from the point of view of the world arena above all and taking up the question of the social forces for revolution in the country concerned on an internationalist basis (as just discussed) will it be possible to adopt and maintain a revolutionary communist stand.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, pp. 145-46.

With all the contradictions of the world being brought to a head and with this collision course developing between war among the imperialists on the one hand and revolution versus the imperialists on the other, the conditions and the possibilities for revolution in the Third World become even greater in an overall sense. But at the same time, this bringing together of the world contradictions also brings about one of those more *rare* situations where real revolutionary possibilities may also develop in the imperialist countries, and from the point of view of the international proletariat it is important to grasp this as well.

“More on the Principal Contradiction in the World Today,” *RW*, No. 172, September 17, 1982, p. 10.

When we talk about how the contradictions of the imperialist system are coming to a head and approaching an explosion on a world scale, we mean just that.

It is a certainty that revolutionary situations and revolutionary upsurges will arise repeatedly, in

many different parts of the world. That has already been a phenomenon of the last several years and it is bound to intensify in the years ahead. The possibilities for great advances to be made by the *international proletariat* are very real and place urgent demands on the class-conscious proletariat everywhere.

“Stepping Up . . . Stepping Out,” *RW*, No. 151, April 16, 1982, p. 16.

## 6. REVOLUTION IN THE U.S. AND OTHER IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES

### A POWERFUL BLOW FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD!

It will be a *great* historic day in the history of humanity and the world when we finally do seize this monster by the throat, choke it and knock down and destroy this beast of reaction and oppression all over the world and raise up in its place a bastion, base area and beacon light of revolutionary struggle and support for oppressed people all over the world. And this is our vision. This is our determination.

“Why the Proletariat Will Lead the Revolution,” from a 1979 speech in Columbus, Ohio, *RW*, No. 53, May 1, 1980, p. 13.

When this monstrous beast which has its tentacles all over the world, squeezing and crushing the life out of millions of people, is finally brought down, when along with its bloodsoaked red, white, and blue, it is crushed into the dust and in its place rises a revolutionary base area where the red flag flies, calling on people all over the world to unite with us to carry through the struggle worldwide — when that day comes, *literally hundreds of millions of people* will go into the streets to celebrate, but to celebrate in the way the oppressed celebrate, by determining and acting to carry forward the struggle, finish off this system completely, and bury it

once and for all! We have an opportunity and a responsibility in this country not just to fight to emancipate ourselves and free ourselves of this exploitation and oppression and degradation, but to unite with and strike a blow for all the oppressed and exploited people in the world toward the goal which millions are striving for and becoming more conscious of: the goal of socialism and ultimately communism to free all of mankind and advance history to a whole new stage.

“To All Those Who Refuse to Live and Die on Their Knees,” Part 2, excerpts from 1979 national speaking tour, *RW*, No. 243, February 17, 1984, p. 4.

Besides the truth that in the most basic sense the *world* is the decisive arena in the struggle against imperialism and for the achievement of communism, let us never forget that the defeat of imperialism even in its own citadels is not the concern or the task of the proletariat in these citadels *alone* but of the *international proletariat*. The revolutionary struggles in the countries dominated by imperialism and the active role of masses driven from those countries into the imperialist citadels are both tremendous forces contributing to and vital for revolution *in those citadels* as well as worldwide.

“Stepping Up . . . Stepping Out,” *RW*, No. 151, April 16, 1982, p. 15.

We have seen where the domination by the imperialists of the world’s productive forces (including the mass of people who create technology through their labor) has led, and especially where it is leading now: toward world war.

At whatever time power is seized by the proletariat in the U.S., and whatever the immediate con-

ditions in the country might be, *from the beginning* this lopsidedness between the (formerly) imperialist countries and the oppressed nations must be systematically attacked, even with the significant sacrifices this will involve, including for the basic masses in the U.S. Or else it will be back before long to the same system that was overthrown and all its truly monstrous crimes once again. (And this principle has especially important application for not only the U.S. but for — the formerly — imperialist countries in general, as and whenever power is seized there.) If, on the other hand, revolution does not succeed in preventing world war, our basic orientation must remain that of proceeding first and above all from the perspective of transforming the whole world and rebuilding from the start on the basis of seeking not to reestablish but to overcome any such lopsidedness. Therefore, we openly declare — and even now must do more to create public opinion around — what we intend to do with the productive forces, under whatever conditions exist when we come to control them: above all to utilize them to promote revolution and the complete remaking of the world and its previously dominant conditions, relations, and divisions, continuing the advance to achieve the goal of a communist world, where the lopsided character of today’s world will have been overcome, the division of oppressor and oppressed nations and the division of society into classes will have been eliminated, and the soil for all these thoroughly uprooted in every sphere.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 36-37.

## YES, IT IS POSSIBLE AND CONDITIONS ARE RIPENING

Many people say they don't believe revolution is possible in this country. I'll tell you something, the people who run this country do.

*How Can We Apologize for Taking History into Our Hands?*, p. 13.

Yes, in one sense we are "playing a long shot" but it's "our best shot." And, from a world-historic standpoint — or even viewing things in terms of what the U.S. and other imperialists are confronted with — *their* position is more difficult, more desperate.

They are not invincible — they are not all that "bad," strategically. And once things get to the point where we can make an initial breakthrough strong enough and keep it going long enough to shatter their traditional methods of suppression by force, then it's a whole new deal.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 44.

I don't know if you remember Silky Sullivan, but he was this race horse that used to race and his trademark was that he ran about 25 lengths behind on the backstretch but he had this tremendous kick. And there would always be this question down to the wire: could Silky Sullivan whip by everybody as they came down the homestretch and beat everybody to the wire? And if you were to walk into that racetrack knowing nothing of the horses, knowing nothing about their physical features and their different styles of racing and so on, then if someone told you that the horse way back there has a good chance to win this race, well, you would think whoever told

you that was crazy.

True, this party — our party, the Revolutionary Communist Party — is still small and its influence still exists only among tens, or perhaps hundreds, of thousands — not yet millions, certainly not anything like a majority of the working class. But this is not at all unique or unusual — the same was also true of the Bolsheviks at the start of World War 1. As a matter of fact, it could be said that we will have to be coming "from a long way back." I think it could be said that we're the Silky Sullivan of the proletarian revolution.

*Coming from Behind to Make Revolution*, p. 7.

Some people say, "Revolution is a good idea but it's not possible. You're talking about dealing with a man that's got nuclear weapons. He's got tanks, he's got airplanes, he's got everything." Well, I'll tell you, he's got all that, but he got his ass whipped in Vietnam, didn't he?

"This System Is Doomed, Let's Finish It Off!", speech delivered on May 1, 1979, *RW*, No. 50, April 18, 1980, pp. 23-24.

We are full of confidence that we can lead masses of people to rise up and overthrow this system, but that's a scientific understanding, it's not some pollyanna wish, and in no way do we or can we underestimate the strength or viciousness of this ruling class or the magnitude of the task of rising up in arms and overthrowing them.

*Summing Up the Black Panther Party*, p. 12.

Strength can be transformed into weakness, and weakness into strength. Even a powerful imperialist

state can become vulnerable, and a revolutionary movement right within its “home base” can go from being small and relatively weak to gaining the necessary strength and reserves to actually topple the ruling class.

“Strength Can Be Transformed Into Weakness and Weakness Into Strength,” *RW*, No. 108, June 5, 1981, p. 3.

If you look at things metaphysically — statically, without internal contradiction and with everything absolutely isolated from everything else — then you won’t and can’t recognize this revolutionary potential. If you look at this country the way it is now and somehow think that there will be crisis, even world war, but despite that, people’s lives won’t really be affected — that terrible things will happen, metaphysically, “over there,” but somehow things will basically stay the same as they are in this society — or maybe in some way people will be suffering, will be tightening their belt a little more, going through a little bit more hardships, deprived of a few things, but fundamentally the conditions of the masses won’t change; if that’s your outlook, then naturally you will say revolution could never happen.

But when you think about it, it’s inconceivable that there could be deeper crisis and even world war and only some minor adjustments in people’s lives.

*Coming from Behind to Make Revolution*, p. 6.

We’re not handing out guarantees for victory, but the only way we ever are going to help move humanity beyond all this is to prepare for and make — and keep on making — revolution. A revolutionary situation is going to develop in this country sooner or later. If it doesn’t happen within the next

ten years, it’s going to happen some time later.

If you say revolution can’t happen and don’t act then you are working to make it not happen; don’t say “It’s a good idea but it won’t happen” — *it can happen*, but you have a role to play, a crucial role, in *making* it happen.

*Coming from Behind to Make Revolution*, p. 27.

In a revolutionary situation the conflicts within the ruling class and the enemy camp generally become especially acute, the suffering of the oppressed is intensified and broad strata of the population are drawn into political life by the development of crisis and the actions of the upper classes themselves. The whole society is convulsed in upheavals. Things are “driven to extremes” and the essential relations stand out. The “middle ground” is cut out from under the middle forces — between the basic revolutionary masses and the ruling class — and they tend to swing back and forth from one camp to the other depending on the relative strengths of the basic forces in opposition and the twists and turns of the battle. It becomes more possible to discredit and isolate the vacillators, compromisers, and opportunisers, through the back and forth zig-zag of events and the systematic and intense work of the advanced forces. In one form or another, or often in a combination of forms, the struggle assumes its highest expression — the armed struggle for political power — during the course of which the class-conscious proletariat led by its vanguard party, if it is to prevail, must win over the necessary forces to its banner and make the necessary alliances and tactical maneuvers, without compromising basic principle.

“Stepping Up . . . Stepping Out,” *RW*, No. 151, April 16, 1982, p. 15.

I'll tell you one thing — and it should be said straight up to the masses — if you're posing the question "is revolution possible, can it really happen" in the sense that somebody will come along and without you having to sacrifice, without you having to be involved, without you having to continue to struggle, somebody will just hand you a better life . . . , no, *that is not possible*. And you might as well get that idea out of your mind. Because a lot of times when people say, "it's not possible," they want to have their cake and eat it too — they want a better world, but they want it given to them, without the tremendous struggle that's necessary all the way through.

*Coming from Behind to Make Revolution,*  
p. 20.

Things in the '60s did not go all the way. Of course for those who are fond of repeating that "this is not the '60s," the '60s went way too far in the first place. While there were revolutions and powerful revolutionary struggles in many parts of the world — particularly in the Third World — and overall tremendous changes did take place in the world situation, it was not the case that the major contradictions of the imperialist system came to a head in a single, explosive conjuncture. Secondly, within the U.S. itself there was, as we know, no overthrow of the imperialist system, no seizure of political power by the proletariat.

This brings us to the second and most important aspect of the fact that, indeed, this is not the '60s. This is the '80s when what is on the agenda is precisely the development of such a world-historic conjuncture, where the major contradictions of the

world imperialist system are brought, together, to the exploding point.

"The '60s Weren't Always 'The '60s' and the '80s Will Be Far Heavier," *RW*, No. 203, May 1, 1983, p. 3.

I really believe that out of that generation, out of that whole upheaval of the '60s, even among older people and not just the generation that was coming to "maturity" at the time, there was a tremendous impact on millions of people that has not been lost.

"'60s People," *RW*, No. 147, March 19, 1982, p. 16.

It is right to be impatient — impatient for revolution. But to the degree that this is an expression of and means political paralysis, it is not good — and works against revolution.

The fact that our party, with our clear, firm orientation of undertaking everything we do as part of the overall preparation for the armed struggle to overthrow imperialism — the fact that we are *not* right now attempting to launch that armed struggle shows (perhaps ironically) how serious we really are: serious about winning! When things ripen more, when we can make a real go at it, then we must do so — and we must have prepared to do so — all-out and with the orientation, plans, strategy, and tactics to make it real: with the real intent to fight through and *win*.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 45.

We shouldn't be discouraged if the time is not yet right to actually rise up, if it's not yet time to start the revolution in the fullest sense. We should be impatient but we should be impatient to carry out

political activity at this time which creates revolutionary public opinion among the broadest masses and trains, at every point, the advanced forces, the people who are coming forward, who do question deeply, who do raise the basic issue about is there a way out of and a way forward from all this madness and can we in fact transform the world.

“Bob Avakian on May First,” text of a 1981 tape, *RW*, No. 103, May 1, 1981, p. 21.

When the whole society is erupting in upheaval and turmoil, when dramatic changes are taking place and things are going up for grabs politically, then what was tolerable, what people have adjusted to — maybe not just once but several times — becomes intolerable. With people who are discontented with their situation and just trying to get through it, when the possibility arises that they just don't have to do that, then they go through changes in their thinking and actions very quickly — not in a straight line toward revolution, but quickly all the same — and they become more and more open to the idea of revolution. A lot of people put up with what goes on all the time in this society and they also know it's garbage and when they actually see the chance to throw it away, a lot of them will do so quickly.

*Coming from Behind to Make Revolution*, pp. 11-12.

One of the advantages in a country like this is that when things do begin to break and snap — and I'm not just talking about a major financial and economic collapse but some kind of serious, sudden breakdown in the normal economic and/or political situation — such a breakdown introduces big changes in ripples throughout the whole society,

much more decisively and devastatingly in a society where the means of communication, transportation, government control, etc., are highly developed and integrated.

*Coming from Behind to Make Revolution*, p. 11.

Both sides, worldwide — the imperialists and reactionaries of both blocs on the one side, the proletariat and revolutionary masses on the other — will be faced with the need to seek extreme solutions to extreme circumstances.

There is and will increasingly be sharp polarization in society. Overall the “middle ground” will be increasingly shrinking and the position of conciliation characteristic of the middle forces will be undermined as things come to a head.

All this is a *good* thing — not something to shrink from or be intimidated by — but it requires the revolutionary outlook of the proletariat, a radical rupture with the present system and its values, to grasp this, to even recognize let alone seize the opportunities amidst the extreme circumstances.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 41-42.

## **A REVOLUTIONARY LINE IN OPPOSITION TO ECONOMISM AND CHAUVINISM**

The revolutionary communist, proletarian internationalist line does represent in the most fundamental sense the interests of the *international* proletariat, but in terms of its expression inside the U.S., it does represent and is a concentration of the interests and to a significant degree the felt aspirations of a social base of people too. It represents and has to find its most solid roots among that section of

society whose interests are, in fact, most fully in line with the fundamental interests of the international proletariat.

“A Social Base for Proletarian Internationalism,” *If There Is to Be Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party*, pp. 68-69.

Lenin explained how the development of capitalism into its imperialist stage in a handful of advanced countries and the great extension and intensification of international exploitation and robbery by these imperialists, particularly in the colonies, led to a profound split in the working class between the masses of proletarians and what Lenin labeled an aristocracy of labor, a section of the workers bought off by the imperialists, bribed from the spoils of this international robbery.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, p. 85.

With the development of imperialism and the split in the working class of the imperialist countries, Lenin insisted on building a revolutionary, internationalist movement based among the lower, proletarian sections of the working class, in opposition to a reformist and chauvinist bourgeois labor movement based among the upper, aristocratic sections of the working class.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*, Chapter 6: “Bourgeois Socialism and Bourgeois Democracy.”

Some will choose to cling to crumbs tossed them from the rich table of the imperialists who gorged themselves on the blood and bones of the masses of the world. These are like people who live in an

outhouse with a little pretty wallpaper on it, who live dripping with the filth piled on them by the imperialist system, but who screech at the masses of people of the world, “You fools, who says this country stinks?” But then there are those, still a comparatively small number but ultimately the decisive force, who say, “To hell with all this scandalous stuff, we throw our lot with the people of the world and with revolution here to end all this.”

*1980 — a Year, a Decade of Historic Importance*, p. 7.

There is a material basis for proletarian internationalism. This material basis of proletarian internationalism also means that there is a class basis for this internationalism.

There is a real social base for this, and *it* above all — not it alone, but it above all — has to be mobilized around this revolutionary communist/proletarian internationalist line. This social base does in fact consist of those who, as Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* have put it, can live only so long as they can work, and can work only so long as they enrich the bourgeoisie, and who are degraded and crushed by the conditions of life and by the exploitation under capitalism, who do have nothing to lose but their chains, and who in the basic sense are not caught up in the whole treadmill of respectability and so on, but whose position impels them to struggle against the established order.

There is, as the song says, the question that “If you’ve ever been mistreated, you know what I’m talking about,” and I’m talking about proletarian revolution and internationalism.

“On Both Aspects of Proletarian Internationalism, or, If You’ve Ever Been Mistreated You Know What I’m Talking About,” *RW*, No. 184, December 10, 1982, p. 3.

It is important to win much of the mainstream white working class in the U.S., but to say that this is the working class or this is the proletariat, this is the most important social base for the hope of revolution in the U.S. is to be profoundly mistaken. And in fact it is not the way to win those forces, and there are considerable numbers among them that *can* be won to a revolutionary struggle, if in fact the revolutionary movement is based among those workers, those proletarians, who are in a classical position of having nothing to lose but their chains and who are in the condition of being exploited and ground down under the capitalist system, even in its imperialist stage, which includes not only masses of Black people but also whites as well as other people of other nationalities.

“On Phil Ochs or Why You Can’t Have Kennedy and Revolution Too,” *RW*, No. 176, October 15, 1982, pp. 9-10.

When we talk about the proletariat in the U.S., there are those “wise people” who mock and ridicule the very notion of such a proletariat, of a class of people whose interests lie in the complete overthrow of the existing order and the radical transformation of economic, political, and social relations. Well, when we talk about the proletariat in the U.S. — the real proletariat, as opposed to the bribe-fattened aristocrats of the working class, or even the better-paid, still relatively complacent workers — whom do we have in mind? Can anyone seriously doubt that the masses of Black people and other oppressed nationalities — in particular those crowded into the inner cities, forced into wretched conditions and preyed on by all manner of exploiters, whether they have some kind of job or are part of the massive numbers of unemployed — can anyone seriously

doubt that they have a profound interest in and a profound desire for a radical change? Add to this the millions of immigrants in the U.S., especially those who come from Third World countries victimized by U.S. imperialism and who are oppressed, superexploited, discriminated against, and terrorized inside the U.S. itself. And let’s not forget that there are also millions of powerless, basically propertyless white people in the U.S. whose position is a hell of a lot closer to that of the oppressed nationalities and immigrants than it is to the ruling class, or even the well-to-do middle class. Is there anything funny about calling all these exploited and oppressed people proletarians and working to base a revolutionary movement among them? I don’t think so — and I doubt very much that the ruling class, or anyone else who definitely does not want to see a revolution in the U.S., really thinks it’s very funny either.

Previously unpublished.

The role of consciousness and the conscious element is a very indispensable element for the revolution. The masses will not spontaneously develop socialist consciousness. They may gravitate toward it, as Lenin said, but they will not spontaneously develop socialist or Marxist consciousness, and that has to be, in a certain basic sense, imparted to them from without, even at the same time as that doesn’t mean standing to the side of them in the political sense. But it does mean not simply merging into their midst, that is, tailing behind them. It means carrying on active political revolutionary work in their midst, especially paying attention to the advanced but also even more broadly among the masses, being in their midst in *that* sense, but not just sort of merging into their midst, that is,

submerging yourself beneath their level of consciousness and struggle spontaneously developed at any point.

“Why We are ‘What Is to Be Done?’-ists,” *If There Is to Be Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party*, p. 6.

One argument says that “economism means reducing or limiting the struggle of the workers to economic struggle — that, of course, is wrong, but the economic struggle is what the workers (or the mass of them) are presently engaged in and concerned with, so that is where we communists must focus our efforts, in order to raise the workers’ movement to the level of a revolutionary movement.” This is frequently raised by people who actually believe that they are opposing economism, but it is an almost classical statement of the economist position itself. In fact, the arena of politics and social life in general, the conflict between different class forces in all spheres of society — political, cultural, scientific, etc., as well as economic — provides the means or basis for what must be the heart of communist work: comprehensive exposure of the system, around all major social questions and events, instilling in the masses a clear sense of class outlooks, interests and forces involved.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, pp. 75-76.

There is a very common line that it is necessary to be a good fellow in the trade union struggle for a few years before you can win the masses to communism. That’s a ridiculous reformist recipe. But such a line and current does exist; it insists that you have to

prove yourself in terms of people’s day-to-day needs before they’ll listen to you about the larger questions. In an overall sense this is just exactly the contrary of the truth and is a reversal, an inversion, of the actual dialectic at work.

“Pay Attention to the Day to Day Needs of the Masses — But Don’t Overdo It!”, *If There Is to Be Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party*, p. 47.

It’s true that we would be making a mistake if we carried out our overall work and did not pay any attention to — ignored — the conditions of the masses and their everyday needs, especially the masses who actually are the most solid social base for a proletarian revolutionary line.

But that is still (a) not the most important thing we should be doing, (b) not the main thing we should be doing, (c) not something more important than or a necessary prelude to carrying out our central task and particularly exposure as the key link, and (d) the idea that we do have to do all that first is a trap of quicksand that we have to very, very rigorously avoid. That’s what it will become if you fall into the idea that somehow the day-to-day needs of the masses are the most important thing we have to pay attention to.

To be provocative about it, particularly given the pull of economism and spontaneity, in a certain way we could almost say that you have to have the ability *not* to pay attention to some of those problems to a significant degree. In other words, on the one hand, you cannot fail to pay attention to them at all, or as some kind of principle. But on the other hand, there has to be a conscious effort not to pay *too much* attention to them, and that is the much more danger-

ous and much more powerful current that has existed and continues to exist among communists.

“Pay Attention to the Day to Day Needs of the Masses — But Don’t Overdo It!”, *If There Is to Be Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party*, pp. 49, 50, 51-52.

We’re going to take hold of the science of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, and I’ll never tire, and our party will never tire, of talking about this. But more than that we’ll never tire of applying this to actually change the world and to lead masses of people to rise up and grab hold of every sphere, of every branch of knowledge, and use it as a tremendous material force with millions of people grasping and taking up, debating and struggling over the way forward, and then uniting on the way forward to consciously advance the cause of revolution and the cause of emancipating the people all over the world.

“They Can’t Believe We’ll Rise Above the Muck and the Mire,” *RW*, No. 56, May 23, 1980, p. 10; *On the Mao Tsetung Defendants’ Railroad and the Historic Battles Ahead*, p. 8.

We’re not going to leave a single sphere untouched. We’re not going to leave a single field — whether it’s philosophy, science, culture, politics, economics, social relations or personal relations, or anything else — we’re not going to leave it to the bourgeoisie to have domination there. We’re going to challenge them in every sphere.

“They Can’t Believe We’ll Rise Above the Muck and the Mire,” *RW*, No. 56, May 23, 1980, p. 10; *On the Mao Tsetung Defendants’ Railroad and the Historic Battles Ahead*, p. 8.

To preach economism to the workers and to focus their attention on the narrow sphere of their relations with their employer, or even frankly on the narrow sphere of their relationship with their own bourgeoisie, without focusing their attention on the world as a whole, is what I call *imperialist or chauvinist economism*. Such imperialist economism not only limits the movement to reformism but leads it into the service of counterrevolution, particularly the more so if it’s a conscious policy. In fact, with regard to imperialist countries, if one takes the standpoint of the nation, it might be better to remain imperialist. But if one takes the stand of the proletariat — which can only mean the international proletariat — it would be better to make socialist revolution and turn an imperialist country into a base area for the advance of world revolution and the advance to communism.

*Conquer the World*, p. 40.

Some people say, “You shouldn’t do anything to offend the American people,” which, if you think about it, is ridiculous.

“Why We Are ‘What Is To Be Done?’-ists,” *If There Is to Be a Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party*, p. 7.

It is true that economism in the imperialist countries is doubly treacherous: it not only degrades the communist movement to the level of trade-unionism, even more it promotes chauvinism among the workers in the imperialist country who, to one degree or another, receive some part of the spoils of imperialism’s international robbery and plunder. But that does not make economism correct in the colonial and dependent countries!

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, p. 77.

Lenin refers to the worker who impatiently tells the communists to quit boring him (and other workers) with the drab details of everyday economic struggle, with which they are already quite familiar, and instead insists that “we want to know everything that others know, we want to learn the details of *all* aspects of political life and to take part *actively* in every single political event . . . . Just devote more zeal to carrying out this duty, and *talk less about ‘raising the activity of the masses of workers!’* We are far more active than you think, and we are quite able to support, by open, street fighting, demands that do not promise any ‘palpable results’ whatever!”

Where, some people demand, are such workers in the U.S. right now? The real problem is not at all that such workers do not exist, but that those who ask this question do not know where to look for them or how to recognize them — even though and even when they pass by them or perhaps bump into them every day.

*Coming from Behind to Make Revolution,*  
p. 31.

## WE MUST PREPARE NOW!

Revolutions can't be made — and they definitely cannot be won — without preparation.

“Stepping Up . . . Stepping Out,” *RW*, No. 151, April 16, 1982, p. 15.

We are just waiting for them to make a serious mistake — to take a serious fall and leave us a real opening. This is first of all a question of basic orientation and stand: it requires that radical rupture

with reformism, with bourgeois democracy, and with patriotism; it requires the stand of *welcoming* such a disaster for “your own” ruling class.

We are “just waiting” for that — but on the other hand we are not just waiting: we are actively, urgently preparing.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 55.

Without making rash mistakes and being tricked or provoked by the enemy on the basis of our own enthusiasm or impatience, we must prepare now to be able, as soon as conditions ripen and a political jolt or tremor in society opens a wide and deep enough crack, to channel the eruption of the formerly suppressed revolutionary energy of oppressed masses and launch and wage a revolutionary armed struggle. And when we do so it must be with the real perspective of going all out to win!

*An End to the Horror*, p. 89.

The opportunity to strike down a powerful monster like this, not only crushing us but squeezing the life out of people all over the world, comes along only once or a very few times in a lifetime. And what you do when the conditions finally boil up and reach that point will be felt for decades afterwards. We cannot afford not to be prepared.

“Why the Proletariat Will Lead the Revolution,” from a 1979 speech in Columbus, Ohio, *RW*, No. 53, May 1, 1980, p. 13.

Mao Tsetung in 1949 spoke about the need to “cast away illusions, prepare for struggle.” I think that’s got to be our orientation. We have to look ahead and prepare for revolution — cast away illusions that arise from living in one of the most power-

ful imperialist countries, one of the biggest bandits throughout the world, preying on people throughout the world, and on that basis having lulled sections of the working class and people to sleep for a certain period of time, having drugged people with the idea that it's possible to get by, and to make it and have a better life by working hard, or having a good hustle.

"Look to the Future, Prepare for Revolution," from a December 30, 1978 speech, *RW*, No. 1., May 1, 1979, p. 11.

A revolution can only be made when there is a revolutionary situation. But in a real sense it is also "made" for a whole period leading up to that.

"Stepping Up...Stepping Out," *RW*, No. 151, April 16, 1982, p. 15.

If we want to win, we have to maximize our strength and conquer new political positions at every opportunity and especially at key points. To not make preparation in this way has the same meaning and the same effect as to not fight when the real deal goes down. It is no different than throwing away the chance when it finally does come.

"Stepping Up...Stepping Out," *RW*, No. 151, April 16, 1982, p. 15.

Those who do see what's going on and that a revolution is needed — and are learning just *what kind* of revolution that means — have the responsibility to raise that banner and rally forth and bust loose others like themselves and still others who are just beginning to raise their heads.

"Stepping Up...Stepping Out," *RW*, No. 151, April 16, 1982, p. 15.

Everyone acts upon the society of which they are a part. No one merely passively reflects it and accepts it. You ultimately either act to reinforce it and contribute to what is old and dying, or you contribute to advancing beyond the present stage and to supporting the new and arising.

*There's Nothing More Revolutionary Than Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought*, p. 13.

It is guaranteed that if we do not act now, if we do not begin to take history into our hands when it may well be there for the taking, we can only lose — for living under this system is losing every day and fighting and dying to preserve it is the twisted logic of losers desperate to drag others down with them.

"May First — Dare to Join Those Forging the Future," *RW*, No. 49, April 11, 1980, pp. 14-15.

In the swirl, and the complexity, and the confusion and the chaos of the situation when things really do ripen up toward a revolutionary situation and when the whole deal does go on the line and things really are up for grabs, at that point it's too late to come running out with the red flag and raise up the banner of the international proletariat. If we wait till then, if we wait till everything is on the line to begin creating public opinion, to begin rallying forward and training the advanced, to take further leaps in welding those who hate this shit into a class-conscious force, it'll be too late and we'll miss, even throw away, the opportunity.

"Bob Avakian on May First," text of a 1981 tape, *RW*, No. 103, May 1, 1981, p. 22.

It is not enough to be “for revolution,” it is also decisive to determine exactly *what kind* of revolution you are for, exactly *which* revolutionary banner and program you will uphold and fight for — and there will be many in the field, especially as a revolutionary situation approaches and then ripens.

When it is said, “I’ll be there when the time comes,” the question must then be sharply put: you’ll be *where*?! “There” must be there during the period of political preparation, working to strengthen and to ready the forces rallying to the revolutionary communist/proletarian internationalist banner and broadening and deepening its influence and following among the masses as they awaken to political life, before and leading into a revolutionary situation. We have stressed many times — but it cannot be stressed too many — that this work and struggle of preparation will have a decisive influence on the question of *whether* a revolution succeeds when a revolutionary crisis does ripen and *what kind* of revolution will occur, with which class in the forefront, leading toward what goal.

“When the Real Deal Goes Down . . . I’ll Be There’ — You’ll Be Where?!”, *RW*, No. 202, April 22, 1983, pp. 3, 4.

While the revolution has not yet begun here — in the basic sense that there is not a revolutionary situation, nor certainly is the time ripe yet for the mobilization of millions and tens of millions in the all-out armed battle for power — in one important sense, the revolution has begun — in the sense that the work and struggle we carry out now will play a crucial part in determining the outcome of the struggle for power when it does finally become the order of the day. This is vital for not only party members

but the advanced workers and other revolutionary-minded forces to grasp. It is crucial not only in a general way for carrying forward revolutionary work and struggle in preparation for the full ripening of the situation but particularly in avoiding the error of dragging behind, failing to strain to make the greatest advances toward the revolutionary goal at every point, and on the other hand the tendency (or temptation) to make premature attempts at all-out revolutionary struggle — which, in turn, will lead to defeat, demoralization and the failure to actually make the advances now that set the stage for and prepare the party and the masses to undertake that historic struggle when the time is ripe for it.

*Coming from Behind to Make Revolution*, p. 35.

In no way should the taking of “independent historical action” by the advanced section of workers in this country, even if it is relatively small at this time, be underestimated or downgraded.

*1980 — a Year, a Decade of Historic Importance*, p. 8.

Lenin drove home over and over again the fundamental point that the workers cannot fully develop their political consciousness and political struggle against the system unless and until the communists carry out consistently Marxist propaganda and agitation, and in particular penetrating exposure of all manifestations of tyranny and oppression perpetrated by the ruling class, and all aspects of the life, the interests and outlook of the various classes and strata of society. Lenin insisted on the decisive role of the communist newspaper, as educator of the masses and as a collective organizer

of the party itself and the revolutionary forces generally.

Do not these basic principles stressed by Lenin have broad application in all countries at all times, and more specifically does not his emphasis on Marxist agitation and propaganda, especially scientific, living exposure, and on the central role of the communist newspaper, have great relevance and importance for the present situation and its future prospects in the U.S.? Who will deny it?

*Coming from Behind to Make Revolution,*  
p. 30.

In a situation like the U.S. today the *preparation* for revolution is essentially *political*, preparing minds and organizing forces. The *Revolutionary Worker* is the key weapon now, the hub of all that political work. It is central in laying the basis to wage and win the future revolutionary civil war whenever the conditions do ripen for such a struggle.

"Stepping Up . . . Stepping Out," *RW*, No. 151, April 16, 1982, p. 15.

It must be really understood that we are involved in warfare with the enemy — a particular kind of warfare in which at the present time the main battles and campaigns are political and the main weapon the newspaper, but a kind of warfare in which the outcome of these campaigns and battles is no less decisive than when the form of struggle is literally, directly military.

*Coming from Behind to Make Revolution,*  
p. 36.

The central task of our party — create public opinion/seize power — is an overall process, so that the

seeds of seizing power are present and must be nurtured and developed even in today's circumstances where the ongoing focus is creating public opinion in an all-around way for proletarian revolution.

Exposure — bringing to light the nature and features of the enemy and of other classes and social groupings and forces, in an all-around way, from many different angles and following close on major social questions and world events — is the key link now in carrying out the central task.

Supporting the outbreaks of protest and rebellion of the masses — above all by "stretching the proletarian revolutionary line into them" but also by entering more fully into the arenas of serious struggle and confrontation between masses of people and the imperialists and giving even greater emphasis to leading especially the advanced among the basic masses to mount the political stage, under the banner of the revolutionary proletariat (of the party and of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement in particular) — this is of increased importance in today's situation.

Such political preparation is the most important way to influence the political terrain now, to plant and nurture the seeds and shoots of a future armed uprising, to learn more fully the features of the enemy and all classes and strata in society, and to develop — especially among the advanced, with the party at the core — the political ability and "maturity" to handle the extremely complex, tortuous, and magnified character of the revolutionary situation, when it does ripen, and of the actual revolutionary armed struggle for power.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 45-47.

Creating public opinion for revolution is not a mere "battle of ideas" — though it definitely involves

that — but the heart of it, the key link, is exposure: penetrating and all-around exposure of the features and nature of this hideous and death-bound system, of the class that rules it and of all the classes, strata and groups in society, not just in this country but the world as a whole, including both those that are enemies and those that are (at least possible) allies of the proletariat. Life itself is the inexhaustible source for such exposure.

“Why Our Plan Is ‘Create Public Opinion . . . Seize Power,’” *RW*, No. 92, February 13, 1981, p. 3.

For some time I have been fascinated by the prospects for communist stand-up comedians. After all, regardless of the politics of any particular comedian, much of comedy in general and stand-up comedy in particular consists of social and political commentary. How could it be otherwise? This is not to say that all stand-up comedians — or even those whose social/political barbs are directed against the *status quo* — need be, should be, or could be, communists in today’s world. Nor, certainly, should every communist try to be a stand-up comedian. But it has struck me that joining the ability to do that kind of humor with a genuinely communist outlook — as opposed to a pitiful doctrinaire, narrow and philistine excuse for such an outlook — could make for a dynamite combination.

“The Challenges Confronting Communist Stand-Up Comedians, or More on Hypocrisy,” *RW*, No. 196, March 11, 1983, p. 3.

When you find yourself falling back on reciting rhetoric, falling back and acting or talking like a typical “commie,” then you know that that’s when

you’ve run up against the limitations of your understanding and you’re falling back on some phrases you heard somewhere to try to get out of a tough situation. That should teach us a key lesson here — that precisely the more deeply and in an all-around way we grasp this revolutionary theory, then the *more*, not the less, we’re going to be able to translate that into sharp and cutting exposure, agitation and propaganda, and the more we’re going to be able to bring forward the masses and inspire them to take up the revolutionary struggle and inspire them to get down on this theory so that they can consciously take it up and struggle consciously in the interests of our class and bring forward still broader ranks of the people into this struggle.

“Don’t Be a ‘Typical Commie,’ Be a Communist,” excerpts from a 1979 speech to Mao Defendants volunteers in Washington, D.C., *RW*, No. 42, February 22, 1980, p. 15.

You cannot carry out effective and sharp exposure if you don’t know what’s on the minds of the masses, and first of all the advanced masses, especially among the proletariat and the real solid social base for a revolutionary line, but also more broadly.

So, the party has to learn and lead, and not just at the time when a revolutionary situation is maturing and ripening and a revolutionary struggle to seize power becomes possible — but all the way along this is so, through the whole period of preparation for revolution, as well as in carrying it out.

“More on the Party and Mass Movements in Relation to the Revolutionary Goal,” *If There Is to Be Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party*, p. 54.

It is not possible to “win a battle of public opinion” with the bourgeoisie before it is overthrown — nor is that necessary. The fact is that sooner or later — and it is quite possible that this will happen in this decade in this country — things will reach the point where there will be the actual attempt by significant sections of the masses to rise up in arms against the system. The ability of the class-conscious proletariat to march to the head of that, with the party playing the overall leading role, depends both on the work we do between now and then (whenever “then” actually is) and how well not only the party but beyond it the class-conscious proletariat it has trained does in actually winning leadership and coordinating the uprising under their overall leadership.

“Why Our Plan Is ‘Create Public Opinion . . . Seize Power.’ ” *RW*, No. 92, February 13, 1981, p. 3.

When — or it should be said, *as* — things develop to the point where this is happening more and more, when in response to something such as the Miami rebellions workers take to the streets, even begin to lead strikes and organized political movements in solidarity and support, and raise up the revolutionary banner of the international proletariat as the standard for the oppressed in revolt to rally around . . . then tremendous progress will be made, and further positions occupied by the class-conscious proletariat in its preparation for the time when it can lead the all-out struggle to overthrow U.S. imperialism and continue marching with the international proletariat toward the final goal of communism. But such progress is not something only for the future, nor something to merely dream idly about — it is something to be worked and struggled

for; and in this, as in everything, it is necessary to strain against the limits at every point. But the important thing to grasp is that there is already a basis for making such progress, that there are advanced workers who desire to, even strive to, act in this way, and that the foremost attention of the party must be placed on giving systematic expression and leadership to this and in an overall way meeting the interests and requirements of this advanced section of the proletariat.

*Coming from Behind to Make Revolution*,  
p. 34.

We know the red flag is not going to be the only banner out in the field when forces are mobilized and people come more and more into motion in the period ahead and especially as a revolutionary situation develops. There will be many banners and many forces in the field. And it will be crucial to unite as broadly as possible with all the different forces who are coming into motion against this common imperialist system, against this common enemy. But at the same time, whether or not this revolutionary upsurge of the masses of people is defeated, whether it is turned back, whether it is led into a blind alley and set up for an ambush, whether it goes only part way and then suffers yet once more a reversal, or whether it goes forward and takes the first great step of actually seizing political power and establishing the proletarian dictatorship, and establishing a base area for the proletarian revolution throughout the world, the crucial question will be how well we are prepared: not just the ranks of the Revolutionary Communist Party, not just how much we’ve built the party, but more than that, how broadly a force of people has been trained, fundamentally how much and how broadly revolu-

tionary public opinion has been created and the advanced forces have been brought forward to raise up the red flag wherever the oppressed rise up and struggle, wherever the enemy is bringing down its hideous oppression on the people and wherever its vicious hand can be exposed.

"Bob Avakian on May First," text of a 1981 tape, *RW*, No. 103, May 1, 1981, p. 22.

### THE CLASS-CONSCIOUS MINORITY AND THE BROADER MASSES

It is a common device to warn "the people in the ghettos and barrios of urban centers" that they are "only a small minority" and that they are bound to be hopelessly overwhelmed if they ever attempt a real revolutionary rising. But there is a fundamental class division in the U.S. as a whole between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat (including millions of whites as well as oppressed peoples concentrated in the ghettos and barrios) and there is a growing polarization in U.S. society as a whole. In the period ahead, with alienation and upheaval increasing in society and among broader numbers of people of different strata, who can say that, when it is for real not a game, the city, especially with the conscious revolutionary proletariat at its head, cannot exert a powerful enough force and sweep enough along with it to win?

"The 'City Game' — and the City, No Game," *RW*, No. 201 April 15, 1983, p. 4.

Can we in fact get the majority of people to unite for revolution? Yes we can. *But we ain't going to get them all at one time, and more than that we ain't go-*

*ing to wait until we got 'em all at one time together before we talk, and more than talk, before we act together with millions of people to make revolution. I've got a question. What's wrong with taking power with a minority of people? So long as we're talking about millions and millions and millions with the class-conscious proletarians at the head, so long as we're talking about millions and millions of people, what's wrong with starting with a minority? And then winning over the majority?*

"Bob Avakian on May First," text of a 1981 tape, *RW*, No. 103, May 1, 1981, p. 21.

As Mao Tsetung perceptively noted: "I believe it is true everywhere that people at the two poles are few while those in the middle are many."

Those who stand firmly with the revolutionary position will always be in the minority. And in nonrevolutionary times — including situations where there is serious crisis and the conditions for some are desperate, but an acute crisis making possible real, full revolutionary struggle has not yet emerged — those who desire revolution (or radical change in a general sense) are also bound to be a minority. But as things sharpen further, and especially as they approach a revolutionary crisis, such a minority can exert tremendous influence, far beyond its numbers. This is still more the case as a revolutionary situation actually does emerge and this minority is able to break through the cracks and fissures in society and its ruling apparatus and make a real bid for power.

This is a gigantic, liberating truth that the ruling class is desperate to keep that revolutionary minority and its potential supporters from really understanding and acting on!

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 51, 52.

The advanced, politically conscious forces — including the revolutionary intellectuals who are generally the first to take up revolutionary theory and begin developing a revolutionary line, as well as the advanced among the masses who rally to it and take it up as their own — are always a small minority in society, especially in “normal” (nonrevolutionary) times. This is nothing to get upset or disoriented about — even now, with the urgent tasks at hand and monumental stakes involved. The point is that the passive posture of large numbers of the masses can and will change dramatically and virtually overnight with the approach and especially the eruption of a revolutionary crisis, when “all of a sudden” millions can be rallied — though they do not “automatically” rally — to the proletarian revolutionary banner. Lenin did not shrink from describing this phenomenon as one where “millions come to the assistance of a few score of party people” (a statement worth pondering). This strengthens our understanding of why it is so crucial not to give vent to frustration — perhaps leading to adventurism — but to consistently carry out the work of political preparation to be in the strongest position for the time when millions of such “reserves” do “come to our assistance,” perhaps very suddenly.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 92-93.

I have several times noted the fact that for the advanced forces, for those who come to the forefront of the revolutionary struggle, there is a heavy weight to carry. It is demanding a lot of them to play this role, to be the ones to most steadfastly carry the revolutionary struggle along. But it is not too much to demand.

In basketball there are those players who are not

only outstanding in general but who specifically make the big plays at the crucial moments. These are the ones who *want* the ball when crunch time comes, when the whole game is on the line. They are the ones who love to go into the home court of the biggest rivals and rise to their greatest right in the face of the other team and their howling, screaming fans. These are the ones who not only soar to great heights themselves but in so doing raise the level of their team as a whole. Why shouldn't the advanced forces of proletarian revolution — those who have the most profound interest in this revolution and the most profound desire for revolution — why shouldn't they be capable of this kind of greatness?

Previously unpublished.

Lenin, you see, was not very impressed with the idea of attracting — or attempting to attract — a mass following on a non- (nor certainly counter-) revolutionary basis. He recognized that the majority of the masses would not follow a revolutionary line in a nonrevolutionary period. Again, this did not lead him to give up on the revolution or on the masses, nor on carrying out consistently revolutionary work and *on that basis* influencing the masses as broadly as possible at each point. But it did lead him to stress that in nonrevolutionary situations to mobilize thousands or tens of thousands around the party's — revolutionary — line was crucial in many ways for preparing for the time when it would be possible to win millions and tens of millions to the revolutionary position.

“For Decades to Come on a World Scale.”  
excerpts from 1980 Central Committee  
Report, *RW*, No. 98, March 27, 1981, p. 10.

The revolution is to a significant degree a civil war between two sections of the people. This is certainly no less true or important in the U.S. than in other countries. By the time things reach the point of revolutionary warfare (versus counterrevolutionary warfare) we will have a significant base of support, and on the other side so will they — but, again, most of the people will be middle forces. Here stands out the importance of winning a significant number among these middle forces to “friendly neutrality.” A big part of the timing of when to launch the armed struggle (or when to give spontaneous uprisings of masses the organized, all-around character of revolutionary warfare) is precisely concerned with finding the right circumstances to be able to win the greatest number of such middle forces to at least this “friendly neutrality,” to have the other side (the imperialists and their reactionary social base) politically on the defensive and discredited among those middle forces to the greatest degree possible while our side and our forces have the initiative and political “credibility,” especially among the advanced of the basic masses but also among the politically aware middle strata.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 53-54.

## 7. SEIZING POWER — REVOLUTIONARY WARFARE

Beyond all question we want to do away with war once and for all. But in order to get rid of war it is necessary to wage war. Or as Mao put it very simply, in order to get rid of the gun it is necessary to pick up the gun. In order to get rid of war it is necessary to get rid of the cause of war.

“Why Profit Junkie System Breeds War,”  
from a 1979 speech in Seattle, Washington,  
*RCY*, Vol. 3, No. 9, September 1980, p. 21.

We’re not just talking about guns. We’re talking about people being educated to fight consciously and with a heroism the imperialists’ army can never have, as was proved in Indochina, because we’ll be fighting consciously for a time when we can put an *end* to bloodshed. That’s our desire; that’s our objective, and that’s what we’ll realize in the future. After we bury this system of imperialism and every form of exploitation, we’ll bury the guns along with it, but not one day before, not one day before that.

“This System Is Doomed, Let’s Finish It Off!”, speech delivered May 1, 1979, *RW*, No. 50, April 18, 1980, p. 22.

Every time we try to change things, they pound their gavel and pull their guns and say: “Overruled!” We go out here every day and what does the ruling class say to us, time and again? “All your hopes and

dreams and aspirations for something higher are overruled. All your demands for a better life, your struggling and striving to get out from underneath this, is overruled.” With that reactionary message of the imperialist class ringing in our ears, we are going to go out here to work among thousands and millions of people, to move thousands and then through thousands move and influence and organize and channel the hatred of millions.

It is going to come to that point where this system is weakened and the determination of the people for change is strengthened and millions of people are going to go from being unarmed — trying to protest or find some peaceful way to change this system by its rules — to saying: “I can’t stand this another day, I won’t live under it another day. I’m willing to put everything on the line to change it!” At that point our party is going to lead them and organize them in taking up arms with the strength of millions.

As we do all this, our vision of the future is going to be before us, and ringing in our ears will be that reactionary message they daily pound into our heads, that everything we hope and strive and struggle for is overruled. As we go and defeat, disintegrate, and win over part of their imperialist army, smash and punish their private reactionary armies; as we shatter and destroy their police forces and punish them for their crimes; as we go in and break the stranglehold of their bureaucracies — break up their administrative hold and apparatus, declaring them null and void — we are going to see those capitalists who have declared everything we want and hope and struggle for overruled. We are going to see them and we are going to chase them into the corner like the reactionary rats they are. As they are in that corner with all their state machinery, their armies, their bureaucracies broken and shattered, and with the conscious force and determination of

millions of people rising up in arms, the vision and understanding of their own interests and the future that belongs to them clearly before them — we are going to point those millions of guns squarely at the imperialists, and with their reactionary message ringing in our ears, we are going to look them straight in the eye and say:

“Overrule *this*, Motherfucker!”

“To All Those Who Refuse to Live and Die on Their Knees,” Part 2, excerpts from 1979 national speaking tour, *RW*, No. 243, February 17, 1984, p. 10.

It is not time to raise the armed struggle for power as an immediate practical question in the U.S., but *it is* time to raise preparation for that struggle as an immediate, urgent, and imminently (as well as eminently) practical question. By this I mean not only the kind of political preparation spoken to repeatedly but also more specific political/organizational preparation more directly linked to developing a mass consciousness about the possibility and also the strategic orientation, means, and methods for carrying out this armed struggle when it does become an immediate practical question.

Raising and popularizing this now and in an ongoing way — even when and even though the form of struggle we must be focusing our efforts on now is political and not military struggle — is an indispensable part of overall preparation for the armed struggle: for the shift in emphasis to the “seize power” aspect of our central task.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 111.

I know what they’re going to say. All I did was get up here and talk about guns and bloodshed. The newsmen will go home now. See, they heard all the

talk about guns and bloodshed, and they're gonna go home. "We went down there and we heard them talk about guns and bloodshed." Alright, we're talking about guns and bloodshed. What are you talking about when you're talking about shooting missiles across the sea and over the oceans? What are you talking about when you're talking about bringing back the draft and gearing up for war? You're talking about bloodshed.

"This System Is Doomed! Let's Finish It Off!", speech delivered May 1, 1979, *RW*, No. 50, April 18, 1980, p. 22.

I'm telling the pigs in the audience, don't go looking around trying to see where our army is. Don't look in dark corners. Look out here on the streets where the people are, that's where our army is — that's where it's going to be built from. And some of your army will come over to us. Oh, yes it will, and we're going to take the guns out of your hands and put them in the hands of the people.

That's where our guns are coming from — our guns are in your hands, and when we get ready, we'll take them!

"This System Is Doomed! Let's Finish It Off!" speech delivered May 1, 1979, *RW*, No. 50, April 18, 1980, p. 24.

In the final analysis, as Engels once expressed it, the proletariat must win its emancipation on the battlefield. But there is not only the question of winning in this sense but of how we win in the largest sense. One of the significant if perhaps subtle and often little-noticed ways in which the enemy, even in defeat, seeks to exact revenge on the revolution and sow the seed of its future undoing is in what he would force the revolutionaries to become in order

to defeat him. It will come to this: we will have to face him in the trenches and defeat him amidst terrible destruction but we must not in the process annihilate the fundamental difference between the enemy and ourselves. Here the example of Marx is illuminating: he repeatedly fought at close quarters with the ideologists and apologists of the bourgeoisie but he never fought them on their terms or with their outlook; with Marx his method is as exhilarating as his goal is inspiring. We must be able to maintain our firmness of principles but at the same time our flexibility, our materialism and our dialectics, our realism and our romanticism, our solemn sense of purpose and our sense of humor.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, p. 152.

At the very same time that he summarized the basic truth that all political power grows out of the barrel of a gun, Mao also insisted on a no less decisive principle: "the Party commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the Party."

*An End to the Horror*, p. 63.

Military science and strategy is a serious question that must and can be taken up and conquered with the science of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. We are behind the bourgeoisie on this front — they know more than we do. Although our class internationally has gained rich experience on the question of revolutionary warfare, nevertheless particularly in a situation like our own, there is not much experience and we'll have to chart an uncharted course there, too — and we'll do that. I don't

say that glibly — that's a task that we have to take up seriously and scientifically.

*Coming from Behind to Make Revolution,*  
p. 18.

The experience of the Chinese Revolution was much richer than that of the Russian Revolution in regard to revolutionary warfare and the approach to military doctrine, to the question of developing a revolutionary army with revolutionary politics in command, of the relation between weapons, overall technology, and expertise on the one hand, and what Mao called "the conscious, dynamic role of man" on the other — all this, in terms of basic approach, is much more of a "model" for the revolutionary proletariat, not just in Third World countries, but in general. Still, this has not of course solved all the problems the international proletariat will encounter in waging revolutionary warfare.

As Mao himself insisted, revolution (and all life) is not a stagnant pond but an ever-rushing great river; and more specifically (as Mao himself also repeatedly stressed) war is one of the spheres where one finds most powerfully expressed the basic truth that no great event appears in the same form, in all significant aspects, as similar great events before it; where fluidity, change, and surprise are most essential features; and where the need to act in accordance with all this is most prominently expressed.

*An End to the Horror,* pp. 70, 71.

We have to carry out our work to prepare ourselves, the advanced, and the broader masses as they awaken to political life, for different eventualities, and in particular different "sparks" that set off the armed struggle. While we must learn from

historical experience, we must not be bound by stereotypes or search for "perfect models" or "ready-made revolutions." As Mao put it: "One must not be restricted. Lenin refused to be restricted by Marx . . . One must not be superstitious. One must not be restricted. One must have new interpretations, new viewpoints, and creativity."

*An End to the Horror,* p. 114.

The correct strategy for revolutionary war depends on the concrete conditions and differs with different countries (and in general terms with the two basic types of countries: imperialist states and oppressed nations, with insurrection followed by civil war the general model in the first type and protracted revolutionary war, beginning in the countryside and with the strategic defensive, generally the model in the second type).

*An End to the Horror,* p. 85.

Mao says at one point that all military logic, whatever the particulars, can be reduced to this: "You fight your way and I'll fight my way."

In an overall sense and as a basic orientation this formulation applies and is of great importance.

With regard to the imperialists and reactionaries generally, if they can't fight their way — as they are deprived of the ability to fight their way — their strategic weaknesses will increasingly show up; and so it must be a major objective of the revolutionary army precisely to deprive them of that ability. Particularly up against a revolutionary army, they depend on utilizing, and intimidating and overpowering the other side with, superior technology and (at the start) superior numbers. They depend especially on extensive air power not only for heavy bombard-

ment but also to amass combat force and for mobility generally. Imperialist and reactionary troops generally cannot fight effectively, or sustain effective fighting, without such “reassurance,” especially when they are up against revolutionary armed forces representing and fighting for the interests of the masses of people.

Again, when imperialist and reactionary armies are deprived of the ability to fight their way — to overwhelm and pound the enemy with superior technology and force — then their strategic weaknesses increasingly stand out: they are an army of plunder and exploitation, opposed to the interests of the masses of people worldwide; their troops have no real political consciousness or awareness of the actual interests and objectives they are fighting for; they rely on technology and technological superiority and therefore are at a loss to a great degree when they do not have it or it is effectively neutralized; their ranks are organized in a strict, oppressive hierarchy and command structure and are riddled with acute class and national (and male/female) contradictions and conflicts, including among the “grunts” themselves as well as between officers and rank-and-file soldiers. And all this will gather momentum once it has begun to strongly assert its influence.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 75, 76-77.

To get to the point where it is possible to initiate the armed struggle and be able to continue it to the point of being able (to at least begin) to deprive the imperialists and reactionaries of the ability to fight their way depends on the development of the objective world situation, but a very important part of that is revolutionary struggle and mass protest and rebellion not only in the U.S. but worldwide. And

even favorable developments in the objective situation which might provide revolutionary opportunities will be lost without the orientation and the political “tenseness” to be able to recognize and seize the moment to go over to insurrectionary struggle. This is another expression of the importance of political preparation of the masses, especially of the advanced, as well as of the party itself, from now looking forward to the time when the insurrection can be launched and coordinated into revolutionary war for political power.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 77-78.

The insurrection and civil war to follow must be viewed, strategically, as a whole, and in an overall sense must be guided by a unified doctrine and strategic orientation.

This is especially important given the concrete conditions and relations in the U.S., where the social base for proletarian revolution is concentrated so preponderantly in the “urban cores” and where a key question from the beginning of the armed insurrection will be to “break out” of an enemy encirclement, containment, and suppression of these “cores.” In fact, the emergence of a situation in which there is a “good shot” at doing this in at least a number of major urban concentrations is a decisive aspect of the objective conditions needed to launch the armed struggle for power.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 78.

The objective of the insurrection must be, while seeking to conquer as much as can be in the initial stage, to minimally establish a revolutionary regime, if only at first in a part of the country, to act as a relatively secure base area (rear) for the revolu-

tionary armed forces.

There will be, of course, important differences between the process of revolutionary warfare in different countries and in particular between the two basic types of countries — imperialist states and oppressed nations — and in the latter it will be the general rule that forms of guerrilla warfare in particular areas, rather than simultaneous insurrectionary uprisings, will characterize the first stages of the revolutionary war. But in these cases too the objective is to establish revolutionary base areas, embryonic revolutionary regimes, as a rear for carrying forward the revolutionary war. (In this connection Mao argues: “The heterogeneity and uneven development of China’s economy are rather advantageous in the war of resistance.” He adds the observation, very provocative to ponder in terms of revolutionary warfare in the advanced imperialist countries: “to sever Shanghai from the rest of China would definitely not be as disastrous to China as would be the severance of New York from the rest of the United States.”)

*An End to the Horror*, p. 81.

The offensive is decisive — and the defensive is death — in insurrection.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 79.

From the beginning of the insurrection there will be what Lenin called “*the fight for the troops*.” But, as he insisted, the launching of the insurrection does not depend on nor can it wait for the winning over of the troops of the reactionary army. It will precisely be a fight between the revolutionary and the counterrevolutionary camps for the allegiance of the rank-and-file troops of the reactionary army, and

precisely the winning of these troops (or many of them, since it would be foolish to expect to win them all) depends on the initiation of the armed insurrection when the time is ripe, and then on the daring and determination of the insurrectionaries, the increasing polarization of the situation and especially the momentum gained by the insurrection as it advances quickly upon each victory and from each position conquered.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 81-82.

Lenin notes that the uprising in Moscow in December 1905 “strikingly confirmed one of Marx’s profound propositions: revolution progresses by giving rise to a strong and united counterrevolution, i.e., it compels the enemy to resort to more and more extreme measures of defense and in this way devises ever more powerful means of attack.” There is no way to get around the fact that it is necessary to *defeat*, militarily, the armed forces of counterrevolution on the battlefield. An insurrection should not be launched without a perspective for doing just that, and for handling to advantage the dialectic Lenin (citing Marx) refers to just above: Winning over significant sections of the troops of the counterrevolutionary armed forces depends on demoralizing them, which in turn depends on defeating them in battle and putting them into disarray.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 82.

When you’re waging a civil war in an imperialist country, when you have to go *against* the spontaneous tide, your strategic objective should still be to win over all who can be won over to you, that is to unite with or to neutralize the broadest number, and to isolate the real enemies to the greatest degree

possible; the united front kind of approach is still correct there. But we've correctly emphasized that a civil war is a struggle between two sections of the people, and we're not going to have 90 percent with us more or less all the way through.

*"Internationalism and the Mass Line," If There Is to Be Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party, p. 27.*

The revolutionary proletariat, where its necessary strategic approach is to begin with armed insurrection, must also strike dramatic blows quickly. It must shatter the existing status quo and balance of forces, thus bringing into play its vast, powerful reserves — among the masses of the oppressed — and bringing over to its side important parts of the previous reserves and forces of the enemy, among his own troops as well as middle forces in society who tend to "go with the flow" (and more to the point, with the power — with who is on top or at least has the momentum).

*An End to the Horror, p. 86.*

Wars are never decided by weapons alone, and in the case of revolutionary war versus counterrevolutionary war this is all the more the case — or there never could or would have been a successful revolution!

*An End to the Horror, p. 87.*

Where do the revolutionary armed forces get their weapons from, especially at the start? The answer provided by historical experience and revolutionary principles summed up from it is that, overwhelmingly, especially at the start, the weapons of the revolutionary armed forces come from the enemy —

that is, they are captured; and the capturing of these weapons is one of the most important objects of the revolutionary army in waging battles.

*An End to the Horror, pp. 82-83.*

Another basic principle formulated and fought fiercely for by Mao: people, not weapons, are decisive in warfare. In a fundamental sense, an army is a concentration of the society it is fighting for — of the social and political relations, values, etc., that are dominant and characterize that society. And the fundamental difference between revolutionary armies and counterrevolutionary armies will continue to find fuller expression the more a war between them goes on. This is one of the most significant aspects of the importance of being able to keep the revolutionary war going and gathering momentum once it has been initiated.

*An End to the Horror, p. 77.*

The principle that the next war will differ in important aspects from the last one will find much more concentrated and dramatic expression than ever before in the approaching world-historic conjuncture, on both the side of the proletariat and revolutionary people and that of the imperialists and reactionaries. A particularly important aspect of this, and a peculiar feature of the approaching conjuncture, is that the explosion of the major world contradictions — even if world war is prevented by revolution — will almost certainly witness the extremes of advanced technological methods of warfare on the one hand and "primitive" methods of warfare on the other.

*An End to the Horror, p. 73.*

In the armed struggle in the U.S. a particular application of the offense within the defense will be necessary to deal especially with air attacks and even possible nuclear attacks on the strongholds of the revolutionary army: that is, the tactical approach of fighting at close quarters (or “intermingled”) with the enemy forces, at least in certain circumstances. We should learn from the policies developed by the leaders of our class, such as Mao’s 1964 discussion of how to deal with the threat of atomic attacks on Chinese cities:

“We shall run away when they drop the atom bombs. When they enter the city, we shall also enter the city and the enemy will not dare to use the atom bomb. We shall engage in street fighting. At any rate, we shall fight them.”

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 84-85.

We must combine our revolutionary enthusiasm — our urgent desire for radical change and our deep hatred and strategic contempt for imperialism and its crimes — with sober, serious, scientific, and consistent preparation for revolution. That means most of all political preparation now, but it also means specific preparation for revolutionary war — in the realm now of theory and strategic thinking and the urgent summing up of the practical experience in war of all different forces, but especially revolutionary forces, in the international arena. It also means taking initiative and making innovations to develop practical steps which are not themselves military but involve people in mass forms that lay a basis for military organization in the future, when the armed struggle does come on the agenda.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 88-89.

Mao provided a succinct summary of a fundamental principle of revolution when he said that “without a people’s army the people have nothing.”

The approaching world-historic conjuncture, with its magnification of the prospects and effects of both war and revolution, will give a further, even a truly unprecedented expression of this basic truth.

This will certainly be so if revolution is able to prevent world war; and if it is not, then in the conditions of massive destruction — indeed the very likely shattering of the whole framework of human civilization as we now know it — there will be the fierce struggle to determine on what basis the reconstitution of some kind of society and the “starting up again” will be established. There can be no question that in such circumstances without revolutionary armed forces the revolutionary people will have nothing — because they (and you know whom I mean by “they”) will still be around and still be determined, after all that, to reimpose their rule and their social relations.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 61-62.

## 8. THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

The Revolutionary Communist Party, USA is a party of struggle. A party of slaves who are determined not to be slaves any longer. It's the organized general staff and leadership of our class, to lead it in this historic battle, this historic mission of advancing human society to a completely new stage, to end wage slavery, and all the evils and suffering of this capitalist system. To end exploitation and to rip out for once and for all the weeds and roots of exploitation, so that they can never grow again.

And with the leadership of our party, the party of our class, and together with the hundreds of millions of our class throughout the world, nothing can stop us. We will free ourselves and we will free all mankind.

*Our Class Will Free Itself and All Mankind,*  
p. 30.

The formation of the party itself is a creation, is a product of the struggle of our class.

*Our Class Will Free Itself and All Mankind,*  
p. 1.

Some of these people say, "Oh, you talk so *nasty*. How can people like *that* run a country?" Well, I'm going to tell you, we just talk like all the rest of the masses of people talk and the time's going to come when all these nasty-talking people out there are go-

ing to run the whole goddamn world! And we're not going to talk nice and polite the way you tell us to talk. We're going to talk the way it actually is and the way we feel about it. But it's going to be *scientific* and that's what's going to *really* drive you crazy.

"They Can't Believe We'll Rise Above the Muck and the Mire," *RW*, No. 56, May 23, 1980, p. 14; *On the Mao Tsetung Defendants' Railroad and the Historic Battles Ahead*, p. 16.

The most lasting and most important product of the movement of the '60s and early '70s in the U.S. was the formation of a genuine Marxist-Leninist vanguard party. Because it went deeply into the science of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, because it fought for a correct political program and ideological understanding and outlook, it was able not only to survive but to become strengthened and tempered as a revolutionary force. This is our party, the Revolutionary Communist Party, which was formed in 1975 but whose roots lie in the revolutionary upsurges of the 1960s and early '70s, not only in this country but worldwide.

"Why There Was No Revolution in the '60s and Why There May Be in the '80s," from a 1979 speech in Cleveland, Ohio, *RW*, No. 47, March 28, 1980, p. 18.

It is no exaggeration to say that without the theory and line developed by Mao and the practice of the Chinese masses in carrying it out, especially through the Cultural Revolution, our party would not and could not have been founded when it was and on such a revolutionary basis.

"Second Party Congress Deepens Victory: Opening Remarks at Congress," *Revolution*, April/May 1978, p. 12.

Where does the Revolutionary Communist Party come from? Where does its line come from? Is it in fact a product of a few people, is it the product of a genius or two? Or in fact is this the product of the whole struggle, not just in this country but internationally, not just in the last ten years but ultimately throughout history, while most immediately and directly during the period of the last 10 or 20 years? And where did this line and party come from? Did it come out of the sky, or in fact was it forged through fierce class struggle both among the masses against the bourgeoisie and within the revolutionary movement against those who either out of well-intentioned but mistaken motives or out of outright opportunism attempted to lead people into one form or another of blind alley and into the swamp?

“Don’t Be a ‘Typical Commie,’ Be a Communist,” from a 1979 speech to Mao Defendants volunteers in Washington, D.C., *RW*, No. 42, February 22, 1980, p. 14.

This party *is* different from any other party in the history of this country. Not because the people in it are better than the people who went before them and tried to make revolution or than other people today who say they’re for some kind of revolution, but because we do have the experience of those before us and more than that because this happens to be the party whose leaders and whose members generally fought at every crucial point, and all along the way, to arm themselves with the theory of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, to apply it concretely to the struggle here as well as keeping the whole world in mind and applying it to that situation as well. We fought for that. That isn’t

something that was handed to us, that isn’t something that came easily for us, and it still doesn’t.

“Don’t Be a ‘Typical Commie,’ Be a Communist,” from a 1979 speech to Mao Defendants volunteers in Washington, D.C., *RW*, No. 42, February 22, 1980, pp. 14-15.

Any kind of mass struggle or mass organization — as important as it genuinely may be, and even if it’s a struggle that becomes very broad and lasts a long time — has a temporary character as compared with the party and as compared with the ongoing task of revolution.

“The Party: The Key Part of Organizing Forces,” *If There Is to Be Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party*, p. 40.

The party’s roots and its influence must grow and deepen many, many times over in the period just ahead.

This is possible, but it cannot happen without advanced people joining up (why not — if confused and ignorant people among the masses are joining the imperialist army out of desperation, why can’t the enlightened, politically advanced join the party of the proletariat?) and carrying out systematic party work according to a single strategy and plan and an overall division of labor facilitating the most effective revolutionary activity.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 95.

Not only does there have to be a clear identification of our revolutionary communist/proletarian internationalist trend, but we have to make a real living thing among the masses of the question that we have a party which is ours and which we have to

join and build and strengthen as a crucial part of preparation for revolution, that we have a party that actually expresses our proletarian and internationalist outlook and interests, and whether it stands or falls and whether it can play its role depends on *us* and not just on *it* as an external abstraction. All this must be made a real living thing to the masses, particularly to the advanced.

*Conquer the World*, p. 49.

Line and the training of party members and those drawn toward the party in theory and in practice is the key link in party building. But also extremely important is the question of building the party quantitatively. To put it in simple terms, building its membership, bringing in new members continually, building up the quantitative aspect of the party is crucial to being able, even first of all, to gauge the developments — specifically the mood of the masses — toward a revolutionary situation and of course to carry through whenever a revolutionary situation does develop — which, as we've seen from experience, can develop suddenly and without much warning — and certainly without permission!

*Conquer the World*, p. 48.

Mao Tsetung once said, and I think he said a very profound truth, "If you want others to be strong, you must be strong yourself." If we want others to stand up and continue to fight and change the world, we've got to be bold, and we've got to be strong.

*Communist Revolution: the Road to the Future, the Goal We Will Win*, p. 36.

The party cannot "create" the revolutionary situation, nor can it stand aside cultivating itself until the

revolutionary situation develops and then "intervene" to assume (grab) leadership. But, on the other hand, it is through the leadership of the party that, in conformity with the laws of society and the development of the objective situation and the class struggle, the masses are concretely trained and prepared ideologically, politically and organizationally for the revolutionary situation. And it is through the leadership of the party that they are and must be led in making revolution when the situation does ripen. Who else can prepare and then lead the masses in seizing the opportunity — and who else, for that matter, can throw away that opportunity?

"Thoughts on Points for Discussion" (unpublished 1978 paper).

There is a store of knowledge, out among the masses of people, and a lot of them know a lot more things about this system better than a lot of us do. Now they don't consciously understand how to make revolution or even, in most cases, that revolution is necessary. They don't have a scientific view of their own experience and how it fits into the broader experience of the overall situation and therefore what has to be done, how to do it, how to proceed in order to unite the forces who have to be united to make revolution. But there's a vast store of knowledge out there, a vast, broad range of experience. It's not simply our role to go out and yell at them, "Everything you've thought about, all your ideas, are bullshit!" We are not a religious cult. We are people struggling to grasp and apply the scientific principles of revolution in order to be able to properly interact with the masses to bring them forward to be able to consciously struggle for revolution, because that is the only way that revolution can be made, the

only way that revolution can be kept, and the only way ultimately that humanity will advance.

"Don't Be a 'Typical Commie,' Be a Communist," from a 1979 speech to Mao Defendants volunteers in Washington, D.C., *RW*, No. 42, February 22, 1980, p. 7.

One of Mao Tsetung's great contributions to the methodology and strategy of proletarian revolution was systematizing the mass line approach. Revolution can only be made by revolutionary masses, not by the revolutionary vanguard alone, Mao insisted; and to lead them in revolution the vanguard forces must also learn from the masses and must have a clear sense of their ideas and feelings. But how did anyone ever get the idea that Mao meant the mass line as a recipe for tailing the masses and their spontaneous understanding! Take the ideas of the masses and by applying the science of Marxism-Leninism concentrate what is correct in these ideas, systematize them, bring about a higher synthesis than the partial, scattered knowledge that can be acquired spontaneously, and return that synthesis to the masses in the form of line and policies, win the masses to take these up and unite with the masses to carry them out — *that* is the weapon of the mass line as Mao forged and wielded it.

Previously unpublished.

Our party stands on constantly drawing the links between understanding the world and changing the world. We've got to study the world, we've got to understand everything about nature, we've got to understand everything about society and the way it's divided into classes, and how those classes struggle. We've got to understand how people's thinking is a reflection of the society they live in and of the nature they're interacting with and, on *that*

*basis* and together with that, we have to constantly struggle and bring masses of people forward to consciously, and ever more in a conscious way, rise up and conquer every sphere.

"They Can't Believe We'll Rise Above the Muck and the Mire," *RW*, No. 56, May 23, 1980, p. 10; *On the Mao Tsetung Defendants' Railroad and the Historic Battles Ahead*, p. 8.

Our party calls on people and says the first thing you should do is to raise your head up and ask, "why." Ask "why" whenever they tell you to do anything, and for that matter, ask why whenever *we* say you should do anything. Because we're not afraid of people questioning us. We're not afraid of people digging into what we have to say. We're not afraid of people criticizing us and struggling with us, because we stand on the basis of the revolutionary science that represents the interests of the masses of people. And if our grasp of that science is not complete, if our grasp of that science is wrong in this or that particular aspect, or if the way in which we're applying it doesn't correspond fully to the interests of the masses of people, then we're not afraid — in fact, we insist — that people come forward and call us out and question us and struggle with us and criticize us. That's the only way that we're ever going to be able to bring that revolutionary science to the masses of people, and for them to take it up and wield it as a weapon to win their own emancipation.

"Revolution: They Can't Stand It But They Can't Stop It," *RW*, No. 57, May 30, 1980, p. 14; *On the Mao Tsetung Defendants' Railroad and the Historic Battles Ahead*, p. 31.

The party is not a clique or a ladder to climb up to prestige and power or a patronage machine but a

vanguard organization whose members are central to revolution and determined to make any sacrifice, to go to the most tortuous and tumultuous battle-grounds, to carry forward the revolution.

“The Proletariat Is Learning to Walk,” from a 1979 speech to Mao Defendants volunteers in Washington, D.C., *RW*, No. 45, March 14, 1980, p. 10.

Lenin’s argument in *What Is To Be Done?* — that the more highly organized and centralized the party was, the more it was a real vanguard organization of revolutionaries, the greater would be the role and initiative of the masses in revolutionary struggle — was powerfully demonstrated in the Russian Revolution itself and has been in all proletarian revolutions. Nowhere has such a revolution been made without such a party and nowhere has the lack of such a party contributed to unleashing the initiative of masses of the oppressed in *conscious revolutionary struggle*.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, p. 84.

I see some anarchists have attacked us for taking ourselves too seriously. They brag that they, by contrast, don’t take themselves too seriously. That’s nothing to brag about.

Previously unpublished.

The point is that you’ve got to have some kind of leadership; there’s got to be some sort of direction to things; people have to take responsibility for giving some direction and leadership. With all the problems involved in a party, the real contradictions between the party and the masses, those real problems and those real dangers stem from something more

fundamental, from the division of labor and from the contradictions that generally characterize class society. And if you just want to turn your back on or walk away from those contradictions, the only thing you’ll be doing is guaranteeing that the masses’ role in things will be suppressed, that they will in fact be led around by the nose, they will in fact be taken advantage of by demagogues. That’s the only thing you can guarantee if you refuse to have and build and strengthen the role of the vanguard.

The irony for all those people who recognize this problem but who recoil from it is that it’s *only* with the role of a real vanguard party, a real revolutionary party based on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, it’s *only* with that vanguard that there’s the possibility of the masses playing a conscious role in changing things and eventually overcoming that contradiction between the party and the masses. That’s the contradictory nature of it; the greater the role of the vanguard, not in the sense that the more it has its hands organizationally on everything, but the greater its role is ideologically and politically, the greater the chances for the masses to actually take these things consciously in hand and transform the world in such a way as to eventually even eliminate the need for the vanguard when all over the world the basis for classes is eliminated. But that does *not* guarantee that the party won’t go bad, that the party won’t turn into a bunch of demagogues or its leadership won’t become a new core of a bourgeoisie; there’s no guarantee against that because you are dealing with real contradictions and they can get resolved one way or the other and they depend, as we’ve learned more deeply, more than on what’s happening in just one country at one time. But still it’s only with that vanguard and precisely to the degree that its role politically and ideologically is strengthened — it’s in

relation to that, not contrary to that, that the conscious role of the masses is developed.

“Can You Do Away with Leadership?”, *If There Is to Be Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party*, pp. 13-14.

If you deny the need for vanguard leadership and for leadership even within the party, then you are guaranteeing that bourgeois methods of leadership and bourgeois forms of leadership will prevail. That is the only real choice — proletarian leadership and methods of leadership versus bourgeois — not leadership versus no leadership, not “vanguard vs. no vanguard.”

“Can You Do Away with Leadership?”, *If There Is to Be Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party*, p. 21.

It is not without reason that opportunists of every type, along with openly reactionary political commentators, analysts, scholars, “dissidents” from the Soviet empire, and even some honest but confused people who have taken radical political stands but have not yet overstepped the bounds of bourgeois democracy, all single out Lenin’s *What Is To Be Done?* for attack. In particular they focus on its insistence on distinguishing between the masses, and their spontaneous consciousness, on the one hand, and class-conscious revolutionaries on the other — and more specifically on the conclusion that there must be an organized vanguard of the proletariat, with a backbone of professional revolutionaries, that brings communist consciousness to the masses from outside the sphere of their immediate economic relations and their economic struggles.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, p. 74.

There is a direct link between vanguard leadership and centralism, not centralism in a bourgeois sense but centralism in dialectical relationship with democracy, that is, with the conscious role of the masses. If you deny the need for a vanguard role, politically and ideologically, you will deny the need for centralism organizationally and that goes hand in hand with tailing the masses. In imperialist countries it is bound to lead to promoting social-chauvinism.

“Internationalism and the Mass Line,” *If There Is to Be Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party*, p. 24.

Saying that ideological and political line is decisive does not mean that if you have a correct line you’ll go straight ahead and win in a straight line, because motion only proceeds through twists and turns and in a spiral development. But still, it’s precisely the content of the leadership, the character of the leadership in that sense which determines whether or not there is a real revolution with the conscious role of the masses being developed, unleashed and increased or whether that’s suppressed. It’s *only* with that kind of a vanguard that such a revolution is even possible.

“Can You Do Away with Leadership?”, *If There Is to Be Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party*, p. 15.

Our basic orientation should be infused with the kind of thinking that would cause us to ask the question: How could anarchists be more revolutionary than Marxist-Leninists? It is not that these people are somehow too much out of control and too revolutionary. In fact there is nothing more revolu-

tionary than Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought.

*Conquer the World*, p. 43.

Anyone who fears the consciousness and conscious initiative of the masses or cringes at or shrinks from mass upheaval is no communist, regardless of what label he or she wears.

*Communists are Rebels*, p. 12.

Genuine communists, including genuine communist leaders within socialist society, will, must encourage and support revolution, rebellion against what is old and reactionary — *including* rebellion that exposes and attacks old ways and ideas into which we “veteran” communists are becoming set!

*Communists are Rebels*, p. 22.

One of the reasons that in the *New Constitution* of our party there is emphasis on struggle within the party is that people should understand the crucial importance and the actual laws involved — that a party has struggle within it as a critical part of the overall class struggle in society as a whole. But it’s also for people to know, secondarily but not insignificantly, that this party has a history, that it has fought through questions, and its line did not just drop out of the sky — it has been fought for and will be fought for.

*Coming from Behind to Make Revolution*, pp. 17-18.

There’s nothing so holy about a party.

It is very hard to imagine that a party could stick around for 40 or 50 years, not have the objective and

subjective conditions come together for making a revolution, *and* stay on the revolutionary road. It is not impossible. But it is not a virtue. Parties are in fact vanguards, they are in fact the expression in terms of the subjective factor of what is going on overall in the world as a whole. They are dialectically related to it and they react back upon it and have a tremendous role to play, which is linked to the role of consciousness and conscious initiative.

It represented a tremendous contribution that in China a party was able to exist and remain a revolutionary vanguard for more than 50 years, with all the tremendous struggle that was involved in that whole process, before it was finally reversed by the revisionist triumph in China. That was a tremendous achievement, nothing to take lightly, or to say “it’s really old so it’s bound to be decayed and rotten.” There is a law that the new supersedes the old but you can’t mechanically apply that to parties because parties also take in the new. You can’t just look at the length of time a party has been there and say it’s old now, because it’s constantly taking in the new and getting rid of the old itself. Eventually every party will be replaced by the new — which is communism, and not necessarily another party. So we have to understand it that way, but at the same time what I’m combating is this metaphysical notion that a party is an “institution.”

“A Party Is Not a Holy Thing — It’s Got to Be a Vanguard,” *If There Is to Be Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party*, p. 63.

In class society and with the division of labor (or significant remnants of the division of labor) characteristic of class-divided society, it is the case that certain individuals come to “represent the

truth” in a concentrated way (as others do the false). This, of course, is not a “once-and-for-all, lifetime-guaranteed” thing — and there is always the danger that building up such people could turn into a very bad thing if they no longer did “represent the truth” after a certain point. But even if there remains the real possibility that the individual may thus change, there will also remain the need for building up others who do continue to stand for the truth in a concentrated way. In any case such people play their role as leaders of a class (that is the meaning of Lenin’s comment to those who called him a dictator — better me than you, better the proletariat than the bourgeoisie) and thus there is, as Mao described it, the combination of the role of the individual (in particular in this context the individual leader) and collective leadership.

However much it may drive liberals, social democrats, and bourgeois democrats generally up a wall, there is also a dialectical relation — unity as well as opposition — between cult(s) of the individual around leading people and on the other hand ease of mind and liveliness, initiative, and creative, critical thinking among party members and the masses following the party. In the future communist society, this need for firmly established revolutionary authority as an “anchor” will no longer exist and would run counter to developing the critical spirit and critical thinking; it too will have to be abolished as an important part of the advance to communism. But to demand its abolition now runs counter to that advance, and to unleashing and developing that critical spirit and critical thinking.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 211-12.

Many people ask this question, “Listen, I really agree with a lot of what you’re saying but how do we

know that like others before you, your party won’t also sell this thing down the river?” We ain’t got no intention in this party about devoting ourselves to anything other than struggling and carrying through the fight for making revolution and moving society forward, together with the people of the world, to a whole new stage. But more than that, I’m gonna put it back to you. The fundamental question comes down to this: Do you want to be emancipated, do you want to stand up tall and proud and take the world into our hands and storm the heavens, or do you want to be forced back on your knees and learn to live on your knees and worse than that learn to *like* it?

If you want to be emancipated, you’re going to have to become part of this struggle and fight to emancipate yourself, and not just yourself but all of the exploited and oppressed people in the whole world, you’re going to have to step forward, work with, and become part of this effort and join with and join this party.

*Summing Up the Black Panther Party*, pp. 20-21.

What kind of guarantee do we have that the party won’t turn revisionist or be taken over by revisionists (revisers of Marxism and revolution who pervert it to serve a narrow clique) like it was in China, that new bigshots won’t arise even from within the ranks of the revolution and steal back what the people have shed their blood to win? What guarantee do we have of that? None. There’s only one way to deal with that problem and to prevent that, and that’s for the party members as a whole and the masses of people to become conscious of their revolutionary interests, to grasp hold of this revolutionary science and this theory that shows us

the way forward out of our misery and enables us to distinguish the interests of a handful of exploiters from the interests of the masses of people rising up to rid themselves and the whole world of exploitation and enables them to see beyond the appearance of things to their essence.

"This System Is Doomed, Let's Finish It Off!", speech delivered on May 1, 1979, *RW*, No. 50, April 18, 1980, p. 23.

What are we supposed to do? Are we supposed to say OK, because we can see this danger that the party may turn into its opposite, then we won't have a vanguard party and, OK, then we won't even have revolution, then we can be sure of avoiding this problem!

Well, you see, that's the kind of point of view that I find unacceptable, not just morally, but because I think that this is an idealist point of view that doesn't actually look at what are the material contradictions that underlie this problem and therefore seeks to go to the roots and solve them that way. I think the correct, revolutionary, scientific Marxist-Leninist way to approach this problem is to look more deeply at the underlying contradictions and figure out and struggle to grasp more deeply how to resolve these contradictions in the process of moving forward.

"Why We Are 'What Is to Be Done?'-ists," *If There Is to Be Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party*, pp. 3-4.

Yes, our party wants to go out of existence. Yes, even our class wants to bring about the time when it can go out of existence, but only when we have brought on communism and abolished all basis for one class to rule over another and one group to ex-

plot another. Definitely at that point, we will celebrate the time when our class and our party goes out of existence, but not before we've swept your system and all of its bloodsoaked doings out of the way and made them extinct. Yes, at that time we will be glad to go out of existence. We will celebrate the time that there is no longer a need for a party because there is no longer a division of society into classes, and people have begun to consciously take up the task of transforming the whole world and transforming themselves in the process.

"This System Is Doomed, Let's Finish It Off!", speech delivered on May 1, 1979, *RW*, No. 51, April 25, 1980, p. 7.

## 9. THE MASSES ARE THE MAKERS OF HISTORY

It is the masses of people, as Mao Tsetung consistently fought for all his life, who are the real makers of history.

“We, the Working People of the World, Are Mao’s Successors,” *Revolution*, October 1, 1976, Supplement, p. S-4.

Our rulers, like sorcerers — these mummified merlins — are driven to conjure up forces they cannot control. They must drag the *masses of people* into political life. But once this “genie,” the masses of people, and most especially the working class, is roused up, *everything* can be thrown up for grabs — including just who is going to stuff who into what bottle.

*1980 — a Year, a Decade of Historic Importance*, pp. 3, 4.

The fact that the masses are the makers of history does not deny the fact that they need revolutionary leadership, which points out to them what they *cannot* see on their own and spontaneously, their real revolutionary interests, and which on that basis leads them forward in conscious struggle to transform the world themselves.

*The Loss in China and the Revolutionary Legacy of Mao Tsetung*, p. 131.

In a serious crisis, before or in the context of world war and/or a revolutionary civil war, there may not be clear lines of leadership or organization within the party, or between the party and the masses; the party’s functioning may be disrupted, or perhaps the party is even (temporarily) shattered or wiped out in certain areas. In such extraordinary times there is all the more need for “ordinary people” — basic party members and basic masses trained in or even influenced in a general way by the party’s line — to rise to the occasion and “take the reins and ride”: regrouping revolutionary forces and rebuilding the party “from the ground up,” taking initiative to give leadership and direction to the outrage and unrest of the masses and seeking out links with other forces of rebellion, while also striving to re-establish organizational links with the party structure in other areas.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 55-56.

Our consistent objective must be to be among the people, be consciously and thoroughly working for revolution, even when 9 out of 10 people or 99 out of 100, or 999 out of 1000 do not agree with us or do not want to hear it today. We cannot fail to unite and struggle with them and show them where their interests lie and prepare them, step by step but always looking to the future, always straining at the limits of where things are today and refusing to get into a rut.

“Look to the Future, Prepare for Revolution,” from a December 30, 1978 speech, *RW*, No. 1, May 1, 1979, p. 11.

The desire among the masses — speaking of the masses in their majority — to radically rise up against, even overthrow, the system develops only

together with the development and intensification of its crisis and of the immediate necessity — and possibility — of rising up and overthrowing it.

“For Decades to Come — On a World Scale,” excerpts from 1980 Central Committee Report, *RW*, No. 98, March 27, 1981, p. 12.

As Lenin himself put it, there are “masses” and there are “masses,” depending on the situation: to move thousands (or tens of thousands), and to influence hundreds of thousands) in a politically conscious way — that is, with proletarian class-consciousness — during “normal times” is genuinely to move (and influence) masses; in a revolutionary situation, it is necessary to move, influence and win leadership of millions (even tens of millions). But at all points it is necessary to adhere to the Leninist view of the masses and base ourselves on them — those who are awakening to political life (and not those still politically asleep).

“A Few Thoughts on Masses, Mass Struggle and Mass Movements — in Relation to Revolutionary Work and the Revolutionary Goal,” *RW*, No. 109, June 12, 1981, p. 3.

For the most part, the struggle of the masses should be viewed more as part of the objective conditions that the party deals with, because most of it comes into being, people come into motion, independently of the direct calls to action of the party, and even to a large degree independently of the *indirect* work of the party to initiate struggle.

“The Party: The Key Part of Organizing Forces,” *If There Is to Be Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party*, p. 38.

The class-conscious, advanced section of the proletariat is in contradiction to the rest of the masses and this in itself lays the possibility that a proletarian revolution can be turned back into, at best, a bourgeois-democratic affair, whereby the advanced section, like the advanced bourgeois leaders of previous times, install themselves as the ruling group and the masses remain relatively passive. This is *not*, as a lot of social-democrats like to present it, simply as a result of the manipulations of this leadership but because of the objective contradictions and some of the inertia of the masses as well as the bourgeois influences on the leaders. Because of all *this* it can come about that the masses remain or quickly fall back into a more passive position and the advanced section is pushed in a direction of becoming a ruling group above the masses of people in a class sense, ruling over them. In other words what’s focused on here is the much longer and more difficult process; even if the masses are constantly aroused under the leadership of a class-conscious vanguard there still remains the longer, more difficult ebbing and flowing and twisting and turning process of actually transforming society and the world as a whole, in making the famous two radical ruptures spoken of by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* — the radical rupture with all traditional property relations but also with all traditional ideas.

So “nothing can be done without the masses” is a fundamental truth. But at the same time it has to be understood in one sense anew, not romantically but with a deep and scientific understanding.

“Nothing in Our Times Can Be Done Without the Masses: A Scientific Not Romantic Understanding,” *RW*, No. 183, December 3, 1982, p. 3.

There is a particular and crucial role for the advanced from among the basic masses themselves, as “links” or “levers” to spread the line of our party (and the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement) and unleash the politically conscious activism of many others among the basic masses. This is important now and its importance will be magnified many times over as things develop — and especially when they do reach the point of a revolutionary crisis. This is a recognition of the particular, and in important aspects pivotal, role the advanced from among the basic masses can play, especially as the objective conditions develop and ripen, in making the transition — or leap — from an advanced force, with the party at the core, involving a small minority while influencing broader numbers, to a vanguard actually winning and leading millions in class struggle going over to its highest form, the armed struggle for political power.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 94.

The one force that has to come forward and consciously fight to make revolution *is* the working class and the masses of people in their millions and tens of millions.

We have to apply revolutionary theory to the struggle and, in the broadest sense and with the broadest view, bring together and combine this revolutionary liberating science of Marxism with the hatred and the determination of the masses of people to rise up and be free of this oppressive system. Our party has fought for and continues to fight to arm itself with that theory and to bring it together with the hatred and the burning desire of the masses of people to rise up and resist their oppression. That is what we have seen has been most

decisive and that is what *will* be most decisive in the battles and tremendous upheavals in the period ahead.

“Grasp Revolutionary Theory — Rely on the Masses,” *RW*, No. 58, June 6, 1980, p. 7; *On the Mao Tsetung Defendants' Railroad and the Historic Battles Ahead*, pp. 40-41.

## 10. UNITING ALL WHO CAN BE UNITED FOR REVOLUTION

Our strategy is the united front, under the leadership of the working class and its party. We must unite and draw into the ranks of the revolutionary struggle and unite around the working class the masses of people in this country of all different nationalities, especially the Black people and other oppressed nationalities, who are doubly oppressed and crushed and degraded under this system. We must work to activate the broadest ranks of people, of all races, different nationalities, men and women, uniting them under the one banner of rising up against and crushing into the ground this imperialist system.

“This System Is Doomed, Let’s Finish It Off!”, speech delivered May 1, 1979, *RW*, No. 51, April 25, 1980, p. 7.

Those who tell Black people and other oppressed peoples in the U.S. that they can win equality and emancipation within this system are telling them a lie that is contradicted by hundreds of years of history and by present-day reality. The subjugation of whole peoples is an integral part of the development of capitalism and imperialism; it is a part of the very foundation and the entire edifice of U.S. society. To abolish this requires that U.S. imperialism be overthrown and this whole oppressive society radically transformed — nothing less. And this pro-

vides a powerful basis of unity between the struggle against such national subjugation and the movement of the class-conscious proletariat, of all nationalities, to overturn and uproot the imperialist system and the very basis for all oppression and exploitation not only in the U.S. but throughout the world. It is this unity which is the most crucial element in building the revolutionary movement in the U.S. It is the solid core of the broader united front that is the strategic orientation and the strategic weapon for carrying out socialist revolution in the U.S. as part of the world proletarian revolution.

Previously unpublished.

This system jolts people awake, it forces them to think. It causes them to question the hardship it puts them through, the crisis and wars it plunges them into.

“This System Jolts People Awake,” excerpts from 1979 national speaking tour, *RW*, No. 232, November 25, 1983, p. 3.

Unless revolution prevents it, there is going to be world war unleashed by these two superpowers and their imperialist blocs within the next ten years, with everything that means on top of everything else we already have to go through. That poses the prospect of tremendous suffering and tremendous horror. But it also poses the prospect that, as things move closer toward that situation, millions of people will be brought into motion.

“To All Those Who Refuse to Live and Die on Their Knees,” Part II, excerpts from 1979 national speaking tour, *RW*, No. 243, February 17, 1984, pp. 3-4.

Like Lenin put it, communism springs from every pore of society. Another way of saying the same thing from a slightly different angle is that the proletarian revolution is itself made up of many diverse currents and streams which have to be led by the vanguard forces toward the goal of proletarian revolution, even though many of them have currents and offshoots which go against that revolution.

*There's Nothing More Revolutionary than  
Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought,*  
p. 25.

If things are sometimes frustrating for the revolutionaries, just think about the imperialists. In the U.S. they have worked so tirelessly to create the impression that everyone is united behind them; they have gone to such extremes to reassert more strongly the traditional relations and values that were so badly shaken — though not yet fully shattered — through the upsurges and changes wrought in the '60s and into the '70s; and they have done all this as a crucial part of their tightening things down for the ultimate showdown with the (other) evil empire. But when people see and feel more sharply what it is they are reasserting, what they are preparing for — and what the consequences of all this are and will be — masses of people are revolted and in turn revolt. This includes growing numbers within the “solid middle class” and even within the ranks of the “respectable citizens.” The turmoil and upheavals in Central America cause protests to grow against U.S. actions and agendas there; mass rebellion in South Africa provokes rebellions, among many different strata, within the USA — the real, ultimate power behind oppression in South Africa; the vicious campaign of terror to intensify the subjugation and degradation of women cannot help but call forth

resistance in many forms, a resistance with a tremendously dangerous potential for a system which has as one of its main foundation stones the systematic oppression of women. And so it goes. Imperialism and all systems of exploitation and oppression, and those who preside over them, cannot help themselves. To enforce their rule, to pursue their interests, to act according to their own nature, to be what they are and perpetuate their existence and their dominant position — they must commit the most brutal outrages and monstrous crimes, they must do those things which provoke masses of people, from many different strata, into protest, resistance, and rebellion. Those who see the need to develop and transform this protest, resistance, and rebellion into a revolutionary struggle must unite with the thousands and millions who are protesting, resisting, and rebelling, but at the same time must also struggle with them to win them to the understanding of the source of all these crimes and outrages — the imperialist system — and the solution to all this: the overthrow of imperialism through proletarian revolution.

Previously unpublished.

What we seek to do is unite with all those who are struggling against, genuinely struggling against, and aiming their efforts against this ruling class and against imperialism. Even if they are not doing this consciously, so long as the main thrust of what they are doing is to rise up and fight back against the real enemies, we believe it's our duty and the duty of every genuine revolutionary to unite with them.

At the same time, any united front implies that there must be struggle. There must be struggle, not to establish who's right and who's wrong in the

abstract, but there must be struggle because there is only one correct line that can lead us forward.

“Excerpts from Conference Speech,” delivered at The Conference on the International Situation, War, and Revolution, November 20, 1976 in New York City, *Revolution*, December 1976, p. 11.

The working class needs and will build alliances and unity with all forces fighting against this system. But also those forces need to see the strength and uncompromising stand of the class-conscious workers.

“Why the Proletariat Will Lead the Revolution,” from a speech in Columbus, Ohio, 1979, *RW*, No. 53, May 1, 1980, p. 3.

Punk youth, many from the suburbs, joining with Black youth from inner-city ghettos to fight against preparations for World War 3. College students, just having their eyes opened to the reality of imperialism, taking up the fight against it together with immigrants with a lifetime of experiencing its most naked brutality. Alienated intellectuals finding themselves compelled, and inspired, to join the ranks of the insurgents alongside women from the housing projects rising up against the full horror of “the American way.” The struggle against imperialism in the U.S. indeed involves some very intriguing alliances — and this will be all the more the case the more it is developed into a conscious revolutionary struggle aimed at the overthrow of imperialism.

Previously unpublished.

Speaking not only to prisoners but to those whose life is lived on the desperate edge, whether or

not they find some work or even homes; to all those the system and its enforcers treat as so much human waste material:

Raise your sights above the degradation and madness, the muck and demoralization, above the individual battle to survive and to “be somebody” on the terms of the imperialists — of fouler, more monstrous criminals than mythology has ever invented or jails ever held. Become a part of the human saviors of humanity: the gravediggers of this system and the bearers of the future communist society.

This is not just talk or an attempt to make poetry here: there are great tasks to be fulfilled, great struggles to be carried out, and yes great sacrifices to be made to accomplish all this. But there is a world to save — and to win — and in that process those the system has counted as nothing can count for a great deal. They represent a great reserve force that must become an active force for the proletarian revolution, to destroy the old world and create the new.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 58.

The stepping forward of the proletarian social base for revolution around the proletarian revolutionary internationalist line has a tremendous influence in bringing forward the other strata and class forces that can be allies of the proletariat and can be won to the revolutionary banner.

“A Social Base for Proletarian Internationalism,” *If There Is to Be Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party*, p. 70.

Those who are most in the position of having nothing to lose — but their chains — are in the position to exert the most profound impact on society. This is not only a general law of history, it is a lesson

that has been written in fire in recent times in the U.S. as well as throughout the world.

"A Message on Hearing 'The Message,'" *RW*, No. 200, April 8, 1983, p. 3.

What Marxist can or would deny the truth and importance of the fact that struggles among social strata and forces outside the working class have a very positive effect overall on the working class, including in "shocking it" awake to political life, especially when revolutionary leadership is provided by our party?

"Main Political Report" — Second Party Congress, 1978, unpublished paper.

The experience of the '60s in the U.S. holds many valuable lessons. Forces from among the basic proletariat and other oppressed masses — in particular Black people but also other oppressed nationalities and other social movements — rose up, in the context of the international struggle against imperialism (in particular U.S. imperialism). Even though this was not a situation where a proletarian vanguard was at the head and a proletarian line and outlook in the lead, this experience shows the potential for revolutionary struggle in the U.S. in the period ahead, including the potential for influencing even the more privileged strata — on the basis of a revolutionary section of the proletariat, with our party as its vanguard, stepping forcefully onto the political stage. It is a truly remarkable thing, given the depth and breadth of parasitism in the U.S., that in the '60s so many turned so strongly against "their own" imperialism and a significant number even supported (what was then) a revolutionary force in defeating U.S. imperialism in Vietnam. A truly wonderful thing!

*An End to the Horror*, p. 98.

Even though the '80s are and will be more complex and more difficult — and harder times can lead to a more narrow and backward reaction among some strata — still the strategic possibilities for influencing, for winning (at least to "friendly neutrality") broad numbers of people, including among the more privileged workers and middle-class strata, will be greater in the period ahead than in the '60s. But, besides the development of the objective situation, this depends on the work of the party and the stand and actions of the basic proletarians, especially the advanced among them, not only when the situation reaches the point of acute crisis deeply convulsing all of society but from here toward that point.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 98.

Winning over, or at least winning to "friendly neutrality," as many of these different middle forces as possible while isolating the die-hard defenders of the system and its crimes will be decisive for the possibility of revolution in the U.S. and to contribute the most in all circumstances to the revolutionary struggle worldwide.

"Stepping Up. . . Stepping Out," *RW*, No. 151, April 16, 1982, p. 16.

Many of the people who came through the '60s will come forward again. Though we can't expect that these people, many of them, are going to be in the *forefront* the way they were 20 years ago, many of them are going to be a tremendous potential reserve of the class-conscious proletariat.

"'60s People," *RW*, No. 147, March 19, 1982, p. 17.

It is precisely and only by establishing a clear-cut revolutionary stand and revolutionary pole in U.S. society and consistently working to rally the advanced, especially among the proletariat, to this pole, that it will be possible to apply the united front strategy correctly. It is only thus that other strata and forces with which it is correct and strategically necessary to seek unity will feel inclined and/or compelled to enter into a united front with us; and only thus that the strategic interests of the proletariat will be upheld and the prospect of proletarian leadership of the united front, infusing it with a clear-cut revolutionary thrust and content, will be maintained.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 101.

The more firmly we grasp the correct line, including on building the united front as our revolutionary strategy, the more broadly we should not only seek to but be able to unite with other forces in motion. This is because the deeper we grasp this line, and the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought on which it is based, the more we will be able to understand how each particular struggle arises from the fundamental contradiction of capitalism and represents a part of the overall struggle against the capitalist system, regardless of the degree to which the people spontaneously involved in these struggles are conscious of this.

In short, our correct line should not make us more sectarian — for then that line turns into its opposite — but better able to unite.

“The United Front and the Revolutionary Alliance at Its Core,” excerpts from 1978 paper, “Thoughts on Points for Discussion,” *RW*, No. 60, June 20, 1980, p. 7.

It is a general principle and is especially true in politically quiescent (dead) times that within the proletariat itself the advanced need a politicized atmosphere — air to breathe — in order to sustain revolutionary activity. They need to be involved with and influencing many different social movements of different strata.

At any given time the involvement of such advanced proletarians — especially as such, as a social force of class-conscious proletarians — in these various social movements, their uniting with people from other strata but also their “injecting” proletarian politics and the proletarian outlook into such movements will not only give them more air to breathe but will exert a powerful influence on these movements and more broadly in society. It will push forward the whole process of developing the strategic approach of a united front under proletarian leadership, including by bringing more forces among the proletariat itself into motion, into political life and action. And as a crucial part of this it will give impetus to and provide more fertile soil for building and strengthening the party and its roots among the oppressed proletarians. The growing involvement and influence of a force of class-conscious proletarians within the major social movements is a kind of key link that we have to take hold of to accelerate the development of the whole process of building the revolutionary movement and wielding the strategic weapon of the united front under proletarian leadership.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 99.

The proletariat with its communist vanguard is the driving force of the advance to communism because communism does correspond to the fundamental interests of the proletariat, and of no other

class, and because the proletariat, and the proletariat alone, is capable of carrying this process through.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 214-15.

It is only this international proletariat which needs no excuses or apologies, in some form or other, for exploitation, the oppression of women, nations and national minorities, war and a thousand other monstrosities; it is only the class-conscious revolutionary proletariat that insists that all these things can and will be eliminated from the earth. When this outlook and this leadership is combined with the anger and burning desire of the masses of oppressed to put an end to all this — then an unconquerable force is forged.

“We Want In . . . We Want Out — Opposite Views on Discrimination and Degradation,” *RW*, No. 199, April 1, 1983, p. 3.

The position and role of the proletariat in society and human history are radically different from those of any other class. The proletariat carries out socialized production in a society (and world) marked by large-scale industry, the widespread application of science, highly developed means of communication, etc.; it is the exploited class in capitalist society, a society split in the main into two directly antagonistic classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat; because of its propertyless condition it is subjected to domination and exploitation by capital and subordinated to the dynamics of capitalist accumulation, and its interests lie in the thorough revolutionization of society, in bringing about the most radical rupture with traditional property relations and traditional ideas, as it is put in the *Communist Manifesto* — the proletariat can emancipate itself only by abolishing not just capitalism but all

exploitation, indeed all class distinctions and their material and ideological bases.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, p. 44.

We'll continue to unite more and more broadly with all different forces in society who take a genuine stand in struggling against the oppressor. But to all who agree with us up to a point and don't agree with us all the way, I'm going to give you a friendly warning — we're going to unite with you and we're going to seek a broader and broader basis to unite, but we're also going to struggle with you. We're going to struggle, argue and debate about what is the only way to solve all this.

“They Can't Believe We'll Rise Above the Muck and the Mire,” *RW*, No. 56, May 23, 1980, p. 14; *On the Mao Tsetung Defendants' Railroad and the Historic Battles Ahead*, p. 17.

## 11. THE ENEMY'S DESPERATE VICIOUSNESS

Revolution can never be killed, you can kill revolutionaries, you can shoot it, you can bomb it, you can take tanks, machine guns against it, you can try to pimp off it, and try to hustle off it, but you never kill it and it will never be stamped out.

“Look to the Future, Prepare for Revolution,” from a December 30, 1978 speech, *RW*, No. 1, May 1, 1979, p. 11.

We know their nature. We understand that the period of the '80s is going to find upheaval unlike anything even in the '60s in this country and internationally. The challenge and the stakes are going to be up during that period. They are going to be much higher and much more life-and-death for them and for us than anything we've seen in several decades.

We've pointed out to people, yeah, that's true. They can, they have and they will not only jail people, not only hound and harass people — they will murder people outright and in larger numbers than we've seen in order to try to crush any revolutionary leadership and prevent the masses of people from not only fighting back but consciously fighting through and winning victory and making revolution. But we're not helpless in the face of that either and we've proved we're far from helpless.

“The Stakes are Up — For Them and Us,” *RW*, No. 29, November 23, 1979, p. 4; *On the Mao Tsetung Defendants' Railroad and the Historic Battles Ahead*, pp. 50-51.

Yeah, they killed Fred Hampton. We know their nature. They murdered Malcolm X, much as they try to cover it up. But we can learn not only from the history of this country but from others. Let's look to a place like Russia where there was someone named Lenin. They hounded him out of the country but he came back not only to haunt them but to raise up the real specter that not only filled them with fear but finally led to their overthrow — the class-conscious working class and the masses of oppressed people.

Let's look at China. They put a bounty on Mao Tsetung's head, offered 100,000 or more pieces of silver to people, to peasants in China whose children were literally starving in front of them for lack of food or would freeze to death in the winter. But they couldn't find anyone who, even if they wanted the money, was foolish enough to try to go up against and kill Mao Tsetung, because the wrath of the Chinese people would have come down on them like a thunderbolt.

So let's not only talk about the losses we've suffered, let's talk about the victories we've won. And let's learn from both.

“The Stakes are Up — For Them and Us,” *RW*, No. 29, November 23, 1979, p. 4; *On the Mao Tsetung Defendants' Railroad and the Historic Battles Ahead*, p. 51.

True, the RCP is going to be hit with more than any other organization in this country has ever faced before we succeed in overthrowing the bourgeoisie, but we also have a stronger foundation. And I have said many times, and it needs repeating, that this is not because we are braver or bolder or have been through more than other people have been through, either in our lives or our political activity. That's not the point; the point is that in terms of ideological and

political line we have a stronger foundation.

And that's why I don't hesitate to say we have a stronger basis to stand up to this stuff than any other organization — and not only to stand up to it but to advance right in the face of it and through the course of it.

*Coming from Behind to Make Revolution,*  
p. 20.

When they brought myself and others up on heavy charges and threatened us with 241 years in jail, they tried to teach a lesson but we turned that itself into further exposure of their whole system, further opposition and exposure of the revisionist betrayal in China, but more than that, of its links with imperialism, of the imperialist system and of their war preparations. It's a tremendous victory that we prevented them from extracting a price and we made the whole thing come out with a different lesson altogether than the one that they wanted people to learn.

Through this whole thing we waged a real political battle, we strengthened that pole of revolutionary communism/proletarian internationalism, firmed up our own understanding of it through this battle, as well as our overall work in preparation for revolution, and I think that had a very wide and, at least in a beginning way, a deep influence among a lot of people. A very broad united front was built with many different people from many different tendencies, some of whom disagreed in some ways, even some important ways, with the overall line of our party, but who could recognize the attacks of the enemy and were outraged and stepped forward in

opposition to that, and I think that the work that we've done in that regard is very important, too.

"Celebrating Long Distance with Bob Avakian," *RW*, No. 159, June 11, 1982, pp. 4, 18.

We're determined to do our work in such a way that for each person who falls, for each one who is taken to jail, hounded out of the country or even killed — our roots will be so broad and so deep in the working class and among the oppressed people and all those fighting for change and revolution, that for each person who falls 10 or even 100 will come forward to take their place and influence and bring forward ultimately thousands more.

"Why the Proletariat Will Lead the Revolution," from a 1979 speech in Columbus, Ohio, *RW*, No. 53, May 1, 1980, p. 12.

To die in the causes for which the imperialists and reactionaries have and will on an even more monstrous scale enlist the people, or to give up living and to die a little death on your knees, or to consume oneself in futile attempts at self-indulgent escape; all this is miserable and disgraceful. But to devote your life, and even be willing to lay it down, to put an end to the system that spews all of this forth, to live and die for the cause of the international proletariat, to make revolution, transform society and advance mankind to the bright dawn of communism — this is truly a living, and a dying, that is full of meaning and inspiration for millions and hundreds of millions fighting for or awakening to the same goal all around the world. Such was the life and

death of Comrade Damián García, a fighter and martyr in the army of the international proletariat.

“Statement on the Death of Comrade Damián García,” member of the RCP,USA murdered April 22, 1980 by police agents in Los Angeles, *RW*, No. 51, April 25, 1980, Special Supplement, pp. 1-2.

The killing of Comrade Damián García was a cowardly act in which the bloody hand of the police and the bloodsucking capitalist class and the system they represent, the law of oppression and the order of exploitation they enforce, are clearly implicated and for which they are accountable.

But this only shows that the rulers of this country and their assassins, in and out of uniform, are not only cowardly but desperate — desperate to prevent the awakening and the class-conscious action of a section of the working class right in the U.S., at the head of other oppressed masses, here in the stronghold of their tyrannical worldwide empire. And in fact, this only shows more clearly that it is the imperialists and reactionaries who fear the people. And if these desperate criminals thought, or hoped, that by carrying out such a cold-blooded murder they would cause the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA to lay down the banner of revolution and retreat, if they thought beyond that that they would intimidate those who have already stepped forward to join this historic struggle and scare away those on the verge of doing so, they will find out that the exposure of their bloody hand in this action will have just the opposite effect — it will deepen a hundredfold the determination of those already involved to carry forward the fight for which Comrade García gave his life, and will in-

spire hundreds, indeed thousands more to step forward and become part of that same great battle.

“Statement on the Death of Comrade Damián García,” member of the RCP,USA murdered April 22, 1980 by police agents in Los Angeles, *RW*, No. 51, April 25, 1980, Special Supplement, p. 1.

There is vicious repression and state terror carried out continually — and not only in times of serious crisis or social upheaval — in the imperialist countries: it is carried out specifically against those who do not support but oppose the established order, or who simply cannot be counted on to be pacified by the normal workings of the imperialist system — those whose conditions are desperate and whose life situation is explosive anyway.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*, Chapter 5: “Imperialism, Democracy and Dictatorship.”

The people in the imperialist countries should take advantage of the openings that do exist for political activity — but they should take advantage of them to build a revolutionary movement, in unity with the people in the oppressed nations of the world, toward the overthrow of imperialism and all exploitative relations. And they should recognize and be prepared for the fact that if they do this — and unless they are willing to play by the rules established by the imperialists and to support them whenever there is a serious crisis or challenge to their basic interests — they will be met with ruthless repression, most especially at times of serious crisis and social upheaval.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*, Chapter 5: “Imperialism, Democracy and Dictatorship.”

It is necessary to tell the workers and others in the imperialist countries today that making revolution will almost certainly involve incurring — and advancing in the face of — much more severe repression than is normally meted out to broad masses in the imperialist countries, but such a revolution is infinitely preferable to the continuation of imperialism and its consequences.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*,  
Chapter 5: "Imperialism, Democracy and Dictatorship."

The ruling class of imperialists has to deal with the decline of their position in the world, the heightening of the contradictions of their system and the growing challenges both from the rival bloc of imperialists and from the once-again rising revolutionary struggles in many parts of the world. To deal with this they must call forth the worst in society (and in individuals), stomp on (if not stomp out) resistance and revolutionary stirrings, and even questioning and the critical spirit. Patriotism, blind loyalty to country and government (and "God on its side"), the willingness to do and die to "make America number one again" — all this must be not only brought back in style but made the commanding principle.

"On Reagan, the 'Rise of the Right' and the Decline and Fall of the U.S. Empire," *RW*, No. 116, August 7, 1981, p. 3.

They need and have built up a right-wing "popular" force: to strengthen public opinion for their program and give it a certain "legitimacy" as the "will of the people," to demoralize and intimidate all those that are victimized by and oppose them and to be used as a reserve in crushing resistance, rebellion

and the forces of revolution.

In the face of this it is not demoralization, disorientation and paralysis but greater awareness of the revolutionary potential, not just in the U.S. but internationally, and greater determination to work toward and strengthen the basis to seize and maximize all possibilities — it is this that should inspire everyone who hates imperialism and its crimes and longs to bid farewell forever to all the Falwells and Reagans and the rotten, murderous old world of which they are fitting guardians.

"On Reagan, the 'Rise of the Right' and the Decline and Fall of the U.S. Empire," *RW*, No. 116, August 7, 1981, pp. 3-20.

I have today demanded political refugee status in France.

This demand for political refugee status is a necessary step as a result of the increasing and increasingly vicious moves of the imperialist ruling class in the U.S. and its state apparatus and loyal assassins (whether wearing government uniforms or not) to suppress rebellion against them, to cripple the developing revolutionary movement in the U.S. itself and in particular to crush and wipe out the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA and myself as its Chairman.

In all this it is vitally important to grasp not only the temporary difficulties and the necessity the imperialist ruling class is able to impose in the short run on the revolutionary forces and the fact that it has real teeth, but more fundamentally the deepening crisis the imperialists are engulfed in and the fact that their teeth (along with the rest of their system) are rotting and remain only to be yanked out.

The period ahead, as our party has repeatedly stressed, will not only be marked by the intensifying

danger of world war, with all the terrible destruction that means, arising from the nature of the imperialist system, from the crisis of the imperialists and the contention between the rival blocs headed by the two nuclear superpowers; this period will also be marked by the growing trend to revolution, rising revolutionary upsurges and perhaps unprecedented opportunities for revolution on a world scale.

It is with this orientation and consistent with this goal that the decision has been made to demand political refugee status in France at this time.

“Bob Avakian Demands Political Refugee Status in France,” statement by Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Central Committee of the RCP, USA — March 19, 1981, *RW*, No. 97, March 20, 1981, pp. 1-12.

Even being “removed” from the scene in the U.S., it is impossible to observe that scene without being struck by the very real elements of fascism that are being built up in the political and ideological superstructure in particular.

This is precisely not some “classless” or “systemless” phenomenon that can be attributed merely to the fact that evil people are in positions of power (though that is certainly true, it is also certainly *not* an *exception* to the rule). Rather it is an expression of the necessity that the U.S. imperialist ruling class as a whole faces, a necessity in the ideological realm to fan the fires of blind jingoism, to dazzle people with individual and collective (national) narcissism and prepare them for the orgy of death and destruction that is the epitome of the program for “USA-No. 1,” and at the same time to overwhelm and intimidate those who aren’t swept up in this, who won’t go along or who actually resist. It is

not necessarily the case that the U.S. imperialists will have to implement an actual fascist form of their bourgeois dictatorship, that is, a dictatorship openly based on systematic terror within the U.S. itself. But in any case things in the U.S. will get much more repressive, in terms of the atmosphere created as well as the brute force employed by the apparatus of the state (police, army, courts, etc.), and the fascist elements within their ideological offensive will be an important part of all that.

All this emphasizes the importance of our waging a determined counteroffensive in the ideological sphere, straight up against their offensive. Waging such an ideological counteroffensive means not only continuing and deepening exposure of their ideological offensive but boldly raising the banner of proletarian revolution and stepping out right in their face, ideologically and politically. It means finding creative ways to expose their lackeys and “models” (and their revival of racist and sexist stereotypes) to sharp ridicule. It also means making clear, even proclaiming, that we have the line and program, the orientation and strategy, and the leadership to actually do what we are calling for when the opening is created.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 105, 106, 110.

## 12. BLACK PEOPLE AND OTHER OPPRESSED NATIONALITIES IN THE U.S.

Where there is oppression there is resistance; and as a general rule there is a relationship between the intensity of oppression and the intensity of resistance it gives rise to. Certainly this has been the case with the masses of Black people and other oppressed peoples throughout the history of this country and down to today. Further, and more fundamentally, just because the vicious oppression of these peoples, in many different forms, has been from the beginning and remains an essential feature of the capitalist system here, the masses of these oppressed peoples are bound to continually rise up against the thousands of outrages and insults they suffer *and* are bound to be impelled toward developing that resistance into a struggle that strikes at the capitalist system itself. This is a very important part of the reason why such resistance is not only a tremendous blow itself against this system but is also a tremendous igniting force and rallying cry to the masses of people of all nationalities who are exploited and degraded by the very workings of this system, and especially to the advanced workers — those who, at any given time, already are aroused to revolutionary sentiments.

*"Black Nationalist with Communistic Inclinations", pp. 2-3.*

I recently came across an article in the *Washington Post* which apparently felt it was reporting something newsworthy when it cited a study concluding that, among other things, for Black people "a major move . . . into mainstream middle-class America is not imminent." Well, no shit!

*"A Message on Hearing 'The Message,'" RW, No. 200, April 8, 1983, p. 3.*

"Who is afraid of who?" Centuries of slavery, serfdom, unemployment, exploitation, rape and murder are memories and current reality permanently branded on the collective consciousness of Black people in America. The slave always wants to kill the slavemaster, and the oppressed always wants to eliminate the oppressor. This is the knowledge that instills fear and desperation in exploiting classes everywhere.

*"National Liberation and Proletarian Revolution in the U.S.," RP5, 1972, p. 38.*

The recent government attacks on Indian fishing rights and the more general history of crimes "handed out" by the U.S. government to the Indians — crimes that are still *continuing* today — all this called to mind what used to be said during the "cold war" about how agreements with the Russians were worthless (or worth little) since, as everybody knows, "the communists have never kept a single treaty they have signed." It was called to mind especially sharply because the imperialists are now reviving, through the mouth of Reagan and others, arguments of this kind as part of their preparation for a hot war.

Leaving aside the fact that, since Khrushchev, the leaders of the Soviet Union — and the Soviet Union itself — have not been communist or socialist but

*social-imperialist*, what is most striking about statements such as this, out of the mouths of champions of the “American way,” is the incredible, shameless gall! If ever there was a group of people who had no right to speak on the question of “not keeping treaties” it is the U.S. imperialists — unless you want to argue that they have the most right since they have, perhaps, the most consistent and longest record of violating treaties and agreements in the world today.

“Indian Fishing Rights — and Tell Us Again Who ‘Never Keeps a Treaty,’ ” *RW*, No. 195, March 4, 1983, p. 3.

The Civil War represented in a sense a completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in the U.S., but this did not mean it established, or that the northern capitalists meant to establish, freedom and equality for Black people in relation to white America. Lincoln, like Jefferson, and other representatives of the bourgeoisie before and since, considered everything from the point of view of his nation above all, and in the concrete conditions of America in the nineteenth (and twentieth) century this has meant maintaining Black people as a subjugated nation.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*, Chapter 4: “The USA As Democratic Example . . . Leader of the Pack.”

We have emphasized the right of the Black nation to self-determination (to political secession and the establishment of their own country) because, although it is not at the heart of the Black liberation struggle, it is one current, and a mishandling of this question can only set back the unity of the working class and its revolutionary struggle for socialism.

This does not mean that we *advocate* separation. In fact, we uphold the right of separation because it is a genuine right, and in upholding this right we create the conditions for proletarian unity in opposition to bourgeois separatism.

“National Liberation and Proletarian Revolution in the U.S.,” *RP* 5, 1972, p. 36.

It is our responsibility to train the masses of all nationalities in a self-determinationist spirit, to take up the struggle in support of the long-denied and suppressed demands of oppressed peoples for liberation and equality, as an integral and decisive aspect of the proletarian revolution. In relation to the Black nation, with its historic homeland in the Black Belt area of the south, this includes the right to self-determination, up to and including the right to secession.

In particular if things worked out in such a way that the most that we, the international proletariat, could get out of a situation of upheaval in the U.S. would be the establishment of a Black republic or African-American republic in the historic homeland of Black people in the south of the U.S., then certainly every anti-imperialist, to say nothing of every proletarian internationalist, should firmly support this and fight for it, if, it must be added, we could get it on a real revolutionary basis and not as a neocolony.

But having said that, it is also necessary to emphasize that we might well be able to do better than that, we might well be able to win much more, and that would be that much more of an internationalist contribution to the struggle of the proletariat and toward the goal of communism throughout the world and emancipating all mankind from the shackles of class society. It must be stressed that only proletarian internationalism can lead to a cor-

rect approach to this. As experience has shown, and as we've been struggling to sum up, it's hard enough to make and maintain the victories that are won in revolution as actual bases for the further advance of the revolution throughout the world, to make the territories seized really base areas for the world proletarian revolution. It's hard enough in any case, but if to begin with you've got a nationalist outlook, and in particular if the establishment of the separate state — even if justified and even if the right certainly should be upheld to do so — but if the establishment of such a separate state is the highest goal and an end in itself in your outlook, then already from the beginning you've undercut the basis to really make victories won and territories liberated a further advance for the world revolution.

We're out to make every possible gain and all possible advances for the international proletariat. We're out to wrench everything that can be wrenched out of the madness that the imperialist system is now, not only the daily madness and horror that it puts people through but the even more concentrated and even more horrible madness, in particular world war, that it is now placing on the historical agenda. We're out to wrench as much of the future and as much as we can for the international proletariat out of that and to transform whatever we wrench into a base area for continuing to advance toward the overall goal of the world proletarian revolution and the final aim of a communist world. This is why an internationalist, and not a nationalist, outlook must guide everything that we do.

"The Border Question," *RW*, No. 174, October, 1982, p. 8.

Puerto Rico is exactly an "annexed region" in the way Lenin uses this term. In fact, Lenin cites the an-

nexation of Puerto Rico by the U.S. in 1898 as one of the important events marking the beginning of the "era of imperialism" and the beginning of annexations in the "epoch of imperialism."

Self-determination is absolutely at the heart of the struggle of the Puerto Rican nation. Only through "wresting control" of the territory of Puerto Rico can the people of that nation win liberation, and only after that is done can they begin to build socialism there.

Under these conditions, even if there were no struggle in Puerto Rico for independence (which, of course, there is) it would be the duty of communists there to build such a movement.

"Living Socialism and Dead Dogmatism,"  
*The Communist*, Vol. 1, No. 2, May 1, 1977,  
pp. 154-55. Originally printed in *RP6*,  
1974.

The fact is that the proletariat, upon coming to power in this country, will inherit a very complicated situation, especially in relation to the national question. Exactly what forms the solution to this question will take, in relation not only to Black people, but Chicanos, Native Americans, Asian and other oppressed peoples, cannot be predicted now. Exactly what forms of self-government will be established for the nationalities within this country which have been oppressed by the imperialist ruling class cannot now be determined.

To carry out this task, the communists must educate the workers, especially white workers, to the understanding that there is nothing "sacred" about the present boundaries of the U.S.; they were formed on the basis of barbaric oppression of the Native Americans, Mexican people and Black people, and that the only thing sacred is the unity of the

proletariat and its allies, especially the oppressed nationalities, and the building of socialism on the basis of true national equality and voluntary union. This is what upholding the right to self-determination means under our concrete conditions.

"Living Socialism and Dead Dogmatism,"  
*The Communist*, Vol. 1, No. 2, May 1, 1977,  
pp. 152-53. Originally printed in *RP6*,  
1974.

The U.S. imperialists like to pride themselves on how they have used and absorbed millions and millions of immigrants — we have all been told about the "great melting pot." But in the U.S. today there are millions of immigrants whom the imperialist rulers regard as troublesome and dangerous. These are immigrants from the Third World, particularly those from nations oppressed by U.S. imperialism. They have a lifetime of experience with the raw, brutal reality of Yankee rule, among them is a deep hatred for it and no small amount of experience in fighting against it. Further, there are many things in common between these immigrants and the Black, Mexican-American, Native American, and other oppressed peoples within the borders of what is now the USA. The imperialists see in such immigrants a source of instability and upheaval, a force weakening the internal cohesion of the home base and potentially undermining the power of the U.S. as an international overlord at the very time it is facing a challenge without precedent to that power. The imperialists react by asserting more aggressively the white, European, English-speaking identity of the American Nation.

For the revolutionary proletariat it is just the opposite. We renounce that nation, we denounce any such identity — we are proletarians, not Americans,

and our identity is that of the international proletariat. We insist on the equality of nations, including equality in culture and language. And more, we recognize in such immigrants a source of great strength — a vitally important force for the revolutionary struggle to overthrow U.S. imperialism and to create over its grave a powerful, living expression of proletarian internationalism and a powerful base area for the world proletarian revolution.

Previously unpublished.

Through the '60s, through the '70s and moving into the '80s, there has been an increased class polarization among the Black people. Within the Black nation there are now more built-up petty-bourgeois strata and forces, even though large numbers of them are being undermined. One important thing to recognize, which has implications for the future and the sharpening struggles of the period ahead, is this class polarization and the role of these Black petty-bourgeois forces and Black bourgeois forces in acting as a social base for reformism and even for American patriotism.

"The '60s-'70s Shift," *Revolution*,  
Winter/Spring 1985, No. 53, p. 21. Originally  
printed in *RW*, No. 154, May 7, 1982.

Determination decides who makes it out of the ghetto — now there is a tired old cliché, at its worst, on every level. This is like looking at millions of people being put through a meatgrinder and instead of focusing on the fact that the great majority are chewed to pieces, concentrating instead on the few who slip through in one piece and then on top of it all, using this to say that "the meatgrinder works!"

"The 'City Game' — And The City, No  
Game," *RW*, No. 201, April 15, 1983.  
pp. 3-4.

There is a trend which insists that the very essence of the struggle against oppression and inequality — speaking specifically of the oppressed nationalities and women — is the right to be not only equally bourgeois as the big bourgeoisie but equally reactionary as well. It must be said that this trend has a lot of influence because it corresponds to the class position and aspirations of more privileged, bourgeois or would-be bourgeois, strata among the oppressed and because it is vigorously promoted by that ruling big bourgeoisie (in the main — all except the “equally” part). I am talking about those who, whenever and wherever the next heinous crime is about to be committed by imperialism, insist on having their rightful share in it. And this goes as well for those among the most oppressed who strive to make it by stepping on the backs of the others.

The stand and the sentiments of the masses who suffer oppression and inequality — in a qualitatively more intense and all-around way than the privileged strata we’ve examined — have a qualitatively different character. The masses of the oppressed want an end to the oppression and inequality that the masses suffer and they gravitate toward the outlook of abolishing all oppression and social inequality and the basis for them. In opposition to the trend among those privileged strata which, when viewing the degradation the system deals out to millions and millions of people, insistently demands, “we want in on it,” these millions and millions have the urgent feeling “we want out — we want an end to this.”

“We Want In . . . We Want Out — Opposite Views on Discrimination and Degradation,”  
*RW*, No. 199, April 1, 1983, p. 3.

The '60s movement among Black people was the most advanced revolutionary expression of that period in the U.S. — and it was the most advanced revolutionary mass movement that has yet erupted in the U.S., not only in terms of militant resistance and rebellion but especially in terms of its basic alienation from and opposition to the whole social order and in its identification with the enemies of America (U.S. imperialism) particularly in the Third World. On the other hand, even this most revolutionary expression did not make a thorough rupture with bourgeois democracy.

There is of course a bourgeois-democratic aspect to the struggle of Black people against their oppression (including their right, as a nation, to self-determination), and it is a damning indictment of the imperialist system that it cannot bring about the equality of nations and must in fact foster and reinforce national oppression. But first of all, as the experience of the '60s in the U.S. — and historical and international experience generally — has shown, there can be no thoroughgoing struggle against imperialism and no complete shattering of the bonds of national oppression without the leadership of a proletarian, as opposed to a bourgeois-democratic, line and program. Further and more fundamental, there remains the fact that equality as such falls ultimately within the framework of bourgeois democracy, that it cannot solve or even fundamentally address class division, exploitation and oppression, and the whole dog-eat-dog relations and mentality characteristic of the present system. Therefore, ironically, an orientation based on equality as the essential goal cannot even fully and finally bring about the abolition of social inequality.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 129-30.

The revolutionary nationalist forces can be a powerful ally of the proletariat in the struggle for revolution against the imperialist system. The more strongly and correctly the struggle is waged for leadership of the proletarian line, the revolutionary communist/proletarian internationalist trend, the more it will be possible to build unity with these kinds of forces because the unity won't be possible without struggle.

"The '60s-'70s Shift," *Revolution*, Winter/Spring 1985, No. 53, p. 21. Originally printed in *RW*, No. 154, May 7, 1982.

Despite the differences between the various oppressed nationalities within this country, they share one decisive characteristic: they are all overwhelmingly working class. Their struggle for freedom is closely bound up with the struggle of the entire working class to abolish the system of wage-slavery. In the final analysis, the practical and theoretical leadership for uniting the national and class struggles, to lead the people in overthrowing monopoly capitalism and building socialism, will come from a single, multinational communist party.

"National Liberation and Proletarian Revolution in the U.S.," *RP* 5, 1972, p. 11.

National oppression is a much sharper thing for the masses of Black people than for the Black upper classes. Now that doesn't mean that all Black people don't suffer some form of discrimination or oppression. But it's a much sharper thing for the masses of Black people than for the Black upper classes. And in the final analysis and fundamentally, the masses of Black people have more in common and more interests in common politically with the masses of

people of all races and nationalities than they do with the Black upper classes.

"When You're Talking Communism You're Talking Internationalism," *RW*, No. 18, September 6, 1979, p. 16.

The key point is the *dual oppression* of the masses of Black working people. The national oppression they suffer, and the mass struggle against it, is bound together by a thousand links with their struggle against class exploitation and oppression, and the oppression and exploitation of the whole working class. This is exactly why the Black liberation struggle has been a "powerful driving force" pushing forward the whole struggle against U.S. imperialism and helping to lay the basis for the revolutionary unity of the working class. This is the heart of our line on Black liberation and proletarian revolution.

"Build the Leading Role of the Working Class, Merge the National and Class Struggles — National Bulletin 13," *RP* 6, 1974, p. 11.

The advanced workers of the oppressed nationalities can and must be a tremendous force for proletarian revolution themselves and a spark and lever to awaken and activate others among the proletariat, and even among the petty bourgeoisie, to political and revolutionary activity and struggle.

"There Really Are, Among the Masses in this Country, the Potential Forces for Revolution," *RW*, No. 110, June 19, 1981, p. 17.

It is up to the party to help the advanced workers of the oppressed nationalities sum up systematical-

ly and scientifically the experience — the oppression and resistance of various kinds — they have been through directly or are intensely familiar with. It is up to the party to train these workers as *communists*, as frontline fighters for the cause of the proletariat. We must say: you, as part of the oppressed peoples and of the most exploited sectors of the proletariat in this country, have not only suffered an extra heavy burden of oppression but have therefore seen and felt in an especially intense way many of the hideous features of this system and have been part of intense resistance against it — take that experience and knowledge, inform, awaken and challenge broader ranks of your class, concentrate and sharpen your own understanding with the science of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, wield it as the most powerful weapon for the whole proletariat, with the leadership of its vanguard, and make your greatest contribution to the overthrow of the system of imperialism and the final abolition of all forms of oppression and exploitation, not only in this country but everywhere in the world.

At the same time, of course, the party works precisely to unite the working class as a whole around its common revolutionary interests and in particular to bring forward and train as revolutionary, communist leaders the advanced workers of *all* nationalities.

*"Black Nationalist with Communistic Inclinations", p. 13.*

We can say that obviously the role of the class-conscious proletariat will be extremely important in the period ahead, and perhaps even decisive, if things develop in a certain way and toward a revolutionary situation, and specifically if they develop to a revolutionary situation. And within that a very im-

portant role will be played by the basic proletarian masses of Black people.

But Black people must not be left out by themselves on the line, assuming the advanced position; class-conscious proletarians, people who are awakening to political life among the proletariat as well as from other strata of all nationalities, must step to the frontlines as well, and must take up and be at the frontlines of the battle against all oppression, including as an especially important part of that, the battle against national oppression, discrimination and racism. At the same time, and from the most fundamental and overall perspective, there must be the unity of especially the advanced class-conscious forces around a firm orientation of actually fighting for the interests of the proletariat on the *world* level and for the *world* proletarian revolution above all.

"The Us vs. Them Decade: Which Way? That's the Question," *RW*, No. 185, December 17, 1982, p. 14.

In the first part of the nineteenth century de Tocqueville wrote volumes, which have been made famous, upholding the USA as a model democracy. Such a society, he said, with its extensive opportunity for individual enrichment and its large, prosperous, stable middle class, would be very resistant to revolution. But, he warned, if revolution ever did come to the USA, it would be in connection with the Black people. Today, 150 years or so after de Tocqueville wrote this, the masses of Black people are still enslaved, but that slavery has taken new forms — and the Black masses are in a different position too. They are now concentrated in the strategic urban cores in the U.S. and concentrated in the most exploited sections of the working class,

with the least stake in upholding the system and preserving the present order. And they are joined in this position by millions of proletarians of other oppressed nationalities. In short, these special victims of U.S. imperialism are in a tremendously powerful position to play a decisive role in making de Tocqueville's warning a reality — with world-historic consequences far beyond anything de Tocqueville could have imagined.

Previously unpublished.

### 13. BREAKING DOWN BORDERS

I've often been tempted by the idea that we should issue an appeal to all the people in all the vast parts of the world who have every right to claim that they enjoy all the benefits of American democracy and the free enterprise system — that is, the domination, plunder, oppression and exploitation of American imperialism. I've often been tempted and wished that we could extend an invitation to these people, and more than that, provide the means for them all to get boats or planes or whatever means could be made available to come over to the U.S. in their millions and hundreds of millions and let's just finish off this monster here and then sweep back in a wave through the rest of the world. If in fact I thought that there was any way that that was a possibility, then I certainly would be in favor of it. But this is just a way of saying that to us there's nothing sacred at all about the United States of America, quite the contrary. To paraphrase Malcolm X in a slightly different way, we are not at all Americans. We don't talk as Americans, we're proletarians, we're internationalists. And, just to make it clear, if anybody thinks that when it finally becomes possible, and when the revolutionary situation finally does develop at whatever point in the U.S. and the revolutionary struggle is on the order of the day, if anybody thinks that in making that revolution we are going to somehow respect the

borders of the United States of America, they must be crazy!

"The Border Question," *RW*, No. 174, October 1, 1982, p. 8.

It is hardly conceivable that there could be a revolution in the U.S. which didn't at some point and in various ways significantly interpenetrate with and have mutual interaction and mutual influence with revolutionary struggles being waged by the people in neighboring countries — especially in Central America.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 64-65.

One thing about such a third world war, if it is unleashed by these imperialists — if the international proletariat is not able to prevent it through revolution — is that it will batter down the barriers of country and nation much more than any previous war. At the same time it will destroy more than ever before the superstitious awe for states and statecraft that is instilled in the masses, will make clear that boundaries and governments are established and enforced with cannon and missile and there is nothing holy or eternal about them, or about the ruling classes presently presiding over the fate of mankind with such unspeakable consequences for it.

"Crowns Will Roll by Dozens on the Pavements... There Will Be Nobody to Pick Them Up," *RW*, No. 115, July 31, 1981, p. 3.

There is nothing sacred to us about the USA, as it's presently constituted, or about the borders of the U.S. as they are presently constituted. Quite the opposite. And we recognize as a very important task,

and a very important aspect of proletarian internationalism, our responsibility to educate the masses of people — and this is particularly important for the white people in the United States — to educate them to the fact that there is nothing sacred about these borders and that we have higher interests that go way beyond these borders.

It is certainly a very real possibility, and even a real likelihood, that the revolution in what is now the U.S. when it does come will involve a very significant aspect of the battering down — not only in an ideological sense but literally in terms of the actual way the revolution goes — a battering down of the southern border, or much of the southern border, of the U.S. and very likely the phenomenon of the sweeping up of revolutionary forces from Central America right into the U.S. — horror of horrors and worst nightmares of the imperialists and their social base, but a very good thing and a source of great inspiration and further strength for the proletariat.

"The Border Question," *RW*, No. 174, October 1, 1982, p. 8.

You mean to tell me that there is no distinction between the violence of a rapist and a woman's violence in fighting back against that? Wake up and realize what is going on in the world!

"Grasp Revolutionary Theory — Rely On the Masses," *RW*, No. 58, June 6, 1980, p. 8; *On the Mao Tsetung Defendants' Railroad and the Historic Battles Ahead*, p. 43.

## 14. WOMEN

In many ways, and particularly for men, the woman question and whether you seek to completely abolish or to preserve the existing property and social relations and corresponding ideology that enslave women (or maybe "just a little bit" of them) is a touchstone question *among the oppressed themselves*. It is a dividing line between fighting to end all oppression and exploitation — and the very division of society into classes — and seeking in the final analysis to get your part in this.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 140-41.

Recently I heard a startling statistic: one out of every four women in the U.S. will be the victim of a sexual assault during her lifetime. One out of four!, and the number is expected to rise to one out of three. Right there, even if this "way of life" did not produce any of the other seemingly endless outrages and genuinely monstrous crimes — all the way to world war — that it does produce; even if what stands behind that statistic were the only thing seriously wrong with this system, that alone would be enough to rise up against it and not stop until it had been overthrown and something better put in its place.

"Provocations," *RW*, No. 228, October 28, 1983, p. 3.

The word "bitch" as applied to women plays the same social role as the word "nigger" applied to Black people.

As for the word "lady," its social role is in general not much better. Oh, it may sometimes seem more sophisticated — as in "disco lady, sophisticated mama" or "she's my lady" or "she's a real lady" — and it may supposedly indicate "class" ("a 'lady' does not do things like that") but it is not too hard to see *which* class all this serves. It is all part of that bourgeois "style" or pretension that is supposed to be "cool" these days — part of the cynicism, hedonism (pleasure-seeking) and narcissism (self-love) that is such an easy and ridiculous cop-out. And most particularly, it is part of the oppression and degradation of women and their relegation to an inferior status and role. In short, in its general social usage, it is part of the arsenal of the enemy.

"Down on the Word Lady (to Say Nothing of Bitch)," *RW*, No. 198, March 25, 1983, p. 3.

Even being "removed" from the scene in the U.S., it is impossible to observe that scene without being struck by the very real elements of fascism that are being built up in the political and ideological superstructure in particular.

This is particularly striking in the ideological, and

more specifically, the cultural sphere. The cult of the body that screams out in this “let’s get physical” craze; the cult of the military; the many-sided attack — including literal physical and sexual assault as well as the incessant preaching of wifely and motherly duty — to force women, even women with “responsibility outside the home,” more firmly into a subordinate, debased, and brutalized position; the cult of the nation, including the revival of the U.S. as god’s chosen nation (or at least as enjoying “favored nation status” with him).

*An End to the Horror*, p. 105.

The woman question — that is, the position and role of women in society, and more specifically the abolition of the oppression of women — is much more than a mere question of democracy and equality. It does involve the question of equality — eliminating unequal relations between women and men is a decisive question and a decisive part of the proletarian revolution — but at the same time it is much more fundamental than that. It is much more central and fundamental to the whole question of the split-up of society into antagonistic classes, to the basic division of labor in human society — that is, the development and perpetuation in various forms of an *oppressive* division of labor and antagonistic social relations — *and* to the elimination of all this and the attainment of communism.

Previously unpublished.

The subjugation of women by men is a product of human social development — not an unchanging or unchangeable product of nature (or of “nature’s god”) — and it will be finally eliminated through a further leap in that social development. In early

forms of human society, division of labor between women and men does not in and of itself mean that women are oppressed by men. In fact for tens of thousands of years social relations between women and men were not relations of domination and oppression. But the development of human beings’ productive forces and, along with them, the development of surpluses which could be accumulated unevenly among different people, began to provide the basis for the domination and exploitation of one part of society by another; then the division of labor between men and women became the basis for the subordination of women by men. And so it has been over thousands of years of human history. There have been various forms of society which, despite different levels of productive forces and differing forms of production relations, have all shared the basic feature that they could not be maintained and further developed except through an oppressive division of labor and the exploitation of the laboring population by a nonlaboring minority that monopolizes political power and intellectual life. But the most profound fact is that human society has now reached the point where, as Engels pointed out, such an oppressive division of labor and such relations of exploitation are not only unnecessary but a definite hindrance to the full utilization of society’s productive forces and knowledge. Thus the most radical revolution in human history — to sweep away thousands of years of traditional relations and ideas — is now on the agenda and urgently demanded. Integrally bound up with this revolution is the complete abolition of all forms of the oppression of women — of the subjugation and binding of half the human species. That women, in their masses, must and will play a most forceful role in this revolution may bewilder and infuriate some,

but it should encourage and inspire all those who are not the beneficiaries or the guardians of the violently convulsing old order.

Previously unpublished.

We know that the indoctrination of the masses socially, culturally and in other ways includes a heavy dose of the idea that women's place, if it's put politely, is in the home (and if it's put impolitely I'll leave it to your understanding of what's said). We know that this is drummed into the masses of people, and this is one of the sharpest contradictions that hits literally right at home — this division between men and women that has its roots in the basic social division in society as a whole.

There has to be ideological struggle. How can we go out and educate the masses of people to the historic mission of their class, the proletariat; how can we talk about abolishing all exploitation, all oppression of the masses of people; how can we talk about sweeping away every remnant in which one section of society rides upon and lives parasitically off another; how can we talk about sweeping into the garbage bin all of the inequalities left over from capitalism — except one? How can we talk about doing all that and yet at the same time leave intact or take a liberal attitude toward one of the most important cornerstones of the foundations of capitalism — the oppression of women and the whole ideology of male superiority and the degradation of women that goes hand-in-hand with it and must go hand-in-hand with it? There is no way we can do this.

*Break the Chains! Unleash the Fury of Women as a Mighty Force for Revolution,* from speech on International Women's Day, March 8, 1979, p. 25.

I am going to say this straight up, some of these guys out here will say, yeah, they dig revolution but they cannot go along with this part about equality between men and women. Bullshit! If you are serious about making revolution, if you are serious about abolishing every form of exploitation and oppression, if you are serious about sweeping away this system and all its monstrous crimes, how are you going to tell me that you want to eliminate every form of oppression except one, every form of inequality among the people except one, every form of degradation in society except one? You can't do it! How are we going to achieve equality and unity between different races among the masses of people and overcome all the other divisions they put in our ranks and yet still maintain among ourselves a position of slavemaster and slave, of commodity-owner and owned, of possessor and possessed between men and women? No, we cannot do that! And why should we want to? We want a world free of any form of exploitation, oppression, discrimination, and degradation among the masses of people. We do not want, it is not the outlook of our class, and it is no consolation — let's say for men — to have somebody to kick around and somebody to lord it over. Our class, the working class, is going to rise up and remake this whole world in our image and advance humanity to a whole new stage where nobody owns anybody or oppresses anybody in any form whatsoever! And if we are going to do this, we cannot break all of our chains but one; we cannot break all of our mental shackles but one. We have to break and smash and bury them all forever!

*"You Can't Break All the Chains But One."*  
*RW*, No. 95, March 6, 1981, p. 23.

Chiang Ching and Chang Chun-chiao: Heads high and vision far and firm in the face of isolation, slander, torture and the threat of death, with conquering contempt for the howlings of dying beasts and the whinings of miserable traitors; theirs is not the over-bloated arrogance of those whose gain is measured in the suffering of the masses and whose future is oblivion, but the confidence of the new-born, self-emancipating force whose strength lies in billions beginning to awaken. Oppressed all over the world know that these two are of them and that their stand is for them.

As Chiang Ching has defiantly declared on behalf of the international proletariat: Making revolution is no crime. It is right to rebel! "Chiang Ching — a brazen woman, seeking to make herself empress." So say the upholders of tradition's chains in China and those like them elsewhere, but to the international proletariat she is an inspiring leader and signal that age-old inequalities and divisions can and will be struck down.

"The Banner Has Been Held Brilliantly Aloft, A Call Has Been Righteously Sounded," Statement on the Heroic Stand of Chiang Ching and Chang Chun-chiao, *RW*, No. 90, Special Edition, January 30, 1981, p. 3.

One of the greatest things about the 1960s in this country was for example the women who said, "To hell with being Mary Hartman and Edith Bunker!" They said, "There's a whole world out here to become part of and change, along with the men. Who wants to go through your life having your highest concern be the waxy yellow build-up on your floor?"

*How Can We Apologize for Taking History into Our Hands?*, p. 7.

Over the past several decades in the U.S. there have been profound changes in the situation of women and the relations within the family. In only one of ten families today is there the "model" situation, where the husband is the "sole breadwinner" and the wife a totally dependent "homemaker." With these economic changes have come significant changes in attitudes and expectations — and very significant strains not only on the fabric of the family but of social relations more broadly. Yet it is precisely that "model" of woman/wife — the mother who knows that father knows best — that the ruling class must hold up and toward which it must drive women to conform, as it seeks to rally the Nation around the traditional norms and values that bind this system together, as it seeks to prepare the masses of people to make the ultimate sacrifice for the Flag, Mom, and Apple Pie. But can anyone really imagine millions and millions of women being driven back into that "model" position without the most wrenching struggle, a struggle that could go a long way toward rupturing the whole social fabric? The whole question of the position and role of women in society is more and more acutely posing itself in today's extreme circumstances — this is a powderkeg in the U.S. today. It is not conceivable that all this will find any resolution other than in the most radical terms and through extremely violent means. The question yet to be determined is: will it be a radical reactionary or a radical revolutionary resolution, will it mean the reinforcing of the chains of enslavement or the shattering of the most decisive links in those chains and the opening up of the possibility of realizing the complete elimination of all forms of such enslavement?

Previously unpublished.

The imperialists have their reasons and needs for involving women in certain aspects of society from which they have been largely shut out (such as the military!), which has all to do with their preparations for world war. That *this* is why they would even allow or encourage some of the breaking down of barriers to women that has gone on, while at the same time they promote, through the various media and by other means, the most brutal and debasing oppression of women — from pornography to offensives in the realm of fashion to the Moral Majority's spearhead of restoring the "proper place" and role for women, as man's subordinate in the home and in society at large. This provides a vivid and grotesque exposure of their whole system and why it is not worth a single drop of blood to defend — but many to overthrow.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 143-44.

The position and role of Black women and women generally in society and in the struggle to transform it will be a big question in the '80s, far beyond what it was in the '60s. This marks an important difference between the '60s and the '80s and reflects the fundamental differences in terms of what is on the historical agenda and what the stakes are: a far more extreme and radical solution is demanded and will be brought about — in one direction or another.

Out of their own necessity, and despite their furious attempts to intensify the oppression and degradation of women and smother their outrage, the imperialists are raising up a terrible force whose basic interests — speaking of the vast majority of women — cannot help but be radically opposed to this whole system with its institutionalization of

patriarchal right and its systematic oppression, suffocation, and mutilation of women, body and soul. **How** could most women *not* want a basic change in a society where a woman will be raped *every eight minutes* while the rulers of that society ravage people throughout the world and plot a war that could **blow** the world up to defend this way of life! To **unite** with and seek to fully unleash, or to fear, hate, **and** seek to suppress the fury of this terrible force: **this** is a *fundamental dividing line* and has a great **deal** to do with whether things in the '80s go **qualitatively** beyond the '60s on the revolutionary road.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 142-43, 144.

## 15. YOUTH

Youth are always the most audacious. They are the first to take initiative in exposing the enemy and struggling against him.

“Revolutionary Youth and the Road to the Proletariat,” *RP2*, 1970, p. 45.

Old people tend to become conservative, settled in their ways, comfortable with, or at least resigned to, “the way things are.” This must be challenged, of course. But who can be unleashed as a powerful force to challenge it, as well as convention and the “force of habit” in general? Mao understood, very profoundly, that the youth are a major, dynamic force for this. Let them rebel, let them challenge the old fogs. Let them spark the rest of society to do the same.

*Communists are Rebels*, p. 14.

The youth want to rebel and do rebel against the rottenness and the hypocrisy and the corruption and the just absolute worthlessness of the dominant society and its values in every sphere — culturally, in terms of the educational system, in terms of their actual situation and the sharp way in which that is expressed in the treatment by the police, and all the rest of that. But it’s the whole thing; the youth want to rebel against that.

*There’s Nothing More Revolutionary than Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought*, p. 3.

Any system that has such a bleak and rotten future for the kids that are coming up, that in growing numbers and in some of the highest numbers in this world are killing themselves — right there is reason enough that this system should be overthrown and swept into the graveyard of history.

*How Can We Apologize for Taking History into Our Hands?*, p. 4.

There is nothing good to be had under this system and the only way forward for the youth is to begin to learn about each other, to get to see their common interests, and more than that to get revolutionary consciousness — which our youth group, the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade, is bringing out to them — and to become part of fighting for the real future. In the final analysis, it’s the only alternative to their either blowing their own brains out or having them blown out on a battlefield fighting for nothing except to keep this capitalist madness going.

*How Can We Apologize for Taking History into Our Hands?*, p. 6.

The *only* future for youth lies, not in trying to work within this system or trying to make a go out of “beat the man at his own game,” but in beating the man by overthrowing and getting rid of his game.

*Communist Revolution: The Road to the Future, the Goal We Will Win*, p. 14.

They say that they don’t have any work for one out of two of these Black youth, and for a good number of these other youth out here. And they’re telling them straight up, slapping them in the face and saying, “This is the way it is, what are you going

to do about it? You don't have a future under this system, much as we lie and talk about the land of opportunity. You don't have a job and you don't have a future!" Well, we've got news for you, *we've* got a job for them, and *we've* got a future for them! We've got a job and a future — a revolution to turn this whole world upside down, and there ain't no unemployment line in the ranks of the revolution!

"This System Is Doomed, Let's Finish It Off!", speech delivered May 1, 1979, *RW*, No. 50, April 18, 1980, pp. 3-22.

Youth generally do not weigh the way things are as much against how they used to be, but much more so against how they feel they *ought* to be — and can see more or less that they *could* be. They are more critical, daring, innovative, irreverent, less in thrall to and in awe of tradition and the "force of habit." These are qualities that communists cherish and seek to both unleash and give a conscious expression to.

*Communists are Rebels*, p. 21.

As Mao Tsetung has pointed out many times, the youth are often the ones to make innovations: They aren't bound by the conventions or the prejudices of the old fuddy-duddies. Youth tend to be more rebellious — that is a fact — but this does not mean that they just rebel blindly, that they don't think deeply about big questions in general and about the things they're rebelling around in particular. Just as it is a characteristic of youth to be daring and to break with tradition and go up against established norms in the practical sphere, it is also a characteristic of youth to do the same in the realm of ideas and theory.

Previously unpublished.

Let the youth be out there in the forefront because we know that they have been and they will be. Let them be bold and be daring, let them challenge everything that's old and rotten, decadent and decrepit in this system. Let them raise up the banner and let the old people not be far behind, let them race to catch up with the youth.

"Bob Avakian on May First," text of a 1981 tape, *RW*, No. 103, May 1, 1981, p. 22.

## 16. THE REVOLUTIONARY SCIENCE OF MARXISM-LENINISM-MAO TSETUNG THOUGHT

What we want to and have to popularize, from now forward, is the spirit so powerfully concentrated in the statement issued by Mao during the Cultural Revolution: Marxism consists of thousands of truths, but these truths can be summarized in the statement: It is right to rebel against reactionaries.

*Communists are Rebels*, pp. 24-25.

Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought is a revolutionary ideology which has, like the proletariat itself, nothing to preserve and defend in the old order; rather, it has every interest in continuing to challenge, criticize and uproot the status quo at any given time, even (perhaps especially) under socialism, even for that matter under communism, and to continue to advance human society.

"Marxism as State Religion," *RW*, No. 179, November 5, 1982, p. 3.

There's nothing more revolutionary than Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought because Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought stands for rebellion, but it stands for more than that. It

stands for actually transforming society in a thoroughgoing way.

*There's Nothing More Revolutionary than Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought*, p. 15.

If we didn't have the burning desire to get rid of all this and bury it once and for all, then we would have no right to call ourselves revolutionaries, and we would never be able to lead anybody in making revolution. But that spirit will never make a revolution by itself. It has to be tempered with revolutionary theory and a scientific method to be able to deal with the complexities of what a revolution is about and to be able to bring forward the force that can actually make a revolution, and that is the masses of people in their millions.

"Don't Be a 'Typical Commie,' Be a Communist," excerpts from a 1979 speech to Mao Defendants volunteers in Washington, D.C., *RW*, No. 42, February 22, 1980, p. 7.

The real question is not whether someone has a philosophy or not (because everyone does), but whether they follow *one kind of philosophy or another*.

While it is true, as for example in the Watts rebellion of 1965, that the oppressed can and do rise up spontaneously against the system, it is also true that spontaneously they will still be dominated by the philosophy of the very system (and its ruling class) that they are rising up against, and to the degree that this is so their struggle will be held back (for example, a few years later, in 1968, Black people in Watts turned out in overwhelming numbers to vote for Bobby Kennedy!).

*"Black Nationalist with Communistic Inclinations"*, pp. 5, 4.

Common sense will not take you far enough. Common sense doesn't tell you that there are germs out there. You can't see them but you can catch them. Only with the microscope can you really see them, magnify them and understand them. Common sense doesn't tell you that the light from the stars that you see out there actually left them a long time ago, maybe millions of years ago, that in fact, some of the stars whose light you're just seeing now may have actually been extinguished long ago, and you're just now seeing their light. Common sense won't tell you that, but a telescope and studying the laws of astronomy can tell you that. That's what Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought is — it is a telescope and a microscope, to enable us to magnify everyday events and see the broadest and furthest horizons and understand the events in the world in their interconnections.

*Summing Up the Black Panther Party*, p. 8.

Where does the strength really come from to maintain a revolutionary line, to maintain a revolutionary orientation, to maintain your political bearings all the way through all the twists and turns and past all the detours and deadends and roadblocks the bourgeoisie throws up? Where do you get the ability not to go for those sugar-coated bullets as well as the ability to fight back in the face of the real bullets?

There's basically two things, and they're really dialectically related, that are the ultimate basis we have to stand up to them and beat all these things. One of them is the masses of people, and the other is

the correct theory and principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought.

"Don't Be a 'Typical Commie,' Be a Communist," excerpts from a 1979 speech to Mao Defendants volunteers in Washington, D.C., *RW*, No. 42, February 22, 1980, p. 7.

Once we get hold of this scientific understanding and this liberating science of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought we can analyze, we can investigate, we can understand and we can change, on that basis, every aspect of nature, society and even the people's thinking.

"They Can't Believe We'll Rise Above the Muck and the Mire," *RW*, No. 56, May 23, 1980, p. 9; *On the Mao Tsetung Defendants' Railroad and the Historic Battles Ahead*, p. 7.

A youth from El Salvador put it this way: "When I was 12 years old in El Salvador, I remember looking at all the papers I could, trying to find out why people worked so hard but stayed so poor, trying to understand what was happening in other countries. . . ." Down through the course of human history the oppressed masses have sought the answer to basic questions like these. So, too, philosophers and political theorists of various kinds have attempted to determine the basis for the most just, or most rational, form of society. But in the one case as in the other, they remained for centuries unable to arrive at the essence of the problem — not only in formulating the answers but even in posing the questions. It was only with the development of Marxism that this problem was fundamentally solved, for the first time.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, p. 11.

As Mao points out, it is in fighting back and seeking a way out that the oppressed start looking for a philosophy that can lead to their liberation. And as Mao also indicates, this will lead them toward Marxism-Leninism, which is in fact the only thoroughly revolutionary philosophy in today's world, the only ideology that can guide the struggle to the complete emancipation of the masses of people from all forms of oppression.

*"Black Nationalist with Communistic Inclinations", p. 4.*

There is not a progressive tendency in history, understood in the sense of a conscious design or a predetermined, preprogrammed development. But there is, as Marx put it, a "coherence" in human history, "Because of the simple fact that every succeeding generation finds itself in possession of the productive forces acquired by the previous generation, and that they serve it as the raw material for new production." It is not the case that all of history has been preparing the ground for the communist future, in some metaphysical sense, but it is definitely the case that it has laid the basis for communism.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better Than That?*, Chapter 8: "The Future of Humanity and the Historical Place of Democracy."

To accomplish the abolition of the capitalist system of private property and the conversion of all means of production into the common property of society requires, Marx further showed, a political revolution in which the exploited proletariat overthrew the capitalist class, smashed the capitalists' state machinery, established its own state — the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat — and advanced to "the *abolition of class distinctions*

*generally*, to the abolition of all the relations of production on which they rest, to the abolition of all the social relations that correspond to these relations of production, to the revolutionizing of all the ideas that result from these social relations."

*Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions*, pp. 85-86.

The fundamental truth revealed by Marx remains fully in force: the capitalist system, through its own motion and the contradictions immanent in it, continues to drive toward and strengthen the conditions for its replacement and supersession by communism through the proletarian revolution.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, p. 41.

It is impossible to arrive at an all-around understanding of the truth (at any given point) without the correct outlook and methodology. Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought is that outlook and methodology.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 160.

Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought is an integral philosophy and political theory at the same time as it is a living, critical and continuously developing science. It is not the quantitative addition of the ideas of Marx, Lenin and Mao (nor is it the case that every particular idea or policy or tactic adopted or advocated by them has been without error); Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought is a synthesis of the development, and especially the qualitative breakthroughs, that communist theory has achieved since its founding by Marx up to the present time.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, p. 114.

Marxism is not a utopian scheme — unworkable at best, “a nice idea on paper but never working out in practice,” monstrous at worst, as its opponents variously accuse. It is a scientific worldview and method leading to clear-cut political understanding and pointing to the emancipation of the exploited class in modern, bourgeois society — the proletariat — and through this the abolition of all exploiting systems and the emancipation of humanity as a whole from inhuman conditions. As an all-encompassing *science*, and in contrast to all religion and superstition and dogma of any kind, Marxism (as Mao said) “has in no way exhausted truth but ceaselessly opens up roads to the knowledge of the truth in the course of practice.” In sum, as Lenin so succinctly put it: “The Marxist doctrine is omnipotent because it is true.”

In the world situation today, one hundred years after the death of Marx, the truth and omnipotence of Marxism not only remains a fact but assumes immense importance — now more than ever.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, pp. 9-10.

More than a few people rebel against the assertion that Marxism is a science. In part — and leaving aside those who have a class interest in opposing Marxism — this is because of a misconception of what it means to call Marxism science, and more fundamentally of what science is, viewing it as something rigid, ossified, a set of transcendental “laws” standing above reality, lifeless and mysterious formulae comprehensible only to a select and strange few — THE SCIENTISTS. In short, the very opposite of what science is, and must be. Of course, the resistance to viewing Marxism as a science — speaking, again, of people without a vested interest in opposing Marxism — is furthered

by the fact that among many so-called “Marxists,” and more particularly the rulers of the revisionist countries that proclaim themselves Marxists, there is the treatment of Marxism as lifeless dogma, akin to a religious catechism, ripping out and attempting to suffocate its revolutionary thrust and critical spirit. And the struggle against the conversion of Marxism into religious dogma has been and remains a crucial part of upholding and applying Marxism itself.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, pp. 41-42.

The emergence and development of Marxism itself has been an illustration of the basic principles of Marxism. First of all this development has been a reflection of developments and changes in the material world, society in particular. But beyond that, just as things in nature and society do not develop in a linear way, proceeding instead through spiral-like motion and marked at decisive points by leaps and ruptures, so too the development of Marxism has not been straight-line or without the discarding of theses and conceptions that have become outdated, or have proved to be incorrect, and their replacement by new and more correct theories and policies.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, pp. 57-58.

Marxism did not, of course, spring full-blown from the head of Marx. As Mao was reported to have jokingly asked, when Marx was a very young man did he study any Marxism? Marxism was forged by Marx, in close collaboration with Engels, on the basis of critically assimilating and synthesizing elements of philosophy, political theory, political economy and other fields, including scientific

discovery, in close connection with and in an overall sense on the basis of profound developments in the society of their time — in production and science and in the class struggle within the relatively recently emerged capitalist society.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, p. 11.

It can be said that it is even a law of revolution, and especially of proletarian revolution, that in order for it to succeed in any particular country, the struggle in that country and those leading it will have to depart from and even oppose certain particular conceptions or previous practices which have come to be invested with the stature of “established norms” in the revolutionary movement. This is an expression of materialist dialectics, because every revolution arises out of the concrete conditions (contradictions) in the country (and the world) at the time it is occurring, and every new revolution inevitably involves new questions, new contradictions to be resolved. It is the basic principles and the method of Marxism-Leninism that must be applied as a universal guide for revolution — but these, too, are constantly being developed and enriched, just because scientific knowledge is constantly being deepened, including the Marxist-Leninist comprehension of reality in the fullest sense, and because reality is constantly undergoing change, which requires and calls forth the continuous deepening of this knowledge.

*Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions*,  
p. 312.

Why must the revolutionary proletariat favor, encourage, and foster the “battle of ideas,” the critical spirit, and the challenging of convention —

dissent in that basic sense — in socialist society no less than in capitalist society? This is not a question of some kind of concession to the intellectuals but fundamentally a means for furthering the struggle of the masses themselves to master and transform society in every sphere in accordance with the interests of the proletariat and the advance to communism — and it is a question of how communism itself is conceived.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 185.

Can anyone even conceive of Mao as a stodgy bureaucrat or “comfortable veteran” resting on his laurels!

*Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions*,  
p. 323.

Criticism and the battle between the new and the old and between right and wrong are essential to Marxism itself. As Mao said, “Marxism is a wrangling *ism*, dealing as it does with contradictions and struggles.”

*An End to the Horror*, p. 185.

Humor is an indispensable part not only of life in general but of any real revolutionary movement.

“The Challenges Confronting Communist Stand-Up Comedians, or More on Hypocrisy,” *RW* No. 196, March 11, 1983, p. 3.

What is most controversial is Marxism’s claim to be not just a science but an all-encompassing science, a single, unified worldview and methodology that provides a comprehensive approach to analyzing — and synthesizing — and to changing

reality, both nature and society. But if, in fact, the material world exists objectively and all reality consists of matter in motion (motion being the mode of existence of matter, as Engels pointed out), and further if the principle reflecting this — dialectical materialism — is not only universally applicable in nature but can and must be extended to society, then indeed this does represent such a comprehensive approach that must be the fundamental principle in all investigation, and action. This does not mean that there is no need for dealing with the specific quality and characteristics of different things or that in dealing with any problem the repetition of the basic principles of dialectical materialism and historical materialism will provide the solution and way forward. What it means is that these basic principles must be the guiding ones precisely in examining the particularities of different things (different contradictions).

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, p. 42.

The outlook of the proletariat, the scientific worldview and methodology of Marxism, unlike all other class outlooks, is not only partisan, it is also true. It represents a class outlook but it is not blinded or prejudiced by class *bias*. This is because of the fact that the position and role of the proletariat in society and human history are radically different from those of any other class. The proletariat carries out socialized production in a society (and world) marked by large-scale industry, the widespread application of science, highly developed means of communication, etc.; it is the exploited class in capitalist society, a society split in the main into two directly antagonistic classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat; because of its propertyless condition it is subjected to domination and exploitation by

capital and subordinated to the dynamics of capitalist accumulation, and its interests lie in the thorough revolutionization of society, in bringing about the most radical rupture with traditional property relations and traditional ideas, as it is put in the *Communist Manifesto* — the proletariat can emancipate itself only by abolishing not just capitalism but all exploitation, indeed all class distinctions and their material and ideological bases. It is for this reason that Marxism openly proclaims its class character and ruthlessly exposes the class character and interests in all relations, institutions and ways of thinking in present-day (and past) society.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, p. 44.

While the truth itself has no class character and is not a class question in that sense, *arriving* at it, in an all-around way, most definitely is!

*An End to the Horror*, p. 173.

The people who run this country wouldn't recognize the truth if they had a head-on collision with it.

Previously unpublished.

The ideas that people have, in order to be correct, in order to be able to move things forward, have to correspond to the actual material world that exists outside of us. You can walk on water if you correctly understand the laws of water and transform it into ice. But you can't do it just by wishing to do it. So our ideas have to conform to the actual development of the real world. And that's what we mean by materialism.

*Communist Revolution: The Road to the Future, the Goal We Will Win*, p. 19.

On the surface, it might seem obvious that matter is primary over ideas — that the external world of nature both exists independently of human beings and their ideas and in fact is the ultimate source of those ideas. For example, everyday objects, such as trees, rivers, mountains, and so on, do not begin existing or cease existing depending on whether a particular person (or people generally) are thinking of them. The fact remains, however, that not only historically but in present-day bourgeois society, it is not materialism but idealism that has been and is the ruling philosophical principle. This is, to a significant degree — especially in modern society with its tremendous advances in science over all previous ages — for *political* reasons: idealism, not so much in “pure philosophical form” but in popularized and also in ritualized forms (including religion, of course), serves the interests of the ruling class in keeping the oppressed classes stupefied, mystified and subjugated. But it is also true that the realm of philosophy itself plays an important role in society, in the actions of individuals, and still more importantly, of social classes or groups, and that in this realm the “common sense” rejection of idealism does not stand up, either in the spontaneous thinking of people or in debate and confrontation between opposing philosophical schools or camps.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, p. 18.

Matter not only exists independently of consciousness but exists even where there is no consciousness.

*Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions*, p. 159.

“But where did it all come from?” We are told everything must have a beginning and an end; and in

fact, for particular things — in a *relative* sense, and *only* in that sense — this is true. People, for example, are born, live and then die. But the matter of which they are composed is neither created nor destroyed. And just because for 70 or so years — *out of infinity!* — particular elements were combined in that particular form (a person), what about that makes a “miracle” or justifies the argument that “it all had to come from somewhere”?

“Then where did matter come from?” It did not “come from” anywhere — it has always existed, in one form or another, whether energy or mass. Again, because *particular forms* of matter have a (relative) beginning and end, why should it follow — and in fact it does not follow, nor is it true — that matter itself, in one form or another, must likewise have a beginning and an end?

*Communists are Rebels*, pp. 16-17.

Dialectics basically tells us that everything in the universe — whether it's in nature or society — develops through the struggle of opposing forces, of contradictions, and particularly develops on the basis of the contradictions within itself.

*Communist Revolution: The Road to the Future, the Goal We Will Win*, p. 15.

The dialectical view of development recognizes that all things are unities of opposites, which have relative identity with each other — under certain conditions and for a certain time — thus forming the particular thing, but are from beginning to end locked in struggle with each other.

This is obviously an extremely complex process in real life. The essential point is that dialectics reveals the inner contradiction within all things, as well as the interaction between different things, and

further, that after a certain point in the struggle of opposites, in interpenetration with other things, there is a leap, a transformation of the aspects into their opposites, and sooner or later a rupturing of the old identity and its replacement by a new relative identity (unity of opposites).

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, pp. 23, 24.

Mao even stated that “sudden changes are the most fundamental laws of the universe.” In calling sudden changes the basic law(s) of the universe, Mao is stressing a most important aspect of the law of contradiction: at a certain point in the struggle of opposites there is a *leap* which brings about a qualitative change in the thing (contradiction); and such changes are likely to — in a certain sense cannot help but — come suddenly, or they would not be leaps.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 210.

Motion is the mode of existence of matter; there is no matter without motion, and vice versa. And motion itself is contradiction — in motion, by definition, something is both in one place and not in that place at any given point in time. Since motion is the mode of existence of matter and since the motion of all things and their development is determined by the contradiction within them, there need have been and there was no “initial impulse” to start everything — no god.

All ideas of stagnation, permanence — and permanent order — of unchanging absolutes, are contrary to nature and its laws and to humanity’s struggle with the rest of nature, through society, and to the laws of social development (and of thought). In

political expression, these ideas are reactionary and serve reactionary social forces.

*Communists are Rebels*, pp. 17-18.

Neither the emergence of the human species nor the development of human society to the present was predetermined or followed predetermined pathways. There is no transcendent will or agent which has conceived and shaped all such development, and nature and history should not be treated as such — as Nature and History. Rather, such development occurs through the dialectical interplay between necessity and accident and in the case of human history between underlying material forces and the conscious activity and struggle of people.

Cited in Skybreak, *Of Primeval Steps and Future Leaps*, p. 7.

One of the key points of materialist dialectics is that matter and consciousness are a unity of opposites and therefore can be transformed into one another, so that, even though in the overall sense matter is primary and the source of consciousness, consciousness in turn can and does exert a tremendous influence in guiding people in transforming the material world, and the more so the more that consciousness is a true reflection of material reality — in its process of motion and development — and therefore is able to accelerate the motion and change called forth by developments in the material world. In the sphere of society and history, this means that people, and in particular the class-conscious representatives of the advanced class in any stage of class-divided society, play a crucial and dynamic role not simply in the development of the productive

forces but more than that in the revolutionary transformation of the superstructure, beginning with the overthrow of the old order, and of the production relations — in the “changing of all traditional social forms” — in order to advance society and its productive basis to a new stage.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, pp. 28-29.

Perception only represents the knowledge of the appearance of things as they are reflected by the senses and registered in the brain as impressions. Conception, rational knowledge, theory, represents the synthesis of these perceptions, the concentration of the essential aspects of them and their internal relations. From this can be understood the tremendous importance and role of theory in general and in the revolutionary movement in particular.

*Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions*, p. 153.

Practice is the source of theory, theory is a concentration of practice; perception is the raw material of conception, conception is the product of the synthesis of perception. But conception, rational knowledge, theory, must also be returned to practice, in which process not only is the rational knowledge tested, but new raw materials are gathered for deepening rational knowledge.

*Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions*, p. 154.

Religion is the doctrine of submission — blind obedience; Marxism of rebellion — ever more conscious rebellion.

*Communists are Rebels*, p. 24.

## 17. RELIGION

People say, “You are a bunch of Godless atheists.” That has to be divided into two parts. First of all, as to the fact that we’re Godless — yes, we are. But that doesn’t make us any different than anybody else. Everybody’s Godless because there is no God! What makes communists different is that we consciously grasp this fact and we’re actively atheists (*a-theist*, “a” means without and “theist” means believer in God, so we’re without belief in God).

*Communist Revolution: The Road to the Future, the Goal We Will Win*, p. 29.

There ain’t no next world. We’ve got to do what we’re going to do right here and now, and at least if we die, we can die fighting to make this world, which is the only one we’ve got, a better place.

“Why Are Communists Godless Atheists?”, from a February 1979 speech in Chicago, *RCY*, Vol. 3, No. 7, July 1980, p. 20.

While we recognize and uphold the right of people to freedom of religion, at the same time we have to struggle and help people to be emancipated, and to emancipate their minds.

*Communist Revolution: The Road to the Future, the Goal We Will Win*, pp. 32-33.

We have to have an approach to Christians, and to believers in religion of various kinds generally, that seeks to unite with people who out of religious conviction or similar ideals like humanism are propelled to fight, and do fight, against injustice, oppression, even sometimes to consciously fight against imperialism while, of course, we continue to carry out an ideological struggle against religious and all their other idealist ideology.

But at the same time what I want to emphasize is that it is important to draw a clear distinction. Creationism and religious movements that make a principle of attacking science and the critical scientific spirit and promote know-nothingism and blind obedience to authority and reaction are themselves the enemy — even if we try, and we must try, to win over and neutralize people among the social base for this or who are swept up in it. Of a qualitatively different character is the struggle against religion in general as an important expression of idealism and a real mental shackle on the masses of people — a struggle that must go on, but is long-term and must be conducted in such a way that unity is built as far as possible with people who hold religious convictions but take a stand for the oppressed against the forces of reaction in the world.

“Creationism, Religion, Humanism, and Revolution,” *RW*, No. 178, October 29, 1982, p. 3.

I have in my mind the vision that was described to me of Jerry Falwell, leader of the so-called Moral Majority, giving a speech to his followers, pointing to the American flag and having them chant in unison behind him, “I love that flag, I would die for that flag.” This should give anyone a very clear understanding of not only the ideological but the

political purpose and program that is involved in the whipping up of creationism and religious fundamentalism in the U.S. We should be clear that not only will this be an important social base for them in carrying out their imperialist aims in a world war against the Soviet bloc, but also an important social base for them in the showdown and civil war in the U.S. for which they are, in fact, making preparations.

“Creationism, Religion, Humanism, and Revolution,” *RW*, No. 178, October 29, 1982, p. 3.

Some people will say, “The Bible says it. I believe it. That settles it.” They might as well say, “*I demand my right to be ignorant,*” which is another right they will always allow you to exercise in this country.

“To All Those Who Refuse to Live and Die On Their Knees,” Part 1, excerpts from 1979 national speaking tour, *RW*, No. 242, February 10, 1984.

Now I saw some of those reactionary clowns out there, and I remember one woman in particular. You know, the Pat Nixon model — face frozen in a pitiful, forlorn, zombie-like look. She had the nerve to hold up a sign that said, “Iranians go home to the Middle Ages where you belong.” I feel quite confident in saying that this woman (or at least people like her), only about a month ago, was down on her knees slobbering at the feet of the major monument to the Middle Ages and the Dark Ages in the whole world — the Pope. She’s got the *nerve* to talk about how the Iranian people should go back to the Middle Ages.

I’ll tell you something that really gets me and gives me a kick. I know the reason these neanderthal, backward people out here have the nerve to talk

about how other people ought to go back to the Middle Ages, the reason they are so furious at Khomeini talking about how they're the devil, they're satan, and how god is on the side of the Iranian people is that they believe that god can only be on the side of American imperialism. And how dare anybody else say that god's on their side! God belongs to them. Nobody else can have god.

"If Our Party Didn't Take an Internationalist Stand It Wouldn't Be Worth a Damn and I Wouldn't Be Worth Defending," *RW*, No. 229, November 4, 1983, p. 4; *On the Mao Tsetung Defendants' Railroad and the Historic Battles Ahead*, pp. 53-54.

Every religion in the world believes that every other religion is superstition. And they're all correct.

*Communist Revolution: The Road to the Future, the Goal We Will Win*, p. 31.

God created man in his own image, they say. The truth is that man created god in *his* own image.

"Why Are Communists Godless Atheists?", from a February 1979 speech in Chicago, *RCY*, Vol. 3, No. 7, July 1980, p. 7.

This Bible is supposed to be the word of an all-knowing, all-seeing, all-powerful being. Don't tell me you want to reinterpret it and make it figurative. It says what it says. It means what it means. And it is wrong! It was written by people. It reflects the understanding that they had and the understanding that they did *not* have at the time.

"To All Those Who Refuse to Live and Die on Their Knees", Part 1, excerpts from 1979 national speaking tour, *RW*, No. 242, February 10, 1984, p. 14.

If I was one of these pimps or hustlers out here, you know what I would do? I would get the best hustle in the universe, I'd be god. Think about it. God has got it made. Every time something good happens to people out here, they praise god to the skies and throw money at him. If something bad happens, they still say, "It's God's master plan, He works in mysterious ways," and they throw *more* money at him. I'll tell you, you can't have a better hustle than to be god.

"To All Those Who Refuse to Live and Die on Their Knees," Part I, excerpts from 1979 national speaking tour, *RW*, No. 242, February 10, 1984, p. 14.

Religion plays the role of a drug, passed out freely and in large doses to the masses of people and organized on a grand scale — even as the ruling class literally passes out dope in the streets every day.

"Why Are Communists Godless Atheists?", from a February 1979 speech in Chicago, *RCY*, Vol. 3, No. 7, July 1980, p. 20.

Lenin once pointed out that all systems of exploitation require two functions, that of hangman and that of priest. In the same spirit we can say that so long as such systems continue to exist they will always have the need to bring forth saviors of the masses to console them in their misery and make more tolerable the terror and brutality that is the main and ultimate means of persuading the oppressed to accept their lot. The need for saviors of this kind is especially necessary in those times when the system is strained to the extreme and put to the test.

"On Saviors, Realism and Working Within the System," *RW*, No. 208, June 3, 1983, p. 8.

Ideologically, the essence of religion of any kind is to tell people that there are forces above and beyond them, all powerful, they cannot and must not challenge, that there are things in this world and of other worlds that are beyond their reach, that set the limits of what they can do, that they must not challenge and must be obedient to. That in fact they must not think of taking their fate into their own hands, or uniting with others to do that, but must leave that to some other supernatural force, and in fact leave that in almost all cases to the next world while suffering in this world. You'll find this in the Christian Bible where people are told to put up with slavery, and you'll find it in every form of religion that exists. In one form or another, even if it's a combative religion that fights other religions, still in the final analysis it will preach to people idealism, it will preach to them the idea that there is some unknowable force existing that does not have any relationship to the material world or to nature as we know it, which is ultimately controlling everything.

So we see that this ideological role is not hard to understand and is an extremely important one for the ruling classes that are a *minority* and must have various ways to keep the majority of people enslaved. And they cannot simply do it by the brute force that will be brought down if you seriously challenge their rule.

"Why Are Communists Godless Atheists?", from a February 1979 speech in Chicago, *RCY*, Vol. 3, No. 7, July 1980, p. 20.

We cannot be afraid of anything and we cannot tolerate anything that tells us, as religion does: "Miserable, wretched, sinful, pitiful creatures that you are, get down on your knees and pray to some

lord to save you." We don't want any lords or masters, in this world or any other world. There isn't any other world but this material world (or universe) anyway.

"To All Those Who Refuse to Live and Die on Their Knees," Part I, excerpts from 1979 national speaking tour, *RW*, No. 242, February 10, 1984, p. 14.

It's built into religion that you can only go so far, and then god must intercede and you can do no more. Sooner or later, even if you're struggling today, you're going to come up against the barrier that religion erects in the way of continuing that struggle and making revolution.

"Why Are Communists Godless Atheists?", from a February 1979 speech in Chicago, *RCY*, Vol. 3, No. 7, July 1980, p. 20.

As for Reason and Moral Sense, the very fact that different ages and more particularly different and opposing classes have different and conflicting views of these things — that is, of what is in accord with reason and morality — is itself a refutation of the notion that "He who made us" or man's immutable "nature" has endowed human beings with some inherent and universal reason and morality.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*, Chapter 4: "The USA As Democratic Example . . . Leader of the Pack."

Does this mean, then, that communists have "no morals"? This is a charge often hurled at us by the very Christian people (or devout disciples of other religions) who rule capitalist or other exploitative societies and who have invariably committed the

most heinous, unspeakable crimes — very often in the name of or under the cover of religious righteousness. Such people are, without exception, capable of justifying (rationalizing) the worst of these crimes on the basis of religious “morals.” This is not, in every case, nor perhaps most cases, because they are hypocrites, as opposed to true believers and practitioners of their religion. On the contrary, the fact is that, indeed, in their religious doctrine can be found the justification for these crimes, precisely because religious doctrine, like everything else in class society, has a class nature; or, to put it another way, it is because all such notions as “brotherly love,” “love thy neighbor before [or even *as*] thyself,” “peace on earth, good will toward men,” etc., are *impossible* to practice in a society divided into classes, regardless of the wishes or intentions of anyone, and this impossibility will be reflected both in religious doctrine, especially as it assumes any real force in society, and in the practical actions of the most devout religious adherents, along with everyone else.

Communist morals indeed exist. And they are just as much the product of society — of a particular historical stage of its development — and just as much the expression of the outlook and interests of a particular class as are all other ideas. But there the identity ends. Communist morals — and communist ideas generally — express and serve the outlook and interests of a particular class, the proletariat, but the proletariat, unlike all other classes in history, is a class which has no interest in exploitation or the division of society into classes. This is not because, in some abstract sense, the proletariat is “better” (more “nearly perfect”) than other classes. Rather, it is because the proletariat is itself a propertyless class — that is, a class which (in capitalist society) is without ownership of the

means of production — and further a class that engages in its productive activity not in isolated, individualized conditions, but in highly (and increasingly) socialized ones.

The morals of communists stress and insist upon placing the interests of society as a whole — and specifically its advance to classless society, communism, a whole new and higher stage in human history — above narrow, individual or small-group interests, which always promote exploitation and the perpetuation of class distinctions.

*Communists are Rebels*, pp. 7-8, 9.

There is no overall grand design — nor any Grand Designer. Nor is there a hierarchy inherent in nature which establishes man as its highest creation, destined to rule over the rest of nature by virtue of man’s Reason and the Moral Sense with which he is endowed. There is only matter in motion — potentially assuming infinite forms — and human beings are a particular form that matter in motion has assumed, with a certain kind and level of consciousness and capable of increasingly developing the ability to transform other matter in motion.

*Democracy: Can’t We Do Better than That?*,  
Chapter 4: “The USA As Democratic Example . . . Leader of the Pack.”

People are used to thinking everything has a beginning and an end, therefore the whole deal must have a beginning and an end, and then you do run into these enigmas, these mysteries that you can’t solve: well all right, then what comes before the beginning? And that’s also impossible to contemplate isn’t it? “Something before the beginning?” So then you invent that something and call it god.

If you’re going to create god, then I still say, what

is the impulse that created god? Since you're going to make that argument to me, I'll put it back to you. You say god was there — the only difference between your argument and mine is that you want to say that something unknowable that cannot be understood nor touched nor transformed by people has existed from eternity, and I want to say that *matter* moving in different forms has existed eternally and therefore *will* exist eternally — because if it never had a beginning, it can't have an end. But the thing that I'm saying has been there all the time and will be is something that people can learn about, can master, can utilize and therefore cannot be called god, by definition, because everybody'll agree that if you can master it and utilize it, it isn't god.

“In the Beginning There Was’ . . . No Beginning,” from a February 1979 speech in Chicago, *RCY*, Vol. 4, No. 9, September, 1981, p. 5-18.

Who said that order is the order of things? The bourgeoisie and all exploiting classes and their ideological apologists and advertising men insist on this. But where is it ever really true? Not in nature. We are told to think so, and on the surface it may appear so — because we are on a small part of an infinite universe and because this universe is not only infinite but infinitely changing. Ironically, this leaves us open to the notion that there is, there must be, “order to it all” — a “master plan” — god.

Here we are, one small, infinitesimal part of the universe, which is infinite — in time as well as space. But we tend — and are instructed and encouraged by the reactionaries and reactionary philosophy — to look at things as if what we see around us is, first of all, centered around us, when in fact it is not centered around *anything*. (The Chris-

tian Bible, in its account of “the creation,” has it that the stars, etc. — the heavens — were put there by god to provide light for the earth and its creatures, especially man. In fact, in opposition to what the Bible says, the earth is actually much *younger* than most of these stars, etc., and they were not “put there” for the earth — nor, for that matter, was the earth “put there” for them.) Second, we are encouraged and conditioned to view things as they are *now* as the way they always have been and will be (“As it was in the beginning, is now and always shall be — world without end” — this is metaphysics, it is wrong). In this way, it is made to seem as if everything has a place in some predetermined order, and the way things happen at any given point in time and space is made out to be the only way they could have happened or ever will happen — and often this is even elevated to the level of a “miracle.” And with this outlook it appears that things *must*, according to some all-encompassing plan and/or will (god), happen the way they do, rather than recognizing that they merely *do* happen the way they do.

*Communists are Rebels*, pp. 15-16.

But in the final analysis art plays a role for one class or another (in class society); it always plays a social role.

“Art and Politics,” excerpts from a June 1982 interview on WRFG Atlanta, *RW*, No. 190, January 28, 1983, p. 8.

## 18. ART AND CULTURE

I think people recognize, or should recognize, that art does have a political character to it; it's either going to serve one kind of politics or another. In other words, I don't think there's such a thing as art for art's sake, art that's pure and above politics and doesn't represent the point of view ultimately of one class or another and one way or another of viewing how society is and how it ought to be. Even the most subtle things, for example things that may influence politics indirectly and express a viewpoint indirectly, do so nonetheless, and sometimes the more subtly they do so the more powerfully they do so exactly because it's not overt.

Now that's on the one hand. On the other hand, art is different than politics *per se*, and it's good that it is. People need politics — politics is the lifeblood of society, if viewed in the correct way that politics is the struggle over what direction society and the institutions and people in it should take and how they should be shaped, in relation to the world around them. But nevertheless, art is a distinct sphere that's different than politics *per se*. Even though ultimately it can't be independent of or escape the realm of politics, still it is not the same thing as politics *per se* and when it is it is not good art, in general. It has its own laws, that's why there is aesthetics, it does speak to those laws and the specific character of art.

There is a lot of cynicism around these days. In the cultural sphere in the U.S., one of the main ways this comes out is in the tendency, especially among intermediate artists, to treat everything as equally fair game for ridicule and contempt. In a way, those who are caught up in this are like people with a spiritual machine gun that is out of control: they spray bullets in all directions, blasting anything and everything indiscriminately.

One of the most significant and most harmful aspects of this is that it obliterates the fundamental dividing line between the oppressor and the oppressed and between reaction and revolution.

“Provocations,” *RW*, No. 228, October 28, 1983, p. 3.

I have been tempted but it would be a mistake, for any number of reasons, to translate our strategy for revolution — united front under proletarian leadership — into the following terms: rely firmly on basketball, win over (or neutralize) as much as possible of football (and baseball) and firmly oppose and defeat golf (to say nothing of polo).

What I am getting at is that different sports, like everything else in society, have different and particular social meaning — they have their specific social base and social role.

“The ‘City Game’ — and the City, No Game,” *RW*, No. 201, April 15, 1983, p. 3.

The dunk itself arose as an act of defiance, conscious or unconscious (and this, by the way, is why many — though not all — white basketball players don't put much emphasis on the dunk; it's not that they can't jump, as conventional, racist wisdom often has it, chalking leaping ability up to genes peculiar to Black people; instead it's just that those whites don't have much to feel defiant about). But by now the dunk itself has been institutionalized to some degree and it is necessary to differentiate between different dunking styles.

Now the "white establishment" is especially concerned to distinguish between different kinds, different classes, of Blacks, in sports as well as in other spheres, and even between different kinds of dunks!

"In the Spirit of Phi Slama Jama," *RW*, No. 205, May 13, 1983, pp. 9, 11.

The arena of art is tremendously important in terms of influencing people one way or another — for revolution or against revolution, for the status quo or against the status quo speaking more generally. Art not only influences politics tremendously but there is also a sharp struggle in the realm of art over what will be produced, what will be supported, and there are many different ways that the bourgeoisie, the ruling class, has of controlling art. In fact, in the U.S. at this time, they prefer to do it without having to show a heavy hand to the degree that this is possible. They prefer to do it by pretending to have pluralism just as they pretend to have it in the political sphere — that there is no political character, no class character to our art, just different viewpoints expressing people's different ways of looking at the world. But it's like a *Newsweek* magazine article. *Newsweek* specializes in the eclectic style, they say almost everything, apparently, but by the time they're through they've gotten the point

they want across and they've told you what the acceptable conditions and framework of the argument are.

But they have other ways of controlling people, they will use the iron hand and they will use murder if people don't get in line, among artists as well as others. And that's something we've seen in the past. But at the same time, they prefer to get people with the weapon of cynicism, to get people with the weapon of demoralization, particularly people who are trying to do something with their art that is different than talking about all these rotten themes that leave people feeling demoralized or worse. With people who are trying to make a political statement or are trying to stand up and, even without knowing clearly where to go, say this whole order stinks and there's got to be something better out there, they try to convince these people that they are all alone, that nobody supports them, that people don't want to hear that, that you can't sell records or you can't sell tickets at the movie theater, or you can't keep a TV rating up if you do that kind of art. No, "you've got to be realistic and recognize that people just don't want to hear that and you're up against overwhelming odds in trying to do it. Not because we, the imperialists (or the democratically elected leaders of the country, as they call themselves) don't want you to do this or will prevent you from doing it or forcibly suppress you when you try to do it, but because the people out there are too uninterested, apathetic and so on and don't want to hear it." So I think these are some of the problems that progressive and revolutionary artists come up against; as well as outright suppression, they have to deal with all the more subtle influence that is directed at them by the ruling class.

"Art and Politics," excerpts from a June 1982 interview on WRFG Atlanta, *RW*, No. 190, January 28, 1983, p. 9.

Rapping itself is a style, a form that is the creation of the Black youth on the streets, carrying forward and shaping to today's circumstances the traditions of Black street culture. When I was in school it was the vocal groups that sang on the street corners, in the hallways, in the showers and just about everywhere else.

The cultural influences, beginning in the '50s, were in some important ways the forerunners and signals of the gathering storm of Black urban rebellion and the Black liberation movement that rocked the entire U.S. and sent shockwaves throughout the world, in the context of the world setting as a whole, particularly the rising tide of national liberation struggles throughout the Third World. Those who are most in the position of having nothing to lose — but their chains — are in the position to exert the most profound impact on society, including on other dissatisfied if less desperate groups in society — this is not only a general law of history, it is a lesson that has been written in fire in recent times in the U.S. as well as throughout the world.

In the naive love songs of the '50s street corner (or hallway) groups and in other Black cultural expressions of the times, while there were notes of protest, sometimes openly sounded, there was a significant element of hopefulness, belief perhaps that long-deferred promises would finally be made good. It was in large part the fact that these hopes were once more shown to be illusions, were once more cynically dashed by the ruling class, that fueled the explosion of Black people's struggle in the '60s.

In the face of that the ruling class has devoted serious efforts to co-opting and controlling Black culture and suffocating rebellious currents within it. The ripping off of Black music — which meant many things, including watering it down while tak-

ing it over in large part through the large established record companies — was not done only for economic reasons but at least as much for political ones.

"A Message on Hearing 'The Message,'" *RW*, No. 200, April 8, 1983, pp. 3-10.

If you want to produce music that is inspiring to people and that takes the various forms — and even develops new forms — and imbues them with content that takes people's highest aspirations and concentrates and directs them toward changing the world and criticizing and challenging things, then you have to *know* the people.

"One on One with Bob Avakian," excerpts from 1979 national speaking tour, *RW*, No. 17, August 31, 1979, p. 14.

When I say revolutionary art I don't only mean art that overtly and directly popularizes the need for revolution. I think art that does that and does it well, that is really art, is very important. But revolutionary art is certainly not limited to that. There are other forms of art that criticize the system, which dissect and expose certain of its more outrageous features and crimes, which call people to question the established order — all these kinds of things, on many different levels and in different forms, can certainly make an important contribution to building a revolutionary movement. Certainly the consciously revolutionary artists are something that the proletariat, the Revolutionary Communist Party and revolutionary communists generally, cherish, but even they should not confine their work to art that directly points to the need for revolution, nor certainly should any of their work, whatever its theme, fall into being mere propaganda or attempt to be, or replace, politics *per se*. And we must recognize the

important role and contributions of many people who are not communists, who don't agree with us completely, perhaps are not themselves convinced of the need for revolution or are not very clear what that means, but who do in fact challenge the established order and who do call on people to question and rebel in various different ways against it, often very indirectly as well as sometimes more directly through their art.

"Art and Politics," excerpts from a June 1982 interview in WRFG Atlanta, *RW*, No. 190, January 28, 1983, p. 9.

A work of art must be more intense and concentrated than life itself; it cannot passively reflect life; a play, novel, song, etc., cannot just reflect the minute-by-minute life of someone — there would be no point to it. Art must concentrate and intensify life, must raise it to a higher plane.

*Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions*, pp. 224-25.

It is not possible to carry out the socialist revolution and the transition to communism without creating a whole new culture, including literature and art, which, for the first time in history, puts forward the outlook and promotes the interests of the proletariat in overthrowing everything reactionary and revolutionizing all of society.

*Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions*, p. 221.

Is there such a thing as "proletarian art"? In my opinion, there is — and there isn't. There is not such a thing in terms of form; that is, there is not one particular form that alone characterizes and expresses the interests of the proletariat in the sphere of art,

there is no form that is quintessentially proletarian and that must be employed to the exclusion of all others; nor is it helpful to try to find or fabricate such a Proletarian Form. But there is proletarian art in terms of content: it is art which, through many different forms, reflects — as art — the outlook and interests of the proletariat, and in that way contributes to the realization of its revolutionary goal.

Previously unpublished.

All-around dictatorship by the proletariat does not mean crude imposition of whatever the current policies of the government are. It does mean that the Marxist method must be in command and leadership must be in the hands of those who have demonstrated the ability to grasp and apply it — in a *critical* way, without turning it into a static, sterile state religion. This too will be a question of sharp struggle. Take, for example, how we will deal with something like graffiti art and artists under socialism. Certainly we will not seek to suppress them and to wipe away their works; but *neither* should we try to "pacify" and "sanitize" them by simply giving them assigned places to do their work, etc. — though there will be a place for that. But beyond that, we should enter into this arena with them, seeking to learn and to criticize, right on the same walls and other places where they are creating — if their shit's no good, artistically and/or politically, then let's tell them and everybody so and make it a mass question if they don't dig our criticism; and especially if it *is* good, artistically and politically, let's let everybody know that too and support and popularize it, without "legitimizing the life out of it"! Variety, diversity in art is very important; without this, creativity would be stifled, and on the other hand creativity will bring forth variety and

diversity — though the artists' self-expression is not more important than the content and social effect of their art (which are principal and decisive through all the different forms in which art is expressed).

Either the Marxist method and proletarian forces will be in command and leading in the arts and sciences (and the superstructure generally) or the opposite methodology and forces will: classes do and will sharply contend over this, so long as classes (and their social basis) exist. One class or another must win out. There is no "pure" knowledge or search for knowledge (and no "art for art's sake" standing outside or above class contradiction and struggle), just as there is no "pure" democracy (without class content). But fortunately, *one* of these methodologies does provide a comprehensive basis for arriving at, and making a powerful material force of, the truth: the outlook and interests of the proletariat do correspond to the further emancipation and enlightenment of humanity, in a qualitatively greater way than ever before.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 183-84.

What Lenin said about how communism springs from every pore of society also applies in the realm of art. Rigid formalism, resistance to innovation, ready rejection of nonconformity — all this is an obstruction to the flowering of artistic creation. But more — it is an obstruction to realizing the goal of communism.

Previously unpublished.

## 19. DEMOCRACY AND DICTATORSHIP

Oh, you capitalists talk about democracy — but what is this democracy you're talking about? When I went to school they used to say that the cradle of the democracy that we have was in Greece, thousands of years ago. Ancient Greece, that was the best example of the democracy that we have now. And I had to get out of school to find out they were telling the truth, despite themselves. What I found out after I got out of school was that Greece was a slave society, where 90 percent of the people were slaves and there was democracy only for a small handful of slaveowners, and that's exactly the kind of democracy we've got right here in this country.

*Communist Revolution: The Road to the Future, the Goal We Will Win*, p. 23.

America today is on a grand and international scale the enslaving empire that Athens represented in miniature.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*, Chapter 2: "The Roots and the Rise of Modern Democracy."

In the world today the most horrendous crimes are committed in the name of democracy.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*, Chapter 1: "Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?"

The hypocrisy of the imperialists seems to have an inexhaustible source — it will only be extinguished when imperialism is, finally.

“The Challenges Confronting Communist Stand-Up Comedians, or More on Hypocrisy,” *RW*, No. 196, March 11, 1983, p. 3.

You step out of line, you threaten them the least and you’ll see what the reality of so-called freedom and democracy in this country is — you don’t even have to be organizing politically against them. Anybody that challenges, questions, doesn’t go along with the program and especially if you’re among the basic masses of people on whose back this system lives — the full force of this dictatorship will come down on you.

Dictatorship simply means the rule of one class over another. And as long as society is divided into classes, we’ll always have a dictatorship of one class over another.

“The Sham of Democracy and the Reality of Dictatorship,” excerpts from a 1979 speech in Columbus, Ohio, *RW*, No. 55, May 16, 1980, p. 7.

Don’t talk to me about freedom and democracy until you ask and answer the most basic question: freedom for whom to do what? Freedom for the exploited to rise up and get rid of exploitation — *or* — freedom for the exploiters to keep us down, dictate to us, keep us in our place, suck our blood, and literally murder us? It’s one way or the other.

“Capitalist Dictatorship and the Great Shuck and Fraud of Voting,” excerpts from 1979 national speaking tour, *RW*, No. 237, January 6, 1984, p. 3.

If exploiters are free to exploit, then the majority of people are not free to be free of that exploitation.

“The Tomorrow Show,” from 1979 interview with Tom Snyder, *RW*, No. 234, December 9, 1983, p. 10.

They run this line that when you step into that polling booth your vote is worth just as much as Rockefeller’s. And that’s right. Because neither one of them means a damn thing. Decisions don’t get made in that polling booth. Whichever way the election comes out, the Rockefellers and the class of Rockefellers are going to come out ahead.

“On Saviors and Horse Races,” excerpts from a 1976 speech in Los Angeles, *RW*, No. 63, July 11, 1980, p. 7.

Who the hell wants the right, so-called right, to see which group of oppressors and exploiters is going to oppress and exploit you?

We don’t want that right — it’s not worth a damn! We want the right to be rid of being oppressed and exploited — to put an end to the sham of democracy and the reality of dictatorship.

“The Sham of Democracy and the Reality of Dictatorship,” excerpts from a 1979 speech in Columbus, Ohio, *RW*, No. 55, May 16, 1980, p. 7.

What is the Kennedy tradition? It’s the tradition of U.S. imperialism.

“On Current Events,” from 1982 interview on Ken Davis Show, WBEZ, Chicago, *RW*, No. 165, July 30, 1982, p. 14.

The alleged freedom of expression in the

“democratic countries” is a sham — and for two basic reasons — because the ruling class has a monopoly on the means of molding public opinion and because its monopoly of armed force puts it in a position to suppress, as violently as necessary, any expression of ideas, as well as any action, that poses a serious challenge to the established order.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*,  
Chapter 3: “The Illusions of Democracy.”

You see, the one freedom they'll allow you in this country and will NEVER take away no matter what, the one freedom that they'll in fact encourage you and give you free time to exercise, especially if you're one of the oppressed masses, is to open your mouth, move your lips, but have the words of your oppressor come out of your own mouth. You will have the freedom as long as you live to open your mouth and talk a fool and parrot the very lies of this ruling class. They will never take *that* freedom away. And unfortunately right today there are too many people still exercising it.

“The Sham of Democracy and the Reality of Dictatorship,” excerpts from a 1979 speech in Columbus, Ohio, *RW*, No. 55, May 16, 1980, p. 14.

In all bourgeois-democratic countries — and this is no exaggeration — from the earliest age, through the educational system, the mass media and in other ways, *the people are systematically misinformed and lied to about every significant question of current political and world affairs and of world history, and are systematically indoctrinated and imbued with an upside-down worldview and errant methodology.* And this takes place, not through the kind of extreme, and exotic, measures of the totalitarian state

of Orwell's *1984*, but through the “normal” oh-so-democratic functioning of bourgeois-democratic society and its state.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*,  
Chapter 6: “Bourgeois Socialism and  
Bourgeois Democracy.”

Even if every last spokesman for the bourgeoisie was not allowed to communicate a single word for a century, while proletarian revolutionaries had unlimited access to the media, etc., the revolutionaries still would not yet have achieved “equal time” with the reactionaries! This is an important aspect of why, with the overthrow of capitalism, the exercise of the dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie and over counterrevolutionaries generally is essential and indispensable.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*,  
Chapter 7: “Democracy and the Communist Revolution.”

From the time of Plato and Aristotle (and even before) to the present era, political theorists and philosophers have formulated concepts of freedom, justice, wisdom, reason, right (or life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness) in different ways, depending on the age in which they lived, the social system and the class they represented. Different and opposing classes will have different and opposing viewpoints on what such concepts mean — life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness could not help but have the opposite meaning for slaves and slaveowners in America at the time the *Declaration of Independence* was written, for example.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*,  
Chapter 3: “The Illusions of Democracy.”

As a general category, equality is itself a phenomenon of the bourgeois epoch. Historically, in its struggle against the feudal system, the bourgeoisie raised the banner of equality, by which it meant, as experience has clearly shown, essentially the equality of commodity owners in the marketplace. Of course, from the start, this formal equality was founded in a profound inequality in fact — specifically the fact that the bourgeoisie owned the means of production and thereby appropriated to itself (and sold) the goods produced by the workers (the proletarians) who were deprived of all ownership of the means of production and had only one commodity to sell — their ability to work (their labor power). And even if all the loudly proclaimed “equalities” of bourgeois society — such as “equality before the law” — were really and fully implemented (that is, if judges, prosecutors, etc., showed no prejudice toward the poor) this would not and could not change the basic fact that the rich and the poor do not face an “equal” need to steal a loaf of bread (or perhaps money to pay their heating bill) nor have “equal” access to legal advisors, representatives, etc. In short, regardless of any laws or practices whose professed aim is to establish “equality” — and even if they were all “fairly” applied — there can be no real equality between exploiter and exploited, there can be no equality between different (and especially between antagonistically opposed) classes.

*“Black Nationalist with Communistic Inclinations,”* pp. 6-7.

It is conventional wisdom in countries like the U.S. that democracy and dictatorship are the complete opposite of each other. But in fact democracy is a form of dictatorship. In any state where

democracy is the form of political rule, democracy is really only practiced among the ranks of the ruling class, while dictatorship is exercised over the oppressed class (or classes).

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?,*  
Chapter 3: “The Illusions of Democracy.”

We can once again answer the accusation of the apologists of capitalism, who assail the communists for openly proclaiming the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat: better us than you — far better, infinitely better the dictatorship of the proletariat than the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?,*  
Chapter 7: “Democracy and the Communist Revolution.”

Should it be concluded that the communist approach to democracy is an entirely negative one? No, it is a dialectical materialist one. Concretely, this means that communists recognize that democracy is not an end in itself but a means to an end; that it is part of the superstructure and conforms to and serves a particular economic base; that it arises in certain historical conditions and is generally associated with the bourgeois epoch; that it never exists in abstract or “pure” form but always has a definite class character and is conditioned by the fundamental relation between classes; and that it has a distinctive character and role in the transition from capitalist society and the bourgeois epoch to the epoch of world communism, and will wither away with the achievement of communism.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?,*  
Chapter 7: “Democracy and the Communist Revolution.”

Have those democrats who really love the *Declaration of Independence* — and here I'm talking about people genuinely opposed to tyranny and injustice, not bourgeois hypocrites — have they really read it and paid attention to what it says? I am moved to ask such people to explain how something they regard as an enduring manifesto against oppression can contain such passages as the following complaint against the King of England:

“He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions.”

It would be hard to imagine a more blatant and complete reversal of truth and falsehood, of right and wrong, of victim and criminal, of just and unjust warfare, than is contained in this description — yes, in the *Declaration of Independence* — of the relations between the Indians and the Europeans who founded the United States of America on territory they stole from the Indians through murder and plunder. And this passage, this perversion of history and fact, is not an aberration from but is consistent with the whole thrust of the *Declaration of Independence*.

“*Declaration of Independence, Equal Opportunity and Bourgeois Right*,” *RW*, No. 230, November 11, 1983, p. 3.

The answer to the question, what if the basic principles of the *Declaration of Independence* were really applied?, is that they have been, in the U.S. itself and generally in all bourgeois societies; and the time is

long since past when *that* is the best and highest that humanity is capable of achieving.

“*Declaration of Independence, Equal Opportunity and Bourgeois Right*,” *RW*, No. 230, November 11, 1983, p. 17.

Just allowing people to vote, just allowing them to have their say is no guarantee that the interests of the broadest masses are going to be realized. There's no guarantee of that just by people having a “right to speak” because life's not that simple, and not only is it not that simple, there's a philosophical question involved. Is there or is there not objective truth? Not that all of it can be known at a given time, but is there or is there not objective truth? Are there or are there not things that lie in the direction of progress, advancing society, developing things? The philosophical underpinning of bourgeois democracy is agnosticism and eclecticism, “There's no truth anyway, so the important thing is that the majority of people have their will.”

But the problem is that there is truth. That is, even truth as understood correctly as a contradictory phenomenon, a thing advancing through motion and development, or through contradiction. Precisely because there is objective truth, and it also moves in that dialectical way as a result of the dialectical motion of matter, then truth will assert itself anyway. The masses can all have their say and decide something that is not in line with the development of things and then their interests won't be served — especially if you're looking broadly at the interests of mankind as a whole.

“*Can You Do Away with Leadership?*”, *If There Is to Be Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party*, pp. 16-17.

One of the things people used to say around the Vietnam War was, "this is an unconstitutional war and was not declared by Congress." Well, who gives a fuck? I wouldn't have liked it any better if it was declared by Congress. This is not necessarily to condemn those people, or at least not all of them, who fell into saying things like that. But it wouldn't really do even to say, "This was never submitted to a vote of the American people; we didn't want this war." Well, there's something there you can agitate around but you can't carry that very far because even if they'd had a plebiscite and all the American people, or the majority, had voted to have the Vietnam War, that wouldn't make it correct. It wouldn't make it in the interests of the majority of the people of the world, the interests of mankind, in line with progress, revolution and advance.

"Can You Do Away with Leadership?", *If There Is to Be Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party*, p. 17.

The communist view of freedom, then, is radically different from and opposed to the ideal bourgeois conception of freedom. It does not focus on the individual and to what degree other individuals stand as obstacles and impediments to the exercise of his will; it is not based on the individual struggle of each against all for survival and personal advancement. This is not to say that individuals will be less free in communist society than in the present bourgeois society: in fact they will be free in a far greater — but more than that, a qualitatively different — way.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*, Chapter 3: "The Illusions of Democracy."

Marxism recognizes that freedom does not lie in the absence of all compulsion — which is an im-

possibility — but in the recognition and transformation of necessity.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*, Chapter 8: "The Future of Humanity and the Historical Place of Democracy."

If we were to sum up in a phrase what the bourgeois concept and content of freedom and equality is — what is the highest meaning it gives to "liberty" and "the pursuit of happiness" — that phrase would be "equal opportunity for all." Let us assume, then, a situation where this principle is not only the guiding principle in society but is actually consistently applied. Note, first off, that the equality involved here, the ideal, is equal *opportunity*, and specifically not equal station in life: according to this ideal and the bourgeois outlook in general, the absence of social inequality is neither possible nor desirable. Well, with the fullest, most consistent application of this principle, the result would be that some, a minority, would one way or the other utilize this opportunity to establish themselves as the exploiters of the majority, an exploitation they would have to enforce through the use of direct force (with hired enforcers) and deception (divide and conquer schemes included). *There could be no other result*, precisely if this principle, equal opportunity for all, were fully and consistently applied. In other words, we could get nothing but the bourgeois society we already have, including its social inequalities along with its basic exploitation of the proletariat. To get some other result, one which would abolish social inequality, along with the elimination of exploitation, it is necessary to overthrow and transcend the ideals and principles of bourgeois society and the material conditions of which they are an expression. It is necessary to overthrow bourgeois rule and ad-

vance entirely beyond what Marx termed “the narrow horizon of bourgeois right” (equal opportunity for all) and all the economic and other social relations of which it is a reflection and extension.

When communists speak of abolishing social inequality we mean first and as the foundation the abolition of classes. But beyond that we mean the abolition of social conditions where such concepts as equal opportunity for all and their reflection in law and politics — equality before the law and democracy generally — have lost their meaning, *because the individual struggle for existence will have been eliminated together with the abolition of class distinctions* and the members of society will consciously contribute what they can to society’s overall advancement, taking back from it what they need in order to continue to develop in an all-around way and make a still greater contribution. It is this ideal whose time has now come — or rather the reverse, it is the development of the material conditions in society up to this point that have now brought forth this ideal and demand its realization.

*“Declaration of Independence, Equal Opportunity and Bourgeois Right,” RW, No. 230, November 11, 1983, p. 17.*

## 20. SOCIALISM — THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

Under capitalism it’s dog-eat-dog. Under socialism you start things by taking away the capitalist system of ownership and their ability to force everybody to scramble just to work for them.

“One on One with Bob Avakian,” excerpts from 1979 national speaking tour, *RW*, No. 17, August 31, 1979, p. 14.

When you leave, look at this housing out here and think about it; old men drunk on wine, young kids shooting dope in their veins or sniffing something **into** their nostrils, all around them garbage piling **up**, things falling down. This is not an exception, this is the future under capitalism and the present for millions of people who hate this system. Under socialism, we’ll deal with that problem. I’m telling you right now we’re going to deal with it, and we can deal with it because we’re going to sweep this capitalist god of profit out of the way and its rule out of the way. There’s no reason why those kids can’t be put to work and the old men can’t be put to work, not only tearing down those slums and building decent housing for the people, but also learning the laws of society, taking up politics, lifting their heads and together with the rest of the people in this country and around the world, ruling, transforming, and conquering the world and storming the heavens, and

changing themselves in the process. There's no reason except for capitalism.

"This System Is Doomed, Let's Finish It Off!" speech delivered on May 1, 1979, *RW*, No. 50, April 18, 1980, p. 23.

The maxim of socialist society is: from each according to his ability, to each according to his work. This means that, while provision is made for those actually unable to work, etc., and after a certain amount is set aside for accumulation, public services, and so on, generally each person gets back in the way of consumer goods an equivalent to what his labor has contributed.

And labor power itself is no longer a commodity under socialism — no longer can some people appropriate wealth from the labor of others on the basis of private ownership of the means of production, and instead each person's income is acquired solely from the labor he or she contributes — so long as socialist relations of production actually exist.

*Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions*, pp. 251, 252.

Socialism is a transition from capitalism to communism, and retains many of the features of the former even while advancing toward the latter. The economic base of socialism is marked by the contradiction between incipient communist elements — such as public ownership of the means of production and the formal abolition of the right to exploit others — and remaining capitalist elements (broadly defined as "bourgeois right"). The superstructure of socialism reflects this profound contradiction and struggle; in particular, it retains dictatorship and democracy, but as compared with capitalism,

these are reversed and radically transformed, and they serve as the political vehicle through which to carry forward the advance to communism.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*, Chapter 8: "The Future of Humanity and the Historical Place of Democracy."

Through the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China, the working class and the masses of people, led by Mao and other communist revolutionaries, carried out changes which were unprecedented. Divisions and inequalities were reduced between different strata and sectors of society, including between the country and the city. The people rose up in their hundreds of millions, developing and strengthening not only new economic and social relations and the revolutionization of culture, of people's thinking etc., but also the different forms of struggle so characteristic of the Cultural Revolution — big-character posters, public mass criticism of persons in power, the organization of brigades of youth, which came to be called the Red Guards, and so forth.

Mao warmly supported the struggles and initiatives of the masses and constantly urged them on to persevere in their revolutionary upsurge.

*Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions*, pp. 285-86.

"Yeah, but you and the capitalists are both dictators," some people say, "you both want to have dictatorships." Again, there's all the difference in the world. Yes, we do want to have dictatorship. We believe the working class should dictate to the capitalists, no bones about it, and we'll say so openly. That's the difference between us and them.

They don't dare come out openly and say, "The

United States of America is the great experiment in history. It's the greatest capitalist dictatorship that has ever existed." They won't say it! Why? Because they *are* exploiters, they *are* a handful of people who have to rule over the majority to enforce exploitation, and so they don't dare say so openly. And what are *we*, the working class? We're the majority of the people, who represent the future of eliminating exploitation and oppression.

Our dictatorship, the dictatorship of the *proletariat* (working class) is different than the capitalists' in two ways. First of all, when the workers dictate over the capitalists, it's the majority of people who are not exploiters, who are the producing people, the laboring people who make everything in society that's worthwhile, dictating to a handful of exploiters who want to continue to be exploiters, and new groups that crop up that want to do the same. And second of all, your dictatorship is only to keep a system, in which there are divisions between people and inequalities among people, going.

Our dictatorship is to carry forward the cause of revolution until we eliminate all differences, all inequalities, all exploitation, all oppression, and any basis for it, until we get to communism. And when we get there, there won't be any more need for dictatorships, so there won't be any. But not until we get there, not one day before that, will we stop dictating to the capitalists and those who want to be capitalists.

*Communist Revolution: The Road to the Future, the Goal We Will Win*, pp. 26-27.

You know, a lot of people, people who have been miseducated about what we are talking about, will call in to these radio shows I'm on and some of them will say, "Listen, when you are in power I won't even

be able to criticize you." This is the farthest thing from the truth. In fact, what we have to say to them is, "Listen, the biggest problem with people like you is getting you to criticize us once we are in power because if you will put up with what is going on under this system now, you will put up with anything!"

"The Tomorrow Show," from 1979 interview with Tom Snyder, *RW*, No. 234, December 9, 1983, p. 10

Do you think we intend to shed our blood to get rid of the system only to turn around and give it back to the capitalists, old or new, so that they can bring back all the misery of capitalism? Yes, we're going to dictate to the capitalists, and if they don't like it that's good — that tells us we're doing the right thing.

*Communist Revolution: The Road to the Future, the Goal We Will Win*, p. 27.

When we're in power — no more Sylvester Stallone movies. Anybody with any artistic sense should support us, if only on that basis.

Previously unpublished.

In socialist society, after the bourgeoisie has been overthrown but before class distinctions have been finally and completely eliminated everywhere, how can there be equality between the formerly exploited proletariat, aiming to abolish all forms of exploitation and all oppressive division of labor, and the overthrown exploiters (or newly generated ones) aiming to restore a system founded on such exploitation and oppressive division of labor?

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*, Chapter 3: "The Illusions of Democracy."

Lenin stressed, "Proletarian democracy is a *million times* more democratic than any bourgeois democracy." In fact, it is not only a million times more democratic, it is democratic in a qualitatively new and profoundly different way: it represents and depends on the broadest, and ever-deepening, participation of the formerly oppressed and exploited masses in every sphere of society — and more than that it requires their increasing mastery of affairs of state, of economic management and other aspects of administration, and the superstructure as a whole, including culture as well as other spheres of ideology. All this goes far beyond — again, it is qualitatively different from — the mere question of formal democracy and formal rights.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*,  
Chapter 7: "Democracy and the Communist Revolution."

Socialism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, does indeed mean unprecedented democracy for the masses, but this is precisely not a quantitative extension of what exists under capitalism — as the revisionists, including the old Communist Party in this country (even before it went thoroughly revisionist) have presented it. It is instead a qualitative leap — an overthrow of bourgeois rule and suppression of the overthrown bourgeoisie and all exploiting class elements and, for the first time, actual democracy for the masses. And even this is only the transition to a higher form of society where, as Lenin stressed in *State and Revolution*, democracy itself will be abolished — that is, to communism. We must constantly educate the masses in this country in this

understanding and this spirit. Otherwise socialism cannot be won; or, if won, will be lost.

"The Question of Democracy and the Communist Movement," excerpts from 1978 paper "Thoughts on Points for Discussion," *RW*, No. 56, May 23, 1980, p. 11.

The historical experience of the socialist transition so far has underscored that this transition cannot be approached, fundamentally, within particular countries, taken by themselves, but must be approached, above all, as a worldwide process, involving the overcoming and elimination of the lopsidedness in the world and all the material and ideological conditions associated with it.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*,  
Chapter 7: "Democracy and the Communist Revolution."

It is *not* simply the workers who at the present time are working in the factories who have built up the industrial strength of the U.S. There is the whole *history* of the development of the U.S., even just taking what's now within its borders. There is the whole history of Black slavery, of the genocide and the theft of the land of the Native Americans, of the theft of the land and the oppression of the Chicano people in the Southwest. There is the whole history of immigrant labor both from Asia and from Europe — for example Chinese and Irish. And that's just taking the U.S. itself. When we look at the present-day reality, especially with the development of imperialism, to argue that it is the workers in the individual factories whose labor is responsible for the industrial might of the U.S. is itself a sharp expression of chauvinism. Once you start admitting that

there are larger questions than the workers in the individual factories, and that the wealth produced has not been produced by just those workers in those factories, and there is both an historical dimension and an international dimension that has to be considered, then you come even more sharply up against the limitations of the anarcho-syndicalist view of turning the means of production over piece-by-piece to the workers in the individual factories.

In this light you can see much more clearly the need for there to be a proletarian state which cannot only represent the interests of the proletariat as against those of the bourgeoisie and other exploiting forces, or newly arising bourgeois forces inside a particular country, but which can serve as an instrument to promote and advance the proletarian revolution internationally.

*There's Nothing More Revolutionary Than Marxism- Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought,*  
p. 9-10.

The socialist transformation of any particular country can only be a *subordinate* part of the overall world proletarian revolution.

This means fully practicing proletarian internationalism: keeping the world revolutionary movement as the highest priority, challenging people on that basis and level, keeping constantly mindful of the fact that even where power has been seized in a particular country that is only the first step of many thousands that must be taken in the world proletarian revolution and making this a mass question, a question to be thrashed out broadly — and deeply — throughout society. This is especially important in a country like the U.S., most of whose people have for decades enjoyed, to one degree or another, “perks” from living in a powerful imperialist country, a world predator with the resultant high level of

productive forces and standard of living. Not only in this present and crucial period but even more so after U.S. imperialism has been brought down and a revolutionary regime established on its ashes, the orientation of linking revolution from the beginning and consistently with the revolutionary struggle and revolutionary transformations in other parts of the world, especially (what is now) the Third World, must be fought for — and this fight carried through.

*An End to the Horror,* pp. 154, 155.

There's been the old charge that we've pled “not guilty” to and to which now we have to plead “innocent as charged”: that's the old charge that socialist countries have a need themselves to expand and conquer more of the world or else they run up against their limitations. I think we have to plead innocent as charged and by that, of course, I'm talking about something qualitatively different from the need of the imperialists for spheres of influence to export capital, to exploit more people, to try to transform the world in their image, or better said, distort it under their domination.

There is a limit to how far you can go in transforming the base and superstructure within the socialist country without making further advances in winning and transforming more of the world; not in terms of conquering more resources or people as the imperialists do, but in terms of making revolutionary transformations.

*Conquer the World,* pp. 37-38.

As much as they represent a qualitative change in the economic relations and the political/ideological superstructure within the particular country and in the relations between it and the rest of the world, socialist revolutions and the ongoing transformations in socialist society cannot escape the overall

world framework. They are significantly, indeed in the final analysis decisively, conditioned in their development by the overall world situation and the struggles and changes within it — which include of course revolutionary struggles and successful revolutions that actually seize parts of the world from imperialism.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 198.

The new socialist society contains many leftovers from the old society, especially as regards inequality among the people, the mental/manual contradiction, worker-peasant differences, differences in rank and pay, etc. This provides the basis for capitalist relations and bourgeois elements representing them to constantly emerge.

The fact that economic units — and the economy as a whole — can be turned from socialist to capitalist is a result of the fact that the means of production under socialism are still not completely the common property of all of society and that the masses of people still have not yet completely become masters of the economy and society as a whole. These contradictions point to the grave danger that revisionism poses, especially as it emerges at the top of the party.

*Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, pp. 9, 11.

Socialism as an absolute means capitalist restoration. Once the freezing of things and the mere defense of things at the point which they've reached — even if that point means a socialist transformation up to a certain point — becomes an end in itself, and once that becomes raised as an absolute and the defense of *that* becomes the highest objective, to

which everything else is subordinated, then the basis is being laid to reverse even the gains that have been made, as well as to obstruct further gains being made not only in that country but throughout the world.

"Marxism as State Religion," *RW*, No. 179, November 5, 1982, p. 3.

Building socialism and going on to communism, Mao showed, requires and depends on unceasing class struggle against the bourgeoisie, especially the capitalist-roaders within the party, and every few years there will be a major struggle for power between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, with the main target of the proletariat being the bourgeoisie within the party. The revolutionaries can only succeed in this struggle by politically arming, mobilizing and relying on the masses. The dictatorship of the proletariat is and can only be dictatorship by the masses, led by the party; it is not and cannot be dictatorship by the party, and still less by a handful of leaders alone.

*The Loss in China and the Revolutionary Legacy of Mao Tsetung*, p. 101.

The Cultural Revolution was unprecedented, not only in general or in China, but in the history of socialism. It went against all the "norms" of what socialism was supposed to be, what a communist party is supposed to do, and so on.

It was unprecedented for the chairman of a communist party to call upon the masses to rise up and strike down powerful persons in the party. Within the party there were two headquarters. The capitalist-roaders had their own machine and their own headquarters, and this was what was necessary to dislodge them in order to prevent China from being

taken down the road to capitalism.

Thus Mao summed up that it was not enough to talk about upholding the leading role of the party, etc. Unless the masses were mobilized to recognize, to drag into the light of day, and strike down top leaders of the party who were trying to turn it into a bourgeois party, and to subject to mass criticism and supervision the leading cadres in general, then through the force of habit and the conscious action of revisionist high officials the party *would* become an instrument of the bourgeoisie and society would be taken “peacefully” down the capitalist road under its leadership.

*Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions*, pp. 281-85.

The party itself develops in a spiral-like motion as part of the overall spiral-like motion of the revolution and of events in the world in the process of the development of the world from the bourgeois epoch toward the communist epoch.

At certain points things come to crucial junctures or conjunctures where the question of what the nature of the party will be becomes a concentrated expression of which direction society will take and of the general overall struggle in society and even in the world, between the forces of revolution and counterrevolution.

“Can You Do Away with Leadership?”, *If There Is to Be Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party*, p. 20.

The dictatorship of the proletariat can only be really that if it is dictatorship exercised by the broad masses themselves, which means mobilizing and arming them with a Marxist-Leninist line to fight against the class enemy — and enabling them to

distinguish the correct from the incorrect line and the actual interests of the proletariat from those of the bourgeoisie through the course of their own struggle and the study of Marxism-Leninism to master its basic stand, viewpoint and method.

*Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions*, p. 291.

Building the communist society involves relying on the masses of people to take up every sphere and to transform it consciously in their interests. But in order to do that the most advanced people are going to have to step to the forefront to take up the most difficult things.

“One on One with Bob Avakian,” excerpts from 1979 national speaking tour, *RW*, No. 17, August 31, 1979, p. 14.

To deny the need for the state in a country where capitalism has been overthrown, to deny the need for a state to operate in the world in such a way as to advance and promote the proletarian revolution can only in fact aid the forces of counterrevolution against the process of proletarian revolution internationally. This does not deny but even brings into sharper relief the fact that there must be and will be tremendous struggle over what the character of that state is and what will be the character of its actions internationally.

*There's Nothing More Revolutionary than Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought*, p. 10.

Without a vanguard party to lead the masses in socialist society, and in fact without a state to represent the proletariat in, yes, *enforcing* the policies

which represent its revolutionary interests and the revolutionary transformation of society, it will not be possible to go forward. In fact, you'll be dragged back rather quickly.

*There's Nothing More Revolutionary Than Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought,*  
p. 8.

If the goal of overcoming the old division of labor and abolishing the basis for class divisions in society is to be achieved, it will be as a result of determined class struggle. Under socialism this struggle will become very acute and will even immediately determine the direction of society — forward toward a communist world or backward to capitalism — at certain “concentration points” (again, linked most fundamentally to the overall world situation and struggle). It will require encouraging and enabling the masses themselves to thrash these things through and struggle them out together with but also at the head of the intellectuals — even at the cost of certain short-term “losses” (in particular in developing specialized or technical expertise, in making technological advances, etc.) and even if at times the masses mishandle things or “make a mess of things.” Or else, again, it will be impossible to overcome these divisions between mental and manual laborers and the overall division of labor characteristic of class society, and these “mental” spheres will remain the monopoly of an intellectual elite, serving an exploiting class — in whatever guise, even “socialism” or “communism.”

*An End to the Horror*, p. 177.

The united front must remain the strategic orientation for both “living in harmony with” but also remolding and reeducating the petty bourgeoisie, in-

cluding the intelligentsia, through the socialist transition period; but this must be a united front *under firm proletarian leadership*.

With regard to the arts and sciences (and the intellectuals involved in them), which have their own particularities, a basic orientation must be that formulated by Mao Tsetung as “Let a Hundred Flowers Blossom, Let a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend.” And as Mao also advocated, this must be a long-term policy, because, as he explained,

“It often happens that new, rising forces are held back and sound ideas stifled. Besides, even in the absence of their deliberate suppression, the growth of new things may be hindered simply through lack of discernment. It is therefore necessary to be careful about questions of right and wrong in the arts and sciences, to encourage free discussion and avoid hasty conclusions.”

(It is also important to note Mao’s comment in the same speech that “many of our comrades are not good at uniting with intellectuals. They are stiff in their attitude towards them, lack respect for their work and interfere in certain scientific and cultural matters where interference is unwarranted.”)

This is a very difficult problem to handle correctly, because, among other things, in socialist society too people with specialized knowledge or ability in these fields will try to turn that into capital and preserve such areas as the domain of a privileged few, shutting the masses out and refusing the overall guidance and leadership of the party, *even when* that leadership is not crude or stiff.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 181-82.

The common attitude among the intellectuals is that the proletarians are too crude and un-

sophisticated to lead in intellectual fields in particular — the arts and sciences, etc. However, the proletariat must lead in these fields anyway, although to do so the proletariat and its politicians must learn to be both firm and flexible, piercing to the heart of problems while having a sense of the complexities involved, criticizing their own errors and boldly correcting their mistakes, including the tendency to handle things too crudely and roughly — mechanically.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 174-75.

Most intellectuals are of course not hopeless. Besides their negative side many of them also have a positive one and a positive role to play, though this depends on overall conditions. Many are attracted to the proletarian movement and to the critical, revolutionary stand of the class-conscious proletariat — especially, to be frank, when there is a serious crisis in society *and* when the revolutionary movement of the proletariat is powerful. The strategic orientation toward them, both before and after the proletariat has seized power, must be to unite and to struggle with them so as to enable them to make important contributions to the socialist transformation of society and the international struggle leading to a communist world and to the advancement of humanity. This will be a long-term and complex problem, also proceeding in a spiral-like motion, but in order to carry out its historic mission the revolutionary proletariat must learn how to master this too.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 175.

When we are in power we must struggle to maintain the same willingness — no, more, eagerness —

we have now to take on and demolish through exposure and debate counterrevolutionary or just plain wrong ideas, theories, and so on.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 185.

Why should we revolutionary communists be afraid of the reactionaries? I have fantasies about a movie I'd like to make after state power has been won (not that I think it would be a great work of art — but it would be fun and have some value — let it be a little work of art). I'd like to take all these things like this movie *Sudden Impact*, where they have Clint Eastwood as Dirty Harry, revived again: "Go ahead — make my day!" My idea is that we would make such people reenact these roles — those that are still around after the proletariat has seized power. So we have Clint Eastwood up there, "Make my day." OK — boom! We'd change the scene so in the film he gets righteously blown away. And the movie would go on with about thirty or forty of the most infuriating scenes like that, but changing the endings to give real satisfaction. Such scenes as they are now are not only infuriating because they're reactionary, but they're doubly infuriating because they're so ridiculous. Clint Eastwood (Dirty Harry) would have been blown away ten times in this bank scene before he even got to his pocket. Such scenes are infuriating artistically as well as fundamentally politically. So my idea would be to force them to reenact such scenes and put the appropriate ending on them. But with humor.

This goes along with another idea, or fantasy, I've had: to bring out all these hacks, warhorses, and ideological prostitutes in the media, etc., and make them read their news reports (their contention for the "with a straight face award") — their endless barrage of reactionary propaganda — force them to

read this stuff in front of meetings of revolutionary masses, masses who have become politically conscious and hip to all this. The purpose would be to subject these hacks to perhaps the most stunning and difficult punishment of all for them — the anger and ridicule of the masses. Especially the ridicule. Ridicule is a powerful weapon.

I just can't understand why revolutionary communists should be defensive in the face of such people! If you listen to them, they have absolutely nothing (that is, no real arguments) to stand on and they only rely on the fact that they have state power and a lot of guns and weapons of mass destruction behind them. That's what the ultimate substance of their argument always is: "If you don't like it, then how about this argument" (the tanks, aircraft, missiles, and nuclear arsenals that are the "bottom line" of their arguments). We should not rely on such things as *our* ammunition in ideological struggle when we have state power. I say, bring 'em on, one and all — though with some organization, priorities, etc. They want to whine about how they're going to be suppressed and not even allowed to speak up — well, let 'em speak up. But we're going to determine the context in which they speak up and in that context we're going to *make* them speak up, and let's have some fun while we thoroughly dissect and destroy their outmoded, rotten and vicious theories, credos, nostrums, and bromides.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 186-87.

Looking ahead to the future and socialist society, there will certainly be a role for works of art as well as other vehicles that express criticism of and poke fun at the weaknesses and shortcomings of the state, the party and other institutions and practices, pointing to contradictions between our objectives and

declared aims and our actual practice. But this can only play a positive role if it is done from the basic standpoint of supporting and seeking to strengthen the consolidation of the new society and its further revolutionary transformation and the leadership required for such an unprecedented struggle. An example from the other side should help to illustrate this. Johnny Carson, particularly in his monologues, has always poked fun at the politicians, at different government agencies and policies and so on, but this has always been from the basic standpoint of supporting and defending the present system and the interests of U.S. imperialism in particular, and they have always been able to count on him in this regard. Certainly the proletarian revolution and the future socialist society should be no less able to bring forward many who play a similar but at the same time radically different role on behalf of liberating humanity from the material and mental shackles of class-divided society and the strangulation of the cash nexus.

"Provocations," *RW*, No. 228, October 28, 1983, p. 3.

It is impossible to arrive at the truth without centralism — leadership (though this will take a qualitatively different form in communist society). All ideas should not get "equal time" nor *could* they, under any social system or set of circumstances. There has to be some means for determining what will be given priority, what will be posited as true, and what will be focused on as a target of criticism. What these means are and whether they correctly reflect material reality as fully as possible will depend on the social system. Further, it is impossible not only to arrive at an all-around understanding of the truth but to make it a material reality without

social struggle — which means above all class struggle in class society.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 161.

As for party members, give them no opportunity to “settle down and feather their nests” under socialism. A communist should always be in the thick of struggle — and marching to its forefront, not dragging at its tail. Communists are, in their essence, innovators and most of all rebels — not “able administrators,” or people whose orientation is to “get down to business.” If they want a soft job and a comfortable position, don’t let them have it — let them go to hell, but better yet (and more realistically) let them go out among the masses and be the target of their criticism and struggle, either to change or be ousted or overthrown.

*Communists are Rebels*, p. 14.

If you’re afraid of losing what you got — and this goes for state power, too — then how can you be a revolutionary!

*Communists are Rebels*, p. 14.

“What kind of way is that to run a society?” — the communist way. “But that’s anarchy!” — no it’s not, it’s communist revolution. While order is needed, and things do have to get done, turmoil is needed all the more and things need even more to get undone — so that they can advance to (get done on) a higher level . . . and on and on. Let people know now — especially party members, but also the masses — that this is what they can look forward to, that the new society will be one of continuing challenge against and eventual elimination of everything old and rotten, of every link in “tradition’s chain” and all “force

of habit,” everything that has ceased to promote progress and change and instead stands in the way of them; that this new society will give no comfort to self-seekers and narrow-minded conservatives who just want to carve out a niche for themselves.

*Communists are Rebels*, pp. 14-15.

It is only through continual struggle and repeated upheaval, and specifically through the challenging of convention, the “force of habit,” and the *status quo* — including the status quo under socialism at any given point — that this great goal of communism will be achieved.

*Communists are Rebels*, p. 22.

The first great step — or leap — in enabling humanity, through its social organization, to know and change the world consciously on the basis of a correct comprehensive worldview and method is the seizure of political power by the proletariat and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat to suppress the overthrown bourgeoisie and other counterrevolutionary elements and to unleash the suppressed energy, initiative, and creative potential of the masses to transform society. But this is after all only the first step: the revolution must be continued, broadened, and deepened. In socialist society, the class struggle continues, including as a very important dimension the class struggle in the ideological realm. And this class struggle, conditioned itself by the overall world situation and international struggle, exerts a tremendous influence on and in the final analysis determines whether or not objective truth will be grasped and made a powerful material reality, and whether or not a whole new society — and world — will be achieved where

class divisions do not fetter society and people and distort and vitiate the struggle to know and use the truth, in accordance with the basic laws of the universe.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 163.

## 21. REVOLUTIONS REVERSED — REVISIONISM AND SOCIAL-IMPERIALISM

“If you don’t like it here, why don’t you go to Russia.” These backward clowns out here, they tell us that. Well we tell them, “Why the fuck don’t you go to Russia if you love capitalism so much, why don’t you go over there, see how it’s working out over there.” We tell them further, that if we were in Russia, since it’s a capitalist country now, we’d be doing the exact same thing over there that we’re doing here. Exposing it, educating and organizing the people there to rise up and overthrow capitalism, reestablish socialism and move on toward communism. “And YOU, fool, you’d better wake up because if you were in Russia you’d be doing the same thing over there that you are doing over here: Praising the rulers to the sky, kissing up to whoever’s in power. And talking about how there couldn’t be nothing better.”

“The Sham of Democracy and the Reality of Dictatorship,” from a 1979 speech in Columbus, Ohio, *RW*, No. 55, May 16, 1980, p. 14.

Having restored capitalism, the rulers of the Soviet Union are bound by the very laws of capitalism, especially in its imperialist stage. Ever since the death of Stalin and Khrushchev’s power seizure, they have been driven to push out and try to grab up everywhere they can in the world. To

plunder wherever they can while robbing and exploiting the people within the Soviet Union itself.

“Excerpts from Conference Speech,” delivered at Conference on the International Situation, War, and Revolution, in New York City, November 20, 1976, *Revolution*, December 1976, p. 10.

The Soviet rulers insist that the Soviet bloc (the “world socialist system”) has become the decisive factor in the world arena and the determining force in world history, upon which everything depends, and together with this they put forward their notion of what kind of world this is bringing into being — the “communist” world of bourgeois relations, remaining bourgeois but reorganized under the centralized control and regulated by the computerized planning of philistine technocrat-accountant imperialists.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, pp. 124-25.

When the Soviet revisionists restored capitalism they recognized that the only way they could deal with the world as it was and buy some time and deal with their own internal economic crisis was if they put a tremendous amount into military expenditures in order to build up the basis to go to war. Unless they redivide the world fairly quickly and get more areas under their control, more areas to exploit, their thing is going to come apart completely at the seams.

“Why We Call It Social-Imperialism,” excerpts from 1979 national speaking tour, *RW*, No. 21, September 28, 1979, pp. 13, 16.

In the main, though not entirely, the form of monopoly capitalism and imperialism in the Soviet

Union is through the *state*. It’s not in the form of private capital, in the sense of different corporations, but what you *do* have increasingly is basically the same analogies.

The Soviet Union has production associations as well as different ministries basically occupying the same role as the large corporations and banks, cartels, trusts and so on, in the Western countries. And the decisive thing is that the Soviet planning and economic ministries, and so on, have restored the law of value and in particular the law of accumulating surplus value — profit — as the guiding principle of the economy, in other words, the same way they’re doing now in China.

“Why We Call It Social-Imperialism,” excerpts from 1979 national speaking tour, *RW*, No. 21, September 28, 1979, p. 12.

The Soviet revisionist bourgeoisie (Marxist-Leninist in word, capitalist-imperialist in fact), in order to maintain its “socialist” cover and deal with its particular present-day exigencies, is especially concerned to pose as the champion of — or the paternalistic “deliverer” to “The Workers.” And its vision of the quintessential Worker is one who is remarkably like those imperialist-fattened, hide-bound kulaks-on-concrete who have been seen, hard-hats on head, American flag in hand, lumbering and bellowing after anti-establishment demonstrators in the U.S. (for example, during the Vietnam War), attacking them in the name of apple pie Americanism — in other words, remarkably like those thoroughly bourgeoisified Blue Collars glorified by the ruling class in the U.S. these days.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*, Chapter 6: “Bourgeois Socialism and Bourgeois Democracy.”

Marx insisted that the proletariat should inscribe on its banner not the reformist slogan, a fair day's wage for a fair day's work, but the revolutionary slogan, abolition of the wage-labor system. The revisionists, however, treat this question very differently. When they are not in power, they seek to appeal to the workers on an economist, reformist basis, in line with that old slogan Marx criticized: a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. But when they are in power and exploiting the workers in the name of socialism and communism, the revisionists reverse that old slogan — then they demand of the workers a fair day's work for a fair day's wage!

Previously unpublished.

While it may be possible for revisionism to rise to power in certain circumstances without a major armed conflict (and certainly without revolutionary warfare), even this is not always possible, while the coming to power of a truly socialist regime is impossible without a violent revolution.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*,  
Chapter 6: "Bourgeois Socialism and  
Bourgeois Democracy."

The goal of the revisionists is not to change the whole world, from bottom to top, but to rise to the top of the world as it is. Their aim is not to make the two radical ruptures Marx and Engels spoke of in *The Communist Manifesto* — the rupture with traditional property relations and with traditional ideas — but to make some changes in form and appearance while leaving the essence unchanged. They want new faces, new forces in power — themselves — but no revolutionary overturning of

all hitherto existing relations and conditions. They want a socialism, even a communism with no mass revolutionary upheaval, no overthrowing of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat, of the old by the new. In short, they want capitalism in the name of socialism and communism.

Previously unpublished.

The Soviet revisionists do not insist on the possibility of peaceful transition to socialism because they are opposed to violence — in principle or in practice. They do so because this line — leaving open the use of both peaceful and violent means to gain power, and often the combination of the two simultaneously — is a very important part of their overall drive to expand their sphere of influence and contend with the rival (and openly capitalist) imperialist bloc.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*,  
Chapter 6: "Bourgeois Socialism and Bourgeois Democracy."

The Soviet Union still has a socialist cover and as a major tactic makes use of it to pose as the "natural ally" of struggles in the Third World (and elsewhere) against U.S. imperialism and its allies and to utilize these struggles for its own imperialist ends. The Soviet Union not only has a socialist cover, however. It also has real material force to oppose the considerable material force of the U.S. and its bloc — and where it suits their interests the Soviets make weaponry, technical assistance, etc., available in sufficient quantity and in such a way as to make the prospect of such "aid" attractive and to ensnare those who fall for the bait.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 146-47.

The Soviet revisionists' basic methodology is the same as that of the U.S. imperialists and other classical imperialists. They argue like typical imperialist gangsters. They don't really rely on persuading you by the compelling force of their arguments — the "bottom line" is that, as I once put it, they expect you to believe them because they are leaders of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Union has not only credentials but guns, tanks, and missiles.

Previously unpublished.

The Soviet revisionists put forward the thesis that there has been a "collapse of the imperialist colonial system," which means that political independence has been won and "the main task for the former colonies, where the political rule of the imperialists has been abolished, is to strengthen their newly won independence, eradicate colonialism from the national economy and develop the latter rapidly, achieving economic independence and advancing along the path of socio-economic progress." This formulation wipes out the need for political revolution/armed struggle against continuing imperialist domination, in the form of neocolonialism, and against domestic reaction. It is part of a larger Soviet social-imperialist strategy of advocating the so-called noncapitalist path of development in these countries, which means increased state capitalism in combination with and at the service of domination by the Soviet bloc.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, p. 122.

The bourgeoisie in the East is no less (and no more) a true believer in democracy than its counterpart and rival in the West, but it believes in and seeks to implement a different form of the same

bourgeois essence; its ideal is revisionist democracy, which is a particular form appropriate to the exercise of its bourgeois dictatorship.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*,  
Chapter 6: "Bourgeois Socialism and  
Bourgeois Democracy."

To anyone who would still insist that such people as the Soviet revisionists are Marxists, the following remark by Engels seems the most appropriate response: "Just as Marx used to say, commenting on the French 'Marxists' of the late seventies: 'All I know is that I am not a Marxist.'"

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, p. 133.

Engels at one point makes the analogy between the early Christians — who, when their religion had not yet been adopted as an official religion by the Roman empire, were hounded, harassed and persecuted — and the early Marxist proletarians and revolutionary socialists in the nineteenth century.

What I want to take up here is the extension of this analogy to one between the Roman empire and the Soviet Union today — that is between the Roman empire with Christianity as a state religion in the service of reaction, and state capitalism disguised however as socialism, and with a Marxist ideology (that is a revisionist ideology, posing as Marxism) as its rationalization.

Once Marxism — which *is* qualitatively different from religion in that it is after all a science — is ossified and turned into a rationalization for whatever exists at the given time, even if whatever exists is genuinely socialism and represents an advance qualitatively beyond capitalism, and specifically once it becomes an apology for whatever the policies are of the given socialist state at a given

time, then it in fact becomes a state religion and a reactionary ideological expression.

"Marxism as State Religion," *RW*, No. 179, November 5, 1982, p. 3.

The situation and the tasks with regard to the Eastern European revisionist countries is a peculiar and sharp example of the principle that Marxism will have to be brought to the masses "from without" (in this case this largely means from literally outside their borders and is a kind of extension into another arena of the basic truth that Marxism must be brought to the masses from outside their own immediate experience). The "spilling over" into Eastern Europe of resistance and protest in the West (in particular the antiwar and antinuke movements) is an important illustration of the need both to transform these protests and rebellions into a powerful revolutionary movement — including a revolutionary defeatist stand toward the Western bloc and "one's own" imperialism — and to work consciously to spread *this* influence "to the East."

*An End to the Horror*, p. 203.

Khrushchev tried to strangle China, pulling out all economic assistance, and told them, you'll starve, you'll see, without us, without big sugar-daddies from the Soviet Union, you'll be nowhere. Mao told them, you can take your aid and shove it right up your ass, 'cause we'll see who's going to go on and build socialism and advance towards communism, we'll see what is the real strength and what is the real bastion of iron — you and your little flaky machines or the masses of people transforming the world through their tremendous struggle.

"Storms Are Gathering — Carry the Red Flag Forward!", excerpts from a 1979 speech, *RW*, Special Supplement, February 1979, p. 4.

When Mao died the masses of Chinese people were in the midst of yet another soul-stirring and decisive battle. With the support and guidance of Mao they were fighting to beat back the counter-revolutionary offensive of Deng Xiaoping and others in the top leadership of the Communist Party itself who were whipping up a large-scale wind to reverse the great victories and achievements, especially in the Cultural Revolution. This latest battle raging in 1976 was not an academic debate over how to evaluate the unprecedented events and results of the Cultural Revolution but a life and death struggle over which class would rule China, the proletariat or the bourgeoisie, and which road it would follow, the revolutionary road of socialism or the counterrevolutionary road of restoring the old society with all its misery for the masses.

On October 6, 1976, less than a month after Mao's death and less than three weeks after the official mourning period for Mao had ended, the revisionists, using the portions of power they had seized from the working class over a period of time, especially in the military, pulled off their *coup*, before the mass struggle could be developed further and strike harder at their positions of power.

And with this act the revisionists rose to power, seizing control of the Communist Party and the state. This coup marked the decisive turning point and fundamental change, the beginning of the process of suppressing genuine revolutionaries and the masses, reversing the entire revolution and restoring capitalism.

*The Loss in China and the Revolutionary Legacy of Mao Tsetung*, pp. 10-11, 13-14.

We must not be taken in by superficial phenomena. The large demonstrations in China to “celebrate the smashing of the gang of four” prove primarily one thing — the present rulers can organize a demonstration. So can most reactionaries, especially if they have power. We still have to base ourselves on the fundamental question — what is the class content, the line, of those demonstrations, which class do they serve?

*Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, p. 105.

It is quite interesting that some people seize on this defeat to say that Mao’s line and the Cultural Revolution must be basically flawed — this amounts to saying that because Mao is proven correct and farsighted, in saying the danger of capitalist restoration is real and will be for a long time, then this proves that he was wrong and must have made serious errors! No, the Cultural Revolution was indeed absolutely necessary and most timely as Mao said, but as he also said there is still the danger of defeat and there will be for some time. One victory, even a monumental one, does not change that or lessen the danger.

*The Loss in China and the Revolutionary Legacy of Mao Tsetung*, p. 106.

To use the problems in the economy as an excuse for a revisionist line is not worthy of a Marxist. Revisionism will not “solve the problems” of a socialist country — except that it will transform it into not being a socialist country, so there will be no socialist country to “have problems.”

*Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, p. 110.

It is no doubt true that in the Cultural Revolution in China, specifically during the peak of mass upsurge (1966-69), the Four made mistakes. So what? Revolutionaries cannot avoid making mistakes if they want to be revolutionaries.

*Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, p. 95.

Revisionists are revisionists and must not be supported; revolutionaries are revolutionaries and must be supported.

*Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, p. 1.

What is of great significance in the stand of Chiang Ching and Chang Chun-chiao is not that they are the first heroes or martyrs of the proletariat and oppressed masses throughout history who have stood up to torture, death and denunciation. In fact, there have been thousands, millions who have done this. But Chiang Ching and Chang Chun-chiao have been leaders of the proletariat in power. Here stands out a crucial difference with the Soviet Union where, when revisionism rose to power and capitalism was restored from within more than 20 years ago, there were no leaders who raised high the banner of the international proletariat and refused to let it drop regardless of the price.

“The Banner Has Been Held Brilliantly Aloft, A Call Has Been Righteously Sounded,” Statement on the Heroic Stand of Chiang Ching and Chang Chun-chiao, *RW*, No. 90, Special Edition, January 30, 1981, p. 3.

China follows, within two decades, down the same path of capitalist restoration as the Soviet Union and there are no longer any socialist states at

this time; Iran and Nicaragua give inspiration (especially coming only a few years after the loss in China) but, while certain reactionary class forces were overthrown and some blows struck at imperialism, no fundamental change, no real liberation occurred — no real rupture with imperialist world relations and real embarking on the socialist road — and instead new exploiting class forces (of one type or another) imposed their rule as new compradors dependent on and serving imperialism while maintaining “revolutionary” pretentions in one form or another.

These setbacks are part of the motion toward the approaching world-historic conjuncture and not “the end of the story” (even for the revolution in those countries but most of all for the world revolutionary movement) for this period.

A correct understanding of such setbacks, recognizing that they are bound up with the overall world situation and its motion and development — not merely the general historical context of the world struggle between imperialism and the forces of proletarian revolution but the specific, immediate world situation and where it is headed — such an understanding is essential in order to fully learn from this negative experience, and specifically to grasp the heightened revolutionary opportunities the approaching conjuncture holds.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 42-43.

The fact that the revolutions have been reversed and capitalism has been restored in the Soviet Union and China is a temporary victory for the enemy — that’s all. It isn’t something that can’t be understood, or something that nothing can be done about. It just means that these states are now part of the enemy camp, they are just one more part of the

world situation that must be radically transformed through proletarian revolution. That’s all.

Previously unpublished.

Changing the international political map and striving to prevent world war through revolution: actually seizing power through mass revolutionary struggle in as many places as possible — even making a revolutionary breakthrough to seize power in one country or another — is the crucial step that will reverberate throughout the globe like an earthquake under the whole structure of world relations. This is the key link in setting off a whole “chain reaction” in these world relations — which will not only batter and shake the entire edifice of world imperialism at its foundations but as a particular aspect of this will also be a powerful force stimulating revolutionary struggle toward the overthrow of the ruling bourgeoisie in the revisionist countries (in particular of the Soviet social-imperialist bloc but including China and others as well), undermining their whole “logic,” their *raison d’être* and the basis of their “practical” appeal to many revolutionary or potentially revolutionary forces.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 204.

## 22. COMMUNISM — THE GREAT LEAP BEYOND CLASSES

Only with the achievement of communism — a society, a world, without classes, commodity production, and other property relations of exploitation and oppression, and the politics and ideology corresponding to this — only then will such things as war, poverty amidst mighty productive forces, national and sexual oppression, and the thousand other evils of life under the present order be abolished.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 214.

Humanity (including its earliest ancestors) is several million years old. When the first forms of the human species developed, something very significant happened in the world. For the first time a form of life developed which stood erect, walked on two feet, and regularly used its hands to begin changing the world around it, to begin shaping tools and transforming the rest of nature.

But along with their hands being freed up, something else very significant happened to their brain — an anatomical development that came to predominate through natural selection. A new and a more highly developed and sophisticated brain came into being. With this development of a brain which was conscious of the rest of nature and the

rest of the world around it, which could increasingly grasp the laws that govern life and society, human beings began to break away from the rest of the animal kingdom and advance beyond it, consciously reacting upon and shaping the rest of nature.

Today that millions-of-years-long struggle of humanity is now approaching a new, a fundamental, and a radical change — a tremendous forward leap for mankind. For the first time we will move beyond this stage of history where it is any longer necessary for people to fight each other, dog-eat-dog, to survive; where it is any longer necessary or in any way justified for one small group of people to rule over and force others to labor for them in order to live — we will move to a whole new stage in human history where consciously and in common people can, through struggle, take what is there in nature, study it, consciously change it, use it, and transform the world and themselves in the process, conquer the whole world, and in fact storm the very heavens.

“To All Those Who Refuse to Live and Die on Their Knees,” Part I, excerpts from 1979 national speaking tour, *RW*, No. 242, February 10, 1984, pp. 14, 15.

The economic base of communism will embody the fact that not only private ownership of the means of production but bourgeois right in its entirety and all the production and social relations marking the division of society into classes have been transformed and transcended.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*, Chapter 8: “The Future of Humanity and the Historical Place of Democracy.”

Production must have developed to a certain level, capable of creating a surplus beyond subsis-

tence before the division of society into classes, exploitation and oppression could flower. And, in turn, a certain, far higher level of development of the productive forces must have been attained before the basis was finally created for the complete elimination of class distinctions, exploitation and oppression.

As Engels noted, that point has now been reached, the era of achieving this historic goal has now begun. It is an era which has already been marked and is bound to be increasingly marked by tremendous upheaval and cataclysmic confrontation, is bound to witness the achievement of that goal only through tumultuous struggle following a tortuous course. This has everything to do with the nature of the goal itself — the most radical rupture with traditional property relations and traditional ideas — a goal demanding the most conscious, thoroughgoing, sustained and determined revolutionary effort.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, pp. 56-57.

Once the development of the productive forces demands it, a radical rupture must take place in society — the revolutionary overthrow of the old superstructure and the production relations maintained by it. So long as the level of the productive forces, at whatever stage of society, remains relatively undeveloped so that scarcity and the individual struggle for existence cannot be eliminated throughout society and for its members generally, this basic contradiction (involving the productive forces and the production relations and the superstructure) will assume the form of class division, and the leaps in transforming the superstructure and production relations (in order to once again liberate the productive forces) will assume the form of an antagonistic struggle between classes. With

the eventual establishment, through this process, of the material and ideological conditions for communism, this will no longer assume the form of antagonistic class conflict.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, pp. 26-27.

Communist society is a society in which, as Marx puts it, the principle prevails: from each according to his ability, to each according to his need.

*Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions*, p. 252.

Under communism men and women will not be “angels,” but overwhelmingly they will be communists, in theory and practice, and they will have the material and ideological basis to prevent the re-emergence of class distinctions.

*Communists are Rebels*, p. 20.

The abolition of social antagonism and political domination, and the unity of people around the basic principles of dialectical materialism — together with the struggle over how to apply and further develop them — will make possible, for the first time, the voluntary association of people in society on the basis of a fundamentally correct and ever deepening understanding of the laws of motion of nature, of society, and of the relation between the two — it will make possible and involve the recognition and transformation of necessity on a whole new and far higher basis than humanity has previously been capable of.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*, Chapter 8: “The Future of Humanity and the Historical Place of Democracy.”

It is only in classless communist society that the exploitation and the oppression of one part of society by another will be finally eliminated, and moreover that the subordination of one individual to another individual will also be eliminated. But the subordination of individuals to society as a whole will not be eliminated. Nor could it be, or else society could not function, and in fact the freedom of all members of society would be severely restricted.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*,  
Chapter 6: "Bourgeois Socialism and  
Bourgeois Democracy."

With the abolition of capitalism and all relations of exploitation and social inequality — representing the two radical ruptures, with traditional property relations and traditional ideas — will come the abolition of the political institutions, practices and principles that correspond to capitalist economic relations, including democracy.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*,  
Chapter 2: "The Roots and the Rise of  
Modern Democracy."

Once the division of society into classes has been finally abolished, then the very concept of "equality" will lose its meaning. Everything exists only in relation to its opposite; and once social inequalities are eliminated with the advent of communism (I say "social inequalities" because individual differences between particular people will never be eliminated — though in communist society this will not have the same consequences as in class society) then social equality will also be eliminated as a category. To look at this another way, all equality implies inequality — it is impossible to have the one without the other. In communist society, the principle will be

"from each according to his ability, to each according to his need" — people will not work for individual survival (society will have developed to the point, materially and ideologically, where that will not be a question as it is now) — but consciously to contribute to the development of society, and in turn they will receive what they (actually) need to live (this too will mean a high degree of social consciousness has been reached, so that people voluntarily subordinate individual needs to the overall advance of society) while increasingly being enabled to develop and contribute to society in a fuller, more all-around way, both physically and intellectually. "Equality" does not enter in here — in fact "equality" will have been surpassed and superseded, along with the bourgeois epoch to which it belongs.

*"Black Nationalist with Communistic Inclinations"*, p. 7.

Even though there will no longer be antagonistic social conflict in communist society, the basic contradiction — that the development of the productive forces will run ahead of the production relations and the superstructure, plus the fact that the superstructure does not passively reflect the economic base but reacts dialectically with it — this will continue in force and will continue to call forth struggles and after a certain development leaps and ruptures with old forms, institutions and ideas in society.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, p. 27.

When communism is reached, will everything then, finally, "settle down"? As Mao put it — "I just don't believe it!" Such a notion is contrary to dialectics, to the laws of nature and society (and thought)

and their development. Even then, new knowledge of the truth, as it first emerges, will be upheld only by a minority (though not the *same* minority in each case). They will no doubt be ridiculed — but not politically suppressed, imprisoned, tortured, even killed. Why not? Because the material conditions will be such — the elimination of scarcity and of the basis for the monopolization of wealth as well as knowledge and skills, etc., by a few — that people will no longer have a need to carry out such suppression, and along with this people will have learned better and moreover undergone an all-around fundamental change ideologically. In fact, until that happens there will not yet be communism — it will be reached only when these material *and* ideological conditions are realized, won through struggle. And, under communism, new truths, changes, advances, will still win out and come to be embraced by society as a whole (or overwhelmingly) only through struggle — though not through antagonistic struggle and political suppression. And then, in turn, these ideas, institutions, etc., will grow old and be superseded by new, arising ones — until they, in their turn, grow old and are superseded . . . and on and on.

*Communists are Rebels*, p. 18.

There will never be a time, as far as I'm concerned, when in the most literal and absolute sense there is appropriation by the direct producers of the product of their labor. Even under communism things will go to society as a whole; this is a point Marx made in criticizing the Gotha Programme. Things will go to society as a whole and there will always be some form of exchange between a particular unit of production and the rest of society, however that works out; it's never going to be that people simply

appropriate in the most literal sense directly what they produce. And there will always be in one form or another political representatives; despite all the science fiction and everything else, I do not believe that the highest level that can be achieved is where everybody puts on their TV, listens to a big debate and pushes a computer, yes or no, up or down, kill 'em, throw 'em out, make 'em president or whatever; I don't believe that's the way that decision-making is going to be done under communism.

*Conquer the World*, p. 29.

In communist society "centralism" will be necessary, unavoidable, but it will be no less necessary and unavoidable to see to it that such centralism does not become the institutionalized role of particular individuals or groups (rotating people through different responsible positions is one measure that will have to be applied, but others will have to be developed as well) and that "leadership" or particular areas of knowledge and activity do not become the "preserves" (or "strongholds") of particular people or groups who show a specific inclination toward pursuing that field.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 179-80.

In the epoch of classes, every action, including rebellion, assumes a class character and contributes to the interests of one class or another. There is no rebellion or form of opposition or criticism which can escape that general truth and that general relationship. And even when the epoch of classes has been superseded and surpassed and there is communism, there will still be — not in terms of class expression but still in social expression — rebellion, criticism, actions and ideas in general representing

either progress or retrogression. And so the *content* of criticism, of rebellion, of action, is ultimately the most important thing, not the mere act of doing it.

*There's Nothing More Revolutionary than Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought,* p. 12.

As you move beyond the division of society into classes, you move beyond the need for one part of society — even if it is correct, in opposition to others who are incorrect — to impose a solution to disagreements by force and by coercion in the sense of a repressive apparatus. But you never eliminate the need for people to act in accordance with objective truth.

*There's Nothing More Revolutionary than Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought,* p. 23.

If you are going to get to the point where you don't need a repressive apparatus to *force* one part of society to carry out the dominant idea at a given time, then you are going to have to get to the point where people will voluntarily unite in action without it being blind obedience and ideological enslavement.

*There's Nothing More Revolutionary than Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought,* pp. 23-24.

We're trying to advance to a whole new stage of history. We're going to wipe out these distinctions that now seem so commonplace, but which people have dreamed of wiping out, these distinctions between people who sit in offices and scribble with a pen and people who work and bend their backs pro-

ducing the wealth of society. We're going to develop people to where people are both administrators and thinkers and philosophers and workers at the same time, where people are both politically conscious and also productive members in society. This is a world that remains for us to conquer and for us to remake with our own hands and our own minds, overcoming step by step and through our ever more conscious struggle the divisions and inequalities that this system will leave to us even after we've overthrown it — this will be carried out because until it's carried out this madness, this destruction, this crisis, these wars will continue to be brought down on people and people will find society plunged into this again until we *do* finally become conscious, overcome the obstacles, learn from our setbacks and reversals and go forward and finally advance to a society where class differences and social inequalities have been eliminated.

"We Don't Have a Country, We Live in It But It's Not *Ours*," excerpts from a 1979 speech in Seattle, *RW*, No. 61, June 27, 1980, p. 22.

The process — the struggle — involving the elimination of the inequalities and contradictions left over from and characteristic of capitalism and the bourgeois epoch is the path along which communism will finally be achieved, worldwide, and the state — and along with it democracy — will finally wither away: the transformation of circumstances and people to achieve the elimination of "bourgeois right" and the division of labor attendant to class-divided society, in all their manifestations; the abolition of commodity production and exchange and the necessity of money as a medium of exchange, and their replacement by conscious planning of produc-

tion and exchange — involving both unity and diversity, both centralized guidelines and widespread initiative — all in accordance with the basic principle “from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs”; the overcoming of inequalities and antagonisms between women and men, and between different nationalities and regions; the transcending of national as well as class divisions and the creation of a true world community of humanity, consciously uniting — and wrangling — to achieve the continuous, all-around development of human society and of the human beings who comprise it.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?.*  
Chapter 7: “Democracy and the Communist Revolution.”

It is not correct to picture “primitive communism” (the stage of society before classes emerged) as “pure” or without any seeds of oppression and to view the communist future as a return on a higher level to that pristine state. Nor is it necessary, or helpful, to depict things in these terms in order to be convinced of the possibility of achieving communism and to win others to fight for this and the radical rupture it will mean in relation to all previous society. There is plenty of basis at this stage of history and in today’s world to achieve communism *and* to see the urgent necessity of fighting to achieve it — though that fight will be long, arduous, and tortuous — by straining to make the key breakthroughs and leaps toward that communist future that are demanded now.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 216.

## 23. A WORLD TO WIN, IF WE DARE!

We don’t have to hide from the future because the future belongs to us if we dare to rise up.

*Summing Up the Black Panther Party*,  
p. 20.

Once we begin to see what the future is really going to look like, then we can see that this capitalist system is far from eternal. It has only come into being as a slightly higher form of society than feudalism which preceded it, and it has already brought into being its own gravedigger, the working class, and created the conditions for its own overthrow.

“To All Those Who Refuse to Live and Die on Their Knees,” Part I, excerpts from 1979 national speaking tour, *RW*, No. 242, February 10, 1984, p. 4.

It might seem that we revolutionary communists are “back where we started,” even hurled back to where we were after the defeat of the Paris Commune over 100 years ago, since today there are no socialist states and, worse, those that existed have experienced a restoration of capitalism. But this is a superficial view, refuted by materialist dialectics.

The fact is we are not back to “nothing” and everything should not be called into question. Nor again is this the time for “quiet reflection” or “slow patient work”! The formation and the *Declaration of*

the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement represent a great victory, a great weapon for the international proletariat and the international communist movement in approaching this conjuncture and a powerful refutation of such erroneous views.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 193, 194-95.

Despite the setbacks and reversals that have occurred in this revolutionary struggle, a struggle without precedent in human history, despite the blustering and fear-covering smirks of the decaying guardians of the past, despite their attempts to hold up and hold together what is dead and dying, their system continues to be propelled by its own contradictions toward its own extinction and the basis for revolutionaries to consciously grasp the lessons of history and accelerate the historic process of proletarian revolution continues to grow greater.

"The Banner Has Been Held Brilliantly Aloft, A Call Has Been Righteously Sounded," Statement on the Heroic Stand of Chiang Ching and Chang Chun-chiao, *RW*, No. 90, Special Edition, January 30, 1981, p. 3.

Here we are, the proletariat of the world, and historically we're like a little baby about nine, ten months old, taking its first step. And all the wise old men and women of the bourgeoisie say, "See, you're never going to learn to walk."

But, in fact, once you step back and study scientifically, what you see is that here's this new thing coming into the world that's got its whole life before it, just beginning to learn how to walk and here's this tired, old reactionary fool, the bourgeoisie, about ready to go out of existence mocking and

laughing. Why should we be discouraged when the whole future is before us?

"The Proletariat Is Learning to Walk," from a November 1979 speech to Mao Defendants volunteers in Washington, D.C., *RW*, No. 45, March 14, 1980, p. 10.

Is the proletarian revolution with its goal of communism to be seen as the product and outcome of a straight-line march through history, on an essentially predetermined course? Or is it the result of spiral-like motion through contradiction, not everywhere taking the same, more or less laid-out path, through all the same exact stages, but *having* led (as opposed to "bound to lead" or even "leading") to imperialism as a world system whose contradictions pose the necessity for proletarian revolution throughout the world as the only resolution that can lead society forward — that can liberate the forces of production, including most significantly the people? Our revolutionary communist outlook, which gives the latter answer, also shows that communism is not the *inevitable* resolution of these contradictions, in the sense of being the only possible one. The comment in the *Communist Manifesto* that class struggles throughout history have "each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes" has some relevance in relation to the question of world war and nuclear devastation. But, as stressed many times, even this would not eliminate the class struggle, including intense class struggle in the aftermath of this war and devastation (unless it did eliminate humanity). Exactly because this would be a question of struggle, however, its outcome cannot be predetermined; nor is it inconceivable that nuclear destruction would be so complete

that human civilization would essentially (or even perhaps literally) die out. For these reasons it cannot be correctly said that communism is the inevitable resolution of the contradictions of imperialism. But this is no reason to become politically paralyzed; rather it is all the more reason to urgently intensify our work to accelerate the process of revolution in the U.S. and worldwide.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 213-14.

Things do not proceed in an unbroken straight line, but through spirals: they do not have a preordained course, but they do have identifiable fundamental contradictions and a motion that can be grasped, in all its complexity. Great leaps backward are possible. But great leaps forward are also possible. Thus, there are two possibilities, two futures that are posing themselves very directly and urgently before us and that are locked in acute conflict.

*Democracy: Can't We Do Better than That?*,  
Chapter 8: "The Future of Humanity and  
the Historical Place of Democracy."

Not only do things in general develop in spirals, but there is a particular motion to the working out of world contradictions in the stage of imperialism, in which at certain historical points these contradictions are especially tightly interwoven and heightened, leading to a dramatic explosion and then resolution (though partial and temporary) involving a qualitative recasting of world relations — among the imperialists, and between them and the forces opposed to them. At least this is how spiral motion under imperialism has gone on up to this point and is going on now, approaching another — and by far the most dramatic — world-historic conjuncture. In

this process, world wars have so far been the nodal points. Stalin's observation concerning World War I has great relevance for today's world situation: "The significance of the imperialist war which broke out ten years ago lies, among other things, in the fact that it gathered all these contradictions into a single knot and threw them on to the scales, thereby accelerating and facilitating the revolutionary battles of the proletariat."

In today's world situation there is an immediate and urgent application of and importance to this. We are heading into just such a world-historic conjuncture and one where the resolution of this will involve a more earthshaking change, one way or the other, than has ever been witnessed.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 195-96.

No one, that is no Marxist and least of all Mao Tsetung, ever told us that the struggle to achieve communism would be easy. But at the same time Mao Tsetung has told us — and taught us, in both word and deed — that nothing is hard in this world, *if we dare to scale the heights*. This is the strategic orientation we must stick to, basing ourselves on the understanding that Mao poetically and powerfully proclaimed, "Look you, the world is being turned upside down."

"Second Party Congress Deepens Victory,"  
opening remarks at the Second Congress of  
the RCP, USA, *Revolution*, April/May  
1978, p. 12.

The contradictions of the world imperialist system and the struggles these give rise to have continued to propel things toward the resolution of these contradictions and the final elimination of capitalism (and all exploiting systems and relations).

As a result, even though proletarian revolutions have been defeated or reversed, the material foundation for proletarian revolution has been strengthened and from a world-historic standpoint things have been brought closer to the achievement of communism, despite all the distortions and lopsidedness in world economic and political relations.

Of course it requires revolutionary struggle led by the proletariat to actually make the leap to socialism in different parts of the world and then to communism on the global level. And such revolutions greatly accentuate world contradictions and accelerate the motion toward the replacement of the epoch of capitalism with the epoch of world communism.

*An End to the Horror*, pp. 193, 194.

There is a great deal of accumulated experience, positive and negative, to learn from. There is a rich revolutionary legacy, which must be upheld at the same time as it is critically evaluated and critically assimilated. This corresponds to reality: the experience of proletarian revolutions so far should be mainly upheld and secondarily criticized, though criticized and dissected fearlessly, penetratingly, and thoroughly. And we have the scientific principles and methods to guide us — to enable us to synthesize the lessons more thoroughly and apply them systematically in the decisive period ahead — the science of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, which is itself the theoretical reflection of the rich experience of the past 100 years and more of the world revolutionary movement as well as a basic comprehensive outlook and methodology. But we must not simply defend Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. We must apply it and further develop it, because it is a living science in which there is a unity and a constant interplay between uphold-

ing its basic principles and further enriching them through critically approaching, evaluating, and synthesizing new experiences and developments and the lessons which must be drawn from them.

*An End to the Horror*, p. 194.

Today, the objective world situation is far more favorable for proletarian revolution than at the time of Marx's death a hundred years ago. In this, the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution, and especially with the present approach of a world-historic conjuncture, the profound truths that Marx brought to light concerning the fundamental contradictions of capitalism and their resolution through proletarian revolution assume more intensive and more extensive expression — they have been heightened and more fully internationalized. The problem in this period is not that revolutionary possibilities may not arise but that they may not be seized — or may be thrown away. We must not be unprepared and must not leave the international proletariat unprepared for those great days in which decades are concentrated.

*For a Harvest of Dragons*, p. 152-53.

At each and every setback we sum up the lessons and on that basis ascend still higher peaks. It's like climbing a mountain. When you climb you look ahead and the next peak looks like the very top of the mountain — nothing could be any higher than that, you can't go up any higher than that. Then you get up a little further and you say, "Oh, damn, there's another peak." But that mountain does have a top. It's like that guy, Hannibal, who crossed the Alps. There were many soldiers who said that can't be done. Elephants can't go up mountains like this. and

this mountain goes up to the sky and never ends. And Hannibal, who was a primitive materialist and not what you call a Marxist of course, said that's impossible, no mountain can possibly go without end into the sky, and you will see elephants will go over the Alps. And he was proved correct. And today we know that it's perhaps even more difficult to make the proletarian revolution than for Hannibal to cross the Alps, but we know there is no mountain that does not have a top, no mountain that goes endlessly into the sky, and this mighty elephant of the proletariat will go over the Alps!

"Look to the Future, Prepare for Revolution!", excerpts from a December 30, 1978 speech, *RW*, No. 1, May 1, 1979, p. 11.

# BULLETS

FROM THE WRITINGS, SPEECHES & INTERVIEWS OF

# BOB AVAKIAN

CHAIRMAN OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY, USA