



# REVOLUTIONARY WORKER

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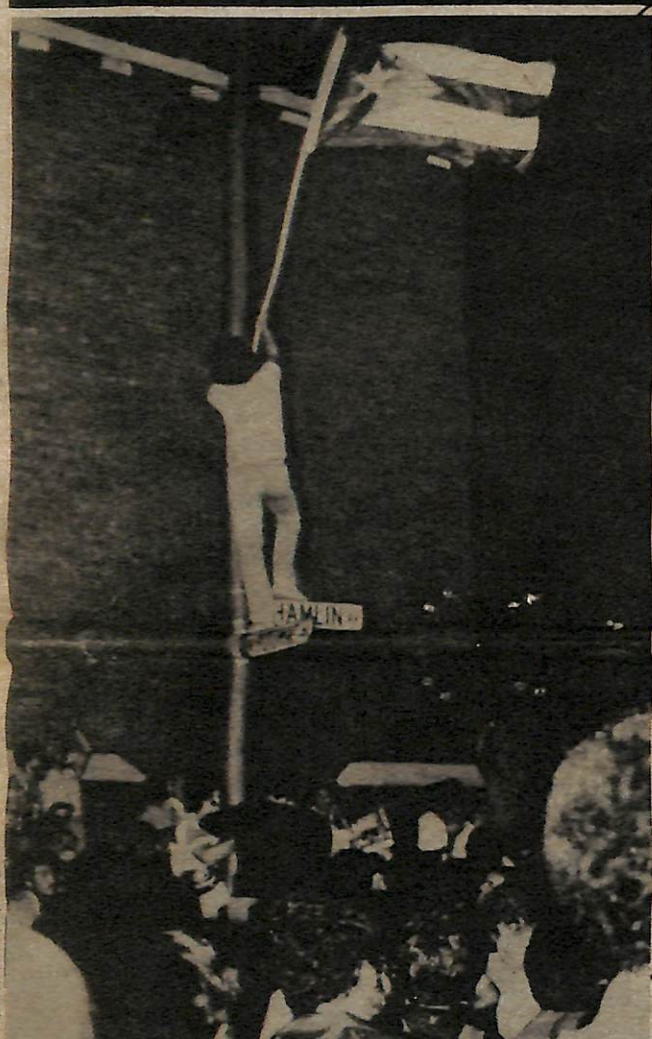
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## Puerto Rican Fighters Free

It was a day of great victory, of tremendous jubilation for the people. On September 10, the government was finally forced to release four Puerto Rican nationalists—Lolita Lebrón, Irving Flores Rodriguez, Rafael Cancel Miranda, and Oscar Collazo—held as political prisoners in U.S. jails since the early 1950s.

As the four were reunited at Chicago's O'Hare Airport, the people began to gather on a street corner in the Puerto Rican community near Humboldt Park. The Puerto Rican national flag was hoisted up on traffic signals. Chants rang out: "If the Yankees don't leave, they will die in Borricua (Puerto Rico)." The crowd swelled to hundreds; Puerto Ricans, young and old, Americans of all nationalities, friends

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Chicago, Sept. 10. Rafael Cancel Miranda, swept up by the crowd at the evening rally is carried on their shoulders.

### U.S. on Soviet Troops in Cuba

## Wolf Cries "Wolf"

The "discovery" of Soviet troops in Cuba has sparked a new round of anti-Soviet diatribes and sabre-rattling on Capitol Hill at a most "opportune" moment for the ruling class. The disclosure coincided perfectly with the opening of the conference of non-aligned countries in Havana, and it was undoubtedly meant to undermine Cuba's (and thus the Soviet Union's) position at the conference. At the same time, it came only days before Congress was scheduled to begin debate on the budget, with military spending sure to be a key issue. But more than that, it came in the midst of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's hearings on the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT II) treaty, opening the way for a chauvinist propaganda barrage that has yet to die down.

The presence of Soviet troops in Cuba should come as no surprise. Everyone knows that Cuba is totally dominated by the Soviet Union, and it is a well-publicized fact that Soviet civilian and military personnel by the thousands have been stationed in Cuba for years. In fact, many people in this country found it more surprising to learn the U.S. has an entire military base in Cuba—the U.S. Navy base at Guantanamo Bay—something the ruling class has not publicized a great deal lately.

When asked about the turmoil over Soviet troops, one Cuban official commented wryly that he didn't see what all the fuss was about, since the U.S. has more troops there than the Russians do! Of course, for the U.S. imperialists, particularly at this juncture, it is definitely a big deal. Just like the ridiculous detention of Soviet ballerina Ludmila Vlasova two weeks ago, which got banner headlines around the world, the presence of Soviet combat forces (which U.S. officials admit may have been in Cuba for the last 19 years!) is being milked for all it's worth to whip up anti-Soviet sentiment at home and abroad. And through the piercing clamor of invective, the beat of war drums can be clearly heard.

In the wake of the "disclosure" there have been repeated calls for beefing up and expanding U.S. intelligence activities around the world. President Carter is making noises about a \$4 billion increase in military spending.

Actually, this whole Russian troops issue is a good illustration of the principal benefit to the ruling class of the whole SALT process; it has supplied the U.S. with no small amount of propaganda about how it is the "peaceful" party in the whole affair while the Soviets are the "warlike" ones. Of course, SALT is nothing but a smokescreen which both superpowers

are using to hoodwink their people into thinking that each is genuinely working in the interests of peace, while, in fact, both are frantically preparing for war.

Beyond this, the troops issue has renewed the impression that there is a serious "hawk" vs. "dove" debate alive in the U.S. Senate, deepening the illusion that a fundamental argument over war preparations exists in the nation's ruling circles.

But the farcical nature of such an illusion was revealed as events unfolded. A key figure has been Idaho Senator Frank Church—a staunch SALT supporter and Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. It was Church who blew the whistle on the Soviet troops, cancelled Committee hearings on SALT, and set the tone for the ensuing anti-Soviet tirade. But then, veteran warhawk and anti-Soviet crusader Senator Robert Byrd shot back and chided Church for creating a crisis where there was none. He expressed the hope that in a couple of months the "dust should have settled" and the ratification of SALT could proceed. It's getting difficult to distinguish the moderates from the hard-liners!

Through all the flack, President Carter has stepped forward as the "voice of reason"! Light was shed on this unusual development by none other than Senator George McGovern, who,

in a statement in a recent meeting of the Foreign Relations Committee, provided a revealing assessment of Carter's position: "How can we seriously argue that we have the right to deploy 500,000 American troops around the world, but the Soviets have no right to station troops in Cuba?" asked the Senator in an appeal to tone down the rhetoric. "I ask those who are issuing ultimatums to the Soviets... what will be your answer if the Soviets say, 'we'll bring our troops home, if you bring yours home?'"

Then, McGovern inadvertently let the cat further out of the bag. "President Carter is right," he said, "in keeping cool over Soviet deployment in Cuba... This is a good time for American politicians to keep cool and keep the powder dry..."

### Special

**Conferences:  
Free the Mao  
Defendants!  
May Day 1980**

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**Iran's  
Revolutionary  
Left** — See page 9

Revolutionary Worker

Revolutionary Worker



Iran's "New" Secret Police

# SAVAMA



(Above) Pictured on the left is S. Ghotsbadeh, chief of Iranian radio and TV and one of Khomeini's closest allies, holding a discussion with the head of the right-wing Falangists (on the right). When this picture appeared in one of Tehran's progressive magazines (that has since been shut down by the government), it caused a big scandal. Trying to deny any connection with the organized fascist gangs, government officials claimed the photo was a fake. The magazine printed a copy of the negatives in its next issue. The government has outlawed many publications critical of the Islamic Republic to prevent such embarrassing exposures.

Mostafa Chamran, a little known name in Iran, seemed to be a newcomer when he entered the political stage earlier this year—one of the fresh new faces around Khomeini's so-called "revolutionary" Islamic Republic. Little more than 5 months later, he is appointed head of SAVAMA, the new Iranian secret police formed to crush the revolutionary forces which are leading the masses to achieve people's democracy and the end to imperialist rule in Iran. They are especially after the Marxist-Leninist groups.

It is well known that many old SAVAK agents from the Shah's regime have been reemployed in SAVAMA. A case in point is the story of the infamous Tehrani, former head of the SAVAK torturers. In a public trial a few months ago attended by thousands who demanded his immediate execution, Tehrani admitted to unspeakable crimes of torture and murder of Iranian revolutionaries. He put on a big act insisting that he was deeply religious and did it all for Allah, only torturing Com-

munists, not Moslems. After his conviction, thousands of his victims' relatives and friends demanded proof of his execution. The response of the government was far from satisfactory. While pictures were shown of the bodies of those executed along with him, only pictures of Tehrani's head were shown. Many believe he wasn't executed at all and is now working for SAVAMA.

Mostafa Chamran's first assignment as chief of SAVAMA was to direct the army and air force in an all-out attack on the struggle in Kurdistan last week. SAVAMA is also in the process of trying to round up revolutionaries who were active abroad, opposing the Shah's regime. They are working from a list that SAVAK helped compile.

Chamran is like many of the new faces around the government—Yazdi, Ghotsbadeh, Bani-Sadr and the rest—who appeared as if from nowhere just as the Shah was about to be toppled to cash in on the revolution for themselves. During the years he spent in the U.S., Chamran briefly joined the

Berkeley, California chapter of the Iranian Student Association (ISA), part of the international organization of the Confederation of Iranian Students (the Shah's main opposition outside Iran). He used this participation as credentials to portray himself as an Islamic revolutionary, hoping to give himself a somewhat militant cover.

But Chamran distinguished himself from the thousands of true revolutionaries who poured into Iran from exile to help bring down the Shah. Both his present position and his career—full of reactionary associates and friendships—cannot help but cast suspicion on his participation in the I.S.A. in Berkeley, California. He is remembered by former I.S.A. members as being very quiet, reserved and deeply religious. He joined in the late 1960s during a time when the I.S.A. was not only actively exposing the Shah but enthusiastically participating in the Black liberation and anti-war struggles sweeping this country. He allied himself with the anti-imperialist positions of the National Front faction of the I.S.A. At the same time, he also took a staunch position against the I.S.A.'s left forces for being atheist, arguing at length in defense of Islam and the existence of God. His actions could be overlooked as simply those of a religious fanatic who also opposed the Shah. However, members of the I.S.A. feel it is much more likely in view of his subsequent activity that he was already acting as an intelligence agent.

It was a well known fact among Iranian students that the FBI and CIA often contacted foreign students, tested the water by questioning them, and began to work toward recruiting those

who were more wishy-washy in their outlook. A case in point was a man known as Sabour, a U.S. Phd. graduate in biology who was exposed as a CIA agent in the I.S.A. after he was discovered taping discussions.


Chamran didn't show his true colors until he left for the Middle East under the pretense of joining the Palestinian struggle in 1971. He immediately teamed up with the Ayatollah Musa Sadr in Lebanon who had built a name for himself as a progressive religious figure who supported the democratic rights of the Palestinians. Chamran ran an experimental trade school for the Ayatollah. The school was innocent enough except for its list of visitors. It attracted the ambassadors of Britain and Germany. Chamran also became a frequent guest of the American and British ambassadors in Beirut.

Little by little, as Chamran began to openly oppose the revolutionary struggle of the Lebanese and Palestinian people who were fighting the Christian Falangists (the U.S., Zionist backed fascists left over from World War II), it became clear why he had opposed the left forces of the I.S.A. in the U.S.

Ayatollah Sadr and Chamran gave up all pretense of being progressive, established relations with the Falangists and openly supported the Syrian invasion of Lebanon in 1976 to help in the slaughter of Palestinian and Lebanese freedom fighters. This particularly earned them the hatred of the entire anti-imperialist and revolutionary forces in Lebanon. Chamran even had three subordinates in Lebanon who were well known SAVAK agents who collaborated with the Israelis against the Palestinian resistance. Chamran topped this performance when he applauded the unpardonable assassination last year of the head of the nationalist movement in Lebanon, Kamal Jamblat, who had been a consistent fighter against the Falangists.

These are the real credentials Chamran took with him to Iran. As soon as Khomeini took power, he began to prove his military worth by helping to train right-wing falangist Hesbollahi—the fanatical Islamic "party of God." This organization of fascist thugs works directly with the government and its main purpose is to suppress the revolutionaries in Iran,

Continued on page 14



## REVOLUTIONARY WORKER

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Participate and Build for Region-Wide Conferences On Two Issues Most Vital to Our Class

# Take the Revolutionary Future into Your Hands —It's Long Overdue!

You who right now recognize the American dream for the nightmare it really is—who see the oppression and decadence of this dog-eat-dog best of all worlds, its crisis, our unemployment, and our rulers' mad dash towards World War 3;

You who refuse to accept the lies that this has to be our lot—who look to the storms of the masses in Iran and Nicaragua and wonder when the oppressed here will also righteously rise up against the oppressor;

You workers who can see beyond the nose on your face, are struggling to understand world affairs, and refuse to parrot the outlook and excuses of our modern day slavemasters—

You are not alone in the way you see things and today there is something you must get involved in.

## Free the Mao Tsetung Defendants! Stop the Railroad of Bob Avakian!

Some may think that revolution is only an idle dream—but the rulers of this country, the U.S. imperialists, don't think so. That's why they've launched the most aggressive assault on an organization since the '60s against the Revolutionary Communist Party. On January 29th, in Washington, D.C., 500 marched straight in the face of the U.S. government, against the traitor Teng Hsiao-ping and were attacked by the police for it. Today Bob Avakian, the Chairman of the RCP, and 16 others, face charges that could bring each of them 241 years in prison.

These dogs are out for blood in this case. They want to railroad the Mao Tsetung Defendants, to rip away revolutionary leadership from the people and strike down the possibilities of our being able to realize a way out of this hell. They are hoping that their own vampiristic, lifeless outlook is intact among the workers here. How could their loyal slaves give a damn about what happened in China or notice China's new de facto membership in NATO? "Now's our chance," they think, to smash down a real threat, the only Party that's serious about leading the slaves to overthrow them.

To be sure, this criminal, desperate attack is a sign of weakness—and a sign of the times. It reveals their class rule for what it is, and raises the very questions they are trying to suppress. And their madness can be turned around on them by mounting a counteroffensive that will shake the courtrooms of D.C. and spread the Party's influence into every corner of the country. The reality that there are people seriously getting ready for revolution will be known everywhere.

## May Day 1980

Beyond that, the working class itself, in its own right, must stand up and march in the streets on May 1st 1980. May

Day—International Workers' Day—when the working class worldwide gathers its forces and renews its declaration of war against the system—based on its enslavement and the oppression of the many to serve the few. It's long overdue for the working class of the United States to join the forward march of history and put the knife to the lie that the George Meany's and other reactionary clowns represent our aspirations. The time has come where in every major city across this country, the pavement must ripple as workers take to the streets in step with the working class and revolutionary people the world over.

By May 1st, people everywhere will be marking the days off on their calendars, anxiously looking toward its approach. The mood will be tense, all eyes glued to the streets. Many, although a minority, will not punch in to the normal routine on that day. In the mines, factories and fields, there will be many people who "fail to report." Classrooms will be vacated, the unemployment offices emptied, because many will have found a job to do. These thousands will set fire to the aspirations of millions more who on that day may be on their porches but tomorrow will bust out, guns in hand, to seize hold of the future. On that day shrieks of deep-felt liberating enthusiasm will interrupt prime-time TV and jolt people out of complacency. And of course there will be some, the more backward, who will be volunteering for overtime but this too will be nothing but a sign of success.

## Regional Conferences

Soon, workers and others hungry for change will be gathering in conferences on the East and West Coast, and in the Midwest and South. These meetings of the most advanced, the most aware and the most ready are absolutely necessary. The Mao Tsetung Defendants are scheduled to stand trial on November 19. To make revolutionary May Day a reality, the historic event it can be, we must start now. The issues must be debated, problems discussed, the orientation set, and plans made now to make the biggest drive possible. Thousands cannot be reached and mobilized if the many hundreds don't set out today and organize themselves. In the 1980s, pent-up contradictions of this system will explode, shattering the normal routine and sweeping away all the petty and trivial things they try to keep people preoccupied with. Already, workers look far beyond their next paycheck; many burn to find the way out.

It won't be easy. But we are daring people to dream, to trip out, and then dare some more to make it real. Seize the Time!

Revolutionary Communist Party  
National United Workers Organization  
Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee  
Vietnam Veterans Against the War

## COMMITTEE TO FREE THE MAO TSETUNG DEFENDANTS

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or

Contact the local committees in your area c/o the Revolutionary Worker (see address on page 2)



## This System Is Doomed Let's Finish It Off!

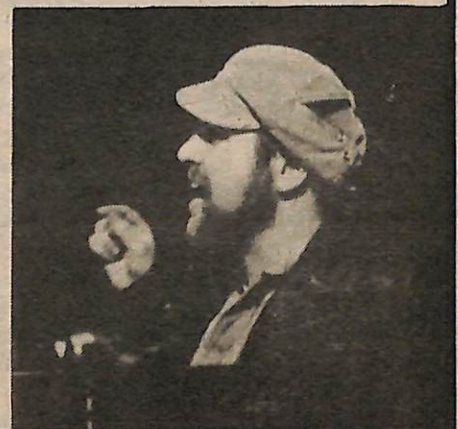
Speech by Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party at May Day rally, May 5, 1979 in Washington D.C. Includes historic call for revolutionary May Day demonstrations on May 1st, 1980.

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## Plotting Against Party Chairman Continues

## L.A. Times Admits "Mistake"

In the *Los Angeles Times*, Sunday September 9, a correction appeared under the heading, "For the Record"; and in it the *Times* admitted:

"In a *Times* story August 19 on the Revolutionary Communist Party, the following remark by Party Chairman Bob Avakian should have been attributed to an interview with a *Times* reporter: 'I mean we won't kill some dumb jerk just because he jumped us for passing out our paper. He can probably be reeducated. But it's another story with these hired thugs and killers, like the police...and the leaders of this country, like Mr. Carter!' The remark which was incorrectly attributed to Avakian's speech at the convention center, was part of his description of the policies his Party would follow if it were to come to power."

This retraction, finally wrung out of the *Times* after two weeks of struggle, does not refer to some minor typographical error. Even though this correction still contains distortion, it basically represents the newspaper being forced to back down from its previous invented and dangerous statements. The original article was written in such a way that the fabricated quote could be potentially used to frame up Bob Avakian on felony charges, on a special federal law against threatening the life of the President. (See *RW*, August 31) By including the last sentence of the retraction, the *L.A. Times* removed all but the most far-fetched and politically self-exposing "legal" basis for accusing the Chairman of this charge. Desperate as they are, they still might try something. But if the government were to proceed against Chairman Avakian now it would be even more clear to all that the "threat" they are afraid of is political—not some individual assassination, but political revolution. It is the threat represented by the RCP leading the masses in making revolution to overthrow their rule.

The *Times* has taken a hard line on the obviously made up little story. First, the article had clearly made up a whole scene around this quote. Tapes of the speech that had nothing even vaguely of this sort on them were in the possession of the *Times*. But the article even created a whole crowd scene around the "quote" and followed it immediately with the sentence, "The crowd cheered."

After it was clearly pointed out to the *L.A. Times*, both that there had been no such statement in the speech and there could be serious legal ramifications off the quote, their spokesman stiffened his back, making statements "sticking by" their story. In fact they refused to talk to the RCP further about the matter. They characterized the RCP press conference, called the following week to protest the *Times* action, as a "dog and pony show." Even after at least one radio station picked up the story and asked the *Times* for a statement, they still stuck by their article. And two days before they printed the retraction, their lawyer could be heard trying to talk the RCP out of pressing the issue, saying that the Party should just let the thing blow over now, implying that they might write something worse—another ridiculous distortion.

Does the *Times* deal with all its misstatements in this manner? Hardly. During the same period of time, an article appeared on Clayton Moore, the Lone Ranger, in which it contained a description of Jay Silverheels (the actor who played Tonto, his Indian sidekick) as being confined to a wheelchair and living in a rest home. Within four days, the *Times* took pains to print a complete retraction stating that even after he had suffered a heart attack, Silverheels had never been confined to a wheelchair and did not live in a rest home. Clearly, the Avakian article was a special case.

This was further proven on Septem-

ber 7 when the RCP brought the case to the federal court, attempting to get an injunction against the government moving on the Chairman on the basis of the misquote. The government sent three U.S. Attorneys to argue against granting the injunction. When the court clerk walked into the room, he said to them, "I see you brought out the big guns." One of the government lawyers responded, "It's a big case. I hope you don't want to go home early." Of course, U.S. District Judge Malcom Lucas refused to grant the injunction, claiming that the Party had 1) failed to show the situation could result in "irreparable injury" to the Chairman; 2) failed to show conspiracy between the *L.A. Times* and the FBI; and 3) failed to prove there was an "active investigation" going on around the quote. Here was some real "Catch 22"—the government was saying, "Prove what we're up to." When presented with evidence of government harassment of revolutionaries in the past, such as the Black Panther Party leader David Hilliard who was charged with this "threatening" crime, the government lawyer replied, "But J. Edgar Hoover is not a defendant in this action, Bill Webster (current head of the FBI) is. Don't you think there's been some changes since Hoover died?"

Now judge, why is it that even with your old buddy "Bill" in charge, the FBI admits that it is conducting an "active investigation" of the RCP? And how come no current documents on the RCP are available even under the Freedom of Information Act because to release them would be a "dangerous security breach" according to government sources?

## Times Still Won't Print Truth

The *Times* subsequent retraction will undoubtedly make it more difficult for the government to proceed with a "criminal case" based on that particular quote. Yet the fact that the newspaper still sticks by the quote itself, which even a *Times* spokesman admits is more the reporter's summation of the lengthy discussion than a direct quote (which accounts for the use of "...") in the article shows that they remain dedicated to creating public opinion for the ruling class that the

RCP is a bunch of "crazies" and not a serious revolutionary party.

In fact the part of the discussion referred to in the article was prompted by the reporter's own relatively general question about the Party's policy towards the ruling class and its hired enforcers after the seizure of state power. In particular, the reporter expressed concern about the executions that were taking place in Iran and wondered if the Party would do things in the same way.

Bob Avakian answered by pointing out that in the main those executed in Iran had been vicious butchers and torturers of the Iranian people, the generals and colonels who had ordered the murders of 10,000 peaceful demonstrators in Tehran in one day, who had tortured political prisoners for months and sometimes years at a time. The only fate that people like that could look forward to with the rise of the masses to power, was exactly what they were receiving in Iran, and our Party supported these measures. He also pointed out that upon seizing power the RCP would not do things like Khomeini who after all is not a communist. (Of course, Khomeini was beginning to stop executing reactionaries and start in on revolutionaries.) But in dealing with the reactionaries, the RCP would bring criminals like these before the masses of people, not conduct secret trials in the back room somewhere, since this was the only way that the masses could fully participate in deciding the fate of those who had kept them in chains; and it was also the only real way to sort out who were really arch enemies of the people and those who were lesser criminals or were themselves victims of the system and could be reeducated under a society where the working class ruled.

The *Times* reporter—not the Chairman—raised the question of Carter, describing him as "well intentioned but bumbling." Chairman Avakian pointed out that the only intentions of big time ruling class politicians like Carter were to figure out the best way to maintain capitalist rule over the masses and its inevitable exploitation and oppression. People like that would be treated accordingly when the masses had overthrown their rule. But the statement by the Chairman involved no particular people now in office, only statements on the

ruling class in general and its armed enforcers, once the people took power. In fact, at such a time, there would be no chief-butcher office of President. This, in fact, not assassinations which they themselves carry out against one another, is exactly what the ruling class really fears.

It's the political threat of that situation becoming a reality that has led the capitalists to attempt every "legal" maneuver they can to stop the RCP. Since the publication of the *L.A. Times* article, as if by coincidence, all kinds of questions about possible attempts on the lives of the government officials have been popping up. In one city on the Chairman's speaking tour, a reporter asked him, seemingly out of the blue, *if you had a gun and Jimmy Carter walked by on the street would you shoot him?* Comrade Avakian answered, "No." The aim of these persistent, annoying questions along this line is all the more obvious to anyone who has bothered to clean the wax from their ears and the sleep from their eyes, listen to what the Chairman of the RCP, Bob Avakian, has to say or read the literature of the Party concerning the Party's strategy for revolution. The stand of the RCP is for the armed overthrow of the capitalist system in this country by the uprising of the masses in their millions and the Party's strategy has never included the assassination of individuals. But despite this fact, the questions continue and sometimes they are quite revealing.

A very amusing example of the same kind occurred recently when the Chairman appeared on a radio talk show in Rochester, New York. The show's host asked, "What is the Party going to do about the leaders of the Klan and the Nazis?" The Chairman answered, "Upon seizing power, we would execute them." A few minutes later the talk show host said, "Now Bob, you just said you would execute the heads of our government..."

Plots? To be sure. But the question is, ladies and gentlemen of the press, who is plotting against whom? Never confuse the plotting of a handful of bloodsuckers with the subversive activities of millions in the proletarian revolution. ■



The cartoon above was sent to the *Revolutionary Worker* by a reader who was inspired by an article in a past issue of the paper. The article referred to the "Communist" Party Marxist-Leninist (CPML) and the League of Revolutionary Struggle's promotion of a "Chicano spiritual walk" complete with pictures of the Virgin of Guadalupe, with the theme "love the people, don't hate the enemy."



Sept. 16—Mexican Independence Day

# IS MEXICO INDEPENDENT?

Mexican Independence Day, September 16 is a proud day in the history of the Mexican people. On that day in 1810, ringing church bells in the village of Dolores signaled to the people that the anti-Spanish rebellion had begun. After 11 years of heavy fighting, the Spanish had been driven out. This was a great victory in a proud Mexican revolutionary tradition that also brought victories over the French in 1867, and over the landlords and the Diaz regime in 1911.

But the struggle for Mexican independence is still not over. Today the Mexican people are in the iron grip of U.S. imperialism, which dominates Mexico completely.

The *Wall Street Journal* very clearly summed up U.S.-Mexican relations. "The U.S. wields so much leverage in so many ways that it basically holds life or death powers over the republic, whether it's polite to admit it or not." In other words, they may name their streets "Villa," "Zapata" or even "Revolución," but Mexico belongs to Uncle Sam.

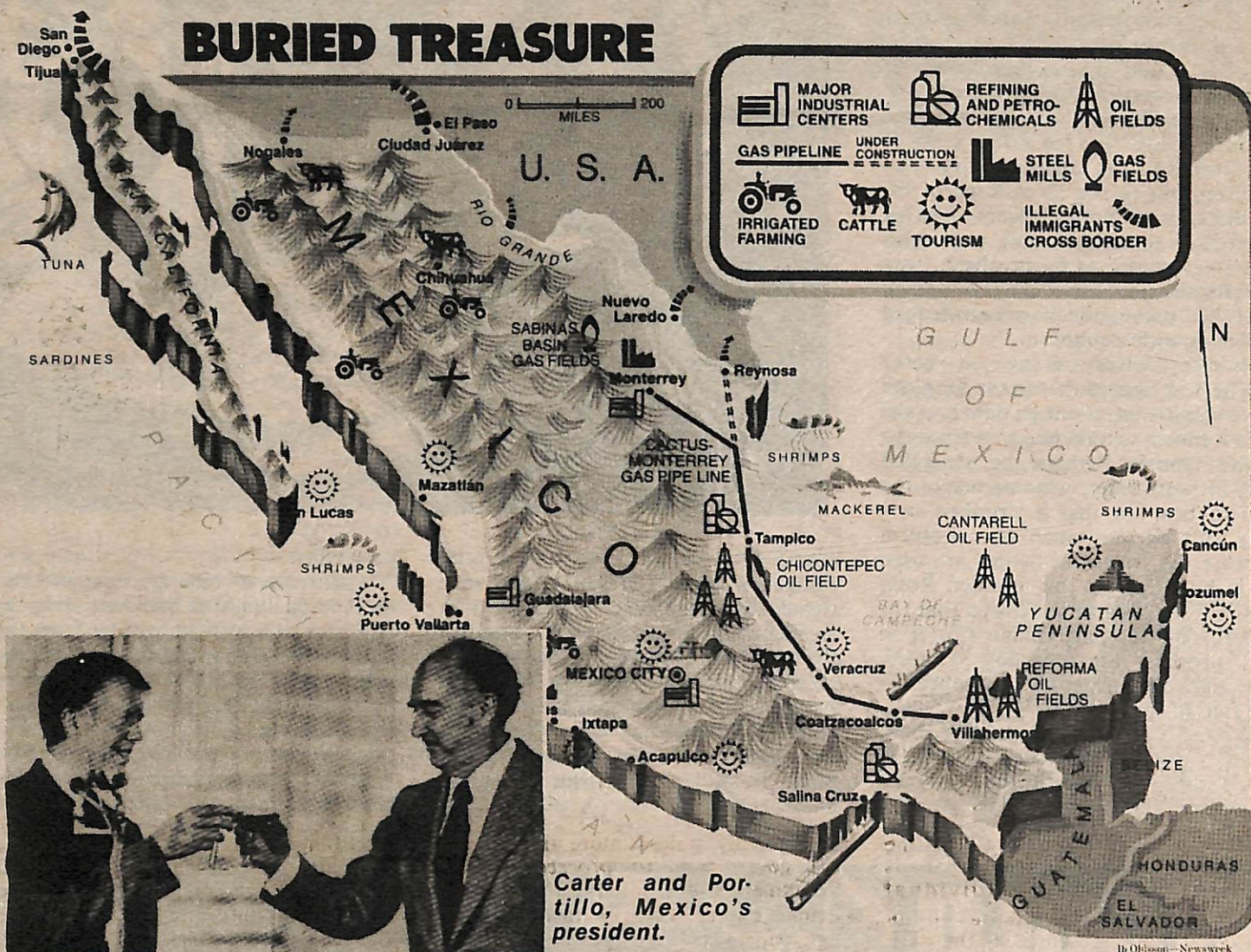
Mexico is supposedly wielding its "oil weapon" against U.S. domination. But what is called a weapon is really a bigger chain being tightened around the necks of the people. Development of the oil fields requires massive investment and technology, equipment and trained personnel. There is no way that Mexico can even begin to pay for that investment, except by massive loans from the U.S. and other imperialist sources. Mexico's total foreign debt, both public and private, by 1976 was already over 30 billion dollars.

U.S. government and private banks have been happy to provide loans for oil development: the U.S. Export-Import Bank, for example, recently voted one billion dollars in loans to develop Mexican oil and agriculture. Almost 70% of Mexico's foreign debt is owed to U.S. banks and the U.S. government. Currently projected export levels of 1 million barrels of oil per day will just cover the \$5 billion per year interest on foreign debts. Not a penny of this oil revenue will go to the people.

Increasing foreign debt brings increasing control of Mexico by the U.S. New loans have to be taken out to repay old ones, and this is where American finance capitalists call the shots; if they don't like what's going on in the country, either economically or politically, no more loans.

What imperialist domination of Mexico means for the Mexican people can be sharply seen in agriculture. U.S. agribusiness interests control vast acreage, especially in the fertile Northwest of Mexico, and those farms that are not controlled directly by U.S. com-

An imperialist's eye view of Mexico—a map recently run in *Newsweek* illustrates the appetite of 20th century U.S. pirates for ever expanding exploitation.



panies are heavily in debt to U.S. finance capital. Huge areas of land have been abandoned because they are not profitable enough, and the richest lands are being converted from wheat and corn to high-profit cash crops like sugar, coffee, tobacco and marijuana. Once a food-exporting country, Mexico now must import basic foodstuffs. The result is that soaring food prices have led to starvation and malnutrition among the people. Mechanization of agriculture and the ruin of thousands of small farm owners are causing massive unemployment in the Mexican countryside. 50% of Mexico's work force is either unemployed or earning too little to survive.

The same imperialism that forces people off their land throughout Mexico tightens the screws of exploitation on them in the border areas. The U.S. government deliberately keeps immigration quotas and short-term work passes ("green cards") at a low level, creating a special group of workers—"illegals"—who, under the threat of

deportation, are forced to accept the lowest wages and the most miserable conditions when they work in the U.S. Or, if they are lucky, they can stay on the Mexican side of the border and work in a U.S.-owned *maquiladora* (sweatshop) there. Jorge Bustamante, a U.S.-trained Mexican government sociologist, is calling for a belt of *maquiladoras* extending 100 miles inland on the Mexican side of the border; that way, Mexican workers would have better opportunities to be exploited by U.S. imperialism without having to cross the border. Last weekend in a speech to the California legislature in Sacramento, Governor Roberto de la Madrid of the Mexican border state of Baja California endorsed this "border belt" plan, calling it a "fence of factories." Other Mexican officials and businessmen are calling for *maquiladoras* throughout Mexico. They're looking toward an intensified imperialist domination to solve the problem of unemployment, which is caused by imperialism in the first place.

How does U.S. imperialism physically enforce its domination of Mexico? There are no U.S. army bases. U.S. military aid today is less than 3% of Mexico's military budget. In a book written in 1975, a former CIA agent in Mexico named Philip Agee explained the U.S.'s low-profile approach: "Mexican security forces are so effective... that we don't have to worry. If the government were less effective, we would of course get going to promote repression." As of 1975, over 200 CIA agents were in Mexico, presumably to make sure the Mexican security goons remained "effective."

The true features of Mexico's "revolutionary" government were revealed to the world in October, 1968. In the face of powerful student demonstrations that would have embarrassed both the Mexican government and its U.S. masters, the "effective" Mexican security forces were unleashed on the student rally in Mexico City's Tlatelolco

Square, firing machine guns from rooftops and helicopters, murdering more than 300 students.

Today the most common method the Mexican government uses to effectively squelch protest is to make the popular leaders disappear. According to the Committee of Relatives of Disappeared Persons in Mexico, 426 have disappeared after detention. Also, widespread use of torture continues.

And, of course, when an American-owned company in Mexico calls for help, Mexican authorities jump. In January, 20 workers at a Rockwell plant in Mexicali were arrested and held incommunicado. They had been organizing a strike to protest arbitrary firings of workers and contract violations.

The anger of the Mexican people against U.S. domination was clearly seen at the El Paso-Juarez border crossing last March. When 500 Mexican maids had their green cards revoked so they couldn't cross to their jobs on pay day, they and others blocked the border-crossing bridges and threw the American flag into the river.

Faced with the powerful anti-imperialist feelings of its people, the Mexican government has worked hard to develop an image of "independence" from the U.S., opposing many of the U.S.'s tactical moves but all the while basically defending U.S. interests. In 1972, for example, the government reopened diplomatic relations with China and Albania, seemingly against U.S. wishes, and they maintained relations with Cuba throughout the U.S. economic blockade. But the U.S. rulers didn't get too upset by all this; in fact, they were quite understanding. As they summed it up in the 1975 U.S. Army handbook on Mexico, "...Mexico has felt obliged to steer a difficult course of asserting independence from the U.S., as the popular sentiment has demanded, without placing intolerable strains on their basically cordial relations. There have been obvious limits to the

Continued on page 14



1974, Mexican police called out to join the company and union hacks in breaking a strike at General Electric.



# Kennedy Gets OK from THE FAMILY

Last week, the news leaked out that the one remaining obstacle on the road to the Democratic Party's Convention next summer for Teddy Kennedy as a presidential candidate has been removed. His family has given their consent for him to run.

Teddy is said to have been torn over all this. According to the *New York Times*, the family's consent was key because Teddy "has felt a deep sense of responsibility not only to his own children, but to the 13 children of his brothers, to his mother's fears of losing a third son to assassination, and to his wife's reluctance to be involved, even peripherally, in a Presidential campaign after her own publicly acknowledged problems with alcoholism."

Hmmm, what's going on here? Maybe Ted figured that in the long run more significant moral guidance to the little Kennedys could be given from the White House. Perhaps he struggled with his wife Joan, winning her to the correct position that a drunken first lady isn't all that much of a problem because the American people are used to it by now. As for mother Rose, possibly she became convinced that the benefits of dumping Lillian Carter in the process of dumping Jimmy, outweighs the danger of Teddy meeting the fate of his brothers.

While it's amusing to speculate about Teddy's domestic problems, behind all this is some *real* family business. We are witnessing the beginnings of an even



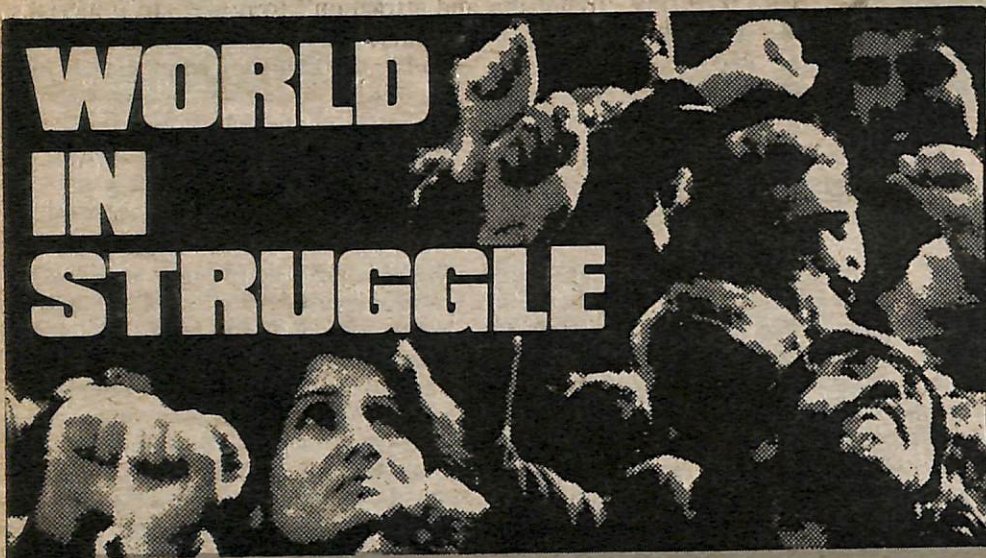
more well orchestrated presidential campaign than the show we were treated to in 1976. The "leak" of a Kennedy associate last week comes on the heels of obvious signs that the ruling class has slated Carter for the scrap heap. Jimmy's image has been tarnished and it's clear that he won't cut it in the presidential role during the turbulent years they see ahead. They've decided to test out Kennedy as a

possibility.

Apparently all have agreed to even let the Chappaquiddick incident sink, as reference to it is clearly absent from the press these days. But that's nothing new. All these politicians have more than a few skeletons in the closet which can be revealed or concealed, depending on the needs of the ruling class. After all, Watergate didn't start making headlines until the bourgeoisie had

decided to dump Nixon, some time after the break-in actually took place.

A continuing effort is being made to convince us that presidential material is born of parlor discussions between mom and son. But aside from the opinions of Rose, Joan and the kiddies, apparently THE FAMILY has indeed given Kennedy its "consent." ■



## Rhodesian Troops Invade Mozambique

Last week, Zimbabwe-Rhodesia's neo-colonial government headed by Abel Muzorewa launched a major attack with ground troops and French Mirage jets into the country of Mozambique against the Mozambique Army as well as guerrillas of the Zimbabwean Patriotic Front. This is the first time in a decade of guerrilla war that Rhodesian puppet troops have directly attacked the regular troops of a neighboring country. During the 3 day invasion, Zimbabwe-Rhodesian authorities said 16 major targets were destroyed or damaged, including bases claimed to be jointly occupied by Mozambican troops and ZANU freedom fighters. They also claimed more than 300 Mozambican regulars and guerrillas were killed while 15 attackers died, including 13 who were shot down in a helicopter. Mozambique defense officials said a number of civilians were killed along the Limpopo River.

Muzorewa's military headquarters said the attacks had been launched because of an alleged "threat of incursions" into Zimbabwe by Mozambique troops who were aiding guerrillas in an attempt "to shorten the war." But clearly this outrageous aggression was intended as a show of strength by the Muzorewa government on the eve of the British sponsored "constitutional conference" on Zimbabwe-Rhodesia in London, a ploy to improve its bargaining position against Patriotic Front leaders, Robert Mugabe of ZANU and Joshua Nkomo of ZAPU, who are attending the conference. The sham "majority rule" presided over by Muzorewa is so thoroughly discredited that Britain Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was forced to call a meeting of Commonwealth countries in Lusaka, Zambia last month to gain approval for the imperialists' latest proposal to reshuffle a deck already rigged in their favor.

The Lusaka plan calls for a ceasefire, a new constitution and new "free and fair" elections, supervised by the British while, of course, retaining as yet unspecified "safeguards" for the ruling white minority to preserve their economic and political power. Although the plan would attempt to include the Patriotic Front, it is no more than a shabbily disguised instant replay of the present "internal settlement" which maintains white minority control of the

army, judiciary, police and public services and gives them 28 out of 100 seats in parliament.

As Muzorewa arrived in London for the conference, he piously declared: "It is only a confused fool or a liar who can believe that anyone is still fighting for freedom in my country," But this latest desperate attack against the Zimbabwean liberation struggle which has stepped up in recent weeks, and those who are aiding it, only reveals that while this fool of the U.S. and British imperialists may not be confused, he is most definitely a liar.

## Hunger Strike in Chile

This September 11 marks the sixth anniversary of the U.S.-sponsored coup which brought military rule to Chile. Such highly objective rich man's mouthpieces such as the *New York Times* have pronounced the six years of bloody terror a success, citing the "enthusiasm of foreign (U.S.) bankers who have poured in more than \$2 billion in loans" to set up new industries to enslave and bleed the Chilean people. Exxon, Superior Oil, Anaconda and Falconbridge have all recently announced that they are considering opening copper mines in Chile, so that more than ever it will be one great big copper mine for American imperialists. Overthrowing the Allende government that tried to nationalize foreign control of Chile's industry, and unleashing a campaign of terror that has resulted in the murder of 30,000 workers, peasants and other Chileans is considered sound business practice.

But despite intense repression, the Chilean people have continued to wage resistance, and this resistance has been stepped up lately. Since September 3, over 100 people, relatives of some of the more than 2500 Chileans who have "disappeared" at the hands of Chile's secret police, have defied the regime by holding a hunger strike. These protests are taking place at the Danish Embassy, the UNICEF Office and churches in various places in Santiago. Some of the strikers are young boys. The arrest of 63 members of the Group of Relatives of Disappeared Prisoners in a public protest last April, and the recent death threats against group members by a new fascist secret death squad have failed to halt these public acts of defiance. Widespread acts of resistance were expected to take place on September 11 itself.

## Italian Youth Storm Rock Stage

Bologna, Italy. September 9. Thousands of Italian youth had packed the Bologna Soccer Stadium for the evening rock concert, headlined by Patti Smith and her band. But when Patti Smith raised a gigantic American flag backdrop in the middle of her act, this was too much.

The audience went wild at the sight of U.S. imperialism's banner being flaunted in their face. The stadium seats emptied as people stormed the stage. Within minutes, the former flag had been torn to shreds, reduced to red, white and blue scraps scattered across the field.

Patti, in desperation, tried to cool off the fury of the crowd by playing a hard-rock version of the *Internationale*, the international communist anthem. But the rage continued as people tore up the soccer field.

No doubt Patti, who likes to deal in weird ambiguities, has her tripped out justifications for flaunting the American flag at many of her performances. But the Italian youth who attended her concert know quite clearly what the red, white, and blue stands for and took the appropriate action. In Bologna, Patti got nailed.



FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA  
PRESENTS


# Apocalypse Now

"I'm still in Saigon. Shit."

Captain Willard has nothing to live for any more but his mission. Trapped in a seedy Saigon walk-up waiting for orders, waiting for a mission, he feels the attraction and repulsion of the jungle. The river sucks him upstream. His wild ritualized drunken dance, climaxed by smashing his fist into the dresser mirror and sinking into unconsciousness, smeared with his own blood, introduces the first major symbol of the most self-consciously symbolic film of recent years: "Apocalypse Now."

Director Francis Coppola spent four years and \$35 million making the movie. He claims the film became an obsession with him. There is no reason to doubt the truth of this. His themes are obsessive. Coppola set out to make the definitive film on the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. For his plot he adopted Joseph Conrad's famous short novel, *Heart of Darkness*, as a basic structure. On the surface, it might seem a logical choice. Set in the Congo, the action of *Heart of Darkness* unfolds in the midst of the vicious colonial plunder, the ivory trade, described by Conrad's narrator, Marlowe, as "just robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a great scale, and men going at it blind—as is very proper for those who tackle a darkness. The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much..."

But Conrad's tale is not an indictment or exposure of imperialism in a political sense. It is a story of a highly civilized, intellectual administrator of the ivory trade, Kurtz, stationed deep in the heart of the Congo, who discovers in the primitive world of savagery and darkness "the horror, the horror," of his own soul. The jungle is like a solvent which strips away the thin veneer of civilization and leaves exposed only a throbbing, primitive evil which unites European imperialism and African barbarism in a spiritual whole. Conrad's Kurtz sets himself up as a jungle God, and employs his devoted native followers in committing hideous atrocities only vaguely sketched in the story. Before his madness, Kurtz had been working on a learned treatise on the "suppression of savage customs." Sinking into disease and death, he scrawls in a fevered postscript to the report: "Kill the brutes! Exterminate them all!"

Captain Willard says in *Apocalypse Now*, "After my first tour in Vietnam, the only thing I wanted was to go home. When I got home, the only thing I wanted was to get back to the jungle." Still in Saigon. Shit. Captain Willard is a hero. Willard needs not simply a mission; he needs a quest. He has glimpsed something. Seen something—"... Things. Things." Willard has a Marlboro clinched between his teeth, he lies on his bunk, he stares at a snapshot of his wife. "When I was back home, I didn't say a word to my wife until I said 'yes' to a divorce." Willard draws the snapshot to his face, and burns a hole through his wife with the glowing end of his cigarette.

Boots on the staircase. Two spec-4's with orders for Captain Willard. They find him in his destroyed home covered with blood and stale brandy.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Death and Resurrection (The Golden Bough, by Sir James Frazer): "The mystic kings of fire and water in Cambodia are not allowed to die a natural death. Hence when one of them falls seriously ill and the elders think that he cannot recover, they stab him to death. The people of Congo believed... that if their pontiff... were to die a natural death, the world would perish... Accordingly when he fell ill and seemed likely to die, his prospective successor entered his house with a rope or club and strangled or bludgeoned him to death."*

"They worshiped Colonel Kurtz... as a god. He is up there, somewhere in Cambodia with his Montagnard army... still commanding troops... beyond any bounds of acceptable human conduct..." The general concludes his classified briefing over roast beef with Captain Willard. The general's aide spells out Willard's mission: "... terminate the Colonel's command." Terminate. "Terminate with extreme prejudice." Terminate the colonel. "You understand this mission does not exist. It will never exist."

Though *Heart of Darkness* provided Coppola with a basic theme, he did not content himself with a mechanical retelling of the story, merely changing the locale and time. Conrad's Congo was utterly alien to the vast majority of his readers, and few of them challenged the assumptions behind imperialism; Conrad was not dealing with a major war or a crisis which

# M I R R O R I N T H E H E A R T O F D A R K N E S S

by J. Samuels

had rocked the nation when he wrote his novel in 1902.

Coppola has stated that he sought a "catharsis" with *Apocalypse Now*, a means by which "the experience, the tragedy, the dilemma" of Vietnam could be at once grasped and "put behind us." Coppola was becoming fascinated with ambiguity. He also found stirring within himself an ambivalence, a combined "repulsion and attraction" to power, to imperialism, to war, to slaughter. This ambivalence is a persistent feature of Coppola's work; it showed up clearly in *The Godfather* epics, in which Coppola combines some exposures of the links of the Mafia to the corrupt capitalist system as a whole, with a sympathetic rendering which allows the viewer to vicariously identify with the mob and participate in the passion of power, blood, and good Italian food which seems to make up the lives of these "attractive" characters.

It is ironic that in *Apocalypse Now*, the epic in which Coppola invested his entire *Godfather* fortune in order to produce it with complete artistic independence, the film with which he sought to create both a major anti-war political statement and a brilliant artistic achievement, Coppola lost control, and was dragged under by the dark currents of reactionary ideology. The result is a film entirely dependent on obscure religious symbolism and threadbare idealist theories of the "evilness of human nature."

It was inevitable, then, that Coppola would turn to the likes of T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland* and *The Hollow Men*. Eliot, a religious fanatic and, in his own words, a "monarchist, aristocratic Anglo-Catholic," wrote these poems in the early '20s following World War I, at a time when the European intelligentsia was filled with a sense of numbness, hopelessness and shock after the great war that had destroyed the apparent stability of the imperialist world. Eliot was obsessed himself with the writings of Conrad—"Mistah Kurtz—he dead" introduces *The Hollow Men* (which Marlon Brando's Colonel Kurtz reads aloud in the film), and the first draft of *The Wasteland* had another quote from Conrad at the end, until Eliot's editor, Ezra Pound (a crackpot fascist who worked for the Italian propaganda service during World War 2), insisted that it be deleted.

But to Eliot, the "heart of darkness" was to be found in decayed European civilization itself. This theme must have appealed to Coppola as analogous to the cynicism and decadence that gripped American culture in the aftermath of the Vietnam conflict. There was nothing progressive in Eliot's critique of European decadence, however. The central metaphor Eliot drew on comes from the mythology of the quest for the Holy Grail, in which the land has become a Waste Land because of a grave wound sustained by the king (resulting in castration and symbolizing the loss and infertility of the land, though the wound is sometimes euphemistically described as a "wasting disease," old age, etc.)

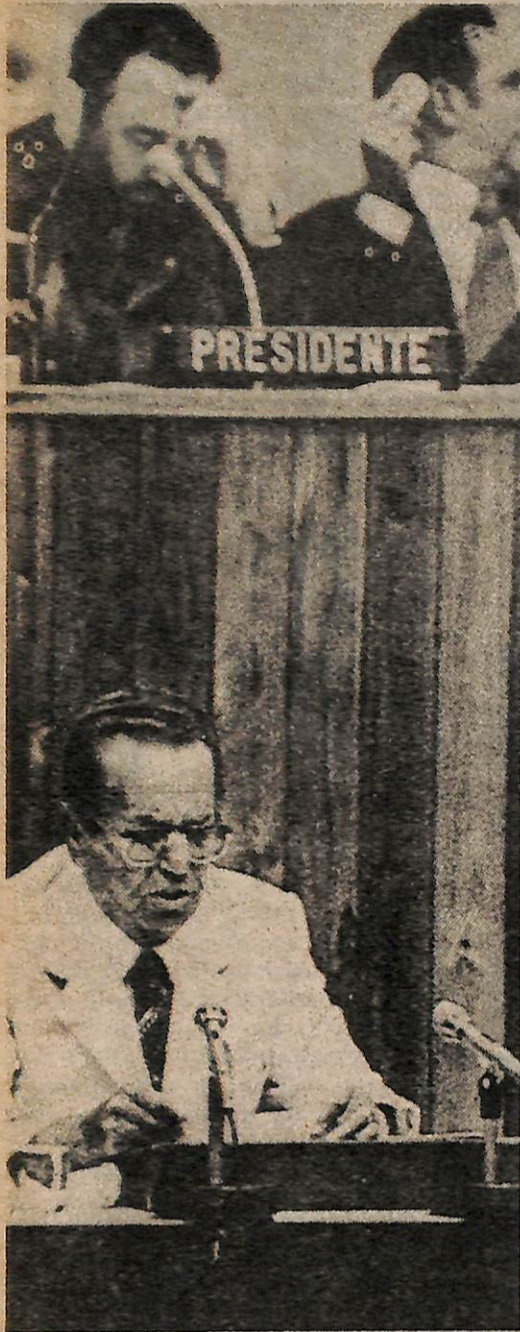
Eliot openly stated that mankind had reached its peak in the Middle Ages, when the church exercised absolute control and church and state power were one. To him, the Waste Land of European civilization

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# Blocs Collide at Non-Aligned

## Meeting



Fidel Castro (top) and Tito (bottom)

The sixth triennial conference of nonaligned countries ended Sunday, September 9, in Havana, a day and a half after it was scheduled to close. As was clear from the start, the conference had nothing to do with "independence" or "nonalignment," and everything to do with superpower rivalry between the U.S. and Soviet imperialists. This characterized every debate and every decision at the conference. The meeting had to be extended because the participating countries, all of which claim to be "nonaligned," found themselves sharply divided into two opposing camps, making it virtually impossible to reach a consensus on two key issues.

The first was the question of who to recognize as the legitimate government of Kampuchea (Cambodia), the current regime of Heng Samrin, a Soviet puppet installed by Vietnam after its invasion of Kampuchea last January, or the Pol Pot government, the legitimate government of Kampuchea, which had been ousted by the Vietnamese.

Cuba, the conference host and head of the "nonaligned movement" for the next three years, led the Soviet-dominated forces in demanding recognition of the Heng Samrin government. Tito of Yugoslavia, who played front man for the U.S. at the conference, called for the recognition of Pol Pot.

There was widespread opposition to the Heng Samrin regime, but Tito nonetheless found himself in a bind in supporting Pol Pot. Before its ouster in January, the Pol Pot government had not lined up behind either the U.S. or the Soviet Union, and there was no

clear indication that it would. The revolutionary government had kicked out invading U.S. forces during the last days of the Vietnam war and was in the process of unifying and rebuilding its war-ravaged country, withstanding tremendous pressure and a vicious propaganda assault from the U.S., when the Soviet-backed Vietnamese invasion drove it, at least temporarily, from power.

Since January, the U.S. has been pushing for a third alternative in Kampuchea—preferably former Prince Sihanouk, with whom they feel they can deal. But Sihanouk was not invited to the Havana conference, so U.S. bloc forces had to back Pol Pot by default.

After a long and heated debate, during which each side accused the other of fronting for a war-mongering superpower (in this instance, they were both correct), the conference decided not to recognize either government of Kampuchea, and instead turned the matter over to a special committee which is supposed to "study" the question and report back in two years. As expected, both sides claimed "victory."

The other point of hot contention was whether or not to suspend Egypt from the nonaligned movement for signing a separate peace treaty with Israel during the U.S.-sponsored Camp David talks earlier this year. Even as the debate went on, Egypt's president Sadat was meeting with Israeli prime minister Begin in a continuation of the betrayal and backstabbing of the Palestinian people for which Sadat has become notorious.

Despite widespread resentment of Sadat's role, even among pro-U.S. forces at the conference, the realities of superpower contention asserted themselves and the conference settled on an "energetic condemnation" rather

than a suspension of Egypt. Ironically, the compromise was suggested by none other than Yasir Arafat, head of the Palestine Liberation Organization, who currently leans heavily toward the Soviet Union but is enough of a pragmatist to realize the advisability of keeping his options open. "It was enough," said Arafat in an interview after the conference ended, that the delegates had condemned Egypt's actions. "I am very satisfied."

The Havana conference ended with the adoption of a final declaration which had been an underlying point of contention from the beginning. The first draft of the declaration, in keeping with tradition, was written and submitted to the conference by the host country, and Cuba had used the opportunity to dish up a windy indictment of U.S. imperialism and reverent praise of the Soviet Union as the "natural ally of the developing nations." Tito and the pro-U.S. forces flew into a rage, and the ensuing tug of war produced a final declaration that referred to both imperialism (meaning the U.S.) and hegemony (the code word for the Soviet Union).

The participating countries stated their desire to "free the world from war, the policy of force, blocs and bloc politics, military bases, pacts and interlocking alliances, the policy of domination and hegemony," etc. But the heavy hand of superpower domination and rabid contention that determined every move the delegates made was exposed in the nature of the resolutions that were passed, along with the closing statement that was made, showing that the superpower contention which characterized the conference will continue and intensify despite all the pious words and hypocritical statements to the contrary. ■

### North Dallas Forty Reprisals

# NFL Acting Out the Role

The recent response of the National Football League to the movie "North Dallas Forty" would make a nice epilogue to the movie or a chapter of the book. In actions exactly like those of the North Dallas management in the story by Peter Gent, the owners, stung by the book and movie's biting exposure, have moved to take reprisals on some of the football players who appeared in the movie. Tom Fears, Fred Biletnikoff and Tommy Reamon have been the first to be hit by the counter-attack.

In the eyes of the NFL, Fears, Biletnikoff and Reamon made the key error of appearing in a film that exposed some of the dirty innards of pro football's class relationships and pissed off the entire league's front offices. (See RW—Sept. 6). Fears, who was an ad-

visor to three football clubs, was dropped by all three in a week's time with no reason given. Reamon, whom O.J. Simpson described as one of the best running backs in the San Francisco 49'er camp, was cut from a team notoriously weak at that position. Biletnikoff, the NFL's fourth all-time leading receiver, was sent packing from the Oakland Raiders, a team he had played with for over 14 years. And since their releases, none of them have even gotten close to a job in football.

Reamon stated at a recent press conference, "I know Rozelle (the football commissioner) is behind this. 'Tex' Schramm (president of the Cowboys) and Clint Murchison (Dallas Cowboy owner) are powerful men. I could be the best back in the whole nation and none of these teams would even let me get

close. I'm being blackballed."

Some players who were contacted about appearing in the film backed off sensing that it had the potential of making the wrong people angry. Dallas defensive linebacker Thomas Henderson said, "It wouldn't be good for me...for my standing with the NFL. I'm smarter than that. A skin film would be better than that."

Pete Rozelle and nearly all of the football owners have gone on record as hating the film and, in fact, tried to prevent "North Dallas Forty" from getting any exposure even before it became

a movie. In 1974 when the publishers of the book on which the movie is based tried to get television time for a commercial spot, two of the three TV networks refused and the other ran the commercial once. The three networks combined do over \$500 million a year in business with the NFL.

As to the charge of blackballing, Rozelle boomed, "Absolutely ridiculous. Only good players play in this league." As in all businesses, the "good players," or employees, are those who don't make waves, do as they're told, and don't get in the way of the capitalists making big profits. Fears, Reamon and Biletnikoff didn't play by these rules, so they are no longer all-Americans. In fact, they've been thrown out of the game. ■



Tommy Reamon (right) with Nick Nolte, in a scene from North Dallas 40.

## Kalamazoo, Michigan Cops Get Kicks, Take Licks

**Kalamazoo, Michigan.** On September 7, about 1,000 students from Western Michigan University were gathered at a traditional spot for a party, that is, until the cops arrived at 9:30 p.m. demanding that the music be turned down. Over a bullhorn, they barked orders for the crowd to disperse. The students chanted their answer: "Bullshit, bullshit. Go home. Go home."

Preparing for an all-out attack, 75 state police, county sheriffs, city police and campus cops congregated in a nearby parking lot preparing their gas masks, shields and other riot gear. They were ribbing each other in friendly rivalry over which of them would "crack the most skulls."

In formation, they advanced on the students. One eyewitness said that as police attacked with clubs flying, the students scattered and then regrouped themselves into brigades to surround

the cops and counterattack. The students threw rocks, bottles, cans, garbage and cherry bombs. Finally, after nine cops sustained injuries, they dispersed the students with tear gas, arresting 19.

Most students were charged with unlawful assembly, a five-year felony; one with inciting to riot, a ten-year felony; and one with resisting an officer, a misdemeanor. At the arraignment, while the unlawful assembly charges were dropped, eight were left facing misdemeanor charges and the others "further investigation."

But no investigation was needed to prove who was guilty—one guy came to the arraignment showing his bruises and open wounds from police clubbings. With an eye toward the next nine months, the police clearly attempted to deliver a pre-semester message that the students better stay in line. The students' reaction was just as clear. ■



Special to the Revolutionary Worker

# Iran's Revolutionary Left: Breaking New Ground

The following report on some of the political forces that are shaping the Iranian revolution is the third in a series of articles about the struggle in Iran by Bob Saibel, a revolutionary activist and writer who recently returned from a two and a half month stay in Iran. He was a first-hand witness to the work and ideas of the Iranian Left. He was in the thick of the developing revolutionary struggle of the people from Tehran to Kurdistan. He is now writing a book on his trip, which will be published in a few months.

It was in July that I visited the former headquarters of the Shah's police in Sanandaj, the capital of Kurdistan. The gendarmerie was no longer full of the Shah's armed enforcers lording nervously over the population. Workers weren't being beaten and interrogated inside the compound; instead they were studying politics. Truckloads of revolutionaries going to assist the peasants in nearby villages had replaced the truckloads of troops formerly sent to those same villages to bloodily suppress the masses. The Shah's old gendarmerie had fallen to the revolution in February, and these buildings now housed the Society for the Defense of Freedom and the Revolution.

My host laughed as he talked about how only a short time ago, the people couldn't even have walked near this fenced compound, yet they were inside doing just what these reactionary police had dreaded most—spreading the cause of revolution. He was an enthusiastic young intellectual, born and raised in Sanandaj, and this was an opportunity I had been eager for. This was a chance to really dig into the politics and the practice of the new revolutionary forces that were sprouting all over Iran, and would have so much to do with the future here.

I couldn't help feeling the tremendous progress that the struggle had made here, before even talking to anyone; just the fact that revolutionaries would have so much freedom to discuss, study and organize was unheard of under the Shah, when even possession of a leaflet was grounds for torture and imprisonment. The conversation with my host added new dimensions to this impression. "The Society is a mass organization for all who want to continue the revolution against feudalism, imperialism, and reaction," he said, "and many of the new Marxist-Leninist forces work with and support us."

Speaking of the freedom won by the blood and bullets of the Iranian people, my host continued. "Remember, the conditions for revolutionaries here were very different than in your country. Before, we couldn't openly have meetings and discussions. Most literature was illegal, if we could even get it translated, and real communist groups were viciously attacked by the SAVAK." While there were a lot of people who burned with the desire for revolution and even considered themselves communists, the groups that existed were fairly small and isolated from each other, or they existed outside of the country. "So you can see what a liberating thing it is to be able to work openly and have political struggle. Already the political understanding of our movement has grown by leaps and bounds."

He went on to describe the hundred-fold growth of Marxist forces during the revolutionary upsurge of the past year: "There are now over 37 different Marxist-Leninist groups in Iran, with more springing up all the time. When a group of students in a provincial city gets one of our papers, they either start their own collective or a support group.



Announcement for this year's massive revolutionary May Day demonstrations in Iran. Many democratic and Marxist-Leninist forces united, as hundreds of thousands marched throughout the country.

It's hard to keep up with." For the reactionaries, a Pandora's box had indeed been opened.

One very significant Marxist-Leninist trend that works closely with the Society is the "third line," which gets its name because it rejects both the revisionism of the pro-Soviet Tudeh party and the individualistic strategy of the urban guerrilla groups (groups that have based themselves on the strategy of guerrilla actions by small bands of armed revolutionaries). In what many feel was a very important development, twelve of these "third line" groups joined in a "Unity Conference" in Tehran to push forward the ideological and political struggle for forming a new communist party.

The groups have united around the principles of upholding Marxism-Leninism, rejecting the revisionism of both the USSR and China's new rulers, and considering the Soviet Union a social-imperialist country and China on the road to capitalism. (They also expose the lie that the revolutionary groups in Iran are "puppets of the Soviets"). While condemning the reactionary theory of the "three worlds" of the current revisionist rulers in China, all these groups uphold Mao Tsetung as a great Marxist-Leninist who has made important contributions to the science of revolution.

In terms of Iran, the groups in the Unity Conference feel their main task is to continue the revolution which is "new-democratic in character." They are especially harsh in condemning the "traitorous revisionist nature" of the

Tudeh party and feel that the formation of a genuine party of the working class is their first main objective. "You can see from our experience that there must be a party for our revolution to advance to victory," my host emphasized. Groups like the Union of Iranian Communists (UIC), Peykar (Organization for the Emancipation of the Working Class), and Razmandagon (Organization of Struggle for the Liberation of the Working Class) are some of the leading representatives of this trend, along with some Kurdish Marxist-Leninist groups like the Organization of Unity of Toiling and Oppressed Peoples, which has considerable influence among the peasants of Kurdistan.

This revolutionary center in Sanandaj, disguised as an old gendarmerie, bustled with activity as we talked. In one room, forty men and women were studying the evolution of society. In another, a dozen were huddled in a circle discussing how to mobilize the peasants to form peasant associations to seize the feudals' (rich landlords) land and run the affairs of the villages. "These peasant organizations are important," one said, "but we view raising the peasants' consciousness as our most important task."

Terrified of any leftists "arousing" the peasants, one short year ago the Shah's regime would have had any stranger even visiting a village arrested. Now for the first time, revolutionaries were able to go to the people in a big way to struggle with and learn from them. Despite their claims of being

unafraid of open debate between Marxism and their reactionary Islamic Republic, the Khomeini-Bazargan government is also terrified of this new contact. Since they came to power they have tried to put all kinds of obstacles in the Marxist-Leninist forces' path. Their fear of the growing influence of these forces is one of the main reasons for their recent bloody attacks on the struggle of the Kurdish people. Speaking prophetically of the future, with these government attacks looming on the horizon, my host said, "We've got to do the work of two years in six months to get prepared."

Suddenly a group of peasants burst into the office. A group of landlords had threatened to attack them and take their newly harvested crop. The Society must get arms and help them. The Society members, led by one who was on the city council of Sanandaj, took this militantly in stride and got down to business. Throughout Kurdistan, Marxist-Leninist forces and mass organizations like the Society are playing a leading role in organizing the peasants and are in the forefront of the fight against the feudal forces and the reactionary central government that is now raging across this province.

Close by the Society, politically and geographically, was the Women's Council of Sanandaj. No self-centered feminism here. These women are hard at work developing ways for peasant women to get involved in the revolution. Through health care, reading circles, and education committees, the women of the council are striving to join with the village women and raise their political consciousness. They see the liberation of women as being bound up with the liberation of all of Iran; for them the heart of women's liberation is politically mobilizing the masses of women to free the country from the burdens of feudalism and imperialism, while dealing with the special problems of women also.

I then headed for a visit to the Fedayeen headquarters in the town, housed in a big four-story building, with the thirty-foot banner of their familiar hammer, sickle and gun symbol hung across the front. It was a great feeling for me to see these liberated buildings. I was so used to every inch of everything being owned by the lords of capital, that I felt joy seeing some buildings just taken by force, because the people needed them. That's the way it ought to be, and if you have the armed revolutionary masses, well, why not?

The Fedayeen are well respected because of their battles with the Shah's regime and their fighting during the insurrection in February. There are differences between them and the Marxist-Leninist forces on how they view the nature of the Iranian revolution, the Soviet Union, Mao's role, and the need to form a vanguard communist party, but their anti-imperialist stance has led to friendly relations between the groups. For example, there was a jointly organized May Day celebration of over 20,000 in Sanandaj this year.

Throughout my visit, everyone I met spoke warmly of the Kurdish religious leader Sheikh Ezzeddin Hosseini, a Sunni Moslem leader from Mahabad. Inspired by the heroic struggle of the Kurdish people, Hosseini has consistently stood with the aspirations of the masses, against any compromise of their basic rights. This revolutionary democrat has championed Kurdish demands for regional autonomy and forcing government troops and agents out of Kurdistan.

Though no Marxist and no substitute for the leadership of a proletarian party, Hosseini has supported the struggles of the peasant masses, calling for the

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# The System is Gonna Make Us Fight! Only The RCP Can Make Us Win!

The following is from the text of a leaflet from a former member of the Black Panther Party in the San Francisco Bay Area calling on Black people to contribute to the RCP's Million Dollar Fund Drive, support the work of the Party, and join the revolutionary struggle. (The leaflet has been slightly edited for space reasons.)

TO ALL THOSE WHO REFUSE TO LIVE AND DIE ON YOUR KNEES—TO MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY—

STEP FORWARD AND PREPARE FOR REVOLUTION! CONTRIBUTE—RIGHT NOW—TO THE MILLION DOLLAR FUND DRIVE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY! TURN YOUR DOLLARS INTO SWORDS THAT WILL CUT OFF THE HEADS OF THE CAPITALIST DOGS WHO RULE OVER US.

When I was 9 years old, my mother died of childbirth in one of these butcher shop hospitals. I couldn't believe it—nobody dies of childbirth at the age of 28 in America—unless you're Black or poor of course.

When I was 10, we had no electricity in our house, no gas, no running water and no food. Late at night we would get our pitcher and go "steal" some water from our neighbor's faucets. My youngest brother, who was about 5, could take no more of this—one day he just ran out in the middle of the streets and screamed his lungs out! *I'm hungry!!!* Later, after he was a teenager, he would go out and steal some money to buy him some new clothes and all the food he could eat. He told us he was tired of being poor—when caught, the pigs beat him up and sent him to youth authority. When he was 18 he could take no more of this shit, so he put a gun to his head and blew his brains out.

I hate this motherfuckin' system. I've always rebelled against the American nightmare. I grew up in the ghettos of the Bay Area. We couldn't even have a party without the pigs crashing it. Whenever they came they would radio to each other that it's a TNA—translated means Typical Nigger Activity. We would greet them by hurling bricks and wine bottles at their cars.

They wanted to draft me into their

imperialist army to go and put an end to the TNA of the Vietnamese people. I told them that I didn't fight any imperialist wars of aggression, that the Vietnamese were my brothers, and I'm on their side. That if they drafted me and gave me a gun, I would shoot all my superior officers. The person I told this to turned several shades of red, gave me one of those "crazy nigger" looks and told me to get the hell out of there. That was the last I heard from them.

When the Black rebellions of Watts, Newark and Detroit set this whole country to rockin', I was so proud of Black people I cried. When the Black Panther Party hit the scene with Chairman Mao's Red Book, guns and talking about making revolution, smashing capitalism as the only way to end all the hell Black people catch, it was like they were speaking to my every feeling.

There were a lot of Black organizations at that time. Most of them were into saying white people was the enemy and called for putting Black faces in places where there were white faces and keeping the masses of Black people on the bottom. Only they would call us "brothers" while they fucked us or fucked us while speaking Swahili.

It seemed the Panthers had the interests of Black people at heart and not their careers. I was 20 years old when I joined—I never felt so proud before in my life—proud to fight—kill and die for the liberation of Black people. We put our whole lives into this.

But the Panthers fell into pragmatism. They didn't understand that revolution wasn't possible at that time nor did they understand the kind of revolution it is gonna take to end Black people's oppression. So eventually the Panthers sold out and betrayed the interests of Black people and started seeking high places for their Black faces.

I wasn't prepared for this—it was like there was no more reason to live. I couldn't understand it. I went to shooting dope. I got hooked, got busted for robbery and went to the penitentiary. It was in prison that I got to know Bob Avakian, the Chairman of the Revolutionary Union (forerunner of the RCP) through its publications. I learned that revolution didn't die with the Panthers. It was like my life had meaning again—there was still something to live for.

I started to understand that Black

people can't be free unless the whole working class and ultimately all mankind is free—and that it was this kind of communist working class revolution where we sweep capitalism away that was gonna free us and not no separation to five states in the south or some other madness. We set up study groups in the joint and discussed these questions. We would try to organize rebellions against our imprisonment every day.

And after our beloved Chairman Mao died and his four close comrades were arrested, it was only the RCP who came out boldly with a clear-cut Marxist analysis of what happened there and held high the revolutionary banner of Mao. I studied the Party's analysis and then I understood that a bunch of two-bit backstabbing capitalist dogs had sold out Mao and the revolution in China and around the world and had taken China on the capitalist road.

Bob Avakian and the RCP have made me see and understand the struggle of Black people is part and parcel of the struggles of the working class and oppressed people in this country and around the world against imperialism, capitalism, revisionism and everything in the world that fucks over people. The RCP and Bob Avakian have saved my life!

Without them I would have thrown in the towel long ago. I would be in a narcotic stupor somewhere, or at best I would be thinking that there's nothing we can do about this shit and that we might as well go along with the program.

Every day we got to work to prepare for revolution. This is what the RCP is doing. The *Revolutionary Worker* newspaper is there to train millions to understand the world and how we gon-

na change it. Without this newspaper and the revolutionary work of the RCP, all we can do is what I did all my life—get mad, grit my teeth and just lash out in blind rage—at each other—at the pigs—at white people, but never at the heart of the problem—capitalism. This newspaper has got to go into every home, prison, school, factory—raising our sights to what's got to be done and why and how so that when the time comes, all of us will be in the streets with guns pointing the same way. Remember the days when sight of the Panther newspaper would freak the pigs because the people were learning warfare through its pages? The *Revolutionary Worker* is that weapon—on a higher and deeper level.

And this has got the capitalists running around like chickens with their heads cut off trying to figure out ways to crush the Party as quietly (with nobody knowing about it) as possible. But I ain't gonna let that happen. I'm gonna shout about it on every street corner in every project—everywhere the people are catching hell at, because I would rather be dead than stand by and watch these motherfuckers take our leadership away. Without the RCP's and Bob Avakian's leadership we just can't understand how to fight this shit.

We got to come forward with our hard-earned money, not for some con escape trip—church or dope—but to buy the nails for the capitalists' coffin. To put out millions of copies of the *Revolutionary Worker*, to defend hundreds of RCP members and supporters arrested this past year, especially Chairman Avakian who they are trying to railroad to jail for 200 years. Right now the dogs who rule this country are trying to crush the RCP and lock up Bob Avakian—to strip the people of revolutionary leadership. If we stand on the sidelines and watch them crush the Party and railroad Bob Avakian—we will fight but we will NEVER win.

SUPPORT THE ONLY WEAPON WE HAVE TO MAKE REVOLUTION!

SUPPORT THE VANGUARD! CONTRIBUTE TO THE RCP'S MILLION DOLLAR FUND DRIVE!

—An ex-Panther from Oakland, Calif.

## Iran's Revolutionary Left

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expansion of the peasants' unions, and declaring that the only way to be free of imperialism is to build the economy on a socialist basis. He has consistently targeted the feudal landlords and imperialist elements as the enemy in Iran, and has refused to knuckle under to government pressure to go along the reactionary road of Khomeini and Company. His picture hangs on walls throughout Kurdistan. (Recently he has been declared an "outlaw" by the central government and has gone underground.)

However, the tone of the discussion changed sharply when the name of the Soviet-backed Kurdish Democratic Party was mentioned. Hardly the only or even the major group in Kurdistan engaging in battle with the Iranian army, as the bourgeois press would have us believe, the KDP gets large sums of money and military equipment from the Soviet Union and maintains a paid army financed mainly by Soviet funds. In fact, the head of the KDP is also a member of the pro-Soviet Tudeh party. The KDP jumps back and forth between militant-sounding Kurdish nationalism and open capitulation to the government. My host said, "The KDP is a mixed bag of feudal, petty-bourgeois and bourgeois elements" that "show off their guns to bargain with the government." In fact, KDP leaders even admitted that they "have been careful since the Shah's fall not to compromise any chances of reaching an agreement within the framework of the Republic." In June, the KDP leader, Dr. Qassemloou, even went to Qom to strike a deal for "order" with the central government, saying, "Only Imam (Khomeini) could avert a tragedy in Kurdistan."

Some time prior to my visit the KDP made an appeal to some of the revolutionary groups in Sanandaj to "discuss differences" and "seek unity." In refusing to work with the KDP, one of the Marxist-Leninist groups stated, "If the KDP wanted to bring together all the groups, then why did they attack the revolutionary center in Sardasht (a village near the Iraqi border—RW) and take it over? The traitor KDP's goal is power for itself and its bosses in Moscow by any means. When it is weak and isolated, like a fox it tells lies about being the vanguard and opening negotiations; in other places it sends its mercenaries."

As in Naghadeh (see the article, "Bloody Intrigue in Kurdistan," RW, July 6, 1979), there were numerous examples mentioned of the KDP pursuing their pro-Soviet revisionist ends even by arming feudals and in some cases supporting the notorious CIA-bankrolled Ghiadeh Movaghat, a counterrevolutionary organization of armed reactionaries headed by the infamous Barzani brothers.

The Kurdish revolutionaries I met had no doubt that the future was full of sharp struggle and many twists and turns. And since I left, their vision has been confirmed, as many of the open offices of the Marxist-Leninist organizations have been shut down by the central government in the name of "Islamic revolution." But the February insurrection and the destruction of the Shah's regime unleashed forces beyond the control of the imperialists and the "born-again" reactionaries. It spread seeds of a new and higher political understanding and struggle throughout Iran. In the hills of Kurdistan and throughout Iran, these seeds are growing and bearing fruit.

# A Gold Chain to Break the Chains

On August 29, Bob Avakian spoke in Columbus, Ohio as part of the current national speaking tour. At a reception which followed the speech, an Iranian comrade made the following statement prior to an auction raising money for the RCP's million dollar fund drive.

"In my country, we have been struggling for revolution for many years. Two of my cousins died in the struggle. My uncle was jailed for several years. I

myself was kicked out of high school for opposition to the Shah. When I left for the U.S., my mother gave me this golden chain to remember her by. I would like to say to my mother—Mother, I love you, but I love revolution more. I am giving this chain to the RCP for this auction because this Party will make revolution in the U.S. Long live the unity of the toiling masses of the world. Long live the RCP."



## Interview with Cleveland Worker

# The Word is Out in the Ghetto to Check Out Bob Avakian and the RCP

The following interview is with an older Black worker who attended Bob Avakian's speech in Cleveland a few weeks ago. He works as a janitor in a housing project where the Revolutionary Worker is sold. After having seen people selling the newspaper in the projects for several months, he called one of the sellers over one day. He said, "You don't know me, but I've been observing you for the last few months and I see the way you talk to people and the way they read your newspaper. Many years ago, I used to be with the Young Progressives (a youth organization led by the old Communist Party—USA). I've never given up hope for communism, but I can't stand the Communist Party (USA), they're racist and they sold the people out." After hearing the Party Chairman's speech he sat down and talked with the Revolutionary Worker about his experiences, his impressions of the Chairman and the RCP and why he is a revolutionary.

RW. Well now you've heard Bob's speech. What do you think?

A. Bob is what I would call a white Malcolm X. He's full of fire. He's real and he has a way of making me feel like he is one with me. Bob is street wise. He's down to earth and he talks the street language that I understand and trust. You've got to be real to do that and he is for real. I've heard a lot of bullshit, but that night there was no bullshit.

There was talk about him today in the projects by people who didn't even go to hear him. One of the Muslim brothers asked, "Have you heard this Bob Avakian?" Another guy said, "Yeah, that brother is together. He's on fire." This is the way the people in the projects are beginning to think of him. He's the type of dude a Black guy will not call honky.

RW. Why did you become a revolutionary?

A. It's this system itself. It forced me

to become a revolutionist. My mother at one time was an entertainer. At that time during the '30s she used to entertain at some of the big white joints in Cleveland. So one time, me, her and some of the musicians were coming back after work. And we were stopped by the Cleveland police.

They stopped us and were checking us for guns and I noticed how they were feeling my mother's breasts. How they were sliding their hands all up and down her butt and everything else and I was forced to stand there and look at it. When they were finished they said, "Okay, you niggers can go now." Then I started thinking and said, goddamnit, there has to be something better than this, there has to be some way of fighting back.

And then I heard of the Communist Party. I investigated it. I had always looked towards the Russian revolution for my relief. I got into young progressives at that particular time. Passing out leaflets in front of the Social Security Offices and things like that. Listening to the Nazi slurs of the cops. Another thing, too, that I want to put you hip to—I witnessed the Communist Party during the McCarthy era turn over Black people's names and records. Some lost their job and house and everything. What they did was a real bad heartbreak. I was looking towards them for my salvation and finding out that they were my Judases was pretty hard to take. They sold out. They sacrificed many, those bastards.

RW. So you saw close up the old Communist Party giving up the goal of revolution and communism. What did you do?

A. One thing I never did was give up. I knew something had to happen. Something was going to come better. I was waiting for something to get into.

RW. Were you involved in the civil rights movement and Black liberation struggle?

A. Yeah, but a lot of that wound up as nationalism. It didn't get nowhere.

RW. Can you explain that?

A. Well I'm going to explain to you by my own experience in Cleveland of Black nationalism. I watched so-called revolutionary organizations here in this town rip off the dope man, take his pills, and then turn around and sell them to the Black community! I also watched them chase away the pimps, and then prostitute the sisters themselves. So this is where nationalism can lead to. That Black nationalism can wind up meaning all for yourself, not really for the people, even your own people. Now I love the way Bob told me about internationalism. How internationalism is everybody, it includes all working people, and that's the only nationalism that I dig. And that's the one I would like to work hard for and give the balance of my life for. That's the future.

RW. What makes you think the RCP is going to be different than all this stuff, the old CP and the Black nationalists?

A. How do I know that Bob and you guys may not do the same thing? I'll tell you how I know. I believe you won't because of the way you act, the honesty and who's backing you. This is what really convinced me. You aren't getting no backing from some rich fat cats. You're going to the people so then it must be a party for the people.

RW. Then you think this is for real, making revolution in the United States

of America?

A. Can we really make revolution here? Yes, I believe it can be done. We will work hard and see it is done. For a fact, it has to be done. We have no choice. We can't live on our knees and have them kill us. We've got to do it one way or another, by any means necessary, and the time is closer than we think. This man is gearing up for war, like he's never geared up for it his whole life.

The only way you are going to have the masses with you is for them to know what you are doing. You've got to do that, in people's homes, gathering people together, having classes, and keep exposing them all the time. The main thing is that newspaper. That's our lifeblood.

Look, the people are very angry. Like they're fed up with the cops. To prove that, remember when that FBI man got shot up in Carver Park, the people applauded when they brought the body out. Now that is political! The people didn't know it but that was political. And that gives me the idea that when a group of people are oppressed, the more political they can become, the more wide awake they can become about this system.

RW. And you think the RCP is going to play a leading role in all of this?

A. Yes. Absolutely. This is the Party to get into if you're serious minded. If you're for real about getting this man off your back, this is the way to do it. The only alternative is Marxism-Leninism—a Party with a programme backed by the people. And so this is the way I intend to try and do it, this is the pattern I'm going to use. This is the only Party that's equipped and ready to do something. This is the only Party that has a programme. And I dig that programme and am willing to support it in any kind of way I can, even with my very life.

Now I know some are going to say, "Oh, my god, they're going to hear about it on my job. Oh, my god, how are you going to get your house paid for?" Well, let's face facts. I'm not going to get my house paid for! And as far as losing my damn job, there was a day when I didn't have a damn-ass job in the first place. So what do I see as more important than my job? What do I see as more important than my house? I'll tell you what I see as more important than my job and my house! Freedom for all people! Freedom—and I'd love to see that day that there was no money exchanged at all.

And all these beautiful people talk about Armageddon, and talk about paradise on earth, as these Jehovah's Witnesses do, but I say, well, the only way you're going to get your paradise on earth, brother, is making sure that we do it all ourselves because I don't believe that some mystic leader is going to come down from the sky and do a damn thing for me or the rest of the masses of people. Like they say, "You got shoes, I got shoes, all God's children got shoes. When we go to heaven we're going to put on our shoes." The hell with that. The hell with putting them on in heaven. I need shoes now. Besides the clouds are soft to walk on. They can take it up there barefoot, but I can't take it down here!

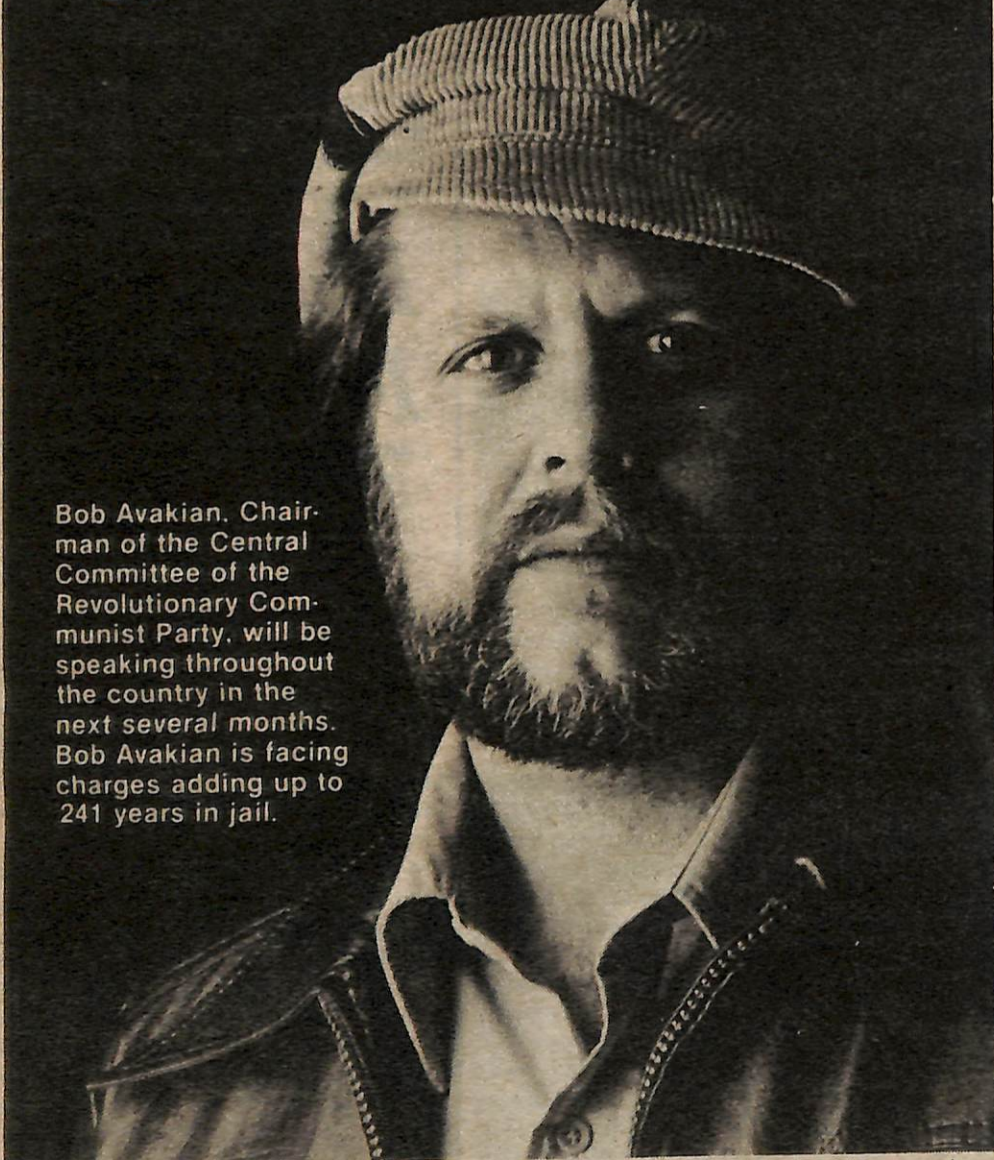
They say, "You'll have pie in the sky when you die, by and by." Hell, have you ever seen a dead man eat pie?

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## Major Speaking Tour by Party Chairman

### "To All Those Who Refuse To Live and To Die On Your Knees!"

Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party, will be speaking throughout the country in the next several months. Bob Avakian is facing charges adding up to 241 years in jail.



This is your chance to hear the leader of the only organization in this country seriously working for revolution, the organization the government is viciously attacking and declares to be the most dangerous revolutionary organization in this country.

**Don't Miss The Chance To Hear Bob Avakian Speak & To Get Down With The RCP! It Will Change Your Whole Life!**

When you hear Bob Avakian speak you will know why those who rule this country are desperate to put him away and to stop the RCP. And why those who hate this whole criminal system and government are rallying more and more to the RCP!

For more information, contact the RCP in your local area, or write to: PO Box 3486, Chicago, IL 60654.



## After 25 Years in Prison

# "We are stronger than Ever, More Committed than Ever"

"Libertad para Puerto Rico!" With these words, Lolita Lebrón emerged from the federal women's penitentiary in Alderson, West Virginia to an excited and enthusiastic welcome from a crowd of supporters. They were nearly the very same words she had shouted on March 1, 1954—"Puerto Rico Libre" (Free Puerto Rico)—as she and three other Puerto Rican nationalists, Irving Flores Rodriguez, Rafael Cancel-Miranda, and Andrés Figueroa Cordero, unfurled a Puerto Rican flag from a gallery overlooking the House of Representatives and sprayed the House floor with gunfire, wounding 5 congressmen in a protest against U.S. colonial domination of Puerto Rico.

Now, 25 years later, the government has released the Puerto Rican nationalists under pressure to blunt the steady outpouring of public opinion that has demanded their freedom. Although the four had originally been thrust into the public eye for their terrorist attack on Congress, over the years these imprisoned freedom fighters have come to symbolize the broad struggle of the Puerto Rican masses for liberation and to represent unyielding opposition to U.S. imperialism. Figueroa, who was suffering from cancer, had already been freed in 1977. Before he died last year in Puerto Rico, he called on every Puerto Rican "to fight to the end against Yankee imperialism"

Last week, the remaining three stepped out of prison along with a fourth nationalist, Oscar Collazo, who was convicted in 1950 after he killed a guard while attempting to shoot his way into President Truman's temporary residence at Blair House across the street from the White House. "We are stronger than ever, more committed than ever!" announced Lebrón firmly outside the prison gate to the cheers of supporters who held banners reading "Free Puerto Rico" and "Death to U.S. imperialism!"

During their long years in prison, the nationalists had been uncompromising in their stand against the U.S. rulers, refusing to repent for their actions, to beg for clemency or to back down an inch from their demand that Puerto Rico be free. They scoffed at offers of freedom made by the government under conditions that they formally request a pardon and agree not to take part in political activity. Collazo waived consideration for parole when it first came up for him in 1966. Since 1973, Lebrón had also refused parole unless her four comrades-in-arms received an unconditional amnesty.

As the four were being released, the U.S. government unleashed their flunkies, like Baltasar Corrada, Puerto Rico's non-voting representative in Congress, to push the lie that the nationalists "were jailed for their criminal conduct, not for their political beliefs". But government maneuvers time and again confirmed the fact that the U.S. rulers viewed the four as political prisoners. When Collazo was on trial, a lawyer obviously acting on behalf of the U.S. offered to contribute \$15,000 for his defense if Collazo would only plead insanity. Collazo refused, knowing full well it was nothing but a ploy to discredit the struggle.

Numerous overtures were also made to Lolita Lebrón to strike some kind of deal, particularly when her release appeared to be imminent. But throughout the years she remained steadfast, as well as giving her support to the struggle of other political prisoners like Joanne Little, a Black woman who killed her jailer when he attempted to rape her. Lebrón fully supported Vietnam's struggle against U.S. imperialism, which she called very important to the Puerto Rican people. After the Attica Rebellion in 1971, she and a number of

other women protested in memory of those who were massacred. For this she was locked in segregation for 16 months and forcibly given drugs.

So why did Carter suddenly decide to grant clemency and release these adamant freedom fighters now? It was certainly not out of the goodness of his heart nor out of any sympathy for the Puerto Rican struggle for independence. The U.S. government has been forced to release these political prisoners as part of their efforts to appear to be concerned with the "freedom and independence" of those they dominate and enslave. In recent years the demand to free the four nationalists has become a rallying cry of the Puerto Rican independence movement both in Puerto Rico and in the U.S. and has fueled the struggle to rid Puerto Rico of U.S. domination. For all Carter's talk of "human rights" and "letting the Puerto Rican people decide their own destiny," the fact that the four were the longest held political prisoners in U.S. history was becoming a glaring sore in the eyes of the Puerto Rican people as well as the masses in other U.S. neo-colonies around the world.

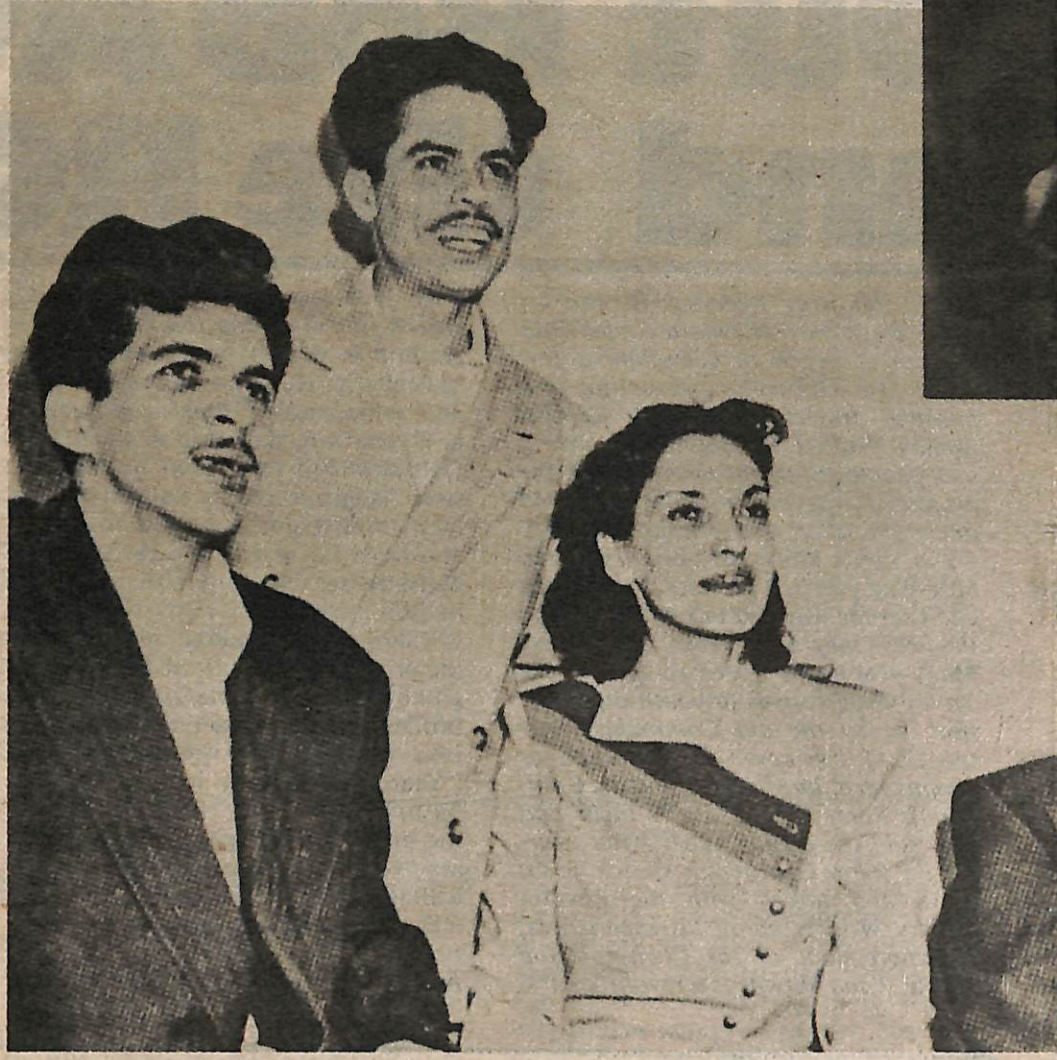
It is, therefore, not surprising that the release was timed by the U.S. to coincide with the non-aligned conference in Cuba—a thinly disguised propaganda counter to the Cuban attempts to draw many of these countries into the orbit of the U.S.'s Soviet rivals. While the U.S. floated rumors that the release might clear the way for the release of four Americans in Cuba (a motley collection of CIA agents, spies and saboteurs), their real concern was clear; Carter concurred with Secretary of State Vance in hoping that commuting the sentences to time served would be seen as "a significant humanitarian gesture and would be viewed as such by much of the international community."

But for the masses of people, there is nothing "humane" about the fact that the four have finally been freed. It is nothing but a vile outrage that they have been locked up for a quarter of a century in U.S. dungeons, harassed and abused for half their lives for refusing to bow down before their oppressors. With this concession to the struggle of the Puerto Rican people, Carter and the U.S. rulers are obviously hoping to defuse the movement by releasing these heroic fighters who have consistently opposed anything short of complete independence and national liberation from the U.S.

The imperialists, of course, would like nothing better than to channel the sentiments of the Puerto Rican people away from this stand and into the fruitless debate over whether Puerto Rico should remain a "free associated state" (U.S. "territory") or be granted statehood. Either way Puerto Rico would remain firmly locked in the iron grip of U.S. imperialism. Rep. Robert Garcia (the only congressman of Puerto Rican descent) expressed the desire of the U.S. rulers when, in arguing for commutation of the nationalists' sentences, he said: "It's a chapter in Puerto Rican history that should be over."

But the historic chapter of resistance by the Puerto Rican people to their oppression is far from over. A profound spirit is being ignited among the masses as the four, upon release, have been unrelenting in their militant stance. "I will do whatever is necessary for the liberation of Puerto Rico," said Lebrón the moment after she had driven outside the prison gate. It is little wonder Puerto Rican Governor Romero Barcelo opposed the four prisoners' unconditional release on the ground that it would "constitute a menace to public safety!"

At a news conference in Chicago, the four nationalists gathered together for



the first time since they were jailed. They emotionally embraced each other and fielded questions from the press. They made it perfectly clear that they were in no way grateful to President Carter for their release. Cancel-Miranda defiantly tore up Carter's clemency order right in front of reporters. "If the U.S.A. had never invaded our country and subjected our people and exploited us," said Lebrón, "I would never have been there (in jail)".

"Would you do it again?" asked one reporter. "That's been the \$64,000 question," retorted Collazo. "The aggressors, the terrorists, are not the Puerto Ricans—the aggressors and the terrorists are those who represent American imperialism. We are only fighting back against that aggression and that repression of American imperialism, not only in Puerto Rico, but in other countries."

"You hear a lot about the armed actions in Washington," he went on, "but you never read or listen to radio or TV about the things that were taking place in Puerto Rico at the time. The American airplanes were bombarding the Puerto Rican people. American tanks were going into the towns in Puerto Rico and killing the people." At the time Collazo was arrested in 1950, Truman had ordered the Nationalist Party crushed during the Jayuya uprising. Puerto Rican nationalists had seized control of police and government buildings in Jayuya, proclaiming an independent Puerto Rican republic. Popular insurrections raged throughout the island for six days before being defeated by the well-equipped National Guard backed up by U.S. military might.

"Let me tell you a little story," said Rafael Cancel-Miranda. "I was with my parents (during the Ponce Massacre in 1937 when marchers protested the frame-up of Nationalist Party leader Albizu Campos). I was seven years old. We had a peaceful demonstration asking for the release of some political prisoners... The Governor... and Washington (D.C.) ordered a massacre against that demonstration. My mother, she was dressed in white. She became dressed in blood, the blood of the people, because the only way she could save herself was by crawling over the dead

bodies, the wounded bodies of the others... and you never heard about that. They make sure you know only what they want you to know."

"Are you considering trying to effect liberation through established political means?" one reporter asked. Collazo abruptly answered: "Puerto Rico is a colonial possession of the U.S. and colonial possessions don't have political powers. As long as a nation is invaded, conquered and occupied by the military forces of a foreign nation, it doesn't have any political powers."

## Fighters Free

Continued from page 1

from Jamaica and as far away as India—all knew of the Puerto Rican fighters. They had come to greet these living symbols of the revolutionary struggle of the Puerto Rican people for national liberation.

The crowd marched through the community toward the First Congregational Church, picking up people as it went. Horns honked, whistles blew. People danced as the streets took on a festive air. "They were able to keep them in prison but they were never able to break them," said one man. "All of them are back for the cause. I feel so good about what they are doing."

The U.S. rulers were sadly mistaken if they thought that releasing these revolutionary fighters would cool out the struggle of the people against them. A young Puerto Rican who waited filled with anticipation spoke for the feelings of many: "What I feel about the four being freed brings the struggle back to life again... These four have their liberty. Now we should fight for the liberty of the whole people... It's going to revive the whole sense of fighting again... I think it's about time for people to get together like this!"

As the crowd gathered outside the church, it had grown to well over a thousand. Finally came the moment of their arrival. From behind a banner





**Left—The four Puerto Rican nationalists in 1954 shortly after their arrest. (Left to right) Rafael Miranda, Figueroa Cordero, Lolita Lebrón, Irving Flores. Above—For the first time in 25 years, Miranda greets Lebrón as she enters the Chicago press conference; Flores, Lebrón and Oscar Collazo, another nationalist who has been in prison since 1950. (Top right)—Figueroa Cordero, released in 1977 shortly before he died of cancer, raises the Puerto Rican flag at the San Juan airport.**

Revolutionary Worker

release of the nationalists but, more than that, the future they represented—a future of unswerving, uncompromising and unrelenting struggle to free Puerto Rico and its people.

For five minutes the church shook as 3000 people cheered, chanted, danced in the aisles and embraced each other, bringing to life in the fullest sense the words “the festival of the oppressed.” One older man who had come to the U.S. from Puerto Rico the same year that three of the nationalists were sent to jail sent a bright red shawl his wife had made for Lolita Lebrón up to the front.

Throughout the program, each of the four nationalists spoke, condemning U.S. imperialism and declaring their determination to continue the struggle until, as Lolita Lebrón said, “The people and only the people will liberate Puerto Rico.” “We are happy, we are very happy today,” she said, “but only for a few minutes. Because how can anybody be happy as long as our country is oppressed by the U.S. imperialists... What other choice is left for us but armed struggle?” Irving Flores declared, “We are not here to spread illusions among the people. We are not the only political prisoners in the American jails. We have seen hundreds of Chicanos, Blacks and Puerto Ricans in jail. All those people are victims of the oppression of U.S. imperialism. And all those people are our brothers.”

The program ended with the presentation of a Puerto Rican flag to Lolita Lebrón, the same flag that Puerto Rican nationalists had flown from the Statue of Liberty when they seized it more than a year and a half ago demanding the release of the four nationalists and independence for Puerto Rico. The program ended, but as it did each person who walked out of the building had the words of Rafael Cancel-Miranda ringing in their ears:

“The Yankees don’t know who they’re dealing with. The Yankees couldn’t make me cry when they beat me up in jail. But Lolita and you have made me cry with your love. I am proud of you... We didn’t hold out all those years because we are supermen or wonder women. It was because we had the strength, the strength that ties us to you. That was the strength that helped us put the Yankees once more in our pocket. We are not exceptional, we are you. And the valor which each one of us has demonstrated throughout these years is the valor that you have given to us. Now we hand ourselves over to you.”

Revolutionary Worker

dedicated to Andrés Figueroa Cordero (another nationalist who recently died) the four freedom fighters came forward to address the people. A young man scaled the street pole and someone passed him a nationalist flag. As Lolita Lebrón began to speak, the excitement of seeing her free at last brought many to tears of joy.

Rafael Cancel-Miranda turned to his comrades and then broadly gestured to the crowd. “Now I’m going to do something that I have waited to do for 25 years,” he said. “Go among my people and greet them!” As he moved down the steps of the church and began shaking hands, the people pressed forward to embrace this man who spent 25 years refusing to give in to the U.S. imperialists. Swept up like the crest of a wave Rafael Cancel-Miranda was lifted up on the shoulders of the people amid shouts of triumph.

The next day, the 3PM flight from Chicago landed at Gate 23 of La Guardia Airport on time. The passengers and crew left the plane and walked to the lobby, passing through hundreds of people gathered at the gate. Everyone had left the plane, except four of the passengers. The ramp to the gateway was decorated with a large banner showing a Puerto Rican woman, gun in hand, stepping on the U.S. capitol building.

Three hundred people were waiting, anxiously waiting for the last four passengers to walk through the gate. Finally they appeared and a tremendous wave of chanting broke out as people surged forward, rushing to greet these four revolutionary heroes. The first three moved through the crowd, grabbing hands, hugging and straining to embrace the people. Then, Lolita Lebrón walked through the crowd.

People rushed forward to reach her, her bodyguards tried to surround her, to separate her from the onslaught of people. But the people continued to press forward, and as they did, Lolita stepped back, raised her fist, and shouted, “Independence for Puerto Rico now!” Scores of people were openly crying in a tremendous outpouring of love and respect for the revolutionaries.

One man pushed his eight-year-old daughter to the front of the crowd saying, “I want my daughter to see them,

to learn from them, to follow them, to liberate our country. All my life I’ve heard about the four nationalists, about Lolita Lebrón. And all my life they were a symbol, a symbol of what we’ve got to do. Today they are free, tomorrow Puerto Rico will be free.”

Later that night a program was scheduled to begin at 7PM. By 6:30 over 3000 people had filled the church to capacity and more. Hundreds of Puerto Rican flags and banners upholding the four nationalists were visible throughout the crowd. Suddenly chanting and applause swept over the church, people jumped up from their seats and others rushed to the center aisle,

as the four marched to the front, fists raised in a revolutionary salute to the people.

Thousands of people had come from all over the city, from the ghettos of the South Bronx, from East Harlem and Brooklyn. People who had lived all their lives under the whip of the oppressor, people who had been driven out of their countries into the ghettos of New York City, and people who weren’t even born when the four people at the front of the church had been thrown into the Yankee dungeons, but who knew the taste of oppression well. All these people had come together for one reason, to celebrate not only the



**New York City Rally**



# Mexico

Continued from page 5

amount of independence Mexico could effectively exercise, but the country has generally succeeded in appearing to concede less [to imperialism—RW] than in fact it was necessary to concede."

Mexico voted against the U.S. demand for expulsion of Cuba from the Organization of American States (OAS). Of course, by this time, 1962, Cuba had been sold out to the Soviet social-imperialists, but there was still a lot of support for Cuba in Mexico based on anti-U.S. feelings. Actually, what was not publicized is the fact that the Mexican OAS delegates had earlier in the session introduced the thesis that a "Marxist-Leninist regime" was not compatible with membership in the OAS, and this became the main argument of the majority for justifying the expulsion of Cuba. When it was clear that the expulsion resolution had a safe majority, the Mexican delegates voted against it on a technicality, not out of opposition to the U.S., but out of fear of the sentiment of the Mexican people.

In another seemingly anti-American move, President Lopez Portillo invited Fidel Castro to visit Mexico last June. However, nothing of any substance was discussed during Castro's visit; in fact, as a clear sign to the U.S. that everything was O.K., Lopez Portillo invited the President of Costa Rica, the U.S.'s "democratic showcase" in Central America, to fly in hours after Castro left. Lopez Portillo signed agreements to sell oil to Costa Rica, as well as other trade agreements.

At this meeting with Costa Rican

President Rodrigo Carrazo, Mexico announced that it was withdrawing recognition of Nicaragua's Somoza government—seemingly a bold anti-American stand. Actually, it was right in line with the changing policy of the U.S., which had already decided to dump Somoza and bank on influencing moderates within the Sandinistas to form a "cooperative" government.

Mexico has opposed U.S. moves in the OAS many times, most recently a U.S. proposal to send a "peace-keeping" force to Nicaragua. But Mexico's reason has always been that the U.S. domination of the OAS is too exposed—better if it were cleaned up through a "latinization" of the OAS structure. As then-president Echeverria said in 1974, "The OAS... must not insist on remaining a theatrical backdrop for undisguisable hegemonic maneuvers." In other words, this open domination of Latin America by U.S. imperialism is too embarrassing. The Mexican people don't like it. What is needed are some disguisable hegemonic maneuvers.

The Mexican government's little independence act is becoming extremely threadworn, especially for the Mexican people, and increasingly for the peoples of the world. When Carter visited Lopez Portillo in February, the Mexican president made a big show of insulting the U.S., claiming "we will not be bullied." Lopez Portillo may very well do a repeat performance when he visits Carter at the end of this month. Whether he does or not, it is becoming clearer every day that the U.S. imperialists are pulling the strings. For the Mexican people, Independence Day is not just a part of history to be remembered—it is a struggle still to be won.

# SAVAMA

Continued from page 2

especially the Marxist-Leninist forces. Recently the head of the falangists candidly admitted she was paid by the government to do her dirty work.

It wasn't long before Chamran moved on to bigger and better things. It was really no surprise that he was chosen to head the new Iranian national information and security organization, SAVAMA. This organization was formed for the same reasons as the Shah's SAVAK, to keep tabs on and brutally suppress the revolutionary struggle of the Iranian people. While its activities are shrouded in secrecy and undoubtedly it is not fully functional, several things about SAVAMA are clear. It is presently compiling lists of those considered dangerous to the Islamic government. At the head of the list are those such as the I.S.A. who were active abroad in opposing the rule of the Shah, many of whom Chamran

knew by name. Everyone who was in any way involved in any sort of revolutionary activity outside Iran is being labeled as a communist and on that basis pursued by SAVAMA.

In addition, phones are being tapped and revolutionaries have been arrested after having their phone calls monitored. For example, two people were arrested in southern Iran for telephone calls they made to the U.S. These arrests are so reminiscent of SAVAK repression that it is no surprise that many former SAVAK agents have admittedly been approached by the Islamic government to come and work for SAVAMA.

Of course, SAVAMA like its forerunner is riddled through and through with agents of the U.S. imperialists who are seeking to expand it and use it just as they did SAVAK. In fact, the whole thing smells so bad that a high government official came out recently and tried to feebly distinguish SAVAMA from SAVAK. His statement? "SAVAMA has no torture wing." He might just as well have added—YET!



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# A.W.O.L. GI's Found DEAD

**Los Angeles, California.** James Tuell and Jed Harrison were two G.I.'s stationed with the Second Armored Division in Bremerhaven, Germany. They went AWOL (absent without leave) on July 11 of this year, sneaking into a ship's cargo container bound for the U.S., and taking along food and water for the voyage. When the container was opened over a month later in southern California, workers discovered their badly decomposed bodies with U.S. Army dog tags still hanging around their necks.

Jed Harrison had joined the "all volunteer" army when a northern California judge "advised" him that he had a choice—either enlist or do time behind the bars of the Contra Costa County jail. James Tuell had joined in Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, because, according to his mother, "All his friends were going in and it seemed like the thing to do."

Like 205,000 other G.I.'s, they found themselves stationed in Europe on the front lines of the U.S. war prepara-

tions. Their division had been transferred last fall to Bremerhaven on the strategically located North Sea as part of the "Operation Bold Guard," the largest peace-time military maneuvers in this region. Like all the G.I.'s in Germany, they had been extensively drilled and whipped into combat readiness.

In Germany and throughout the U.S. military as a whole, conditions are highlighted by the fact that the desertion rate in the Army has shot up 30% in the last year; the death rate from heroin overdose among G.I.'s in Europe rose 50% in the same period.

Tuell and Harrison chose escape. They couldn't have known that the container they were hiding in was going to be sealed up, trapping them inside. Temperatures in the tomb reached 150 degrees and the L.A. County Coroner estimated that it only took five or six days before they died of dehydration. But even as they were dying, in a final act of defiance, one of them burned his Army I.D. card.

# Bob Avakian

Continued from page 11

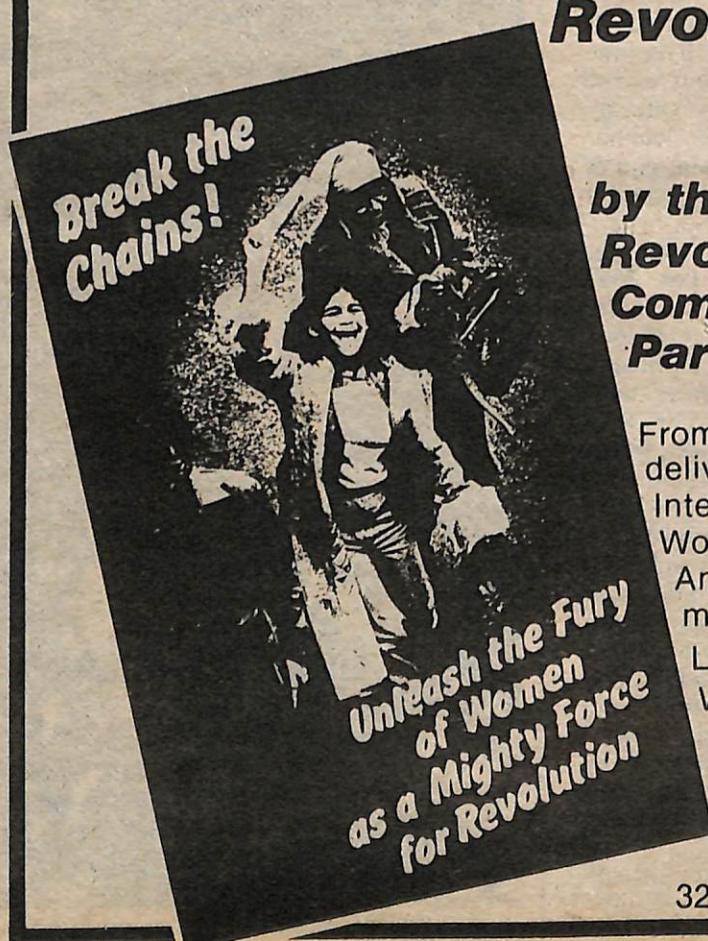
*RW. Do you have anything else you'd like to add about the Chairman, his speech and the Party?*

A. Bob's a born leader. But I fear for him. Every leader that I have seen that was like Bob, something always happened to him. This is why I fear for him. I really do. That man's on fire, and I know the system is after him. It would break my heart if anything happened to him.

When he talked to me that night he specified that I should get the newspaper, this *Revolutionary Worker*. Getting this paper to people because this paper is our lifeline, our educator. I see Bob as a true comrade. When Bob looks at me he doesn't examine me through the eyes of a microscope. When Bob looks at me he looks at me direct. He has a way of making you feel at home.

Now through all these other parties I've been in, they look at me as something exceptional. Something to be used. They really segregated me, through all the other parties. But this Party here I don't feel that way. I feel I'm one, I'm part of everything. This is why I know that eventually, if they will have me, I would love to become a member of the Revolutionary Communist Party. Seriously, I work hard in this effort. Because this is something that's worthwhile to get into. I never thought that after all these years something would come along like this—a leadership for the people that's for real, that doesn't feel it's too good to get down there and get its hands dirty or to expose itself to the same danger as the masses. And I do believe the RCP will be out in front and guiding the masses on into the revolution ahead. This is the only way we're going to win. As I said before, this is a Party that I'm willing to give my life for, seriously. So Bob, remember this, from now on you've got me with you.

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# Apocalypse Now

Continued from page 7

resulted from its "turning away from God" and forgetting spiritual values in favor of blind "materialism."

The theme of the quest for the Holy Grail, which has its roots deep in primitive religion, is in essence the theme of the search for God, of proceeding from this world to the "other world," and from the temporal to the divine. What Coppola has done is to fuse the story of *Heart of Darkness* with the legend of the Grail Quest—of course in a heavily shrouded form. His intention is to make Willard's journey up river in search of Kurtz the "quest" for the "moral truth" of the war in Vietnam and to demonstrate the "horror, the horror" which binds together Western civilization with our savage past.

The effect of Coppola's romance with mysticism is a film which seeks to heal the "maimed king" of U.S. imperialism, and attempts to restore it to health, vigor and prosperity. In fully analyzing the reactionary character of the movie, and in attempting to understand how Coppola managed to lose himself in the jungle, it is necessary ourselves to wade through some of the murkiest idealist mud. Unlike Coppola, however, we will emerge on the other bank better armed not only to criticize *Apocalypse Now* but to understand how it is that reactionary ideology can exert such a powerful pull and twist the outlook and work of an artist beyond any recognition of his original intentions.

*What are the roots that clutch, what  
branches grow  
out of this stoney rubbish? Son of man,  
you cannot say, or guess, for you know only  
a heap of broken images, where the sun  
beats,  
and the dead tree gives no shelter, the  
cricket no relief,  
and the dry stone no sound of water...*

*a rat crept softly through the vegetation  
dragging its slimey belly on the bank  
while I was fishing in the dull canal  
on a winter evening round behind the  
gas house  
musing upon the king my brother's wreck  
and on the king my father's death  
before him.*

"Why didn't you tell me there were six-foot breakers on that point?" Colonel Kilgore loves to surf.

"Sir, that's Charley's point. It's pretty hairy up there, sir," says one of Kilgore's boys, one of the coterie of handsome surfers he surrounds himself with. The navy patrol boat carrying Willard up river has hooked up with Kilgore, who is supposed to ensure safe passage through Charley-controlled territory. Kilgore heads an air cav squadron and he will seize that point. And his boys will surf that day. Awright!

It's exhilarating. Choppers, stereophonic Wagner piped into the cabin (Kilgore likes to keep his boys' minds off the fear). Sitting on their steel pots ("so their balls don't get shot off"), giggling and smiling, the boys in the choppers roll in from the sea. It's a beautiful shot! Coppola shot beautiful footage of the choppers coming in over the six-foot breakers. The Wagner is beautiful, Coppola had the best people, the best producers work on the stereo soundtrack. The film cuts from the Wagner to the scurrying Vietnamese hustling the kids into formation, hustling to the bunkers, hustling to the machine guns. Awright! This is gonna be hairy, sir!

"What do ya think, Lance?" Kilgore shouts to one of Willard's seabee escorts, who is also an accomplished surfer and has thus won a place of favor. "Wow, sir, this is really exciting!" Below is a spurting sea of blood and flame.

"I'm talking about the waves, Lance! What do you think of the waves!"

After the air cav has landed, Kilgore sends his boys out to surf, but heavy mortar fire from the hills disturbs their concentration. Kilgore calls in a napalm strike. The hillside becomes a gelatinous fireball.

Kilgore is overcome. "I love the smell of napalm in the morning. Smell it. Smell the gasoline. It smells... I don't know. It smells like... victory!"

Kilgore is a cartoon, he is parody, but he is also an image of life, an image the director envied. "He had a light around him, you just knew he was gonna come out of this without a scratch." Coppola (and Robert Duvall, who played the role) do not hold up Kilgore consciously as a "positive" character; he is frivolous, silly, mindless, thoughtlessly brutal, but he is elemental, giving the illusion of extreme and vivid self-fulfillment. The audience chuckles, cheers. Sit back and enjoy the cartoon. Share, with Francis Coppola, Kilgore's high.

But Willard does not share it. He stares, stricken. The war is being pissed away. If such a one as Kilgore can thrive, why must Kurtz perish. He doesn't understand, but his fascination with Kurtz grows as the patrol boat proceeds further up river, towards Cambodia, and the heart of darkness.

Willard's various adventures up river are analogous



Willard



to the adventures of the knight on the Grail Quest; they represent both tests of his worthiness to achieve the quest and expansion of his consciousness, preparation. Willard has been unconsciously preparing for this quest for some time; the quest began with his divorce, as one of the scriptures of grail myth is:

*The grail secret must be concealed  
And never by any man revealed, for as soon as this tale  
is told, it could happen to one so bold, if the teller  
should have a wife, evil will follow him all his life.*

The grail and its secrets are under the watchful trusteeship of the Maimed King, represented by Kurtz; and in the peculiar form in which Coppola has fused disparate elements of Conrad, Eliot and grail myth to his own purpose, the grail secret itself (consciousness, the full apprehension of "the horror, the horror") is the source of the wound. The theme of extraordinary vision or perception being connected with bodily infirmity is a common one in Greek mythology. It is personified in *The Wasteland* by the blind and impotent prophet Tiresias, who is both man and woman, but neither, and whose inner vision is the cause of his outward blindness and sexlessness. The seminal sources of this fertility mythology are too murky to belabor here. The point that must be grasped, however, is that while in the grail myth, the mission of the knight is the healed maimed king (the theme of resurrection and redemption), in practice this means that the knight himself becomes the incarnation of the king, whose body dies and whose soul is transferred to his successor. It may strike the reader as weird that these things are central to grasping the content of *Apocalypse Now*. But Eliot, in his notes to *The Wasteland*, explicitly referred to Frazer's *Golden Bough* and Weston's *From Ritual to Romance—An Account of the Holy Grail from Ancient Ritual to Christian Symbol* as the main inspiration for his work. In the film, not only does Brando/Kurtz read aloud constantly from Eliot, but Frazer's and Weston's books are on his bedside table.

"You bitch! You fucking bitch!" shouts Lance. It's USO time! The Playmate of the Year and a couple of other pin-up girls dance on a moated platform out of reach of the screaming GI's. The scene is one of unbridled mutual hostility. The girls taunt, beckon, their gaudily painted faces become twisted, gleaming smiling sneers. The GI's storm the moat. Willard and his crew are moving further north, now, and control is disintegrating further and further at each of their stopping points. As the Playboy chopper disappears into the night and the scene below becomes a riot, with MP's clubbing the GI's like animals, Willard ponders the scene. "Charley doesn't get any USO. His idea of a good time is a bowl of rice and maybe a little rat meat on the side..."

The journey up river is disintegrating the personalities of all the crew members except Willard, who is growing stronger and more conscious of the absolute necessity that he find Kurtz. Emotional wrecks, the crew members open fire on an innocent sampan of Vietnamese when a woman rushes to protect her puppies during a board and search operation. The woman is still moving; the pilot wants to take her in to ARVN medical. Willard blows her head off to avoid a delay in the mission. (The audience at the New York showing this writer witnessed broke into loud, nervous laughter.)

*The eyes are not here  
There are no eyes here  
In this valley of dying stars  
This broken jaw of our lost kingdoms  
In this last of meeting places  
We grope together  
And avoid speech  
Gathered on this beach of the tumid river*

"The asshole of the world." Stoned GI's paralyzed with terror, speechless and blind, pouring lead out of M-16's into the heart of an impenetrable jungle. This is the last U.S. outpost in the northland. Willard gets his last orders there from a terrified lieutenant who is waiting for him on the beach and then disappears into the night. Willard takes Lance (who's stoned on acid) ashore to look for the CO. "I thought you were the CO," one GI replies. Willard asks once more, the last time, "Do you know who the CO is?" "Yeah," a GI smiles and then walks slowly away. Willard and Lance return to the boat, and as they pull away, the bridge across the river is blown up by North Vietnamese artillery. It is blown up every night; the engineers build it again every day, "just to say the road is open." The last outpost of "civilization" vanishes behind them.

Then Coppola begins an artistic "process of elimination": the two Blacks on the ship, the pilot and "clean," described in the narrative as "from some south Bronx shithole," are killed off, one by NVA rockets and one by a Montagnard warrior spear.

After reaching Kurtz's compound, a guy from Louisiana, who perceives Kurtz and the jungle as being entirely evil and experiences none of the primeval pull, is beheaded by Kurtz's men immediately before the film's climax, leaving only Willard and Lance, who in one of the film's more bizarre creative twists form a dialectical unity.

Willard and Lance appear to have nothing in common. But they are approaching the same goal on different planes—Willard from the point of consciousness, Lance on the plane of spirit. When Willard and Lance go ashore and Willard is grabbed by Kurtz's men, Lance simply smiles and passes among the people, donning a loin cloth and playing with the children.

After a brief period of confinement, Willard is allowed to roam the compound freely. He discourses with Kurtz, who relates his experiences as a special forces officer in the pacification program in south Vietnam: *He inoculated a group of south Vietnamese children as part of the "hearts and minds" campaign, and then the Viet Cong cadre cut off all the children's arms after the unit had left the village.* Initially Kurtz was stunned, sickened; but then he realized, it struck him like a "diamond bullet penetrating the brain" that this act was actually a brilliant, tremendous act of will and courage. "The people who did this were trained cadre. They were passionate believers in a cause. They had families, these men were filled with love. But to have the strength to do that! That's when I knew they were stronger than we were."

From this turning point in Kurtz's life, he drew the lessons: Make friends of horror and mortal terror. In order to be strong, the imperialists, represented by Kurtz, must combine absolute morality (i.e. a full grasp of what they are doing and a full sense of its significance, unlike Kilgore who is blindly, mindlessly a killer) with an absolute willingness to engage in any act to further their cause.

The practical results of Kurtz's policies could be seen in the profusion of bloody heads mounted on stakes around the compound, the piles of bodies, and the postscript to his "learned treatise" on pacification policy in south Vietnam: "Drop the bomb! Exterminate them all!"

But a distinction is supposed to be drawn between Kurtz's madness and the lucidity of the "truth," the "secret" he is expounding to Willard. It was the unbearable burden of the truth, the effect of the "diamond bullet" of truth penetrating the brain, that caused Kurtz's wound, his madness, that made him the Maimed King.

The assassination of Kurtz by Willard is a collaboration between Kurtz and Willard. "If anything should happen to me, Willard," Kurtz confides in an atmosphere drenched with insinuation, "if I should die, I should want somebody to go back to America to tell my son the truth about me. I wouldn't want him to believe lies about me." Willard takes the hint, which is

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Kurtz' private army.

## Apocalypse Now

Continued

made even more explicit by the mad photo journalist: "You, you are going to help him. You."

"Everybody wanted him dead," Willard relates in the voice over narration as he prepares for the ritual slaying. "Kurtz wanted it most of all."

The climax of the film is the simultaneous build-up and consummation of two sacrifices. Inside, Willard, brandishing a ceremonial sword, creeps up on Kurtz. Outside, Lance is participating with the tribe in the preparation of a water buffalo for sacrifice. In cuts back and forth, both Kurtz and the buffalo are hacked to pieces at the instant. Kurtz's last words: "The horror! The horror!"

Willard stares at his arm, drenched with blood.

He takes Kurtz's personal papers and leaves the temple. Outside, the tribesmen kneel in homage to the new king. Kurtz's soul has been passed to Willard, and has thus been born again. The king is healed, the quest is achieved.

Willard steps through the crowd of tribesmen, takes Lance by the hand, and leads him silently to the boat.

Willard has become a sighted Tiresias, conscious but not incapacitated or maimed, as his reunion with land symbolizes. This is made clearer by the fact that Willard's mission is not over now. It is only begun. He is to go back to America to tell Kurtz's son the truth about his father. This indeed is a development one can credit only to Coppola. In Conrad's book Marlowe went back and told soothing lies to Kurtz's wife. It is significant that Coppola substitutes Kurtz's son—wives are ruthlessly excised from the cult of the Holy Men.

Why isn't the process of Willard going back to America shown in the movie?—after all, *Heart of Darkness* goes on to describe Marlowe's confrontation with Kurtz's wife. The answer: Willard's return to America is *Apocalypse Now*. We are supposed to be Kurtz's "son," and Willard's narration throughout the movie represents his carrying out of the mission which Kurtz has entrusted to him. Coppola undoubtedly considered this little twist to be an eloquent final "tour de force" with which to complete his film "classic."

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One night several years ago, this writer and a friend happened to walk by a construction site, surrounded by those handsome signs advertising the project, the cost, the contractor, etc. Inside the construction fence there was nothing but rubble and a few walls of the old building still left standing. But for a moment it absurdly seemed that this was the finished structure; we joked that the bourgeois architects had surely reached the last stages of decadence—they were now erecting ruins.

Sort of a lame joke. But even in its lameness, it becomes an insight when applied to director Coppola's "crowning achievement." He desired to create, but his four years of work is nothing but rubble. He thought that, to borrow one more line from Eliot, before stepping into a cold shower and washing away the filth, he would show us "fear and a handful of dust." But all that remains, finally, is Francis holding a handful of dust. The dust is dust. It is Francis who was afraid.

Not that dust cannot be dangerous; if it gets into your eyes you are blinded. The implications of a modern myth of a young and vigorous Kurtz returning to America to "spread the word" to Kurtz's symbolic son don't have to be carried very far before the vicious effects of the movie become clear:

1) The United States lost the war in Vietnam because, unlike the communist "cadre," those running it

on the U.S. end were unwilling to face with absolute moral clarity the necessity to adopt the most ruthless means to obtain victory. The war was run by fools who deluded themselves that there was, that there must be, some limit to war, to atrocity. These men were unwilling and unable to face horror—and to make a friend of it, to embrace it and moral terror. It is ugly, and it is brutal, it destroys the entire moral foundation of our civilization—but it is *true*, and only those who can face this truth intellectually are competent to lead and to win.

2) These "qualities" described above were the qualities of the enemy, the communists. This is, of course, clearly stated in Brando's soliloquy on the severed inoculated arms, an antidote the symbolic character of which need not be spelled out—it follows the same obsessive line of the entire movie. The trained cadre who did this, Kurtz says, were "men of great love," men of courage and will. In other words, the philosophy which led Kurtz to his own genocidal theories, including the maxim, "Drop the bomb! Exterminate them all!" is credited to the communists in the film. This is in line, by the way, with Eliot's own stated *envy* of the discipline and dedication of the communists—he sought to create a "church militant" composed of similarly disciplined reactionaries. Of course, the leap from this to fascism can be made standing still. Eliot's ideological affinities to fascism are well known. He never troubled to conceal them. But Francis, come now, you're not serious!

The view that the source of the Vietnamese victory was their willingness to resort to brutal mass terror against their own people is an interesting one—full of possibilities for "art." But let us suggest another "theme" for Coppola's consideration: a whole people, led by communists, ruthlessly exterminating the imperialists and filling them with boundless terror as their dreams of enslaving a people turn to a handful of dust. Isn't this a theme for art—and perhaps with the added benefit of being somewhat closer to life, and that drab thing, fact?

3) There is really no genuine political standard for judging such matters as right and wrong, progressive and reactionary, just and unjust. The Vietnam war, like all wars, is simply War—a manifestation of the darkness. Principles, values, a rational understanding and a class analysis, are merely emissions of swamp gas, charges of light and shadow which create illusions. A critic of Conrad's work points to precisely this quality in his prose:

"As a connoisseur of dreams, Conrad is a 'dark' writer...so the light in Kurtz's heart barely appears, overwhelmed as it is by the darkness of his needs, the exigencies of his situation..."

"The yellowish, wispy light...exists against the fragmented darkness of the jungle—the contrast of colors giving Conrad a vast symbol for moral, political and social values...the result is bleared, filled artfully with the illusions and the deceptions that Conrad makes us accept as the pathos of existence."

But this "theory" is merely a step towards in fact adopting a definite class position. Though Coppola's film is filled with "ambiguity," this does not lie at the core of his work. The ambiguities are a screen for reaction, an artistic technique analogous to the "principle" that seductive dress is more enticing than sheer nakedness.

For Coppola, "ambiguity" is what provides him with his excuse for "seeing things from the point of view" of the guy manning the mini-guns and the chopper. Emphasis here is on experience, Coppola says. *Here* is emotion. *Here* is beauty. Let me portray it! Napalm is beautiful, viewed from a certain place, through certain eyes—let's share these eyes, let's be in these places.

Coppola makes the spectacle of a colonel leading his boys into battle in order to find a good surfing place not only "funny" but "touching." How quixotic. How exquisitely improbable. The goal of all this is...

why, beauty, boys surfing those beautiful waves, the bracing smell of napalm mingling with the salty air, the screams of the dying drowned out by the roar of the sea. It is...art.

But Coppola will have to distinguish the beauty of this from the lampshades of human flesh which so delighted the wives of the Nazi generals—another example of the "art" produced by the ideology Coppola is toying around with.

To plumb the various depths of this disaster, much more could be written; here, obviously, even enough is too much. But it remains to briefly touch on the question, "What the hell got into the guy?"

Coppola is a bourgeois director; but he has tried to do some progressive things in his films in the past, and he certainly has never been a fascist. And what of Marlon Brando, who supported the Black Panthers, who lists Mao as one of the men in history he most admires? Dennis Hopper? And the list of those associated with the film who have a history of activity in the anti-war movement and support of various progressive causes could go on.

Of course, without talking to these people, we can have no sure and direct insight into this question. But two points can be made. One is that, despite the popular insistence among bourgeois artists that "art" and "politics" should be kept separate and in fact are separate—in other words, that T.S. Eliot may have been a reactionary personally, but he was "still a great artist" whose work can be used and treasured as art—and applied to create new art—*Apocalypse Now* is a resounding refutation of this entire school of thinking. Eliot was indeed able to achieve remarkable effects with his poetry—and for this very reason Coppola was utterly unable to free himself from its morbid embrace, or to avoid surrendering to the medieval darkness it represents. This general principle has combined with Coppola's inherent weakness, clearly visible in other works, for "becoming" the reactionary, power-mad characters he is so fond of portraying. His \$35 million gave him a chance to produce a great progressive political film on the Vietnam war—or a chance to play Westmoreland. He chose cheap, cheap thrills for \$35 million.

But Coppola's experience must be related to the situation in society today. Right now, things are changing on the surface, clearly. But much more rapid and profound changes are taking place beneath the surface in the consciousness of the American people. There has indeed been a dissolving of many of the assumptions underlying U.S. imperialism. But there has been a similar dissolution of the bonds created in the mass movements of the 1960s, in which an entire generation gained an identity based on rebellion, resistance, and fighting U.S. imperialism in Vietnam and its oppression of people around the world.

The 1970s have eaten away, like powerful acid, at dreams and ideals of all kinds. Right now, at the edge of the 1980s, powerful currents are sucking people under and whipping them around in different directions. In a way, this phenomenon can be likened to weird changes in the weather before an earthquake: the two things may not be immediately connected together, but everybody knows that something's going on.

In this context, it should be kept in mind that a powerful pull can exist, not only for the growth of revolutionary sentiment, which is definitely taking place, but of all sorts of reactionary ideologies, including fascism, which would not have dared to raise their heads only a few years ago. And instruments of these reactionary currents may well be men like Coppola, precisely because of their refusal to adopt a clear political standard and their belief that they can fool around with any hocus-pocus in the name of "art," which makes them blind instruments of forces and passions they may not even understand. Of course, the possibility also exists that these same dark forces may transform men like Coppola so that they become in fact thorough reactionaries, both subjectively and objectively.

The effect of the film on audiences can so far only be gauged from reserved performances in New York and Los Angeles; from sitting through two performances in New York, it is clear to this writer that audiences came to the film quick, almost desperate, to rip off the sack cloth of cynical sophistication and drink up any meaning, any hope, any purpose, any truth, any wisdom, any answer, any god. They wait outside the theater every night for an hour. They tremble at the chance to feel, to see, to understand something, and they accept greedily any chance offered them by Coppola. This usually means laughing and cheering at some imperialist atrocity or other; immediately after, the audience senses the treachery, and a shamed silence suffocates the theater. In the sampan scene described above, when the soldier pulls the puppy from the box after the GI's had blown away the civilians, the audience murmurs, "ah." (It was just a little puppy.) When Willard immediately thereafter blows the head off the woman to whom the puppy belongs, there is laughter. Dead hush. Perhaps this is Coppola's way of making us confront our own bestiality. Perhaps the crowds line up at the theater every night waiting to be inoculated, then leave their arms in a sacrificial pile in the lobby in front of the popcorn machine.

We're still in Saigon. Shit.