On the Crash of '87 and the Crisis of the Late '80s

By Raymond Lotta

Gulf Escalation

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

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By Raymond Lotta
Three Main Points

by Bob Avakian
Chairman of the RCP, USA

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

1. The whole system we now live under is based on exploitation — here and all over the world. It is completely worthless and no basic change for the better can come about until this system is overthrown.

2. Many different groups will protest and rebel against things this system does, and these protests and rebellions should be supported and strengthened. Yet it is only those with nothing to lose but their chains who can be the backbone of a struggle to actually overthrow this system and create a new system that will put an end to exploitation and help pave the way to a whole new world.

3. Such a revolutionary struggle is possible. There is a political Party that can lead such a struggle, a political Party that speaks and acts for those with nothing to lose but their chains: The Revolutionary Communist Party, USA.

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

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

As the White House meeting shows, this was a very calculated move on the part of the U.S. rulers. But the attack was anything but “nimble” — a more appropriate code name would have been “Operation Anti-Murderer” or “Operation Overkill.” Four destroyers were deployed against the oil platform, located at the Rashadat oil fields about 75 miles off the coast of Iran. Two frigates were placed between the platform and the mainland, and jet fighters flew overhead. The destroyers then fired 1,085 rounds of high-explosive 5-inch shells at the target in an 85-minute barrage. The U.S. Navy claimed that it broadcast a warning to the platform crew about 20 minutes before the attack began. However, according to a report in the Chicago Sun-Times, Iranian crewmen still on the platform broadcast a plea for the shelling to stop so the crewmen could be removed, but the attack continued. (In the September 21 attack on the Iranian ship Iran Ajr, one of the crewmen killed by gatling-gun fire from U.S. helicopters was trying to flee on a rubber lifeboat.)

This was a brutal display of massive military power by the U.S. It was also the contemptible tactics of a bully who shows off his muscles by knocking around a weaker victim. The U.S. warships, after all, had mobilized a small armada and a military build-up in this relatively small body of water? Not World War! The U.S. Pretext for Attack

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

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

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

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

By saying that the destruction of the oil platform was a response to the incident in the Kuwaiti harbor, the Reagan administration expanded its own definition of the role of the Middle East Task Force in the Gulf. Previously, the U.S. government said that its naval convoys were placed between the platform and the mainland. The attack is certain to raise the level of tensions in the Persian Gulf even higher. Iran’s Islamic Republic regime vowed to retaliate for the destruction of the oil platform. On October 22 Kuwait’s main supertanker oil loading facility was damaged by a missile attack. The U.S. government said that the damage was caused by a “Silkworm” missile fired by Iranian forces.

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

Many More Defeats for U.S. Imperialism!

World Revolution, Not World War!
Escalation

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

A "Calibrated" Attack

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

The fact that such deadly military options are being matter-of-factly discussed in the media is seemingly taken by everyone concerned by the Reagan administration officials who shows where things stand in the Gulf. The situation could quickly escalate to new levels of reactionary violence by the U.S.

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

One factor in this choice was the logistic difficulties for the U.S. military in attacking targets on the mainland. For example, an aerial bombing of the Fao Peninsula in the northern Gulf by attack jets would have involved complicated mid-air refueling of A-6 and F-18 aircraft based on the carrier Ranger. Moreover, U.S. forces could have been shot down by Hawk anti-aircraft missiles - the very same weapons sold to the Khomenei regime by Oliver North and company. Such an incident would reopen the political issues of Iran/Contra and be a highly embarrassing setback for the Reagan administration. There are also reports that some Iranian hand-held antitank weapons that the U.S. sends to pro-Western guerrillas in Afghanistan have ended up in the hands of the Iranian military.

Another factor in not attacking the Iranian mainland is that the U.S. is building up on Iran within the overall framework of trying to force the Iranian comprador bourgeois rulers more firmly into the Western orbit. An editorial in the Wall Street Journal ap- plauded the attack on the Rashadat oil platform and also cautioned the administration to keep this larger framework in mind: "Ayatollah or no Ayatollah, Iran is and will remain the most valuable sovereign land mass in the Persian Gulf. That is why we remain perplexed that despite the administration's assertion of neutrality, it is widely perceived as tilting toward Iraq. Administration officials do indeed understand that Ayatollah Khomeini's bloody theocratic terror is the act of an aberrant regime by Oliver North and company. The U.S. certainly does not want to get involved in the Iran-Iraq land war at this point, but further deterioration of the Iraqi regime's position may compel the U.S. to intervene more direct-

In the aftermath of the attack, on the rapidly escalating events demand that all those who are opposed to U.S. aggression make their voices heard in protest against the U.S. attack on Iran and military build-up in the Gulf.
Deadly risks are being taken in the Persian Gulf. The United States has sent a war-ready armada there, now numbering forty-seven ships with 29,000 military personnel. On the northern shore of that sea, the desperate war between Iran and Iraq rages on, eroding a stalemate that could give way anytime. A traffic jam of military forces from almost a dozen other powers crowd into this waterway, with a thousand aircraft and more than 750 warships. For half a year now, violent confrontations have happened weekly, like footfalls leading toward some wider war.

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

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

- First came an offer they couldn’t refuse when it was revealed that Kuwait had asked the Soviet Union to protect Kuwaiti shipping. From the Gulf, a junior member of the tag-team, Iraq, pummels Iranian military and economic targets from the air. The intended message to the Khomeini regime: you cannot win militarily against an Iraq bolstered by the big Western powers; your best option is to accept the Western embrace fully and quietly.
- This gunboat politics straight up and for that reason alone demands to be loudly opposed. It should also be clear that this drawn-out military confrontation may careen off in unpredictable directions. Reagan insists that there is no danger of a wider war, not even with Iran, let alone with the Soviet Union. But few can easily believe this: no serious discussion of the Persian Gulf takes place without the words “flashpoints” and “tinderbox.”

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

For all these reasons, there should be intense outrage and powerful protest over the U.S. aggressions in the Persian Gulf! But confusion holds sway where lines of responsibility are ill-defined and wherever it sees fit.

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

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

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

At this point it is unclear who is laying mines where in the Persian Gulf. Iran has said that it is laying mines in its own territorial waters. And the fact that the U.S. media constantly repeats that “Iran has been caught red-handed” in international waters does not make it so. “Iranian mining” may be as fictitious as “Libyan hit squads.” The possibility of others laying mines in the shipping lanes, including the United States itself, cannot be ruled out. Furthermore, it is typical of the U.S. that it brags that this Third World country has small military means to strike back at ultramodern U.S. forces and then screams in holy outrage when forty-year-old antique weapons are found bobbing in the waters. But the thing is clear: the main military power waging the “tanker war” is not Iran but Iraq. It was Iraq which started the tanker war in 1981 by attacking ships
Ohio Students Unite to Protest U.S. Moves in Gulf

Urgent Call for Seattle Forum

Seattle Press Release

Soweto Festival and Berkeley Youth Clampdown
Partial List of Endorsers of the Spirit of Soweto Festival:

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

*For identification purposes only.
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Performers at the Spirit of Soweto Festival Include:

UPSKANK • MICHAEL MCSHANE • OLIVER X
LOS COMPAS • JOHN O’NEAL • TOM KENNY • WAZOBIA

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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7
The financial area is probably next to nuclear war, the kind of area that can get out of control and once out of control cannot be contained and will probably do more to upset the civilized world than anything else we can think of.

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

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

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

It was the worst day in the entire history of the New York Stock Market, worse than the 1929 crash. On Monday, October 19, 1987 the Dow Jones average fell by 508 points. This was a 20 percent drop. In one day, 600 million shares of stock were traded, $500 billion was lost. One-half of the gains of the bull market of 1982-1987 were wiped out in a single day! The panic spread quickly — to the London, Tokyo, and Hong Kong exchanges. That same day the U.S. carried out a raid in the Persian Gulf. The markets grew even more jittery. Talk of recession, depression, financial collapse spread. Finance ministers were meeting in secret sessions. The Reagan bubble of artificial prosperity had burst. And the Reagan presidency had been dealt what might be its crippling blow. The experts are hard at work trying to give you the blame every which way. For the rest of the week the markets roller-coasted. The atmosphere is nothing less than crushed. But you want to know how crazy the system really is, and why it must be abolished and not simply reformed? The simple fact is that what happened on Black Monday is at once an inevitable outgrowth of finance capitalism and a necessary mechanism of adjustment. Right from the get, it is necessary to explain what was not the cause of this collapse. It was not the computers that executed massive orders instantaneously when prices fell. It is obvious, they were not programmed to respond to certain economic signals. It was not John Q. Public panic buying. Some 80 percent of trading on the stock market is done by institutions — by several large brokerage houses and the like. Indeed, the huge sell-offs was precipitated when some of these big institutional investors attempted to cash in on their stocks. This was the big refrigerator acting. It was domestic and foreign capital. And if it was panic, it was panic within the bourgeoisie. It was a gigantic vote of no-confidence in the current state of affairs. Which brings us to the most important point. The crash was not principally caused by forces internal to the stock market, whether this be over-valued stocks or trading abuses. Even if the stock market could somehow bounce back, this wouldn't provide the basis for any sustained economic growth. Because what happened on Black Monday was a reflection of deeper, underlying problems in the economic and political realties. It is these larger problems that are the focus of this article.

The Western Alliance and Economic Stability

The immediate cause of investor anxiety was the appearance of the breakdown in policy coordination between the United States, Japan, and West Germany. Back in February of this year the major Western imperialist powers had agreed to work toward concerted stabilization of their economies. The United States would work to reduce its twin budget and trade deficits. Japan and West Germany would work to stimulate their economies, in order to draw in imports from the United States and to reduce their trade surpluses. But the U.S. trade performance through October of this year was not substantially better. At the same time, there was more and more bickering between the three countries over exchange rates, interest rates, and trade policies in general. Investors feared that the disintegration of monetary and trade agreements would send the financial markets into turmoil, and that the dollar would drop precipitously in value, thereby wiping out the value of dollar-denominated assets. If the U.S. and other countries raised interest rates to defend the value of their currencies, this, it was feared, would slow the world economy down even more. So large blocks of stock were now being sold off, investors wanted to beat the inevitable decrease in stock values and put their money into safer, more likely investments. This is when mob psychology set in. Once these big sell-offs took place, everyone moved to get out before it was too late.

But the bigger question is this. Why has it proven so difficult for the United States, Japan, and West Germany to work out their problems, to manage their way through trade and currency difficulties? The answer is two-fold. On the one hand, there is the condition of the world economy. While it is not in recession, growth is extremely sluggish. Western Europe has grown at less than 3 percent a year for the last six years. Unemployment in West Germany now stands at 9 percent and the economy is barely growing. Even Japan, a relative dynamo, is beginning to experience excess industrial capacity. The United States was able to engineer a recovery from the 1981-82 downturn, and has been able to prolong some measure of growth.* But weaknesses are very apparent. Investment in plant and equipment, when inflation is taken into account, actually declined last year in the Continued on page 10

Late '80s

By Raymond Lotta

The Stock Market: What Is It?

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

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

In the most basic sense the stock market is one way that capitalists raise (or borrow) money to finance expansion or modernization. A corporation issues stock. The purchaser of this stock is not taking ownership of a amount of machines or factories of the corporation. The owner of the stock is buying the right to share in the dividend payments made by the corporation. The prices of stock market shares represent, in the final analysis, an estimate of future profitability. But future surplus value production is subject to various factors: there is competition, new technologies, ups and downs in the economy, and so on. So there is a built-in element of risk and uncertainty. Moreover, and this is the rub, these claims to a share of future surplus value production are themselves marketable: they can be sold and resold. Thus, their prices are shaped by forces other than just the conditions of surplus value production. Stock traders are ceaselessly maneuvering for short-term advantage: by trading in the stocks of companies facing buy-outs, by turning temporary price discrepancies into profits, and so on. But, again, what is being bought and sold is not real capital but titles and duplicates of titles of ownership, which themselves have no value, only prices.

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

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

Three points need to be made in sum-

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United States. There are no signs of any improvement in the mass debt crisis Third World. Countries like Mexico and Brazil totter on the edge of bankruptcy. And as the U.S. keeps adding to its debt. Against a backdrop of slow growth it is not surprising that the open window system that was built up during the 1970s remaining World War 2 has started to shave. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that coordination has been hard to come by.

The second reason that coordination has been so difficult to achieve has to do with who does the coordinating. Over the course of the post-war period the United States has played the leading role in fashioning the structures and institutions of the world economy. Its ability to do so rested on its economic, political, and military power. Japan's relative strength has seriously eroded. Its rate of growth since the war is not that far below that of West Germany and Japan. Its share in world trade has declined sharply. Its date of capital formation is no longer today than it was in 1979. The dollar's dominance has slipped during the last decade. In 1981 the United States was the world's largest creditor; today, it is the world's largest debtor.

On the other hand the Japanese economy is complexly replicated by a greater vigor and efficiency. Indeed, one of the most striking trends of the 1980s has been the emergence of Japan as the world's greatest capital exporter and as a major financial power. Japan's relative weakness has grown to the point that it is now half the size of the U.S.'s. The yen is already the second most important currency in foreign exchange markets. The interbank market for yen, even as their linkages grow, is a defining feature of this decade. But Japan cannot play the orchester role of the United States. Dependence on imported raw materials means that a deeper recession in Japan and the yen is still limited in its global role. And, quite obviously, Japan does not have the military strength of the U.S.

All of this would be serreous enough. But in recent years the U.S. has added a new twist to the problem. The untried United States national debt of the U.S. tripled over the last seven years (it's now close to $2 trillion). The debt is at its highest level in twenty-five years. The budget deficit in 1986 stood at $221 billion. The highest level in twenty-five years. The budget deficit in 1986 stood at $221 billion. The closest interlocking of West European, Japanese, and U.S. capital serves to bolster the cohesion of the bloc. (See Figure 2). The bull market of 1982-87 always had a manic quality, it was a nervous boom set against the chances of an uncertain domestic and world economy. It could not go on much longer. And as strange as it may seem, the crash that took place last week will in part play a purging and correcting function for the system. Paper values had grown away out of line with real values (see the box “The Stock Market: What Is It?”). Now they will be brought into closer correspondence. Some less efficient capitals may be bankrupted. Capital will grow larger and more concentrated, as those companies that did not have the cushion to absorb

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Goetz Sentence
Mini Sentence, Maximum Outrage

On October 19, 1987, a subway train deranged seven-year-old Barry Stonick while he was shooting four Black youths. Last June Goetz was acquitted of attempted murder charges. In the court and in the media, it was not Goetz who was put on trial but rather the four Black youths who were depicted as "criminals" who deserved "what they got." The only charge Goetz was convicted of was illegally possession of a firearm. New Goetz, who openly admits that the weapon used in the shooting was his, who was never before given a sentence of six months in jail. The whole trial has been a message broadcast to other monsters like Goetz—open season on Black people. The slap on the wrist on Goetz in the sentencing just adds a sickening postscript to that message. Next time, take with a thimbleful of salt. The judge told a packed courtroom, "A no-jail sentence would violate public morality." Of course, O.J. Crane wasn't talking about deterring anyone from shooting Black people. The whole Goetz affair has been a big part of the reactivity, pogromist atmosphere against youth of oppressed nationalities that has been building in society.
The courtroom and hallway outside it were jam-packed the day Goetz was sentenced. The attorneys for the family of Darrell Cabey—William Kunstler, Ron Kuby—got up to come to the courtroom to press for Goetz's jailing. Cabey was shot in the skull by a stray bullet during the new parade with a severed spinal cord. Among other people there to denounce the Goetz shootings and the sham trial were Carl Dix, spokesperson for the ICP USA, Rev. A. Shaker, Imam of the Islamic Cultural Center, Activists from Refuse and Resist! were there to join in the protest and pass out picket signs to the media. Carl Dix said, "Goetz, Black Youth, Refuse and Resist!" After the jury announced the sentence, William Kunstler stood up in court and requested that the judge render the sentence at the same time with the trial. Why Goetz should get a mandatory one year in jail is incomprehensible. The judge replied that he was aware of Kunstler's opinion, and he made clear he didn't want to hear it again. One young Black man disrupted the proceedings by standing up and saying "Get Goetz!" The judge said, "[Goetz] can do a mandatory year."
After the sentence was handed down, discussions and debate continued outside in the hallway. The attorneys for Cabey's family said they were glad to see that the judge was not going against them but with them, but they said why Goetz should get a mandatory one year in jail is incomprehensible. The judge added, "The message still seems to be that it's all right to kill Black people as long as you don't do it with an illegal handgun."
Many were also reactionaries who were surprised and upset that Goetz received any jail sentence at all. Barry Stonick, Goetz's lawyer, said, "I think Mr. Goetz has been victimized one more time."
The Guardian (London), which gave a good luck wrench to Goetz, opposed the sentencing. Goetz's appeal as an "underdog" has only been strengthened among reactionaries in society with this sentence. But for all the buffing by such people, Goetz is now slated to go to jail until after an appeal of the weapons conviction. He remains free on the streets. According to the New York Times, Goetz's six months can be knocked down to 120 days for "good behavior," minus the nine days he spent in jail after his arrest. Whether he finally goes to the slammer in his next 120 days or ends up scoop net, there are Goetz fans who see him as a "hero."
It is also true that the fact the ruling-class authorities weren't able to get Goetz off the hook completely points to the precariousness of their situation. They clearly viewed his sentencing with much concern. It was repeatedly put off for several months while city officials worried about a "long" and "hot" summer. An official reported just last time, Goetz's lawyer added, "The message still seems to be that it's all right to kill Black people as long as you don't do it with an illegal handgun."
The judge said, "The message still seems to be that it's all right to kill Black people as long as you don't do it with an illegal handgun."

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

Yoichi Fanahashi
Economic specialist of a leading Japanese daily

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

Johnny Carson

Crash '87

Continued from page 10

The shock hit the world with no under or get grabbed up. It is possible that new forms of regulation will be instituted, curbing some of the outrageous excesses of the immediate past.

Looking Ahead

But this process is secondary to the fundamental change in the role of the world economy. The stock markets may be the present vantage point of things. As an immediate result of what happened last week, many financial transactions will be more difficult to consummate, the pace of economic activity will slow, and new financial problems will undoubtedly arise.

Is this 1929? Obviously the stock markets have always surged at great change. At the same time new regulatory structures and institutional mechanisms have been developed, and failures have evolved. But two things must be stressed. First, the stock and financial markets are both far more concentrated and globalized than they were in the 1920s. Huge blocks of capital were in the 1920s. Huge blocks of capital are both far more concentrated and globalized today.

Each of the four possibilities noted above would result from this. The fact is that at this point the Reagan team neither enjoys the economic confidence of its alliance partners nor possesses the political confidence and capacity to undertake decisive and far-reaching policies. The Reagan presidency has been gravely weakened through Iran/Contra and now, its economic policy will be to try to prevent a massive flight from the dollar in the face of falling interest rates. The financial markets themselves are reacting even more sensitively to these flashpoints. Each of the four possibilities noted above exists in theory, but in practice it is highly unlikely that any of them will materialize. The political and economic situation presents other contradictions and constraints. The United States and the Soviet Union are on collision course towards world war. The economic problems of the Western imperialist powers and the spasm of crises can only add to the compulsion to forcibly redraw the world and could in the process provoke a world war. This is the sequence of events leading to world war. The world is a very dangerous place in 1987. It is the case that if the economy is not dealt with forcefully the world situation of imperialism will be comics. the world situation of imperialism will be comics. the world situation of imperialism will be comics.

A Final Thought

The conventional wisdom of capitalism has it that the common good is furthered through the pursuit of private ends. Individuals set out to maximize their private gains and society as a whole will benefit. This is what the stock market is supposedly about—it's there for all to play. But we should note that the bull market of 1982-87 had its counterpart in the destruction of Black people and polarization of wealth, the epidemic of homelessness, and a significant decline of those of a dyspeptic attack on Black people.

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

The United States, West Germany, and Japan could take extraordinary economic measures to maintain and repair some of the damage. Even if such intervention took place, it is highly unlikely that it will end the political-military world situation. The United States and the Soviet Union are on collision course towards world war. The economic problems of the Western imperialist powers and the spasm of crises can only add to the compulsion to forcibly redraw the world and could in the process provoke a world war. This is the sequence of events leading to world war. The world is a very dangerous place in 1987. It is the case that if the economy is not dealt with forcefully the world situation of imperialism will be comics. the world situation of imperialism will be comics. the world situation of imperialism will be comics.

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Houston Proletarians

Continued from page 6

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

The governments of the world are not going to deceive us with the promise of peace. There is never going to be peace if we don’t completely wipe out this rotten system and replace it with another one that is going to serve the real interests of the worldwide proletariat. We can do this, it is in our hands to make it like this.

We will unite around the slogan of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, “Prevent war world, step up the struggle for revolution throughout the world.” And we will also unite around the slogan of Mao “Either revolution will prevent [world] war or [world] war will give rise to revolution!”

An immigrant proletarian living in Houston, Texas

To the RW:

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

Hawaii Forum on the Gulf

Honolulu, Hawaii. On October 19 Revolution Books sponsored a forum titled, “Conflict in the Persian Gulf — Flashpoint for World War 3?” Flyers announced the forum internationally. The presentation concluded by pointing out how the U.S. is contributing to the outbreak of war, and stressing the demands places on all who wish to prevent world war. Two speakers, both veterans of the U.S. (and NBAU) chapter and a member of the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade (RCYB), gave the presentation.

The discussion that followed sharpened the discussion of the impact of the day’s events. One woman who worked downtown told of going to the state court building and seeing the preparations for the war and stressing the demands this places on all who wish to prevent world war. Two short statements were made by a young woman from the local No Business as Usual (NBAU) chapter and a member of the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade (RCYB).

One man at the forum ridiculed the idea that the imperialists were behind the tensions and dangers in the Gulf and argued that they stemmed more from “centuries-old religious conflicts,” others also took on this view stressing how this feeds the chauvinist excuse that “those people over there are fanatics” and therefore people should not oppose what the U.S. is doing. One woman who is part Hawaiian told of how military recruiters were constantly calling for her 16-year-old son. And a high school senior also talked of how last day he had gotten her first call from the recruiters.

Several people gave examples of how rising tensions are forcing people to grasp with political and practical questions — from NBAU youth trying to find ways to influence their classmates, to immigrant Filipinos who have been discussing the threat of nuclear war and their responsibility to translate key RW articles into Ilocano so other immigrants can read the paper’s analysis.

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

Rebel Youth Contingent

On Saturday, October 10 a demonstration was held in Cleveland to protest aid to apartheid South Africa. The rally and march was called by a broad coalition, The October 10th Mobilization on Central America and South Africa, and was endorsed by local university officials, anti-apartheid forces, religious forces, and peace groups from northeast Ohio. Some 300 people came out, including many members of the campus college and high school students, and a substantial number of Black proletarians. The impact of Contragate was evident as filing clerks huddled around radios listening for news on “the war.”

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Correction

In last week’s RW, in the article “Krausberg Became Harami” on page 11, column 1, paragraph 1, the first sentence should read: On the other hand, the police press in an occupier ing army.
Are You Ready for the Future?
Crisis, Response—
and More

Persian Gulf: The Risk of War

Continued from page 5

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

This spring, after the United States started escorting convoys of oil tankers in and out of Kuwait, a 25-day cease-fire developed in the Iran-Iraq war. And with it came a lull in the tanker war. On August 10 it was Iraq which reopened the Gulf coast. These countries have supposedly been neutral in the Iran-Iraq war. In practice they have all—especially Kuwait—been deeply involved in backing Iraq, often at American instigation.

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

In crisis times, like those of the past week, many people come seeking out the analysis of the Revolutionary Worker and seeking to unite as well with the RCP/USA in political action in response to world events. The RCP/USA welcomes this, and wants very much to see this increase. But at the same time, the RCP believes that something, something more, is required of those who really want to affect things. And times of crisis point this out:

While strong political response is needed to aid such crises, more is required than just a repeating cycle of crisis and response. An end is due, and overdue, for the system that produces such crises—and which makes life a daily misery for billions worldwide. The problem is to make that revolution, because without revolution, and if you want to do that, then you must join, build, and support the organization that is preparing to do just that in this country—the Revolutionary Communist Party.

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And it opened the possibility that Sad Combat Information center aboard an Aegli cruiser. Soviet at the time. And as the war drag spare parts, for intelligence, for supplies. on the Iraqi regime which was more pro-
leverage both on the Iranian regime and said, "the premier strategic prize in the and for its rival the Soviet Union.
order to place tremendous pressure on Khomeini's Islamic Republic. Through began with American encouragement of military confrontations with Iran and, even with the serious pressures and others, including the possibility of acquiring U.S. military bases in the region.

Willy different "Iran initiatives" have flowed from Washington these last years. But, however American tactics may twist, the underlying remains to consolidate as the dominant power in Iran. The United States has used dual tac-
ries of "boat and barge" on the Islamic Republican, usually all at the same time. They seek to use external pressure to "soften up" the Iranian regime, without being drawn so deeply into confrontation.

And this bloody war has been a "tiger by the tail" for the Iranian regime. It has strengthened their position inside Iran, and even with the serious pressures from Western imperialism, it is now very difficult for them to let go of this tiger. Faced with the possibility that major new alignments may break loose in the Gulf, the United States has been forced to intrude directly into the heart of the storm. With missiles, nukes, and fighter jets crammed aboard its armada, the American government pursues a single-minded goal: shoring up its dominance of this region, by any means necessary. It is a very risky thing to do — for the whole world.

But the Soviet Union does not seem to be directly involved in the Persian Gulf situation. Where is the imminent danger of war in this regional crisis?

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

More important, far more powerful Soviet military forces are fully present on the scene and weigh heavily in the military and political considerations of all powers in the region. Whereas the United States has to strain the military infrastructure of its empire and alliances to sustain a war-
ready strike force in the Gulf, this region lies close to the Soviet Union. Huge Soviet armies are massed on its southern borders; nuclear missiles, air-
craft, and some 500,000 combat troops are within striking distance of the Gulf. Plus some 100,000 Soviet troops on Iran's eastern border, in Afghanistan. And the Soviet Union is becoming in-
creasingly active politically in the Persian Gulf region. For now the Soviets are playing a cagy and comparatively low-
key game. But the very unstable situation in the Gulf combined with the underlying U.S.-Soviet antagonism produces an un-
predictable mix.

On the surface it might seem that the Soviet Union and the U.S. have some parallel interests in the Gulf and that the contradictions between them are not as threatening as those between U.S. and Iran. And it is true that the Soviet Union does not want a clear-cut Iranian victory over Iraq either. But behind the words of mutual interest and the sharing of regional in-
terests are intense rivalry and jockeying for position. Fundamentally, the target-
ing of any particular regime in the region by one imperialist or the other is not what is driving the pumpings of warships in the Gulf. Each side — West and East — is pushing and maneuvering to resolve the Gulf situation in terms most favorable to itself and most unfavorable to the other side.

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

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

Refuged Kuwaiti tanker Bridgerton follows U.S. Navy ship.

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

No, the Democrats are doing a circus act — objecting and going along. Some like Sam Nunn publicly criticized the reflagging policy, but now that the U.S. fleet is in the Gulf and the reflagging of Kuwaiti ships is accomplished, the Democrats agree that it is impossible for the U.S. to leave. On May 21 the Senate voted to extend, with relatively little debat-
ion and deployment of a massive U.S. armada to the Persian Gulf? No! It was to require the administration to notify Congress about how the fleet was plan-
ing to defend itself. Other votes follow-
ed. The result of these votes was a four- to six-day delay in the reflagging operation which gave the administration extra time for consider-
ation by buying time to plan the operation without appearing indecisive, since they "were just going along with the wishes of Congress." The New York Times pointed out that these resolutions "would have "no practical effect" even if passed. And Democratic Les Aspin distin-
ushed himself when he loudly suggested to Reagan with the War Powers Act?

As Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, pointed out: "Any attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an attack on the vital interests of the United States of America. The U.S. has a number of forces, many means necessary, including military force. "Vital interests" is a code word for areas in which the United States has major interests.
U.S. will defend by first use of nuclear weapons. In a note to Carter in 1980 (Zbigniew Brzezinski), the national security advisor, wrote that the Iran-Iraq war was a potential "long-range threat to the region" but that "the threat to the Gulf" given a unique opportunity to consolidate our security position.

And it has been revealed that during the takeover of the U.S. embassy in 1980, a story of Soviet troop movements on the Iran border gave rise to open discussion in the National Security Council of the United States on the option of using nuclear weapons.

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

Which Iranians? If you are talking about the masses of Iranian people, they are quite rationally anti-American. The record of the United States in Iran is long and bloody. The people remember the U.S.-backed Shah and the armed forces which massacred 10,000 Iranian people in one day in 1978. They remember his regime which came complete with apartheid in South Africa stand clearly delude themselves into believing that the masses had risen up against the Shah would "criticize the Great Satan" too or that they wouldn't stay in power very long. And this is a big problem for the Islamic Republic because they are actually trying to maneuver their way to some kind of arrangement with Western imperialism. In fact, under the current religious leadership, the regime was prevented from consolidating the political, economic, and social roots of the Iranian revolution, along with the domestic reactionary classes. And since they have consolidated their power in the blood of Iranian revolutionaries, the Islamic Republic has proven quite willing to talk turkey with the imperialists of the West and, to a lesser extent, flirt with the imperialists of the East.

But saying "I don't like Khomeini" cannot justify silence and inaction in the face of United States attacks on Iran. If you hate Khomeini because he has betrayed the highest aspirations of the masses of people who made 1979 Iranian revolution, because his regime brutally assassinated Kurds and other minority nationalities, because he promoted feudal discipline, systematically reinforced the oppressed status of women, and murdered Iranian communists, how does it assist the Iranian regime which came complete with those "allies." They consider that raising protest against U.S. aggression in the Middle East would be divisive of patient constructed relations. Others have alliances to protect with pro-Soviet forces who for their own reasons have a "blind spot" for the Persian Gulf. As a result, some people have allowed "Middle East issues" to be simply "read out of the agenda" of major anti-anti-interventionist coalitions. Doesn't the lack of widespread public protest over the Persian Gulf intervention reveal the unacceptable political cost of these strategies and the danger of such political loyalty to whatever is acceptable to those in power or whatever seems possible in the most narrow sense of the word?! Are anti-interventionist forces suddenly to say that some imperialist interventions are to be condemned and condemned but other provocative military aggression is to be passed over in virtual silence? Shouldn't everyone who opposes U.S. intervention in Central America or apartheid in South Africa stand clearly opposed to U.S. aggression in the Gulf? What use would such an inflexible, compromised movement be when even the immediate future forecasts to be full of uncredible military acts on a world scale?

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

And to those who see the stakes and feel paralyzed, to those who ask the Question: How do we oppose such an awesome threat as nuclear war? We say straight up: only revolution in large and/or strategic parts of the world can really stop such a war. But only by opposing every outrage, starting with the acts committed by "our own." U.S. government like the aggression in the Persian Gulf, can we build the kind of movement needed to stop these gangsters from ripping apart the entire planet to preserve the American way of life. This is the issue. What will our answer be?
Contribute to the 1987 RCP Fund Drive

Many deeds cry out to be done. Thousands upon thousands of dollars are needed to build the party and support its work. One facet of our work that requires funding:

**AN IMPORTANT NEW BOOK**

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

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

*Reflections, Sketches, and Provocations* is the title of a collection of articles and essays written over the last eight years. Part social and cultural commentary, part theoretical intervention, and part strategic analysis, this volume is a kind of political compass of the 1980s. Avakian ranges over such issues as Reaganism and the rise of the right, trends among Black people, problems of revolution in the Third World, and the growing danger of world war. Consistently fresh and vibrant in his perceptions, Avakian can look at a movie like *Fort Apache, The Bronx* and launch into a discussion of liberalism; he can take the opening lines of a Thanksgiving Day speech by Ronald Reagan and tear apart its historical, indeed even its geological, assumptions; or he can contrast two different kinds of “festivals” occurring simultaneously: a rebellion in the Black community of Miami and the Orange Bowl regalia. A routine by Richard Pryor or a song by Phil Ochs provide springboards for Avakian. Yet as broad-ranging as these writings are, certain basic themes run through them: the obscene hypocrisy of the imperialists, the limits of reformism, the shifts in the world since the 1960s and the strategic weakness of imperialism, the crucial importance of internationalism in general and its particular relevance to making revolution in the United States, the need to oppose war with revolution, and the nature and necessity of revolutionary preparation.

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

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

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

Checks can be sent to RCP Publications, P.O. Box 3486, Merchandise Mart, Chicago, IL 60654.