The following discussion between Bob Avakian and some African students took place after the Chairman's speech in Madison, Wisconsin. Both the questions and answers have been edited, with some small changes made for clarity.

Q: I was provoked when you mentioned the question of the so-called socialist imperialism of the Soviet Union. And as far as I am concerned, I still take the Leninist definition of imperialism as being the highest stage of capitalism, and I associate imperialism with economic exploitation. By that definition, I still don't see exactly how the Soviet Union, however expansive its policy has been, has been able to entrench itself economically, in other words, when I look at such countries as Angola, like Vietnam, etc., I don't see any monopoly-corporations from the Russian sector like we see them from the capitalist western areas which promote the cause of imperialism.

And secondly, for a long time we have associated the Soviet people as having sided with the liberation movements in Africa. While the western camp was arming the Varshon-Smith regime it was only Soviet people and the Soviet government that came to aid the liberation struggle until today. Now we find this orchestrated cry about Soviet social-imperialism as having been a dividing influence among the rank and file of the community movement, especially among the working class and the people who are still trying to liberate themselves.

Now can you clarify this issue? In other words, how do you see these two imperialism as being characteristically different from each other?

B.A.: Well, first of all we did write a whole book on this, it's called How Capitalism Has Been Restored in the Soviet Union and What This Means for the World Struggle. In this book we analysed Soviet imperialism both from the internal and international aspects. Basically I would say that the Leninist analysis of imperialism does apply to the Soviet Union; however, there are some particular features, given that this came from a formerly socialist economic base and a social structure and then reverted to capitalism. And so in the main, though not entirely, the form of monopoly-capitalism and imperialism in the Soviet Union is through the state. It's not in the form of private capital, in the sense of different corporations, but what you do have increasingly is basically the same dynamic.

All capitalist corporations are collectively body, they are not under the ownership of one person, they are banks and blocks of capital interlocking in the things, so to speak. But Lenin pointed this out in this book, Imperialism—you get these corporations and banks that are strangling the limits of private ownership are still capitalist foundations. And the Soviet Union has production associations as well as different ministries basically occupying the same role as the large corporations and banks, capital, trusts and so on, in the western countries. And the key thing is that the Soviet planning and Soviet economic ministry, as they call it, have restored the law of value and in particular the law of accumulating surplus value—profit—as the guiding principle of the economy, in other words, now, the same way they're doing China.

In fact, when the central ministry or bank decides whether or not in investments will be made or a bank will lend money to a particular ministry, it makes it on the leading criterion of profitability, of course, it's part of the imperialist industry of the time, or venture, so this accounts for the fact that Soviet agriculture, for example, in the past number of years has been increasingly lagging behind other sectors of the economy. While the Soviet agriculture is deteriorating and in its way a very useful rate, that state investments are going overseas, just like they do here. Just like Lenin said, imperialism would not be imperialism if the money were re-invested in the home country of developing agriculture, towards the standard of living of the people. That takes socialism. But in the Soviet Union, agriculture is allowed to lag further and further behind while capital is taken, driven by profit, and invested in the home industry.

Let's take Iran: What happened to the Soviet Union when the Iranian revolution came along? They had this deal with the Shah whereby they were buying natural gas at a certain price, supplying a certain amount at fixed rates to the Soviet countries (Soviet economic block), (often at a price greatly above the world market), and then also some amount of this oil to other parts of the world. And this was all on a basis not much different from other purchases of the countries—the Soviet supplied Iran a certain amount of technology and machinery and equipment and so on. On that basis they were sucking off the natural gas from Iran, really basically living off the surplus value of the Iranian workers.

When the Iranian revolution came along, it threw a lot of chaos into the whole of Comex. Of course, the same thing is done with India—Soviet-built steel mills in India. Often the form of the Soviet export of capital comes through a cheap lending arrangement whereby an unequal trade is set up so that in exchange for the Soviets supplying technology, or what have you, the Soviets receive a certain amount of the finished product or some other product at a reduced price. In turn what the Soviets provide is paid for at inflated prices. It appears to be just a trade arrangement when in fact the Soviet Union & company is exploiting the people of those countries.

And in relation to countries, to take one example, when you see, the Soviet Union practices a policy of the so-called socialist imperialism, to lose some money in a particular area of the world for a political reason. In order to begin in Cuba, for example, the Soviets first column it is willing to lose some money—though it also makes money off Cuba. Just like the United States, when it fought in Vietnam. It was losing money essentially for political reasons, and this is now, but it was doing it for political reasons.

Of one last point you made about the Soviet Union supporting struggles, you have to look at the whole complex of different kinds of support. "What in fact is the nature of that support and what does it lead to? As far as Vietnam, the price is Soviet domination, where the people of those countries don't control their own technology that's supplied to them. And remember U.S. imperialism, especially after WWII when British and French and Imperialism were being forced to retreat from the Western front, was as, as going, as the Soviet Union does now, as an ally of the oppressed, like they did in the Philippines in 1900, and they did it again in 1945. In Suez when British and French imperialism and Babylon went up against Nasser, the U.S. went in under the guise of supporting Nasser and opposing imperialism to tighten its own hold over the Mideast. So you have to look at that nature of support; it's something that has to be analysed, what is the content of the support and what does it do.

Q: I understand, but this puts us in a great dilemma. Here we have a support of a revolution against an entrenched capitalist or colonialist country, whatever it is, in fact, it's a lot more than that, just as they are, because they are arming the other side. Here is the man who's really fighting me, and you say that you are following me, but I cannot go to the Soviet bloc or the socialist countries and say: we have a revolution here and they did it.

B.A.: Well, on the contrary, they can't. There's a whole big picture here, you see, and China is not to be considered as support. They support and they did what Mao did in 1946, in fact not only did Stalin not support Chiang Kai-shek in 1946. And he had certain military agreements and political agreements with Chiang Kai-shek established during WWII which Stalin continued to honor all during that period and there were many in China who argued basically that you're arguing this as a base of support, "There's no way we can win." And Mao defeated them and that's why the Chinese revolution won on to victory because he said we don't have to rely on the internationalism and on the Soviet Union to rely even on the Soviet Union. We can do it by fighting on the basis of self-reliance and that's what they did.

Q: We have reached a stage where it is impossible to fight a war with a knife. It is impossible to confront a knife. And the only man who can give him a knife is the Soviet Union.

B.A.: Well, wait a minute. You see, some principles have to be drawn. We have to differentiate the capital of the world. The principle question is: is the Soviet Union imperialist? The question is: do you go to pay the duty of revolutionaries to expose it as such. Now if the Soviet Union is not in fact imperialist, then it is, if it is, then it's the duty of revolutionaries to expose it as such. And since the Soviets are imperialists, even the kind of military aid they give is basically more suited to im...
All pl ease. They did the same thing in Algeria.

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Region Wide Conferences
On Two Issues Most Vital to Our Class

At the end of September and the beginning of October, hundreds of workers, veterans, youth and others will gather in each of several locales to come to grips with some serious questions facing the working class. They will discuss and debate and make preparations to really get into motion and get out the word about two decisive battles that will be developing in the months ahead:

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

May Day 1980

East Coast—Washington D.C., Saturday, Sept. 29 (212) 924-4387
California & Southwest—Los Angeles, 9am Saturday, Sept. 29
UCLA, 39 Haines Hall (213) 585-8234
Hawaii—Honolulu, 9am Sunday, Sept. 30, Kalihi-Falama Library (808) 841-2733
Northwest—Seattle, 11am Sunday, Sept. 30, Jefferson Park Community Center, 3801 Beacon Ave. S. (206) 723-8439
South—Birmingham, noon, Saturday, Oct. 6, Miles College Student Union
Midwest-Great Lakes Area—Cincinnati, 1pm Saturday, Oct. 6 (513) 542-5124

For more information, call above phone numbers or your local Revolutionary Worker (see listing on page 2)

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

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Continued from page 1
case. Mary Ellen Abr echt, is a former
selected at birth and raised in isolation.

But the preparations being made by the prosecution for the trial, November 19, are ridiculous. The pro-
secution response is far from "frivolous"—it's quite serious. It is the height of ridiculousness—seriousness with which those in the highest ruling circles of this coun-
try would try to make a mockery of the battle ahead. These documents can only be seen as a surface attempt to simply legal jabs between defense and prosecution to make it seem like a struggle between classes, which is begin-
ing to rage over the case of the Mao Tsetung Defendants.

The arguments of the prosecution are such a absurdity of legal, even common sense, substance, but really that's just the prosecution's "legal" way, and by flaunting such an open and crude mockery the "legal" side of the ruling class is making obvious the intensely political nature of the trial. It is with such a clear political statement: we are not to crumble and crush the Revolu-

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Good fight and give of their best, to rage over the case of the Mao Tsetung Defendants.

In the past, the government has said that in order to make the case: the hand and glove that are inseparable. The ruling class is trying to show that the whole class war between classes, which is begi-
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