Soviets March into Afghanistan Quicksand

U.S. Imperialists Cry "Imperialism!"

On the first day of the 1980s, 10,000 Afghan and Iranian demonstrators marched on the Soviet embassy in Tehran to protest the recent invasion by the Soviet Union into Afghanistan, as well as its installation of a new puppet regime. Shouting "Down with Social Imperialism!" they tore up the Russian flag, while a number of the demonstrators attempted to storm the embassy walls. From there, the demonstration proceeded to the former U.S. embassy, adding "Down with U.S. Imperialism!" to the chants. At the same time, the Soviet flag was being burned at a demonstration of 1,000 at the Russian consulate in Mahshad, Iran, near the Afghan border. The next day, the Afghan embassies in both West Germany and New Delhi, India, were taken over by Afghan students and held for a number of hours.

While the Soviet Union has been trying to blame its armed invasion on "imperialist interference" in Afghanistan's internal affairs, the U.S., expressing laughable indignation at the Soviet Union's "naked aggression," has been using the opportunity to rattle its own war sabres and tighten up its bloc in preparation for their use. Events in Afghanistan are clearly taking shape in the international (and regional) context of the sharpening contention between the U.S. and USSR. And while these events may prove to be a qualitative leap in this sharpening contention, there is an element to the general picture that, with as they may, neither imperialist superpower can ignore: The actions of the masses in Central and South Asia, including within Afghanistan itself, are showing the people have other plans than to be used as pawns in the inter-imperialist rivalry for world domination.

"Stabilization"—Soviet Style

Actually, the Soviet Union's increasing difficulty in "stabilizing" its own domination of Afghanistan is what has led it to send some 30,000 to 50,000 troops (so far) into that country, and to replace one puppet regime with a new one. The past year has seen a number of major anti-Soviet uprisings against the Afghan regime and the Soviet masters, including in the major cities Harat and Jalalabad in the east. In addition, rebel guerrilla forces have been battering the Soviet puppet troops especially hard in recent months, and their ranks and areas of control have been swelling. At least one province, Kunar in the east, was reported to be totally under rebel control, and most of the rest of the country's 28 provinces have been the scene of fierce fighting, with the guerrilla forces basically controlling the areas at night. In fact, armed convoys travelling from Kandahar, 400 kilometers south of the capital, to Kabul, normally a seven-hour drive, have taken 3 days to arrive after being ambushed by two or three different guerrilla groups along the way.

This situation has led to big problems within the Afghan puppet army.

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Bob Avakian Case Appealed
Gov't Fires Up Railroad Again

Late last week the U.S. government fired up the engine of its legal railroad of Bob Avakian and the Mao Tsetung Defendants. On Thursday, December 27th, the U.S. Attorney's office filed an appeal with the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. The appeal stems from the lower court ruling on November 14th dismissing the 25 felony counts against Comrade Avakian and the 16 other defendants. The legal grounds of the dismissal were "prosecutorial vindictiveness" when the prosecution added charges increasing the defendants' possible jail time from 100 to 241 years when they combined two sets of defendants. The underlying fact was that the government had been forced to temporarily postpone this case, due to the strength of thousands of people who had been mobilized to oppose the attack and the potential strength of many thousands more throughout society stepping forward in opposition to the government and its attack.

Still, the government did not change a bit as far as their determination to nail Bob Avakian is concerned. While they were planning and maneuvering for a comeback on the legal front, they have unleashed their attack on various other fronts—in particular sending out the Secret Service agents to wage a secret war against Bob Avakian (see R W No. 32). By filing their appeal, the government has stepped up and raised their attack to a still higher political level. They have further shown their blood-thirsty "secutorial vindictiveness" when the prosecution puts it straight to the defendants' possible jail time from 100 to 241 years when they combined two sets of defendants. The underlying fact was that the government had been forced to temporarily postpone this case, due to the strength of thousands of people who had been mobilized to oppose the attack and the potential strength of many thousands more throughout society stepping forward in opposition to the government and its attack.
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economic advisor to the head of SAVAK. His testimony was a clever combination of profane deal concerning the flow of information to the United States and (hence possibly win his freedom) but total ignorance of the operations of his agency: he described the SAVAK as "a pocket of the day-to-day direction of the Shah's government" that he had "left for the Embassy" who called himself William Wood. He told of his training as an interrogator and his psychological and mentalistic methods of "interrogation," which he had "invented" at the Propaganda Ministry. Now he had been trained by Masoud, the Israeli intelligence agency. He admitted that SAVAK had never been "the place of stores that served liquor in order to cast the blame on "Moslem moderates." The interrogation was part in the Rex Theatre fire in Abadan where hundreds were killed. This again brought cries of protest from the Iranian citizen in the room. In the end he attributed only good motives to himself, blamed everything on the Shah (who was of course safe in the United States), offered to serve the new Islamic republic and declared his only regret was that he had failed to kill the Shah. He too sat down smiling.

And so the litany went on. After one particularly long session, Vahid had suffered, sympathetically questioned by the American journalist. He had then moved to the new Islamic republic. All declaring the reign of the Shah a "monstrous uncle," his "little brother." In other words, "all that's in the past, let's forget and be friends now!"

I left the prison with a profound feeling about Khomans's policy toward executives—it was clear that he hadn't shot anyone, just that the interrogators had been so cocky. They were rather well-fed and most were wearing sport coats and ties, even in the matter of time till they would be put on. A young Iranian walking out with mop at the ground, "Hello," he said, "isn't this a prison. This is a country too!"

Pity the Hard-Working Journalists

For American journalists Tehran is a hardship assignment. The laws of the new Islamic Republic have shut down all capitalism, its money, its banks, its bars. As a result you have all these TV crews and foreign correspondents going to Tehran. The latest has adding to Tehran's already "laziness by the Islamic factories." For many years the old "Tehran hands" among the press corps used to warn that the "puppet kings of the world" would be the first to lose their jobs at the Propaganda Ministry. Now the firewall is deserted and hard times have come to journalists.

After the booby trap, the next big hardship for the American press is getting used to the fact that America doesn't own Iran any more. Doors do not automatically open for them and they even have to wait in line occasionally like mere mortals. Still they march to their obvious presence felt, yelling out imperious demands to Iranian press: "Let's get the story of the road. We have deadlines!" At a press conference in Enghelab, the Ministry of Information had presented a mother who had lost four children to SAVAK during the Shah's regime. The press conferences are often shut off after one question. But when a former minister of the Shah's government was brought into the room to photograph him and bombard him with questions, "Why are you in prison? Did you have a fair trial? Are you being mistreated? Don't you resent being tried before the people like this?"

After touring the SAVAK torture chambers, we heard James Walker of ABC news asking one of the officials: "Why would your press office organize such a grimly morbid demonstration that it is impossible to create world public opinion to pressure the U.S. to give up the EEU-51 engagement? Why are you demonstrating to the United States to give up the EEU-51 engagement? Is it for the sake of their own country?"

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Next week: Conclusion of First Hand from Iran

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