MASSACRE IN CHIAPAS
MEXICO: PRO GOVT SQUADS MURDER 45 CAMPESINOS

Coffins of the victims of the massacre in Chiapas.
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—and 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—those who are willing to take up the challenge of a struggle to actually overthrow this system and create a new system that will put an end to all this hatred and 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 has to be done: to make the world safe for everyone who would like to see such a revolution—those with a burning desire to see a drastic change for the better, all those who don’t want to accept the way things are and want a whole new world.

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Support the Communist Party of Peru!
Defend the Life of Chairman Gonzalo,
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CHIAPAS

MEXICO:

PRO GOVT SQUADS

MURDER 45 CAMPESEINOS

It was just before noon on December 22, in the mountain village of Acteal in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas. About 70 members of one of the pro-government and pro-landlord paramilitary groups entered this village of Tzotzil Indian peasants. The gunmen were heavily armed with AK-47 and R-15 combat rifles.

In a calculated and cowardly attack, the paramilitary forces began firing on the villagers, who had no way of defending themselves. Many were attending services at the small village church when they were gunned down in cold blood. Others were killed as they tried to flee toward a nearby jungle.

The shootings continued for several hours. By the end, 45 people had been massacred—21 women, 9 men and 15 children, including a baby less than a year old. Some of the children were shot at close range or as they sought sanctuary in the jungle.

At the same time, the government has been saying that the gunmen, who opposition leaders say are loyal to the nation's ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), were acting on their own.

According to various news reports, the paramilitary groups have been stepping up their activity in recent months. The people who came under attack in Acteal had already been driven out of other villages.

The massacre in Acteal shows that the U.S.-backed government in Mexico is being more militarized, more paramilitarily organized, as a strategic reserve of U.S. imperialism.

The massacre in Acteal shows that the Mexican rulers and their U.S. backers have a real solution to the problems faced by the oppressed people of Mexico—a more militarized, more paramilitarily organized country, in a situation of growing poverty. It is not just that the rulers are cruel and heartless. They cannot provide real solutions, because their whole system is based on ruthlessly exploiting and oppressing the masses.

In the four years since the Chiapas uprising, the U.S. rulers have further tightened their imperialist hold over Mexico through the North American Free Trade Agreement. They are also increasingly worried about the possibility of social upheaval and revolutionary struggle in Mexico. They are panicking the peace of the militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border. And the U.S. military and the CIA are providing Mexico's federal army with new levels of covert aid and training. This military aid is described as part of the "anti-drug" effort in Mexico. But the New York Times noted a few days after the Acteal massacre that there is "nothing to stop the transfer of American-trained army officers to similar special forces units that might be deployed against leftist refugees in southern states like Guerrero and Chiapas."

The U.S. imperialists have long considered Mexico to be their special "backyard"—a strategic reserve where they can freely profit off the backs of the oppressed and in order to protect their interests. But as the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement pointed out right after the Young Workers' statement, "the struggle to transform Mexico from a strategic reserve of U.S. imperialism into a strategic dagger of the world proletarian revolution aimed at the very heart of U.S. imperialism."
A week after the shooting of William Whitfield, the New York Times ran an article on the front page of its Metro section under the headline "Police's Use of Deadly Force in New York Is Low for Nation." The article cites statistics from an FBI study that tracked police shootings between 1985 and 1989, claims that cops in the NYPD shoot 4.1 shootings compared to New York's 0.7 shootings. Diego 6.6 people was the average, number of people killed, in New York Is Low for Nation " The article, citing statistics from an FBI study that showed, for example, that in San Diego there were 30, but attempts to minimize this by saying "the number of police shootings that the killing rate has increased, and that in 1992 there were 26 killings and in 1996 number—coming in second only behind L.A. with 25.01 has re mained relatively stable," When they do release data, it is piecemeal and confusing. For example, they separate

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Shootings</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
<th>Fired &amp; Custody</th>
<th>Shot to Death</th>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>6,061</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>154</td>
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The statistics in the chart below, based on figures released by the NYPD, was gathered by Amnesty International and the New York City Police Department. This is the most current accounting of people killed in the epidemic of police brutality in New York (no figures are available for deaths in custody for 1995 and 1996). These figures show that between 1992 and 1996 the NYPD killed at least 187 people. According to these statistics, the NYPD has killed an average of 374 people a year. According to the chart, the number of people killed by the NYPD has remained relatively flat.

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Why Did "Life" Bannerman Die?

Reginald Bannerman was a gym teacher at Lefferts High School in Brooklyn. He was also part-time cleanup man at the BBG cafe in Crown Heights. On the night of December 10, Reginald was in the club, though he wasn't working. At the same time, seven off-duty narcotics cops were having a party inside the club. The cops were drunk and loud and at one point Reginald (who his friends called "Life") asked them to quiet down. According to press accounts the cops did quiet down, but later they confronted Reginald outside the club. The cops then arrested him and then beat and kicked him in the face and ribs, dragged him by his ankle and fired at him as he tried to get away. The police claimed this was the end of it. However, less than two hours later, in the early morning hours of December 10, Reginald Bannerman was struck and killed by a subway train at a nearby subway station. Police initially and his family say he was suicide. Witnesses, however, say they heard the press that the cops followed Reginald to the train station and continued to beat him on the platform and that Reginald tried to get away by going onto the tracks to escape. Apparently only one cop was implicated in the incident, a seventh cop was later brought in after he returned to the club to search for a missing gun. The cops are under investigation by the Brooklyn District Attorney but continue to draw full pay after being put on "modified duty"—the NYPD's standard procedure for dealing with killer cops when their actions become public.

Reginald's wife, Joanna Carr, told the press, "I want justice to prevail. I want whatever was responsible for his death to pay for what they did."
The NYPD Christmas Murder of William Whitfield

Once again the NYPD has shot and killed someone in cold blood. Once again we have shattered the lives of relatives and other loved ones of the victim. Once again the murdering cop has been allowed to get his story together, using the numerous 48 hour rule which allows NYPD cops to go unquestioned for two days after an investigation begins on a cop shooting incident. Once again the press has floated out a story attempting to blame the victim. The people have responded with outrage and are demanding justice.

William "Smoke" Whitfield, a 22-year-old Black man, was getting ready to go to his Mom's house for Christmas dinner. He had been with his girlfriend, Cindy Williams, at their apartment at the Glenwood Houses in Canarsie, Brooklyn. Cindy didn't have a phone so William stepped out to use a pay phone. He had just proposed to Cindy and wanted to call his Mom to let her know he was on his way and was bringing his new fiancée and her two children to Christmas dinner.

The cops say they were responding to a call of a domestic dispute at the projects and they rolled by around the same time. Williams was going to use the phone. As they got to the Glenwood Houses, the cops claim they heard shots fired from a rooftop and called for backup.

Two of the cops to arrive as backup were Michael Davitt and his partner Michael Duggan. They saw William come around the corner and ordered him to stop. Williams, who had some minor arrests in the past—a fact the NYPD immediately made available to the press—didn't stop. According to a NYPD source William said, "Not today." Whether this is true is unclear. However, as too many people who've been awed by the police know, if you get picked up by cops, even on Christmas, it means going through the "system," which can mean days in jail. Witnesses say William walked briskly into the Milky Way grocery store.

The cops chased William into the store, where he suddenly turned to lie down. One of the cops, Michael Duggan, claims Williams rose from his crouched position with a "black object" in his hand which the cop thought was a gun. A woman who was in the store at the time told the press that the cops shouted "We got him! Everyone out of the store!" When Davitt was six feet from Williams he shot him through the chest, killing him. Just like that, no regard and no respect. The life of another Black man snuffed out by the police.

Davitt immediately exercised the rule in the police手册 that allows cops to shoot someone to lie down. He had just proposed to his girlfriend, and ordered everyone to lie down. The mayor pushed his own version of allowing the cops to get their story together, saying, "People shouldn't jump to conclusions before all the facts are known."

Davitt has had an icy trigger finger for years. In the aftermath of the killing the NYPD disclosed that Davitt has been involved in more shootings than any other officer in the NYPD. Since 1983 he's shot and wounded two people and fired his gun eight times. In 1994 he operated on a "robbery suspect" holding a "dark object" in his hand that turned out to be a wristwatch. According to the mayor it was "accidental."

The assistant commissioner announced after the shooting that the police would begin monitoring cops who shoot on more than three occasions. He said, referring to the cops who are involved in shooting incidents, "It doesn't necessarily mean that all of these shootings are bad shootings." In fact, all of the shootings by Davitt have involved in more shootings than any other officer in the NYPD. Friends and relatives of William Whitfield were struck by this and expressed this cold-blooded murder of an unarmed Black man, going about his business, trying to enjoy a holiday, confronted and shot down by the police. William's uncle Farquhar Whitfield said, "It's common sense. No gun, no bullet shells, there was no problem. He shot for nothing." The family immediately came together at a news conference in Harlem to denounce the killing and demand justice. The family asked for the assistance of Rev. Al Sharpton, and Michael Hardy, Carl Thomas and Conilda Roper-Simpson—some of the lawyers representing Abner Louima, the Haitian man brutally tortured by the NYPD.

A demonstration and memorial took place the Saturday after the killing in Williamsburg, where William lived, and another rally was held in front of the Milky Way grocery store where Williams was killed. At the memorial Willie Mae Whitfield, William's grandmother, told radio station WBAI, "I just want justice for my grandson, and not only him, there's plenty more grandsons out here...."

More than 600 people came to William Whitfield's funeral on New Year's Eve day. Among those attending were relatives and friends of other victims of police brutality including Abner Louima and Patricia Baez, the sister of Anthony Baez—who was strangled to death by an NYPD cop three years ago. Patricia remarked to Jose Santiago from WBAI how each new police killing calls up the pain and the lack of justice the Baez family has confronted. She said, "People have to unite, we have to say no more."

Speaking at the funeral on behalf of the family, Dolores Drayton powerfully gave voice to the anguish at such a cold-blooded killing of a loved one: "I'm dying inside, no one will never know my sorrow, no one will ever know my pain... So now you know Officer Davitt we are devastated, devastated and our lives, and your life, won't ever, ever be the same."

On New Year's Day 200 people gathered outside of One Police Plaza, NYPD's headquarters, to denounce the ongoing brutality and murder of the NYPD and to demand justice for William Whitfield and other victims of the NYPD. The crowd, mainly Black people but also many different nationalities, was spirited and determined, despite the harshness of sub-freezing temperatures and the police state environment surrounding the "coronation" of Mayor "Adolf" Giuliani at nearby City Hall. People carried signs saying, "We Are Human Beings, Not Fair Game."

"Another Isolated Incident," and "Shooting an Unarmed Civilian is Execution," Members of Parents Against Police Brutality, Norman Siegel of the New York Civil Liberties Union, the October 22nd Coalition, RCP spokesperson Carl Dix, Workers World Party, and the Rev. Al Sharpton, were among those participating.

This rally took place as hundreds of workers marched barricaded throughout the area around City Hall for the official inaugural ceremonies. People attempting to get to the demonstration were told that access was closed (though it wasn't) to One Police Plaza—even with this, hundreds of people were able to make their way to the demonstration.

The contrast of the two gatherings, the demonstration and the Mayor's inaugural, was striking. At One Police Plaza the victims and those who have taken up the cause of fighting police brutality gathered to greet the new year and voice their determination to continue the fight against police brutality and for justice. At City Hall the Mayor called for further unleashing the police—under the cover of eradicating drugs from the city—by hiring 1,600 more cops to bring the NYPD up to 40,000.

The killing of William Whitfield is one more outrageous, sorrowful loss for the people and another powerful reason to build and strengthen the movement against police brutality.
The Bells of Balangiga

A hundred years ago, out of the dark, an insistent town made its mark.

From the program for "The Bells of Balangiga"

The Pintig Cultural Group in Chicago recently premiered its musical "The Bells of Balangiga." This musical tells the story of a small town in the Philippines, Balangiga, where the people successfully resisted U.S. imperialism in 1901—successfully organizing and carrying out a plan to kill the U.S. soldiers who had invaded and occupied their town.

Rodolfo Carlos Vera, who wrote this Chicago version of the play, first put this story on the stage two years ago with a regional theater group in the Philippines. That production toured throughout Samar, the very island where the story takes place. Now, The Pintig Cultural Group has plans to take The Bells of Balangiga on the road to regional theater groups in the Philippines.

Angela Maccabe, a founding member of Pintig who is the producer of the play, says in her program note: "The Bells of Balangiga is not just a musical production. It is a discourse on colonialism and the history of the Philippines-United States relation. It is an attempt to popularize these historical facts that have not made it in the mainstream history books nor in documents about the role of U.S. aggression in different parts of the world at the turn of the century. Most importantly, it is a conscious effort to amplify these historically marginalized voices of the colonized Filipinos and those who continue to suffer under colonial oppression under U.S. imperialist stranglehold in the Philippines... We dedicate this production to all Filipinos who have died for justice and freedom as well as to all those who continue to fight for the same in the Philippines and elsewhere in the world, for those who have forgotten and for those who have yet to learn, we hope to bring back to life the songs, the stories, and the lessons of Balangiga.

The 1898 story of Balangiga is another chapter in the people's history which illustrates the truth that, as Mao Tsetung said, "...It is a new chapter in the people's history which is not written in the mainstream history books nor in documents but rather in songs, stories and the lessons of Balangiga."

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In the early evening of December 17, people at 1340 N. LaSalle in Chicago's Cabrini Green housing project were coming and going after shopping and preparing for the upcoming Xmas holiday. Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) police approached the building to carry out what was referred to in the press as "a normal drug investigation."

To the residents of Cabrini Green, "normal" police operations meant that people get frisked. One resident put it this way: "When the CHA police officers arrest somebody, it's not like they just frisk them and put the cuffs on them. They arrest someone in this area, they normally beat them up." Lastly, this has escalated to the point where the president of the local tenantry organization has reported that the police have been regularly threatening "shorthairs" (youth in the 10-16 age range) with drawn weapons. There is a widespread view among the people that this escalation is basically aimed at pushing them out, since it is coming at exactly the same time that the authorities have stepped up their efforts to tear down most of the buildings in Cabrini.

While the police have been escalating their attacks, there has been increasing resistance among the people, fueled by the feeling that they have right on their side. Last March, hundreds protested the near fatal shooting of Shaunay Royal by the CHA police after she stood up against the police bastartling one of her cousins. When the police tried to disperse the protest by firing tear gas at the crowd and into a highrise occupied by women and children, wounding two, the people continued to protest in the face of armed intimidation. Last October 22, 50 to 60 Cabrini residents joined in downtown rally in Chicago for the National Day of Protest Against Police Brutality and the Criminalization of a Generation. The following night, since the October 22 protest can be seen plastered all over the front pages of many buildings in the projects. According to witnesses, it was in one of those entrances, with many people around, that police on December 17 grabbed one youth and started to rough him up. Another youth, Quintus Royal, age 20 (nephew of Shaunay Royal), stepped forward, and people shouted somebody yell at the cops. "Don't touch him! Don't put your hands on him!" One of the cops grabbed Quintus and, in full view of many people, beat him with billy clubs and sprayed mace in his eyes. The police called for back-up — the crowd refused to move on. A gunshot was heard. Angry voices were heard among the people that "this wasn't going to go down" and "that wasn't the end of it." Finally, after backup arrived, the police were able to drag Quintus off to a jail away from the projects. They charged him with aggravated battery, disorderly conduct and public annoyances in connection with the protest at Cabrini Green.

Right away, hundreds of CHA police came into Cabrini from all over the city. Marry residents described what happened next. Dozens of people went to the CHA police headquarters at 624 W. Division in the heart of the projects to find out if Quintus was all right and to demand he be released. Several of the people were hit by billy clubs and sprayed with mace. As of this printing the situation is still tense. The CHA police headquarters is basically aimed at pushing them out, and demand be released, since people felt his only "crime" was raising his voice challenging a cop. In the media, the police called this righteous action an "attempt by gangs to take over the projects." In order to confuse those outside the projects, authorities claimed that the people had come to physically spring Quintus from jail, even though evidence in Cabrini knows that CHA police always take those arrested to jail a mile from where the people had gathered to protest.

Residents told the FBI that at CHA police headquarters the people were treated with more disrespect and called all kinds of "n—gets" and "b—tches" by the police. Then, two cops came outside where the people had gathered, threatening people and flashing their guns and clubs. People refused to move on. Finally, the cops said they were going to start arresting people. Apparently, no one in the crowd wanted to be brutalized and arrested like Quintus, so the two cops ended up in the hospital with minor injuries, and the people made their way back to the buildings, still angry. In terms of the cops, one homeless man said: "They just got touched up a bit." Another resident emphasized that the police had brought him on themselves: "That would have never happened if the police hadn't been around here beating up on people and harassing people." The media claimed that people in the crowd staged a fight to draw the police out and then jumped them.

Right away, hundreds of CHA police came in Cabrini from all over the city. The TV news called what the police did next "sweeps" and announced that "everyone involved would be arrested." But what actually happened had very little to do with trying to find those involved, because the police rampaged through the projects, grabbing, beating and arresting people. They also seized people in front of buildings far from where Quintus was arrested and in gang territories different from where the original incident took place.

In one incident they attacked a number of youth in front of a building where resistance has been mounting to increasing efforts to force people out and demolish the building. It is also different gang territory than the area where Quintus was arrested. The police grabbed three youth and started beating one viciously as he lay on the ground. In fact, they beat so wildly and viciously that in the course of swinging at him they knocked a window out of a mirror, belonging to none of the tenants.

People in the building heard the youth's cries for help and the crashing glass of the mirrors. Quickly, dozens of people started throwing anything they could get their hands on from as high as 14 stories down on the cops who were beating the youth. The cops said to start feeling control of the situation slipping. They pulled their guns and pointed them at a highrise full of women and children and threatened to shoot. People continued to throw things and in the course of this battle a police car was savagely damaged by bricks.

The next day in the media all damages to the police car was repaired.

Meanwhile, in the building where Quintus lives, the cops went door-to-door looking for "suspicious objects." They threatened people and tried to get people to snatch on each other. Apparently all this failed because no one has been arrrested and charges have not been filed against any "crimes" in connection with the protest at CHA police headquarters. The media reported that on the night this all took place 18 to 20 shots were fired at the CHA police headquarters. There were acrid complaints from the people that shots were fired at CHA police headquarters for the next three consecutive nights.

As of this printing the situation is still tense. The FBI police are investigating the revenge and trying to figure out how to finger people in the face of a wall of silence from local media. The media is still reporting that the authorities go full speed ahead in tearing down public housing. The city and the media are still demanding that the CHA tear down most of the buildings. Editorials in the mainstream press have called the CHA cops "heroes." Quintus Royal is out on bond, and support groups are planning to show up and stand with him at his next court hearing. More determined than ever, determined to stand together against this brutal onslaught.
Amistad: It's Ours

In the darkness we can't, at first, tell what is going on. A flash of lightning, and we are human eyes. Another flash shows blinding fingers working to loosen a nail. Suddenly we see chains. Chains on human wrists. "Reigning!"

Then comes the struggle. Weapons are switched up. Black men break onto the main deck of a ship. The first quick chop digs deep into the neck of a crewman. Desperate fighting sweeps the ship. The captain stands with rifle and bayonet. Out of the darkness strides Cinque, straight forward, with a saber. They fight. The award twists deep. Flashing light shows Cinque standing over the fallen man,drenched by the rain, bellowing from the depths of his soul.

The film opens with an incident of insurrectionary violence. It too seems so sudden, without explanation, or any means to keep us up.

The film sweeps us along. The desperate mutiny on the decks of the slave ship Amistad takes these 53 Africans to a strange and hostile land, the United States. A Coast Guard ship captures them off the coast of Long Island. They are thrown back into chains and must fight their way through the insurmountable mass of U.S. courts. Outside their jail cells, the population and the authorities debate how to treat them.

And along the way, we arrive at moments from slavery-days that are still, today, only familiar.

**Shared Moments and Recognition**

There is the moment when the Africans are being paraded, in chains, through a New England town on their way to the courthouse. When Cinque is played brilliantly by Djimmon Hounsou—say sharply, "Djimmon, keep your head up!"

"Yes. Keep your head up!"—on the face of both enemies and potential allies. Those words ring out strong today, when this society still marches young Black men in chains to judgment and punishment. Keep your head up, youngblood! It is not we who are the criminals. Keep your head up—we are not defeated or dead yet. There's more to come... including liberation.

There is the moment in the film when the Black abolitionist, "Theodore Joadson" (played by Morgan Freeman) revisits the Amistad, to search for evidence. Joadson suddenly confronts the bloodstains and ships. Aoi then he is suddenly seized with status, Joadson can feel the closeness and sharing of the many different oppressed people, from both past and present, that lie buried (and remembered) in the very fact that such a film is to rare portrayed on the Hollywood screen, and the story of how Black people came to America has not hit mainstream U.S. culture like this since 190 years ago. We are struck by the deep inequality in the cultural arena—where films like Halie Germaine's "Amistad," a powerful story of slavery and resistance, struggle for distribution and Black directors still cannot get the financial backing necessary to make a film like "Amistad." Amistad.

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While White Gloves and Slave Chains

There are many controversies raging around Amistad. But we think the most important question is: What is the overall effect among the masses of people? Does this film instill a burning hatred for the system of slavery? Does it encourage or discourage resistance to oppression? In the main does it strengthen or does it weaken the ways the ruling class uses to justify its oppression of Black people? It is short, is it? It, in the words of Cinque, is "a little drop in a big bucket of blood memory we need to share with the world."

And the appearance of Cinque, and the reception it is receiving among oppressed people, underscores the urgency to fight hard for a revolutionary society—where the culture of oppressed people can flour, where artists can tell these many stories, and where the resources of society are put in the hands of the oppressed to transform the world.

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There are many controversies raging around Amistad. But we think the most important question is: What is the overall effect among the masses of people? Does this film instill a burning hatred for the system of slavery? Does it encourage or discourage resistance to oppression? In the main does it strengthen or does it weaken the ways the ruling class uses to justify its oppression of Black people? It is short, is it? It, in the words of Cinque, is "a little drop in a big bucket of blood memory we need to share with the world."

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"Founding Fathers" in the courtroom—including the slaveowners George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.

The United States has, of course, never "lived up" to the idea that "all men are created equal." The words of the Declaration of Independence did not apply to the captured Africans, enslaved on the plantations, or the Native Americans, or women. And even as the label "all men" has—over two long centuries—slowly been extended, on paper, to include women, Black people, Native people and propertyless classes, in reality even that shallow promise of "equality before the law" has remained a lie. Aware of this contradiction, Amistad director Steven Spielberg points out, in Vibe magazine (February 1998), that "Blacks have been fucked by the African legal system, which hasn't changed very much from 1839 to 1997."

In telling the Amistad story there are some complicated historical realities to deal with that would pose challenges for anyone creating such a work of art. On one hand, at that moment of history, the Northern capitalist class (who Adams represented all his life) was moving to challenge the power of Southern slaveowners within the United States. Politically, however, the case, the public campaign around it, and the participation of John Quincy Adams signaled the approach of war. Portraying Adams, Anthony Hopkins proclaims to the Supreme Court, "If it means civil war, then let it come and when it does let it be, finally, the last battle of the American Revolution." This does, correctly, show that some political representatives of the capitalist class, like Adams, were motivated by the idea of carrying out a more thoroughgoing bourgeois democratic revolution.

At one point in the film Amistad, ex-President John Quincy Adams tells the prisoner Cinqué, "We find ourselves together by some mysterious set of circumstances." The fictional dialogue captures a certain historical reality. But, in this temporary alliance of slaves and capitalists, the different forces were motivated by extremely different class interests. The slaves wanted freedom from slavery; the Northern capitalists wanted the freedom to consolidate the capitalist mode of production as the dominant economic system in the country.

In fact, the ideals of the U.S. "ancestors" did not and could not, lead to the liberation of Black people. The principles of the Declaration of Independence were applied after the American Revolution, when those same authors wrote the U.S. Constitution, which legalized slavery and counted each Black person as only three-fifths of a human being. And the ideals of Adams' "last battle of the American Revolution" became realized as the modern capitalist state emerged from the civil war and consolidated its grip on the continental United States during the last half of the 1800s.

That realization of the capitalist ideals meant the imposing of new forms of oppression on the freed Black slaves. The Northern capitalists helped bind Black people into Jim Crow segregation and plantation sharecropping.

Today there are a lot of people who think the language of the Declaration of Independence embodies timeless ideals that can liberate people. But Bob Avakian has pointed out that this is not possible: "The Declaration of Independence is not anything anybody wants to make out of it; it was written in a very definite historical context and has a very definite social and class content... The general declarations it contains about the equality of all men, their inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness and so on assume their meaning according to this actual and overall context—otherwise they have no real, concrete meaning."

"The answer to the question, what if the basic principles of the Declaration of Independence were really applied?, is that they have been in the U.S. itself and generally in all bourgeois societies, and the time is long since past when that is the best and highest that humanity is capable of achieving."* Keeping this problem in mind, we urge people to see the movie Amistad, to appreciate its power and artistry, to share in the inspiring story it unfolds, and to explore the complex issues of struggle and liberation that it raises.

See also:
- Democracy: Can't We Do Better Than That?, Bob Avakian, Banner Press
- "The Amistad Mutiny," RW No. 937

"How can I, I say, love a country thus cursed, thus bedewed by the blood of my brethren! A Country, the Church of which and the Government of which, and the Constitution of which are in fact so supporting and perpetuating this monstrous system of injustice and blood! I have not, I cannot, have any love for this country, as such, or for its Constitution. I desire to see it overthrown as speedily as possible and its Constitution shivered in a thousand fragments, rather than that this foul curse should continue to remain as now."

Frederick Douglass, "Country, Conscience, and the Anti-Slavery Church!", an address delivered in New York, NY, May 11, 1847.
The Murder of Comrade Kamala Bhatt

The Crisis-Ridden State and Change of Government in Nepal

From the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)

The Naxalite movement was an annexed and declared to be a terrorist organization. The Crisis-Stricken Government in Nepal in February 1996. The event of the People's War Movement in Nepal has led to the government changes all together. The widespread government changes have been the result of anti-people and anti-national policies before the coming of Thapa as Prime Minister has already triggered a chain of state repression. The pastoral sector is facing a crisis due to the increasing and rapid urbanization. The local police and vigilantes are being used to suppress the masses. No wonder more and more masses, especially women, are being arrested and imprisoned.

The otherwise known "peaceful" Himalayan kingdom of Nepal is at present undergoing a big political turmoil. Within the last seven years of a monarchical parliamentary system there have been six government changes all together. While general empowerment has been the general trend of Nepal for the last few decades, what is happening in the present crisis in ruling class of Nepal is the Maoist people's war that was initiated barely two years back under the leadership of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). Since the initiation of people's war, there have been three changes of governments, each competing to outdo the other in trying to nip in the bud Maoist people's war. But each attempt has led to not only failures in their mission of suppressing the people's war but has also revealed their treacherous anti-people and anti-national policies before the masses.

When the Nepali Congress, a party of big landlords and bureaucratic capitalists, failed to contain Maoist people's war, the ruling class (particularly the royal palace) decided to lend support to United Marxist-Leninist party in forming government. The example of India's experience where a powerful Naxalite movement was crushed with the help of the revisionist CPI(ML), the ruling class in Nepal hoped the UML, in power could effectively suppress the Maoist movement. However, UML's effort to bring the anti-terrorist black law, together with deploying military in Maoist stronghold areas so as to facilitate repression of people's war, met with big failure as the vigilante masses of Nepal, including the intellectuals, cultural activists, human right activists (including UML's own grassroot cadres) opposed the superficial and fascist coalition government headed by Surya Bahadur Thapa, a notorious rightist Prime Minister during the autocratic monarchical period from 1960 to 1990. Commenting on the formation of this new coalition government, Com. Prachanda, General Secretary of CPN(Maoist), has blasted the two major parliamentary parties for facilitating the return of the old autocratic rule. In a press statement issued on October 11, 1997 he has also exposed the present parliament as a tool of feudal and imperialist forces and has called for the total overthrow of the present system through the armed people's war and establishment of a New Democratic state. Similarly, Dr Baburam Bhattarai, President of United People's Front, has issued a statement exposing Surya Bahadur Thapa's professed "priority to peace and security" as an indication of the depth of fear instilled in the ruling class by the Maoist people's war. He has warned the people against the present government's depression of sending police and military in plain clothes as vigilantes and attacking the masses, thus giving an appearance of "people fighting against the people."

The coming of Thapa as Prime Minister has already triggered a chain of state repression.

Rape and Murder of Com. Kamala Bhatt

On October 20, 1997 Com. Kamala Bhatt, a young 25-year-old party member, a district secretary of All Nepal Women's Association (Revolutionary) (Gorkha district) and a school teacher, was found raped and murdered on the bank of Daraundi river. She was returning after addressing a series of mass meetings in various villages. She was seen leaving Gokha village in Gorkha district around 8 a.m. Her dead body was found surrounded by policemen around 10 a.m. Thus within two hours of leaving the village she was ambushed by the combined forces of Commandos (especially deputed from Kathmandu to suppress Maoist activities), local police and vigilantes. She was tortured, raped and killed instantly by them. Her shoe, part of a duster and the rest of her clothes were found in a nearby jungle while her dead body with only her underwear was discovered nearby Daraundi river by the local villagers. This is the first evidence of the present government's new vigilantist style of suppressing the people with the backing of policemen and commandos, when their other direct methods of suppressing the movement had failed. This incident has evoked a tremendous hatred amongst the masses against the reactionary state and a sense of revenge was prevalent in the air. On October 22 about 6,000 villagers gathered to pay homage to the brave martyr Bhatt. The genocidal police, scared to death with such a massive crowd, fled upon the masses when they were returning from the funeral, grievously injuring another young woman student, Tik Lamichhane.

From the nature of genocide and repression unleashed against the masses, especially against the women, it is clear that the ruling class is shaken by the increasing and rapid urbanization and during participation of women in various Maoist activities, including guerrilla warfare. The present bizarre attack on women is clearly aimed at terrorizing young women from participating in the Maoist people's war. However this has evoked greater fury and zeal amongst the masses to punish the butchers of Com. Bhatt. Already hundreds of thousands of people have paid reverence to martyr Bhatt in different parts of Nepal with a pledge to advance the people's war with firmer conviction and to punish the butchers.

Today, more and more people are joining the Maoist Forces. In fact state repression is encouraging the people to revolt against this rotten system and usher in New Democracy in Nepal. Today even a section of the ruling class has openly acknowledged that in Nepal there are only two forces, the royalist force and the Maoist force, contending for state power. Brutal repression has only hardened the revolutionary consciousness among the toiling masses. No wonder more and more masses, especially women, have been joining guerilla units to take revenge against these butchers and to fight for New Democracy. And this seems to accelerate the process of hoisting the red flag on the roof of the world.
Getting Over the

Part 7: Strategic Double C

by Bob Avakian

A new series* by RCP Chairman Bob Avakian on the so-called "demise of communism" and the advance to communism worldwide. The series takes up strategic problems and reality of the proletarian revolution in particular countries and on a worldwide to "get over the hump" and defeat the imperialist system.

I have spoken to a number of important problems confronting the world proletarian revolution—and these contradictions are important material facts. They are a material reality that must be transformed. But the even more powerful material reality is that the capitalist-imperialist system is a colossal disaster and is definitely a disaster for the great, great majority of humanity. This is something we should continually put back in the face of the bourgeoisie as well as putting it before the masses. We should never let the bourgeoisie get away with saying anything to the contrary. Not only do these colossal disasters exist, but their reality is a monstrous crime in terms of what it subjects the great majority of humanity to. And we should not let them get away with this, even in the realm of public opinion.

**Strategic Double C**

At the same time, and along with this, we must never lose sight of the great achievements of our class so far. This is the other side of our strategic double C—strategic contempt for them, strategic confidence in our class and our cause.

This strategic double C has a profound material-historical basis. It's true we've encountered setbacks and reversals—there have been very real and in certain ways they have been body blows to us, in the short run, tactically. It's not easy to have to deal with the material reality and the political-ideological fall-out from the loss of China as a socialist country coming on top of the loss of the Soviet Union. But because this is reality—reality that we have to confront and transform—we should not therefore lose sight of the great achievements of our class so far, and really in a very short period historically speaking.

Especially with historical perspective, seeing this in terms of the relatively short period of the world proletarian revolution so far, we shouldn't lose sight of the many world historic transformations that have been carried out and the great transformative potential of the world proletarian revolution that is illuminated by these achievements.

Let's put it this way. What our class has accomplished so far even though it has been reversed, in a radically different and much better world than what the bourgeoisie is imposing on the mass of humanity—and it is radically different and far better than even the (then) proclaimed by the bourgeoisie. We should never forget this, and we should never fail to boldly bring this forward to the masses of people and enable them to learn and be inspired from this.

Even though, in the short run, these gains have been reversed, still, along with these achievements and the reality of them, so long as they existed, we have also acquired a tremendous store of knowledge about the means and methods for carrying this revolution forward and towards final victory. Through all the twists and turns, with all the reversals and setbacks, we have had to continually and turns, with all the reversals and setbacks, we have had to continually and turns, with all the reversals and setbacks, we have had to continually and turns, with all the reversals and setbacks, we have had to continually and turns, with all the reversals and setbacks, we have had to continually and turns, with all the reversals and setbacks, we have had to continually and turns, with all the reversals and setbacks, we have had to continually.

The basic point I'm stressing is that these imperialists and their ideologies and apologists—all of them, liberal as well as conservative—really do represent the past, and we should never let them get away with portraying themselves in any other way. Obviously, on some objective level, they're going to get away with it, till we overthrow them and then go on with the revolution. But in our work we should never let them get away with this—we should never concede an inch to them on this point. They are committing monstrous crimes and their system is a colossal disaster. And we should continue to hammer at this point. Not only do colossal disasters exist, but their system is responsible for this—we can show this concretely and we will. We get the case, beyond a reasonable doubt! We can show it, and we should, in our all-around work and in a concentrated way in our work of creating public opinion and being creative and being relentless in our propaganda and agitation. We have to continually come back to, bring to light, the material reality that they are continually trying to blot out, along with the people who experience this reality in the most grotesque and extreme ways, that is—the great majority of humanity.

The imperialist system is a colossal failure and disaster in terms of its effects on the masses of people. It is a monstrous crime in terms of what it subjects the great majority of humanity to. And we should not let going back to Mao Tsetung's famous formulation which I have spoken to several times: the "future is bright, the road is tortuous." This reflects material reality, in all its contradictions, in all its contradictions. It captures material reality in a very profound way. This is a truth that we should understand more and more deeply and popularize among the masses. There is a very powerful historical and present-day material basis for our strategic double C. We must continually come back to this fundamental point of orientation and boldly put this forward and project this double C in everything we do.

Drawing from the experience of the world revolution so far, on one level we could say everything is not going to work out and has not been working out exactly as Marx and Engels foresaw, and undoubtedly everything is not going to work out as we or anyone else can foresee now. But, on another level—the grand strategic level—we can and must maintain our confidence that everything will work out just as Marxist-Leninism-Maoism foresees. In other words, the capitalist-imperialist system—and all the relations, institutions, and ideas corresponding to it and corresponding generally to exploitation, oppression and class division and social antagonism—all this will in fact be overturned, transformed and revolutionized, worldwide. So in that sense we can say that, while everything on one level is not going to work out exactly as anybody in the international communist movement has foreseen or can foresee—including in the original conception of Marx and Engels—on another, more profound and grand strategic level, everything will work out as we foresee. We have to be able to deal with that unity of opposites, not only in our own understanding, but in terms of how we present things to the masses.

* Other parts in this series are:
  Part 1: Ruling the Court Is Not a Straight Line Thing Communist System
  Part 2: What Will It Take To Get Rid Of This Obsolete System
  Part 3: The Problem of Lowered Sights
  Part 4: The Problems of Uneven Development and Leftovers
  Part 5: Eliminating the Division Between Mental and Manual: Stalin and Mao
  Part 6: A Radical Revolution, A Radical Rupture

Shorts in Bombay, India.
Hump

Thousands of dispossessed peasants march into the capital of Brazil after walking 70 days to demand land; April 1998.

Mexican peasant carrying harvested crops to market.
Brooklyn subway station

Page 14—Revolutionary Worker—January 11, 1998

What was once more or less an "convenience" for drivers, since they don't record one.

However, each time the E-Z Pass is used, a number is recorded, tied to an individual account number, and stored in a centralized database. The transportation agencies are seeking to increase efficiency and cut costs, but the new technologies also give the government and political police new potential to increase their Big Brother data base.

E-Z Pass

The E-Z Pass is promoted as a "convenience" for drivers, since they don't have to stop and manually pay the toll. However, each time the E-Z Pass is used, a computerized record of the time and date of each passage through a toll booth is kept. This feature of the MetroCard system raises the possibility that the authorities could use it to find out about someone's comings and goings. If they have the card, they could conceivably generate a record of what buses and subways that person took over a certain period of time. The MTA can then determine what route they use, and traffic-based toll pricing. To facilitate these services, the system tracks the movements of all people using public or private transportation. As currently proposed by TRW, a leading developer of the technologies involved, the data collected on travel will be available for both law enforcement and private uses such as direct marketing. Automated toll collection is already in operation in several states, including New York, Florida, and California. Existing systems for this purpose are already in place in New York City, where the FBI has set up a permanent real time physical tracking system.

The government has a vision of linking various local ITS. A recent Department of Transportation report says, "In many cities traffic management efforts have already been deployed but most systems are not integrated. Systems do not "talk and listen" to each other. The main objective of Operation Time Saver [a federal government initiative] is to integrate separating ITS by linking them to share data within and across transportation modes and across local, state, and regional jurisdictions."

The use of new technologies in mass transit and traffic management is mainly about "cutting costs" and making the transportation system "more efficient." But these technological "innovations," also give the police, FBI and other agencies more tools to track, hunt and represent the people and political groups. It is important to keep a close eye on the developments and resist the moves by the power structure to step up their Big Brother capabilities.
The following information comes from the October 22 Coalition:

THE STOLEN LIVES PROJECT

A Record Of Victims Killed By Police And Border Patrol
In The United States 1990-1997

A joint project of the Anthony Baez Foundation, the National Lawyers Guild and the October 22nd Coalition to Stop Police Brutality

FIRST EDITION OF THE STOLEN LIVES PROJECT BOOK NOW AVAILABLE

Order from:
Stolen Lives Project/October 22 Coalition, c/o KHL, Inc., Box 124, 160 First Avenue, New York, NY 10009, $5 plus shipping. Orders of 10 or more are $3 each plus shipping
Make check or money order payable to “IFCO/Oct 22 Coalition” and write “Stolen Lives books” in the memo. Additional tax-deductible donations are welcome.

The mission of the STOLEN LIVES PROJECT is to assemble a national list of names of people killed by police and U.S. Border Patrol from 1990-1997. Hundreds are killed by the "official violence" of the police every year. These victims—whose lives have been viciously cut short—all had lives, families and were part of our society. But rarely are their lives or names publicized, nor are the real circumstances surrounding their deaths caused by police made known, nor is the extent of this epidemic of police violence known.

STOLEN LIVES will help reveal to millions the reality of police terror and killing that is escalating in cities large and small across the United States, as well as along the U.S.-Mexico border. Our aim is to build the growing resistance against police brutality.

STOLEN LIVES is a work in progress. This first edition was prepared and produced for release prior to October 22, 1997—the 2nd National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality. The first edition contains more than 500 names of people killed by police and U.S. Border Patrol—and this is only the tip of the iceberg.

STOP POLICE BRUTALITY, REPRESSION AND THE CRIMINALIZATION OF A GENERATION!

If you know someone who has been killed by police, contact the Stolen Lives Project.
October 22 Coalition:
National Office c/o KHL, Inc.
Box 124
160 First Avenue
New York, NY 10009
212-822-8566 (voicemail)

Or call 1-888-NO BRUTALITY for more information about the October 22 Coalition
**STOP POLICE BRUTALITY 1998 DESKTOP CALENDAR**

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