

REVOLUTION

WINTER/SPRING 1987

**Since the '60s
Trends of Impoverishment, Oppression,
and Class Polarization in the Black Nation**

*by Clyde Young
with Steven Anders*

**Considerations on a
Revolutionary Situation in the United States:
Likely Triggering Factors, Potential Political Contours**

by M. Upshaw

Historical Document
**Self-Criticism by the
Indonesian Communist Party, 1966**

\$4.00

REVOLUTION

Winter/Spring 1987
Issue number 55

Contents

- Since the '60s
Trends of Impoverishment,
Oppression, and Class Polarization
in the Black Nation**
by Clyde Young with Steven Anders 3
- Considerations on a
Revolutionary Situation
in the United States**
by M. Upshaw 37
- Historical Document:
Self-Criticism by the
Indonesian Communist Party, 1966 65**

Revolution (ISSN 0193-3612) is the propaganda organ of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA (RCP,USA).

Correspondence: We welcome correspondence to *Revolution* magazine. All letters and manuscripts should be clean copy, typed and triple-spaced and become the property of *Revolution* magazine. They should be sent to: RCP Publications, P.O. Box 1317, New York, NY 10185

Subscriptions:
In the U.S.: \$14.00/4 issues
Other countries: \$16.50/4 issues—surface mail
\$24.00/4 issues—air mail
\$20.00/4 issues—institutional rate

Payable by check or money order.
Send all subscription orders to: RCP Publications,
P.O. Box 3486, Merchandise Mart, Chicago, IL 60654.

Since the '60s Trends of Impoverishment, Oppression, and Class Polarization in the Black Nation

**by Clyde Young
with Steven Anders**

I. Introduction

In *A Horrible End, or An End to the Horror?*, Bob Avakian, the Chairman of our party's Central Committee, addressed the sharpening class polarization among Black people, situating his presentation in the larger context of the necessity of making a radical rupture with the whole bourgeois-democratic framework:

There is, especially among Black people but also among the basic masses (and others) more generally, a certain disorientation and in some cases even conservatism right now, not only because (as it is often put) the struggle of the '60s did not succeed or accomplish anything real, but because in another way it *did* achieve something, including some of the things that were being aimed for in that period. There are today, in a way there were not 15-20 years ago, many Black elected officials, a fair number of Black people in the media, etc., and there has been a building up of some Black business (and this continues today, despite the fact that some are being allowed, or even pushed in some cases, to go under) . . .

It is of course not the case that basic equality has been won for Black people and other oppressed peoples in the U.S. But certain things have changed and certain things have been gained, in particular for the more privileged and elite strata among them, and especially in today's "hard times" and with the approaching showdown with the Soviet bloc, a significant mood exists among these strata of scuffling to preserve what they have got, including by "going along with the program" of the U.S. imperialists. Further, even among those who have not benefited

from the concessions and co-optations by the ruling class and whose situation has grown worse since the '60s, there is significant disorientation: not just disorientation at the fact that after so much struggle things are worse — and this is the situation for the basic masses generally — but also to some degree the disorientation of not knowing exactly what should be struggled for after all, since many of the specific things demanded in the '60s *have* been granted, at least up to a point.

This is linked not only with the sharpened class polarization among Black people which we have been emphasizing, but it is also another sharp illustration of the need for that radical rupture with the whole bourgeois-democratic framework — and on the other hand how crucial and liberating for the basic proletarian masses that rupture is. It is only as such a rupture is made that the fundamental class interests of these proletarians and of the proletariat as a whole can be really fought for uncompromisingly (and as a vital part of this, that the oppression of Black people as a people, which does victimize them across class lines — though in significantly different ways and to different degrees for different classes — can be attacked at its roots). (Avakian, 1984, pp. 139-40)

Avakian's writings on class polarization within the Black nation in the U.S. provide the analytical framework for this study. (See Avakian, Bob, "Class Polarization Among Black People," *Revolution* magazine, Winter/Spring, 1985).

The phenomenon of class polarization among Black people has given rise to much controversy and debate in this country, especially among Black intellectuals. Some attempt to deny the phenomenon's significance; others argue that the oppression of Black people has been mitigated or eliminated as a result of the recent build-up of significant sections of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois strata and forces among Black people. Neither position is correct. The phenomenon of class polarization is very significant, while at the same time, as Bob Avakian suggests in *A Horrible End, or An End to the Horror?*, Black people as a people continue to be "victimized across class lines — though in significantly different ways and to different degrees for different classes" (Avakian, 1984, p. 140).

Indeed, the subjugation of whole nations and peoples — including Black people within the U.S. — is a basic and fundamental pillar of the imperialist system the world over. Imperialism derives huge superprofits from the plunder of whole nations and regions of the world, superprofits which are indispensable to the reproduction of *all* capital under imperialism.

Within the U.S. itself, the imperialists reap superprofits from the subjugation of Black people and other minority nationalities. What has emerged from that oppression is a superstructure which not only justifies, reinforces, and perpetuates national oppression but is also a "crucial

political weapon, wielded directly against the oppressed people but also, fundamentally, at the entire working class" (*New Programme and New Constitution of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA*, 1981, p. 33). It is an obstacle to the development of a class-conscious revolutionary movement of the proletariat (RCP, *New Programme*, 1981, p. 33).

Black people's labor has played a crucial role at each stage of the development and expansion of capitalism in the U.S. The net effect of the savage and brutal suppression of Black people and their distinctive economic role is that they have been kept at the bottom of U.S. society. Moreover, the oppression of the masses of Black people (and other oppressed peoples) has been (and remains) *integral* and *vital* to the historical evolution of U.S. imperialism and its requirements today. In other words, Black people's oppression is due in part to their historical past as slaves, followed by a period of semifeudal exploitation as peasants and continuing down to today with the caste-like oppression of Black people, concentrated in the lowest strata of the proletariat and trapped, for the most part, in the ghettos of rotting and decaying urban centers. And all of this is reinforced by a "structure of political, economic, and social oppression which affects all classes of Black people, a structure of white supremacy that is rooted in the development of the capitalist system in this country, beginning with slavery, and remains an integral part of it in the U.S. today" (*Red Papers* 6, 1974, p. 106). The position of Black people within the overall division of labor and the superexploitation of Black labor have been essential features and important props of the U.S. economy. The oppression of Black people has been a major source of strength of U.S. imperialism in the post-World War 2 period.¹

The material basis and forms of expression of national oppression have undergone changes. Indeed, the national question in the U.S. has been peculiar and extremely complex in its development. A crucial aspect of the RCP's position on the national question in the U.S. has been precisely the recognition that while national oppression is indispensable to U.S. imperialism, its material basis and forms of ex-

¹ While the question of superexploitation cannot be explored in any depth in this article, our discussion would be incomplete if we did not indicate the outlines of a Marxist approach to this question. Such an approach would take as a point of departure the caste-like oppression of Black people and then explore a highly important and complex dynamic: the channeling into, and the concentration and overrepresentation of Black workers within, the lowest paid sectors of the workforce; the exceptionally high rates of unemployment among Black proletarians; and the economic, social, and political processes specific to the ghetto which influence the conditions of existence of this labor power, that is, its costs of reproduction, availability, and supply. Thus, a scientific approach to the question of superexploitation would demonstrate that there are downward pressures on the wages of Black labor, stemming from its oversupply, and mechanisms specific to the ghetto which lower the cost of this labor to capital.

pression have often undergone radical changes and transformation. This understanding distinguished the party's line both from those who have seized on real transformations in the character and form of national oppression in order to deny the existence of the national question, reducing it to merely a question of "racism" and "racial oppression," and from others who clung to an analysis of Black people as a peasant nation in the Black Belt South (and who then argued that secession was at the heart of Black people's struggle for emancipation) even after the masses of Black people had been transformed from peasants into proletarians concentrated in the urban cores of the North and South.

The nature and character of the oppression of Black people profoundly changed in the years after World War 2 when, on the basis of an unprecedentedly dominant position coming out of that war, the U.S. imperialists carried out the large-scale proletarianization and urbanization of millions of Black people, the overwhelming majority of whom were previously sharecroppers. These changes do not argue for the "progressive" nature of imperialism but instead were instrumental to the profitable accumulation of capital. Even more important, this historic shift had fundamental implications for the revolutionary process in the U.S.

Numbering in the tens of millions and suffering discrimination and other forms of oppression as peoples, while at the same time in their great majority part of the single proletariat in the U.S., concentrated in its most exploited sections, the oppressed peoples in the U.S. are a tremendously powerful force for revolution. Their fight for equality and emancipation is bound by a thousand links with the struggle of the working class for socialism and lends it great strength. Large numbers of people of these oppressed nationalities will, together with class-conscious white proletarians, fight consciously and directly under the proletarian revolutionary banner; others will fight under various revolutionary nationalist banners. The forging of the alliance between these two forces, around a program only realizable through and serving the proletarian revolution, will be key to the victory of the socialist revolution in this country. (RCP, *New Programme*, 1981, p. 34)

Our analysis of class polarization will be presented in two installments in *Revolution*. In the first installment, we will address in some detail two major issues: (1) the underlying contradictions giving rise to the upheaval of the '60s and the bourgeoisie's response to that turmoil: concessions, cooptation, building up a buffer strata among Black people, and vicious repression; and (2) the intensifying class polarization within the Black nation with the build-up of certain significant sections of the Black bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie and the deteriorating situation facing the masses of Black people. A second, future article will explore the

political and strategic implications of our analysis of class polarization among Black people.

II. The '60s and the Aftermath

The apostles of violence, with their ugly drumbeat of hatred, must know that they are now heading for disaster. And every man who really wants progress or justice or equality must stand against them and their miserable virus of hate. (*Report of the National Advisory Committee on Civil Disorders* [Kerner Report], 1968, p. 540)

Not even the sternest police action, nor the most effective Federal troops, can ever create lasting peace in our cities. The only genuine, long-range solution for what has happened lies in an attack — mounted at every level — upon the conditions that breed despair and violence. All of us know what those conditions are: ignorance, discrimination, slums, poverty, disease, not enough jobs. We should attack these conditions — not because we are frightened by conflict, but because we are fired by conscience. We should attack them because there is simply no other way to achieve a decent and orderly society in America. (*Kerner Report*, 1968, p. 539)

The statements quoted above are from a report authorized by then-President Lyndon Johnson and quoted by him in an "Address to the Nation on Civil Disorders." They were made in the wake of powerful rebellions in Detroit, Newark, Cleveland, and more than a hundred other cities during the summer of 1967. It was the 1960s: a decade of great turmoil and struggle, including revolutionary struggles in the oppressed countries and regions of the world, and even in various imperialist countries. In the U.S. the Black liberation struggle shook this country at its foundations, inspiring millions upon millions of people here and throughout the world. Indeed, Mao Tsetung referred to the Black liberation struggle as "a new clarion call to all the exploited and oppressed people of the United States to fight against the barbarous rule of the monopoly capitalist class" (Mao, 1968, p. 2).

This was the context in which Johnson talked about the bourgeoisie's "conscience being fired" and "the apostles of violence, with their drumbeat of hatred." If anything "fired the conscience" of the bourgeoisie in the '60s, it was the flames of rebellion and liberation in this country and the blaze of revolution in the Third World.²

² We use the term "Third World" throughout this article because it has become widely accepted as a kind of shorthand for the peoples and countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. But its use in this article has no connection with the reactionary "Three Worlds" theory advanced by the revisionist rulers of China.

In the above excerpts from his "Address to the Nation on Civil Disorders," Johnson expressed in a concentrated way the counterrevolutionary dual tactics to which the imperialists resorted in dealing with the upheaval of the 1960s: on the one hand, making concessions and promoting bourgeois reformism, and, on the other hand, brutally suppressing revolutionary forces and rebellious sections of the masses. The Kennedys, above all, personified that approach. During a period of tremendous turmoil and upheaval, the Kennedys provided a certain kind of leadership on behalf of the ruling class as a whole, concealing the mailed fist of capitalist reaction inside the velvet glove of bourgeois reformism. However, before delving further into the bourgeoisie's response to the social unrest of the '60s, we ought to turn our attention to the underlying contradictions which gave rise to that upheaval.

In order to grasp what gave rise to the revolutionary initiatives of the Black masses in that period, it is not enough to focus on the contradictions inside the U.S. On the contrary, one must look *first* and *foremost* to the world arena and analyze the contradictions expressing themselves on a world scale during the '60s and their interpenetration with the transformations and contradictions within U.S. society.³ This is the method that Bob Avakian applies in analyzing the material underpinnings of the revolutionary turmoil throughout the world and in this country in the '60s:

Overall, the character of the '60s was determined by tremendous changes taking place in world economics and politics, on a basis largely laid through the fighting and outcome of WW2. Most significant on a world scale in the '60s was the intensifying contradiction between the oppressed nations of the "third world" and imperialism, headed by the U.S., giving rise to a tide of national liberation struggle against imperialism, with the focal point in Vietnam. And there was then in China a powerful revolutionary base area. In this overall context, profound changes took place within the U.S. itself, in the economy and the political and ideological-cultural superstructure, especially affecting the masses of Black people and interacting with the storm of protest and rebellion that began as a civil rights movement and developed into a Black liberation struggle. (Avakian, 1983, p. 3)

What were the specific conditions within the U.S. giving rise to the revolutionary struggle of the Black masses during the decade of the 1960s? In *Bob Avakian Replies to a Letter from: "Black Nationalist with Communistic Inclinations,"* Avakian pointed out that millions

of Black people had been driven off the southern

farmlands, out of the conditions of sharecropping (or other forms of bare subsistence farming), into the urban ghettos of the North (and South) and, in larger numbers than ever before, into the ranks of the working class — specifically its most exploited ranks. This was not merely a geographic change but a basic change in their position in the overall economy and society as a whole, a change which put them in a much more powerful position not only to strike back against their oppression (including in its new forms) but to influence even broader masses of people and the whole society, including by sparking protest and rebellion among millions of other people in society and raising profound questions about the whole nature of the system among these and even millions more. (Avakian, 1980, p. 10)

From Peasant to Worker

Prior to World War 2 the southern portion of the U.S., with its semifeudal survivals, lagged behind the rest of the country in developing capitalism in agriculture. However, on the basis of its dominant world position coming out of that war, the U.S. succeeded in bridging the gap between the level of agriculture in the South and the remainder of the country. With mechanization in the South, agriculture became capital intensive as opposed to labor intensive. The transformation of Southern agriculture began in earnest in the late 1940s, accelerated during the latter half of the 1950s, and continued throughout the 1960s. Between 1945 and 1959 the percentage of Southern farms which had tractors increased from 14.3 percent to 54.9 percent. In absolute figures, the number of tractors on those farms rose from 400,000 in 1945 to 900,000 in 1959 — an increase of more than 100 percent. In contrast, the number of tractors in the North grew from 1.4 million to just over 1.5 million during the same years (*Red Papers* 5, 1972, p. 28).

With the profound changes in production relations in the South during the 1940s and continuing into the 1960s, millions of Black people who had previously been engaged in sharecropping and subsistence farming were driven off the land and into the factories within the urban areas of the North, the South, and the West. Millions were transformed from peasants into proletarians. Similar processes occurred in other imperialist countries after World War 2, especially Japan and Italy. But the proletarianization and urbanization of millions of Black people helped unleash much more profound political upheaval. This was one of the most remarkable transformations in the history of U.S. society and sent shock waves through every institution.

With the mechanization of agriculture in the South, the impoverished condition of tenant farmers, which had previously been severe, found even more acute expression as their labor became superfluous. Between 1950 and 1965 alone, farm output in the U.S. increased by 45 percent and

³ For a fuller explanation of the necessity for this approach, see Avakian, Bob, *Conquer the World*.

farm employment declined by 45 percent as the result of mechanization and new methods in farming (Piven and Cloward, 1971, p. 201). Millions of Blacks, therefore, were forced to leave the South in search of a livelihood.

During the Second World War tens of thousands of Blacks migrated to the North to fill positions in industry created by the needs of war production. Approximately 1,000,000 Blacks joined the industrial work force during the war, 60 percent of whom were women, including many former domestics. One historian has pointed out that "Rosie the Riveter" was as likely to be Black as white (Harris, 1982, p. 122). The Black labor force became considerably more diversified during the war years. For example, the number of Black workers employed as skilled craftsmen and semiskilled operatives doubled between 1940 and 1944. Nevertheless, Black proletarians found themselves disproportionately represented in the unskilled jobs — 80 percent of Black proletarians were unskilled laborers in 1945, the same proportion as in 1940. And when the war ended and the white soldiers returned home, many Blacks were pushed out of the factory jobs that they had held during the war (Harris, 1982, p. 122).

Over 20 million people, including 4 million Blacks, left the land after 1940. This massive population shift prompted one bourgeois historian to comment that the United States "grew up in the country and moved to town" (Harris, 1982, p. 123). Over time, millions of the whites who had migrated from the rural areas to the cities were to a large degree absorbed into high-paying jobs in industry, but, as we have indicated, Blacks were overwhelmingly excluded from this process. Instead, Blacks were in large part forced into ghettos and into the lowest and most exploited sections of the proletariat as a kind of caste.⁴

Table 1 illustrates the pattern of out-migration of Black

⁴ Historically, two main incorrect explanations have been advanced for this phenomenon. The first is the stagnation theory, which was championed in particular by the Comintern; the Comintern theorists argued that stagnation was imperialism's normal state — that capitalism had entered into an irreversible systemic crisis in which periods of revival and boom were exceptional and bound to be shortlived. Consequently, imperialism lacked the dynamism with which to expand and to absorb the millions of Blacks driven off the land after World War 2. (In fact, based on the general crisis theory, the Comintern argued that imperialism could not alter the production relations in the South as occurred during and after the war.)

The second dominant explanation rests on the presumption of an ideal, free labor market. According to this notion, because Blacks lacked training and skills they found themselves at a competitive disadvantage in the scramble for jobs with the millions of whites who had also left the land after 1940. This explanation fails to comprehend and even denies the integrality and profitability of national oppression to the imperialist system.

Table 1
Out-migration of Blacks from the South, 1910-1966

Period	Net Black Out-Migration From the South	Annual Average
1910-1920	454,000	45,400
1920-1930	749,000	74,900
1930-1940	348,000	34,800
1940-1950	1,597,000	159,700
1950-1960	1,457,000	145,700
1960-1966	613,000	102,000

Source: Kerner Report, 1968, p. 240

people from the South during a 56-year period: 1910-1966.

While there was significant out-migration of Blacks from the South throughout the entire period on which Table 1 focuses, the years 1940 to 1960 witnessed the most dramatic shift in the Black population. The pattern of Black migration from the South continued up through the 1960s. Beginning in the '70s the longstanding Black exodus from the South seemed to end. Between 1975 and 1980 approximately 415,000 Blacks moved to the South, compared to only about 220,000 who left; and by 1980, 53 percent of the Black population resided in the South, the same percentage as in 1970 (Matney, 1983, p. 1).

To return to and focus on the decisive point: the migration of millions of Blacks from rural areas in the South to urban areas in the North and West (and the South as well) was not just a geographical change but was also a fundamental change in the class position of Black people, whose overwhelming concentration in the lowest sector of the proletariat placed them in a position not only to strike powerfully at their oppression but also to influence broader sections of the working class and other popular strata (in this country and indeed throughout the world).

The Struggle Erupts

The transformation of the production relations in the South after World War 2, along with the concomitant vast expansion of the Black section of the proletariat and the concentration of Black people in the urban cores, was the underlying material basis for the struggle of Black people in the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s. The plantation system in the South was the economic foundation of segregation, which in turn served the purpose of keeping the sharecropper confined to the land under the domination of the plantation owner. This was enforced by open terror directed not only against the poorest section of Black peasants but also those Blacks who managed to acquire land, i.e., elements of a

nascent Black bourgeoisie. When the plantation system began to undergo radical transformation, the superstructure of which Jim Crow segregation was a basic part became increasingly racked with crisis and finally untenable. The changes in the superstructure and the social relations in the South, however, did not flow "automatically" from changes in the underlying economic conditions. Jim Crow segregation did not fall down simply as a result of the profound changes in the production relations in the southern region of the U.S. Indeed, the ruling class initially hoped to maintain most of the institutions of segregation in the South. However, as the struggle of Black people erupted and developed into a mass movement in the latter part of the 1950s and the early 1960s, and as the U.S. ran up against the powerful tide of national liberation in the Third World, the bourgeoisie was forced to make a few small concessions. For example, after the rebellion in Birmingham, Alabama in 1963 President Kennedy sought the enactment of a "major" civil rights bill. In an address to the nation in June 1963 Kennedy made clear for all those who wanted to hear the underlying motivation for this "concession":

One hundred years of delay have passed since President Lincoln freed the slaves, yet their heirs, their grandsons, are not fully free. They are not yet freed from the bonds of injustice. They are not yet freed from social and economic oppression. And this nation, for all its hopes and all its boasts, will not be fully free until all its citizens are free.

We preach freedom around the world, and we mean it, and we cherish our freedom here at home, but are we to say to the world . . . that this is a land of the free except for the Negroes . . . ? Now the time has come for this nation to fulfill its promise. The events in Birmingham and elsewhere have so increased the cries for equality that no city or state or legislative body can prudently choose to ignore them. (Lewis, 1978, pp. 208-09)

Masquerading under a banner of "anticolonialism," the U.S. largely edged out Britain and France and other traditional colonial powers in various Third World countries during the years after World War 2, implementing instead its own brand of neocolonialism. Indeed, the ability of the U.S. imperialists to export capital to the Third World was crucial to their postwar economic expansion. But when Black people rose up against Jim Crow segregation in the South and were attacked with water hoses and dogs, and were frequently murdered outright, this did not befit the "anticolonial" image desired by the U.S. in the Third World. In short, the struggle of Black people, interacting with the world situation and especially the rising tide of revolution in the colonial world, profoundly influenced the policies of the U.S. government in the 1950s and the 1960s, forcing concessions from the ruling class. This was especially true when the struggle of Black people became more conscious and developed into a Black liberation struggle.

While there were contradictory trends within it from the beginning, the Black movement in the U.S. in the 1950s and early 1960s was dominated by nonradical sections of the Black bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie who sought to confine and restrict the goals of that movement to reforming the imperialist system.⁵ The RCP pamphlet summing up the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. provides a useful analysis of the role of the Black bourgeoisie in the mass movement of Black people in the late 1950s and early 1960s:

Especially in the '50s and early '60s, the Black bourgeoisie saw its own interests very much tied up with the developing mass movement, since many aspects of the oppression of Black people make life hard for them as well, and in this movement they saw a golden opportunity to advance their own economic and political power. But their outlook towards the masses was exactly that of King: they saw the mass movement as something to pressure the white capitalists into giving the Black bourgeoisie a better deal. (RCP, 1978, p. 20)

In the mid-to late-1960s a revolutionary trend emerged as the tendency which, if not dominant, at least had the initiative within the Black movement. The involvement of many proletarian Black masses played a crucial role in giving the movement of the '60s such a powerful revolutionary thrust.⁶ Moreover, the Black liberation struggle was more consciously aimed at the imperialist system and viewed itself as part of a worldwide struggle of the oppressed against the oppressor (or, as Malcolm X put it, the "haves against the have nots"). Malcolm X powerfully challenged the mainstream reformism of King and others with a fiery and anti-imperialist revolutionary nationalism; later in the decade the Black Panther Party, an openly revolutionary organization, emerged as the leading force in the Black liberation movement. In a speech in Cleveland in 1979, Bob Avakian addressed the impact of the Black Panthers in the 1960s:

[T]he Black Panther Party in this country,

⁵ In *A Horrible End, or An End to the Horror?*, Bob Avakian exposes how today certain forces among Black people want to bury the legacy of the more revolutionary currents of the '60s: "The focus on this is 'the '60s' that bourgeois elements and lackeys among Black people and other oppressed peoples in the U.S. want to 'replay' — and in the present situation this can only be a retrograde trend, especially to the extent (and it is to a large extent the case) that this is a conscious attempt to negate the revolutionary currents of the late '60s and a conscious effort to lead the oppressed masses more firmly into the deadly embrace of the imperialist ruling class" (Avakian, 1984, p. 139).

⁶ For a more thorough discussion of this point see Avakian, 1982, pp. 70-72.

despite weaknesses in its understanding and political program, turned thousands, even tens of thousands, perhaps even hundreds of thousands of people toward revolution in this country. Thousands and thousands of young people in particular — Black, white, Chicano, Puerto Rican, and others — were turned toward revolution and even some toward Marxism by the work, by the political activity, and by the propaganda and the agitation carried out by the Black Panther Party. (Avakian, 1980, p. 2)

In addition to, and underlying, the role of revolutionary forces such as the Black Panthers, there were four basic factors contributing to the development of a revolutionary trend in the Black movement of the '60s: (1) the international situation — more specifically the rising tide of revolution throughout the Third World; (2) the failure of reformism in the U.S.; (3) the general climate of expansion and rising expectations in this country (and on a world scale); and (4) the stark conditions of life confronting the masses of Black people in the urban ghettos.

Concession, Repression, and Rebellion

As the struggle of Black people erupted into a mass movement, and particularly as it went over to a struggle for liberation, the bourgeoisie resorted to counterrevolutionary dual tactics: promoting bourgeois reformism and engaging in concessionary pacification on the one hand while brutally suppressing the revolutionary leaders and revolutionary forces on the other. While the U.S. bourgeoisie was not about to eliminate the oppression of Black people, the resources and reserves that they did have in the 1960s, a period of relative expansion, enabled them to make certain concessions to the struggle of Black people. And that struggle, together with the struggle of other strata in U.S. society and the revolutionary movements and struggles in the Third World, compelled the ruling class to make those concessions.

We have shown how President Kennedy sought the enactment of a "major" civil rights bill after the rebellion in Birmingham, Alabama in 1963. After John Kennedy was assassinated, Lyndon B. Johnson, who was himself no paragon of "liberalism,"⁷ called for the building of the

⁷ Prior to becoming president — specifically, between the years 1937 and 1960 — Lyndon Johnson distinguished himself as a staunch opponent of civil rights for Black people in the U.S. In a speech in Austin, Texas in 1948 he said: "This civil rights program is a farce and a sham — an effort to set up a police state in the guise of liberty" (Sheriell, 1967, p. 190). Moreover, in 1949 Johnson opposed an anti-lynching law because it "would indict as killers men and women who never held a gun in their hands" (Dugger, 1982, p. 345).

"Great Society." "The Great Society," said Johnson, "rests on abundance and liberty for all. It demands an end to poverty and racial injustice, to which we are totally committed in our time" (Gettleman and Mermelstein, 1967, p. 16). At the beginning of 1964, in his State of the Union Address, Johnson called for a "national war on poverty":

We are citizens of the richest and most fortunate nation in the history of the world. One hundred and eighty years ago we were a small country struggling for survival on the margin of a hostile land. Today we have established a civilization of free men which spans an entire continent. . . . The path forward has not been an easy one. But we have never lost sight of our goal — an America in which every citizen shares all the opportunities of his society, in which every man has a chance to advance his welfare to the limit of his capacities. . . . We have come a long way toward this goal. We still have a long way to go. The distance which remains is the measure of the great unfinished work of our society. To finish that work I have called for a national war on poverty. Our objective: total victory. There are millions of Americans — one-fifth of our people — who have not shared in the abundance which has been granted to most of us, and on whom the gates of opportunity have been closed. (Gettleman and Mermelstein, 1967, p. 181)

Only a few years before that speech the ruling class hardly acknowledged that poverty even existed in the U.S.; yet in 1964 Lyndon Johnson declared "war" on it. These concessions were not a reflection of the "benevolence" or "generosity" of old LBJ; they were an expression of the exigencies of the U.S. empire. This was the impetus for LBJ's "lofty" and demagogic rhetoric about the "Great Society" and a "war" on poverty.

The War on Poverty was officially launched with the creation of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). The programs which were administered by the OEO ranged from Vista and the Job Corps to Legal Services and Upward Bound. The Community Action Program (CAP) was the heart of the OEO programs. CAP called for the "maximum feasible participation of residents of the areas and members of the groups served" (Piven and Cloward, 1971, p. 265). Through that program, the bourgeoisie, assisted by an assortment of "poverty pimps," sought to channel the discontent and rebellion of the Black masses onto a "safe" and reformist path. In *The Choice: The Issue of Black Survival in America*, Samuel Yette points out that CAP also "became a name-taking web that helped identify and isolate the natural leaders of every black community in America, each leader's name ultimately fixed to a massive pickup list at the Pentagon, awaiting the moment when the order is given" (Yette, 1971, pp. 39-40). (CAP was later abolished, however, when even the "militant" reformism of those who participated in the program proved to be more than the bourgeoisie had bargained for.)

This author also points out that as part of these preparations some police departments armed white civilians and trained them in the use of weapons. For example, the police in Kansas City, Missouri held a six-week course to train private citizens in the use of firearms. Clarence Kelly, the Kansas City police chief (and later head of the FBI), argued that civilians were already arming themselves "for protection"; therefore, the police might as well teach them how to use the weapons most effectively. In Dearborn, a segregated suburb of Detroit which is virtually owned by the Ford family, "the city sponsored a six-hour course in the use of pistols for local housewives." And in Highland Park, another suburb of Detroit, police "provided gun training to local merchants." In Detroit itself "an all-white group called 'Breakthrough' set up a gun club to train its members" (Allen, 1970, p. 200).

The bourgeoisie also waged a concerted offensive in the cultural arena aimed at disorienting and derailing the militance of Black youth in particular. In discussing that offensive, Bob Avakian says:

They gave some room for "Black expression" in the cultural sphere, which wasn't really something coming from out of the uprising of the masses, nor certainly an expression of it; it was in fact aimed directly against the section that they were especially concerned about which was the extremely volatile Black youth, the basic proletarian Black youth. A lot of that was aimed specifically at confusing, disorienting them, and . . . derailing and misdirecting that militancy and rebelliousness into harmless channels, individualistic channels, and at promoting this whole line that goes along with the material promotion of the Black petty bourgeoisie that the way to get back at the system is to beat the man at his own game, to be slicker than he is at his own thing.

In all of this, both in the ideological sphere and culturally in particular, as well as in the material sphere, there were . . . real steps taken to steer the offensive back at the masses, including by misdirecting their upsurge and rebelliousness and their volatility and channeling it into highly individualistic directions — making "me" the message. (Avakian, 1985, pp. 20-21)

What Avakian is referring to specifically is the wave of Black-oriented movies, characterized aptly by some as "blaxploitation films," that appeared in the early 1970s. Prior to the 1970s Blacks were seldom given a major role in a motion picture, and when they did appear on screen they were more often than not depicted in subservient roles. However, beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s Blacks were given major roles, including in many cases lead roles, in scores of films. In January 1974 *Variety* (the entertainment industry newspaper) listed over 100 Black-oriented films which were produced in a four-year period, beginning in 1970. And in 1974 alone, Black movies grossed

\$175,000,000. Black films, and particularly the blaxploitation variety (euphemistically called "fantasy action films" by *Variety*), are credited by many reviewers and publications with having been instrumental in lifting Hollywood out of a serious slump that it had fallen into in the late 1960s. But while these movies were highly profitable, the bourgeoisie had larger and more compelling reasons, as indicated by Avakian above, for allowing them to flourish for a time.

Among the blaxploitation films that were made in the 1970s were *Shaft*, *Melinda*, *Trouble Man*, and *Superfly*. Writing about these films, Daniel Leab says:

Among the most controversial of these films (as well as one of the largest grossers) was *Superfly*, a 1972 Warner Brothers release, directed by Gordon Parks, Jr. It earned over \$5 million in one year on an investment of less than a million. The title refers to the ghetto name for cocaine and the film is about Youngblood Priest, a black dealer who is looking to make one last big sale and retire. He succeeds despite the attempts to relieve him of his loot and his life by high-ranking white police officials, one of whom is described as New York City's biggest cocaine supplier. At the film's end the cocaine sniffing Priest drives off in his magnificent Rolls Royce, a rich and happy man. In the process of achieving his goal, moreover, he has not only beaten up black thugs and white policemen but has enjoyed his loyal black mistress and an eager white girl. (Leab, 1976, p. 255)

"Cocaine-sniffing" drug pushers like Priest were promoted as role models by the bourgeoisie. In fact, the glorification of the drug scene was a big part of the "blaxploitation films." This was no accident but part of the bourgeoisie's strategy for diffusing and misdirecting the anger of especially the youth among the Black masses and the oppressed. For example, after the Detroit rebellion in 1967 there was a notable increase in the accessibility of drugs, particularly heroin. Politically conscious Black masses (and others) correctly saw this as a ploy of the ruling class to pacify the Black masses.⁸

Revolutionary nationalists, on the other hand, were depicted in these films as leeches who talked "tough" but who, when "push came to shove," were not ready or willing to get it on with the "Man" as Priest was. For example, in one scene in *Superfly*, Priest is confronted by a group of nationalists who demand that he contribute a portion of his dope revenue to the revolution. Clutching his pistol, Priest dismisses them rudely: "When you brothers get some guns and get ready to get it on with the man, I'll be right there on

⁸ Ironically, the U.S. imperialists — ever the ones to "skin the ox twice" — are now pointing to the drug scene as a justification for a major tightening up of their state apparatus, including more repression against the Black masses.

the front line — until then, get the hell out of my face!" (Warner Brothers, 1972).

Richard Lederer, former vice-president of Warner Brothers in charge of advertising and publicity, answered the critics of *Superfly* in this fashion: "Blacks who know tell us that in the ghetto, the pusher is a hero to the kids. Street Blacks and non-bleeding-heart blacks say this is the only reasonable goal that black youth can aspire to. . . . We sneaked [previewed] it in several cities. Audiences loved it. Only a loud minority protested it, the glory seekers who want the headlines. We try to be sensitive to what people think of the movies. . . we won't do anything that we think is offensive" (Williams, 1974, p. 102).

One gets a sense of the line and outlook being promoted by films like *Superfly* through reviewing the dialogue from the movie. What follows is some of the dialogue from a scene in the film where Priest is telling his crime-partner, Eddie, that he is getting out of the dope business:

Priest: "I'm getting out, Eddie."

Eddie: "Getting out of what?"

Priest: "The coke business."

Eddie: "You gonna give all this up — eight track stereo, color TV in every room and you can snort a half a piece of coke every day. That's the American Dream, nigger. . . . I know it's a rotten game, but it's the only one the man left us to play."

And in another scene there is this exchange between Priest and Eddie:

Priest: ". . . that man owns us, you understand, Eddie? To him we're not real, he'll just use us and then kill us."

Eddie: "Man, people been using me all my life. Yeah. That honkie's using me — so what? I'm glad he's using me because I'm gonna make me a piss pot full of money and I'm gonna live like a prince, a fucking Black prince. Yeah, this is the life and I could be nothing nowhere else. And about him killing me, I don't care — shit, I don't care, as long as he lets me live to be an old motherfucka. And I ain't gonna do nothing to make him kill me now. (Warner Brothers, 1972)

What is clearly illustrated here is the view that if you cannot make it into the system through "legitimate" channels, then you can still get a piece of the American Dream and find a niche and "become somebody" through illegitimate means. The underlying ideology expressed, although from lumpen elements, is that of the petty bourgeoisie.⁹

⁹ The 1960s also witnessed a flowering, and suppression, of progressive and revolutionary Black culture in many different spheres and arenas. The ruling class attempted to pre-

The Promotion of Male Chauvinism

In concluding this point, we should discuss briefly another feature of the "blaxploitation films": the demeaning and degrading portrayal of women in general and Black women in particular. As Daniel Leab says:

There can be no question about the black superhero's capabilities, but his humanity is another matter. For *Superspade* was no less a caricature than the earlier ones that so grossly insulted black people. And this was even more true of the typical black woman who was presented in these films. Take the nightclub singer in the 1972 Twentieth Century-Fox release *Trouble Man* about a fancy black detective known as Mr. T. The movie makes it seem as though she spends all of her time waiting for "Mr. T" to call; she even refuses a chance to perform out-of-town lest she be absent when he needs her. As one critic said, "no matter that her hair is cut Afro, nor the objects d'art surrounding her are African, she's still a house slave." At a time when women's lib had become increasingly militant, these films served as splendid examples of male chauvinism. (Leab, 1976, p. 256)

This reflected, of course, the dominance of male supremacy and male chauvinism in bourgeois society (and, indeed, in class society generally). But one of the significant things the bourgeoisie was specifically exploiting in these "blaxploitation films" was the line current in the Black movement of the 1960s, including even among the more revolutionary elements in that movement, that women's oppression did not apply to Black women. Underlying this view was the notion that Black men had been politically and psychologically "emasculated" as a result of their oppression in this country and that the oppression of Black women would not and should not be fought against until Black men

vent this culture from getting out to the masses through denial of venues and exposure, refusal of funding, and bourgeois-oriented criticism, and where it did get out attempted to overwhelm it with trash like the "blaxploitation films," or pallid rip-offs. They also, however, resorted to outright police suppression of artists such as Charlie Mingus and Jimi Hendrix (with the political police perhaps implicated in the latter's death), while other popular Black artists (e.g., Sam Cooke, Otis Redding) died under what were at least suspicious circumstances. It was the early '70s before a few hugely popular artists like Marvin Gaye and Stevie Wonder were able to win any measure of artistic control over their work and broach themes of even a progressive (if not revolutionary), explicitly political character. This flowering and its suppression, while extremely significant, are beyond the scope of the current article, however.

had achieved their manhood.

Those holding this line often argued that to raise the issue of inequality between Black men and women divided the Black nation. One gets a sense of some of this from an interview with Tamara Dodson, the star of *Cleopatra Jones*. In that interview, Dodson explains that she does not see her character as a women's libber. "I don't believe in that for black people," she says. "We're trying to free our men. I believe in equal pay, but the rest just doesn't involve me. I don't want to talk about it, because I don't think of Cleopatra Jones as being a women's libber. I see her as a very positive, strong lady who knows what she has to do, she's defending an important freedom for her people, the freedom to exist without drugs" (Elemesrud, 1973, p. 11). The character Cleopatra Jones was a CIA agent à la James Bond!

For many people in the Black movement of the 1960s, "achieving Black manhood" was the essence of Black liberation. In *A Horrible End, or An End to the Horror?*, Bob Avakian discusses this line in the context of a larger presentation of the necessity of people who rebel against imperialism and reaction to "make a leap to thoroughgoing opposition to the whole system and its ideology, ways of thinking, and values" (Avakian, 1984, p. 120). In particular, he stresses the centrality of the struggle against women's oppression to the revolutionary process as a whole: "In many ways, and particularly for men, the woman question and whether you seek to completely abolish or to preserve the existing property and social relations and corresponding ideology that enslave women (or maybe just a little bit of them) is a touchstone question among the oppressed themselves. It is a dividing line between 'wanting in' and really 'wanting out': between fighting to end all oppression and exploitation — and the very division of society into classes — and seeking in the final analysis to get your part in this" (Avakian, 1984, pp. 140-41).

In summary, the imperialists resorted to suppression, concession, cooptation, and building up buffers among Black people in the 1960s as a means to cool out the Black liberation movement. But these tactics, particularly the brutal suppression, did not by themselves cause the demise of that movement. Ultimately, the shift in the contradictions on a world scale — particularly the shift from the oppressed-nations-versus-imperialism contradiction to the inter-imperialism contradiction as the principal contradiction in the world — interacting with the situation in the U.S., including both the severe (and varied) repression and the contradictory tendencies and limitations of the Black liberation struggle, led to the ebbing of the revolutionary movement in the U.S. (On a world scale there was also in the 1970s, especially by the latter half of that decade, a "relative ebb" in the revolutionary struggle. We say "relative ebb" because revolutionary struggle and revolutions have continued in the Third World even during the 1970s and into the 1980s — and have experienced a beginning but very significant resurgence as the 1980s have progressed, even while the inter-imperialist conflict and the danger of world war have continued to intensify.

With all this as a backdrop, we turn now to the primary

focus of this article: an analysis of the sharpening class polarization within the Black nation over the past couple of decades.

The bourgeoisie adopted a multifaceted approach in its use of concessions. For one, more jobs were opened up for Blacks in higher-paying industries like auto and steel (a point to be returned to later). Another very important concession was the "welfare explosion" that the bourgeoisie implemented in the U.S. in the 1960s. From December 1960 to February 1969 approximately 800,000 families were added to the welfare rolls, an increase of 107 percent. The greatest increase in the welfare rolls during the 1960s occurred after 1964. The "welfare explosion" occurred in all regions and in urban and rural counties, but the greatest increase (217 percent) was in the five most populous urban areas outside the South: New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, and Los Angeles. In *Regulating the Poor*, Frances Piven and Richard Cloward analyze why the "welfare explosion" took place:

[T]he contemporary relief explosion was a response to the civil disorder caused by rapid economic change — in this case, the modernization of Southern agriculture. The impact of modernization on blacks was much greater than on whites: it was they who were the chief victims of the convulsion in Southern agriculture, and it was they who were more likely to encounter barriers to employment once relocated in the cities, a combination of circumstances which led to a substantial weakening of social controls and widespread outbreaks of disorder. For if unemployment and forced migration altered the geography of black poverty, it also created a measure of black power. In the 1960s, the growing mass of black poor in cities emerged as a political force for the first time, both in the voting booths and in the streets. And the relief system was, we believe, one of the main local institutions to respond to that force, even though the reaction was greatly delayed. (Piven and Cloward, 1971, p. 196)¹⁰

¹⁰ While the above quote (and Piven's and Cloward's work as a whole) provides many useful insights — including their central thesis that the relief system does not increase "simply because economic deprivation spreads" but instead is used to "regulate labor" — it is marred by a reformist line. Specifically, their analysis that the "welfare explosion" of the 1960s was in any way a response to the "voting power of Black people" is wrong and quite reformist, to say the least. The ruling class was forced to make concessions to Black people in the 1960s in response to the tremendous, explosive struggle that the Black masses were engaged in at that time — Piven and Cloward do acknowledge this fact — and the overall world situation, which was largely characterized by the rising tide of the national liberation struggle in the colonial world directed at U.S. imperialism, with the focal point

But these concessions took place in a context of what some bourgeois commentators have referred to as a "revolution of rising expectations": the fact is, as Bob Avakian has noted, that a "significant part of the movement [of the 1960s] was an expression of the frustration . . . [of the Black petty bourgeoisie] at their basic conditions as part of an oppressed nation and their resulting concrete position in society." He points out that, in the context of the transformation of the Black nation after World War 2, there were rising expectations on the part of the Black masses generally and among the Black petty bourgeoisie in particular (Avakian, 1985, pp. 19-20). Those expectations, however, were largely frustrated. In further addressing this point, Avakian says:

Relatively speaking for the society as a whole, including even for the Black masses, the '60s was not a period where from the strictly economic standpoint their position and their conditions were more backward and more difficult than they had been previously. If anything, somewhat the opposite was true. But precisely in the society as a whole the changes were better than for the oppressed nationalities, including Black people.

in Vietnam. But contrary to what Piven and Cloward have said, the bourgeoisie itself promoted voter registration drives and voting at critical stages during the movement of the 1960s in opposition to and as a diversion from mass rebellion and revolutionary activity. For example, in 1961 Robert Kennedy, who was Attorney General at that time, met with SNCC and other civil rights organizations in Washington. At that meeting, he suggested that these organizations direct their energies toward voter registration as opposed to mass protest actions like the freedom rides. Kennedy assured all those who attended the meeting that private foundations would provide financial support for voter registration projects (Carson, 1981, p. 39). Another example that is worthy of note: in the late 1960s the bourgeoisie, in league with Black bourgeois and petty-bourgeois elements, championed the view that electing Black mayors was the road to liberation for Black people. A sharp and intense struggle over this issue broke out in the Black liberation movement and revolutionary forces won the day for a time, exposing the electoral road for the dead-end that it was (*and is*). (Many nationalists and leftists forgot or *refused to remember* that important lesson from the movement of the 1960s as they rushed to support the presidential candidacy of Jesse Jackson in 1984. The goal of Jackson's campaign, despite his rhetoric to the contrary, was precisely to help channel anger and rebellion [and potential rebellion] into a "loyal opposition" and line up ever larger numbers of Blacks [and others] on the side of the U.S. imperialists and their bloc in preparation for the showdown that is rapidly approaching between the West and the Soviet bloc. For a fuller discussion of Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign, see Dix, 1984, pp. 3-10.)

In other words, in society as a whole, the '60s was a period of expansion in the economy, not very much unemployment, wages going up, earnings going up, and in a certain sense because of that the lower level, the depressed level, and the discriminated situation of the Black people stood out. This was true for Black people in general, and particularly in certain ways it was very sharply expressed among the Black petty bourgeoisie. A lot of the movement at that time sprang from that and was an expression of it. (Avakian, 1985, p. 20)

In sum, millions of Blacks had been forced off the land by the mechanization of agriculture in the South. They fled to the urban areas of the North in search of a "better life" only to be forced into the most exploited section of the proletariat and concentrated in urban ghettos where they were preyed upon and where they faced the worst of bad living conditions, social services, and health care. In a word, Black people continued to be subjected to national oppression when they got to the "promised land." Further, the national oppression of Black people and other oppressed nationalities stood out all the more in the context of the overall expansion of the economy, and this stark reality was an important factor in the development of the movement of the 1960s.

By the late 1960s/early 1970s, based on developments both domestic and international — particularly the historic defeat that the U.S. suffered in Vietnam, combined with the economic and political crisis in this country and the failure of concessionary pacification — the ruling class was forced to shift its strategies, giving much more emphasis to suppression and building up buffers and role models among Black people (a subject to which we will return in depth in the next section of this article). The U.S. imperialists were faced with a multidimensional crisis — one of their most serious political crises ever. The contradiction for the bourgeoisie was how to maintain the oppression of the masses of Black people while building up a buffer stratum among them — how to pacify and demobilize the Black masses while viciously attacking revolutionary nationalists. In 1967 alone, violent rebellion erupted in more than one hundred cities, including Detroit, Newark, and Cleveland. And in April 1968, 70,000 National Guard and federal troops were called to duty in response to widespread rebellions in some 125 cities after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. These uprisings graphically illustrated the ineffectiveness of the bourgeoisie's concessionary pacification.

In commenting on those rebellions the *Kerner Commission Report* stated that "a spirit of carefree nihilism was taking hold. To riot and destroy appeared more and more to become ends in themselves. Late Sunday afternoon it appeared to one observer that the young people were 'dancing amidst the flames'" (*Kerner Report*, 1968, p. 4, emphasis added). This situation was combined with the existence of powerful revolutionary currents within this country which strongly identified with the enemies of U.S. imperialism in the Third World.

The *Kerner Report* echoed the concerns of the bourgeoisie:

If the Negro population as a whole developed even stronger feelings of being wrongly "penned in" and discriminated against, many of its members might come to support not only riots, but the rebellion now being preached by only a handful.

If large-scale violence resulted, white retaliation would follow. This spiral could quite conceivably lead to a kind of urban *apartheid* with semi-martial law in many major cities, enforced residence of Negroes in segregated areas, and a drastic reduction in personal freedom for all Americans, particularly Negroes. (*Kerner Report*, 1968, p. 397)

This was not just idle chatter or empty threats: the bourgeoisie — both through direct military force and active mobilization of its social base — were bloodily suppressing any and all uprisings of the Black masses, even as they continued various social programs and began to build up a buffer strata among Black people. As one writer has revealed:

At the end of 1968, a major manufacturer of anti-riot equipment boasted that 1968 had been a good year for his industry, and he expected 1969 to be even better. Cities across the country were stockpiling arms, buying tank-like armored vehicles, building up huge caches of ammunition and tear gas, and arming their policemen with helmets and high-powered rifles and shotguns. Newark spent three hundred thousand dollars for bulletproof helmets, armored cars, antislip rifles, and large quantities of tear gas. Chicago spent a little more than half that amount on three helicopters designed to serve as airborne command posts during riots. State police in Virginia got themselves six armored cars at a hefty thirty thousand dollars each. The Los Angeles sheriff's department showed a little Yankee ingenuity and built its own armored vehicle. . . . Equipment like this was not intended for routine police work. These were preparations for warfare.

And this is exactly the way many law enforcement and military officials viewed the riots. A National Guard officer in Maryland pulled no punches. To him the riots were guerrilla warfare. "These people [black rioters] have been learning the lesson of Vietnam," complained Maryland's Adjutant General Gelston. In an article entitled "Second Civil War" (*Esquire*, March 1968) author Garry Wills quoted Detroit's police commissioner as saying: "This is revolution, and people have not become aware of that. . . . This is not just mob or gang fights. It is a question of the survival of our cities." As though to emphasize that he wasn't kidding, the commissioner asked Detroit's Common Council for nine million dollars' worth of anti-riot equipment, including battle cars and machine guns. (Allen, 1970, pp. 197-98)

III. The Sharpening Class Polarization in the Black Nation

Under the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, the bourgeois state pumped tens of millions of dollars into a variety of social programs — with the period 1965-68 being the banner years. While mainly designed to contain the most impoverished and disruptive sections of the masses, these concessions also (and importantly) served to maintain a cheap labor force, tiding over the impoverished masses during financially difficult times. There was no fundamental development of the ghetto either during the 1960s or since then, nor was there intended to be. The Black masses continue to be trapped in the ghetto and the ghetto was and is still. . . the ghetto.

But the bourgeoisie began to shift their strategies in the late '60s and early '70s, emphasizing the build-up of Black bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces as role models, as opposed to large-scale concessionary spending. In early 1968 President Johnson urged Howard Samuels, the head of the Small Business Administration (SBA) and a wealthy businessman and politician, to expand the use of SBA loans to minorities. Samuels, however, had his work cut out for him; the SBA was not previously known for its assistance to "minority businessmen," and for good reason. In fact, between 1953 and 1963 the SBA made only seven loans to Black businessmen! The program that Samuels initiated to make SBA loans more accessible to Black businessmen was known as "Project Own," which later, under the Nixon administration, became "Operation Mainstream." The stated goal of "Project Own" was to increase the volume of loans to minority businessmen from 1,700 in fiscal year 1968 to 10,000 in fiscal 1969 and 20,000 by June 1970. In addition, the procedure for obtaining loans was simplified and the waiting period for approval of assistance was shortened. And, in fiscal year 1969, the number of loans to minority businessmen did increase to 4,120.

It was, however, Nixon who came to personify the bourgeoisie's strategy of building up buffer strata within the Black nation. In his presidential campaign in 1968 Richard Nixon vowed to stop the war in Vietnam, establish "law and order" in the U.S., fight "welfare chiselers," and develop a plan for "Black Capitalism." Stokely Carmichael once commented, after LBJ sang "We Shall Overcome," that the bourgeoisie would never try to coopt the slogan "Black Power." But in a CBS broadcast in April 1968 during his campaign for the presidency, Nixon refuted Carmichael's prediction:

Our task — our challenge — is to break this cycle of dependency, and the time to begin is now. The way to do it is not with more of the same but by helping to bring to the ghetto the light of hope, and pride and self-respect. We have reached a point at which more of the same will only result in more of the same

frustration, more of the same explosive violence, more of the same despair. The fiscal crisis now confronting America is so great, and so urgent, that only by cutting the federal budget can we avert an economic disaster in which the poor themselves would be caught calamitously in the undertow. . . . Black extremists are guaranteed headlines when they shout "Burn!" or "Get a gun!" But much of the black militant talk these days is actually in terms far closer to the doctrines of free enterprise than to those of the welfarist '30s — terms of pride, ownership, private enterprise, capital — the same qualities, the same characteristics, the same ideals, the same methods that for two centuries have been at the heart of American success. What most of the militants are asking for is *not separation but to be included in, to have a share of the wealth and a piece of the action.* And this is precisely what the central target of the new approach ought to be. *It ought to be oriented toward more black ownership, for from this can flow the rest; black pride, black jobs, and yes, Black Power — in the best sense of that often misapplied term.* (*Time*, 1968, p. 21, emphasis added)

Nixon's speech, characteristic of the demagogic rhetoric of the bourgeoisie in that period (and now!), was an open appeal to the less radical petty-bourgeois elements within the Black Power movement. Those forces saw Black Power as a vehicle to get into the system. On the other hand, the radical elements within that movement sought to "change the whole system." The contradictory trends within the Black Power movement were apparent at the Newark Black Power Conference, which was convened only days after the Newark rebellion in July 1967. A manual distributed by conference organizers said: "Ethnic groups in America have developed their own solidarity as a basic approach toward entry into the American mainstream" (Allen, 1970, p. 158). But a youthful delegate took that approach to task: "We don't want to enter America's polluted, dirty mainstream but to carve out an altogether new river" (Allen, 1970, p. 158). And another delegate pointed out: "I don't want to be exploited by a black man any more than I want to be exploited by a white man. You've got to change the whole system" (Allen, 1970, p. 158). The debate continued in the workshops with some delegates talking about "filling the gaps in the present system" and "pumping the system for all it's worth" while other delegates denounced capitalism and advocated "burning it all down and creating something new" (Allen, 1970, p. 159).

"The Star-Spangled Hustle"

William F. Buckley supported Nixon's "Black Capitalism," calling it the "universal hope" for the masses of Black

people. And other commentators, perhaps inebriated by Nixon's bombastic oratory about giving Black people "a share of the wealth and a piece of the action," believed (or pretended to believe) that the Black businesses would eventually achieve parity with the major corporations in the U.S. as a result of the "Black Capitalism" initiatives of the bourgeoisie. However, Maurice Stans — of Watergate fame — punctured that idealist view in an intragovernmental speech after Nixon took office in 1969. Stans was then the head of the Commerce Department and in that capacity presided over Nixon's "minority enterprise" programs. Blaustein and Faux present a synopsis of Stans's speech on the objective of those programs in their book, *The Star Spangled Hustle*:

Stans stated that the most important objective of the programs was to create "success stories." These success stories would "create pride among the minority which, in turn, creates aspirations of those down the line. . . . What the black people, the minority people, need more than anything else today is a modern Horatio Alger, the kind of guy who will tell the story of how he succeeded and let everyone else believe that they can accomplish the same result. As time goes on, we are going to do everything we can to publicize the stories, not only like Johnson [John Johnson, publisher of *Ebony* magazine and other 'black' periodicals] in these magazines, and so forth, and the sausage maker, Parks, what he has done, but we want to talk about the little fellow down in North Carolina or somewhere who got the idea of a delivery service two years ago and how he has seventeen branches and forty-seven people working for him. This is the way we will build the pride of these people, and this is the way we will convince the young fellows coming up that they have a chance to do the same thing." (Blaustein and Faux, 1972, p. 155)

In a word, the primary purpose of "Black Capitalism" and, in general, "minority enterprise programs" was to create "role models" for the oppressed masses.

Nixon's minority enterprise initiatives generated a variety of programs: Operation Business Mainstream; loans and loan guarantees for minority business; Minority Enterprise, Small Business Investment Corporation (MESBICs); and the 8(a) program, which provided government contracts to minority businessmen. The year 1970 was a banner year for Nixon's minority business programs. In that year 6,300 minority firms received loans amounting to \$160 million, which was 23 percent of all loans approved by the SBA in 1970. Indeed, 23 percent was the largest percentage share of government loans to minority businesses for any one year (*Black Enterprise*, 1983, p. 63). At the same time, the number of minority firms in the 8(a) program increased from nine in fiscal year 1968 to 1,477 in fiscal year 1972. And, as Table 2 illustrates, this growth continued into the '80s.

Development of the Black Bourgeoisie

What is the status and what has been the development of the Black bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie over the past fifteen years?

Prior to the 1960s — particularly during the period of semifeudal relations in the southern region of this country — the bourgeoisie virtually smothered the development of the Black bourgeoisie. In his pamphlet, *Capitalism in Agriculture*, Lenin points out that the "typical white farmer in America is an owner, the typical Negro farmer is a tenant" (Lenin, 1974, p. 25). He comments further in that work that "it turns out that there is a startling similarity in the economic status of the Negroes in America and the peasants in the heart of agricultural Russia who *were formerly landowners' serfs*" (Lenin, 1974, p. 27). Lenin's pamphlet was first published in 1915 at the start of World War I. In a recent book an historian, William Harris, described how Blacks were, in the main, prevented from acquiring land and capital and generally kept in a state of impoverishment under the sharecropping system:

Even if situations in which workers lived in conditions approaching slavery, forced to live on plantations because of debt, were unusual, the lives of southern farm workers were bleak at best. Few black farmers owned the land they worked, a situation that was to worsen during the Depression and war years, and whether they worked as sharecroppers or as day laborers, they remained in the same position as their ancestors after the Civil War. The South was still basically a cashless economy, with many black families receiving less than \$100 annually in real money. Lack of land and capital, and the systematic oppression of the region, continued to lock blacks in an ever-widening cycle of perpetual poverty from which there seemed little hope of escape. (Harris, 1982, p. 97)

And it must also be noted that many Black lynching victims were small farmers who had acquired their own land. Following their lynching (or in some cases forced flight), the white gentry would divide up the holdings of the victimized farmer.

Thus, a series of legal and extralegal measures protected and upheld the semifeudal relations under which Blacks labored and worked to suppress the nascent Black bourgeoisie. Previous to the 1960s the Black bourgeoisie's accumulation of capital was based almost entirely on the Black market. Today, while not as overwhelmingly dependent on the market among Black people for financing, the Black bourgeoisie's base is still strategically in the Black market. It now occupies a more contradictory position too — the imperialists today in certain ways actually prop up this class (or sections of it), even as they continue, in other ways, to suppress it. The leash, as it were, is kept very, very short.

Table 2

Number of Firms in the 8(a) Program By Fiscal Year Ending

Year	Number
FY 68	9
FY 72	1,477
FY 76	1,605
FY 80	2,111
FY 84 ^a	2,663

Source: Lenneal J. Henderson, Jr., "Black Business Development and Public Policy," *The State of Black America*, 1983

^aSmall Business Administration, unpublished data.

In his famous work *Black Bourgeoisie*, the noted Black sociologist E. Franklin Frazier undertakes an analysis of the Black middle class. Frazier's Black bourgeoisie included "those Negroes who derived their incomes principally from the services which they render as white-collar workers" (Frazier, 1962, p. 42). What Frazier describes, then, is not the "Black bourgeoisie" but instead a section of the Black petty bourgeoisie which derives its income largely from its own labor. In our view, the Black bourgeoisie is that stratum of the Black nation which controls social means of production, depends for its income on the labor of their employees (and/or financial speculation with accumulated capital), and accumulates significant sums of money in the process. This class, the Black bourgeoisie, is *tenuous* (and was even more marginal in Frazier's time), but it is *substantial enough to make an impact within the Black nation*; and, on the basis of the influence that they command among Black people, the Black bourgeoisie can (and does) barter with the imperialists.

According to Frazier, at the time he wrote *Black Bourgeoisie* (the 1950s) nearly half of all Black businesses were service. These businesses had "grown up to serve the needs of Blacks primarily because of discrimination and segregation — whites refusal to provide personal services for Blacks" (Frazier, 1962, p. 51). Over 80 percent of Black businesses consisted of beauty shops, barber shops, cleaning and pressing places, undertakers, and shoe repair shops. The remainder were "auto repair and services and various other types of repair services" (Frazier, 1962, p. 51). These businesses were in almost all cases operated by their owners and generated a small volume of business; their owners were in fact part of the Black petty bourgeoisie.

In the 1950s the core of the Black bourgeoisie actually consisted of the owners and operators of Black insurance companies and financial institutions. The Black bourgeoisie, like the Black petty-bourgeois strata that we discussed above, was at that time overwhelmingly dependent upon the Black nation for its economic sustenance.

Black insurance companies were the "largest enterprises owned and operated by Blacks." In 1945 there were forty-four Black insurance companies which had been in business an average of twenty-four years. These companies had a total

of 4 million insurance policies in force, employed an average of 24.4 persons in branch offices, and earned \$42 million in 1945 (Frazier, 1962, pp. 54-55). The twenty-five Black-owned and-operated savings and loan associations had total assets of \$16 million in 1949. Black banks, on the other hand, had assets amounting to \$32 million and total deposits of \$29 million in 1951. These fourteen Black banks "employed three persons in the smallest to fifteen in the largest institutions" (Frazier, 1962, p. 53). One begins to grasp how *marginal* were these Black banks, and indeed the Black bourgeoisie as a whole, when one considers that "the total assets of all Negro banks in the United States were less than those of a single small white bank in a small town in the state

of New York" (Frazier, 1962, p. 8). We must reemphasize, however, that the Black bourgeoisie was *substantial enough*, even in Frazier's time, to exert influence and to make an impact within the Black nation.

Relative to when E. Franklin Frazier wrote *Black Bourgeoisie*, Black businesses today are far more numerous and diversified, and they generate a larger volume of business. This growth, quantitatively and qualitatively, has been tremendously influenced by initiatives of the bourgeois state.

Examining recent government publications concerning Black businesses, one can discern a sizeable classical Black petty bourgeoisie. The most comprehensive survey of those businesses that is currently available was conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau in 1982. In that year Black-owned firms¹¹ were primarily concentrated in selected services and retail trade as opposed to manufacturing. These two categories comprised 68.2 percent of all Black-owned firms and accounted for 59.2 percent of the total sales of those businesses. (See Table 3.)

The selected services category primarily consisted of personal services, auto repair services, and hotel and other lodging places, while the retail trade firms were mainly "eating and drinking places," food stores, and automobile dealers and service stations.

The attrition rate of small Black businesses is quite high: 85 percent of these businesses fail in the first year! However, as Table 4 indicates, Black businesses are constantly regenerated. For example, the number of Black firms increased from 163,073 in 1969 to 339,329 in 1982. Over 95 percent of all enterprises owned by Blacks were sole proprietorships in 1982 as opposed to partnerships or corporations; moreover, most of these firms had no full-time paid

Table 3
Number of Black-owned Firms, Percent of Total Firms and Percent of Total Sales by Industry: Adjusted Data for 1982¹

	No. of Firms	Percentage of Total Firms	Percent of Total Sales
Total, all industry	339,239		
Construction	23,061	6.8	8.0
Manufacturing	4,171	1.2	7.9
Transportation and public utilities	24,397	7.2	6.4
Wholesale Trade	3,851	1.1	6.9
Retail Trade	84,053	24.8	33.1
Finance, insurance and real estate	14,829	4.4	6.0
Selected Services	147,263	43.4	26.1
Not Classified	32,709	9.6	4.2

¹This is the last year that Census data are available relative to Black businesses.
 Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1982 Survey of Minority-Owned Business Enterprises — *Black*, August 1985, pp. 4-6.

¹¹ A firm is considered Black-owned if it has 51 percent Black ownership. However, Blacks could own 51 percent of a business and still not control it.

Table 4
Selected Characteristics of Black Business, 1969, 1972, 1977 and 1982

Year	Firms (Number)	All Black-owned Firms		Firms Without Paid Employees		Firms With Paid Employees	
		Gross Receipts (\$1,000s)	% of Total Number of Firms	% of Gross Receipts	Average Gross Receipts Per Firm (\$1,000s)	Average Gross Receipts Per Firm (\$1,000s)	Average Number of Employees
1969	163,073	4,474,191	77	18	7	95	4
1972 ^a	187,802	5,534,109	87	37	13	141	6
1977 ^b	209,259	8,161,931	83	26	12	169	4
1982	339,239	12,443,572	89	31	13	221	4

^aData for 1972 has been adjusted to account for a "systematic overstatement."

^bData for 1977 has been adjusted to make them comparable with 1972 figures.

Sources: Bureau of Census, *Minority-owned Businesses, 1969*, MB-1 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), Table 1; *Minority-Owned Businesses — Black*, MB 77-1 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979), Table 1; *Minority-Owned Businesses — Black*, MB 82-1 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985), Table 1.

employees except the owner. Indeed, only 11 percent of all Black businesses had paid employees when the last government survey was conducted; and the firms with employees averaged only four workers per firm! (See Table 4.)

Less than 1 percent — 0.3 percent — of Black businesses had gross receipts of 1 million dollars or more in 1982. At the other end of the size spectrum, there were 158,672 firms (about half the total) with sales of less than \$5,000 per year! These small firms had total sales of only \$291 million. The marginality of Black business to the overall economy is more fully revealed in the fact that while the receipts of U.S. businesses came to \$4.7 trillion in 1977, Black-owned firms accounted only for an estimated \$8.6 billion of that total, or about 0.2 percent of total business receipts (source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1982-83* [Washington, D.C.: 1982], Table 875, p. 528; Table 882, p. 530).

What section of Black business today comprises the Black bourgeoisie? Our contention is that the core of the Black bourgeoisie is the *Black Enterprise* 100¹² along with the

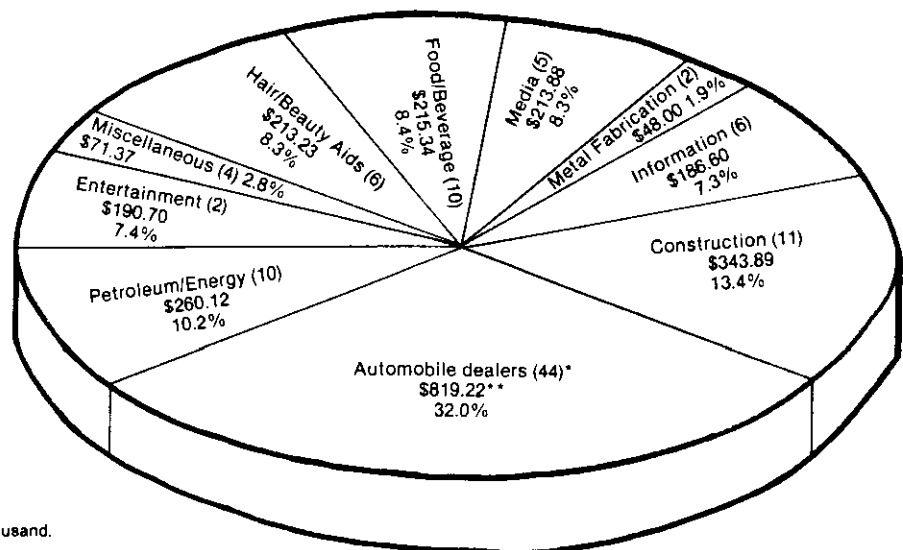
¹² "To be eligible for the *Black Enterprise* 100 List, a company must have been fully operational in the previous calendar year and be at least 51 percent Black-owned. It must manufacture or own the products it sells, or provide industrial or consumer services. And in 1984, it must meet the \$11 million minimum gross sales to qualify. Brokerages, real estate firms and firms that provide professional services (accountants, lawyers, etc.), are not eligible" (*Black Enterprise*, 1986, p. 92).

major Black insurance companies and financial institutions. Many of these firms have gained niches within the overall economy and, as we will demonstrate later in this article, rely on governmental assistance of various sorts.

A recent survey by *Black Enterprise* magazine (*BE*) of the top 100 Black businesses reports that those companies had gross sales of \$2.94 billion in 1985, up from \$2.56 billion in 1984. On the other hand, the total number of persons employed by these firms was only 20,970 in 1985 (Hicks, 1986, p. 29). Automobile dealerships accounted for the largest percentage of the sales of the *BE* 100 in 1984, with total sales for all the dealerships amounting to over \$819 million. Forty-four of the *BE* 100 were automobile dealerships in that year. (See Graph 1.) As *Black Enterprise* itself points out, many of these dealerships had their beginnings in the period of social turmoil in the 1960s: "When the idea of a minority-owned automobile dealership graduated from the dream stage to reality with the appointment in 1967 of Al Johnson of St. Louis to an Oldsmobile franchise on South Halsted Street in Chicago, the American automobile industry still had some of its best years ahead, it seemed. Opportunities for Blacks to cash in on such opportunities also were expanding, as civil unrest during the 1960s spurred Detroit into action. Ford Motor Company and the Chrysler corporation soon followed General Motors' lead, and within a few years minority dealerships became the hallmark of black capitalism in America" (Stuart, 1982, p. 104). Black auto dealerships are dependent on the major auto industry for their very existence and are keenly sensitive to the vicissitudes of that industry.

Behind automobile dealerships, construction firms and

Graph 1
B.E. 100 Companies by Industry



*Number of companies

**In millions of dollars, to nearest thousand.

Source: *Black Enterprise*, June 1985, p. 87

petroleum/energy companies had the largest gross sales of the BE 100 in 1984, with more than \$343 million and \$260 million respectively. (See Graph 1.) In general, the energy sector of the Black bourgeoisie has a symbiotic relationship with the large monopolies and is heavily reliant on government contracts.

Hair care and beauty aids manufacturers are among those BE 100 firms catering primarily to Blacks. In 1984 these hair care and beauty aids businesses were 8.3 percent of the BE 100 companies, with total sales of more than \$213 million. (See Graph 1.)

It is important to note that the overwhelming majority of the BE 100 were started after 1968 when the imperialists began emphasizing "Black Capitalism." This is a reflection of the policy that the government has had over the past decade or more to prop up and hold many of these firms afloat.

In 1984 the forty-seven Black banks employed a total of 2,090 persons and had total assets of more than \$1.6 billion. The top Black bank on the BE 100 list in 1984 had assets totaling over \$103 million dollars and employed 167 persons (Black Enterprise, 1985, pp. 122, 125-126). The overwhelming majority of Black banks were started during and after the 1960s, largely as a result of government intervention. As Black Enterprise points out:

During the "black capitalism" years of the Johnson and Nixon Administrations, the Federal Reserve Board was permitting newly-founded black banks to open their doors with a rock-bottom level of assets at \$1 million. The government sent its own employees in to provide technical assistance and amended federal regulations so that executives of white banks could be loaned to the black banks.

Thus, the development of government "black capitalism" policies in response to the civil rights movement [in this article we have shown that there was a good deal more than this] of the 1960s, was directly responsible for the establishment of many black-controlled banks.

Large white-owned banks were often reluctant to finance black businesses in the inner cities. So the new black-owned banks — 48 of them chartered during the 1960s and 1970s — began to service the black business community, often with an enthusiasm that was beyond their financial means. (Petrie, 1982, p. 138)

Unlike Black banks, Black savings and loan associations and insurance companies are older and more established enterprises. The majority of Black savings and loan associations were established before the 1960s; and virtually all of the Black insurance companies were started prior to 1960, with the oldest, Southern Aid Life Insurance Co., being started in 1893. In fact, the Black insurance companies form the heart of the Old Guard Black bourgeoisie.

In 1984 there were thirty-five Black savings and loan

associations, which had total assets of over \$1.2 billion and employed a total of 654 persons (Fulwood, 1985, p. 138). In the same year the thirty-six Black insurance companies had combined assets of more than \$811 million and employed 6,931 persons (Millinder, 1985, p. 156).

Having reviewed some of the important characteristics of the Black bourgeoisie, it is important to stress again that this class is in no way pivotal to the U.S. economy. There is no large manufacturing sector of the Black bourgeoisie. The forty-four Black banks with combined assets in 1982 of over \$1.3 billion (Bradford, 1984, p. 120) compare quite unfavorably to the 14,763 large commercial banks which had combined assets of more than \$1.8 trillion in the same year. In addition, there are no Black firms on the Fortune 500 list. Moreover, the total gross sales of the BE 100 was only 2.6 percent of the net income of the No. 1 company on the Fortune 500 list in 1983 — Exxon. Exxon's net income in that year was \$88.6 billion (Fortune, 1984, p. 292), while the BE 100 had combined gross sales of \$2.3 billion. What we are dealing with, then, is an oppressed bourgeoisie whose existence is real, even as it is tenuous and feeble. We must, however, reemphasize that the Black bourgeoisie is substantial enough as a class to make an impact within the Black nation.

Another expression of the position and role of the Black bourgeoisie is its dependence on aid from the large monopolies and the government. Over the past fifteen years or more, beginning with Nixon's "Black Capitalism" campaign, the bourgeois state has provided a broad range of assistance to Black and other "minority-owned enterprises," including government contracts, loans, and technical assistance. Large monopolies have also aided Black businesses in various ways, particularly through providing franchises.

As indicated earlier, the SBA awarded loans in the amount of \$160 million to minority firms in 1970, a "banner year" for government loans to those businesses. The volume of loans "continued to increase until 1973, then dipped for 3 years before starting a new upswing in 1977" (Black Enterprise, 1982, p. 71). The "dip" for three years after 1973 was, of course, a result of the 1974-75 recession. After 1977 the volume of loans increased again, reaching a high of \$470 million in 1980. However, by the end of 1983, during the Reagan austerity years, direct government loans to minority firms were, in effect, eliminated and loan guarantees through the SBA reduced. The ruling bourgeoisie, however, has not snatched away all the lifelines to Black and minority-owned businesses — and is not likely to do so — but instead continues to prop some up and keep them afloat. There are compelling political reasons why the ruling class continues to build up and support sectors of the Black bourgeoisie (and petty bourgeoisie) — a subject to which we will return shortly.

The 8(a) program is one of the significant remaining "lifelines" that the bourgeoisie continues to throw to the larger Black businesses. The program began in 1968 to assist minority firms in winning government contracts. SBA serves as a "prime contractor awarding contracts for goods and services from federal agencies to eligible companies" and

providing management, technical, and bonding assistance to these businesses. In 1968 there were nine firms in the 8(a) program, a number which grew to 2,663 in 1983. A total of 5,754 businesses participated in the program between 1968 and 1984; those firms received government contracts amounting to \$14.7 billion over that 16-year period. One area of government contracting that is of particular interest is contracts that the Defense Department has made to minority businesses over the past four or five years, enlisting those firms directly into the war machinery of the U.S.-led bloc.

Over the past five years the Booker T. Washington Foundation has assisted more than 150 minority firms in obtaining defense contracts amounting to approximately \$313.7 million. Soncraft, Inc. of Chicago, G&M Oil of Baltimore, and J.W. Micro Electronics are a few of the many firms that have received multimillion dollar defense contracts. And one author points out that "more vigorous efforts are underway at the Foundation to expand black business participation in contracting and subcontracting in advanced weapons systems, installation development and management, construction and electronics" (Henderson, 1983, p. 185, fn. 51). Indeed, by 1981 Systems and Applied Sciences (SAS) of Riverdale, Maryland had a \$50 million "Defense Department contract to design a tactical communications system for use by the military in combat environments" (Logan, 1983, p. 224).

Originally firms were allowed to remain in the 8(a) program until they were "competitively viable." But in recent years the SBA has established a "fixed time period" that minority businesses can participate in the program. Also, in February 1983 nineteen of the largest minority firms were eliminated from the program because they were no longer considered small businesses by new SBA standards. Five of the Black data-management companies on the *BE* 100 List were adversely affected by that SBA action. The utter dependence of these firms on government assistance was revealed in a *Black Enterprise* article entitled "Harnessing the Information Explosion": "The five firms have relied on the 8(a) program . . . for between half and three-quarters of their revenue, and now face the sudden prospect of either going up against the giant companies in bidding for the government work that previously they had been awarded noncompetitively or else going after contracts in the private sector" (Logan, 1983, p. 223, emphasis added).

Franchising is another area in which the bourgeoisie has built up and assisted minority businesses. While 85 percent of all new small businesses fail in the first year, more than 95 percent of franchises are successful. Prior to the late 1960s and early 1970s, Blacks were practically locked out of franchising (the first Black-owned McDonald's franchise wasn't established until 1968). But over the last decade, franchising opportunities for Black entrepreneurs have opened up. Numerically, the leading franchising activities for Blacks are gasoline service stations, automotive products, and services, restaurants, and food retailing. The total number of Black-owned franchises in 1982 was estimated to be about 5,500, up over previous years but still a drop in the bucket relative

to the more than 440,000 franchise outlets in the U.S. (Trammer, 1982, p. 88).

In an article entitled "Going for the Gold," *Black Enterprise* reports on Black companies that were preparing to make millions as licensees at the highly patriotic twenty-third Olympiad. According to *Black Enterprise*, about twenty Black companies had been licensed by 1983 to sell a variety of products at the 1984 Olympics. These companies were expected to receive combined profits of more than \$50 million (Clayton, 1983, p. 65). The Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (LAOOC) required some "sponsors and suppliers to employ minority subcontractors." For example, "the committee required both Levi Strauss and Co., a sponsor, and Adidas, an equipment supplier, to subcontract with two minority firms. And, in fact, Adidas . . . struck deals with two black-owned Los Angeles companies — Panama Glove and Action Headwear" (*Black Enterprise*, 1983, p. 66). One is asleep if he or she believes that political considerations did not play a role in Black businesses being given a "piece of the Olympic action."

Black Mayors: A Section of the Black Bourgeoisie or Part of the Imperialist State Apparatus?

Black elected officials increased more than 300 percent between 1970 to 1982, and their numbers have continued to grow. (See Table 5.) Black mayors have increased from forty-eight in 1973 to 223 in 1983; ten of the eighteen largest cities in the U.S. now have Black mayors — such cities as Detroit, Atlanta, Oakland, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. Despite what many would argue, the election of these Black mayors has meant no real change for the basic Black masses. Blacks in city government are for the most part presiding over deteriorating urban centers which have millions of impoverished Black masses trapped within them — basic proletarian masses whose situation has continued to grow worse and is in many cases quite desperate. For some who have become intoxicated with the rhetoric of electing Black officials as the road to "empowerment" and "liberation" for the Black masses, it might be sobering to peruse what was written in the *Revolutionary Worker* nearly four years ago in the wake of the cowardly murders of more than twenty-eight¹³ Black youths in Atlanta:

While between the years 1900 and 1960 fewer than 300 Blacks had ever been elected to any political office, by 1975 there were over 3,000 Black elected officials, including the mayors of such key

¹³ Twenty-eight is the official figure of Atlanta youth murders. Several people who did independent investigations during the course of the murders put the number of murdered youth at more than fifty.

Table 5**Black Elected Officials, by Office, 1970 to 1984**

Year	Total	U.S. and State Legislatures ¹	City and County Officials ²	Law Enforcement ³	Education ⁴
1970 (Feb.)	1,472	182	715	213	362
1975 (Apr.)	3,503	299	1,878	387	939
1980 (July)	4,890	326	2,832	526	1,206
1984 (Jan.)	5,654	396	3,259	636	1,363

¹Includes elected state administrators and directors of state agencies.

²County commissioners and councilmen, mayors, vice mayors, aldermen, regional officials, and other.

³Judges, magistrates, constables, marshalls, sheriffs, justices of the peace and other.

⁴College boards, school boards, and other.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982), p. 250.

cities as Washington, D.C., Newark, Detroit, Los Angeles and Atlanta.

In Atlanta the bourgeoisie even bragged of "sharing power" with Blacks. . . . As the "good times" of the early '70s rapidly gave way to the deepening crisis of the late '70s the ground was steadily eroded from under these people and they have been increasingly put in the position of proving their loyalty to the ruling class to save their hides. What was loudly proclaimed as a "new day" for Blacks has increasingly been shown to be merely a new stage in the nightmare, only this time the Black bourgeois forces are more and more openly "partners" in the clampdown.

The Black youth murders represented the sharpest crisis so far in that stratum. While part of the bourgeoisie's line was that there couldn't be any racism involved since the city administration was Black, [Atlanta Mayor Maynard] Jackson showed himself to be perfectly capable of, and willing to directly carry out, repression against "his own people" and to even cover up for and protect the reactionaries who were murdering them. He was even so brazen as to justify the curfew as a means to keep "unruly youth" off the streets. To say the least, this has poked dents in the facade of his (and others' like him) "Black politicians are the road to freedom" bandwagon. (*Revolutionary Worker*, No. 141, 5 Feb. 1982, p. 12)¹⁴

¹⁴The Atlanta youth murders are indeed an odious example of the *real* role of Black mayors. Maynard Jackson and his staff were less concerned with finding the perpetrators of those heinous crimes than they were with playing the role of "firemen" in relation to the Black masses in Atlanta and, for that matter, nationwide. In fact, Atlanta city officials virtually ignored the murders until an explosion at the day-care center at Bowen Homes housing project catapulted the Atlanta youth murders into a national and international

Although the main social base of the Black mayors is the Black bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, which receive important sops from Black city administrations, including con-

issue. It was only then that the Atlanta city government took action — *against the people!* The weekend searches for the bodies of missing and murdered youth began, which were a ploy to cool out the anger of the masses. Scores of police began flooding the Black neighborhoods. A curfew was ordered against the youth, and more than 1,500 youth were cited for curfew violations. Roadblocks were set up, and 100 state troopers were brought in to bolster the city police force. Meanwhile, efforts on the part of the Black masses to patrol the street were discouraged, and when the residents of one housing project organized a "Bat Patrol" to protect Black youth, the city administration suppressed it, arresting the leaders. And in one of his more disgusting moves, Maynard Jackson held a press conference as he sat behind stacks of money totaling \$100,000 which was raised as a reward fund. "Money talks," Jackson said at the press conference. Finally, thousands of dollars were earmarked for police helicopters like the ones used in Miami and Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Maynard Jackson's handling of the Black youth murders — including the jailing of Wayne Williams, whose guilt or innocence was (and is) only a part of the picture, for two of the murders and then closing the book on all the others — has indeed "poked dents in the facade" of the electoral road to Black "liberation." While it is not altogether clear who the killers were, their motives, or their links to the bourgeoisie — though such links very likely existed — there is *tremendous* evidence which points to the role of the state in protecting and encouraging the murderers. Jackson and his ilk played a very important role in those events, playing the role of firemen whose duty was to put out any potential or actual fires among the Black masses. In fact, despite all the reformist rhetoric to the contrary, this is the primary responsibility of Black mayors and political officials more broadly; they are instruments of the bourgeoisie for maintaining the oppression of the masses of Black people.

tracts and jobs, these big-city mayors *are not* part of the Black bourgeoisie; *they are part of the bourgeois state apparatus*, which exists for the suppression of one class by another. Today they play their role mainly by taking measures to cool out the anger of the basic masses and build up the buffer strata, keeping alive the illusion of upward mobility for the proletarian masses. Tomorrow, in the context of overall global turmoil, it will be the Black mayor and Black city government, presiding over decaying ghettos, who will call on other authorities in the bourgeois state to send in the National Guard and even U.S. troops to contain the suppressed anger of the basic Black masses or to put down a rebellion or an uprising. In that context, Black mayors will not only serve as firemen; those who act in that way (and we can basically expect they will — or be rendered irrelevant in bourgeois infighting) will be playing an important role in violently suppressing the Black masses, as they have already shown they are more than willing to do. Exhibit A is Mayor Wilson Goode in Philadelphia, who outdid his openly racist predecessor Rizzo by acting as commander in chief during the 1985 "Philly Massacre" and ordering the *bombing* of the MOVE house and the murder of at least eleven people in it, including five children! If Atlanta put a "dent in the facade" of Black mayors, Philadelphia has even more vividly shown "what time it is." To some degree, Maynard Jackson could hide behind the mask of "doing all that we can to find the murderers"; Wilson Goode's role, on the other hand, is right out there "on front street." As Carl Dix, a spokesperson for the RCP, has pointed out: "This reliance on Black faces in high places is a dead-end road that can't end the oppression of Black people (or anybody else for that matter) and, even worse, it is a deadly trap. Time and again, the rulers have demonstrated that terror unleashed against the masses and a Black official to front for it is an effective and deadly mix. After all, what would have been the response of the masses if a white mayor had been the one bragging about taking 'full responsibility' for the MOVE massacre?" (Dix, 1986, pp. 10-11)

To reiterate: the Black politicians (and here we are talking particularly about the big-city mayors and the congressmen, etc.) do not form a detachment of the Black bourgeoisie (or still less the Black petty bourgeoisie). They serve and enforce the dominant position (and dictates) of the big (i.e., white American) bourgeoisie. But this is not to say that the relationship between these mayors and the bourgeois strata within the Black nation is not complex and intimate. In the concentrated instance of the Philly Massacre, Goode was able to draw on a not insubstantial social base that swallowed their displeasure (and in some cases revulsion) at the bombing because Goode had channeled a few more contracts, a few more goodies, and a few more patronage plums their way — and at times this argument was put in quite frank and unvarnished terms. At the same time, in the end Goode has found it quite difficult to ride the two horses of terroristic national oppression and acting as a buffer, and no small part of this has been his difficulties in maintaining order even among the more entrenched petty-bourgeois sections of his social base.

The Build-up of the Black Petty Bourgeoisie

In his book *Where Do We Go From Here*, Martin Luther King, Jr. talked about the goals of the civil rights movement of the 1960s:

The American racial revolution has been a revolution to "get in" rather than to overthrow. We want a share in the American economy, the housing market, the educational system and the social opportunities. This goal itself indicates that a social change in America must be nonviolent. If one is in search of a better job, it does not help to burn down the factory. If one needs more adequate education, shooting the principal will not help. If housing is the goal, only building and construction will produce that end. To destroy anything, person or property, cannot bring us closer to the goal that we seek. (King, 1968, p. 130)

What King describes in his book can hardly be considered a "revolution" of any sort; instead, he expresses the aspirations of the Black bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. And it is undeniably true that *to an extent* the aspirations of the more privileged and elite strata among Black people have been realized. By this statement we do not imply that these strata no longer suffer discrimination and national oppression but rather that they have made some "progress" along the lines that King talks about in his 1968 book. In fact, the past twenty years have witnessed the build-up of certain significant sections of the Black petty bourgeoisie. Today Blacks are far more visible than they have ever been in U.S. society, including in various "white collar" positions, the media, political office, etc.

What has been the specific character of the "progress" that the Black middle class has made over the past couple of decades? And in what ways do they continue to be held down and oppressed?

The "movement of Blacks up the occupational scale" progressed steadily in the 1960s, slowed in the 1970s as the result of economic disruption, and has continued into the 1980s, although not in a straight line. Blacks have made significant gains in the three highest-paying job categories over the past couple of decades: the professional and technical, managerial and administrative, and craft positions. For example, 11 percent of Black workers were employed in professional and technical and craft positions in 1960; by 1980 their proportion had almost doubled to 21 percent (Westcott, 1982, p. 29). In addition, the percentage of all persons employed as managers and administrators who were Black increased from 1.6 percent to 2.6 percent between 1960 and 1970 (Levitan, 1975, p. 48). As Table 6 shows, the growth of Blacks in two of the highest-paying job categories has continued. Between 1972 and 1982 the percentage of employed Blacks working in professional and technical positions increased from 8.2 percent to 11.8 percent. And during the same period Black managers and administrators increas-

Table 6**Percent of Distribution of Employed Blacks
By Occupation, 1972¹, 1976², 1980², 1982², 1985³**

	1972	1976	1980	1982	1985*
Total Employed	7,753	8,231	9,313	9,189	—
Professional and Technical	8.2	9.8	10.9	11.8	11.0
Managers and Administrators	3.2	3.8	4.5	4.8	6.2
Sales	2.0	2.2	2.7	2.8	6.6
Clerical	14.2	15.9	18.5	18.9	17.1
Craft and Kindred	8.7	8.9	9.7	9.0	9.0
Operatives except Transport	16.3	16.2	14.7	13.8	10.7
Transport Equip. Operatives	5.9	5.4	5.4	4.8	5.9
Nonfarm Laborers	10.1	8.8	7.4	7.4	6.9
Farm and Farm Managers	.6	.4	.2	.2	—
Farm Laborers and Foremen	2.4	1.9	1.5	1.4	—
Private Household Workers	7.4	5.0	3.7	3.2	2.8
Other Service Workers	21.0	21.6	20.7	21.8	21.3

*There is a technical break in the series from 1982 to 1983; therefore, the data for 1985 is not directly comparable with earlier data, but the trend lines do seem to indicate developments since 1982.

¹Derived from Diane-Nilsen Westcott, "Blacks in the '70s: Did They Scale the Job Ladder?" *Monthly Labor Review*, June 1982, Table 2., p. 30.

²*Handbook of Labor Statistics*, Bulletin 2175, December 1983, Table 16, p. 48.

³U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings*, Jan. 1986, Table 21, p. 174.

ed from 3.2 percent to 4.8 percent. And, at "the other end of the scale," the previous two decades have also witnessed substantial declines in the percentage of Blacks employed as private household workers. (See Table 6.)

Another phenomenon during the '70s was the increase in Black women as professional workers relative to their white counterparts. Black women professionals, accounting for almost 11 percent of all employed Black women in 1972, were nearly 14 percent of the total in 1980, a proportion approximating that for white women (Westcott, 1982, p. 30). These data have prompted some observers to argue that Black women have achieved parity with white women. A couple of observations must be made about these conclusions. First, what is often obscured in the data pertaining to the median income of Black women and white women is that women generally are at the *bottom* of the income scale. It is the reality today that men have a position of privilege (indeed dominance) relative to women — this is something that is measurable not only in terms of income but also in terms of the basic social relations in U.S. society, a phenomenon that is also observable globally. Moreover, Black women suffer oppression not only as *women* but also as *Blacks*. Second, the income "parity" between Black women and white women is no doubt also partially attributable to the fact that many *white women are employed part-time or seasonally*.

While Blacks have made significant gains in higher-paying jobs in the private sector over the past couple of decades, the public sector of the job market is, however, the backbone of the Black petty bourgeoisie. While all government jobs are certainly not petty-bourgeois positions, many are. Approximately one-fourth of Black workers employed in

the public sector have federal government jobs, half work for city and county government, and the remaining one-fourth are employed in state government (Hill, 1986, p. 50). In fact, concomitant with the rise and installment of Black mayors in major urban areas has been a substantial increase in Black city and county employees. For example, between 1975 and 1984 Blacks employed full-time by city government expanded from 260,254 to 302,726; and their median annual income rose from \$9,342 in 1975 to \$17,144 in 1984. The total number of full-time Black county employees was 95,727 in 1975 and 131,793 by 1984. During that period the median annual income of Black county workers grew from \$8,260 to \$15,004. One-third (34 percent) of Black male managers and half (51 percent) of Black male professionals work for the government. Similarly, two-fifths (41 percent) of Black female managers and two-thirds (69 percent) of Black female professionals have jobs in the public sector (Hill, 1986, p. 50). This has gone along with a big increase generally in Black public sector employment for all classes, which rose from 1.6 million in 1970 to 2.5 million in 1980.

Apart from government jobs, state intervention has played an important and initiating role in the build-up of the Black petty bourgeoisie, particularly as reflected in initiatives like affirmative action. The affirmative-action program was aimed against discrimination against women and minorities in education, employment, and in various other areas, including housing and military service.

To cite just one example of the effects of the program, affirmative action played an important role in removing some of the barriers to higher education for Blacks. Prior to the 1960s many major colleges and universities did not admit

Black students. In 1970 only 260 Black high school graduates for every 1,000 were enrolled in college. By 1975 that figure had climbed to 320 Black graduates per 1,000 — almost comparable to that for whites. Since 1975 the number of Black college enrollees has decreased, but by 1981 the figure was still higher than it had been in 1970 (CSSP, 1983, p. 13). It should be noted, however, that a substantial proportion of Blacks in post-secondary education are in junior colleges.

Through the years, "ratio hiring" and "quota relief" to "overcome the effects of past discrimination and to compel fairness in employment" became features of many affirmative-action programs, often as the result of court actions (Pickney, 1984, pp. 157-58). In recent years, however, affirmative action has come under considerable attack and has been subject to reversals, specifically as relates to "ratio hiring" and "quotas," which some observers — including the current Justice Department — have characterized as "reverse discrimination."

The gains of the Black middle class that we have been pointing to, while *real*, are only part of the picture. Although they have made "progress" over the past couple of decades, the Black middle class *is still concentrated in the lower rungs of the higher-paying jobs*. As a recent study points out: "In most cases, black workers were concentrated in the same jobs in which they were employed in 1972. In other words, although a higher proportion of blacks could be found among the professional and technical occupations in 1980 than in 1972, they were still concentrated in jobs at the lower end of the professional pay scale, such as nursing, technical trades, and vocational and educational counseling. And even though their numbers have expanded in some of the more desirable and better paid jobs, there are few examples where black men and women have been able to significantly increase their representation in a particular job" (Westcott, 1982, p. 31). In 1980, 8.2 percent of Black men were employed as professionals compared to 16.1 percent of white men; and in the same year 5.6 percent of all Black men were managers and administrators, as opposed to 15.3 percent of white men (Westcott, 1982, p. 30). Black men were more likely to be school administrators and managers of restaurants, cafeterias and bars, and school administrators in both 1972 and 1980 (Westcott, 1982, p. 31). In addition, Blacks were less than 5 percent of all accountants, computer specialists, engineers, physicians, and dentists in 1980, and more than 13 percent of all nurses, dietitians, therapists, social and recreation workers, and vocational and educational counselors (Westcott, 1982, p. 32). In short, the "better paid the job the less likely that Blacks are well represented in it" (Levitan, 1975, p. 53).

It should also be kept in mind that an important section of the Black petty bourgeoisie continues to consist of small owner-operators based in the Black community, as well as vendors and small-time hustlers, some of whom operate on the borders of legitimacy but are not actually criminals. For them there has been little if any progress, as the conditions generally in the ghetto have been devastating for such petty entrepreneurs. They have not, generally, been the beneficia-

Table 7

Median Family Income, by Race 1960 to 1983

Data adjusted to 1983 dollars.

Year	Median Family Income (in constant 1983 dollars)			Black Family Income as percent of White Family Income
	All Races	White	Black	
1983	24,580	25,757	14,506	56.3
1975	25,395	26,412	16,251	61.5
1970	25,317	26,263	16,111	61.3
1965	21,968	22,896	12,607*	55.1
1960	14,907	19,630	10,864*	55.3

*A Dream Deferred: The Economic Status of Black Americans, A Working Paper (Washington, D.C.: Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1983), p. 4. Data adjusted to 1983 dollars.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Money Income of Households, Families, and Persons in the United States: 1983*, Table 15, pp. 41-42.

ries of the imperialists' strategy of building up a buffer.

While not the most clear-cut indicator of the economic status of Blacks, median family-income data demonstrate improvement in the income level of Black families over the past twenty or more years. Table 7 shows that between 1960 and 1983 the median annual income (in constant 1983 dollars) of Black families increased from \$10,864 to \$14,506. The period of most rapid improvement of Black family income relative to whites was between 1965 and 1970. The median income of Black families as a percentage of white family income peaked in 1975 at 61.5 percent and has since declined. (See Table 7.) Black families in which both the husband and wife work recorded the most impressive gains. The median income of these families increased from 73.2 percent of comparable white families' income in 1968 to 84.3 percent in 1981 (CSSP, 1983, p. 8).

These data, however, need to be put into perspective; that is to say, the female-headed household is the most rapidly increasing household among the Black population. Black female-headed households, unlike Black married-couple households in which both husband and wife work, made no progress between 1968 and 1981!

Table 8 illustrates the percentage share of aggregate income of Black families over the past twenty years or more. If the income of Black families was equally distributed, each level would receive 20 percent of the aggregate income. However, this has not been the trend over the last two decades. In fact, the top 40 percent of Black families are the only ones that receive 20 percent or more of the aggregate income. Furthermore, these data suggest that since 1970 there have been at least two observable trends: (1) the shrinking of the percentage share of income received by the bottom two-fifths of Black families; and (2) an increase in the proportion received by the top two-fifths. In other words, there has been a sharpening income polarity among Black families since 1960; and this polarization has increased at a faster rate

Table 8

Percentage Share of Aggregate Income Received in Selected Years by Each Fifth and Top 5 Percent of Families (by Race of Householder) —in current dollars

	Families					
	Black and other races			White		
	1960	1970	1983	1960	1970	1983
Lowest fifth	3.7	4.5	3.6	5.2	5.8	5.2
Second fifth	9.7	10.6	8.8	12.7	12.5	11.5
Middle fifth	16.5	16.8	15.6	17.8	17.7	17.2
Fourth fifth	25.2	24.8	25.3	23.7	23.6	24.2
Highest fifth	44.9	43.4	46.8	40.7	40.5	42.0
Top 5%	16.2	15.4	17.0	15.7	15.5	15.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of Commerce, Bureau of Census, *Money Income of Households, Families, and Persons in the United States: 1983* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985), pp. 49-50

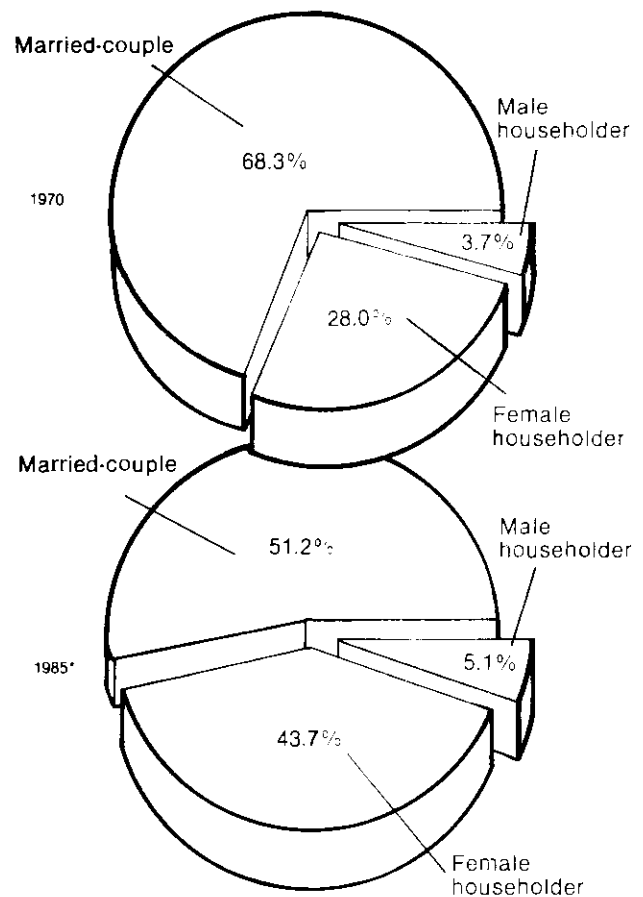
among Black families than among white. (See Table 8.)

Education is another area where the gains of Blacks over the past couple of decades are apparent. Indeed, the median educational level has increased more rapidly for Blacks than for whites over the last twenty years (CSSP, 1983, p. 11). Between 1960 and 1981 Black males gained 4.4 years of education compared to 1.9 years for white males. Black females made similar gains in schooling during the same period, showing a gain of 3.5 years as opposed to 1.3 for white females. By 1981 the median level of education attainment for Blacks was twelve years, reflecting a disparity of only six months between Blacks and whites (CSSP, 1983, p. 11). The official illiteracy rate for Blacks has also dropped.¹⁵ For ex-

¹⁵ A recently published book provides another perspective and some startling statistics on literacy in the U.S.: "Twenty-five million American adults cannot read the poison warnings on a can of pesticide, a letter from their child's teacher, or the front page of a daily paper. An additional 35 million read only at a level which is less than equal to the full survival needs of our society. . . . Together these 60 million people represent more than one third of the entire adult population. . . . The largest numbers of illiterate adults are white, native-born Americans. In proportion to population, however, the figures are higher for blacks and Hispanics than for whites. Sixteen percent of white adults, 44 percent of blacks, and 56 percent of Hispanic citizens are functional or marginal illiterates. Figures for the younger generation of black adults are increasing. Forty-seven percent of all black seventeen-year-olds are functionally illiterate. That figure is expected to climb to 50 percent by 1990. . . . Fifteen percent of recent graduates of urban high schools read at less than sixth grade level. . . . Half the heads of households classified below the poverty line by federal standards cannot read an eighth-grade book. Over one third of mothers who receive support from welfare are functionally illiterate." (See Jonathan Kozol, *Illiterate America*, (New York: New American Library, 1985), pp. 4-5.)

Graph 2

Black Families by Type: 1970 and 1985



Source: Bureau of the Census, *America's Black Population, 1970 to 1982: A Statistical View*, 1983, p. 19.
*U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, unpublished data.

ample, in 1959 the illiteracy rate for Blacks between the age of fourteen and forty-five was 63 persons per 1,000 and 13 persons per 1,000 for whites. But by 1979 that rate had declined to 7 persons per 1,000 for Black and 4 persons per 1,000 for whites.

The educational "achievements" of Blacks, however, have not been enough to bridge the gap in the annual income of Blacks and whites. The yearly earnings of Black families headed by a college graduate compared to the earnings of white families headed by a high school graduate are perhaps the most dramatic statistical evidence of a gap between Black and white earnings. In 1980, 23.7 percent of all Black families headed by persons with at least *four years of college* earned less than \$15,000 annually, while 26.1 percent of householders in white families who only had *four years of high school* received a comparable annual salary. As observed in the study, "A Dream Deferred: The Economic Status of Black Americans": "Overall, the income distribution of black families whose heads have completed four years of college parallels the income distribution for white families headed by high school graduates more closely than it does white families headed by college graduates" (CSSP, 1983, p. 14).

In thinking about the build-up (and role) of the Black petty bourgeoisie in recent years, it is useful again to draw a distinction between those who have made it into a relatively solidly entrenched position and the majority of the Black petty bourgeoisie who continue to scrape along, barely surviving. This latter section continues to include everyone from those many owner-operators of beauty parlors, barber shops, and auto repair operations, to aspiring Black artists, and on to the many street vendors and small-time, semilegitimate hustlers. These forces have not benefited from the push of the last two decades, and their conditions of life do not approximate those of the middle class. They are a politically volatile and quite significant section of the Black nation, a big part of the social base for revolutionary nationalism, and an important element of the solid core of the united front against imperialism.

To conclude this section of our study, the last couple of decades have witnessed the build-up of the professional and technical, managerial, and craft sectors of the Black population. State intervention has played an important and initiating role in the build-up of these strata, particularly as reflected in initiatives such as affirmative action — a program which itself has been subjected to curtailment in recent years. But again, while it is an incontrovertible fact that the Black petty bourgeoisie has made gains along the lines of what Martin Luther King, Jr. talked about in his 1968 book *Where Do We Go From Here?*, the Black middle class is still confined to the lower rungs of the socio-economic ladder. Our position, therefore, is at odds with two other trends of analysis that can be found in the literature on Black "progress": (1) a position which tends to exaggerate the gains that the Black petty bourgeoisie has made since the 1960s; and (2) a trend which denies those gains and argues instead that there is a "commonality" of interests — or a lack of any

significant class contradiction — in the Black nation. Both of these analyses marshal evidence to show that the system is reformable — that resources can be redistributed to compensate for imbalances. Neither argument is correct. Neither is able to situate phenomena within the framework of national oppression, capitalist accumulation, and the international exigencies of imperialism; nor does either argument comprehend that national oppression has been pivotal in the post-World War 2 period and is overall *integral* and *vital* to imperialism. (See Wilson, 1980; Pickney, 1984; and McGhee, 1983.)

Skilled and Bourgeoisified Workers

In the 1960s high-income jobs in basic industry were the road to upward mobility for many Black workers. Detroit — "auto capital of the world" — affords an interesting and important case study of the employment "opportunities" for Blacks in that decade and the years following. After a slump in the late 1950s the auto industry experienced a sales boom in the 1960s. Employment at the Big Three grew tremendously between 1960 and 1968 — from 723,556 employees in 1960 to 1,020,783 in 1968 (Geschwender, 1977, p. 42). The proportion of Blacks who were employed in the auto industry increased from 9.1 percent to 13.4 percent during that decade (Geschwender, 1977, p. 42). Indeed, by 1970 over 33 percent of employed Black male residents of Detroit were commuting to manufacturing jobs in the suburbs (Fusfeld and Bates, 1984, p. 120).

But while the employment gains of Detroit ghetto residents were impressive, Blacks continued to be concentrated in the lower-ranking, less desirable jobs in the auto industry in the late '60s. They were more often than not employed in the "worst and most dangerous jobs: the foundry, the body shop, and engine assembly — jobs requiring the greatest physical exertion and jobs which were the noisiest, dirtiest, and most dangerous in the plant. Blacks were further abused by the 90-day rule, under which workers could be dismissed at will before coming under full contract protection. The companies made it a practice to fire hundreds of workers per week, creating a rotating and permanent pool of insecure job seekers" (Georgakas and Surkin, 1975, p. 35).

Detroit was the scene of one of the most powerful uprisings of the decade during the summer of 1967. More than thirty other cities ignited in the week that the Detroit rebellion erupted. The cover of the August 7, 1967 edition of *Newsweek* was entitled "Battlefield, U.S.A." and featured pictures of Detroit going up in flames. That issue of *Newsweek* conveyed the deep concern and panic of the bourgeoisie over what had happened in Detroit, following just three weeks after the explosion of violence in Newark, New Jersey:

The trouble burst on Detroit like a firestorm and turned the nation's fifth biggest city into a theater of

Table 9
Occupational Distribution of Employed
Black Workers, 1960-70

	(numbers in thousands)			
	1960	Blacks as % of all	1970	Blacks as % of all
	Number		Number	
Total	6,087.5	9.4	7,403.1	9.6
Professional and technical	319.0*	3.7	616.3	5.4
Managers, administrators and proprietors	115.0*	1.6	166.2	2.6
Sales workers	96.8*	1.8	165.8	3.1
Clerical and kindred workers	426.4*	4.0	1,021.6	7.4
Craftsmen and kindred workers	418.6*	4.3	674.8	6.3
Operatives	1,309.8*	10.1	1,749.2	12.7
Laborers, except farm	816.1*	24.7	688.2	20.1
Service workers, except private household	1,128.6*	18.9	1,484.0	17.1
Private household workers	947.5*	52.7	613.4	52.5
Farmers and farmworkers	509.6*	12.4	223.5	9.4

*Categories adjusted to match 1970 definitions.

Source: Sar A. Levitan, et al., *Still A Dream: The Changing Status of Blacks Since 1960* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp. 48-52, Table 3-4

war. Whole streets lay ravaged by looters, whole blocks immolated by flames. Federal troops — the first sent into racial battle outside the South in a quarter of a century — occupied American streets at bayonet point. Patton tanks — machine guns ablaze — and Huey helicopters patrolled a cityscape of blackened brick chimneys poking out of gutted basements. And suddenly Harlem 1964 and Watts 1965 and Newark only three weeks ago fell back into the shadows of memory. Detroit was the new benchmark, its rubble a monument to the most devastating race riot in U.S. history — and a symbol of a domestic crisis grown graver than any since the Civil War. (*Newsweek*, 1967, p. 18)

It is no exaggeration to say that Detroit — and the heating climate in the country overall, including the existence of revolutionary leadership and organization — “freaked” the ruling class.

In the wake of the Detroit rebellion, the bourgeoisie initiated a program to train the “hard-core” unemployed, many of whom were eventually hired in the auto industry. Welfare recipients and former prisoners, among others, were given jobs in the industry. Ford Motor Company set up hiring offices in the ghetto, and they waived “normal job requirements if the requirements were not found to be directly related to job performance” (Geschwender, 1977, p. 74). And in early 1968 the bourgeoisie on a national level intervened

in this process, launching the “Job Opportunities in the Business Sector” program. The program was initiated under the Johnson administration and was later embraced by Nixon. More than 300,000 “hard-core” unemployed were hired under this program.

Detroit, however, was not the only city that witnessed gains for Blacks in manufacturing industry in the 1960s. Data on five major U.S. cities with large Black populations — Chicago, Baltimore, Cleveland, Detroit, and Philadelphia — reveal upward mobility for Black “blue-collar” workers between 1950 and 1970. In these five cities, Black males made impressive gains in the manufacturing industry, especially as operatives, a sector concentrating the largest proportion of Black male workers. Black men also made gains in the “craftsmen, foremen, and kindred” category. The employment of Black women in these cities, however, declined in the operative category and rose only slightly in the craft sector. The growth of Black women clerical employment was quite impressive, expanding from 7.5 percent of employed Blacks in 1950 to 30.8 percent in 1970! Two things must be noted about these data: (1) the employment gains of Black women are not as impressive when one considers that clerical jobs are the lowest paid of the “white-collar” positions, with an annual income in 1980 of only \$11,717 for full-time workers; and (2) in general, Blacks were concentrated, as we have indicated previously in discussing national trends, in the lower rungs of the employment ladder, as well as at the bottom of operative and craft positions.

Nationwide statistics pertaining to the U.S. labor force paint a similar picture as those for the five major cities that we have discussed. Between 1960 and 1970 the proportion of all employed "craftsmen and kindred workers" who were Black increased from 4.3 percent to 6.3 percent. By 1970, however, most skilled Black workers were employed as cement and concrete finishers as opposed to electricians or plumbers, which were higher-income positions. On the other hand, the proportion of all operatives who were Black expanded during the same years — from 10.1 percent to 12.7 percent. (See Table 9.)

Black workers made significant inroads into high-paid jobs in basic industry in the 1960s, including in skilled positions. Those gains have been seriously undermined in recent years, however, through several recessions — the weight of which has fallen disproportionately on Black workers — and continuing structural changes in the U.S. economy which have dried up many of these better-paying production jobs. For example, 11.5 million workers lost jobs in basic industry between 1979 and 1984 as a result of "plant closings or relocation, abolition of a position or a shift, or slack work. Of these, 5.1 million had had the job at least 3 years and were considered displaced." By January 1984, 1.3 million of the 5.1 million displaced workers were still without jobs and almost one-third of those who found jobs had taken wage reductions of 20 percent or more, while more than one-tenth of those workers who had formerly been employed full-time had taken part-time jobs. Although the majority of these "displaced" workers were white males, Blacks accounted for 12 percent of them (U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, 1986, p. 7).

Some observers on the left, notably Manning Marable, argue that the bourgeoisie (and/or the "white masses") want to "roll back the clock," specifically on the "progress" that the Black masses have made over the past couple of decades. Others argue that the imperialists find it necessary to "roll back the clock" specifically in order to create the conditions that are more conducive to economic expansion. Our views are at odds with both of these positions. While the crisis will erode more privileged bastions — and is already doing so — among the Black masses, we do not believe there will be an across-the-board leveling of the positions of various strata among the Black masses. Indeed, class polarization will continue, even intensify in some ways. And it will continue to have important political expression. The phenomenon of "last hired and first fired" among the proletariat will assume even more monstrous proportions; and the bourgeoisie will continue to build up some sections of the Black bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie even while other sectors are driven under, as many have been since the decade of the '60s. We have shown how the state continues to provide a "lifeline" for elements of the Black bourgeoisie, despite certain cut-backs in aid. This is based on the political situation that the U.S. bourgeoisie faces in preparing its bloc for a showdown with the Soviet-led bloc. The needs of the U.S. empire provide compelling political reasons to continue to prop up and support buffer strata among Black people as a base for refor-

mism and even American patriotism.

Beyond all that, "rolling back the clock" is not enough to create better conditions for economic expansion. What is required is that the whole framework of global economic, political, and military relations be recast. What is required to get over the profound crisis of the imperialist system worldwide is the restructuring of world capital. In order for that to happen, a rival bloc must be defeated and the whole world redivided. This is the concrete situation at this point in the spiral development of imperialism; this is why we say world imperialism is rapidly approaching a conjuncture (Lotta, 1984).

The Basic Black Masses: Increasingly Desperate Circumstances

So far we have dealt with only one side of the class polarization equation: the build-up of significant sections of the Black bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie and the motion of some Blacks into the better-paid sections of the working class. But what are the conditions of the basic Black masses? How has their situation grown worse since the decade of the '60s?

As a result of a long history of oppression, in various forms and continuing until today, the majority of the masses of Black people (and other oppressed nationalities) are concentrated in low-wage, dead-end jobs. One writer has estimated that between 66 percent and 75 percent of all employed Black ghetto workers hold jobs in the low-wage sector of the economy (Fusfeld and Bates, 1984, p. 158). The ruling class in the U.S. utilizes Black labor as a superexploited section critical to the accumulation process and as a key segment of a permanent reserve army of the unemployed. As Fusfeld and Bates have observed in the *Political Economy of the Urban Ghetto*: "The presence of these cadres of unemployed workers tends to keep wages low in those sectors of the labor market in which they compete. These are the low-wage industries and menial occupations for which racial minorities are eligible" (Fusfeld and Bates, 1984, p. 161).

In fact, the unemployment rate for Blacks has been consistently more than twice that for whites since the end of the last world war. For teenagers between the ages of 16 and 19, the unemployment rate for Blacks is also substantially higher than for whites. In 1985, 38.4 percent of Black teenage males were unemployed — and these are the official unemployment figures — compared to 16.5 percent of white teenagers. And for Black females, the unemployment picture was just as serious — more than 35 percent of them were unemployed, as opposed to 14.8 percent of white teenage females. (See Table 10.)

In recent years, the U.S. military has appealed to Black youth (and others) to "be all that you can be." The idea is that unemployable Black youth can enter the armed forces, be trained in a skill, and return to civilian life far more employable than they were when they went into the mili-

Table 10
Unemployment by Race 1960, 1970, 1982 and 1985*

Year	All Civilian Workers	Unemployment Rate (Percent)					
		Total	White		Black and other non-white ¹		
			Males Age 16-19	Females Age 16-19	Total	Males Age 16-19	Females Age 16-19
1985	7.2	8.2	18.5	14.8	13.7	38.4	35.8
1982	9.7	8.8	21.7	19.0	17.3	44.0	43.8
1970	4.9	4.5	13.7	13.4	8.2	25.0	34.5
1960	5.5	5.0	14.0	12.7	10.2	24.0	24.8

¹Black and other non-white. "Other non-white" are about 10 percent of the Black total.

Source: *A Dream Deferred: The Economic Status of Black America, A Working Paper* (Washington, D.C.: Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1983), p. 18.

*Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings*, January 1986, Table 1, p. 152; Table 3, p. 155; and Table 4, 157.

tary. Large numbers of Black youth have gone into the military to escape the pervasive poverty in the ghetto. By 1981 Blacks constituted more than 30 percent of the U.S. Army. This development generated much concern in ruling circles, where there was speculation about the potential fallout if Blacks suffered a third or as much as a half of the combat fatalities in the initial stages of conflict, a real likelihood given the large percentage of Black combat troops. But the bourgeoisie is even more concerned that Black troops will not "be all that they can be" in confronting the enemies of U.S. imperialism, especially when confronting revolutionary struggles in the Third World. In a 1982 study, *Blacks in the Military*, the Brookings Institution explored the issue of the viability of a military machine consisting of large numbers of Blacks. One consideration was how reliable Black troops would be in a domestic military conflict or in an attack on a Third World country. The Brookings report, in fact, reviewed the history of the appeals of Third World peoples (and imperialist enemies of the U.S.) to Black soldiers:

Potential adversaries might also view the changing racial balance as an opportunity to exploit racial problems where they exist and to create them where they do not. There is a long record of the nation's perceived vulnerability to such propaganda measures; virtually every recent adversary has used them. At the turn of the century, Filipino guerrillas exhorted U.S. black soldiers to desert and not be "instruments of their white masters' ambitions to oppress another 'people of color.'" In World War I the Germans circulated among members of the black 92nd Division leaflets pointing out the contradiction of fighting for democracy abroad while being denied rights at home. In World War II the Japanese made radio appeals specifically to black troops serving in the Pacific theater. During the Korean War the Chinese reportedly used 'divide and conquer' tech-

niques on black prisoners of war. In Vietnam the National Liberation Front announced that 'liberation forces have a special attitude toward American soldiers who happen to be Negroes.' Rebel forces in the Dominican Republic, as already indicated, appealed to racial differences. And more recently, the Khomeini government released thirteen U.S. hostages after three weeks of captivity, eight of whom were black males and five white women. The release was staged as a major media event at which Khomeini's professed respect for women and oppressed blacks was highlighted. (Binkin, et al., 1982, pp. 117-118)

This problem has historically posed a contradiction for the U.S. imperialists, especially during the Vietnam War when large numbers of Black soldiers (and others) opposed the war, including by turning their guns on their commanders. This is a grave concern for the U.S. imperialists in the context of the global war that is shaping up between the imperialist blocs, East and West. If the approach to that war includes U.S. military action against liberation movements, or even moderately nationalist governments in the Third World — as it well might — such "concerns" will sharpen greatly. An equally serious consideration for the ruling class is the basis for many of these troops to be won over to the side of the proletariat in circumstances of a serious revolutionary initiative in this country in the context of overall global crisis.

The incidence of poverty is another indicator of the bleak situation confronting the Black masses in the '80s. There is a vast and growing proportion of the Black population that is living in depressed conditions. In 1983, 9.9 million Blacks — approximately 36 percent of the Black population — lived in poverty, the highest Black poverty rate since the government began reporting data on Black poverty in 1968 (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities [CBPP], 1984, p. 4). And, since the 1981 budget cuts, the incidence of poverty among Blacks has grown.

A report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities suggests that Blacks were "disproportionately affected" by the Reagan budget cuts. According to the Center, the cuts cost the average Black family three times as much in lost income and benefits as they cost the average white family (CBPP, 1984, p. 12). This occurred primarily because the "deepest cuts were made in programs in which blacks participate in the largest numbers" (CBPP, 1984, p. 12). Moreover, the poverty rate for Blacks has grown at a faster pace than for whites over the past few years. Between 1980 and 1983 the incidence of poverty for whites increased from 10.2 percent to 12.1 percent, meaning an additional 1.9 percent of whites became impoverished during that period. During the same period the poverty rate for Blacks rose from 32.5 percent to 35.7 percent. As a recent report points out: "The proportion of the Black population added to the poverty ranks since 1980 (3.2 percent) is almost twice as large as the proportion for the white population added to the ranks of the poor (1.9 percent)" (CBPP, 1984, p. 5).

The report of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities attributes the deteriorating economic situation of the Black masses primarily to Reaganomics. This is the height of liberal hypocrisy. The cuts in social programs actually began under Carter's administration and are primarily a function of the exigencies of the U.S. empire, and are being made even though they undercut the political purpose which these social programs have served for the bourgeoisie. As Raymond Lotta observed recently:

Nevertheless, the cuts are but an expression of, and an imperative reaction to, a real crisis of accumulation and a real necessity to 'shift priorities.'

These social programs mainly represent a form of concessionary spending designed to politically demobilize and contain some of the more volatile sections of the masses. They are funded largely via deductions from surplus value. These programs were functional and sustainable up until a point. But in a constricting environment of global crisis, in which capital must, on the one hand, profitably concentrate surplus value, and, on the other, parlay its efforts into the military struggle for global supremacy, such expenditure becomes more of a dead weight. And these cuts are functional not only in the sense of cost savings but in their effect on profitability, as the increase in unemployment and poverty exert greater downward pressure on wages — even, and especially, in the lowest, most superexploited sectors of the working class. The budgetary reorientation actually began in the later years of the Carter administration: increases in social expenditure relative to military outlays were braked, and new weapons programs initiated. A restricted budget will not in and of itself solve the deficit crisis or really propel accumulation; but this reprioritizing and tightening is an integral part of the only solution to the multi-dimensional crisis that the imperialists can embark on. (Lotta, 1985, p. 12)

Given the worldwide crisis of imperialism and accelerating war preparation of the imperialist blocs, East and West, the U.S. bourgeoisie has been forced to "shift priorities." But it must be said for the benefit of those who are enamored with reformism that it is the underlying structural features of the

Table 11
Persons Below Selected Proportions of the Poverty Level,
By Race, 1981

Race and Status	Total (in 1,000's)	Percent		
		Below Poverty Level	Below 75% of Poverty Level	Below 50% of Poverty Level
White	194,504	11.1	6.7	3.7
In families with female householder:				
Total	18,795	29.8	20.8	10.9
Children under 18	7,299	42.8	31.3	17.1
Children under 6	1,867	59.1	45.7	25.5
Black	26,834	34.2	25.2	13.8
In families with female householder:				
Total	9,214	56.7	45.4	26.5
Children under 18	4,507	67.7	56.0	34.2
Children under 6	1,490	74.2	62.3	38.8

Source: *A Dream Deferred: The Economic Status of Black Americans, A Working Paper* (Washington, D.C.: Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1983), p. 26.

economy which preclude any fundamental changes in Black labor-force participation, ghettoization, and so forth. In other words, the ruling class can make concessions, but it cannot concede away the structure of national oppression.

While the data on Black impoverishment generally is very stark, the incidence of poverty among Black women is particularly pervasive. As Table 11 shows, 56.7 percent of all Black families headed by women are below the poverty level, as compared with 29.8 percent of similarly situated white families. When the children of female-headed Black families are considered the data are even more striking: 67.7 percent of all Black children under 18 years of age who live in households headed by women are impoverished, while 74.2 percent of children under 6 living in such families are similarly situated. Moreover, Black children are three times more likely to live in poverty than white children.

Over the past three decades, the percentage of Black female-headed families with children has increased more than five-fold, growing from 8.3 percent in 1950 to 49.9 percent in 1985. As Table 12 shows, the percentage of similarly situated white families has also expanded, but the phenomenon of Black female-headed households is more pronounced. What this trend suggests is that "hearth and home" has been undermined with the material changes occurring in the U.S. and the international imperialist system after World War 2, and, as the data indicates this has not just been a development among oppressed nationalities. This is not to say that male supremacy and its ideological trappings have been eliminated but rather that the material basis for it has undergone transformation.

Class polarization *within* the Black nation — that is to say, the build-up of significant sections of the Black bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie concomitant with the increasing immiseration of the basic Black masses — must be situated in the larger context of the political economy and social relations of U.S. society as a whole, and significant changes within them.

An interesting study released in 1983 suggested that "[d]espite the fact that black Americans have made some gains since the civil rights movement of the last two or three decades, the economic gap between blacks and whites remains wide and is not diminishing." Since 1960 the economic disparities between Blacks and whites have worsened (CSSP, 1983, p. 1). While the incomes of Black and white families reflect gains over the past two decades, Black families remain concentrated at the lower end of the income scale. For example, the proportion of white families with income below \$5,000 decreased by 45 percent between 1960 and 1981 — from 8.2 percent to 4.5 percent. The proportion of Black families in this income range declined by only 35 percent, from 26 percent to 16.7 percent. On the other hand, in the \$5,000 to \$9,999 income range the number of white families dropped by 22 percent, while the proportion of Black families fell by only 12 percent. In 1981, 54.8 percent of Black families had annual incomes of less than \$15,000, while only 27.9 percent of white families were similarly situated. Income disparities can also be found at the other

Table 12
Female-Headed Families with Children, By Race, 1950-1985*

Year	Female-Headed Families with No Spouse Present and with Own Children Under Age 18	
	As Percent of All Black Families	As Percent of All White Families
1950	8.3	2.8
1960	20.7	6.0
1970	30.6	7.8
1980	46.9	13.4
1985	49.9	15.0

*Bureau of Census, unpublished data.
Source: *A Dream Deferred: The Economic Status of Black Americans, A Working Paper* (Washington, D.C.: Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1983).

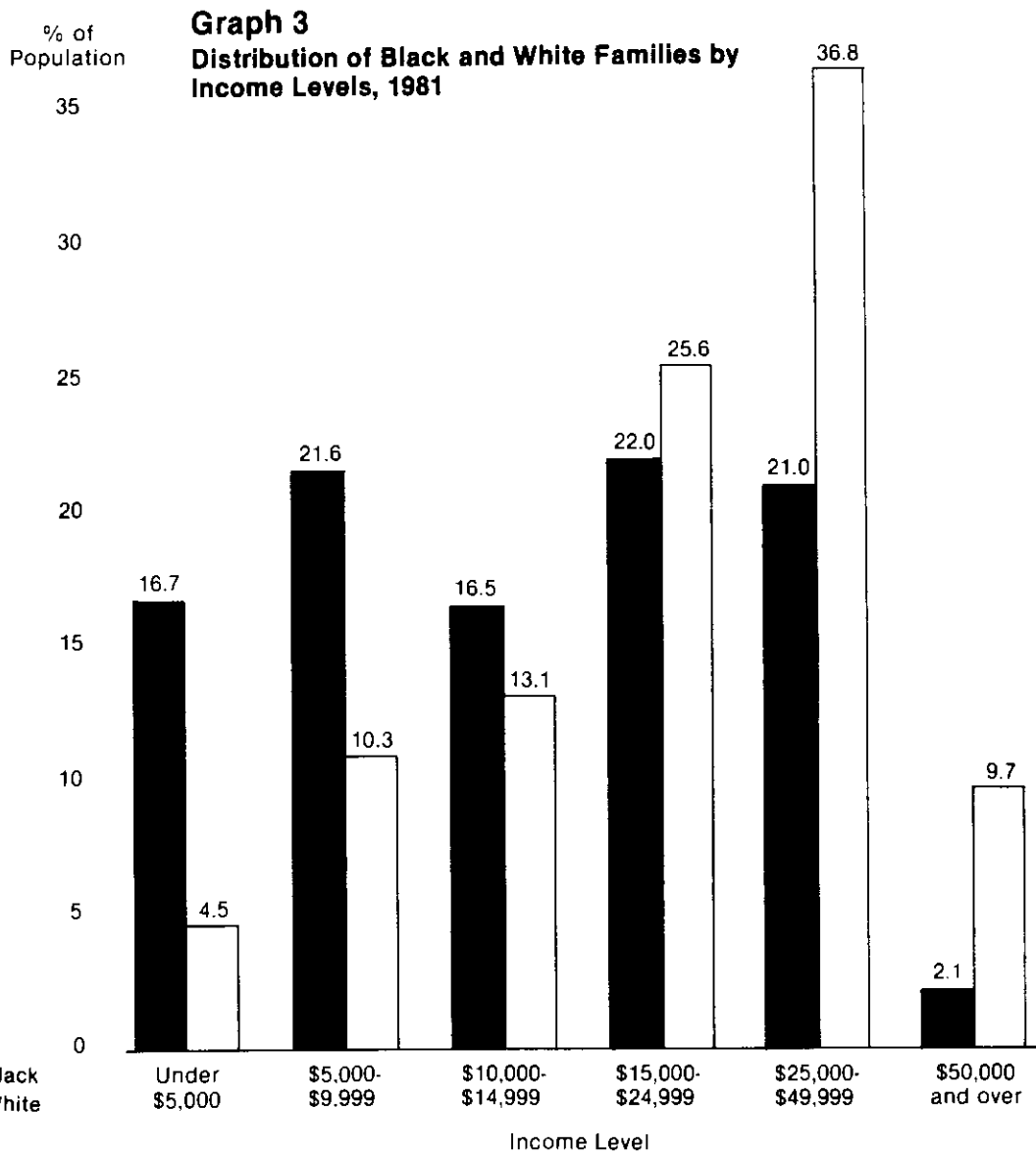
Table 13
Infant Deaths¹ by Race 1960, 1970, 1983

	(Death per 1000 live births)		
	1960	1970	1983*
White	22.9	17.8	9.7
Black	44.3	32.6	19.2

¹Represents deaths of infants under 1 year old, exclusive of fetal deaths.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1986).
*U.S. National Center for Health Statistics, *Vital Statistics for the U.S.*, 1983.

end of the income spectrum: 46.5 percent of white families earned more than \$25,000 in 1981, as compared to only 23.1 percent of Black families. Indeed, there were four times more white families at the highest level of the income scale than Blacks in 1981: 9.7 percent to 2.1 percent. (See Graph 3.) It should be noted that these figures tend to paint an even rosier picture of the income disparity between Black families and white families because Black families generally have more dependents and, in Black married-couple families, both husband and wife are frequently employed. In fact, such families have made the greatest "progress" relative to whites.

Labor-force participation rates are also worse for Blacks than for whites. Nonparticipation in the labor force is rising for Blacks and whites, but it is increasing more rapidly for Blacks. Over the past couple of decades, between 1960 and 1982, the proportion of Black men not participating in the labor force rose from 17.0 percent to 28.1 percent, compared to an increase from 15.8 percent to 22.2 percent for white men (CSSP, 1983, p. 20). The data is even starker when the ratio of employed population to the total population is compared. For instance, in 1960, 74.1 percent of the "noninstitutionalized, civilian black male population over age 15 was employed." However, by 1982 only 55.3 percent of that population had jobs (CSSP 1983, p. 20). On the other hand,



Source: The Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP). 1983. *A Dream Deferred: The Economic Status of Black Americans*, Washington, D.C.: CSSP.

the similar ratio for white males declined from 75.7 percent to 69.1 percent (CSSP, 1983, p. 20).

The disparity between Blacks and whites is also reflected in the data on infant mortality. The infant mortality rate among Blacks is nearly twice that of whites, even though the rates have declined for whites and Blacks since 1960. In 1983 the rate of infant deaths was 9.7 per 1,000 live births for whites, while in the same year the number of Black infant deaths was 19.2 per 1,000 live births. (See Table 12.) To state the matter in its starkest terms, a Black infant in Chicago in

1983 was more likely to die in the first year of life than a baby born in Costa Rica! (Children's Defense Fund, 1986, p. xiii)

Finally, the growing number of incarcerated Blacks is a stark manifestation of national oppression. In conjunction with the increasing number of Black elected officials and the build-up of a buffer strata among Black people during the 1970s and early 1980s, there has been an expansion of the jails and prisons in this country. Between 1972 and 1981 the U.S. prison population grew from 200,000 to 412,000, with Black prisoners comprising 50 percent of that total (Revolution-

ary Worker, No. 236, p. 6). As the *Revolutionary Worker* has pointed out, Illinois is a good example of this trend: "The number of inmates has increased 122.5 percent since 1974. Of more than 14,000 prisoners in state facilities, 61 percent are Black (including 62 percent of death row), and maximum security prisons like Statesville and Pontiac are 80 percent Black. This figure does not include local jails, like Cook County Jail in Chicago, or juveniles" (*Revolutionary Worker*, No. 236, p. 6). For many Black youth, we can say without exaggeration that their future under imperialism holds a life of low-wage, dead-end jobs, high unemployment, pervasive poverty, the army, prison, drug addiction, gangs, and an early grave.

.....

The outlines of a general periodization of developments in the national question in the post-World War 2 period can now be sketched. The 1950s witnesses the eruption of major "social dislocation," with the transformation of productive relations in the South and the proletarianization and urbanization of the Black masses. The 1960s were an expansionary period of imperialism worldwide. A powerful revolutionary movement erupted in the U.S. (and in other imperialist citadels) during that decade, which was overall characterized by revolutionary struggle in the Third World, including in China where the proletarian leadership launched the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in the late '60s. The U.S. bourgeoisie responded to the revolutionary movement in this country and, in general, to the "fighting mood" of the masses with brutal suppression and concessionary pacification. Tens of millions of dollars were pumped into various social programs. Generally, the three categories of concessions were: cash payments, such as AFDC and SSI; in-kind programs, like Food Stamps and Medicaid; and increased opportunities for employment, especially in high-paying jobs in industry. These concessions, however, did not alter the political economy of the ghetto, nor were they intended to do so. Bugged down in Vietnam and confronted with a multifaceted political crisis in the U.S., one of the most serious ever, the bourgeoisie was forced to shift gears in the late '60s, giving more emphasis to the building up a buffer stratum within the Black nation. To underscore just how serious the situation was in the country, it should be noted that the Black Panther Party commanded the respect of large sections of Black youth in the late 1960s, including large numbers inside the U.S. military!

In the early '70s elite strata of the Black masses continued to be built up while, on the other hand, the situation for the basic proletarian masses among Black people grew more desperate. Indeed, the bourgeoisie shifted gears and placed the *main* emphasis on building up a buffer stratum within the Black nation. As a result of state intervention in the form of affirmative action and other programs, there was not only impressive occupational upgrading for many in the Black petty bourgeoisie — in conjunction with the expansion

of the Black bourgeoisie — but there were also significant gains in education for Blacks generally. In addition, Black politicians were significantly bolstered, while some sections of Black politicians were integrated into the state apparatus, particularly Black mayors. These Black politicians, though subject to control by the "big" bourgeoisie, did cultivate a social base precisely among those Blacks who had "made it" somewhat since the '60s.

The devastating back-to-back recessions of the late '70s and early '80s were followed by the mid-'80s "recovery," with the expansion of military spending and the acceleration of capital inflows from other imperialist countries in the U.S. bloc and the growth of the high-tech industry in the U.S. This meant an increase in high-paying jobs in the professional, managerial, and entrepreneurial sectors of the economy concomitant with the explosion of low-wage, dead-end jobs, particularly in producer services. In the context of overall global economic crisis and the accelerating war preparations of the imperialist blocs, West and East, the bourgeoisie has been forced to reorient federal spending away from social programs. At the same time the bourgeoisie has continued to build up certain elite, buffer strata among Black people as the situation confronting the basic Black masses has rapidly deteriorated. In addition to the expansion of these elite strata, the ruling class further bolstered Black participation in at least parts of the political structure in the late '70s and early '80s, with the rapidly multiplying number of Black elected officials.

Meanwhile the country as a whole has witnessed an ideological offensive against women, immigrants, and oppressed nationalities as well as others. Such things as the Goetz shootings, the Philly massacre, and the ideological offensive that situates the cause of Black oppression *within* the Black community or the Black family, have played no small role in this quasifascist wave. This has been mixed with pervasive promotion of patriotism and a call for a Resurgent America — all of which is crucial for the bourgeoisie in rallying its social base for the showdown with the Soviets, a social base that is being prepared to fight and to die to make America No. 1 again in the world. Within the Black nation, people like Jesse Jackson have played a crucial role, as part of a *loyal* opposition, in attempting to rally large sections of Black masses, especially among the elite strata, to line up behind the war moves of the ruling class. While Jackson issues calls for reform, these are solidly in the context of "America Number One." It is no exaggeration to say that for a certain section of its social base the bourgeoisie offers the likes of Jerry Falwell and for others they offer Jesse Jackson, the country preacher.

.....

Over the past couple of decades there has undeniably been an intensification of class polarization among Black people. The important thing to stress about this development, however, is not simply that the proletarian masses are

now more impoverished. While desperate circumstances are certainly part of the stuff of which revolutionary situations consist, it must be emphasized that proletarian revolution requires the leadership of the advanced class, armed with the most advanced theory, which it must translate into strategies and tactics and a battle plan for victory. The proletarian revolution is a *conscious* revolution, led by the class-conscious proletariat and its vanguard party — although spontaneous outbursts on the part of the masses do play an important role. The significance of class polarization in the Black nation, therefore, is that the *class contradictions are now intensified*. This is not to suggest that the Black bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie should be identified as the enemy and a target of the proletarian revolution. Indeed, there are conservative influences among those classes — and among many a strong pull to go along with the bourgeoisie in order to maintain their privileged positions. But this is not something absolute or static. In the context of overall global crisis and the emergence of revolution in various countries throughout the world and in the U.S., many among the Black bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie will be able to be won over or neutralized. Nonetheless, it must be said that there is more of a basis now, as opposed to previous historical periods, for a reformist and even patriotic trend within the privileged strata among Black people. On the other hand, there is much more of a basis now, given class polarization within the Black nation, to bring forward broad sections of the proletarian masses of Black people, on the basis of their class interests, around a *proletarian internationalist* line. There is more of a basis for proletarian Black masses to grasp and act on what Bob Avakian has written:

One of the forms of class struggle is "What is the arena?" Is the arena the nation or is the arena the international situation . . . and the world struggle? And if the arena is presented as just the oppressed nation — that is, Black people — or just the U.S. society, then that's ultimately favorable to the bourgeoisie. It is precisely a point of class struggle to fight for people to grasp that the arena objectively is, and must be re-

flected in their consciousness as being, first of all and fundamentally the world arena and that the basic contradiction that they are involved in, in class terms, is between the proletariat and its allies against the imperialists and their allies on a world scale through all its various different processes and streams and currents. Without doing that it's not possible to win people to and continue to lead them on the basis of the proletarian line and proletarian politics. And also importantly, if secondarily, it is the only way in which the possible allies among, for example, Black petty-bourgeois forces or even some Black bourgeois strata and forces can be won over or at least neutralized with the development of a strong proletarian revolutionary current, and especially with the development of an overall revolutionary situation, revolutionary movement, and the actual struggle for the seizure of power and the transformation of society. So even as we stress the importance of the deepened and sharpened class polarization that has gone on within the Black nation, among the Black people, yet this can only be correctly understood, and the understanding only correctly utilized and turned into a strong weapon for the proletariat and for its struggle, if in an overall sense it is presented in this light and in this framework and with this kind of orientation and those kinds of horizons are what people's sights are directed toward. (Avakian, 1985, p. 23)

While Black proletarians can be attracted to various non-proletarian ideologies, like nationalism, to a certain extent and to a certain degree, their real interests lie in fighting in unity with proletarians the world over for the communist future. And, given the class polarization addressed in this article, there is more of a basis now to win large numbers of them to that position. This is the real significance of polarization within the Black nation. And this has political and strategic implications — an issue that will be explored in a future article. □

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, Robert L., *Black Awakening in Capitalist America; An Analytic History* (New York: Anchor Books, 1970).
- Avakian, Bob, *Bob Avakian Replies to a Letter from: "Black Nationalist with Communistic Inclinations"* (Chicago: RCP Publications, 1981). Originally published in *Revolutionary Worker*, No. 75, 10 October 1980.
- Avakian, Bob, *Summing Up the Black Panther Party* (Chicago: RCP Publications, 1980).
- Avakian, Bob, "Conquer the World? The International Proletariat Must and Will," *Revolution*, No. 50 (Chicago: RCP Publications, December 1981).
- Avakian, Bob, *If There Is to Be Revolution, There Must Be a Revolutionary Party* (Chicago: RCP Publications, 1982).
- Avakian, Bob, "The '60s Weren't Always 'The '60s,' and the '80s Will Be Far Heavier," *Revolutionary Worker*, 1 May 1983.
- Avakian, Bob, *A Horrible End, or An End to the Horror?* (Chicago: RCP Publications, 1984).
- Avakian, Bob, *Revolution*, No. 53 (Chicago: RCP Publications, Winter/Spring 1985).
- Avakian, Bob, "Questions for These Times: An Interview with Bob Avakian," *Revolution*, No. 54 (Chicago: RCP Publications, Winter/Spring 1986).
- Binkin, et al, *Blacks and the Military* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1982).
- Black Enterprise*, June 1982, "A Decade of Steady Progress."
- Black Enterprise*, June 1983, "Federal Government Loans to Small Businesses and to Minority-Operated Small Businesses: 1970 to 1982."
- Blaustein, Arthur I. and Faux, Geoffrey, *The Star Spangled Hustle* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1972).
- Bradford, William D., "Growth in Store for '84," *Black Enterprise*, June 1984.
- Carson, Clayborne, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960's* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981).
- The Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP), *A Dream Deferred: The Economic Status of Black Americans* (Washington, D.C.: CSSP, 1983).
- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), *Falling Behind: A Report on How Blacks Have Fared Under the Reagan Policies* (Washington, D.C.: CBPP, 1984).
- Children's Defense Fund, *Maternal and Child Health Data Book* (Washington, D.C.: Children's Defense Fund, 1986).
- Clayton, Janet, "Going for the Gold," *Black Enterprise*, April 1983.
- Dix, Carl, *Jesse Jackson: The "Right Stuff" for U.S. Imperialism* (Chicago: RCP Publications, 1984).
- Dix, Carl, "Statement by Carl Dix, RCP, USA on the MOVE Massacre," *Revolutionary Worker*, No. 337, 6 January 1986.
- Dugger, Ronnie, *The Politician* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1982).
- Elemesrud, Judy, "Tamara Dobson — Not Super Fly, but Super Woman," *New York Times*, 19 August 1973.
- Fortune*, 30 April 1984.
- Frazier, E. Franklin, *Black Bourgeoisie* (New York: Collier Books, 1962).
- Fulwood, Sam, "Savings and Loans Face That Rainy Day," *Black Enterprise*, June 1985.
- Fusfeld, Daniel R. and Bates, Timothy, *The Political Economy of the Urban Ghetto* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984).
- Georgakas, Dan and Surkin, Marvin, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975).
- Geschwender, James A., *Class, Race, and Worker Insurgency* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).
- Gittleman, Marvin E. and Mermelstein, David, eds., *The Great Society Reader: The Failure of American Liberalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967).
- Harris, William H., *The Harder We Run: Black Workers Since the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).
- Henderson, Lenneal J., "Black Business Development and Public Policy," *State of Black America 1983* (New York: National Urban League, 1983).
- Hicks, Jonathan, "Black-owned Concerns Reflected '85 Economy," *New York Times*, 7 May 1986.
- Hill, Robert B., "The Black Middle Class: Past, Present and Future," *State of Black America 1986* (New York: National Urban League).
- King, Martin Luther, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968).
- Kozol, Jonathan, *Illiterate America* (New York: New American Library, 1985).
- Leah, Daniel J., *From Sambo to Superspade: The Black Experience in Motion Pictures* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976).
- Lenin, V.I., *The Collected Works of Lenin* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), Vol. 22.
- Levitan, Sar A., et al., *Still a Dream: The Changing Status of Blacks Since 1960* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975).
- Lewis, David L., *King: A Biography* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978).

- Logan, Hal J., "Harnessing the Information Explosion," *Black Enterprise*, June 1983.
- Lotta, Raymond with Shannon, Frank, *America in Decline: An Analysis of the Developments Toward War and Revolution, in the U.S. and Worldwide, in the 1980s* (Chicago: Banner Press, 1984).
- Lotta, Raymond, "Notes on Political Economy: A Perverse Recovery in Strategic Context," *Revolutionary Worker*, 4 January 1985.
- Mao Tsetung, "Statement by Comrade Mao Tse-tung, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, In Support of the Afro-American Struggle Against Violent Repression" (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1968).
- Matney, William C., *America's Black Population: 1970 to 1982, A Statistical View* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1983).
- McGhee, James D., *Black Solidarity: The Tie That Binds* (New York: National Urban League, Inc., 1983).
- Millinder, Lucius, "Insuring Against the Odds," *Black Enterprise*, June 1985.
- Newsweek*, "Battlefield, USA," 7 August 1967.
- Nixon, Richard M., "Highlights of CBS Broadcast to the Nation," *Time*, 3 May 1968.
- Petrie, Phil W., "Dividends of Experience," *Black Enterprise*, June 1982.
- Pinkney, Alphonso, *The Myth of Black Progress* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).
- Piven, Frances Fox and Cloward, Richard, *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare* (New York: Vintage Books, 1971).
- Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, *King Legacy: Reformism and Capitulation, Revolution* Reprint No. 7 (Chicago: RCP Publications, 1970).
- Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, *New Programme and New Constitution of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA* (Chicago: RCP Publications, 1981).
- Revolutionary Union, *Red Papers 5: National Liberation and Proletarian Revolution in the U.S.* (Chicago: Revolutionary Union, 1972).
- Revolutionary Union, *Red Papers 6: Build the Leadership of the Proletariat and Its Party* (Chicago: Revolutionary Union, 1974).
- Revolutionary Worker*, No. 141, "Atlanta: The Hand at the End of the Chains," 5 February 1982.
- Revolutionary Worker*, No. 236, "A Nation of Prisonhouses," 30 December 1983.
- Sheriell, Robert, *The Accidental President* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1967).
- Stuart, Reginald, "Motor City Blues," *Black Enterprise*, June 1982.
- Trammer, Monte, "Franchising: The Low Risk American Dream," *Black Enterprise*, June 1982.
- U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, *Technology and Structural Unemployment: Reemploying Displaced Adults, DTA-ITE-250* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1986).
- U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, *1982 Survey of Minority-Owned Business Enterprises — Black (August 1985)* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985).
- U.S. Riot Commission, *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (Kerner Report)* (New York: Bantam Books, 1968).
- Westcott, Diane Nilsen, "Blacks in the 1970's: Did They Scale the Job Ladder?," *Monthly Labor Review*, June 1982.
- Williams, Barbara Morrow, "Filth vs. Lucre: The Black Community's Tough Choice," *Psychology Today*, February 1974.
- Wilson, William Julius, *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions* (Second Edition) (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980).
- Yette, Samuel F., *The Choice: The Issue of Black Survival in America* (Silver Spring, Md.: Cottage Books, 1971).

Considerations on a Revolutionary Situation in the United States: Likely Triggering Factors, Potential Political Contours

by M. Upshaw

This manuscript was submitted for publication in Revolution by an author who is a long-time student of the line of the Revolutionary Communist Party. For some time, the RCP has emphasized its responsibility of preparing for a revolutionary situation in this country. But Marxist-Leninists need to understand much more about the nature of revolutionary situations in general and the specific ways in which a revolutionary situation might develop in the United States. That is why we are enthusiastic about publishing this essay. Although it is built around hypothetical scenarios, the details of which are obviously somewhat arbitrary, the overall analysis goes a long way towards fleshing out just what a revolutionary situation might look like in this country

There are no miracles in nature or history, but every abrupt turn in history, and this applies to every revolution, presents such a wealth of content, unfolds such unexpected and specific combinations of forms of struggle and alignment of forces of the contestants, that to the lay mind there is much that must appear miraculous.

— Lenin, *Letters from Afar*

To be successful, insurrection must rely not upon conspiracy and not upon a party, but upon the advanced class. That is the first point. Insurrection must rely upon a *revolutionary upsurge of the people*. That is the second point. Insurrection must rely upon that *turning-point* in the history of the growing revolution when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at its height, and when the *vacillations* in the ranks of the enemy and *in the ranks of the weak, half-hearted and irresolute friends of the revolution are strongest*. That is the third point. And these three conditions for raising the question of insurrection distinguish *Marxism from Blanquism*.

— Lenin, *Marxism and Insurrection*

It's silly to get upset over the fact that the masses, at any given time, follow the ruling class. Of course they do: the ruling class generally has their allegiance. The point is that the ruling class has to lose that allegiance *just once* . . . and then it's a whole new ball game!

— Anonymous

What might a revolutionary situation look like in the United States? True, never has a revolution been made in an advanced capitalist country, and a full-scale challenge to this social order will present novel features and pose new prob-

lems. But are there historical and contemporary episodes from which general lessons can be drawn? In view of the current world situation, what are some of the possible "trip-wires" for massive crisis? What might one expect in terms of duration and intensity? And what does ongoing analysis of the political economy and social fabric of "late imperial America" suggest about the onset and likely contours of a conjunctural crisis in this country? These are far from academic questions. But they require intense theoretical reflection.

While Mao, particularly in his post-1949 writings on the relationship between stages and leaps in social development, advanced Marxism's philosophical understanding of the basis for revolutionary transitions to a new level, Lenin had paid special attention to the development of revolutionary situations in the advanced countries, emphasizing that such situations are characterized by a sharp break from the ordinary flow of events, by the rapid contraction of a social order's absorptive capabilities and, with this, the sudden and mass perception of entirely new prospects.

Revolutionary situations by their very nature imply great contingency, complexity, and fluidity. But in considering the conditions of existence of a revolutionary situation in the United States, one is not dealing with an unknown (or unknowable) quantity but with a concrete social formation inserted into, and occupying a strategic position within, an international economic and political order that is itself defined by specific structures and alignments. And it is possible, given what can be learned from the past and discerned from the present, to project probable turns and combinations of events that might throw the United States into great disorder, perhaps even in the very near future.

To simulate in this way is not to cast about for the "best of all possible" revolutionary situations, nor, for that matter, to fixate on worst-case scenarios (and even the most "desirable scripts" are writ large with peril, danger, and potential for massive destruction). Rather, simulation is a creative and scientific anticipation of what is most likely to occur and what are likely to be the most favorable aspects residing in such situations.

This paper consists of three major sections. The first examines the general characteristics and historical emergence of revolutionary situations. The second section attempts to forecast some of the core developments that might make revolution the order of the day in the United States — four scenarios, each involving the potential for revolutionary crisis, are considered. The third section raises some general issues for further study and deliberation.

If revolution is a conscious act, it is also a leap into the untried and incalculable; but if revolution is compounded of exceptional circumstances, exceptionality is precisely the rule of revolution. To the lay mind, Lenin wrote, revolutionary situations appear miraculous. In an overall sense, this paper seeks to identify some of the laws and general features of just these sorts of miracles.

On Leninism and "Hot Mixes"

A revolutionary situation can be usefully conceptualized along three dimensions. First are its *deep structural causes*. Among such causes are the underlying political economy of a given social formation including its modes of integration into the imperialist world economy, the social and class structures of the formation, as they have evolved over particular historical periods, and, in relation to all of this, the social formation's "active past," more specifically, the alignments, movements, and struggles that have shaped its political terrain. Second are the *proximate causes* of a revolutionary crisis. These are the specific triggering events that shatter social stability or that at least begin to strain the social order in such a way as to call its "permanence" into question. History has shown not only that a convulsive chain of events can occur virtually overnight but also that precipitating conflicts can occur over the least expected of developments. Third is the actual *unfolding and resolution of revolutionary crisis*. This involves the ebb and flow of struggle in a situation that now threatens to transform basic power relations. Of defining importance is the fact that a crisis of this magnitude must be resolved within a very definite, typically brief, time frame (although its *ultimate* resolution will generally reside in a civil war that could last for years). The (relatively) long-term future of the system now turns on sudden displacements of the relation of forces around state power and a compressed cycle of action and reaction (or inaction) focused around the preservation or conquest of that state power.

The downfall of the Shah in Iran can be viewed through this conceptual prism. The longer-term causes of the 1977-79 crisis lay in the contradictory character of imperialist-sponsored development and transformation in the Iranian countryside and cities (see the important article by the Union of Iranian Communists [Sarbedaran], "The Forging of a Weak Link," in *A World to Win*, 1985, No. 2). The oil boom of the early 1970s led to a massive assault on the economy by foreign capital and domestic bureaucrat capital, throttling those sections of the bourgeoisie not tied to the Shah's inner circle and ruining vast sectors of the petty bourgeoisie. An associated run-up in military expenditure fueled inflation and balance of payments difficulties. Unplanned urbanization and agricultural stagnation were the underside of the oil bonanza, with massive unemployment one of its chief social expressions. A major catalyst of the explosion of urban discontent was the inability of the Shah to develop integrative political mechanisms that could adequately regulate social and economic modernization. Conflicts and contradictions grew within ruling circles, including a heightening of the estrangement of many mullahs (and the institutions under their control). The precipitants of the revolution lay in what the oil boom wrought: extreme political rigidity and economic mismanagement. Outrage and anger exploded into the open, embracing broad (and ever-broadening) segments of the population. By 1978 the regime was facing the most serious challenge to fifteen years of relatively stable rule. And here loomed a factor of enor-

mous importance, and one that is operative in any revolutionary situation: subsequent events would be profoundly influenced by how an embattled regime, in this case the Shah's, responded to mass discontent and organized protest, by how successfully a regime can combine repression with deception. That the Shah failed the *initial tests of a regime in crisis* had everything to do with the speed with which the old order collapsed.

In considering the "problem-field" of revolutionary conjunctures in imperialist countries, the experience and practice of the Bolsheviks stand as the necessary point of reference, and Lenin's political writings of the 1917 period repay close study. One of the more interesting of these pieces is *Letters from Afar* (V.I. Lenin, "First Letter," *Collected Works [LCW]*, Vol. 23). The February Revolution, Lenin explains,

required a great, mighty and all-powerful "stage manager," capable, on the one hand, of vastly accelerating the course of world history, and, on the other, of engendering world-wide crises of unparalleled intensity — economic, political, national and international. Apart from an extraordinary acceleration of world history, it was also necessary that history make particularly abrupt turns, in order that at one such turn the filthy . . . monarchy should be overturned at *one stroke*.

This all-powerful "stage manager," this mighty accelerator was the imperialist world war. (p. 298)

The actual crisis, Lenin goes on to write, was precipitated

by the series of extremely severe defeats sustained by Russia and her allies. They shook up the old machinery of government and the old order and roused the anger of *all* classes of the population against them. . . .

But while the defeats early in the war were a negative factor that precipitated the upheaval, the *connection* between Anglo-French finance capital, Anglo-French imperialism, and Russian Octobrist-Cadet capital was a factor that hastened this crisis by the direct *organization of a plot* against Nicholas Romanov. (p. 301)

The Tsarist regime could absorb neither the economic chaos nor the social strain of a prolonged war; in some ways it was not even ready for such a war, in consequence of Russia's backward industrial base and ruined peasantry. Against a backdrop of battlefield defeats and the specter of mass risings, palace intrigues and conspiracies threatened the Tsar.

In assessing all of this, Lenin then makes an astonishing observation:

That the revolution succeeded so quickly and — seemingly, at the first superficial glance — so radically, is only due to the fact that, as a result of an ex-

tremely unique historical situation, *absolutely dissimilar currents, absolutely heterogeneous* class interests, *absolutely contrary* political and social strivings have *merged*, and in a strikingly "harmonious" manner. (p. 302)

Diverse trends and conflicts fused into a peculiar, even paradoxical, contagion. Yet it was just such a "hot mix" that produced an opening for revolution. Part of that hot mix was disorientation within ruling circles. The nobility, the industrial bourgeoisie, and liberal bourgeois forces could neither come up with a viable political solution to the crisis nor produce (and vest their confidence in) a new political leadership. They found themselves divided at the worst possible time. The regime was so weakened by three years of war, and its economic and institutional supports had so thoroughly rotted, that it was, in a sense, susceptible to a "push." This condition should not be regarded as a general feature of revolutionary situations. Similarly, that "harmonious" merging of different currents of which Lenin speaks should be seen as a function of the particular alignment of interests of specific class forces in February 1917. (It is not necessarily and characteristically the case that the overwhelming majority of the population will swing into the camp of opposition in a revolutionary situation.) But the phenomenon of a "hot mix," of wild and discordant struggles and conflicts that tear through society, is of universal significance and should be seriously thought about.

Now the exact accumulation and combination of circumstances and contradictions that produced the February crisis could not have been predicted in advance — and even the Bolsheviks were, to a certain extent, caught off-guard: "The Bolshevik slogans and ideas *on the whole* have been confirmed by history; but *concretely* things have worked out *differently*; they are more original, more peculiar, more variegated than anyone could have expected" (V.I. Lenin, *Letters on Tactics*, "First Letter," *LCW*, Vol. 24, p. 44). But the Bolsheviks under Lenin were able to specify the significance of what had unfolded so "originally," to undertake necessary reconsiderations of major positions, and, most important, to act on this conjuncture *from within*. This was Lenin's sense of the moment.

The article "Defeated Armies Learn Well" (*A World To Win*, 1985, No. 4) offers many valuable insights into the question of revolutionary hot mixes. The investigation centers on a period that saw a major crisis take shape in Iran (in the winter of 1981), and the polemic is aimed at gradualism and economism. In the development towards a revolutionary situation,

all the contradictions of society become increasingly intertwined. This intensification and interconnectedness of the contradictions makes it easier for social pressure to break them. Under certain conditions, the conjuncture will be shaped and the ground will be provided for a serious rupture to take place in the form of chain-like actions and reactions, con-

vulsing the entire social organism and social life. A single spark can start a prairie fire. For this reason, the starting point of a revolutionary period could be a struggle, collision or friction in a secondary arena.

Society does not enter a revolutionary situation in a straight line or gradually, but leaps into it. Under certain circumstances, even the most peaceful opposition of the most reactionary strata of liberals against the ruling regime can be a spark for mass uprising where the struggle leaps to a higher level. . . . (p. 50)

The reference is to a March 1981 meeting called by then-President Bani Sadr to commemorate Mossadegh (martyr of the struggle in the early 1950s against the Shah and his U.S. masters). Thousands of people gathered and then took to the streets in heroic opposition to the Islamic regime. Thus, even when mass resistance is occasioned by a split within ruling circles, and even though the mass movement at the outset may be under the ideological sway of some section of the ruling class, exactly within a concrete historical context a particular outburst may constitute that starting point for revolutionary struggle. The article suggests further that an initiating challenge to a regime may in fact originate in struggle over questions of seemingly minor importance (here the reference is to violent anti-Khomeini street demonstrations that started at a football stadium).

These dual phenomena of the shifting of the main arena of conflict to a secondary sphere and the intertwining of many contradictions into an explosive knot radically alter the field (and horizon) of revolutionary struggle. Two important points need to be stressed. First, revolution, as Lenin emphasized, is not a matter of two hostile blocs, each homogeneous, the one declaring its allegiance to socialism, the other to imperialism, neatly squaring off against one another. A social formation is more complicated than that — as is a political crisis, in which polarization and all kinds of social dislocation take place. Consequently, the significance of various political movements, struggles, and conflicts in conjunctural periods cannot be assessed merely by reference to the class origins (or interests) of the actors involved. Second, it is in such periods of intensifying social stress that a vanguard force must, precisely on the basis of an understanding of underlying power relations and the limitations of various class forces, be able to draw the necessary lines of demarcation (as reflected in program and tactics) in order to pursue, with maximum strength, its strategic objectives, toward which the effective (insurrectionary) means of action may soon be at hand.

In elaborating their argument against those forces for whom an upsurge of economic struggle among the workers was the necessary precondition or awaited signal for an assault on the state power, the Union of Iranian Communists (Sarbedaran) points out that political crisis does not develop in lockstep with economic crisis, that there is no one-to-one correspondence between the two. This is another way of expressing the uneven development of social contradictions and the fact that politics, while it is concentrated economics,

is by no means a passive reflection of economics. Moreover, the ensemble of political relations is itself dynamic. What this emphasizes is that the inherent nature of different class forces can only be partially predictive and evaluative of their interaction with and action on other forces. Their actual role and objective function will also depend on the specific political conjuncture, on the forms of combination and displacement specific to a social formation in (or approaching) crisis.

It may not be the case, for instance, that on the eve of nuclear war millions of workers will be taking to the streets chanting, "Don't press that button." Indeed, a mass upsurge could very well take shape over another, perhaps quite secondary, question, and one that might initially engage the energies of nonproletarian strata. But what are the motive forces that underlie all of this, what is its significance at a given turning point in international relations, and how are the tasks of revolutionary diversion to be understood at such a turning point? To formulate questions in such a way is to embrace a Leninist politics.

The experience of the Russian Revolution and the recent episodes in Iran and the Philippines seem to suggest that the middle classes can be expected to play a major role in the unraveling of the old order. From relative dormancy and even active support for a regime, the middle strata have often undergone rapid disaffection, thrown alternately into panic and outright opposition to the status quo. Several commentators have seen in Iran a classic case of a middle class that had traded away political rights in exchange for material security and tangible improvements in its lot. When these were no longer forthcoming, and as corruption became more of a drain on rather than a source of benefits, the political compact began to erode. This was obviously a factor of great importance during the recent Marcos crisis, and not a few U.S. analysts see in the squeeze on the Mexican middle class an even more dangerous threat (the character of postwar urbanization in the Third World is a major factor in all three situations).

In many cases, middle-class opposition not only presents an initial and destabilizing challenge to the old order but also sets a certain tone of expectation and framework for resolution. Many among these strata are inexperienced in politics and, as they awaken, given to great exhilaration and naïveté. In the Russian case, large sections of the middle classes fell away from the Tsar but just as quickly put their confidence in the new bourgeois government. The working class was hardly immune to this influence. Lenin wrote that "a gigantic petty-bourgeois wave has swept over everything and overwhelmed the class-conscious proletariat, not only by force of numbers but also ideologically; that is, it has infected and imbued very wide circles of workers with the petty-bourgeois political outlook" (see the discussion in *History of the CPSU* [Short course], Chapter 6). How to take advantage of such dislocations and mass disaffection without being swamped ideologically and organizationally has been a major problem for revolutionaries. The Bolsheviks acquitted themselves well; but no one since has come close in cir-

cumstances more or less similar. What is required in such a situation is a vanguard with a program equal to the monumental and complex tasks of the day, and a vanguard with sufficient connections among the basic masses enabling it to lead a decisive section of the proletariat onto the political stage in a period of upheaval and breakdown. Thus, and only thus, can the thousands become the requisite millions and the revolutionary program of the proletariat acquire material force.

If a revolutionary situation is marked by its relative brevity, it nonetheless passes through stages. Consider Lenin's assessment of the dual power ushered in by the February Revolution. Through June, two state powers were interlocked; under conditions of unstable and divided rule, Lenin envisaged the possibility of the peaceful development of the revolution. By July, undivided rule passed into the hands of the bourgeoisie. The slogan "All Power to the Soviets" was withdrawn, as it could have been construed as a "'simple' appeal for the transfer of power to the present Soviets [which were controlled by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries], and to say that, to appeal for it, would now mean deceiving the people" (LCW, Vol. 25, p. 190). But the slogan was reassessed once more in late September. It was to be linked to the political and material preparation for insurrection; the slogan now embodied the violent struggle for the establishment of a popular state apparatus. (In early September Lenin had again entertained the possibility of peaceful development of the revolution — this was following the defeat of Kornilov — but that possibility evaporated in three days!) That a revolutionary situation, no matter how compressed, will have its own stages and turning points is extremely important to grasp insofar as large sections of the masses may view a particular stage, when more limited objectives are the order of the day (and that could mean literally 24 hours), as an end in itself.

The February to October period saw major shifts and displacements: new forces hurled themselves into struggle, mass aspirations changed rapidly, class relations underwent realignment, and political authority itself was a shifting patchwork. The very fluidity of the situation called forth a high degree of precision in strategic analysis, as the question of class alliances took on life-and-death importance and placed a premium on tactical finesse and tactical boldness. And lest it be forgotten, the Bolsheviks in this period were forced to modify their previous understanding of the two-stage revolution. Yet the specification of the tasks of the moment, especially the tasks of the decisive moment, flowed from the perspective of the relation of different class forces to the most essential of questions — the question of state power.¹ Lenin was able to identify the specificity of critical

¹ It is useful in this regard to contrast the Bolsheviks' practice with that of the German party in the 1920s and 1930s. Lenin's pitbull grasp on the question of state power, along with his living sense of the motion of power relations among key social forces, stands out.

turning points without falling into empiricism or spontaneism. Hence the significance of the *current situation*:

Such, and only such, is the way the situation developed. Such, and only such, is the view that can be taken by a politician who does not fear the truth, who soberly weighs the balance of social forces in the revolution, who appraises every "current situation" not only from the standpoint of all its present, current peculiarities, but also from the standpoint of the more fundamental motivations, the deeper interest-relationship of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, both in Russia and throughout the world. (*Letters from Afar*, "First Letter," LCW, Vol. 23)

Crisis Scenarios, Implications for Struggle

It has been argued by Bob Avakian that if a number of things had been different in the 1960s, including the overall world context, then the mass uprisings of Black people and the societal stresses produced by the war in Vietnam might have provided the opening for a serious bid for power (see interview in *Revolution*, No. 54, Winter/Spring 1986). It's a provocative point. But to simulate a scenario for revolution in the setting of the 1960s is hardly the stuff of science fiction. The ghettos were seething, and among the Black masses there was a widely shared perception of a "state of war." The campuses were careening out of control. Institutions of authority, from the presidency to the local police, were held in contempt by large sections of youth. Violence was widely seen as a two-way street. Many within the prisons were "ready." Revolts in the military were seriously undermining discipline and battlefield capabilities; not a few veterans were returning to America with experience they wanted to put to insurrectionary use. By 1969, the Black Panther Party was commanding considerable political authority. Clearly, hundreds of thousands of people in the United States were motivated by a vision of revolution, and certainly tens of thousands were ready to die for it. By 1971, mainstream America was turning against the war in Vietnam, and the ruling class was increasingly on the defensive. Henry Kissinger recounts that "conservatives were demoralized by a war that had turned into a retreat and liberals were paralyzed by what they themselves had wrought" (Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years* [Little, Brown, 1979], p. 513). Not only was the ruling class's self-confidence shaken by what the war had sown, its ranks were no longer as united. Discord over the handling of the war seems to have been an important element of the Watergate scandal. The postwar domestic consensus was fractured as never before.

What might have been the effect of a significant and mass military initiative, and one guided by a genuinely revolutionary program, at that time? Would it have struck a sympathetic chord among even broader numbers of the basic masses? What impact would a vicious imperialist counter-

offensive have had on social order? To what extent could the ruling class have relied on the middle strata in the conditions of looming civil war? What sorts of divisions within the ruling class might have developed? How would all of this have reverberated through the Western alliance and Third World? These are real questions to mull over. Of course, one can only conjecture about what would have been an extremely wild chain reaction of events; but such a chain reaction certainly could have opened the possibility of revolution (and maybe even elsewhere more so than here).

In the interview cited above, Avakian notes that a situation like that of the 1960s could erupt again. He also notes that events would be far more telescoped and would occur in a very different world context. Is this a correct reading of the contemporary situation? And if so, what kinds of political questions are posed? What follows are several crisis scenarios, each constructed around particularly defining characteristics of U.S. society and the U.S. position in the world. The scenarios focus on specific trigger events that might quickly multiply and broaden into major social and political crises. Relevant analytical and political issues will be addressed in the course of discussion. How plausible are these scenarios? Readers will have to judge for themselves.

Scenario 1: A Variation of Looking Glass²

Following the death of Ayatollah Khomeini and a power struggle among the senior ayatollahs, leftist groups that have been patiently building their cadre strength underground and abroad see their opportunity and stage a coup d'etat in the capital. Within a few months the new government in Teheran declares Iran a People's Republic, signs a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union, and receives Soviet advisers and military equipment. The professional army, seeing the total breakdown of political order throughout the country, decides to take matters into its own hands and with significant popular support in the countryside marches to overthrow the new government in Teheran. In the face of the army's successful advance, the leftist government in a panic calls on the Soviet Union for "fraternal" assistance.

The Soviets decide to stage a massive intervention in the northern half of the country with approximately twenty of the thirty divisions stationed in the Transcaucasus, North Caucasus, and Turkestan Military Districts, as well as by the Group of Soviet Forces in Afghanistan. The initial objective is occupation of the country down to a line running through Hamadan, Qazvin, Teheran, and Mashhad. By consensus the

primary objective is the preservation in power of the pro-Soviet government, much as it was in Afghanistan in 1979, but a powerful faction within the leadership argues that Iran presents an opportunity of historic proportions for the Soviet Union to seize a significant portion of the oil reserves of the Persian Gulf and deal a decisive setback to the U.S. before the latter has a chance to complete its long-term defense modernization plans. In this way Western Europe and Japan can be split apart from the U.S. once and for all, it is argued, at much smaller cost and risk than by a frontal offensive in central Europe. Hence military plans are made to seize not only the oil fields in southern Iran but in Kuwait and parts of southern Iraq and northern Saudi Arabia as well.

Warned of a massive Soviet intervention, the U.S. puts into motion its elaborate plans for the deployment of Central Command forces to the Persian Gulf. Along the way, however, some unforeseen problems arise. The Gulf states with which the U.S. has contingency basing plans refuse to permit precautionary U.S. Air Force deployments before the actual Soviet crossing of the border; once it occurs, they are thrown into such a state of panic that they seek to propitiate the Soviets by continuing to refuse access to the U.S. This means that air interdiction can be mounted only from bases in Turkey, by B-52s operating out of Egypt and B-1Bs from the continental U.S., and from the carrier battle groups concentrating just south of the Straits of Hormuz. A second problem is that the U.S. can find no one in legal authority in Iran who will issue an invitation for U.S. forces to intervene; in fact, the provisional Islamic government still in power in the southern provinces denounces both superpowers and states that an American intervention would be opposed by force.

Soviet columns advance into Iran quickly along the six major axes in northern Iran and from Afghanistan, meeting minimal resistance from Iranian forces. The U.S. National Command Authority (NCA) decides to interdict them with conventional air strikes while they are still in the constricted Elburz passes, but without access to land bases in the Gulf finds it impossible to launch a sufficient volume of sorties. Ground forces could be deployed in southern Iran only after a prolonged and costly amphibious landing along the Persian Gulf coast. Thus the president reluctantly decides to accept the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) recommendation to launch a limited tactical nuclear strike against selected choke points in northern Iran with B-52s operating out of Egypt.

The decision to use nuclear weapons is governed by two considerations: first, it is believed that the limited use of five or six weapons will in itself impose significant delays on the Soviet advance; but more importantly, the U.S. NCA hopes that this demonstration of resolve will force the Soviets to stop and reconsider their invasion before reaching the southern oil fields.

The strike is successful in slowing the Soviet advance and causes several thousand Soviet casualties. The Soviet leadership decides not to back down, however, arguing that the Soviet Union will look weak if American first-use is not met with a response in kind; that mounting domestic pressure in the U.S. and Europe will prevent further

² This scenario is reproduced from Francis Fukuyama, *Escalation in the Middle East and Persian Gulf* (Rand Corp., 1984, pp. 16-20). The title "Looking Glass," from the cable TV docudrama of the same name, is used in this essay as short-hand for nuclear war scenarios.

American escalation; and that they are in any event close to achieving their original invasion objectives. The Soviets launch selected nuclear strikes with Backfire bombers against the U.S. carrier battle groups concentrating in the Persian Gulf.

At this point, significant developments begin to take place in other theaters all over the globe. U.S. and Western European leaders take a number of precautionary moves against lateral escalation: NATO forces are put on a higher state of alert; mobile theater weapons like Pershing IIs and ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) are deployed out of their containment areas; ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), including those of Britain and France, put to sea. Popular European and Japanese opposition to U.S. military moves in the Gulf, strong to begin with, bursts into outright violence as groups take to the streets protesting any cooperation with U.S. aggression. Finally, the North Korean regime sees U.S. preoccupation in southwest Asia as the opportunity it has long been patiently waiting for, and launches a full-scale ground invasion of the South with the immediate objective of taking Seoul.

The U.S. is stunned by the attack on its naval forces and by the sudden escalation of the conflict to Asia. The standard plan for the defense of Korea cannot be executed because of combat losses and the disruption of mobilization assets and plans by the conflict in southwest Asia. Since the only U.S. forces capable of responding to the continuing Soviet advance in Iran are Air Force units in eastern Turkey, the U.S. persuades the Turkish government to permit it to launch a further series of selective tactical nuclear strikes against Soviet forces, and against the air bases from which bomber strikes originated in the Soviet Union itself. This is the first point at which the homeland of either power has been touched.

At the same time the war expands at sea. After the loss of two carrier battle groups, remaining U.S. naval commanders in the Indian Ocean, fearing further Soviet preemption, begin "defensive" conventional strikes against the Soviet naval task forces deployed near their own units. Since the Soviets have already attacked U.S. naval forces in the area, this step is taken on the basis of standard operating procedures, without specific authority from the U.S. NCA. Because it seems that a general naval war has begun, fighting between U.S. and Soviet combatants erupts and rapidly expands eastward from the Gulf along the major sea lanes all the way back to northeast Asia, resulting in the destruction of a large part of the Soviet Pacific fleet.

The U.S. strike against airbases in the Soviet Union is militarily effective and produces heavy civilian casualties in nearby towns. The Soviets are surprised by the Turks' action and feel that they have to be taught a lesson. Responding in kind to the American attack, the Soviets strike with small-yield nuclear weapons the bases from which the U.S. aircraft originated, as well as a few main operating bases in western Turkey for good measure.

Now there has been a direct Soviet nuclear attack on a NATO country. Instead of standing firm behind Turkey, the major Western European governments tend to blame the

U.S. for the initial escalation to nuclear weapons and draw the lesson that they will suffer the same fate as Turkey unless they disassociate themselves from the U.S. Britain and France withdraw their independent nuclear deterrents from any semblance of joint NATO planning or control and put them on a higher state of alert in case they have to be used unilaterally. All European military forces move to higher states of alert as a precaution. In the meantime, the massive North Korean invasion of the South has bypassed and cut off the strong defenses surrounding Seoul and is pushing the Republic of Korea Army and the U.S. Eighth Army southward to Pusan in a replay of the late summer of 1950. Since Korea is not receiving its planned augmentation — naval forces have either been destroyed or are committed to southwest Asia, while ground and air forces based in the continental U.S. are moving to Europe — the U.S. NCA feels it has no alternative and uses tactical nuclear weapons against North Korean forces in the Kaesong and Chorwon corridors.

The Soviet leadership decides that the pattern of American behavior up to this point — first use of nuclear weapons in Iran, higher alert rates and dispersal of nuclear weapons in Europe in the face of strong European protests, expansion of the war to sea, direct nuclear attacks on the Soviet homeland, and now nuclear use in Korea — are all signs of a reckless U.S. leadership virtually out of control. In addition, they entirely misinterpret British and French efforts to separate their nuclear forces from U.S. operations, seeing them as preparations for joint strikes with the U.S. The Soviets do not view American actions as a response to their initial invasion of Iran and the North Korean invasion of South Korea, but rather as a calculated attempt to inflict damage on the Soviet Union and take advantage of the situation created by the current crisis. Some members of the Soviet leadership have a more sinister interpretation of U.S. behavior, believing that higher U.S. alert rates are a preparation for a massive American nuclear strike. The military argues that the U.S. cannot be permitted to whittle away at their forces and those of allies like North Korea; that according to doctrine a nuclear war once begun cannot be limited, and that any advantages of preemption will be lost if American forces proceed to yet higher alert rates. Hence the Soviets themselves launch a massive countermilitary strike against U.S. overseas bases and several selected important targets in the continental U.S. A countermilitary strike, unlike the U.S. [officially-stated] concept of a counterforce strike, does not deliberately seek to avoid hitting civilian targets and minimizing collateral damage; hence, while some Soviet nuclear weapons hit isolated military installations like Shemya Air Force Base in the Aleutians, others hit population centers like the ports of Bremerton, Washington and San Diego, California. The U.S. then feels compelled to respond in kind.

Discussion:

This scenario, whose level of realism is heightened in the atmosphere of Irangate, raises some rather important ques-

tions. Several chilling international crises have occurred over the past few years. KAL 007, Lebanon, and Libya are prime examples. But they did not escalate into all-out and global military confrontations. That they *did* not has led many to conclude that they *could* not. Others, while not ruling out the possibility of world war, regard it as extremely unlikely; after all, the superpowers have certainly been eyeball-to-eyeball with one another before and pulled back from the nuclear precipice. On the other hand, the Revolutionary Communist Party has argued that a war between the two imperialist blocs "could easily break out of any particular 'local' conflict, or any particular eruption of *sharp* conflict of interests in a specific part of the world" (Avakian, op. cit., p. 5). This view — and "easily break out" is a strong statement — would seem to be the correct one, given the acuteness of the imperialist system's contradictions. The bilateral competition, risk-taking, and local crises of an earlier period did not lead to war precisely because of the less severe state of the world system; the absence of world war was not the result of a perception of "shared danger" or abiding respect for the "firebreaks" (limitations derived from the situation-context).

Still, within the framework of the overall compulsion to redivide the world, there remains an element of deliberation and choice as to when and where to throw down the gauntlet. Thus the discernment and assessment of

the nature of the threat, the intensity of the crisis (high as opposed to low), the values of the objectives involved (central as opposed to peripheral), time pressures (acute as opposed to less acute), the sense of urgency to act and the realization by decision-makers of an increased probability for miscalculation, and the impact of the potential outcome in terms of immediate and future relations and for future power and status in the global system. (J. Ranney, "Insights from the Theoretical Literature," in Robert J. Sullivan, *The Potential Effect of Crisis Relocation on Crisis Stability*, System Planning Corp., 1978, p. 46)

What kind of crisis, then, might impel the escalation to nuclear weapons? It would seem that any conflict that endangered an absolutely vital interest, such as in the Persian Gulf, or that involved the crossing, in some form or another, of a "red line," like the East-West divide in Europe, would be a likely avenue to world war. But it would be misleading to associate a "Looking Glass" situation strictly with a threat to or a violation of some preset hierarchy of interests. To begin with, phenomena other than direct political or military action could set in motion a series of events leading to a superpower confrontation (in the actual Looking Glass TV docudrama, the "ultimate crisis" is touched off by financial collapse). Moreover, a confrontation — again, given the character of the underlying world crisis — could be sparked by a wholly unanticipated, or relatively minor, development.

In addition, there is the role of specifically military fac-

tors. The Rand study from which the above scenario was taken examines several ways in which a conventional conflict could quickly escalate:

The first and most obvious consideration is conventional military deterrence in the subtheaters of the [Middle East] region. The probability of war will generally be lower where the state favoring continuation of the status quo (in this case, the U.S.) has a preponderance of conventional military capabilities. The most dangerous situations are likely to be those in which the status quo power finds its conventional options limited and is tempted to compensate either by escalation to nuclear weapons or through expansion of conventional conflict outside the theater. Force imbalances between rival regional powers can also encourage attack, as in the case of Iran, whose apparent weakness and internal disarray was one factor prompting the Iraqi attack in 1980. Superpower clients that find themselves losing wars are usually quick to call upon their patrons for intervention, as the Arabs have done in each of their wars with Israel. Finally, many states in the Middle East have substantial military organizations that themselves invite, limit, or otherwise affect the superpowers' use of force.

A second category of military considerations concerns special incentives for preemptive or early use of force by the superpowers. The most unstable situations are those in which technical military considerations dictate prompt resort to either conventional or nuclear weapons by the superpowers, thereby shortening time for both internal decision making and negotiation. (Fukuyama, op. cit., p. 14)

These are factors which promote *vertical* escalation, the straightforward increase in the risks involved, and this implies resort to higher-yield and, in all likelihood, nuclear weapons. But just as important are those factors, and these things cannot be so finely separated, which promote *lateral* escalation, that is, the uncontrolled "spillover" of a particular conflict, or its calculated extension, into different geographical theaters, involving a widening range of both issues and participants. The Rand study suggests two important ways in which regional conflicts may become quickly globalized. The first is the use of alerts or higher states of force readiness. Such alerts have usually served two functions: as a precaution against unforeseen developments and as a statement of intent. But what precisely is intended and how such signals are read by the adversary are aspects of both the "gamesmanship" and "fog" of modern conflict management. The second element involves the use of naval forces:

Naval forces play a similarly important role in globalizing regional conflicts. This is because:
(1) naval forces are the easiest to deploy in regional

conflicts, where they either become instruments of intervention or targets; (2) to have naval combatants in close proximity with one another is destabilizing in a crisis because the general rule in naval warfare is that whoever shoots first wins; and (3) war at sea, once begun, is very difficult to contain geographically . . .

Naval forces present special problems because they are likely to be deployed early into a Middle East/Persian Gulf crisis, and constitute vulnerable, high-value targets in the event of war. Naval warfare introduces a destabilizing element into regional conflicts by putting a premium on preemption, a situation aggravated by the U.S. and Soviet navies' practice of staging realistic maneuvers and exercises which might be taken for the real thing in a crisis. Standard naval operating procedures, which in some cases permit individual commanders to initiate conflict on their own authority in self defense, could be a source of accidental escalation. (Fukuyama, *ibid.*, pp. 25, 33)

These observations are useful to think about in light of superpower naval jockeying in the Mediterranean (for instance, during the Libya crisis). It is perhaps also useful to speculate on the possible significance of criticisms that have been leveled by some military specialists at the Reagan team for excessive reliance on naval force.

Finally, in dealing with specifically military factors that might precipitate a showdown, there is this paradox: a high degree of technological sophistication and capacity for flexible response is not matched by a comparable degree of battlefield experience with much of the weapons arsenal, nor by a capacity to improvise (given the nature of training and the level of weapons specialization). *What comes into play here is a certain "logic of decision-making,"* in view of preset and relatively rigid operational plans and, especially, that premium placed on preemption, which actually enlarges the role for miscalculation (including the misreading of an adversary's intentions, as is written into the Rand scenario) and accident in precipitating crisis and/or war. The latter point is not to be sneezed at. A big military (nuclear) accident or miscalculation may be the spark for a major political or social crisis (it may also, strangely enough, be the development that would have to be seized upon if revolution were to prevent world war). Is there still a place for "crisis management"? Could escalating moves, including what is described as the "willingness to appear irrational" (Ranney, *op. cit.*), be deployed by one opponent to force the other to back down over a specific dispute? This certainly can't be ruled out. But just as a military maneuver or exercise can easily lead to the real thing, so too can a "managed" crisis be the immediate prelude to an "unmanaged" one.

Any of the following situations should be considered likely tripwires for global military conflict: (1) crises that threaten vital interests; (2) the simultaneous outbreak of conflicts in geographically remote theaters (as simulated in the

Rand scenario and the outlines of which could be observed in the two-front Libya/Nicaragua crisis of 1986), since lateral escalation is already underway and a series of crises can make direct superpower homeland nuclear attacks more likely (as also occurred in the above simulation); (3) a *direct* confrontation between the two superpowers, since it is one thing to indirectly retreat through a client and quite another to back down in a face-to-face collision (although there are clients and there are clients — Libya versus Syria, for example, with the Soviets probably drawing a "red line" around the latter); finally, and plainly ominously, (4) the movement, for any reason, to the "preparation phase" for world war, that is, the full generation of all forces and command, control, and communication assets by both sides, along with the forward deployment of conventional forces, since the situation could quickly get out of hand. Things need not necessarily move along these axes; and while it is vital to learn better how to read such international developments, it would be deadly erroneous to passively await them.

The Looking Glass scenario presents serious challenges to revolutionaries, not the least of which is the time element: a full-scale military confrontation can develop in short order. In the face of impending thermonuclear holocaust, a kind of "now or never" urging beckons the revolutionary proletariat — not as some moral imperative but as a matter of grasping historical necessity and possibility: as quickly as a Looking Glass could develop, so too could the social landscape change.

World War 3 will be neither the World War 2 of "victory gardens" and war bonds in the U.S. nor, quite obviously, the painless and precision combat of that imaginary, high-tech, anywhere-but-here conflict that has been seared into the popular mind in this country particularly. How does the bourgeoisie instill confidence with the specter (or radioactive glare) of mass destruction and dislocation looming? One defining feature of a Looking Glass is that the ruling class must rapidly mobilize the population — without discussion, ratification, or the mildest toleration of dissent — for Armageddon. Now this kind of situation will divide sharply into two. On the one hand, when the awful reality of world war dawns on different segments of the population, it could produce an enraged "Can the governments be this crazy?" reaction among some middle forces. The line of "peace through strength," while still having a hold on some people (and the bourgeoisie would attempt to repackage it to suit new conditions), might lose much of its mass, seductive appeal, especially if mobilization for world war had been preceded by some bungled military operation(s) and if there had already been some fracturing of the social order. The conditions for the kind of great vacillation among the middle strata, of which Lenin spoke, could come into being, and with this might come even more widespread discrediting of prevailing authority among different sections of the petty bourgeoisie as people realize what's actually in store for them.

On the other hand, in the lightning succession of events leading up to world war, spontaneity may not necessarily be

working in favor of revolution. The principal spontaneous response to a Looking Glass might well be feelings of paralysis and impotence, as opposed to outrage and resistance. Having to face something as uncertain and horrific as world war, people will be looking for direction, consolation, and, certainly not least, protection. And for many, given the norms of capitalist society and the ideological dominance of the bourgeoisie, who else is there to turn to but the state? The notion that if we stick together and do what the government tells us then somehow we'll be able to get this thing over with as soon as possible will undoubtedly be an attractive one. Not only is this what the bourgeoisie is counting on but it is what they have been training people in, through the use of minor crises as test-drills. In France, for instance, the government has used terrorist incidents to create a siege mentality and to instruct people that threats to life and property can only be dealt with if people rally behind their leaders and allow them to take appropriate (repressive) measures to safeguard the social order. In sum, spontaneity cannot be relied upon under conditions of extreme social stress.

In an approaching war situation, it may very well be the case that middle and progressive middle-class forces move first. There may be the latter-day equivalents of the Daniel Ellsbergs in various positions of authority, in or out of government, who decide to leak high-level information about a planned military action or nuclear strike. Such acts of conscience (or freak-out), and ghastly revelations or exposures in general, might both galvanize mass opposition and set off tremors within ruling circles. Damaging disclosures could signify major intraruling-class discord — and coups are a definite possibility. (A question: why has the Reagan administration earned the reputation for being the most "leak-conscious" of any since 1945?) It is also possible, if current anti-Star Wars sentiment is any barometer, that from within the scientific community, from those on the technical frontlines, so to speak, and in a position to know what lies ahead, may come acts of noncooperation and, even beyond this, attempts to "stop the war machine."

In considering the potential of the progressive petty bourgeoisie, it must be noted that the current position of these people is more contradictory than it was in the 1960s — much more is at stake. But at the same time, the experience of the 1960s has made a broad and significant impact among these strata. And while a crisis situation will open the floodgates to all sorts of middle-class prejudices, the very gravity of the situation will jar their sensibilities. It is more than likely that enlightened middle strata, and veteran and newborn antinuclear and antiwar activists, will take to the streets in heroic, if sometimes desperate, action — perhaps with the intent of concretely interfering with war preparations (whether this be civil defense population relocations or troop movements). National unity might not come that smoothly in the early stages of a Looking Glass crisis. And the bourgeoisie will not treat these forces with kid gloves in the way that was sometimes the case in the '60s. Police-state tactics might swiftly become the order of the day, and many popular illusions might just as swiftly shatter, although

social-democratic and revisionist remedies will continue to have currency among such people.

Mass psychology is a phenomenon that cannot be overlooked in a Looking Glass crisis. If the "real deal" is likely to provoke determined resistance from enlightened quarters, it will also produce panic, confusion, and demoralization among the more backward. The truth of the matter is that the American populace is not accustomed to large-scale social readaptation. (It has been commented on, in connection with Chernobyl, that the Soviet people have some experience and schooling in responding collectively to disasters and hardships.) In the 1970s the bourgeoisie floated some ideas about mass evacuation of the cities in the event of a world war; but every study they commissioned pointed to immense logistical and psychological difficulties — from the proverbial traffic jams in the metropolitan areas, as people attempt to flee expected targets, to the sacking of stores . . . to mass suicide. Conceivably, a nuclear conflict may have pauses, with death and damage initially confined to certain areas. But this would not diminish mass anxieties. Moreover, the likely coupling of social trauma with social breakdown could also uncork some of the more animal-like forces and elements pent up in capitalist society. Nor should one discount the potential for fanatical religious and millennial ("from holocaust to salvation") movements to gain mass followings in such a period.

These phenomena among the populace, in conjunction with the tremendous strains that crisis response, both domestically and internationally, would in all likelihood place on basic, controlling institutions, could combine to produce various kinds of "gaps" in authority structures. A sort of crazy, patchwork quilt of severe repression and anarchy might develop. In these conditions, the gaps created could potentially be filled by initially small forces of the proletariat; but these initiatives could have broader, manifesto-like significance (beyond the immediate areas in question).

Resistance from progressive middle forces could be a major spur and encouragement for militant outpourings from the proletariat. Even the kind of panic described above could have the positive effect of driving home to the basic masses the truly urgent character of the situation. It is entirely possible that advanced actions may come first from those "in the know" in the field, that is, from within the military. And rebellions in the armed forces may at once be a signal of imperialist plans for war and a clarion call for mass resistance. Protest and disobedience from the enlightened middle strata combined with, or perhaps even stimulating, a major initiative from the proletariat could effect a rapid realignment of social forces within American society. Thus might the state of mind among large sections of the middle strata switch from moods of panic, of paralysis, and of political reformism to one of support for revolution. In any event, the bourgeoisie is not counting on gradually winning people to its war program; similarly, the proletariat does not have the luxury of gradually winning others to its revolutionary program — which only emphasizes the necessity of earnest and creative political work aimed at seizing on key junctures.

Scenario 2: Financial Collapse

On at least six occasions since the epochal global downturn of 1973-75, the international financial network has come perilously close to a wholesale collapse. It could have been touched off by the German Herstatt and Franklin National bank failures of 1973 and 1974, the run on the dollar during 1978 and 1979, the Mexican debt distress of 1982, and the Continental Bank panic of 1984, among other emergencies. That a financial catastrophe has been averted thus far has been due largely to two factors: swift central bank and government intervention, along with the ability to quarantine problem institutions, and the residual strength of the world economy (for instance, the 1982-85 recovery of the U.S. economy stimulated substantial export growth in Latin America).

But instability continues to grow, and the international financial and monetary order is in fact building towards an even bigger explosion than that which might have occurred some years ago. This is a moving contradiction; different elements assume greater or lesser importance as possible triggers. In 1985 and 1986, any of several developments could have been the catalyst for global financial disaster: the collapse of the Singapore stock market and the London-based, world tin market; revelations and murmurings of monumental banking fraud; mounting uncertainties and disturbances associated with global banking deregulation and the wild and uncontrolled proliferation of new debt instruments, feeding on and breeding speculation; and the continuing external debt saga of Latin America (with Mexico once again the focus). Significantly, security concerns have come increasingly to the fore in attempts to tame the crisis.

Any serious probing of banking and financial crisis would have to reckon with the internationalization of the circuits of capital, the particularities of dependent reproduction, and the relationships between productive and loan capital. But in this discussion, the focus is on potentially disruptive phenomena at the institutional level of world finance and the resulting political fallout. In order to conduct analysis and simulation, it will be necessary to introduce several key concepts (the exposition draws on Guttentag and Herring, *Disaster Myopia in International Banking*, Wharton Press, 1985).

The first of these is the notion of a *shock*. A shock is any unexpected development that wipes out a substantial portion of a financial institution's net worth. Essentially, there are four kinds of shocks to which financial institutions (as well as government borrowing entities) are subject: interest-rate shocks, which involve unexpected changes in interest rates; credit shocks, which involve unexpected increases in the percentage of outstanding loans believed to be uncollectible; foreign exchange shocks, which involve sudden changes in the exchange rates of different currencies; and funding shocks, which involve sudden changes in the availability of credit. The largest multinational banks are highly susceptible to such shocks — because often they have few liquid assets with which to meet deposit drains and because they

depend heavily for liquidity on their ability to refinance, or roll over, their borrowings. Banks borrow in order to lend to others, let's say to Third World countries. But these loans have, over the years, often been of longer maturity than that of the borrowings of the banks. So the banks have to continually refinance their maturing liabilities (the money they borrow to lend to others). If for some reason this is no longer possible, disaster is not far off. Next is the "go for broke strategy." This refers to the attempt by a troubled financial institution to protect its positions by engaging in high-risk ventures that perhaps involve expected losses far in excess of gains but which allow losses to be pushed onto others (creditors, insurers, etc.). Finally, there is the *run*. This is a rush by creditors to convert claims quickly, to collect debts, before other creditors do and before the resources of the debtor(s) in question are exhausted. As bankers cynically put it, "if you're going to panic, panic first."

A global financial crisis, of an order that would dwarf the financial panics of the nineteenth century, is a real and strong possibility. The world economy is highly integrated, with the international financial network acting both as a stabilizing agent and a transmission belt of instability. Not only is a country like Mexico highly sensitive to short-term external fluctuations, such as oil price swings. It is also the case that several key countries of the Third World are prone to collapse, given the extraordinary degree of capitalist development and urbanization since World War 2, in a way that a semifeudal and often stagnating China in the 1920s and 1930s, for example, was not. Extraordinarily harsh austerity measures remain the order of the day in many Third World countries; and more so than ever since the end of World War 2, political upheavals in these countries can have devastating impacts on economic stability.

The U.S. is very much enmeshed in all of this — as lender, enforcer, and as the imperialist power with the greatest volume of investments in the Third World. Back in 1983, Data Resources Inc. (a forecasting unit) undertook a study of the effect of a Latin American default on total output, exports, and jobs in the U.S. (see *Business Week*, 7 November 1983, p. 118). If Brazil repudiated its debt, the U.S. GNP would decline by nearly \$25 billion, almost 400,000 jobs would disappear, and the federal funds rate (interest charged on borrowings made by banks from the reserves they are required to deposit with the Federal Reserve Bank) would increase 0.6 percentage points. A default throughout Latin America would cost the American economy \$70 billion in GNP, 1.1 million jobs, and increase the federal deficit by \$26 billion. By the same token, major disturbances in the U.S. economy would have serious consequences for Latin America.

What are some of the outstanding problems faced by the international banking system? First, the world debt crisis. The Third World countries taken together now owe Western private banks some \$630 billion, much of which is, for all intents and purposes, unpayable. These countries are annually transferring some \$30 billion in financial resources to the advanced countries. They must run up huge trade surpluses or

walk away from their credit obligations (in the absence of massive new funding, which is not forthcoming). But what makes the situation especially dangerous is the concentration of the lion's share of this debt among, and the related vulnerability of, a handful of Third World countries in which U.S. and Western capital have huge economic and political stakes. Second, a large share of this debt is owed to a small circle of Western banks (this is quite different from the situation of the 1930s, when loans were more spread out). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, eight of the largest ten U.S. banks had loans in excess of 100 percent of their equity to Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Yugoslavia. Third, an increasingly extensive and uncontrolled network of interbank deposits has developed over the past two decades. It has been estimated that two-thirds of the deposits of the Eurobanks (the American, European, and Japanese financial institutions that turn over \$300 billion each day in the London Eurodollar market³) are other banks' deposits. A few major pins could knock down many others and in the process wreak incredible havoc. In the late 1980s, it does not seem that the international trade and financial system could absorb a simultaneous downturn in the United States and Japan.

The Looking Glass docudrama began with a financial collapse. In the following scenario, the dimensions and implications of such a development will be expanded upon (an article appearing in the *Wall Street Journal* in late 1982, "Script for Collapse," suggested some ideas for the simulation conducted here):

Some turn of events, perhaps plummeting primary commodity prices and a sudden contraction of demand in the advanced countries, reduces the revenues of several "newly industrializing" Third World countries carrying heavy debt loads. The resulting economic distress makes it next to impossible to honor external financial obligations. At the same time, International Monetary Fund austerity measures have touched off food riots. Domestic political pressure mounts to refuse repayment on debts — and several governments withhold payment, largely for demagogical purposes. Two major international banks with heavy loan exposure to Latin America are now experiencing a credit shock. They scurry for new sources of cash. Meanwhile, it is disclosed that these same banks are also saddled with nonperforming energy and agricultural loans. The markets are rife with rumors of massive withdrawals by Japanese investors. Huge sums of money begin to move electronically around the world. A run is now underway. Some investors begin to speculate on gyrating exchange rates, bidding up and down the value of already unstable currencies. World financial markets are spinning out of control. In short order, the Hong Kong real estate market collapses. With storm clouds gathering, Western financial ministers meet to map strategy.

All of this could break out very quickly and could spread

³ A Eurodollar is basically a dollar that leaves the U.S. and does not return home.

very quickly. Further, there is no emergency plan to handle a world banking crisis; no international authority or institution can fulfill a "lender-of-the-last-resort" function under such circumstances. But to return to the simulation. The debt moratorium spreads to all the countries of Latin America. With the lending capacity of many U.S. banks shrinking, the U.S. economy starts to feel the damage. Frightened credit markets push up interest rates. A number of other U.S. banks come under pressure as a result of "tiering," that is, the emergence of one set of interest rates for banks thought not to be in trouble, and another spread of rates for those considered potentially unsafe. The so-called "go-go" companies, operating with huge debt-to-equity ratios, find themselves locked out of credit markets. Trading on the New York Stock Exchange is halted as a safety measure. Interest rates kick up further. Farm loans are no longer forthcoming. Interest-rate-sensitive sectors, like housing and auto, show signs of recession. Exports drop sharply as bankers and governments stop extending credits to Third World countries. The Federal Reserve is forced to take a "shotgun" approach and pumps massive amounts of money into the economy. But this ignites inflationary fears; some foreign investors bolt the dollar, and interest rates stubbornly refuse to come down.

Output continues to fall in the United States. Japan, far more trade-oriented than any other advanced capitalist country, plunges into its sharpest and most devastating recession of the postwar period. Labor unrest mounts. Meanwhile, the moratorium in Latin America shuts these countries off from vitally needed financing. In Brazil, hungry mobs are looting supermarkets; rightists demand the restoration of order. Revisionists on the continent demand that the moratorium become an outright repudiation — debt peonage has gone on too long. With support from sections of the military and from within the national labor confederation, pro-Soviet forces stage a coup in Argentina. Back in the United States, New York City cannot meet its bankroll. A credit crunch is on, and the city is not able to raise interest rates on its bond and note offerings to a level that will entice investors who are leery about rising property tax delinquencies and a sudden decline in sales tax revenues. Layoffs are announced; garbage collection is cut back. Welfare and health-care services are seriously threatened in a city where, every two weeks, 500,000 households receive AFDC and food-stamp payments,⁴ without which it would be difficult to survive. A coalition of Black community leaders issues a call for federal assistance. There is high-level concern about the potential for disorder in the poorest sections of the city.

⁴ New York is one of twenty-one states that requires its local county governments to contribute to the support of cash assistance for the AFDC (welfare) program and Medicaid payments. The cities in the northeast still remain the most vulnerable to financial distress. On the other hand, it would be instructive to assess the effects of the oil-price collapse on Houston's ability to deliver social services to the poor.

Rather than go further with this scenario (just as things are getting exciting), we would do well to take note of some likely characteristics of such a crisis. With respect to the Third World countries, we are dealing with four possibilities: a default, which involves the inability to meet debt repayments (and which today is forestalled, or masked, by debt reschedulings and emergency loans); a moratorium, which means that debt repayments are temporarily suspended; outright renunciation of debt, which means that the debtor refuses repayment and simply walks away from payment obligations; and a collapse, that is, the bottom falling out of any or several of these economies. As far as time-frame goes, a world financial crisis (and collapse) could materialize over the course of a few weeks. A global economic crisis, with depression-like features in several countries, could unfold within a few months. Some countries would be more immediately, and harder, hit than others. Japan's heavy reliance on trade might make it the industrial country first to be dragged down by financial chaos (and its quiet emergence over the last few years as a major banking power only increases its vulnerability).⁵

In the United States, significant sections of the middle classes (small investors and depositors) might be wiped out overnight. Much of the new entrepreneurial and speculative wealth (into which many yuppies are plugged) could get yanked away rather quickly. The farm sector, already strapped, could be devastated. From among these forces might come the first wave of struggle, and it is likely that their plight will provide fertile ground for snake-oil salesmen and demagogic appeals (from LaRouche-type forces, for instance). But such a crisis might also lead to rapid political differentiation among farmers — and the proletariat certainly needs more than a few progressive farmers in its camp. As with the Looking Glass scenario, panicked reactions and/or struggles, which would probably erupt first among these petty-bourgeois strata, might be a kind of stimulus to the proletariat — at least to grasp the seriousness and precariousness of the situation, the growing social instability, and potentially the need to act. Furthermore, as suggested above, many of the lifelines on which the poor depend could also be cut in the early stages of such a crisis. The cities might be thrown suddenly into turmoil; some revolutionary opportunities could open.

Internationally, the kind of situation written into the scenario is very much the stuff of coups. Pro-Soviet forces are clearly positioning themselves, if not waiting in the

⁵ Another collapse scenario might begin this way: skyrocketing U.S. government deficits undermine foreign confidence in the dollar; the ensuing flight from the dollar (foreigners finance a large part of the federal deficit) brings the dollar's exchange rate crashing down, leading to an extreme credit crunch in the U.S.; in response, the U.S. opts for currency devaluation, the burden of which falls on the Japanese, who hold about half of the dollars the U.S. owes foreigners; panic and protectionism spread.

(palace) wings, in anticipation of a similar turn of events. Statements by the Soviets and Castro calling for the renunciation of Third World debt are suggestive. Revisionist battalions would not only seek to capitalize on domestic discontent but also, perhaps directly in step with global strategic maneuvers by the Soviet Union, selectively attempt to cut off critical supplies and materials to the West. Southern Africa would be a major focus of their efforts.

A major conclusion to be drawn from this overall analysis is that the tightly drawn financial network is highly susceptible to shocks that could quickly translate into global economic disturbances. But such shocks could even more quickly be displaced into the political and military realms before they spread. This underscores a sobering point: the U.S. might have to go to war, in part, just to prevent the Western alliance from falling apart.

Scenario 3: Regional Crisis and Domestic Fragmentation

A Mexican upheaval holds unthinkable implications for the world economy, for the control of inflation, for the role of the dollar, for NATO, for the ability of the United States to project military power elsewhere in the world, and hence for the Soviet Union. It could alter world history for the next generation.

— Alvin Toffler, *The Washington Post*, 2 March 1986

One cannot be sufficiently reminded that on its southern border the United States is abutted not only by a large and populous Third World country but also by one within which developments can profoundly influence the prospects for, and course of, revolution in the United States. The world's most advanced and powerful country shares a 2,000-mile border with a country where the birth rate is higher than that of Bangladesh, where the daily minimum wage is \$3.60, and where unemployment stands at about 40 percent. For the better part of this century, Mexico has been a valuable asset for U.S. imperialism — economically, as an outlet for investment capital and a source of cheap labor, and geopolitically, as a buffer against more volatile conditions to its south and as a military and economic gateway to the rest of the continent. But in the potential for economic collapse and/or political upheaval in Mexico, as part of the generally deteriorating situation in Central America, the United States now faces its gravest regional crisis of the twentieth century — and not just at any time, but with a situation marked by heightening developments toward World War 3. In its severest manifestations, such a regional crisis might very well provide the most favorable circumstances for a serious bid for power by the proletariat in the United States.

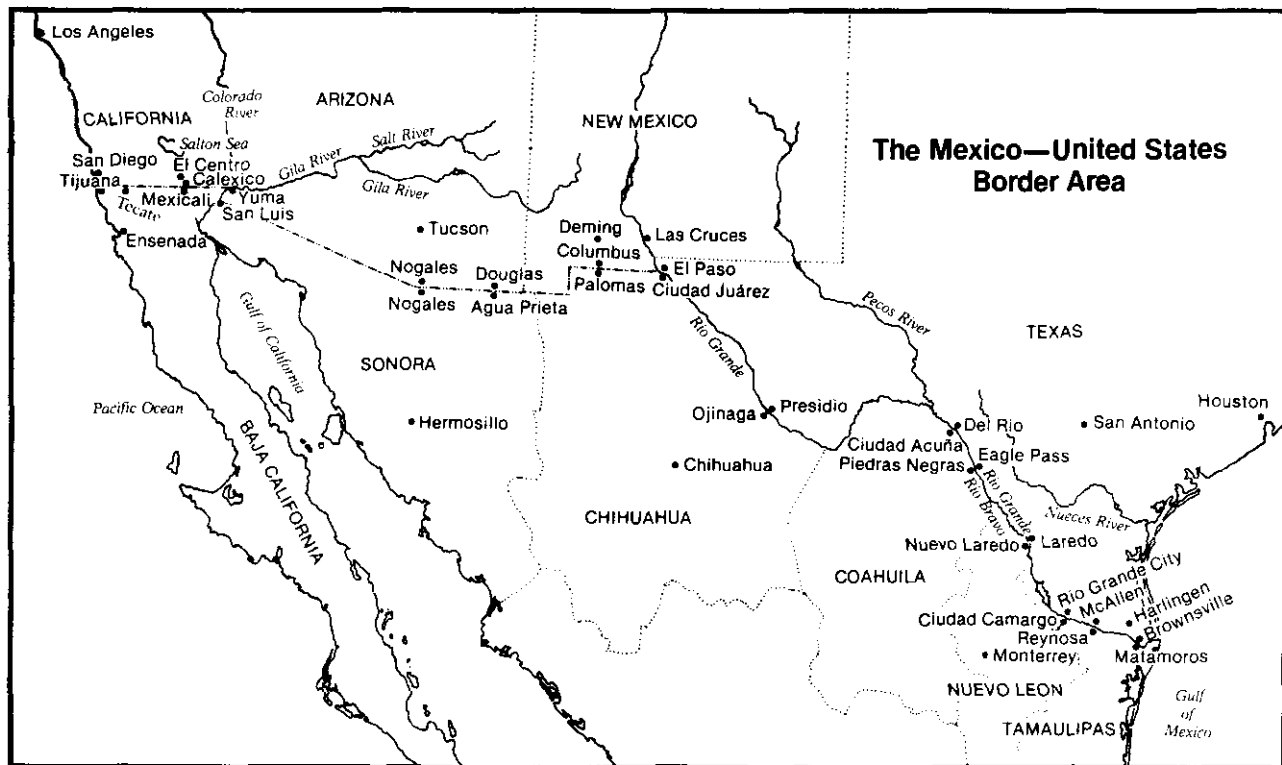
Mexico's foreign debt stands at about \$100 billion (\$25 billion of which is owed to U.S. banks alone). About 50 per-

cent of Mexico's export earnings go towards debt service. Oil accounts for about 75 percent of the country's foreign exchange and half of its tax revenues. But the drop in oil prices will have reduced export earnings by some one-third in 1986. In March 1986 Pemex, the state oil monopoly and the country's largest single purchaser of industrial materials, announced a thirty-day freeze on payments to its domestic suppliers and creditors. Growth has declined over the past few years (many half-completed industrial and infrastructural projects dot Mexico City), and inflation has been running at 65 percent. Almost twice as much capital has been fleeing the country as has been coming in as new borrowings.

For the masses, the situation — even before the earthquake — has been desperate. Real wages are 50 percent below what they were three years ago. Existing patterns of land distribution, the development of an advanced but export-oriented agro-industrial sector, and the reliance on imported foodstuffs for a large part of popular consumption make Mexico's food system especially vulnerable. The rural areas are racked by massive unemployment, mass migration, and widespread malnutrition. It is estimated that 800,000 jobs must be created each year just to keep pace with the growth of the labor force. As indicated earlier, the middle classes seem to be growing more restive; slackening growth

has limited material improvements and social mobility. While this restiveness is certainly contradictory — with expressions of support for openly right-wing programs a significant factor — it both reflects and furthers the destabilizing of the established order and power configurations as they have been maintained for decades. The general program of cooptation, corruption, and repression no longer furnishes a workable framework. Splits are reported in the military. A recent *Foreign Affairs* analysis described the country as being "on the brink of disaster": Mexico needs modernization, austerity, and a new political consensus, the basis for which does not exist.

Mexico has extensive linkages with the U.S. economy. U.S. agribusiness has huge investments — much of the fresh produce consumed in the United States comes from Mexico. It has been said that the San Diego/Tijuana border, in terms of the movements of commodities, labor, and information, is the busiest such border in the world. Indeed, the border industrialization program begun in 1965 has made Mexico the most important partner of the United States in assembly activities abroad. The approximately 600 maquiladoras that stretch from Tijuana to Matamoros, adjacent to Brownsville, Texas (see map), employ about 150,000 Mexicans, mainly young women who have migrated to the northern border



areas. They soak up some unemployment and make an important contribution to Mexico's foreign-exchange earnings. For the U.S., the benefits derive mainly from the combination of cheap labor and access to the border; thus Mexican assembly operations can process and assemble for reexport to the United States a product mix, which includes critical inputs into the dynamic, high-tech sectors, as well as the apparel industry, with significantly lower transport costs than that of U.S. operations in Hong Kong or Taiwan (on the maquiladoras, see Joseph Grunwald and Kenneth Flamm, *The Global Factory*, Brookings, 1985, Chapter 4). Further, a large portion of wage earnings is spent by workers on the U.S. side of the border. The border population of northern Mexico has grown faster than that of any other region in the country except Mexico City (and Tijuana's rate of growth has been faster than that of Mexico City). The combination of high unemployment and rising expectations in this region adds another combustible element to the Mexican crisis.

The flow of legal and illegal labor from Mexico to the United States is not only massive but essential to the profitable functioning of U.S. capital: two-thirds of the garment labor in Los Angeles, 10 to 20 percent of the workforce in California's Silicon Valley, and one-third of the workforce in construction in Houston are made up of illegals (see the special series on Hispanic labor in the *Wall Street Journal*, 7 May 1985). Mexican labor has been absolutely vital to the well-being of U.S. agriculture and to the transformation of the Southwest into a major growth center of the United States. Functionally integrated into the economy of the Southwest borderlands, undocumented Mexicans have increasingly fanned out to other parts of the United States.

While one can speak of a coherent borderland economy in the United States, regional development in the Southwest is by no means homogeneous. It is possible to identify these subregions (as indicated on the map and as delineated by Niles Hansen, *The Border Economy*, Univ. of Texas Press, 1981): (1) the San Diego metropolitan area; (2) the Imperial Valley, a major center for agribusiness; (3) the Arizona borderlands, which include a major distribution point for food crops and cotton, copper mines, and some industry; (4) the El Paso economic region, which is an important manufacturing center and which is completely interrelated with Juarez (about one-third of all Mexican transborder commuters work in El Paso); (5) the Middle Rio Grande region of Texas, where farms and cattle ranches predominate and which is also a major packaging and redistribution point for fresh Mexican agricultural produce; (6) the South Texas region, which includes Laredo, the largest inland port of entry into the United States, and San Antonio; (7) the Lower Rio Grande Valley, where McAllen and Brownsville are located, whose principal mainstays are agriculture (relying heavily on migrant and nonmigrant seasonal labor), shrimping, food processing, and apparel manufacturing, and where the starkest, Third World-like poverty in the United States can be found. If the phrase "culture shock" has relevance anywhere in this country, it is certainly in the Southwest. And it applies not only to the experience of the oppressed

from Mexico and Central America who enter this country but also to the local population, many of whom spontaneously see in this stream of uprooted and persecuted the major pollutant and threat to America. In one sense, the borderland economy is (to paraphrase Carey McWilliams) a zone of interlocking economic, social, and cultural interests; in another sense, it is compounded of a truce between clashing universes, a truce based on repression, intimidation, and cultural subjugation.

A number of factors have accelerated industrialization in the southern zone of the United States. Long-standing regional disparities have provided certain advantages which capital has finally been able to profitably tap on an extensive scale; international competition has pushed much manufacturing capital out of the traditional industrial corridors of the U.S.; the Vietnam War boom fed new opportunities (in aerospace and electronics) and the merger wave of the late 1960s thrust many regionally based firms into stronger positions. Moreover, Los Angeles and Houston have emerged as major international financial centers. If there is a "new right" capitalist bloc, it would be fair to say that it derives some coherence from a complex network of investment and speculative activity in the Sunbelt, as well as from an international portfolio that includes major investments in Mexico and Central America. The "yankees vs. cowboys" model of intraruling-class divisions, the debate over which much ink was spilled in the late '60s and early '70s, was riddled with conceptual and empirical problems. But clearly new constellations of economic activity (and power) evolve over time, and the likely existence of a bloc with substantial "collective" interests in the Sunbelt (and south of it) may bear on crisis response from and unity within the ruling class. Yet and still, the U.S.'s southern flank is a critical concern of the whole ruling class. This is certainly borne out by the big, conventional military buildup (bigger, perhaps, than in any other region during the Reagan reign) of the "Southern Command," as well as by the ideological offensive around the question.

Turmoil in Mexico could trigger the sort of collapse outlined in the preceding scenario. A financial cave-in would certainly imperil several large U.S. banks and immediately hurt the South and Southwest, which depend greatly on Mexico as a trade partner. The food production and distribution network of the United States would be severely disrupted. Economic breakdown and/or mass upsurge in Mexico could destabilize Central America to a degree that called into question, as never before, the U.S. hold on the region. In the southern portions of Mexico dwell some of the country's most impoverished peasants, as well as increasing numbers of Guatemalan refugees. And not far off are the conflicts in Nicaragua and El Salvador. To Mexico's north lies not only the borderland economy and the larger Sunbelt but also missile testing grounds and major military installations — San Diego is the home port of the Seventh Fleet, and the Fort Bliss military complex in El Paso is headquarters of the U.S. Army Air Defense Center. The specter of hundreds of thousands of people fleeing a disintegrating and battle-

scarred Mexico and the potential "spillover effect" of upheaval in Mexico on America's Chicano population, which numbers in the millions in California, Arizona, and Texas, and whose loyalty to America is by no means assured, are matters of grave concern to policy planners.

If not already militarized, the U.S.-Mexican border has become a highly repressive checkpoint. The border arrests and detentions that immigrants face are of course the norm. But harassment and hysteria are reaching a higher pitch. The KKK and other right-wing paramilitary forces are operating brazenly in the border areas. The idea that many refugees from Latin America may in fact be (or become) terrorist infiltrators and would have to be rounded up at some time is a theme being sounded by ruling-class spokesmen of various kinds and through various means. Over the past few years, under the guise of combating drug cultivation and smuggling, spy planes have been pressed into regular service to fly over California forests, while the National Guard and the military have been synchronizing their border activities with the U.S. Customs service. (A question: might the U.S. be thinking of imposing an Israeli-like "South Lebanon security zone" on northern Mexico in some form, while further militarizing the U.S. side of the border?) Although immigration to the United States is still regarded as an important safety valve for Mexico's internal problems, the flow of immigrants is also viewed as a destabilizing force in the United States. "Operation Jobs," carried out in 1982, was a highly publicized "dry run" for dealing with some of the contradictions posed by a large and potentially "disloyal" immigrant population in time of crisis. More recently, the Rex '84 rehearsals for coping with some undefined national emergency have apparently included a contingency plan for the round-up of 400,000 illegal aliens in the event of U.S. mobilization for military action in Central America. (Information on such plans for domestic repression in connection with U.S. military operations in Central America has been gathered by the Christic Institute.)

In order to better understand cross-border influences and the potential feedback of crisis, much more needs to be learned about the occupational distribution, life experiences, and attitudes of the Latino sectors of the U.S. proletariat. Los Angeles contains the second largest urban concentration of Mexicans (after Mexico City). All told the Mexican-origin population increased from 4.5 million in 1970 to 8.7 million in 1980. Add to this some 1.4 million undocumented Mexicans who had settled in the U.S., and the total Mexican-origin population had more than doubled to 10.2 million over the decade — and this is not counting the "sojourners," or temporary illegals, who greatly outnumber the settlers in the undocumented population (see Harley L. Browning and Ruth M. Cullen, "The Complex Demographic Formation of the U.S. Mexican Origin Population, 1970-1980," in Harley L. Browning and Rodolfo O. de la Garza, eds., *Mexican Immigrants and Mexican Americans: An Evolving Relation*, Univ. of Texas Press, 1986).

In California, native-born Latinos and Mexican immigrants hold a large share of farmer and laborer jobs, as

well as a major proportion of semiskilled manufacturing jobs. Spanish-origin persons in Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego counties represent 21 percent of the total labor force in the area. Yet, they have an average labor force participation rate of 69 percent, with almost half employed in the manufacturing sector. Over 35 percent of all women employed in manufacturing in southern California are Hispanic. Within electronics manufacture in the three counties mentioned, 67 percent of the female workforce in the "operators, fabricators, and laborers" category belongs to a minority group, and of those 51 percent are Hispanic females (data taken from Maria Patricia Fernandez Kelly, "Advanced Technology, Regional Development, and Hispanic Women's Employment in Southern California" in Richard Gordon, ed., *Microelectronics in Transition*, Westview Press, publication forthcoming). Some studies suggest that there is considerable labor segmentation between *indocumentados* and Chicanos in three situations: where *indocumentados* worked and Chicanos were not present; where *indocumentados* worked with Chicanos present only as supervisors; and where *indocumentados* occupied different jobs than did Chicanos within the same enterprise. These work situations, combined with a Mexican frame of reference of the undocumented, tend, according to the study, to contribute to significant intergroup differentiation between the undocumented and Chicanos (Browning and de la Garza, eds., *Mexican Immigrants and Mexican Americans*, pp. 148-9).

How significant, and politically relevant, such differences may be can only be understood through further investigation. But it is clear that many undocumented workers have little desire to stay within the U.S. Many might migrate southward to join the struggle in a period of crisis. Others among them might jump at the chance to use some of the evasive skills they have acquired, as well as direct experience in armed struggle, to hit back at the beast. For the bulk of the politically intermediate Mexicans in the U.S., the effects of a collapse in Mexico would be manifold. Were large numbers of Mexicans to stream north across the border, this would cause significant economic strains — increasing competition for jobs and housing, as well as for emergency assistance. Also, while it is often the case that Mexicans in the U.S. send part of their earnings back to members of extended families still in Mexico, this is a two-way street: to some extent, subsistence activity in Mexico enables families to temporarily separate and males, in particular, to migrate north. But if the bottom fell out in Mexico, these arrangements could be severely tested. Finally, anti-Mexican sentiment would not discriminate between various demographic groupings, and many Mexicans and Chicanos resident in the U.S. would find their status (and security) most tenuous.

A major intervention by the U.S. in Central America could lead to incredible turmoil in Mexico; and it is certainly not inconceivable that the Mexican government would call upon the U.S. for assistance in quelling disorder touched off by such an action or by the disintegrative forces at work within Mexico itself. (The Mexican state would probably be reluctant and hesitant at the outset to call for direct U.S.

intervention — an attitude which itself is probably soil for further political conflict at the top, including with the U.S., and for coups.) Any significant unraveling in Central America, especially one that had as an accompaniment new inflows of refugees into the United States, could provide the pretext for pogroms and "race riots" in the U.S. Indeed, if revolutionary struggle were to spread across the border, the real prospect of territorial fragmentation, and the greater danger that such struggle might spread further, could prompt attempts at massacres of unspeakable proportions: aerial bombardments and mass executions might be resorted to quickly as a means to contain and suppress resistance.

The array of social forces and history of struggle and repression in Texas merit close study in this connection. The situation facing Mexican-Americans and Mexicans in Texas in the postwar period does appear to have been tenser than it has in California (this also applies to Black people). Brownsville, Corpus Christi, El Paso, Laredo, McAllen, and San Antonio, cities on or near the Mexican border, all have large Mexican-origin populations — 45 percent or more of the total — while the absolute Mexican-origin population in Houston is probably around half a million. Texas is where things could get ugliest and sharpest, and perhaps very quickly.

The point is that a high level of combat could erupt in the Southwest under conditions when struggle in the rest of the country was at a considerably lower level. This might be the first serious challenge to the ruling class, and, as indicated, the tack of the ruling class would be to isolate and crush it mercilessly, in short, to bare its fangs and set an example. But this would in all likelihood set off immediate and violent reactions, both south and north of the border. To the south, anti-Americanism could take a quantum jump, and weaker regimes in Central America would probably have a hard time holding on. In the United States, a border upsurge (and/or massacre) would probably unleash a wave of anti-immigrant terror (including pogroms). But among the progressive petty bourgeoisie, there would be reason to expect not only rumblings of discontent but, from the more active, open defiance of the government and militant support for the border struggle and the Latino masses.

The sanctuary movement shows some of the potential for this (Renny Golden and Michael McConnell, *Sanctuary: The New Underground Railroad*, Orbis Books, 1986 is essential reading). In a curious way, that movement combines features of both the civil rights movement and a liberation support movement. The religious left (clearly marked by contradictory trends, including revisionism, social democracy, and a real left) is considerably larger, and more influential, today than it was in the 1960s — both worldwide and here. They identify strongly with the struggles of the oppressed in the Third World, particularly in Latin America. Impassioned appeals and heroic actions from the religious left would come quickly on the heels of the events described above. Actually, sanctuary-type forces might be the initial models for and links to broader forces. That many of these people are willing to fight and become martyrs for their

ideals has already caused great concern and alarm in the ruling class,⁶ and they would certainly come under heavy repression early in the game.

A border uprising and reign of terror would be widely perceived by many lower strata of the proletariat as an "early warning sign," if not, at least figuratively, as a call to arms — the more militant the resistance and the more savage the repression, the greater will be the reverberations. The Operation Jobs exercise also showed the lengths to which the ruling class would go to divide immigrants from other oppressed nationalities (in Chicago, jobs vacated by illegals in detention were given to Blacks, with Jesse Jackson's PUSH playing a negative, divisive role). But it is also the case that "pogroms do not play well in the ghetto"; the sentiment that "peoples of color" face a common enemy and must make common cause in struggle would in all likelihood take hold rather quickly among large sections of the oppressed nationalities. Moreover, lots of civilians, both in the border regions and the major metropolitan areas, would be meeting "the enemy" face-to-face — which was not the case during the Vietnam War or other U.S. expeditionary operations (this is something that worries the bourgeoisie vis-à-vis the sanctuary movement today). It is important to note that the Mexican migration has spread to cities outside the Southwest and that the Mexican population in many large U.S. cities is quite substantial (and rapidly growing). These factors underscore the volatile potential of a regional crisis.

One last point. If the Nicaraguan situation deteriorated to a degree that compelled direct U.S. intervention and were Mexico convulsed by a state of disorder that threatened to spill northward, it is entirely possible that *the U.S. imperialists might not respond regionally to a regional crisis*; to put it differently, a real or contrived threat on the U.S. border could be the pretext for World War 3. Here is an example of how scenarios like those presented here do not represent completely isolated developments: these developments are bound to be closely interrelated.

⁶ Listen to Elliott Abrams from the Reagan administration: "The battle for Central America is a battle for the high moral ground. And it is much harder for us to win that battle when a lot of church groups are opposing us and saying we don't have it. . . . I think they mislead many churchgoers around the country and others in human rights groups around the country, thinking that there is some horrendous 1930s-type situation and that if they don't act thousands will die by the end of the week." In attempting to discredit the sanctuary movement, the Reagan administration has made use of the so-called Banzer Plan, named after the Colonel who took power in Bolivia in 1971. The idea is to attack the part of the church that is most progressive, while steering clear of wholesale attacks on the church as an institution (and even less on the bishops as a group). Democracy needs *its* church. (Quoted in *Sanctuary: The New Underground Railroad*, pp. 88-89)

Scenario 4: Urban Crisis, Urban Uprisings, and the Black Masses?

The urban landscape of "late imperial America" can best be understood in terms of the "dual city": glittering and overbuilt downtown districts, complete with glass-encased office towers, luxury hotels, and new residential high-rises or condominiums side by side with hundreds of thousands of families locked into deteriorating neighborhoods and ghettos, often displaced by urban renewal projects (or fire zones created by developers and landlords), and unaccounted-for tens of thousands living in abandoned tenements. Finance capital has been housing itself, building monuments to itself, and barricading itself in the central city. The deterioration of one portion of the city is the condition for the lavish and often speculative expansion of the other. This is a tale of rebirth and decay, of the haves and the have-nots, of "peripheralization within the core." It is within the cities that the internal contradictions of U.S. imperialism are the most sharply defined and posed. It is within the cities that the proletariat is most favorably situated — indeed, the proletariat is probably the largest single social class in the cities, enjoying a plurality, if not an absolute majority. And herein lies a central contradiction of American society: the major cities are the nerve centers of financial and corporate decision-making, and yet in their very heart are concentrated millions of desperate, restless, and potentially rebellious proletarians.

American cities have always been patchworks of rich and poor, and the middle classes have traditionally led an uneasy (and buffer) existence within their residential zones. Violence and alienation are nothing new to the urban centers. But changes in the demographics and economic functions of the city over the span of the postwar period have created new stresses and dislocations that have both undermined the revenue base of the city and exacerbated its bipolarity (see Sternlieb and Hughes, "The Uncertain Future of the Central City," *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, June 1983).

Of overarching importance to any analysis of urban growth and decay in the postwar period are the decentralization and internationalization of much manufacturing activity (traditionally centered in the old-line urban centers) and, relatedly, the leading role of the United States in the international political and economic order, which has resulted in the headquartering into a city like New York of the economic command and control functions of global expansion and the related growth of necessary support services in capital markets, law and accounting, media and advertising, and administration (along with other "postindustrial" activities).

⁷ Some of the commentary and statistical material on the political economy of the city and on labor force trends is drawn from "A Perverse Recovery in Strategic Perspective," by Raymond Lotta (*Revolutionary Worker*, No. 287, 4 January 1985), with some additional data also taken into consideration.

At the same time, another fundamental change was taking place: the massive transformation of southern agriculture and the helter-skelter herding of Blacks into the urban ghettos wherein specific economic, social, and political processes would determine the conditions of existence of abundantly cheap labor power. The oppressed nationalities, especially Black people, became the inheritors of decaying inner cities. Starting in the 1970s a new stream of immigrants would flow into the major urban centers, to be incorporated into backward, though not necessarily declining, sectors in manufacturing and services that rely on low-paid, unorganized, and highly controllable workers.

These structural trends, along with the effects of the fiscal crisis of the cities and federal government cutbacks in social services, have produced increasing polarization in the economic situation of the urban populace. Many of the better-paying jobs in manufacturing have disappeared, as have some good jobs for middle-level-income workers, while high-income jobs in white-collar industries producing highly specialized services have expanded. In the thirty years between 1950 and 1980, 200,000 legal jobs in the New York apparel industry vanished. But while in 1970 there were fewer than 200 garment factory sweatshops, by 1980 there were between 3,000 and 4,500 sweatshops in New York, employing between 50,000 and 70,000 persons (see Rinker Buck, "The New Sweatshops," *New York*, 29 January 1979, and Franz Leichter, et al., "The Return of the Sweatshop," Office of New York State Senator Leichter, 26 February 1981). At the same time, the ranks of the unemployed and underemployed in the large metropolitan centers have mushroomed over the last fifteen years (in New York, they number perhaps 400,000). Commenting on the overall situation, one observer pointed to the seeming collapse of what he calls the "social democratic minimum" (standard of reproduction). Although the city is still an "articulated" patchwork of extremes, larger segments of the urban population (and urban grid) are being left to rot.⁸

The oppressed and proletarian portion of the "dual city" begins to take on certain bantustan-like qualities. A vast reservoir of cheap labor, in this, the most industrialized country in the world, finds itself drawn into the labor force ever more often in a modern-day servant role, catering to the lifestyle requirements of the privileged. The polarization one

⁸ Not that this is without its functionality:

"The immigrant community can be seen as a sort of holding operation which, in the context of severe decline in the physical structure and loss of native population, operates as a low-cost complement to upper class 'gentrification'... as a small-scale investment of direct labor, e.g., neighborhood upgrading, and of capital, e.g., commerce, in the city's economy" (Sassen-Koob, "Recomposition and Peripheralization at the Core," *Contemporary Marxism*, Summer 1982, p. 97).

observes in the cities really reflects broader labor market trends. Between 1970 and 1984, some 23 million people entered the nonagricultural workforce. But only 1 percent of these entered manufacturing (where wages are traditionally higher than in the services). Over 30 percent of the jobs added between January 1980 and March 1986 were in retail trade, and the average yearly earnings for these jobs fall below the poverty level for a family of four as defined by the government (*New York Times*, 7 June 1986). Actually, between 1978 and 1984 about half the new jobs created overall in the U.S. economy paid near-poverty-level wages; this compares with a figure of 23 percent in the fifteen years between 1963 and 1978 (data from Bluestone and Harrison, *The Great American Jobs Machine*, Joint Economic Committee, 1987).

There is an explosion of low-wage jobs in services and manufacturing. Some of this involves the cheap manufacture of components for high-tech firms and various forms of subcontracting, which have given some strength to the U.S. economy. It's no exaggeration to speak of a perverse industrial renewal in America which has been based in large part on the borderland economy discussed earlier and the reemerging sweatshops of the cities on the one hand, and job-displacing rationalization on the other. With respect to rationalization in the traditional smokestack industries, a congressional study found that 40 percent of the 11.5 million workers who lost jobs because of plant shutdowns or relocations from 1979 to 1984 did not find new ones. For those who did find new jobs, 45 percent took pay cuts, and two-thirds of these workers were earning less than 80 percent of their former income (U.S. Office of Technology Assessment, *Technology and Structural Unemployment*, 1986, pp. 11-13).

These developments have contributed to growing earnings and income polarization. A recent study divided full-time workers in 1982 into three numerically equal earnings classes (based on usual weekly earnings). Full-time workers earning under \$239 per week increased their share of total employment from 32 percent in 1973 to almost 36 percent in 1985. The middle third of full-time workers, those earning between \$239 and \$385, saw its share of total employment decline from just under 35 percent to less than 32 percent over the same period (see "The Declining Middle Class: A Further Analysis," *Monthly Labor Review*, Sept. 1986). In point of fact, what has been referred to as "the real proletariat" is growing, both absolutely and relatively — partly at the expense of well-paying factory jobs in traditional manufacturing, and partly in consequence of the growth of the service sector. In 1984 about 8 million workers received wages at or below the minimum wage of \$3.85 an hour, and 6 million more received wages just above that level (*New York Times*, 7 June 1986).

Thus, about 15 percent of the total nonagricultural labor force is made up of the working poor, and were we to remove middle-and upper-strata employees from the total labor force numbers, it would become even more apparent that a substantial chunk of the U.S. working class finds itself in pretty desperate straits (an estimated 10 million nonsupervisory

workers, mostly in retailing, service industries, and agriculture, are not even covered by the minimum wage). Almost half of the minimum-wage workers are 25 years or older, and one of every four heads a household. Throughout most of the 1960s and 1970s, a full-time minimum wage job would allow a family of three to live just above the poverty level. Today, this same family would require a minimum wage of \$4.38 an hour to get above the official poverty level. A full-time minimum-wage worker in 1985 earned income equivalent to only 76 percent of the poverty level for a family of three. Actually, the minimum wage is now 38 percent of the average hourly wage, its lowest level by this measure since 1949 (data from *New York Times*, 30 March 1986). This is another index of polarization.

The high-tech promise of engineering and data-processing is yielding far fewer jobs than have been lost in manufacturing. And, according to projections made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the ten job categories which can be expected to grow the most in the next decade are mainly outside of high tech: the top five are cashiers, registered nurses, janitors and cleaners, truck drivers, and waiters and waitresses. These are extremely low-wage jobs — the average weekly earnings for the ten job categories in 1984, and this includes the higher paying accountant and auditor categories, was \$344, with cashiers averaging \$194 a week (see the interesting analysis of the "new service economy" in *Business Week*, 3 March 1986). Alongside this absolute and relative growth of the real proletariat is the fact that it tends, increasingly, to labor in smaller-scale, more specialized, and more geographically scattered production units than has been the norm in traditional manufacturing. It would seem important to think through some of the consequences of this "fragmented environment" for various forms of struggle — economic, political, etc. — now and in the future.

The Census Bureau in 1984 estimated that more than forty million Americans were living in families of four with earnings of \$200 or less. The rapid rise of mass poverty has much to do with the phenomenal growth of the "new poor" — the newly unemployed, the underemployed, the homeless, many farmers, and people who fall outside the "safety net" of government assistance — and continuing immiseration in the cities. Indeed, *at the core of the urban cores in the United States are to be found conditions of work and well-being that are, in many respects, more like those of Third World countries than they are of other advanced countries* (see R. Ross and K. Trachte, "Global Cities and Global Classes," *Review*, Winter 1983).

New York is the pacesetter and the most extreme case. Illegal garment workers in the late 1970s were earning average wages of less than \$1.75 an hour, which puts them more in the camp of apparel workers in Singapore and Hong Kong than in the camp of their counterparts in Sweden and the Netherlands. Table 1 makes some comparisons in connection with infant mortality rates. The poorest areas of Brooklyn have infant mortality rates comparable to those of the Dominican Republic and Venezuela. A Black child born in Chicago in 1985 stood a greater chance of dying in his or

Table 1
Infant Mortality Rate for New York City
and Average of the Five Highest Infant
Mortality Areas in Major Boroughs (1980),
Compared to Selected Countries

Area	Infant Deaths (1000 live births)	Country with Comparable Rate (Actual)
New York City	15	Austria (13) West Germany (13)
Weighted Average of Five Highest Areas in:		
Manhattan	54	Philippines (53) Colombia (55)
Brooklyn	42	Sri Lanka (43) Venezuela (40)
Bronx	33	Malaysia (30) South Korea (33)
Queens	25	Taiwan (25)

Sources: The World Bank (1982); New York City Department of Health (1982).

Table 2
Population Share of Black Men
Over Age 16 With Jobs,
Selected Metropolitan Areas, 1985
(%)

Atlanta	73	Los Angeles	60
Washington, D.C.	73	New York	57
Houston	68	Chicago	52
San Francisco/		Detroit	45
Oakland	62		

Source: U.S. Department of Labor (1986)

her first year than did an infant born in Costa Rica or Cuba.

In the late 1970s, over a third of renter households in the Bronx and Brooklyn were paying over 40 percent of their incomes for rent, and about half of these people were living in dilapidated structures; the rent burden in New York City, as measured in rent/income ratios, had steadily worsened between 1960 and 1978 [see Peter Marcuse, *Rental Housing in the City of New York*, New York Housing and Development Administration, 1979]. In 1970 one in five of the city's children were poor; in 1982 the figure approached one in two. The poverty rate for Hispanic people is estimated to be in the range of 45 percent [data from "New York's Poor Grow in Number," *New York Times*, 16 December 1984].

The employment rates for Black men in twenty large

U.S. cities (see Table 2) are rather telling. In Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area the population share of Black men over age 16 with jobs was 60 percent; in Detroit only half the Black men over age 16 had legitimate jobs! Table 3 reveals another striking phenomenon: the growth of poverty in the cities parallels the growth of the cities' minority populations. Minorities (Hispanic, Black, Asian, and others) now make up more than 50 percent of the total population in New York, Baltimore, Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland, for example.

How do people subsist under the circumstances that have been described? Raymond Lotta points to four institutionalized axes of survival. First is the low-wage, high-turnover job market into which the basic masses are crowded. Multiple wage-earning situations are quite common for lower-strata households (often involving teenage service employment). Second are various government support programs, including AFDC, food stamps, housing and health assistance. Transfer payments and welfare are absolutely critical for many within the social base of real proletarians. Third is the informal or irregular economy. This economy includes everything from off-the-books employment and casual services extended in the ghetto to criminal activity, especially in drug dealing. (The latter occupation is hardly marginal; not a few mothers will refrain from asking questions when a teenage child contributes cash to the family kitty.) Finally, there are the "networks of care," issuing in part from extended family situations, and the general pooling of resources. This takes on great importance in the realm of housing: the New York City Housing Authority has 175,000 units of public housing with 500,000 legal occupants and another 100,000 people, mostly relatives of tenants, living in them without permission; Chicago's Cabrini-Green has 13,500 official and perhaps 7,000 illegal residents. For many in the lower rungs of the proletariat, these conditions stand as immediate obstacles to taking up sustained political activity: welfare can be cut off, people can be evicted from public housing, and the heat that might come down from political involvement can spill over to necessary but subterranean economic activity. Closely linked to these means of survival, then, are various authority structures and control mechanisms — some more disguised than others — that regulate, fragment, and tend to demoralize the masses.

In considering the possibility of major and multiple ghetto eruptions or uprisings, the scenario at hand, it is necessary to examine some likely faultlines. As for the relative calm of today, Bob Avakian makes the observation in his work *A Horrible End, or An End to the Horror?* that the daily struggle for survival, combined with an awareness that broader sections of the population are not very receptive to radical ideas and action right now, weighs very heavily on the basic masses. But the complex web of monetary and nonmonetary activity on which people depend is also, as "Perverse Recovery" points out, extremely tenuous, and the associated struggle for survival is becoming ever more desperate. A particular "hot mix" might not only undermine this already fragile mode of existence; it could also suggest to millions

that this is no way to live . . . and that there is now a chance to strike back. But the tenuousness of daily life also raises the possibility of actual "commodity riots" — uprisings occasioned by conditions of privation.

In a previous scenario, the possible disruption of the welfare system as a result of a financial collapse was indicated. That could trigger the equivalent, in an imperialist country, of what has been called an "IMF riot," disturbances touched off by the sudden withdrawal of subsidies and support systems as part of austerity programs imposed on Third World countries from without. More generally, further cut-backs in social programs and continuing social decay could produce an intolerable situation for millions, a situation that would seriously increase the potential for mass disorder and violence. And the bourgeoisie is preparing. What lends weight to these speculations is not only the direction of social policy — very clearly, social welfare programs are being roped in as a first step towards even more massive cuts — but also the ideological offensive, whose basic theme has been summarized by Lotta: the poor have not been helped by these programs but rather offered disincentives to work that have led to unprecedented levels of crime, illegitimacy, and family breakup, that is, to a rising tide of social dysfunction

that now threatens to pollute the rest of America.⁹ The ruling class is signaling that people will be expected to fend for themselves; those who do not make the necessary adjustments will be kept on a tighter leash.

In this regard, it is useful to compare the current political climate with that of the '60s. As has been noted by analysts of many different political persuasions, the riots of the time were strongly conditioned by rising expectations, or by a sense of the betrayal of those expectations by those in a position to deliver on the promises of "the affluent society." The riots certainly gave vent to the alienation and anger of Black people, but to some degree people also hoped to gain something by rioting and to receive greater attention from government. The political terrain today is very different — both ideologically, with the demise of liberalism, and economically. Reagan cannot quite be charged with

⁹ This message was sounded in a Bill Moyers TV special and was given typically Reagan-esque treatment in his 1986 budget address. For an academic, though no less vile, presentation of the "new realism," see the special issue of *Society*, Jan./Feb. 1986.

Table 3
The Growing Minority Population of American Cities

		Total Population	Minority Population*	Percent of total
New York	1970	7,895,000	2,833,000	36%
	1980	7,072,000	3,403,000	48
	1985	7,380,000	3,987,000	54
Philadelphia	1970	1,949,000	702,000	36%
	1980	1,688,000	725,000	43
Baltimore	1970	906,000	431,000	48%
	1980	787,000	445,000	57
Chicago	1970	3,363,000	1,364,000	41%
	1980	3,005,000	1,706,000	57
	1985	3,083,000	1,875,000	61
Detroit	1970	1,511,000	691,000	46%
	1980	1,203,000	801,000	67
	1985	1,131,000	809,000	72
Cleveland	1970	751,000	304,000	40%
	1980	574,000	274,000	48
	1985	545,000	301,000	55

*Minority refers to Blacks, Hispanics, Asians and others.

Source: University of North Carolina (*New York Times*, 22 October 1986).

hypocrisy in the same way as were proponents of the Great Society. The Miami riot of 1980 had its particular underpinnings in the character of the city and in the structure and evolution of the Black community. But a study commissioned by the Ford Foundation drew some ominous conclusions (for the ruling class) with respect to the riot's possibly broader significance:

What claim the Miami riot has to a significant place in the history of racial unrest in the United States does not, as we have seen, spring from its having been the most costly riot in terms of property loss. Nor did it result in the most deaths. . . . [But] whereas the violence in Miami was not as broadly destructive as it was during the biggest riots of the 1960s, it surpassed Watts, Newark, and Detroit in its intensity. Indeed, to find a precedent for the random killing of whites, one would have to reach back before the 20th century, to the Nat Turner-style slave rebellions. . . . The disorder in Miami also differed from its earlier counterparts, in that the rioters had little reason to believe their actions would result in better living conditions for themselves. (Bruce Porter and Marvin Dunn, *The Miami Riot of 1980*, pp. 173, 175)

The ferocity of the masses in Miami is perhaps a harbinger of what is in store if the ghettos erupt again. To be sure, an "important change in the inner city. . . is that there has developed a corps of hardened, street-type urban dwellers who operate in a shadow economy of hustle and crime. . . first cast off by the working of the economic system, then frequently asocialized in youth homes and prisons, from which they bring a rather fierce and brutal institutional culture to the streets" (Robert Curvin and Bruce Porter, *Blackout Looting*, p. 184). But these were not the principal actors in Miami (although they played a certain role in the initial stages of the riot). What is more important is that simmering just below the surface is an even greater sense of entrapment — after all, there are fewer avenues out of ghetto conditions for the basic masses today. And while any future riots will undoubtedly contain an element of the desire to improve conditions in the Black community, what might more define future disturbances is a kind of "settling of accounts" — people have not forgotten the child murders in Atlanta and the MOVE massacre in Philadelphia, and there may be some more such outrages, of an even more horrific character, before the dam bursts. While the 1977 New York blackout looting was not so ferocious as the Miami rebellion, it is also worth studying for the notice it delivered of the extensive and spreading character of urban poverty (ironically, some statisticians made use of looting patterns to locate where the New York poor were — and found them in many more places than expected!) and for the widespread attitude of "break the rules when the lights go out."

It is impossible to assess the prospects for ghetto uprisings without considering the interrelations among different

sections of Black people. Particularly important here is the broader social impact on the basic Black masses of a reawakening of, and realignment within, the Black petty bourgeoisie. Its dormancy over the past period of years is linked in part to political disorientation and exhaustion, in part to new economic and social opportunities. But people's expectations and sights can change, either as a result of an explosive international development or some significant domestic shift.

Internationally, the struggle in South Africa, whose fallout in the U.S. has proven to be more and more politically radioactive, could be a social detonator. An all-out civil war in South Africa might not only be among the bloodiest in history but also one that forces the U.S., perhaps under the pretext of warding off the Soviets, to directly intervene (the excuse could also be the "desire to prevent further bloodshed"). Under the circumstances, sections of the Black petty bourgeoisie could become radicalized to the point of taking bold and militant initiatives. The ghettos could get quickly energized. People might take to the streets and lash out at symbols of authority and oppression for a multiplicity of reasons: racial solidarity, or just the boiling over of rage and resentment. Similarly, a major defeat for the U.S. somewhere in the Third World, combined perhaps with tangible Soviet advances, might be the signal to some revolutionary nationalist forces to "intensify the struggle." It is entirely possible that such forces might launch urban guerrilla-type activity which could, especially if the social fabric at home were tearing, both ignite social outbursts and attract a following. Thus, some forms of armed conflict of this type might precede a fully ripe crisis. A dialectic of repression and resistance could be set in motion in which forms of armed struggle would become part of the objective situation.

Paradoxical as it might appear in the wake of the MOVE bombing, a situation could arise in which attacks on Black mayors and the associated political infrastructure become lightning-rods for mass struggle. Conceivably, the bourgeoisie might sum up that "neocolonial" arrangements no longer serve the purposes of containment (especially in anticipation of unruliness with the onset of war or deep crisis) and that an undisguised iron fist is required. The orchestrated or forced removal of some of these collaborators might be viewed by the masses as a prelude to something heavier (which could very well be the case). Further, there are not a few potential "wild cards" in these Black administrations — operatives with gang connections, former revolutionaries, etc. — who could just as easily try to stir the ghetto up as they would try to cool things out (there were elements of this in the '60s). The continual thwarting of the aspirations of some sections of the Black middle class in this kind of political atmosphere could lead a Louis Farrakhan (of the Black Muslims), or someone like him, to enter into more open confrontation, even combat, with the powers that be.

The Miami rebellion is also instructive in relation to the contradictions involving middle strata among Black people (even taking into account the particularity that there has been more of a "shutting out" of the Black petty bourgeoisie

in Miami than is the case nationally). First, of course, is the fairly well-known fact that many people from the Black petty bourgeoisie — and even bourgeoisie — supported the rebellion, with some middle-class elements even taking part in it. But also of interest are several episodes involving some "poverty-pimp" and normally reliable "political firemen" types. A good chunk of the local "poverty-pimp" structure apparently became quite pissed off when the local power structure went right over their heads and directly called in Jesse Jackson. In addition, a local leader of the Urban League pointedly went out to play golf (of all things!) when he was called upon to play his fireman role. (He shot a score in the mid-eighties, including four birdies; he must have been feeling pretty good.) (Bruce Porter and Marvin Dunn, *The Miami Riot of 1980*, pp. 68-69)

So there can be some important, if partial, defections and conflicts when the state calls in its chips on these strata at crisis time. And, especially in even more acute situations than Miami was, the reactions of the authorities to such partial desertions can also be a precipitating, and complicating, factor.

A major role in a ghetto uprising situation could be played by organized reaction. The city embodies much that is alien and threatening to "mainstreet America." It is not only inhabited by Blacks and foreigners but by "cosmopolitans" as well. The city also stirs resentment among many of those seeking cover in the suburbs. Under the banner of "taking back the city," with or without the sanction of the state, right-wing paramilitary forces could certainly carry out, if they are not already planning, assassinations of some Black leaders (elements of local police forces should also be factored into this kind of activity). Pogroms should also be regarded as real possibilities: they could be launched in connection with a situation of rising war-fever running up against a mood of "uncooperativeness" in the ghetto (the two previous world wars saw some of this) or in association with a vengeful "put shiftless and dangerous Black youth back in their place" offensive. But in virtue of the much larger, and more volatile, concentrations of oppressed peoples in the cities than was the case during the last two world wars, such violence could produce a massive counterresponse (which would certainly be decried as "race war" by the bourgeoisie).¹⁰ Thus, in the context of more intense harassment and repression of the basic masses, political destabilization and right-wing violence could produce chain reactions leading to major ghetto explosions.

¹⁰ Having said all of this, it would be wrong to rule out the South African tack of state-sponsored Black vigilantism — perhaps under the local direction of Black mayoral administrations — as a means to curb radical influence. Exposures today of "Black faces in high places" are few and far between. Those that have been done by various forces are timely and necessary — and might well play a similar role in some respects to the Bolsheviks' exposures of the Kerensky government in the months following February 1917.

There is uneven development among, and social histories specific to, individual ghettos. The Miami rebellion occurred in relative isolation. But in the scenarios presented here, the potential for simultaneous uprisings, or for multiple uprisings following on the heels of others, is considerable. The fact remains that there are general (deteriorating) conditions in the ghetto and an increasingly hostile climate. A political crisis or attack could spawn a new-found sense of Black consciousness and common purpose, perhaps focused around the issue of national survival itself (the question of genocide did assume significant proportions in the '60s). The bourgeoisie realizes that ghetto uprisings could rapidly spread, even as "copy-cat" riots, and in the event of an initial riot or opening salvo of riots, the ruling class would not wait for others to erupt city by city. Politically and logistically, the bourgeoisie would try to "cordon off" any serious disturbances. How to push things forward in such a situation will be a major challenge for revolutionary forces. On the other hand, a preventive clampdown (about which more later) could backfire and provoke precisely what it was designed to forestall.

Obviously, poverty or police brutality does not in and of itself beget riots. Nor, in trying to understand what causes the outbreak of mass disorder, can a recurrent "precipitating event," of the sort the Kerner Commission sought to isolate, be abstracted from the larger package of political-social conditions and popular expectations in which such outrages become fuses. On a deeper level, what is involved is the sharpening of the overall situation and an altered field of perception as to what the future holds (or does not hold) and what kinds of risks are worth taking. Given the realities of Black social existence in late imperial America, and the kinds of shocks that the empire will in all likelihood have to absorb, it is quite possible for the frazzled but no less real "social compact" binding the basic Black masses to the system to come undone very quickly.

Concluding Considerations

Other equally plausible crisis scenarios could be constructed (a Three Mile Island or Chernobyl-type accident in which damage control — both materially and politically — proves ineffective would certainly be an important thought-experiment). The four scenarios presented here are instructive insofar as they capture some of the more defining and explosive features of the current situation — any one of these scenarios could pop up literally overnight — and reveal, in a rudimentary way, that domestic and international factors are bound to be highly intermixed and interactive.

This takes on special significance in light of the highly urbanized character of this country. Yet there is no equivalent of a Petrograd in the United States: "In the Russian empire, with its long tradition of strong, arbitrary rule from the center, the political situation in Petrograd, especially control of the institutions and symbols of national power, was of im-

mense significance in determining the course of the revolution throughout the country. In addition to being the governmental hub, Petrograd, with a war-inflated population of 2.7 million in 1917, was the country's most important commercial and industrial center" (Alexander Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power*, [New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1978], p. xvi. But economic and social developments since the first two world wars have created a situation in which cities are subject to greater stresses and strains, with all that implies for social order and regulation. Furthermore, in consequence of the growing and more complex interplay of economic and technological functions, a major city now becomes highly sensitized to all manner of disturbances and dislocations in other urban centers. And this has more than local or regional significance in any of the four scenarios, given the interdependence of the world economy: the major cities of the industrialized world have become netted with each other to form an interlocking web of vital functions. The vast international migrations of labor since World War 2 represent an important strand of this web. In short, *the potential for the generation and transmission of urban crises and disruptions is enormous.*

If, for analytical purposes in this study, some aspects of social life and social response were emphasized more than others in particular scenarios, this should not blind the reader to the likely eruption and merging of "dissimilar currents," recalling Lenin's description of revolutionary Russia. The wild displacement and condensation of contradictions are of the essence of a "hot mix." But a revolutionary situation doesn't come out of nowhere; nor are its constitutive elements created out of whole cloth. Certain prominent features of American society, certain social issues, will be integral and central to any foreseeable "hot mix" in this country. And among these will clearly be the woman question.

So much of what defines and tears at the social fabric of late imperial America is bound up with the position and changes affecting women. *Occupationally*, we are dealing with the large-scale and long-term entry of women into the labor force. A substantial chunk of the "real proletariat" is made up of women (and the "industrial renaissance" referred to earlier very much involves women of the oppressed nationalities). *Socially*, we are dealing with extraordinary transformations of the nuclear family and traditional gender roles, which have at once given further impetus to the quest for independence and magnified the burden placed on women. One out of three families headed by women, and one out of every two Black families headed by women, lives in poverty. *Politically*, with the battle around abortion, we are dealing with a question that is violently polarizing American society (what other issue today provokes demonstrations of tens of thousands on both sides?). A film like *The Color Purple*, along with other cultural expressions of the struggle against women's oppression, sets off major storms. Women's studies programs and feminist research and scholarship in general are leaving a big mark on the intellectual landscape and greatly influencing alignments within the intelligentsia.

For many tired and reconciled veterans of the 1960s, things got out of hand and went too far; for many women, things never went far enough! The Revolutionary Communist Party has correctly emphasized that the struggle against women's oppression is an ideological touchstone for proletarian revolution. Indeed, the pervasiveness of and depth of response to women's oppression, both in advanced capitalist society and the colonies, have created a more favorable basis for a program of "all-the-way revolution." Much more needs to be thought through in terms of how the sharpening of this contradiction will influence the social and political conditions of pre-World War 3 America. Plainly, it will have profound "scenario consequences." A few suggestive aspects of the question will be focused on here.

The return to traditional family values is a hallmark of the imperialist ideological offensive. The article "The Making of the Christian Soldiers" (*Revolutionary Worker*, No. 379, 3 November 1986) observes that

from the mid-'70s until today, the religious and "pro-family" coloration became the prism through which the whole familiar range of reactionary issues were projected. White racism now masqueraded as a fight "of concerned parents against having *their* children bussed across town to inferior schools." The counteroffensive against science and progressive ideas was presented as "a fight by concerned parents to control what *their* children are taught, and to defend them against moral relativism, sex, pornography, perversion, and godlessness."

But "defense of the family" is no merely ideological ruse, nor is it a simple backlash to the '60s and '70s. Of great concern to the bourgeoisie is how the state of the family, in particular the role and attitudes of women, impacts on social stability — not only today but especially, projecting forward, in a highly stressful crisis situation. Not a few of the social changes wrought by the movements of the earlier upsurges represent problems in the path of "know-nothing" war mobilization. And the swelling ranks of alienated and angry women is viewed with great alarm by the bourgeoisie. How the bourgeoisie has been trying to effect an ideological synthesis reflective, on the one hand, of the deep-going changes in the structure of social life that have taken place in the last twenty-five years and, on the other, of the requirements of reactionary, imperialist war preparations is a complex issue that warrants further investigation. But "putting women back in their place" has emerged as a key rallying cry, and organizing center, for patriotic traditionalism.

The antiabortion movement has been pivotal to this feverish mobilization. It has served to glue together, both ideologically and organizationally, various strands of obscurantism and backwardness. It has served as a vehicle through which loyal Americans can overcome their demoralization. And it has served as a training ground for proto-fascist activity: blacklists and smear campaigns directed against prominent women who speak out in favor of

abortion and doctors who perform them, firebombings of clinics, kidnappings and other terror directed against the women's health movement, and the creation of self-styled martyrs to the "cause of life." But all of this has stirred greater outrage and a more militant response on the other side of the barricades. This is likely to become increasingly the case.

An analogy can be usefully drawn between the role of the draft in the 1960s and the abortion issue in the contemporary political setting. There is a sharp "us versus them" ("them" being the federal government and the powers that be) edge to the question, made even sharper by the meager support that proabortion activists receive from government authorities and liberal politicians. The question could become ever more of a dividing line, and one that could lead to mass disaffection with the system. But there is more involved. Might some of the features of the clashes preliminary to a civil war situation be prefigured in the abortion battles today? Might this become a training ground of another sort for progressive forces? To go further: might pogrom-like attacks on women, perhaps coming from more organized, paramilitary right-wing forces, be a tripwire for broader social combat?

In trying to extrapolate strategically from the four scenarios, it is evident that some crises have greater potential for social disorder, and greater potential for producing a more favorable alignment of forces for the revolutionary proletariat, than do others. But this has to be understood dynamically. We have seen how initial outbursts, progressive or reactionary, from different social strata can have an effect on others. For the ruling class, the real danger of things spreading in any such crisis situation puts a premium on the capacity to quarantine disorder.

The ruling class is hardly ignorant of the possibilities for revolutionary upheaval inherent in the crisis situations of the sort that have been outlined here. Though sometimes obscured by self-serving "crisis games" and "conflict theories," the imperialists take the threat of societal breakdown quite seriously (as indicated earlier, a number of high-level studies examined the likely effect of population relocation, in the event of a war alert, on social stability). The upsurges of the '60s have not been written off as aberrant or unrepeatable phenomena (interestingly, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration report on the Miami rebellion chides local authorities for complacency in riot control) (see *Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, Prevention and Control of Civil Disorders: Issues for the 1980s*, 1980, pp. 43-51). And the concern over Mexico suggests the degree to which the ruling class understands the realities of the "hot mix." This raises the issue of crisis response and repression.

That repression will come down, probably with a ferocity never before seen in this country, and that the fallout from and the response to it will greatly influence the political situation, is a given in these simulation exercises. Not only won't the U.S. imperialists kneel over to a superpower rival, they'll also stop at nothing to exact the submission at home

that they will need to wage world war. And so they have been strengthening the repressive machinery at the same time that they have been expanding their military arsenal. There have been a number of disclosures over the past few years about the activities of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the so-called Rex '84 exercises linked to contingency planning for a domestic crisis (see Golden and McConnell, *Sanctuary*, p. 93). What has been reported is the existence of standby legislation for broad emergency powers which would allow for the extreme centralization of government and economic functions, as well as censorship, suspension of the Bill of Rights, and the imposition of martial law (including mass detentions of immigrants and "political subversives"). Recent speeches from Attorney General Meese in which he raised questions about the constitutional doctrine of the "presumption of innocence" are of more than philosophical interest.

In the world war and regional crisis scenarios, a probable crisis response from the bourgeoisie would be some form of preventive detention. By this is meant government-sponsored round-ups, jailings without trial, and occupations of oppressed communities in anticipation of social breakdown and social conflict. (The Polish crackdown in 1981 and 1982 is instructive in this light.) It would also seem that the "specter of terrorism" and anti-immigrant hysteria would figure prominently in state-organized or state-backed efforts to meet the potential for mass upheaval. A latter-day Reichstag fire (the Nazi excuse for fascistization), only this time blamed on real or imagined terrorists, would be a most suitable pretext for the installation of a police state. The point is that anything even beginning to approach a 1960s level of disorder and confrontation — and the urban uprisings scenario drives this home even more — would be met with savage force.

The popular response to large-scale repression is likely to be very contradictory, particularly in its early stages. Police-state tactics will be met with awe and fear by large sections of the population. The middle classes would probably experience a profound psychological shock, unaccustomed as they are to the extreme centralization of authority or to its unbridled use on a mass scale and in a way that cannot be ignored. And the question of authority is so critical since, generally speaking, the middle classes see the government as their protector (something which takes on special relevance in world war). Thus the withdrawal of democratic rights in exchange for the promise of the earliest possible return to normalcy may have more than limited appeal, although the idea that there's nothing much you could do about it anyway is just as likely to influence such opinion. On the other hand, when the "real deal" dawns on some of these strata, that is, when it becomes clear that the bourgeoisie is serious about waging world war, allowing neither discussion nor dissent, and is prepared to stop at nothing to put down rebellion and resistance, then some of these people may undergo a rude awakening. The specific terms, and turns, of mass struggle will of course bear heavily on popular perceptions, and if the bourgeoisie commits any major blunders or reveals

weakness, then middle forces may vacillate in a more socially significant way.

A preemptive clampdown would be aimed principally at revolutionary forces, various progressives from movements judged to be dangerous, and oppressed proletarians in their vast numbers (there is probably something in this regard to be learned from the state of siege that exists today in the working-class slums of Santiago, Chile). Now the oppressed masses in this country do not have the same experience of conducting their daily lives and waging political struggle in conditions of extreme repression, as did, for instance, large sections of the masses in Tsarist Russia or in Iran under the Shah. But neither would this be a totally foreign situation: living in the ghetto does provide people with some important survival and evasion skills, and many immigrants do bring with them to this country direct experience with such situations. Dragnets in the oppressed communities and round-ups of youth are bound to provoke resistance on some level. But here again the question of consciousness and political preparation assumes extraordinary importance. People have to begin to grasp the stakes and probable contours of the sort of situation that might quickly unfold. There is the greatest need for a conscious vanguard force to lead in creating the strongest political and organizational basis for the masses to act within and transform an extremely difficult situation.

In any situation of social stress and/or collapse, right-wing forces would be fielding large battalions. It's not too difficult to imagine an updated version of the German "free corps movement" (disgruntled soldiers from World War 1), maybe made up of a section of Vietnam veterans claiming to have been stabbed in the back by soft-hearted liberals, becoming a political force. It's also probable that right-wing paramilitary forces will be pressed directly into the service of martial law. But in being unleashed by "save America" madness, some of these forces may run amok and start getting out of hand, even from the standpoint of their ruling-class masters. Such "loose cannons" could further destabilize things and fuel greater hatred for the ruling class. (In Germany after World War 1, right-wing activity, with greater or lesser backing from on high, touched off several crises and opened significant revolutionary opportunities.) It is also possible that in wildly attacking various sections of the masses, perhaps in the border regions or the inner cities, the reactionaries may find the going a lot rougher than what they had bargained for. Setbacks or defeats for them in local engagements (although the bourgeoisie is not likely to stand aside when things reach such a point) might provide the inspiration for broader rebellions and the opening for more organized revolutionary offensives.

The revolutionary masses and their vanguard cannot afford to underestimate — and history bears this out repeatedly — the lengths to which a ruling class will go to quash actual or potential resistance and rebellion. But this is no cakewalk for the rulers. Lenin's observation in the *Collapse of the Second International* that "never do governments stand in such need of agreement with all the parties of the ruling classes, or of the 'peaceful' submission of the oppressed classes to that

rule, as in the time of war" is most relevant. This is so not only in connection to world war but also (and relatedly) in specific application to the conditions that would surround any major moves over repression, even a more full-fledged, Rex '84-style fascism. The imperialists will need to weld, and in short order, a high degree of unity and, as already noted, to greatly centralize authority. But while a consensus on "what's up in the world" exists within the ruling class, actual war mobilization and moves towards institutional centralization are likely to produce discord within ruling circles. Some officials suddenly cut out of the action may balk; elements in Congress may drag their feet and even, however feebly, resist.

In projecting forward from a clampdown, there looms this most important mood-creating factor: how the revolutionary forces targeted for attack respond to the initial waves of repression. If revolutionary forces could withstand a preliminary assault and continue to influence the political situation, this would represent a terrible blow to the bourgeoisie and radically alter popular expectations. A failed attempt at suppression might not only embolden fiercer resistance (maybe among oppressed nationalities facing pogroms) and broader resistance (perhaps among progressive middle strata): the resurgence of revolutionary forces would also, in the context of grave dislocations, give credibility to revolutionary political programs and solutions. By the same token, the ineffectuality and bankruptcy of other political programs would become increasingly apparent to many different strata of the population. Such a resurgence might also contribute to an ungluing of things on top. The combination of chaos and enhanced prestige possibly enjoyed by revolutionary elements could precipitate significant splits within the ruling class, which in turn could produce temporary paralysis and disorientation — perhaps leading to constitutional crises or even coups (as well as the appearance of liberal knights on white horses). Thus a very different dynamic than that of unrelieved and unanswered terror could be set in motion relatively quickly.

All of these considerations underline the importance of the comment quoted at the beginning of this article: the ruling class has to lose the allegiance of the masses just once. If they seriously mishandle a turning point, and neither they nor serious revolutionaries are counting on gradually winning people over, then it's a whole new ball game — for both sides. But this also emphasizes that a vanguard must think and act as a vanguard in a situation of unprecedented danger and opportunity. Spontaneity cannot be counted on. Revolutions don't happen; they are made!

Historically, the emergence of forms of dual power has been integral to the process of proletarian revolution. In Russia in 1917 dual power took shape as soviets; in China it was armed base areas in the countryside. These embryonic institutions of proletarian state power have allowed the masses to translate their class interests into social and political practices that give concrete expression to their capacity to run society, and in a way completely different from the bourgeoisie. At the same time, forms of dual power

have enabled revolutionary vanguards to mobilize the masses for the armed struggle. More recently in South Africa there have been attempts to exercise popular control in the townships — the so-called "comrades" have set up shadow local administrations. And there is experience worth studying from the mass upsurges of the late '60s and early '70s in this country: instances where police and other armed forces of the state were driven out of urban areas during violent rebellions in the ghettos and barrios; building takeovers and occupations; People's Park in Berkeley; and the more prolonged and threatening exercise of alternate power that occurred during the Wounded Knee struggle of American Indians in the Dakotas.

Is it possible to envision dual power emerging in the highly telescoped and highly repressive conditions that are likely to define a revolutionary situation in the United States? The answer is that it would certainly be to the advantage of the revolutionary proletariat to bend every effort to bring such a thing (or things) into being. The question of whose authority will be followed in a period of crisis — that of the bourgeoisie or the proletariat — is more likely to be answered in the proletariat's favor if it is actually wielding some authority. Every revolution has produced its own distinctive forms of dual power. The particular demographic and regional features of American society, as well as the specific nature of a revolutionary crisis, will influence the possibilities for and the actual character of dual power when the situation ripens here.

An issue deserving full examination in its own right but which can only be touched on here is what might be expected from the Communist Party, USA. The CP can be presumed to be in for the long haul and to be functioning with a perspective of power. Their gradualism and pathetic cautiousness are not indications of any lack of seriousness but rather linked to a view of how power will be achieved. They are also "waiting but not just waiting." In effect, the CP has its own conjunctural orientation, which seems to be predicated on two interlinked developments: major international advances by the Soviet Union, or outright victory, and major (incapacitating) splits within the U.S. ruling class. That the CP seriously intends to exploit such developments is one reason why it so closely monitors alignments and divisions within the U.S. ruling class (one is continually amazed at how finely-grained are revisionist analyses of financial groups in the United States) and snuggles its operatives and agents into positions of influence in high places and high office.

Initially, the CP might gain strength and a mass following in the crises considered here — for several reasons: they already have some numerical strength, they do have friends in high places, and they may be the principal target of repression and garner support and derive some prestige as a result. A regional crisis can be seen to provide the revisionists with some openings in view of the strength of pro-Soviet forces south of the border. Upsurges within the United States would be evaluated by the CP from the standpoint of how they serve the program of "revolution from above" (and

towards its fulfillment the CP must position itself in mass movements). An extreme constitutional crisis would probably be the preferred doormat to the chambers of power-sharing; but it would be naive to think that revisionist-inspired armed struggles and/or putschs are beyond the pale of possibility or somehow alien to this general strategy.

Despite some favorable possibilities for the revisionists, the bankruptcy of the CP and its program could become exposed. In the face of repression, and leaving aside their wholesale elimination by the bourgeoisie, they could certainly capitulate and/or undergo severe splitting. They might be forced to justify Soviet atrocities in various parts of the world. And, importantly, in a chaotic crisis situation, they might have to range themselves against more radical and disruptive forces who threaten necessary blocking and compromising with bourgeois forces at critical turns. In any event, the revisionists have to be taken very seriously.

It should be obvious that much more needs to be understood about revolutionary situations in general and the likely contours of one in this country. The particular focal points of each of the four scenarios warrant more thorough investigation, but regional crisis is the one about which least is understood (by this author, in any case), especially with respect to the political economy and demography of the borderlands. In this connection, but with broader significance as well, the immigrant question cries out for further analysis (some useful work has been done "in the field" by radical academics). Theoretical and empirical work around the woman question needs to go deeper. Plainly, it is crucial to know more about the strata of the proletariat that the RCP has identified as the social base for revolution in the U.S.: who is in it, its occupational distribution and concentration, characteristic forms of resistance, and the sociology of its daily existence. Many such proletarians are up against the "despotism" of the factory system (Marx's term). Should major shop struggles and more Watsonvilles (a cannery employing many immigrant workers that has been the site of a prolonged and intense strike) be expected? And what role might such struggles play in a situation of more serious social strife? It is also important to assess developments among the more privileged layers of the proletariat. It's clear that many workers who have been recycled downward, or who face that prospect, are somewhat shell-shocked, hanging on to what can be hung on to, at present. But then there is the Hormel strike. Might similar struggles erupt in the future? And how might such economic struggles interact with a political crisis? Is there anything to be summed up about the miners' strike in Great Britain of a few years ago which struck a sympathetic chord among broad sections of the population?

Work of revolutionary preparation requires the ability to seize on key turning points, and the scenarios presented here would certainly lend support to that orientation. In a revolutionary crisis, a vanguard would have to win diverse social forces — forces that are likely to alternately bolt and join different camps, but without some section of which it will not be possible to take power — to the camp of revolution over a

short period of time. This can only be done on the basis of program, which itself must be given material expression in the strength and authority that the revolutionary proletariat commands. Of what relevance is this to the schooling of the revolutionary proletariat and its vanguard?

In general, the RCP has honed its skills of exposure. Its work around the MOVE bombing is a positive expression of the proletariat bringing its strength and outlook to bear upon a major outrage. Still, there remains the always vexing question of how, and to what degree, the proletariat mounts the political stage in a prerevolutionary situation. And what about the time when program and solution come more directly to the fore (not that exposure will be any less important in a wrenching crisis situation)? Under what circumstances is it correct and crucial to begin to assist the struggling masses in formulating fighting demands? Today, Jesse Jackson goes into the farmbelt, with a program of sorts, and creates a definite impression. Back in 1979, members of the Miners Right to Strike Committee went to Washington, D.C. to support, and struggle with, farmers from the American Agricultural Movement. This too created a definite impression. Since then the RCP has developed a new party programme that contains a fairly sophisticated section dealing

with agriculture. But there is, I believe, the need to go beyond that to make a more specific analysis of the farm problem and to offer for more popular consideration the solution to it. A crisis such as that affecting farmers reveals in miniature the shifting array of political forces and programs, along with many of the contradictory tugs and pulls, that will be operative in a scenario-type situation. Is there perhaps important experience to be gained through creative forms of intervention? More generally, how does the party learn more about different social strata and expand its influence among them?

In concluding, it is necessary to emphasize that the purpose of simulating specific crisis situations is to try to anticipate the kinds of problems, tasks, and challenges that lie ahead. Not only must revolutionaries heighten their vigilance. They must also sharpen their capacity to recognize and evaluate changes in the objective situation in order to theoretically and practically bear into a conjuncture, to act on an historic moment, pregnant with possibility, from within. This is no mere exhortation, because as Bob Avakian points out in his 1986 interview, "We know the world as it is is not for long going to be able to remain as it is, and one way or another it's going to be radically and dramatically changed."

Historical Document

Self-Criticism by the Indonesian Communist Party, 1966

Starting in October 1965 and continuing into 1966, pro-U.S. fascist militarists unleashed a massacre of horrible proportions against the Indonesian people. Several hundred thousand Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) members and sympathizers as well as masses not involved in any political activity were murdered in cold blood. The number of people shot in the streets or arrested, tortured, and killed in prison is still not known with any accuracy. The massacre resulted in the crushing of the PKI, the fall of the Sukarno government, and the rise to power of a right-wing military clique led by Suharto which still holds sway in Indonesia today.

If the U.S. imperialists were not directly involved in Suharto's coup (and there is some evidence that they were), they openly applauded the fascist takeover in Indonesia. "We must say it's refreshing to read of young Moslems burning down Communist Party headquarters for a change and shouting 'Long Live America,'" said a Chicago Tribune editorial in October 1965. In July 1966, when the immensity of the bloodbath in Indonesia was already becoming clear, Time declared that the ousting of Sukarno was "the West's best news for years in Asia."

Sukarno had presided over a coalition government that contained various forces, including the PKI. Despite the nationalist rhetoric and some actions reflecting national bourgeois interests, Sukarno certainly did not stand for new democracy and genuine independence from imperialism. Under Sukarno, Indonesia, with its rich oil reserves and strategic position in Southeast Asia, remained under imperialist domination and was a prized neocolony for the U.S. But by the mid-'60s the U.S., neck deep in trouble in Vietnam, needed an outright lackey regime in place in Indonesia. The clique of right-wing generals under Suharto fit the bill to a tee.

The responsibility for the monstrous crime of several hundred thousand murders must be laid squarely at the doorsteps of the Indonesian reactionaries and their U.S. imperialist masters. At the same time, it's true that the PKI was extremely vulnerable to such an onslaught, and no effective, organized resistance to

Suharto and the massacre was ever built. By the mid-'60s the core of the PKI leadership had become rotten with years of revisionism. The PKI put forward a wrong view of the state and in practice participated in and glorified Sukarno and the coalition government, which decidedly was not under proletarian leadership. The PKI also went down the revisionist path on the question of the process of revolution, seconding the thesis of a "peaceful road to socialism" advocated by the Soviet revisionists who came to power in 1956.

These and other serious errors were summarized and criticized in two documents by forces who were attempting a revolutionary regroupment of the PKI: "Statement by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Indonesian Communist Party" (August 17, 1966) and "Self-Criticism by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Indonesian Communist Party" (September 1966). In 1968 China's Foreign Languages Press published a pamphlet, titled *People of Indonesia, Unite and Fight to Overthrow the Fascist Regime*. The pamphlet contained excerpts from the two documents as well as an editorial from Hongqi (Red Flag), magazine of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. In this issue of *Revolution* we are reprinting large sections from this pamphlet.

What happened in Indonesia in the mid-'60s has many particularities relating to that country, to the specific array of class forces involved, and to that period of time. But the PKI summations are right to the point, for example, in emphasizing the importance of Mao Tsetung Thought. As the Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement points out, "Without upholding and building on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought it is not possible to defeat revisionism, imperialism and reaction in general." This and many other points made in the PKI summations are still very relevant today and warrant close study, including in relation to events in the world within the past year.

January 1987

.....

From: People of Indonesia, Unite and Fight to Overthrow the Fascist Regime

— Editorial of Hongqi (Red Flag), No. 11, 1967 —

After staging the counter-revolutionary 1965 coup d'etat, the Suharto-Nasution Right-wing military clique, faithful lackey of U.S. imperialism and anti-communist ally of Soviet revisionism, established a fascist dictatorship of unprecedented ruthlessness in Indonesia.

For the past year or more, it has followed an out-and-out traitorous, dictatorial, anti-communist, anti-China and anti-popular counter-revolutionary policy.

It has imposed a white terror in Indonesia on an unprecedented scale, slaughtered several hundred thousand Communists and revolutionary people and thrown into prison another several hundred thousand fine sons and daughters of the Indonesian people. All Indonesia has been turned into one vast hell. By engaging in bloody suppression, it attempts in vain to wipe out the Indonesian Communist Party and stamp out the Indonesian revolution.

This clique cherishes an inveterate hatred for socialist China, which resolutely supports the revolutionary struggle of the Indonesian people. It has repeatedly carried out serious provocations against the Chinese people, whipped up anti-China, anti-Chinese campaigns and practised inhuman racist persecution against overseas Chinese. It has vainly tried to sabotage the traditional friendship between the Chinese people and the overseas Chinese in Indonesia on the one hand and the Indonesian people on the other, and to prevent the Chinese people from supporting the Indonesian people's revolution.

In the final analysis, the many kinds of persecution against the Indonesian Communist Party and the Indonesian people by the Suharto-Nasution Right-wing military clique will only serve to hasten the arrival of the upsurge in the Indonesian revolution and speed its own doom. The heroic Indonesian Communists and people can neither be cowed, suppressed, nor wiped out. The determination of the Indonesian people to make revolution is unshakable, so is the Chinese people's determination to support their revolution. No reactionary force on earth can obstruct this.

At present, the Indonesian Communists and revolutionary people are regrouping their forces for a new battle. The August 17, 1966 Statement of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Indonesian Communist Party and the Self-Criticism it endorsed in September, which were published by the magazine *Indonesian Tribune* not long ago, are a call to the Indonesian Communists and the Indonesian working class, peasants, revolutionary intellectuals and all anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolutionary forces to unite and engage in a new struggle.

The two documents of the Political Bureau of the Indonesian Communist Party are a telling blow at U.S. imperialism and its flunkies, the Suharto-Nasution fascist military dictatorial regime, and the revisionist leading clique of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and a tremendous encouragement to the revolutionary people of Indonesia.

In these two documents, the Political Bureau of the Indonesian Communist Party sums up the experience and lessons of the Party in leading the Indonesian people's revolutionary struggle, criticizes the Right opportunist errors committed by the leadership of the Party in the past, points out the road for the Indonesian revolution, and lays down the principles for future struggle.

From: Statement by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Indonesian Communist Party August 17, 1966

The Main Problem of Every Revolution Is The Problem of State Power

The statement declares that it is an absolute condition for every revolutionary, and even more so for every Communist, to grasp the truth that "the main problem of every revolution is the problem of state power".

The oppressed classes, in liberating themselves from exploitation and oppression, have no other way but to make a revolution, that is to say, overthrowing by force the oppressor classes from state power, or seizing state power by force. Because, the state is an instrument created by the ruling classes to oppress the ruled classes.

But, for a genuine people's revolution in the present modern era, it is not enough just to wrest the power from the hands of the oppressor classes, and to make use of the power that has been wrested. Marx has taught us that the destruction of the old military-bureaucratic state machine is "the prerequisite for every genuine people's revolution" (Lenin, *State and Revolution*). A genuine people's revolution will achieve decisive victory only after it has accomplished this prerequisite, while at the same time it sets up a completely new state apparatus whose task is to suppress by force and mercilessly the resistance put up by the overthrown oppressor classes.

What should the August Revolution of 1945¹ have done with regard to the state power?

As a prerequisite, the August Revolution of 1945 should have smashed the colonial state machine along with all of its apparatuses that had been established to maintain colonial domination of Indonesia, and not merely transferred the power to the Republic of Indonesia. The August Revolution of 1945 should have established a completely new state, a state **jointly ruled** by all the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal classes **under the leadership of the working class**. This is what is to be called a people's democratic state.

The statement points out that due to the absence of the working class' leadership, the Republic of Indonesia was inevitably a **state ruled by the bourgeoisie**, despite the participation of the proletariat. A state with such a class character can never become an **instrument** of the 1945 August Revolution. Without the dictatorship of people's democracy, the August Revolution of 1945 did not have an instrument to defeat its enemies, and consequently was unable to accomplish its tasks, namely the complete liquidation of imperialist domination and the remnants of feudalism.

The Communists' voluntary withdrawal of a cabinet led by themselves in 1948 had opened up the broadest opportunity for the reactionary bourgeoisie led by Muhamad Hatta to make the state power fall into its hands. This reactionary bourgeoisie then betrayed the August Revolution by unleashing white terror, the Madiun Affair,² as a prelude to the restoration of the Dutch imperialist interests through the conclusion of the despicable agreement of the round-table conference, which turned Indonesia into a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country.

The statement says that the resurgence of the revolutionary struggle of the Indonesian people in continuing the fight against the oppression by imperialism and the remnants of feudalism after the round-table conference, had gained certain political victories of partial and reform nature, which had led to the lessening of the anti-democratic character of the bourgeois power.

It was a great mistake to assume that the existence of such a government signified a fundamental change in the class character of the state power. It was equally incorrect to assume that the above-mentioned facts marked the birth and the development of an **aspect** representing the interests of the people, or of a **pro-people aspect**, within the state power. Such an error, that was formulated in the "theory of

¹ On August 17, 1945 Sukarno, Hatta, and others declared Indonesia a Republic and launched the Indonesian "revolution." This "revolution" in effect was the transformation of Indonesia, which was an outright colony of Holland before World War 2, into a neocolony with the U.S. as the main imperialist overlord.

² A "military revolt" which led to a campaign of brutal suppression against the PKI forces and sympathizers by the Indonesian government in September/October 1948.

two aspects in state power", led to the conclusion that according to the before-mentioned facts, within the state power of the Republic of Indonesia there existed two aspects, the "anti-people aspect" consisting of comprador, bureaucrat capitalist and landlord classes on the one hand, and the "pro-people aspect" composed mainly of the national bourgeoisie and the proletariat on the other hand.

According to this "two-aspect theory", a miracle could happen in Indonesia, namely that the state could cease to be an instrument of the ruling oppressor classes to subjugate other classes, but it could be made an instrument shared by both the oppressor classes and the oppressed classes. And the fundamental change in state power, that is to say, the birth of a people's power, could be peacefully accomplished by developing the "pro-people aspect" and gradually liquidating the "anti-people aspect".

The statement points out that hoping for a fundamental change in state power, to usher the people into the position of power, through the victory of the "pro-people aspect" over the "anti-people aspect" in line with the "theory of two aspects in state power", was but a pure illusion. The people will be able to gain power only through an armed revolution under the leadership of the working class to overthrow the power of the comprador bourgeoisie, the bureaucrat capitalists and the landlords which represent the interests of imperialism and the remnants of feudalism.

The "theory of two aspects in state power" has in practice deprived the proletariat of its independence in the united front with the national bourgeoisie, dissolved the interests of the proletariat in that of the national bourgeoisie, and placed the proletariat in a position as a tail-end of the national bourgeoisie.

To return the proletariat to its position of leadership in the liberation struggle of the Indonesian people, it is absolutely necessary to rectify the mistake of the "theory of two aspects in state power", and to do away with the erroneous view with regard to Marxist-Leninist teaching on state and revolution.

The Road To a Completely Independent and Democratic New Indonesia

The statement indicates that the main contradiction in the present Indonesian society is still the same with what existed at the outbreak of the August Revolution of 1945, that is to say, imperialism and the remnants of feudalism are involved in a contradiction with the masses of the people who desire full independence and democracy.

Thus the target of the revolution remains the same: imperialism and the remnants of feudalism. Classes which are the enemies of the revolution, in the main, are also the same: imperialism, the compradors, the bureaucrat capitalists and the landlords. The driving forces of the revolution, too, are still the same: the working class, the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie.

The statement says that after the imperialists no longer directly hold political power in Indonesia, their political interests are represented by the comprador bourgeoisie, the bureaucrat capitalists and the landlords who are holding the state power in their hands.

Therefore, only by overthrowing the power of the domestic reactionary classes can the overthrow of imperialism and the remnants of feudalism be concretely realized. This is the primary task of the present stage of the Indonesian revolution.

The statement points out that today, the Indonesian people are faced by the military dictatorship of the Right-wing army generals Suharto and Nasution and their accomplices, which is the manifestation of power of the most reactionary classes in our country.

The absence of democracy for the people, and the suppression by force of arms of every revolutionary and democratic movement, inevitably compel the whole people to take up arms in order to defend their rights. The armed struggle of the people against the armed counter-revolution is unavoidable and constitutes the chief form of struggle of the coming revolution. Only by taking the road of armed struggle, the Indonesian people will succeed in overthrowing the power of the armed counter-revolutionaries, as a precondition to realize their aspiration for which they have fought for scores of years: independence and freedom.

The statement maintains that the armed struggle to defeat armed counter-revolution, as a revolution, must not be waged, in the form of military adventurism, in the form of a putsch, which is detached from the awakening of the popular masses.

The statement emphasizes that since the present stage of the Indonesian revolution is essentially an agrarian revolution by the peasantry, the armed struggle of the Indonesian people, too, essentially will be the armed struggle of the peasants to liberate themselves from the oppression by the remnants of feudalism. The armed struggle against the armed counter-revolution can never be lasting and in the end will surely be defeated, unless it is essentially an armed struggle of the peasants in realizing the agrarian revolution. And the armed struggle of the peasants to realize the agrarian revolution will only succeed in achieving a complete victory, and in really liberating the peasantry from the oppression by the remnants of feudalism, only when it is waged under the leadership of the proletariat, and when it is not limited to just overthrowing the power of the landlords in the countryside, but is aimed at smashing the entire power of the internal counter-revolutionaries who are now represented by the military dictatorship of the Right-wing army generals Suharto and Nasution and their accomplices.

From: Self-Criticism by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Indonesian Communist Party September 1966

Indonesian Tribune published in its January issue (No. 3) the self-criticism adopted by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Indonesian Communist Party (P.K.I.) in September 1966. The self-criticism is entitled "Build the P.K.I. Along the Marxist-Leninist Line to Lead the People's Democratic Revolution in Indonesia".

The self-criticism says that the disaster which has caused such serious losses to the P.K.I. and the revolutionary movement of the Indonesian people after the outbreak and the defeat of the September 30th Movement³ has lifted up the curtain which for a long period has hidden the grave weaknesses of the P.K.I.

The Political Bureau is aware that it has the greatest responsibility with regard to the grave weaknesses and mistakes of the Party during the period under review. Therefore, the Political Bureau is giving serious attention to and highly appreciates all criticisms from cadres and members of the Party given in a Marxist-Leninist spirit, as well as honest criticism from Party sympathizers that have been expressed in different ways. The Political Bureau is resolved to make self-criticism in a Marxist-Leninist way, putting into practice the teaching of Lenin and the example of Comrade Musso in unfolding Marxist-Leninist criticism and self-criticism.

The self-criticism says that under the situation where the most vicious and cruel white terror is being unleashed by the military dictatorship of the Right-wing army generals Nasution and Suharto, it is not easy to make as complete criticism and self-criticism as possible. To meet the urgent necessity, it is necessary to point out the main issues in the ideological, political and organizational fields, in order to facilitate the study of the weaknesses and mistakes of the Party during the current rectification movement.

³ On October 1, 1965, the September 30 Movement, a group of mid-level officers in the military, kidnapped a number of high-ranking generals of the Indonesian armed forces. The leader of the group said that their aim was to thwart a coup by rightist generals and bring them to account before Sukarno. According to some scholars, the September 30 Movement was infiltrated by *agents-provocateurs* associated with Suharto. The action by the movement was labeled a PKI "coup attempt," and it served as the immediate pretext for a takeover by a military clique headed by Suharto and Nasution and the massacre of hundreds of thousands.

With all modesty and sincerity the Political Bureau presents this self-criticism. The Political Bureau expects all members to take an active part in the discussions of the weaknesses and mistakes of the Party leadership, critically analyse them, and do their utmost to improve this self-criticism of the Political Bureau by drawing lessons from their respective experiences, collectively or individually. The Political Bureau expects all members to take firm hold of the principle: "unity — criticism — unity" and "learning from past mistakes to avoid future ones, and curing the sickness to save the patient, in order to achieve the twofold objective of clarity in ideology and unity among comrades".⁴ The Political Bureau is convinced that, by holding firmly to this correct principle, every Party member will take part in the movement to study and surmount these weaknesses and mistakes with the determination to rebuild the P.K.I. along the Marxist-Leninist line, to strengthen communist unity and solidarity, to raise the ideological, political and organizational vigilance, and to heighten the fighting spirit in order to win victory.

The Main Weaknesses in the Ideological Field

The serious weaknesses and mistakes of the Party in the period after 1951, the self-criticism says, certainly had as their source the weaknesses in ideological field, too, especially among the Party leadership. Instead of integrating revolutionary theories with the concrete practice of the Indonesian revolution, the Party leadership adopted the road which was divorced from the guidance of the most advanced theories. This experience shows that the P.K.I. had not succeeded as yet in establishing a core of leadership that was composed of proletarian elements, which really had the most correct understanding of Marxism-Leninism, systematic and not fragmentary, practical and not abstract understanding.

During the period after 1951, subjectivism continued to grow, gradually became greater and greater and gave rise to Right opportunism that merged with the influence of modern revisionism in the international communist movement. This was the black line of Right opportunism which became the main feature of the mistakes committed by the P.K.I. in this period. The rise and the development of these weaknesses and errors were caused by the following factors:

First, the tradition of criticism and self-criticism in a Marxist-Leninist way was not developed in the Party, especially among the Party leadership.

The rectification and study movements which from time to time were organized in the Party were not carried out seriously and persistently, their results were not summed up in a good manner, and they were not followed by the appropriate measures in the organizational field. Study

⁴ Mao Tsetung, "Our Study and the Current Situation," *Selected Works*, Vol. III.

movements were aimed more at the rank and file, and never at unfolding criticism and self-criticisms among the leadership. Criticism from below far from being carefully listened to, was even suppressed.

Second, the penetration of the bourgeois ideology along two channels, through contacts with the national bourgeoisie when the Party established a united front with them, and through the bourgeoisification of Party cadres, especially the leadership, after the Party obtained certain positions in governmental and semi-governmental institutions. The increasing number of Party cadres who occupied certain positions in governmental and semi-governmental institutions in the centre and in the regions, created "the rank of bourgeoisified workers" and this constituted "the real channels for reformism".⁵ Such a situation did not exist before the August Revolution of 1945.

Third, modern revisionism began to penetrate into our Party when the Fourth Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Fifth Congress uncritically approved a report which supported the lines of the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U., and adopted the line of "achieving socialism peacefully through parliamentary means" as the line of the P.K.I. This "peaceful road", one of the characteristics of modern revisionism, was further reaffirmed in the Sixth National Congress of the P.K.I. which approved the following passage in the Party Constitution: "There is a possibility that a people's democratic system as a transitional stage to socialism in Indonesia can be achieved by peaceful means, in parliamentary way. The P.K.I. persistently strives to transform this possibility into a reality." This revisionist line was further emphasized in the Seventh National Congress of the P.K.I. and was never corrected, not even when our Party was already aware that since the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U., the leadership of the C.P.S.U. had been following the road of modern revisionism.

The self-criticism stresses that the experience of the P.K.I. provides the lesson that by criticizing the modern revisionism of the C.P.S.U. leadership alone, it does not mean that the P.K.I. itself will automatically be free from errors of Right opportunism, the same as what the modern revisionists are doing. The experience of the P.K.I. provides the lesson that modern revisionism, the greatest danger in the international communist movement, is also the greatest danger for the P.K.I. For the P.K.I., modern revisionism is not "a latent but not an acute danger", but a concrete danger that has brought great damage to the Party and serious losses for the revolutionary movement of the Indonesian people. Therefore, we must not in any way underestimate the danger of modern revisionism and must wage a resolute and ruthless struggle against it. The firm stand against modern revisionism in all fields can be effectively maintained only when our Party abandons the line of "preserving friendship with the modern revisionists".

It is a fact that the P.K.I., while criticizing the modern

revisionism of the C.P.S.U. leadership, also made revisionist mistakes itself, because it had revised Marxist-Leninist teachings on class struggle, state and revolution. Furthermore, the P.K.I. leadership not only did not wage a struggle in the theoretical field against other "revolutionary" political thoughts which could mislead the proletariat, as Lenin has taught us to do, but had voluntarily given concessions in the theoretical field. The P.K.I. leadership maintained that there was an identity between the three components of Marxism: materialist philosophy, political economy and scientific socialism, and the so-called "three components of Sukarno's teachings". They wanted to make Marxism, which is the ideology of the working class, the property of the whole nation which includes the exploiting classes hostile to the working class.

The Main Errors in the Political Field

The self-criticism says that the mistakes of Right opportunism in the political field which are now under discussion include three problems: (1) the road to people's democracy in Indonesia, (2) the question of state power, and (3) the implementation of the policy of the national united front.

One of the fundamental differences and problems of disputes between Marxism-Leninism and modern revisionism lies precisely in the problem of choosing the road to socialism. Marxism-Leninism teaches that socialism can only be achieved through the road of proletarian revolution and that in the case of colonial or semi-colonial and semi-feudal countries like Indonesia, socialism can only be achieved by first completing the stage of the people's democratic revolution. On the contrary, revisionism dreams of achieving socialism through the "peaceful road".

During the initial years of this period since 1951, our Party had achieved certain results in the political struggle as well as in the building of the Party. One important achievement of this period was the formulation of the main problems of the Indonesian revolution. It was formulated that the present stage of the Indonesian revolution was a new-type bourgeois democratic revolution, whose tasks were to liquidate imperialism and the vestiges of feudalism and to establish a people's democratic system as a transitional stage to socialism. The driving forces of the revolution were the working class, the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie; the leading force of the revolution was the working class and the principal mass strength of the revolution was the peasantry. It was also formulated that the national bourgeoisie was a wavering force of the revolution who might side with the revolution to certain limits and at certain periods but who, at other times, might betray the revolution. The Party furthermore formulated that the working class in order to fulfil its obligation as the leader of the revolution, must forge a revolutionary united front with other revolutionary classes and groups based on worker-peasant alliance and under the leadership of the working class.

⁵ V.I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*.

However, there was a very important shortcoming which in later days developed into Right opportunism or revisionism, namely, that the Party had not yet come to the clearest unity of minds on the principal means and the main form of struggle of the Indonesian revolution.

The Chinese revolution, the self-criticism says, has provided the lesson concerning the main form of struggle of the revolution in colonial or semi-colonial and semi-feudal countries, namely, the people's armed struggle against the armed counter-revolution. In line with the essence of the revolution as an agrarian revolution, then the essence of the people's armed struggle is the armed struggle of the peasants in an agrarian revolution under the leadership of the working class. The practice of the Chinese revolution is first and foremost the application of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions of China. At the same time, it has laid down the general law for the revolutions of the peoples in colonial or semi-colonial and semi-feudal countries.

To achieve its complete victory, it stresses, the Indonesian revolution must also follow the road of the Chinese revolution. This means that the Indonesian revolution must inevitably adopt this main form of struggle, namely, the people's armed struggle against the armed counter-revolution which, in essence, is the armed agrarian revolution of the peasants under the leadership of the proletariat.

All forms of legal and parliamentary work should serve the principal means and the main form of struggle, and must not in any way impede the process of the ripening of armed struggle.

The experience during the last fifteen years has taught us that starting from not explicitly denying the "peaceful road" and not firmly holding to the general law of revolution in colonial or semi-colonial and semi-feudal countries, the P.K.I. gradually got bogged down in parliamentary and other forms of legal struggle. The Party leadership even considered this to be the main form of struggle to achieve the strategic aim of the Indonesian revolution. The legality of the Party was not considered as one method of struggle at a given time and under certain conditions, but was rather regarded as a principle, while other forms of struggle should serve this principle. Even when counter-revolution not only has trampled underfoot the legality of the Party, but has violated the basic human rights of the Communists as well, the Party leadership still tried to defend this "legality" with all their might.

The "peaceful road" was firmly established in the Party when the Fourth Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Fifth Congress in 1956 adopted a document which approved the modern revisionist line of the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U. In such a situation, when the revisionist line was already firmly established in the Party, it was impossible to have a correct Marxist-Leninist line of strategy and tactics. The formulation of the main lines of strategy and tactics of the Party started from a vacillation between the "peaceful road" and the "road of armed revolution", in the process of which the "peaceful road" finally became dominant.

Under such conditions, the General Line of the P.K.I. was formulated by the Sixth National Congress (1959). It

reads, "To continue the forging of the national united front, and to continue the building of the Party, so as to accomplish the demands of the August Revolution of 1945." Based on the General Line of the Party, the slogan "Raise the Three Banners of the Party" was decided. These were: (1) the banner of the national united front, (2) the banner of the building of the Party, and (3) the banner of the 1945 August Revolution. The General Line was meant as the road to people's democracy in Indonesia.

The Party leadership tried to explain that the Three Banners of the Party were the three main weapons to win the people's democratic revolution which, as Comrade Mao Tse-tung has said, were "a well-disciplined Party armed with the theory of Marxism-Leninism, using the method of self-criticism and linked with the masses of the people; an army under the leadership of such a Party; a united front of all revolutionary classes and all revolutionary groups under the leadership of such a Party".⁶

Thus the second main weapon means that there must be a people's armed struggle against armed counterrevolution under the leadership of the Party. The Party leadership tried to replace this with the slogan "Raise the banner of the 1945 August Revolution".

In order to prove that the road followed was not the opportunist "peaceful road", the Party leadership always spoke of the two possibilities, the possibility of a "peaceful road" and the possibility of a non-peaceful road. They held that the better the Party prepared itself to face the possibility of a non-peaceful road, the greater would be the possibility of a "peaceful road". By doing so the Party leadership cultivated in the minds of Party members, the working class and the masses of the working people the hope for a peaceful road which in reality did not exist.

In practice, the Party leadership did not prepare the whole ranks of the Party, the working class and the masses of the people to face the possibility of a non-peaceful road. The most striking proof of it was the grave tragedy which happened after the outbreak and the failure of the September 30th Movement. Within a very short space of time, the counter-revolution succeeded in massacring and arresting hundreds of thousands of Communists and non-Communist revolutionaries who found themselves in a passive position, paralysing the organization of the P.K.I. and the revolutionary mass organizations. Such a situation surely would never happen if the Party leadership did not deviate from the revolutionary road.

The Party leadership declared, says the self-criticism that "our Party must not copy the theory of armed struggle abroad, but must carry out the Method of Combining the Three Forms of Struggle: guerrilla warfare in the countryside (especially by farm labourers and poor peasants), revolutionary actions by the workers (especially transport workers) in the cities, and intensive work among the enemy's armed

⁶ Mao Tse-tung, "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship," *Selected works*, Vol. IV.

forces". The Party leadership criticized some comrades who, in studying the experience of the armed struggle of the Chinese people, were considered seeing only its similarities with the conditions in Indonesia. On the contrary, the Party leadership put forward several allegedly different conditions that must be taken into account, until they arrived at the conclusion that the method typical to the Indonesian revolution was the "Method of Combining the Three Forms of Struggle".

To fulfil its heavy but great and noble historical mission, to lead the people's revolution against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism, the Indonesian Marxist-Leninists must firmly reject the revisionist "peaceful road", reject the "theory of the Method of Combining the Three Forms of Struggle" and hold aloft the banner of armed people's revolution. Following the example of the glorious Chinese revolution, the Indonesian Marxist-Leninists must establish revolutionary base areas; they must "turn the backward villages into advanced, consolidated base areas, into great military, political, economic and cultural bastions of the revolution".

While working for the realization of this most principal question we must also carry out other forms of struggle; armed struggle will never advance without being coordinated with other forms of struggle.

The line of Right opportunism followed by the Party leadership was also reflected in their attitude with regard to the state, in particular to the state of the Republic of Indonesia, the self-criticism says.

Based on this Marxist-Leninist teaching on state, the task of the P.K.I., after the August Revolution of 1945 failed, should have been the education of the Indonesian working class and the rest of the working people, so as to make them understand as clearly as possible the class nature of the state of the Republic of Indonesia as a bourgeois dictatorship. The P.K.I. should have aroused the consciousness of the working class and the working people that their struggle for liberation would inevitably lead to the necessity of "superseding the bourgeois state" by the people's state under the leadership of the working class, through a "violent revolution". But the P.K.I. leadership took the opportunist line that gave rise to the illusion among the people about bourgeois democracy.

The self-criticism says that the climax of the deviation from Marxist-Leninist teaching on state committed by the Party leadership was the formulation of the "theory of the two aspects in the state power of the Republic of Indonesia".

The "two-aspect theory" viewed the state and the state power in the following way:

The state power of the Republic, viewed as contradiction, is a contradiction between two opposing aspects. This first aspect is the aspect which

represents the interests of the people (manifested by the progressive stands and policies of President Sukarno that are supported by the P.K.I. and other groups of the people). The second aspect is the aspect that represents the enemies of the people (manifested by the stands and policies of the Right-wing forces and die-hards). The people's aspect has now become the main aspect and takes the leading role in the state power of the Republic.

The "two-aspect theory" obviously is an opportunist or revisionist deviation, because it denies the Marxist-Leninist teaching that "the state is an organ of the rule of a definite class which *cannot* be reconciled with its antipode (the class opposite to it)".⁷ It is unthinkable that the Republic of Indonesia can be jointly ruled by the people and the enemies of the people.

The self-criticism says that the Party leadership who wallowed in the mire of opportunism claimed that the "people's aspect" had become the main aspect and taken the hegemony in the state power of the Republic. It was as if the Indonesian people were nearing the birth of a people's power. And since they considered that the forces of the national bourgeoisie in the state power really constituted the "people's aspect", the Party leadership had done everything to defend and develop this "people's aspect". The Party leadership had altogether merged themselves in the interests of the national bourgeoisie.

By considering the national bourgeoisie the "people's aspect" in the state power of the Republic, and President Sukarno the leader of this aspect, the Party leadership erroneously recognized that the national bourgeoisie was able to lead the new-type democratic revolution. This is contrary to historical necessity and historical facts.

The Party leadership declared that the "two-aspect theory" was completely different from the "theory of structural reform"⁸ of the leadership of the revisionist Italian Communist Party. However, the fact is, theoretically or on the basis of practical realities, there is no difference between the two "theories". Both have for their starting point the "peaceful road" to socialism. Both dream of a gradual change in the internal balance of forces in the state power. Both reject the road of revolution and both are revisionist.

The anti-revolutionary "two-aspect theory" glaringly exposed itself in the statement that "the struggle of the P.K.I. with regard to the state power is to promote the pro-people aspect so as to make it bigger and dominant, and the anti-people force can be driven out from the state power".

The Party leadership even had a name for this anti-revolutionary road; they called it the road of "revolution

⁷ V.I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.

⁸ This refers to the revisionist Italian Communist Party's "theory" of pursuing gradual reforms in the present bourgeois state structure through parliamentary means.

from above and below". By "revolution from above" they meant that the P.K.I. "must encourage the state power to take revolutionary steps aimed at making the desired changes in the personnel and in the state organs". While by "revolution from below" they meant that the P.K.I. "must arouse, organize and mobilize the people to achieve the same changes". It is indeed an extraordinary phantasy! The Party leadership did not learn from the fact that the concept of President Sukarno on the formation of a co-operation cabinet (the old-type government of national coalition), eight years after its announcement, had not been realized as yet. There was even no sign that it would ever be realized, despite the insistent demands. Let alone a change in the state power!

The self-criticism stresses that to clean itself from the mire of opportunism, our Party must discard this "theory of two-aspect in the state power" and re-establish the Marxist-Leninist teaching on state and revolution.

The 5th National Congress of the Party in the main had solved theoretically the problem of the national united front. It formulated that the worker-peasant alliance was the basis of the national united front. With regard to the national bourgeoisie a lesson had been drawn on the basis of the experience during the August Revolution that this class had a wavering character. In a certain situation, the national bourgeoisie took part in the revolution and sided with the revolution, while in another situation they followed in the steps of the comprador-bourgeoisie to attack the driving forces of the revolution and betrayed the revolution (as shown by their activities during the Madiun Provocation and their approval of the Round Table Conference Agreement). Based on this wavering character of the national bourgeoisie, the Party formulated the stand that must be taken by the P.K.I., namely, to make continuous efforts to win the national bourgeoisie over to the side of revolution, while guarding against the possibility of its betraying the revolution. The P.K.I. must follow the policy of unity and struggle towards the national bourgeoisie, the self-criticism says.

Nevertheless, since the ideological weakness of subjectivism in the Party, particularly among the Party leadership, had not yet been eradicated, the Party was dragged into more and more serious mistakes, to such an extent that the Party lost its independence in the united front with the national bourgeoisie. This mistake had led to the situation in which the Party and the proletariat were placed as the appendage of the national bourgeoisie.

The self-criticism states that a manifestation of this loss of independence in the united front with the national bourgeoisie was the evaluation and the stand of the Party leadership towards Sukarno. The Party leadership did not adopt an independent attitude towards Sukarno. They had always avoided conflicts with Sukarno and, on the contrary, had greatly over-emphasized the similarities and the unity

between the Party and Sukarno. The public saw that there was no policy of Sukarno that was not supported by the P.K.I. The Party leadership went so far as to accept without any struggle the recognition to Sukarno as "the great leader of the revolution" and the leader of the "people's aspect" in the state power of the Republic. In many articles and speeches, the Party leaders frequently said that the struggle of the P.K.I. was based not only on Marxism-Leninism, but also on "the teachings of Sukarno", that the P.K.I. made such a rapid progress because it realized Sukarno's idea of Nasakom unity,⁹ etc. Even the concept of the people's democratic system in Indonesia was said to be in conformity with Sukarno's main ideas as expressed in his speech "The Birth of Pantjasila"¹⁰ on June 1, 1945.

The self-criticism repudiates the erroneous view that "to implement the Political Manifesto in a consistent manner is the same as implementing the programme of the P.K.I."

The statement that consistently implementing the Political Manifesto meant implementing the programme of the P.K.I. could only be interpreted that it was not the programme of the P.K.I. that was accepted by the bourgeoisie, but that, on the contrary, it was the programme of the national bourgeoisie which was accepted by the P.K.I., and was made to replace the programme of the P.K.I., it points out.

The self-criticism says that the abandonment of principle in the united front with the national bourgeoisie had developed even further in the so-called "General Line of the Indonesian Revolution" that was formulated as follows: "With the national united front having the workers and peasants as its pillars, the Nasakom as the core and the Pantjasila as its ideological basis, to complete the national democratic revolution in order to advance towards Indonesian Socialism." This so-called "General Line of the Indonesian Revolution" had not even the faintest smell of the revolution. Because, from the three preconditions to win the revolution, namely, a strong Marxist-Leninist Party, a people's armed struggle under the leadership of the Party, and a united front, only the united front was retained. Even then, it was not a revolutionary united front, because it was not led by the working class, nor was it based on the alliance of the working class and the peasantry under the leadership of the working class, but on the contrary it was based on the Nasakom.

The Party leadership said that "the slogan for national co-operation with the Nasakom as the core will by no means

⁹ Nasakom is an acronym derived from *Nasionalis, Agama, Komunis* (Nationalism, Religion, Communism). Sukarno put this forward as representing the unity of what he said were the three major groupings in Indonesia: the nationalists, religious believers and the communists.

¹⁰ Pantjasila were the five "principles" proclaimed by Sukarno as the basis for the bourgeois state of Indonesia: belief in god, nationalism, humanism, social justice, people's sovereignty.

obscure the class content of the national united front". This statement is incorrect. The class content of the Nasakom was the working class, the national bourgeoisie, and even elements of the compradors, the bureaucrat-capitalists and the landlords. Obviously, putting the Nasakom in the core not only meant obscuring the class content of the national united front, but radically changing the meaning of the revolutionary national united front into an alliance of the working class with all other classes in the country, including the reactionary classes, into class collaboration.

This error must be corrected. The Party must throw to the dust-bin the erroneous "General Line of the Indonesian Revolution" and return to the correct conception of a revolutionary national united front based on the alliance of the workers and peasants under the leadership of the working class.

The abandonment of principle in the united front with the national bourgeoisie was also the result of the Party's inability to make a correct and concrete analysis of the concrete situation, the self-criticism says.

The self-criticism points out that ever since the failure of the August Revolution of 1945, except in West Irian, the imperialists did not hold direct political power in Indonesia. In Indonesia, political power was in the hands of compradors and landlords who represented the interests of imperialism and the vestiges of feudalism. Besides, there was no imperialist aggression in Indonesia taking place. Under such a situation, provided that the P.K.I. did not make political mistakes, the contradiction between the ruling reactionary classes and the people would develop and sharpen, constituting the main contradiction in Indonesia. The primary task of the Indonesian revolution is the overthrow of the rule of the reactionary classes within the country who also represent the interests of the imperialists, in particular the United States imperialists. Only by taking this road can the real liquidation of imperialism and the vestiges of feudalism be realized.

By correcting the mistakes made by the Party in the united front with the national bourgeoisie it does not mean that now the Party need not unite with this class. On the basis of the worker-peasant alliance under the leadership of the working class, our Party must work to win the national bourgeois class over to the side of the revolution.

The Main Mistakes in the Organizational Field

The self-criticism says that the erroneous political line which dominated the Party was inevitably followed by an equally erroneous organizational line. The longer and the more intensive the wrong political line ruled in the Party, the greater were the mistakes in the organizational field, and the greater the losses caused by them. Right opportunism which

constituted the wrong political line of the Party in the period after 1951 had been followed by another Right deviation in the organizational field, namely, liberalism and legalism.

The line of liberalism in the organizational field manifested itself in the tendency to make the P.K.I. a Party with as large a membership as possible, a Party with a loose organization, which was called a mass Party.

It says that the mass character of the Party is not determined above all by the large membership, but primarily by the close ties linking the Party and the masses, by the Party's political line which defends the interests of the masses, or in other words by the implementation of the Party's mass line. And the mass line of the Party can only be maintained when the prerequisites determining the Party's role as the advanced detachment are firmly upheld, when the Party members are made up of the best elements of the proletariat who are armed with Marxism-Leninism. Consequently, to build a Marxist-Leninist Party which has a mass character is impossible without giving primary importance to Marxist-Leninist education.

The self-criticism points out that during the last few years, the P.K.I. had carried out a line of Party building which deviated from the principles of Marxism-Leninism in the organizational field.

The self-criticism says that this liberal expansion of Party membership could not be separated from the political line of the "peaceful road". The large membership was intended to increase the influence of the Party in the united front with the national bourgeoisie. The idea was to effect the gradual change in the balance of forces that would make it possible to completely defeat the die-hard forces, with a Party that was growing bigger and bigger, in addition to the continued policy of unity with the national bourgeoisie.

The stress was no longer laid on the education and the training of Marxist-Leninist cadres to prepare them for the revolution, for work among the peasants in order to establish revolutionary bases, but on the education of intellectuals to serve the needs of the work in the united front with the national bourgeoisie, and to supply cadres for the various positions in the state institutions that were obtained thanks to the co-operation with the national bourgeoisie. The slogan of "total integration with the peasants" had become empty talk. What was being done in practice was to draw cadres from the countryside to the cities, from the regions to the centre, instead of sending the best cadres to work in the rural areas.

To raise the prestige of the P.K.I. in the eyes of the bourgeoisie, and to make it respected as the Party of intellectuals, the 4-Year Plan stipulated that all cadres of the higher ranks must obtain academic education, cadres of the middle ranks high school education, and cadres of the lower ranks lower middle school education. For this purpose the Party had set up a great number of academies, schools and courses. So deep-rooted was the intellectualism gripping the Party leadership that all Party leaders and prominent figures of the popular movements were obliged to write four theses in order to obtain the degree of "Marxist Scientists".

The deeper the Party was plunged into the mire of opportunism and revisionism, the greater it lacked organizational vigilance and the more extensively legalism developed in the organization. The Party leadership had lost its class prejudice towards the falsehood of bourgeois democracy. All the activities of the Party indicated as if the "peaceful road" was an inevitable certainty. The Party leadership did not arouse the vigilance of the masses of Party members to the danger of the attacks by the reactionaries who were constantly on the look for the chance to strike. Due to this legalism in the organizational field, within a short span of time counter-revolution has succeeded in paralysing the P.K.I. organizationally.

Liberalism in organization had destroyed the principle of internal democracy in the Party, destroyed collective leadership and had given rise to personal leadership and personal rule, to autonomism.

In a situation when liberalism dominated the organizational line of the Party, it was impossible to realize the Party's style of work "to combine theory and practice, to keep close bonds with the masses and to conduct self-criticism". It was equally impossible to realize the method of leadership whose essence is the unity of the leadership and the masses; to realize it the leadership must give an example to the rank-and-file.

The self-criticism points out that thus, in general the wrong political line which ruled in the Party was followed by the wrong line in the organizational field which violated the principles of a Marxist-Leninist Party, destroyed the organizational foundation of the Party, namely, democratic centralism, and trampled on the Party's style of work and method of leadership.

The self-criticism emphatically points out that to build the P.K.I. as a Marxist-Leninist Party, we must thoroughly uproot liberalism in the organizational field and its ideological source. The P.K.I. must be rebuilt as a Lenin-type Party, a Party that will be capable of fulfilling its role as the advanced detachment and the highest form of class organization of the Indonesian proletariat, a Party with a historical mission of leading the masses of the Indonesian people to win victory in the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and anti-bureaucrat-capitalist revolution, and to advance towards socialism. Such a Party must fulfil the following conditions: **Ideologically**, it is armed with the theory of Marxism-Leninism, and free from subjectivism, opportunism and modern revisionism; **politically**, it has a correct programme which includes a revolutionary agrarian programme, has a thorough understanding of the problems of the strategy and tactics of the Indonesian revolution, masters the main form of struggle, namely, the armed struggle of the peasants under the leadership of the proletariat, as well as other forms of struggle, is capable of establishing a revolutionary united front of all anti-imperialist and anti-feudal classes based on the worker-peasant alliance under the leadership of the working class; **organizationally**, it is strong and has a deep root among the masses of the people, consists of trustworthy, experienced and steeled Party members who are models in the implementation of the national tasks.

Today, we are rebuilding our Party under the reign of counter-revolutionary white terror which is most cruel and ferocious. The legality of the Party and the basic human rights of the Communists have been wantonly violated. The Party, therefore, has to be organized and has to work in complete illegality. While working in complete illegality, the Party must be adept at utilizing to the full all possible opportunities to carry out legal activities according to circumstances, and to choose ways and means that are acceptable to the masses with the aim of mobilizing the masses for struggle and leading this struggle step by step to a higher stage.

The self-criticism stresses that in rebuilding the P.K.I. along the Marxist-Leninist line, the greatest attention should be devoted to the building of Party organizations in the rural areas, to the establishment of revolutionary bases.

The task to rebuild a Marxist-Leninist Party as has been stated above requires arduous and protracted work, and is full of danger, and consequently it must be carried out courageously, perseveringly, carefully, patiently and persistently.

The Way Out

The self-criticism says that once we know the weaknesses and mistakes of the Party during the period after 1951 as have been explained above, obviously what we have to do is to realize the most urgent tasks faced by the Indonesian Marxist-Leninists at the present time, the first one being the rebuilding of the P.K.I. as a Marxist-Leninist Party which is free from subjectivism, opportunism and modern revisionism.

To rebuild the P.K.I. as such a Marxist-Leninist Party, Party cadres of all levels and then all Party members must reach a unanimity of mind with regard to the mistakes made by the Party in the past, as well as concerning the new road that must be taken.

Subjectivism can be effectively combated and liquidated when the ability of the whole Party to distinguish proletarian ideology from the ideology of the petty bourgeoisie is raised, and when criticism and self-criticism is encouraged. To raise the ability of the whole Party to distinguish proletarian ideology from the ideology of the petty bourgeoisie will be possible only by intensifying the education of Marxism-Leninism. The Party must educate its members to apply the Marxist-Leninist method in analysing the political situation and in evaluating the forces of the existing classes, so that subjective analysis and evaluation can be avoided. The Party must draw the attention of the members to the importance of investigation and study of social and economic conditions, in order to be able to define the tactics of struggle and the corresponding method of work. The Party must help the members to understand that without an investigation of the actual conditions they will get bogged down in phantasy.

The self-criticism emphatically points out that the experience of the struggle waged by the Party in the past has shown how indispensable it is for the Indonesian Marxist-

Leninists, who are resolved to defend Marxism-Leninism and to combat modern revisionism, to study not only the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, but also to devote special attention to studying the Thought of Mao Tse-tung who has succeeded in brilliantly inheriting, defending and developing Marxism-Leninism to its peak in the present era.

The P.K.I. will be able to hold aloft the banner of Marxism-Leninism, only when it takes a resolute stand in the struggle against modern revisionism which today is centred around the leading group of the C.P.S.U. The fight against modern revisionism cannot be consistently carried out while, at the same time, preserving friendship with the modern revisionists. The P.K.I. must abandon the wrong attitude it held in the past with regard to the question of the relations with the modern revisionists. Loyalty to proletarian internationalism can only be manifested by a merciless stand in the struggle against modern revisionism, because modern revisionism has destroyed proletarian internationalism, and betrayed the struggle of the proletariat and the oppressed people all over the world.

In rebuilding the Party, the Indonesian Marxist-Leninists must devote their attention to the creation of the conditions to lead the armed agrarian revolution to the peasants that will become the main form of struggle to win victory for the people's democratic revolution in Indonesia. This means that the greatest attention should be paid to the rebuilding of Party organizations in the rural areas. The greatest attention must be paid to the solution of the problem of arousing, organizing and mobilizing the peasants in an anti-feudal agrarian revolution. The integration of the Party with the peasants, in particular with farm labourers and poor peasants, must be conscientiously carried out. Because, only through such an integration will the Party be able to lead the peasantry, and the peasantry, for their part, will be capable of becoming the invincible bulwark of the people's democratic revolution.

As a result of the attacks of the third white terror, Party organizations in the rural areas in general have suffered greater damage. This fact has rendered it more difficult and arduous to work in the countryside. But this does not in any way change the inexorable law that the main force of the people's democratic revolution in Indonesia is the peasantry, and its base area is the countryside. With the most resolute determination that everything is for the masses of the people, the Indonesian Marxist-Leninists will certainly be able to overcome the gravest difficulties. By having the most whole-hearted faith in the masses and by relying on the masses, the Indonesian Marxist-Leninists will certainly be able to transform the backward Indonesian villages into great and consolidated military, political and cultural bastions of the revolution.

The Indonesian peasants are the most interested in the people's democratic revolution. Because, only this revolution will liberate them from the life of backwardness and inequality as a result of feudal suppression. It is only this revolution that will give them what they have dreamt all

their lives and which will give them life: land. That is why the peasants will surely take this road of revolution for land and liberation, no matter how arduous and full of twists and turns this road will be.

Obviously, the second task of the Indonesian Marxist-Leninists at present is the creation of the necessary conditions for the armed agrarian revolution of the peasants under the leadership of the proletariat. Provided that the Indonesian Marxist-Leninists succeed in arousing, organizing and mobilizing the peasants to carry through an anti-feudal agrarian revolution, the leadership of the working class in the people's democratic revolution and the victory of this revolution are assured.

However, the Party must continue the efforts to establish a revolutionary united front with other anti-imperialist and anti-feudal classes and groups. Based on the alliance of the working class and the peasantry under the leadership of the proletariat, the Party must work to win over the urban petty bourgeoisie and other democratic forces, and must also work to win over the national bourgeoisie as an additional ally in the people's democratic revolution. The present objective conditions offer the possibility for the establishment of a broad revolutionary united front.

The military dictatorship of the Right-wing army generals Nasution and Suharto is the manifestation of the rule by the most reactionary classes in the country, namely, the comprador-bourgeoisie, the bureaucrat-capitalists and the landlords. The internal reactionary classes under the leadership of the clique of Right-wing army generals exercise dictatorship over the Indonesian people, and act as watch-dogs guarding the interests of imperialism, in particular United States imperialism, in Indonesia. Consequently, the coming into power of the military dictatorship of the Right-wing army generals will certainly serve to intensify the suppression and exploitation of the Indonesian people by imperialism and feudalism.

The military dictatorship of the Right-wing army generals represents the interests of only a very small minority who suppresses the overwhelming majority of the Indonesian people. That is why the military dictatorship of the Right-wing army generals will certainly meet with resistance from the broad masses of the people.

Thus, the third urgent task faced by the Indonesian Marxist-Leninists is to establish the revolutionary united front with all anti-imperialist and anti-feudal classes and groups based on the worker-peasant alliance under the leadership of the working class.

Thus, it has become clear that to win victory for the people's democratic revolution, the Indonesian Marxist-Leninists must hold aloft the Three Banners of the Party, namely:

The first banner, the building of a Marxist-Leninist Party which is free from subjectivism, opportunism and modern revisionism.

The second banner, the armed people's struggle which in essence is the armed struggle of the peasants in an anti-feudal agrarian revolution under the leadership of the working

class.

The third banner, the revolutionary united front based on the worker-peasant alliance under the leadership of the working class.

The tasks forced by the Indonesian Marxist-Leninists are very arduous. They have to work under the most savage and barbarous terror and persecution which have no parallel in history. However, the Indonesian Marxist-Leninists do not have the slightest doubt that, by correcting the mistakes made by the Party in the past, they are now marching along the correct road, the road of people's democratic revolution. No matter how protracted, tortuous and full of difficulties, this is the only road leading to a free and democratic New Indonesia, an Indonesia that will really belong to the Indonesian people. For this noble cause, we must have the courage to traverse the long road.

The self-criticism points out that the Indonesian Marxist-Leninists and revolutionaries on the basis of their own experience in struggle, do not have the slightest doubt about the correctness of Comrade Mao Tse-tung's thesis that "the imperialists and all reactionaries are paper tigers. In appearance they are terrifying, but in reality they are not so powerful. From a long-term point of view, it is not the reactionaries but the people who are really powerful". The military dictatorship of the Right-wing army generals which is now in power is also a paper tiger. In appearance they are powerful and terrifying. But in reality they are not so powerful, because they are not supported but on the contrary are opposed by the people, because their ranks are beset by contradictions, and because they are quarrelling among themselves for a bigger share of their plunder and for greater power. The imperialists, in particular the United States imperialists who are the mainstay of the military dictatorship of the Right-wing army generals, are also paper tigers. In appearance they are powerful and terrifying, but in reality they are weak and nearing their complete downfall. The weakness of imperialism, in particular United States imperialism, is vividly demonstrated by their inability to conquer the heroic Vietnamese people and to check the tide of the anti-imperialist

struggle waged by the people all over the world, including the American people themselves, who are furiously dealing blows at the fortresses of imperialism.

From a strategic point of view, the imperialists and all reactionaries are weak, and consequently we must despise them. By despising the enemies strategically we can build up the courage to fight them and the confidence to defeat them. At the same time we must take them all seriously, take into full account of their strength tactically, and refrain from taking adventurist steps against them.

The Indonesian Marxist-Leninists will spare neither efforts nor energy to fulfil the best wishes of the world Marxist-Leninists by resolutely defending Marxism-Leninism and struggling against modern revisionism, by working still better for the liberation of their people and country, and for the world proletarian revolution.

The Indonesian Marxist-Leninists who are united in mind and determined to take the road of revolution, by putting their wholehearted faith in the people, by relying on the people, by working courageously, perseveringly, conscientiously, patiently, persistently and vigilantly, will surely be able to accomplish their historical mission, to lead the people's democratic revolution, to smash the military dictatorship of the Right-wing army generals and to set up a completely new power, the people's democratic dictatorship. With the people's democratic dictatorship, the joint power of anti-imperialist and anti-feudal classes and groups under the leadership of the working class, the Indonesian people will completely liquidate imperialism and the vestiges of feudalism, build a free and democratic new society, and advance toward Socialism where the suppression and exploitation of man by man no longer exists.

Let us unite closely to take the road of revolution which is illuminated by the teaching of Marxism-Leninism, the road leading to the liberation of the Indonesian people and proletariat, the road leading to Socialism.

(Bold-face emphases and quotation marks are in the original.)