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The Mexico City Fire: What Lit the Match

In the morning hours of November 19, as many were just beginning to make their way to work, a series of massive explosions ripped through the barrio of San Juan Ixhauatepec, located in Tlalnepantla, just north of Mexico City. Fireballs engulfed whole streets, houses were shattered in a matter of seconds, and more than 24 hours after the initial explosions fires were still burning near the heart of the blast. Early reports estimated that over 3,000 people were wounded severely enough to be treated in hospitals, and that at least 10,000 homes were destroyed

by the blast.

As we go to press the official death toll in the disaster has already reached well over 300 people, but the *RW* has also received information from people with relatives who live in the area which indicates that government figures minimize the extent of the disaster and underestimate the numbers of victims.

Indeed, official pronouncements have consistently downplayed the extent of, and blunted the outrage over, the catastrophe, such as the warning of one government official who told the press, "We

must be prudent and avoid irresponsible accusations until a thorough investigation is carried out." These officials, and their imperialist patrons in the U.S., have good reason to urge reporting that is, as they put it, "prudent." For both the reason for the massive extent of the disaster and the immediate cause of the explosion are direct products of the vicious, distorted development imposed on the Mexican people by imperialism. This disaster was no act of god — imperialism and its compradors set the tinder and lit the match.

"Time Bombs"

More than twenty square blocks of San Juan Ixhauatepec were leveled by the force of the dozen blasts and fires that burned in their wake. Days after the blasts the entire area was saturated by fumigation trucks to control the already enormous rat population that was feeding on the death and garbage. The mere existence next to the gas plant of this heavily populated workers' slum and the conditions of life in it were ready tinder for the disaster that exploded this week — a si-

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Excerpts from:

A Horrible End, or An End To The Horror?

by Bob Avakian

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Correspondence on: "Let's End This Madness, Before It Ends Us!"

RW,

At a large industrial plant with thousands of workers, about 70% of them Black, the "Let's End This Madness" leaflet touched some very deep feelings and agonizing over how to prevent nuclear war and for some, especially those who have read Bob Avakian's book, some important beginning steps to answer the question "What does this mean for me?"

Most at this place will make at least \$30,000 this year; the lifestyle is more like that of the middle class, despite the difficult work conditions. There is still a lot of "no interest in the world" among some workers based on that better life. But there is a lot more interest in the world as the jolts and shocks of approaching world war penetrate into the previously passive and sterile atmosphere of the plant cafeteria conversations.

One Black worker, for example, flip-flops between concern about world issues to trade unionism. He never really saw the threat of world war as real until he saw one of these Meet the Press-type TV shows where some Defense Department official was on talking about the capability of the B-1 or Stealth bomber to penetrate Soviet air space without being detected. He was shook up the next day at work. "I couldn't believe it. This joker was not talking about this plane could do this stuff — he was talking about this is what it will do when we send it on its mission. They're really planning to do this. They are going to do this world war." He was speaking not just to me but had turned to a group of three or four other workers and was agitating about it loud enough for half the locker-room to hear.

The recent provocations against Nicaragua have also generated a lot of discussion — with more than a few realizing the U.S. could invade at any point — over whether or not this could spark the world war.

There is a real frustration over the passivity these workers see in others in the plant however. When many of the Black workers judge the mood of the Black masses, they think only of Blacks in the better-off strata and that in turn produces some demoralization about the prospects for revolution. To some

the "Let's End This Madness, Before It Ends Us" leaflet broke through this with its emphasis on the people at the bottom, the "nobodies."

An older Black worker, an ex-prisoner, active with the Muslims at one point, is very frustrated with the way "The Man" has messed with the minds of his fellow (especially Black) workers in the factory, giving them a few crumbs to try to get them to "forget their whole history of oppression." The leaflet was a breath of fresh air to him. He summed it up in one sentence, "The millions of nobodies — yeh, they can do it."

Another contributed money for the leaflet. He sees that the better-off workers with jobs tend to forget about the situation of people on the bottom, which he sees as increasingly desperate. "How soon do you think revolution can come with people suffering so much? It seems like we don't have that much time with the suffering at such a high level." Combine this with his sense of the coming of world war and there is a real sense of urgency to his questions and outlook.

Another Black worker jumped on the report (RW No. 280) summing up the leaflet battle in one city to examine the section of the report on Black people. He insists Blacks won't get involved in revolution because "they'll be loyal to whoever gives them this big paycheck." But in an unguarded moment, referring especially to the all-the-way-revolutionary orientation of the RCP, he let slip, "If all this can happen, if you can win, I'll be with you 100%."

He also grabs up issues of the RW with any story of national oppression; he has followed avidly the story of the

murder of Michael Stewart in New York City.

A significant number of Bob Avakian's new book, *A Horrible End, or An End to the Horror?*, has been sold in the plant. This includes copies to several skilled tradesmen (Black and white) and to a larger number of Black production workers.

One of these workers has read all of it and plans to get together soon with the party to discuss it. He has had questions about the ability to pull off revolution ever since the revisionist coup in China which affected him deeply. He has followed Bob Avakian's writings since his speech at the Mao Tsetung Memorial meetings in 1978 through *Conquer the World* to this new book. He was most struck by the sections dealing with "settling for nothing less than the whole world and its complete transformation" and by the fact that some beginning theoretical work has been done on the question of military strategy.

Another considers himself a Marxist and has read widely in philosophy. "I'm one of those advanced workers your party talks about who needs air to breathe, to keep from being suffocated. That's what this book gives me." And he went on to add, "If Bob Avakian were living at the time of Marx and Engels, he would have been their colleague. That's the level he is at. He is a genuine leader of the working class. Do you comprehend what I am saying? A man like Bob Avakian comes along only once every 50 years, if that."

Before he had bought the book, we had had an argument in which I drew on the book to say that the demand of

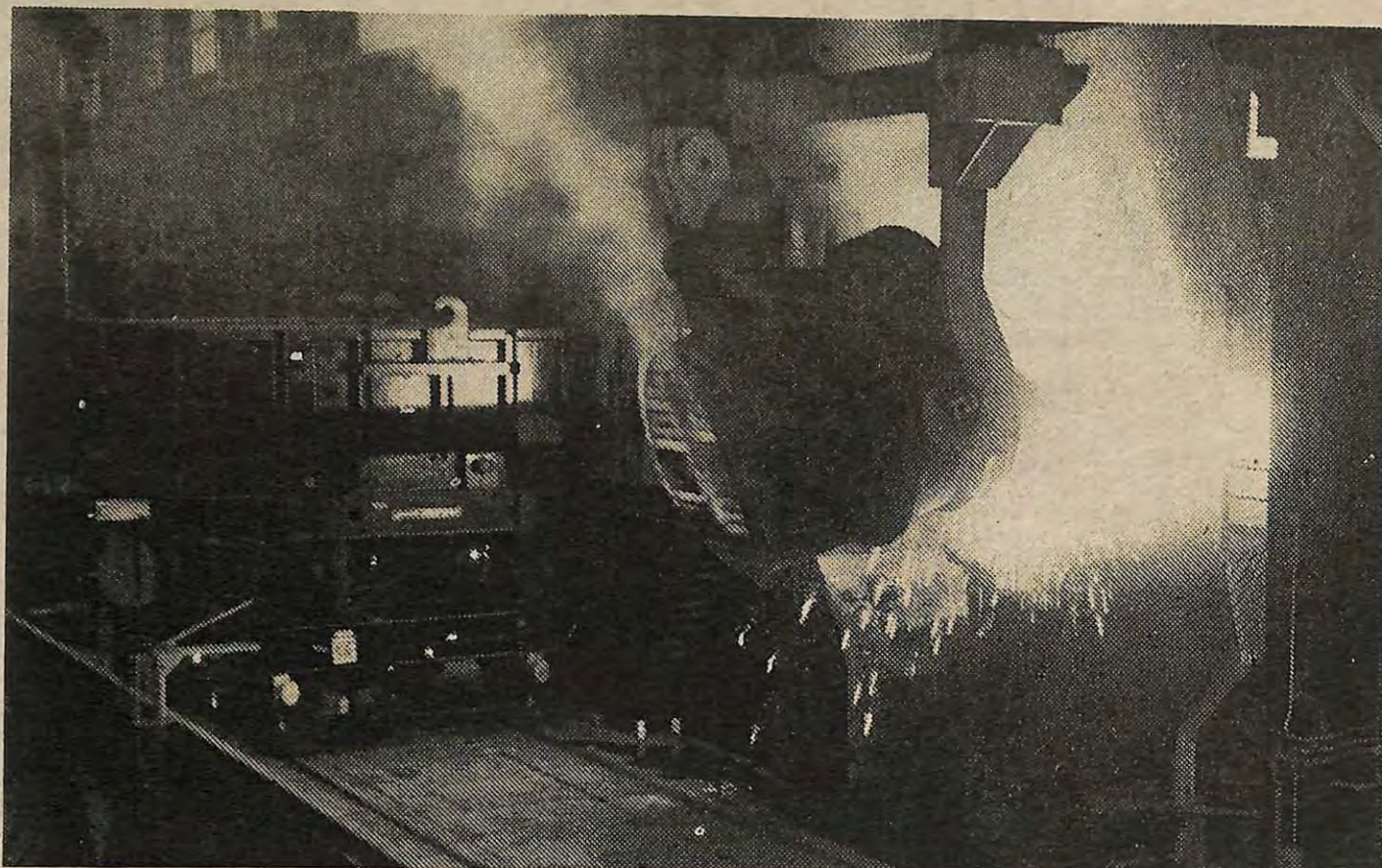
Blacks in the '60s for equality was still within the bounds of bourgeois democracy. He had vehemently disagreed. After reading that section of the book, he had changed his mind, but we haven't had a chance to get into it yet.

The moves towards world war, the elections, the provocations around Nicaragua — all these objective conditions and the impact of the party's work, especially the RW, are jolting people loose from previous political passivity and creating the conditions for revolutionary activity to take root and grow. Recently a meeting was held right in the plant of a small number to discuss the recent events around Nicaragua and its implications. At it one asked what would happen if the Soviet Union intervened if the U.S. invaded, would it push things towards world war (although he tended to think the U.S. and the Soviet Union would not "go to missiles" over Nicaragua).

Another also asked, "Where will we be 30 years from now with all these nuclear weapons?" A white worker answered, "nowhere" meaning if we let them go on that long they will have launched world war. At the end of the discussion he said, "Why don't we do this regularly?"

Some of these workers are looking to those at the bottom of society and to the party for leadership at this point. At the same time some are taking up the challenge to join the "nobodies" in becoming part of the organized revolutionary movement — beginning in more quiet ways but with a sense of urgency and seriousness.

A proletarian internationalist



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A HORRIBLE END or An End To The Horror?

by BOB
AVAKIAN

A General Introductory Explanation

Water Margin is a classical Chinese novel. Many in China have upheld it as "an immortal epic of peasant revolution."¹⁰¹ But in 1975, in the course of his last great battle against revisionist betrayal — in particular against Deng Xiaoping and others who seized power after Mao's death and have taken China back down the road of capitalism and capitulation to imperialism — Mao focused attention on the real lesson of *Water Margin*. "The merit of the book *Water Margin*," Mao said then, "lies precisely in the portrayal of capitulation. It serves as teaching material by negative example to help all the people recognize capitulationists."¹⁰² And he added: "*Water Margin* is against corrupt officials only, but not against the emperor." As Raymond Lotta explained in *And Mao Makes 5*, "Sung Chiang, who is the main figure in the novel, sneaks his way into the ranks of the peasant rebels and seizes leadership. After having put up a show of resistance for a while he capitulates to the emperor and turns on the peasant rebels."¹⁰³ (Sung Chiang is similar to the hero in medieval English tales, Robin Hood, who is cheated out of his rightful place in the nobility and becomes an outlaw, but fights only against the corrupt Prince John and only to restore the rightful ruler, Richard, to the throne and restore Robin's own lost lands, wealth, and position in the realm. Another example of basically the same kind of thing is the relation of the Christians to the Roman Empire: from resistance to the elevation of Christianity as the enshrined state religion beginning with the reign of the Emperor Constantine.)

Such people are not thoroughgoing revolutionaries; they never break with the whole framework of the established order, and their orientation remains one of getting their fair share (or all they can) within that framework: if they fight against the powers-that-be, such fighting serves the purpose of striking a better deal with them at some point. And when that point comes, the whole logic of their outlook and objectives leads them not just to desert the revolutionary ranks but to become vicious opponents of revolution and to enlist themselves in a crusade against it. History has witnessed more than a few such people.

It is not necessarily the case that such people intended to follow this course all along, from the time they joined the revolutionary ranks, though that is definitely the case sometimes. There are many like the character Ah Q, created by the great Chinese revolutionary writer Lu Hsun, about whom Mao commented: "Actually, all Ah Q understands by revolution is helping himself to a few things just like some others."¹⁰⁴ The essential point is that unless people who rebel do make a leap to thoroughgoing opposition to the whole system and its ideology, ways of thinking, and values, they are liable to end up serving that same system, against revolution.

In returning to the question Mao raised around the novel *Water Margin*, I want to deal with its broader application and implications for revolution: the problem of making thoroughgoing revolution and sticking to it — and not just any kind of revolution but the communist revolution which involves, as Marx and Engels proclaimed, "the most radical rupture with traditional property

¹⁰¹ "Unfold Criticism of 'Water Margin,'" *Peking Review* No. 37 (September 12, 1975), reprinted in *And Mao Makes 5*, edited with an introduction by Raymond Lotta (Chicago: Banner Press, 1978), p. 242.

¹⁰² "Unfold Criticism of 'Water Margin,'" Lotta, ed., *And Mao Makes 5*, p. 241.

¹⁰³ Lotta, ed., *And Mao Makes 5*, Introduction, p. 32.

¹⁰⁴ Mao, "On the Ten Major Relationships," *MSW*, Vol. 5, p. 301. Another example that I'm reminded of is something that I saw years, more than 10 years ago now, back in the "mad years" of the late '60s, early '70s. One day someone handed me a public but not widely circulated manifesto from a group calling itself the Chicano Liberation Army in California. This manifesto listed all the various acts of guerrilla warfare they were going to carry out and so on and so forth in rather graphic detail, with indictments of the system — and some of these indictments were well-founded and you had to have basic agreement on that. But after doing all this they then summed it all up by expressing their determination to fight until "liberation is won... or until sufficient reforms are granted to redress our grievances." (I'm paraphrasing from memory here but that's the thrust of it.) This is the most classical and essentially explicit statement of "Sung Chiang-ism" that I at least can remember seeing in quite some time, although there are many contenders for that.

This week the Revolutionary Worker presents the sixth in a series of excerpts from Bob Avakian's newest and most important work to date, *A Horrible End, or An End to the Horror?* The entire book is being serialized weekly in Spanish in *Obrero Revolucionario*. In English, we are only excerpting some sections to give our readers a "taste." The book is available at local Revolution Bookstores and outlets, through RCP Publications, and at some other locations.

This week's excerpt includes several subsections from Chapter II and its first major section "Questions Relating to the Experience and Lessons of the '60s Movement in the U.S." Other subsections in this section of the book are:

"We tried that before." ... You tried what?

On Malcolm X

More on the Black Panther Party

As Mao Said, "Historical Experience Merits Attention"

relations; no wonder that its development involves the most radical rupture with traditional ideas."¹⁰⁵

Proletarian Revolution Versus Bourgeois Revolution

The historical experience of proletarian revolution so far is that in general such revolutions have involved a significant bourgeois-democratic aspect and have actually passed through a bourgeois-democratic stage, whether shorter or more protracted. And it has proved to be much more difficult than anticipated to make the leap — or rupture — beyond bourgeois democracy to the socialist revolution, as a transitional stage and part of the overall world struggle for communism. The two great proletarian revolutions in history up to this point, the Russian and Chinese, each in their own way illustrate this.

The Chinese Revolution involved, as a necessary preparation for socialism, a bourgeois-democratic revolution — though one of a new type, led by the proletariat through its party and thus termed New Democracy by Mao. And as it turned out, this stage of the revolution involved a several decades-long struggle, itself passing through a complex process and several substages (most notably that of the War of Resistance against Japan). This new-democratic revolution was in its political and economic content anti-imperialist and anti-feudal but not anticapitalist as such (although, as Mao pointed out, by striking at bureaucrat capital, which controlled 80 percent of industry, during this stage of the revolution a big blow was struck in undermining the foundations of capitalism in China, and in this respect there was an anticapitalist aspect to the new-democratic stage of the revolution).¹⁰⁶

During this stage of the revolution, Mao wrote that this "new type of democratic revolution clears the way for capitalism on the one hand and creates the prerequisites for socialism on the other."¹⁰⁷ At that time and into the early years of the socialist stage after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, this contradiction found expression mainly in terms of bourgeois forces outside the party more or less openly advocating capitalism and opposing socialism. But the more the socialist transformation of society advanced and the deeper it went in the following years, the main focus of this struggle changed to the fight against those within the Chinese Communist Party itself, especially at its top levels, who sought to take China down the capitalist road with themselves as the new, ruling bourgeoisie. In a sense this has proved to be, from an historical standpoint, the more profound expression of the fact that the new-democratic revolution cleared the way for two roads: the socialist road and the capitalist road (though, in the concrete circumstances of China in the world today, the capitalist road means capitalism subordinated to international capital, imperialism, as indeed has been the case since the capitalist-roaders seized power in China right after Mao's death in 1976).

Already in 1964, in discussing the tasks and content of the new-democratic revolution, Mao made the following very provocative remarks:

New Democracy is a bourgeois-democratic revolution under the leadership of the proletariat. It touches only the landlords and the comprador bourgeoisie, it does not touch the national bourgeoisie at all. To divide up the land and give it to the peasants is to transform the property of the feudal landlords into the individual property of the peasants, and this still remains within the limits of the bourgeois revolution. To divide up the land is nothing remarkable — MacArthur did it in Japan. Napoleon divided up the land too. Land reform cannot abolish capitalism, nor can it lead to socialism [i.e., in itself it does not constitute or achieve socialism — B.A.].¹⁰⁸

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¹⁰⁵ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1973), p. 59.

¹⁰⁶ See Mao, *A Critique of Soviet Economics*, p. 40.

¹⁰⁷ Mao, "The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party," *MSW*, Vol. 2, p. 327.

¹⁰⁸ Mao, "Talk on Questions of Philosophy (August 18, 1964)," Schram, ed., *Chairman Mao Talks to the People*, p. 216.

A Horrible End, or An End To The Horror?

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A decade later, carrying this analysis further and deeper in his last great battle against Deng Xiaoping, et al., Mao summed up:

With the socialist revolution they themselves come under fire. At the time of the cooperative transformation of agriculture there were people in the Party who opposed it, and when it comes to criticizing bourgeois right, they resent it. You are making the socialist revolution, and yet don't know where the bourgeoisie is. It is right in the Communist Party — those in power taking the capitalist road. The capitalist-roaders are still on the capitalist road.¹⁰⁹

As Mao also summed up at that time, such people never make the leap beyond the bounds of bourgeois democracy — they never cross the narrow horizon of bourgeois right, to use Marx's phrase — and as the revolution reaches the socialist stage and continues and deepens in that stage, such people go from being bourgeois democrats to becoming capitalist-roaders — in the name of socialism and communism.

I pointed out in a paper submitted to our Central Committee in 1978 that for such people "socialism" means in essence the opportunity for them to lead their country — and themselves — to the status of an industrially developed, modernized nation, free from foreign domination and backwardness, and able to enjoy the benefits and privileges that accompany this — especially for the ruling class.¹¹⁰ (That such people may be unable to realize their grand designs is an historical irony but does not change the fact that this is the essence of their outlook and intent and the limit of their vision.) As a result of the revisionist coup in China an important negative lesson has been more profoundly provided, even if at a very bitter cost: now we do know much more clearly "where the bourgeoisie is" under socialism. But beyond this heightened recognition, as important as it is, what is fundamental to grasp is the underlying material and historical basis for this — and for the struggle against it. This resides not just in the nature of socialist society as a transition between capitalism and communism but in the world contradictions of this, the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution, and the major expressions these contradictions assume in any given period, and especially at key turning points in world history such as the present.

Although Russia at the time of the October Revolution of 1917 was an imperialist country, it was a backward one which in certain respects was "imperialized" by other, more developed and powerful imperialisms (in particular British and French imperialism). In important ways, not only geographically but economically and politically, Russia was a kind of bridge between West and East. In the development of the Russian Revolution there was a bourgeois-democratic stage and even after Lenin summed up (following the February 1917 Revolution that toppled the Tsar) that the situation had changed and the socialist revolution had come on the agenda as the immediate stage, he also recognized the fact that there remained many bourgeois-democratic questions that were as yet unresolved with the triumph of the October Revolution. Besides the task of ending national oppression — and very much bound up with this as an underlying condition — was the land/peasant question, which remained an essential problem in building socialism in the Soviet Union over the next several decades. In fact, this problem proved to be extremely difficult to handle, and this difficulty was very much a factor in the undermining and eventual overthrowing of socialism in the Soviet Union (though not in the mechanical materialist, "one-to-one" sense that it is impossible to build socialism in a backward, largely peasant country, as is claimed by various Trotskyites, social democrats, and other pseudorevolutionaries and pseudosocialists with dead souls).

It is important to note in this connection that on the one hand, in summing up the problems and errors in the Soviet Union and the causes for the triumph of revisionism there (beginning with the coming to power of a new bourgeoisie headed by Khrushchev in the mid-1950s), Mao focused a great deal on the problems and errors in dealing with the peasantry (for example in his 1956 speech "On the Ten Major Relationships" and in his reading notes on a Soviet political economy textbook in the early '60s).¹¹¹ On the other hand, however, perhaps he didn't link this enough (or deeply enough) with the question of whether or not and to what degree bourgeois-democratic tasks and problems actually remained unresolved throughout the almost four decades of socialism in the USSR. For example, he says, "The October Revolution was a socialist revolution which concomitantly fulfilled tasks left over from the bourgeois democratic revolution."¹¹² This analysis may seem correct on the surface; however a deeper summation suggests that neither "concomitantly" (i.e., as an accompaniment) nor "fulfilled" is altogether correct. Perhaps more than Mao recognized, efforts to carry out such tasks — in particular, in regard to the land/peasant question — involved intense contradiction which had a great deal to do with the strengthening of bourgeois forces in Soviet society — including within the party itself — and the eventual triumph of revisionism.¹¹³

These kinds of problems are likely to be with us for some time. This is very much linked with the phenomenon of lopsidedness in the world and with the political and ideological distortions that tend to accompany it. As I pointed out in *For a Harvest of Dragons*, corresponding to this lopsidedness,

in the sphere of politics and ideology, and within the Marxist movement in particular (broadly defined), has been the marked tendency (of avowed Marxists)

toward social-democracy in the imperialist countries and toward nationalism in the oppressed nations (though the latter has the virtue of often assuming a revolutionary expression, even if not a thoroughly Marxist-Leninist one).¹¹⁴

In other words, there remains a strong material basis in the world today for the pull of bourgeois ideology, in one form or another. And, if there is world war/nuclear devastation, in such circumstances the problems of this kind — of people continuing to view things, even the struggle against the established order (or the attempt to reimpose that order), through the prism of bourgeois ideology, even in terms of "what do I get out of it" (like Lu Hsun's character Ah Q) — will hardly be made less acute!

All this stresses the crucial necessity, especially for the vanguard and the advanced but also the oppressed masses more broadly, to grasp the profound, fundamental difference between proletarian revolution and bourgeois democracy — even bourgeois-democratic revolution. This means confronting the question of making the "two radical ruptures" Marx and Engels spoke of in the *Communist Manifesto* and grasping that this problem can only be attacked at its roots, let alone solved, with a firm internationalist approach and through liberating and transforming the whole world — and as much of it as possible at each stage.

The Struggle of Black People, Bourgeois Democracy and Proletarian Revolution

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...

Disorientation from Failure — and from "Success"

There is, especially among Black people but also among the basic masses (and others) more generally, a certain disorientation and in some cases even conservatism right now, not only because (as it is often put) the struggle of the '60s did not succeed or accomplish anything real, but because in another way it *did* achieve something, including some of the things that were being aimed for in that period. There are today, in a way there were not 15-20 years ago, many Black elected officials, a fair number of Black people in the media, etc., and there has been a building up of some Black business (and this continues today, despite the fact that some are being allowed, or even pushed in some cases, to go under). The focus on this is "the '60s" that bourgeois elements and lackeys among Black people and other oppressed peoples in the U.S. want to "replay" — and in the present situation this can only be a retrograde trend, especially to the extent (and it is to a large extent the case) that this is a conscious attempt to negate the revolutionary currents of the late '60s and a conscious effort to lead the oppressed masses more firmly into the deadly embrace of the imperialist ruling class.

It is of course not the case that basic equality has been won for Black people and other oppressed peoples in the U.S. But certain things have changed and certain things have been gained, in particular for the more privileged and elite strata among them, and especially in today's "hard times" and with the approaching showdown with the Soviet bloc, a significant mood exists among these strata of scuffling to preserve what they have got, including by "going along with the program" of the U.S. imperialists. Further, even among those who have not benefited from the concessions and co-optations by the ruling class and whose situation has grown worse since the '60s, there is significant disorientation: not just disorientation at the fact that after so much struggle things are worse — and this is the situation for the basic masses generally — but also to some degree the disorientation of not knowing exactly what should be struggled for after all, since many of the specific things demanded in the '60s have been granted, at least up to a point.

This is linked not only with the sharpened class polarization among Black

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¹⁰⁹ Cited in Fang Kang, "Capitalist-Roaders Are the Bourgeoisie Inside the Party," *Peking Review*, No. 25 (June 18, 1976), reprinted in Lotta, ed., *And Mao Makes 5*, p. 358.

¹¹⁰ *Thoughts on Points for Discussion*, an unpublished paper submitted by Bob Avakian to the Central Committee of the RCP, USA and adopted by it in 1978.

¹¹¹ See Mao, "On the Ten Major Relationships," *MSW*, Vol. 5, pp. 284-307, especially pp. 289-92; and Mao, *A Critique of Soviet Economics*.

¹¹² Mao, *Critique of Soviet Economics*, p. 39. Another translation of this I have seen reads "incidentally accomplished," but in any case the essential point is the same. See Mao, "Reading Notes on the Soviet Union's 'Political Economics' (1961-1962)," *Miscellany*, Part II, p. 251.

¹¹³ Here I have only briefly noted, in the most general terms, some basic questions and underlying problems; these points are addressed in more detail in *Conquer the World* (see Part I, "Further Historical Perspectives on the First Advances in Seizing and Exercising Power — Proletarian Dictatorship — and Embarking on the Socialist Road," pp. 1-36, especially pp. 19-22), but still more thorough, all-around summation of this needs to be made.

¹¹⁴ Avakian, *For a Harvest of Dragons*, p. 145.

Nicaragua U.S. Tallies Crisis Benefits

The U.S.-manufactured MIG/arms buildup crisis over Nicaragua has moved off the front page — as of *RW* press time, at least. But that the U.S. is working toward a protracted state of crisis — certainly not excluding direct and overt acts of war — is shown by the themes currently struck in commentary. These center on the many benefits that accrued to the U.S. through the "MIG Scare." Thus we are told by Hedrick Smith in the *New York Times* (and told in bold type) that the incident has produced some "Useful Fallout."

If anyone harbored any lingering doubts as to the preplanned nature of this crisis, the current commentary should clear it up. A particularly good representation is the following, taken from a recent article written for the Knight-Ridder newspaper chain by James McCartney, and recently published in the *Chicago Tribune*. "The objective is to put so much pressure on Nicaragua's leftist Sandinista government that it will crumble or will take a more democratic form, the (high-level State Department) officials said. The officials indicated that the flap last week over the possibility of Soviet MIG aircraft being shipped to the Sandinistas was part of the plan." This is in addition to the report, noted in last



U.S. troops on maneuvers in neighboring Honduras.

week's *RW*, from a Congressional aide who told the *New York Times* that State Department officials had told him on October 11 that they planned to make a big deal out of Soviet-bloc arms shipments to Nicaragua after the U.S. elections.

In fact, the plan went into effect on the day of the election — but this, too, turned out to be in someone's planning. In noting that the MIG story was "leaked" by U.S. officials, the *Tribune* article says the "leaker" was "probably someone with a desire to produce a postelection atmosphere of crisis."

"Someone"? The "desire" is gener-

alized in the U.S. ruling class: with their "mandate" for reaction at its celebratory high point, what better time to jolt the population to the global realities? What better time to begin getting it accustomed to the kind of environment that is to be the normal state of things in the coming period? And what better time for war cries — and war preparations?

The U.S. bully-boys are also carefully considering the value of the "atmosphere of crisis" they have created within Nicaragua. Openly discussed are the possible effects of continuous U.S.

military maneuvers in the region, deliberate low-flying of U.S. spy planes so as to try and panic the Nicaraguan population with sonic booms and the constant threat of a direct U.S. military intervention, including anything from a "surgical strike" to a full-scale U.S. invasion.

Economically, Nicaragua's strained and crisis-ridden dependent economy has been further damaged by the need to devote a large portion of resources — estimated from 25%-40% of the government budget (the Sandinistas don't reveal

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1965: Marines invade the Dominican Republic.

Massive effort goes into preparing public opinion in the United States for war — both for local wars of intervention and for interimperialist world war between blocs. A key element of this is restoring a "white hat" of virtue to American foreign policy — whatever "we" do is for decent purposes because of the innate generosity of the American spirit... unlike the motives of that sinister enemy. At the very same time the cold and gangster-like notion is promoted that whatever the United States does deserves support, because in a troubled and complex world, you look out for yourself and your own interests. "Do it to them before they do it to you."

In such a climate it is worthwhile reviewing some of the ways U.S. imperialism has justified its crimes in the past... now that time has brought some of the hidden details to light. One useful example is the story of machinations during the Dominican crisis of 1965:

For the U.S., ominous events were unfolding in the tiny Dominican Republic of the Caribbean. On April 25, 1965, a coup led by opposition leader Juan Bosch overturned the government of Donald Reid Cabral. Cabral had been a loyal friend of the United States. Actually, he had been an obscure local CIA operative in the Dominican Republic before being hand-placed in power, and was so loyal in fact that he bore the nickname "el americanito." Not only was Bosch not similarly reliable, but the coup triggered a massive revolutionary upsurge among the Dominican people. They threw themselves into the struggle for change on the island, often with guns in hand.

In a broadcast on May 2, 1965, the hang-dog face of President Lyndon B. Johnson was broadcast to the nation. Announcing the landing of U.S. Marines in the Dominican Republic, he explained the U.S. actions in the following words:

Justifying the Dominican Invasion of 1965 Great Moments in Imperialist Cosmetics

"There are times in the affairs of nations when great principles are tested in an ordeal of conflict and danger. This is such a time for the American nations. . . .

"I want you to know that it is not a light or an easy matter to send our American boys to another country, but I do not think that the American people expect their President to hesitate or vacillate in the face of danger, just because the decision is hard when life is in peril. . . .

"The American nations cannot, must not, and will not permit the establishment of another Communist government in the Western Hemisphere. . . .

"Our goal is a simple one. We are there to save the lives of our citizens and to save the lives of all people. Our goal, in keeping with the great principles of the inter-American system, is to help prevent another Communist state in this hemisphere. . . .

"The form and the nature of the free Dominican government, I assure you, is solely a matter for the Dominican people, but we do know what kind of government we hope to see in the Dominican Republic. . . .

"We hope to see a government freely chosen by the will of all the people."

There is a classic elegance to Johnson's explanations. A reluctant United States is being prodded into action by the desperate pleas of smaller "American nations." Not only are American lives in danger, but "communism" threatens to suppress the ability of the "will of all the people" to choose a "free Dominican government." Like the Lone Ranger, the United States must buckle up its guns to perform a new good deed.

But what is still missing from this story is the spade work necessary to get all these justifications into place. Between April 25 and May 2 lay a frantic week of political maneuvering.

The first move by the U.S. (through the CIA) was to establish an alternative junta

under a certain Colonel Benoit to challenge the legitimacy of the new Bosch regime. Under prevailing conditions, Mr. Benoit's authority did not reach beyond the perimeter of the San Isidro air base he was stationed on. No matter. There was at least a nominal government that could request U.S. intervention.

Beginning on April 28, a series of telegrams flew back and forth between Benoit and U.S. ambassador Bennett, getting the justifications for invasion straight. Benoit started by requesting American troops "because a Communist takeover threatens."

According to testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Ambassador Bennett then informed Benoit that American troops could only be brought in if there was evidence that American lives were directly in danger. Not surprisingly, the next cable from Benoit read: "Regarding my earlier request, I wish to add that American lives are in danger. . . ."

The same day this final cable arrived, the United States dispatched 400 Marines from bases around the Caribbean to establish an initial beachhead in Santo Domingo, soon to be followed by the main force of 20,000. The revolt spreading among the Dominicans was drowned in blood.

There was, of course, one final cosmetic condition to fulfill: The holding of new "free elections." In the wake of the U.S. invasion an acceptable "provisional government" was set up and elections slated for 1966. The United States and its favored candidate Joaquin Balaguer spent an estimated \$13 million on the election. Balaguer turned out to be the "will of the people" Johnson was talking about, since he won the election. Danger had been averted, and the rape of the Dominican people by U.S. imperialism could continue. □

Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade Leaflet

**U.S. KEEP YOUR BLOODY HANDS OFF
NICARAGUA AND ALL OF CENTRAL AMERICA!
MANY MORE DEFEATS FOR U.S.
WARS OF AGGRESSION!
OPPOSE THE IMPERIALISTS' HEIGHTENED
ESCALATIONS TOWARD WORLD WAR 3!**

If you believed what you heard on the news (and there are people who do) what a strange picture of the world you would have! The Central American nation of Nicaragua, would appear to be some huge monster of a country — ruled by bloodthirsty despots who not only oppress their own people but threaten the peace and independence of their neighbors.

From the picture in the U.S. press, you would expect to find the words "Nicaragua Go Home" spraypainted on walls from one end of Central America to the other. Of course it's not "Nicaragua" but "YANKEE GO HOME!" that covers the walls of Central America, and much of the rest of the world. And it's the United States who already has some 10,000 "contras" (the U.S. puppet army) invading Nicaragua — and is threatening more aggression every day.

The whole picture being painted to justify aggression against Nicaragua is a big load of shit. They talk about the Sandinista's election not being "legitimate" because no real opposition was allowed. But it is U.S. imperialism that has staged elections to legitimize death squad regimes from El Salvador to the Philippines, with opposition candidates — should they make the mistake of running — ending up corpses in ditches or airports (as their recently revealed CIA manual explicitly suggests).

And much as they've accused Nicaragua of having "too big a military," it is this country that has accumulated enough nuclear weapons to destroy the planet, and is madly preparing for a nuclear world war against their Soviet rivals threatening not only their "neighbors" but humanity.

Since the Sandinistas came to power, Nicaragua is no longer part of the U.S.' empire. And over the past several years, U.S. control over Central America has been slipping. The Soviets have moved to take political advantage of this, just as the U.S. has done in Poland and Afghanistan. All this is a sign that the "glory days" for U.S. imperialism are gone forever. Who the fuck wants them back? This is the nation that celebrates "Thanksgiving" for the massacres of native peoples (Indians); the dragging of Black people to its shores in chains; the invasion of Grenada and the latest in nuclear missiles.

To be an American is to take pride in all that. But don't worry — you have a choice! The stand of the international proletariat (people with nothing to lose) is to work for "our" government's defeats — all of them! We welcome the chance to use every defeat for the USA to contribute to its overthrow at the soonest possible moment.

The U.S. is desperate to demonstrate its absolute dominance of Central America as proof of, and as a boost to, its ability to go for world dominance in World War 3. At the same time, an invasion of Nicaragua wouldn't be the kind of cheap victory they got over tiny Grenada (remember who won the Vietnam war). That they are caught between a rock and a hard place is fine. When they fall, it will be one of the greatest moments in human history.

Rebel youth!

- Take the corners and walls, the classrooms and the streets in opposition to U.S. provocations and threats against Nicaragua.
- Make the necessary plans so as to be able to react immediately to any escalation of U.S. aggression.

There is a beast to destroy, and we're in its belly! Revolution in the '80s — Go For It!

Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade/PO Box 30735 Term. Annex/Los Angeles, CA. 90060

Nicaragua

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(the actual figures) — to defend themselves from the U.S.'s puppet Contra army and the threat of much more. While U.S. officials publicly lambast the Sandinistas for a "massive arms buildup," they are coldly calculating the effects of U.S. military actions and threats of forcing an even greater buildup — thereby exacerbating Nicaragua's economic difficulties, driving it to the brink of bankruptcy and, U.S. officials hope, ultimately making it easier to get rid of the Sandinista regime.

U.S. officials are also weighing the psychological effects of the crisis atmosphere they have foisted on Nicaragua. The speculation in U.S. ruling circles is that the constant pressure of being under the U.S.'s guns (with sonic booms driving home the point) will create greater turmoil within Nicaragua and make larger sections of the population want to capitulate to the U.S. in order to get "peace." This, too, is part of paving the way for the removal of the Nicaraguan regime as presently constituted.

There are also military calculations involved here. The Sandinistas are facing a Contra army that has somewhere between 10,000-20,000 mercenaries, armed and supplied by the U.S. and its allies. By forcing the Sandinistas to prepare for a direct U.S. military action, the U.S. is limiting the resources the Sandinistas can put into fighting the Contras. And of

course, insofar as this helps fuel success in the Contra campaign of assassination, murder, kidnapping, bombing and sabotage, it also helps throw the country into greater turmoil and facilitate the U.S.'s eventual overthrow of Sandinista rule.

Much has been made of the policy differences in the U.S. over the Nicaraguan crisis, although there was new unanimity over the desirability of U.S. attacks in the event that MIGs actually did arrive. Differences are currently described publicly as being between those who want to militarily overthrow the Sandinistas right now (which would require a direct U.S. intervention) and those who want to see if the Sandinistas can be made to capitulate in negotiations. One U.S. official who was supposed to be part of the "moderate" pro-negotiating side, told the *New York Times* that a Nicaraguan proposal for another round of U.S.-Nicaraguan talks in Manzanillo, Mexico was fine — coming as it did in the midst of the crisis. "It will give us a chance to take their temperature," he said. "We can see if they're more serious now than they were before." All this smacks more of a "good cop/bad cop" routine — itself perhaps designed to throw the Sandinistas off balance. Obviously, whatever the real specifics of the divisions in the U.S. bourgeoisie over Nicaragua, neither opposition to naked U.S. aggression nor tolerance of any Nicaraguan opposition to U.S. dictates are positions in the debate.

One of the forms that the dispute has

taken is over whether or not to *openly* support the Contras (it is well known that the Contras are going to stick around in any case and get substantial direction from the U.S. in one way or another). One of the possible "achievements" of the U.S.-created crisis, say some administration officials, may be greater support in Congress for open and direct U.S. control over the Contras. But that is clearly not sufficient for U.S. imperialism. As *Newsweek* put it, "...resupplying the (Contras) may seem less appropriate than providing better anti-aircraft systems and other defenses to El Salvador, Honduras and Costa Rica — or direct U.S. intervention. 'A revived Contra program would be a side show only,' predicts one Democratic leadership aide. For better or worse, he says, 'the main show would be an overt military action.'"

Clearly, the fact that this particular crisis has been allowed to fade for a while is no sign that the situation is any less tense. Indeed, it is liable to erupt again at any moment — and revolutionaries should be alert to any eventuality. One of the products of the desired "atmosphere of crisis" has been just a glimpse of the potential social strife within the U.S. that the U.S.'s aggression in Central America can provoke. We know of two demonstrations totaling about 3,000 people in the Bay Area — one of which was viciously attacked by the police — another demonstration of about 1,000 people in Los Angeles, the inclusion of actions targeting U.S. crimes in Central America

in a Week of Resistance at Great Lakes Naval Base in North Chicago, as well as a rally in Damian Garcia Park in L.A. just before the MIG crisis broke. In addition, there is a far-reaching network, initiated by religious pacifists, who have signed a "Pledge of Resistance" committing themselves to engage in widespread non-violent civil disobedience in the event of U.S. intervention in Nicaragua. While the range of actions that have taken place thus far reflect a complex panorama, with a broad range of forces in the field, it does demonstrate the kind of polarization that is taking place in the U.S. over Central America.

Meanwhile, we hope that at least *some* of the people taken in by the great "MIG Scare" will have gotten a glimmer of the understanding that specific reactionary imperialist interests are being played out here — or at the very least, the understanding that yes, the U.S. government does lie! Others, however, may take comfort in a more recent news item. Remember that Soviet ship, the *Bakuriani*, with the crated MIGs on board that sneaked out of its Black Sea port, under cloud cover, skillfully eluding U.S. surveillance satellites, craftily sailing around South America, thousands of miles out of its way, avoiding inspection at the Panama Canal so as to deliver its nefarious cargo to a certain hostile Central American state? According to an account from *Jane's Defense Weekly*, which cites Reagan administration sources, the ship *actually* made a stop and delivered the MIGs in... Libya!

"The Day After World War III"

Book Review: *The Day After World War III*, by Edward Zuckerman (N.Y.: Viking Press, 1984)

"Nuke war would be a mess. To suggest it wouldn't be a mess is ridiculous. It would be a terrible mess. But it wouldn't be unmanageable to the extent that we had a plan." General Louis Giuffrida, Reagan appointee to head the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA).

When the nuclear alert sounds, plans are for the U.S. President to rush to the National Emergency Airborne Command Post ("Kneecap") or, alternatively, to one of the eighty Presidential Emergency Facilities around the country to direct the nuclear battle. SAC's "Looking Glass" planes (one of which has been in the air every minute since 1961) will be preparing to launch American missiles by remote control should communications with silo-based missile centers in Kansas be interrupted, their cockpit windows covered by aluminized curtains to protect the crew members from the blinding flashes of nukes exploding below. If all else fails, special Emergency Rocket Communications System Minuteman II missiles, designed to do nothing else but transmit coded, tape-recorded attack messages will be launched, and as they fall back to earth the commands to fire will be repeated over and over, long after the particular command posts they originated from have been shit-canned. The Air Force's Continental Airborne Reconnaissance and Damage Assessment planes will scour the country for evidence of NUDETS (nuclear detonations), keeping the President and military leaders informed of the situation. . . . This is only the surreal beginning of the imperialists' plans to launch, and then, they hope, "recover" from nuclear war. Plans for the aftermath are given in painful detail by Edward Zuckerman in a widely read new book.

The Day After World War III contains an abundance of exposure, informed with a penetrating sense of the truly bizarre. Zuckerman's method is pretty much to let various U.S. officials, political figures and war plans speak for themselves. And in the process, the U.S.'s preparations for waging, and recovering from, nuclear war descend from the realm of horrific abstraction into a far more earthy, and ghastly, reality in which practical problems are posed and "solutions" found.

Though Zuckerman keeps his political viewpoint low-profile, it is clear from his book that he is disgusted by this stuff, and at the same time finds it ridiculous. Zuckerman plainly finds the idea of life after nuclear war laughable. . . while any who would weave schemes to launch and survive it emerge as truly mad. This outlook can be powerfully affecting: one comes away sick and furious at the kind of men who rule this country and who



would plan such things. It also can limit the scope of the book: there is scant mention of the plans and worries of the imperialists to deal with opposition to the war and the system that has launched it, even though there is much in Zuckerman's material that points to great concern on this score. Still, this is a telling indictment of the plans for world war — and how serious they are.

The Home Front

While nuclear warfighting tends in general to be perceived mainly on the level of global military strategies, the seriousness of this endeavor for the U.S. rulers becomes quite plain with some of

the contingency plans for dealing with the situation on the "home front." Zuckerman begins by floating out some tidbits from the volumes of government "postattack recovery" scenarios that have been formulated and reformulated over the years. And there are, as he tells us, literally thousands of such studies, occupying hundreds of feet of shelf space in the FEMA library (FEMA's 1984 research budget is \$5.6 million), from evaluations of the effect of nuclear war on the American rubber industry to dissertations on the effect of fallout on radishes.

How, for example, will the mail be delivered in a post-nuke situation? The Postal Service's *Emergency Planning*

Manual outlines how the USPS will rise to an occasion in which millions are uprooted by issuing Emergency Change of Address Cards to facilitate rerouting of mail around towns and cities that used to be (instructions are even provided for postal employees on how to test the cards themselves for dangerous radioactivity!). It is important, the manual notes, for survivors to fill out these cards for the deceased as well so their mail can be efficiently "returned to sender" and not overburden the dead-letter file.

Or how will the government retain its ability to raise tax revenues after nuclear devastation? For one thing, the IRS will be authorized to waive interest penalties for those who, after a nuclear exchange, file late returns "due to reasonable cause, and not due to willful neglect." But there will be sticky problems in determining such things as income, assets, net worth, or, say, allowable deductions for loss, i.e., in the very calculations of value itself. For instance, even assuming all the players survived, how much would the Detroit Tigers championship baseball team be worth without Detroit? Or what if computerized employer records of wages paid were largely destroyed by the effect of electromagnetic pulse (EMP) and they couldn't issue W-2s? One plan envisions chucking the whole income tax system and going with a 30% national sales tax. At any rate, all seriously worked out options on matters like these are backed by collections of prewritten Presidential proclamations, executive orders and draft legislation to be submitted and quickly approved by Congress (such as it exists after the nukes fly), so that they can be legally and constitutionally put into effect in a hurry.

Recovery planning extends into all spheres of activity. HUD's *Emergency Housing Management Manual* establishes guidelines and practices for attempting to house survivors. The Department of Agriculture has a series of food

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Tales of Horror

The book by Edward Zuckerman, reviewed on this page, successfully evokes something of the necessity, and the recklessness, of a U.S. ruling class that has always been determined to use nuclear weapons when necessary. For example, Zuckerman reveals that when the U.S. decided to A-bomb Japan (a decision made even before the bomb had been tested), the original target list included not two, but four cities: Niigata, Kokura, Nagasaki and Hiroshima. The ancient capital and cultural and artistic center of Kyoto was also considered, but finally rejected because, in War Secretary Stinson's words, "such a wanton act might make it impossible during the long postwar period to reconcile the Japanese to us rather than to the Russians."

Three days after Hiroshima was annihilated, an American B-29 took off as planned to drop the second A-bomb. . . on Kokura! It seems Kokura was covered by haze that day, so the plane simply switched course and dropped it on Nagasaki instead. (Equally evocative is the picture of President Truman, eating lunch on a naval vessel in the Atlantic, receiving the news of the

first explosion over Hiroshima: he leaped to his feet, shook the captain's hand, and exclaimed: "This is the greatest thing in history!")

Zuckerman also delves into the evolution of present U.S. nuclear warfighting strategy — from the 1949 SAC war plan Trojan (which called for dropping 133 atomic bombs on 70 Russian cities in 30 days), through the Kennedy/McNamara Assured Destruction goals of killing one-third of the Soviet population and wiping out one-third of their industry (as well as killing 50 million Chinese and destroying half of China's industry), to more current plans to operate, as Cap Weinberger told Congress in 1981, "across the full range of plausible nuclear warfighting scenarios" (for an overview of U.S. nuclear strategy in its world-historical context, see *RW* No. 271, page 5). His point here is well taken: "Planners have spent twenty-five years looking for ways in which nuclear weapons can actually be used." According to Zuckerman, the present Single Integrated Operating Plan (SIOP) for waging nuclear war with the Soviets today contains some two hundred different attack

options that can be "dialed up," as one missile commander put it.

And, of course, the U.S. rulers are not the only ones planning to dial-a-war and then survive it. Zuckerman describes a test, designated Mill Race, at White Sands in 1981 where 25,000 fifty-pound sacks of manure (ammonium nitrate) doused with diesel fuel were exploded to simulate the effect of a one-kiloton nuke. In attendance were military officers, engineers, contractors and technicians from various Western-bloc countries. The U.S. had parked, among other things, two M-1 tanks at the thousand-foot mark; FEMA had covered the area with prototype blast and fallout shelters; Britain had erected a Sea Wolf missile launcher; Sweden had brought a portable shelter inhabited by sophisticated dummies with simulated internal organs, etc. One American general explained, "We're all working to gain knowledge to keep the world free." And of course the Soviet side is working just as feverishly toward the same ends — to "free" the world of the opposing bloc. □

The Politics of Famine

and the Utter Poverty of Imperialism

Over the last few weeks films taken by British and Canadian television crews have graphically portrayed the agony of mass starvation in Ethiopia. In one film clip tens of thousands of starving people were shown sitting and lying outside the walls of a refugee aid center — their last hope being a 50 to 1 shot that they might be able to get inside the aid center for a bowl of gruel before they die. The barren field around the center is littered with the bodies of those for whom time ran out. Dozens of vultures relentlessly circle the fields, lazily awaiting their chance. Those left alive no longer have the strength to even bury the dead. Blankets sent by relief agencies to provide a semblance of shelter from the elements find more use as funeral shrouds. Suddenly, a rumor that food might be available somewhere in the crowd sets off a stampede of human agony as tens of thousands gather up what strength they have left to run in the direction of the rumor. An eerie, almost inhuman, wail comes from the crowd and is the only sound heard for miles around. The concrete meaning of the lopsidedness of the imperialist-dominated world stands in stark relief.

This is only one film clip from one aid center in Ethiopia. The same and worse is happening throughout the entire country daily. At many aid centers the number of people dying per day has doubled in the last month. At some centers, which are capable of feeding hundreds — and at the most a thousand — the Ethiopian regime's soldiers guard the compound from the tens of thousands camped outside. The populations of many urban centers in the north have doubled and tripled as people from the rural areas con-

verge on the cities in search of food. For the rural population the urgent quest for food has become the way of life. People simply start walking, following rumors of anything edible. Where they are available, grass and leaves are devoured in desperation. The aid centers are the endpoint for those able to reach them.

But even these hundreds of thousands captured on film are only a small percentage of the 7 million people starving to death in Ethiopia today. The vast majority of famine victims are in Eritrea and Tigray — areas where liberation struggles against the Ethiopian regime are being fought. For the people in these areas international emergency food aid has been by and large up until now "unavailable," since most of the relief centers have been set up in enemy-held territory.

None of this is an accident, neither an "act of God" nor a quirk of nature. It is a barbaric crime perpetrated by the imperialist system and the conditions it enforces on the vast majority of the earth. The fact that the situation in Ethiopia is only one small part of the overall picture on the continent of Africa today — a picture described by many as the "greatest human tragedy in the recent history of Africa" — underscores this point. Ninety percent of the people in Africa today live in absolute poverty. Food shortages have reached emergency levels in at least two dozen African countries. In Mozambique alone, 200,000 people have already died in 1983-1984 — a fact which is hardly ever mentioned in the U.S. press.

A few statistics presented in the September 1984 issue of the magazine *New Internationalist* complete the picture. "Three out of five are chronically

malnourished. Twenty-two of the world's 36 poorest countries are in Africa. For every 1,000 African children born, 120 will die before their first birthday. Eighty percent of the continent's population have no access to adequate health services and only one in four has safe water to drink. Africans die sooner (average age 49) and are less literate (only 36%) than in any other part of the world. In the 1970s the economies of fifteen African countries actually shrank and the national debt of Africa as a whole...increased tenfold. Half of the world's refugee population now lives on the continent."

And what about the "great humanitarian response" that the tragedy in Africa — particularly the mass starvation in Ethiopia — has recently elicited from the U.S. and Western imperialists and the actual motives behind this "outpouring of compassion"?

The film clips first aired on October 23rd of the famine victims inside Ethiopia were the first such films to be shown on television throughout the U.S. In the wake of these films, as well as subsequent reports, a couple of things developed. First, it should be mentioned here that the portrayal of such massive human suffering struck a responsive chord among large numbers of people inside the U.S. For some it was a shocked awakening to the fact that such large-scale suffering exists in the world today and for thousands of people it definitely brought out progressive sentiments of wanting to somehow help the famine victims. Relief agencies throughout the country reported a massive flood of donations from tens of thousands of people in the weeks that followed; one letter read, "I didn't know there were people starving in the world." Many examples of people coming forward to help the starving people in Ethiopia have been brought to light in the last few weeks. One particularly moving example involved a grade school in the South Bronx, itself a living testimony to the grinding oppression and poverty spawned by U.S. imperialism. According to a story in the *New York Times*, a grade school teacher in the South Bronx asked her class to contribute what they could to help feed the people in Ethiopia. The teacher stated that given the conditions most of her students lived in, she only expected to get a token response. Instead, these grade school children managed to scrape together \$129.

Dying from the Disease of Imperialism

It is absolutely enraging that such sentiment and effort, undoubtedly duplicated many times over and in many other places, can actually do little to genuinely aid the starving people in Ethiopia. Instead, because of the way the world is set up such efforts will be distorted and cynically used by U.S. imperialism in an effort to advance its own interests in Ethiopia.

The airing of these films signaled the launching of a major move by the U.S. bloc — particularly the U.S. and Britain — in their political contention with the Soviet imperialists over Ethiopia.

Undoubtedly such a proposition will provoke indignant howls from the imperialist humanitarians. After all, the

U.S. government has assured us that Reagan himself has been "deeply concerned" by the plight of the famine victims. And, in October alone — and the last couple of weeks of October at that — the U.S. has provided over 200,000 metric tons of emergency food to Ethiopia, five times what it had provided in all of 1984. M. Peter McPherson, the head of that widely respected "humanitarian agency," the U.S. Agency for International Development — often associated with another "humanitarian" agency, the CIA — declared that "our policy has not been to give economic assistance to our enemies, but to give food to starving people."

Well, to put it bluntly, come what may, a stuck pig is going to squeal. Within their own ranks the U.S. imperialists betray the politics underlying the U.S. famine relief effort. A November 4th *New York Times* editorial openly gloated, "Sympathetic Western donors are left to clean up after the heartless failures of scientific socialism.... It will take nothing from the West's response to make every effort to tell the world the source of Ethiopia's relief. M. Peter McPherson, administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, rightly says that 'a hungry child knows no politics.' In Ethiopia, as elsewhere, that idea nobly distinguishes East from West."

All this is just a despicable coverup for the most inhumane crimes. The famine hasn't surprised or crept up on anyone. It has been going on for years now and the situation that exists has been forecast by the Dergue and some international relief agencies for just as long. Where was all of the great humanitarian concern by the U.S. prior to October 1984? The Mengistu regime issued an international alert in the fall of 1982 about the potential starvation of two million people, yet the U.S. and other Western imperialists did very little to alleviate the situation. Indeed, the U.S. was quite stingy with its imperialist charity.

Nicholas Mottern, a former lobbyist with Bread for the World, was cited in the *New York Times* for calling out the U.S. as being "very tightfisted" and "very slow" with its aid over the past few years. In the same article Mottern also declared, "I'll be very outraged if they (the Reagan administration — *RW*) come out of this looking like humanitarians. In a telephone interview with the *RW*, Mottern elaborated his denunciation of U.S. tightfistedness with regard to famine relief to Ethiopia. Mottern has put together a chronology of requests to the U.S. for famine relief aid and the U.S. response to these requests from December 1982 to August 1983.

According to Mottern, during the period December 1982-May 1983 the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) (one of the largest U.S.-sponsored relief agencies working in Ethiopia) requested 838 metric tons of grain for Ethiopian famine relief. In spite of the fact that this was a very insufficient amount of food when viewed against the needs at the time, it wasn't until six months later, in May 1983, that the U.S. granted this request. At the same time, the U.S. also gave the World Food Program 630 tons of food and granted the CRS \$25,000 in transport-





ting costs. All told, the U.S. response to emergency food requests at that time was a paltry amount worth \$602,000. On April 22, 1983 the United Nations Disaster Relief Committee requested \$35 million from the U.S. to cover emergency food relief and the cost of transporting it to the famine victims. This request was based on a UN estimate that only one million famine victims out of the three million estimated to be starving at the time were accessible to relief agencies. Here, U.S. generosity was indeed touching — on May 17, 1983 the U.S. supplied a measly \$1.5 million worth of food. And again, on June 26, 1983 the UN reported that the situation in Ethiopia had gotten much worse. In response, the U.S. squeezed another drop into the bucket, granting the CRS another \$709,000 to cover food and the cost of transporting it to Ethiopia.

It is also well worth noting that in the U.S. government's original budget proposals for 1984, Ethiopia was the only African country to have its entire U.S. food aid allotment eliminated. This allotment, primarily used for political leverage with the Dergue, was restored after a period of bickering within the ruling class. Again, the U.S. aid allotment was a relatively tiny amount — a total of 41,000 tons of food which began to be shipped to Ethiopia in late 1983. In March 1984 two U.S. aid officials actually justified U.S. stinginess by declaring that the areas of Ethiopia controlled by the government were not really experiencing any food shortages. This little gem was followed up by the U.S. tying \$60 million of famine relief aid for all of Africa to a bill which granted further funding for the reactionary U.S.-sponsored Contras in Nicaragua, thus tying up the delivery of this emergency food aid for two months while Congress argued over the funding of the Contras. A few months later, in September 1984, the U.S. blocked the funds for a special Africa aid program proposed during the annual meeting of the World Bank. And finally, it is definitely worth noting that despite

all of their recent breast-beating and boasting about their so-called "humanitarian effort," the U.S. has so far refused to even consider using any of the hundreds of thousands of tons of reserve grain that they have stored inside the U.S. for famine relief in Africa.

Nor has the U.S. been alone in all of this. At the beginning of last summer it was conservatively estimated that Ethiopia would need 519,000 tons of relief food just to get through the rest of the year. Yet, up until the sudden flood of Western aid in October, the total food aid pledged by Western donors came to only 92,000 tons and only a small percentage of this tiny amount had actually arrived in the country by October. The delivery of much of this aid was deliberately slowed down so that its arrival at Ethiopia's main port would conflict with the already scheduled arrival and unloading of Soviet ships delivering cement — a move obviously designed to politically embarrass both the Dergue and the Soviet imperialists. The Dergue had also asked for 200,000 blankets from Western donors last year and by October had only received 50,000 of them.

Next to the U.S., Britain certainly deserves special mention here. Prior to the recent moves by the West, Britain stood alone among the members of the European Economic Community (EEC) in constantly seeking to reduce the amount of EEC donations to Ethiopia, advancing the slogan "trade not aid."

It should also be noted here that the Soviets and their bloc have more than matched the U.S. and company in starving out the Ethiopian people. In another fine example of Soviet "internationalism" the Soviet bloc together has so far contributed only 30,000 tons of food to Ethiopian famine relief. For their part, the Soviets themselves contributed only 10,000 tons of rice to this amount — a food that is not a part of the Ethiopian diet.

Essentially what it comes down to is the disgusting fact that the imperialists have allowed the situation in Ethiopia to

steadily deteriorate to the point where today — even with the aid that the imperialists are now dispatching to Ethiopia — one million people are most likely going to die. Most of these one million people are going to die of the effects of starvation, diseases contracted due to the lowered resistance associated with starvation and because of the simple inability to reach food relief stations. According to representatives of four relief agencies, this number could most definitely be significantly reduced if only the right type of food aid was sent to Ethiopia (liquid nutrients for those who can no longer digest solid food), if adequate amounts of aid were actually being sent and if the means of distributing it existed, and if the famine victims could in fact get adequate medical care including access to hospitals. In an imperialist-run world none of this is going to occur in an oppressed neocolonial country. In fact, in Ethiopia today relief officials do little to actually save any of those in immediate danger of dying or those who are too weak to help themselves. According to one doctor cited in the November 26 issue of *Newsweek*, doctors working in Ethiopia practice a barbaric version of triage, limiting the distribution of aid to those judged relatively healthy while the weak and sick are left to die. Nicholas Mottern summed up this situation to the *RW* by stating, "What you have here is a judgment that the loss of life is inevitable in Ethiopia, an attitude which would be totally unacceptable in other parts — in Caucasian parts — of the world." More precisely, what is happening in Ethiopia is, more than anything else, a damning indictment of imperialism and the way the world is molded to serve only its interests.

The Politics of "Relief"

At this point, one question obviously stands out. What exactly has changed in order to spur the U.S. and Western imperialists into such a sudden and large (relative to their past efforts) response to the famine in Ethiopia? What is it that has led to a situation where Ethiopian air-

ports are now getting more use by planes laden down in food aid in one day than they used to get in a week or even a month? The U.S. claims that their "humanitarian" chords were touched by the BBC films showing the victims of the famine. They even credit these films with breaking the extent and depth of the famine to the rest of the world and focusing their attention on it. Here it should be pointed out right off the bat that this is absolute nonsense. In November 1982, the UN Food and Agricultural Organization issued a report which graphically spelled out the dimensions of the famine at the time, and clearly indicated what the future would be if aid grants were not taken up seriously. In July 1983, there was even a seven-member U.S. congressional delegation which toured Ethiopia and reported back to the U.S. government on the crisis.

For more than two years now various relief agencies and individuals have bent every effort to expose the proportions of the Ethiopian famine to the rest of the world. For months before the recent U.S. moves began, relief agencies and individuals had consistently bombarded the media and the government with all kinds of information about the famine — all to no avail. Actually, the release and airing of the British and Canadian film footage on the famine points to what is going on behind the scenes in relation to Ethiopia today. In order to obtain these films the Western media had to buck the long-standing policy of the Dergue which barred extensive media coverage of the famine inside Ethiopia. And this was clearly done with the consent of the U.S. and its partners, as was evident in the tremendous amount of attention these films received by the imperialist media. Interestingly enough, this also went against the long-standing policies of the U.S. and the Western imperialists who, until this time, had for the most part played along with the Dergue in downplaying the actual proportions of the famine.

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Famine

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Actually the media and particularly NBC, which first aired the famine film footage in the U.S., has attempted to seize the opportunity of the sudden interest of the famine to present itself as the "conscience of the nation." But this same media often refused to even cover the famine over the last few years. NBC's European news director stated, "It was kind of low priority with us." And when BBC first offered to show its film footage to NBC, there was little interest in it on the part of the U.S. media. NBC in New York actually refused the story when it was first offered. The *Washington Post* reported that NBC employees told them, "New York was preoccupied with the U.S. elections and bored with the thought of another African famine."

Basically, the answer to what has changed with regard to the U.S. response to the famine is bound up with the intensifying political contention between the U.S. and Soviet blocs over Ethiopia. The U.S. has been somewhat open about this contention in general. There has hardly been one instance in which news coverage of the famine has not included attacking the Dergue for having the "misplaced priorities" of a "Marxist" government and in which the Soviets have not had their nose rubbed in the fact of their relative lack of contributions to the famine relief effort. In addition, the head of the USAID stated in the midst of the recent flood of aid to Ethiopia, "The word is out that the West delivers the food." Other U.S. officials were cited in *Newsweek* as hoping that the U.S. aid will be "a threat to Soviet hegemony over Ethiopia." And in case there was any lingering doubt about what was actually behind the famine relief effort, the British ambassador to Ethiopia made it very clear when he commented on the participation of British RAF Hercules planes in the famine relief airlift: "This is the first time there has been a British armed forces presence here in many, many years."

But there is more than just the general contention between the two blocs here. From the time the Mengistu regime came into power in 1974, the U.S./Soviet contention over Ethiopia has mainly focused on the Dergue itself — with the U.S. attempting through various means to pry the Dergue out of Soviet hands and into the U.S. bloc. One of the means through which the Dergue was being enticed to bolt from the Soviets was the trickling in of famine relief aid from the West, bearing with it the promise of much more if the Dergue only played its cards right. (The importance of famine relief aid is bound up with the ability of the Dergue to maintain the stability of its rule. It should be remembered here that the 1973-74 Ethiopian famine in which 200,000 people died played a major role in the downfall of the pro-U.S. Haile Selassie regime.)

Recently, however, the Soviets scored a significant advance in Ethiopia by tightening up their relationship with the Dergue through the formation of a revisionist-style "Marxist-Leninist" ruling party, the Ethiopian Workers Party. More than anything else, the sudden concern of the Western bloc for the famine victims inside Ethiopia is a countermove by the West in response to this Soviet gain.

The U.S. countermove consists of two parts. On the one hand, there is an intensification of the efforts to buy the Dergue with famine relief. On the other hand, rumors of a major new tactic in the U.S. scheme have emerged, that is, stepping up the pressure on the Dergue inside Ethiopia by dispatching famine aid to relief agencies operated by the Eritrean and Tigrean liberation movements for the first time ever.

With regard to the attempt to entice the Dergue out from under the Soviet wing, a few things stand out. First, as was already pointed out, in the last month the U.S. and the West in general have more than tripled the amount of relief aid sent to Ethiopia in all of 1984. (However, it should also be pointed out that this is still approximately only half of what is actually needed.) And, in spite of all the U.S. criticisms of the Dergue for its "misplaced priorities" and "bad management policies" in relation to the

famine, most of the Western relief aid being sent to Ethiopia today is being funneled into the hands of the Dergue and its notorious Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission. What this has meant in the past is that quite a bit of the food aid has actually ended up in the stomachs of the Ethiopian army and other reactionary forces aligned with the Dergue and, at times, has even been used as currency to pay wages to various workers in Ethiopia. And with regard to the food aid that has filtered down to actual famine victims, it should be noted that this aid only reached famine victims inside the territories controlled by the Dergue — that is, 5% of the overall famine victims as opposed to the 95% living in areas controlled by the liberation movements. Essentially this famine aid has been used to both shore up the Dergue and as a political weapon in the Dergue's attempt to starve out the liberation struggles.

The State Department recently assured the *RW* that new steps had been taken to "avoid famine aid abuse" and "make sure that the aid gets where it belongs." According to the State Department, one of these steps involved insuring that the relief agencies have greater responsibilities in Ethiopia and play a "supervisory role" in relation to distributing the food aid.

Who is kidding whom here? Many of the relief agencies have been complicit in the "famine aid abuse" in the past. So too was the U.S. The standard policy has been to operate along the guidelines of the U.S. policy which essentially has meant working hand in hand with the Dergue. As the *Christian Science Monitor* put it back in July, the relief agencies have too much "invested" in Ethiopia to buck the Dergue. In an interview with the *RW* a spokesman for the Catholic Relief Services stated flat-out that there would be "no changes in the mechanisms of food aid distribution in Ethiopia, the only change is going to be in the quantity available." With regard to the supposed supervisory role of the relief agencies (as if that would make a difference anyway) the Catholic Relief Services stated that while they will have nominal control over the food that they bring into Ethiopia, they are still bound to work under contract with the Dergue which, when push comes to shove, decides where and to whom the food aid goes.

The second event worth noting in the intensified attempt to entice the Dergue into the U.S. bloc is the fact that on November 1 the U.S. completed its first direct government-to-government agreement with the Dergue concerning famine relief. According to this agreement, the U.S. will supply food aid directly to the Dergue starting with an initial shipment of 50,000 metric tons of food. (Prior to this, the U.S. funneled all of its aid through the various relief agencies which then dealt with the Dergue.) In addition to food, the U.S. has also promised to consider granting Ethiopia's request for deep-water drilling rigs, increased medical supplies and new equipment for unloading ships at Ethiopia's ports. In return, the Dergue has promised to give U.S. ships first priority at Ethiopian ports. Once again, this agreement was worked out and announced even as U.S. officials and some relief agency officials were rigorously criticizing the Dergue's handling of famine relief in the press.

But the most interesting and new aspect of the U.S. countermove in Ethiopia hint of a move that has yet to be officially announced. And it is also the aspect which clearly indicates that the ante has been upped in imperialist contention over Ethiopia. According to two different sources inside two different relief agencies, the U.S. is about to begin delivering major amounts of food directly to the famine victims in Eritrea and Tigray through the guerrilla-run relief agencies based in Sudan. (These agencies are the Relief Society of Tigray [REST] and the Eritrean Relief Association [ERA].) This will mark the first time ever that the U.S. has even so much as officially acknowledged the existence of these relief agencies and the fact that they have access to 95% of the famine victims in Ethiopia. Whether this move by the U.S. is actually initiated, or whether the mere hints of such a move are intended for political leverage, the imperialist interests behind such a change are blatant.

In the past the U.S. has totally ignored

Three Views of World Hunger

A revolutionary was invited to speak to a social studies class in a high school in the ghetto. The students asked him what his view of the world hunger problem was. He replied by saying, "There are actually three views:

Conservative: These people are starving because they're not as enterprising, diligent, and resourceful as we are. They have no one to blame but themselves and their lack of civilization and achievements. No matter how much aid and assistance we give people, they never seem to learn.

Liberal: We are blessed with bounteous harvests, high productivity, and a superior standard of living. Our society is immensely successful in meeting material needs. But while being grateful for all this, we ought not forget those who are not as fortunate as us. We have a responsibility to offer them help and assistance.

Radical: The imperialist system is responsible for untold suffering in the world. It must not last one day longer than it has to. And we, living in the heart of the monster that feasts on the oppressed of the world, have a special responsibility to do everything in our power to quicken the struggle to topple U.S. imperialism. That is my view."

the famine in Eritrea and Tigray, preferring instead to work through the main relief agencies operating in Ethiopia which, as pointed out earlier, work only through the Dergue and in the areas controlled by it. Sometimes, when pressed on the issue, U.S. officials would flat-out lie about the "impossibility" of reaching Eritrean and Tigrean famine victims because of the guerrilla warfare going on in these areas. What this actually meant was that the U.S. and its relief agencies were working with the Dergue in attempting to starve the liberation struggles.

It is a fact that the Dergue uses food aid as a political weapon against the liberation struggles and the people living in the liberated areas. Relief agencies operating in Ethiopia are only permitted to set up aid stations in the major towns of both Tigray and Eritrea — the areas under the control of the government. In an attempt to depopulate the liberated areas, the Dergue has declared that anyone living in these areas who wants food must come into the government-controlled area to get it. Once at the aid stations the starving people must then show membership cards from various peasant associations to get aid. Since these peasant associations are controlled by the government, Eritrean and Tigrean peasants are supposed to swear allegiance to the Dergue by joining these associations in order to get aid. Without proof of such allegiance, peasants entering the government-controlled areas are subject to arrest or being drafted into the Dergue's army. On November 21, ABC *Nightline* carried an interview with a Tigrean farmer who revealed that the Dergue had forced him off his land and when he got to the relief center they attempted to draft him into the army. The U.S. has had little to say about all this. In fact, two months ago, when the *RW* questioned a spokesman for the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs about the reports of these types of activities by the Dergue, the reply was "unbelievable, not possible."

Now it is hinted that this situation is about to change. While this move has not yet been announced, there are signs that indicate that it is coming. For one thing, the U.S. media has definitely begun to step up its coverage of the situation in Eritrea and Tigray, including reporting on "reports that the Ethiopian government has not been giving aid" to these famine victims. The State Department also hinted to the *RW* that this move was in the works when it was questioned about how the outburst of U.S. famine relief would affect the people starving to death in the areas controlled by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Tigrean People's Liberation Front (TPLF). According to a State Department spokesman, the U.S. is "pushing to get food aid to all distressed people in Ethiopia" and, if they can't do this through the Ethiopian government they "will work through independent relief agencies not currently operating in the areas controlled by the government."

The strongest evidence concerning this upcoming move was given to the *RW* by two sources inside relief agencies. According to a spokesman for Grassroots International (a Boston-based relief agency that has worked with the TPLF and EPLF), "There is going to be a big shift in U.S. policy. Previously the U.S. channeled aid through the Dergue. Now AID is going to be sending food to 'all people in Ethiopia.' There will be a significant new output through PVOs (private volunteer organizations — *RW*) in

nongovernment-held areas. It will triple the aid now going to the relief society of Tigray."

According to a source in the second relief agency, one which has worked with both the Dergue and the guerrilla movements, the USAID sent out a cablegram to various relief agencies on November 9 declaring that major obstacles to getting food aid into Eritrea and Tigray have been overcome and only a few minor obstacles remain. According to this source, once these minor obstacles have been cleaned up the U.S. will dispatch 46,000 metric tons of food through private relief organizations to the Relief Society of Tigray and the Eritrean Relief Association. This amount is supposed to approximately match the amount of aid that the U.S. government is sending directly to the Dergue.

Apparently, we are supposed to believe that the U.S., in its frenzied outburst of compassion, suddenly discovered the famine victims in Tigray and Eritrea and the means through which they could be reached. This would require an amazing amount of willingness to suspend disbelief, especially since the Relief Society of Tigray and the Eritrean Relief Association have been operating quite publicly in Sudan for years now and Sudan is not only tightly welded to the U.S. bloc but is also very hostile to the Mengistu regime. The real motivating factor behind this sudden concern on the part of the U.S. for Eritrea and Tigray was indicated by a spokesman for Grassroots International. As this person pointed out, the U.S. discovery of Tigrean and Eritrean famine victims and the routes through which they can be reached began three days after the official formation of the Ethiopian Workers' Party when the USAID began pushing U.S. relief agencies to find ways to reach all of the people in Ethiopia. In other words, this "discovery" and "new course of action" has as little to do with actually feeding the famine victims in Eritrea and Tigray as the U.S. aid to the Dergue has to do with feeding those under its control. The main motivating factor here is to step up the pressure on the Dergue by offering aid to the liberation movements against it. Undoubtedly, this move by the U.S. will at least cause the Dergue to worry about whether food aid today could turn into other types of aid in the future. While the U.S. has little hope of significantly influencing the liberation movements and no interest in genuinely aiding them to the point of a victorious overthrow of the Dergue, this aspect of their countermove is clearly designed to make the prospect of a niche under the U.S. wing look much more appealing to the Dergue.

There you have it, as with everything else these days the "great humanitarian concern" for famine victims in Ethiopia is nothing more than another cynical and self-serving move by the U.S. imperialist bloc on the international chessboard of contention with the Soviets as they jostle their way to war. Only here, it is not only a matter of preparing to take the lives of millions in a war in the near future, but each pawn knocked around the board in Ethiopia represents millions of people starving to death today. And the fact that this whole situation is a grotesque crime perpetrated by and exacerbated by the imperialist system proves once again that it does not require the threat of a nuclear holocaust to despise imperialism and hasten towards the day of its elimination from the face of the earth. □

The Murder of Eleanor Bumpurs: Reality and Official Lies

Three weeks after the brutal police killing of a 66-year-old Black woman, Eleanor Bumpurs, New York City officials released a report on the killing that is as vicious as the murder itself: it was all a big mistake. Eleanor Bumpurs was behind in her rent and was under an eviction order from the city-run Sedgewick housing project in the Bronx. Emergency Service Police went into Eleanor Bumpurs' apartment with plastic riot shields, a metal restraining bar, tear gas, pistols and a shotgun. When Eleanor Bumpurs, who suffered from arthritis, diabetes and high blood pressure, didn't hop to it and clear out, New York City's finest pigs blasted away with a shotgun at point-blank range. Eleanor Bumpurs was executed on the spot.

Immediately the police talked about Eleanor Bumpurs having a knife and that she was crazy and out of control. Scrambling to dish out explanations (meaning a coverup) and hoping to cool off outrage over this blatant murder, Mayor Koch declared before an audience of several hundred angry Black people at a November 21 Harlem "town meeting," "The city of New York accepts the responsibility because we believe that city personnel failed to comply with the procedures that were put into place." The city has deemed that welfare agency supervisors failed to come up with emergency rent money for Eleanor Bumpurs. Two supervisors have been demoted. This deliberately skirts the point that Eleanor Bumpurs was shot to death by the police. Mayor Koch explained at a news conference that Eleanor Bumpurs had died "not, it appears, because of brutality but because of something much more complex — a chain of mistakes and circumstances that came together in the worst possible way, and with the worst

possible circumstances." The attempt here is to reduce the police murder of Eleanor Bumpurs to a bureaucratic screw-up.

"... After the guys with the riot shields went in a cop with a long kind of pole went in. He was white too. And then the guy with the shotgun went in. He was white. Everybody was white except for two Black guys. They were by the door. ...

"The guy with the pole was in the back of the apartment, like where the kitchen is. I couldn't see Mrs. Bumpurs. She was all the way back there and she was screaming, 'Leave me alone. Get away from me.' But this guy with the pole was kind of like poking, you know poking at her. But I couldn't see her. I could only see him.

"Then this other cop, he was in the middle of the room about 10 or 12 feet from the kitchen. All of a sudden I hear two shots: BAM! BAM! As soon as the shots went off, they closed the door. It was about 5 minutes after they went in the apartment that the shots were fired. ..."

(From an eyewitness account of the shooting of Eleanor Bumpurs as reported in the *City Sun*.)

New York City's first Black police commissioner, Benjamin Ward, has shoveled out even more crap: "Mrs. Bumpurs looks like my mother. ... For me to take that woman down with but one knife, as opposed to taking seven steps back, I suspect I would have stepped outside the apartment and resecured the door." How noble, after the fact. Ward has issued new police guidelines for similar situations in the future: even more cops will be called in, including a precinct commander and a police hostage negotiating team. Said Ward of Officer Sullivan who fired the shots, "I don't

have a rule that was violated here." And one is supposed to believe that whether Eleanor Bumpurs would be alive or dead today rests on the fine line of "police guidelines" and that her killing is somehow an isolated "mistake." Just two and a half weeks after Eleanor Bumpurs was murdered by the police, Barry Parson, a 30-year-old Black man arrested by Yonkers police, was found dead in his cell. Police claim Parson hung himself; several witnesses saw Parson brutally beaten by the police. And there is the savage police killing of Michael Stewart, a 25-year-old Black artist. After a year of "official procedures" a weak indictment against three cops in the Stewart case was dismissed. Officer Sullivan has in fact been completely exonerated of any wrongdoing and was officially cleared by the police department's internal affairs division. Sullivan has been reassigned to a job away from the public — watching over heavy-equipment vehicles. In short, he's been given a paid vacation until he retires next year.

"It took about 40 minutes before they brought her out of there. When they brought her out she was naked. Naked. She had a big hole in her chest. One of her hands was blown off. She was completely naked. They didn't even cover her up.

"Blood was all over the place. Everywhere there was blood. Blood was in the hallway and as they carried her to the elevator, it was dripping all over the place. They had a guy following behind them just sopping it up with a cloth. ...

"They put her in the back of a Housing Authority car. The people started yelling. They were mad. They were mad. They were really upset about that, you know, the way they treated the whole thing. I guess that's why they all had the cops outside because they thought people would

get out of control. ..."

The official report of Eleanor Bumpurs' murder is also aimed at holding Eleanor Bumpurs and her family responsible for her death. The report criticizes her family for failing, to respond to welfare agency and Housing Authority requests for help. Eleanor Bumpurs' daughter, Mary, replied by saying that she was not told once that her mother was threatened with eviction. The report criticizes a city-hired psychiatrist who examined Eleanor Bumpurs, not for describing her as a "psychotic" — oh no — but for failing to reveal just how dangerous Eleanor Bumpurs was really supposed to be! The cops issued a photo of the alleged knife that Eleanor Bumpurs was supposed to have. Mary Bumpurs replied that she had never seen this knife in her mother's home. The cops also claimed that they thought Eleanor Bumpurs was cooking a pot of lye on her stove and that they were in fear when they smelled something as they entered her apartment. The lye is a lie — for it turns out that what they smelled was nothing but bug spray. In an interview with *Newsday* Mary Bumpurs responded to all of these attacks by saying, "They are trying to paint a picture of my mother that says, 'she deserved to be killed!'" It has also been learned that the city which now refers to Eleanor Bumpurs' death as a "tragedy" refused to cough up one cent for Eleanor Bumpurs' burial.

The outrage over Eleanor Bumpurs' killing continues to mount. Two demonstrations have already taken place. A citywide protest is currently being planned. We will continue to follow the developments in this case. □

CIA Stands Trial in Ann Arbor

The routine business of a CIA recruitment presentation at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor was righteously disrupted on November 15, forcing the CIA representatives to run for their cars. As one complained, "We've met with some opposition before at Columbia and Berkeley, but this is unusual. We haven't seen this before."

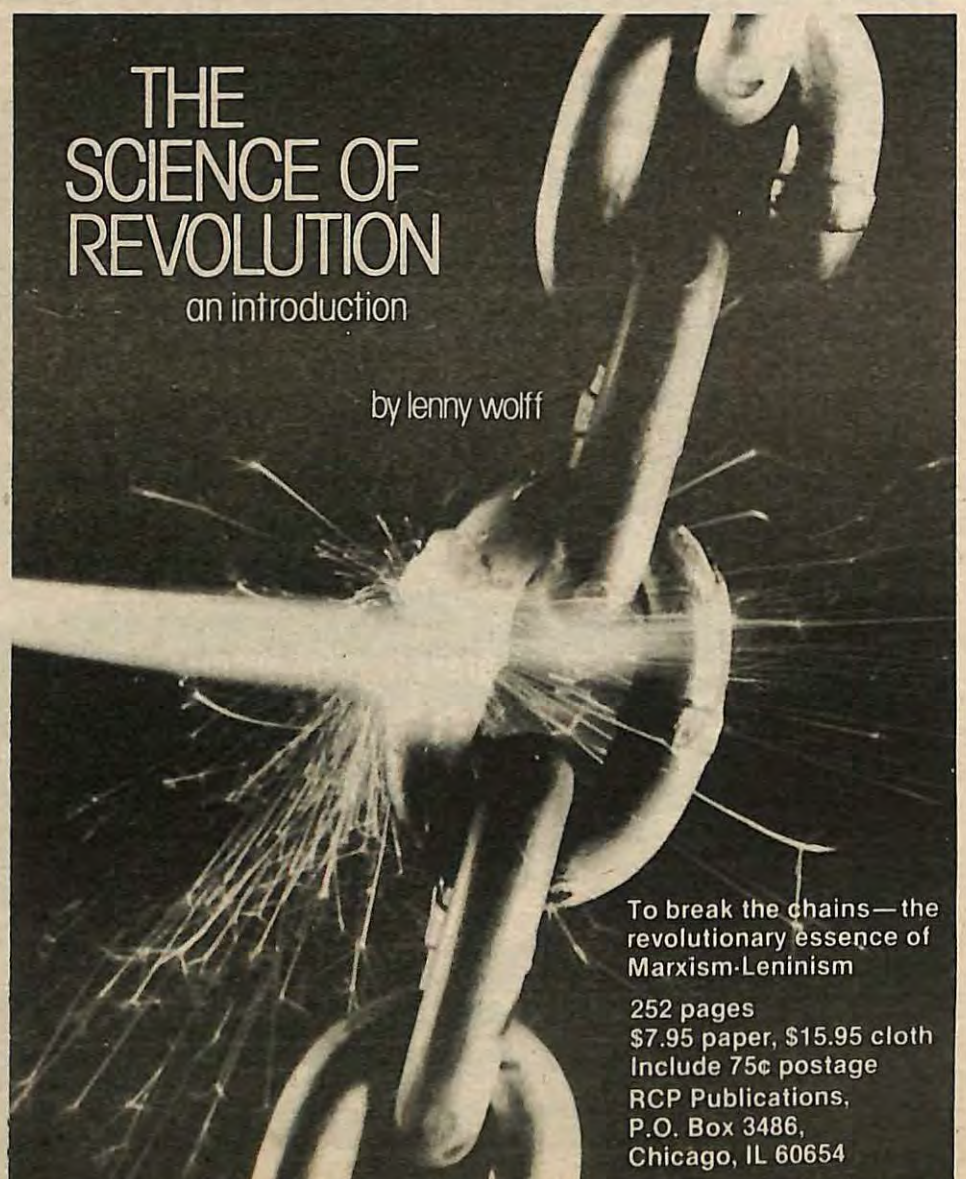
When CIA representatives arrived for their 4:00 p.m. public presentation on careers with the agency, instead of eager applicants they found 100 students ready to put them and the U.S. history of terrorism against foreign governments on trial. The lecture hall had been transformed, with a blackboard at the front reading, "The People's Court: the people preside." The judge, dressed in full robes, read the charges: "Illegal mining of harbors in Nicaragua; illegal funding of Contras; publishing manuals encouraging assassination and other illegal acts; endangering the lives of the passengers on Korean flight 007; illegal interference in elections in other countries. ..."

As stunned CIA men gaped, things got even more out of hand when the "courtroom observers" decided this was no place for "decorum" and joined in the charges: "How do you plead to deposing the popular government of Iran in 1953 with the Shah?" "How do you justify the illegal mining of harbors in Nicaragua?" More joined in, banging pots and pans as others gave testimony on CIA history in Chile, the Philippines and elsewhere.

Refusing to enter a plea or answer questions, the representatives apparently decided this particular courtroom was not their turf and picked up their materials and left. Some protestors escorted them out to their cars chanting, "Hey, hey, ho, ho, the CIA has got to go" and "Don't come back." A number of other students stayed in the lecture room to turn it into a public forum on CIA crimes worldwide, including struggling with the five or six who had showed to sign up for real interviews to change their minds.

Further disruptions were in the works, as a number of students had scheduled interviews to use the allotted time with the CIA the next day to further expose the agency's role. However, that night they all got calls cancelling appointments "due to the protests" and "out of concern that the appointments will not go smoothly." Applicants were invited to send resumes to CIA headquarters, after which they would be contacted "some less public way."

Few were disappointed at missing their "interviews" however, as into the evening this victory was celebrated and plans were laid for further disruptions of U.S. preparations for war, whether through an invasion of Nicaragua or otherwise. And while the University of Michigan president has called for a public apology by the protestors to those who were forced to miss interviews, no one seems to be sorry at all. □



**THE
SCIENCE OF
REVOLUTION**
an introduction

by lenny wolff

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Vampires

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rationing schemes (with ration cards already preprinted), Defense Food Orders spell out things like the National Emergency Maximum Food Distribution Allowance where the blanks can be filled in down to the last calorie, and helpful advice on how to harvest irradiated crops or convert contaminated milk into cheese and store it until the radioactivity decays to "consumable" levels. The Department of Labor has various plans for reconstituting (i.e., pressganging) workforces and sending them back into shattered — and even still partially irradiated — industrial areas, etc., etc.

Likewise, the Public Health Service has its plans for postattack "medical care" (including, notably, the current goal of having a 130,000-pound stockpile of opium on hand). Here, something of the sheer magnitude of the hell they are bent on unleashing, as well as something of the cold-blooded attitude of these people, was illustrated by the remark of one postattack health researcher to a Congressional committee in 1976 that a nuclear war would result in "an increase of thirty percent in cancer incidence in some parts of the country. While this increase is undesirable it does not threaten national survival. It could be cancelled out by neglecting to rebuild the cigarette industry."

Disposal

There are positively reams of recovery literature devoted solely to the problem of the disposition of the projected victims. For instance, a U.S. Army study circa the 1960s, "The Impact of the Radioactive Environment Upon Traditional Chaplain Ministry," noted that "In ministering to radioactive casualties," chaplains should "wear gloves if possible, preferably rubber." An early 1956 manual on "Mortuary Services in Civil Defense" explained that "Disposal of bodies as nearly as possible in accordance with normal customs and religious rites will be a major contribution to morale." However, it goes on to note that "such methods may be impossible. Embalming, use of caskets, lying in state, and individual religious ceremonies may have to be omitted." As for the difficult job of even identifying victims of a nuclear holocaust: "Ten identification teams (30 men) working steadily should be able to handle an average of about 100 bodies per hour or 800 bodies per eight hour shift." But, alas, only so many can be identified before they begin to stink up the place and thus "a method of rapid, mechanical grave digging and filling will be needed...."

But that was 1956, and it has now been recognized that today's nuclear realities may require far more efficacious means. As Public Health Service Emergency Coordinator Harold Gracey (not Gacey) noted more recently in 1981, "If we're involved in a small war, we'd just go with an extension of the present system. If we had one hundred million casualties, it would be more of a dump-truck operation." All this is really the epitome of making nuclear war a specifically *American* undertaking, as it were, with all the moral and religious hocus-pocus this implies and quite in line with the current Reagan/religious right's inspiring vision of Armageddon. What could be more comforting to loyal Americans than the guarantee to all and sundry who may get zapped of a good *Christian* burial, circumstances permitting?

The imperialists have even gone so far as to calculate the brighter side of mass death. One study for the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1972, based on a computer simulation of a 6800-megaton attack on the U.S., optimistically concluded that only six years after the war the survivors "would have approximated a 1965 per capita standard of living, except for automobile production." This may well be true; as Zuckerman notes, when recovery is measured by per capita standard of living, the *more people that are killed*, the faster will be "recovery"!

Social Relations

All this busy-bee planning for an efficient Armageddon is portrayed — justifiably in most cases — by Zuckerman as ludicrous, unrealistic and downright stupid. This he achieves without comparing the imperialists' nuclear optimism with the more thorough models of nuclear destruction recently developed by Carl Sagan and the "TTAPS" study on nuclear winter, where the effect of synergisms — the interrelationships between different nuclear effects that greatly magnify the destruction — are explored. (The "TTAPS" study is mentioned briefly.) Zuckerman concentrates on a political exposé.

But though many of these "recovery" schemes can be laughable, something else comes through which is very real: these imperialist criminals actually intend to *do* this if they are not stopped. They want to pull as much as possible of their system out of the glowing ashes, even if there isn't much left to pull. And this includes refurbishing their whole oppressive system, i.e., while Zuckerman does not explicitly draw out this point, there is much in the book to show the imperialists' overwhelming fixation with retaining all the brutal social relations of the old system and many of its trappings.

In the first place, the imperialists cer-

tainly have no intentions of exposing *themselves* to the cold and the dark. The survival schemes for those who rule are exquisitely detailed. Even as the generals at NORAD monitor their missile launch, in Washington FEMA's Central Locator System will be tracking down the 16 designated legal successors to the President, all the way down to the Secretary of Education, and closely monitoring their movements (they are not allowed to assemble in the same city at the same time). It is necessary, noted a 1980 FEMA study on the "continuity of government," that legitimacy of leadership "be established with high reliability."

In a nuclear crisis, all vital government agencies will be activating emergency succession lists, phone trees and dispersing management teams. A-Team members will go directly to special shelters "to carry out departmental functions as long as is feasible." B-Team members will helicopter to the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia where they will descend into Mount Weather, a hollowed-out fortress built in the '50s to be an "alternate national capital" and consisting of offices, residences, little streets with electric cars and a lake-sized reservoir, all inside the mountain. C-Team members will disperse to other specially equipped agency relocation sites throughout what is known as the Federal Relocation Arc within a short radius of Washington. Neither has continuity of *state* government been overlooked: e.g., the New York State Emergency Operating Center and Alternate Seat of Government, an elaborate underground complex designed to house 700 essential state officials in Albany (a similar facility in Framingham, Massachusetts includes a "Refrigerated Morgue for Two Bodies").

Such plans and facilities for the preservation of governmental authority have been continually updated and tested in practice, ever since the first "Operation Alert" conducted in 1955. Then, in a mock attack which assumed the destruction of 61 American cities, President Eisenhower left Washington in a speeding cadillac along with 15,000 other top government employees for relocation sites to determine, in his words, "whether or not the government is prepared in time of emergency to continue the function of government." During the surprise test, which postulated 3 million killed by a 5-megaton bomb landing in Brooklyn, New York, city buses were stopped, passengers ordered off and handed "raid checks," and forced to take cover. Though details are lacking in Zuckerman's account, apparently things didn't go quite as smoothly as expected. On the second day of the exercise, Ike noted that there were "more complications than I ever believed possible."

Company Assets

Corporate planning for nuclear survival has also proceeded apace. Indeed, there are any number of blast-proof corporate facilities around the country ready and waiting for when the nukes begin to fly, developed along lines suggested in FEMA's *Disaster Planning Guide for Business and Industry*, which includes advice on drafting pre-established emergency by-laws and succession lists to facilitate corporate functioning. There is also protection provided in well-guarded subterranean vaults for vital corporate and governmental records, such as at the Iron Mountain Group, formerly the Iron Mountain Atomic Storage Company, in upstate New York (which at one time also leased a 4,400 square foot cavern to the Shell Oil Company, complete with clinic, lounge, dining room, conference rooms, sleeping accommodations and a "home-like" kitchen).

Perhaps most notable in this regard have been the precautionary measures taken by AT&T, where the safeguarding of company assets dovetails nicely with the national interest in maintaining viable postattack communications systems. AT&T has built windowless, blockhouse-type buildings in most American cities and long-distance lines have for some time now been routed around likely target areas. But more interesting is AT&T's National Emergency Control Center, located forty feet beneath Netcong, New Jersey. Encased in solid granite bedrock and wrapped in sheet steel to protect it from EMP, the center is equipped with shock-mounted switching units designed to withstand the effects of a blast wave (there are also seven other regional AT&T underground centers). As Zuckerman notes of New Jersey's AT&T employees: "When bottlenecks develop — on Mother's Day, for example — they reroute calls around cities where the circuits are jammed with people calling Mom. Following a nuclear attack, they will reroute calls around cities that have ceased to exist." In the underground complex's spartan executive suite, the plain steel desk reserved for AT&T's Chairman of the Board is a few inches larger than the postattack desk of the company's president, which in turn is a few inches larger than the desks of the vice-presidents.

This is truly a picture of a class bound and determined to maintain its diseased social setup even under the most adverse of conditions, down to the pettiest prerogatives of aspiring executives in the bourgeois pecking order! Obviously a great deal of effort has been expended

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RCP

"World War 3, not in our name," they chanted, marching through the canyons of Wall Street. Thousands of women stream into this area each weekday, most work as secretaries in corporate offices and financial institutions. But the hundreds of women who descended into the U.S. financial capital Monday morning, November 19, were definitely out-of-place.

Holding cardboard figures of businessmen with words coming out of their mouths — "I'm just doing my job," "rape — she asked for it," and one with a big, round yellow "smile" symbol for a face saying "We begin bombing in five minutes" leading the march — and other signs, and generally appearing "unladylike," the Not In Our Name Women's Resistance Action moved towards its goal, the New York Stock Exchange.

Coming from all over the Northeast as well as New York City, the women had also staged a march the day before down Fifth Avenue "to protest corporate crimes against women here and abroad." This drew over 1,000 women and featured a huge grotesque figure of "corporate America" with a bloody U.S. flag on its head at the beginning of the march, and various banners ("This system is revolting and so should we!" read one) and spirited chants (such as "American family, American dream, these are the fruits of the war machine!").

"Why are we here?" read the leaflet. "We come to Wall Street to protest what it is and who supports it. We come to say the supposed benefits of this institution are Not In Our Name! We come to place our bodies in the way of 'business as usual.' We come to say the death, destruction and exploitation in the name of corporate profit must stop...."

Hundreds of pigs, probably at least three times the number of women, joined the usual bears and bulls of the Stock Exchange to try to ensure that the Big Board functioned as usual.

In the bourgeois news accounts, stock market spokesmen claimed that the protest had little affect on business. But for two hours some, or at times all, of the entrances to this hub of imperialist finance were blocked, with all those who entered having to climb over, around, or on top of the determined women — at the expense of considerable decorum — and

"This system is revolting and so should we!"

Women Blockade

Wall Street

more than a few workers and others who had appointments there were seen turning away and not even trying to get in. Some were reduced to crawling under wooden police barricades to get to the door — whereupon the women mockingly tossed coins in front of their noses.

Even more significantly, the action created great chaos and accompanying debate in the entire area, among passers-by and workers, including some inside the Stock Exchange. "This is wonderful," said a woman who just happened to be in the area. Two youths who worked there as messengers said, when they learned why the women were protesting, "They're doing the right thing!" "We deliver all this murdering equipment — stocks and stuff," one added thoughtfully.

One stockbroker who had gone in earlier, came outside to see what was going on. He told the *RW* that a memo had been circulated inside the Exchange the week before telling people there was to be a demonstration of "women protesting corporate crime" and that those who

worked there should "avoid conflict." Another stockbroker commented that he hadn't known that the question of nukes and world war was also part of the protest, and, when asked what he thought of it all, after a pause, said "I'll put it to you this way, nothing is worse than war."

One of the tasks of the pigs when the women first got there was to quickly get as many brokers, etc., inside as possible, and hurry others on their way who stopped to watch and check out the scene. The pigs themselves blocked off Wall Street at Broadway to prevent much of the usual foot traffic coming out of the subway from passing by or even seeing the protest.

It was only after all those who were going in had gotten in one way or another that the cops began carrying away and arresting the women. Over 200 were arrested, dozens at each door. Along with the door blockades, there were also a few quick-breakaway blockades on Broad Street, in front of the main entrance to the Stock Exchange.

Just as the cops had loaded in the last

of the sit-down blockaders, using stretchers to lift and carry the noncooperating women to city buses pressed into service as paddywagons, a small group dashed into the street and lay down in front of oncoming traffic. The pigs were not so gentle here and roughed up especially one woman who tried to walk to the police bus, jerking her hands behind and shoving her around. "Let her walk! Let her go!" shouted the nonarrested women, joined by several of the dozens of passers-by who had by now gathered on the sidewalks. One Black woman, outraged at this, shouted, "That's male chauvinism for you! The way men react to women who get out of hand!" This woman, walking by on her way to pick up her workmen's compensation check, added to us that she had once worked for the police department and "knows what goes on there."

The arrested women were held through the evening, most charged with disorderly conduct, resisting arrest and obstructing the business of a government agency. Many refused to give their names and addresses and refused to walk out of the buses and through the processing procedure. At one point the cops promised to reduce the charges for one busload if the women would just give their names and walk on their own feet. They all refused. Thirty-five were detained on one bus, without bathroom facilities, for six hours. In the end, 68 of the women who refused to give their own names finally were given court dates under the names of "Jane Doe" or "Barbara Deming" (a well-known antiwar feminist activist and writer who recently died), essentially dismissing the charges.

Chants at the protest included — "World War 3, Not In Our Name! World War 2, Not In Our Name! World War 1, Not In Our Name! Revolution — In Our Name!" and "Take Back the Night, Take Back the Day, Revolution in the USA!" While there were many diverse views among activists as to what exactly revolution entails, the fact that quite a number of women raised this as an alternative to the present madness is itself significant. Many also were interested in the banner carried in the march on Sunday: "Stop World War 3 No Matter What It Takes! No Business As Usual April 29, 1985." □

Vampires

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not merely to assure the continuity of society in some general sense, but specifically to preserve its criminal class relations that spawned such horrible destruction in the first place.

This theme permeates the recovery literature. For example, FEMA's *Attack Environment Manual* includes a short test — "Rate Yourself a Potential Shelter Leader" — for interested readers who may find themselves in less luxurious accommodations than AT&T. Not surprisingly, it seems that people with a "strong management background" (i.e., military officers, PTA presidents, business executives, Boy Scout leaders, etc.) best fill the bill and are most suited to take charge of such functions as supervising entrance of potential shelter residents, registering them, confiscating any firearms and determining priorities for distribution of resources. "It may be necessary to let some people die," the manual says, and it is apparent just who is to be entrusted with making such decisions. (In this regard, FEMA researchers suggest selecting foragers for expeditions outside the shelter from among older shelterers because: "Older people will come to the end of their natural life spans before reaching the end of the risk i.e., of fallout-induced cancer"... thus, the same exposure may produce fewer total excess cancers in this group than within a younger segment of the population." FEMA literature fairly abounds with sickening tips like these for facilitating survival American-style.)

Evacuations

What of the survival of anyone besides the imperialist elite? Zuckerman discusses the idea of Crisis Relocation Planning — mass evacuations — that was introduced under the Carter administra-

tion. Under CRP, FEMA was commissioned to develop plans to evacuate 150 million people from four hundred urban "risk areas" to several thousand rural "host areas" in a pre-nuclear crisis.

Now, these plans have received little publicity beyond think-tank circles since they were proposed, and there is small evidence of any technical preparation for them, certainly not on the massive scale that would be required. This may be due to the fact that the great bulk of U.S. military preparation has been geared to attaining a first-strike capacity, whereas mass evacuations would only tip the Soviets that such a surprise strike was coming.

Indeed, this points to the real and explicit purpose of CRP, which was not at all to save lives but to utilize the population of the home country as a bargaining chip, as hostages, in a deadly poker game between the two blocs. In this scenario, a mass evacuation would be a giant threat by the U.S. — and if carried off successfully, would neutralize one threat of the rival imperialists, that of destroying the civilian population. But today, this scenario does not seem the most likely of options for launching the war.

The bourgeoisie has also worried about other aspects of CRP. Zuckerman notes that: "The sudden news, for example, that half a million black and Hispanic residents of the Bronx are heading for rural Ulster County is likely to create tremors in Ulster County. 'How are you going to keep people there from shooting the people coming in?' a reporter asked Bardyl Tirana, then director of the DCPA (Defense Civil Preparedness Agency — *RW*), in 1978. Replied Tirana: 'That's tough.'"

There certainly is this problem of lawlessness, and extreme social tensions, in the enormous demographic shifts proposed by the CRP. And this is just one aspect — the safest one from the point of view of bourgeois war planners — of the

question that has got to be raised by the fact of nuclear destruction: who rules, who's got the power?

Unfortunately, here we reach the limits of Zuckerman's analysis since he raises only fleetingly, and fails to explore, the great possibilities for social upheaval in a postnuclear situation — particularly upheaval of a different sort than in the example above. But the bourgeoisie's concerns about "social tensions" after war are one of their worries. If the imperialists cannot be prevented from wreaking nuclear destruction — though again, prevention would be far better — they still may be prevented from rebuilding their maniacal system all over again upon the ruins — and there will be every opportunity to deal with them, given what they will have done. *They*, at least, realize this well.

A Further Outrage

When the firing by both sides subsides, according to a 1979 report conducted by the Congressional Office of Technology, between 20 and 165 million Americans will be dead within 30 days, between 1.1 and 5 million will die later, there will be up to 6 million abortions, 9 million cases of adverse genetic effects, etc., etc., depending on which "rung" has been reached on the nuclear ladder — not to mention the destruction over the rest of a globe saturated with nukes. Then, with FEMA pamphlets in hand, the American survivors will ostensibly begin to pull themselves up by their bootstraps.

To sustain them, the N.Y. Museum of Broadcasting has thoughtfully stored copies of its collection of thousands of old TV programs at Iron Mountain so that, if no other cultural remnants remain, atomic survivors will not be deprived of *Leave It To Beaver* and *I Love Lucy*. As for the preservation of rather more fundamental American values, each night at the National Archives the display case that holds the Declaration of

Independence and the U.S. Constitution is lowered into a fifty-ton vault designed to protect it from, among other things, a direct nuclear hit on Washington, D.C.

Imperialism being what it is, there is yet a further outrage which is captured in Zuckerman's final chapter, "The Day Before World War IV." As a former director of the Federal Preparedness Agency put it at a seminar in 1979, "Recovery" may not be synonymous with "peacetime." A recovery period may be just another phase of the war." Or as the dean of the American survivalists, FEMA Director General Louis Giuffrida, told the American Civil Defense Association in 1981: "This administration has categorically rejected... the short-war, mutual-assured-destruction, it'll-all-be-over-in-twenty-minutes-so-why-the-hell-mess-around-spending-dollars-on-it (philosophy). We're trying to inject a long-war mentality." Clearly the intentions here are to end up on the winning side, no matter how catastrophic things get. In fact, consideration by FEMA or other official agencies of any scenario in which the U.S. might *lose* has been expressly *illegal* ever since 1958 when an amendment to a military appropriations bill was passed forbidding expenditure of federal funds "to conduct studies concerning circumstances under which the U.S. would surrender to any aggressor."

The idea is, after all, to recover precisely in order to prevail and dominate the world. A 1967 report by the Army Corps of Engineers asked, "Will our postattack economy support the operations necessary to maintain the United States as a world power?" Yes, they concluded. Enough young American males would survive to be available for a *postattack draft* and would provide "considerable potential for subsequent military actions." This may be. But by that time, the available youth may see a different target for their activities. □

The Mexico City Fire: What Lit the Match

Continued from page 1

tuation which one university researcher had described as a "latent disaster."

The plant in San Juan Ixhauatepec is no isolated case. Alfonso Cifuentes Villareal, official of a Mexican ecology group, said that there are "more than 75 plants that are actual time bombs" in the Mexico City area, including a thermoelectric plant and other facilities. Others have made similar comments, some pointing out that this situation exists not only in Mexico City but in other densely populated regions of the interior of Mexico as well. Pressure has mounted to move the worst of the plants, which altogether are said to endanger 30% of the population of Mexico City, but the costs of this have made it impossible. Indeed, as we shall see, new facilities have been added on!

Once the "latent disaster" actually occurred, medical facilities were immediately overburdened. Patients were stacked in hallways and spare rooms, emergency facilities quickly ran out of blood. One report in the U.S. media stated that anyone with less than third-degree burns was not eligible for hospitalization. But some government services ran like clockwork, were well-organized and well-supplied: only hours after the explosions, all military forces in the region were put on alert. Hundreds of soldiers with semiautomatic rifles were ordered into the neighborhood. They set up a perimeter in the disaster area to deal with "panic" and the threat of looters.

Influx

Like many of the slums that surround dangerous industrial facilities in Mexico City, the thickly populated district of San Juan Ixhauatepec did not exist when the PEMEX facility was first built, but tens of thousands were soon forced to settle literally within the shadow of the mammoth plant. This itself was a product of the distorted and disarticulated development forced on countries like Mexico by imperialism. Over a period of decades, following the dictates and necessities of the imperialist world market, agricultural production in Mexico has stagnated (with the exception of some large-scale farming operations which largely produce for export to the U.S.). The cities have been swollen and overtaxed by literally millions of people coming from the rural areas — the population of Mexico City is estimated at 18 million, about a quarter of the entire population of Mexico, and is growing at the rate of a thousand a day.

The growth of San Juan Ixhauatepec does not seem to be a direct result of the most recent influx from the countryside. But it, and the more impoverished shantytowns around Mexico City, share the consequences of this distorted growth, lacking many of the basic city services. This was brought home in one report in the *L.A. Times*, which described how people escaping the inferno of the exploding PEMEX facility dived into an open sewer called the Río de los Remedios, a "noxious, greenish-black (body of) water at the edge of the neighborhood," as the newspaper put it.

Another facility — owned by a gas distribution company called Unigas — was built adjacent to the PEMEX plant after the area was already densely populated. Apparently this plant was built next to the PEMEX facility because Unigas buys gas from PEMEX for distribution to homes and businesses in Mexico City. Thus the authorities allowed yet another plant to be built in the exact same area carrying with it all the same dangers. The construction of the second plant went ahead despite what is said to have been widespread anger over the construction by the residents of San Juan Ixhauatepec.

PEMEX "Safety"

As for conditions at the PEMEX plant itself, officials of the government-run company have tried to claim it was safe, but this has been widely treated as a sick joke. The *L.A. Times*, for example, reported the official PEMEX claims that the plant was safe, and then also noted the PEMEX confession that "sixty tons of lumber stored at an 'annex' to the plant caught fire on the evening of March 22, 1984," and that the fire was not controlled until 8:00 the following morning. Mexican government officials received

reports of two fires at the plant in March, but these reports were kept secret at the time. And an official of the ruling Partido Revolucionario Institucional is quoted as saying that the residents of the area warned of the dangers of the gas plant but were ignored by authorities. Villareal, of the ecology group, reported in a dispatch from the Mexican newspaper *Excelsior* that much of the equipment in the plant dated to 1932 and was outmoded and dangerous.

Some media reports in the U.S. have gloated in typical chauvinist fashion over the "inept" and "corrupt" management of the state-run plant in "underdeveloped" Mexico. This really takes some gall. The truth is that the situation PEMEX is in and a determining factor in the conditions that led to the explosion are one more direct product of the havoc imposed on the Mexican economy by the dictates of imperialism, in this case of its international financial structure.

It was in the mid-'70s that the discovery of large oil reserves in Mexico was touted as the key to financing an "all-around" development of the Mexican economy. This "solution," of course, was financed by loans from the Western imperialist powers, first and foremost the U.S., with the end result being that Mexico was mortgaged as never before and critically dependent on its oil exports in

order to earn the foreign exchange needed to repay the massive foreign debt. From 1975 to 1981 Mexico's foreign debt shot up from \$12.8 billion to \$65 billion, while oil provided some 75% of all of Mexico's export earnings. When the worldwide "oil glut" struck in 1981 Mexico's projected earnings took a nosedive. The result of the sudden evaporation of much of Mexico's oil revenues contributed heavily to a financial disaster and Mexico's severe debt crisis. As the only available means of forestalling a looming financial collapse, Mexico was forced to accept an imperialist-sponsored austerity program.

In the middle of all this stands the state-owned petroleum company, PEMEX. It seems clear that while capital was being poured into PEMEX for new technology and installations to develop Mexico's oil reserves — largely for export purposes — precious little was being done to keep up facilities like the sprawling plant in San Juan Ixhauatepec, which stores liquified natural gas, propane and other highly flammable liquified fuels for consumption in Mexico City. Plainly, the profitable export-oriented operations would receive the bulk of funds. Since the imperialist-imposed austerity measures, it seems very likely that all kinds of cost-cutting measures at the San Juan Ixhauatepec plant would be affected that could

only increase the likelihood of catastrophe. It goes without saying that the enormous funds needed to actually move the plant — the only fundamentally effective "safety measure" — could not be had.

Recent reports on the disaster in the U.S. media have been embellished with yet another form of imperialist arrogance. Though the PEMEX plant was indeed a disaster waiting to happen, so say these reports, and even though in political circles a scandal has long been growing concerning corruption in the PEMEX bureaucracy, we are told that the people of the area do not seem to be interested in pointing the finger at PEMEX or anyone else. If we may read between the lines a bit here, this media attitude is nothing but the smug conviction that "these masses will passively take anything we dish out to them!"

Of course it can be said right off that the masses of San Juan Ixhauatepec have certain more immediate questions on their minds at the moment. But beyond that, we can only hope that the imperialists continue to swell with these arrogant illusions about the masses of the world putting up with their crimes indefinitely... keep on thinking like that, bourgeoisie....

"This is a provocative reinterpretation of Marx and Lenin from a viewpoint opposed to capitalism and imperialism and also opposed to what it calls the 'social-imperialism' of the Soviet Union. It is therefore worth reading as an unusual point of view, rigorously presented."

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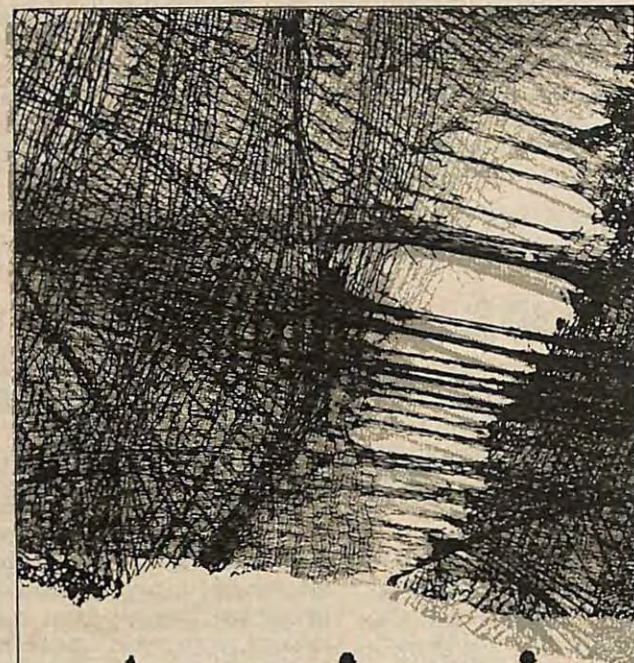
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Raymond Lotta with Frank Shannon Vol. 1

A Horrible End, or An End to the Horror?

Continued from page 4

people which we have been emphasizing,¹²⁴ but it is also another sharp illustration of the need for that radical rupture with the whole bourgeois-democratic framework — and on the other hand how crucial and liberating for the basic proletarian masses that rupture is. It is only as such a rupture is made that the fundamental class interests of these proletarians and of the proletariat as a whole can be really fought for uncompromisingly (and as a vital part of this, that the oppression of Black people as a people, which does victimize them across class lines — though in significantly different ways and to different degrees for different classes — can be attacked at its roots).

The Woman Question and the “Two Radical Ruptures”

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 “wanting in” and really “wanting out”: 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, the difference between real revolutionaries and Ah Qs.¹²⁵

Black Women

The suppressed position of Black women in the '60s movement of Black people (and this was true for women generally, but there were particular expressions of this concerning Black women that hold some valuable lessons, by negative example) and the rationalization for this are something which cannot go — and indeed have not gone — unchallenged. From straight-up bourgeois scholars to so-called revolutionaries (including some women, such as the impostor Angela Davis,¹²⁶ as well as many men), the notion has been propagated that inequality between women and men and the oppression of women by men does not exist or apply in the same way among Black people as among others — or even that it is reversed! This includes the idea (whether stated straight-up or slightly disguised) that the “emasculatation of the Black man” has created a situation where it is necessary for him first to realize his “manhood,” including by lord-ing it over women, and then maybe the question of equality between sexes can be taken up.

It is a truth and a searing indictment of America that Black men in the U.S. have suffered barbarous oppression — including literal emasculation — at the hands of slaveowners and other white oppressors. But oppression has assumed forms no less barbarous with regard to Black women. And the answer to the centuries-long oppression of Black people, *women and men*, in the whole historical development and present-day reality of the U.S. (an oppression which has, however, had different features in different eras) is not to “restore the rites” of patriarchy. Patriarchy and “male rights” serve imperialism, the

¹²⁴ See, for example, Bob Avakian, “Class Polarization Among Black People,” *RW*, No. 154 (May 7, 1982), p. 3.

¹²⁵ In this regard see Bob Avakian, “We Want In... We Want Out — Opposite Views on Discrimination and Degradation,” *RW*, No. 199 (April 1, 1983), p. 3.

¹²⁶ See, for example, Angela Davis, *Women, Race & Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983).

bourgeoisie, oppression, exploitation, and the division of society into classes and everything that goes with them: they will never serve the struggle to abolish these things.

Secondly, the oppression of Black people has never resulted and does not result today in a situation where Black women have a position of equality with — nor still less that they have a superior position to — Black men (or any other men). The fact is, Black women are oppressed — by Black men as well as more generally by men and most fundamentally by the whole system. (Of course individual cases where women have fucked over men can be cited among Black people as well as in general, and the same could also be said in terms of individual Black people fucking over individual white people, but we are talking about *basic social relations* here.) And the ending of these unequal and oppressive social relations between men and women is an integral and indispensable part of the overall struggle to end all oppression: the emancipation of the proletariat — and of mankind itself from the fetters and evils of class-divided society — is impossible without the emancipation of women. If you think being free means or must include having a woman (or more than one) to oppress, then you are still striving for the “freedom” of capitalism, not the emancipation of communism — you are still an Ah Q, not a proletarian revolutionary, you are only against corrupt officials, and not against the whole empire.

This question — the position and role of Black women and of 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.¹²⁷

The position of the masses of women, and in particular Black women, especially today — where roughly half the Black families with children under 18 are headed by women, to cite just one significant aspect of the overall situation — on the one hand involves a tremendous burden of oppression that weighs them down but on the other hand gives rise to a no less tremendous, even if often suppressed, outrage and a restless questioning and desire for some way out, for drastic change from conditions and from a whole world that becomes increasingly unbearable. This is the fury that must be unleashed as a mighty force for revolution — and there is a stronger basis for this today than at any time in the past.

It is not accidental that much of the resistance and political movements of opposition that are taking place today find women playing a major and in many cases initiating and leading role (the antiwar and antinuclear movements, not only in the U.S. but in other countries as well, being important examples), and that there is much militant resistance by women to their oppression. 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.

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.

¹²⁷ This is reflected in some influential cultural works (novels, poems, and so on) that have been brought forward by women — with Black women a particular and significant part of this — in recent years, dealing not only with the woman question in various aspects but with other important social questions as well.

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A Horrible End, or An End to the Horror? is not airy speculation but a lucid and riveting assessment of the problems, tasks, and opportunities that this critical historical period presents to revolutionary-minded people. It may be objected to but can no more be ignored than can the imperialists' plans for nuclear war: the world situation is just that acute and the approaching possibilities for the revolutionary seizure of power are just that real.