



REVOLUTIONARY WORKER

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

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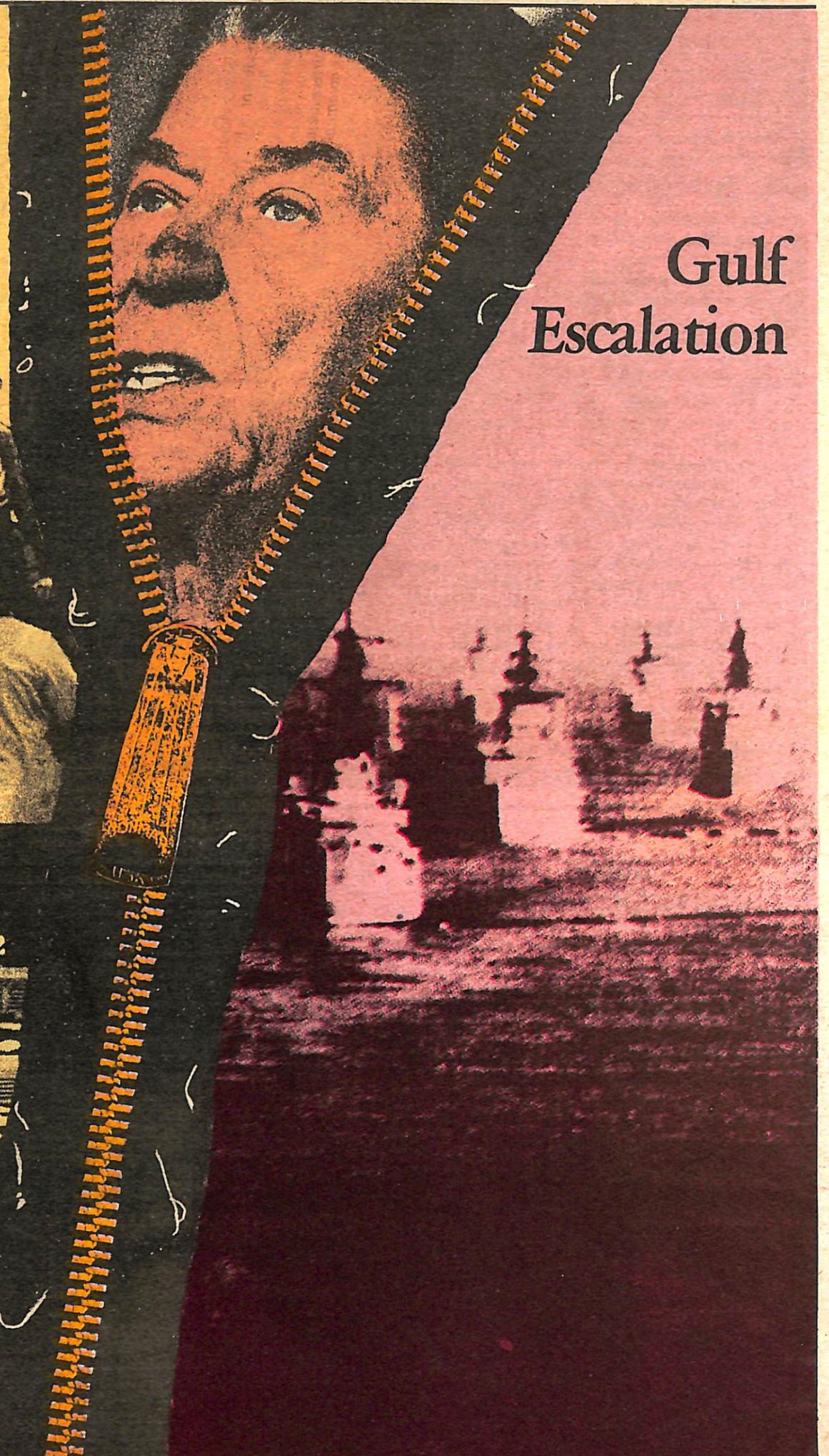
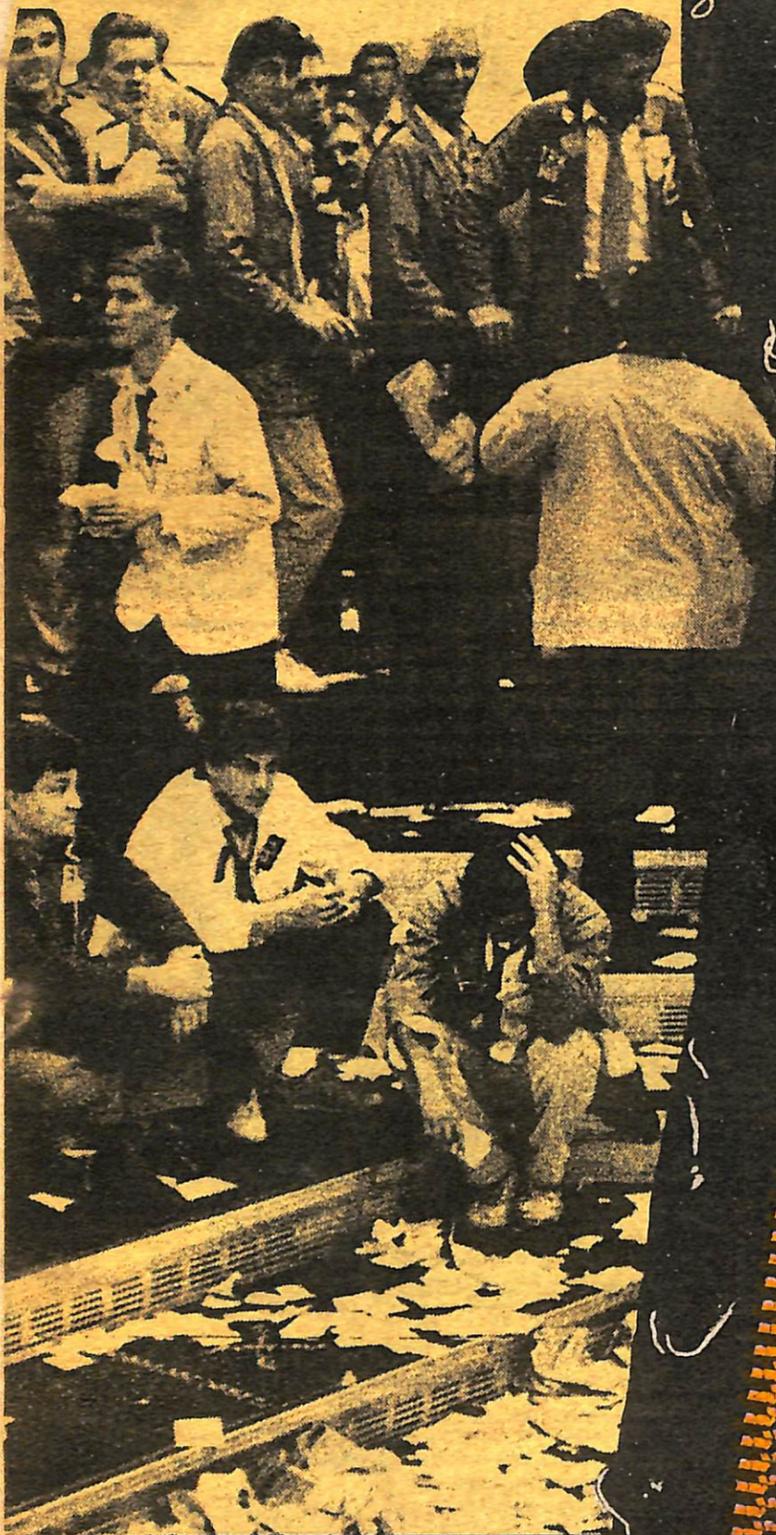
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and the Crisis
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**On the Crash of '87
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of the Late '80s**
By Raymond Lotta

Three Main Points

by **Bob Avakian**
Chairman of the RCP, USA

What do we in the Revolutionary Communist Party want people to learn from all that is exposed and revealed in this newspaper? Mainly, three things:

1. The whole system we now live under is based on exploitation — here and all over the world. It is completely worthless and no basic change for the better can come about until this system is overthrown.
2. Many different groups will protest and rebel against things this system does, and these protests and rebellions should be supported and strengthened. Yet it is only those with nothing to lose but their chains who can be the backbone of a struggle to actually overthrow this system and create a new system that will put an end to exploitation and help pave the way to a whole new world.
3. Such a revolutionary struggle is possible. There is a political Party that can lead such a struggle, a political Party that speaks and acts for those with nothing to lose but their chains: The Revolutionary Communist Party, USA.

This Party has the vision, the program, the leadership, and the organizational principles to unite those who must be united and enable them to do what must be done. There is a challenge for all those who would like to see such a revolution, those with a burning desire to see a drastic change for the better, all those who dare to dream and to act to bring about a completely new and better world: Support this Party, join this Party, spread its message and its organized strength, and prepare the ground for a revolutionary rising that has a solid basis and a real chance of winning.



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The United States Navy called it "Operation Nimble Archer." On Monday, October 19, in the latest act of superpower aggression against Iran, U.S. warships destroyed an Iranian oil platform in the Persian Gulf. The previous night the Reagan administration had called in ten top congressmen — Republicans and Democrats — to the White House for consultations and a briefing on the plans for a military strike against Iran. Several hours later, at 6 a.m. Washington D.C. time on Monday (2 p.m. in the Persian Gulf), the U.S. death ships began their attack.

As the White House meeting shows, this was a very calculated move on the part of the U.S. rulers. But the attack was anything but "nimble" — a more appropriate code name would have been "Operation Axe Murderer" or "Operation Overkill." Four destroyers were deployed against the oil platform, located at the Rashadat oil fields about 75 miles off the coast of Iran. Two frigates were placed between the platform and the mainland, and jet fighters flew overhead. The destroyers then fired 1,065 rounds of high-explosive 5-inch shells at the target in an 85-minute barrage. The U.S. Navy claimed that it broadcast a warning to the platform crew about 20 minutes before the attack began. However, according to a report in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, Iranian crewmen still on the platform broadcast a plea for the shelling to stop so the wounded could be removed, but the attack continued. (In the September 21 attack on the Iranian ship *Iran Ajr*, one of the crewmen killed by gatling-gun fire from U.S. helicopters was trying to flee on a rubber lifeboat.)

This was a brutal display of massive military power by the U.S. It was also the contemptible tactics of a bully who shows off his muscles by knocking around a weaker victim. The U.S. warships, after all, had mobilized a small armada and fired over 1,000 shells at an immobile oil platform, which was defended at most by light machine guns!

The attack is certain to raise the level of tensions in the Persian Gulf even higher. Iran's Islamic Republic regime vowed to retaliate for the destruction of the oil platform. On October 22 Kuwait's main supertanker oil loading facility was damaged by a missile attack. The U.S. government said that the damage was caused by a "Silkworm" missile fired by Iranian forces.

U.S. Pretext for Attack

As in previous military strikes against Iranian forces in the Persian Gulf, the U.S. claimed that it was acting in "self-defense" in the operation against the

Rashadat oil platform. The pretext this time was that the U.S. was "retaliating" for the firing of a "Silkworm" missile on Friday, October 16 against a U.S.-flagged Kuwaiti oil tanker which was anchored in Kuwait's main oil port. The day before, another missile had hit a U.S.-owned ship flying a Liberian flag in the same harbor. U.S. officials claimed that both missiles were fired by the Iranian military, possibly from the Fao Peninsula in Iranian-occupied Iraqi territory. And U.S. Secretary of War Caspar Weinberger said that the Rashadat oil platform was selected as the target for "retaliation" because it had been used "to mount radar surveillance, to report on convoy movements, to launch small boat attacks against non-belligerent shipping in the central Gulf waters, and last week to fire at U.S. military helicopters."

This is another case of the U.S. twisting the facts to suit its own purposes. First of all, there are reports that U.S. munitions experts who inspected the damaged Kuwaiti tanker the day after it was hit concluded that the missile which struck the ship was not aimed specifically at the U.S.-flagged vessel but at the Kuwaiti oil terminal. But this conclusion of the experts was kept in the background, as over the weekend administration officials and the media played up the story that Iran specifically targeted a U.S.-flagged vessel for attack.

As for Weinberger's claim that the Rashadat oil platform was a "military in-

Gulf Escalation

stallation," again people of the world are supposed to take the words uttered by U.S. officials as gospel truth. Even if the platform was being used to mount radar surveillance and as a base for the small boats of the Iranian navy, so what? There's still absolutely no justification for the U.S. attack. Who is it that has every square mile of the Gulf covered with sophisticated surveillance equipment on AWAC planes, spy satellites, and warships? Whose destroyers, aircraft carriers, and frigates are prowling the waters of the Persian Gulf and the nearby Arabian Sea, and who has led the Western bloc in the huge and dangerous military build-up in this relatively small body of water?

There should be no confusion about who the aggressor is in the Gulf. It is the U.S. which has pumped in massive military force in the past few months to reassert and strengthen the dominance of the Western bloc in the region and to prevent gains by the rival gangster bloc led by the Soviets. It is the U.S. which has been going around proclaiming the Persian Gulf as an "American lake" and trying to bash the Iranian government into submission.

By saying that the destruction of the oil platform was a response to the incident in the Kuwaiti harbor, the Reagan administration expanded its own definition of the role of the Middle East Task Force in the Gulf. Previously, the U.S. government said that its naval convoys were

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**U.S. Warships Out
of the Persian Gulf!
No U.S. Attacks on Iran!**

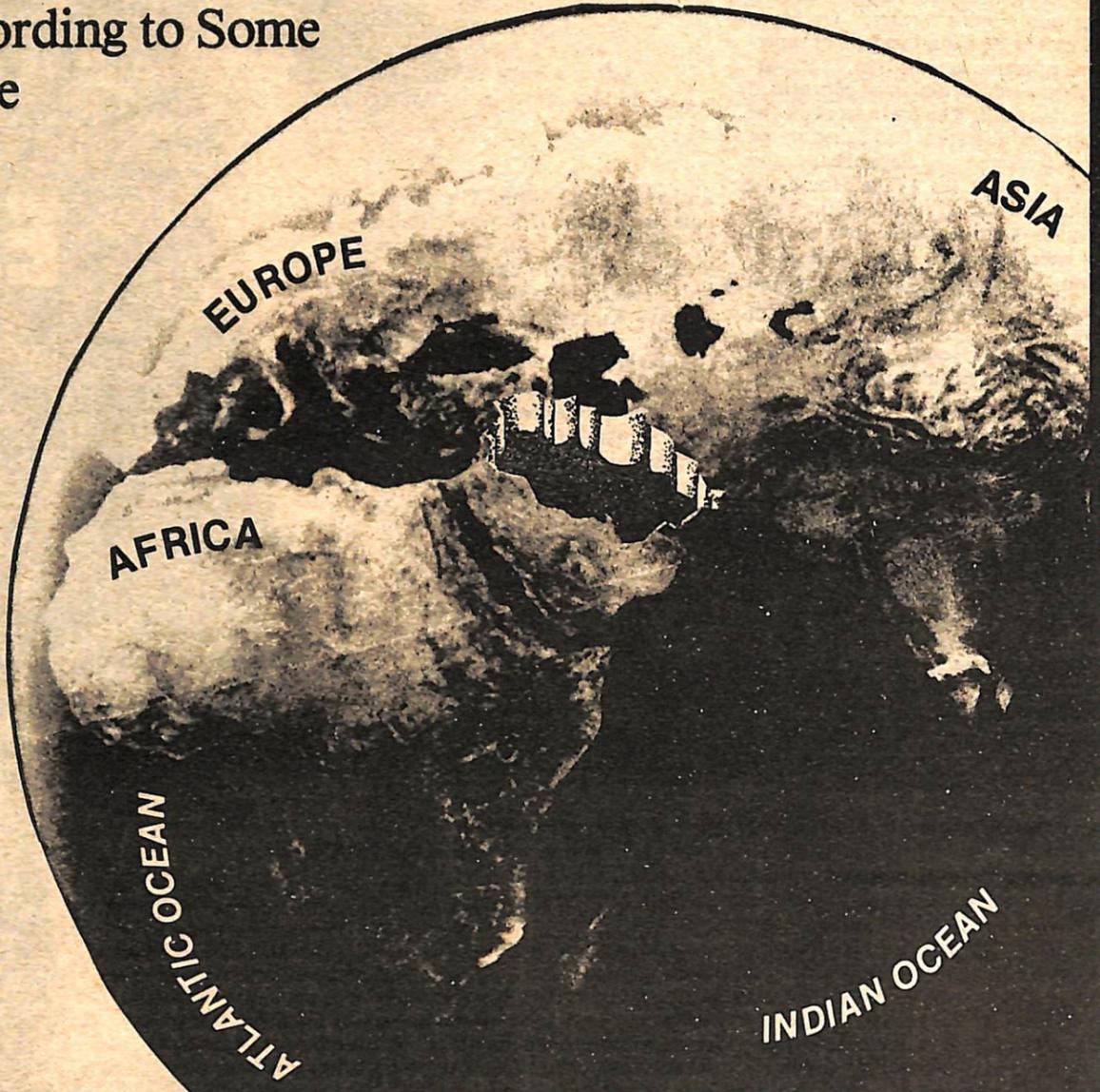
**Many More Defeats
for U.S. Imperialism!**

**World Revolution,
Not World War!**

Map of the World According to Some People in the U.S. Peace Movement

How Long Will They Hold Sway?

How Long Will Events Allow It?



Submitted to the RW by a frustrated-artist-who-went-looking-for-the-big-demonstration-protesting-U.S.-aggression-in-the-Persian-Gulf-and-couldn't-find-it.

Escalation

Continued from page 3

there only protect U.S.-flagged ships in international waters in the Gulf. Now it has declared that it considers an Iranian attack on U.S. targets in Kuwaiti waters to be cause for "retaliation."

A "Calibrated" Attack

During the weekend before the assault on the oil platform, the U.S. media was buzzing with talk that the Reagan administration had decided to attack "Silkworm" missile installations on Iranian territory. The Sunday edition of the *New York Times*, for example, laid out three possible ways that the military could wipe out "Silkworm" sites: Navy A-6 and F-18 aircraft from the carrier *Ranger*, stationed just outside the Gulf, would use laser-guided bombs; surface ships would bombard missile sites with surface-to-surface missiles or cruise missiles; B-52 bombers would drop "immense loads of explosives" on Fao Peninsula from high altitudes.

The fact that such deadly military options are being matter-of-factly discussed in the media (and probably were seriously considered by Reagan administration officials) shows where things stand in the Gulf: The situation could quickly escalate to new levels of reactionary violence by the U.S.

U.S. officials have not ruled out attacks against "Silkworm" missile sites. Citing U.S. military sources, the *New York Times* wrote after the assault on the Rashadat oil platform: "These officers say that at some point the Silkworm missiles will have to be destroyed if the threat they pose to shipping is to be eliminated." But at this particular point, the U.S. decided not to go this route and instead conducted what was termed by officials and the media as a "well-calibrated" attack on an easy target in the Gulf waters.

One factor in this choice was the logistic difficulties for the U.S. military in attacking targets on the mainland. For example, an aerial bombing of the Fao Peninsula in the northern Gulf by attack jets would have involved complicated mid-air refueling of A-6 and F-18 aircraft

based on the carrier *Ranger*. Moreover, U.S. planes could have been shot down by Hawk anti-aircraft missiles — the very same weapons sold to the Khomeini regime by Oliver North and company. Such an incident would reopen the political floodgates of Iran/Contra and be a highly embarrassing setback for the Reagan administration. There are also reports that some Stinger hand-held antitank weapons that the U.S. sends to pro-Western guerrillas in Afghanistan have ended up in the hands of the Iranian military.

Another factor in not attacking the Iranian mainland at this point is that the U.S. is beating up on Iran within the overall framework of trying to force the Iranian comprador bourgeois rulers more firmly into the Western orbit. An editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* applauded the attack on the Rashadat oil platform but also cautioned the administration to keep this larger framework in mind: "Ayatollah or no ayatollah, Iran is and will remain the most valuable sovereign land mass in the Persian Gulf. That is why we remain perplexed that despite the administration's assertion of neutrality, it is widely perceived as tilting toward Iraq. Administration officials do indeed understand that Ayatollah Khomeini's bloody theocratic terror is the act of an aberrant government and that a more open attitude toward the West still exists at some levels of Iranian society. As the Gulf tit for tat becomes more intense, it would be helpful to hear these officials say publicly that indeed they will not flinch from taking actions like yesterday's strike, but it is also not the U.S.'s intention to seal off the West from such a geostrategically vital nation."

There are two parts to the U.S. tactic against the Iranian rulers — beat up and bribe. The U.S. certainly does not want to drive the Iranian regime closer to the Soviets. Neither does the U.S. want to touch off a chaotic collapse of the current order which could lead to a favorable situation for genuine revolutionary forces within Iran. Also, a U.S. attack on the Iranian mainland could end up arousing more political support for the current government among the people, which would work against the U.S. goal of forc-

ing the regime to its knees and into the clutches of the West. And an attack on the Fao Peninsula would have meant direct U.S. involvement on the side of Iraq in the land war between Iran and Iraq.

Thus the U.S. is trying to control the conflict and apply carefully "calibrated" pressure against the Iranian government. But whether the U.S. can continue to do this is an open question. In reply to a reporter's question, Reagan said on October 19: "No, we're not going to have a war with Iran. They're not that stupid." This is the same man who said on the same day that the economy was in fine shape, despite the stock market crash. It is not a question of "stupidity" or "irrationality" on either side. There is a complicated mix of clashing interests in the Gulf, and this makes for a very unstable and explosive situation.

The Iranian rulers are under extreme pressure from several different directions, and they would like to make a deal with the U.S. on terms favorable to their own interests. Iranian officials apparently have sent feelers to Washington in recent weeks to look for possible paths of negotiations, even as U.S. military forces attacked Iranian ships on two occasions. *Time* magazine reported before the attack on the Rashadat oil platform that "Sources in both Tehran and Washington say the U.S. has been approached on several occasions over the past three weeks by intermediaries who claim to represent senior Iranian officials, including Speaker of the Parliament Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani." Administration officials claimed that such approaches were turned down by the U.S.

But in the face of continued provocations and aggressions by the U.S., the Khomeini regime is forced to not only turn up its rhetoric of nationalist and anti-imperialist sounding declarations but also respond militarily. To do nothing would mean a dangerous loss of political credibility for the Islamic Republic rulers. They are compelled to push forward for some kind of victory in the war against Iraq, and this means pursuing the land war against Iraq and hitting at Iraq's allies like Kuwait.

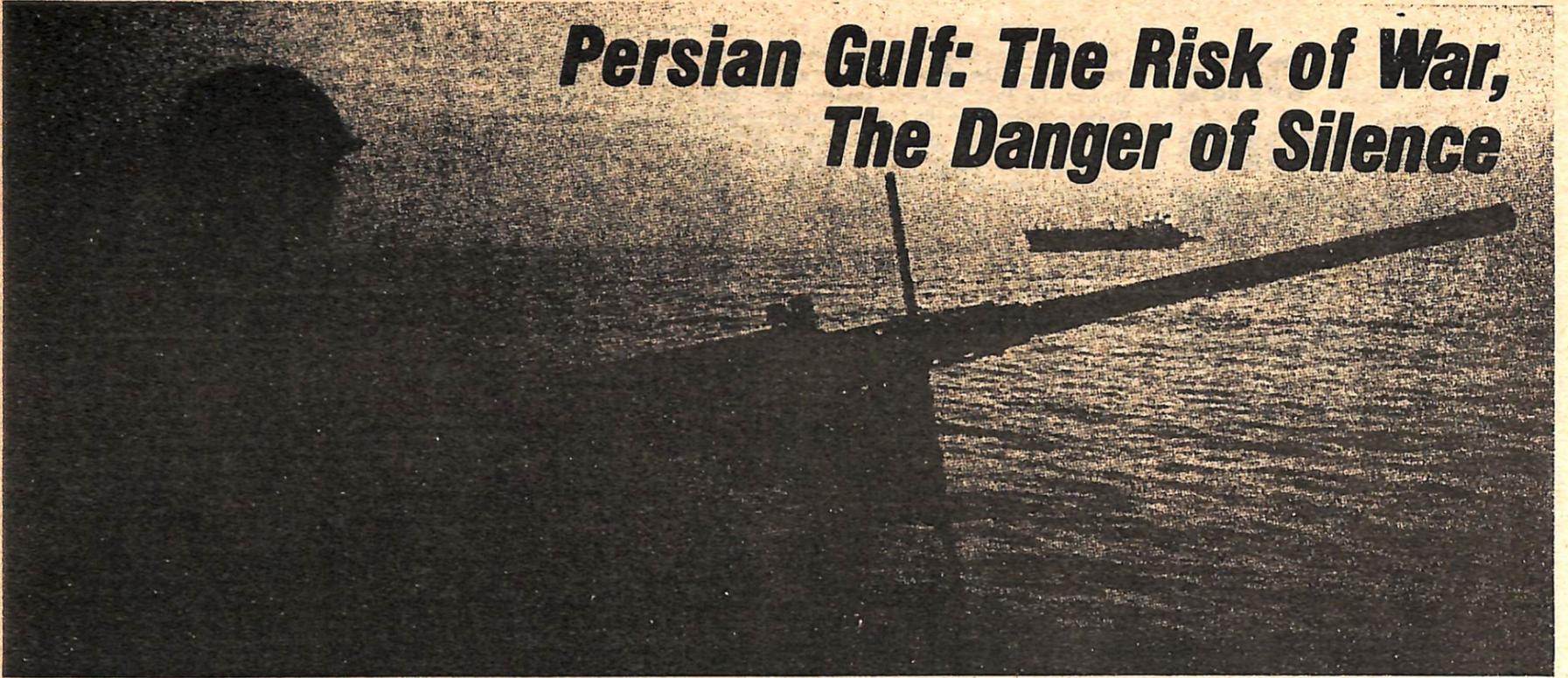
Iraq's precarious situation is a point of acute worry for the U.S. and could

possibly lead to even higher levels of U.S. military activity in the Gulf. A staff report of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, released a day before the U.S. attack on the oil platform, warned: "All along its 900-mile front with Iran, Iraq is under heavy military pressure and its ability to withstand Iran's assaults indefinitely is an open question." The chairman of the committee said, "This report shows that the dangers of a possible Iraqi collapse are greater than commonly understood, and that the perils for the United States in the Gulf are certain to increase." The U.S. apparently does not want to get involved in the Iran-Iraq land war at this point, but further deterioration of the Iraqi regime's position may compel the U.S. to intervene more directly.

In the aftermath of the attack on the Rashadat oil platform, U.S. officials continued to threaten even more serious actions against Iran. Weinberger warned that "stronger countermeasures" would be taken if Iran did not stop its attacks. Meanwhile, top congressional Democrats fell right in behind the administration to praise the attack, although some muttered a few complaints about Reagan not obeying the War Powers Act. The *Los Angeles Times* noted that "the only vocal congressional critic of the attack was House Armed Services Chairman Les Aspin (Democrat-Wisconsin) who called it 'probably too mild.' Aspin said Reagan should have struck 'a more significant target and we should have done it in association with other countries.'"

The spiral of U.S. attacks and Iranian responses could quickly spin out of control and develop into much bigger conflicts, possibly even direct confrontation pitting the Western bloc against the Soviet bloc over this vital strategic region. Does anybody in his/her right mind want to leave this dangerous situation in the Persian Gulf — and the future of the world — in the hands of these gangsters in the White House and the Congress or their rival mobsters in the Kremlin? Don't the rapidly escalating events demand that all those who are opposed to U.S. aggression make their voices heard in protest against U.S. attacks on Iran and military build-up in the Gulf? □

Persian Gulf: The Risk of War, The Danger of Silence



Deadly risks are being taken in the Persian Gulf. The United States has sent a war-ready armada there, now numbering forty-seven ships with 29,000 military personnel. On the northern shore of that sea, the desperate war between Iran and Iraq rages on, eroding a stalemate that could give way anytime. A traffic jam of military forces from almost a dozen other powers crowd into this waterway, with a thousand aircraft and more than 250 warships. For half a year now, violent confrontations have happened weekly, like footfalls leading toward some wider war.

In January of this year the highest levels of the U.S. government decided to forcefully intervene in the Persian Gulf. Seven years of warfare was taking its toll and the Iraqi regime was in trouble. The United States felt compelled to prevent an Iranian victory and to make sure that future military and political developments in the Gulf region conformed to the interests of the U.S. and its allies in Western Europe and Japan.

In typical U.S.-government style, however, simple-minded pretexts were manufactured to publicly justify this intervention:

First came an offer they couldn't refuse when it was revealed that Kuwait had asked the Soviet Union to protect Kuwaiti ships in the Gulf. Soon a justification for preplanned U.S. intervention surfaced: the United States would "reflag" Kuwaiti tankers and then

protect them. High-level U.S. politicians blustered that the Gulf was vital to U.S. interests and the Soviet Union could not be allowed to horn in. An American armada was needed to protect supposedly neutral shipping from hostile acts.

The next big excuse came in May when a pair of French Exocet missiles fired by an Iraqi plane rammed into the frigate *Stark* in the Persian Gulf. There were casualties aboard the gunboat — and the United States quickly posed as outraged victim.

Familiar banners flew over the U.S. fleet as it assembled that spring: the banner of vengeance for "spilled American blood," and the banner of "the world's policeman," protector of international sea-lanes and international law.

However, what has actually unfolded has been a highly dangerous and escalating bully game. The United States and its gathering allies have attempted to threaten Iran to heel. While the naval forces of the NATO alliance — and the United States above all — brandish their "overwhelming" military superiority to pin Iran down, a junior member of the tag-team, Iraq, pummels Iranian military and economic targets from the air. The intended message to the Khomeini regime: you cannot win militarily against an Iraq bolstered by the big Western powers; your best option is to accept the Western embrace fully and quietly.

This is gunboat politics straight up —

and for that reason alone demands to be loudly opposed. It should also be clear that this drawn-out military confrontation may careen off in unpredictable directions. Reagan insists that there is no danger of a wider war, not even with Iran, let alone with the Soviet Union. But few can easily believe this: no serious discussion of the Persian Gulf takes place without the words "flashpoint" and "tinderbox."

While the American government routinely labels the Iranian government "irrational" — because they have their own agenda for coming to terms with the Western bloc — the fact is that it is in *Washington* that the wildest and most desperate risks are being taken. This is open brinkmanship. The United States is grasping for momentary advantages, fully conscious that this could be a flirtation with the edge of world nuclear war, a planet-threatening contest with a Soviet rival equally jealous about its own basic imperialist interests.

For all these reasons, there should be intense outrage and powerful protest over the U.S. aggressions in the Persian Gulf! But confusion holds sway where lines should be drawn. The discussion that follows is intended as a contribution toward political clarity, and therefore to timely political action.

Isn't the United States keeping important sea-lanes open with its convoys?

No. This is the same United States which, in the summer of 1983, sent CIA frogmen to covertly mine the harbors of Nicaragua to cut off that country's international trade. And this is the same United States which denied accountability when Nicaragua appealed to the World Court protesting this mining of harbors. American spokesmen bluntly explained that the international court had no power over American actions. Only a very naive person or a scoundrel can accept that the United States is now, suddenly, the principled *defender* of international sea-lanes against those who use mines. But there is one consistent thread that connects the U.S. adventure against Nicaragua and its naval actions in the Gulf: the United States upholds its own right to run guns up the nose of any adversary, whenever and wherever it sees fit.

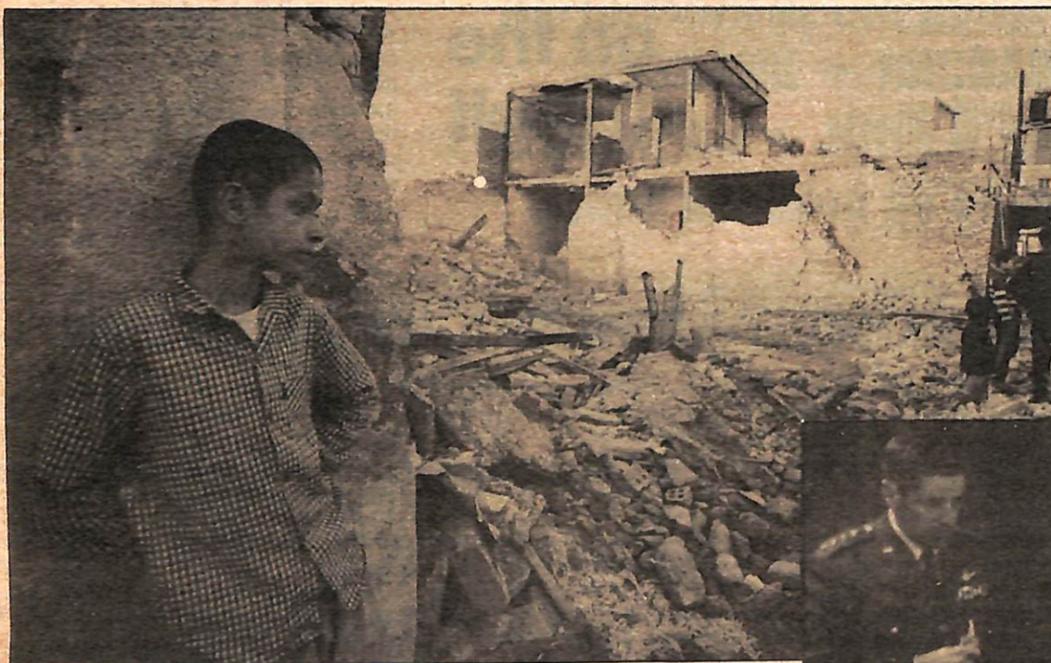
Isn't Iran mining the waters and threatening important shipping?

At this point it is unclear *who* is laying mines where in the Persian Gulf. Iran has said that it is laying mines in its own territorial waters. And the fact that the U.S. media constantly repeats that "Iran has been caught red-handed" in international waters does not make it so. "Iranian mining" may be as fictitious as "Libyan hit squads." The possibility of others laying mines in the shipping lanes, including the United States itself, cannot be ruled out.

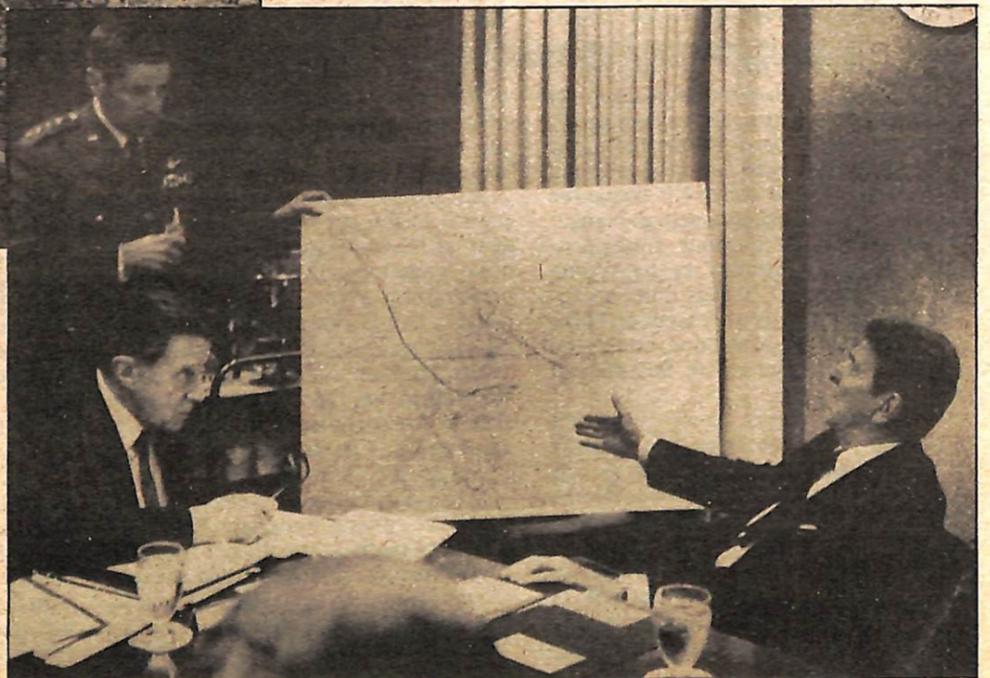
Furthermore, it is typical of the U.S. that it brags that this Third World country has small military means to strike back at ultramodern U.S. forces and then screams in holy outrage when forty-year-old antique weapons are found bobbing in the waters.

But one thing is clear: the *main* military power waging the "tanker war" is not Iran but Iraq. It was Iraq which started the tanker war in 1981 by attacking ships

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Iranian children survey the rubble of their town, Dezful, after an Iraqi bombing raid.



In the White House situation room, Reagan is briefed on the *Stark*.

Ohio Students Unite to Protest U.S. Moves in Gulf

October 21, Kent State University. The newly formed Middle East Action Alert Network (a group involving activists and Students for Peace at Kent, students at Wooster College, Oberlin College, Hiram College, and high school students in Youngstown, Ohio) held an emergency teach-in in response to the latest attacks by the U.S. against Iranian boats and the bombing of oil platforms in the Gulf. The action was called for around the slogan "U.S. Out of the Persian Gulf! Prevent World War No Matter What It Takes!"

At noon activists gathered in front of the Student Center with banners and signs — "The Stakes Are the Whole World, U.S. Out of the Persian Gulf." And chants challenged those on their way to class: "America has got a plan to bomb its way to Iran! But there's a problem in their way, we won't fight for the USA! No more world war!"

Because of the weather the teach-in moved inside the student center. A member of Students For Peace spoke, exposing the U.S.: "Reagan said that the U.S. does not seek confrontation or trouble with Iran but wishes to... settle their

differences and build a just and lasting peace. Yet at the same time U.S. gunships fired machine guns and rockets on an Iranian ship in the Gulf. This is wrong and we should not be there." Then, as university officials came and told her the group would have to leave, she continued, "And Kent State University is scared shitless that the opposition to U.S. war moves in the Gulf is going to be taken up by people beyond this room."

A spokesperson for the RCP also spoke, making the point that "because the stakes for the imperialists are so high in the Gulf — both strategically and politically — the possibility for the fuse for World War 3 being lit by the conflict there is very real."

At this point university officials forced the group to leave the building, but this did not stop the teach-in as debate and discussion continued among different groups of students. Many came forward wanting to find out more about the Network and what kind of opposition can be built. Some students found themselves struggling with their friends to stay and participate in the discussions.

After the teach-in one of the organizers told the *RW*, "Anytime anything happens in the Persian Gulf we are going to do this again, and we will go inside and they can tell us to leave again and sooner or later someone might get arrested... The opposition will grow. What is going on in the Persian Gulf is the same thing as what's going on in Nicaragua. It is imperialism. We've got to say no to this. It is all building up to nuclear war. They are each a stepping stone. One more step and we are going to hit. I don't know which rung it will be but one of them is going to fall through and we're gonna have nuclear war."

Throughout the day many students were drawn to the Middle East Action Alert Network. The Black United Students (Black student organization at Kent State) asked the Network to speak to their members that evening.

Feeling confident and enthusiastic that opposition to the U.S. war moves in the Gulf will and must grow, the Network called for an area-wide meeting of students and social movement activists in Cleveland for Saturday, October 24. □

Urgent Call for Seattle Forum

The following is an open letter calling for a forum in the Seattle area aimed at exposing and opposing the U.S. presence in the Persian Gulf. The call has been well received by an array of antiwar and anti-intervention activists, members of the religious left, professors, Black activists, and revolutionaries determined to raise the level of opposition to U.S. moves in the Gulf.

Dear Friend,

Many people agree that the Persian Gulf is an area of extreme tension in the world today, where regional conflict already rages and where massive Western naval presence not only fuels bloodshed but holds the potential for quickly escalating into world war. The region is also pregnant with the potential for revolutionary action for the masses of people to overthrow the reactionary regime and positively alter the course of world events.

Yet, the level of opposition, especially to the U.S. presence and role in the Gulf crisis, is far from commensurate with the dangers and urgencies of the situation. To

a great extent this state of affairs is a result of the tremendous complexity of the conflict alongside of the web of lies woven by the government and its spokespeople. Any ray of light shed on the Gulf has brought forth responses like, "I'm so glad somebody's doing something about this," and "I want to act but I'm not sure what to do." Much work cries out to be done to build resistance to all reactionary war moves in the Gulf, and especially those of the U.S., who has been the main force driving the regional conflict and the dangers of further escalation.

As an important step in this direction, we, the undersigned, are calling for a forum to expose what's really going on in the Gulf and educate people to do something about it. We propose to unite a broad array of oppositional forces under the slogan: "U.S. warships out of the Persian Gulf! No U.S. attack on Iran! Prevent World War III!"

Partial List of Endorsers:

Dana Schuerholz (political artist)
Nancy Redwine (writer and activist)
Bob Trutnau (Puget Sound SANE)*

Revolutionary Communist Party, USA—Seattle Branch
Supporters of the Union of Iranian Communists (Sarbedaran)
Charles Meconis (program consultant for SERPAC)*
Lyman Legters (Russian and Eastern European Studies Program, University of Washington)*
Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Anti-Imperialist**
Richard Carbray
Tim Amen (Political Science Department, University of Washington)*
Bill Moyer (Seattle University Peace and Justice Center)*
Michael Dixon (Ex-University of Washington Black Student Union member, Ex-member of the Black Panther Party)
Reverend William Sodt (Lt. Commander, U.S. Navy Ret.) (Campus Christian Ministry, Western Washington University — Ret.)*

*For identification purposes only

**Not associated with VVAW, Inc.

Seattle Press Release

To the President of the United States:

We abhor the violence in the Gulf and further we abhor the unilateral American action in the Gulf.

We call for the removal of the American forces presently in the Gulf. To keep the peace, we call for negotiations between the two disputing parties, Iran and Iraq, under the auspices of the United Nations and, if necessary, referral of the issue to the World Court. Resolution and just compensation to all parties must occur. Further escalation of the hostility in the Gulf may lead to full-scale war.

For the Church Council of Greater Seattle
The Rev. Dr. William B. Cate
President and Director

Houston Proletarians Speak Out on the Gulf

We received the following statements from Houston:

A message of support to the revolutionary Iranian comrades:

Right now, we know that the Persian Gulf is full of ships and nuclear weapons. It's a very complicated situation and it is exactly from this situation that the danger of World War 3 jumping off exists. A world war in which we could play a very important role, but with a different end in mind, if a situation like this presents itself. Our goal would be to make revolution during the world war. This would play a very important role in the development of history.

We know that on the radio and the
Continued on page 12

Soweto Festival and Berkeley Youth Clampdown

The city of Berkeley has said it will grant a parade permit for the November 7 Spirit of Soweto Festival, if a few "conditions" are met. In oh-so-free-America, this event is "free" to happen if thousands of dollars worth of insurance is provided and the festival agrees to pay for a police presence! Furthermore, the city has only granted a two-hour sound permit so far. The reason? It seems the city sometime back granted a blanket sound permit to religious fundamentalists for every Saturday on the Avenue — a "disturbance" that is quite acceptable in their eyes for the Avenue! These "conditions" say something about the city's lack of desire to see this festival happen.

RW readers may remember that Telegraph Avenue has been the focus of a "War on Youth" campaign led by the city and the University of California. Under the pretext of a "War on Drugs," the thousands of youths who make the scene on Telegraph on the weekends, especially Black youths from the bantustans of Oakland, Richmond, West Berkeley, and other cities in the Bay Area, were bad-

mouthered in the press and attacked with everything from curfews to towing of cars and dragnets. One Black youth, Karlos Leonard Hill, was murdered by the Berkeley police a year ago. The sight of these youths mixing it up in the highly politicized atmosphere of Berkeley was too much for the authorities to take, and they moved on the kids.

Any air of "reasonableness" the city council might put on is quickly ripped apart by the following first-hand account of its recent meeting devoted to the issue of Telegraph Avenue. It was clear at the meeting that Berkeley is still quite intent on driving out Black youths from Telegraph Avenue. It was also clear that the authorities have encountered more than a few problems in attempting to achieve this — including from the youths themselves:

"The city last night voted to discontinue the towing policy for Friday and Saturday night at the discretion of their City Manager. It was a unanimous vote. Councilman Jelnik declared, 'The problem on Telegraph is over. You police are to be commended for a job well done. It is

the one thing that I have been involved with in this council that has received universal praise. Thank you.'

"The police made the report that the 'problem' is not over and that they are still having 'problems' on Friday and Saturday from midnight to 1:00 a.m. They say that the 'problem' may return at any time and that their recommendation is to be able to put the Task Force in place on Telegraph Avenue if needed at any time, and for that decision to be made by the police.

"The city manager made his recommendation that the Task Force and towing remain in place until it starts raining because he is afraid that the word might get out that the city of Berkeley is once again 'lax on crime' and that the youths might return. The city manager and Jelnik described the Avenue as 'THE PROBLEM' that in the past had '6-700 youth massing at Durant and Telegraph.' Everyone was shaking hands and slapping backs [figuratively] in terms of the 'success' of the program. The city manager described this as a star on the record of the police chief. The council

made the recommendation that the Task Force, once relieved of its duties on the Avenue, should resume them at the 'hotspots' in South and West Berkeley [Black areas of Berkeley] and at Berkeley High School [a place they fear and hate for much the same reasons as the Avenue].

"A woman merchant spoke and declared that not all the merchants are united with the approach that the council took in terms of chasing the youths from the Avenue: 'It's not like the progressive city council we elected.' She told Jelnik that he didn't have universal praise and that they were too heavy-handed with the youth. She said she was in favor of having the youths there.

"City workers were at the meeting around the city not bargaining with them in good faith for a new contract. One woman ripped into Mayor Hancock for not showing up at a recent youth festival, saying, 'Where was her concern for the youth? It seems that all she is concerned with is siccing the police on them for the merchants!'"

An *RW* reader

Partial List of Endorsers of the Spirit of Soweto Festival:

- CHARLES BYRD, Director of the Western Addition Cultural Center*
- PABLO MOSES, Musician
- LUIS OROPEZA, Actor
- HOMELESS LIBERATION FRONT, Berkeley
- TUNDE OKORODUDU, Student Body President, Contra Costa College*
- SALAHUDDIN S.TULAH, Student Senator, Contra Costa College*
- ORLANDO, "Special Forces"*
- VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR/ANTI-IMPERIALIST**
- UPSKANK, Band
- UNIVERSITY COPY, Telegraph Ave. merchant
- PAUL RAT, Promoter
- DUNCAN MURPHY, Member of Veterans Fast for Life, Veterans Peace Action Team*
- RABID LASSIE, Band
- JONATHAN MONTAGUE, "In the Revolution," *Daily Californian**
- KEVIN RICE, Photographer, *Daily Californian**
- LIBERATION CHANTS, Poets
- OLIVER X, "Wordhead" (A Rap Ensemble)*
- REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY, USA, Bay Area Branch
- DAVID VOLPENDESTA, Poet
- ANDRES SOTO, Hispanic Roundtable, Richmond*
- DEBBIE GORDON, Alternative Tentacles*
- REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST YOUTH BRIGADE
- DR. CARLTON GOODLET, Editor, Publisher
- LEE HELLER, Co-producer, Labor Video Project*
- MICHAEL MCSHANE, Actor
- THAMSANQA HLATYWAYO, Azanian Choreographer
- TOM KENNY, Comedian
- WAZOBIA, Afro-beat band
- LOS COMPAS, Salsa band
- JOHN O'NEAL, Performer, Playwright
- HENRY HORNSBY, President of the Parchester Homeowners Association, Richmond*
- REVEREND RONALD SWISHER, Easter Hill United Methodist Church, Richmond*
- CHEESE and STUFF, Telegraph Ave. merchant
- MAXINE HOWARD, blues artist
- JORDAN SIMMONS, East Bay Center for the Performing Arts, Richmond*
- JOE HENDERSON, "Blue Note" jazz saxophonist
- REFUSE AND RESIST!, Bay Area chapter

*For identification purposes only.
**Not affiliated with VVAW, INC.



Performers at the Spirit of Soweto Festival Include:
UPSKANK • MICHAEL MCSHANE • OLIVER X
LOS COMPAS • JOHN O'NEAL • TOM KENNY • WAZOBIA
Sound donated by Sound Services, San Francisco

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7

Joint Statement of the Spirit of Soweto Committee and the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade

In the township of Soweto, South Africa, tens of thousands poured out of their shanties and onto the Streets. The youth, many as young as eleven years old, were leading the way, battling under the banner which boldly proclaimed: "The first school for an oppressed people is a revolution." They did what many believed to be impossible — they ignited a rebellion that rocked the fortress called apartheid and thrust the cry "Soweto!" into the hearts of millions worldwide.

There has been a major blackout of news from South Africa of late. Yet it is clear that the spirit of Soweto is alive and strong. Three hundred and fifty thousand gold and coal miners shut down the mines in the face of brutal attacks by the hated apartheid regime. The few sanctions that the U.S. has imposed have been dropped, and the U.S. remains the main

pillar of support for a regime that holds the record for children in prison. In unity with the Azanian people, we should bring the Spirit of Soweto alive on the streets of Berkeley.

Let's get down to it — the U.S. has written the book on the oppression of Black people. With the promotion of Bernhard Goetz and the attacks at Howard Beach, open season has been declared — especially on Black youth. The city of Berkeley has done its part in declaring Telegraph Avenue "Off Limits" and "Back to your bantustans," including the cold-blooded murder of Karlos Leonard Hill a year ago.

We have our own statement to make: to be young and Black is no crime. It's right to rebel! Come in groups; bring your drums, your raps, and your friends. □

The financial area is probably, next to nuclear war, the kind of area that can get out of control, and once out of control cannot be contained and will probably do more to upset the civilized world than about anything you can think of.

—William Seidman, chairman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp., *Financial Times*, 29 May 1986

Now we're seeing it: an attempt to stand tall on bended knees.

—Peter Petersen, former Sec. of Commerce, *Atlantic*, October 1987

It was the worst day in the entire history of the New York Stock Market, worse than the 1929 crash. On Monday, October 19, 1987 the Dow Jones average fell by 508 points. This was a 20 percent drop. In one day, 600 million shares of stock were traded, \$500 billion was lost. One-half of the gains of the bull market of 1982-1987 were wiped out in a single day! The panic spread quickly — to the London, Tokyo, and Hong Kong exchanges. That same day the U.S. carried out a raid in the Persian Gulf. The markets grew even more jittery. Talk of recession, depression, financial collapse spread. Finance ministers were meeting in secret sessions. The Reagan bubble of artificial prosperity had burst. And the Reagan presidency had been dealt what might be its crippling blow. The experts are bewildered and pointing fingers of blame every which way. For the rest of the week the markets roller-coastered. The atmosphere is nothing less than crazed. But you want to know how crazy this system really is, and why it must be abolished and not simply reformed? The simple fact is that what happened on Black Monday is at once an inevitable outgrowth of finance capitalism and a necessary mechanism of adjustment.

Right from the get, it is necessary to explain what was *not* the cause of this collapse. It was not the computers that execute massive orders instantly when prices fall to certain levels. These computers are programmed to respond to certain economic signals. It was not John Q. Public panicking. Some 80 percent of trading on the stock market is done by institutions — by several large brokerage

houses and the like. Indeed, the huge sell-off was precipitated when some of these big institutional investors attempted to cash in on their stocks. This was the big bourgeoisie acting. It was domestic and foreign capital. And if it was panic, it was panic within the bourgeoisie, it was a gigantic vote of no confidence in the current state of affairs. Which brings us to the most important point. The crash was not principally caused by forces internal to the stock market, whether this be over-valued stocks or trading abuses. Even if the stock market could somehow bounce back, this wouldn't provide the basis for any sustained economic growth. Because what happened on Black Monday was a reflection of deeper, underlying problems in the economic and political realms. It is these larger problems that are the focus of this article.

The Western Alliance and Economic Stability

The immediate cause of investor anxiety was the appearance of the breakdown in policy coordination between the United States, Japan, and West Germany. Back in February of this year the major Western imperialist powers had

agreed to work toward concerted stabilization of their currencies. The United States would work to reduce its twin budget and trade deficits. Japan and West Germany would work to stimulate their economies, in order to draw in imports from the United States and to reduce their trade surpluses.

But the U.S. trade performance through October of this year was not substantially better. At the same time, there was more and more bickering between the three countries over exchange rates, interest rates, and trade policies in general. Investors feared that the disintegration of monetary and trade agreements would send the financial markets into turmoil, and that the dollar would drop precipitously in value, thereby wiping out the value of dollar-denominated assets. If the U.S. and other countries raised interest rates to defend the value of their currencies, this, it was (and is) feared, will slow the world economy down even more. So large blocks of stock were now being sold off: investors wanted to beat the inevitable decline in stock values and put their money into safer, cash-like investments. This is when mob psychology set in. Once these

big sell-offs took place, everyone moved to get out before it was too late.

But the bigger question is this. Why has it proven so difficult for the United States, Japan, and West Germany to work out their problems, to manage their way through trade and currency difficulties? The answer is two-fold. On the one hand, there is the condition of the world economy. While it is not in recession, growth is extremely sluggish. Western Europe has grown at less than 3 percent a year for the last six years. Unemployment in West Germany now stands at 9 percent and the economy is barely growing. Even Japan, a relative dynamo, is beginning to experience excess industrial capacity. The United States was able to engineer a recovery from the 1981-82 downturn, and has been able to prolong some measure of growth.* But weaknesses are very apparent. Investment in plant and equipment, when inflation is taken into account, actually declined last year in the

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*See Raymond Lotta, "A Perverse Recovery in Strategic Context," *Revolutionary Worker* No. 287, 4 January 1985.

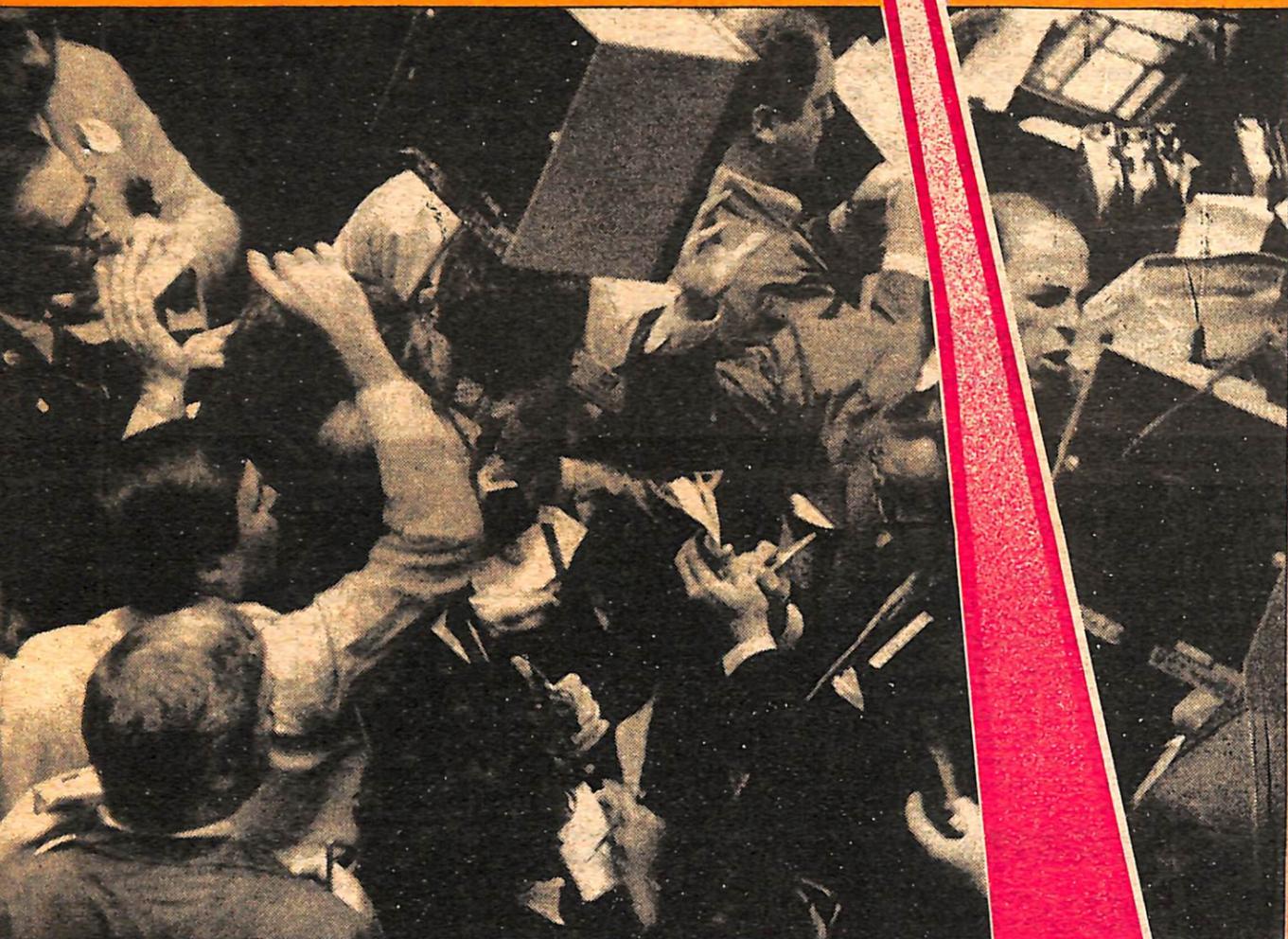
On the Crash of '87 and the Crisis of the

The World's Major Stock and Foreign Exchange Markets—Transmission Belts of Crisis



The Late '80s

By Raymond Lotta



The Stock Market: What Is It?

Everybody knows what the stock market is. Right? Well, it's actually not so obvious. For those invested in it, the stock market is simply about making money — by trading pieces of paper, by bidding up or down share prices, by getting the inside track, by gambling, by manipulating, and, when the roof starts to fall in, by getting out before others do. It's as though money just makes money. For most of us, the stock market is what we hear about — the Dow Jones average — and what we see — crazed and manic dealers shouting on the stock floor.

So, again, what is the stock market? It took Marx two volumes of *Capital* before he even began talking about stock. Not because it is unimportant or incomprehensible but rather because those pieces of paper and numbers are really quite removed from real economic activity — and yet they ultimately rest on a real economic foundation. Marx had to first explain that capitalism's foundation is the production of surplus value (profit) on the basis of the exploitation of wage-labor.

In the most basic sense the stock market is one way that capitalists raise (or borrow) money to finance expansion or modernization. A corporation issues stock. The purchaser of this stock is not taking ownership of x amount of machines or factories of the corporation. The owner of the stock is buying the right to share in the dividend payments made by the corporation. In other words *stock ownership is a claim upon future surplus value production*. The prices of stock market shares represent, in the final analysis, an estimate of future profitability.

But future surplus value production is subject to various factors: there is competition, new technologies, ups and downs in the economy, and so on. So there is a built-in element of risk and uncertainty. Moreover, and this is the rub, these claims to a share in future surplus value production are themselves marketable: they can be sold and resold. Thus their prices are shaped by forces other than just the conditions of surplus value production. Stock traders are ceaselessly maneuvering for short-term advantage: by trading in the stocks of companies facing buy-outs, by turning temporary price discrepancies into profits, and so on. But, again, what is being bought and sold is not real capital but titles and duplicates of titles of ownership, which themselves have no value, only prices.

When we talk of the stock market, we are really talking about two interlinked markets and processes. There is the *primary* market, which enables a corporation to raise money by issuing new shares of stock. And there is the *secondary* market, in which shares issued years ago are sold over and over again, with investors hoping to capture gains from changes in stock prices. Thus there are two kinds of return: a *speculative return*, this is the hope that the share price will go up; and a *dividend*, which is tied to the profitability of the corporation that issues the stock and which is the base for the speculative return. And we are really not talking about one stock market but several highly integrated, international stock markets in which astronomical sums of stock change hands by the minute and across the globe.

Now one of the big changes in the stock market over the last fifteen years has been the institutionalization of a new phenomenon: a security derived from another security. As we have noted, stocks are titles to future earnings. But today there is also enormous trading in what are called *options*. An option is the right to buy or sell stock at a set price. So if a share of stock is once-removed from real productive activity, the option is twice-removed: it exists only to be traded. The relation to real value production becomes increasingly obscured. This is why Marx could say that in the realm of stocks and bonds "everything is doubled and trebled and transformed into a mere phantom of the imagination."

Three points need to be made in sum—
Continued on page 10

largest
dominant
exchange

30

Crash of '87

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United States. There are no signs of any improvement in the massive debt of the Third World. Countries like Mexico and Brazil totter on the edge of bankruptcy. And the U.S. keeps adding and adding to its debt. Against a backdrop of slow growth, it is not surprising that the open trading system that was built up in the 30 years following World War 2 has started to crumble. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that coordination has been hard to come by.

The second reason that coordination has been so difficult to achieve has to do with who does the coordinating. Over the course of the postwar period, the United States has played the leading role in fashioning the structures and institutions of the world economy. Its ability to do so rested on its economic, political, and military strength. But its economic strength has been seriously eroded. Its rate of growth in productivity has been far below that of West Germany and Japan. Its share in world trade has declined sharply. Its rate of capital formation is no higher today than it was in 1979. The dollar's dominance has slipped during the last decade. In 1981 the United States was the world's largest creditor; today, it is the world's largest debtor.

On the other hand the Japanese economy has displayed far greater vigor and efficiency. Indeed, one of the most significant trends of the 1980s has been the emergence of Japan as the world's greatest capital exporter and as a major financial power. Japan's economy has grown to the point that it is now half the size of the U.S.'s. The yen is already the second most important currency in foreign exchange markets. The imbalances between the two countries, even as their linkages grow, is a defining feature of this decade. But Japan cannot play the orchestrating role of the United States. Dependence on imported raw materials makes it susceptible to external shocks, and the yen is still limited in its global role. And, quite obviously, Japan does not have the military strength of the U.S.

All of this would be serious enough. But the perverse condition of the U.S. economy, the most important and powerful economy in the world, makes the situation even more dangerous. The national debt of the U.S. tripled over the last seven years (it's now close to \$2 trillion) and corporate debt is at its highest level in twenty-five years. The budget deficit in 1986 stood at \$221 billion, this under a "balance-the-budget" president. There is no — repeat, no — historical precedent for a country accumulating debt on the scale that the U.S. has. And as the London-based financial journal *The Economist* put it, "Never before has the world's economic superpower also been its biggest debtor." Or as Peter Petersen, former Secretary of Commerce, put it, "America's leading export in the 1980s has been I.O.U.s." Fully one-half of the U.S. budget deficit in 1986 was financed by foreign purchases of Treasury debt. In 1986 foreign borrowing covered about 40 percent of the declining level of net business investment in the U.S. The quality of this investment is itself suspect: much of this investment has involved merger and acquisition activity, the shuffling around of existing assets, and investment in office buildings, commercial real estate, and shopping centers. Whether the operating efficiency of American capital has been

improved is a matter of some controversy. All of these factors combine to make it more and more difficult for the dollar to function as the international currency.

In considering the budget deficit, the most outstanding fact is the \$2 trillion military build-up that Reaganomics was designed to carry through. It is militarization and the surge in preparations for World War 3 that are the elemental force behind the budget deficit. The borrowing binge serves another function: it has buoyed up consumption in the United States. Keeping large sections of the middle classes happy, bloated — this is not unrelated to war preparations. What we have are guns and butter on credit. Mastercard... I'm gored. But there is a limit to the capacity to borrow, and there is that lurking danger of a collapse in confidence in the dollar. With all the chaos that entails. The U.S. imperialists are trying to hold the empire together at the same time they move into combat position against the adversary empire, the Soviet Union.

But What About the Stock Market?

Now isn't all this somewhat removed from the stock market? Hardly. First off, the problems in investment mentioned above and declining rates of return have propelled capital to seek greater mobility and greater liquidity. In other words, as long-term growth prospects have faded, and with the currency instabilities and inflationary ravages of the 1970s still fresh in investors' minds, they have had to learn how to operate in a riskier and less stable environment. The goal is to spread and transfer risks. Mobility means the capacity to rapidly shift their capital in or out of this or that investment, in or out of this country. Liquidity means the ability to turn their investments quickly into something approaching cash. And so there has been a marked shift from productive investment to more short-term and speculative investments.

In adapting to this new environment, finance capital has created all kinds of exotic new financial instruments and has further globalized and integrated its financial operations. It has also discovered new profit-taking opportunities in the midst of this very volatility. Take what are called "futures contracts." Originally, futures contracts were contracts for the delivery of commodities at an agreed upon price at a specified time. Now the futures markets are increasingly dominated by precious metals, foreign currencies, and financial instruments. This is a highly parasitic, if lucrative, business that turns on paper profits. The chart comparing the volume of futures trading with industrial production shows just how dramatic the rise in speculative activity has been over the past period (see Figure 1).

Between 1982 and Black Monday, the American stock market was the site of unparalleled speculation: some of it linked with merger mania, some with related insider trading, and all of it lubricated with new kinds of financial instruments. But the defining feature of this boom was that it was focused on the short-term. Companies were bought and sold over three-year periods. Deals were financed with short-term debt. The hunt was on for the highest and quickest yields. Thirty-year-old yuppies became overnight millionaires by sitting in front of a video screen, lining up partners and a commitment for billions of dollars to buy a company. The average number of shares of stock traded daily on the New York Stock Exchange jumped from 19 million in 1975 to 109 million in 1985.

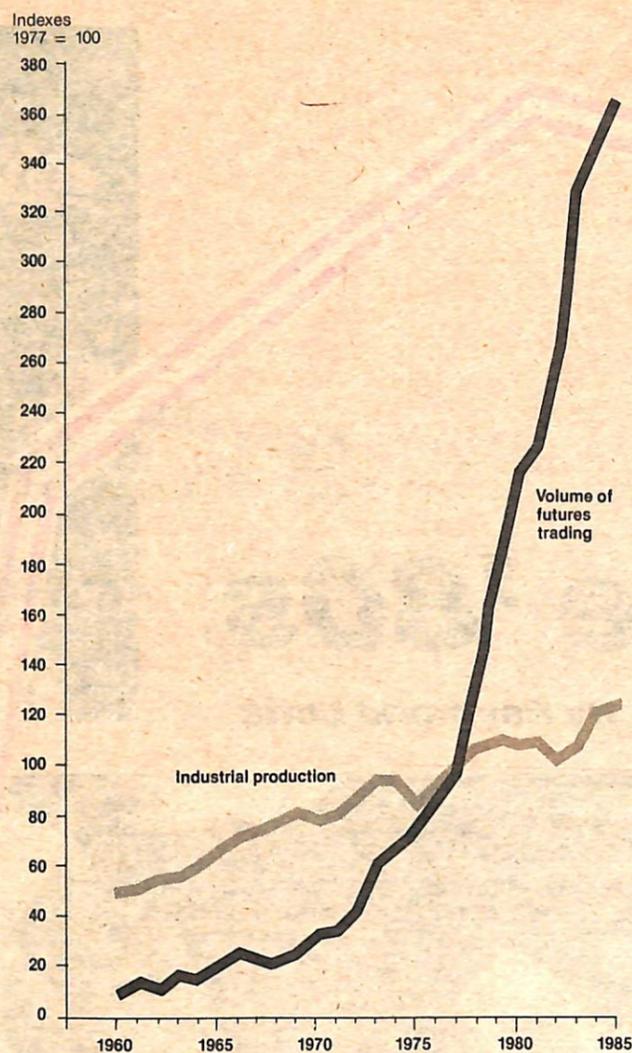
The Stock Market: What Is It?

Continued from page 9

ming up the Marxist approach to stocks. First, the stock market is an integral and vital component of the capitalist system. It helps to coordinate the flows of money-capital. Even speculation has its place: risky ventures can be financed, and more established capitals can be pressured to rationalize their operations. Second, the stock market, along with other financial markets, is a major source of distortion and dislocation in the capitalist system. And as we saw last week, it is capable of wreaking incredible havoc. Third, the fundamental determinant of economic ac-

tivity in capitalist society is not the stock market but rather the accumulation of capital in production. True, the stock market has a certain life of its own. But the world of stocks is ultimately limited by the accumulation process and ultimately reflects developments in the realm of production. Which is to say that Smith, Barney does in fact "make money the old-fashioned way" — that is, it is part of a complex economic process and system which, when all is said and done, feeds on the labor and misery of the oppressed of the world. □

Figure 1 **Speculation vs. Production**



Source: Monthly Review, October 1986

Foreign capital has been heavily involved, to the tune of almost \$19 billion in net purchases of U.S. stock in 1986, with Japan leading the way. This was triple the previous record of \$6 billion in 1981. Foreign capital has been trying to cash in on the speculative profits and, especially in the case of the Japanese, to find a safe shelter for surplus capital. But from the U.S. perspective, there has always been a strategic dimension to these capital inflows. On the one hand, as indicated, this capital has eased the burden of financing, in a noninflationary way the huge budget deficits linked to the enormous military buildup. On the other hand foreign capital has been drawn into the United States as an economic mechanism through which the unity of will and unity of action of the Western alliance can be reasserted on a higher

level. The closer interlocking of West European, Japanese, and U.S. capital serves to bolster the cohesion of the bloc. (See Figure 2).

The bull market of 1982-87 always had a manic quality, it was a nervous boom set against the canvas of an uncertain domestic and world economy. It could not go on much longer. And strange as it may seem, the crash that took place last week will in part play a purging and correcting function for the system. Paper values had grown way out of line with real values (see the box "The Stock Market: What Is It?"). Now they will be brought into closer correspondence. Some less efficient capitals may be bankrupted. Capital will grow larger and more concentrated, as those companies that did not have the cushion to absorb

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

—Howard Zinn
Professor of Political Science, Boston University
author of *A People's History of the United States*

"From a theoretical perspective, the chief significance of this book is the way it develops Marxist political economy in the light of Lenin's analysis of imperialism. It argues that the laws of capitalist accumulation now operate at the level of the world as a whole, including both East and West. The problems of individual countries must therefore be seen in the context of the world system. This is an important argument and it is developed here not only with scholarly care but also with an eye to the guidance it provides for political action."

—Edward Nell
Professor of Economics,
Graduate Faculty at the New School for Social Research
author of *Growth, Profits and Property*

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Raymond Lotta with Frank Shannon Vol. 1

Goetz Sentence

Mini Sentence, Maximum Outrage

On October 19 subway gunman Bernhard Goetz was sentenced — but not for shooting four Black youths. Last June Goetz was acquitted of attempted murder charges. In the court and in the media, it was not Goetz who was put on trial but rather the four Black youths who were depicted as “criminals” who “deserved” what they got. The only charge Goetz was convicted of was illegal possession of a firearm. Now Goetz, who openly admits that he was out to kill the four youths, has been given a sentence of six months in jail. The whole trial has been a message broadcast to other monsters like Goetz: open season on Black people. The slap on the wrist on Goetz in the sentencing just adds a sickening postscript to that message: Next time, take aim with a licensed gun! The judge told a packed courtroom, “A nonjail sentence would invite others to violate the gun laws.” Crane wasn’t talking about deterring anyone from shooting Black people. The whole Goetz affair has been a big part of the reactionary, pogromist atmosphere against youth of oppressed nationalities that is being stirred up.

The courtroom and hallway outside it were jam-packed the day Goetz was sentenced. The attorneys for the family of Darrell Cabey — William Kunstler, Ron Kuby, and C. Vernon Mason — came to the courtroom to press for

Goetz’s jailing. Cabey was shot in the back by Goetz and is now paralyzed with a severed spinal cord. Among other people there to denounce the Goetz shooting and the sham trial were Carl Dix, spokesperson for the RCP, USA, Rev. Al Sharpton, and Rev. Herbert Daughtry. Activists from Refuse and Resist! were there to join in the protest and pass out stickers that said, “Hands Off Black Youths, Refuse and Resist!”

Before Judge Crane revealed the sentence, William Kunstler stood up in court and requested that the judge read his memorandum filed with the court on why Goetz should get a mandatory one year in jail for the weapons conviction. The judge replied that he was aware of Kunstler’s opinion, and he made clear he didn’t want to hear it again. One young Black man disrupted the proceedings by shouting, “If I can do a mandatory year, he [Goetz] can do a mandatory year.”

After the sentence was handed down, discussions and debate continued out in the hallway. The attorneys for Cabey’s family said they were glad to see that Goetz at least got some jail time, but one lawyer added, “The message still seems to be that it’s all right to kill Black people as long as you don’t do it with an illegal handgun.”

There were also reactionaries who were surprised and upset that Goetz received

any jail sentence at all. Barry Slotnick, Goetz’s lawyer, said, “I think Mr. Goetz has been victimized one more time.” The Guardian Angels, who gave a good-luck wreath to Goetz, opposed the sentencing. Goetz’s appeal as an “underdog” has only been strengthened among reactionaries in society with this sentence. But for all the huffing by such people, Goetz is not even slated to go to jail until after an appeal of the weapons conviction. He remains free on the streets. According to the *New York Times*, Goetz’s six months can be knocked down to 120 days for “good behavior,” minus the nine days he spent in jail after his arrest. Whether he finally goes to the slammer for a few days or ends up scot free, there are Goetz fans who see him as a “hero.”

But it is also true that the fact the ruling-class authorities weren’t able to let Goetz off the hook completely points to the precariousness of their situation. They clearly viewed his sentencing with much concern. It was repeatedly put off for several months while city officials worried about a “long” and “hot” summer. An official report from the city’s probation department had recommended that Goetz not do any time. The report was “leaked” to the press — perhaps to test the waters. But apparently the authorities felt that not to give any jail sentence to Goetz would be too blatant

and might touch off widespread and angry protests among Black people and others. This was especially so with the trial of the Howard Beach white youths accused of a lynch-mob attack on Black men going on at the same time in New York City.

One Black man who lives in the same South Bronx housing projects where several of Goetz’s victims live told a *Newsday* reporter: “What? Goetz only got six months in jail? . . . I got six years probation for the same charge, and I didn’t even shoot anyone. Goetz shot four people, and he only got six months in jail? . . . But we knew the deal. Goetz was white, the people he shot were Black, and all the publicity he got calling him a hero, I’m surprised he even got six months. . . . If I had done that, I would be looking at 25 years to life, even if the victims were Black.”

What the *RW* said in June when Goetz was found not guilty is also very fitting for the sentencing: “The acquittal of Goetz is a verdict for the end of the American empire. Because any system that produces a creature like Goetz, lets him off for gunning down oppressed youth, and even makes a ‘hero’ out of him deserves to have a revolution as soon as possible.” □

Heard the Day After

The U.S. has become the world’s biggest debtor nation. . . . And there’s concern in Japan about the Persian Gulf. People ask: Do you expect to wage a major war on a credit card?

—Yoichi Funabashi
Economic specialist of a leading Japanese daily

Reagan got it all wrong. You’re supposed to have a depression first and then a war, not a depression and a war at the same time.

—Johnny Carson

Crash of '87

Continued from page 10

the shock will either go under or get grabbed up. It is possible that new forms of regulation will be instituted, curbing some of the more outrageous excesses of the immediate past.

Looking Ahead

But this process is secondary to the mounting instability and tension within the world economy. The stock markets may not yet have seen the worst of things. As an immediate result of what happened last week, many financial transactions will be more difficult to consummate, the pace of economic activity will slow, and new financial problems will undoubtedly surface.

Is this 1929? Obviously the stock market as an institution has undergone great change. At the same time new regulatory structures and institutional mechanisms to cushion against upheavals and failures have evolved. But two things must be stressed. First, the stock and financial markets are both far more concentrated and globalized than they were in the 1920s. Huge blocks of capital have extensive and overlapping international networks. Stock and money markets throughout the world are interlinked. This allows for a higher degree of flexibility and risk management. Resources can be pooled on an immense scale. But this concentration and globalization can readily turn into its opposite. When the big dominos begin to fall, they take a lot down with them. Second, concentration, globalization, and state intervention link economic developments much more closely to developments in the political and military realms.

From the present vantage point, we can see four possible trajectories of this crisis:

- The system may just muddle through for the time being. The result of course would only be a more serious reckoning down the line. Still, the possibility cannot be ruled out.

- Tumult in the stock markets could widen and deepen into a full-blown financial crisis and collapse, which could send the world economy into a depression. This might take on some of the features of the financial collapse that is simulated in the article “Considerations on a Revolutionary Situation in the United States” in the Winter/Spring 1987 issue of *Revolution* magazine.

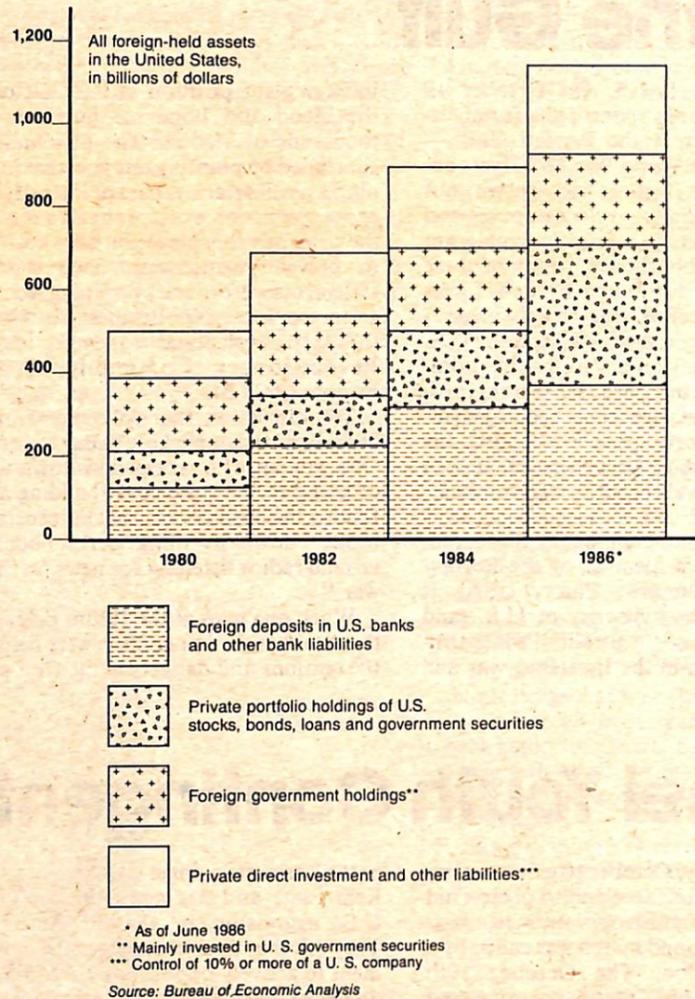
- A major recession in the United States, at least as serious as that of 1981-82, might be touched off by the debacle in the stock market, and it would cause serious damage to other economies, especially in the Third World.

- The United States, West Germany, and Japan could take extraordinary measures to minimize and repair some of the damage. Even if such intervention took place, it is highly unlikely that any major and long-term remedial programs would result from this.

The fact is that at this point the Reagan team neither enjoys the economic confidence of its alliance partners nor possesses the political coherence and capacity to undertake decisive and sweeping initiatives. The Reagan presidency has been gravely weakened through Iran/Contra and now this. Its single economic priority will be to prevent a massive flight from the dollar in the foreign exchange markets and the flight from dollar-based holdings, like U.S. government securities.

At the same time the international political situation presents other contradictions and constraints. Developments in the Persian Gulf in particular are placing major strains on the U.S. empire. And the financial markets themselves are reacting ever

Figure 2 The Inflow of Foreign Capital Into the United States



more sensitively to these flashpoints. Each of the four possibilities noted above exists in the context of a highly tense political-military world situation. The United States and the Soviet Union are on a collision course towards world war. The economic problems of the Western imperialist powers and the spasms of crisis can only add to the compulsion to forcibly redivide the world and could in fact figure prominently in a specific sequence of events leading to world war. The world is a very dangerous place in 1987. At the same time it is a place of the increasing vulnerability of the world system of imperialism.

A Final Thought

The conventional wisdom of capitalism has it that the common good is furthered through the pursuit of private ends. Individuals set out to maximize their private gains and society as a whole will benefit. This is what the stock market is supposedly about — it’s there for all to

play. But we should take note that the bull market of 1982-87 had as its counterpart in the United States the growing polarization of wealth, the epidemic of homelessness, and a significant decline of the health of Black people relative to white people. In the Third World, this bull market had as its counterpart famine in Africa, the Union Carbide industrial nightmare in India, and the Pemex fire in Mexico. We should also take note that this bull market produced its own legends — moral sludge like Ivan Boesky and Carl Icahn,* the financial equivalents of Oliver North. And, finally, we should take note of what this most capitalist of marketplaces has wrought: chaos and destructiveness which threaten its own foundations. □

*Ivan Boesky was a Wall Street financial wizard who was indicted for making astronomical sums of money through illegal, insider trading. Carl Icahn, the head of TWA, is a notorious corporate takeover specialist.

Houston Proletarians

Continued from page 6

television, the governments are saying that what they are doing is promoting world peace. This is nothing but hypocrisy. While they are in the Persian Gulf sending ships and tanks to destroy society, circulating the waters of the Gulf and intentionally being provocative, how is it possible that they can talk of peace at times like these. No, comrades, in these times there is no peace. I am 23 years old and I have never seen peace.

The governments of the world are not going to deceive us with the promotion of peace. There is never going to be peace if we don't completely wipe out this rotten system and replace it with another one that is going to serve the real interests of the worldwide proletariat. We can do this, it is in our hands to make it like this. We will unite around the slogan of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, "Prevent world war, step up the struggle for revolution throughout the world." And we will also unite around the slogan of Mao: "Either revolution will prevent [world] war or [world] war will give rise to revolution!"

An immigrant proletarian living in Houston, Texas

To the RW:

My opinion about the U.S.'s involvement in the Persian Gulf is as follows:

First of all, I think that the U.S. is one of the main players in Iraq's starting of the war, and with this it is to their interests that Iraq does not lose the war. The U.S., through their lackeys like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates, have constantly pumped money into Iraq's effort to fight the Iranians. The U.S. has constantly given intelligence information pertaining to Iran to Iraq. And now the U.S. government is making an all-out effort to turn Iran into the aggressor and to create an opening to get their own military fully involved in the war.

I personally think that the American revolutionary-minded people should stand up and raise hell, shouting and exposing the hypocrisy of the U.S. Middle East policy and let the people that's not informed know what the real deal is and who the real provocateurs are in the Persian Gulf. The situation in the Persian Gulf shows the oppressed people in the U.S. as well as the oppressed people all over the world the urgency of why it's so essential that U.S. imperialism and imperialism as a whole be uprooted and cast out now and forever more. And it's going to take not only the oppressed in the U.S. but the oppressed all over the world to get on with overthrowing this shit once and for all.

A Black proletarian in Texas

Hawaii Forum on the Gulf

Honolulu, Hawaii. On October 19 Revolution Books sponsored a forum titled, "Conflict in the Persian Gulf — Flashpoint for World War 3?" Flyers announcing the forum had gotten out broadly, especially on the campuses and in some proletarian (mainly immigrant Filipino) neighborhoods. Many of these leaflets were distributed by new forces who felt compelled to act in light of escalating tensions in the Gulf. And the U.S. attack on Iran's oil platforms the morning of the forum gave the evening program a particularly serious and urgent atmosphere. Forty people attended the forum, including University of Hawaii students, NBAU youth, and proletarians.

The main presentation at the forum was given by a member of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA. It focused on the hypocrisy of U.S. (and Soviet) claims of "neutrality" while arming both sides in the Iran/Iraq war and

jockeying for position in the Gulf over the blood and bones of hundreds of thousands of victims. The presentation concluded by pointing out how that morning's naval attack is part of intensifying preparations for world war and stressing the demands this places on all who wish to prevent world war. Two shorter statements were made by a young woman from the local No Business As Usual (NBAU) chapter and a member of the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade (RCYB).

The discussion that followed sharply underlined the impact of the day's events. One woman who works downtown told of going to the state court building and finding the business as usual bureaucracy broken down as filing clerks huddled around radios listening for news on "the war."

When one man at the forum ridiculed the idea that the imperialists were behind the tensions and dangers in the Gulf and

Rebel Youth Contingent

On Saturday, October 10 a demonstration was held in Cleveland to protest aid to the Contras and in opposition to apartheid. The rally and march was called by a broad coalition, The October 10th Mobilization on Central America and South Africa, and was endorsed by local union officials, anti-apartheid forces, religious forces, and peace groups from northeast Ohio. Some 300 people came out, including many middle-class people, college and high school students, and a small number of Black proletarians. The impact of Contragate was evident as many carried signs saying, "Contragate, stop the lies."

The spirited march which traveled from Cleveland State University campus to downtown Public Square was welcomed by many among the weekend shoppers along the main downtown street. Many people, especially Black masses, were very glad to see such a demonstration and the demands "Stop aid to the Contras" and "End U.S. support for apartheid."

Within the march a loud and rebellious youth contingent was formed to oppose U.S. war moves in the Persian Gulf. The youth contingent had been called for by No Business As Usual (NBAU) and the RCYB several days earlier. Many of the youth in this contingent had just been

part of protests against CIA recruiters at Kent State and are active in opposing U.S. aggression in Central America. They felt that the reluctance in the movement to actively oppose what the U.S. is doing in the Persian Gulf had to be challenged. The leaflet calling for the contingent said: "Persian Gulf — hey, this is enough shit going on to escalate into World War. Amerika — has forty-seven nuclear warships, 29,000 soldiers. This is not including warships from France, England, Russia, and Italy. This is the biggest concentration of firepower since World War 2." As the contingent formed up, drawing to it youth who had come to the Cleveland march from different northeast Ohio campuses, they began chanting, "No more bombing, no more lies, no more fucking alibis, U.S. out of the Persian Gulf." The youth also got out stickers that said, "It's right to rebel against reactionaries — Mao 1966." □

CORRECTION

In last week's RW, in the article "When Kreuzberg Became Harlem" on page 11, column 1, paragraph 1, the first sentence should read: On the other hand, the police press in like an occupying army.

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argued that they stemmed more from "centuries-old religious conflicts," others also took on this view stressing how this feeds the chauvinist excuse that "those people over there are fanatics" and therefore people should not oppose what the U.S. is doing. One woman who is part Hawaiian told of how military recruiters were constantly calling for her 16-year-old son. And a high school senior also told of how just that day she had gotten her first call from the recruiters.

Several people gave examples of how rising tensions are forcing people to grap-

ple with political and practical questions — from NBAU youth trying to find ways to influence their classmates, to immigrant Filipinos who have been discussing the threat of nuclear war and their responsibility to translate key RW articles into Ilocano so other immigrants can read the Party's analysis.

Discussion continued for nearly an hour after the program ended, spilling outside when the room finally had to be locked up. One youth commented on her way out, "I've got to go home and do some thinking about all this." □

IN THE CURRENT ISSUE OF
REVOLUTION MAGAZINE

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by M. Upshaw

**Since the '60s
Trends of Impoverishment, Oppression,
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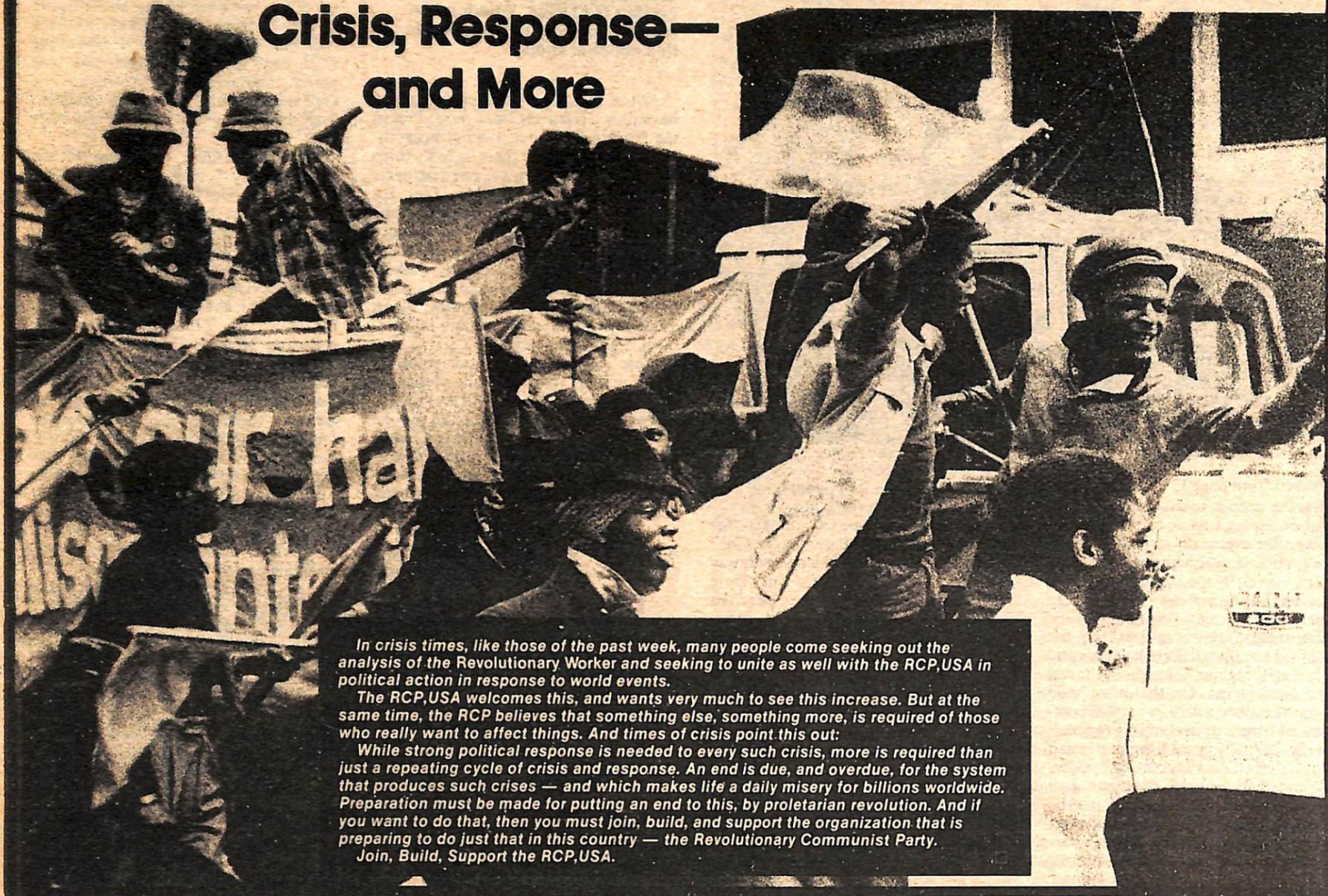
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Are You Ready for the Future?

Crisis, Response— and More



In crisis times, like those of the past week, many people come seeking out the analysis of the Revolutionary Worker and seeking to unite as well with the RCP, USA in political action in response to world events.

The RCP, USA welcomes this, and wants very much to see this increase. But at the same time, the RCP believes that something else, something more, is required of those who really want to affect things. And times of crisis point this out:

While strong political response is needed to every such crisis, more is required than just a repeating cycle of crisis and response. An end is due, and overdue, for the system that produces such crises — and which makes life a daily misery for billions worldwide. Preparation must be made for putting an end to this, by proletarian revolution. And if you want to do that, then you must join, build, and support the organization that is preparing to do just that in this country — the Revolutionary Communist Party. Join, Build, Support the RCP, USA.

Persian Gulf: The Risk of War

Continued from page 5

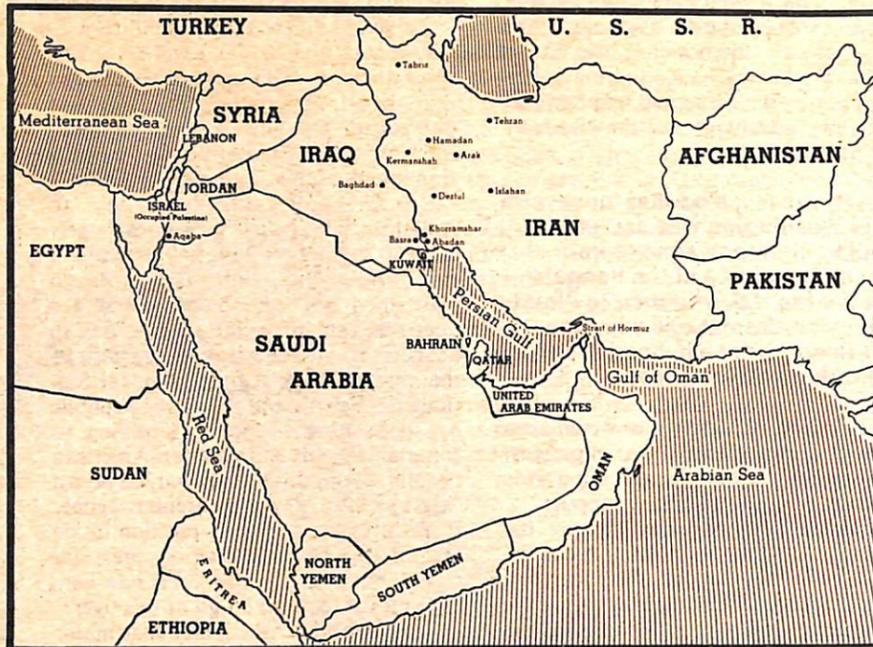
hauling Iranian oil from Iran's main exit point on Kharg Island. It was three years before Iran retaliated by hitting ships either bringing supplies to Iraq or carrying out oil from Iraq and its allies. Between 1984 and this year, both Iran and Iraq hit shipping, but Iraq relied most heavily on this tactic, hitting almost twice as many ships.

This spring, after the United States started escorting convoys of oil tankers in and out of Kuwait, a 25-day cease-fire developed in the Iran-Iraq war. And with it came a lull in the tanker war. On August 10 it was Iraq which reopened hostilities, in massive air raids probably approved by high-level Saudi and American commands. When the attacks on tankers started again, on August 29, it was once again Iraq that initiated them. Listening to the American media, one would never guess that Iraq has been waging this "tanker war." But the U.S. media has every reason to hide this since Iraq's tanker war is now being waged in, around, over, and in close connection

with the American military presence.

In reality, keeping the Gulf shipping lanes open is actually in the interest of the Iranian regime. The Gulf is Iran's main avenue for exporting oil. Iraq by contrast has been able to rely on a network of oil pipelines that run west overland to distant ports. So Iraq has an interest in the tanker war. With its pipelines relatively safe from retaliation, Iraq has tried to sever Iran's economic lifeline at sea. When Iran entered the tanker war it was by retaliating against the oil tankers which service the various kingdoms and emirates along the Gulf coast. These countries have supposedly been neutral in the Iran-Iraq war. In practice they have all — and especially Kuwait — been deeply involved in backing Iraq, often at American instigation.

One should not be too surprised if this is different from the news reports on American television. After all, the United States kept a straight face last spring when it used an Iraqi missile attack on the USS *Stark* as a pretext to step up war moves against Iran!



Isn't the U.S. there to protect its oil interests?

Yes, but this is far more than a question of the flow of oil. Otherwise the U.S. Navy could get the hell out of there and improve the situation.

It was clear from the beginning of this military intervention that the American armada was not assembled in order to defend oil shipments from the tanker war. Major U.S. politicians, including Henry Kissinger, pointed out at the time the reflagging decision was reached that there was no major disruption of oil supply through the Persian Gulf. The fact that the American fleet did not even include minesweeping equipment at the beginning was only one sign that the U.S. fleet in the Gulf was intended as an offensive force. Its main mission all along was to project the military might of the United States in the region.

In a word, this region is strategic.

Reagan reminded everyone of that in his speech over the bodies of dead sailors from the *Stark*: "Every American president since World War 2 has understood the strategic importance of this region that is a crossroads for three continents and the starting place for the oil that is the lifeblood of much of the world economy,

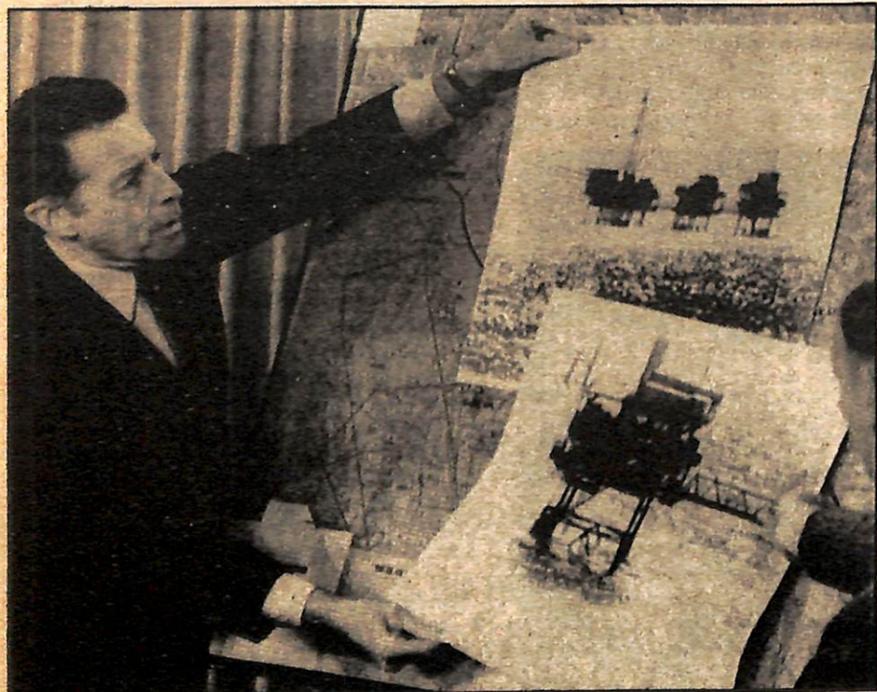
especially those of our allies in Europe." One European diplomat said: "Unlike Saigon or Lebanon, you cannot simply walk away from the Gulf." Dramatic shifts in power relations and major military gains or losses by one superpower or another in this region are the stuff the nightmare scenarios of nuclear war planners are made of.

The jugular veins of the Western alliance run down through the Persian Gulf. And American dominance of the region has for decades been a cornerstone of the whole NATO-plus-Japan alliance and for the whole U.S.-centered empire of neocolonies and dependencies.

The U.S. has never quite recovered from the events of 1979 which damaged America's web of domination. Under the Shah, Iran once served as a heavily armed "gendarme" for the United States in the Persian Gulf region. However, that Shah fell to revolution and was replaced by a far less reliable and cranky fundamentalist Islamic regime. Soon after, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan greatly increased U.S. anxiety over their position in the region.

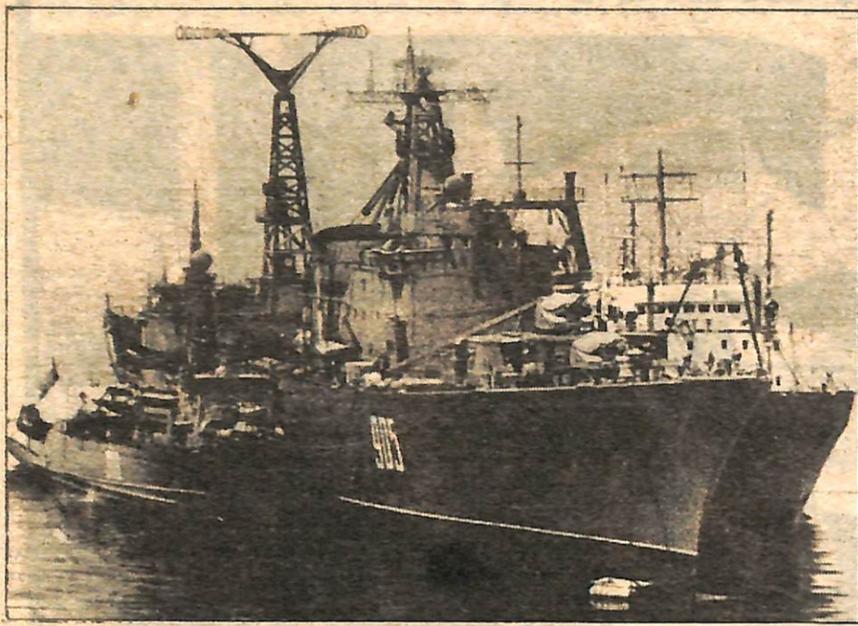
Under Ayatollah Khomeini the new government sought to harness the energies and anti-American sentiments of

Continued on page 14



Weinberger shows photos of the oil rig the U.S. shelled last week.

Persian Gulf: The Risk of War



A Soviet minesweeper and supply ship anchored beside a frigate near the Strait of Hormuz.

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the Iranian people, to use them as a vehicle for extending Iranian influence in the Gulf and for eventually closing a better, more favorable deal with the imperialist powers, especially the United States. On the one hand the policies of the current Iranian government, especially their stubbornness in the war against Iraq, has threatened to upset delicate balances and highly fragile regimes throughout the rest of the Gulf region. On the other hand Iran has remained a very important component of future control of this region.

At the sailors' funeral Reagan stressed that this region had become a "tinderbox" and that a crucial American goal had to be to introduce "peace" to the region. But what the U.S. ruling class means by "peace" is a return to a clear-cut American domination of this region. A United States that cannot guarantee and if necessary enforce control of the region, in the words of one commentator, "won't be a superpower anymore." And that "other superpower," the Soviet Union, is close at hand, sharing a northern border with Iran and maneuvering to its own advantage and the disadvantage of its U.S. rivals.

First it was revealed that for several years Washington was secretly sending high-tech arms to Iran, then in the middle of the Irangate scandal the U.S. switched to direct military confrontations with Iran. Isn't Reagan just a hypocrite and a fool with no clear policy?

Half right. Reagan is a world-class hypocrite. But there is an imperialist policy which not only Reagan but a wide spectrum of U.S. politicians support.

American jingoists may portray the Khomeini regime as a mini-focus of world evil. But beyond their cartoon world there is widespread unity within the American ruling class that Iran is, as the liberal imperialist *New York Times* has said, "the premier strategic prize in the Middle East," both for the United States and for its rival the Soviet Union.

Seven years ago the Iran-Iraq war began with American encouragement of an Iraqi invasion of Iran's oil fields — in order to place tremendous pressure on Khomeini's Islamic Republic. Through long, bloody years the stalemated status quo was acceptable to the Western powers as well as the Soviet Union who used the war to angle for influence in both regimes.

This war, which has left more than one million dead, was useful to these powers. For the West it tied up and provided leverage both on the Iranian regime and on the Iraqi regime which was more pro-Soviet at the time. And as the war dragged on, it compelled both sides to approach the West for arms, for high-tech spare parts, for intelligence, for supplies. As the United States fueled both sides of this brutal conflict, it sought to use those arms deals to cement influence in the warring governments, especially in Iran.

Then, starting at the end of last year, a major new possibility loomed: after seven years of bloodshed the ruling regime in Iraq was in big trouble. This opened the possibility of an Iranian victory and the release of pressure on the Iranian regime. And it opened the possibility that Sad-

dam Hussein of Iraq would fall and power would be up for grabs.

The situation spelled danger for America's other "friends" in the Gulf. As trouble threatened to blow their way from the war in the northern Gulf, these kingdoms and emirates, perched precariously on oil wealth and U.S. arms, worried about their future. And with the chance to enter the Gulf militarily in defense of these regimes, the U.S. also saw an opportunity to increase open military cooperation with Saudi Arabia and others, including the possibility of acquiring U.S. military bases in the region.

Wildly different "Iran initiatives" have flowed from Washington these last years. But, however American tactics may twist, the underlying goal remains to consolidate as the dominant power in Iran. The United States has used dual tactics of "beat up and bribe" on the Islamic Republic, usually all at the same time. They seek to use external pressure to "soften up" the Iranian regime, without being drawn so deeply into confrontation that pro-U.S. forces in Iran are discredited. The U.S. seeks to bludgeon Iran into submission, without "pushing Iran into the arms of the Soviet Union."

But a successful "balance" to American policy has proven extremely difficult to find. Nothing has yet brought Iran firmly back onto the American plate: there has been no coup d'etat, nor does the Iranian regime seem willing to abandon its aim of breaking the back of the current Iraqi regime. The faction-ridden leadership of the Islamic Republic has been unable and/or unwilling to come out openly with its pro-American positions. And this bloody war has been a "tiger by the tail" for the Iranian regime. It has strengthened their position inside Iran and, even with the serious pressures from Western imperialism, it is now very difficult for them to let go of this tiger.

Faced with the possibility that major new alignments may break loose in the Gulf, the United States has been forced to intrude directly into the heart of the storm. With missiles, nukes, and fighter jets crammed onboard its armada, the American government pursues a single-minded goal: shoring up its dominance of this region, by any means necessary. It is a very risky thing to do — for the whole world.



Combat information center aboard an Aegis cruiser.

But the Soviet Union does not seem to be directly confronting the United States or backing Iran or even militarily engaged in the Persian Gulf itself. Where is the imminent danger of world war in this regional crisis?

At this moment the Soviet Union may have only a relatively small naval fleet in the Persian Gulf, but it is not insignificant. The Soviet fleet there includes three minesweepers, one frigate, one destroyer, and a submarine depot ship. They are part of a larger 15- to 20-ship fleet cruising in South Asian waters. This presence is more than enough to "show the flag" and offer "protection" to any takers among the Gulf states. And it is more than enough to act as a "tripwire" — an excuse for direct Soviet military involvement if hostilities escalate.

More important, far more powerful Soviet military forces are fully present on the scene and weigh heavily in the military and political considerations of all powers in the region. Whereas the United States has to strain the military infrastructure of its empire and alliances to sustain a war-ready strike force in the Gulf, this region lies close to the Soviet Union.

Huge Soviet armies are massed on its southern borders; nuclear missiles, aircraft, and some 300,000 combat troops

Iraq either. But behind the words of mutual cooperation and common interests are intense rivalry and jockeying for position. Fundamentally, the targeting of any particular regime in the region by one imperialist or the other is not what is driving the piling up of warships in the Gulf. Each bloc — West and East — is pushing and maneuvering to resolve the Gulf situation in terms most favorable to itself and most unfavorable to the other side.

As Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, pointed out: "Out of everything going on with American involvement in the Persian Gulf these days, one of the main reasons why the U.S. has a massive presence there is because the Soviets started giving protection to Kuwaiti ships. Reagan and the rest couldn't stand for that. The 'protection' has to be American protection, because the U.S. has to be the dominant power in the Gulf and the world... It's not hard to see that this is nothing but straight-up gangster logic, all the way around. Murderous protection rackets and the deadly contest between rival gangs. But the stakes are not a few neighborhoods or a few areas, and the means of warfare are not things like mere machine guns. No, the stakes are the whole world, and they have at their fingertips massive arsenals, including nuclear arsenals."



Reflagged Kuwaiti tanker Bridgeton follows U.S. Navy ship.

are within striking distance of the Gulf. Plus some 100,000 Soviet troops on Iran's eastern border, in Afghanistan. And the Soviet Union is becoming increasingly active politically in the Persian Gulf region. For now the Soviets are playing a cagey and comparatively low-key game. But the very unstable situation in the Gulf combined with the underlying U.S.-Soviet antagonism produces an unpredictable mix.

On the surface it might seem that the Soviet Union and the U.S. have some parallel interests in the Gulf and that the contradictions between them are not as sharp as those between the U.S. and Iran. And it is true that the Soviet Union does not want a clear-cut Iranian victory over

But what about the Democrats? Aren't they trying to restrain Reagan with the War Powers Act?

No, the Democrats are doing a circus act — objecting and going along. Some like Sam Nunn publicly criticized the reflagging policy, but now that the U.S. fleet is in the Gulf and the reflagging of Kuwaiti ships is accomplished, the Democrats agree that it is impossible for the U.S. to leave. On May 21 the Senate voted 91 to 5. Was this to halt the reflagging and deployment of a massive U.S. armada to the Persian Gulf? No. It was to require the administration to inform Congress about how the fleet was planning to defend itself. Other votes followed. The result of these votes was a four-to-six-week delay in the reflagging operation which actually assisted the administration by buying time to plan the operation without appearing indecisive, since they "were just going along with the wishes of Congress." The *New York Times* pointed out that the congressional resolutions would have "no practical effect" even if passed. And Democrat Les Aspin distinguished himself when he loudly suggested that the U.S. mine the coastal waters of Iran.

This was truly in the tradition of former Democratic President Jimmy Carter whose Carter Doctrine held that "Any attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force." "Vital interests" is a code word for those areas of the world which the



John F. Kennedy welcomes the Shah to the White House, 1962.

U.S. will defend by first use of nuclear weapons. In a note to Carter in 1980 Zbigniew Brzezinski, the national security advisor, wrote that the Iran-Iraq war was a potential "long-range threat to the region" but that "the threat to the Gulf gives us a unique opportunity to consolidate our security position." And it has been revealed that during the takeover of the U.S. embassy in 1980, a story of Soviet troop movements on the Iran border gave rise to open discussion in the National Security Council of the United States on the option of using nuclear weapons.

But there are no "good guys" to support. I don't like what the U.S. is doing, but the Iranians are irrational anti-Americans.

Which Iranians? If you are talking about the masses of Iranian people, they are quite *rational* anti-American. The record of the United States in Iran is long and bloody. The people remember the U.S.-backed Shah and the armed forces which massacred 10,000 Iranian people in one day in 1978. They remember his regime which came complete with

they wouldn't stay in power very long. And this is a big problem for the Islamic Republic because they are actually trying to maneuver their way to some kind of arrangement with Western imperialism. In fact, under the current religious leadership, the revolution was prevented from touching the political, economic, and social roots of foreign domination — along with the domestic reactionary classes. And since they have consolidated their power in the blood of Iranian revolutionaries, the Islamic Republic has proven quite willing to talk turkey with the imperialists of the West and, to a lesser extent, flirt with the imperialists of the East.

But saying "I don't like Khomeini" cannot justify silence and inaction in the face of United States attacks on Iran. If you hate Khomeini because he has betrayed the highest aspirations of the masses of people who made the 1979 Iranian revolution, because his regime brutally assaulted Kurds and other minority nationalities, because he promoted feudal discipline, systematically reinforced the oppressed status of women, and murdered Iranian communists, how does it assist the Iranian



American flag burning in Teheran, 1979.

U.S.-trained SAVAK torturers and secret police. They are quite rational and righteous in their hatred of the American CIA which staged a coup in 1953 that deposed the nationalist Mossadegh regime and erected the bloody Pahlavi monarchy over Iran. They are rational in their desire to end once and for all the domination of their country by U.S. imperialism which produced twenty-five years of exploitation, grotesquely distorted "development," and a massive pro-Western military used to crush revolution throughout the region. And this imperialism is still dominating their country and wishes to dominate it more thoroughly once again. And really, when it comes right down to it, from the point of view of the oppressed people of the world there can be no such thing as being *too* anti-American and waging *too* resolute a struggle against American imperialism.

But if you're talking about Khomeini and the various reactionary cliques of the Islamic Republic, then you're also wrong. Because Khomeini and company are not fundamentally opposed to American imperialism. They use the anti-imperialist rhetoric and talk about the Great Satan, but any fool in power in a country where the masses had risen up against the Shah would "criticize the Great Satan" too or

people in any way to stand silently while the U.S. attacks Iran? If you oppose Khomeini because you support the ongoing struggle of the Iranian people for revolution and liberation — how on earth is this *any* reason to vacillate when the United States forcefully moves to consolidate its grip on Iran? There are forces within Iran who at this moment are waging revolutionary struggle against the Islamic regime. But they are not helped one bit if progressive and anti-imperialist forces in the United States find excuses *not* to forcefully oppose U.S. intrigues and aggression in the region!

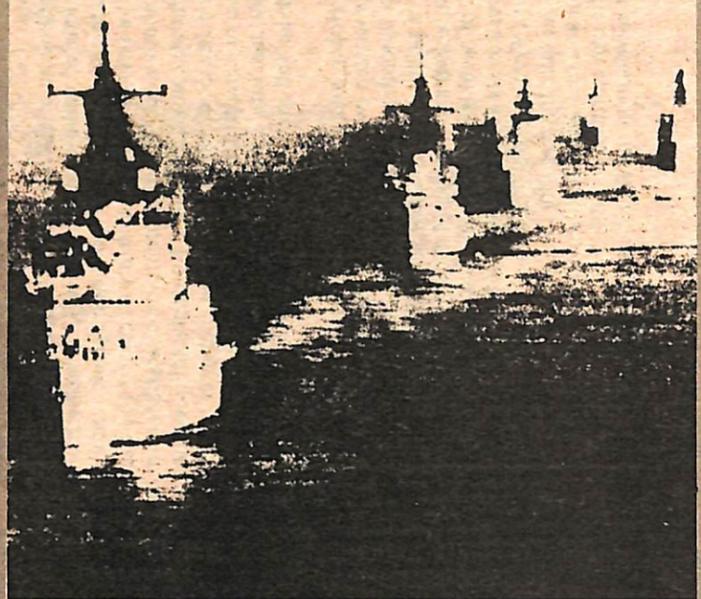
But the waters of the Persian Gulf are too deep and muddy for this intervention to be "an effective organizing issue"?

But this world refuses to stand still for such stratagems. The actions of the war-makers are global, based on global needs and strategies.

There are forces, powerful within the various anti-intervention coalitions, who have staked their political strategies on developing close political alliances with liberals highly placed within the existing American power structure. And as a result they feel forced to avoid raising political issues that would "alienate"

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those "allies." They consider that raising protest against U.S. aggression in the Middle East would be divisive of patiently constructed relations. Others have alliances to protect with pro-Soviet forces who for their own reasons have a "blind spot" for the Persian Gulf. As a result, some people have allowed "Middle East issues" to be simply "read out of the agenda" of major antiwar and anti-interventionist coalitions. Doesn't the lack of widespread public protest over the Persian Gulf intervention reveal the unacceptable political *cost* of these strategies and the danger of such political loyalty to whatever is *acceptable* to those in power or whatever seems *possible* in the most narrow sense of the word?

Are anti-interventionist forces suddenly to say that *some* imperialist interventions are to be confronted and condemned but *other* provocative military aggression is to be passed over in virtual silence? Shouldn't everyone who opposes U.S. intervention in Central America or apartheid in South Africa stand clearly opposed to U.S. aggression in the Gulf? What use would such an inflexible, compromised movement be when even the *immediate* future threatens to be full of unpredictable military acts on a world scale?

What thinking person on this planet can delude themselves into believing that

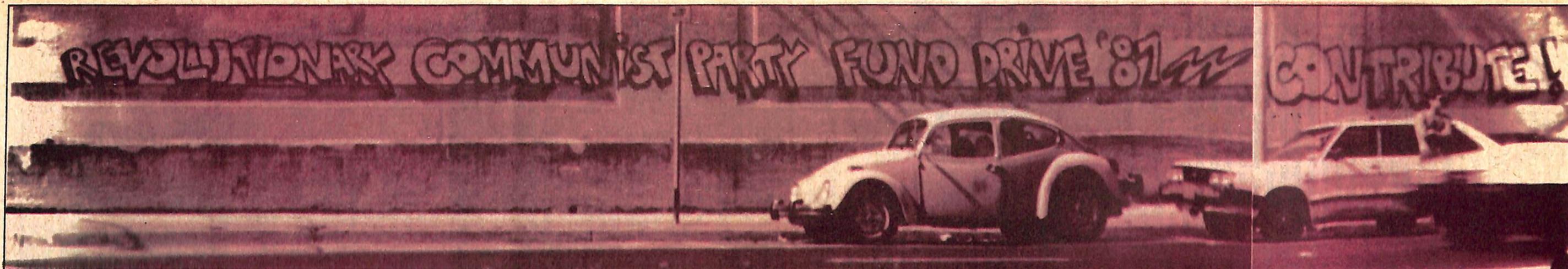
anything but a murderous process is unfolding with the U.S. fleet in the Persian Gulf? The actions by the United States in the Gulf are not "ill-advised" macho reprisals. They are planned and orchestrated moves, political and military — part of the global calculus of a United States preparing for war. The pretext factory is working overtime: "protecting international waters," "preempting terrorist attacks," "teaching lessons to irrational people." The actions of the U.S. government in the Gulf are about American imperialists displaying their power and bringing a lesser power to heel. With each new challenge the United States dares their Soviet rivals to act in kind, to assert their interests. And the danger of a nuclear world war grows greater. This is the issue. What will our answer be?

And to those who see the stakes and feel paralyzed, to those who ask the **Question: How do we oppose such an awesome threat as nuclear world war?**

We say straight up: only revolution in large and/or strategic parts of the world can really stop such a war. But only by opposing every outrage, starting with the acts committed by "our own" U.S. government like the aggression in the Persian Gulf, can we build the kind of movement needed to stop these gangsters from ripping apart the entire planet to preserve the American way of life. This is the issue. What will our answer be? □



Kurdish fighter.



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AN IMPORTANT NEW BOOK

***Reflections, Sketches, and Provocations* by Bob Avakian**

What do you say about a leader of a revolutionary party who can offer up an incredibly detailed commentary on an NCAA basketball championship game and, what is even more outrageous, draw lessons about revolution from the style of play and attitude of one of the teams? And what do you say about a self-described communist and Marxist-Leninist who, on the one hand, can address some fundamental questions to Carl Sagan and Stephen Jay Gould in respect to the character of intellectual inquiry and debate in socialist society, while, on the other, can decry the ossification of Marxism into a state religion? Well, you can say that his name is Bob Avakian and that a new book of his writings is about to appear.

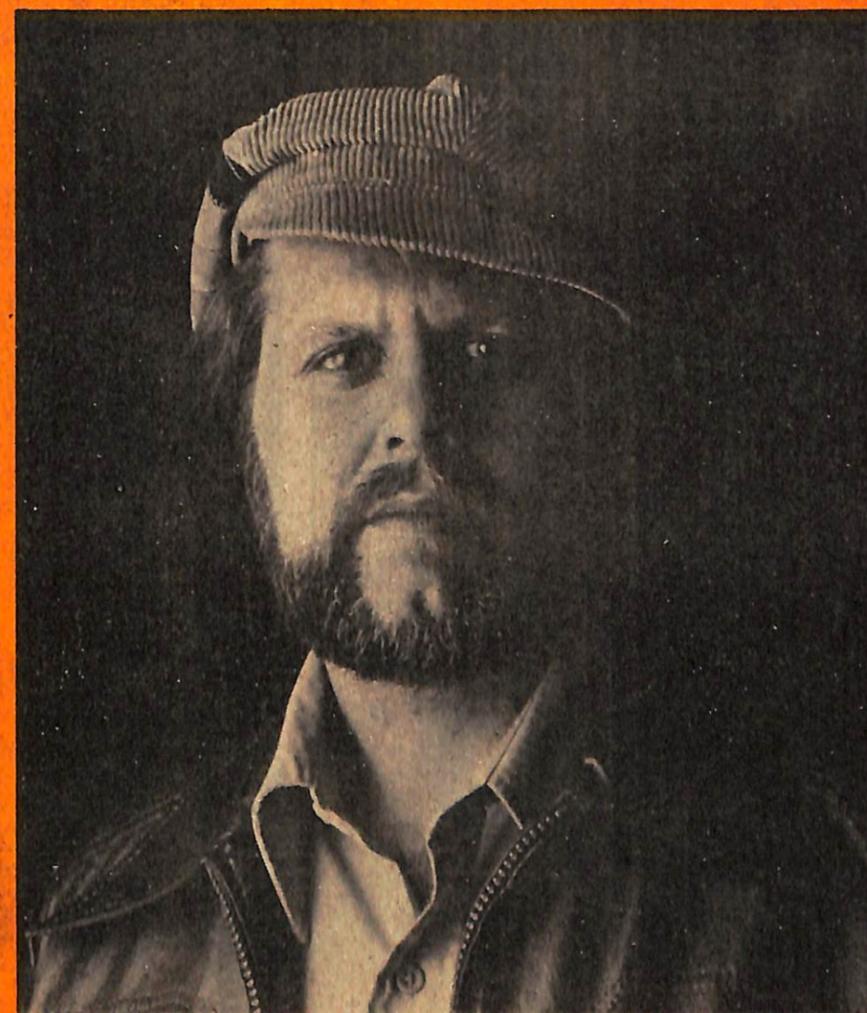
Reflections, Sketches, and Provocations is the title of a collection of articles and essays written over the last eight years. Part social and cultural commentary, part theoretical intervention, and part strategic analysis, this volume is a kind of political compass of the 1980s. Avakian ranges over such issues as Reaganism and the rise of the right, trends among Black people, problems of revolution in the Third World, and the growing danger of world war. Consistently fresh and vibrant in his perceptions, Avakian can look at a movie like *Fort Apache, The Bronx* and launch into a discussion of liberalism; he can take the opening lines of a Thanksgiving Day speech by Ronald Reagan and tear apart its historical, indeed even its geological, assumptions; or he can contrast two different kinds of "festivals" occurring simultaneously: a rebellion in the Black community of Miami and the

Orange Bowl regalia. A routine by Richard Pryor or a song by Phil Ochs provide springboards for Avakian. Yet as broad-ranging as these writings are, certain basic themes run through them: the obscene hypocrisy of the imperialists, the limits of reformism, the shifts in the world since the 1960s and the strategic weakness of imperialism, the crucial importance of internationalism in general and its particular relevance to making revolution in the United States, the need to oppose war with revolution, and the nature and necessity of revolutionary preparation.

If he is always probing revolutionary possibility, Avakian is just as unflinching in tackling the seemingly intractable problems of making that revolution. If he is passionately concerned with the mass seizure of power, Avakian is no less absorbed with the difficulties of exercising that power.

From a piece that extends no more than a paragraph to an expansive essay, Avakian has that rare ability to not only offer up insights but to force his reader to argue with him. For those unacquainted with the work of Bob Avakian, this collection will serve as a splendid introduction. For those who have encountered him before, here brought under one cover are some of his most engaging writings. In short, *Reflections, Sketches, and Provocations* confirms Bob Avakian's reputation as one of the most original and provocative thinkers of our time.

This book is planned to appear simultaneously in Spanish and English.
Approximate cost of production: \$10,000



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