



REVOLUTIONARY WORKER

Voice of the
Revolutionary Communist
Party, U.S.A.

No. 287 (Vol. 6, No. 35)

Published weekly in two sections — English Section 1.

January 4, 1985

Editions in English and Spanish

ISSN 0193-3485

75c



In Geneva this week, the U.S. and Soviets prepared to sit down and talk. Everywhere else in the world, they prepared to slug it out in their global showdown.

In the weeks preceding the Shultz-Gromyko meeting at Geneva, the air has been filled with bellicose actions of every sort. The U.S. opened with a Christmas-week campaign to flaunt its Star War plans. A military shuttle launch was announced, with obvious connections to the space war program, the date for the launch set for three days after Reagan's inauguration. A flurry of announcements and actions pushing Star Wars occurred at exactly the same time. This week, as the meeting actually approached, Reagan publicly announced that a ban on Star Wars technology wouldn't even be discussed in Geneva. Here it should be recalled that the very purpose

of the talks, as announced on Thanksgiving Day, was to aim for agreements on "the whole range of questions concerning nuclear and outer space arms" (our emphasis).

The same week also saw sharply provocative maneuvers by the U.S. aircraft carriers in the Sea of Japan near Soviet territory. The Soviets replied with the largest display of military force in such a situation since World War 2.

On Monday, December 31, Reagan capped a week of Western propaganda hitting the Soviets on the fifth anniversary of the invasion of Afghanistan by calling the invasion "a day of infamy," thus comparing the invasion to Pearl Harbor.

On January 2, a Soviet submarine launched a cruise missile which flew over a portion of Norwegian territory and crashed in Finland. Everyone called it an accident, but even if this were true, the

overflying of a missile across the territory of a NATO power only underlined the explosiveness of the conflict between blocs. It is also worth considering that a cruise missile is one type of nuclear delivery system that could not be intercepted by Star Wars technology — were the Soviets deliberately waving around some of their hardware?

This, then, has been the U.S.-Soviet Peace Week so far. After which events, ex-national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*: "It is best to be blunt about it: The forthcoming Shultz-Gromyko talks will not mean a return to detente." And just when it looked like the age of perpetual peace was at hand...

What to Expect

Actually, Brzezinski's statement is part of a major spread in the *Wall Street*

Journal, including excerpts from a talk by Weinberger, a prominent *Journal* editorial and other materials which give some insight into the thoroughly deceitful imperialist motives for the meeting at Geneva.

The *Journal* squarely confronts the fact that the tense political situation might make arms talks seem superfluous and futile. Like Reagan, who asked the American public to "temper its expectations with realism," the paper agrees that the first thing we must understand about the meeting is that nothing is going to come of it. Phrased, as always, in language that pins on the Soviets what is equally true of the U.S., the *Journal's* point nonetheless comes through clearly: "These talks will not result in an arms agreement that civilizes the Russian bear," and: "for the lifetime of anyone

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Raymond Lotta On The Recovery

See Centerfold

Since the Call To Act was first put out by signatories in mid-October, the list of signatories has grown, and this week the *RW* is publishing the up-to-date list. The Call has appeared in the *Village Voice*, the *Bay Guardian*, *Direct Action*, *Brix and Bottles*, *Overthrow* magazine, and the *Revolutionary Worker*.

A CALL TO ACT

The threat of world war is increasingly real and pressing. The recent past has witnessed an unprecedented increase in international tension and war preparations. The great powers stand toe to toe, openly building and boasting of their increased armaments. They intervene against popular struggles around the world, while at the same time a series of confrontation points between the great powers (and their proxies) burn like fuses capable of igniting a greater conflagration.

The military forces of the major powers are equipped with nuclear weapons at all levels, making it all but certain that any global conflict would be fought with these weapons of mass destruction. Target lists to annihilate whole nations have been drawn up and are continually revised. Beyond the hundreds of millions of deaths their use would cause, lies a future scarred by global climatic, ecological, and economic effects. Worldwide, many millions more who might have escaped the immediate effects of nuclear weapons will die of starvation and disease.

In this season of peril, all the governments continue to proclaim their peaceful intents and declare global nuclear war to be unthinkable. Yet their actions (and with increasing frequency their words as well) speak differently. The major powers continuously hone their war plans with new weapons tests and ever more realistic war games. New disarmament proposals are cynically designed to elicit rejection. Jingoistic appeals to national pride abound. Military-political moves and counter-moves force the situation to ever more dangerous heights. The U.S. government stands belligerently on the front lines of these moves to war. Crisis follows crisis in a spiral that cannot go on without resulting in the gravest of consequences.

Such an extraordinary situation requires an extraordinary response. Mass opposition and resistance to war must achieve new heights, and with the greatest urgency.

Only the independent action of millions stepping onto the stage of history to resist can realistically speak to the enormity that looms before us. It is in this spirit of practical politics that we now call for a coordinated day of national action against war, a concerted day of "No Business As Usual" on April 29, 1985. A day that deliberately disrupts and shuts down as much as possible of the daily routine through which we are lurching toward global war. A day of diverse events across the country which include the activities of people of many nationalities and social backgrounds: the anti-nuclear and anti-interventionist movements, the rebellious youth, the women's movement, religious activists, immigrants and political exiles, academics, workers, those involved in the war machine itself, and others. With activities ranging from teach-ins and forums to civil disobedience and other creative forms of direct action, our joint actions will focus the attention of large sectors of society on this critical question and on the necessity to act, and will deliver a powerful message that we will **not** go along with the rulers down the road to World War III.

We who issue this call have taken part in many different ways in the movements against injustice, exploitation, and war. Among us we hold different political and philosophical analyses of the configurations of world power, the sources of wars through history, and the many fronts of struggle and tactics we must employ for social change. But we share the recognition that now it is time to unite to say **NO**. Precisely because:

*They won't listen to reason,
They won't be bound by votes,
The governments must be stopped from launching World War III,
No matter what it takes!*

Individuals' organization listed for identification purpose only

Anti-War Action Coalition (AWAC), Cleveland
Emile de Antonio, film director and writer
Beverly Axelrod, attorney and mediator
Dana Beal, *Overthrow* editorial collective
Karl Bissinger, anti-war activist, NY
Bohemian Grove Action Network
Robert McAfee Brown, Professor of Theology and Ethics, Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley
Courtney Bullock, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, S.F. State University
Kate Champa, artist, resister and mother, Providence
Richard Chinn, poet and gay activist, Chicago
Jack and Felice Cohen-Joppa, editors, *The Nuclear Resister*
Grace Copperhead, Kalirose, Ann Lewis, Cathy Hope, Joyce Land & Carlyle Casal, of the Women's Encampment for Peace and Justice, Savannah River Plant, 1983-84
John Costin, student and member of "Crime Prevention Bureau," Brown University
Carl Dix, Revolutionary Communist Party, Black G.I. member of the Fort Lewis 6 who served 2 years in Leavenworth for refusing to go to Vietnam
Patrick S. Diehl, Livermore Action Group staff member
Gary Floyd, singer, *The Dicks*
Lillian Ford and Therese Forte, Seattle Non-Violent Group
Kris Fulsas, Northwest Passage
Teri Galvin, N.Y. Mobilization for Survival (MOBE)
John Gerassi, author, *The Great Fear in Latin America*, leader in the San Francisco State takeover in the 60s
Ed Gehrman, Livermore Action Group staff member
Norman Gottwald, Professor of Biblical Studies, New York Theological Seminary
Greenpeace Pacific Southwest
Robert Hernandez, member National Lawyers Guild Military and Draft Task Force, defense attorney Plowshare AVCO 8 and the Boston 18

Abbie Hoffman, activist and author
Rich Hutchinson, Disarm Now Action Group member, Chicago
Lee Huttner, lead singer, Radical Elite
Sonia Johnson, feminist, author and political activist
Sander Katz, Brown University student activist and "citizens arrestor"
C. Clark Kissinger, organized first March on Washington against Vietnam War, 1965; contributing writer, *Revolutionary Worker*
Sherry Klink, former regional disarmament coordinator, Greenpeace Northwest
Joel Kovel, Professor of Psychiatry, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, author of *Against the State of Nuclear Terror*
Paul Krassner, author and editor, *The Best of the Realist*
Sidney Lens, activist and author of *The Day Before Doomsday*
Karen Lindsey, feminist writer
Lian Marie and S.D. Robert, action anarchists and Circle A Video
Pamela Marsh, *Heartland Newspaper*, Jackson, WY
Francisco 'Kiko' Martinez, attorney & activist, Colorado
Michael McCloskey, attorney
Erin Moore, Northwest Passage, Editorial Board
Honor Moore, poet, Connecticut
Mary K. Moore, Bohemian Grove Action Network
Richard Navies, Department Chairman of African-American Studies, Berkeley High School, Berkeley
Richard Newberger, Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade, Fort Mac 2
Jane Noll, Washington War Resisters League and D.C. Women's Collective
William Oandasan, Senior Publication Coordinator and Editor, UCLA
Albert Parsons, editor *Brix and Bottles*
Don Paul, world record holder 50K run, author of *Good Intentions and Ameri Modern*
Leonard Post, Litigation Director, Western States Legal Foundation, member Legal Collectives of Livermore Action Group and Abalone Alliance
Tim Quinn, Trident Nein Plowshares, anarchist, member Lyander Spooner Society
Steve Rabinowitz, Libertarian Workers Group, N.Y. MOBE

Red Balloon Collective, New York
Diana Russell, author, Rape in Marriage
Dave S., drummer, *Disinfect*
Ben Sasway, draft resister
Laurel Sercombe, Northwest Nuclear Xchange board member
Clark Smith, Winter Soldier Archive
Chuck Speta, anarchist and Republican War Chest Tourists, Gainesville, FL
Jim Squatter, organizer of Democratic and Republican War Chest Tours
Silence One Silo and Species Life House, Missoula, MT
Squatters Anonymous, San Francisco
Bill Starr, Campus Ministry, Columbia University
Alicia Svigals, student, street musician, and "citizen's arrestor," Brown University
Alan Thompson, Rock Against Reagan Tour, San Francisco
Bob Townley, Coalition for a Nuclear Free Harbor, N.Y. MOBE
Mike Tsongas, U.S. Navy deserter, Fleet Week defendant, Democratic War Chest Tour
Lloyd K. Wake, minister, Glide Memorial United Methodist Church, Japanese-American interned at Poston concentration camp under Executive Order 9066
Mindy Washington, NY Mobilization for Survival and Liberation Workers Group
George W. Webber, Prof. of Urban Ministry, New York Theological Seminary
Len Weinglass, attorney
Geoff Yipiel, Abalone Alliance, People's Law School, San Francisco
Joe Zone, organizer, Republican War Chest Tour
8 Democratic War Chest Tourists
and 3 Republican War Chest Tourists
43 students and 2 professors, Antioch College, Ohio
This call does not fully express all the politics of all participants in the No Business As Usual Day. For further information, to sign this call, or to contribute urgently needed funds, please contact:
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The *Revolutionary Worker* (ISSN 0193-3485) is published weekly except for the 4th week of December and the 4th week of July, by RCP Publications, 3449 N. Sheffield Ave., Chicago, IL 60657. Second class postage paid at Chicago, IL. Subscriptions and address changes should be sent to RCP Publications, POB 3486, Chicago, IL 60654. Subscriptions are \$30 a year, \$9.00 for 3 months in the U.S., Canada and Mexico. (\$40.00 for institutions.)

An American Biology Experiment

The Church of Scientology, for reasons of their own, obtained a collection of recently declassified Army documents that pull back a tiny part of the curtain on American biological warfare preparations. What they have revealed is that the U.S. Army secretly sprayed potentially harmful bacteria in five open-air tests in Washington, D.C. in 1964 and 1965. The documents are heavily censored, but the legible parts describe how personnel from the Army's Special Operations Division (SOD), under the direction of the United States Army Biological Laboratories at Fort Detrick, Maryland carried out the operations.

Operatives, masquerading as human beings, went into Washington's National Airport and Greyhound bus terminal. Some carried briefcase-disguised germ pumps that ejected the *Bacillus subtilis* steadily into the air for up to thirty minutes at a time. Meanwhile, extensive testing was going on to determine how much of the bacteria managed to attach themselves to the various travelers moving around the terminals. "An air sample was collected by one operator seated in the center of the waiting room of the North Terminal Building" at National Airport, the report stated. "Other test-team members, each with a suitcase sampler, selected a passenger at random...and covertly collected air samples in close proximity to the passenger during his stay in the terminal." The report included photographs of Army personnel mingling with unsuspecting passengers at various locations in the terminals — including the snack bar — while conducting the tests. "Photographic coverage can be obtained of covert field trials in crowded areas without calling attention to test personnel and compromising the operation," the report concluded. In fact, in the final report by the Army's SOD force, it was emphasized that the tests "...were completed without challenge or question. No terminal employee, passenger or visitor gave any outward indication of suspicion that something unusual was taking place."

The actual on-the-spot effects of the induced infection by this bacilli are hard to gauge. Controversy continues over whether or not these particular germs are dangerous. The Army's official position was restated to the *RW* when we contacted spokesmen at Fort Detrick — it is harmless, ubiquitous and can be readily cultured from dust, hay and other common sources. One spokesperson, Marge Sherald, conceded that evidence has since accumulated that the germs cause symptoms of respiratory infections, blood poisoning and food poisoning. At the time of the 1964 and 1965 tests, the Army estimated, using "the number of one-way and round-trip tickets" being sold on those days, that "infected passengers" would carry the bacillus to more than two hundred cities.

However, what is more significant than the particular effect of these particular germs on those particular travelers, is that the whole episode takes its place alongside a growing number of exposés which reveal the extent of the bacteriological testing conducted by the United States.

When the *RW* contacted Norm Covert, the public affairs specialist representing Fort Detrick, he was more



Photographs from the Army's biological warfare files:

Two of the test sites: the airport and the bus station.



Three members of the Army biological warfare test team — and their "suitcases" — at the National Airport snack bar.



Undercover Army man, with "suitcase," checks out the newsstand at the Greyhound terminal.



The suitcase.

The "Scum of the Earth" Throw A Coming Out Party



Dear RW:

A few days before Christmas, the youth of San Francisco were at it again, this time mocking and exposing one of San Francisco high society's sacred rites of passage — the annual holiday cotillion and debutante coming out party. The night of December 22, while limousines drove in and out of the entrance of the very exclusive Fairmont Hotel, sable- and ermine-clad guests were accosted by some who called themselves the Scum of the Earth, jeering, hooting, and satirizing, and managing to steal the spotlight from the bourgeoisie's disgusting and decadent ritual.

The Scum of the Earth, a young women's affinity group, had put out the call for the Scum of the Earth cotillion and debutantes debacle. A spirited crew of forty or fifty "peace punks," anarchists, revolutionary communist youth, and other rebels showed up, gathering on the sidewalk outside the hotel, and high society's finest had to wade through a small sea of mohawks, purple hair, and dead flowers to get to the doorway.

While the debutantes inside, handpicked for the right breeding, social connections, and proper attitudes, went through their "coming out" and were thus officially certified U.S.-prime marriageable material for bourgeois gentlemen, the Scum on the streets outside had their own "rite of presentation" to society. An arch was formed by two lines of youth facing each other and holding up skateboards and dead flowers, and the "debutantes" promenaded down the middle. "Don't worry," one of the promenaders assured a high-society matron, "we're just debutantes from Ethiopia."

It didn't take too long for the special Scum of the Earth limousines to arrive on the scene — paddy wagons, a mode of transportation the "nobodies of the earth" are perhaps as well acquainted with as those inside the Fairmont Hotel are acquainted with limousines. On this particular occasion the authorities apparently decided that the usual mass bust would shine too much of a spotlight on the nature of official society. The San Francisco armed and flak-jacketed cotillion defense squads had to rest content with repeatedly ordering the sidewalk cleared and threatening arrest. Even this was turned into exposure and mockery — one "Scum of the Earth," upon being threatened by a cop with, "If you stand in front of the door, we'll carry you to jail," responded with a fake swoon, and a "delighted" squeal, "Ooh! He offered to carry me off! Ooh!"

The police efforts at "debutante debacle control" could not completely shield those seeking entry into the Fair-

mont from such a rude encounter, even though most of them kept their noses high in the air and tried to hide the fact that they were seeing or hearing anything uncouth. Still, some bourgeois jaws did drop, and the crowd more than kept itself entertained poking fun at the official spectacle. One young woman suddenly screamed "Mom!" at a passing befurred and bejeweled woman. Upon getting no visible response, she yelled to the crowd on the sidewalk: "I can't believe it. My own mother ignores me!" Turning to her target, she called out again, "Can I have my allowance? Can I have the car tonight anyway?" Someone else, dressed in a radiation suit with "Union Carbide debutante" written on the back, had a Fairmont Hotel plate with a small, charred paper American flag on it. Through his gas mask, he offered hors d'oeuvres to the passing partygoers.

As part of the finale to the night's debutante debacle, and in response to the holiday atmosphere which was getting pretty thick by that night, voices were raised in the traditional tune of the season. One of the more popular songs was this one, to the tune of *Jingle Bells*:

*"Dashing through downtown
On the insurrection day
We'll chase cops around
Laughing all the way.*

*Bosses necks we'll wring
As we set their empires alight
What fun it is to laugh and sing
A riot song tonight! Oh...*

*Anarchy
Anarchy
Anarchy is for me
Oh what fun
It is to throw
The state into the sea."*

Another song, to the tune of *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*, went like this:

*"God rest ye old society
The cause of our dismay
No longer will we work for you
Nor sell our lives away
Your priest and boss and bureaucrat
We'll never more obey
Uprising in anger and joy
Anger and joy
Uprising in anger and joy.*

*We're done with rite and sacrament
Religious holiday
For now we chose to celebrate
Without worship or prayers
Your church and mosque and synagogue
Are only in our way
Uprising in anger and joy
Anger and joy
Uprising in anger and joy."*

The Christmas Bombings And the Commander In Chief

The reactionary right-to-lifers celebrated Christmas and New Year's Day with four more bombings of abortion clinics. Three clinics in Pensacola, Florida were bombed on Christmas day and only eleven minutes into 1985 another clinic was hit in Washington, D.C. The National Women's Health Network in Washington, D.C. also reported that a clinic in Prince George's County was bombed during Christmas week. These are only the latest in an extremely intense campaign over the last year by pro-lifers against abortion clinics. (See RW No. 284)

On December 31, 21-year-old Matthew John Goldsby turned himself in and confessed to the three Christmas Day bombings. He also admitted to the June bombing of a clinic which had since relocated and was one of the three hit on Christmas Day. A second man, James Simmons, turned himself in on Tuesday and was also charged with the bombings. And on Wednesday, Goldsby's fiancée and Simmons's wife were arrested as accessories to the bombings. All four were active members of an Assembly of God Church in Pensacola.

To "set the record straight," John M. Walker, Jr., the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, wrote a letter, published in the *New York Times* on Wednesday, stating, "Let no one doubt that President Reagan and this Administration deplore the violence directed against abortion clinics..." But in subtle and less subtle ways, an official green light is being given for even more attacks by these pro-life forces.

In typical administration double-talk, the FBI has refused to investigate any of these bombings — saying there is no evidence to suggest that these attacks are being done by an organized group or a conspiracy, and that because these cannot, therefore, be considered terrorist acts, this precludes use of the FBI's counter-terrorist forces. Webster, director of the FBI, said that the Bureau "did not consider such attacks terrorism and that as a result they received less attention from the FBI than acts considered terrorism."

As we pointed out in previous coverage, even if the FBI did take up these cases it would only be for the purpose of more credible whitewashing of the forces behind this antiabortion violence. But the

refusal of the FBI to investigate these bombings and the clear "low priority" this is being given are yet another exposure of exactly how much official approval is being given to these pro-life terrorists — even as the official-official line is that the government "deplores these acts of violence."

As for the claim that these latest bombings are not part of an organized and concentrated campaign — even the newspaper reports have had to admit there is evidence that Goldsby did not act alone and a Federal agent testified at Goldsby's bond hearing that they had evidence suggesting he belonged to a "secret-type organization." T-shirts were found in Goldsby's home with the slogan "Protector of the Code," which an agent from the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms admitted was from a "secret-type organization" but then refused to state the name of the organization, saying he'd "rather not get into that."

The New Year's Day bombing also revealed how ludicrous the FBI's claim is that these bombings cannot be considered the work of organized terrorists.

After the bombing on New Year's Eve a man called the *Washington Times* to claim responsibility for the bombings on behalf of the "Army of God, East Coast Division." He warned that these attacks would continue, that they were a warning to abortionists everywhere and that they were meant to be encouragement for Goldsby, "our brother in Florida, telling him to keep the faith." And still we are supposed to believe these bombings are just the work of isolated individuals! And as for the "Army of God, East Coast Division" — no need to worry here, as law enforcement officials have stated that the "Army of God consists of only three men who are now all in prison for attacks on abortion clinics in 1982"! It should also be added that the real issue here is hardly whether or not there is some concrete connection between all the various bombings — given the reactionary climate being created, it is certainly not the case that the pro-life terrorists have to be physically rounded up and organized at every point to be given the message that "anything goes." And further, as the "no-conspiracy" argument continues to be made it is clear that a major purpose

Continued on page 14

Over the past six months the RW has carried correspondence from readers on the political questions posed by the break-up of The Clash. Following the publication of an interview with Joe Strummer by Atlanta DJ Miller Francis in the RW, July 13, 1984, correspondence appeared in issues Nos. 269, 271, 273, and 280, debating these important questions for all revolutionaries and especially revolutionary artists. This week, some thoughts from the Revolutionary Worker on this debate. Readers are encouraged to correspond concerning their views.

Is it really inevitable that when a band as important as The Clash was to the oppressed comes on the scene, their demise is to be expected as a matter of course, and sooner than later? The very vital seven-year life of The Clash itself defied this "commandment" among revolutionary artists. But it does seem to be the case these days that, in the name of the "most revolutionary politics," more than a few revolutionary artists are finding the ways to capitulate. Would it be an exaggeration to say that they are scared to death of their own successes?! The Selector and The (Strummer/Jones) Clash, to name only the most notable of these, managed to end themselves as opposed to being ended. This is not to deny the tremendous pressure in its various forms that was brought to bear on these groups by the forces of reaction. But there are clearly other questions involved, including just what is revolutionary art, and what is the role of an artist who would like to see an end to this madness — who is aspiring for something higher.

The very perceptive, correct and documented arguments presented by M.M. & O.M., San Francisco ("Clash Break-up Poses Important Political Questions on Culture and Revolution," *Revolutionary Worker*, September 21, 1984) speak to some of these questions, especially the differences between Mick Jones and Joe Strummer on the process by which revolutionary art connects with its audience. These days Strummer seems to be preoccupied with the very contradictory character of the large audience The Clash was able to draw. But the point is, if one is going to attack or expose the most basic contradictions of human society at the present historic stage — which The Clash did — then *how could it be* that there would be peace and harmony? There will be a great "Clashing" and revolutionaries should not be horrified by this.

Another letter which appears in the same issue, signed by "A Proletarian Internationalist," calls for "songs with a clearly defined revolutionary line" as the "solution" to the dilemma posed by Strummer that too few are "getting the message." Although s/he defines this (as somewhere between "Washington Bullets" and "Rock The Casbah") the overall implication is that songs with a clearly defined revolutionary line have yet to be written. This is a ridiculous "typical commie" argument which amounts to nothing less than making the entire notion of revolutionary art (and by implication, revolution itself) an ideal category, and as such, one which has never and can never be attained.

The body of the work of the (Strummer/Jones) Clash was clearly defined revolutionary art. The fact that some songs were better than others, and that some songs were downright bad does not make this any less true. And by the way, the fact that they did not write anthems, which are good and have their place, also does not make this any less true.

This sort of thread runs throughout the entire letter. "A vanguard role must be played, an advanced pole must be planted..." Basically, according to this writer, nothing has been accomplished, all is yet to be done. To go on like this, especially when speaking of *The Clash* is nothing short of ludicrous!!! This does not at all imply that new things need not emerge, that a more correct understanding and practice need not always be developed. But this can never occur by obliterating the past.

The logical extension of the argument

that no revolutionary art has yet been created (by The Clash or anyone else, presumably) is the line that these artists have yet to become what they need to become, e.g., "more than musicians." And this is precisely what our "Internationalist" calls for at the end of the letter. While, of course, the need for everyone on the planet to become more conscious and act accordingly ought to be a given, it seems that something else is being implied here. Namely the urgency of these times requires that these artists become the revolutionary spokespeople for the masses. If it is true that (for some of the reasons pointed to by another letter in the same issue signed "A Reader, Chicago") certain artists tend to be looked to more these days for this type of leadership by some among the revolutionary youth, this "guru artist" phenomenon only goes so far. Anyone seriously contemplating "what to live and die for" looks way beyond the lyrics and lifestyle of their favorite artist — revolutionary or not. The social role of artists in countries like Jamaica is somewhat different, because of the particular class contradictions at work. But in any case, despite Strummer's (and everyone else's) frustration over the lagging of consciousness in these high-stakes times, the fact remains that classes exist and will fight it out for hegemony over a period of time, producing representatives to lead them in political battle. Artists objectively take sides in all of this, but *as artists* they are not equipped to lead in this battle — regardless of whether, at the present moment, the revolutionary forces capable of leading have come to the fore in any given situation or country. No amount of handwringing or "recruiting" of artists to fill such vacuums (whether this be the spontaneous desire of the masses, or the more calculated program of opportunists) will change this fact. And beyond that, where such revolutionary organization and leaders *do* exist, such a line only serves to undermine this very precious concentration of consciousness — the most important thing the oppressed have.

It is also interesting that this "Internationalist," with all their championing art "with a clearly defined revolutionary line" does not seem able to analyze (much less be inspired by!) such art which does exist — rushing instead to trash a song like "Should I Stay Or Should I Go?", which, ironically, poses in a most moving and deep way the actual dilemma of the revolutionary artist and his audience. The lyrics: "This indecision's killing me/If you don't want me, set me free/Tell me who I'm supposed to be?/Don't you know which clothes even fit me?/So you got to let me know/Should I cool it or should I blow... If I go there will be trouble/If I stay there will be double." Not the first time a "love song" was a stand-in for another subject.

When Joe Strummer sang this song at an Atlanta concert shortly after his disappearance in 1982 (when he was apparently trying to sort through just such questions), he marched to the front of the stage, bright lights shining on a troubled but determined face, and he along with the band (Mick Jones had written and usually sang the song) put the question to the audience — most of whom did not "miss the message." And in fact many would later that night fight Nazi punks

and cops outside the theater in defense of this band.

Many letters have dealt with Strummer's claim that The Clash committed "cultural imperialism" with every album they made after the first one. Whether Strummer currently believes it or not, The Clash were objectively always more than just "white boys with guitars and drums." We know of one reggae store which still today displays a large poster announcing the EP "Black Market Clash" — featuring a dread-locked youth striding confidently toward a line of British riot cops. With reggae, which became an integral part of their sound beginning as early as 1977, the beat came with the terrain. Paul Simonon (Clash bass player): "I grew up listening to reggae on a jukebox in my neighborhood where you could only hear the bass line... We grew up in Brixton, all the people I knew were black, we shared the same common experience. I didn't discover reggae in a book... It's a part of me."

It's an irony of the imperialist system that as it strengthens its hold on the peoples of the world, it forces many from the colonies to emigrate to the metropolises, making for a mix which has the habit of blowing up in the bourgeoisie's face. Paul: "We sing of the oppressed because that's who and what we are." This is what The Clash represented, white proletarian youth who took up the culture of the oppressed around them as their own. Their music, as well as that of the many "two-tone" ska groups which also hit the scene in Britain in the late '70s, was emphatically no rip-off, but rather part of a kind of joint effort among the more farseeing artists, including Jamaicans like Lee Perry who suggested to The Clash they cover "Police and Thieves," and who, together with Bob Marley, wrote and produced "Punky Reggae Party" in 1978 — a tribute to the British punks. Marley said at that time, "Listen, punk loves reggae, and some of dem say things Babylon no like... Dem resist the society and say, 'Me a punk cos I don't want you to shove me where I don't like it'... And the punk say, 'No! We wanna join with the Rastaman and get something outta life.'"

The Clash's ventures into other musical forms like rap and R&B were marked by the same spirit... "It takes a joyful sound/To make the world go 'round" — and they crossed borders and boundaries to create such a thing. In doing so they were making a path through some rather treacherous ground. Because it is true, of course, that the imperialists and their artists have committed countless kinds of theft and distortion of musical forms and actual songs, with no credit, remuneration, or respect for the oppressed who originated this art. But can anyone seriously place The Clash's "Magnificent Seven," for instance, in

the same category as The Police's "Every Step You Take" or Eric Clapton's version of "I Shot the Sheriff"?!

While confusion over all these questions of art and revolution has existed for decades, including within the international communist movement, it is also the case that today revolutionary artists confront a particularly difficult moment, and one that feels like a real let-down from the '77-'81 period when TV screens were filled with youth taking the streets in many parts of the world and "Rudie Can't Fail" seemed more on the agenda. The mistake that Strummer and others make is in assessing the role The Clash played in all of this. While it was tremendous, it did not chiefly consist of "turning youth onto political science courses," or politics in general — this was already the *currency*! Rather, The Clash reflected the spirit of revolt — felt it themselves — and on this basis proceeded to blow the old dinosaur rock groups off the stage, opening the gate for the new and outrageous, making the music that was demanded by the advanced and helping to unleash other artists to do the same.

The political movement which propelled this cultural explosion subsided temporarily, and moves toward world war by the superpowers have accelerated, leaving more than a few demoralized by it all. While The Clash went further than most in developing their art under such conditions, the current break-up appears to be one more casualty. This does not, however, necessarily have to be the last chapter on this band... and *certainly* the last word from the oppressed has not been heard! Strummer says, "The nearer the world goes to nuclear war, the less time — you're just aware of the less time you've got..." In one sense we quite agree. The urgency of these times do require the conscious people to take risks, and in The Clash's case it requires the kind of risks they took in busting out of the garage with songs like "I'm So Bored with the USA" that looked and laughed and cursed the monster all at once and with ferocious glee; or "Armageddon Time" which rewrote the wail of the "hungry" of the world in militant reggae style — "don't push us when we're hot!"

The times require the kind of vision it took to reach their audience by signing with a major record company, confronting and confounding TV talk show hosts, creating songs which forced their way onto radio play lists around the world, beating the authorities at their own games, from CBS to the NYC mob and Fire Department... etc.

We think that the times require of a band that was capable of all that to struggle through their differences at this time, and reunite on a higher level. "If I go there will be trouble/If I stay there will be double." This is the kind of "double trouble," the disorder and scaling of the heights by the oppressed and their artists, which today's times do indeed call for. □

"Freedom Fighters" — Yankee Style

The nature of the freedom that the U.S. "freedom fighters" — as Reagan calls them — are bringing to Nicaragua has surfaced in the U.S. press once again. On December 27, the *New York Times* declared that there have been numerous reports of atrocities against civilians committed by the U.S.'s puppet anti-Sandinista army, the Contras. The *Times* says that Congress members and other U.S. government officials have been receiving these reports: "In testimony to the House Select Committee on Intelligence this month, the members of Congress and other sources said, Central Intelligence Agency officials and others presented evidence that the United States-backed rebels had raped, tortured and killed unarmed civilians, including children. . . . The reports have included accounts about groups of civilians, including women and children, who were burned, dismembered, blinded or beheaded, the sources said."

Many documented examples of such ghoulishness exist. The New York-based Center for Constitutional Rights, which gave the House committee more than 150 pages of written testimony on Contra atrocities, filed a legal suit against the administration two years ago which listed some: Contras "kidnapped and slit the throats of eighteen peasants and burned their houses"; Contras attacked a hospital in the village of Bilwaskarma, kidnapping and raping a woman doctor and nurse, along with thirteen other women from the town; Contras kidnapped a man from the village of Anorestara who "was subsequently found decapitated, with his eyes removed from their sockets"; and many more. The suit was dismissed as a "political question" — these are indeed the politics of U.S. imperialism. The suit is on appeal.

Last April an Americas Watch report cited more cases, among them one where villagers were "tortured to death." It declared, "In the northwestern mountain areas, the F.D.N. (Nicaraguan Democratic Force, the particular Contra group which has received the majority of the U.S. direction, weaponry and other support — *RW*) has engaged repeatedly in kidnappings, torture and murder of unarmed civilians, mostly in villages and farm cooperatives."

The press in Latin America and the Nicaraguan government have reported many more cases. Over forty children, aged 10-15, were kidnapped from one town alone in the past few months. Trucks carrying coffee pickers have been

attacked regularly, their occupants murdered. Agricultural cooperatives and even private farms of late have all been subject to sudden assault, and numerous peasants, armed with nothing but machetes, have been slaughtered. Indeed, the Nicaraguan government files a formal complaint over Contra atrocities to the U.S. government an average of once a week, "specifically in relationship to the killings of women and children," according to Nicaragua's ambassador to the U.S.

Not only is there plenty of documentation of such actions, but the Contra leaders themselves have admitted that the atrocities take place. Edgar Chamorro, a former Contra leader who was declared a "loose cannon" by the F.D.N. chairman and kicked out of the group for talking too much about CIA involvement, said that some Contra commanders routinely executed their prisoners. He failed to mention, however, that most of these "prisoners" are, in fact, kidnapped victims; Chamorro, of course, found the practice "sickening and disgusting." Other Contra leaders, according to the *New York Times*, described the "problem" as "regrettable but inevitable," while implying that it was justified because the Sandinistas, they say, do the same thing. Adolfo Calero, the chairman of the F.D.N., has already announced his approval of attacks on farms and peasants by declaring that "everything is militarized" in Nicaragua.

In other words, here we have a prime example of state-supported terrorism, ongoing and continuous, with lots of documented cases, where the leaders of the terrorists openly admit that their groups conduct such activities. Yet somehow the Contra actions have been left out of the melodrama that shows up nightly on the television news. The handwringing over the "terrorist threat" that so dominates the official and unofficial pronouncements of America's public-opinion molders never mentions the Contras. And of course the "debate" over whether to engage in "preemptive" or "retaliatory" strikes is not relevant in this case. After all, pinpointing a supposed "terrorist headquarters" in Beirut, or Iran, or Libya, is hardly the same thing as taking note of a real one in Miami.

On the other hand, CIA officials claimed that they were so "concerned" about Contra atrocities that they approved the infamous CIA manual, *Psychological Operations in Guerrilla Warfare*, in

order to "moderate" their charges. The manual counseled the Contras in such activity as: "neutralizing" — that is, assassinating — Sandinista officials; using "implicit and explicit terror" against the Nicaraguan population; using blackmail to get individuals to cooperate; and the deliberate creation of "martyrs" for the Contra cause through setting up confrontations with the police (unbeknownst to the prospective martyrs); and using shock troops in the manner of Nazi Brown Shirts to make sure that the right people attained their martyrdom. This is as "moderate" as the CIA gets.

The CIA's apparent effort to distance itself somewhat from the particular crimes being reported is not going to wash. The former Contra leader Chamorro has previously noted that the CIA's participation in Contra activities "was broader and deeper than what has been told." He stated that "in many cases of sabotage and war actions, the CIA acted directly without the knowledge of the anti-Sandinista leaders, to whom the Agency later gave press dispatches for them to release." Is one supposed to believe that the CIA directed only "moderate" Contra action?

CIA director Casey described the manual as attempting "to make every F.D.N. guerrilla 'persuasive in face-to-face communications. . .'" But the U.S.'s methods of "persuasion" are already common knowledge in many places, including Nicaragua. Indeed, many of today's Contras first learned their techniques as members of the Nicaraguan National Guard under the deceased U.S. puppet Anastasio Somoza. The Contra murders, kidnappings, torture, rape, and decapitations are merely the latest applications, under changed conditions, of the U.S. traditional security force/death squad training for its puppets in the Third World.

Nevertheless, all the Contra crimes against the Nicaraguan people seem to be moderate enough for the U.S.'s vaunted democrats in Latin America. For example, take Arturo Cruz who, *RW* readers will recall, is the former Inter-American Development Bank's official who returned to Nicaragua from his self-imposed exile in Washington, D.C. supposedly to run for president; despite numerous efforts at compromise on the part of the Sandinistas, Cruz ended up dropping out of the election and declaring it a "sham," whereupon the U.S. used Cruz' withdrawal as "proof" that the

Nicaraguan election wasn't "legitimate." In a recent opinion article in the *New York Times*, Cruz declared the Contra assaults "the revolt of Nicaraguans against oppression by other Nicaraguans." And he subsequently argued for a continuation of U.S. support for the Contras, telling *Time* magazine, "I disagree completely with the apologists who want to give the Sandinistas only the carrot and not the stick."

And then there is that bastion of morality, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, which never misses an opportunity to condemn "terrorism." U.S. officials like to point to the crowd of Sandinista supporters who, horror of horrors, actually committed the unpardonable sin of jeering the Pope. They failed to point out that this outburst occurred after the "Holy" (God) father was asked to condemn the atrocities committed by the Contras and refused to do so — an action akin to tacit approval. This policy has been carried forward by Nicaraguan Archbishop Obando y Bravo, who has also refused to condemn either the Contras or their atrocities and has called for the Sandinistas to open up a "dialogue" with the Contras — clearly as a first step to letting the Contras attain a portion of state power in Nicaragua.

The terrorist crimes of the Contras are suddenly being talked about in the U.S. press because the question of whether or not the U.S. should renew direct and open support for the Contras is coming on the agenda once again. Last spring the U.S. Congress ended such "aid" while U.S. officials continued to control and supply Contra operations through the involvement of U.S. surrogates such as Israel and Taiwan and the efforts of "private citizens' groups" led by "retired" generals and "former" Green Berets, with plenty of assistance from active State and Defense Department personnel. The U.S. ruling class seems to be divided over the Contra issue, with some opposing direct involvement and others calling for renewed open support. This debate is rooted in the U.S.'s essential dilemma in Central America: the U.S. has a real and desperate need to demonstrate its absolute domination of the region, but it also fears that more direct U.S. intervention would mean getting bogged down in Central America — serious problems determined by the intensifying global contradictions, principally the drive toward world war with the Soviet Union.

On the surface it would appear that the tale of Contra atrocities was released by those who oppose further direct U.S. aid to the Contras, and the *Times* even stated that some Democrats felt that the exposure would strengthen that side of the issue. However, the U.S. has continually tried to play the bully in Central America, and previous exposures, such as the CIA assassination manual, have more been used to bolster that image while simultaneously ratcheting up the pressure on Nicaragua. The virtual announcement that the Contras are terrorizing the Nicaraguan population then must be seen as a further U.S. message to Nicaragua, and the masses of Central America more generally, that the U.S. will exact its price in blood for all those who dare to challenge its absolute rule.

In any case, both ruling-class sides have fully supported the transformation of Honduras into a U.S. fort, continual U.S. military exercises in the region and generally wielding the U.S. truncheon as much as is deemed prudent. The debate over direct backing for the Contras, insofar as it takes place in public forums like Congressional hearings, may be instructive as to the terms and extent of the U.S.'s serious difficulties in Central America. But it is quite clear that whatever the outcome of that debate, the U.S. has nothing but wanton terror in store for the masses in Nicaragua. □

Teach-In Prepares Opposition To U.S. Moves In Central America

Shortly before the holiday break, a highly successful teach-in on the situation in Nicaragua and Central America was held at Contra Costa Jr. College in California. The school, a few miles east of Berkeley, draws many proletarians, particularly Black and other oppressed nationalities. The theme was "U.S. Keep Your Hands Off Nicaragua and All of Central America." The event drew sixty people, and the presentations and discussion lasted for two and a half hours — and when it was over, a student senator called it "the biggest thing that's happened on this campus in a long time."

The teach-in stood out in the currently calm political life at the college and in the area nearby (which has been sort of off the beaten path of the political activism in the surrounding metropolitan area); it revealed among significant sections of the community a hunger for the information and the political challenge and debate that the three panelists offered. One panelist, recently returned from Nicaragua, presented a first-hand account of life under siege by the U.S. — he

had been in Nicaragua during the recent elections and the U.S.-manufactured "MIG crisis" and had traveled to areas under intense Contra attack. A speaker from the RCP spoke to the history of the U.S. in Central America and placed the present crisis in the context of geopolitical maneuvering for position for World War 3, calling for a stand of "many more defeats for U.S. wars of aggression." A professor of Mexican-American studies from a neighboring community college dug into the history of U.S. imperial penetration into Nicaragua and current U.S. involvement in Central America. He also issued an urgent call for demonstrations and opposition inside the U.S. to current and future U.S. moves in the region. The panel was introduced by a political science professor from the college.

The panelists provoked questions and wide-ranging discussion from the audience. The teach-in drew foreign students, from Central America, Ethiopia, and South America; a number of Black and white students from the col-

lege; a small number of people from the community, including a few workers who took off work to attend the teach-in; and a few students from the Chicano Studies Department.

Adding to the overall impact of the teach-in were a literature table from the Emergency Response Network, with its "pledge of resistance" to a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua; a book table from Revolution Books; and a literature table from the Chile Information Center. The school newspaper also covered the teach-in.

As people left the teach-in, discussion and debate continued, with different people upholding the views of different speakers, but nearly all agreeing that the teach-in was very informative and that more events like it were very much in order. Among the small group of mainly foreign students from the campus who had been active in building for the teach-in, including wide leafletting and placing a big banner in the cafeteria the day of the event, plans are already under way for at least one more teach-in. □

When Bernhard Goetz, a 37-year-old self-employed electronic specialist, pulled out a silver .38-caliber revolver on a New York City subway on December 22, 1984 and shot four Black youth from the South Bronx, Goetz made it into that special category reserved for the John Waynes and Clint Eastwoods of this nation: hero land. It was the police who immediately made it clear what the shooting represented. "A real Charles Bronson-type of incident," said a transit police detective. In the 1970s the bourgeoisie gave us the movie *Death Wish*; in the 1980s it's the real thing. Four Black youth, it was claimed the day after the shooting, had pulled screwdrivers on Goetz and threatened to rob him. Goetz, of course, brave hero that he is, ducked into the subway tunnel after the shooting only to surface some ten days later in New Hampshire, but not before a blast of reactionary poison spewed via the police and the media as support for this reactionary was whipped up into a "popular movement." While four Black youth with bullets in their bodies is normally of no particular concern to the bourgeoisie — their hired thugs, the police, routinely pump Black youth across the country full of lead with impunity — in this case the shooting of these youth became the opportunity to blare it out rather straightforwardly: it's open season — with oppressed youth, an explosive section of society and a potentially extremely powerful force for revolution, prime targets. The juices of the Archie Bunkers were stirred. Authoritative shrinks and social commentators of the media analyzed the psyche of the shooter and declared that he did what "everybody" wants to do. The campaign widened to draw in the

New York Subway Gunman

A Reactionary Call To Arms

liberal petty bourgeoisie in New York too. James Q. Wilson, a political scientist at Harvard known for his crime studies, told the *New York Times*, "In New York there are no liberals any more on the crime and the law and order issues. . . . All the liberals have been mugged." One particularly rabid piece by Dorothy Rabinowitz of the *Daily News* declared, "Four would-be predators, the sort who regularly intimidate, who mug, who kill people in the streets and subways in our cities every day, were themselves, for once, put in the position of victims: predators who had been made to experience the terror of superior force turned on them." How dare these mouthpieces of the U.S. imperialists talk about predators! When the oppressed

rise up and practice some revolutionary violence, these hacks are the first to scream "terrorists"! Rabinowitz, along with other commentators, added that those who approved of this shooting were "black, they were white, they were yellow: a true rainbow coalition. . . this approval cut across racial lines." In stepped Roy Innes, of CORE, to declare that the shooter had made "the greatest contribution to crime prevention in the last 25 years." The Guardian Angels set up picket lines demanding that the authorities give the then-unknown shooter amnesty.

A reactionary wind has been blowing in the wake of the shooting couched in terms of the scared, frustrated anticrime fighter (packing a .38!) versus the

"punks," the "toughs." One need not speculate for too long just what kind of hysteria would be whipped up had a Black man shot four white teenagers. Or if a woman shot a rapist? What exactly happened on the subway is murky. Official reports have it that the youth were apparently jostling the guy, at first asking him for cigarettes, that kind of thing. The police report that the youth asked Goetz for money, amounting to \$5. According to the police story, when asked for the five bucks, Goetz replied, "I have \$5 for each of you" and reached for his gun and opened fire. Two of the youth were shot in the back. What seems to tickle the fancy of various reactionaries in New York was how cool and calm Goetz was. No sooner were the youth taken to the hospital, one of them with a severed spine and paralyzed from the waist down, did a hatchet job on the youth unfold. They had sharpened screwdrivers. It turned out the screwdrivers were not sharpened and were never brandished anyway. Witnesses said the youth did not threaten the man. "Criminal records!" screamed the media as judges dug out old warrants for such infamous crimes as subway trespassing, riding between subway cars, possession of marijuana, disorderly conduct. When one of the youth was released from the hospital he was arrested and arraigned on an unrelated charge of stealing quarters from a video game. Al Capone, move over! Frankly, it doesn't much matter whether these youth did or didn't commit any petty crimes. It is quite clear that these youth were not major predators and that this was not a case of "self-defense." What has mattered is that a backward

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Tijuana Fire

The Hand That Turned Off The Faucet

On the evening of December 4th a huge fire erupted in the central business district of Tijuana, Mexico, only blocks from the U.S. border. By the time the blaze had been extinguished the following morning, the warehouse of a major department store chain had been totally destroyed, and several homes, offices, a rooming house, and a hotel were either destroyed or severely damaged. Dozens of residents of the area have been forced to evacuate their homes, with some taking refuge in a nearby fire station. Firefighters from Tijuana, five nearby towns in Baja California, and from San Diego and Chula Vista battled the fire before it was finally brought under control.

While the immediate cause of this blaze remains unknown, the reason it spread to such destructive proportions was immediately evident. There was no water available to put the fire out. This is not an uncommon problem in Tijuana. According to Tijuana fire captain José Narciso Laguna Salinas, about *one-half of the time* firefighters either have inadequate water pressure or there are no fire hydrants nearby when they arrive on the scene of a fire. Sometimes there is no water pressure at all.

In the case of the recent fire, it took something like half an hour before water pressure was brought up to full force in the area of the blaze, and that was long enough to allow the flames to spread and engulf most of the department store warehouse.

Fortunately, in this blaze the injuries were not severe and no one was killed. But it had all the potential of a major disaster: if the fire had come at a drier time of the year, or had a strong wind fanned the flames, or had it taken a bit longer to get sufficient water pressure, then the devastation would have been much worse. As it was, Tijuana officials were reduced to calling on companies which deliver water to the neighborhoods in the area, asking them to send their tanker trucks to help the firefighters.

Shortage

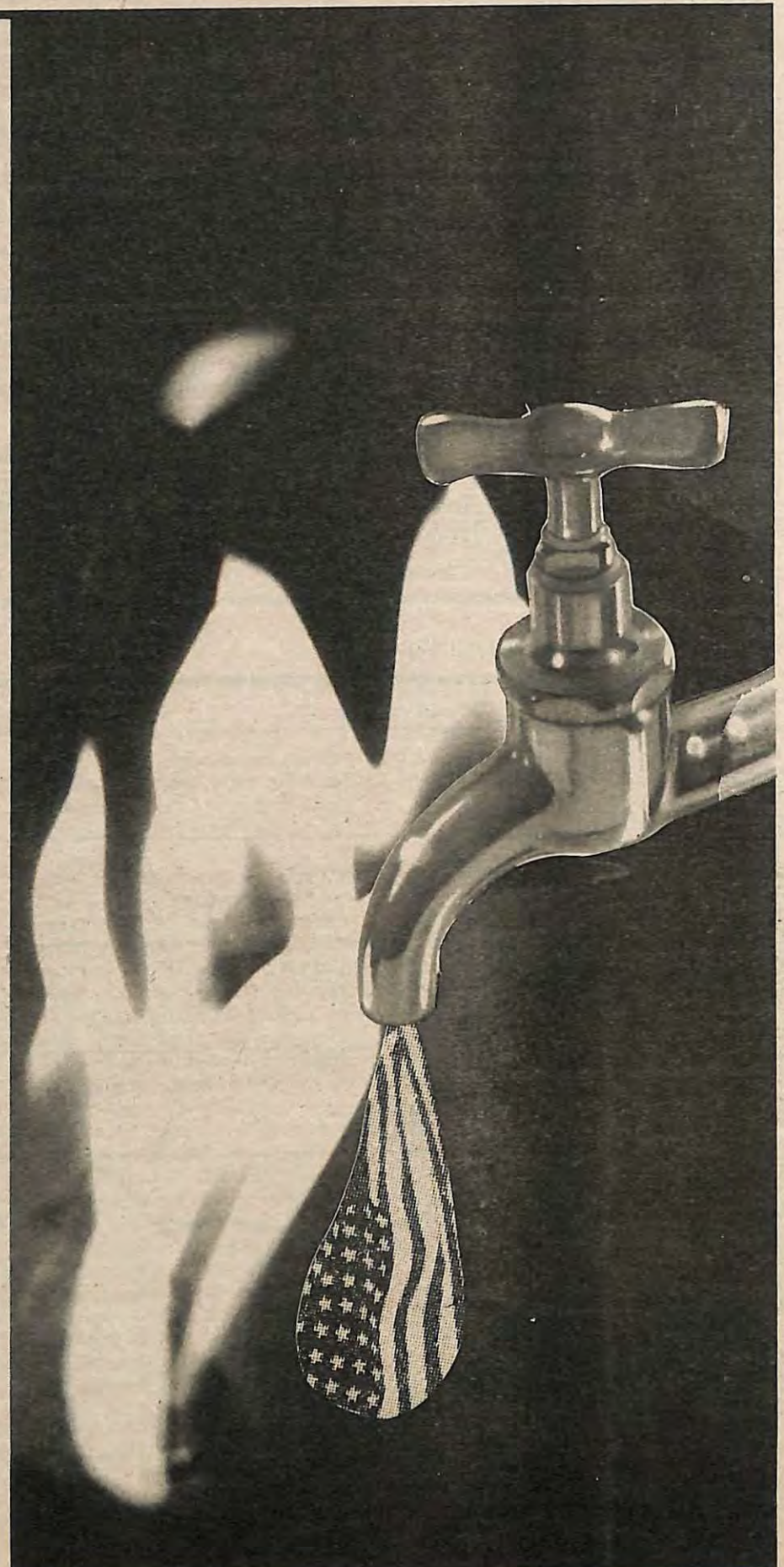
Tijuana has virtually a perpetual water shortage, and the turning down of the water pressure or shutting off the supply to a neighborhood for a period of time is done as a matter of course in order to stretch out the available water supply. This fact has been noted in the press of

neighboring southern California, but, not surprisingly, precious little is said about why. It is simply another one of those imperialist "facts of life." Ignored is the fact that, if these conditions existed a few miles to the north — in the suburbs of San Diego — we would have a major scandal on our hands.

The blaze did not result in a disaster like those in India and Mexico City, not this time. But it does rip into the open many of the same underlying conditions of distorted development, oppression and brutalities-to-come. Just north of Tijuana, the lands of southern California are laced with a whole system of aqueducts and canals which supply water to Los Angeles and San Diego and also to the crops grown in California, crops which are cultivated and harvested in large part by the labor of Mexican immigrants. Moreover, the waters of the Colorado River, which are a prime part of this water-supply system, are so heavily exploited in the U.S. that the water has become unusable in Mexico and even harmful to the lands because of its high salt level.

Population

A large part of the reason behind the shortage of water in Tijuana is the phenomenal growth in its population with which the water supply and other social services have been unable to keep up. Tijuana is today the fastest growing city in all of Mexico, growing at a faster rate even than Mexico City. And this is the direct result of the fact that Tijuana is right on the U.S. border and that the Mexican economy is so heavily dependent on the U.S. A whole series of factories have been located along the border in order to have cheaper Mexican labor to produce parts for U.S. corporations. Such factories are encouraged by a special program of tax incentives and the like from the Mexican government. Given the high rate of unemployment in Mexico and the ruination of large sections of the peasantry, the mushrooming growth of this industrial border strip cannot help but attract ever-growing numbers of people. This being only one more example of the way in which U.S. imperialism has promoted a grossly lopsided relationship with Mexico, and so is creating what may well turn out to be a disaster in the making. □



When Ronald Reagan took office in 1981, he announced his intention of pushing through a series of economic and military initiatives that would restore "American strength and prosperity." America, he intoned, would rediscover its national greatness. As he stood reelection in 1984, he could point to a recovery and a vastly expanded military arsenal. And he could bask in the blinding rays of a kind of high-tech, mom-and-apple-pie chauvinism, which found its most virulent expression in the LA Olympics. Yet there is something very desperate and hollow about these "achievements." Peace through strength? In point of fact, the rapid military *buildup* serves the cause of a rapidly approaching military *showdown*. A strong economy? More banks failed in 1984—a recovery year—than in any year since the Depression of the 1930s. Prosperity? The numbers of the poor, homeless, and hungry in the United States are growing at alarming rates. National pride? Well, perhaps it'd be best to consider just what the celebration is all about. It is assuredly not an inward or reflective absorption with America but *America No. 1 in the World*: the American people are being programmed for world war, the horror of which gets routinely glossed over by recourse to

stupefying banalities.

In this article, I will zero in on the economic recovery and attempt to put it in perspective. The larger perspective to which I refer is the deepening crisis of the world economy, the exigencies facing the Western alliance, and the time-frame within which the Western imperialists (and their counterparts in the Soviet-led bloc) are operating. This article does not address the question of the character, configuration, and crisis of the Soviet-led imperialist bloc—I have spoken to this at length elsewhere¹—nor does it treat the nature of imperialist relations with the Third World. These are crucial elements of the world imperialist economy, but the focus of this article is the recent performance of the U.S. economy and the ways in which the U.S. imperialists are preparing for a global confrontation. The analysis is divided into two major sections. It begins by examining the recovery in its economic and strategic specificity. The second section looks at some of the repercussions of recent economic developments on occupational and social structure. It is hoped that readers will be stirred to study *America in Decline* for deeper theoretical discussion of many of the issues raised in this article.

I. ON THE SPECIFICITY OF THE RECOVERY

The U.S. economy was hit by two major recessions in the last five years: the first in early 1980, and the second (and more serious) in 1981-82. In many respects, these two recessions were triggered by actions of the Federal Reserve Bank. Throughout most of 1979, the dollar was declining in value and hysteria was spreading in the international financial markets. The price of gold bullion had risen to an unprecedented \$800 an ounce; indeed, the *Wall Street Journal* went so far as to suggest that the world was a breath away from a financial panic. In this highly charged atmosphere, and to allay Western alliance fears of an uncontrollable run on the dollar, Jimmy Carter appointed Paul Volcker as Chairman of the Federal Reserve. In October 1979, Volcker announced a decisive assault on inflation. A new, tight monetary regime was imposed. This was not, as is often portrayed in the press, some coup by the monetarists, or a measure of Volcker's "iron will," but rather an initiative necessitated by the danger of an unraveling of international financial arrangements at the very time the bloc was moving to raise the level of war prepara-

tions. The effect was to drive up interest rates to record levels and to induce the steepest recession of the postwar period. Nevertheless, some order was brought to the international money markets and the dollar began to stabilize and appreciate against other currencies. These restrictive monetary policies were accompanied by deep cuts in domestic spending and low-income programs—although military spending would rise dramatically, a point we shall discuss momentarily. But the contractionary pressures of the anti-inflationary strategy led to new contradictions. Against a backdrop of soaring Third World debt, capped by the near-default of Mexico and a severe recession, the Federal Reserve loosened the credit reins in the fall of 1982. It would subsequently shift gears again... and again. What we are witnessing is not managed intervention but high-stakes juggling.

The recovery of the U.S. economy began in November 1982. In previous commentaries in the *Revolutionary Worker*, the partial and temporary character of this recovery has been correctly stressed. But the recovery is real

Notes On Political Economy

A Perverse Reco

enough. How is it to be explained and how is it to be evaluated? In addition to some cyclical phenomena—like mergers, retooling, and depression of wages—associated with the past two recessions, this recovery is basically the product of several specific features of the U.S. economy interacting with, and very much linked to, the position and role of the United States within the Western imperialist bloc. This is what has given a certain strength to the recovery relative to the situation in Western Europe. Let us examine the key factors in turn. We begin with the military buildup in the United States, a reflection of the U.S.'s guardian role within the Western alliance.

The Military Buildup

The boost in U.S. defense spending is staggering. The administration had planned for spending to grow from \$182.7 billion in fiscal 1982 to \$356 billion in fiscal 1987. This is \$1.7 trillion in all. Over the last three years alone, military spending increased in real (inflation-adjusted) terms by 40 percent! This is clearly the largest military buildup in peacetime history; in fact, since 1948 there has never been a period of sustained real increases in defense spending such as that beginning in 1980. (See Figure 1) Much of this spending is focused on the purchase of new, strategic nuclear weapons, such as the B-1 bomber, the MX and Trident missiles, cruise missiles, and high-tech space weapons, along with a large complement of new conventional weapons, including tanks, naval ships, aircraft carriers, and helicopters. It is this extraordinary increase in spending for new weapons systems that is propelling the military budget upward at such a rapid pace (actually, this buildup is more

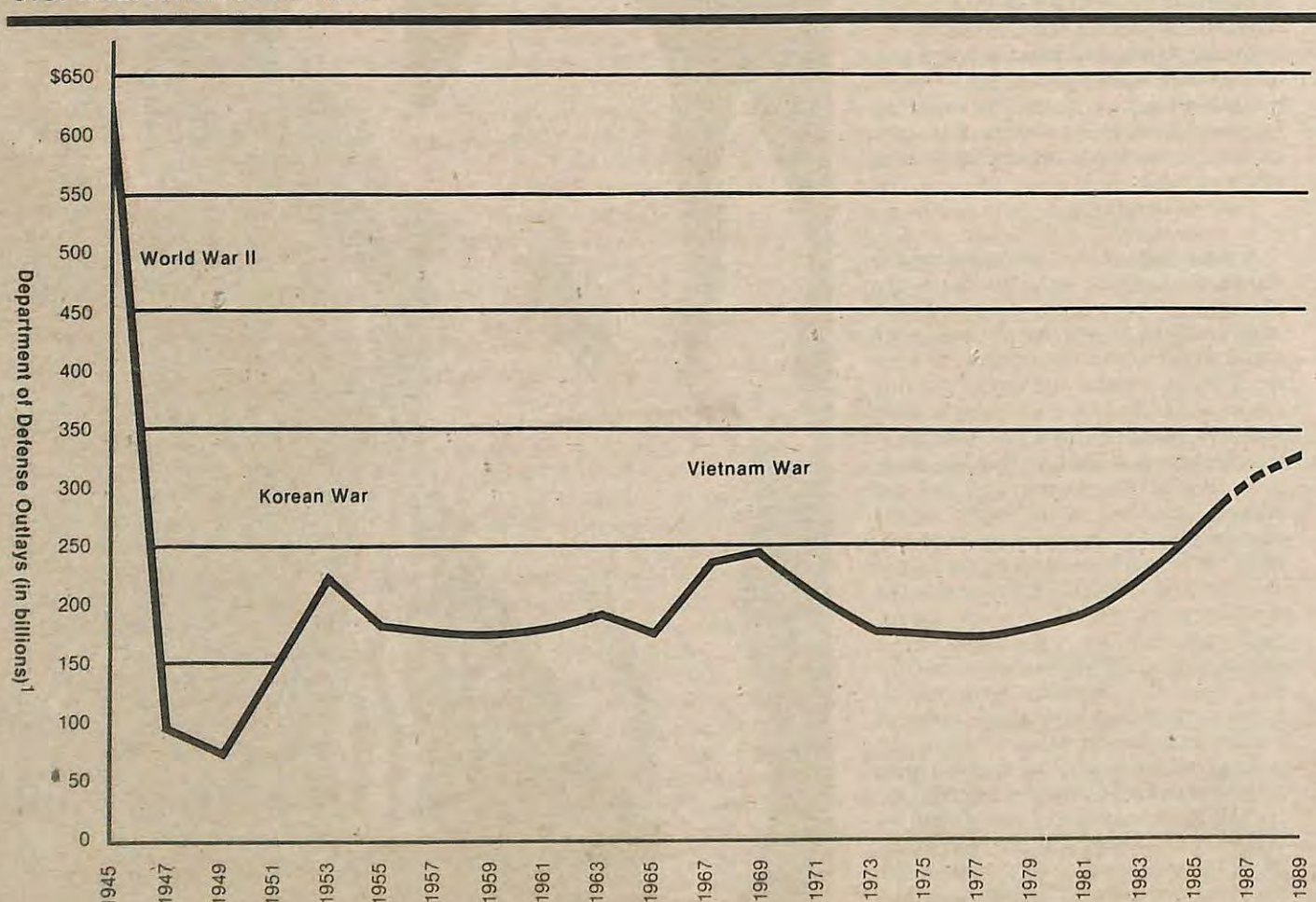
heavily concentrated on weaponry than was the case during the Vietnam mobilization).

This is not a World War 2-style industrial mobilization. But the buildup has had a not insignificant effect on the economy. Calculating the exact impact of remilitarization is a formidable task, especially in view of the many indirect linkages between the military and civilian sectors. But back in 1981, Charles Schultze of the Brookings Institution estimated that some 30 percent of the increase in "goods producing" GNP over the next four years would go to the military. It is reasonably assumed that the Department of Defense creates 48,000 jobs for every \$1 billion it spends.² Defense and defense-related industrial activity constitute a significant share of the U.S. economy. We are dealing with a large chunk of the electronics and aerospace industries, of the transportation equipment and primary metals industries, and with a tangled network of subcontractors spread throughout the United States. In the past three years, defense procurement has almost certainly helped compensate for the eroding international competitiveness of American manufactures (military spending is a captive market for American manufacturing; the Pentagon does not solicit competitive international bids on military equipment).

When Reagan took office, concern was expressed that this sort of crash effort would strain resources and create bottlenecks. Improving what is called "surge responsiveness" of the defense industry has certainly been a matter of paramount importance to strategic planners. But the bottlenecks and inflationary fallout did not materialize on account of the sluggishness of the economy—industry was operating at about 69 percent of total capacity in late 1982, when the recovery got underway. Does this suggest, then, that the military buildup was a counter-cyclical device, the Reagan brand of fiscal stimulus? Emphatically not. The overall increases in military spending on the part of both the U.S.-led and Soviet-led imperialist blocs are called forth by the intensification of their global rivalry, and the weapons systems on line are, it must be soberly acknowledged, designed to be used. One particular feature of the current buildup is the attempt to gain momentary advantage—and momentary counts for something, given how close the two blocs are to a full-scale confrontation—by investing in weapons systems that render obsolescent some equipment stocks of the adversary power.

Historically, the Left has been hobbled by all manner of unscientific and reformist views of military expenditure. The "surplus absorption" school of thought, associated with Baran and Sweezy, regards military spending as a means to prevent capitalism from succumbing to its stagnationist essence. In this view, the defense sector is an outlet for unabsorbable capital. Another school of thought, traditionally identified with the notion of a "permanent arms economy," suggests that the bargaining power of certain sectoral interests enables them to coalesce into a "military-industrial complex," which has an autonomous tap on the federal budget. From the standpoint of Marxist-Leninist political economy, however, military spending serves the dictatorship functions of the capitalist class,

Figure 1
U.S. MILITARY SPENDING



¹In constant 1985 dollars

Source: Defense Budget Project.

Recovery In Strategic Context

By Raymond Lotta

and is in fact a necessary *expense* bound up with the preservation of capitalist property relations. In the imperialist era, with the exercise of global power integral to internationalized accumulation, such expenditure attains incredible proportions. Military expenditure is parasitic. It is a drain on productive resources. It does not directly enhance the profitability of capital as a whole, since, viewed from the requirements of expanded reproduction, it cheapens neither the production of means of production nor means of consumption — in this sense, it is analogous to luxury goods production (as analyzed by Marx). But precisely because we are dealing with the *political* economy of imperialism, this expenditure cannot be scientifically understood from a narrowly economic standpoint. Military spending flows from the needs of empire; it is

More banks failed in 1984 — a recovery year — than in any year since the Depression of the 1930s.

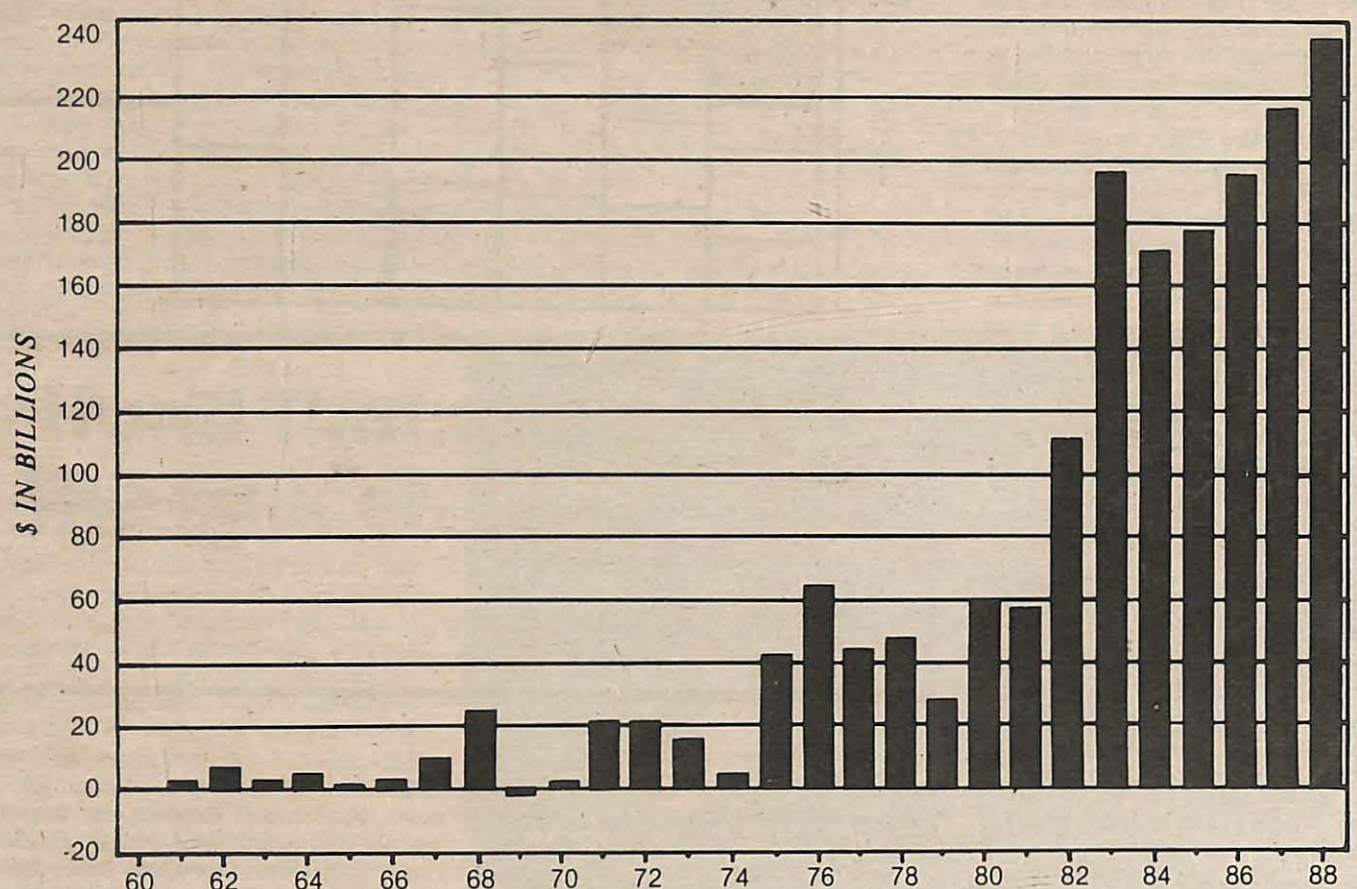
necessary and functional in that larger context, even as it creates its own contradictions.

Returning to the recent military buildup. The major economic policy issue faced by the U.S. imperialists as they embarked on remilitarization was how to push ahead, at the pace required, without unleashing inflationary pressures and heightening monetary instability throughout the Western alliance. Managing this buildup became a question of underwriting enormous deficits. In fiscal 1976, the deficit hit an unprecedented \$66 billion; in 1983, it rose to nearly \$200 billion! (See Figure 2) What has enabled the U.S. to sustain these deficits and what sort of forces are bolstering the U.S. economy? The U.S. economy has certain advantages and areas of strength that have found expression in new patterns of accumulation. At the same time, the first half of the decade of the '80s has seen an extraordinary inflow of foreign capital into the U.S. Each of these factors requires some discussion.

Investment Patterns and Capital Inflows

The U.S. share of world industrial production and its share of world exports have declined over the past twenty years. Its rate of growth of manufacturing productivity between 1977 and 1982 seriously lagged its competitors. Its industrial base and infrastructure have experienced rapid deterioration. Yet certain features of the U.S. economy have combined to produce a peculiar growth dynamic: the large and highly integrated continental market affords great mobility of capital and labor; regional differentiation allows for the profitable relocation and redeployment of capital (the Sunbelt is a prime example); U.S. capital has preserved its technological and competitive edge in key industrial sectors, like semiconductors, computers, telecommunications, aircraft, and pharmaceuticals; and its low-wage labor reserves are available for incorporation into new industrial-service complexes.

Figure 2
U.S. FEDERAL DEFICITS (in billions of dollars)



Sources: Office of Management and Budget, Congressional Budget Office. Deficits for fiscal years 1985 through 1988 are the Congressional Budget Office's latest (August 1984) official estimates of the deficits for these years under current budget, tax, and defense policies.

While finance capital was overseeing the shrinkage of the steel industry, forging steel-related mergers, and shifting production into minimills, it was also pumping capital into more dynamic sectors. The high-tech industries, which are very important to the U.S.'s international position, are an obvious case in point. Legions of engineers, new entrepreneurs, and venture capitalists have been part of this process. And standing in dialectical relation to this brave new technological world, with its opportunities for the rapid accumulation of wealth, is a complementary axis of outsourced and subcontracted production which thrives on superexploited labor. This is by no means a backwater phenomenon. Here I want to quote from a fascinating study of recent employment trends in the major urban centers of the U.S. Saskia Sassen-Koob writes:

There has been an increase in low-wage jobs in the manufacturing sector as a result of (a) the social reorganization of the work process, notably the expansion of sweatshops and industrial homework; (b) the technological transformation of the work process that has induced a downgrading of a variety of jobs; and (c) the rapid growth of high-technology industries which are characterized by a large share of low-wage jobs in production. These three trends have resulted in what I

call a downgraded manufacturing sector.

There is a strong tendency to assume backward jobs to be part of backward sectors. Yet, low-wage, dead-end jobs can be part of the most dynamic sectors of highly advanced industrialized economies. There is also a strong tendency to assume that backward sectors cannot be part of major growth trends. Yet my analysis of an expanding downgraded manufacturing sector, one containing sweatshops, industrial homework, and a large incidence of nonunionized, low-wage assembly jobs, suggests otherwise.³

Many of these jobs are filled by minority and immigrant women.

At the same time, corporate America, in its search for new growth opportunities and aware that killings must be made quickly, has sought to attract the "best and the brightest." This, and the complementary expansion of various business and producer services, has contributed to the growth of professional and managerial employment. The consumption expenditures of these strata, in many cases the outcome of competitively bid-up salaries, have fed back into the economy as a stimulating element. These various trends, some of whose social implications will be discussed in Section II of this article, have been pushed along by

the particular position of the U.S. in its bloc. Which brings us to the next point.

Since 1917, the United States had more invested or lent abroad than foreigners had invested in this country. The surplus of U.S. investment abroad less foreign assets held in the United States peaked in 1982. But the trend has been rapidly reversing. This is partly the result of a significant slowdown in American direct investment abroad (direct ownership in foreign enterprise) — five consecutive years of near-zero growth, in real terms — and a drastic reduction in foreign loans by American banks to Third World countries — new net borrowings by the developing countries plunged to \$22.6 billion in 1983 from \$70.5 billion in 1981. Declining rates of return, the world debt crisis, and growing political instability are major factors involved in this reverse flow. At the same time, as can be seen from Figure 3, over the past five years foreign investment in the United States has doubled, now amounting to an awesome \$833 billion. Some experts have projected that the United States will owe the world a net \$357 billion at the end of 1987, if this pattern continues.

Some of this foreign investment has financed takeovers and joint ventures: in 1984, for instance, Britain's Midland Bank took full control of California's Crocker National Bank, while Japan's Nippon Kokan bought half of the National Steel Corporation. But the bulk —

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Recovery

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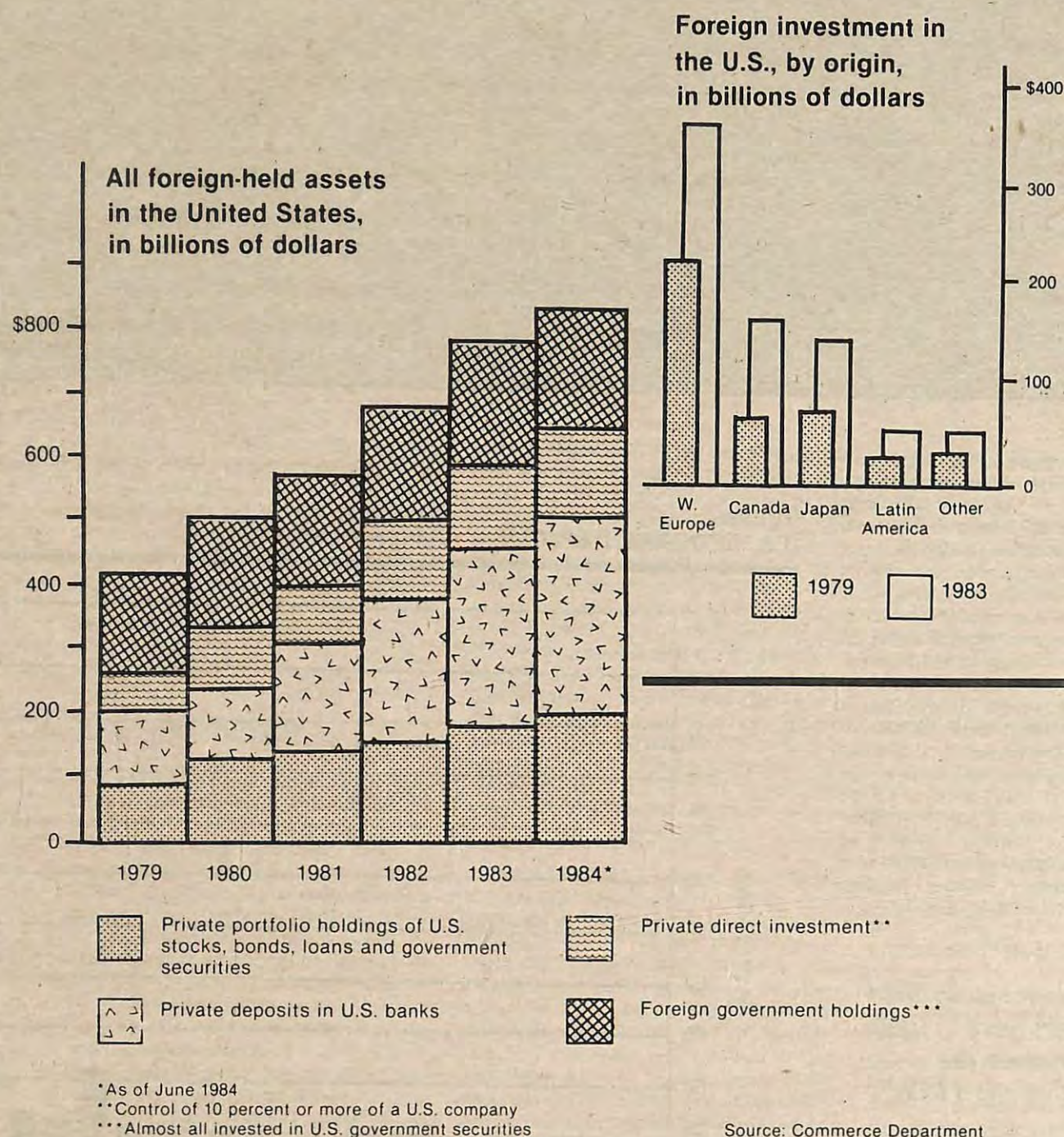
about three-quarters — of these foreign funds are invested in relatively liquid investments, such as bank deposits, government securities, stocks, or bonds — which is to say, they can be moved out of the U.S. relatively quickly. It is estimated that half of this capital comes from Western Europe. Of course, the interknittedness and fluidity of finance capital often make it difficult to pin down the exact origin of much of this capital: some of it is actually American capital deposited abroad which is reinvested back in the United States; some of the capital nominally ascribed to Western Europe is actually investment originating in Latin America which gets funneled through the European banks. But the trend is unmistakable: a torrent of investment capital flowing into the United States.

What has drawn this capital into the United States and what role is it playing? The Federal Reserve has in effect administered the highest real interest rates since the 1930s. This has made financial investments in the U.S. highly attractive, while contributing to a 40 percent rise in the value of the dollar since 1980. Compared with the expansion of the 1960s, these are not boom times; but relative to the anemic state of the West European economies, the U.S. economy does offer some growth and diversification opportunities, and even some high-profit investments. At the same time, the United States represents a kind of imperialist redoubt, or what the bankers call a "safe haven." Given the volatility of the world economy and mounting global tensions, the U.S. looms as a comparatively secure market. More profoundly, for the United States' imperialist partners, the defense and reconstitution, through world war, of an imperialist world order in their interests turns mightily on the role of the United States and their relationship to it. The United States is the functional "base area" for the Western imperialist bloc.

The United States, for its part, has encouraged this capital inflow for two basic reasons. First, this overseas money has eased the burden of an astronomical run-up in the Federal Government deficit — the U.S. government is now borrowing to the tune of more than \$1 for every \$5 it spends, and foreign capital is funding half of this new debt — which might otherwise have required inflationary monetary expansion and which might have seen the government "crowd out" private borrowers in the credit markets, sending interest rates even higher and severely compromising the U.S. economy. And these inflows have directly fueled the recovery: according to one estimate, foreign capital now funds a significant 26 percent of corporate capital spending in the U.S., compared with 15.7 percent in 1980.⁴ Second, the closer interlocking of European (and Japanese) capital with U.S. capital contributes towards bolstering the cohesion of the bloc; it represents an economic mechanism through which the unity of will and unity of action of the bloc are being reasserted on a higher level.

The strategic initiatives taken by U.S. imperialism reflect its leading position with the Western alliance. In a very limited sense, the U.S. imperialists have succeeded in managing the military buildup without immediately wreaking havoc on the international financial structure. Moreover, the U.S. recovery has had a cushioning effect on the slump in the bloc. It has provided export markets for the manufacturing sectors of its alliance partners: it is estimated that 33 percent of the growth in Canada's economy, 15 percent of the growth of Japan's economy, and 17 percent of the growth of West Germany's economy in 1984 derived from the boom in exports to the United States.⁵ And to a lesser extent, U.S. demand has mitigated the strain of debt-repayments of some Third World countries. But this recovery has not wrenched the world economy out of crisis. The largely advanced industrial countries which make up the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development "bounced back" in 1983 from a steep recession by eking out GNP growth of only 2.4 percent. That was exactly half the growth achieved in 1976,

Figure 3
THE INFLOW OF FOREIGN CAPITAL INTO THE UNITED STATES



after the 1974-75 downturn. Eighteen million people are unemployed in Europe, and this is expected to rise to 20 million by the end of this year — a record rate of 11.5 percent of the total European labor force.⁶ And the U.S. economy is still fundamentally sick (the import invasion spurred by the high interest rates and overvalued dollar is now beginning to pinch U.S. domestic industry).

The prerogatives available to U.S. imperialism also reflect its orchestrating position within the Western bloc. The U.S. could devalue the dollar and experiment with free currency floats between 1971 and 1979 (discarding the logic and discipline imposed by the 1944 Bretton Woods arrangements). And, faced with a more dire global political and economic situation, it could opt for severe monetary and credit restriction in the early 1980s. But none of these measures, in the jargon of mainstream economists, effected any fundamental "structural adjustments."

There are certain indices and weak links that reveal just how serious the global crisis is and just how explosive is its potential. Let us consider some trends in capital investment. We have made frequent mention of the deficit. Table 1 tells an interesting story. The table is taken from an article in *Monthly Review*. The numbers in juxtaposition pertain to fixed investment and the federal deficit. The trend is striking: the rate of growth in investment declined sharply over the successive five-year periods, while the deficit as a percent of fixed investment shot up during the 1970s and early 1980s. In effect, ever greater injections of fiscal stimulus have failed to buoy up the rate of capital formation. What this suggests is not that the growing deficit has, in a one-to-one way, absorbed funds that would have otherwise gone into capital investment, or that simply more stimulus is required to spur this investment, but that the underlying profitability of productive capital is such as to call forth this kind of expenditure, which in turn compounds the difficulties in restoring profitability.

The rate of return on capital in manufacturing in the U.S., Japan, Germany, France, and England has sloped sharply downward since the late 1960s. For France, West Germany, Great Britain, Canada, and Japan, manufacturing investment grew at an annual average rate (in real terms) of 9 percent during the period 1965-70; since then it has slowed to barely 5 percent.⁷ In the U.S., the business sector's net new investment is rising more slowly than it did a decade ago, and it is also weighted more toward inventory accumulation than to investment in plant and equipment, and more toward equipment than new plant (capacity expansion). Unlike the 1960s, investment in general is highly debt-leveraged. Net interest payments are gobbling a third of the pre-tax profits of American companies; at a similar stage in five previous cyclical upswings they were taking only one-eighth.⁸ And much of this debt is short-term. Excess capacity plagues key industries: in the world steel industry, the current slack is estimated at 200 million tons, and world shipping and

mining are severely depressed. Bankruptcies in the U.S., West Germany, and Japan have been at postwar highs in the 1980s.

International expansion is pivotal to the profitable reproduction of imperialist capital. More than a third of the profits earned by the top 100 U.S. multinationals in 1983 came from overseas. Yet, as indicated, U.S. overseas investment has been tapering off. As a general international trend, capital has moved away from long-term productive investments into short-term and speculative ventures. In the Third World, direct foreign investment is flowing into an ever-narrower circle of countries. And some, like Brazil, hover on the brink of collapse. International finance capital is dealing with the Third World debt crisis not through any fundamental restructuring of capital on a global scale but through case-by-case renegotiation and enforced austerity. Indeed, the international financial press has spoken of a new phenomenon, the "IMF riot": urban riots touched off by Interna-

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Table 1
FEDERAL DEFICIT AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT

(Billions of 1972 \$)

	Fixed Investment		Federal Deficit	
	Annual average (1)	Percent change from preceding period (2)	Annual average (3)	Deficit as percent of fixed investment (3) ÷ (1) (4)
1960-64	\$111.0	—	\$ 2.6	2.3%
1965-69	148.4	+33.7%	3.5	2.4
1970-74	177.9	+19.9	14.0	7.9
1975-79	197.8	+11.2	31.2	15.8
1980-83	214.2	+ 8.3	51.9	24.2

Note: Fixed investment includes investment in residential construction, nonresidential structures, and producers' durable equipment.

Source: *Monthly Review*, April 1984, p. 3.

Recovery

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tional Monetary Fund austerity programs.

What these trends reveal at the deepest level is the inability of capital to make the necessary leaps in productivity and profitability. Capital can still shift in and out of sectors here and there, and even tap into some boomlets: the borderland economy of the U.S.-Mexico has been a crucial source of growth over the past decade (new U.S.-funded projects have proliferated in auto assembly, electronics, and computers); in the past year U.S. capital has been flowing into the Japanese semiconductor and computer industries. And rationalization is taking place: a "mega"-merger movement in the United States has seen fourteen takeovers worth \$2 billion or more each since 1981.⁹ But the world economy lacks the bases for durable expansion. As we emphasize in *America in Decline*, a threshold is reached over the course of a spiral beyond which the advanced countries cannot export enough capital and the dependent countries cannot absorb enough capital to fuel an expansionary process. The dynamic of expansion has played itself out within the present political/economic alignment of the world.

Interacting with these underlying structural trends are highly volatile aspects of the world economy and world imperialist system. The international financial network is a notable example. In two previous articles published in the *RW*, I have commented on how the highly integrated and entwined character of world finance has been transformed from a major source of strength in the postwar period into an Achilles' heel that threatens to pull all the players and institutions into the vortex of crisis. To appreciate the dimensions of what we are dealing with, consider the fact that the Third World countries have accumulated an external debt in excess of \$800 billion (much of which can never be paid back), while the nine largest banks in the U.S. have lent to "risky" countries in South America and elsewhere, sums amounting to more than 250 percent of their capital and reserves.¹⁰ The near-collapse of the Continental Illinois Bank of Chicago in 1984 augured just how quickly things

could unravel. And it should not be overlooked that the rescue package engineered by the Federal Reserve to save that bank was larger than the previous bailouts of Lockheed, New York City, and Chrysler combined.

This is the overall context in which the initiatives taken by the U.S. imperialists and the recovery of the past two years must be situated. The imperialists do not understand the causes of the global crisis, much less the mainsprings of twentieth century development. But they do understand that no durable and sustainable recovery is possible, and they are even more acutely aware that things could blow up in their face. Their strategy is twofold: to press ahead with war preparations (NATO's recent decision to increase expenditures for military infrastructure and related improvements in conventional defense capabilities is yet another reminder that we are dealing with a war bloc) and to rationalize the effects of deepening crisis in a way least disruptive to the unity of the bloc. It is a strategy that is short-term and fraught with peril and contradiction. An international portfolio shift out of the dollar could set off new inflationary storms and bring down the financial superstructure; a collapse or upheaval in a major Third World country could have enormously destabilizing repercussions throughout the bloc. The imperialists are engaged in a delicate high-wire balancing act.

Some pundits have suggested that the huge import surplus of the United States and the inflow of capital are simply signs of a maturing industrial society which has grown cognizant of its international responsibilities. Others have alleged that the United States is losing sovereignty over its economy as its external debt increases (Jesse Jackson tried that number out at the Democratic Convention). These are exercises in deliberate obfuscation and demagoguery. As for bipartisan concern over the budget deficit, well the problems are real enough, and even deeper cuts in social expenditure will be rammed down the throats of the poor. But given the health of the world economy and the exigencies of war preparation, there is no real solution at hand. Again, all of what is happening only makes sense in the short-run. And the short-run grows shorter as events threaten to quickly overtake this strategic planning; its elements are continually jeopardized and its underpinnings demand resolution.

II. SOME IMPORTANT OCCUPATIONAL AND SOCIAL TRENDS

How have the developments described above impacted on the U.S. labor market and the broader social fabric in America? Obviously, space does not permit an exhaustive exploration of the question, but the analysis would be incomplete were it not provisionally addressed. The point of departure for any such discussion is the combined effect of long-term changes in the industrial mix of the U.S. economy with the concrete political and economic modalities of the global crisis. Only with this perspective can we begin to get a handle on why the recovery has not only overlooked large segments of the American population but led to intensified exploitation and oppression. There are two basic phenomena with which we are dealing: *the displacement, downgrading, and polarization of employment, and the rapid increase in mass poverty.*

New York City offers a microcosm of these trends. From 1969 to 1976, employment dropped sharply. From 1977 through 1983, however, total employment climbed by 5 percent. In that latter period, employment in banking rose by 29 percent; in the securities industry by 64 percent; in real estate by 25 percent; and in the legal, accounting, and other business services by 41 percent. New York City's economy is the most service-oriented in the world. This has everything to do with the city's role as international financial center, servicing not only U.S. multinational corporations and banks but non-American capital as well. In view of the very large dollar component of any international financial portfolio and given the massive inflow of capital described earlier, it has become highly impor-

tant to foreign capital to tap into New York's global financial clearinghouse: in 1980, there were 149 foreign banking offices in New York; by mid-1984, that number had increased to 207. Along with this white-collar expansion has come a real-estate boom which has provided some momentum to the construction industry and hastened the reemergence of speculative real-estate investment trusts.

What is significant about this growth dynamic is that in many respects it depends upon a peculiar combination of high-paying professional and administrative employment with low-paying and low-skilled labor — dead-end clerical jobs, for instance. Further, while New York City lost 100,000 manufacturing jobs since 1977, "there has in fact been a major expansion in manufacturing jobs, but mostly in forms of organization of work that do not get easily recorded in official figures, notably sweatshops and industrial homework, including homework in electronics."¹² These niches of superexploitation, and the garment industry remains an important one, have played a major, if less advertised, role in New York City's dubious "revival."

Newsweek magazine dubbed 1984 the Year of the Yuppie (young urban profes-

The dynamic of expansion has played itself out within the present political/economic alignment of the world.

Table 2
DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL U.S. LABOR FORCE*
AMONG EARNINGS GROUPINGS, 1970 AND 1980

Earnings Groupings ^a	Distribution of Total U.S. Labor Force (%)	
	1970	1980
1.60 and above	11.3	12.9
1.59 to 1.30	20.9	24.2
1.29 to 1.00	18.9	12.8
.99 to .70	16.9	11.7
.69 to .40	22.8	25.2
.39 and below	9.2	13.3
Total	100.0	100.0

*Civilian workers 14 years old and over by total money earnings.

^a In this table the average earnings are represented by 1.00. Thus, in 1970 32.2% of those in the U.S. labor force were earning 30% and more above the average, while 32% were earning 70% and less of that average.

Source: See footnote 3.

sionals). Their consumption expenditures and lifestyles have certainly left their mark on cities like New York: the proliferation of boutiques, restaurants, gourmet shops, movie houses, and gentrified housing. But 1984 could just as well be called the Year of the Urban Poor (although that's far too out-of-synch with America's official "upbeat mood"). Consider these statistics about the haves-nots of New York City: the city has witnessed a 20 percent increase in the number of poor since 1979; the number of poor children in 1982 approached half of all the city's children (in 1970, one in five of the city's children were poor); the city's overall poverty rate is 24 percent, and for Hispanic people the rate may be as high as 45 percent; the percentage of Blacks holding jobs has dropped by 10 percent in the last decade; and more people than at any time since the Depression are hungry and homeless.¹³ In an America in which "soft-hearted nostrums" to social problems are oh-so passé, the Head Start corrective gives way to the old fashioned remedy of "hard work" — where there is no work! For those unemployable who do not fit into the growth dynamic, the U.S. imperialists offer the army; Jesse Jackson (I may be hungry or I may be cannonfodder, but I am somebody); and the terror of the police or the subway vigilante.

Displacement, Downgrading, and Polarization

A dramatic recycling of labor and a significant recomposition of the labor force has been taking place not just in New York but nationally. A recently released U.S. government study reports on one aspect of this: the phenomenon of displaced workers. The study analyzed people who had worked at jobs three or more years, overwhelmingly in the goods-producing sector of the economy, and who had lost these jobs between January 1979 and January 1984 because of plant closings, layoffs, or job elimination. Many of these workers were among the better-paid wage-earners in auto, steel, and other durable goods, where the workforce has shrunk considerably over the period. Of the 5.1 million experienced workers who lost their jobs, about 60 percent, or 3.1 million, found new jobs by January 1984. But about 900,000 people, nearly 45 percent of those who managed to find work, reported lower earnings — 60 percent of these workers accepted pay cuts of 20 percent or more. About 25 percent of the 5.1 million displaced workers, or 1.3 million, were still looking for jobs, some 700,000 dropped out of the labor force, and about 360,000 were reemployed part-time.¹⁴

At the end of 1984, factory employment remained 1.2 million below its December 1979 level. Yet in the same period, the service sector — which includes finance, insurance, real estate, and restaurants — had added two million jobs.¹⁵ Indeed, the service sector as a whole has accounted for almost all net job creation in many OECD countries since 1975. But one striking difference between the United States and Western Europe over the last decade is that Europe lost two million jobs while the United States added twenty million jobs, most of them in the service sector.¹⁶ The expansion of this sector is linked with the

internationalization of capital, the concentration of global management and administrative functions within the advanced countries, the particular role of the United States within the Western bloc vis-à-vis these functions, and the decline and technological transformation of the traditional manufacturing complexes. This point cannot be gone into here. But more must be said about the characteristics of the occupational structure that has been the concomitant to the new accumulation patterns of the past decade.

The bulk of new service jobs generated during this period have been concentrated in three industries: private health

And the short-run grows shorter as events threaten to quickly overtake this strategic planning; its elements are continually jeopardized and its underpinnings demand resolution.

care; business service, banking, and real estate; and the fast-food sector. The first two industries include an enormous number of upper-level professional and managerial positions and an even larger layer of low-paid, low-skilled laborers with little opportunity for advancement. The fast-food industry employs over a million workers, whose wages are among the lowest of any sector of the U.S. economy. In general, those sectors of the economy experiencing the greatest net growth between 1969 and 1982 were those that in 1980 paid the lowest average wages, with most in the service sector.¹⁷ And as emphasized earlier, sharp polarization is an important feature of the evolving manufacturing sector.

Thus the growth that has taken place in the U.S. economy has simultaneously seen the explosion of professional, managerial, technical, and new entrepreneurial strata and what has been described as a "low-wage revolution." The resulting rise in earnings inequality can be observed in Table 2. Note how in 1980 the share of employment of the top two earnings groupings and the lowest two earnings groupings increased substantially relative to 1970. The so-called "working poor," those wage-earners who hover just above the poverty line, represent a significant component — about one-third — of the U.S. labor force. At the same time, unemployment rates have remained at extremely high levels over the last decade. At the height of this recovery, unemployment stood at 7.3 percent — unprecedented by historical standards. And the problem of long-term unemployment has seriously worsened: in 1979, close to 9 percent of those unemployed had been out of work for six months or longer; in 1983, that figure rose to about 24 percent.¹⁸ In August 1984, over 40 percent of working-age Black men were out of work! The perverse character of this recovery

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becomes more starkly apparent when we examine the signs of spreading poverty in the United States.

The Rapid Increase in Mass Poverty and the Budget Cuts

According to the Census Bureau, more than forty million Americans are living in families of four on \$192 a week, and one out of every four children in America are living in these families below this official poverty line. Well over one-third of all female-headed households in the U.S. are now below the poverty line, and more than half of all Black and Hispanic households headed by women live in poverty.¹⁹ It is the height of hypocrisy for the liberals to ascribe these conditions to Reaganomics. They principally reflect profound structural characteristics of the U.S. economy. In 1973, in the aftermath of the Great Society programs, the percentage of the Black population living below the poverty level was 31.4 percent. In 1980, as the liberal Carter administration vacated office, that rate stood at 33

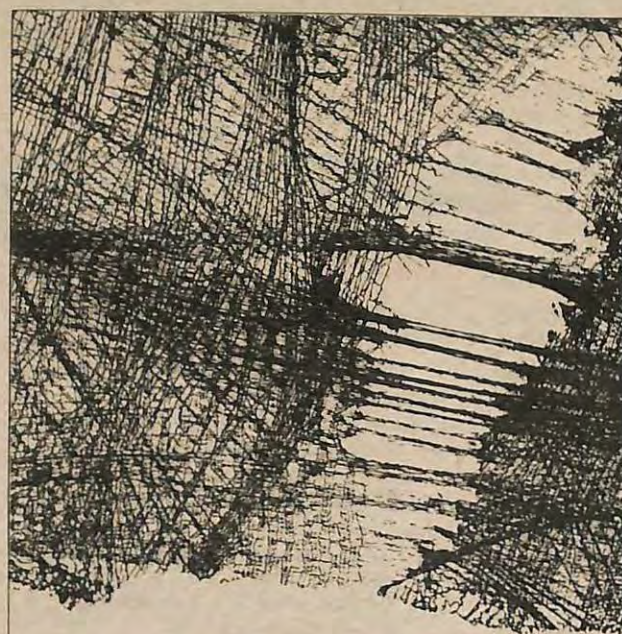
For those unemployable who do not fit into the growth dynamic, the U.S. imperialists offer the army; Jesse Jackson; and the terror of the police or the subway vigilante.

percent. But the numbers of the poor and desperate have been growing rapidly over the past five years, and there is mounting evidence of more acute forms of this poverty.

The number of Americans living below the poverty line increased by over nine million, or 35 percent, in the four years from 1979 to 1983. In early 1984, an Administrative flap was caused by the release of a Presidential Task Force report that found hunger to be a "significant problem" in the country. The dimensions and human toll of that problem have been graphically etched in the pages of the *Revolutionary Worker*.²⁰ But it should be pointed out again that in Chicago, one-third of the city's population lives at risk of hunger, with the figure rising to about one-half in several Black neighborhoods. Doctors at Cook County Hospital found that 30 percent of the children under age two coming to the hospital's emergency room in the years 1981 to 1983 had abnormally low growth, and that half of these low-growth children suffered from inadequate nutrition.

To what extent can this rise in poverty be blamed on the budget cuts in 1981? The connection is very strong. Data released by the Congressional Budget Office show that low-income programs were reduced more than twice as deeply (in proportionate terms) as social programs not concentrated on the poor. The Urban Institute found that the average Black family lost three times as much from the 1981 budget cuts as the average white family.²¹ What kind of cuts are we talking about? Nearly one million food-stamp recipients had their benefits terminated, while nearly all others had benefits reduced; 500,000 low income working families (most of them female-headed) had public assistance benefits terminated; substantial reductions were made in federal funding for Medicaid; rents were raised for all four million low-income families living in public or subsidized housing; compensatory education services for low-income children were cut; and employment programs for low income, unskilled persons were sharply reduced. Such cuts assume great significance when one considers that what reduction in poverty did occur since 1965 was not the result of an increase in market income of the poor — indeed, the labor force participation rate of Black males has continually decreased since 1954 — but the growth of government transfers.

Nevertheless, the cuts are but an expression of, and an imperative reaction to, a real crisis of accumulation and a real



America in Decline

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Raymond Lotta with Frank Shannon Vol.1

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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.

necessity to "shift priorities." These social programs mainly represent a form of concessionary spending designed to politically demobilize and contain some of the more volatile sections of the masses. They are funded largely via deductions from surplus value. These programs were functional and sustainable up until a point. But in a constricting environment of global crisis, in which capital must, on the one hand, profitably concentrate surplus value, and, on the other, parlay its efforts into the military struggle for global supremacy, such expenditure becomes more of a dead weight. And these cuts are functional not only in the sense of cost savings but in their effect on profitability, as the increase in unemployment and poverty exert greater downward pressure on wages — even, and especially, in the lowest, most superexploited sectors of the working class. The budgetary reorientation actually began in the later years of the Carter administration: increases in social expenditure relative to military outlays were braked, and new weapons programs initiated. A restructured budget will not in and of itself solve the deficit crisis or really propel accumulation; but this reprioritizing and tightening is an integral part of the only solution to the multidimensional crisis that the imperialists can embark on.

III. CONCLUSION

A close analysis of this recovery reveals just how unrobust and fragile it is. To be sure, reorganization and restructuring are taking place in the West, but none of what is happening has fundamentally unclogged the accumulation process. This reorganization is occurring on the basis of the existing division of the world. Yet it is precisely that global political and economic framework that obstructs accumulation and that must be violently recast: because it's not just Brazil but Mexico that presents problems; not just the steel industry but the banks and, what wasn't even mentioned in this article, agriculture — one-quarter of the farmers in the Midwest are technically insolvent; and it is not just economic difficulties but

rivalry between the U.S.-led and Soviet-led imperialist blocs. And there is the threat of, and even greater potential for, revolutionary struggle internationally.

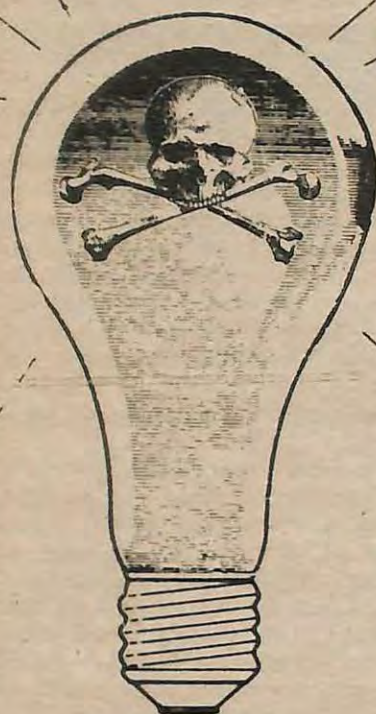
As the title of this article suggests, this crisis has profound political and strategic mediations. The so-called illegal alien problem in the United States is not merely being dealt with as an economic or social phenomenon but in relation to the overarching need to prevent Mexico from exploding as the U.S. pulls its war bloc together. Trade restrictions have reached levels not seen since the trade wars of the 1930s; yet these protectionist pressures have been contained, to an extent, as a result of a mutual recognition of larger strategic interests. It is fitting that the most recent trade discussions between the United States and Japan also touched on forging a common front around Star Wars. Indeed, there is a remarkable lack of contention within the bloc around the need for new military initiatives. On this, the conservative Thatcher, the socialist Mitterrand, and the businesslike Nakasone all see eye to eye. Nevertheless, the contradictions in the realms of capital export, trade, and finance are so intense that centrifugal forces and antagonisms can only be contained and channeled in the short-run. In fact, the very difficulties of holding the bloc together add powerfully to the momentum towards war.

There are some who don't, or who refuse to see this larger picture. I am reminded of a wonderful line from a novel by Marge Piercy. In an argument over religion, one character exclaims, "If you believe in god, you'll believe in anything." And if you believe that the imperialists can peacefully get over the hump of this crisis, you believe in miracles of which god is not even capable. But if you can discern the dynamics of this crisis and if you really trace out some of the trends that have been identified here, you begin to sense revolutionary possibility. Welcome to 1985. □

Footnotes

1. See Raymond Lotta, "Realities of Social-Imperialism Versus Dogmas of Cynical Realism: The Dynamics of the Soviet Capital Formation," in *The Soviet Union: Socialist or Social-Imperialist, Part II* (Chicago: RCP Publications, 1983).
2. See Charles Schultze, "Economic Effects of the Defense Budget," *The Brookings Bulletin* (Fall 1981); vol. 18, no. 2; and *New York Times*, 14 November 1982.
3. Saskia Sassen-Koob, "The New Labor Demand in Global Cities," in Michael P. Smith, ed., *Cities in Transformation* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1984), pp. 157, 164. Table 2 appears on p. 156.
4. *New York Times*, 18 November 1984.
5. *New York Times*, 18 November 1984.
6. "The world settles down for a hard slog," *The Economist*, 17 November 1984, p. 73; "The Employment Outlook: Where are the Jobs in Today's Labour Market," *OECD Observer*, September 1984, p. 5.
7. "World Economy Survey," *The Economist*, 24 September 1983, pp. 45-52.
8. "The mighty borrower," *The Economist*, 22 September 1984, pp. 15-16.
9. "It is better to bid than fold in takeover poker," *The Economist*, 6 October 1984, pp. 69-70.
10. Harold Lever, "The Debt Won't Be Paid," *New York Review of Books*, 28 June 1984, p. 3; see also Raymond Lotta, "International Financial Ills: Large Scope for Contagion," *Revolutionary Worker*, 2 April 1982; Raymond Lotta, "Anatomy of a Crisis: The Rescue of the Continental Bank," *Revolutionary Worker*, 13 July 1984.
11. "Why The Big Apple Shines in the World's Markets," *Business Week*, 23 July 1984, pp. 100-112.
12. Sassen-Koob, "The New Labor Demand," p. 149.
13. See *New York Times*, 28 July 1984 and 16 December 1984.
14. See "BLS Reports on Displaced Workers," *News* (U.S. Department of Labor), 30 November 1984.
15. *New York Times*, 9 December 1984.
16. *New York Times*, 17 June 1984.
17. B. Bluestone, B. Harrison, L. Gorham, *Storm Clouds on the Horizon* (Brookline: Economic Education Project, 1984), p. 23.
18. *OECD Observer*, September 1984, p. 6.
19. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, *End Results: The Impact of Federal Policies Since 1980 on Low Income Americans* (Washington, DC: Interfaith Action for Economic Justice, 1984), p. 13.
20. *Revolutionary Worker*, "The Hidden Hunger," 16 November 1984.
21. Cited in *End Results*, p. 14.

Lt-Col. "Good Idea" & Mr. Covert



The revelation of details in the Army's biological warfare testing program naturally raised the question of where and when these biological weapons were being put into practice. We sought out Army spokesmen hoping for some information and, after a half-dozen calls to the military bureaucracy, arrived at a Lieutenant-Colonel Craig MacNab in the Pentagon's Army Public Affairs division.

Our opening question was blunt: is there any truth to the reports that the U.S. used bacteriological weapons right in the same period as it has admitted testing them on travelers in the capital? Specifically we asked about reports that CIA operatives had dropped plague-injected rats onto North Vietnam in the late-sixties, and that they had similarly spread epidemics among valuable livestock in Cuba to intensify economic difficulties.

Col. MacNab virtually exploded: "You wouldn't believe," he stuttered, "the kinds of lies that are spread about us. We would never do those kinds of things. It is kind of like starting to assassinate the heads of foreign governments, it simply invites retaliation and who knows where that would stop?" We pointed out that his analogy was a little chilling since (after all) the U.S. has admitted attempting to kill foreign heads of state, including specifically supplying exotic poisons for use against Fidel Castro.

Col. MacNab refused to retreat: "All I can say is that the Army can't be involved in that kind of thing."

RW: "We didn't have just the Army in mind but rather the whole U.S. government. The Army was obviously involved in developing these weapons but other branches of the government, like the CIA, might have been the ones to use them."

Col. MacNab: "Well, that is another matter entirely. . . . I can only speak for

the Army. . . ."

RW: "In that case, could you comment on the press accounts that U.S. chemical warfare experts were sent to Bhopal to study the effects of the toxins on the people there? If it is not secret, not covert, we'd like to confirm it."

Col. MacNab: "I don't see why it would be covert. But I don't happen to have the information on that. You'll have to call back to talk to Major Maples. . . . but I'll tell you one thing. *It sure sounds like a good idea!*"

Our next phone call brought us to Norman Covert, the public affairs specialist at Fort Detrick, Maryland, which has long been the center for the U.S. biological weapons research. (Covert really is his name — the facts in this article are literal recounts of our discussions with these people.) Among other things, we asked Mr. Covert if the U.S. sent military experts to Bhopal. After checking for a few hours he reported that *officially* no one from Fort Detrick (at least) had been assigned there. However, he went on, Fort Detrick is the headquarters of something called the "Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center." According to Mr. Covert, "Their purpose in life is to monitor medical developments anywhere in the world. They told me that the U.S. government had sent 'public health people' to investigate Bhopal. The Medical Intelligence Center will be naturally curious about what happened there, how people responded and what kind of medical response was possible. And they will undoubtedly be analyzing lots and lots of information gathered from there first hand. Exactly what those sources will be I can't tell you; I didn't ask them. . . . after all, my name is Covert!"

It was just his way of making a little joke.

Experiment

Continued from page 3

than willing to discuss some other of those tests. He described in detail how another germ, *serratia marcescens*, was spread in the New York City subway during that same period in the 1960s. The technique in this case was "to throw a light bulb down on the tracks between a train and the platform, where it would break releasing the bacteria." According to Mr. Covert, the Army had stationed sensors "up and down the tunnels, without of course anyone having any idea what was going on." The test revealed that the germs could travel a full thirty blocks in fifteen minutes.

The recently declassified documents also revealed that the Army planned similar experiments in Greyhound terminals in San Francisco and Chicago, and the reports include an estimate of the cost for "six operatives to launch covert attacks" in those target cities over a seven-day period. The figure given is \$21,730. Deletions in the released material prevents any confirmation of whether those tests were actually conducted.

One further story helps reveal that we're only seeing the tip of the iceberg. Fort Detrick, it seems, has also been notorious in connection with other tests — chemical warfare tests conducted by the CIA using LSD and Mescaline. In 1953, Dr. Frank Olson, a forty-three-year-old biochemist at the Fort Detrick germ warfare laboratories, was given a massive dose of LSD in his after-dinner Cointreau by CIA operatives. This brutal "test" was only one of thousands conducted in the fifties and sixties using hallucinogenic drugs, often given at random to people at parties or even bars. Dr. Olson's case became the most famous after he was flown from Maryland to a mental hospital in New York City where he ultimately plunged 10 stories from his hotel room to his death, suffering from "delusions and severe psychosis."

None of these revelations are denied by official sources and many of the earlier ones were documented in official hearings in 1977. In fact, the major response of military spokespeople to the new evidence from these more recently declassified documents is that the whole business is ancient history. The Army dutifully admits that they happened. They claim that such tests are no longer

conducted. And they firmly insist that they were aimed at *defensive* purposes, proving how vulnerable the U.S. population might be to Soviet germ attacks.

Necessary, Defensive and Discontinued

Scratching the surface, even slightly, reveals quite a different reality. For example, on the question of "defensive," the Army spokesmen freely discuss how the original public "mission" of Fort Detrick's Biological Laboratories was to develop both *defensive* and *offensive* germ weapons. Tremendous research went into the development of prototype

devices that could secretly spread germs in crowded places. Similarly, the germ *Bacillus subtilis* was chosen (as Mr. Covert explained) because it "mimics smallpox in the way it moves through the air, in its particle size and other features." If it was simply a test of how the Soviets might use smallpox germs, it is very curious that the U.S. government documents include discussions of how to create the smallpox virus in military quantities, how to put it into a usable powder form, discussions of the costs of creating it and detailed analysis of the symptoms it would cause. One section,

Gate 7,
National Airport.



Greyhound
Terminal,
Washington, D.C.



for example, called "Covert Employment of Smallpox Virus" details the factors favoring "the selection of the virus of smallpox as the biological agent of choice for covert operation in this study." Several of the features listed include: "(1) Smallpox is highly infectious with close contact; it spreads readily from an infected person to susceptible individuals. (2) A long incubation period of relatively constant duration permits the operatives responsible for the attacks to leave the country before the first case is diagnosed. . . ."

The report on the Washington, D.C. experiments concluded that "The tests demonstrated that an aerosol of smallpox virus can be disseminated with covert-type devices."

And so, the major importance of these new revelations is not that the U.S. government has been caught spreading mildly dangerous germs on purpose, but that they are in fact preparing far more massive crimes.

On this point, of course, the Army issues the firmest denials. Such testing has been formally discontinued, along with all other offensive preparations. Spokesperson Marge Sherald explained that in 1969 the biological warfare laboratories were disestablished in accord with a presidential order from Nixon.

However this hardly reflects a change of heart on the part of the U.S. Mr. Covert explained that these particular tests had been well completed by the late 1960s, and that they were simply a "first step" in winning widespread approval in high government circles for more systematic and serious preparations for the use of bacteriological weapons in war with the USSR. The tests showed how easily a handful of men could infect a whole population. With that point made, the experiments could shift terrain. In fact, Mr. Covert made a useful political point in his discussion with the RW — such tests were specifically banned in 1972 by the biological weapons conventions. This was, Mr. Covert pointed out, four or five years after the U.S. had completed its tests, at a time when "we didn't need to do that anymore." Another illustration of how negotiated arms control controls extremely little and is a mutually beneficial sham on both sides.

The changes which have occurred in research since that banning in 1969 are twofold. First, the development of toxins and vaccines has been formally separated from the research into "delivery systems" so that the ongoing work can be more easily described as "strictly defensive." In fact, the military spokespeople were quite willing to concede that the development of masks and vaccines for troops are equally necessary to the U.S. whether it initiates germ warfare first or is in fact subject to such an attack. It is a clear case of nominally "defensive" preparations being actually crucial for any serious offensive capability.

The second change is that research has developed beyond the crude "spray a crowd stage." Mr. Covert explained that now large bodies of volunteers are used and he was positively enthused by the way "computers can now simulate most kinds of stuff now, but only thanks to that early pioneering work."

In short, if you scratch the formal disavowals of the Washington-type testing, they reveal themselves to be fairly overt insistence that the U.S. does and must engage in preparations for bacteriological warfare. The military insists that the public tests were necessary at the time they were conducted and have been discontinued only because they are no longer needed. They further insist that the tests were harmless, morally justified and scientifically fruitful for war planning. Alongside their official insistence that such tests are discontinued, comes an unabashed excitement over the research which forges ahead in all key areas of germ-warfare preparations, with much of it still being conducted at Fort Detrick and with other tests being carried out at the recently expanded "germ warfare testing capacity" at Dugway Proving Grounds in Utah.

We can also expect that the military continues to conduct secret testing on unsuspecting civilians, possibly still in major airports and almost certainly in the Third World. Though we hardly expect the government to release *that* information, even in the censored form its 1965 documents were released.

Christmas Bombings

Continued from page 4

of this is to emphasize that these acts are *not* terrorist, because, as FBI chief Webster has reiterated, they are not "an attack on the government."

It has also been pointed out by women who work in women's health clinics and around issues of abortion rights that especially since Reagan's reelection, the pro-lifers have seemed to become even more emboldened. The caller who claimed responsibility for the Washington bombing taunted that the next bombing would be an "unidentified clinic in Ohio" and then said that the Washington bombing was "to give the bureau something to do on their day off." The UPI telephoto released of Goldsby being arrested was even carefully chosen to show him smiling as he was being taken from federal court. And while these terrorists proudly admit to carrying out the bombings, the *New York Times* dutifully reports that "The four defendants were described as 'upright and clean-living citizens' by Paul Shimek, Jr., the attorney for all the defendants except Goldsby."

One of the most revealing exposures of how egged-on and bold these reactionaries have become with the present reactionary climate is the daily taped message on Joseph Sheidler's Hot Line Pro-Life Action News. As we reported in *RW* No. 284, Sheidler is the director of the Pro-Life Action League, which has branches in a number of cities across the country and describes itself as the "Green Berets of the pro-life movement." Sheidler is the one who is planning to publish "99 Ways to Close Abortion Clinics" and has also made no secret of his approval of the work of the Army of God.

Sheidler's Hot Line on Wednesday reported the Christmas Day and New Year's Eve bombings, stating, "We believe there is an element of true believers who have decided that this is the way to shut down abortion clinics and damage abortion business nationwide." Of course Sheidler makes the obligatory statement that his League disagrees with this program and will "continue to pro-

mote and preach nonviolent and direct action." But then he says, "I have talked with and corresponded with some of those who have been involved in clinic violence and illegal acts to stop abortion — after the fact. And I have found that they are not properly characterized as not really pro-life as some national leaders have said. They very keenly sense the injustice of abortion and are impatient to end abortion where it takes place, inside the clinics..." Sheidler then goes on to say: "We are asked whether this violence will hurt the movement — to some extent it will. Some dummies will blame all pro-lifers for the acts of a few... at least the violence brings the abortion issue into the news and gives pro-lifers a forum to present their real case. *And the use of violence makes those of us who promote nonviolence look almost moderate and intensely reasonable*" (our emphasis). Here it must be added that Sheidler is also expressing the essence of the hypocritical "official" position of the government when they come out and cry big crocodile tears after the bombings and say they are doing everything they can to put an end to this violence.

The Thursday "Hot Line" also continued to aggressively and openly celebrate the bombings. Sheidler takes on columnist Carl T. Rowan, who in a Wednesday column criticized the pro-life bombers for "working outside the law." And to this Sheidler says: "Apparently we have to love the law we operate within, unjust as it might be... Is Rowan so law-abiding that he wishes we had the Dred Scott decision back — it took some law breaking to get that changed. How about South Africa? Does Rowan, a Black, like the law of apartheid?... While Rowan is so all-fired law-abiding what did he think about Hitler's law of racial purity? Come on, Carl, aren't there a few laws that hurt even the likes of you?"

Well, it takes even less brains than Sheidler has to figure out what most pro-lifers think about apartheid or racial purity, or which side they stand on when anti-nuke demonstrators break the law. And

while Sheidler accuses Rowan of belonging to the "Neanderthal School of Journalism," it is the movement which Sheidler represents that has, in fact, organized an honest to goodness terrorist neanderthal army that uses calculated know-nothingism and enforced obedience to beat down any woman who dares to step "out of her proper place." Those who find the prospect of revolutionary civil war shocking should think again.

And should anyone try and argue that elements like Sheidler are not fully supported and in fact embraced by the government, consider the fact that shortly after reelection, Reagan invited, among others, Sheidler himself to come to the White House and discuss the issue of abortion. It was reported that at least one thing that happened at this meeting was that Reagan assured this group of pro-life leaders that he would work to make sure the next appointed Supreme Court Justice had a strong pro-life stand.

Commander in Chief

On Thursday, Reagan released a brief statement stating that he condemns "in the strongest terms, those individuals who perpetrate these and all such violent anarchist activities," and further said that he will "request the Attorney General to see that all federal agencies with jurisdiction pursue investigation vigorously." Obviously this short and obligatory statement was worded to support the continuing claim that these acts are just those of isolated individuals, and further, that these acts are not terrorist and therefore not under the FBI's jurisdiction.

The whole way these bombings have been dealt with is an exposure in itself. It is an absurdity, to begin with, that four bombings have occurred within one week (after over twenty have happened in just this last year) and then the question is made "whether or not they are going to be investigated by the FBI"! Further, the whole way the media has reported this — giving full play to the pro-lifers' position — has had the effect of making the whole terms of the thing *not* women's rights to abortion, let alone the question of the liberation of women which is at the heart of this issue, but a grand choice between terrorist pro-lifers and so-called

more "moderate" antiabortionists.

It is also true that the antiabortionists who are hypocritically saying they are against the bombings are hardly known for their nonviolent stands. Pro-life leaders talk about how they promote and preach nonviolence, but even the "legal" antiabortion actions by pro-lifers have been notorious for using extreme and hardly nonviolent tactics. As we reported in an earlier *RW* article, attacks against clinics have ranged from spraypainting and smashing equipment to bizarre, thug-like threats like that against one clinic counselor who came home to find someone had decapitated her cat. And their "concern for life" is exemplified in one militant pro-lifer's bragging that antiabortion demonstrations and other actions used to intimidate people going into clinics are raising the rate of medical complications for patients getting abortions.

While Reagan runs the official line that condemns the bombings, his close association with and support of figures like Sheidler is well known. And it was Reagan who made the argument that abortion is murder a major theme of his reelection campaign. The bombings can be seen as only the most concentrated version of the whole pro-life movement. And forces like Sheidler and Reagan can hardly even hide this fact in how they have responded to these most recent bombings.

The aggressive and blatant posture of these reactionaries, along with the government's doubletalk and rather obvious support of these forces, is meant to strengthen the nationwide campaign that is being waged to take away the legal right of abortion. And beyond this, the whole reactionary climate that is being created is meant to put women on the defensive and institute and enforce the most reactionary ideas about women in general.

That such terrorists are being tacitly allowed to run amok and then rather blatantly given an official forum to further run their garbage out — all this says how desperate the attempts by the bourgeoisie are to continue to enforce the most brutal oppression of women and how essential this is, especially in a prewar period, to their rule.

Reactionary Call To Arms

Continued from page 7

fool shot four rowdy Black youth on a subway (a favorite stalking ground of the police with their sweeps of the trains aimed at minority youth), and this was clearly cause for celebration by the bourgeoisie.

In the recent period in New York the police killings of Black people, Michael Stewart, Eleanor Bumpurs, Barry Parson, Sharon Walker, etc., etc., have fueled outrage and have been damning exposures of the national oppression permeating this society and the nature and role of the police as armed thugs of the state. The bourgeoisie has sought every opportunity to counter back. The Police Benevolent Association has placed radio and newspaper ads boasting of what a fine police department New York City has. When the subway shooting occurred, the moment was seized, embraced, to go on a counteroffensive. This counteroffensive has been aimed at emboldening and organizing a reactionary social base — on a long leash — and especially at justifying stepped-up repressive measures of the authorities. Just three days after the shooting an FBI agent in New York claimed that he saw from his apartment window two youth trying to break into a car. The agent went outside, pulled out his badge and gun and then ordered the youth to lie down. The FBI agent claims that one of the youth, Dario Vasallo, a 20-year-old son of Dominican immigrants, reached for his pocket. The agent shot him dead. No weapon was found on Vasallo.

In regards to this shooting the ruling class is also clearly looking forward as we hear predictions of vigilanteism on the rise. From the director of behavior science for the Los Angeles Police Department, the following forecast: "I think that type of reaction is just beginning... I think it will gather for perhaps the next 10-15 years, with more intensification toward retribution and punishment." What we are witnessing is im-

perialist preparations, the marshaling of a social base to go after, to organize against and to shoot down a section of society — Black youth in particular — who pose such a potentially serious threat to the "law and order" of this imperialist citadel. In a *New York Daily News* editorial entitled "Vigilantes Don't Work," we hear the pumping up of the "delight in that fact that *somebody* has decided not to take it anymore... 'String 'em up!' 'Blow 'em away!' — who hasn't felt a surge of that passion in the face of physical threat and impotence?" The *Daily News* then reasons that there could be problems, however, and asks, "What are the limits?"

"If it's fair game to pull out a handgun and blast away at a handful of punks on a subway, who defines punk? Is it then fair to shoot down somebody with green hair or a mega-decibel noise machine? Somebody with a bulge under his coat? Somebody who looks like that sketch of the neighborhood axe murderer drawn by a police artist? An Iranian fanatic (*everybody* knows what *they* are capable of)?"

"The trouble is that it's mortally easy to confuse a Khomeini terrorist with a taxpaying Sheepshead Bay chef on his way to a costume party." Governor Cuomo and Mayor Koch have also come out with statements that vigilanteism is not the way. But clearly what concerns the bourgeoisie here is that someone might hit the *wrong* target and not get the *right* one, and that when it comes to reactionary violence the bourgeois state, after all, has the last word. What then is a citizen to do? "Get mad at the judges who return the violent to our streets, our politicians — responding to what they believe is public passion — who won't spend the money to build enough jails to put them in," the *Daily News* concludes. In a city where one police killing after another has been thoroughly whitewashed, this is nothing but an open call for the repression of the state to increase. And immediately following the shooting Koch ordered an additional 1,300 cops to patrol the subways.

The golden ring the authorities have

grabbed in this shooting has been the assertion that Goetz acted in self-defense. One can only imagine the response if a youth — making an assessment of the current outcome of confrontations between the police and the oppressed — had shot a cop and claimed self-defense! Descriptions of Goetz have filled the pages of newspapers depicting him as perhaps a little strange but basically a model member of his community pushed over the edge by a 1981 mugging where justice wasn't served, and the presence of drug addicts on the street outside his apartment. Goetz reportedly told the authorities in New Hampshire, after he turned himself in, that he was sorry about the shooting, but it had to be done. Well, it turns out that Goetz is a bit of a racist dog. He was kicked off the board of a tenants' group in his building for making racist and bigotted remarks. The claim that a youth who mugged him three years ago got off scott free is total baloney; the youth was sentenced to six months and served four months in jail. The press has also recently reprinted portions of a transcript of an appeal hearing by Goetz to get a gun permit. The purpose of reprinting the transcript was to lay out Goetz's frustrations at criminals. But the transcript also reveals more about where Goetz is actually coming from. The *Daily News* reports that Goetz was complaining that he saw the youth who had tried to rob him three weeks later trying to attack a couple. The *Daily News* quotes Goetz as saying, "And while this was going on there was a lot of publicity about the killings (of 28 Black youth over 22 months) in Atlanta, and people were assuming it was a white person that was doing this."

Goetz, too, is a little darling of the police. In New Hampshire, though no threats were made against Goetz, the police on their own gave him a bullet-proof vest for him to wear to court. And we learned of one report of a policeman telling a Chicago cabdriver that this cop had just made his own personal contribution to Goetz's defense fund. The police in New York have also made a point of providing virtually daily bulletins on phone calls to them in support of Goetz,

and this support has been duly recorded in the pages of the *New York Times*.

Goetz is currently being returned to New York on charges of four counts of attempted murder and illegal possession of a gun. Meanwhile various legal experts have been featured on TV gushing over the fact that no jury in New York will ever convict Goetz. And in case some folks weren't quite getting what was going on here an assistant attorney general in New Hampshire made a point of revealing to the press that Goetz had made certain statements to the police that he never did feel threatened by the youth and that there were indications that the shooting was *premeditated*.

The problem for the bourgeoisie, however, is that this revelation that the shooting was quite probably premeditated — a revelation designed to stiffen the backbone and increase the mobilization of the most backward — has also provided an opening for the voicing of outrage over the shooting which up to this point has been totally and consciously left out of the picture. And it is also serving to clear some of the dust out of people's eyes and to see more clearly what the intentions of the bourgeoisie are.

On Thursday afternoon, Bernhard Goetz was whisked into New York City and taken to Central Booking in Lower Manhattan. What the *New York Post* termed airtight security was more of an official police welcoming party for Goetz — police sharpshooters were placed on building rooftops throughout the area and they certainly weren't there to shoot Goetz! Wooden police barricades lined the streets and there were cops on foot and on motorcycles. The *Post* seemed downright disappointed to report, "none of the supporters or protestors expected by the police were on hand." Goetz's bail has been drastically reduced from an initial half-million dollars set in New Hampshire to \$50,000 in New York. The most recent news bulletin on Goetz reports that when he opened fire, he intended to kill the four youths and that Goetz would have continued to fire away except that he ran out of bullets. □

Warhead Tongues

Continued from page 1

reading these words, Soviet-American relations will not be governed by agreed law but by Realpolitik." Now, if we know from the beginning that arms talks will not result in arms agreements, what can we expect from them? "Hope," editorializes the *Journal*, "hope for precisely such an agreement (which the paper has just termed impossible! — ed.) is in fact the great appeal, the great moral force of arms control." And again: "the hope of getting aggressors to enroll in the civilized world nonetheless has a remarkable durability."

This is a blunt confession of the duplicitous propaganda charade that makes up the most important element of imperialist arms talks — no peace will come of such talks, but imperialists constantly hold out the "hope" that it will... right up until they issue the missile launch commands.

And the *Journal* adds another note of realism. "The only way to change East-West relations fundamentally is to change the character of either the East or the West," the *Journal* writes, and continues, "we are not volunteering... and we cannot expect to draw up some papers that will change the character of the Soviet Union." No, that they plan to accomplish by other means.

...And Star Wars

There are also more specific aims of the upcoming talks which can be gleaned from the *Journal* spread. It is made clear that the talks are firmly linked to the next phase of U.S. weapons development, namely Star Wars... or at least some form of missile defense. That the U.S. is going ahead with Star Wars is made clear in the excerpts from the Weinberger speech to the Foreign Press Center in which Weinberger upholds the Star Wars plans. Weinberger also states in an important revelation that a partial, quick-fix version of the missile-killing systems could be deployed much earlier than the complete system. The essence of this, which has been confirmed recently by a number of scientists and politicians close to the administration, is that the first stage of Star Wars to be deployed will aim to protect missile silos and command

centers, and not city populations. This appears to mean that some form of Star Wars missile defense is feasible in the near future, and would be a critical element in a war in which both sides are most worried about counterforce attacks — against silos and especially against command centers.

But the space wars systems will also be a gross violation of the 1972 Anti-Ballistics Missile (ABM) Treaty, and so could be a grand opportunity for a Soviet coup in the realm of propaganda peace wars. This is because the ABM Treaty has always been seen as central to the SALT agreements, which in essence codified the nuclear parity between the U.S. and Soviets.

(A bit of history is also significant: the ABM Treaty followed the "Great ABM Debate" of the late '60s, in which the first missile defense systems were — correctly — accused of making a first strike more likely since a nation could take the offense while hoping it might ward off most of the retaliatory blows.)

To break so decisively with the ABM Treaty is similar to the decision to deploy cruise and Pershing II missiles in Europe, and to produce the MX — it amounts to a declaration of intent by the U.S. to break out of parity and gain a decisive nuclear warfighting capacity; and because the ABM Treaty is such a highly charged symbol, the U.S. actions could have even greater impact on public opinion.

On top of this, the Star Wars program is said to resurrect some old contradictions with the European imperialist allies of the U.S. Because of the extremely short times needed for Soviet missile-strike at Europe, the Star Wars system could not be used in that theater. There are signs that the Europeans are worried that the U.S. could be planning to protect itself at the expense of its allies. The visit by Soviet second-in-command Gorbachev to London recently was doubtlessly meant to begin to exploit this contradiction. This will also be the Soviet tack during the meeting itself.

In the eyes of the *Wall Street Journal*, the Geneva meeting appears to have as one goal an attempt by the U.S. imperialists to handle this potential damage to the U.S. position in the peace wars. The

paper states that the administration is in the midst of the "most thoroughgoing reassessment of arms control in two decades." And this, the demise of the old control framework, is not mourned but applauded by the *Journal*. The editorial dusts off the old Reagan administration complaints about the SALT talks: the treaties only created a "more dangerous world" (by "allowing Soviet arms build-ups" and permitting "Soviet cheating"). All this was, of course, a way to justify the tremendous U.S. arms buildup. But now a shiny new wrapping is found for the old charges — Star Wars. The new U.S. weapons systems, especially Star Wars, writes the *Journal*, will create stability, even without arms agreements: "The current trends in military technology, if left to work themselves out, might serve the primary goals we now seek through arms control" because, we are told, these are defensive weapons.

Defense or Offense

From the time they were first proposed by Reagan in March 1983, the Star Wars weapons have been rationalized as defensive; they are now officially the Strategic Defense Initiative. But this is flagrantly dishonest. As we have seen, this is a defense that the imperialists have developed from the beginning as part and parcel of their warfighting strategies, not as a substitute for them; or, as one progressive antinuke writer put it, "the best offense requires a good defense." Today, the literature of the warplanners is replete with strategies which utilize missile defense, including as part of a first strike. This will be discussed more fully in a later *RW* article. Here it is perhaps enough to mention that Reagan himself felt constrained in the 1983 speech to deny that the space weapons were linked to offensive war. His proof? The pledge that the U.S. would gladly share the space wars technology with the Soviets so that both sides would have it. This would certainly be a first in imperialist history — those loyal patriots who actually believe it might also want to buy the Brooklyn Bridge.

Yes, the idea that war in space might serve the cause of peace on earth is bizarre, but no more so than the idea, say, of naming the MX "Peacekeeper." In the topsy-turvy world of imperialist

doubletalk, it is quite the norm and, aimed at those who will swallow such things, its purpose is to seize some kind of moral high ground from the Soviets by contrasting the "defensive" U.S. space weapons with the Soviet force structure which continues to rely on enormous numbers of land-based ICBMs with large-megatonnage warheads, an "offensive" force.

This is being termed a new two-track approach to the arms talks by the U.S. On the one track, according to the *New York Times*, Shultz will not advocate a ban on space weapons, but will propose "research into space defenses that could enhance nuclear stability," that is, invite the Soviets into a space arms race.

On the other track, Shultz will propose "reductions in long-range and medium-range nuclear weapons." (Here it is safe to assume that these proposals will look much like the "deep cuts" proposed by the U.S. in the START talks. This was a ploy which involved methods of accounting weapons which ended up as consistent with U.S. arms needs, but would create "deep cuts" in the heart of the Soviet forces, the land-based missiles.)

The new two-tracks are calculated to cast a spotlight on the Soviet arms buildup and whitewash that of the U.S. It is a framework for talks which the U.S. imperialists clearly hope will take them off the hot seat and place it squarely under the Soviets.

The U.S. is embarking on a most deadly phase of its arms buildup, some form of missile defense. To do this, it must thoroughly shatter and repudiate a highly symbolic arms treaty — the ABM agreement. This the U.S. is doing with gusto, by no means apologizing, but indeed celebrating the "death of the old arms framework." As the *Wall Street Journal* concludes, "what is implicitly on the table in Geneva is not the conclusion of a new arms agreement but the renegotiation or revocation of an old one." And all the while these imperialist spokesmen leer that Star Wars makes the death of the old treaties a great blow for peace.

It is not that the passing of the old treaties should be mourned; they, too, were part of the contention between blocs. But their death is a sure sign of the extreme times in which we live. □

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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.

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