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Bhopal: An American Gas Chamber



Bhopal. In India and internationally, the disaster stands as a slaughter by a great power set loose upon the world. At least 2,000 are dead, thousands and thousands more are crippled for life. The crime alone is enough to desire, and work toward, the system's overthrow — the sooner the better. So is the posture struck by America's great captains of industry, the media, and the state: a calculated, chauvinistic indifference, mixed with the musings of company executives that "Considering the insurance available, the financial structure of Union Carbide is not in any way threatened." Their soul: that of imperialism. On every level, Bhopal concentrates raw imperialist relations.

American Gas Chamber

Shortly after midnight on Monday, December 3, a killer broke the still of the

night in Bhopal, a city of 900,000 in central India. A burst of deadly poisonous gas, methyl isocyanate, used in manufacture of pesticide, escaped from an underground storage tank at the Union Carbide complex. The gas formed a cloud over a 25-square-mile area.

In the slums surrounding the plant, hundreds died in their sleep. Many more woke up choking. They stumbled out of their scrap-wood and thatch huts in agony. One witness said, "Screaming, crying and shouting men, women and children came out on the streets in the wintery night. Some fell unconscious on the roads, while others, gripped by nausea, began vomiting. Some collapsed and died on the roads." Another witness: "Everybody was confused. Mothers didn't know their children had died, children didn't know their mothers had died, and men didn't know their whole families had died. Anyone who was left alive ran away blindly."

The horror continued for those who didn't die immediately. Thousands, blinded by the gas, ran seeking help, bumping into each other and tripping over obstacles. Others, severely hit by the gas, began to froth at the mouth as gas replaced the oxygen in their bloodstreams. Their lungs filled up with fluid, and they drowned.

Medical personnel in India have warned against the view that the havoc wreaked is short-term. Already, fetal deaths in pregnant women are mounting. Fatalities

will accumulate due to liver and kidney disfunction and disease. Epidemics stalk the streets of Bhopal, due to undisposed carcasses of thousands of dead animals. Water and food supplies have all been contaminated; crops have withered and died.

All this, courtesy of the USA.

The Standards of Empire

Methyl isocyanate is produced from phosgene, one of the first chemical weapons produced and employed in World War I — only methyl isocyanate is far more toxic than phosgene. Why did the gas leak? Union Carbide officials all but dismissed the question, sticking to incantations of professed respect for safety standards. At a Wednesday press conference, India's minister of chemicals and petroleum blamed the disaster on Union Carbide, charging that the corporation had failed to provide the Bhopal plant with the same standard of safety equipment used in the U.S. Jackson Browning, Union Carbide's safety and environmental director, responded: "As to the standards in effect in this country and those in effect in Bhopal, they are the same. . . . We are confident that, to the best of our knowledge, our employees in India were in compliance with all laws, and we are satisfied with the facilities and the operation of them."

It is as if *nothing* has happened! "We are satisfied," he says — thousands dead and dying and these people don't even bat an eye. This is truly a look into their "soul." Or, if this was meant to allay

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Excerpts from:

A Horrible End, or An End To The Horror?

by Bob Avakian

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Stop The Deportation Of Salvadoran Revolutionaries!

On December 3 an important hearing was held in the case of two Salvadoran revolutionaries, David Méndez and Emilio Henríquez. The hearing marked an important development in the battle to stop the U.S. government's attempt to deport the two Salvadorans. At the hearing U.S. immigration judge George Indelicato postponed the start of actual testimony in the case until February 5, but at the same time the judge took a number of steps aimed at limiting testimony in the case in an effort to rush the hearing through as quickly as possible and with as little exposure of the government as possible.

These two revolutionaries toured the U.S. in late 1981 and early 1982, speaking to thousands about their experience in El Salvador, exposing and opposing all imperialism (U.S. domination and Soviet designs).

The following are excerpts of a new trial bulletin which had just been issued by the Salvadorans' legal defense committee as we went to press:

On December 3, the deportation/political asylum hearing of David Méndez and Emilio Henríquez was reopened in Los Angeles with Judge G. Indelicato presiding. From the start it was clear a decision had been made to continue the hearing, which was eventually set for February 5, 1985. This is an important gain for the defense. However, the judge also sharpened the government's assault on these two Salvadoran revolutionaries and laid the basis for further attacks.

During the hour-long session, Judge Indelicato did all the government's arguing, with the trial attorney for the U.S. government simply looking on. First the judge denied a defense motion to allow additional evidence. The additional evidence is a ten-volume transcript from a major political asylum case in San Francisco known as the "young male" case. Judge Indelicato's decision to deny this evidence, in addition to harming David and Emilio's case, may set a dangerous precedent for other asylum cases.

The evidence includes testimony from eight witnesses which help establish the claim of the defendants in that case that young males in El Salvador are a grouping who are the subject of persecution. Included is the testimony of ex-National Guardsmen and members of the death

squads who left El Salvador because they could no longer carry out the atrocities. They testified to what they witnessed and carried out as well as specific policies and attacks on young males. Also included is testimony from young male Salvadoran refugees and from Americans who traveled to El Salvador. This case is perhaps the most major political asylum case presented thus far in the country and has been seen by immigrant rights forces as somewhat of a test case. Up until now, INS judges have insisted on documentation that pertains to the individual applicant for asylum. Thus, there have been asylum cases where refugees have shown the bullet holes in their chests from being shot by the National Guard, and the judge has denied their asylum claim because they could not produce the names of the guardsmen who shot them! This young male case challenges the necessity to provide such detailed "proof" and instead proves that a whole grouping is targeted and therefore anyone in that grouping is subject to persecution.

The "young male" case was heard and denied by the immigration judge in San Francisco, who issued a major written decision, and it is currently on appeal. The defense team in that case has made the transcripts available for use in other asylum cases to spare defendants the expense of flying in witnesses for the same testimony.

Without even knowing the content of the testimony, Judge Indelicato raised, "I'm not going to go along with it! I'm not going to allow it!... I don't want you to have a major court case. You can have all the due process available, but not have a major case that just goes on for days and days and days. I like to know who the person is who is in front of me and not have to accept the decision of what happened there. I don't want you to make this into another San Francisco."

It is exactly the type of case put on in San Francisco that the government wants to avoid, where the evidence overwhelmingly supports the claim of the defendants. How much more difficult for the government to carry out its predetermined orders to deny asylum to Salvadorans and deport them posthaste? As Judge Indelicato nervously asked, "Why do you need a multitude of evidence?" as he again denied the motion.

The defense then stated their intention of bringing in several witnesses and, in addition, of flying into L.A. some of the eight witnesses in the S.F. case, if the judge would not allow the transcript as evidence. In an effort to make sure the number of witnesses and testimony on behalf of the two Salvadorans would be limited, the judge then insisted that the first two witnesses to testify be David and Emilio themselves!

By having David and Emilio testify first, the government is obviously laying the basis to deny any further witnesses on grounds that they don't specifically relate to David and Emilio. As the judge asked of the S.F. testimony, "Does it mention the names of these two defendants anywhere in there?" "Here I am thinking of judicial efficiency," the judge cackled. "Why, how can I allow you eight days of testimony that is unnecessary when there are thousands upon thousands of these cases?" In other words, all Salvadorans should have equally as little time as possible to argue their case before they are denied and deported. A perfect example of bourgeois democracy at its finest!

The judge is clearly playing the role of the executioner, as if he stood with a black hood over his head urging the condemned to hurry along since thousands more await the same fate. The government is thus honing its line of attack and clearing the way for a highspeed railroad come February 5.

Response to the case has been widespread. On as little as a day's notice, potential witnesses volunteered to be on call to come to court to testify, some having to travel long distances. Ready to testify for the Salvadorans are the following: an expert witness on international law, who will give their opinion on whether or not and why Salvadorans generally, and these two Salvadorans specifically, are political refugees; an expert witness on what happens to Salvadorans who apply for asylum and are deported back to El Salvador; two witnesses who sponsored the speaking tour that David and Emilio participated in; two witnesses on different aspects of the recent situation in El Salvador; and others are still being pursued. The defense is pursuing the admissibility of the San Francisco transcripts and challenging the decisions of this hearing, preparing for a major battle on the 5th

around David and Emilio's right to bring these witnesses and evidence on their behalf. Clearly what the government fears is not only that the validity of David and Emilio's claims will be made clear, but that the role of the U.S. in El Salvador will be bared and the real crimes against immigrants in this country indicted.

So while the government clearly is preparing to strike more viciously when the hearing reopens on the 5th, the fact they could not railroad through the denial of the Salvadorans' asylum claim this time around is significant. The February 5 date also comes after the trial of the Salvadorans' civil suit against the INS which is scheduled for January 22. Their suit charges discriminatory law enforcement and demands the current deportation proceedings be stopped and their original asylum claim heard. The January 22 trial will be a major battle in the defense efforts to stop the deportations and to set the best possible terms for their asylum hearing on the 5th.

The legal defense committee for the two Salvadorans is calling for stepped-up support efforts. Funds are especially needed in the battle for witnesses on behalf of the Salvadorans. Clearly one of the results of the judge's ruling is to try to force the Salvadorans to have to fly witnesses to L.A. in person. The government is well aware that without funds the Salvadorans' efforts at their own defense are greatly hindered. Checks can be sent directly to the committee or tax-deductible donations can be made out and sent to: Clarence Darrow Foundation, 345 N. Rockingham Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90049. Please attach note indicating the money is for the El Salvador Tour Legal Defense Committee.

The legal defense committee is also urging that support of this case be taken up by already existing El Salvador support groups or that support committees for this case be set up in your area. Please contact the committee for information and materials which can be used. Let us know what your plans are and call us for suggestions.

The address for the El Salvador Tour Legal Defense Committee is: P.O. Box 30922, Los Angeles, CA 90030. The phone number is (213) 487-2918. □

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A HORRIBLE END or An End To The Horror?

by BOB
AVAKIAN

The United Front Strategy as a Long-Term Orientation, and the "100 Flowers" and "100 Schools" as a Long-Term Policy

Lenin pointed out in "Left-Wing" Communism, *An Infantile Disorder*:

The abolition of classes means not only driving out the landlords and capitalists — that we accomplished with comparative ease — it also means *abolishing the small commodity producers*, and they cannot be driven out, or crushed; we must live in harmony with them; they can (and must) be remolded and reeducated only by very prolonged, slow, cautious organizational work.¹⁷⁴

This principle must also guide the strategic orientation and approach to the intellectuals, who generally speaking hold the same class position in society as the small producers and have the same class outlook, fundamentally, though they play different roles and may differ, even sharply in some respects, in terms of their specific inclinations, habits, ways of looking at things, and prejudices. Here it is helpful to recall the statement by Marx that one must not imagine

that the democratic representatives are indeed all shopkeepers or enthusiastic champions of shopkeepers. According to their education and their individual position they may be as far apart as heaven from earth. What makes them representatives of the petty bourgeoisie is the fact that in their minds they do not get beyond the limits which the latter do not get beyond in life, that they are consequently driven, theoretically, to the same problems and solutions to which material interest and social position drive the latter practically. This is, in general, the relationship between the *political and literary representatives* of a class and the class they represent.¹⁷⁵

For these reasons, the united front must remain the strategic orientation for both "living in harmony with" but also remolding and reeducating the petty bourgeoisie, including the intelligentsia, through the socialist transition period; and for these reasons too, this must be a united front *under firm proletarian leadership*.

With regard to the arts and sciences (and the intellectuals involved in them), which have their own particularities, the basic orientation must be that formulated by Mao Tsetung as "Let a Hundred Flowers Blossom, Let a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend."¹⁷⁶ And, as Mao also advocated, this must be a long-term policy, because, as he explained,

it often happens that new, rising forces are held back and sound ideas stifled. Besides, even in the absence of their deliberate suppression, the growth of new things may be hindered simply through lack of discernment. It is therefore necessary to be careful about questions of right and wrong in the arts and sciences, to encourage free discussion and avoid hasty conclusions.¹⁷⁷

(It is also important to note Mao's comment in the same speech that "many of our comrades are not good at uniting with intellectuals. They are stiff in their attitude towards them, lack respect for their work and interfere in certain scientific and cultural matters where interference is unwarranted.")¹⁷⁸

This week the Revolutionary Worker presents the eighth 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 two sections from Chapter III "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat, the Goal of Communism, and the Role of Dissent." Other sections in this chapter include:

The Relation Between The Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Truth — And Between Changing and Knowing the World
Leninism is Better than Bourgeois Democracy
Marx's Profound Insight
Overcoming the Division of Labor of Class Society and Knowledge as Capital

This is a very difficult problem to handle correctly, because, among other things, in socialist society too people with specialized knowledge or ability in these fields will try to turn that into capital and preserve such areas as the domain of a privileged few, shutting the masses out and refusing the overall guidance and leadership of the party, *even when* that leadership is not crude or stiff. In 1950, Stalin wrote: "It is generally recognized that no science can develop and flourish without a battle of opinions, without freedom of criticism."¹⁷⁹ But in practice Stalin did not do so well in applying this. This is linked to some larger methodological problems on Stalin's part, including a tendency to treat Marxism-Leninism as a static, absolute truth, combined with a certain pragmatism: truth = what is needed at the moment, in narrow terms (for example, the "Lysenko Affair," where Stalin intervened to support erroneous scientific theories and suppress opposition to them, in large part because of the exigencies of agricultural production). But Stalin's problems in this arena were also due in no small measure to the fact that he was dealing with what is an extremely complex and difficult problem: how to give "air" to the intellectuals and encourage creativity, critical thinking, initiative, and the "battle of opinions" while at the same time leading the intellectuals — when they by and large do *not* readily accept such leadership or embrace the Marxist outlook and method.

How to handle the dialectical relationship between "100 flowers" and "100 schools" on the one hand and on the other hand the need for the proletariat to (in Mao's phrase) "exercise all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in the realm of the superstructure, including the various spheres of culture"?¹⁸⁰ This is similar to the phenomenon that while truth itself does not have a class character, the struggle to grasp and apply it is most definitely a class question — a question of class struggle — in class society. All-around dictatorship does not mean crude imposition of whatever the current policies of the government are. It does mean that the Marxist method must be in command and leadership must be in the hands of those who have demonstrated the ability to grasp and apply it — in a *critical* way, without turning it into a static, sterile state religion. This too will be a question of sharp struggle. Take, for example, how we will deal with something like graffiti art and artists under socialism. Certainly we will not seek to suppress them and to wipe away their works; but *neither* should we try to "pacify" and "sanitize" them by simply giving them assigned places to do their work, etc. — though there will be a place for that. But beyond that, we should enter into this arena with them, seeking to learn and to criticize, right on the same walls and other places where they are creating — if their shit's no good, artistically and/or politically, then let's tell them and everybody so and make it a mass question if they don't dig our criticism; and especially if it is good, artistically and politically, let's let everybody know that too and support and popularize it, without "legitimizing the life out of it"! Variety, diversity in art is very important; without this, creativity would be stifled, and on the other hand creativity will bring forth variety and diversity — though the artists' self-expression is not more important than the content and social effect of their art (which are principal and decisive through all the different forms in which art is expressed).

Either the Marxist method and proletarian forces — concentrated through the party but also involving the masses and mass initiative broadly — will be in command and leading in the arts and sciences (and the superstructure generally) or the opposite methodology and forces will: classes do and will sharply contend over this, so long as classes (and their social basis) exist. One class or another must win out. There is no "pure" knowledge or search for knowledge (and no "art for art's sake" standing outside or above class contradiction and struggle), just as there is no "pure" democracy (without class content). But fortunately, *one* of these methodologies does provide a comprehensive basis for arriving at, and making a powerful material force of, the truth: the outlook and interests of the proletariat do correspond to the further emancipation and enlightenment of humanity, in a qualitatively greater way than ever before.

This touches on the question of "thinking for yourself." While it has some value to the degree that it implies critical rather than slavish thinking, this no-

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

¹⁷⁴ Lenin, "Left-Wing" Communism, *An Infantile Disorder* (Peking: Peking Foreign Languages Press, 1965), p. 32.

¹⁷⁵ Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, p. 424.

¹⁷⁶ See, for example, Mao, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," *MSW*, Vol. 5, p. 408.

¹⁷⁷ Mao, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions," *MSW*, Vol. 5, pp. 408-9.

¹⁷⁸ Mao, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions," *MSW*, Vol. 5, p. 404.

¹⁷⁹ J.V. Stalin, *Marxism and Problems of Linguistics* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1972), p. 29.

¹⁸⁰ Mao, "Chairman Mao on Continuing the Revolution Under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," *Peking Review*, September 26, 1969; quoted in Avakian, *Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions*, p. 199.

Bhopal

Continued from page 1

fears of loyal Americans that a similar disaster could occur in the U.S., it obviously fell quite short.

Claiming that these standards are the same is also a lie. At press time, Reuters is running a report that Union Carbide has now admitted the absence of an important safety device at Bhopal, apparently an early warning system which could have detected pressure build-up in the storage tank.

The Bhopal plant, according to press accounts, has been the site of two previous leaks, both involving deaths of employees. The circumstances surrounding the leak on Monday have been the subject of daily alteration and deliberate confusion. (One recent story is that irresponsible "unskilled workmen" are to blame!) Mutual recrimination and authoritorial back-biting may yet bring to light some of the details. But if the aftermath of Bhopal is a grim testament to overall imperialist development of oppressed nations, then so too the immediate causes of the leak.

The aftermath is such a testament, and this is being obscured as well. For example, the following from the *New York Times*: "When the plant began functioning in 1979, it was situated on the outskirts of the city. But rapid industrialization and rapid growth in population spurred by new migrants have turned the area into a densely populated slum, well inside the city limits." In other words, "It's not our fault if there's a slum sitting next door to a poison-gas factory," as if these are merely disconnected development patterns.

They are imperialist development patterns in countries like India; which concurrently build promising sectors of the economy, while facilitating large-scale ruination of the peasantry and dumping newer and higher numbers into the ranks of a marginal urban population. The slums around the Union Carbide plant in Bhopal are all the more hideous: a multi-million dollar pesticide plant (no doubt once advertised as a key to India's agricultural future) sits side by side a colony of recently impoverished peasants! Evidently many of these people had "settled" around the plant in hopes of getting work. Instead, they got murdered.

"I know that none of the people were killed on our property," declared a Union Carbide official. Inside the plant, wind socks had been set-up so that in the event of a leak, employees would know the direction of the wind, and which way to run in escape. Nothing like this existed outside the plant. One press account



The chemical in the poison cloud that killed thousands in Bhopal, India, and injured and blinded tens of thousands more, was used for pesticide. But in the Third World, someone is killed by the effects of pesticides every minute, all the time.

The mass killings in the last few weeks — the poisoning in India, explosions in Mexico City, the famine in Ethiopia and the sub-Sahara — show in a glaring light the horror that imperialism always wreaks on Third World countries. In a short, shocking stretch of time, the essence of the lopsided production relations foisted on the world have been laid bare: imperialism is a mass killer, and is especially drenched with the blood of the colonies. Does humanity need to wait for the mass killings of nuclear war to wipe out this awful monster of a system?

The disasters cannot be said to be coincidental. From the beginning, the distorted development of the Third World countries has made industrial dangers all that much greater. As crisis has gripped the imperialist world economy in recent years, these dangers have been left to fester and erupt.

Among the responsible bourgeois authorities on these matters, you can hear some ooze with liberal concern over the "tragedy of poverty" in these lands, or perhaps over the dark side of modern technology. Some other patriots just can't help crowing aloud about how lucky they are to live here in America.

Wrong, on every count. Millions of proletarians are, for one example, crowded around toxic waste dumps in this country, subject to a giant Love Canal, and do not — for a great many other reasons — thank the lord that they live in America. On the other hand, to those that do revel in the privileges of life in the imperialist heartland, we say take a good look at the blinded kids in Bhopal, good Germans, this is what your privileges are made of. □

reports that a plant supervisor, notified of the leak, entered the area in a gas mask! Needless to say, those outside were in possession of no such "safety standard." In fact, throughout the forty minutes of the gas leak, *not one warning siren* sounded in the adjacent slums. The alarms only sounded two hours later. To Union Carbide, and its class, "life is cheap" in the oppressed countries — they make it that way.

Medical attention — or rather, the lack of it — became an immediate problem. At first, the number of injured was said to be 2,000. This number was later said to account for those seriously injured. Still later, it was revealed that this number actually only represented the *total capacity* of the hospitals in the area. Outside the overflowing hospitals, 50,000 injured were beginning to camp. There are probably many more injured who have not yet even found their way to medical help.

The dead also became an immediate problem. Moslems dug mass graves, until there was literally no room left in burial areas. Then they dug up old graves. Hindus cremated the dead in funeral pyres. But then, since the area is so poor, these people ran out of wood for fire fuel!

What a grotesque imperialist lopsidedness is concentrated in Bhopal and India! No wood for funeral pyres, but millions in American capital export. Sparse medical facilities, while there are actually more Indian doctors practicing in the U.S. than in India.

"Thank God it didn't happen in America," cried one zealous Chicago media brute, typifying what was largely

the standard fare, occasionally understated but mainly overstated, through the week in the U.S. News about India consistently yielded to public discourse on the "safety problem" in the *United States*, beginning only hours after the devastation in India. And when commentary turned to the notion of lawsuits, liability, and possible Indian demands that compensation be the same as it would had the disaster occurred in the U.S., some in the free press indignantly registered their outrage: "But in India, the standard of living is *so much* lower."

But the more rank and chauvinist they get, the more underscored is their panic. The disaster in India is a severe jolt to the rotting Indian social edifice, coming close behind the bloody suppression of the Sikhs, and the assassination of Indira Gandhi. Upheaval has been widespread in recent months; very scant reports indicate an extremely tense situation in the last week. In fact, the first action of the government, only hours after the gas leak, was to send riot troops into Bhopal to "maintain order" and "squell rumors." Anger at the government is running high; so is anger at the U.S. There have been demonstrations in New Delhi and Bhopal itself.

Yet on Wednesday, an ABC evening newscast would still formulate this bit of wishful thinking: "Since India is a superstitious land, hardened to natural disasters, there's always a good chance that the Bhopal tragedy will be dismissed as bad karma or God's will."

Delusions of a vicious beast, it is true. But delusions all the same. □

CORRECTION

In last week's *RW* (November 30, 1984) in the article on page 6, "U.S. Tries to Deport Azanian Student Leader," two corrections need to be noted. (1) SASCO (South African Students Committee), is not directly affiliated with the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCMA). It is an independent student group in which some BCMA members are active. (2) At this point Twigg has not yet appeared before a judge. All legal proceedings have been carried out by other immigration officials, including a deportations officer and an investigations officer.

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Apologies to Cherríe Moraga, guest at the grand opening celebration of Revolution Books New York; her name was misspelled in the ad appearing in *RW* No. 283.

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In last week's *RW* (No. 283), the article on page 5, "Deep Strikes: More Blood on the Blood Compact," contains an error. In the fourth column, in the middle of the second full paragraph, in the sentence that begins: Specifically, with the deep-strikes doctrines..., the percentage cited with the parentheses should read: 4%.

Uncle Sam And The Army Of God



Wheaton, Maryland abortion clinic that was bombed

In the early hours of Monday, November 19th, a bomb blast destroyed the Metropolitan Medical and Women's Clinic in Wheaton, Maryland. Eleven minutes later about a mile away in Rockville, a second blast damaged a satellite office of Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington. Together the two explosions caused over \$400,000 damage. As is typical in anti-abortion bombings, these bombings appeared to be linked to a string of harassing actions by anti-abortion protestors at the Wheaton clinic. Just two days before the bombing, 46 anti-abortion fanatics had been arrested attempting to disrupt the clinic. A few days after the bombings, the "Army of God" called a local radio station to claim credit for the blasts — the third and fourth bombings claimed by the "Army of God" this year.

The bombings were the latest major hits in an intense wave of right to life attacks on abortion clinics, women's health centers and counseling offices across the country. In 1984 so far, 24 bombings and arson attacks have taken place, in most cases causing major damage and in a number of places completely destroying clinic buildings. The federal government has reported 150 cases of harassment and vandalism against clinics this year — attacks ranging from smashing of equipment, spraypainting slogans inside clinics, and bizarre, thug-like threats like that against one clinic counselor who came home to find that someone had entered and decapitated her cat.

These "pro-life upholders of womanhood" are also no doubt complicit in the series of rape attacks which hit workers in at least one feminist health clinic. Additionally, one militant pro-lifer publicly crows that demonstrations and other actions against clinics raise the rate of medical complications for patients at the clinics.

While such attacks have been going on for years, the bombings and arson attacks have sharply surged this year — in 1983, "only" four bombing and arson attacks were reported to the National

Abortion Federation, the national center for monitoring these attacks.

Indeed, god's army made its increasingly open patriotic colors clear this year, in the July 4th bombing of the national office of the National Abortion Federation's itself. A hole was drilled in the basement wall, the basement filled with propane, and the whole thing ignited. The office staff and local police found a second, unexploded bomb in the building when they entered to inspect for damage. The NAF is still working out of temporary headquarters. Further evidence of just how responsive god's army is to the pressing political needs of the U.S. came during the election campaign — in September alone, seven bombings were reported to the NAF, a wave of attacks coinciding with the atmosphere whipped up during the election by the church campaign to tab Geraldine Ferraro as soft on abortion.

This whole onslaught has been given overall political direction and encouragement by important imperialist figures for years, including most especially by Reagan himself, with his statements that abortion consists of a "holocaust" against the unborn. This hypocrisy, calculated stupidity, and outright encouragement of the work of god's army reached new levels in the wake of the recent Maryland bombings. After the NAF and NOW issued statements in the wake of the bombings demanding a government investigation, the Justice Dept. announced that while the bombings would be investigated, no political connections or organizational ties of the bombers would be probed into or even examined: "We have taken the position that so far our investigation doesn't point to a nationwide organized conspiracy."

Now, it must be stated that even had the Justice Department launched a "full-scale" investigation, this could only be for the purpose of more credible whitewashing of the forces behind the anti-abortion violence. But this is not in the cards, since for one thing, a real investigation would undoubtedly uncover

the hand of the state in the conspiracy; far be it for the imperialists to investigate themselves. More fundamentally, in 1984 there are other necessities before imperialism, namely a big thumbs-up and pat on the back for the pro-lifers and their idiocy.

You see, explained a Justice Department lawyer, these attacks against abortion clinics, including bombings, could not, by definition, be terrorism. As paraphrased in the *New York Times*, she said, "...The Bureau's working definition of terrorism was 'unlawful use of force or violence by an organized group to intimidate or coerce a government in furtherance of political or social objectives.' This would exclude attacks on abortion clinics, she said."

This week, FBI chief William Webster underlined this message of congratulation to the "pro-lifers" saying that prosecution of those responsible for the clinic bombings was "low priority...I'm trying to hold the line and not call everything terrorism," said he.

Really! Somehow we must have missed the government's carefully considered language on the question of terrorism. Heretofore, we have only been aware of wild fantasies of "Libyan hit squads," running around Washington, "preemptive strikes" against Black revolutionary nationalists who are freely called terrorists even though they hadn't done anything, and furious threats by the Americans against unnamed "terrorists" in the Middle East, a term which seems to include anyone who hates the U. S. (a long list indeed). "Holding the line" against calling people terrorists hasn't seemed to be part of the program...

Back in the real world, there is of course evidence galore of broad conspiracy in the clinic attacks. Leaving aside for the moment the question of the hand of the state in all this, those carrying out the violence haven't very much bothered to deny the organization of the attacks. FBI chief Webster calls the more frequently used name "army of god," "a nice name originated with Don Benny

Anderson who was convicted of kidnapping an Illinois doctor and his wife in 1982; Anderson has admitted carrying out that kidnapping and bombing in two other states. Besides continued use of the name in anonymous telephone calls by "pro-life" bombers, some groups continue to openly support Anderson and his wife.

Then there is the pile of evidence which plainly links the anti-abortion bomb squads and the brainless god squads that keep to picketing and harassment. For example, in Everett, Washington, the Feminist Women's Health Center was picketed every day for four months. One day last fall, without explanation, the picketing was suddenly stopped. A couple of days later, the clinic was bombed. After three bombings in less than a year, the Everett clinic was closed. Similar evidence of collusion and coordination between bombings and lower levels of attacks and harassment abound from across the country — a director of the National Abortion Rights league told the *New York Times*: "Bombings almost never occur in isolation. It starts with picketing, then paint in the waiting room, then the locks are jammed."

The National Abortion Federation has collected statements from clinics across the country that have been the targets of what are by official definition not "terrorist" attacks. The administrator of an abortion-providing clinic in Virginia wrote: "On May 26, 1983, an arsonist, using a ladder to gain access to our second story window, broke into the clinic and used kerosene to set fire to our offices. The damages totalled approximately \$140,000...the vice-president of the Virginia Society of Human Life made a public statement to the newspaper that 'We rejoice' at the news of the fire."

"Subsequent to the fire, the frequency of demonstrations and the number of demonstrators in attendance increased dramatically. Almost daily, protests were staged. One demonstrator, dressed as a doctor, chased women around the public easement in front of the building, a paper hatchet in his hand. The following day a confrontation erupted at the front door of the building between a patient and a protestor. Another patient was followed by protestors to a restaurant next door to our building and verbally assaulted in the restaurant. All degree of normalcy began to elude us. It became impossible to predict what the next day would bring. Already making a difficult decision, our patients now expressed fear for their confidentiality and question whether they are going to be verbally attacked when they leave the building..."

"1984 began for us with telephone harassment and bomb threats; and, on February 17th, 1984, a bomb exploded outside of the building. Although only one of seven pipebombs exploded and minor damage resulted to the bank downstairs, the message was clear. On the same evening, I was requested by the police department to leave my home 'for a few days.' Police officers escorted my family to a friend's house to ensure our safety. Today, my children stay with friends after school until I pick them up in the evening."

One name that comes up frequently in the NAF collection of statements from abortion providers is that of Joseph Sheidler, director of the Pro-Life Action League, which has branches in a number of cities across the country. It describes itself as the "Green Berets of the pro-life movement." Sheidler specializes in a type of intimidation and harassment tactics increasingly being used against abortion clinics and the women that use them. For example, a book Sheidler says he plans to publish, called "99 Ways to Close Abortion Clinics," contains chapters such as "The use of inflammatory rhetoric," "Use of threats: pressure," "How to rattle your opponent," and so on.

Sheidler has also made no secret of his approval of the work of the Army of God, and has even flaunted his contacts with it, though he has claimed to be personally opposed to bombings. He is so "opposed" that he made a media event out of visiting the wife of Army of God kidnapper Don Benny Anderson after Anderson was in prison, and later in the same day organized a demonstration against the doctor who had been kidnapped by Anderson.

Sheidler prides himself on his "abortion counseling" — which consists of

Continued on page 15

What's Happening in the World Economy?

POINT-COUNTERPOINT

On the wealth of nations and the poverty of theory

"In June 1982 I attended a conference of economists from all over the world in Tokyo. The intellectual disarray among them was complete — not shared ideas about what was going on, why, and what could be done about our ailing economies."

—Lester Thurow, *Dangerous Currents: The State of Economics*

"It is certainly not for want of technical sophistication that mainstream economics cannot explain crisis. If anything, the formal elegance of its computer-nourished models seems to correlate with their essential emptiness. The problem could be likened to alchemy — some highly complex and developed procedures and methods, but lacking any scientific foundation. This is not to deny the value of computers; it is simply to observe that the class position and interest of those who seek to rationalize and defend a rotting system make it impossible for them to grasp the world as it is, and as it is developing."

—Raymond Lotta, *America in Decline*

What happened to the U.S. economy?

"In as few as 20 years we have gone from the American Century to the American Crisis. . . . A deepseated American conviction that our children's future would be brighter than ours, that our ability to produce and create wealth knew no limits and that all Americans would ultimately share in this cornucopia, has given way to doubt. . . . Crises are not inevitable; but they become more likely in the absence of institutions that can anticipate and forestall them."

—Felix Rohatyn, *The Twenty-Year Century*

"History's most powerful empire was erected on the ashes of World War 2. Puffed up and confident, the U.S. imperialists coined a phrase to describe the new state of affairs: 'The American Century. . . .' For all its imperial arrogance, the American colossus would not have its century. The very advantages and real strengths the U.S. derived from the settlement of World War 2 not only made possible a period of marked expansion, but also contained the seeds of severe economic crisis. The defense and extension of empire gave rise to resistance from the world's people and to conflicts with rivals. These nearly four decades of United States dominance are now turning into their explosive opposite."

—Raymond Lotta, *America in Decline*

"Underlying the high rates of unemployment, the sluggish growth in the domestic economy, and the failure to successfully compete in the international market is the deindustrialization of America. . . . The essential problem with the U.S. economy can be traced to the way capital. . . has been diverted from productive investment in our basic national industries into unproductive speculation, mergers and acquisitions, and foreign investment."

—Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison, *The Deindustrialization of America*

"Why certain sectors of the U.S. economy were modernized while others atrophied in the postwar period can only be understood in terms of the prerogatives and necessities of empire flowing from the outcome of World War 2. The international position of U.S. imperialism dictated that it maintain and continually upgrade an immense and highly advanced military sector; at the same time, the establishment of specific political and financial arrangements strengthened its ability to expand internationally and enabled it to profitably delay the retooling of some basic industry."

—Raymond Lotta, *America in Decline*

On the international debt crisis

"A method must be devised to cope with the international debt problem. The International Monetary Fund, in particular, must continue to support debtor countries that need time to service their debts and that cannot rely on the private banking system alone. The I.M.F. must also be more flexible in dealing with key countries whose political or strategic importance means that they cannot be allowed to slide into anarchy."

—David Owen, Saburo Okita, and Zbigniew Brzezinski
"Exploiting Summitry," *New York Times*

"The international banking and monetary system is beset with grave difficulties. In point of fact, the prospect of mounting financial disorder is of major concern to policy-planners at the highest levels, and desperate, if unreported, shoring-up action is taking place. Things have greatly worsened since the early 1970s. Both the further ballooning of the financial superstructure and the stop-gap measures to prevent its bursting are playing themselves out. But exactly on account of intensifying crisis and sharpening rivalry between the two imperialist blocs, the focus of attention and repair within the U.S.-led bloc has shifted very directly and immediately into the political and, especially, military spheres. Nevertheless, the financial structure that is at once a sort of lubricant and glue for the bloc remains a concentration point of economic contradictions, and is by no means immune to a major snap, the shockwaves from which would be profoundly felt through the world economy. And the stability — or lack of stability — of this structure interacts with the broader tightening and war preparations that are on the imperialist agenda."

—Raymond Lotta, "International Financial Ills: Large Scope for Contagion"

Current world tensions and the threat of war

"The age of imperialism, both old and new, is indeed over."

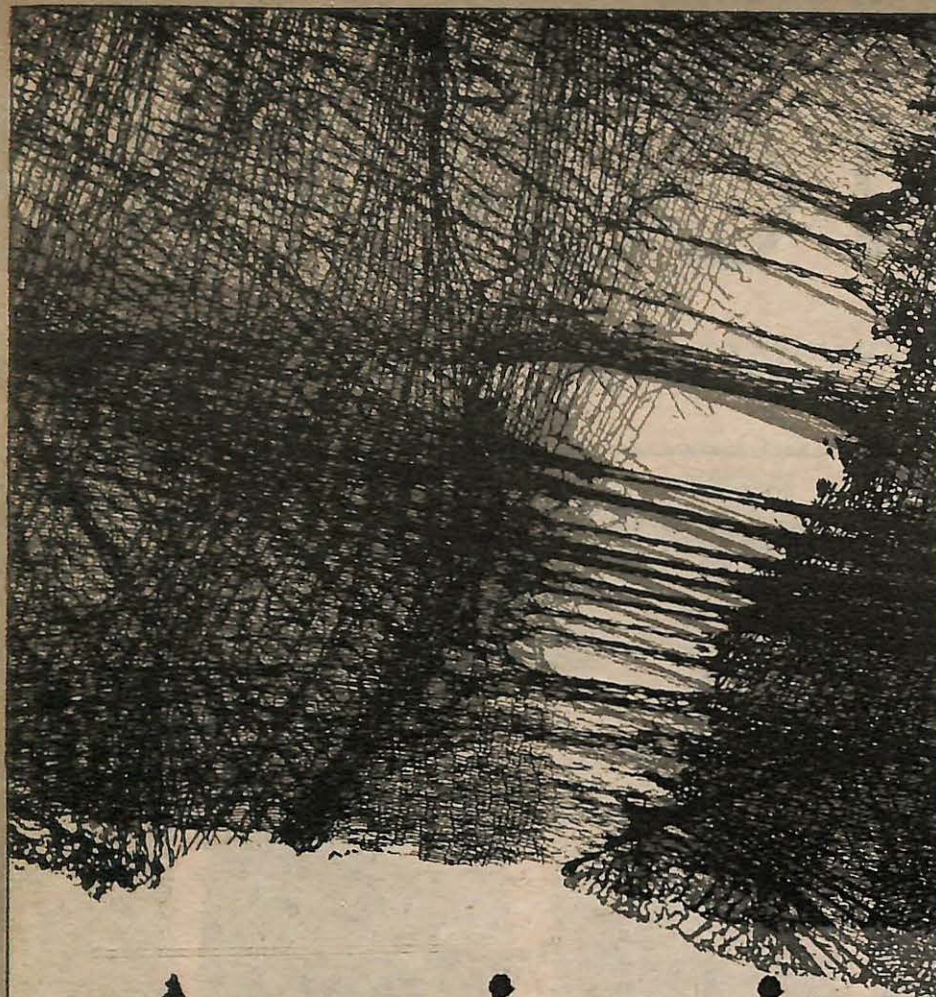
—John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Voice of the Poor*

"John Hackett's novel, *The Third World War: August 1985*."

—President Reagan, in response to the *New York Times Book Review's* question,
"What is the most important book you are reading for your work?"

"Lenin's emphasis on the inevitability of world war under imperialism is considered by many to be the most antiquated aspect of his thought. According to this view, world war could only be the result of the madness of a Reagan or the product of shortsighted and bungled diplomacy. But the reality of the present-day world is that no realignment short of a total redivision of the world will enable imperialism to overcome economic crisis and resolve its politico-strategic difficulties. The division of the world and the structure of world capital do not permit either the volume of capital flows or the requisite reorganization of capital internationally to fuel an expansionary process. World war is a question for this decade."

—Raymond Lotta, "On the Contemporary Relevance of Lenin's Theory of Imperialism"



America in Decline

An Analysis
of the Developments
Toward War and Revolution,
in the U.S. and Worldwide, in the 1980s.

Raymond Lotta with Frank Shannon Vol. 1

"An ambitious and often interesting attempt at Marxist interpretation of world developments in the 20th century."

John C. Campbell
Foreign Affairs, Fall 1984

"America In Decline offers a searching examination of the ways in which the United States has been thrown into crisis by major shifts and changes in the global system of political economy."

Eric R. Wolf
Distinguished Professor of Anthropology,
City University of New York
Author of *Europe and the People Without
History* and *Peasant Wars of the
20th Century*

"Lotta, a notable American Maoist, has written a valuable Marxist tract. . . . The book is highly readable. . . with minimal Marxist jargon. This volume is divided equally into theoretical explorations and application of theory to the history of the world and the U.S. until 1945. Teachers of Marxist theory and history would probably find it interesting to examine the volume for possible student use. No timetable is given for the appearance of subsequent volumes in this series, but that may not be important, since the most contentious issues in Marxist circles are treated here."

Choice, a Review Journal of the American
Library Association,
December 1984

Arguably one of the most important Marxist analyses ever published in this country, *America in Decline* breaks new ground and offers fresh insights into the origins and implications of the contemporary crisis of world capitalism. It identifies and examines, as no other work before has, the forces that have brought the world to the precipice of the most destructive war in human history. This work is essential for understanding the causes and dimensions of the world crisis of the 1980s and the potential that it holds for revolutionary transformation. *America in Decline* shows that beneath the seeming madness of the arms race, beneath an international debt crisis that almost defies quantification, beneath the great power interventions in various corners of the world, and beneath the obfuscation and triviality of mainstream economic and political thought can be found an objective logic — the logic of capital in the imperialist epoch.

Volume 1 contains three introductory studies. The first chapter lays the theoretical foundation for the work as a whole and sets forth its principal theses. The second chapter surveys the rise and ascendance of U.S. imperialism, emphasizing those factors which would play a crucial part in the bolstering and unraveling of its international position in the years after 1945. The third chapter subjects

the received tradition of Comintern crisis theory to blistering criticism.

America in Decline combines a mastery of material with a sense of urgency. Marxism here is presented and applied with rigor and vision. At a time when the economic collapse of entire countries and the nuclear devastation of the Earth are no longer viewed as remote possibilities, Raymond Lotta's insights into the mainsprings of twentieth century history and the prospects for the coming decade cannot be easily dismissed — not when basic and perhaps fateful decisions and choices confront us all.

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Important Speech By Raymond Lotta At Madison

On November 29, Raymond Lotta lectured at the University of Wisconsin, in Madison, the kickoff of a nationwide speaking tour. His talk, entitled *"Resurgent America" or the Desperation of Empire? The Breakdown of Pax Americana and the Onrush of World War III*, was sponsored by the Class Analysis and Historical Change Program and the Sociology of Economic Change Program, both part of the graduate studies division of the Sociology Department. A capacity crowd of some 100 undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty filled the lecture room where Lotta spoke. His presentation was divided into three major sections: a theoretical model of capitalist accumulation in the twentieth century; an overview of the key stages and turning points of the post-World War 2 period; and an examination of the crisis of the world imperialist economy, showing why a violent redivision of the world was on the agenda for

international capitalism. Lotta also offered a perspective on the recent economic recovery in the United States. He pointed to its fragile and contradictory character, and emphasized that this recovery had to be seen in a strategic light as well, that is, in relation to war preparations.

The speech was followed by an extensive question and answer period. Discussion touched on issues ranging from the role of petrodollars in the international financial circuits to the character of the Soviet Union's external economic relations. What stood out about the program overall was the seriousness with which Lotta's speech was received and the intensity with which the issues it raised were taken up by the audience. One faculty member compared the excitement generated by the presentation to the radical spirit of the 1960s. An article in the campus daily summarized major themes of Lotta's talk. □

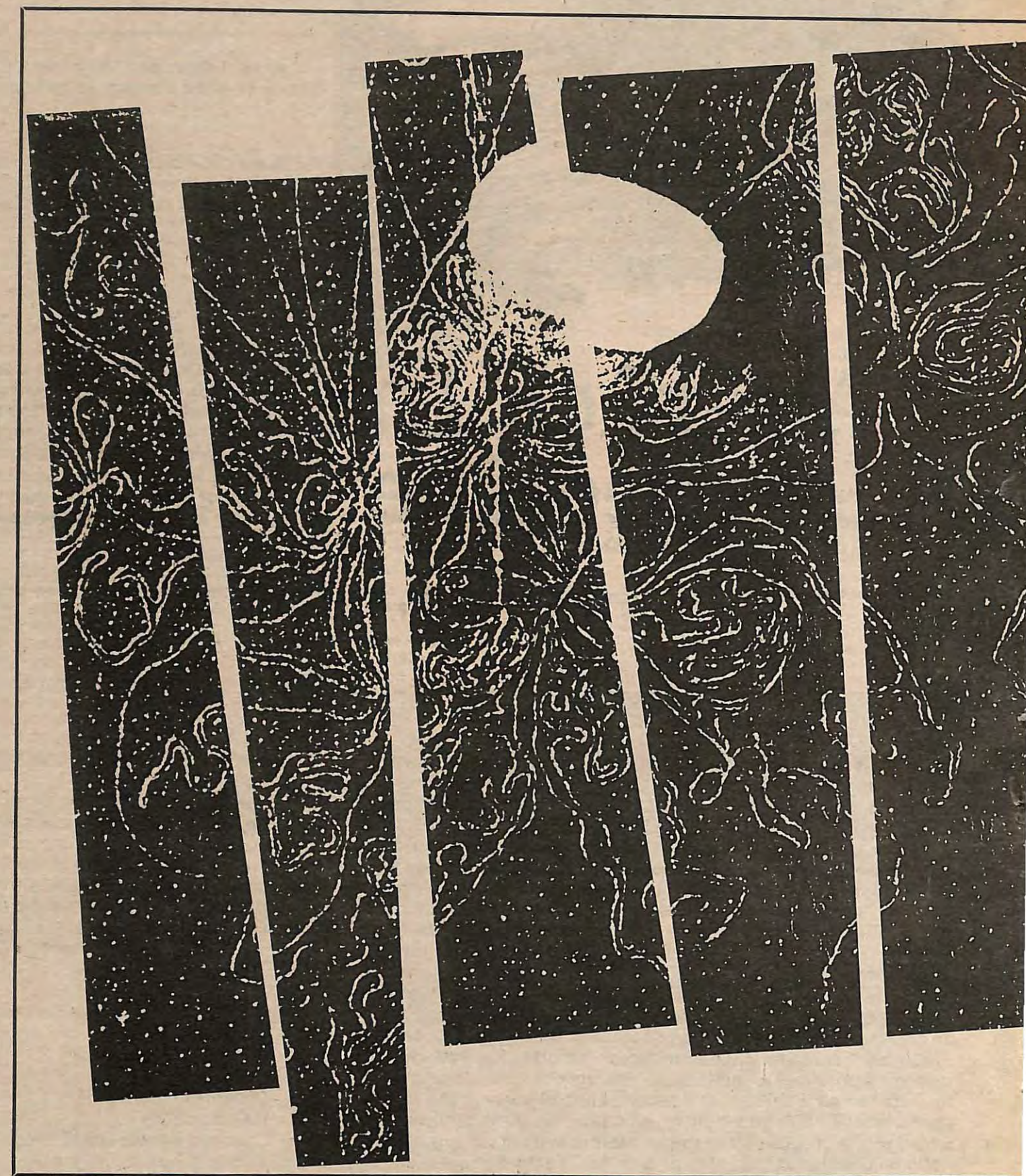
NOT IN OUR GENES

A Breath of Fresh

by A.S.

To all those who feel like they're going to explode if they have to listen to just one more "explanation" (read: justification) suggesting that the great social inequities of this world and outrageous social phenomena such as rape or wars of plunder (or even the uprisings of the oppressed) can be traced to inherent biological differences among individuals or between social groupings, or attributed to some fantasized depiction of an inescapable (and rather nasty) human nature forged in the course of our species' early evolution. . . . Good news! An excellent book has just been published which thoroughly takes on and demolishes a whole slew of these biodeterminist theories on their own scientific turf and goes beyond that, drawing the connections between them, revealing their common philosophical and methodological underpinnings and examining how such theories and approaches are fostered by — and in turn serve to legitimize and reinforce — the prevailing social order. The book I am referring to is *Not in Our Genes: Biology, Ideology and Human Nature* by R.C. Lewontin, Steven Rose, and Leon J. Kamin (Pantheon Books). And it is an important addition to the growing body of critiques which have begun to challenge the veritable onslaught of determinism emanating from scientific circles, roughly since the publication of E.O. Wilson's *Sociobiology* in 1975. Many of these recent critiques have been quite good (see for instance Lewontin's articles in professional journals, Stephen Jay Gould's *The Mismeasure of Man*, and Stephan Chorover's *From Genesis to Genocide*), and all this represents a new and very welcome challenge to the status quo in the scientific sphere. But the publication of *Not in Our Genes* will most likely be seen by friend and foe alike as the most comprehensive and sweeping counterattack to date, and it is one which the determinists will not easily dismiss or ignore.

On the other hand, precisely because it poses some serious challenges to determinism and to the intensifying reaction of these times, one could have predicted that this book would not receive the kind of massive official promotion which attended, for instance, the publication of Wilson's book. While *Not in Our Genes* is objectively a very fine and challenging work written by eminent scientists who are well respected in their fields, and while it does in fact lend expression and a more unified voice to what have been the sentiments of many, and to what have been the until now somewhat scattered and disconnected attempts of scientists in a variety of fields to regain the initiative and not get swallowed up by the determinist upsurge, there has been no rash of newspaper articles and other media events proclaiming a major theoretical assault on sociobiology and scientific determinism generally — "E.O. Wilson may be all wrong!", etc. — that's just not what these times are all about. While there is little chance that *Not in Our Genes* will be relegated to obscure bookshelves (and will hopefully be used broadly in university classes for instance), we should all be thinking about



Microscopic bacteria, magnified 20,000 times, surrounded by their own genetic strands of DNA.

ways of promoting this book and popularizing its contents and the existence of this very welcome trend of radical science.

Not in Our Genes: the title literally jumps off the cover of the book in bold block letters which are a call to arms to all those who have been thirsting for an opportunity to take on the whole lot of biodeterminism and a throwing down of the gauntlet to the determinists themselves. *Not in Our Genes* boldly challenges the most basic and false assumption underlying all their theories — the notion that complex human behaviors and forms of social interaction and organization can be reduced to some underlying and fixed genetic blueprints which deterministically prescribe what we as humans are or can ever hope to be. This is in fact the heart of the issue over which a clear line of demarcation must be drawn today: to the question of where to find the root causes (and bases for change) of human behaviors and forms of social organization, it is essential to

first state clearly, *Not in Our Genes!*¹

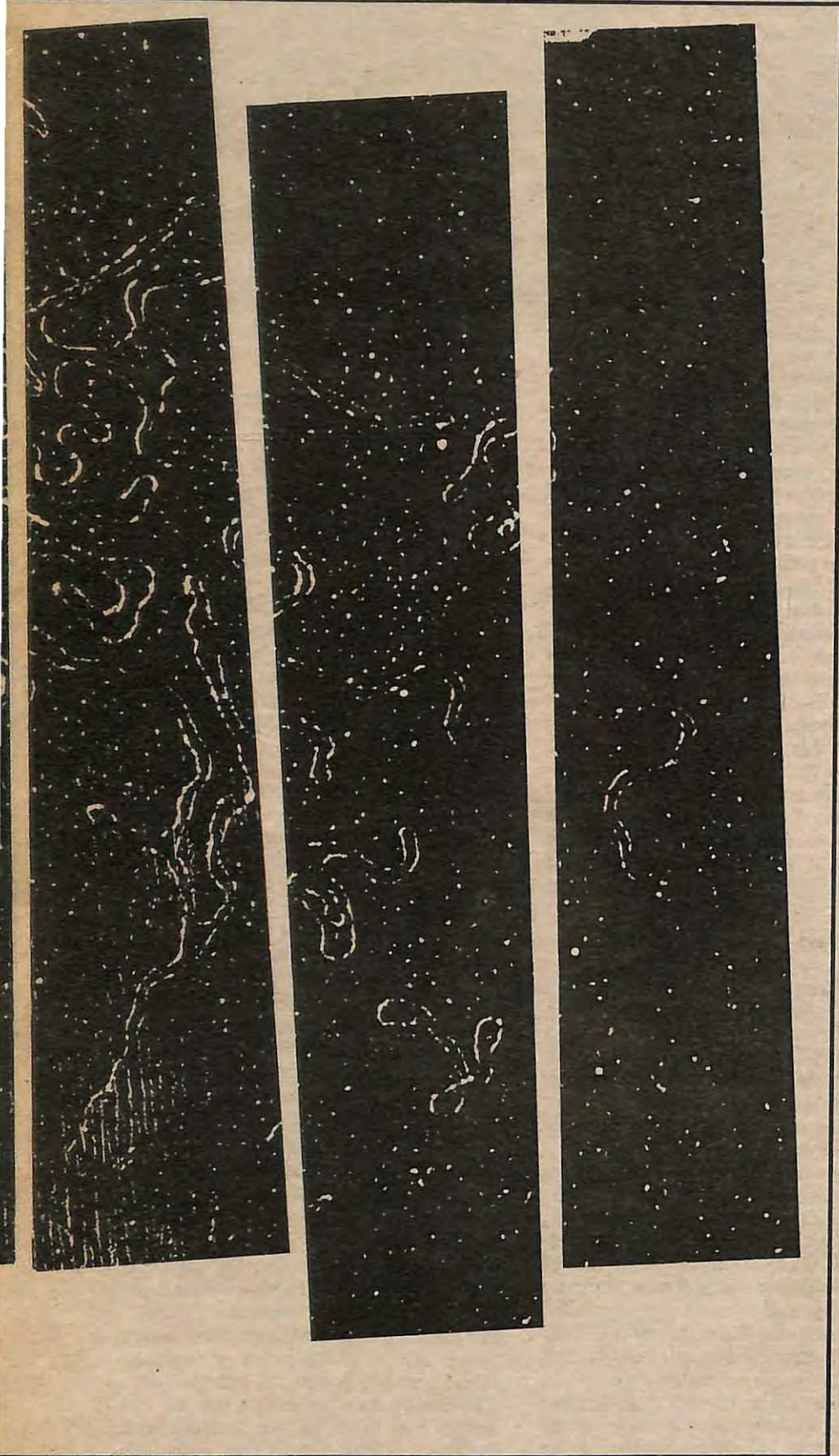
At the height of the 1960s social ferment such a proclamation would perhaps have seemed obvious to many. This was the time when the determinists were on the defensive: when the likes of Jensen and Shockley were being run off university campuses for their racist theories on the supposed heritability of IQ; when science undergraduates were avidly trying their hand at exposing how unfounded such theories really were. At the height of the social movements of that period, theories which portrayed human social life as essentially static and immune to change just simply did not wash, and were widely held up to ridicule. And this social ferment was reflected in scientific spheres in numerous ways, affecting the kinds of questions asked, the methods of doing research, and so on. Attempts were made to break down the ivory-tower isolation of science circles, to promote

collective research projects, to launch radical science movements, and to search for more sweeping and dynamic interpretations of the workings of natural systems. While never fully broken with, crude reductionism was definitely out of favor. The times fostered, and demanded, more sweeping views!

The fact that within a decade or so some of the most narrowly reductionist, static theories and worldviews have not only enjoyed a resurgence in scientific spheres but have been elevated to a status of unprecedented legitimacy and canonized as some sort of visionary scientific and social vanguard just goes to show once more how old reactionary ideas are never finally defeated so long as the material underpinnings of those ideas (the prevailing social relations) remain fundamentally intact. But *Not in Our Genes* has the delightful feel of the spirit of the '60s which hasn't gone down for the count. The authors have undertaken to combat the onslaught of reductionism and determinism with some of that same spirit, but with more depth and breadth than many '60s attempts in that direction

¹ And it is certainly worth noting that one of the scientists forcefully making this statement is himself an evolutionary geneticist by training!

Air In the Scientific Sphere



which left many insufficiently prepared for the renewed reactionary offensive of today. The authors of *Not in Our Genes* quite simply explain that they want to be able to go beyond constantly rushing about, putting out the fires as they flare up: "Now it is IQ and race, now criminal genes, now the biological inferiority of women, now the genetic fixity of human nature" (p. 265). And while they do not neglect to wage any of these particular battles, they clearly see the need for a more all-encompassing analysis which can tie it all together and allow them to expose (and sever) the ideological and methodological threads which hold the whole rotten edifice together.

Science and Politics

The authors of *Not in Our Genes* themselves view things from a certain political perspective and are refreshingly open and direct about it: they frankly align themselves with the interests of the dispossessed of this world and, whatever political differences there might be among them, all "share a commitment to the prospect of the creation of a more

socially just — a socialist — society." Furthermore, they see the need for a "critical and liberatory" science to contribute to that goal and feel that most of science today actually serves to retard social change in that direction. Thus, in addition to their own avowed partisanship, they contest the notion that there exists some kind of absolute "scientific objectivity" and argue forcibly that science, scientists and scientific institutions cannot be viewed in isolation from a broader social context and the prevailing social relations and worldviews. They reject the common notion that scientists are "individuals confronting an objective and external nature, wrestling with nature to extract its secrets, rather than... people with particular relations to each other, to the state, to their patrons, and to the owners of wealth and production. Thus scientists are defined as those who do science, rather than science being defined as what scientists do" (p. 33). In line with this they argue that to thoroughly criticize biological determinism it is not sufficient to reveal its gross flaws in methodology or the treatment of data. It is not merely

"bad science," as many critics would describe it, but like all science it is "embedded in a social matrix" which itself must be subjected to scrutiny and criticism since it is this matrix which frames what questions get asked, what kinds of explanation are considered legitimate, what constitutes a valid test of theory at any given historical moment, and so on.

Typically, critics of biodeterminist theories have either pointed to its scientific errors in a vacuum or focused on its reactionary political implications with little examination of its scientific premises and methods. In contrast to these approaches the authors of *Not in Our Genes* (who trace their orientation back to Marx and Engels) stress that in order to make a thorough critique of erroneous scientific theories and methodologies, it is necessary to evaluate *both* the internal scientific logic of descriptions and explanations *and* the social framework which channels what questions get posed and defines the criteria for scientific legitimacy. Only in this way will we be able to understand why so much "normal science," as they put it, can today "be in such poor correspondence with the real world of objective relations that it is intended to reveal" (p. 34). To fully appreciate the import of such statements one should keep in mind again that views such as this are usually very marginal, and rarely openly expressed in science circles where one is likely to pay a price for holding to such radical approaches... and yet here it is, expressed in a major book by three well established and respected scientists! This is no small thing.

Clearly the authors' intent is to arm the readers with an understanding of what's wrong with biological determinism which will carry them further than to the very next conflagration over a particular issue. They are very concerned to demystify the whole process of how science gets done, what confers special legitimacy on scientists, etc., and their book is valuable even just on those grounds. In comparing the role of science to that of the Church in feudal times as "the source of legitimacy for ideology," they point out that today "universities serve as creators, propagators, and legitimators of the ideology of biological determinism. If biological determinism is a weapon in the struggle between classes, then the universities are weapons factories, and their teaching and research faculties are the engineers, designers, and production workers" (p. 30). One certainly can't accuse them of mincing their words! Again, this is especially refreshing and important in times when so many intellectuals are cowed by the renewed flaunting of open reaction and are unwilling to say peep about anything for fear of "rocking the boat" — the rest of the world be damned!

The authors of *Not in Our Genes* are clear about the role of ideology as a "weapon" in the service of either hindering or promoting social change. They note that one of the principal ways for those in power to avoid violent confrontations challenging their rule is to channel struggles "to an institutional level — the courts, the parliamentary process, the negotiating table. Since these institutions

are themselves in the hands of the possessors of social power, the outcome is better assured, and, if concessions must be made for fear of successful disruption, those concessions can be small, slow, and even illusory. Those who have power must, if possible, avoid the struggle entirely, or at least keep it in bounds that can be accommodated within the institutions that they control. To do either requires the weapon of ideology" (p. 64). They go on to say that one of the most effective weapons of those in power is to convince any who would challenge them of the "legitimacy and inevitability of the reigning social organization" (p. 64). What we need then are "ideological counterweapons that deprive the old order of its legitimacy and at the same time build a case for the new."

The authors discuss how today's various biodeterminist theories are rooted in the general determinism and reductionism which has characterized the conduct of nearly all modern science and which is closely associated historically with the coming to power and subsequent consolidation of the bourgeois class, and which to this day continues to reflect and reinforce the prevailing worldview and methodologies of that class, based on existing social relations.² Their probing of some of these political and philosophical questions — in their own right and in historical perspective — makes a strong case for the need to break with determinist and reductionist methodologies and for applying instead the methodology of dialectical materialism in attempts to understand — and change — nature and society. It is this material, in combination with their vivid exposures of the scientific bankruptcy and reactionary social uses of the major biodeterminist theories — in relation to IQ and the supposed inheritability of intelligence; male-female differences; mental health; or the all-encompassing dictates of sociobiology — which makes this book so special, especially in these times.

It should be noted that the presentation of a developed argumentation urging the application of the dialectical materialist method to scientific endeavors is exceedingly rare, especially in the U.S. where such views are rarely held among eminent scientists and even more rarely publicly expressed. The degree to which such a perspective is "out of line" is reflected in the tenor of some of the reviews of *Not in Our Genes* which have accused it of much "exaggeration" and "shrill rhetoric" and generally failed even to give a sense of the depth and breadth of the analysis contained in this thought-provoking book. (See, for instance, Melvin Konner's hatchet job in the August '84 issue of *Natural History*.) On the other hand it is significant that such a prominent figure as Stephen Jay Gould should have felt compelled not only to defend the substance of the scientific arguments in *Not in Our Genes* but

Continued on page 10

² A discussion of this deserves further treatment. It is outside the scope of this article; but it is taken up in an article in the forthcoming issue of *Revolution* magazine, No. 53.

Not In Our Genes



Continued from page 9

to state that he shares the authors' basic political orientation and supports their call for an alternative methodology. He writes in part:

"In short, we must use what so many great thinkers call, but American fashion dismisses as rhetoric from the other side, a dialectical approach.

"Dialectical thinking should be taken more seriously by Western scholars, not discarded because some nations of the second world (apparently this refers to the Soviet Union — A.S.) have constructed a cardboard version as an official political doctrine. The issues that it raises are, in another form, the crucial questions of reductionism versus holism, now so much under discussion throughout biology (where reductionist accounts have reached their limits and further progress demands new approaches to process existing data, not only an accumulation of more information)" (*New York Review of Books*, August 16, 1984).

Refuting Biological Determinism

If, among other things, *Not in Our Genes* contributes to a more open polarization among scientists on the question of the application of Marxist dialectics to science it will have performed a very important function. More specifically, what *Not in Our Genes* sets out to do is to refute what it terms the three basic claims of biological determinism: (1) the notion that inequalities in society are a direct and ineluctable consequence of differences in intrinsic merit and ability among individuals; (2) the notion that such differences (in merit, ability, etc.) are rooted in underlying genetic differences; (3) the further notion that such presumed biological differences between individuals inevitably lead to hierarchical forms of social organization among human beings because it is supposedly part of biologically determined human nature to form hierarchies of status, wealth and power.

The authors of *Not in Our Genes* show the bankruptcy of all these claims from a number of different angles, including through a series of detailed exposures of the combination of faulty scientific assumptions, flawed (or even fraudulent) experimental procedures and general unfounded speculation on which the major biodeterminist theories rest. They further demonstrate how biodeterminist theories readily flow out of an overall reductionist methodology which attempts to interpret the properties of complex wholes (whole organisms, or whole societies, for instance) only in terms of the properties of their component parts. For instance, complex social phenomena are treated as if society was merely a collection of individuals with individual characteristics: we have wars because individual humans are aggressive. And complex human behaviors are reduced to the assumed properties of their genes (which are assumed to code for such things as altruism or selfishness!). In addition to exposing the absurdity of many of the assumptions made concerning the properties of various units of matter (genes, whole organisms, etc.), the authors of *Not in Our Genes* point out the basic fallacies of all reductionism: *complex wholes are in fact often characterized by properties which are not present at the simpler level of organization of their component parts, and even component parts often acquire properties in their interactions within a complex whole which they do not have in isolation.* And yet typically the reductionists, biodeterminists included, view things as if the properties of complex wholes could be reduced to the properties of component parts which are treated in isolation and as if they were "ontologically prior to the

whole." That is, they are treated as if they had existed first, as isolated discrete units in the absence of the complex wholes, and had conferred upon these wholes their most basic and fundamental properties. For example, individuals are treated as if they had at some point existed prior to society, or genes are analyzed in a vacuum, cut off from interactions with higher levels of organization.

The authors show how biodeterminism is in fact "a special case of reductionism" and how such a view does not actually correspond well at all to the material world where things and processes are in a constant and ongoing state of interpenetration rather than isolation, and where the characteristics of one level of integration may in fact yield little insight into the organizing principles of matter at a whole other level of integration — a crucial point which is never understood by the sociobiologists and other variants of biodeterminists. While their focus is mainly on the biodeterminists who are the most concentrated expression of reactionary bourgeois ideology and politics in modern science, the authors of *Not in Our Genes* also devote some attention to criticizing the methodology and conclusions of the supposedly more liberal "cultural determinists" who sever the relations in nature and society from the opposite end, and of the "interactionists" who have made only a partial break with the reductionism which plagues modern science.

These arguments are examined more closely elsewhere, as are some political and philosophical shortcomings in *Not in Our Genes* — in particular a certain amount of unfortunate clinging to ideals of bourgeois democracy in their treatment of "the idea of equality" and a significant and recurring eclecticism reflected in a failure to distinguish between primary and secondary aspects of contradictions or to distinguish which contradictions are themselves more defining of a given process at a particular point in time. These criticisms will not be reiterated here, although I do think such questions must be worked out more correctly both for broader political reasons (figuring out the way forward) and for developing and giving full play to the application of dialectics to science. But this is part of what makes this book challenging — it provides a good basis both to refute much bourgeois ideology and scientific methodology and to begin to go further and wrangle among ourselves over some of the questions which must be taken up to further deepen and extend the method of dialectical materialism. For all these reasons, then, both to combat the onslaught of reactionary biodeterminism and to stimulate us all to sharpen our ideological counterweapons (and because it makes for some very enjoyable reading!) this book should be read and discussed.

What follows should provide the reader some sense not of the political and philosophical discussions per se, but of the content of what could be called the "exposure chapters" of *Not in Our Genes* (Chapters 5-9), which are the specific refutations of the principal biodeterminist theories in vogue today. These are careful and methodical analyses exposing the errors of scientific methodology — the flawed assumptions, the incredibly shoddy or nonexistent experimental procedures, etc., which these theories revolve around. The main points are well documented, references cited, and in short the reader has here at his or

her disposal an excellent compilation of the argumentation needed to challenge and completely shatter the basic premises of these different theories on their own turf, wherever they might surface.

These chapters should be particularly useful for those who want to go up against the proponents of determinist theories to combat their reactionary social role (in classrooms and public forums of various kinds) and who have a basic sense of what is flawed with their methodology but are unfamiliar with much of the specific scientific literature, the particular studies conducted, and so on. These chapters are guides into the specialized knowledge in these areas, which can be gone back to time and again as the need arises. The critiques are thorough and up-to-date, and if "facts" were sufficient to settle a question, there is no doubt that these would certainly do so! I should also point out that these chapters are far from cut and dry and will pretty much keep readers on the edge of their seats, even if they are already familiar with many of the specific arguments. For one thing, there is always something very appealing about an exposure well done, the feeling of tracking down the ideologues of reaction in their innermost sanctum. For another, the authors of *Not in Our Genes* are clearly not jaded cynics concerned only with being able to take credit for an intellectual "coup" scored against professional rivals. They clearly understand and reveal how determinist theories get translated into great misery and oppression for so many people in the world. And one senses and shares their genuine outrage as they report on the incredible abuses, which can be directly tied to these theories, which repeatedly lead to such things as incarceration, forced sterilization, brain surgery and massive drugging of the undesirables of society and especially of those showing any signs of restlessness with the present order of things — theories which provide facile justifications for the preservation of the most crying misery of the present or even of the unprecedented horrors which await humanity if we fail to prevent nuclear war.

On I.Q.: "The Rank Ordering of the World"

Ever since the beginning of this century IQ tests have been used, among other things, to shunt working-class and minority children into educational dead ends, to justify forced sterilization programs for the poor and to set up restrictive immigration quotas to reduce the influx of "undesirables" (i.e., people from the oppressed nations) into the imperialist motherlands. All this has been justified on the grounds that IQ tests sort people out according to relative intelligence, that this intelligence (or lack of it) is reifiable and that it is inherited (and therefore passed down family lines), and that it is only reasonable therefore to keep those of supposedly inferior mental abilities (who conveniently turn out to be overwhelmingly minorities and the poor generally, by these criteria) from wasting the resources of society, polluting the homeland and diluting the gene pool. Even where eugenicist solutions have not directly been invoked, the popularization of ideas that minorities and working-class people are of inferior abilities has contributed to their social oppression and to the notion that the source of this oppression lies in their own limitations. The authors of *Not in Our Genes* document this history but also demonstrate forcefully that IQ tests are culturally biased and that furthermore intelligence cannot be reified, that is, treated as some discrete quantifiable object, as a fixed underlying property rather than as an ongoing process. In fact IQ theories objectively (sometimes even explicitly) define intelligence as whatever IQ tests measure! And it can be clearly shown that — whatever it is that these tests measure — it has little to do with a person's mental capacities and abilities and everything to do with reflecting existing social relations.

As for the supposed "heritability" of IQ, the authors document the massive fraud and almost incredibly sloppy experimentation techniques which have typically characterized research — claiming that intelligence is inherited — and point out that they are so shoddy that they would never have been published in

scientific journals if the same standards had been applied here as are applied to genetic studies in domestic animals!

The failure to distinguish between genetic and environmental factors in development (p. 95); the supposition that correlation necessarily indicates causality; the conflation of "heritability" and "environmental variance" (p. 97); the truly grotesque methodological flaws which have characterized IQ studies of human twins, the massive and influential fraud perpetrated by Cyril Burt (who had nevertheless been "knighted by his monarch and bemedaled by the American Psychological Association" ! [p. 87]); the tale of horrors has been told elsewhere (e.g., Gould, Chorover) and is here sharply and thoroughly reviewed. From a scientific point of view I appreciated a few additional points: Aside from the fact that there is no valid study demonstrating the inheritance of whatever it is that intelligence tests measure (certainly not intelligence!), determinists also confuse heritability and changeability, wrongly assuming that there is a strict identity between "inherited" and "fixed" which is not true (e.g., the loss of an eye is presently irreversible, but it is not inherited; on the other hand, certain diseases are inherited, but are not irreversible).

There is also an interesting discussion of some principles of population genetics which are very relevant here: it is shown that variance for a trait among individuals in a given population is not the cause of differences between populations. Even if what IQ tests measured was heritable (it is not) that would still not explain the differences in test scores between racial or class groups: the key assumption of the likes of Jensen — that observed test differences between racial and class groups reflect genetic differences between these groups — falls apart even on that basis. Along with this, biological techniques of recent decades which make it possible to measure genetic variation within and between human groups for a number of traits have revealed that popular conceptions of "race" in everyday language (based mainly on skin color, hair type, some facial features) have very little to do with what is a true biological race,⁴ and are poor predictors of genetic variance. It turns out that:

- 85% of all human genetic variation can be found within any local group. ("If everyone on earth became extinct except the Kikuyu of East Africa, about 85 percent of all human variability would still be present in the reconstituted species" [p. 126].)

- All humans are striking in their high degree of genetic similarity.

Only a very small percentage of genes occur in multiple forms (thus providing the genetic variation within the species). But even this minimal terrain for variation does not correlate well with what we commonly recognize as the major "races." For instance, there are three alternative forms (alleles) of the genes determining blood type (A, B and O), but extensive knowledge now available about the distribution of blood types throughout the world reveals clearly that while different human populations vary in their relative proportions of the different blood types, this does not correspond with the main racial groups as usually defined. A similar distribution of blood types (statistical cluster) can be found, for instance, in one African, three Asian and one European population (p. 122). Examples such as this show that "the social and historical definitions of race that put two East African tribes in the same 'race' but put the Japanese in a different 'race' were biologically arbitrary" (p. 120). And again the authors stress how it is "the very small degree of divergence between geographical populations as compared with the genetic variation among individuals" which is one of the remarkable aspects of human evolution and history (p. 127).

On the Determined Patriarchy

The authors of *Not in Our Genes* describe the social systems in which they

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³ See upcoming issue of *Revolution* magazine No. 53.

⁴ Defined in *Not in Our Genes* as: "a population of varying individuals, freely mating among each other but different in average proportions of various genes from other populations."

Law 'N Order For Those Without Lawns

Chicago

This week the newspapers in Chicago were filled daily with strategies for dealing with the gangs; with major proclamations on the subject by the mayor, a march of thousands of people, and urgent meetings by the most prominent Black political figures. The so-called "war on gangs" is on, the community said to be begging for more cops, a genuine Major Issue has been opened full-throttle.

Most immediately, the trigger for the uproar was the tragic shooting two weeks ago of high school basketball star Ben Wilson. Actually, something was already in the works back in October as exposures of gang problems (at a less emotional level than at present) focused on a housing project called Henry Horner Homes. This huge, all-Black housing project on Chicago's West Side was "discovered" by the media of this city in a mini-wave of publicity early in October. The project was featured no less than five times on the TV news and was the subject of a front-page article in the *Chicago Tribune*.

What did these trained reporters discover after their visits to the Horner projects? The lack of maintenance that caused a woman's stove to explode, burning to death four people in September (see *RW* No. 271), the broken-down elevators, the pitch-black stairwells? No. They discovered "gang crime and violence." After three shooting deaths an army of police invaded the projects and rounded up youth "by the wagonload," as one man said. "They treated them like animals, picked them up and kicked them in the ass. One put a gun to my son's head." Twenty youth were rounded up on flimsy charges without evidence, photographed, had the brims of their hats torn off (a hat turned sideways is sometimes a gang symbol) and were released without charges. Police stopped cars in the street for searches and in one case made six occupants lie face down on the ground as a cop cocked his gun against a man's head and said, "If you move, I'll blow your head off."

Something Afoot

In the midst of this furor over Horner Homes, the *Chicago Tribune* indicated that perhaps something much bigger was afoot. An October 25 editorial fondly recalled Mayor Jane Byrne's move into the Cabrini Green housing project three years previous, unleashing what they accurately called "a police crackdown that fell just short of martial law," and brazenly called for more of the same throughout Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) projects. The CHA houses 142,000 people, 95 percent Black (about 10 percent of Chicago's Black population). Over two-thirds of the people are on public aid, 70 percent are youth, and one study based on census tracts found that 10 of the 16 most concentrated areas of poverty in the U.S. are located in six CHA projects. The *Tribune* editorial, entitled "Beef Up CHA Security," urged the federal government to spend \$82.5 million on a CHA-approved plan to install security systems, hire a private security force of several hundred, put 100 more Chicago cops in the Public Housing Unit and step up evictions from 150 a month to 400 a month.

When major newspaper editorials start throwing around words like "martial law," something obviously stinks in Denmark. Some sort of repression was being prepared and in the case of Henry

Horner Homes, already being implemented.

On November 20, Ben Wilson, a 6'8" Black high school basketball star who was rated one of the best in the country, was shot and killed by two Black youth. His death was literally pounced on as a godsend by every politician, police spokesman, two-bit preacher and newsmaker in the city. The massive "WAR ON GANGS" was launched with banner headlines and officials of every stripe scurrying to set into place a repressive apparatus for a large-scale clampdown on Blacks and other oppressed peoples, youth in particular.

A wave of anger and sorrow swept Black people and others following Ben Wilson's shooting. Many students at his high school, Simeon Vocational, were in tears over his tragic death. There was a general consensus among Black people, especially in the more oppressed areas where gang violence is sharpest, that this was a particularly foul killing and that gangs terrorizing the masses had to stop.

Sensing in this mass response to the death of one Black youth the opportunity to further unleash the police against other Black youth, the media literally worked itself into a frenzy. The murder was front-page news for days and linked up the question of a proposed police force reduction by Mayor Washington. The usually fractured Chicago City Council stopped all other business and united in issuing a call to "get tough on gangs." Ben Wilson's funeral at Operation PUSH became what one progressive Black minister called "a Hollywood Extravaganza...complete with Stars, Entertainers, Politicians and the usual characters who are in attendance at 'First Nighters.'" Ten thousand people attended and heard speeches by Mayor Washington and Jesse Jackson, followed by a candlelight march through the Black community.

Cabrini Green

The volume of this hysteria and freneticism was turned even louder when six people were shot on the weekend following Wilson's murder. Four of these people, including an 11-year-old girl and an alleged gang leader, were at the all-Black Cabrini Green housing project. Sniping at people on the street went on from the upper floors of the project but the police somehow had "no idea" who was doing it. School authorities incited the situation further by calling Cabrini Green mothers and announcing "rumors of an impending gang shootout." Fearing for the lives of their children, mothers throughout these huge projects came to the schools to take their kids home. The supposed shootout never occurred but great "concern" for the masses flowed from the pages of the newspapers while side-by-side stories called for what amounted to martial law focused on CHA housing projects.

With great pompousness politicians came before the public to announce their programs to "fight gang violence."

Alderman Ed Burke, a leader of the white majority bloc of the city council, set the tone for this when he announced: "The only way to deal with street gangs is to let them do anything they want or lock 'em up." His program was simple: police, police, and more police, including the establishment of an auxiliary police force (basically vigilante squads in white areas). In addition, the city council majority voted unanimously calling for fining parents whose children break the curfew, although the measure wasn't passed.

Not to be outdone the Black bourgeois leaders took the stage. Following a meeting of 50 Black ministers, judges, policemen and other "community leaders," Jesse Jackson announced a 10-point program calling for raising the age and lowering the time of the curfew in Chicago and prosecuting minors as adults. Former Black Panther leader Bobby Rush, now a Chicago alderman, called for a summit to ask gang leaders to lay down their arms and if they refused, to have them "fight the Chicago Police Department as well as Black organized resistance." Black Superintendent of Police Fred Rice promised "a curfew crackdown" and Black Superintendent of Schools Ruth Love targeted 15 schools for "increased police patrol." This was to be nothing less than a battle cry of "law'n order"...for those without lawns.

Time to Strike

Mayor Washington, unavailable for a week because of "sickness," reemerged at a December 4 news conference. "I have never in my life seen the response and the reaction to certain kinds of crimes as we have seen in the response and reaction to gang crimes over the past several weeks. This is clearly the time to strike. It is ripe, and people appear to be ready to do that which they have not done in mass numbers over the years — to become actively and personally involved in assisting and cooperating with the local police department to eradicate a long-standing, cancerous situation." He announced a 4-point anti-gang program in which he reversed his former position and now called for hiring more police, requested U.S. Justice Department aid in areas such as wiretapping and RICO-type prosecutions, targeted the CHA for more police sweeps and evictions and called for a variety of "neighborhood crime-fighting programs."

Anyone who harbors any illusions that these programs are aimed at gangs rather than at Black people in general, especially youth, should check out what is going on at the Cabrini Green housing project. There, an unofficial 9 p.m. curfew has been enforced not only on teenagers but on young adults also. Arrests and police beatings are widespread. During night hours the police are stopping, frisking and running ID checks on virtually everyone on the streets. Police without search warrants are busting down doors of unoccupied and even occupied apart-

ments allegedly looking for guns or drugs. Cars are being stopped and searched.

Youths at Cabrini Green painted a vivid picture of this to the *RW* in interviews this past week. Two eleven-year-old youth put it this way: "The police lock you up for nothing. Maybe you got your hat turned sideways or maybe you just be walking down the street. They pick you up for nothing. Or they come and kick down your door, come in your house, say you did this, that and the other thing. Say they have a search warrant and they don't have a piece of paper to their name."

"The detectives took a sledgehammer and broke down Mr. Zero's door. Say they looking for guns. Hit the door two or three times and busted it down. Tore up his bed and couch, turned the table upside down, busted his TV with the sledgehammer. He was gone. They didn't find nothing."

"The police be locking people up, beating people up. Somebody broke into the store down the street. A boy was just walking by. The police came up to him and told him if he didn't tell them who broke in they'd bust in his two front teeth. He told them he hadn't seen nothing. They hit him in the teeth with their flashlight, threw him in the car and took him to the station. His mother had to come and take him to the hospital."

A 22-year-old worker had this to say: "The police be standing in the hallways. They pull their guns on people. You never see no badge and they're in plainclothes. All you see is the gun and handcuffs."

"They say they got a curfew time. I'm a grown man, 22 years old. A lot of people work at night. But after 9 o'clock they lock you up, period. They stop and search dudes all the time. They may let you go. Then 15 minutes later they be patting you down again, asking for ID."

"Ben Wilson shouldn't have gone out like that, but he didn't die in Cabrini Green. The police won't change a thing except people are getting tired of getting harassed by them."

A youth who goes to Lincoln Park High, a school nearby Cabrini, said: "The police were smacking a boy yesterday, hitting him in the legs with their sticks, kicking him in the behind. The boys were playing outside in the mall. One boy had his hat turned. They came up and smacked him in the head. Then they looked on our arms for tatoos. They hassled me because I had my ear pierced."

At Home With the Mayor

"War on gangs" has always been a catchall slogan under which police attacks are launched against Black people. In the late 1960s the Gang Intelligence Unit played an especially active role in the attacks on the Black Panther Party in Chicago and in the general repression against Black youth in the aftermath of the urban rebellions. When Jane Byrne "in effect declared martial law" at Cabrini Green three years ago, leading to

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Law 'N Order

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massive arrests and evictions, this also was done under the cover of a "war on gangs."

Byrne settled into Cabrini bringing an army of pigs with her. As an opening salvo in this so-called war against crime, the ex-head of the Green Berets was hired with a great deal of fanfare to lead an assault of several hundred riot-equipped cops, complete with helicopters hovering overhead, on a search and destroy mission through the vacant apartments in search of guns. Following this, the Chicago Police Department formed a special "Gang Suppression Bureau" to beef up police patrols in the projects. In the first five months of 1982 the police unit assigned to Cabrini had arrested 4,200 people, over one-third of the total 12,000 residents who live there.

A Black cop who had some trouble carrying out his mercenary role at that time told Chicago's Black daily newspaper, "In the first four years we did not make more than 400 arrests. . . . It's very common to hear white policemen say they want to get more heads. When Black officers object, they are transferred, or when they say why not arrest people on Rush Street (a high-class nightlife area) who are doing the same thing, they are told they cannot make any arrests within a three-block area outside Cabrini. . . . We have a police car equipped with a computer. There are some Cabrini residents who go to work each morning. We have to sit at the bus stop, ask the people for identification, then run a check on them. Many times they have warrants out for child support payments or traffic warrants."

Today this previous police crackdown at Cabrini is being declared the precedent for the current "anti-gang" campaign. Although Cabrini is a focus of the attack again, a spokesman for Mayor Washington announced the machinery is being put in place to target five "hot spots": three Black CHA projects — Cabrini, Horner Homes and Robert Taylor Homes — as well as Humboldt Park (a Puerto Rican neighborhood) and Little Village (a Mexican community). The bottom line is a qualitative leap in clamping down on these oppressed Black people and other minorities. Both Mayor Washington's bloc and the white majority bloc of the city council agree on the need for more police and more CHA evictions. "It is interesting how hard-line Washington's new anti-gang proposal is," stated the *Chicago Tribune*.

Philadelphia Plan

There are some differences in proposals for the clampdown. The *Tribune* has carried several articles on the "Philadelphia Plan" for fighting gang warfare and Mayor Washington has announced his program is modeled, to some degree, after this. An important element of this is funding "ex-gang leaders" to work with the police in patrolling the streets and "counseling" gangs. This bears striking similarities to the way the bourgeoisie used certain gangs in the late 1960s to undermine the struggle of Black people. Jeff Fort and the Black P Stone Nation in particular were promoted by Jesse Jackson and funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity and then used to suppress Black urban rebellions and to oppose the Black Panther Party. Today one gang has a contract with the Teamsters Union to act as enforcers and during the last election intimidated Black voters from going to the polls on behalf of the racist Vrdolyak bloc that had been battling the administration of Mayor Washington. This plan is an attempt to take this tradition one step further in actually getting "ex"-gang leaders to work for the state.

This particular aspect of dealing with gangs — utilizing ex-members — remains somewhat controversial. Not only in Philadelphia but also in Los Angeles police work closely with "former gang members" in something called "crisis intervention." In Chicago there has been such a pilot program in Humboldt Park but much of this work goes on in less direct ways. Feuding has emerged in the

city council over how much to put this on front street. One problem is that, because gangs are often linked to one political machine or another, promoting these kinds of programs inflames warring among factions in the city government. So this part of the program might not be immediately on the agenda here.

However, the one thing on which everyone is united is the need for more "community cooperation" with the police in some form in the war. The development of "community involvement" has been a major focus of the current campaign. Mayor Washington proposes the creation of a Task Force on Youth Crime Prevention which will include, among others, the Chicago Superintendent of Police and work to establish cooperative ties with churches, business organizations and civic groups, as well as "oversee" neighborhood block watches, walkie-talkie patrols and whistle alerts. The *Chicago Tribune* informs us that this involves eavesdropping on conversations of youth and mothers calling the police to have their own children arrested.

Other Cities

This same phenomenon of mass marches and community involvement with the police in cracking down on "crime" is now going on in several other major cities in the country, with local variations. In the San Francisco Bay Area a "war on drugs" has involved several hundred people marching side by side with police chiefs against drug dealers. In Detroit a war on youth crime has also been launched with very similar and perhaps more developed efforts to sweep community groups into the frenzy. In Los Angeles and Philadelphia efforts to involve the "ex"-gang members in police work have been going on for some time. In each city, churches and community groups are involved, parents wooed to play the role of cops right in the household. In every locale, an atmosphere of emergency has been manufactured.

The call for this kind of "community involvement" was originally issued by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) following the first Miami rebellion (see "Miami: View From the Other Side," *RW* No. 213). The bourgeoisie took the Liberty City rebellion of Black youth very seriously, as a portent of the future. The LEAA undertook to study this rebellion from the bourgeoisie's strategic point of view and in the summer of 1980 issued a 100-page report entitled: "Prevention and Control of Urban Disorders: Issues for the 1980s." Interestingly, the report points to the forging of an alliance of the police with community groups as a key link in the suppression of the masses at times of urban rebellions. The report states: "It has now become commonplace to state that the police can no longer act alone in preventing disorder. The prevention and control of disorder must become a collaborative effort between government, citizens, and the police. . . . Assessing the potential for disorder is not a one-time activity; it requires the establishment of new police functions which will involve police personnel at all levels of the organization, officers with special competencies and relationships, as well as neighborhood-based organizations." This report goes on to argue that while a massive show of police firepower is often the only answer to a "breakdown in order," there are more subtle, sophisticated ways to "prevent and control disorder." Key to this is drawing in significant sections of the middle forces among Black people, those who "have a major stake in orderly development of the neighborhoods," and making them part of the military strategy for putting down rebellions in the 1980s.

"Civil Rights of '80s"

In this light it is interesting to note that a Chicago TV station recently editorialized about how the "war on gangs" and Black-on-Black crime has become the "civil rights issue of the 1980s." There is a point to this. For the Black bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie this is what is being promoted as the program for social activism of the day. It is a program precisely not directed at systematic and pervasive national oppression, or even at the KKK-inspired attacks on Black people. As we pointed out last week, a lynch-mob attack on a Black family in "The Island" neighborhood of Chicago, the firebombing of a Black family on Chicago's Southwest Side, and the gangs of white youth attacking Black people and burning

crosses in Uptown have raised nary a public word of protest from Mayor Washington, Jesse Jackson or other Black establishment figures who at the same time have been some of the driving forces behind the drive against Black-on-Black crime.

Further, this "civil rights issue of the '80s" goes even one step further by reversing previous correct verdicts on the role of the state's repressive apparatus, especially the police and their brutality directed against the Black masses. In the '80s, the program is to be far from indicting police terror against Black people, but is supposed to *plead for more pigs in the community*.

Underlying this has been the increasing polarization of Black people, and the ways in which the bourgeoisie wants and needs to use this. The Chicago "war on gangs" relies for its success on the leadership of a minority section of Black bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie; its fundamental aim is control of the much greater numbers of Black people who are being even further driven down by the system.

The Gangs

Ben Wilson's murder and the shootings at Cabrini Green are indeed despicable crimes. There have been over 100 youths — the vast majority Black and Puerto Rican — killed and hundreds wounded in vicious gang violence in Chicago so far this year. This same phenomenon exists in other cities around the country. But the notion of sending in the police to stop gang rivalry, when, for instance, they are well known for *inciting* one gang against another, is almost laughable.

This sudden concern for Black youth blown away in gang violence is a little too much to stomach. What right do these authorities have even to speak on this question? As one woman at the Horner Homes projects said, "When one of these boys gets murdered the police say, 'Good, that's one less nigger for us to kill!'" The sudden concern over the safety of Black youth has nothing to do with newly found tender mercy for Black people from on high, and everything to do with the suppression of this section of the basic masses.

The police have hypocritically declared themselves the "protectors" of Black people from gang violence while police infiltration and ties with the gangs are well known. Crocodile tears flowed from the authorities' eyes over the killing of Ben Wilson and the shootings at Cabrini Green, yet these deaths were most definitely in their interest and used by them. In fact, suspicions about the official version of these murders runs high in some quarters. A spokesperson for one Black community group with ties to the Washington administration told the *RW*: "It seems like it was done by design, like it didn't happen by chance. . . . The police wanted to hire more men. They'd do anything to get it." So far the evidence is circumstantial, yet it must be noted that the Chicago Police Department has gained a lot from these killings, including a reversal of the proposed layoffs.

That the gangs are a source of fear and misery for those who live in the ghettos and barrios, especially women, no one would deny. Gang violence is a part of the fabric of everyday life that impacts on the mood of the masses and contributes to an atmosphere of intimidation and demoralization. Blowing this up in the media and bringing it to public attention, however, has always proven to be the green light for police-state measures against the people.

. . . and the System

Far from the system moving to stop gang violence, it is quite evident that elements such as the gangs have long been incorporated into the power structure of the inner cities. There are a myriad of ties, both direct and indirect, between the state and the gangs, and they have become part of the way the city is ruled. There is the whole underground economy — especially involving drug distribution — in which the gangs, the police and other state agencies are intertwined. In addition, the authorities have a long history of utilizing gangs to undermine the struggle of Black people and other oppressed peoples. And in Chicago, many gangs have been rather openly in the service of one political faction or another, and at odds with gangs linked to opposing factions. For the bourgeoisie to now call for the police to come down on the gangs is really a joke.

In Chicago these links have been crudely apparent. Powerful U.S. congressmen like Dan Rostenkowski, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, utilize gangs to "get out the vote." Part of the Democratic Party machinery includes groups like the Young Voters of Illinois and the United Concerned Voters League, groups organized by the gangs. One gang fits right in with the establishment as a political group and maintains extensive ownership of properties from which they collect rents but pay no taxes.

In addition, the police themselves are a major *cause* of gang killings and gang warfare, not a deterrent to them. As a massive and systematic policy the police pick up one gang member and drop him off in another gang's area, often getting on the bullhorn to announce this before letting him out of the squad car. They also steal gang sweaters and give them to rival gangs. They go through these communities snapping pictures of every youth they see on a particular block and then post these pictures in the police station as "suspected members" of a particular gang. All this fuels divisions, rivalry and murder among the youth, the better for the cops to control and utilize them.

In areas such as Horner Homes, the ties between various politicians and the gangs are so well known that residents have speculated freely about what role the authorities could have played in instigating recent gang murders there. Especially suspicious in this regard, they note, is a recent influx of guns and money to the gangs. One person described how any time the police want to start a gang war they further flood the ghetto with drugs, which leads to rival gangs competing for the same customers — and eventually shooting breaks out.

The authorities are so "horrified" that gangs fight to protect and expand their "turf." What a travesty! The imperialist system itself breeds this phenomenon. "Official" unemployment among Black youth in Chicago now runs 65 percent. This system offers these youth a future of prison, death, drugs or the military. The police constantly round them up, beat them and crowd them into their paddy-wagons and jails. . . . and then there is the "alternative" of the gangs.

In an even more basic way, how dare these imperialists — the greatest gangsters in history — talk about "gang warfare"! One youth who distributed the "Let's End This Madness, Before It Ends Us" leaflet on Chicago's West Side put this into perspective. "Why are we destroying each other? Nuclear war is going to do it better than the gangs with all that radiation. This can kill us quicker than the gangbangers. . . . I laid up half the night last night thinking about how half the world could be killed by radiation. I thought, 'Man, if I had been able to get off into this (revolution — *RW*) sooner, maybe we could have stopped the world from getting blown up.'"

Real Object

From all this it should be clear that the present "war on gangs" is *not* an effort to stop or even deter gang violence. The real object of all these police-state measures is to head off a different kind of crime altogether — the crime of rising up against the system. As a former Black Panther Party member said, "They want to put a heavy police presence in this community because they want to put fear in this race of people and keep this revolution thing from getting out here." Anyone who doubts that the authorities launching this nationwide campaign view it in this context should check out the LEAA report previously mentioned which itself quotes from a 1976 study by the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals. They say: "We cannot afford to ignore the underlying causes of civil disorders during this period of relative calm. The urban crisis is far from being resolved: in many ways, the state of the great cities is more desperate than it was during the most serious riots of the 1960s. . . . these facts may well have contributed to the present quiescence. But this is a false calm, and we must see in the current social situation an accumulation of trouble for the future."

These measures of suppression being undertaken today are preparation for a future when the fissures of political instability already apparent within this system threaten to crack wide open. The majority of Black people are bound to be a "critical mass" in this situation, and the enemy is taking what precautions it can.

Not In Our Genes



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live (England and the U.S.) as "advanced capitalist and patriarchal," and their concerns with the particular oppression of women and the various determinist justifications of this oppression are discussed in a specific chapter as well as in many other parts of the book. In contrast to the biological determinists who argue that the continued domination of men over women is "an inevitable product of our biology, fixed by the biological differences between men and women and determined by our genes," they argue that patriarchy is a "historically contingent form of social organization, preserved by those who benefit from it, a consequence of human biology just as any other social form is a consequence of that biology, but only one of a range of possible social organizations available to us" (p. 133). They go on to trace a clear distinction first of all between *gender* differences (differences between men and women in attitudes and social roles, etc.) and true *biological sex* differences, demonstrating that gender differences cannot simply be mapped onto sex differences in real life. They also criticize the general tendency to overemphasize the differences between men and women (both biologically and socially), by establishing rigid categories of what is male and what is female and by downplaying the broad areas of overlap which again characterize how things are in real life (such rigid dichotomizing obviously is useful for reinforcing patriarchal ideologies). The point is not that there are no differences between men and women (biological and social) but that determinists make unsubstantiated or demonstrably false claims about what these differences are, what they are based on and what their consequences are for social life.

For one thing, as stressed repeatedly throughout *Not in Our Genes*, characteristics of human social organization (including the division of labor in a given society) do not mechanically correspond to, or flow out of, the abilities or proclivities of individuals. Men don't dominate women because they are better equipped to run things, but because of the existence and re-creation of sets of social relations — of a division of labor — which confers inferior social status on women and constantly thwarts their participation in society and their contributions to transforming it. The fact that many women still do not challenge their enforced subjugation is also no indication of any predetermined inclination towards an enslaved state since it is well demonstrated that people's inclinations are influenced since earliest childhood by the broader social context which channels and restricts their aspirations, reinforces or suppresses their abilities, etc.

But instead of examining the effects of these broader social contexts, biodeterminists reductionistically seek the causes of social differences in the roles of men and women in supposed structural differences in male and female brains, hormonal differences, etc. They then claim that these supposed differences have a genetic basis and finally argue that therefore natural selection must have favored these genetic arrangements in the course of human evolution because they were adaptive features for our species. Conclusion: patriarchal relations are natural and inevitable, so don't bother trying to go up against them. This reasoning is of course completely devoid of biological justification. Since the old idea that men are superior to women because of larger brain sizes has been completely discredited (brain size is simply proportional to body size and as such has no correspondence with mental capacities), it is now fashionable to concoct wild theories about how differences in size and

localization of functions in the right and left *hemispheres* of male and female brains must explain their social differences! Amusingly, the determinists have run into some problems of their own making here because some supposedly typically male attributes (such as being supposedly more cognitive, and better at perceiving space relations!) have been "localized" by these reductionist schemes in *opposite* hemispheres! To deal with this dilemma, enter a new theory suggesting that instead of men being "more left-hemispheric" and women more "right-hemispheric," the two sides of men's brains each "does its own thing better." (Their brains are more "lateralized" while the two halves of women's brains are less lateralized and interact more, leading women to be more confused, less precise, more emotional, etc., etc., ad nauseam.) Is there no limit?

Not in Our Genes argues that there is no basis whatever for the absurd arguments which attempt to explain complex behavioral differences between men and women in terms of differentiation and localization of function in different parts of the brain, stressing in particular that in contrast to less complex organisms which have more fixed, genetically programmed neural pathways at birth, which gives them "a comparatively fixed and limited behavioral repertoire," a human is born with "relatively few of its neural pathways already committed"; neural connections are therefore in large part completed after birth during the prolonged period of human infancy and thus in interaction with the external social world.

What of the determinists' claims concerning hormonal differences which they see as also explaining differences in social roles? Here also, the real biological differences are not as marked and as clear-cut as is usually implied and, more importantly, *there is no evidence for the notion that hormone levels specify particular behaviors in either sex.* In fact, the biological sex of humans results from a complex interplay of genetic factors (XX versus XY chromosomes) and *fluctuating* hormonal *ratios*, and this biological basis is further overlaid by cultural and social sexual expectations. Thus, the Y chromosomes of males, for instance, play a role in the differentiation of male secondary sexual characteristics (such as the development of the testes), but, try as the determinists will, they cannot be shown to code for complex behaviors such as aggression. (It is a myth that the XYY disorder of some males who have an extra Y chromosome makes for superaggressive supermales of criminal nature, although this theory was broadly promoted a decade or so ago.) And for all the talk about typically male hormones and their behavioral effects, or typically female hormones and their supposed behavioral effects, it is worth noting that both sexes produce *both* "male" androgens and "female" estrogens, and that both types of hormones (which are even closely related chemically and which can even be interconverted by enzymes in the body) are involved in sexual maturity. What differs is the *ratio* of these two types of hormones, which is itself subject to considerable environmental fluctuation. And while these hormonal ratios usually do correspond to the chromosomal sex of

the individual (though not always⁶) and are responsible for much of what we recognize as the more obvious sexual differences, hormonal ratios do not determine complex human behaviors, not even *sexual behaviors* — the levels and ratios of different hormones in humans do not, for instance, correspond to sexual enthusiasms or preferences as is commonly believed. Social experience on the other hand has a tremendous bearing on sexual activity in humans, and even in many less complex and flexible species. For instance, in humans it is clear that heterosexuality and homosexuality do not stem from hormonal differences, and the authors of *Not in Our Genes* criticize biological reductionist theories which consider that showing one or the other proclivity "is an all-or-none state of the individual, rather than a statement about a person in a particular social context at a particular time in his or her history" (p. 153).

Not in Our Genes provides valuable scientific refutations of the principal biodeterminist theories justifying the continued domination of women by men (theories of fixed and innate individual cognitive differences rooted in brain biology, hormones, androcentric myths of early human evolution, etc.); and throughout they emphasize the importance of *the broader social context* in all aspects of male-female relations. There is, however, a certain secondary aspect of eclecticism and agnosticism which weakens somewhat the treatment of this question. For instance, in order to avoid the pitfalls of cultural determinism, it is repeatedly stated that all forms of male-female relations (past and future) must be "in accord with human biology." This is true in one sense but the constant interplay of biological and social factors is not even-handed — the social aspect should be clearly stated to be primary overall, to outstrip the biological, in all aspects of human social relations and behaviors.

Similarly it is not really sufficient to say that the inevitability of capitalism or patriarchy cannot be predicted from any reductionist analysis of our biological components. This is true, but much more can be said. Our biology itself reveals that it poses no problem to frequent and radical transformations in our social relations since even as individuals we are supremely flexible creatures capable of a wide range of complex behaviors. It is not that we have no way of knowing "the constraints, if any" imposed by our biology, but more that we do know that individual biological differences are, and have long been, far secondary in importance to social constraints in shaping all aspects of human life.

One senses that part of the problem here is that there is confusion over the *origins* of the dominance of men over women and the fact that it has subsisted through so many different forms of social organization. Despite a brief attempt to counter androcentric myths of early human evolution depicting "hunter males" and passive women (as well as correct criticism of a "certain feminist strand of sociobiology" which makes some of the same methodological errors as the school it seeks to criticize), one senses a reluctance to tackle the question of the probable material bases for the earliest divisions of labor between men and women (including in relation to biological differences) or of the material bases for the subsequent emergence of oppressive relations (based on differential accumulations and control of material surpluses) in early human societies.

While it can certainly be argued that *Not in Our Genes* could not possibly launch into a lengthy analysis of these difficult questions which need to be researched much more extensively⁷, I see no reason why the authors have to agnostically throw their hands up in the air and suggest that attempts to explore the early

roots of human division of labor are largely futile, leading in seemingly limitless fashion to "bandying about anthropological speculation," etc., while in other parts of the book passing remarks are made about our "unrecoverable past." Surely, the authors would not hold that all indirect study of past processes and events (all that has been done in the fields of archaeology, paleontology, geology, evolutionary biology) can be reduced to a bunch of unfounded speculations which can be twisted to suit any argument and which therefore are of no greater or lesser merit (correspondence to reality). This question is no different. It is subject to methodical historical analysis from multiple directions, and its essential features (though not all its details) can be extracted from the past with a reasonable degree of certainty given an appropriate methodology, just as in any other area. Lack of understanding of past history leaves gaping holes in our understanding of the present (and future!). Attempts to uncover this history certainly don't need to be doused with cold water and dismissed as beyond the reach of scientific analysis. If we can uncover traces which suggest how entire solar systems were born and developed eons ago, why can't we get some reasonable interpretation of the origins of the dominance of women by men, in a species whose history goes back a mere few million years?

On Adjusting the Mind and on Schizophrenia

Two of the chapters in *Not in Our Genes* are packed with horrifying exposures of how allegations of mental illnesses are frequently used to enforce conformity with the present status quo. The authors give examples from the Soviet Union about how the state "seemed concerned to *invalidate* a social and political protest by declaring the protesters to be *invalids*, sick, in need of care and protection to cure them of their delusions that there were any blemishes on the features of the Soviet State" (p. 166) and then, refreshingly follow that up with a statement about how this is not all that different from what is routinely done in the U.S., Britain, etc. "Perhaps the chief difference" they note, is "that while the most common candidates for psychiatric hospitalization in the West are drawn from among the working class, women, or ethnic minority people who find it hard to locate a megaphone to speak their troubles to the waiting media world, the Soviet intelligentsia who have been hospitalized are neither inarticulate nor dispossessed" (p. 166).

Those incarcerated in U.S. and British mental hospitals include such examples as the women hospitalized since the 1930s for having had illegitimate children (p. 167), a youth committed for life for a bit of unruly behavior (p. 167), and countless others who do not bend to the current program. In particular there have been many theories promoted in the U.S. and Britain that the cause of urban violence lies in "brain dysfunctions" of rioters! This kind of reasoning is often the pretext for incarcerations and for further "treatment," such as the case of a prisoner recommended for possible brain surgery because of such things as "lack of respect towards officials," "militancy" and having an "avalanche of revolutionary reading material." In addition to such things as surgical removal of parts of the brain (lobotomies, etc.), methods employed to control the nonsubmissive include attempts at thought control through the implantation of electrodes, behavior modification programs, which in prisons especially are often euphemisms for torture, and the phenomenal use of numbing drugs, in prisons, hospitals, and even elementary schools!

Among other things, the authors present documentation on the use in prisons of cyproterone acetate for chemical castration and the very frequent use of chlorpromazine which, even officially, is referred to as a "chemical straitjacket." Should there be any doubts about who these drugs are used against, consider the following statistics: In England, for instance, "prescription of sedatives, tranquilizers, and other psychoactive drugs per head of the prison inmates is lower in prisons for the psychiatrically disturbed, like Grendon, than in some general prisons like Brixton and Holloway. In 1979 the average central nervous system drug dosage rate at Grendon was 11 per

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⁶ There are many documented cases of unfortunate individuals born with genitalia resembling one sex while being chromosomally of the opposite sex due to the occasional lack of correspondence between hormonal ratios and genetic sex.

⁷ See, for example, the upcoming book *Of Primeval Steps and Future Leaps* by Ardea Skybreak (Chicago: Banner Press, January 1985) for an attempt to contribute to this analysis.

⁵ *Not in Our Genes* also correctly criticizes some feminist versions of biodeterminism which adopt the very same faulty methodology and accept the "localization" and "lateralization" arguments but suggest that women's brains, or hormones, make them more intuitive, more expressive of emotions, less aggressive, more nurturing, etc., etc. (The only difference here being that women are presented as innately better than men!)

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person per year; in Brixton 299; in Parkhurst 338; and in Holloway, a women's prison, an astronomic 941 doses per inmate per year"!! (p. 174). Consider also that in the U.S. in the late '60s, hundreds of thousands of very young schoolchildren (as many as 600,000 by some estimates) considered "difficult" and unruly were ascribed the label "hyperactive" or that of "MBD" (Minimal Brain Dysfunction), and given regular doses of drugs in attempts to control their behavior. These drug "treatments" were also accompanied by the concoction of elaborate theories claiming to demonstrate the genetic heritability of hyperactivity, based on grotesquely false experimental methodologies which the authors also document.

The various theories justifying and promoting these abuses have many features in common: they offer biodeterminist explanations for complex social contradictions, reductionistically attributing the cause of all kinds of phenomena — everything from urban riots to unruly schoolkids to deeply depressed housewives — to supposed bad genes, diseased brains or chemical imbalances. As is stressed in *Not in Our Genes*, the fallacy of such reductionist argument lies not only in reducing the social to the biological, "but of reducing the richness of the biological phenomena themselves." And these theories are not only used to buttress reactionary political programs but are also used to buttress horrendous forms of treatment for those who really do suffer from mental illnesses.

The list of horrifying tales of theories of mental illness serving reactionary political and ideological ends goes on and on: here a young black in England is diagnosed as schizophrenic because he "uses the religious language of Rastafarianism"; there undercover researchers get admitted to California mental hospitals by pretending to hear voices and then find it almost impossible to get released even after their "symptoms" stop and they explain that they are healthy. The sheer scale of statistics gives one pause for reflection: "...one in twelve men and one in eight women in the United Kingdom — the proportions are similar in the United States — will now go to a hospital at some point in their lives to be treated for mental illness" (p. 197). What a tremendous indictment of the nature of these societies! These figures of course encompass not just the victims of political persecutions (of direct nature) but also all those who at one time or another become unhinged because they are simply unable or unwilling to go along with the current state of life in this supposed "best of all possible worlds." The authors point out that while there are such things as real mental illnesses, one has to wonder about whether one could deem sick a woman who was terrified that she might be raped, or someone who might fall into "apathetic despair about the likelihood of the world surviving nuclear holocaust through the eighties" for instance (p. 199).

An important section of these chapters is devoted to debunking some common myths concerning schizophrenia, a catch-all term for one or more disorders which are lumped together and defined by such characteristics as appearing to be of "split mind," feeling like thoughts or actions are controlled from the outside, like one is cut off from the rest of the world, etc. And this is not considered such a rare phenomenon: about one percent of the entire British population is said to suffer from schizophrenia, and the diagnosis of schizophrenia is most common in the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Apparently, aside from the problem of treating what may well be a variety of different disorders as if there were some single and clearly defined object, it is apparently very common among psychologists and psychiatrists to accept the assumption that a predisposition to schizophrenia is

genetically transmitted. The authors of *Not in Our Genes* are able to sharply demonstrate that the studies which have led to this common belief are completely invalid, characterized once again by grotesquely shoddy methodology and perverted statistics, in ways very similar to what has been done in the area of the genetics of IQ. This field even has its own Cyril Burt type in the person of Franz Kallmann, who also compiled massive amounts of fraudulent data to "claim" the genetic basis of this disorder (and argue for eugenicist policies on that basis). But there is one big difference: Kallmann has never been officially repudiated and his data are still presented in supposedly serious research reviews, etc., although many now quietly discount these data. Even if not taken all that seriously by many, Kallmann's work apparently continues to be the basic treatise which has conferred legitimacy on all subsequent research and theories of the genetic basis of schizophrenia.

Not in Our Genes therefore performs an important social function in exposing this vicious form of biodeterminism which had not previously been broadly discussed. But the authors also focus on the question of schizophrenia for another reason — because it illustrates what they call the "clash of determinisms," the errors of both biological and cultural determinism. According to the authors of *Not in Our Genes*, the last decade or two has seen the flowering of an "anti-psychiatry school" (centered around the writings of Michel Foucault, R.D. Laing, etc.) which they feel uses cultural determinist arguments in refuting those of the biodeterminists: in the views of Foucault and his followers there really is no such thing as mental illness, but only societal "labels" imposed on society's scapegoats; in R.D. Laing's view the roots of such things as schizophrenia cannot be found in the genes, but are to be found in particular types of "family interactions." The authors challenge both these views, arguing that genuine mental illnesses generating a lot of pain and confusion do exist in some cases, and not simply as a consequence of someone being labelled "mad" or whatever, and also stressing that any real understanding of these problems must refer back to the "larger social context" which pushes people in that direction. They call for a dialectical treatment of the interpenetration of biological and social in this area (as in others), pointing out for instance that external pressures including aspects of social relations can themselves cause internal biological transformations in an individual. One cannot therefore say that biochemical changes in the brain of an individual apparently suffering from mental illness automatically means that these biochemical features are the cause of the phenomenon; they may simply occur in response to external pressures.

On Sociobiology

The last of the exposure chapters is in many ways the most important of all because it deals with the most all-encompassing, and influential, expression of modern biodeterminism: sociobiology. Sociobiology portrays itself as the New Synthesis capable of tying it all together, providing a scientific explanation of human nature and human society, and able to provide a sweeping theoretical guide on which sociobiologists hope ethical and political decisions in any future societies will largely be based. As is argued in *Not in Our Genes*, this combination of a professed ability to distill broad unifying principles underlying all human experience and simplistic, reductionist explanations of very complex natural and social phenomena has lent sociobiology a broad appeal in academia, and more broadly in society. Not surprisingly — given that its pronouncements are first and foremost justifications for "the way things are" — the New Synthesis has been promoted to the skies by those in positions of authori-

ty: countless academic positions and new professional journals have been created to give voice to the sociobiologists; grant money has poured in; the popular media have broadly disseminated their claims for mass consumption, etc., etc.

In truth, one of the most striking things about the New Synthesis is how very, very old it really is! The authors of *Not in Our Genes* clearly trace the intellectual antecedents of the sociobiologists to such early bourgeois ideologues as Thomas Hobbes who, in the 17th century, set out to apply Galileo's reductionist scientific methodology to an analysis of human society and then concluded that humans could be understood as machine-organisms struggling to maintain themselves in a world of finite resources, thereby inevitably leading to such things as ruthless competition in human society. (Although, even Hobbes derived such things as competition from social life, and not from supposedly innate characteristics of individuals as do the sociobiologists!) This theme of "the war of all against all" as the natural state of things was of course extended and amplified by the 19th century social darwinists who vulgarized and twisted elements of Darwin's theories concerning "the struggle for existence" of animals and plants in order to concoct elaborate justifications for the ruthless economic competition and colonial expansionism of the new bourgeois order. Spencer's call for "the survival of the fittest" would henceforth legitimize the worst exploitation and oppression by conjuring some sense that all this corresponded quite simply to the exigencies of nature. By the 1960s the so-called "pop ethnologists" such as Robert Ardrey, Konrad Lorenz, Desmond Morris and Lionel Tiger would continue this tradition of trying to popularize the supposed existence of a scientific basis in the laws of nature for supposedly fixed and innate characteristics of human nature such as aggression and territoriality. Today the sociobiologists, in perhaps somewhat more sophisticated versions better suited to these times, continue this long tradition.

Indeed, the basic sociobiological premises are that:

- (1) Human nature can be described in terms of a long list of supposedly universal social characteristics — such as territoriality, tribalism, indoctrinability, xenophobia, patriotism, or aggression in various forms, to name just a few. Even unselfish behavior is actually self-serving in their view, being motivated solely by the expectation of "reciprocal" rewards!
- (2) These complex characteristics are coded for genetically (sometimes very directly as in the hypothesis of genes "for" altruism, sometimes a bit more loosely as in the phrase "genes hold culture on a very long leash").
- (3) These supposed universal human characteristics, which are also genetically encoded, are further assumed to have been a product of natural selection which favored such genetic arrangements in the course of early human evolution because they conferred reproductive advantages (direct or indirect) on those exhibiting these genes.

While it is not possible here to review all aspects of the critique of sociobiology (which is forcefully presented in *Not in Our Genes*, echoing and expanding on the excellent critiques done by Lewontin in numerous professional articles, as well as by Stephen J. Gould in *Mismeasure of Man* and in his other popular works), suffice it to say that all three aspects cited above are thoroughly refuted in this chapter: All the supposedly "universal" determinants of human nature are actually shown to be only parts of what is above all a very variable and contradictory behavioral repertoire exhibited by all individuals. It is further argued that complex social phenomena simply cannot be reduced to neat little conglomerates of the behaviors of individuals which the sociobiologists consistently reify (i.e., treat as if they were some discrete unitary entities instead of ongoing processes) — words such as aggression are abstract terms which are used to describe complex social interactions and which do not correspond to any reified bits of behavior.

The sociobiologists are also justly criticized for their common method of using identical terminologies to describe widely different phenomena in different species (e.g., "castes" or "slavery" in ants as well as in human societies) and of describing complex social phenomena as if they

were mere collections of individual behaviors (e.g., the notion that wars can be explained in terms of individual aggression). As for the innate genetic basis of social behaviors, the authors correctly point out that "no one has ever been able to relate any aspect of any human social behavior to any particular gene or set of genes, and no one has ever suggested an experimental plan for doing so" (p. 251) — a true statement well worth pondering at length given that all sociobiological theory rests on the assumption that such a causal connection exists!

In fact what the sociobiologists do is treat their assumption about the "universality" of a character as if that in itself were evidence of genetic causality. Unbelievable, but true! And this despite the fact that in addition to the lack of any real evidence and the impossibility of testing for this in humans, it is well known that "the manifest traits of an organism, its phenotype, are not in general determined by the genes in isolation but are a consequence of the interaction of gene and environment in development" (p. 252). And again, in the human species this environment is above all social, and its characteristics cannot be reduced to the characteristics of a collection of individuals: "the laws of relation of individual genotype to individual phenotype cannot by themselves provide the laws of development of society." In other words, even if we did have the means to uncover every possible phenotypic manifestation of every possible human genotype in every possible environment (which we cannot in fact do), we still wouldn't know the most important things about human society!

Finally, on the question of the supposed "adaptiveness" of all these supposed human universals: the authors of *Not in Our Genes* convincingly demonstrate how sociobiology can explain literally anything as resulting from natural selection in the course of human evolution given its basically flawed methodology. All one needs to do to apply the sociobiological method is:

- (1) start with the assumption that some complex social phenomenon can be atomistically reduced to individual behaviors which you must also assume to be under direct genetic control;
- (2) assume that the persistence of these genetic arrangements over time indicates that they were favored by natural selection at some time in the early evolution of our species — i.e., these genetic arrangements conferred some reproductive advantage to individuals who would (directly or indirectly through closely related kin) leave more offspring and therefore ensure the perpetuation of these genetic arrangements;
- (3) add to that the assumption that natural selection always acts as a unidirectional force and a perfecting mechanism which is always geared to adaptation (which it is not) and that it is absolutely the only mechanism of major evolutionary change (which it is not) and, presto! you can now generate any number of "imaginative reconstructions" of how some social characters evolved until you find one that fulfills your expectations. A truly foolproof method!

As shoddy as all this may seem it is important to realize that the influence of sociobiology is incredibly pervasive even among "serious" scientists who are attempting to combat many biodeterminist arguments but without fully breaking with a lot of the reductionist methodology and assumptions, including that "certain feminist strand of sociobiology" referred to earlier which struggles against many of the chauvinist sociobiological interpretations without rejecting some of their most basic assumptions about human phylogeny and ontogeny and their relation to social organization, and who end up simply concocting determinist theories with a different slant. *Not in Our Genes* should prove a very useful book for anyone who wants to uproot the influence of sociobiology — and all of biodeterminism — at its very foundation.

In all, then, *Not in Our Genes* signals an important advance in the almost ten-year-long struggle against sociobiology (and against reductionism and biodeterminism more generally). Something crucially important has been achieved here, something which must be grappled with, popularized and advanced off of. □

A Horrible End, or An End to the Horror?

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tion is ultimately a truism (everyone thinks and can only think with his/her own brain and not anyone else's) and/or it is a fundamental falsehood: everyone's thoughts are based largely on indirect knowledge, facts and concepts presented (in "distilled form") by others. This is especially obvious in a society where the media and means of communication generally play such an influential role. The essential question is not "thinking for yourself" but thinking according to *what method* — a correct or incorrect one — leading to what *basic result* — truth or falsehood.

"Marxism Is a Wrangling Ism"

Why must the revolutionary proletariat favor, encourage, and foster the "battle of ideas," the critical spirit, and the challenging of convention — dissent in that basic sense — in socialist society no less than in capitalist society? This is not a question of some kind of concession to the intellectuals but fundamentally a means for furthering the struggle of the masses themselves to master and transform society in every sphere in accordance with the interests of the proletariat and the advance to communism — and it is a question of how communism itself is conceived. Criticism and the battle between the new and the old and between right and wrong are essential to Marxism itself. As Mao said, "Marxism is a wrangling *ism*, dealing as it does with contradictions and struggles."¹⁸¹

Ideas need challenging. Even wrong ideas or incorrect criticism may raise important questions, besides the fact that criticism of prevailing ideas may be correct. The masses — as well as party members and especially the leaders of the party and the state under socialism — need to be exposed to controversy and the struggle over conflicting ideas and criticism of and challenges to accepted ideas and norms. This is certainly no less necessary under socialism than in capitalist society. And when we are in power we must struggle to maintain the same willingness — no, more, eagerness — we have now to take on and demolish through exposure and debate counterrevolutionary or just plain wrong ideas, theories, and so on.

In several previous works I have cited Mao's summation that in the Soviet Union in the 1920s, when they didn't have anything to rely on but the masses, they had a much more lively spirit, including in how Stalin gave leadership, but later on after they accumulated some gains they basically got ideologically lazy. I think this is one of the most important problems that has to be understood and that struggle has to be waged around — the tendency, even sometimes when you're not literally in control of a society but when you've achieved a certain position relative to others, to become lazy ideologically, to rest on your laurels and to react to criticism or challenges with, "Who the hell are these upstarts and what the hell have they ever done and where are their credentials?" or "Everybody knows these people are counterrevolutionaries so we don't have to bother refuting them," and so on. This, again, is one of the most harmful attitudes that can take hold in a movement, in a party, and especially of course in a party that is in the position of leading a socialist state.

As for our party and other revolutionary communists today, we're like those leaders in the Soviet Union in the '20s — we don't have anything to rely on except our taking these ideas out and thrashing them out, our critical daring and our taking the decisive questions to the masses. And that's why, or at least this has a great deal to do with why, we have such an eagerness — "Bring us a fucking reactionary idea, we're ready." Today we seek out every opportunity for this but it will be a little different when we've accumulated some gains. Then there will be the tendency to sit on these gains and become conservative and rely on what's been accumulated and not on the challenges and the obstacles yet to be tackled and overcome. This is going to be a very sharp struggle: we're not helpless in the face of this, but the problem has to be identified and the basis has to be laid even now to wage that struggle in the future, especially where political power is won.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ Mao, "Talks at a Conference of Secretaries," *MSW*, Vol. 5, p. 364.

¹⁸² Why should we revolutionary communists be afraid of the reactionaries? I have fantasies about a movie I'd like to make (not that I think it would be a great work of art — but it would be fun and have some value — let it be a little work of art). I'd like to take all these things like this movie *Sudden Impact*, where they have Clint Eastwood as Dirty Harry, revived again: "Go ahead — make my day!" My idea is that we would make such people reenact these roles — those that are still around after the proletariat has seized power. So we have Clint Eastwood up there, "Make my day." OK — boom! We'd change the scene so in the film he gets righteously blown away. And the movie would go on with about thirty or forty of the most infuriating scenes like that, but changing the endings to give real satisfaction. Such scenes as they are now are not only infuriating because they're reactionary, they're doubly infuriating because they're so ridiculous. Clint Eastwood (Dirty Harry) would have been blown away ten times in this bank scene before he even got to his pocket. Such scenes are infuriating artistically as well as fundamentally politically. So my idea would be to force them to reenact such scenes and put the appropriate ending on them. But with humor.

This goes along with another idea, or fantasy, I've had: to bring out all these hacks, warhorses, and ideological prostitutes in the media, etc., and make them read their news reports (their contention for the "with a straight face award") — their endless barrage of reactionary propaganda — force them to read this stuff in front of meetings of revolutionary masses, masses who have become politically conscious and hip to all this. The purpose would be to subject these hacks to perhaps the most stunning and difficult punishment of all for them — the anger and ridicule of the masses. Especially the ridicule. Ridicule is a powerful weapon.

I just can't understand why revolutionary communists should be defensive in the face of such people! If you listen to them, they have absolutely nothing (that is, no real arguments) to stand on and they only rely on the fact that they have state power and a lot of guns and weapons of mass destruction behind them. That's what the ultimate substance of their argument always is: "If you don't like it, then how about this argument" (the tanks, aircraft, missiles, and nuclear arsenals that are the "bottom line" of their arguments). We should not rely on such things as *our* ammunition in ideological struggle when we have state power. I say, bring 'em on, one and all — though with some organization, priorities, etc. They want to whine about how they're going to be suppressed and not even allowed to speak up — well, let 'em speak up. But we're going to determine the context in which they speak up and in that context we're going to *make* them speak up, and let's have some fun while we thoroughly dissect and destroy their outmoded, rotten and vicious theories, credos, nostrums, and bromides.

All this is related to the crucial question of overcoming the division of labor left over from capitalism and previous class-divided societies. The radical rupture with all that could hardly be accomplished without tradition-challenging, convention-breaking initiative and without ferment and upheaval in socialist society, certainly involving the criticism of, shaking up, and in some cases the pulling down of leading people.

But the point is to arrive at the truth and change the world to advance society and emancipate humanity — not for everyone to have their say as some abstract principle. And such wrangling, criticizing, challenging, and so on — such diversity and dissent in that sense — is *not* the same as *pluralism*. Pluralism is a bourgeois concept, a rationalization or camouflage covering the actual imposition by the ruling class and its representatives of a definite class outlook and methodology — an erroneous, reactionary outlook and methodology — on every question of any importance, every serious struggle over ideas. In fact, pluralism can very well serve the interests of a ruling class that exercises its dictatorship in a bourgeois-democratic form: it can even allow a few things to slip through in the media, works of art, etc., that oppose the status quo while surrounding, overwhelming, and smothering them with the dominant ideas, theories, and values.

Pluralism as such is an expression of agnosticism, which — wrongly — denies objective truth. That is, it denies such truth on one level while actually defining truth (openly or implicitly, consciously or "by default") as whatever is in accord with and serves the outlook and interests of the ruling class. (This is closely akin to the pragmatism that is upheld and promoted by the U.S. imperialists especially.)

In fact, such pluralism is the same in essence as state Marxism = state religion, the ruling ideology in the revisionist countries (with the social-imperialist Soviet Union the outstanding example). The difference is only in form: the revisionist "Marxists" proclaim their religious dogma as absolute, exhausted truth, unchanging — or changing frequently but only and always in accord with the momentary interests and requirements of the revisionist ruling class and always a rigid "law" for as long as that is useful — always ponderous but brittle. Truth, in short, according to these revisionists and their apologists, is whatever it is said to be at any given time by those in power (and "defining phenomena" to suit their narrow and particular interests as an exploiting class in "socialist" and "communist" guise). Orthodoxy is always their watchword. "Orthodoxy can be as stubborn in science as in religion," as Stephen Jay Gould has noted.¹⁸³ And this *certainly* applies to revisionist pseudoscience. On the other hand, the "pluralists" say (at best) that the conflict of opinions and ideas itself is more important, higher than objective truth — or even that there *is no* objective truth, only different points of view, with each as true (and untrue) as the other.¹⁸⁴ But in the final analysis the "pluralists," by acting as if all ideas are equal and can compete equally — when in reality the bourgeois ruling class has a monopoly on the dissemination of ideas and exercises dictatorship in the realm of ideas, as it does in every other sphere — actually aid this ruling class in defining and enforcing as truth whatever suits its own class interests and outlook.

The communist viewpoint and methodology is of course fundamentally opposed to both of these wrong and class- (bourgeois-) biased outlooks and methodologies (which, again, are the same in essence though differing in form). With a communist understanding the point of the conflict over ideas (the "wrangling" Mao referred to) is to arrive at a correct synthesis *and* be able to *act* on this to further change the world. (This relates back to the discussion on the relation of the dictatorship of the proletariat and truth.) The reason and purpose of communists in encouraging and unleashing this wrangling over ideas, the critical spirit, the challenging of convention, the dissent from the established norms, is that this is in accordance with the basic laws of development of all life and society and with the interests of the proletariat, which must also *lead* all this to contribute in various ways to the advance to communism. This is possible only with the establishment of Marxism in the commanding position and the exercise of the all-around dictatorship of the proletariat — in the way summarized here, and in particular in dialectical unity with the long-term policy of "100 flowers" and "100 schools."

¹⁸³ Stephen Jay Gould, *The Panda's Thumb* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982), p. 243.

¹⁸⁴ A revealing example of this is the bourgeois-democratic legal process with its court procedures; taking them at their best, they are founded on agnosticism and relativism — the most important thing is not arriving at the truth but the "due process" itself, and in fact this very process in itself works against arriving at the truth.

Army Of God

Continued from page 5

parading in front of abortion clinics with his followers, bullhorn in hand, hounding any woman seeking to enter with harangue about the "sanctity of life," physical intimidation, chanting of the rosary and singing of hymns. He has given speeches encouraging his audiences to picket clinics, claiming that the complication rate for clinic patients increases 4-5% on days when there are pickets outside. (A figure that is not hard to believe: consider the statement of the clinic director from Virginia cited above, who describes the tensions of abortion patients. One person we spoke to, who had been a patient at a clinic agreed, saying that patients are generally young and subject to all the pressures and guilt imposed by a twisted, woman-hating society. When these stresses are compounded by screaming fanatics at the clinic door, one can easily envision medical complications occurring.)

Sheidler proudly proclaims a change from the anti-abortion movement of the past. One article commented: "Sheidler has easily transformed the Chicago area movement from part-time volunteers into the underground... where the volunteers are in a pro-life Communion of Saints, hierarchy of angels, and City of

God." A "legal theoretician" of the anti-abortionists, upholding Sheidler, indirectly pointed to the political heart of this approach. He did this by criticizing the Catholic bishops' anti-abortion stand as "diluting the meaning of pro-life" because it was tied to their "antinuclear" war pastoral which he claims hedges on the fight against "despotism." He calls the bishops' stand "country club ambivalence on abortion." The true meaning and calling of anti-abortionism is to carry out a campaign of terror with eyes firmly fixed on the much larger battle that looms ever nearer — the all-out nuclear slug fest with Soviet "despotism." This is truly an undiluted pro-life stand — undiluted ignorance, obedience, and stupidity, pro-life only as long as that life is either not yet born or is hustling its way to the nuclear battlefield.

It is no wonder then that the government is giving this motley army every encouragement. This is a movement that proposes to force the holy trinity of god, family and country down the throats of women and indeed anyone who challenges "woman's place." As feminist Andrea Dworkin writes, these are people who "believe that women who refuse to bear children deserve to die." This the imperialists cannot do without especially right now; the brutal oppression of women has become a centerpiece of America's call to march on into the mushroom cloud. □

**An important new book by the Chairman of
the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA.**

A HORRIBLE END or An End To The Horror?

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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.