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Mexico City Explosion: The Fire and the Fire Below

“‘Pemex Murderer!’ exclaimed a defiant message painted in red letters across one wall. ‘Pemex out,’ demanded another.”

This, in part, is how the *L.A. Times* described the scene in San Juan Ixhuatepec — San Juanico as it is called — in its November 27 issue, one week to the day after it first reported the fiery blast which devastated the neighborhood when the Pemex natural gas plant adjacent to it exploded.

The anger is boiling to the surface — and not just among the residents of San Juanico, the working-class suburb just north of Mexico City — and with it more facts are coming to the surface, facts which form a glaring indictment of the

murdering hand behind the massive devastation wrought on San Juan Ixhuatepec. And the hands behind this murderous inferno are not just those of Pemex, the state-owned oil corporation of Mexico, nor of just the neocolonial Mexican state as a whole. It is rather a crime of the imperialist system which dominates Mexico, and of which Pemex is only one link in a chain.

“We don’t want another November 19,” declares a banner which hangs above the main street in San Juan Ixhuatepec, and for the residents this is not merely a rhetorical statement. Six private gas distribution companies, whose facilities are adjacent to what remains of

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Excerpts from:

A Horrible End, or An End To The Horror?

by Bob Avakian

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Decisive Round in Battle to Free Salvadoran Revolutionaries

As we go to press, the El Salvador Tour legal defense committee is preparing for the opening of a major battle to stop the deportations of two Salvadoran revolutionaries, David Mendez and Emilio Henriquez, and to demand their political asylum. On Monday, December 3 at 1 p.m., the INS has scheduled the reopening of the deportation hearing against the two Salvadorans. As RW readers will recall, these two toured the U.S. in late 1981/early 1982, speaking to thousands about their firsthand experience in El Salvador. They spoke out against all imperialism in El Salvador, putting to lie the U.S.-spread myth that revolution can only mean Soviet domination. The U.S. government has gone after these two with a vengeance and has even greater necessity to silence them today, given the recent escalation of U.S. acts of aggression and intimidation in Central America.

The following are excerpts from a Flash Trial Bulletin just issued nationally by the Salvadorans' legal defense committee. The bulletin underscores the gearing up of the state's railroad apparatus and the urgency of broad and immediate response:

... Already two motions for continuance of the upcoming deportation hearing made recently by the defense have been flatly denied. These motions were based on two important points: first, that the deportation hearings should be delayed until *after* the trial of the Salvadorans' civil suit against the INS, which is set for January 22. Their suit challenges the government's right to have initiated deportation proceedings in the first place, since the two Salvadorans had applied for political asylum before embarking on their speaking tour. These first claims have been callously and unceremoniously ignored. Their suit charges discriminatory law enforcement and demands the current deportation proceedings be stopped and their original asylum claim heard.

Second, the defense motion for a continuance for more time to adequately prepare their (second) asylum case. Extensive work needs to be done to raise funds for legal work and documentation needed, and to bring witnesses forward on their behalf. In swiftly denying both motions, the immigration judge and a trial attorney with INS both voiced their opinions that "these asylum cases shouldn't take long." Remarks were made by the trial attorney especially, berating attorneys who bring in witnesses for their clients! In other words, witnesses would only prolong and further expose the fact that the decisions regarding political asylum for Salvadorans have

already been made elsewhere. Refugees from Soviet-dominated countries are welcomed with great fanfare. For refugees from U.S.-dominated countries like El Salvador, the INS speeds up the railroads, denies asylum and moves on to deportations to their deaths, as fast as possible.

... The defense is gearing up for presenting as fullscale an asylum hearing as possible, if a third continuance to stop this railroad is again denied. The strategy of the Salvadorans and their counsel is to turn the courtroom of INS Judge George Indelicato from a chamber for the meting out of hidden and systematic terror against immigrants, into an arena of exposure. Expert witnesses along with many others will be called to testify. In dozens of additional ways, not only the validity of Emilio and David's claims will be made clear, but the role of the U.S. in El Salvador will be bared and the real crimes against immigrants in this country indicted....

The legal defense committee for the two Salvadorans is calling for swift and broad response:

* Spread the word of this battle. Reproduce, pass along and post this bulletin.

* Especially needed are expert witnesses who can testify to the current repressive conditions in El Salvador and those who can testify to the dangers for refugees who are deported back into the clutches of the Salvadoran government. Please contact the defense committee in Los Angeles immediately with volunteers or suggestions.

* Donate urgently needed funds for the political and legal defense, including helping to pay the costs of transportation for witnesses to and from L.A. Donations may be sent directly to the committee or tax-deductible donations can be made out and sent to: Clarence Darrow Foundation, 345 N. Rockingham Ave., L.A., Calif. 90049. Please attach a note indicating the money is for the El Salvador Tour Legal Defense.

* Finally, telegrams and letters of support should flood the judge's chambers demanding a stop to the deportations and the granting of political asylum to these two Salvadoran revolutionaries. Send telegrams and call the INS judge: Judge George Indelicato, Immigration Judge, 300 N. Los Angeles St., Los Angeles, Calif. 90012, (213) 688-2811. Please send copies of statements and telegrams to the committee.

Further information on the case can be obtained from the El Salvador Tour Legal Defense Committee, P.O. Box 30922, Los Angeles, CA 90030, (213) 487-2918. □

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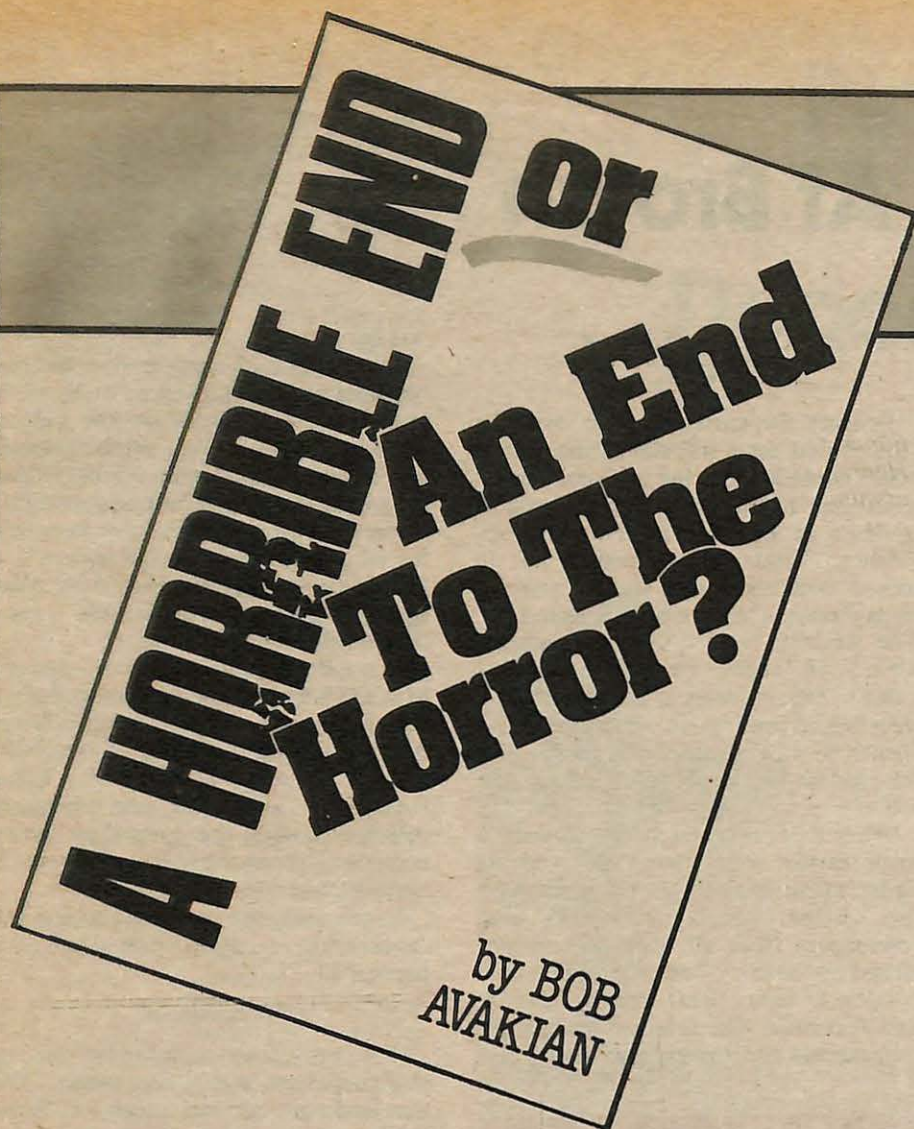
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Some Lessons from the Roman Empire

A phenomenon associated with the decline and fall of the Roman Empire was that it was successively conquered by barbarians. But what is especially interesting and significant is that those barbarians who managed to install themselves as the ruling group generally became "Romanized" and "settled in."¹³⁶ On the one hand this is an illustration of the principle Marx summarized, that "the mode of plunder is in turn itself determined by the mode of production,"¹³⁷ a case where a people with a less developed mode of production conquered another with a more developed one and basically adopted the latter as their own. But on the other hand there is an important lesson here for the proletariat and its struggle for a kind of society and world never seen before — one characterized by a high level of development of the productive forces (and their ongoing advancement to higher levels) but without class distinctions or the oppression of one part of society (or the world) by another.

The lesson here was actually suggested to me some time back in reading the remarkably insightful statement of an 11-year-old youth in Overtown (Miami) at the time of the rebellion there at the end of 1982:

Well, the barbarians lived back in Roman times and the Romans were going all over the place ripping off people and the barbarians fought back. If they want to call us barbarians, okay, we'll be barbarians.¹³⁸

"Tell 'em, put it back in their face!" was my immediate response in reading this (along with a smile of ironic satisfaction thinking of the many authorities and experts who had no doubt declared this kid "uneducable").

There is a great deal that revolutionaries can learn from the basic stand of this youth: the straight-up defiance, the willingness to take the worst that society can come up with to call you and embrace it as a badge of honor and a symbol that indeed you are, joyously, beyond the bounds — the bonds — of the established order and its laws. (Bob Dylan, many years ago now, wrote in one of his songs that "to live outside the law you must be honest," and in the same spirit I think we should add, especially in these times, that the reverse is certainly no less true: to be honest you must live outside the law.) At the same time, however, this set me to thinking that there is an important way in which we are different from the barbarians and that this too must be driven home to the advanced proletarians and the oppressed masses generally.

We are different *not* in that we don't want to tear down the system, defeating its armed forces on the battlefield to do so: without doing this it would be impossible to achieve any of our basic goals. No, this is our *similarity* with the barbarians. What is different — and it is a profound difference — is that the proletariat is not, and the leaders of the proletariat must not be allowed to become, new exploiters. Our historic mission is not to adopt — and adapt ourselves to — the old mode of production and its corresponding institutions and ideas but to make those two radical ruptures and bring into being something new and completely without precedent in human history: classless society, communism.

(Note: All footnotes are numbered as they appear in the original.)

¹³⁶ For more on this see Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, in three volumes (New York: Modern Library, 1932).

¹³⁷ Karl Marx, *Preface and Introduction to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1976), p. 28.

¹³⁸ Quoted in "On the Street in Overtown, From the Roman Empire to What Is To Be Done?," *RW*, No. 187 (January 7, 1983), p. 9.

This week the Revolutionary Worker presents the seventh 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 excerpting selected 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 second major section "Other Important Questions Relating to the Question Mao Raised Around the Novel Water Margin." Other subsections in this section of the book are:

Getting Left Behind in the '60s-'70s ('80s) Shift
An Example of an "Emperor/Corrupt Officials" Shell Game
The Lesson of *Water Margin* and the Relation of Advance and Consolidation in the World Proletarian Revolution

Continuing the Revolution Under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, Carrying Through with the World Proletarian Revolution

Here my purpose is not to attempt to discuss this whole subject in depth or detail but to focus on three questions, summarizing some essential points.

(1) Mao's analysis, drawn from the positive and negative experience of the Soviet Union and China itself — that socialist society is a long transition period between capitalism and communism, all throughout which there are classes and class struggle; that the bourgeoisie is constantly regenerated out of the conditions (the contradictions) of socialism itself; that the more the socialist transformation advances the more the focus of this problem is within the vanguard party itself, especially at its highest levels where people in authority who take the capitalist road pose a great danger to socialism; and that this question must be made known to the masses, indeed the means and methods must be developed to unleash their conscious activism in fighting against these capitalist-roaders and in continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat at the same time as supporting revolutionary struggles worldwide — all this is a truly immortal contribution by Mao Tsetung to the theory and practice of proletarian revolution.

At the same time it is necessary to sum up that while this theory and political line of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat and above all the momentous struggle waged with the overall guidance of this line, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China, represent the highest pinnacle yet reached by the international proletariat, still "these things were treated a little bit as 'things unto themselves,' too much apart from the whole, worldwide struggle against imperialism, reaction, and all exploiting classes."¹³⁹ Even though support was extended to revolutionary struggles elsewhere and it was stressed that the final victory of a socialist country requires the victory of the world proletarian revolution, it was not firmly enough grasped and popularized that the socialist transformation of any particular country can only be a *subordinate* part of the overall world proletarian revolution.

(2) The question of "revolutionary successors." This is the question of bringing forward fresh forces for the revolution at every stage, especially *after* the seizure of power. There are two separate but interrelated aspects of this: developing mass forms for carrying forward the revolutionary struggle and raising the revolutionary consciousness of the masses on the one hand and on the other bringing forward and training new leaders of the proletarian revolution and finding the ways and means to keep them "red" — on the road of revolutionary communism. In both cases, this requires fighting the "calcification" and conservatism that tend strongly to set in once some initial gains have been made in transforming society — and, frankly, in improving the situation of the majority of the people — gains which will become a powerful basis for a reversal of the revolution if they are made into things unto themselves and the goal becomes above all to preserve and protect them — and extend them — without the willingness to risk losing them. This, too, in the final analysis is "Ah Q-ism," not revolutionary communism.

(3) All this has a great deal to do with the question of really, fully practicing proletarian internationalism: keeping the world revolutionary movement as

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¹³⁹ Bob Avakian, "On the Philosophical Basis of Proletarian Internationalism," *RW*, No. 96 (March 13, 1981), p. 3.

The Trouble At Brown

Fifteen minutes into a CIA recruiter's speech on the career opportunities available to Brown University students, a shrill whistle sounded as students stood up to denounce the actions of the CIA and to charge the CIA with crimes against humanity. At an attempted CIA recruiting session, held Tuesday, November 27 at Brown University, students announced a citizens arrest charging the CIA with soliciting students to violate international and national law.

Aware that a protest was going to take place, the university limited the number of students allowed into the room to 100. There was a spillover of students out into the hallway and outside the building. One by one students read off a list of 100 crimes committed by the CIA and elaborated on the bloody history, citing the CIA overthrow of governments around the world, assassinations and attempted assassinations of political leaders, Operation Phoenix in Vietnam, the mining of Nicaragua's harbors right up to the most recent and infamous CIA Manual.

Campus officials quickly escorted the CIA recruiters out of the room. The *Brown Daily Herald* reported that a university spokesperson "thanked the audience for its orderliness" and then politely "invited" students to sign a list for disciplinary action. In defiance sixty-seven students signed their names. These students have now been charged by the university with violating the school's academic code by disrupting and infringing upon the CIA's right to free speech! Students face possible suspension or expulsion from school. The CIA not only has the "right to speak" but to continue its hideous crimes in the service of U.S. imperialism and those who speak out and expose this have the right to get kicked out of the university for daring to do so — bourgeois democracy at its very best.

This action has touched off a big debate. On the night of the action the largest AM radio station in Rhode Island devoted an hour and a half program on the issue. When the recruitment session was over 250 students rallied on the campus with signs demanding "CIA Out of

Nicaragua, CIA Out of Brown."

Beneath the current uproar over the CIA protest lies a still-simmering debate which exploded into the national and international media. On October 10 and 11 students at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, turned out in record numbers during student government elections to vote on a referendum. The students were doing the unthinkable...in some quarters. Voting 1,044 to 689, students at Brown passed a referendum calling on the university's Health Services to stockpile suicide pills for student use in the event of nuclear war.

When first proposed by two students a week earlier more than 700 students signed a petition to get the referendum on the ballot. Major networks and newspapers from all over the country picked up the story. Media inquiries were coming in from Great Britain, Canada and Australia. The referendum sparked tremendous controversy and the debate

was on.

The idea of such a referendum has been ridiculed and cluck-clucked at by all the responsible authorities on the subject. While the imperialists coldly calculate how many millions upon millions of people will be incinerated in nuclear war it is students at Brown who have been portrayed as bordering on the insane. One Providence newspaper placed its coverage of a campus forum on the referendum on the obituary page.

The *RW* has received reports that proletarians knew and were concerned about the campaign — for very different reasons. During leafletting of the RCP's leaflet, "Let's End This Madness, Before It Ends Us" in Detroit, one proletarian commented that the campaign showed something about the state of the world, but that "suicide is not the answer."

In any case, the campaign undeniably captured the attention of an awful lot of people!

"Voting No"

The university administration has shaken its head sagely, and made it clear that under no circumstances will Brown stock suicide pills. They have not, however, provided such pat assurances about nuclear war. (The university mailed letters to all parents of Brown students assuring them that suicide pills would not be available. Presumably parents can rest easy, since fifty or so buildings at Brown are designated fallout shelters.) There were those who expressed sympathy for the students but who said that the students were going about it the wrong way; they were being too negative, too drastic.

In the campus newspaper, the *Brown Daily Herald*, one of the initiators of the referendum urged its passage, writing: "Voting 'no' would be saying that we don't want to face how horrible a nuclear war would be. A 'no' vote implies that we can stand for the thought of nuclear war but not for the thought of suicide. A 'yes' vote says that we can not stand for nuclear war because it means suicide.

"I think voting 'no' would be saying, in effect, that we accept the government's plans to hide us from nuclear bombs, that we accept their assumptions that we can survive. Civil defense plans are much more alarming than suicide pills in Health Services because if you believe in civil defense, you believe that waging a nuclear war is possible. The idea that you can survive a nuclear war is the precept to waging it. Suicide pills carry this message: there is no choice. We cannot allow nuclear war to occur..."

"A lot of people tell me that they understand our intentions but think there are better ways to get the point across. I disagree. The severity of nuclear war makes this approach completely justifiable. What better way can we think of to get the point across besides dropping a nuclear bomb on Brown."

Brown Tradition

Brown had its share of 1960s-era Vietnam protests, and maintained a somewhat liberal reputation, but Brown has certainly not had the radical tradition of a campus like Berkeley. It is not the most likely university where one would expect to find outbreaks of political protest. Brown vies with Harvard and Yale for the number one spot of Ivy League schools. Its physical structure, with its austere-looking classroom buildings and brick archways, reeks of New England tradition. In recent years Brown has developed a more liberal rep in the realm of academics and prides itself on its open dialogue-type atmosphere. It costs approximately \$50,000 to get a degree here. And as one student put it, "Some of the most privileged people in this country are at Brown." Given this, and the overall atmosphere on campuses right now, the eruption of discontent among this stratum of university students is a source of great discomfort to the ruling class. At a time when brainless youth, touched by the new American spirit on college campuses, are being whipped up, and when

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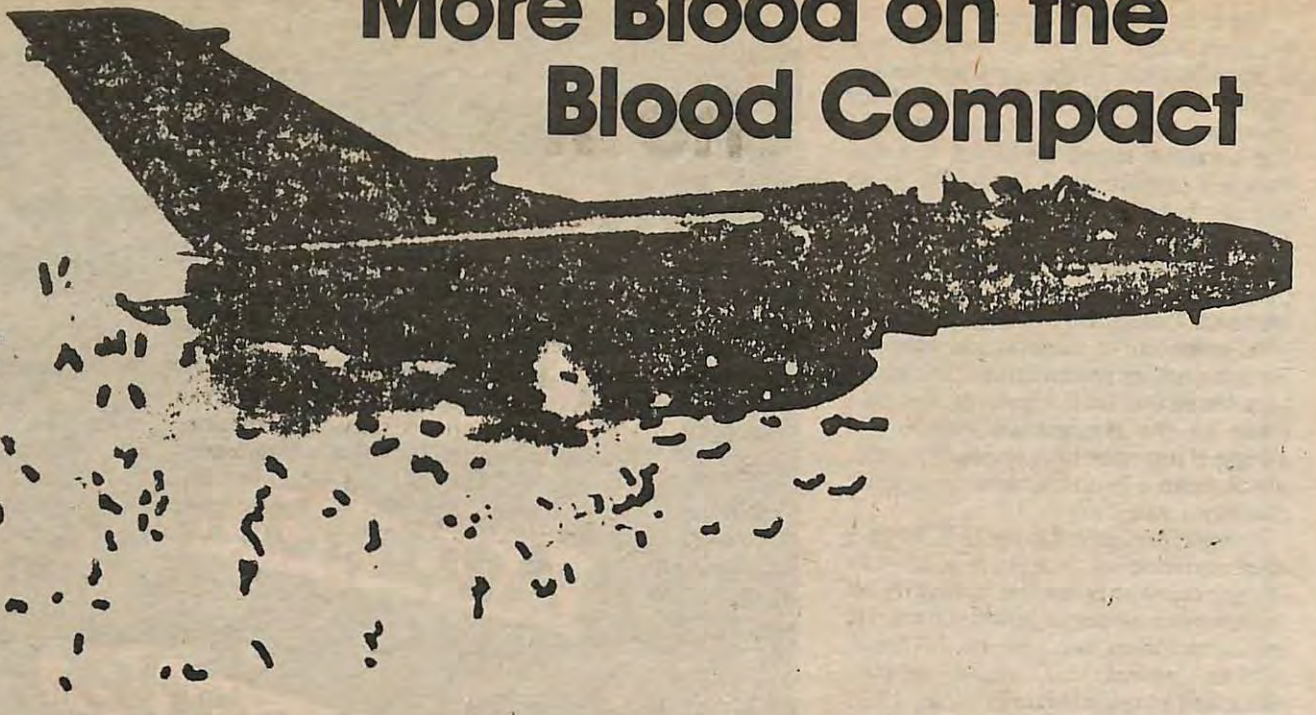
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Deep Strikes:

More Blood on the Blood Compact



NATO is hurtling into the final stages of war-readiness.

That is the import of a recent announcement by the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, General Bernard Rogers of the U.S. The Rogers plan, according to the *Washington Post*, "envision[s] deep strikes into Eastern Europe with conventional weapons in response to a Warsaw Pact attack." It was approved by NATO's Defense Planning Council, in the form of a new guideline for NATO forces, called "Follow-On Force Attack" (FOFA).

The doctrine calls for strikes at Warsaw Pact airfields, river-crossings, command posts, and troop concentrations hundreds of miles into Pact territory right from the start of any conflict. It is meant to utilize new high-tech weapons such as "nuclear equivalent" submunitions and precision-guided weapons.

The doctrine has increasingly been a political hot potato during the last year in bourgeois circles and in the European peace movement. As such it is being given a high-powered hype, starting with Rogers himself, about the purpose of the doctrine being to "avoid early use of nuclear weapons." The stronger NATO is in these new conventional weapons and doctrines, the public is being told, the less likely that nuclear weapons will be used. The hype was given a prestigious boost when a gaggle of liberals and former heads of state of Western countries issued a call last week for the West to "lessen its reliance on nuclear weapons" and specifically mentioned the Rogers plan as a great step forward. The doctrine is a big step all right — in the race between imperialist blocs to see which can get the jump on the other in a world war — but a step toward peace, or even a "modest beginning" toward nuclear disarmament it is not. Actually, Rogers' FOFA doctrine is one of a series of doctrinal ideas being ground out by the U.S. in the last few years, which are often loosely grouped under the heading "deep attack." These include the U.S. Army's current fighting doctrine, Airland Battle, a future projection of Army doctrine called Army 21 (formerly called Airland Battle 2000), FOFA, and more specific deep strike fighting concepts like Counterair 90 and Assault Breaker. Until now, all have been specifically U.S. doctrines, and not adopted by European NATO powers —

in the recent exercises in the Fulda Gap area of West Germany, for example, NATO sources claimed that deep-strike maneuvers were not carried out. So the adoption of FOFA is a big first step for NATO, and exactly a first step — it has always been part of, and makes no sense militarily apart from, its broader companion doctrines like Airland Battle.

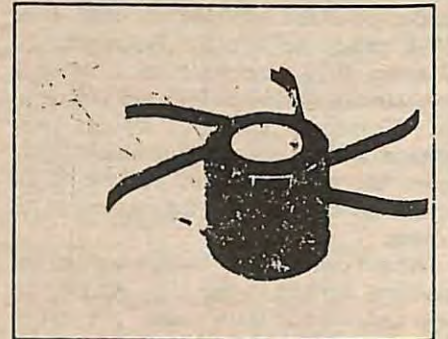
Antinuclear Hype

Looking at these broader doctrines, it is clear that the antinuclear hype around the FOFA announcement is just so much baloney. The 1982 Army field manual for Airland Battle (100-5 *Operations*) outlines a central part of its doctrine as "deep battle" attacks, in a description which closely parallels Rogers' FOFA. At one point, it goes on to tell us calmly that "tactical nuclear weapons" are among "the chief means of battle." They are "particularly effective" when attacking "follow-on formations or forces in depth because of their inherent power and because of reduced concerns about troop safety or collateral damage." (This obviously refers to concerns about reduced damage in Western territory; in Pact territory we are talking about weapons which cause Hiroshima-like destruction; in the case of one common tactical nuclear round, the total destruction of everything for 4.5 miles around the target.)

In fact, much of the thinking which has gone into the deep-attacks scenarios has dealt with integrating more efficiently NATO's theater nuclear forces with its conventional component — Rogers himself was an energetic advocate of the deployment of Pershings and cruises in Europe, for example. Rogers and some others like Robert McNamara are, however, worried about the deliberately automatic and uncontrolled conflict which would be triggered by certain tactical nukes now deployed by the thousands very close to the front — these are called Forward Based Systems (FBS). The deep-strikes doctrines could be used to place less reliance on those particular weapons systems.*

* For more on deep strikes and nukes, see *RW* No. 244, "Nuclear Warfighting With A Certified Dove," and the book *Strengthening Conventional Deterrence in Europe*, the product of a panel of the Atlanticist school of Western imperialists.

Above: The MW-1 submunitions dispenser in action. The MW-1 can hold 8,800 lbs. of submunitions in its 224 storage and ejector tubes, and can lay down 7,800 mines in one pass. One of these submunitions (right) is the MUSPA, an anti-airfield mine which "senses" taxiing aircraft and disables them with shotgun-like blasts of fragments.



But the most revealing point about FOFA, deep strikes, and nukes is the way Rogers and others see the deep strikes as setting up the needed military and political conditions to wage nuclear war. In an interview with *Armed Forces Journal* last year, Rogers lets the cat out of the bag. Speaking specifically about the FOFA idea, he says, "We must be able to force the decision on the Warsaw Pact as to whether to resort to theater nuclear weapons, or to its other option which is to withdraw" (our emphasis).

Unless one is naive enough to actually believe that the Warsaw Pact (or NATO!) might voluntarily "withdraw" and surrender the world to the rival bloc without a fight, the clear point here is that deep attacks could force the Soviets to start the nuclear slamfest... and in a position of military disadvantage in Europe to boot! The idea is that deep attacks would threaten the Warsaw Pact to such an extent, including its nuclear weapons command and delivery systems, that the East would be in a position of use-'em-or-lose-'em. On top of this, as some have pointed out, a feature of the deep attacks now being considered would be the utilization of Pershing I and II missiles with conventional warheads. But since the Warsaw Pact would have little chance of determining whether Pershing launches contained nuclear or conventional munitions, tremendous pressure would fall on the Pact to immediately respond with nukes. Overall, the clear point (made by Rogers twice in the above-cited interview) is to foist the nuclear dilemma — now causing such commotion in the West — onto the Eastern bloc instead, while attaining all the advantages of a surprise attack as well.

Offense and Defense

Some mainstream peace groups in Europe, notably those calling for an "alternative defense policy" for the West (involving supposed defense-only weapons and doctrine), have denounced the deep strikes and related doctrines as a dangerous break with traditional, declared NATO policy of "defense." They cite the fact that most of the deep-strikes doctrines call for attacks "right from the start" of any conflict, in the words of one document. The clear implication is that the West would not wait for an attack by the Warsaw Pact, but would attack first (Rogers denies that the FOFA guidelines imply this, but nearly everything else written about deep strikes shows his dishonesty). The Soviet Union issued a similar angry statement after Rogers made public the new FOFA doctrine for NATO.

But NATO is hardly a "defensive" alliance. It has always been a major pillar of the U.S. bloc's global military force,

the most extremely offensive in nature, and when the Pact and NATO go at it, it is a force that will not be fighting to "defend Europe" but to decisively wipe out the power of the opposing imperialist bloc.

Even as far as doctrine in Europe is concerned, it is untrue that NATO has been restricted to a "defensive" stance. True, there are military and geostrategic strengths in the theater which benefit the Soviet bloc, but — whatever NATO has publicly said — the West has constantly searched for ways to avoid (and reverse) the scenario of a surprise Warsaw thrust across the border. Indeed, the missions which would be carried out by the various deep-attack doctrines have been, till now, largely assigned to tactical nuclear weapons.

On the other hand, the deep-attacks doctrines are indeed an ominous and deadly new step toward war by the West. They deal with problems, both military and political in nature, which have been realized for decades within the Western bloc, and on which various solutions have been kicking around for years. The deep-attacks ideas, like other major recent moves such as the Pershing and cruise deployments, represent a decision on how to solve these problems. The chips are down now; "deterrence," as Robert McNamara puts it, "may fail." Specifically, with the deep-strikes doctrines, NATO is moving to strengthen its conventional hand, which means in part a greater political, military and economic share of the burden for the European powers (although the FOFA guidelines themselves will not require larger expenditures, according to Rogers, the overall deep-attacks force structure will, he says, need a 40% increase per year in military expenditures by European governments). Like the blood compact of the Euromissile deployment, of which deep strikes is a continuation, the new guidelines focus yet more attention on imminent Soviet threat, thus providing the rallying call to pull the bloc together for the necessary sacrifices and the will to win. The doctrines are intended to "reassure" the European imperialists that the war could be taken immediately into Eastern-bloc territory. And they attempt to confront the problem of the "automaticity" of forward-based nukes.

The fact that all these so-coldly-laid plans could easily fall apart at the push of an ICBM launch button is not really the point here. Rather it is that deep strikes, of which FOFA is a part, are not just one more spiral in the arms race and another bit of jockeying between the two blocs; they are a concept of operations with which the West fully intends to fight the next world war. These are part of the final whipping into shape of the imperialists' blood-drenched war plans. □

High Value, Time-Sensitive Targets in Warsaw Pact 2nd and 3rd Echelons (NATO's Central Region)

Type of Targets	Range Beyond Border—Kilometers				
	0-30	30-100	100-300	300-800	Total
Fixed:					
Airfields (Main Operating Bases)	—	13	31	28	72
Choke Points (Bridges, Railyards, Highway Obstructions)	12	10	91	78	191
Underground (Nuclear Storage, C ³ , Fuel Sites)	5	27	87	43	162
Total Fixed Targets	17	50	209	149	425
Mobile:					
Maneuver and Artillery Battalions in 76 Division Force	832	132	426	294	1,684
Nuclear Missile and Support Units	256	129	104	87	576
Total Mobile Targets	1,088	261	530	381	2,260
Total Targets	1,105	320	739	530	2,685

Source: *Armed Forces Journal International*

The U.S. is trying to deport Thembekile Enoch Xiphu (known as Twiggs) back to South Africa. Twiggs, the Chairperson of the U.S. Region of the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCMA) and an active supporter of the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO), is to appear before an Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) investigative officer on December 3. The purpose of this interview is to set a date on which Twiggs will be hauled before an INS judge for a deportation hearing. Twiggs could be picked up and thrown into a detention center pending the outcome of the deportation hearing. If Twiggs is deported back to South Africa, it will mean a prison sentence and quite possibly death.

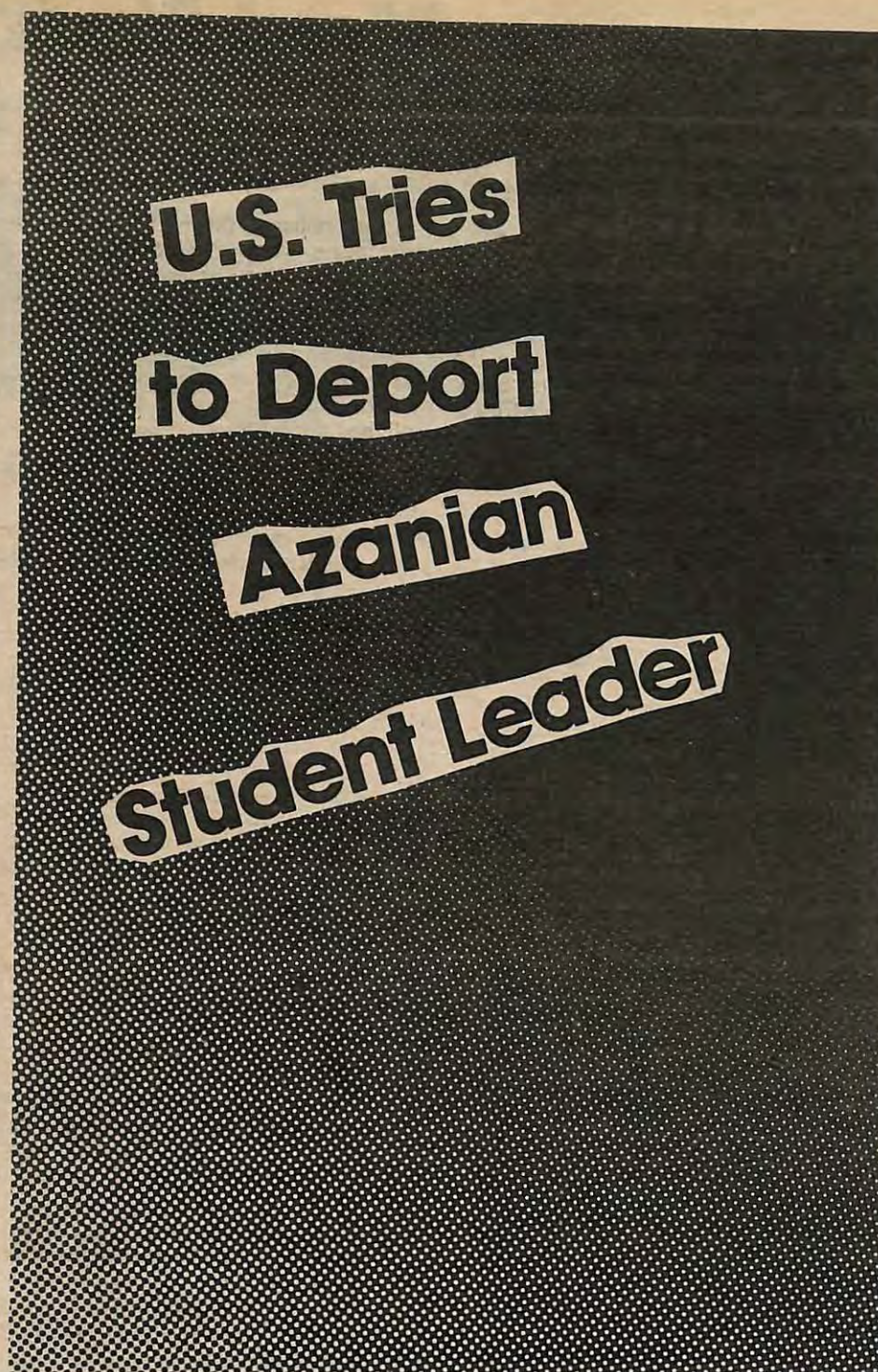
Twiggs first arrived in the U.S. in 1979 after spending six months in a UN-run refugee camp in Botswana, a country on the northern border of South Africa. He had been forced into exile by the South African government whose security police had arrested him in October 1977. Released in December 1977, he was kept under constant surveillance until June 1978, when he left for Botswana. In January 1979 he entered the U.S. as a scholarship student at Howard University. Curiously enough, Twiggs was granted a J-1 visa — a status which meant once his education was completed he would have to return to the country of his origin.

At the end of 1981 Twiggs applied for political asylum in the U.S. At first he was ordered to "show cause" — that is, prove that if he returned to South Africa he would be persecuted for his political activities, beliefs or his race. In Twiggs' case this is hardly difficult to prove. Since 1973, he had been an active member of a Black Consciousness Movement organization, the South Africa Students Organization (SASO), founded by Steve Biko and banned in 1977. During the 1976 Soweto rebellion Twiggs helped provide political leadership to students in his home town of Port Elizabeth and in the Eastern Cape region as a whole. In 1976 he was expelled from Fort Hare University (a center of Azanian revolutionary activity) for "being one of the people responsible for the troubles going on around the country." Following his expulsion from Fort Hare, Twiggs remained active in SASO and took a job as an "unqualified teacher" (a teacher without credentials) at a Port Elizabeth high school. During this time he used his position to act as a sort of liaison between high school students and SASO. He also helped to form the Association for Science and Technology (AFSAT), a group composed of teachers and university students opposed to the inferior Bantu education forced upon blacks in South Africa.

In August 1977, black high school students in Port Elizabeth went on strike against the Bantu education system. Because of a statement AFSAT issued in support of the strike, its members came under surveillance and attack by the security police. In October 1977, nearly five hundred high school students were arrested while holding a meeting to discuss strategy in the strike. AFSAT moved to help the students get legal representation and engaged in fund raising for the arrested students. Soon afterwards, Twiggs and ten other AFSAT members were arrested and the money raised for the students was seized by the police.

Twiggs was arrested during a 4 a.m. raid on his home by the South African security police, including a Chief Gossen who was involved in the murder of Steve Biko a month earlier. Accused of being responsible for every pamphlet that had appeared in the Port Elizabeth area during the student strike, Twiggs was held under Section 6 of the National Security Law, as were others arrested with him. Section 6 allows the police to hold people under administrative detention for long periods without charging them. Under this law the detainees are not allowed access to lawyers, doctors or relatives.

Twiggs was held in solitary confinement for almost four months. His family had no idea where he was or what condition he was in. He was constantly shuttled from police station to police station. Almost every day he was brought to police headquarters in downtown Port Elizabeth for interrogation. This interrogation was carried out in the SANLAM building — a notorious torture center and



the site of Steve Biko's murder. (In fact, during Twiggs' interrogation, the South African police attempted to intimidate Twiggs into cooperating with them by showing him the broken chair in which Biko was tortured to death.)

During his imprisonment Twiggs was also tortured frequently. For two full days he was beaten about the head with rubber hoses containing metal springs. At other times the police applied the "tokoloshe" to him — they placed a hood over his head, beat him while questioning him and then hung him by his feet for 30 to 45 minutes. He was also questioned while being held by his legs out of a tenth-floor window in the building. And finally, the South African police pushed tin through his fingers and under his fingernails. In the midst of all this the police also let Twiggs know that there was a ten-year prison sentence hanging over his head for possession of revolutionary literature.

Following his forced exile Twiggs continued his political activity. In Botswana he was involved in intense activities to sum up and reorganize the Azanian movement. In July 1980 he was a delegate from the U.S. to the founding congress of the BCMA, the external organization of supporters of the Black Consciousness Movement in Azania. As the chair of the U.S. Region of the BCMA Twiggs has played a major role in organizing Azanians sent to study in the U.S. and in opposing and exposing both the South African regime and the U.S. imperialists. Not surprisingly, from the time Twiggs left South Africa to the present, the South African security police have made it well known that he is still a wanted person. Immediately after he left the country the police raided his home. Later his father was arrested for questioning. To this day, his family is continually harassed and the security police visit his home at least once a month, often times offering up the excuse that they have received information that he has returned to South Africa. In addition to his past activities, under current South African law all of Twiggs' activities since he left the country make him liable for prosecution if he was to return to South Africa.

On State Dept. Recommendation

In spite of all this, U.S. Immigration —

"on the recommendation of the State Department" — denied Twiggs' request for political asylum. And, as could be expected, the U.S. has painted its denial and its deportation moves as "quite non-political." Twiggs' request for political asylum was originally denied on the basis of his having come to the U.S. from Botswana instead of directly from South Africa. In this case, the INS argued that Botswana should be the country to grant political asylum. Of course, what is conveniently left out of all this is the fact that there is no possibility at all of Botswana either granting Twiggs asylum or even letting him return to the country. The government of Botswana has openly declared that for "economic reasons" it cannot possibly support massive numbers of South African refugees on an indefinite basis. In general, Botswana only grants South African refugees a "transient status" and once they leave the country they are allowed to return only if they do so within a very brief period of time. In Twiggs' case, he would have had to have returned to Botswana by April 1979. And, given the current uprisings among the Azanian people, it is most likely that a large number of new refugees will be arriving in Botswana — a fact which makes it even less likely that they will grant asylum to or accept Azanian refugees deported from other countries.

Secondly, and more important, it is hardly the case that being deported to Botswana is somehow "better" than being deported to South Africa. After all, the close — even dependent — ties between the South African regime and Botswana are well known and include a number of political, military and security agreements between the two governments. The government of Botswana has freely admitted that it has no power at all to prevent the South African army and police from entering the country for periodic raids on the refugee camps and other regions. It is not uncommon for Azanian revolutionaries who have taken refuge in Botswana to be kidnapped by the South African military and returned to South Africa. And most recently, it has been revealed that South Africa presented Botswana with a list of at least 96 Azanian refugees that the apartheid regime does not want present in Botswana for "security reasons."

In November 1983, the INS issued Twiggs a final denial of his request for political asylum and ordered him to leave the country by mid-December 1983 at his own expense or deportation proceedings would be started against him. Interestingly enough, this notice came at exactly the same time that the BCMA-U.S. Region, together with the South African Students Committee (SASCO, a student group affiliated with the BCMA), was organizing Azanian students to boycott a December 27 conference sponsored by the U.S. State Department and the Institute for International Education. One of the purposes of this conference was to have a meeting between Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker and students who had come to school in the U.S. directly from South Africa. The boycott was highly successful with only four Azanian students showing up for the conference — and those four were flown to the conference directly from the schools they were attending and had no chance to consult with other Azanian students.

By the beginning of 1984 the INS had sent Twiggs a letter demanding to know whether or not he had left the country. In March 1984, another letter came ordering him to appear before the INS for an interview. Twiggs received this letter five days after the interview date had passed. Finally, in the beginning of November 1984, Twiggs received another letter ordering him to appear before a deportation officer on November 15. At this hearing Twiggs' lawyer offered up new evidence about the dangers facing him if he is deported and submitted a motion to reopen the case based on the INS granting political asylum to an African National Congress (ANC) supporter in Baltimore two months earlier. The judge responded to Twiggs' new evidence by simply stating, "it's too late!" With regard to the precedent set by the earlier granting of political asylum to the ANC supporter, the judge refused to reopen Twiggs' case and declared that these "cases are decided on a case by case basis." Interestingly enough, Twiggs' lawyer was informed that the judge based his denial of Twiggs' motion to reopen the case and his refusal to hear the new evidence on a "fact" which conveniently popped up in a story on the case in the *Baltimore Sun* that appeared that morning. Apparently the judge felt that there was no longer any need to haggle over whether Twiggs would be deported to South Africa or Botswana since the *Baltimore Sun* article stated that before coming to the U.S. Twiggs had lived in Britain for three years. This opened up new possibilities of Twiggs ending up in Britain instead of Botswana or South Africa. However, the assertion that Twiggs had ever lived in Britain, or had even been there more than eight days in his entire life, was an absolute lie. Having found such a convenient excuse for pursuing the attack, however, the judge showed no interest at all in investigating this curious little fact any further. Nor did the judge show any more interest in exploring the "sudden discovery" that the INS has two files on Twiggs. One file is his political asylum material while the other contains material concerning his original J-1 visa status. Under this visa status Twiggs is permitted to remain in the U.S. until his education is completed. Since the program Twiggs is currently enrolled in is far from complete, this would definitely throw a wrench into the works of the U.S. attempt to deport him.

Obviously none of this made any difference at all. Less than a week after the November 15 hearing Twiggs received a notice to appear for an interview before an INS investigative officer on December 3; normally it takes quite a bit longer for this final process to move into motion.

The U.S. imperialists are hellbent on deporting Twiggs both as an attack on the revolutionary movement in Azania and in order to serve up a warning to other Azanians in the U.S. about the hazards of taking up revolutionary activity. The BCMA is equally determined to meet this attack head-on. A defense committee has called for telegrams in support of Twiggs. These should be sent to: Richard R. Spurlock, District Director, Department of Justice, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, 101 W. Lombard, Baltimore, Maryland 21201. The defense committee itself can be reached at: BCMA, P.O. Box 13038, "T" St. Station, Washington, D.C. 20009. □

There hasn't been a week during the last month that the U.S. press didn't characterize as the "worst week of violence yet" in South Africa. The apartheid government itself has declared that the current rebellions, already three months old, are "more serious than the 1976 Soweto disturbances." South African Defense Minister Magnus Malan has taken to describing the uprisings as "calculated action by hostile elements" seeking to overthrow the government.

In response to the rebellions, the South African regime has continued to unleash a massive campaign of repression and terror. The tenor of this campaign was best captured in a statement by the Home Affairs Minister: "No matter how unpopular it might make us in the outside world, strong action will be taken against instigators, arsonists and radicals... order shall be maintained." The regime has murdered 160 people over the last three months (officially they admit to killing 97), wounded over 500 and arrested thousands. Among those arrests, 1,000 have been detained under Section 29 of the Internal Security Law which permits indefinite detentions in solitary confinement without charges and does not allow any detainee access to lawyers or family. Officially the government admits to arresting 434 people out of this 1,000.

As brutal as the government's clamp-down has been, it has also been to no avail as the righteous battles by the Azanian people have continued to send shockwaves through the foundations of the apartheid regime. A week after last month's combined army/police raid on Sebokeng and two of the other townships around Johannesburg, the *Washington Post* commented that the atmosphere inside the black townships remained defiant and numerous fresh battles had broken out around Johannesburg and Pretoria as well as in Port Elizabeth, New Brighton and Grahamstown. In Port Elizabeth, the center of the auto industry in South Africa and known as "little Detroit" because of all the U.S. auto industries there, some very sharp battles broke out over the last few weeks. Some were fought between students boycotting school and those attempting to break the boycott. Others were pitched battles between the forces of the state on one side and students on the other, joined by unemployed workers in stoning government buildings and buses. By November 2 the army and police once again raided the same three townships that they had attacked on October 23 and added a new one to the list, Bothelong.

On November 5 and 6 a two-day general strike was called by a coalition of Azanian organizations including the two largest black trade unions — the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) and the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA, an organization affiliated with the Black Consciousness Movement). The action was highly successful — bringing the industrial heartland of South Africa to a virtual standstill as approximately one million people stayed away from work and school. The strike was 90 percent effective in the townships south of Johannesburg, 85 percent effective in those east of Johannesburg. Soweto, the largest black township in South Africa, was 66 percent effective. In downtown Johannesburg itself white supermarket managers were forced to perform the tasks normally assigned to their black workers — things like running the cash register at the checkout line, a scene unheard of during normal times.

The strike's occurrence testifies to the powerful effect the current rebellions have had among the Azanian people. In the past there had been a number of attempts at such an action — most of which

failed. In South Africa a striking worker is liable to be fired immediately and then shipped out to the bantustan homelands. In fact, during this strike the state-owned oil-from-coal corporation, SASOL, fired 6,000 workers for participating in the strike — 90 percent of its black workforce. The fact that South Africa is currently in the midst of its greatest economic crisis in 50 years and that the strike itself was called around political demands, including the withdrawal of the army and police from the townships and the release of political prisoners (a major break with the black trade unions' almost exclusive concentration on economic issues in the past and a break that flew directly in the face of government edicts that trade unions should not take up political issues), contributed to both the government's attempts at intimidating the workers and to the significance of the strike. And, in addition to occupying Tembisa during the strike, the army set up roadblocks around a number of other townships, and in some townships the army and police were found distributing leaflets urging people to go back to school and to work. Police spokesmen have also freely admitted that in the course of the strike "extensive use" was made of shotguns, rubber bullets and teargas with the end result being at least 30 people killed.

In the wake of the strike both the repression by the government and the struggle of the people have intensified. On November 8 the South African police raided the offices of a number of political organizations and trade unions, seizing documents, printing material and film. By November 14 thirteen trade union leaders, including the heads of both FOSATU and CUSA, had been detained under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act. At one point, even moderate religious leaders — members of the Vaal Ministers' Solidarity Committee headed up by the collaborationist Bishop Tutu — were detained.

Political organizations such as the African National Congress-led United Democratic Front and revolutionary organizations like the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) and other black consciousness organizations have come under heavy attack. Muntu Myeza, the public relations officer of AZAPO, has been in jail since September. The Vaal chairperson of AZAPO, Outa Hlomuka, has been arrested and charged with "the deaths" of all the various black collaborators (the community council members and others working with the governments) in Sebokeng and other townships since the rebellions began. The national vice-chair of the Azanian Student Movement (AZASM) has not been seen or heard from since October 5 when he left to address a meeting in Sharpeville. According to people who had been arrested at that time, he was seen under arrest and in the hospital. But both the government and hospital officials continue to deny any knowledge of his whereabouts. One AZAPO supporter told the *RW* that there have also been reports filtering out of the country of prisoners being killed in jail.

The response to this repression — described by the South African Council of Churches as "unparalleled" in South Africa in this century — has spit in the face of the government's efforts to "maintain order." On November 11 the townships of Duduza, Vosloorus and Sebokeng were the scenes of running battles between police and crowds of up to 200 youths who were stoning the police and burning down government-owned buildings. For the last six weeks Tembisa has been the scene of continuous battles with the police and the army. On November 13 Tembisa became the target of the third raid by the South African ar-

my and police on the black townships, an operation which the government said would last at least for several days. On the same day youths in the township of Atteridgeville rebelled after the funeral of a 13-year-old Azanian youth who had been killed by the police a week earlier. In the continuing rebellions the black officials aligned with the government have been consistent targets. Over the past three months more than 30 of these officials have been attacked and at least 25 of them have had their businesses and homes burnt to the ground. Many of the members of the government-sponsored community councils have resigned their positions in fear of their lives and gone into hiding. In addition, black policemen, civil servants and army troops have increasingly become a target of the rebellions.

The weekend of November 16-18 was a particularly heavy period in Umlazi Township near Durban where 4,000 Azanians battled the police in protest of police raids on hostels for black migrant workers. On November 16 the police and army carried out the largest mass arrest in years during what the government called "mopping up operations" after rioting in Sebokeng. 2,300 people were arrested — most have been charged with nonpayment of rent and then released. Many of the police operations over the weekend were carried out as the police announced that they were "diligently investigating" a supposed rumor that November 15 and November 16 had been declared "kill a white" day.

The sharpening development of the situation in Azania has elicited the usual official U.S. response. As State Department spokesman John Hughes put it, "We do not believe that violence holds the solution to the complex problems of South Africa." Hughes went on to urge the South African government "to engage in meaningful dialogue" with all of its citizens. Undoubtedly U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker carried out such a "meaningful dialogue" with South African government officials during his November 15 visit to South Africa. At the same time, the situation in Azania has also emboldened the liberal "opposition" within the U.S. to step forward and press for its own "sensible and humanitarian solution" to the problems of South Africa. One expression of this has been the truly ridiculous formation of the Free South Africa Movement — composed mainly of representatives of the Black bourgeoisie, including Black members of Congress and "civil rights leaders" — and their daily demonstrations at the South African embassy in Washington, D.C. During these demonstrations Black congressmen and other Black establishment figures have been oh-so-politely arrested for politely sitting in at the embassy and politely crossing police lines.

The thrust of this "movement" can be seen in their demand that the South African government "negotiate with the legitimate leaders of the black people of South Africa" and in their condemnation of the violent rebellions rocking Azania today. According to D.C. delegate Walter Fauntroy, the first Congressman to be arrested, this Free South Africa Movement is speaking for "the black people of South Africa who cannot speak for themselves." This is not merely stark, imperialistic condescension: it is the necessary counterpart and logical accomplice of the pursuit of overall U.S. (and West-bloc) interests in the region. While the political posturing of Fauntroy and the others can accurately be described as "pitiful," it can also be described as *worrisome*. □

South Africa: Youth Upheaval, Political Strikes

...voting for the man."



fight. Ali packed and was in his return to Louisville when the was finally persuaded to re-

ay after Ali defeated Liston in a major upset, he called a press and announced his affiliation the Muslims. For this he was vicious- ounced in the bourgeois press. A sign was launched to find a "white" or a Black one, to dethrone Ali. er titleholder Floyd Patterson an- ced he would fight Ali and win the n back for America.

reactionaries were angered by Ali's sh and flamboyant style, they were d about his affiliation with the Mus-

s. The Muslims — or as they called them- ives at that time, under the leadership Elijah Muhammad, the Nation of Islam — had won an undeserved reputa- on as "militants" during the '60s as a result of their association with Malcolm X and attacks from the bourgeois state.

In the early '60s the Muslims began to attract a relatively large following among Blacks. In a short period of time they ex- panded their membership from one tem- ple to temples in many cities with large Black populations, both in the North and the South. The basis of this rapid growth was the agitation and organizational work of Malcolm X, who traveled exten- sively, speaking and organizing new tem- ples. While ideologically embracing Islam and nationalism, Malcolm's attrac- tion for thousands of Black people who heard him, or heard of him, was his powerful indictment and condemnation of the hypocrisy of U.S. oppression of Blacks, his contempt for and incisive ex- posure of the role of "respectable Negroes" and his daring challenge to Blacks to stand up and fight against their oppression and position in U.S. society. As Bob Avakian so aptly stated recently, "Malcolm X called them out for what they are in a way very few had before" (*A Horrible End, or An End to the Hor- ror?*, p. 130).

By 1964 Malcolm X and the Muslims were already parting ways. When he was Ali's guest in Miami, Malcolm was on suspension from the Muslims. This would soon lead to a final split. Shortly after the Liston fight, Ali broke with Malcolm and became closely aligned with the Nation of Islam and Elijah Muham- mad, who sought to channel nationalism into Black capitalism and schemes to ex- ploit Black people as a market for his (and the Muslims') own enrichment.

I ain't got no quarrel with the Viet Cong

In 1964 and '65 Ali continued to suc- cessfully defend his heavyweight crown. He gained increasing admiration for his boxing skills, but also faced criticism in the bourgeois press for being a "Black Muslim," and death threats from the likes of the Ku Klux Klan.

In February 1966, Ali took a stand which would win him the enmity of reac- tionaries and the support of the op- pressed and those who stood with the op- pressed around the world. After the Louisville Draft Board issued Ali a 1-A

draft status, making him eligible to be coerced into the Army and sent to kill and die for American imperialism, he re- sponded in this fashion to a TV reporter who sought his reaction:

*Keep asking me, no matter how long.
On the war in Viet Nam, I sing this song.
I ain't got no quarrel with the Viet Cong...*

Ali's stand ran counter to the image the U.S. had been trying, with increasing failure, to project on the world arena. While Ali came under tremendous attack for his stand, his decision concerning the draft was a reflection of what was hap- pening in the world at that time.

In the '50s and '60s the policies of the U.S. bourgeoisie in response to the civil rights movement and then the Black liberation struggles had been conditioned principally by the U.S. position and aims internationally. In the post-World War 2 period they sought to substitute their domination in the colonial world for that of other imperialists, such as France, Bri- tain and others. These were countries which had extensive colonial holdings before the war, but had lost out in the postwar redivision of the spoils to the U.S. In the colonial world, the U.S. im- perialists tried to pose as "anticolonial- ists" and upholders of democracy, in op- position to the imperialists who had dominated before them. The rising tide of Black struggles threatened this image. The concessions and the "profound con- cern" expressed by the Kennedy adminis- tration in the early '60s was underlined by a more strategic international goals. In a speech in 1963, John Kennedy was forced to deal with this contradiction.

We preach freedom around the world, and we mean it, and we cherish our free- dom here at home, but are we to say to the world... that this is a land of the free ex- cept for the Negroes...?

In a way, Ali's stand concentrated this problem for the imperialists by linking together, symbolically, the struggle of Blacks in the U.S. with the struggles in the oppressed countries. In 1966, when the U.S. was facing tremendous rebellions in the "heartland" itself, and was beginning to taste the bitterness of its coming defeat in Vietnam, one can comprehend why Muhammad Ali's stand against the war would drive the imperialists up a wall, while inspiring and bringing joy to those throughout the world who really had little stake in the continuing stability of the U.S. postwar empire.

For his part, Ali's stand was not a con- scious statement against U.S. imperial- ism nor a revolutionary national liberation of the Vietnamese national liberation struggle. He based his stand on his beliefs as a Muslim minister. He objected to the draft on religious grounds; he was a con- scientious objector. Indeed, religion has played a major role in Ali's life. On the day he refused induction he made no pub- lic statement to the press assembled out- side the federal building in Houston. Re- portedly, this was on the instructions of the Muslims.

It is not clear why Ali was drafted. Twice he had been given a 1-Y draft ex- emption based on tests given him by the

military. It is possible that the U.S. gov- ernment believed that he would accept the draft. In his autobiography Ali re- veals that the army had offered him a deal: if he went into the army they would guarantee that he would not be sent to Vietnam. In the midst of the Black rebel- lions and the rising wave of antiwar op- positions developing in the country, it seems that the ruling class threw down the gauntlet to Ali, hoping he could be manipulated to become a Black role model for reaction as Joe Louis had done during World War 2 when, in a highly symbolic move, he went into the army and played the patriot.

In any case, things turned out marked- ly different in Ali's case; and for this Ali was indicted and convicted for refusing to be drafted. He was also de facto banned from boxing from 1967 until the end of 1970.

Made-in-America Computer

The bourgeoisie were quite beside themselves with the symbolic power of Ali. Even after they had forced him out of boxing, they still concocted ways to destroy his image. In the late '60s there were a number of computer fights, which would supposedly prove "scientifically" who was the greatest champ of all. Ali was actually involved in staging a mock fight with Rocky Marciano, though nei- ther fighter knew what the outcome would be in the computer. However, a re- porter for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* laid it out for Ali what the computer fights were all about.

The computer knows who's who in the equation. Take you, a loud-mouth black racist who brags "I'm the greatest! I'm the King!" You won't submit to White America's old image of black fighters, you won't even submit to White Ameri- ca's Army... Every self-respecting made-in-America computer knows how to add that up. They killed you off but can't get rid of the ghost you left behind (this was when Ali was still banned from boxing — RW). And there's not a white fighter around to chase it away... They want your ass whipped in public, knock- ed down, ripped, stomped, clubbed, pul- verized and not just by anybody, but by a real Great White Hope, and none's around. That's where the computer comes in.

Ali Turns the Corner

Ali's return to the ring in 1970 took place at the time the U.S. ruling class was beginning to develop a consensus on Viet- nam and was maneuvering to retreat from the situation, in defeat, while trying to cut its losses at the same time. As the '60s turned to the '70s Ali, through his association with the Muslims, had toned down his more defiant posture. The bourgeoisie adopted the tack of deflating his former rebellious stature by discontin- uing, in the main, their attacks on him and opening the door to his coming back into the fold. In May 1971 this was given the official stamp as the Supreme Court, by an 8-0 vote, reversed his earlier convic- tion of draft evasion.

By 1970, Ali had several proposed fights ruined by the refusal of state box- ing commissions to grant licenses. His first breakthrough came in Atlanta. In- strumental in this effort was the Black bourgeoisie in Atlanta. For his part, Ali was not very enthusiastic about trying to

get a license in Atlanta, as he was tired of being turned down. He was assured that things were different in Atlanta. As ex- plained to him by Harry Pepp, a white millionaire:

I know it looks like the same as what you've gone through before. But there's something here missing in all the other packages promoters tried to put together. In Atlanta, there's black political power. The largest organized political power in the city is black.

These sections of the Black bourgeoisie, who now stood as oppressors in rela- tion to the Black masses, saw in Ali a pop- ular symbol to tie themselves to, which might improve their image among the Black masses. This is clear from Ali's ac- count of a meeting between himself and Whitney Young of the Urban League.

Whitney Young comes from behind the desk, gives me the brotherhood hug and sits on a couch. I thank him for the League's support, and Whitney talks of ways we might cooperate...

"We can benefit mutually," he says.

"How so?"
"Well, we'll stand together, and hope- fully some of our respectability will rub off on you, and some of your popularity and daring will rub off on us. Fair ex- change?"

The image of "respectable Black lead- ers" like Whitney Young was badly in need of repair at this time, tarnished as it had been as the civil rights struggle went over to a struggle for Black liberation in the mid-'60s. Indeed, for a few sweet years, reformism and respectable refor- mist leaders "were forced to jump back." From Ali's own remarks it is clear that he sensed and welcomed a changed atti- tude towards himself. Commenting on his first prefight conference since being banned from boxing, he says:

Yet as they push me through to the front of the hall, I feel comfortable and at home, with no resentment. In fact, I de- tect a feeling of friendliness, here and there, even from some whose columns

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The Deadly Silence Over The Island

The last three weeks in Chicago have been a sharp example of how the atmosphere of a pogrom is whipped up.

● On November 20 a Black family that had recently moved into the predominantly white Southwest Side of Chicago had a molotov cocktail tossed through their dining room window. It set the drapes on fire and flames traveled quickly up the walls before being extinguished by the fire department. Prior to the incident, according to the *Chicago Tribune*, white residents in the area held a meeting "to discuss fears about the first Black family to move onto the block."

● One day later, on November 21, two firebombs were thrown at the house of a Chilean family that had immigrated to Chicago in 1976. They had moved into "The Island," a white enclave, three months earlier. The gasoline bombs broke a window but did not go off. Chicago police quickly dismissed this attack as "not racially motivated," although the Chilean family had eggs thrown at their house on two previous occasions.

● These latest incidents take place in the aftermath of the election night lynchmob attack on a Black family also in "The Island." Since our article on this incident two weeks ago (see *RW* No. 281) it has come to light that at least four on-duty police officers from the suburb of Cicero were at the scene during the attack on the Goffers family and provided not only bricks and rocks but even pulled their guns and pointed them at Goffers' apartment.

There is little doubt that the November 20 and 21 firebombings were spawned in the noxious atmosphere created following the original attack on the Goffers. As we pointed out in these pages at the time, the "local newspaper accounts blared out the story for days afterwards, especially the support for this ugly incident among Goffers' white neighbors, as if to send out a message to Black people and all others who hate this racist shit that in today's climate such reactionary ravings are not only permissible but quite in fashion." Not only was the "plight of the white homeowner" given wide media attention but as we go to press, a full three weeks after this incident, none of the Cicero police have been arrested and they continue their normal duties on the police force (although a mild slap on the wrist is not out of the question). In fact *no one*

has been arrested for any of these incidents despite ongoing investigations by the Chicago Police Department, the Cicero Police Department, the State's Attorney and the U.S. Department of Justice. These government agencies, of course, as part of their normal everyday routine, extensively spy on political activists. Within the last year in this city they rounded up Puerto Rican activists in a "preemptive strike," throwing around the word "terrorism" left and right. But in the wake of these racist and *real* terrorist attacks, not one official nor local paper that we know of has used *that word*. According to them, they are having a very hard time getting any leads or finding any suspects in these cases. Can anyone doubt that all this has contributed to a climate which encourages these kinds of attacks and in this case contributed to the two firebombings?

Of course, on a national level not a word about terrorism in Chicago can be heard either — the administration's mouthings on this are targeted at others, worldwide. But locally, a legitimate question has been raised: Where has been the response of Chicago's Black leaders to these attacks? This is a city where, as Jesse Jackson declared this past week, "we" are in control, having a Black mayor and police chief and delivering 90 percent vote of the office of State's Attorney."

The fact that these Black officials have had almost nothing to say on this issue was recently pointed out by Bill Granger, a prominent liberal columnist, who wrote in the *Chicago Tribune*: "I kept waiting to hear from the mayor but Weird Harold couldn't be heard on this subject. He... couldn't be bothered with showing a little leadership on this issue." Granger's column reflects the sentiments of a fairly sizeable section of people here who frankly have been somewhat shocked when the mayor and just about every other Black official in Chicago sidestepped this issue — the *one* issue on which you would expect a Black mayor to take a strong stand.

The *RW* called the mayor's office to ask them to respond to Granger's remarks. "The mayor was interviewed casually on the run about it and expressed his concern," press secretary Chris Chandler informed us. But, he admitted, "there's some reluctance on the part of the mayor to jump into these things"

because "he has been blamed by the media for contributing to racial polarization." Actually, Chandler continued, "the mayor is working for depolarization" and as part of this "has forged a political alliance with some of the most conservative groups on the Northwest and Southwest Sides."

What Mayor Washington says privately or in an off-the-cuff remark or for that matter what he personally feels about the attacks doesn't change anything and isn't the point anyway. No special press conferences were called after the Goffers were attacked or after the two firebombings. Nor was any public statement issued concerning the recent KKK-inspired cross burnings in the Uptown section of Chicago. In the days of the Daley-type political machines all this would have been par for the course. But today, Granger and many others can legitimately ask: what in hell is going on?

The fact is, the mayor no doubt is entangled in a whole web of political IOUs. He cannot denounce these attacks on Black people too strongly, for example, because he is trying to build a political base among groups like Save Our Neighborhoods, a coalition of white homeowners concerned with preserving their "ethnic neighborhoods." He cannot raise the issue of the police department not responding at all to the six-hour siege on the Goffers because Fred Rice, the Black police chief, is his appointee and himself contending with all kinds of other petty political warlords over various positions of power. A strong statement might very well, as Chandler hints, trigger a lambasting in the media for "polarizing the city" (as if this society were not already deeply split for very basic reasons). What all this shows is American democracy in action where power-brokering, double-dealing, and appeals to various constituencies are exactly the way the status quo of oppression of Black people is enforced. A fine example indeed of the dead end of the electoral arena as any way to fight national oppression and of an America based on a system which needs and thrives on oppression — and is especially encouraging pogromism today.

The stand of Jesse Jackson is also instructive. After the mob attack on the Goffers, Jackson had nothing to say. Following the Southwest Side firebombing he announced that Operation PUSH

would hold a meeting to protest the violence. "This is the time for leadership to show true grit," he said. And what did this "true grit" consist of? On the same day as the Southwest Side firebombing, a nationally ranked high school basketball player, Ben Wilson, was shot to death by two Black youth. In this context a November 25 meeting "to combat the recent epidemic of violence in the Black community" was held at PUSH by 50 Black ministers, judges, policemen and other "community leaders." The meeting announced a 10-point program — which clearly had been in the works and awaiting a tragedy like the killing of Wilson — aimed at combatting... Black on Black crime. This program called for things like an end to "judicial permissiveness" in prosecuting crimes of Blacks against Blacks, a stricter curfew law against Black youth, and for teenagers to be tried as adults. This merits attention in its own right and is outside the scope of this article, except to note that nowhere in this program is there *any* condemnation — or even so much as a *mention* — of the recent attacks by whites against Blacks. And gangs, which this program points to as the one and only problem for Black people, clearly mean Black gangs and have nothing to do with the gangs of white reactionaries who firebomb, burn crosses and attempt to lynch Blacks in the middle of the night. The issue of Black on Black crime has clearly allowed these Black leaders to skirt the issue of mounting racist attacks and overall oppression of the Black masses.

Of course, downplayed in all of this has been the broad opposition to these attacks expressed by broad numbers of Blacks, whites and other nationalities. Following the attack on the Goffers, the Reverend Scott Shreve of the Trinity United Methodist Church, which is located in "The Island," publicly invited the Goffers back into the community and urged the area be integrated. (The Goffers have since refused the offer.) In doing this Shreve took a very controversial stand in opposition to most of his congregation and has continued to stand fast despite threats against both the church building and his personage. He told the *RW* he took this position because "historically there has been a lack of rights for individuals to live where they choose throughout the United States" and he had decided to stand for "human values" rather than with those in "The Island" who make their top priority housing values and the crime rate. Other whites on the Southwest Side spoke out against the firebombing there. And a multinational coalition of community and religious forces has held a demonstration and rally and plans to continue protesting these racial attacks. All this has been overlooked — deliberately — by the media.

To be quite blunt, it must be summed up that based on the response of the press, the law enforcement officials and various government spokespeople on the national and local level a big fat green light is being given to these kinds of attacks on Black people and other minorities. And the virtual silence of the Black "leaders" in the face of this, and what they have chosen instead to focus their attention on, has actually contributed to the atmosphere where these attacks can be further unleashed. □

Ali

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have hurt me most. From now on, most of them will stop trying to punish me for refusing to fight in Viet Nam... The public attitude toward the war will shift, and the vast majority will oppose it even stronger than I did.

But I have missed them (the press — *RW*) and they seem to have missed me... it's obvious that if the Atlanta fight comes off, things will change for me.

If Muhammad Ali objectively became an international symbol of rebellion against and defiance to U.S. imperialism, Ali himself, even at his best, was never an internationalist in any revolutionary sense, nor did he ever take a revolutionary position vis-à-vis U.S. society. This is not to deny the courage involved in his ac-

tions, as he did personally come under intense fire for them. In fact, it would be incorrect to sum up that Ali capitulated in the face of the heat he was forced to endure. More to the point is that there were limitations to Ali's outlook, and that certain politics, which under certain circumstances played a progressive role, under other conditions ultimately led to a reactionary position.

Lackey for U.S. Imperialism

By the mid-'70s major shifts had occurred internationally, giving rise to a relative ebb in the revolutionary struggle on a world scale and in this country. In the U.S. the ruling class adopted a policy of building up, ideologically and politically, the Black bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie as a base for reformism and patriotism.

The Muslims and Ali came to personify those buffer strata of middle-class Blacks

who were built up during the late '60s and throughout the '70s. After Elijah Muhammad's death in the mid-'70s, the Muslims became the World Community of Al-Islam under the leadership of Elijah's son, Wallace D. In this period they openly became Black lackey cheerleaders for U.S. imperialism.

Indeed, in a major salvo for their new patriotic image, the World Community of Al-Islam joined other American patriots in celebrating "independence day" on July 4, 1979. Wallace Muhammad's followers sponsored an all-American patriotic march on that day, featuring Ali on publicity posters and highlighted by a speech by Wallace Muhammad, who praised Chicago's Mayor Jane Byrne and the Carter administration for keeping alive the spirit of "sacred respect for human dignity" and "opening the way for Blacks to be patriotic citizens again."

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Statement On Nicaragua By Vietnam Vets

We're four combat Vietnam veterans who got together with the specific idea in mind of corresponding to the *RW* around the situation in Nicaragua. Every one of us had to participate in genocide to realize what U.S. imperialism is. The crimes we committed for America will forever be etched in our minds. We are writing this letter because we do have a wealth of bitter experience learned in the field that must be brought to bear for the people of the world.

What context are we looking at Nicaragua in? This is not another Vietnam but part of U.S. imperialism's preparations for world war. We know they will stop at nothing. They are creating public opinion, organizing reaction and will not hesitate to blow Nicaragua off the face of the earth if they see it as furthering their ability to wage and win world war. U.S. imperialism has the dream of crushing any opposition, no matter what it takes.

But, as we learned in Vietnam, even the best laid plans of these imperialist butchers can be turned into their worst nightmares. As one brother put it, "The U.S. will do whatever is necessary to protect its interests in Central America. Invasion, full-scale blockade, to bombing runs." And they'll come up with any lie to justify whatever they do. As they turn Honduras into a major ammunition dump and stepping-off point for the reactionary Contras, these bastards have the gall to proclaim Nicaragua a threat to Central America.

This same brother said, "Before I went to Vietnam in 1970, I was told the same lies over and over again. However, when I got there, I discovered this was not true. As a matter of fact, the exact opposite was true. It was the Americans that had the weapons that couldn't be used for defense and they were using them in a full-scale aggressive way against the people of Vietnam."

Each of us at the table could speak to this hypocrisy. The same scum who told us to hate the Vietnamese for using booby traps against B-52s and napalm are today telling us that they have the right to determine what weapons the Nicaraguans have the right to use against them. Bullshit. The U. S., the biggest butcher the world has ever known, with the worst weapons the world has ever known, has no right to speak.

Another brother said, "It's clear the U.S. wants to crush any opposition in its own backyard in preparation for bigger things. And I think there's some debate among the ruling class as how best to achieve that. An invasion of Nicaragua would bring into motion some of the same kind of forces that came into motion during the Vietnam War." We'll also see a lot of new forces in motion, including proletarians, Vietnam veterans and others with a lot more understanding than forces in the '60s had. The problems these high and mighty rulers potentially face, are far greater than their worst nightmares of the '60s.

He talked about an interview he'd heard on one possible way an invasion could come down. "They would see a Marine amphibious landing on both coasts accompanied by an airborne landing on the city of Managua. And they arrogantly state they could overrun the cities and the capital in two weeks and take another six weeks to conquer the country and lose only 500 men in the process." We broke out laughing. What a pipe dream! This is the same military who just lost 250 men asleep in a motel when one guy drove in a pickup truck of explosives in Beirut. He continued, saying, "I would say they could get into war in Nicaragua pretty easily but it would be a lot tougher for them to get out." This is not another Grenada. *No cheap victory here.*

While this brother was in Washington, D.C., he went to the Veteran's Day bloodfest to do some reconnaissance on the enemy. He saw veterans of the infamous Grenadan invasion. These guys were pumped up and more than ready to go again. They'd won the first war this country has won in 20 years. "There was a lot of guys who went to Vietnam in the same way. And there's a question of whose ass is gonna get kicked. Some people won't learn until they get their butts kicked. And I hope they get it soon."

We are Vietnam veterans that accept the fact that we were part of a defeated army and are not ashamed. But we are very proud of the fact that we came to the realization that we were fighting on the wrong side of a just war and that the Vietnamese had every right in the world to defeat that army. Some of us who got hit sooner, proudly aided them in delivering that defeat!

When we returned from Vietnam we realized that we had more in common with the people we'd been sent to murder than we had in common with the people who had sent us there. We know we're not alone. This is a call to those like us who have not forgotten the bitter lessons.

There are youth in this country today who are giving standing ovations to movies like *Red Dawn*. Let's go out and turn their heads around. The ruling class has created the illusion that everyone who served in Vietnam wants recognition for a job well done. Fuck them. There are many people in motion in opposition to war. We will join with them and fight to influence them with our experience. This is a call for those Vietnam veterans who are proud of their resistance against U.S. aggression in Southeast Asia to correspond with the *Revolutionary Worker* and let that pride be known. The role that we have to play today is of vital importance. We do have a right to speak and, more so, an obligation. We will use it.

TO HELL WITH THEIR NATIONAL HONOR, WE WON'T BE USED AGAIN.

4 proud members, Vietnam Veterans Against the War (Anti-Imperialist)

Starvation and Criminal Lopsidedness

Dear *RW*,

After reading the exposure on U.S. "humanitarian" food aid to starving Ethiopia in *RW* No. 282, I thought I might contribute a few additional observations bearing on the famine there. On the question of the criminal lopsidedness enforced by imperialism (and here credit is mainly due to Western imperialism which dominated Ethiopia until relatively recently), it should be noted that by some accounts Ethiopia is the poorest country in the world. Just how incredibly primitive conditions are is indicated by a few facts. Various statistics are revealing, even if they may be in the nature of rough estimates. In 1977 each inhabitant averaged only 78% of the calories needed for minimal survival. The World Bank estimates that only 6% of Ethiopians have access to safe water. There is one doctor for every 75,000 people and life expectancy is 40 years, way below the already appalling 49-year average for Africa as a whole. Even in normal times (i.e., when there is not a widespread famine), 10% of all Ethiopian children die each year from hunger-related causes before reaching age 1. Even if massive attempts were made to distribute food throughout the whole country it would be an awesome proposition: Ethiopia has less roads per square mile than any other African country and, as of last year, had only 300 trucks (only half of which were operational) to cover an area twice the size of France. For example, in October 1983, as thousands starved, food was piled up in Assab — lacking means and routes of distribution, and vessels carrying desperately needed grain were turned away for lack of unloading space.

As noted last week, the Dergue manipulates the distribution of whatever food aid does arrive to suit its reactionary political and military purposes. One example of this was last year when the bulk of 15,000 tons of UN emergency food — enough to feed the four famine-stricken regions in Western Ethiopia for a month and sent specifically to feed 89,500 starving people in Wellaga — suddenly "disappeared" after arriving at Assab. An Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation official who defected to Sudan subsequently revealed that the food had been appropriated by the government's

Agricultural Crops Marketing Corporation (known to be a major food supplier for the Dergue's army), which then concocted false documents to fool a World Food Program auditor who arrived to check on the food's distribution. And as if the systematic withholding of food aid from the 95% of the famine victims who live in territory controlled by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front and the Tigrean People's Liberation Front wasn't criminal enough, it should also be noted that the troops of the Dergue have regularly augmented the very meteorological calamity that has befallen these areas (the drought) by widespread destruction of crops with sulphur in a further attempt to starve out the liberation forces.

And then there is the matter of the Dergue's current social-imperialist mentors who, aside from the fact that they have provided virtually no food aid, should in no way be let off the hook for their own *direct* contributions to the famine. Indeed, it is a telling exposure of Soviet-style "socialism" that after a decade of revisionist sponsorship Ethiopia is facing starvation on a scale that makes previous episodes of mass starvation pale in comparison. In March 1983, a reporter for the London *Sunday Times* revealed that home-grown grain and locally milled flour were on Ethiopia's export list to the Soviets. While this particular report was the subject of some controversy in the British Parliament, no evidence to refute this reporter's allegations has ever been offered by anyone, least of all the Dergue itself. Other reports have been more cut and dried. In 1979, for example, a harbor official at Assab accidentally discovered a sack marked "coffee" that had broken open while being loaded onto a Russian freighter. It contained *tef*, the staple food of highland Ethiopians (the official's subsequent investigation revealed that an entire shipload of this precious cereal was on its way to the Soviet Union). And why in the world would the Soviets want *tef*? It seems it is useful in the production of vodka! At any rate, it is clear that the repayment terms imposed on Ethiopia by the Soviets for arms and other aid are harsh indeed and literally paid for in human blood.

A reader



Mexico City Explosion:

Continued from page 1

the Pemex plant, continue to do business. Last Sunday, November 25, thousands of residents demonstrated to demand the removal of both the private gas companies and of Pemex, and to demand that Pemex immediately pay for all damages to the victims of the blast.

Reports from San Juanico remain sketchy and the views of various different forces involved in the demonstrations and other forms of protest remain unclear. But what is quite clear is that popular wrath about the murderous explosion—and particularly at Pemex—is bursting forth. Nor is this limited to San Juanico. The residents who live near other Pemex installations, particularly the residents of the neighborhood near the large refinery at Azcapotzalco, which is also in the midst of a heavily populated section of Mexico City, have denounced the presence of the refinery and the threat it poses to the neighborhood surrounding it.

Hand of Imperialism

What stands out above all is the driving necessity, dictated by the economic laws of imperialism, for Pemex to generate increasing profits for Western, and particularly U.S., finance capital. As described in the accompanying article, Mexico has become ever more thoroughly and violently whipped around by its dependence on imperialist financial capital, especially of the U.S., with oil and the national oil company Pemex as the major whip handle. The existence of many of these facilities, their condition and location, the situation in the cities and shantytowns, all this is owed directly to the hand of imperialism.

And as if this wanton plunder of the Mexican people were not enough in itself, this unquenchable thirst by imperialism has left behind a string of outrages and crimes that stretches from the Yucatan to the Rio Grande. Corn, cacao, banana and grasslands in southern Mexico have suffered severe damage as the result of the pollution caused by the burning of gas, and other pollution coming from the extensive oil fields in the area. According to one study done in 1980 the Mexican states of Tabasco, Chiapas, Oaxaca, Campeche and Quintana Roo are in danger of becoming an extensive desert due to the environmental damage they have suffered. Not only does this threaten the livelihood of the peasants in the surrounding area, but it comes on top of the fact that many campesinos have had their land stolen by Pemex so that it could erect its oil fields, pipelines, storage facilities and the like.

By 1979 mass outrage in parts of southern Mexico had reached the point where armed peasants occupied Pemex installations, frequently resulting in clashes between the peasants and Pemex security forces, which have often been backed up by the Mexican army. The construction of the "gasoducto," a giant natural-gas pipeline to export gas to the U.S., sparked several such incidents, with peasants refusing to leave land which was on the pipeline route. Tensions reached the point that several observers felt that large-scale exercises held by the Mexican army in late 1980 in the south of Mexico were intended, in part, to be a show of force directed at the increasingly restive peasantry. (These maneuvers were also aimed at intimidating the large numbers of Guatemalan and other Central American refugees that have been forced into Mexico as a result of the fighting in their countries.) Nonetheless, in the months following these maneuvers some of the largest and most publicized incidents took place in Pemex's huge Reforma oil fields when peasants occupied several sites and were forced out by the army.

During this same period a series of major accidents was occurring at Pemex facilities. In 1979 the "Ixtoc I" offshore oil well exploded, spilling millions of barrels of oil in Campeche Bay and seriously damaging one of Mexico's richest fishing areas. (This accident, unlike others that were to follow, generated substantial publicity in the U.S., not because of the damage it did in Mexico, but because some of the spilled oil drifted northwards

to the beaches of Texas.)

In 1980 the "Giraldaf 22" well, in the state of Chiapas, exploded, leading to a spill of thousands of barrels of oil and the burning of millions of cubic feet of natural gas. Also in 1980 a fire broke out at the Salina Cruz refinery causing damages estimated at some 200 million pesos. Again in 1980 an offshore Pemex well in the northern state of Tamaulipas spilled oil and gas in an area 43 kilometers off Nuevo Laredo.

This history of accidents, which is by no means a complete list, is testament in itself to the severe compulsion placed on the Mexican petroleum industry by imperialism. The events at the San Juan Ixhuatepec refinery are no isolated incidents, but a product of conditions which have existed for years throughout Pemex's operations. In the wake of the explosion in San Juan Ixhuatepec the newspaper *Excelsior* reported that Mexican senator Salvador Barragan Camacho listed refineries in a petrochemical complex owned by Pemex at Azcapotzalco, Madero, Minatitlán, and Reynosa Poza Rica as being unsafe. "This," explained the senator, "is because these refineries have gone many years, they need maintenance and repairs." Repairs are supposed to have been done, but the decisions "remain on paper, they are only halfway implemented..." Another article in a recent issue of *Excelsior* listed Pemex facilities at Acapulco, Mazatlán, Chihuahua, Guadalajara and the city of León in Guanajuato as being unsafe.

Azcapotzalco Refinery

The Pemex refinery at Azcapotzalco is perhaps a typical representative of the situation at these facilities. This refinery, like the San Juan Ixhuatepec facility, is located in the midst of a residential community, but in this case part of the residents are on the refinery's grounds, where the workers at the plant are housed. Some 21 years ago a container of aviation gas exploded at the Azcapotzalco refinery triggering mass panic among the residents. Though there were no casualties in that explosion, its memory continues to haunt the residents of that community, along with other more recent accidents. A Mexico City newspaper, *Uno Más Uno*, quotes a resident of the area around the refinery who tells of an "explosion in a pipe three years ago, which they could not cover up either; but we who live here are in constant fear. Now more than ever, after what has happened, we are very frightened." *Uno Más Uno* reports that the danger around the refinery is heightened because of a number of other flammable materials in the area — a paint factory, a thread-dyeing factory, a gas plant adjacent to the refinery. Reports *Uno Más Uno*: "On many occasions the demand has been raised to relocate these enormous Pemex installations. The response, they (the residents) say, has been the same, with variations: 'There is no danger, there is no contamination'; 'it would be costly'; 'you have to learn to live with it.'"

With all this in mind it is useful to look at those facts which are known about the facility in San Juan Ixhuatepec. The plant itself was built in the 1960s. But as we reported last week, one official of a Mexican ecology group, Alfonso Ciprés Villareal, has stated that a large part of the equipment in the plant dated from 1932 and was obsolete. This report by Ciprés has not, as far as we have been able to determine, been contradicted. It would seem likely, then, that a large part of the equipment in the San Juan Ixhuatepec plant was purchased after being discarded by another natural-gas installation; it is a common practice for old industrial facilities in imperialist countries like the U.S. to be dismantled and then sold to a Third World country. This, in itself, if it is what happened at the refinery at San Juan Ixhuatepec, would be an exposure of the relations imposed on these countries.

Further, according to a more recent report in *Excelsior*, which cites a worker who was involved in the construction of the plant, the equipment originally installed in the plant has never been replaced — a practice which has to be con-

sidered highly dangerous. From what we have seen it can also be considered to be standard operating procedure at such plants.

Smell of Gas

A number of reports have now appeared from residents in the area stating that the smell of gas was heavy for several hours before the explosion. Different versions of the accident describe the cause of the initial spark as either a short-circuit in a transformer, or an accident involving the loading of gas at an adjacent gas plant. In either case, it appears that there was more than enough gas leaking into the air to trigger an explosion, and that this in turn triggered a series of further explosions devastating the plant and the surrounding residential area. Far from being a freak occurrence or product of unforeseeable coincidence, all the ingredients of this incredible catastrophe had been developed by the workings of imperialism to the point where a major disaster of this kind had become only a matter of time.

And, of course, this explosion occurred in the midst of a densely populated working-class suburb of Mexico City. As we pointed out in our previous article, this too results from the lopsided development foisted on Mexico by the demands of imperialist capital, which has forced millions into the ever-swelling metropolis of Mexico City. Just how much this — the location of highly dangerous industrial facilities in the midst of densely packed residential areas — is the rule in the valley of Mexico is illustrated by articles reprinted by *Excelsior* in the wake of the explosion at San Juan Ixhuatepec. One of these articles, which originally appeared in *Excelsior* on May 11, 1982, concerns the city of Tlalneptla, the suburb north of Mexico City of which San Juan Ixhuatepec is a part: "There are highly explosive substances that are being handled in the middle of Tlalneptla.... Enormous and unsafe deposits of nitroglycerin, butane gas, nitro-cellulose, thinner, toxic and corrosive substances, as well as radioactive materials. These materials are stored here and there, arbitrarily, and there is not even a minimum of safety measures...." And "right next to the zones classified as residential, they have permitted chemical plants, or factories that handle explosives to be built. This picture can be seen in every area around Distrito Federal (the federal district which contains Mexico City)...." This is the "all-around development," so acclaimed by the Mexican authorities, which has been visited on the Mexican people as they are literally shoved hither and yon, right up against mass disasters waiting to occur, in accord with the demands of foreign capital relentlessly searching for higher rates of profits.

Troops

But the Mexican government has hardly been passive in the face of all this. They have taken steps which are indicated by comments of residents of the area around the Azcapotzalco Pemex refinery. In the article in *Uno Más Uno* mentioned above, residents report that ever since the explosion at the refinery 21 years ago the government refuses to say anything about accidents in the plant; the authorities quite obviously don't want such things to be known. The only indication they receive that something is wrong is that soldiers suddenly arrive and begin to cordon off the area. "They never say anything to the neighbors," reports one resident, "we only see an intense movement (of troops), but they inform us of nothing, they tell us nothing."

Troops seem to play an important role in the government's plan for "disaster control," an important role in controlling the population and in preventing the spread of information about the situation. We have already mentioned the army's heavy involvement in confrontations between Pemex and peasants in southern Mexico. Within hours after the explosion at San Juan Ixhuatepec armed soldiers were on the scene, along with local police, cordoning off the area. The Mexican press has widely referred to "National Defense Plan III-E," which the army is said to have implemented at San Juan Ixhuatepec. Though details of the plan are not available, it certainly contains a large-scale show of force — backed up with hundreds of semiautomatic rifles. The very name — "III-E" —

implies that the military has a wide array of such plans ready to deal with various contingencies. We will only note that this hardly conveys the impression of a ruling class secure in either its control over the safety of its industry or in its control over the population.

In the meantime, facts are surfacing which increasingly contradict the picture generated by the U.S. press and by the Mexican government of a massive and efficient relief effort. The official death toll from the blast is around 400 as we go to press, but other reports stated that as many as 1500 people are missing. Since many of those killed in the blast may never be found, the full number of people killed may also never be known. The official version is that the blast survivors are supposedly receiving plenty of aid from a variety of government agencies. The Mexican government, for instance, made a point of stating that there was no need to accept offers from U.S. hospitals to treat burn victims, that there were plenty of facilities in the Mexico City area to treat the victims. But a report in the November 21 edition of *Uno Más Uno* painted a quite different picture: "Reports from the different departments of the health sector indicate that the hospitals — both public and private — of the state of México and of the Distrito Federal are saturated with wounded and sick.... Of the 2,000 burned in the fire, 15 percent are suffering from second- and third-degree burns; they are in intensive therapy, and the doctors fear for their lives due to the seriousness of their burns...."

Government "Aid"

Contrary to reports of ample aid to victims, Humberto Luna, a disc jockey with a Los Angeles Spanish-language radio station KTNQ, who personally visited the area devastated by the blast and spoke with residents, reports that many victims have received nothing in the way of aid at all. According to the newspaper *La Opinión*, Luna met many who told him they had received none of the aid promised by the government.

Meanwhile residents of San Juanico are demanding full payment for damages caused by the blast from Pemex. It is reported in the Mexican press that residents fear that while official "investigations" of who is responsible for the blast drag on they will receive nothing. The government especially showcases its program to provide new homes for some of the blast victims, but those who have received such aid say that the homes are much smaller than the ones that were destroyed and are too small for their families.

Thus while new outrages are dished out to the victims, both the Mexican government and the U.S. press labor to cover up the extent of the damage from the blast and suffering of the victims. Indeed the U.S. media has virtually stopped reporting on the catastrophe altogether. Likewise, there is an effort to downplay the very real danger which the residents of San Juanico still face. The private gas companies which have facilities adjacent to the Pemex plant continue to operate despite the widespread demands of the residents, and there has been more than one incident where heavy gas fumes in the area caused people to fear the possibility of new explosions, and many began to flee.

Both ABC and NBC network news reported one evening last week on such an incident. Both networks reported that there was, after all, nothing to fear, that there was an innocent explanation for the gas fumes. The two networks' "explanations" were, however, completely contradictory! One explained that the fumes were produced by tests being conducted by government personnel and the other explained that the smell came from a leak in a small gas tank in one of the resident's homes. You see, the facts are that there is simply no reason for alarm, explained these gentlemen, who, we can be sure, have no plans to move into the neighborhood in the near future.

If the massive slaughter at San Juan Ixhuatepec has done anything at all, it has thrown even more light on a system so vicious that anything more cynical or murderous is hard to imagine. It is a lesson of which, despite the best efforts of imperialism and its apologists, many in Mexico and around the world are certain to take note. □

"Why should we be exposed to this terror?" That was the blunt question posed by a resident to a reporter from the *L.A. Times* after the horrendous series of natural gas explosions which devastated the working-class quarter of San Juan Ixhuatepec in Mexico. It is being asked across Mexico and beyond.

Criminal neglect and wanton disregard for human life so evident in the operations of Pemex, the state-owned oil company which ran the facility, has received exposure. The reasons for it lie in the history of Pemex since the mid-1970s and the particular role it plays in the exploitation of Mexico by finance capital. It is this that has remained in the U.S. at least, purposely well hidden.

As we noted last week, the exploitation of Mexico's large petroleum reserves was, in the mid-1970s, seen as the key to the "all-around" development of the Mexican economy. In fact, the plan formulated by the comprador Mexican government to finance the expansion of the economy with Mexico's oil reserve always had a distinct element of desperation. In 1976 when Mexico approached the International Monetary Fund for a loan, it was granted only under the condition that an austerity program be implemented as well. The Mexican economy was, in short, in rough shape; now the implementation of government spending cuts and austerity measures raised the specter of serious social upheaval as well.

Oil production was to be the way out, a means of stimulating the economy and providing revenues that would allow the government to avoid the imposition of austerity measures. But in practice this "solution" has only bound the Mexican economy more firmly to the dictates of imperialist capital and plunged it into a deeper crisis.

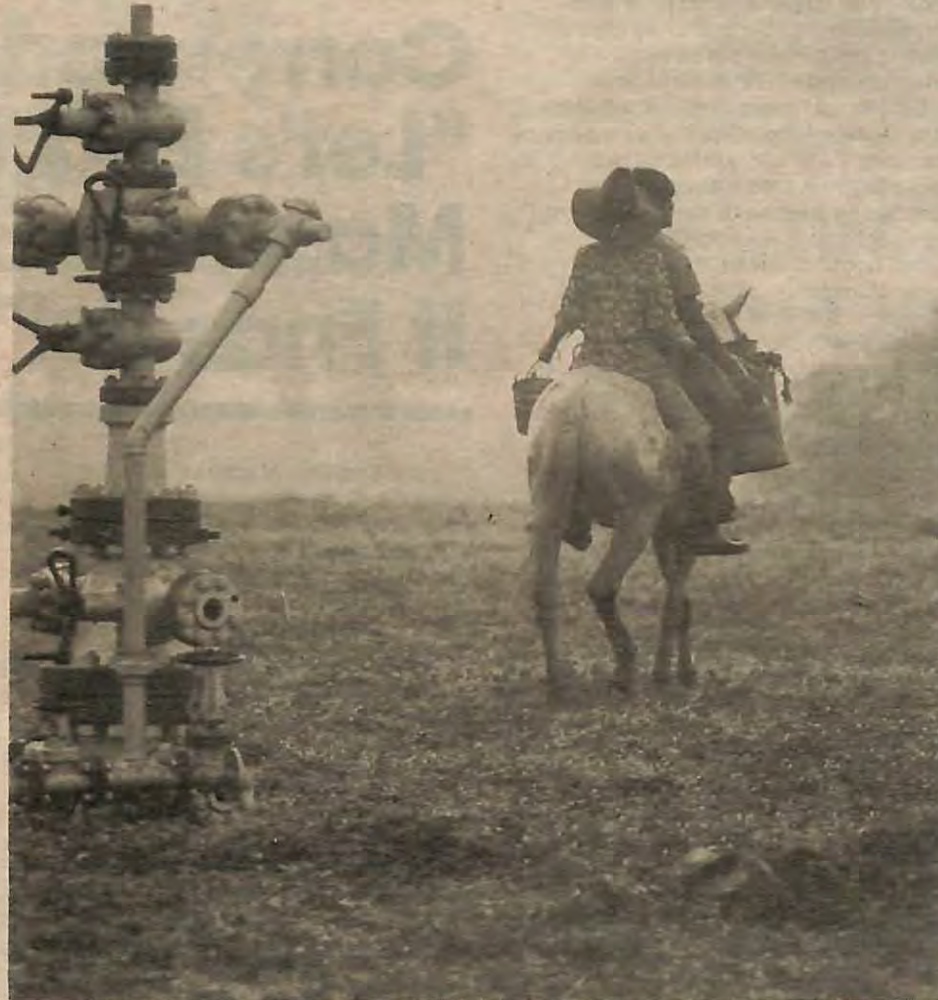
Boom and Bust

The program adopted by the Mexican government in the mid-'70s was a large-scale expansion of Mexican oil production, along with the infrastructure necessary to transport, refine and export the oil. Caught as it was in the web of international finance capital, such a program of expansion could only be dependent on large-scale importation of equipment and technology from imperialist countries, notwithstanding the Mexican officials' frequent mouthing of their supposed nationalist objectives. In 1978 50% of Pemex's capital goods had to be imported. By 1979 this figure had climbed to 75%. In 1980 it was estimated by the Mexican Petroleum Institute that Pemex would spend 33 billion pesos on foreign equipment. More fundamentally, the financing of the expansion of the Mexican petroleum industry could only be funded by loans from the imperialist countries. The study, *Mexico's Oil*, by Manuel R. Millon, reports: "...there are a number of critics who maintain that, far from representing a contribution to Mexico's economic standing, petroleum exploitation has increased its economic vulnerability. In other words, Pemex has borrowed and spent more than it has received from its exports. Indeed, a number of official estimates would seem to confirm this assertion. By the beginning of 1981 a government official had to announce that, in 1980, income from petroleum amounted to \$10.4 billion (more than twice the level of 1979), but the commercial and payments deficit grew because imports totalled \$18 billion, \$7 billion more than expected. On the other hand, during the second three-month period in 1980, Mexico paid \$2.88 billion in foreign debt services, while petroleum exports income only reached the amount of \$2.565 billion." By 1980 Pemex's liabilities to foreign creditors was more than 193 billion pesos; the debt had increased five times from 1976 to 1980.

Dependency

Thus, Mexico's "national oil company" is seen to be a creature chained to the dictates and producing a profit only for Western banks — and, of course, the major creditor is the U.S. This was the situation in Pemex's good years, when the talk was still of Mexico's "oil boom." As the crisis of the world imperialist economy was to intensify, Pemex's creditors were soon to shorten the leash considerably.

In the meantime, Mexico had but one way to make the payments on its rapidly growing foreign debt. And that was to ex-



port oil which would produce the foreign exchange to make the payments on the debt. And this, too, reveals Pemex to be in a state of utter dependency, for the main market for this oil is again the Western imperialist powers.

Mexico's rulers make some noise about never putting themselves in a position of dependence on any one purchaser. Indeed, they have a publicly announced policy of never allowing more than 50% of their oil exports to go to any one country. But this also was only so much posturing; though the U.S. does not import more than half of Mexico's oil (it has remained in the range of 35-40%), this certainly is enough to command dependency, especially as part of a whole network of controls. In any case, the U.S. has been consistently the largest buyer of Mexico's oil exports and when the other major Western imperialist powers are accounted for it is these countries which

Mexico depends on to maintain its oil export income.

In the rush to develop, extract and export large amounts of oil, Mexico was producing more natural gas than it could consume. Large amounts of natural gas, produced in Mexican oil fields as a product of pumping out oil, were simply burned off at the well-head. The lack of means to invest in the natural gas distribution network was a direct result of the necessity to concentrate on the export of crude oil in order to meet Mexico's payments to foreign creditors. This was as much as admitted by the current Mexican Sub-Secretary of Energy at a conference on natural gas production held earlier this year: "The delay in the completion of the installations to process the natural gas was a consequence of the high priority given in our country, in the second part of the '70s, to the accelerated expansion of the exportation of crude" (From

Pipeline To Dependency

Comercio Exterior, May 1984; our translation — RW)

The Gasoducto

One early attempt to deal with this problem by Pemex reveals how deeply enmeshed in the contradictions of imperialist economics was the development of Pemex. In the late '70s Pemex proposed to build a pipeline whose cost was estimated at \$1.5 billion, to ship natural gas north for export to the U.S. Another \$1 billion loan was obtained by Mexico from the International Monetary Fund expressly for this purpose. The project was hurriedly undertaken, with a special law enacted allowing Pemex to expropriate land along the pipeline route. But the agreement to export the gas to the U.S., which had been negotiated between Pemex and a consortium of U.S. gas companies, hit a snag when the U.S. Department of Energy objected to parts of the agreement having to do with the price of the gas. The U.S. was in a position to do this, since the difficulties of transporting large amounts of gas by any other means than pipeline makes the U.S. the only potential customer for Mexican gas. With the U.S. seeming to hedge on the deal, Pemex was left with a lot of gas and an idle and very expensive pipeline on its hands.

Politically, this was a very embarrassing situation for the Mexican government, which had already been widely criticized for building the pipeline devoted to servicing U.S. natural gas needs. So after the debacle over the Mexico-to-U.S. pipeline, the government attempted to save face by making the project seem to be an effort to meet Mexico's internal energy needs. One scholar sarcastically declared: "The gasoducto (pipeline) was miraculously rechristened the Troncal Nacional (National Trunkline) and diverted from export service to the meeting of new-found domestic needs." A campaign was undertaken to convert Mexican industries from oil to natural gas; a move which met with some success but also entailed yet more investments in a more ramified pipeline network. The idea was that, by switching from oil to natural gas use inside Mexico, there would be more oil available for export.

Finally, and ironically, an agreement on the exportation of gas to the U.S. was eventually negotiated leaving the Mexican rulers' nationalist pronouncements seeming more hollow than ever. The campaign to switch over Mexican industry to gas has met with mixed success, and the U.S. is still needed to absorb the gas output. The continued dependence of Pemex on these exports to the U.S. was underlined by the current general director of Pemex, Mario Ramon Beteta, when he ended his speech at the above-mentioned conference on natural gas with a virtual plea to the U.S. not to cancel the agreement. "Mexico," Beteta pointed out, "invested considerable sums in the construction of the processing and transport installations necessary to get the gas to the northern border (of Mexico)." □

"Joey" Johnson, On Trial For Republican Convention Protest

Greg "Joey" Johnson is scheduled to go on trial in Dallas on December 10 for "desecration of a venerated (sic) object" — allegedly burning an American flag. He is one of the 96 people arrested at a demonstration outside the Republican National Convention in Dallas last summer.

According to prominent articles in the Dallas papers, the tactics of the "Republican War Chest Tour" caught the authorities off balance with their bold marches right through bank lobbies, corporate headquarters, and ultra-ritzy department stores. Spraypainted slogans ranging from "Eat The Rich!" to "Sendero Luminoso," and from Circled A's to "RCYB" marked the marches' trails.

The imperialists were particularly stung by the burning of American flags during the demonstration. The *Los Angeles Times*, reporting on the demonstration, pictured a pathetic American picking up burned scraps of

flag and wrapping them in the only thing he could find, according to the paper — a copy of the *Revolutionary Worker*.

The point of holding the Convention in Dallas, with its reputation for ostentatious wealth and brutal oppression of the masses, was to emphasize the theme of a resurgent America that never has to say it's sorry again. It was a real political defeat that they were unable to contain or suppress the demonstrations that broke out; and that the demonstrations made such an uncompromising statement against World War 3 and the whole future being celebrated at the Republican Convention as it nominated Ronald Reagan.

Those singled out for more serious charges included people identified with the anarchist trend, youth from outside the U.S., and Joey, a revolutionary communist youth.

The stakes of Joey's trial are very high. Waging a political defense, including tremendous travel time and expenses, will

be difficult. At the same time, the case concentrates the two futures that clashed in the streets of Dallas — and can and must be taken up by broad sections of people. The fact that charges were brought on the basis of who the police figured were associated with the main political trends in Dallas exposes the blatant revenge motive behind the charges. And the "flagburning" statute is a clear statement that the first amendment and all that crap really means you can protest only as long as you bow down before the American flag and follow it anywhere.

Pretrial motions begin on December 6. It is urgent that telegrams be sent to the judge in the case immediately in support of Greg Johnson. Telegrams can be sent to:

Judge John Hendrick
Dallas County Courthouse
Dallas, Texas

□

Meeting the Students on Election Night

Immigrant proletarians meet with the students on election night:

We were told by a friend that there was to be a demonstration, called for by different antinuke and student groups against the elections. We thought that this was a great idea and that is why we went. We didn't just go there to be there, but to raise debate, check out other points of view and to influence these forces with the line of the party. We also wanted to understand their point of view and draw some conclusions from that.

The first thing that they asked us is where are you from. When we told them that we were from Latin America, they asked us all kinds of questions about what is going on there from El Salvador to Peru. They have been quite affected by the revolution in Peru. They hear a lot of talk, a lot of revolutionary rhetoric — but the situation there takes it into the realm that revolution could really happen and that this isn't just a question for intellectuals to discuss but is really happening in the real world. Hearing about the armed struggle from people who are close to those situations brought the idea that it could happen right here as not such a remote possibility. At first the students thought we had come to discuss electoral politics — who we thought was the best candidate and who we thought was the worst within the bounds of electoral politics. They are very much influenced by the media, bourgeois propaganda. When we started bringing out that these elections are a circus with clowns, something that happens every four years to suck people into the system and to help bolster it, these illusions started to get broken and they started to see more clearly what we are talking about. We told them that both the candidates represent the same class of people — same ideology, they are just different ways of saying things — they are no real choice.

One of the students was telling us how he lies awake at night wondering what he will do if the U.S. invades Nicaragua. He actually mentioned the possibility of his going to Nicaragua. He wanted to know who he should support (he saw this in terms of the U.S./S.U.). If Nicaragua is attacked by the U.S. and they are blockaded, then whom will they be able to draw their support from? They would be isolated and he wanted to know what they could do then. We told them of the example of the PCP (Sendero Luminoso) in Peru — they are opposed to both superpowers. Then they wanted to know, when that regime comes to power, how will it be able to hold on to it, given the forces that surround them. They wanted to know how a government could survive without sup-

port from the U.S. or S.U. We told them that there had to be an international support for these groups. We told them that there is an international movement (RIM). I didn't have the answers to all of their questions. They wanted to know what we would do in an imperialist country after we do seize power. This is also a question for me, seizing power; I didn't understand what this guy would actually do. I told him that it was the responsibility of people living here to destroy the system here because of what this system represents to the world. He told me that it is not that bad here. Some of the students were saying that things are really difficult in the U.S. because there aren't any poor people here. We explained to them that there are people here who don't have things to eat. Some of these students want some changes — even some radical change — but they don't want to destroy the system totally and that is where the outlook of anarchism comes in, it is due to their background. We have to break them of these illusions and point out that anarchism is not a correct response to the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The proletariat's response to the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie is socialism. The question at hand is who is the only class capable of leading this struggle and what does it really require to dump the system.

We have to influence these people in the ideological sphere. We do have a certain amount of influence on them because we do come from these countries that are oppressed and they recognize that. They see that it is not just rhetoric about imperialism — but in fact it is a reality that we are living daily and that has a certain amount of credibility. They cannot just say that we are bourgeois students with off-the-wall ideas. We have to struggle with them over what the real world is about — that there is this merciless oppression going on all over the world. Some of the students raised — "Revolution, that means violence and destruction." We have to make it clear to them that we don't like violence nor destruction but that it is the bourgeoisie and its system of imperialism that obliges the proletariat to respond in this way. This is the way they rule and this is the way they must be stopped.

I think we had a good effect on the students. I wasn't that well prepared. You should prepare yourself to talk to people but you learn through practice. They ask questions around everything. They want to know everything all at one time — like what our program is and what is the essence of Marxism-Leninism. Some of them actually think that Marxism wants to destroy the whole middle class. I thought that peo-

ple were not that interested in politics and that all they hope and work for is petty things, like how to get ahead and buy a new car. But through this discussion, I came to see that they really want to know what is going on. Many of them see that imperialism is an evil system in decay and falling apart. But because they are students and have some aspirations to become professionals

they feel that when they get in there they will be able to reform it from the inside. We have a lot of work to do to influence them because the bourgeoisie is pulling them also. We have to wage a hard struggle so that they will not fall right back into that way of thinking.

A revolutionary immigrant from Central America

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

Let's End This Madness Before It Ends Us. That really caught my eye. I have often thought that the government was crazy building more and more arms and weapons — more than enough to blow up the world. I know that this government is capable of doing it — I have seen what they have done in my country (El Salvador), how they will stop at nothing to keep control. I have thought about this and wondered what it would take to stop them.

When I read the leaflet, especially the part that said we have to start with the U.S. and say that it is not worth defending. That part struck me, I had never heard of an organization in the U.S. say that; taking that position. I wanted to get this statement out to everyone here so they could see through what this government is doing and that there is something we can do about it.

Even though I am not from here, not a citizen, I feel we have to do something wherever we find ourselves — this is a question of humanity continuing to exist!

I got some leaflets out at the school where I study english, at the laundromats, and in the area where I live. I also took it to my friends and we talked about it. Some of them think that there is nothing we can do, especially with the election of Reagan. They think that the election showed that people in this country go along with this government. After, we talked about that for awhile — we talked about who it is in this country, who might, and would, go up against the government if they felt they had a chance. We also talked about what kind of struggle it would take.

I don't think that things will change all at once but if there are people all across the country talking about this — that is good!

Proletarian from Central America

Message on Nicaragua

They're really pushing this invasion thing in the news. The U.S. shouldn't even be messing around over there. They're just pushing their weight around.

People in Nicaragua are not alone, there are people right here in the U.S. that feel the same — that it's an invasion of their privacy. Who gives the U.S. the right to think they can go over there and "set them right"?

I'm sure there are people in Nicaragua who feel that there are people in the U.S. that don't think the U.S. belongs there. And they're right! I'm one of them. I'm a mother living off a monthly income in low income housing, and I feel like this slogan best suits this purpose: U.S. KEEP YOUR BLOODY HANDS OFF NICARAGUA AND ALL OF CENTRAL AMERICA!

A Black proletarian from Seattle

A Horrible End, or An End To The Horror?

Continued from page 3

the highest priority, challenging people on that basis and level, keeping constantly mindful of the fact that even where power has been seized in a particular country that is only the first step of many thousands that must be taken in the world proletarian revolution and making this a mass question, a question to be thrashed out broadly — and deeply — throughout society. This is especially important in a country like the U.S., most of whose people have for decades enjoyed, to one degree or another, "perks" from living in a powerful imperialist country, a world predator with the resultant high level of productive forces and standard of living. Not only in this present and crucial period but even more so after U.S. imperialism has been brought down and a revolutionary regime established on its ashes, the orientation of linking revolution from the beginning and consistently with the revolutionary struggle and revolutionary transformations in other parts of world, especially (what is now) the Third World, must be fought for — and this fight carried through.

In a fundamental sense, let the young barbarians remain barbarians and not become new Romans. Let them be real rebels, outlawed in the reactionary world order until there is no longer any such order to outlaw them; let them not become Sung Chiangs fighting to get and then accepting the offer of "amnesty and enlistment" with the Emperor.

I would like to end the second part of this book on a personal note — which, however, is not merely personal but has much larger political implications: Billy, I'm still not drinking Coke (in the largest sense).

Here I'm referring to an old friend of mine, Billy Carr, whom I knew from high school and kept contact with until he was shot dead ten years ago, a victim of the system even though he died in a dispute with petty criminals over who cares what. Growing up in the ghetto in Berkeley (yes, there is a ghetto in Berkeley!), he was forced into a situation of bouncing back and forth between the bottom layers of the proletariat and the criminal life of the lumpen proletariat, yet he never lost a largeness of mind and a searching for some other way, some other kind of world. Whenever I could I sought him out to talk with — both to learn and to discuss with him the things I was learning as I got involved in political movements, began to see more clearly the nature of the beast we are up against and got turned on to revolution. Many years ago, in discussing South Africa and the role of the U.S. in relation to it, I pointed specifically to the major role of Coca-Cola in South Africa and told him I had decided not to drink Coke as a personal protest. After that, every time we talked one of the first things he would ask is: "Are you still not drinking Coke?" Though I eventually gave up this particular form of protest as ineffective, and he understood that, his question still had a much larger meaning, and we both knew that. And, in that spirit, this has remained a question I continue to ask myself, to make sure I can continue to say: No, I'm still not drinking Coke — in the largest sense.

In its larger implications, this is another illustration of the importance of a vanguard party, which is especially crucial in this period — of the fact that, through the whole upsurge of the '60s not just in the U.S. but internationally, and persevering and becoming tempered and steeled through the '70s and into the '80s, there is a leadership actually capable of being the guiding center in preparing for and carrying out the overthrow of U.S. imperialism. There is a party that is not only the vanguard of the revolutionary proletariat in the U.S. but is a part of an international force fighting for the world proletarian revolution, the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement.

Brown

Continued from page 4

those ground-kissing American medical students "rescued" from Grenada have been held up as role models and feted at the White House, the Brown students' actions have struck the establishment as downright shocking. And the students know it. An editorial in the *Brown Daily Herald* calling for support of the referendum said, "A strong yes vote on the suicide pill referendum might rattle a lot of people's beliefs about college students."

"No, it would say, we're not just grade-grubbing, pre-YUP resume-packers. And yes, we do care about something beyond whether mommy will let us have the car *this* year."

"It will tell people — in a voice made all the more authoritative by the perceived popularity of Brown — the one inescapable fact: nuclear war is suicide."

Urgency

In discussions and at public meetings at Brown and in interviews with students we found an enormous sense of urgency toward preventing the outbreak of nuclear war. The referendum was not taken up as a gimmick or a mere stunt. These students are deadly serious. That nuclear war is on the horizon and that the fate of humanity could be at stake has compelled these students to act with a kind of urgency and determination that some seasoned antinuke forces could stand to learn from.

The status quo is *not* all right with many students at Brown. "All of a sudden people have to say, wait a minute, the hope of America wants to die?" one student said, "It's the absurdity of that that's catching the attention. I think it's really important because all of a sudden all these people's parents are calling in. It's in newspapers all over the world. It's in newspapers all over the nation. People are really responding to it. It's the first

time I've seen any kind of tangible response.... People get very, very scared about it (nuclear war). They don't like to think about it. All of a sudden they're talking about it and it's the talking about it that's going to go towards action. This is like a first step to getting anything actually done. Stockpiling nuclear weapons is the exact same thing as stockpiling suicide pills. That's the metaphor we're trying to get across."

There is a sense among students at Brown that drastic times require drastic responses. This was evident at a forum on the referendum held at Brown on the eve of the voting. Participants included one of the referendum initiators as well as faculty at Brown, the head of Health Services, a campus chaplain and an antinuke activist from the Providence area. One hundred students were present, many of whom spoke of why they supported the referendum. "This generation is facing something that no generation has ever faced. All parallels to history fail when compared to what we're facing right now. If the result of this dilemma is that we're going to have possibly extremist or more creative ways of dealing with it, such as the suicide pill referendum, then we will have to do this. We will have to take up radical ways of dealing with this if it's the only way we can handle it."

Another student summed up, "The nuclear freeze movement — the majority of American people supported it and the government it's supposed to represent didn't. It didn't work. Clearly what's needed is more drastic action. There are a lot of things we can do and there are especially a lot of things you people up on the table can do." He challenged university faculty to put their reputations on the line by supporting the referendum. When the head of Health Services expressed his "optimistic" belief that in the wake of nuclear war life would simply sally forth, a student challenged him to respond to Carl Sagan's nuclear winter report. The head of Health Services answered typically, "I'd like to say a word to this young

lady who is so distressed. I am empathetic and I feel badly for you.... We've all been your age at one point in time. We've all recognized the enormity of situations. Fortunately, maturity and indeed, this gradually degenerative state they call senior citizenry, makes you appreciative of the global picture perhaps more so than you're able to see at this time. I would hope, fervently hope, that the energy you're expending in a what I would call to be a negative fashion... that you'll turn that around and find a way to cope with it, that you'll find a life and career that will be beneficial and helpful." When another faculty member suggested that telling students to seek nice careers was not exactly a solution, students broke into loud applause.

What It Will Take

What it will take to actually prevent the outbreak of nuclear war is a question students at Brown are in the throes of trying to figure out. Students advocate numerous reforms in hopes that they will work: electing freeze candidates (with a lot of rallying around Mondale), having the university sponsor students to meet with leaders of the Soviet Union, getting the university to withdraw investments in companies which produce weapons. One student felt that if the U.S. and the Soviets had greater economic dependency on each other they would be less likely to go to war.

Large numbers of these students have just entered into the political arena. Their nerve and energy in attacking the outbreak of nuclear war also, frankly, comes with gross illusions about what they are up against and what it will take. In our discussion with one student about the need for the revolutionary overthrow of the system she replied, "I'm new at this and I'm figuring out what it takes to do it (prevent war). I'm willing to go really far for it. It's this real gut-level thing with me. I really do think we're going towards it (nuclear war) and I feel this real responsibility to make it not happen.... Right

now revolution is real intangible to me and I haven't done a lot of the reading and studying. On the other hand — something has to get done.... I can't say revolution is the answer right now because there's too many things in front of me that I'm doing or that can be done that can start something. It can't solve something but it can start something and I need to know that the thing I'm starting isn't going to work before I can say revolution is an answer."

More Protests

A trail of mounting political protest has built to the latest action against the CIA. When General Scowcroft, head of the commission which recommended the building of the MX missile, came to Brown, students staged a die-in and others sat with their fingers pointed at the general (pointing the finger of responsibility) during his entire speech. Representatives of Electric Boat — builders of the submarine for the Trident II missile, and target of numerous anti-nuclear actions — came to Brown in October for their annual engineer recruiting drive and were instead confronted by three students (with about 25 supporters) who announced that Electric Boat representatives were under citizens arrest on charges of crimes against humanity.

Most of all, the events at Brown are a sign of the times. Their suicide-pill campaign, their reformist illusions, their feeling of pressing and momentous events, their impatience with other designer-brained patriotic youth, all of it thoroughly reflects what the world has come to.

As one student told us, with great feeling: "I can't let this threat keep on existing because you're asking for it constantly. You're doing the thing in Grenada, you're sending Korean jets over Russia. You're getting first-strike weapons. You're taking every step towards it. I'm protesting that. I'm saying you've got to stop that. You have to prevent it." □

Ali

Continued from page 10

This reactionary march occurred in the year which witnessed the overthrow of the hated Somoza regime and the toppling of the Shah of Iran. It was also a year in which the U.S.-led bloc was stepping up its preparations for world war with the Soviet-led bloc. Yet Wallace Muhammad's World Community distinguished itself in that year and since as lackeys of U.S. imperialism. Around that time, Muhammad Ali himself earned "distinction" as a roving ambassador of the Carter administration; he had abandoned his earlier in-your-face posture and adopted the role of a flunkey for U.S. imperialism.

Social Role of Boxing

White folks are mad at Ali... they are man, Ali kickin' ass, makin' money, and he ain't kill nobody....

George has a unique boxing style. None. He just comes out, the bell ring, ding! (mimicking Foreman) "Which one the referee? 'Cause I'm gonna kill the other motherfucker...."

"Richard Pryor's Greatest Hits" 1977, Warner Bros. Records, Inc.

Richard Pryor's wit about, and insight into, the differing boxing styles of Ali and Foreman focuses up an important question. What is boxing good for anyway? Or, can boxing really be considered a sport?

The *New York Times*, in light of Ali's brain damage, got into this:

There are abolitionists who say there is no place for boxing in a civilized society. There are others who think the sport can exist with much stricter controls. Perhaps, as Cosell said, Ali's physical problems might well force a change.

"Maybe this is the action that will stir Congress," he said, "and cause the abolition of boxing in this country."

Of course, quoting Cosell is the tipoff that they don't mean a word they say. Cosell has built his career on his boxing announcing, and particularly his coverage of Ali's career. More recently he distinguished himself by pulling duty ringside at the 1984 Olympic Boxing, doubling as

the blow-by-blow announcer and cheerleader for the red, white and blue. You reading this paper know it, I know it, and Cosell knows it — Howard is a hypocrite, and if he pops off about abolishing boxing, one better look deeper at what is really being gotten at.

Muffled and short-lived whimpers of protest are raised anytime a boxer is critically injured or killed. In November 1982, Duk Koo Kim, a Korean boxer, died of brain damage suffered in a brawl with Ray (Boom Boom) Mancini. In a November 22, 1982 *Sports Illustrated*, the obligatory handwringing was duly reported. This time it was boxing promoter Bob Arum who feigned indignance.

"Get a Blue Chip Medal Panel to investigate this thing and then suspend boxing," Arum chimed in, between collecting money from his last bout and arranging his next.

In a retort to Arum, Mancini's manager, Dave Wolf, took a different tack — don't blame boxing, blame the boxer. Better yet, blame the victim. He can't defend himself. He's dead.

"I don't know what good a Blue Ribbon Panel would do. It was not a case of defective equipment, or a fighter being allowed to go too far...." And besides, Wolf had been told that "Kim had written 'kill or be killed' in Korean on a lampshade in his room.... He was a warrior going to war. Apparently he viewed it as a death match."

But then, is not "kill or be killed" the guiding action for every boxer — even if most matches don't end in death?

Ali tells the story of an old trainer who explains to Ali why heavyweights can never be friends. He compares heavyweights to dinosaurs:

"Listen," he said, and leaned close to my ear as though to give me a great secret. "When dinosaurs see one another, they just size each other for the kill. All they trained to do is tear each other to pieces. They know a day'll come when they'll have to go out there in that high-noon sunshine with all the world watching and destroy each other. They can't be buddies. Only one can be king."

Floyd Patterson once told Ali,

Violence and hate are part of a prize-fighter's world. We fight, but we do not really hate deep down, although we try to pretend we hate when we are afraid of

losing....

In its essence boxing is a contest which promotes the kill-or-be-killed "instinct," glorifies the role of the macho male and requires a boxer, in order to be up for his opponent, to objectify his counterpart as an enemy to be hated, and if necessary — killed. Added to this, recent studies which have gained prominence with Ali's problems, are showing that boxers, particularly those with many bouts, have a higher chance of brain damage than other people.

In boxing, exciting bouts, good ones, the ones that raise the crowds, are when the dinosaurs go toe to toe, from the beginning to the end, battering away at the body and slamming right crosses to the head. And better if they end with one fighter delivering the knockout punch, and the other hitting the canvas with a thud.

It is no accident that this is one sport (though by no means the only) in which women do not mainly participate. It has always been imbued with the "physicalness" and the "physical superiority" of men over women. The kill-or-be-killed "instinct" demanded by boxing is closely bound up with bourgeois militaristic mind-sets. Some might protest that boxing requires skill. But so does warfare.

Taking into consideration the history of boxing, its identity with male chauvinism, its promotion of the "kill" outlook and recent medical studies that show brain damage associated with continuous boxing (not necessarily just the result of heavy blows), the question must be put forward: Does boxing have any useful social role, and if not, is it possible to transform its pernicious content? Frankly, one must conclude — no.

One final note on this. Anyone who is even superficially familiar with boxing will note that overwhelmingly the ranks of the sport are filled by individuals from the oppressed, both from the U.S. and the Third World. It is often hailed as the way out of the ghetto and poverty. Patterson, in talking of the consequences for the "losing" fighter, exposes the future for the masses of those who take up boxing.

The losing fighter loses more than just his pride in the fight. He loses part of his future. He's a step closer to the slum he came from.

Harry Edwards, sociology professor and organizer of Black protests at the 1968 Olympics, provides some startling statistics in puncturing the myth of the "road out of the ghetto" through sports:

You can work out the odds with a pencil and paper. Less than 900 Black (nine-hundred!) athletes are earning a living in sports — and not more than 1,500 overall including coaches and trainers. By comparison there are perhaps 3 million Black youth (between the ages of) 13 and 22 who dream of a career as an athlete. The odds are 20,000 to 1 or worse. Statistically, you have a better chance of getting hit by a meteorite in the next ten years than getting work as an athlete.

For many the "road to glory" offered by sports has turned out to be just one more dead end, one more moment of frustration, one more dose of the deadening reality that for most of the oppressed there is no way out, in the present order of things. But the myth of making it in the boxing ring (and elsewhere) persists and the role of sports figures like Muhammad Ali is quite important in keeping the myth and the American nightmare alive.

Can anybody, in their *right mind*, believe that by propping up a decaying Reagan next to a dazed Ali high above Black neighborhoods, *this* will inspire those who have never had, or *felt* they had, a stake in this system to jump up and get ready to die for these dogs? Not only is this laughable, but from a more serious take, this illustrates the desperation with which Messrs. the bourgeoisie view their relation to oppressed Blacks and the oppressed more generally in this country.

And certainly Ali's support of Reagan should not be the cause for demoralization or confusion. For one thing, the fool has been turning these tricks for quite a while. Would it really be any different if he were posing for pictures with Jesse Jackson? No, Ali's most recent pose is rather a logical extension of the "we want in" political line. And if it has shocked and demoralized those seeking such reforms, that's fine, because being up in the limelight while still taking it on the chin with an imperialist dinosaur preparing for a fight to the death is a rather fitting picture of the "heights" to which such politics will lead. □

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If the rulers of this country can prepare for a global war of conquest against their Soviet rivals, a conflagration which has the potential to extinguish human life on this planet, then why cannot those who understand this fact and who aspire to a higher form of society prepare to overthrow these rulers before they embark on this monstrous enterprise? This is the profound challenge posed by Bob Avakian in his latest and most important work to date, *A Horrible End, or An End to the Horror?*

Avakian surveys the contemporary social and political terrain to reveal how and under what circumstances U.S. imperialism might be brought down. Yet what makes this such a compelling study is not merely its insights into revolutionary strategy but its insistence that these issues be viewed in the larger setting of the historical advance toward, and the problems attendant to, the achievement of socialism and communism.

Avakian casts his analytical gaze on the shortcomings of the movements of the 1960s, the recent assaults on Leninism, Marxist-Leninist military theory and experience, the enslaving essence of modern democracy, the role of dissent in socialist society, the centrality of the woman question to the revolutionary process, and the ideological roots of accommodationism and capitulationism within the revolution. Here, as in all his writings, Avakian articulates a Marxism for which revolution cannot be a halfway affair.

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.