



REVOLUTIONARY WORKER

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

No. 466

(Vol. 10, No. 13)

English edition

Published weekly

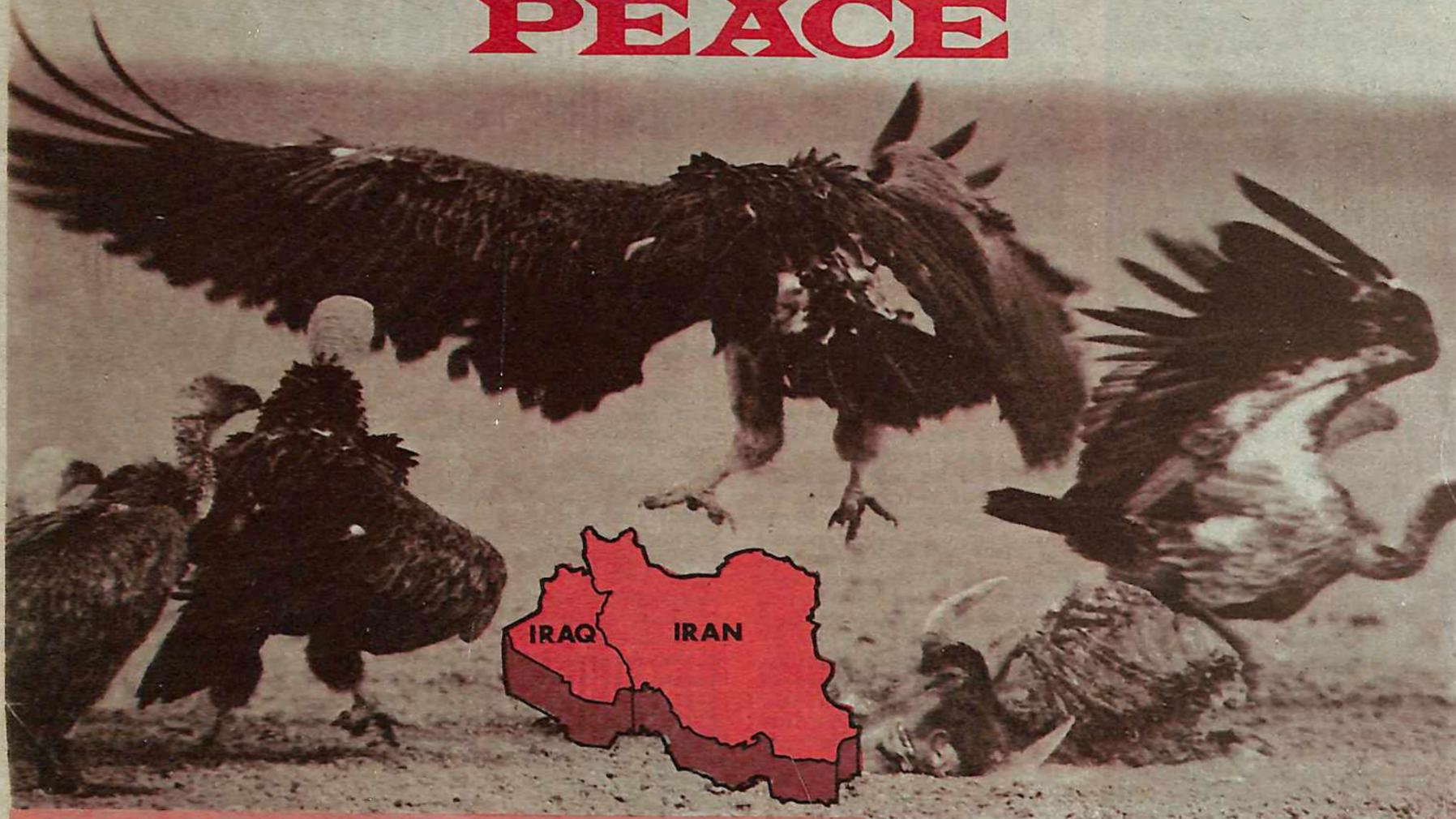
August 1, 1988

Editions in English and Spanish ISSN 0193-3485

\$1.00

GREAT POWERS IN THE IRAN/IRAQ WAR

VULTURES' PEACE



For the big powers — both East and West and particularly the U.S. — the war was an opportunity to stick their claws deeper into Iran, Iraq, and the whole region and try to crush the revolutionary masses. If they want "peace" now, it is only because they think that would be good for their reactionary interests.

Dramatic new developments have taken place in the past two weeks in the Iran-Iraq war, a brutal conflict which started eight years ago and led to over a million casualties. On July 18 the Iranian government announced that it would accept the UN's "comprehensive peace plan" for the war, and indirect cease-fire talks between the two countries have begun.

Almost immediately (and very predictably) a chorus of hypocrisy rose up from U.S. officials and media. They shed crocodile tears about the "immense human cost" of the war and pretended that "peace" was what they wanted all along. These rulers of America — along with their allies and their rivals of the Soviet bloc — are the same vultures who pumped both Iran and Iraq full of weapons, money, and military

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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.



Seattle

Fitting Welcome for Ollie North

Seattle, July 20. Eight hundred to 1,000 people demonstrated against Oliver North. The "Just Say 'No' to North Coalition" called for the protest under the slogans "To Hell with Oliver North, Rambo, and All They Represent!" and "Oppose U.S. Intervention and All Acts of Aggression in Central America, the Middle East, Southern Africa, and Around the World!" Several reactionary Republican groups had invited North to speak. And while they had hoped to fill the 14,000-seat Seattle Center Coliseum, only 2,500 reactionary, white, fundamentalist Christian flag-wavers and warmongers came to hear North whine.

The "Just Say 'No' to North Coalition" was initiated by the Seattle chapter

of Vietnam Veterans Against the War (Anti-Imperialist) which also put out a call for a vets contingent behind VVAW(AI)'s slogans: "The U.S. Deserved to be Defeated in Vietnam, and It Deserves the Same Today Around the World!" and "From My Lai to Managua to Tripoli, the World Knows Who the Real Terrorists Are!" A core group of two dozen AI members and supporters were joined by another forty to fifty vets — mainly Vietnam era vets but also World War 2 and Korean War vets as well as vets from the U.S.'s "peacetime army."

Those who came to hear North speak were met by protesters right at the doors. Some decided not to go in, bought anti-Ollie buttons and took leaflets. At one point a counterdemonstration of thirty to forty reactionaries was forced to retreat when people chanted right in their faces, "To hell with Oliver North and all he represents." Inside, four people from the Seattle Non-Violent Action Group unfurled a banner, "North, Contras, Cocaine, Murder, Torture, Lies" and chanted until they were kicked out. While organizers for North's speech refused to comment officially on the less-than-expected turnout, one person in their office informally speculated that the "cantankerous rabble outside" probably intimidated people with families.

Picket signs made with the Ollie North posters, "Peewee's Big Adventure" and "I was only following orders," had been endorsed by the Coalition and were extremely popular. Many creative signs and banners targeted North's plans for domestic fascism and international aggression, like the ones that read, "Contra/Cocaine: Hooked on Drugs? Thanks Ollie!"; "Ollie North Is a Drug Dealer, a Gunrunner, and a Psychotic Jerk!"; and "U.S. Billions to Israel Aids Apartheid and Contra Terror!" The RCP's banners in English and Spanish read: "Ollie North: A Fitting Hero for a Dying Amerikkkan Empire!"; "Racists, Rambo-Americans, Rulers of America, It's All Going to Fall on You!"; "Out-

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The *Revolutionary Worker* (ISSN 0193-3485) is published weekly except for the 4th week of December and the 4th week of July, by RCP Publications, 3449 N. Sheffield, Chicago, IL 60657. Second Class postage paid at Chicago, IL. Subscriptions and address changes should be sent to RCP Publications, POB 3486, Chicago, IL 60654. Subscriptions are \$40 a year, \$12.00 for 3 months in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. (\$52.00 for institutions).
Postmaster: send all changes of address to Revolutionary Worker, P.O. Box 3486, Chicago, IL 60654.

The Democratic Party Convention is over. Many games have been played. Many deals have been made. It is no longer possible to bullshit about the great changes the Jesse Jackson campaign may create. *We can see what actually went down.*

It was sometimes an uneasy game, but the Jesse Jackson campaign had worked to turn popular support into prominence and influence within the Democratic Party. At the DNC this stage of the game ended in a big show of unity. "Unity" and "Common Ground" were offered up to the Black people and the downtrodden by the Reverend Jesse Jackson in his speech to the Convention as his name went into nomination. "Unity" and "Common Ground" were the catchwords as Jackson delegates were pledged to discipline and passed their votes for VP to Texas Lloyd, the George Bush clone of the Democratic Party. Jesse Jackson reached down and pulled the heartstrings of the oppressed and then he basically told them to be good losers. Predictions are still being offered to the oppressed people that the scene on the podium at the Democratic National Convention is a good omen.

Some people drank *too many* Rainbow Cocktails. Now, the morning after, the hangover comes... and they have to peek under the covers next to them. An ugly sight this morning: Michael Dukakis and Lloyd Bentsen in the space labeled Rainbow Dreams. "Oh, what have you gone and done?"

What You See Is What You Got

Democrats promised that with them in charge the government would be more "competent" and more "ethical." But when all was said and done, the Democrats out-Reaganed Reagan with their new look and stayed well within the framework of political policy and debate set during the Reagan years.

By a vote of 2-to-1, the convention upheld NATO's nuclear first-use policy — the U.S. military doctrine that insists the Western alliance would use nuclear weapons *first* in a war against the Soviet Union. The political party that dropped the bomb on Hiroshima affirmed that it would do it again.

Dukakis made it clear that he appreciated the Reagan arms buildup and promised that he would "competently" use this power to get further concessions from America's enemies.

When some Jesse Jackson delegates broke discipline and waved "NO CONTRA AID" banners on the convention floor — it was openly described as "an embarrassment to the party" by those running the show. A party that is "embarrassed" by the slightest anti-Contra activity clearly has not given up on plans to reconquer Nicaragua.

The promised floor fight over Palestinian statehood was dropped.

On the so-called "social issues," the Democrats tried to out-Reagan Reagan with their own twist on traditional morality, patriarchy, and oppressive family relations. The convention podium looked like a cross between *Dynasty* and *Sesame Street* as candidates paraded the fruit of their loins, children, grandchildren, and a pregnant daughter-in-law.

"War on Drugs" was declared the top national security issue. This special

Jesse Jackson Post-Convention Blues

and a Chance for Clear Vision

Democrat crusade is a plan for counter-insurgency and social discipline on many levels: in the inner cities, in the border region, and in the Third World, especially in Latin America. Alongside talk of drug treatment programs a call is going out for more police, for active snitching, for reactionary vigilanteism, for strengthening authority in all forms.

In short, the Democratic Party re-invented itself as a party walking in the footsteps of the Reagan Era. The old liberalism has given way to a new mix — at home, hardship and repression with a human face and mean-spirited social programs aimed at the most oppressed. Abroad, the American empire and its war alliances are to be given a human rights facelift.

Not "Empowered" — But Tied Up and Hauled to the Big House

Some people had convinced themselves that Jackson had a "secret agenda," that he was going to put up a real fight within the Democratic Party and perhaps use the occasion for a major mobilization in the streets. It was not unusual to hear people say they were "waiting for Jesse to give the signal" — for demonstrations, for walkouts, for whatever...

It didn't happen because that was not Jackson's agenda. Even before the convention started, Jackson fought *any* hint of dissent or mass protest. Jackson's not-so-secret agenda was to corral new forces into the Democratic Party and then demand that they accept their place in the wings.

In Jackson's own words: "I cannot be asked to go out into the fields, pick voters, bale them up, deliver them up to the big house... and not be part of the equation." Jackson's prominence at the convention did not represent power *for* the oppressed — it was just a new opportunity for him to bale up and deliver the oppressed!

Jackson bragged his campaign has "kept hope alive." "Hope" in what? Hope that "America is getting better and better," Jackson said. Hope that this system will ultimately serve the oppressed

and end their oppression. This is a lie, proven by *centuries* of oppression. With all their electronic means, the U.S. media beamed Jackson's speech around the world — to suggest to the people of the world that America may be a home of "human rights." The oppressed don't need false hope in an outmoded, vicious system.

Jackson says there's no chance of victory for the oppressed unless they find "common ground" with others within the Democratic Party. He talked about "common ground" between the "left wing and the right wing," "between the hawk and the dove," "between the lion and the lamb." He called on the oppressed to abandon "a false sense of independence." In other words, his call is for "common ground" between the *oppressor* and the *oppressed*.

He said that "if lions and lambs can find common ground," surely the oppressed and oppressors can too. But in the real world lions and lambs *don't* find common ground. They never have and never will. In this real world, lions *eat* lambs. Jackson's "common ground" really means "All the better to eat you, my dear."

The oppressed need to unite but not with the oppressor. They need to know their enemies and their allies. In his recent article on the Jackson campaign, anti-candidate Carl Dix answered an important question:

"White workers in the rust belt and white farmers in the farm belt, as well as whites from the middle classes, have supported Jackson. Isn't this a positive development?" In a sense it is. It's a good thing if white people who never would have dreamed of associating themselves with someone who is popularly identified with the struggle of Black people have broken with some racism. And as racially polarized as this society is, many honest people, Black and white, have a real and

deep yearning for unity and see Jackson as a vehicle for achieving it. But this too, it must be honestly said, is part of the Jackson bamboozle. The real question is how can the proletariat win broad forces to its side — not deliver them over to imperialism — and unite on the basis of combating all the evils of this system, and the system itself."

We don't want "common ground," we want liberated ground! For that you need a *particular* kind of unity.

Bob Avakian, Chairman of the RCP, USA, has pointed out the basis for such a revolutionary political alignment: "Those who tell Black people and other oppressed peoples in the U.S. that they can win equality and emancipation within this system are telling them a lie that is contradicted by hundreds of years of history and by present-day reality. The subjugation of whole peoples is an integral part of the development of capitalism and imperialism; it is a part of the very foundation and the entire edifice of U.S. society. To abolish this requires that U.S. imperialism be overthrown and this whole oppressive society radically transformed — nothing less. And this provides a powerful basis of unity between the struggle against such national subjugation and the movement of the class-conscious proletariat, of all nationalities, to overturn and uproot the imperialist system and the very basis for all oppression and exploitation not only in the U.S. but throughout the world. It is this unity which is the most crucial element in building the revolutionary movement in the U.S. It is the solid core of the broader united front that is the strategic orientation and the strategic weapon for carrying out socialist revolution in the U.S. as part of the world proletarian revolution." □



Nuclear Navy Plowshares Sentenced

July 26, Norfolk, Virginia. Sentencing of the Nuclear Navy Plowshares for their Easter Sunday protest aboard the USS *Iowa* battleship concluded with the judge calling Phil Berrigan a "career criminal" and protesters were ejected from the courtroom as the judge gave Berrigan a maximum six-months misdemeanor sentence. Phil Berrigan, Greg Boertje, Andrew Lawrence, and Sister Margaret McKenna were convicted on May 19 of pouring blood on and damaging Tomahawk cruise missile launchers on the *Iowa* which had just returned from duty in the Persian Gulf. All four had been in jail since the April 3 action, refusing any release which did not include Greg Boertje, who was also being held for going underground after being convicted for an earlier Epiphany Plowshares action.

Sentencing had been rescheduled for four separate days in an effort to counter support and prevent any repeat of the scene at the May 19 trial in which the crowded courtroom of supporters erupted into chants of "The state is guilty" as the judge tried to pronounce the verdict. But this tactic backfired as local activists in the heavily militarized Norfolk area were able to build more support and press coverage over the two-week period. One organizer told the *RW* that by the time of the last sentencing there were over sixty supporters in the courtroom, mostly local people, and that at least 75 percent of the people walking and driving by the 24-hour protest vigil responded positively.

Sister McKenna, who suffered serious health problems in jail, was the first to be sentenced on July 13. She was released and given two years of supervised probation. In her presence statement to the court McKenna noted that she was held without bond as a possible "threat to the community." She then commented on what the jails would look like "if all those engaged in the nuclear threat to the world community were held in these jails without bail. . . . Most of society's institutions would simply be turned into prisons and jails. . . . Most of Congress would be inmates. . . . The Pentagon would simply intensify security and be renamed Pentagon Prison. . . . All our presidential candidates would be there, their nominations withdrawn for endorsing in their campaigns the community-threatening and internationally illegal first-strike policy. . . . There would be lawyers and judges. . . lots of religious leaders and university profs who though they knew better were complicit by their silence. . . . All those good folk who let themselves get caught in the web of earning what they told themselves was an honest dollar, working for the nuclear death culture."

The prosecutor charged that McKenna held her duties as a citizen of this country in contempt. But as McKenna later said, she considers herself "an international citizen with responsibility to people all over the world."

On Saturday, July 16, local supporters in Norfolk held a protest at the navy base

getting a very good response from many sailors and others on the base. Andrew Lawrence was sentenced to four months on July 21, and as the proceeding came to a close a heavy odor of skunk pervaded the courtroom — meant to represent the "odor of justice" emitted from the proceedings. On July 22 Greg Boertje was sentenced to six months. The court characterized Boertje as a "self-styled revolutionary with some romantic ideas" and also a "common vandal" engaged in "juvenile vandalism." This apparently referred to Greg's "record" of three Plowshares actions and numerous other protests since he resigned his Air Force commission.

When Phil Berrigan was sentenced the judge said that instead of becoming a "career criminal" Berrigan should have "worked within the system," that a man of his "intelligence and commitment could have run for office, but now couldn't even vote." Plowshares supporters began to read in unison a statement taking responsibility for spraying the skunk oil in court at the earlier sentencing, explaining that it was a "reaction to the odor of injustice that we have felt here." They were thrown out of court but finished reading the statement outside the door.

Shortly after sentencing Boertje was moved to Philadelphia, and on July 27 he was sentenced to two years plus 100 days for his part in the 1987 Epiphany Plowshares action at Willow Grove Naval Base near Philadelphia. Another

year, suspended, and five-years probation was added, plus Boertje will also be charged with "jumping bail" for when he went underground in November 1987 and sent a letter to court saying he would surface again in another action.

Boertje's presentencing statement said in part, "Building nuclear weapons is a crime and interventionary war is a crime, and when one's government commits such crimes it is the duty of people to intervene and try to stop those crimes." As he was taken out in handcuffs by the marshals, supporters in the courtroom gave him a standing ovation.

Present in the crowd was Lynn Romano, Boertje's codefendant through all four of the Epiphany trials. Romano had just been released after ten months in prison, her conviction having been reversed on appeal. Another trial on the Epiphany Plowshares action will take place this fall.

Andrew Lawrence was also transferred to the Philadelphia jail to face charges of hanging a banner from the courthouse roof during one of the Epiphany trials. Meanwhile, Plowshares supporters in Norfolk revealed that the U.S. Marshals were refusing to say where Phil Berrigan was being held.

The state continues to try and silence the Plowshares. But actions like the Nuclear Navy Plowshares' sharp targeting of the U.S. Navy's role in the Gulf and its first-strike purpose continue to give serious problems to the U.S. war plans and inspire more resistance. □

NBAU at the DNC in Atlanta: Truth and Consequences



To the *RW*:

It was Sunday, the day before the Convention started, and a specter was haunting the rulers in Atlanta. . . . Having successfully driven the Klan and skinheads off the streets, a chant went up: "It's only Sunday; you ain't seen nothing yet!" Over 1,000 people had taken over the streets, and NBAU with its politics was in the mix. The *Atlanta Constitution* got one thing right when it described No Business As Usual at the end of the week as "youthful, angry, energetic."

Tuesday was our day: No Business As Usual at the DNC. At 9 a.m. we converged at the Carter Presidential Center, which sits on a hill overlooking downtown Atlanta. Inside, Carter was presiding over an elite Democratic Party foreign policy session. (Part of a series of sessions at the Carter Center, closed to the public, it was never meant to be the focus of scrutiny, let alone resistance. Featured were Sam Nunn, Georgia Senator and Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee; Harold Brown, Carter's Secretary of Defense; Clifford Alexander, Carter's Secretary of the Army; and Dukakis's foreign policy advisers, Madeline Albright and Joseph Nye. Their purpose, as explained by Nye and others, was to lay to rest the lingering "neo-isolationist," McGovernite image of the Democrats and declare a "more muscular" stance, reclaiming the legacy of JFK who "didn't blink" in the Cuban Missile Crisis.) This was exactly what NBAU came to Atlanta for: here the Democrats were boldly proclaiming that they were the party of war for the U.S. This was the Carter that signed the decapitating first-strike PD-59 into effect, as well as starting the Rapid Deployment Force and taking the world to the brink with a nuclear threat against the Soviets over Iran in 1980. . . . The driveway was blocked.

Cops gathered menacingly and threatened a mass arrest. Traffic was not pouring in, and so a tactical retreat was called. Three people were arrested circling the intersection leading in. When the buses carrying the bigshots arrived, the group set off in pursuit, banners flying, cops following at high speed. Too late, the war criminals got in, but not without being challenged right in their lair!

At 3 p.m., we stepped onto the Andrew Young Free Speech Cage, the protest ghetto in a parking lot across the street from the Omni. NBAU youth presided over a wild rally which featured satirical skits, speeches, and a simulated nuclear war complete with die-in. Overlooking the events from one side of the stage was the Two-Headed War Monster. Over 8-foot-high on wheels, it was covered with missiles and had a swiveling head: one side a donkey, the other an elephant. A Democrat and a Republican debated war strategy. MX vs. Midgetman. Stealth vs. B-1B. Star Wars now vs. Star Wars a little later. And so on. In the end they declared themselves blood brothers. Dr. Terry Boswell of Emory University blasted Sam Nunn and exposed Star Wars as central to U.S. first-strike planning. A young woman from Knoxville called people to a Hiroshima Day blockade of the Oak Ridge nuclear weapons plant. Rich Hutchinson of the NBAU National Response Committee exposed Dukakis/Bentsen and the Democrats' war program, the history of the Democrats leading the U.S. to war, Carter's role in launching U.S. aggression in the Persian Gulf, and challenged people to deal with reality and break with any remaining illusions including those fostered by Jackson. The rally ended with a call to the crowd to join us for No Business As Usual in the War Zone: this action would be taking place as Jackson addressed the

Convention.

Only the convergence point in downtown Woodruff Park was announced. The group poured into the MARTA station. Chants rocked the balconies as a crowd gathered. Everyone piled into a train car, singing and dying-in the whole way. Then we were on the streets: IBM! Computers for C-cubed-I and an array of other nuclear first-strike weapons components. AT&T! Star Wars research and management of the Sandia Nuclear Weapons Lab. The fast-moving group attracted a swarm of cops after trooping through the AT&T lobby. (NBAU lobbying!) FEMA! The chant went up: "FEMA Means Martial Law!" Military recruiting: eager Rambos and unwilling cannonfodder shipped off to the Persian Gulf, Central America or elsewhere to threaten, to invade, to trigger World War III. . . . Suddenly the cops attacked. Three were arrested as the group was temporarily dispersed in three directions. Regrouping, moving on into the War Zone, past the DOE to Georgia Tech University, Star Wars and high-tech military research center, where another arrest was made. Then we left the zone, and talked for almost an hour to the people in the Techwood Homes project, in the shadow of the Omni (or Nada). "We're the future, not the bomb!" As we left, there was a group of youth, two teenagers and a dozen kids, chanting and walking out with us.

Wednesday, Andrew Young, Mayor of Atlanta, hosted a reception for Tom Hayden, one-time radical antiwar activist and "born-again middle American." NBAU turned up uninvited as "the ghost of Tom Hayden past." Tom's ghost stood and began quoting himself from 20 years ago, when he was hustled out by guards to cries off "let him speak!" Later on, the NBAU crew and the War Monster hit the streets behind the Free Speech Cage, agitating about U.S. nuclear first-strike strategy

and raising bail for those arrested Tuesday. The streets were filled with people, and a sizable crowd gathered to hear this by now notorious group's rap. The Truth was getting out; and the Consequences were not far behind. The cops suddenly attacked viciously, beating three people and arresting them, along with the War Monster, and forcing NBAU to move a block further away from the main Omni entrance.

The Convention and the protests were almost over. Thursday night the Anointed One, contender for Commander-in-Chief, would give his acceptance speech. NBAU's political exposure had hit its mark in a big way as evidenced by the level of police attacks and press distortion. It was time for a No Press Conference As Usual. Without a raggedy edge, the NBAU crew converged at a pre-arranged time from all directions at exactly the corner where the attack had gone down the day before. Banners unfurled, chants rang out, and a typed statement was read aloud on the sound system, denouncing the Democrats' war ticket, proclaiming the week's victories, exposing the role of the press, and calling for further resistance on through the elections and beyond. We took questions in a dignified manner, then we faded, before the cops could get their shit together.

The *Constitution* said on Friday that "NBAU members bedeviled police all week. . . ." and " . . . refused to confine their demonstrations to the city-approved protest area." This much was true. But what really concerned the rulers though was that NBAU not only refused to bow down to the "lesser-of-two-evils" view, but boldly exposed the Democrats' and the government's world war preparations and called for mass resistance to prevent World War III, no matter what it takes! A sore spot, to say the least.

An NBAU activist



Police and anti-KKK demonstrators at the State Capitol.

Report from the DNC Scenes from the Streets of Atlanta

This is an account from an RW correspondent who covered the sights and sounds outside the Democratic National Convention in Atlanta.

It got hotter and hotter driving south to Atlanta. The sun finally slid away and nightfall dropped a curtain of darkness. The night hid everything from sight except the taillights straight ahead. The Democrats were getting ready to hold their national convention in Atlanta. The car radio chattered with talk of the Democrats bringing change in America, talk about the New South, the achievements of the Civil Rights Movement and a Black presidential candidate. The real deal was just down the road in Atlanta.

Running the Boys from Stone Mountain Out of Town

In Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young prepared to welcome the Democratic National Convention, attention was focused on the anticipated arrival of the Jesse Jackson roadshow, and the Ku Klux Klan prepared to march in Atlanta with the full approval of the city. The New South.

Friday's issue of *USA Today* wrote: "The contrast is vivid: In the civil-rights era, [Andrew] Young demonstrated, marched and fought against the government. Now, as the mayor of Atlanta, he leads the city that in three days will host the Democratic National Convention..."

"Young and his generation have come of age, and so has Atlanta. For the first time, a national political convention comes to the city that launched the civil-rights movement and produced its top leadership. And it comes in a presidential season when a black man — the Rev. Jesse Jackson — mounted a historic challenge to the notion, for the presidency, only white males need apply..."

But looking over a daily newspaper put out especially for delegates to the DNC and the official press schedule of events, I noticed an official tour organized to take delegates to visit Stone Mountain — the historic gathering place of the Ku Klux Klan. It was not listed whether the visiting delegates had to bring their own sheets. Shortly before the opening of the convention, the city council of the town of Stone Mountain had voted to rename the Mountain after a well-known leading Klansman. After a public uproar, the city council backed down, but there was still an angry buzz in the city because of this incident.

Sunday, the day before the convention, a representative of the right-wing, white supremacist group, the Nationalist Movement, stood on the front steps of the Georgia state capital building. He

declared, "We're going to be marching with flags in our hands, songs on our lips, and love for America in our hearts. And all those folks who say are you hateful towards anybody else, no sir, we just love America. We love our country..."

A tape-recorded phone message of the KKK was more direct: "You have reached the hotline for the Invisible Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. Next Sunday, July 17, 1988 we will have a Defend South Africa march and rally in Atlanta, Georgia... We will have hundreds of policemen, state troopers, and GBI agents surrounding our parade to protect us from the savage half-ape niggers that have taken over Atlanta... We will have banners that praise God for AIDS, as we all know that AIDS is cleaning up our world by killing queers, niggers, and Jews... This event is a must..."

On the steps of the capital building a young woman reporter was interviewing the speaker from the Nationalist Movement. "You don't think America is the land of everyone?" "It may be now," he fired back, "but when we're finished it'll be America for the Americans."

Down in the street, the ranks of anti-Klan protesters began to swell as political activists of various trends assembled, including people from All People's Congress, anarchists, homosexual rights activists, No Business As Usual, and Jesse Jackson supporters. The T-shirts of the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade stood out in the crowd. Making the whole mix that much more volatile were some Black masses from the ghettos of Atlanta.

At the first sign of the protesters, cops came swarming out of the state capital building, ordering the protesters to a side street and giving the KKK an undisturbed platform. By now the protesters numbered between 1,500 and 2,000. Two dozen Black cops from the state prison's tactical riot squad came running at the protesters, bashing people with the shields. But instead of clearing the street, the cops found themselves surrounded. The cops were withdrawn, and protesters, especially the youth, surged down the street, some rushing the lawn of the state capital with the cops and the press in hot pursuit.

A Black youth jabbed his finger at the state capitol building. "They got a key to the state capitol. And they got a flag that fly on the state capitol everyday. That Georgia confederate flag, that is the Klan's flag... Politicians have always been racist towards Black people. I think the Democratic Convention is just a bunch of bullshit. You know Jesse Jackson is never going to be president when he got the qualifications to be anything he want to be." Then he tipped his forehead towards the protesters in the street. "When a real war get ready to

break out, they gon be in a panic because they don't know what to do 'cause these people are not going to war, these young men out here are not going to join the service. 'Cause what does war mean to them? Can't even come back and get no kind of help, no nothing. I would never fight for the United States. United States ain't never gave me nothing. The United States is a bunch of shit... Eventually this country gon fall. The United States is at the edge of the hill. The only way the United States will ever get straight, it's gon be a miracle..."

An official announcement was made

that the city had revoked the Klan's permit. Some people cheered. But the NBAU activists and the revolutionary youth chanted, "We don't believe you! We don't believe you!" And sure enough an assortment of Klansmen in Southern White Knight T-shirts, guys in camouflage fatigues giving a Heil Hitler salute, and skinheads were gathering downtown in the designated "Free Speech Zone" right across the street from the Omni convention center in downtown Atlanta.

The protesters headed for the Omni. In
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At NBAU demonstration on Tuesday, July 19.



U.S. Navy pilot over Persian Gulf

U.S. Hand in the Gulf War

the U.S. put political, economic, and military pressure on the Islamic Republic to force openings for Western influence and to encourage pro-U.S. forces within Iran. In this context, the Iraqi invasion of Iran in September 1980 was very valuable for the U.S. The invasion was backed (and very possibly directly instigated) by the U.S. in the hope of further pressuring Iran as well as increasing Western influence in Iraq, where the Soviets had a major presence. Because of the complex situation, the U.S. did not throw its full weight behind Iraq — to do so might have pushed Iran decisively into the embrace of the Soviets. The Soviets, for their part, needed to back their ally Iraq while being careful not to alienate Iran. So the U.S. and the Soviets, and their blocs, each played *both* sides of the war in order to push their own big-power interests.

The first period of the war, from the invasion to the summer of 1982, was marked by Iran's efforts to recover territory occupied by Iraq's initial push. Even as Western governments backed Iraq (40 percent of French arms sales were going to Iraq) and waged an economic boycott against Iran, the Iranian armed forces were getting weapons from international markets through channels in Europe, Argentina, or Israel which the U.S. and its allies knew about or were directly involved in. For example, the pre-1986 "Socialist" government of Mitterrand in

France made large amounts of arms deals with the Islamic Republic, and much of the arms flow from Israel led directly to the U.S. Pentagon.

The Western imperialists also showed approval of the Khomeini regime's bloody suppression against the mass movement, communist and revolutionary organizations, and individuals and groups in the bourgeois opposition. During a period of more than a month in the spring of 1981, the Iranian government executed more than 500 people per day. There was no condemnation of these atrocities from Western governments; on the contrary, a lessening of hostilities was even allowed to take place on the Iraq-Iran front so that the Khomeini regime could turn its attention to crushing internal opposition.

By the spring of 1982 the Islamic Republic managed to reoccupy most of the territory seized by the Iraqi army in the invasion. This began a new phase of stalemate, which the Western media called the "forgotten war." The U.S. saw this deadlock as a way to weaken both Iraq and Iran and make them more dependent on the West. Weapons continued to flow to both sides. Iraq signed big contracts with France and other Western countries for modern, sophisticated weaponry, including chemical bombs. Pro-West Arab countries poured

Continued on page 12

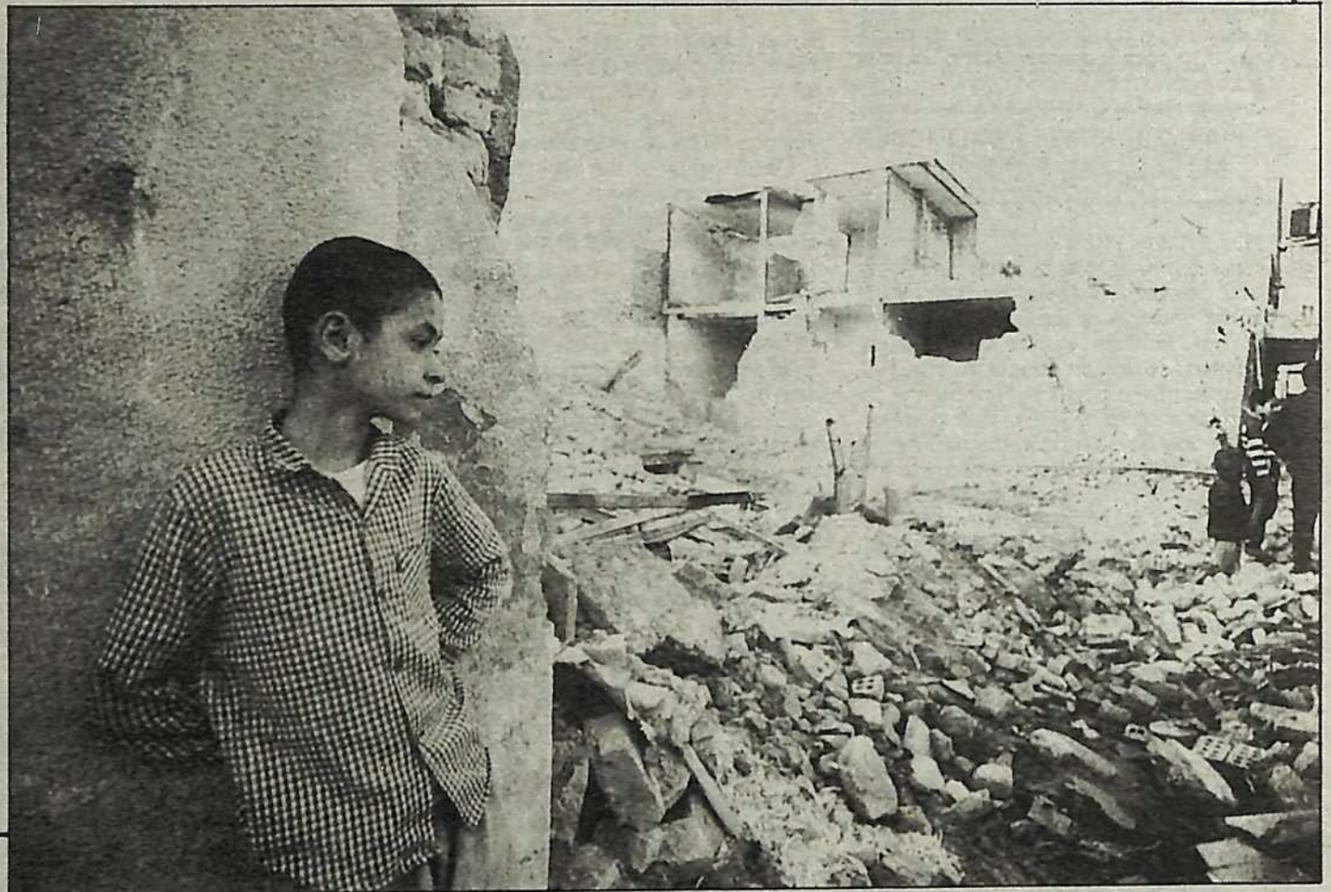
The United States government claims that it has been "neutral" in the Iran-Iraq war and that it had no interest in supporting either country. In one sense this is a blatant lie, since in the recent period the U.S. has openly sided with Iraq in militarily attacking Iran. But in another sense it is true that U.S. policy and actions in the Persian Gulf are not based in the final analysis on support for particular reactionary governments in Iraq or Iran. Instead, they are based on the global necessities and interests of the American empire. For the eight years of bloody conflict, the U.S. and its allies have sent arms to both Iran and Iraq and "helped" one side or the other depending on what gave them the most advantage. (And the same can be said for the Soviets and their allies as well.) A brief review of the moves by the U.S. rulers in the Gulf war shows that the blood of the more than a million people killed in the war is thick on their hands.

Months before the fall of the Shah in 1979, American strategists were developing plans to deal with the loss of this very important pro-U.S. regime in a highly strategic region. These involved containing and suppressing the revolution in Iran while trying to pull the Khomeini regime back firmly into the Western "sphere of influence"; blocking Soviet advances in the region; strengthening the pro-West client regimes in the Middle East such as Turkey, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf states; and building up American military presence in the Gulf.

In 1980 President Carter declared: "Any attempt by outside forces to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on vital interests of

the United States of America and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force." Everybody understood that "outside forces" meant America's Soviet rivals and that "any means necessary" included nuclear weapons.

After Khomeini came to power in Iran,



Wreckage in the Iranian town of Dezful after Iraqi bombing.

"We are part of the people who lost their lives"

On July 3 the United States gave permission to Captain Will Rogers of the U.S. cruiser *Vincennes* and killed 290 innocent people. President Reagan insists on calling it a "mistake." How many "mistakes" will he make before he's killed the world of innocents? With all the high-tech power, radars, receivers and computers, how and why did this happen? This government has taken us and other countries by the balls and pulls any time they feel like making a "mistake."

America says it's okay to kill 290 in-

nocent people. Their lives and the lives of the oppressed proletarians in this country and around the world have no meaning to the imperialist system. They want us to think that we are a part of this country and that when they do these things they're doing it for us. We are not a part of a system which openly murders innocent people and have it justified by saying the captain had an obligation to protect America. We are part of the people who lost their lives. We are part of the oppressed around the world.

Worldwide conflict has begun to arise from the government's "right to interfere." Reagan is a monster, as is the other so-called Top Officials. Whenever a "Top Official" in this country decides that what they've done is justified, *then*, *then* this country is headed for destruction. There is something to be done to stop such blatant and open murder, humiliation, intimidation and degradation. We must prepare the way for revolution against the predators of this nation. We must band together to fight for the freedom of every person and

thing that's under "Top Officials" rule. When we let "a mistake" take over and there's nothing done about it, then we know the "top officials" will always rule. The only "mistake" we, as revolutionaries, will make is making the mistake of not breaking the "top officials" leadership and power. We must have revolution in order to reach the solution to the problem of ending all the oppression and murder.

A Fighter for Freedom,
Black proletarian woman from Detroit

From the Statement of the Union of Iranian Communists (Sarbedaran) on the Shooting of Iran Air #655

Reprinted below is an excerpt from a statement by the Union of Iranian Communists (Sarbedaran) on the shootdown of the Iran Air jetliner. The statement, dated July 1988, came out before the Iranian government announced that it was accepting the UN cease-fire plan, but the analysis is also very relevant to the latest developments in the Persian Gulf.

The UIC(S) statement characterizes the shootdown as "a calculated and deliberate move to commit mass murder" on the part of U.S. imperialism. It points out that the massacre was "a particularly revealing monstrosity" because it laid bare "the extremely explosive nature of the situation in the Middle East and the Gulf where the imperialist rivalry and the position grabbing by the two war-bound military coalitions of the Western and Eastern imperialists contending for world hegemony have brought the region to the threshold of suddenly igniting into all-out warfare between the rival imperialist gangsters." The statement notes that the shootdown also was part of the "bludgeon-and-bribe" policy of the U.S. against Iran which involves "support of the Iraqi war effort and the diplomatic castigations against Iran" on one hand and "secret negotiations and deals" on the other. The excerpt goes into the intensified maneuvers by the big powers and reactionaries in the Gulf in the period leading up to the shootdown and in the immediate aftermath:

The quickly escalating tension and the possibility of a strategic shift in favour or to the detriment of the US-led war bloc could only drive the US and its partners to respond more aggressively taking higher risks and further raising the stakes overall. Within this dynamic, taking advantage of the extremely heavy toll the Iran-Iraq war has been exacting on the Islamic Republic of Iran, the US imperialists, with much discussion and debate in their ranks and notwithstanding the fallout of the Irangate scandal, decided to tighten the screws on the mullahs. On April 18, the US launched a major attack on Iranian oil platforms, supposedly for a limited punitive retaliation for the damage suffered by the US frigate USS *Samuel B. Roberts* which was said to be struck by a mine laid by Iran. The US attack of April 18 was in complete synchrony with the Iraqi army's offensive and capture of the strategic Fao peninsula as part of pushing back the Iranian troops all along the border to the other side. The US and the western imperialists who clamoured so rabidly against the usage of chemical weapons by the Soviet puppet state of Vietnam in Kampuchea were conspicuously quiet when poison gas produced from the chemical supplied by the western imperialists was used to murder thousands of people in Kurdistan.

As if to openly approve it, the US imperialists ordered its prize bull, IMF-trimmed Turkish prime minister Turgut Ozal to make a timely visit to Bagdad, in order to show the flag of the Turkish army, which as the southern wing of the NATO command, has the second biggest army in NATO after the US, in support of the coordinated US efforts in the region. It was not "accidental" but quite "understandable" that the western press during this period chose to give a lot of coverage to the mercenary services of phony "national liberation army" of the pro-imperialist Mujahadeen which completely relies on the Iraqi regime and functions as part of the Iraqi army in its war against Iran.

In addition to all this, the US sent in new warships into the Gulf, the Pentagon announced a new set of "rules of engagement" for its naval forces, and the cooperation between the US and the European naval forces was cranked up to a finer pitch with France being praised for its previous conscientiousness on this issue. With all this precautions, the US navy adopted a more aggressive military profile, attacking and destroying almost half of the Iranian naval capacity mainly composed of small boats. The "new rules of engagement" was there for the US to declare any suitable opportunity or friction as "sufficiently justified threat" to its mission — as we all know from the statement of Reagan — "to protect peace in the Gulf," what else!!!

The handwriting was on the wall; the moment of truth has arrived for the reactionary mullah regime to make up its mind to come to terms with the US. The bribe was still there, but the clock was ticking more with the "bludgeon" aspect, and the Khomeini regime was going to continue to get its face bloodied till it makes a move satisfactory enough for the US.

The imperialists have been closely monitoring the infighting that has been going on within the ranks of comprador clerics and have not been oblivious to the growing signs from at least a significant section of the mullahs, the so-called "pragmatist moderates" gathered around the leadership of the Parliament Speaker Rafsanjani signaling willingness to find prudent ways towards a political settlement to the Iran-Iraq war and reaching some (comprador, no doubt) sort of an agreement with the US. The US policy makers cannot but be aware of the fact that the political, economical and social crimes accentuated by the war and the regime's growing difficulty to find support and recruits for its war effort was being utilised by this faction of the mullahs against those who continued to strike a more "militant" posture in order to further their equally reactionary interests. The recent election for the Parliament has not settled the power struggle in favour of the so-called "moderates" but Rafsanjani becoming the supreme commander of the armed forces had been able to wield more authority and combined the regular army troops and the so-called "revolutionary guards" under his command. He had even managed to elicit self-criticism on TV from the commander of the so-called Revolutionary Guards in relation to the series of defeats sustained at the front by the Iranian army. Again not unrelated to the efforts of the Rafsanjani clique, the diplomatic relations with France were reestablished during the time of French elections and new rapprochements towards Canada and Britain were in the making along the same lines. Even the US Secretary of State, Shultz was quoted saying that Iran was hinting at willingness to open a dialogue with Washington. But all that had to be tested to see whether the mullahs — particularly after the Irangate scandal — were actually capable and willing to deliver. The US was not willing to have its strategic concerns belittled because of the in-fight among the mullahs.

That much, to say the least, was among the calculations of the US imperialists when they had the flight 655 shot down. Two hundred ninety people were massacred with a cold-blooded gangster logic to also make the terms clearer to a procrastinating client.

An outspoken and expert member of the American imperialist bourgeoisie, Henry Kissinger, known for its gangster-like candor, further clarified the message of his class: "The United States has achieved its basic objectives in the Gulf. The choice is now Iran's. Is it prepared to face the reality and act on the basis of national interest? Or will it continue to pursue essentially revolutionary aims? If it chooses the former, it should find a fair and open-minded partner in the United States. If Tehran chooses the latter, the United States has no option but to stay the course and defend its vital interests and those of its friends."

Leaving aside the four words — "essentially revolutionary" and "national interest" — inserted here solely for demagogic purposes, this veteran butcher, with the air of a self-confident bully, spells out the policy of his class to the Khomeini regime, if the latter was still interested in being eligible to the full benefits of a comprador partnership with the US.

The reaction of the counter-revolutionary mullahs to the massacre was so restrained and mild that even the imperialist media mouthpieces felt obliged to congratulate the ruling clerics for their "rare sobriety" and remarked that "who would have expected so mild a response to the killing of 290 civilians?" Rafsanjani who only hours before the bloody massacre was making a speech about a "new foreign policy" and declaring that "one of the wrong things we did in the revolutionary atmosphere was constantly to make enemies. We pushed those who could be neutral into hostility and did not do anything to attract those who could become friends." It is clear to what kind of new friendship, the supreme commander of Iran, is referring. And after the US delivered, what the imperialist press termed "the tough test," by floating 290 dead bodies in the Gulf, Rafsanjani and his criminal ilk was signaling their willingness to pass the test, stating that "wise people understand why we do not take revenge." Isn't it also clear that "the wise people" he was referring to are none other than those imperialist butchers like Kissinger and his class. As for the Ayatollah himself, he too came through the test in flying colors: quickly reprimanding his designated successor Montazeri for his call for revenge Khomeini chose to go on record for teaching his successor a bit of his much misunderstood comprador worldly wisdom, by sharply pointing out that Montazeri "should spend his time in building a world of virtue by supporting," guess who, Rafsanjani. All this is a clear testimony to the fact that there was no accident in the skies over the Strait of Hormuz on Sunday morning of July 3, but a monstrous mass murder committed in order to negotiate a way to their new partnership. That alone suffices to condemn both parties to be swept from the face of the world by the genuine revolutionary violence by the proletarian masses and the oppressed in Iran and around the world.

And prospects for such a revolutionary solution to the crimes of the imperialists and their collaborating puppets and to the most criminal barbarism, the third imperialist world war, are also developing due to the very own workings of the imperialist system they belong.

In Iran, the smoldering hatred of the broad masses of the oppressed against this murdering mullah regime of the Islamic Republic has already started to turn into flames of open protests and resistance. The mullahs themselves know quite well that while the Iraqi rockets were pounding the Iranian cities, the indignant masses were rallying around the slogan of "Down With the War! Down With the Khomeini!" It was Rafsanjani himself who was worried enough to get behind a microphone in order to threaten the women: "We know you are taking advantage of our government's difficulties and defy the Islamic laws." The barricades the mullahs have erected in the cities are not the sign of the ruling classes' confidence of its future. The weakness of the regime and the cracks within its ruling class are not sensed only by the oppressed who yearn for the days 1979 to complete the job half done as soon as they get the first opportunity, but it is also recognized by the imperialists who are concerned about internal stability of their prospective comprador partners, even if the partnership was cemented. The millions of poor and landless peasants constitute a formidable potential army for strangling the strongholds of the ruling mullahs who are already worried about how to stave off the revolutionary wrath of the Iranian countryside which was dragged into ruin by the Islamic Republic. The mullahs' demagogic promises of land reform only reflect their fear, not their benevolent intentions.

The imperialists and the US imperialists might have their designs on Iran but so does the revolutionary proletarians of Iran. The Union of Iranian Communists (Sarbedaran) is actively working to unite all the revolutionary proletarian fighters at the head of the oppressed masses in waging People's War on the path charted by Mao Tsetung. It looks like the revolutionary warfare will not reach to the throat of Khomeini before the nature finishes his miserable existence, however the chances are good that Rafsanjani and his ilk will either face the revolutionary justice or follow the footsteps of the Shah on board of the USS *Vincennes*. □

Drug Lords, War Lords and the U.S. Military

Part One: The Secret War in Laos

Now that the U.S. military is being called upon to throw its considerable expertise into the "war on drugs," it is especially appropriate to examine the actual record of these armed forces vis-à-vis international drug trafficking. Since May, Congress has been readying legislation ordering the Defense Department to deploy troops sufficient to "substantially halt" drug smuggling across the southern border and coastal waters of the United States (see "GI Joe Joins the Drug Squad," RW No. 458). But the real history of the various military agencies shows that the U.S., far from pursuing any sort of "war on drugs," has not only casually tolerated the production and export of drugs by its overseas political allies but has actually utilized the drug trade to finance its own wars and proxy wars for the last several decades. Based on several important books and a recent PBS-TV "Frontline" documentary, this two-part series in the RW looks at this shameful story of how the U.S. government has used the drug traffic for their own international interests.

This history has not skipped lightly out of the pages of any textbook or government fact sheet. It has had to be dragged into the light of day by the persistent efforts of a small corps of journalists and lawyers and, in some cases, by politicians sniffing along a crack opened up by political disputes in U.S. government circles.

When the facts from various quarters are pieced together, they form a picture which indicates that the U.S. has utilized international drug traffic in pursuit of its global interests in a massive and continuous way since World War 2. The activities span both hemispheres, from America's "backyard" in Central America to Southeast Asia on the other side of the Pacific. All of the key agencies are implicated: the various branches of the armed forces, CIA, FBI, National Security Council, State Department, Agency for International Development (AID), even the Drug Enforcement Administration. Marijuana, opium, heroin, and cocaine have all been transported along land, sea, and air routes by American vehicles, American boats, and American aircraft. Cargo holds have returned filled with arms and other military supplies, or the cash to purchase them.

This two-part series of articles will focus on two theaters of nonconventional war: the U.S. secret war in the Golden Triangle region of Laos, Burma, and Thailand between 1950 and 1973, and the Contra war against Nicaragua from 1979 to the present. This is a type of war that is uniquely suited to financing by drug traffic. The ability of U.S. officials to bankroll covert warfare is generally less than it would be in a full-fledge conventional war, when the Congress appropriates huge military expenditures openly before the public. In a secret war, there is the freedom and necessity for the armed forces to use illicit wealth as a politico-military tool. The loyalty of those who may be sympathetic to the

U.S. effort can be ensured by facilitating their role in lucrative drug production. They can be offered the use of unmarked transport aircraft and other advanced technology. A portion of the profits from these ventures can then be siphoned off into the war effort itself. The trade in drugs, on the one hand, and the procurement of reactionary arms and armies, on the other hand, profit from one another in a symbiotic relationship.

In 1972 Alfred McCoy's book *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia* exposed that the CIA had already begun to exploit the lucrative Southeast Asian opium trade in the 1950s. According to McCoy, the trade was centered in the Golden Triangle, the mountainous tri-border region where northern Laos, northern Thailand, and northeastern Burma adjoin one another. After the People's Republic of China was proclaimed by Mao Tsetung in 1949, the CIA linked up with reactionary Kuomintang (KMT) forces that had fled to the Shan states of northern Burma and re-armed them to carry out sabotage and snooping against revolutionary China. The KMT armed forces helped support themselves by gaining control of a huge portion of the opium trade out of Burma. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, they sent Burmese-grown opium on long caravans of pack horses and mules across the mountainous ridges of northern Laos for sale to Laotian and South Vietnamese merchants. With the proceeds they bought food, arms, and other supplies. In the same way, the CIA used a Shan secessionist movement, led by anticommunist monarchists, that began in northern Burma in 1958.

Since the Laotian border with China was controlled during this time by the leftist Pathet Lao, both the KMT and Shan patrols that were trained and directed by the CIA in Laos were forced to enter China by a roundabout route via Burma. Once inside China, the patrols transmitted data to receivers in Laos that relayed it to CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia. The CIA relied on the KMT and Shan troops not only to protect these far-flung patrols but to supply them as well. In fact, a Shan military commander who worked for the CIA told McCoy that the CIA paid the KMT and Shan opium caravans — lightly loaded after their sales in the east — to transport arms, ammunition, money, and radios, on their return back to Burma, to the Americans' forward-listening posts.

But these and other American efforts to "contain" the Chinese revolution failed. By 1959 the CIA became alarmed at reports of growing communist influence in South Vietnam. The agency's Special Operations Division began press-ganging local peasants of the Meo and other tribes living in northern Laos into paramilitary units to monitor and sabotage "Chinese infiltration"



through Laos into South Vietnam. This activity soon developed into a covert war fought by the CIA's secret army of paid mercenaries in Laos against the Pathet Lao and Vietnamese throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. It was an American war which, as we shall see, was financed largely by the trade in opium.

Drug Lords and Civil War in Laos

The whole of Laos was plunged into a three-way civil war in 1960 when a group of army officers overthrew the rightist government of Phoumi Nosavan, a colonel whom the CIA had hand-picked and installed a couple years earlier. Contenders in the prolonged civil war consisted of rightist forces backed by the CIA, neutralist forces who had overthrown Phoumi but were themselves soon overthrown by him and ultimately were defeated in 1966, and the leftist Pathet Lao, who steadily advanced from base areas in the north and eventually achieved nationwide victory in 1975.

Quickly after the civil war began in 1960, Phoumi recruited a young, little-known army officer of the Meo tribe named Vang Pao to seize northeastern Laos for the rightists. With support from Air America — a CIA-chartered air transport company in Southeast Asia — Vang Pao armed a force of peasants and took control of the area. He was promoted to the rank of general and remained the "warlord" of the northeast for more than a decade. There, McCoy's book details, General Vang Pao, with CIA support, soon controlled the traffic in opium.

In early 1962 President Kennedy, fearing for the moment a confrontation with the USSR in Laos, cut off official U.S. aid to Phoumi and his rightist forces, who continued nevertheless to enjoy CIA support. To finance his embattled Vientiane government during this cutoff of American dollars, Phoumi set up a semi-official Laotian Opium Administration to profit from the trade in Burmese opium. General Ouane Rattikone, military commander or "warlord" of northwestern Laos, was appointed its chairman. According to a CIA agent in Laos whom McCoy interviewed, a commander of the CIA's Secret Army put Ouane in touch with the opium traders of the CIA-led Shan army, and a tidy business relationship ensued. The opium would be paid by the



U.S. Marines in Thailand, 1961.

This is a kind of horror story: how the U.S. government used international drug traffic to finance its wars of counterinsurgency from the Golden Triangle of Southeast Asia to the borders of Nicaragua. The toll in human life has been great. There are many high-placed men who would like the people to think that this dirty activity by the U.S. government is going to stop and also that it is somehow in contradiction to the current "war on drugs." But this story shows that the "secret drug wars" and the "war on drugs" are just two sides of the same currency. The secret drug wars have been increasingly used to pursue American global interests in a covert fashion — under both Republican and Democratic administrations — with callous disregard for the masses of people whose lives are torn up by this drug traffic. Now under the cover of fighting against drug traffic the so-called "war on drugs" is being used by the government to put into place all sorts of counterinsurgency measures in the U.S. and around the world which are necessary for their global strategic interests and have absolutely nothing to do with stopping drug addiction. The only real question is: why should the people be cannon fodder in either of these wars?

Shans into northeastern Laos by caravan, traded to Ouane's people for arms, then loaded onto C-47 aircraft operated by French Corsican drug syndicates and dropped into the Gulf of Siam to be picked up by fishing boats and taken to ports in South Vietnam.

When the U.S. and USSR signed an agreement in late 1962 to withdraw all personnel from Laos, the CIA operatives simply moved into nearby Thailand, making daily border crossings to direct the covert war. The CIA claimed that its Air America drops of supplies and weapons to the northern villages were "humanitarian aid" and thus exempt from the agreement.

Drugs for Arms

Rival rightist generals became so jealous of Phoumi's CIA-assisted enrichment from the opium business that they overthrew him in 1964. Ouane was given control of the drug trade in the northeast. But Ouane refused to work with the Corsican airlines and forced them out of business. With Laotian aircraft tied up as never before fighting the Pathet Lao in the northeast and launching secret reprisal raids against North Vietnam, Ouane had a major transport crisis on his hands. Finally, in late 1966 he demanded two Air Force planes for opium transport and had the Laotian Air Force commander unseated

when he refused. Once air transport was assured, Ouane commissioned a Shan warlord that he knew from his old CIA connections to assemble a huge caravan of 300 mules bearing sixteen metric tons of raw opium worth half a million dollars wholesale. The caravan was attacked by jealous KMT units (which had relocated to northern Thailand in 1961), triggering the much-publicized 1967 Opium War. Ouane went so far as to send bomber squadrons which attacked both the Shan and KMT forces, killing almost 200. As a result of this showdown, Ouane himself seized personal control of a major share of the trade in Burmese opium.

One group of Laotian Air Force officers described to McCoy a typical transaction which they were part of in 1968. It illustrates the way in which CIA mercenary troops in the region made a practice of trading drugs for arms. According to their account, a C-47 loaded with crates of weapons (M-1s, M-16s, M-79 grenade launchers, and recoilless rifles) was flown from Vientiane to Ban Houei Sai on the Laos side of the Mekong River, which forms the border with Burma. There the cargo was transferred to an Air Force helicopter and flown to a group of Shan mercenaries camped on the Burma side of the river. Meanwhile, the C-47 was dispatched to pick up opium that the Shans had just sent down river by boat.

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Drug Lords

Continued from page 9

The opium was flown to Vientiane for processing. The middleman profits went directly into the purses of Ouane and the other military commanders fighting the American war in Laos.

In 1967 two different *Time-Life* correspondents reported that Ouane had even set up his own refinery in Ban Houei Sai for processing opium into the yet more profitable heroin.

Other shipments of Ouane's opium were flown to a heroin lab near Vientiane. McCoy learned from a U.S. Bureau of Narcotics agent, confirmed by many other sources, that heroin was then exported from the Vientiane lab to South Vietnam aboard the military planes controlled by South Vietnamese Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky. By July 1971 NBC's Saigon correspondent reported "from extremely reliable sources" that the U.S. puppets Vice President Ky and President Thieu were financing their election campaigns through the narcotics traffic.

Other shipments of heroin were sent from Vietnam to the United States in a truly horrible way. Jonathan Kwitny, an investigative reporter for the *Wall Street Journal*, was told last year by a former officer of the Criminal Investigation Division of the U.S. Army that his team had accidentally uncovered a massive heroin-exporting scheme involving South Vietnamese politicians and senior U.S. officers. In this scheme, bodies of dead American soldiers were cut open, gutted, and stuffed with heroin (up to 50 pounds per corpse) which was then unloaded after the bodies were flown to Norton AFB in Colton, California. When the team reported these findings to its superiors, the Army disbanded it and sent its members into combat duty. But the findings have since been documented extensively.¹

That the CIA also had a direct hand in this drug traffic, actually transporting some of the opium on its own flights, was made clear by ex-CIA employee Del Rosario. After presenting public testimony in San Francisco, he recounted his experiences to some French researchers:

I enlisted in the Marines as a volunteer in 1961, and remained with them until 1966. I then joined the staff of Continental Air Service, a charter company working for the CIA in Laos.

In 1971 I was an operations assistant with Continental Air Service. Since it was my job to deal with loading and flight plans, I knew the destinations and places of departure of all aircraft leaving or arriving in Laos.

The company's cargo aircraft used to carry a great deal of rice. When the consignment note contained the entry of "miscellaneous," I knew it stood for opium. As a rule the special operations telephone would ring and a voice say: "this is the customer," which was what we called the CIA agents who recruited and paid us. "Watch out for flights arriving from Ban Houei Sai," the voice continued, "we're sending a cargo and somebody'll be coming to look after it. No one is to touch it in the meantime, and nothing is to be unloaded." These consignments always took priority and were handled by special personnel. They were known as "classified cargo."

The largest delivery of this kind I ever saw arrived on board a DC3, and took up half the aircraft. It had come from Ban Houei Sai and was consigned to Vientiane. Sometimes the opium was unloaded at Vientiane and stored in the Air America sheds. At other times it was reloaded aboard other aircraft bound for Savannakhet and Pakse in Laos, the American bases at Udorn in Thailand or Danang in Vietnam, or else Bangkok.

When asked whether he was certain these shipments consisted of opium and not something else, Del Rosario replied,



Shan National Army opium caravan, northern Thailand, 1965.



CIA airline in Laos during the '60s.

Several CIA agents I mustn't name, who were directly concerned with the cargos, actually told me it was opium. The aircraft also carried gold to the maquis in the hills, probably to pay the Meos for their opium.

And when asked whether he thought these flights were actually run by the CIA rather than by a few rogue elephants, he replied,

It couldn't possibly be handled by a few pilots working on their own account. How could they carry and unload cargos of this kind without their superiors finding out? Half a DC3 isn't something you can just slip into your pocket. You can't use American military equipment in this way unless you have orders from your superiors, or at least their consent. Bill Marshall, ex-Green Beret from Detroit, testified that at an airport in Vietnam he had seen a military aircraft being loaded with opium in cases marked "Aero-engine spares."²

During this time, the air wing commander of the U.S.'s secret war in Laos was none other than Air Force Lt. Col. Richard Secord (who later directed airlifts of arms to the Contras in Central America). Secord reported to Gen. John K. Singlaub, a CIA veteran, head of the Special Operations Group, whose members were drawn from all services and entrusted with carrying out

America's unconventional warfare throughout Southeast Asia. Both men worked together in the Iran/Contra deals.

The Secret Village

The direct involvement of the CIA in airlifting drugs was even more apparent in northeastern Laos, where Gen. Vang Pao had been installed as warlord in 1960. In 1963 Anthony Poe of the CIA branch of Special Operations was sent to Laos as Vang Pao's chief advisor. Poe helped Vang Pao capture Meo mountain villages and press-gang peasants into a mercenary army, which reached the level of 30,000 Meo organized into teams called "mobile strike forces." McCoy learned from interviews with local CIA officers how the operation worked. Air America planes were used to fly the teams to attack villages, murder suspected Pathet Lao, and set the other residents to work building airstrips to land various supplies, including rice as bribery. As even the *New York Times* reported (April 25, 1963), these hundreds of strips were then used by the Corsican airlines to fly imported Burmese as well as locally harvested opium to Vientiane. The expanded air support completely revolutionized the opium trade of this region.

Diggers of Truth

Widespread drug financing of America's war of aggression in Southeast Asia first surfaced in an article in the progressive magazine *Ramparts* in May 1971. That story was greatly expanded with the publication of Alfred McCoy's book *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia* in August 1972. McCoy, currently a history professor in Sydney, Australia was then a doctoral student at Yale. He and two assistants interviewed many dozens of people, ranging from U.S. government officials and military officers to peasants working the mountain slopes of war-torn Laos. The CIA tried to block publication of McCoy's book but failed when it was unable to disprove the exposures contained in it.

In this decade some of the inner workings of the Contra war in Central America, including its drug-based financing, were revealed by information gleaned in preparation for a major lawsuit filed by the Christie Institute and its attorney, Daniel Sheehan, against twenty-nine

Contra leaders, drug smugglers, and ex-CIA officials. The case, which alleged CIA involvement in a guns-for-drugs network and in the attempted 1984 assassination of uncooperative Contra leader Edén Pastora Gómez, sought \$24 million in damages on behalf of journalists injured in the Pastora bombing. This past June 23 the suit was dismissed for "insufficient evidence" by a federal judge, days before it was due to finally come to trial following two years of preparation. The Christie Institute plans to appeal the dismissal.

Also notable has been the work of Leslie Cockburn and other CBS News reporters covering the Iran-Contra affair. Cockburn has done investigative work for ten years for the TV programs "60 Minutes" and "West 57th." One of her most fruitful research locations has been the posh Metropolitan Correctional Center in Miami, which is crawling with Cuban drug smugglers and others who were involved in the Contra aid network

and who, once indicted, are sometimes willing to spill their knowledge to a persistent reporter. Cockburn's findings culminated in a book *Out of Control*, published in late 1987, and a documentary *Guns, Drugs, and the CIA*, broadcast on PBS-TV's "Frontline" program in May 1988. Outside of scattered reports in the *Boston Globe* and in the *Miami Herald*, the revelations telecast on CBS have been virtually blacked out of the mainstream press.

Lawsuits are reportedly being prepared against both Daniel Sheehan and Leslie Cockburn by former Air Force Major General Richard Secord, one of those they have most deeply implicated in the covert Contra war, on grounds that they have "damaged his reputation."

A few facts from various congressional inquiries have also been made known to the public, including from Senator Church's committee on the CIA in 1975, the Tower Commission in 1987, and hearings last summer before the joint Iran-

Contra committee, the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee, and the Senate Subcommittee on Narcotics, Terrorism and International Operations.

It is also possible that further revelations will be made in two important upcoming trials. Former Air Force Weapons Specialist Secord and Hakim and former National Security officials North and Poindexter were all handed grand jury indictments on March 16 for conspiring to divert U.S.-Iran arms sale profits to the Contras. And Joseph Fernandez, former CIA station chief in Costa Rica, was indicted June 20 for participating in the Contra resupply operation by importing weapons to a secret air strip in Santa Elena, just south of the Nicaraguan border. As Cockburn's work has shown, these arms networks were financed in large part by drug profits. The two trials are scheduled to open in September. □

When Gen. Ouane forced the Corsicans out of business in 1964, Vang Pao had to look elsewhere for aircraft. His problem was magnified when, at the same time, the Pathet Lao liberated the Plain of Jars, a key area of northeastern Laos which had been used by the Corsicans earlier for takeoffs and landings. The Laotian Air Force had no light aircraft available of the sort that could use the short landing strips which Air America had built in the rugged areas ringing the Plain. Without air support for the opium harvests, Vang Pao's counterinsurgency work for the CIA would collapse from lack of funding, and the CIA would lose all support from their allies among the Meo peasants who, living outside the liberated areas, had become dependent on poppy cultivation in the course of the war.

Beginning in 1965, therefore, Air America used its helicopters and light airplanes to carry opium from the Meo villages to Vang Pao/CIA headquarters in the secret village of Long Tieng to the south. This was confirmed to McCoy by various Laotian peasants, village officials, and military generals with whom he spoke. In late 1967 the CIA and USAID even gave Vang Pao financial assistance as well as aircraft to form his own private airline even though, as one USAID official told McCoy, they knew the general would use it to transport drugs between Long Tieng and Vientiane. From opium merchants McCoy learned that in 1970 Vang Pao opened his own heroin lab at Long Tieng, where a Hong Kong chemist supervised the refinement of opium into high-grade heroin.

A Meo village official described to McCoy the CIA flights from Long Tieng to pick up the harvested opium:

Meo officers with three or four stripes [captain or major] came from Long Tieng to buy our opium. They came in American helicopters, perhaps two or three men at a time. The helicopter leaves them here for a few days and they walk to villages over there, then come back here and radioed Long Tieng to send another helicopter for them. They take the opium back to Long Tieng.

The official went on to explain that the helicopter pilots were always Americans.³

Ex-CIA worker Del Rosario described the CIA drug flights out of Long Tieng itself:

Every Thursday at dusk, a C130 without markings — only the U.S. Air Force uses C130s — used to land at Long Tieng. The engines were kept running while a special team unloaded wooden crates eight feet high by six feet wide and then put others on board. Only that particular team was allowed to see to the cargo which was stored in a building guarded day and night by Meo militia. Most likely this was the refinery. At all events that's what I was told by one of my friends who worked at Long Tieng. My duties brought me into direct contact with Udorn Base in Thailand and I learned by radio which machines were flying across Laos. The C130s from Long Tieng always used to make for that base.⁴

The Press-ganged Army

The exploitation of the Meo tribesmen to support this drug trade was appalling. McCoy and his assistants visited a typical village called Long Pot, some 30 miles northwest of Long Tieng. It was a village of 300 Meo people living in forty-seven wooden, dirt-floor houses. McCoy watched the backbreaking seasonal work of slashing and burning new fields, tilling and hoeing the soil, planting and thinning the poppies, and tapping the resin meticulously from each bulb. A family would be paid about \$500 for a year's good harvest of ten kilos of raw opium. That quantity would later be processed into heroin capsules that fetched \$225,000 on the streets of San Francisco.

As the Pathet Lao gained territory, the CIA tried to deny the local population to them by evacuating the Meo villages in forced marches and Air America airlifts. Peasants from the more distant villages like Long Pot were called on to join the mercenary army. By 1970 Vang Pao was demanding of Long Pot village some sixty men yearly — including 15-year-old boys — who were flown to the front by Air America. Most died in combat. When village leaders refused to send any more men, Vang Pao warned that he would cut off the rice drops from Air America on which the poppy farmers had become dependent. Finally, as the Pathet Lao were on the verge of liberating the area, Laotian and American aircraft napalmed and destroyed Long Pot and several neighboring villages on January 4, 1972.

The CIA's involvement in the sordid drug trade in order to finance its secret war in Laos was known and guarded by high circles of American officialdom. After widespread heroin addiction was reported among U.S. troops in Vietnam in 1970, the U.S. Bureau of Narcotics unwittingly sent a team of agents to Laos to investigate. One Bureau official interviewed by McCoy noted that their efforts were blocked not only by Laotian authorities but by the U.S. embassy in Laos, the U.S. State Department, and the CIA, who argued that it would damage the war effort.

Official American cognizance of who was behind the opium trade was also evident in the Sopsaisana Affair in 1971. Soon after Vang Pao's chief Laotian political advisor, Prince Sopsaisana, was appointed ambassador to France, the general tried to smuggle a massive amount of high-grade heroin to Europe in the prince's luggage.



1968—Meo refugees in northern Laos, forced from their land by fighting, at an Air America airstrip.

Sopsaisana was apprehended on April 25 by French customs officials at the Vientiane airport, who found sixty kilos, worth \$13.5 million street value. Although the prince was soon recalled as ambassador, McCoy was told by diplomatic officials in the capital that the U.S. embassy in Vientiane saw to it that the matter was laid to rest then and there before Vang Pao himself was implicated.

In mid-1971, with addiction among U.S. troops in Vietnam — to heroin produced in Vang Pao's own lab — reported at the alarming level of 10 to 15 percent, President Nixon declared a "war on the international heroin traffic." The U.S. embassy in Laos responded not by moving against the Laotian government officials and CIA drug smugglers but by pushing for new laws and a police crackdown directed at the opium addicts themselves. The main effect was to force the addicts to switch from smoking opium to injecting the far more dangerous heroin.

As U.S. forces were withdrawing from Southeast Asia in 1973, bundles of cash from the U.S.-supervised drug trade in Laos were secretly deposited for safekeeping in Nugan Hand Bank, attorney Daniel Sheehan learned. The Nugan Hand operations are also documented in Jonathan Kwitny's book, *The Crimes of Patriots: A True Tale of Dope, Dirty Money, and the CIA*. The "bank," actually a company specializing in covert financial services and counting many reported CIA operatives among its founders and officers, was headquartered in Sydney, Australia and soon had affiliates all over the world, including in Chiang Mai, the key heroin center of Thailand. The "bank" helped funnel money to South African-backed forces fighting in Angola in 1975, and also had ties to U.S.-backed dictators Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines and Shah Pahlavi in Iran.

When one surveys the legacy of the CIA's secret war in Laos, one begins with the deaths of tens of thousands of Indochinese peasants killed by the mercenary army, the evacuation or outright destruction of whole villages, and the devastation of the countryside. But after this, one should also reckon how the CIA's activity created in northern Laos and northern Burma a regional economy

almost totally dependent on opium production, riddled with exploitative drug warlords. Only in areas liberated by the Pathet Lao and the Burmese Communist Party — who drove out the warlords, abolished the oppressive opium taxes, and led the introduction of substitute crops — was the curse of the poppy lifted. But in areas where the CIA and its allies held sway, the unprecedented introduction of air transport dramatically facilitated both the opium trade and the reactionary war effort, in a symbiotic relationship. By the late 1960s, due to the intervention of U.S. military forces, the area had become the world's major source of opium and opium derivatives, producing 70 percent of the world's illicit supply. New Laotian refineries produced heroin that rivaled that of Hong Kong and Marseille in both quantity and quality. By the time U.S. troops withdrew in 1973, much of this heroin was being exported directly to the United States.

What the U.S. hatched in Laos was not only the bloody covert war that was eventually defeated by the Laotian people, but a network of shady operatives experienced in dealing with drugs, cash, and weapons — a network which the U.S. would soon have occasion to redeploy in the Middle East, Central America, and other hot spots around the globe. □

Next Week: Part 2. *The Contra Connection*

1. Jonathan Kwitny, *The Crimes of Patriots: A True Tale of Dope, Dirty Money, and the CIA*. New York: Norton and Company, 1987, p. 52.

2. Catherine Lamour and Michel R. Lamberti, *The Second Opium War*. London: Penguin Books, 1974, pp. 140-142. (Translated from the French by Peter and Betty Ross. Originally published as *Les Grands Manoeuvres de L'Opium*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1972.)

3. Alfred McCoy, with Cathleen B. Read and Leonard P. Adams II, *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia*. New York: Harper and Row, 1972, p. 289.

4. Lamour and Lamberti, p. 145.

Ollie North

Continued from page 2

casts, Downcasts, Slaves, Illegals, and Rebels, It's Right to Rebel!"; "They're Getting Ready to Unleash War, We're Getting Ready to Unleash a Storm!"; "Revolution Is Gaining Ground Around the World, Prepare the Ground Here!"

Dozens of people performed their own theater pieces. And a guerrilla theater destruction of the "My Lai/Managua Ville," in the words of one member of VVAW(AI), showed "the reality of the freedom and democracy that the U.S. brings to people around the world." A VVAW(AI) member addressed the crowd, saying, "We're not going to be honored for the crimes we carried out in Southeast Asia. We're not going to be used as a stepping stone to prepare the next generation of cannonfodder to go off and fight for this goddamned country, or Oliver North or anyone else that's got plans to throw uniforms on the young children of this country.... We're putting the political stamp of radical vets back on the scene!"

When a well-known anti-abortionist got up to brag that she'd had her picture taken with North, she was quickly surrounded by women chanting, "Abortion will be safe, legal and free!" and "Not the church, not the state, women will decide their fate!" Youth chanted, "Future death camp leaders, meet inside!" and "Baaa, baaa, sheep to the slaughter!" At one point the police brought in horses to force people back against the doors of the Coliseum, and the police arrested an "Ollie Drug Lord" for supposedly sprinkling corn starch on a cop's uniform.

The example of Nazi Germany was very much on people's minds. And a good number of people were seriously grappling with the question of revolution. One Black woman spoke to why she came to the demonstration: "I happen to be a Black female, and that is a big part in my kind of social status here. And I don't want my son to be born in a concentration camp. I don't want to see all my friends and relatives shot down in the streets for standing up for what they believe." A white youth who had come to the demonstration mostly off of outrage around the "Contra/Cocaine" connection also saw larger issues at stake and was really angry at the U.S. murder of 290 people aboard Iran Air No. 655. "They're heading for a big oppression. They've proven that they'll stop at nothing, they'll kill anybody they have to and as many people as they have to, and I think where it will stop is here, with people like us who come out and demonstrate."

The crowd of demonstrators was very diverse: anti-imperialist and revolutionary Vietnam vets and rowdy and unrepentant women; movement activists who were disgusted by the electoral path along with others sporting Jesse Jackson buttons but who felt something "more" had to be done beyond organizing people to vote; Latino and Native American proletarians from the street; punks in stud-



ded leather jackets; middle-class women in high heels just off; part-time maintenance employees and radical artists.

Earlier there had been attempts by the police and in the media to "distance" and isolate the most radical groups within the coalition, particularly the RCP and supporters of the Union of Iranian Communists (Sarbedaran). There was red-baiting and calls for pro-Ollie demonstrations, and at the very time the "No to North" demonstration was shaping up, there was a highly suspicious arrest in D.C. of a "Libyan hit squad" which reportedly had targeted North. The coalition responded to all this by going out even more broadly. People were outraged that opposition to what North represents was being portrayed as limited to the "extreme left." Statements were released to the press from groups and individuals as diverse as the Women's Coalition to Stop the Green River Murders, a Black Jesuit priest, a psychology professor from Seattle University, a well-known Christian activist, a major housing activist, and a lawyer, all of whom endorsed the demonstration and took a stand against the "distancing." Over 10,000 leaflets (and many posters) were distributed throughout the area, and as opposition to North became a major social question more groups and individuals stepped forward to help build the demonstration. The final list of endorsers totaled thirty-five groups, organizations, and individuals.

The coalition also used the media, especially utilizing the social effect of activists from VVAW(AI). The day before the demo there was a debate on the radio between Roy Barrington, National Spokesperson for VVAW(AI), and Glen

Dobbs from the Washington Policy Council, the reactionary group which had invited North to speak. Dobbs' puny attempts to red-bait the coalition were countered with Barrington's sharp exposure of North. And later at the demo some people said they had decided to come after hearing Barrington "wipe the floor with this fool!"

A coalition forum on "Resurgent America and the Role of Oliver North" was attended by eighty people. Speakers included VVAW(AI) (on North's reactionary history), Radical Women (on escalating attacks on women), supporters of the Union of Iranian Communists (Sarbedaran) (on imperialist initiatives in Iran), the Seattle Branch of the RCP (on Resurgent America and moves towards war), and the Committee in Defense of Immigrant Rights (on attacks on immigrants and the function of the Simpson-Rodino Bill). Discussion and debate centered over what North concentrated nationally and internationally, to what extent his reactionary social base was a creation of the media, and the nature of the political battle shaping up around building for the demonstration.

The Coalition is now planning a celebration and fundraising dance. And many people want to stay in contact, particularly in order to be able to rapidly respond to acts of aggression by the U.S. internationally. An emergency response mobilization network has already been set up. Also, some who participated in the coalition now want to dig more, theoretically and practically, into what must be done to wrest our future away from the headlong rush toward destruction. A showing of the video on the RCP, USA, *They Say They Will/Dicen*



que lo haran, at Revolution Books a few days after the demo drew an enthusiastic audience of some of the most rebellious from among the youth, artists, and other activists, who suggested that there be weekly film showings and discussions, starting with more on the Cultural Revolution. □

U.S. Hand in the Gulf War

Continued from page 6

billions of dollars into Iraq. Meanwhile, Iran continued to get missiles and spare parts for its U.S.-made jets through the international market, and trade with Japan, West Germany, Turkey, and other Western countries started up again. The Soviets, seeing Western advances in Iraq, reevaluated their policy of reducing arms sales to that country (in the hopes of wooing Iran) and granted a \$2 billion credit and new weapons shipments.

Beginning in the winter of 1985 there was intensification of fighting on the front. In a surprise offensive, Islamic Republic forces occupied Iraq's strategic Fao Peninsula. A top Iraqi official claimed in an 1986 interview with the *Washington Post*, "In this period, the United States has given us misleading information on the makeup and mobility of the Iranian forces, and this led to the successes of Iran." In early 1987 the Iranian forces started another major offensive on the southern front aimed at the major Iraqi city of Basra. There was speculation

in the Western media about the war ending with the fall of the Hussein regime in Iraq. But the Iranian offensive stalled and the balance of forces between Iran and Iraq remained basically unchanged.

This intensification on the front, however, led to an even more explosive situation as the major powers, mainly in the background up to this point, began to step directly into the Gulf scene. The U.S. Sixth Fleet was positioned in the waters just outside the Persian Gulf and there was other American naval buildup in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. Soviet submarines appeared in the waters of the Arabian Sea, and the *Kiev* aircraft carrier began a patrol of the Mediterranean. Articles in the British imperialist magazine the *Economist* urged Iraq to attack tankers carrying Iranian oil. The U.S. waged an international campaign to tighten an arms embargo against Iran (even as the Reagan administration's missile shipments to Teheran were being exposed).

From the spring of 1987 the U.S. made

it clear that a "stalemate" was no longer on the agenda and put increasing heat on Iran, and events rapidly accelerated. The reactionary regime in Kuwait appealed to big powers to "protect free navigation" in the Gulf. The Soviets seized the opportunity to offer their services. The opportunity for the U.S. came when the Navy frigate *Stark* was hit by Iraqi missiles on May 17. The Reagan administration declared its decision to "reflag" and escort Kuwaiti ships, saying it was necessary to protect Kuwait in the face of "the danger of Iranian expansionism and aggression." (This was after the American ship was hit by Iraqi missiles!)

The U.S. reflagging operation was not meant to stop the tanker wars. Experts point out that attacks against tankers (mainly by Iraq) have increased in the recent period. But small-scale hostilities and suspicious attacks and minings were used by the U.S. to conduct a huge buildup of naval forces in the Gulf — the biggest such buildup in any area since World War 2 — as well as to forge more open military ties with pro-West countries

in the region.

In March 1988 the Iraqi military used chemical weapons — supplied by the West or made with Western technology — against Halabja in the Kurdish area of northern Iraq which had been taken over by Iranian forces. Thousands of Kurdish people and Iranian soldiers were poisoned to death by the chemical bombs. The next month U.S. warships destroyed two Iranian oil platforms and sank or damaged six Iranian naval vessels, supposedly in retaliation for a "mine attack" on a Navy ship. At the same time, Iraqi forces waged an offensive to retake Fao Peninsula.

On July 3 the USS *Vincennes* blew Iran Air Flight 655 out of the sky, murdering 290 people. This atrocity was the direct result of moves by the U.S. rulers to "have their way" in the Gulf and push forward the interests of their empire. And consistent with their cold-blooded calculations all through the Iran-Iraq war, the U.S. imperialists used this crime to make more threats against the Iranian regime and demand that they come crawling on hands and knees. □

Tear Down the NY Anti-Postering Ordinance!

Dear RW:

The accompanying letter is now being circulated in the New York area. There are plans for its publication in a number of newspapers and magazines.

The stakes in this battle are high and its outcome of importance to the revolutionary proletariat. The full intent and impact of this "sanitation" ordinance can only be understood as part of the sweeping repressive apparatus now being constructed (including the construction of concentration camps uncovered in relation to the new immigration law by the Christie Institute, Ollie North's plan for martial law, FEMA, and more). The repression of revolutionaries and the cutting off of contact between revolutionaries and broad masses are an important goal of the ruling class. The depth and breadth of these efforts provide some indication of the concerns the ruling class has for its future. As Bob Avakian pointed out in *Bullets*: "Many people say they don't believe revolution is possible in this country. I'll tell you something, the people who run this country do."

Broad opposition to all aspects of this law needs to be built, and the power and nature of this opposition will affect the terrain on which any revolutionary rising in this country occurs.

As the letter indicates, Revolution Books is already a target. Funds are urgently needed for fines and legal expenses as part of waging a battle against this law.

A staff member of New York Revolution Books



To the RW:

A major assault on alternative cultural and political expression is now underway in New York City. In May 1986 the New York City Council quietly enacted an antipostering ordinance subjecting anyone deemed to "benefit" from a poster or handbill found on public property to a fine. Now wherever there are signs or posters found on lampposts or other "city property," "Sanitation" cops are busily investigating the addresses and other information on them. Those they determine to be "benefiting from posting" of such signs or posters, such as by having their name or address on them, are subject to a \$50 to \$100 fine for each poster. In fact, as far as the law is concerned, who actually did the posting is irrelevant. "Violators" are ordered to pay the fines or appear at a hearing before an Environmental Control Board (ECB) officer to "argue their case." These hearings are really no more than kangaroo courts; in hundreds of hearings at the ECB in the past two years almost no one has been found innocent.

The sweep has been broad and far-reaching — targets have ranged from political organizations to music clubs, small businesses and even small area churches. The amounts of the fines have been staggering — for example, "Bad Newz Presents" was hit with \$10,000 in fines for seventy-four flyers advertising punk concerts. Revolution Books has received fines for over \$700 for flyers promoting the store. A free-lance guitar teacher was fined \$2600 for fifty-two flyers. A karate school received fifty-five fines totaling \$2700. Pathfinder Press's Mural Project faces thirty-five citations for flyers for a fundraising event. This represents only a small sampling of fines that have been given over the past two years — many for several thousands of dollars.

"Plainly, this persecutory and censorious campaign has the sole intent of

dictating what shall be approved cultural values and events in this city... Remember — when the government can dictate what posters may appear in public, not only news, but politics, social philosophy, and human thought in general comes under scrutiny of these same ignorant and authoritarian bureaucrats." (From a leaflet by a music promoter calling for protests against the antipostering law.)

Posting handbills has traditionally been a vital link to the public for everyone whose political, religious, or cultural stand is outside the mainstream, outside the access to the major media, and financially prohibited from major commercial advertising. The randomness and dissimilarity of those initially fined disguised the intended target and impact of this law and disoriented some people. For example, in the first few months of enforcement, a large number of citations were given to the major political campaigns for election postering — even Governor Cuomo's campaign was fined! But it didn't take too long for the major political figures to simply adjust their budgets to radio, TV, or other paid advertising. This is *not* an option for the vast majority of forces now being targeted by this law.

This clampdown, under the Department of Sanitation, is all done in the name of "cleaning up the city." The utter hypocrisy of this is outrageous. In this city — where thousands are forced to live on the streets, without even access to basic sanitary facilities — handbills are hardly the problem, and cracking down on alternative political and cultural expression is hardly the solution. People need to see through this smokescreen and come to grips with what will be the result if this law is left standing and a crucial avenue of communication is eliminated. This is one more step towards a culturally stifling, politically repressive atmosphere. A single day's worth of post-

ing handbills around the city could result in many, many thousands of dollars in fines, financially crippling or destroying anyone who takes controversial stands, who speaks out artistically or politically.

And there is a second layer to the repressiveness of this antipostering campaign — an ominous repressive apparatus is being established, ready and waiting to be unleashed when needed. Anyone who ever *issues* written material for broad distribution, regardless of whether the material is intended for posting, is made vulnerable to serious attack. Since it is not necessary to prove that someone associated with those identified on a poster actually did the posting in order to hold them legally responsible, the written material of any group taking a controversial stand, especially against the government, could be put up deliberately by reactionary forces or the government itself in order to bring down enormous fines and destroy them financially.

A major and convenient method is thus being created with this antipostering law for cutting off access of especially revolutionaries to the public. Groups with public offices and those who offer meeting places or provide a place for organizations to receive mail or phone messages would be vulnerable to enormous fines, quickly bankrupting them. This weapon of repression must be fought now before its full destructive effect is unleashed!

New York City has long been a center of all sorts of innovative political and artistic expression that is "out of control" of the authorities: rappers, artists, punk rockers and more. This attack helps set the tone for similar attacks elsewhere. Recently an activist from Refuse & Resist! was taken from his home, arrested and taken to jail in Highland Park, New Jersey — charged with posting signs which would "cause alarm" to the public. He was targeted because his phone number appeared on posters against the "English Only" initiative

which read, "What's the difference between 'English Only' and 'Whites Only'?"! In Washington, D.C., when a circle of musicians and artists posted posters against U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese, saying, "Experts agree... Meese is a Pig!", it has been reported in the *Washington Post* that the Justice Department has been interrogating those found with copies of the poster. All this fits right in with the political and ideological program of "Resurgent America" being cultivated and guided from highest offices in the land.

A look at history points to some of the stakes in this battle. After the 1973 coup in Chile, posters and graffiti were a principal way that those opposing the military clampdown could make their presence known. In 1980, when the Generals seized power in Turkey, they sought to close off this avenue by making all those who owned or rented homes or land responsible for anything found posted on their property. Those found with antigovernment material posted, regardless of who put it up, could be jailed. And as Hitler and others have shown, these calls for "cleaning up" society by eliminating "untidy" elements have long been an early signboard for increased state repression to come.

A broad coalition has been formed of those victimized by this antipostering campaign and others who see the importance of waging a battle to defeat it. There have been several demonstrations at the Sanitation Department, appearances by coalition members on talk shows, and the ACLU is considering joining the case. Such resistance needs to be welcomed, strengthened, and greatly expanded. The true impact and intent of this "sanitation law" needs to be exposed very broadly. Organizations, artists, promoters, and all those who see the importance of defeating attempts at political and/or artistic repression need to speak out and join in the battle.

Signed:

Revolution Books, New York City
Ron Kuby, Center for Constitutional Rights*
Bob Z, Artists & Writers Underground
Russ Weis, Victims of the Poster Police*

Musicians and Fanzines endorsed through STOP-GRO (Stop Prosecuting Grass-Roots Organizers):

Scut Magazine
Smash Apathy Fanzine
A.P.P.L.E.
Jesse Mallin & Hope
Affirmative Action
Sea Hear
False Prophets
Any Of Several Weasels
The Dream Smashes
The Parasites
bób McGlynn
Brian Swirsky
Triggervision
Hakim Bey
More Fiends
Ann-Marie Hendrickson
Tse-Tse Fly Junior

Tull Kupferberg
Ugly Rumors
Reagan Youth
Radio Free Zone
OPEC-SID
Earwax Fanzine
American Tirades'zine
Bullshit Monthly'zine
Mechanical Bride
King Hatred
Fifi The Cat Is Dead
Disapproved Theories Zine
APA-Eros Zine
No More Censorship Fund
Jello Biafra
Audiofile Tapes
Popular Reality Zine

Sink Manhattan
Mother Of Ashes Press
Anathema Zine
Another Point Of View Zine
Dissent (band)
Trash American Style
A.W.O.L.
Stoopid Def Fanzine
The Last Words Fanzine
Ace Backwords
Insomniac Sessions
Slapdash Hackery Factory
Uggy Cheap & Sticky
Luny Ticks
Blowfish
Scrap'zine
Mechanical Sterility

Emotional Vomit'zine
Raw Bone'zine
Blanks
Layabouts
Mumbles
Psychic Violents
Van Gogh's Ear
Charlie Ray
Butthole Blues'zine
Brian Clemons
Selected Ooze'zine
Brat'zine

*For identification only.

Atlanta

Continued from page 5

the midst of the crowd, by one estimate about 500 strong, a banner declared: "Outcasts, downcasts, slaves, illegals and rebels, It's right to rebel! Racists, Rambos, rulers of America, It's all going to fall on you!" On numerous T-shirts there were "Silence = Death" stickers. In the street a bonfire of Klan literature and Confederate and American flags burned. Together white youth and Black were chanting: "The flag's on fire. We don't need no water. Let it burn!" The Klan, humiliated, left Atlanta under heavy police protection. It was definitely a high point of the week.

The Jackson Factor

Coca Cola's headquarters, a tall tan building, stares down like a watch tower over a housing project in Atlanta where clotheslines stretch across the backyards of the single-story apartments. A Black youth anxious to hit the basketball court stopped for a moment to talk about Jesse Jackson, "I hate him for being a brother and allowing them to use him as a stepping stone. Dukakis knows he can't win without him. He's in his corner now to win Black votes. Jackson's being a sucker, a pawn in a chess game."

Going into the convention, it was some concern to the authorities how Black people were going to respond to the slap delivered to Jesse Jackson over the vice presidency. People were upset. Jackson supporters were angry. Many had been taking up the Jackson campaign in the belief that it would strike a blow against national oppression. And now they were getting the blows from the Democrats. There was tension: would the Jackson slap spur people to walk out of the convention and hit the streets? And if so, what further confrontation might that possibly spark off?

Thousands of people gathered in Piedmont Park when Jackson arrived in Atlanta on Saturday, two days before the opening of the convention. First JJ talked about how his candidacy is a symbol that Black people can make it in America. "When I win, you win," he said. "I lift the lid off dreams every day." He stressed that the convention was a full three-day affair and it wasn't over until it was over. Then he told the crowd to stop, stop talking, stop moving, stop whatever they were doing and repeat after him: "Our challenge is common ground, not concession, not conquest, but common ground." "We shall keep hope alive." And then, "We, the people, will be disciplined... determined and hopeful." When the pledge was finished, Jackson launched a voter registration drive.

JJ had sent out a clear signal: Stay in line. There wasn't going to be any fight with the Democrats, no walkouts, nothing getting out of control. And this set a definite tone in terms of any possible disruption of the convention from within or without involving the broad forces that were more or less in support of JJ.

The stifling political message coming from the Jackson camp was evident in the size and the conflicting character of some of the political activities outside the convention during the week. Josea Williams, Gus Savage, and Rev. Ben Chavis, big Jackson supporters, had called for a march to the Free Speech area (known among the radicals as the protest cage) outside the Omni on the night the convention opened. Joining the march was Dr. Lenora Fulani, presidential candidate for the New Alliance Party. Tawana Brawley, her family, and supporters also joined the march. But even with these combined forces, the march only numbered a few hundred people.

When the march got to the rally site the different views and agendas of the forces involved quickly asserted themselves. There were opposing views on where people should put their allegiances. Josea Williams and Gus Savage argued for people to stick with Jackson and the Democratic Party. Savage said they were marching on the Democratic Party, not out of it. Fulani and a representative of

Minister Farakhan argued that while Jackson had waged a good fight, he was being knocked around by the racists of the Democratic Party. They hoped Jackson would stand up to the Democrats but didn't consider it very likely. They promoted taking up a Black Agenda that included voting for Fulani.

By Tuesday, July 19 Jackson emerged before the cameras with Dukakis and Bentsen. The pact was officially and publicly sealed. Privately some Jackson delegates said they were very angered by all this but felt there was no avenue — within the pro-Jackson camp — available to vent that anger.

Fresh Air ON THE AIR

Late at night friends and I tuned in to Atlanta radio station WRFG to hear Carl Dix, the Anticandidate 1988 and a spokesperson for the Revolutionary Communist Party, on the "Round Midnight" program.

Dix: I hit town this morning and got a real eyeful and earful in terms of the developments in this area. And that also fits into what the game plan for the rulers of this country is... It ain't like since the first African was dragged here we ain't never had to deal with never-ending terror. But they're going to be stepping that up, whether that's a question of bringing the Klan out from under the rocks, whether that's a question of unleashing a mob of racist white youth on Black people in Howard Beach and then giving them slaps on the wrist or letting them go off scot-free. Or whether that's a question of cops gunning us down. What it all relates to is that the rulers face a very difficult and complex situation.

Let's just look at the last year. What if they hadn't been able to pull out of the stock market crash? What if once they decide that the Contras can't do the job in Central America, they feel that troops got to go in? What if the situation in the Persian Gulf spirals out of control? What impact will all of that have in the ghetto? How will Black people deal with that? Will they rally around the flag and help Uncle Sam out of his hour of trouble? Or will they say, the man's in trouble, let's move on him...

WRFG: How does the party seek to mobilize and motivate that Black constituency that it must have if revolution is to work at all?

Dix: What we see is taking out to people, and this is something that is pretty unique, revolution is what's needed. And the way to get ready for that is to get ready for *that*. Not to get involved in the elections, not to push this candidate as opposed to that candidate or to try to reform this as opposed to reforming that...

WRFG: ... The Democratic Party has locked us out. The Republican Party has locked us out. Does your anticandidacy give some other alternative? Is there a third party alternative? Are you talking about people joining the RCP? Or some other vehicle?

Dix: What we're talking about people doing is getting down and preparing for revolution. We know everybody is not ready to do that but we ain't looking at it like we need to get the majority ready right now to make that move. What we do need is those who see that this electoral con game has been a shell game, that this whole system has worked against us — and you laid out the history on the parties as good as I could lay it out, 'cause they pull a shell game on us. One time we were supposed to go with the Republicans 'cause they were the ones taking care of us. Then they switch it around and now it's the Democrats. And either way you don't get nothing. The hands that picked cotton have already picked presidents and they don't do nothing for us. We still end up oppressed. And we're saying that revolution is the solution to that and that's what we're putting out.

What we hope to do through that is to both bring forward people to the revolutionary stand and to work with and join the Revolutionary Communist Party. Also to firm up the resistance of people who aren't ready to take that step yet. There are people out there who see some

of this stuff but want to move at it from a nationalist orientation. What we say to people like that is we're against the oppression of Black people and we want to work together with you on that and let's take it to the hoop. Let's not go half way with it, fight the system a little bit and then try to get into the system a little bit, because it's the *system* that's oppressing you. We say the same to people who want to take a feminist orientation, well take it to the hoop. Don't half-step and jive, and we'll see what the ultimate solution needs to be because we think there does need to be that kind of united-front approach to the problem. We do want to build our party. And people who want to get down with us, we call on them to check us out. Read our weekly newspaper, the *Revolutionary Worker*, which this week has an article by me on the Jesse Jackson campaign and the whole elections thing. And I'd really like people to check it out and give me some feedback on it...

No Business As Usual

The Democrats took the "no first use" of nuclear weapons plank that was proposed for the party's platform and killed it without any fanfare. Anything that detracted from being able to wage war was not up for discussion.

But No Business As Usual made a different mark in Atlanta. On Saturday an important symposium, "Complicity vs. Responsibility in Pre-War America," brought together some ninety participants, mostly from high schools and colleges, with panelists from different movements and walks of life. Panelists included Harvard professor Dr. Margaret Brenman-Gibson; Chicano activist Francisco Kiko Martinez; physicist Charles Schwartz; AIM spokesman Wabun-Inini (a.k.a. Vernon Bellecourt); *RW* correspondent C. Clark Kissinger; Ralph McGehee, author of *Deadly Deceit*; Dr. Sondra O'Neale, former professor at Emory; and Plowshares activist Patrick O'Neill. Videotaped messages came from William Kunstler and filmmaker Emile deAntonio. Philip Berrigan sent a message from prison on behalf of the Nuclear Navy Plowshares, and Plowshares activist Larry Cloud Morgan made a statement to the symposium.

For the next several days a rowdy and defiant network of youth brought the NBAU slogan alive in the streets of Atlanta: "They won't listen to reason, They won't be bound by votes, The governments must be stopped from launching World War III, No matter what it takes!"

The NBAU activists charged through the city with inexhaustible energy in an uphill political situation. The scene here was quite different from San Francisco in 1984. There wasn't a large upsurge of thousands and thousands of people protesting at the convention. And the youth didn't have spontaneity on their side. A number of these young activists were participating in a protest for the first time. They came from different parts of the country, from different backgrounds. They burst onto a scene where a mood of "unity" was to prevail in and around the Democratic convention and helped spear that bubble. They withstood and defied the repeated attacks by the police, suffering several arrests and beatings. But NBAU unnerved the authorities wherever NBAU appeared. And that was the problem — the authorities never could tell what NBAU would do next or where. (See also "No Business As Usual: Truth and Consequences.")

Despite the hostile treatment given to NBAU by the media, they did provide one of the funnier TV moments that week for viewers of the "Today Show," which was being broadcast live and outdoors from Woodruff Park. As host Jane Pauley was preparing to introduce Texas Democrat Ann Richards, loud chanting could be heard in the background. Then a line of helmeted pigs trotted across the back of the set. Jane Pauley's lips got tighter and tighter. The line of pigs trotted back in the other direction. The chanting continued. Finally the "Today Show" host told viewers that they would hear protesters but not see them. Democracy in action.

The Concerned Democrats

In her keynote address to the convention, Ann Richards took a moment to put emphasis on the Democrats' commitment to fight AIDS. One day outside the concerned Democrats' convention, gay activists from Act Up! held a protest to draw attention to AIDS and how badly AIDS victims are treated. The police threw them over a metal barricade and beat them.

The Disinvited and the Future

The whole convention area was turned into a heavily policed zone where passes were demanded before you could enter or exit certain areas. The Marta subway by the Omni was sealed off. Homeless people discovered living in a viaduct underneath the convention area were rousted out. Under the pretext of drug raids, the cops had raided some of the housing projects in the city during the months leading up to the convention. The authorities let the disinvited know who they were.

The convention was welded by the authorities like a giant broom to sweep away and intimidate those at the bottom of society.

The Democrats had declared Wednesday Drug Prevention Day. At Woodruff Park the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade called for a night in opposition to the "war on drugs." The Brigade leaflet called youth of all nationalities to oppose the war on drugs and the attacks coming down on Black youth. The RCP poster "Everybody's Talking About Crime, But Who Are the Criminals?" was up on poles and walls around the city. And throughout the week revolutionaries distributed the RCP flyer "Don't Be a Chump for the War on Drugs." At Woodruff Park youth and homeless men circulated throughout the evening. NBAU kids, anarchists, kids from the projects — they gathered in knots for intense discussion on the war on drugs and the revolutionary solution and took turns testifying on the bullhorn. Music played. Homeless Black men spoke bitterness. A banner was painted to send to youth in Los Angeles. Homeless proletarians did a human beat box as an RCYB member performed a rap song exposing the war on drugs.

The cops kept their eyes on things but they also kept their distance. A tiny TV set got hooked up in the park. About two dozen people pressed around the TV. Together they watched the *They Say They Will* video about the RCP and preparing for proletarian revolution.

I talked with a Black youth who had joined in the anti-Klan protest. He was wearing a recently acquired RCYB T-shirt:

"Okay, Sunday was a typical day. I knew the KKK was coming down here to march. And what I did was I went and ate my breakfast. I went to church. And I come back and when I got off at state city capital, I looked and I saw a handful of people standing out there, arguing and fussing, chanting 'KKK Go Home,' 'KKK Get out of here, you don't belong here.' I looked at our capital building and I saw a KKK flag sitting next to an American flag. And I saw Georgia state troopers surrounding the capital protecting a handful of KKK. I got mad. I got really furious seeing my city, my state, the people I pay out of my city taxes and state taxes here, I got very upset when they were protecting people like this. I mean, how can you protect something as bad, something as pathetic, as these people here and what they represent? What they're here for. What they want to do in this city. This is 1988.

"I believe in a nonviolent protest. I've never protested nothing before in my life... The people that I'm running with right now, the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade, are people who feel that a revolution is the only solution. Me, I don't feel like that right now... Jesse

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VULTURES' PEACE

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intelligence. They went between spurring the war and trying to rope it in, depending on what they figured was more to their advantage at any time.

They say that this war is now coming to an end "with no victors." Another major hypocrisy. For the big powers — both East and West and particularly the U.S. — the war was an opportunity to stick their claws deeper into Iran, Iraq, and the whole region and try to crush the revolutionary masses. If they want "peace" now, it is only because they think that would be good for their reactionary interests.

The Khomeini regime's acceptance of the UN "peace plan" has not stopped the fighting on the Iran-Iraq front. In fact, the fires of war shot up even higher after July 18 as Iraqi forces pushed into Iran, using chemical weapons. The Hussein regime has demanded that there be face-to-face negotiations between Iraq and Iran, a condition rejected by the Iranian government. But it appears that the big powers find it in their interest at this point to push for an end to the war or at least a cease-fire.

The Iranian government's decision to accept the UN plan basically amounts to an admission of defeat. After turning back the initial Iraqi invasion in September 1980 (which was backed up by the U.S. bloc), the Islamic Republic rulers had demanded the removal of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, payment of war reparations by Iraq, and the placing of blame for the war on Iraq as conditions for ending the conflict. By accepting the UN plan, Iran dropped the demands about Hussein and reparations and accepted the UN formula for setting up a commission to decide who started the war.

News reports said that officials in Iraq, the U.S., Israel, and elsewhere were "surprised" by Iran's decision. It could be that the exact timing of the announcement was unexpected. But there were plenty of signs in the recent period that the Iranian government was increasingly hard pressed with problems on all fronts and had to make some sort of drastic move or face collapse.

Battlefront Setbacks

The most glaring problem for the Islamic Republic has been the rapidly deteriorating military position of the Iranian armed forces in the war. Iran in fact has been basically on the defensive since its big offensive against Iraq in late 1986 and early 1987 failed. After the U.S. used the Iraqi missile attack on the Navy ship *Stark* in May 1987 as an excuse for a huge military buildup in the Persian Gulf, Iran was faced with a hostile imperialist fleet right on its shores. With all the talk about

"threats to neutral shipping" in the Gulf, Iraqi planes regularly hit tankers carrying Iranian oil while every small-scale hostility between American and Iranian forces was used by the U.S. to issue more threats and launch more attacks against Iran.

Early this year Iraq modified its Soviet-built ground-to-ground missiles to extend their range so they could hit the Iranian capital of Tehran. The missile attacks caused heavy damage, and hundreds of thousands of people reportedly were forced to evacuate the city. The inability of the Khomeini regime to protect the capital severely weakened the government's ability to mobilize support for the war among the people. According to some reports, the Islamic Republic has been facing a lot of difficulty recently trying to round up "volunteers" for the front. There also have been open calls for an end to the war by some top ruling figures in Iran.

Then in April Iraqi forces overran Iranian troops occupying the Fao Peninsula and retook this strategic piece of territory. This Iraqi offensive took place at the very same time that U.S. warships destroyed an Iranian oil platform in the southern Gulf and sank or damaged a third of the Iranian naval force. Anybody putting two and two together could figure out that this was a coordinated military operation by the U.S. and Iraq.

The Iraqi victory at Fao was followed by other retreats of Iranian forces from Iraqi territory. More recently Iraqi troops several times penetrated miles into Iranian territory. In addition to modern conventional weapons from Western and Soviet sources, Iraq has been making increasing use of chemical bombs in its military operations, causing horrible deaths and injuries not only among Iranian soldiers but also among the Kurdish people in northern Iraq. The silence from the U.S. and other governments about the Iraqi chemical weapons amounts to open approval of these atrocities. Meanwhile, the U.S.-led international arms boycott against Tehran put further strains on the Iranian military's ability to fight.

Iran's dependent economy is in shambles, especially from the costs of war. According to some estimates, Iran's inflation and unemployment rates were at least 30 percent last year. Iraq's attack on tankers servicing Iran, as well as moves by Saudi Arabia and other pro-Western oil producers to undercut Iran's oil revenues, have put huge pressures on the Iranian economy.

U.S. Bullying and Iranian "Moderates"

Since the Gulf war broke out, the policy of the U.S. has been to bully and threaten the Khomeini regime on one hand while at the same time offering the Iranian rulers secret deals and a "way out" if they stepped more slavishly into the Western camp. But after the Reagan

administration's attempts to make a deal with the Iranian regime collapsed with the Irangate exposures, the U.S. has put more emphasis on the "stick" part of this carrot-and-stick tactic. Especially since American forces started "reflagging" Kuwaiti ships last year, the U.S. has made a clear military "tilt" on the side of Iraq in the Gulf war.

Inside Iran, those officials the Western media refer to as "moderates" have been strengthening their position. Both the "moderates" and the "radicals" among the Iranian rulers represent the pro-imperialist compradors in Iran. The "radicals" have been trying to reach the top by such means as exposing the links of the other faction with the West, striking a more "militant" Islamic posture, and/or by seeking links with the Soviet bloc. The "moderates" are headed by Rafsanjani, the head of the Majlis (the Iranian parliament) and one of Khomeini's top men. It was this group which met with the Reagan administration team in Tehran in 1986 with the knowledge and approval of Khomeini.

The growing power of the Rafsanjani faction was shown by his recent appointment as head of the entire military that now combines the regular army (which still includes many leftovers from the era of the Shah) as well as the so-called "Revolutionary Guards," which had been seen as more influenced by the "radicals." According to Michael Ledeen, a "consultant" to the Reagan administration during the Irangate dealings, Iran's normalization of diplomatic and commercial relations with France in May of this year and talks with Britain toward the same ends also were a sign of the growing strength of the "moderates." U.S. Secretary of State Shultz recently revealed that the U.S. had received feelers from Iran about holding talks — they no doubt came from the Rafsanjani forces.

Cynically Using the Iran Air Shootdown

The July 3 shootdown of the Iranian jetliner with 290 passengers on board by a U.S. warship took place in this context of intensified U.S. pressures against Iran, severe difficulties hitting the Khomeini regime, and rising influence of the "moderates" in Tehran. In a ghoulish follow-up, the U.S. imperialists and the Iranian reactionaries cynically used the massacre as a stepping stone to get what they wanted.

The American government's stand on the massacre was one of arrogant unrepentance (and almost open boasting) over the downing, combined with offer of monetary "compensation." This was the U.S. rulers' way of putting an ultimatum to the Islamic Republic: If you don't cave in, there will be more such attacks; if you obey our demands, some sops might be thrown your way.

For the Iranian rulers, the shootdown was an opening to free themselves from the war and move closer to the West. Inside Iran, Iranian officials painted the acceptance of the cease-fire as a move forced by outside pressures. Khomeini said that "taking this decision was more deadly than taking poison" but that he was doing it for the good of the Islamic Republic. Rafsanjani warned that the U.S. would commit more "immense crimes" if the war continued. In international forums like the UN, Iran's response to the shootdown was very mild. And the Western media reported how Khomeini had scolded one top mullah for calling for "revenge" and told him to follow Rafsanjani. The restrained response was meant as a signal to the U.S. by the Rafsanjani forces that they were willing — and more importantly, now had enough strength — to deal.

Although the cease-fire decision was a move made under U.S. pressure, the Iranian rulers were not really going against their own class interests. After the Shah's fall, these compradors never broke Iran's dependent relations with imperialism, despite some contradictions with the major powers. They demonstrated their willingness to deal with the U.S. during the Irangate affair. But Irangate also showed the difficulties for the mullahs — they had to play down their meeting with the Americans and keep up their rhetoric against the "Great Satan" to avoid complete exposure. And the war with Iraq has been useful to them as a way to unite their own ranks, rally support for the government by keeping the focus on an "outside enemy," and

crack down on domestic opposition.

But increasingly in the recent period the war had become a major source of instability for the Islamic Republic and infighting among different reactionary circles. There is speculation in the West that Khomeini's failing health was a key factor in the timing of the cease-fire decision, because if he died there would be no other leaders with the political clout to endorse an end to the war which has been so central to the survival of the Islamic Republic. The mullahs, in short, decided to "take the poison" in order to save their collapsing hold on power.

U.S. Calculations and Gains

The favorable reaction in Washington to the Iranian acceptance of the UN plan indicates that the U.S. imperialists see it in their interests at this point to put a check on Iraqi advances against Iran and keep the Islamic Republic from collapsing. Such a collapse could lead to unpredictable turmoil in Iran and the region as a whole. And it appears that the Soviet Union, because of the same concerns (but based on their own imperialist calculations), is going along with these developments as well for now. There are reports that the Soviets, along with other members of the UN Security Council, are urging Iraq to be "more flexible" in the negotiations and accept a quick cease-fire.

The U.S. government claims that its military deployment in the Persian Gulf will be reduced when a cease-fire goes into effect. It is possible that there will be some reduction in the U.S. fleet. But the U.S. and its allies have made important military and political gains in the region through the eight years of carnage (despite their talk that there are "no victors" in this war), and they are not going to give them up. Aside from the big buildup of their own forces in the Gulf, the U.S. has tightened up military cooperation with various Gulf states, equipped Saudi Arabia with AWACS spy planes and taken control of the airspace of the region, set up sophisticated bases in Saudi Arabia and Oman for possible use by U.S. forces, etc. The Soviets, meanwhile, have been doing their own maneuvering by building relations with various reactionary states in the region and trying to improve their political and military position.

In a statement in August last year at the height of the naval buildup in the Gulf, the Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement pointed out: "The target of this piling up of imperialist vessels in the Gulf is neither the Iranian nor the Iraqi regime. Each of the two blocs has sent its ships to circle like sharks in the Gulf waters to resolve the Gulf situation on terms most favourable to it and unfavourable to the other — which may not be exactly the terms most favourable to the Iranian or Iraqi regimes."

Even if there is a cease-fire or an end to the Gulf war, this contention between the two blocs over this very strategic region will remain very explosive and in fact may intensify as each side scrambles to gain advantage over the other in Iran and Iraq. The Iranian rulers were forced to admit defeat in order to try to save their skins, but the end of the war could heat up the infighting within the Islamic Republic and make the government even more vulnerable, perhaps creating openings for social upheaval and revolutionary forces.

The U.S. and other great powers are gloating over their "success" in the Gulf. But the future is by no means settled, and the revolutionary masses in Iran, Iraq, and Kurdistan — who have suffered so much at the hands of the imperialists and reactionary tyrants — could have a lot to say about where things are headed. □

CORRECTION

In the May 9 issue of the *RW* there was an article announcing the silver award for political/international documentary at the Houston International Film Festival for the video "They Say They Will." In that article the second and third sentences in the second paragraph should read:

First place in this category went to a CNN documentary called "The Battle for Peace." Other major documentary awards went to Parallel Film's "Voices in Dissent"; Walter Cronkite's film on the America's Cup race; and Turner Broadcasting for a documentary on the Soviet Union.

Atlanta

Continued from page 14

Jackson is pulling the Black people in. The Democrats know that Jesse Jackson is the loop in the rope to tie everybody in and nominate the Democrats. All Jesse Jackson said on TV last night when he talked about how we can ride on busses now, how we can drink water from a fountain now, he's trying to tell the Black community, it's okay people, it's fine, there's no more racism here. That is bullshit. When two white police officers can go into a project, handcuff a man, and just literally kill him — which they did. They put seven bullets in a man who was handcuffed last year. They killed him....

"Oppressed people here are the ones who are being shut out of this type of system. There's no place for people who have no jobs, who have no life, and who have no future in this type of a system. That's exactly what the war on drugs is targeted for. If this man over here is selling dope, let's lock him up. And let's lock up this man over here for standing outside, watching him sell dope. And let's get him over here too. He doesn't look too good on the streets, let's put his ass in jail too.

"I'm beginning to think the more and more I hear about the bullshit the government is throwing in our faces, I'm beginning to think, yeah, revolution is the only solution. You walk around. People like this in suits and ties who give a fuck about how much you suffer out here on the streets. People don't care about where you sleep, about how you shower. Look at these gentlemen here in their suit and ties. They don't give a fuck about the man who has to sleep on the bench. They don't care if the city has closed down the missions and shelters. They don't mind, oh well, he's just a nobody out here in the street. He probably doesn't want to work. I got two years of college and a high school education. I'm not a nobody...."

"It's a fucked up system. And yeah, I would love to be part of the overthrowing of it."

Gone with the Wind

The Omni, where the Democratic National Convention was held, is owned by Ted Turner. Playing all year long at Turner's Omni Cinema is the racist epic movie *Gone with the Wind*.

"See that?" I asked a Black brother with dreadlocks cascading down his back. "It'll all be gone with the wind soon," he said. □

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REVOLUTION magazine is the propaganda organ of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA. Every issue contains articles addressing a wide range of questions rigorously and in-depth, reaching out to activist and scholar alike. Though unabashedly partisan, **REVOLUTION** worships no icons, and takes on the thorniest, most controversial questions.

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