

Reagan's Imperial Presidency

The shocking liaison of U.S.-Iran and the need for a biweekly N&L

Editorial statement

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The timing of Reagan's shocking U.S.-Iran liaison, which has been kept secret from the American people, from the U.S. Congress, from his own Cabinet and from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and which violated U.S. law governing clandestine operations—a law signed by Reagan himself Jan. 17, 1985—cannot possibly be glossed over by the present hullabaloo about the need to re-shuffle the Cabinet.

The only word of truth that issued from Reagan at the news conference (November 19) when he supposedly finally revealed all—and let us not forget that he had to make the belated announcement of this super-secretive affair after Khomeini's Iran and Assad's Syria saw that it was made public through the Syrian-sponsored Lebanese newspaper, *Ash-Shira'a**—the only word of truth from Reagan, we repeat, was: "This was my decision, and mine alone."

What Reagan failed to say was why it was his decision and his alone. It was not to let his advisers off the hook. Nor was the decision taken only 18 months ago, as he insisted. No, what has characterized his Presidency since the beginning in 1981, what got him the Christian fundamentalist and other reactionary support for the presidency, was his counter-revolutionary aim to turn the clock back in the U.S. as well as abroad, Iran included. He expressed himself in no uncertain terms that what characterized the whole world was its division into two, and two only—the U.S., which he calls "the West," and Russia, that "evil empire."

REAGAN THE RETROGRESSIONIST

That ideology of seeing a Russian, a "Communist," under every bed has been the most corrosive element of Reagan's retrogressionism, more corrosive than Khomeini's designation of the U.S. as the "Great Satan." Clearly, the U.S. being designated as the "Great Satan" didn't stop Reagan from engaging in clandestine schemes with Khomeini-ites, whom he christened "moderates," and sending Iran arms. Whether that was done to "free the hostages," as he claimed at first, or for "stopping terrorism" or for "strategic reasons," based on the geopolitics of the Persian Gulf region, the truth is that Reagan's aims exceeded even what the U.S. did in arming the Shah as the "U.S. policeman" in the oil-rich Persian Gulf.

Back then there was no Iran-Iraq War, and there was

* *Ash-Shira'a* Nov. 3, 1985. An English translation appeared in *Iran Times* on Nov. 14, 1985.

no Reagan tilting toward Iraq, much less deluding himself that he could stop the Iran-Iraq War by sending substantial arms shipments of the most sophisticated weapons to Iran, the same kind of weapons with which the U.S. had armed the Shah.

What was driving Reagan into the embraces of the merchants of death and the total disregard of West European allies? What deluded him to believe that he had just discovered "moderates" in Iran? The answer lies in Reagan's aim of gaining nuclear superiority over Russia. That is the driving force both of the U.S.-Iran liaison and the push for Star Wars. Not even the fact that the very survival of civilization is threatened by this uncontrolled rush to the global nuclear arms race has stopped him. (For that matter, Russia is trying to do the same.)

Nothing can stop these rulers except masses in motion with freedom as their aim. Reagan's aim is to so pave the way for single world mastery by the U.S. in his final two years of office that his machine would go on in the direction he has set no matter who is President.

**REAGAN MUST BE STOPPED:
THE NEED FOR A BIWEEKLY N&L**

Reagan must be stopped long before his two years have run their course. And the best way of stopping him is to tell the truth. The truth is a great deal more than the disclosure of the facts of this latest dismal affair. It is fully the truth only when it is inseparable from the continued struggle for freedom.

The U.S. in its birth did struggle for truth inseparable from freedom. And that struggle began with words, common words, of people talking to each other, writing to each other, and organizing Committees of Correspondence about this purpose—freedom. By July 4, 1776, those "nuisances" of the Committees of Correspondence turned out to be, as the eminent American historian Charles A. Beard put it, "the engines of revolution."

Intellectuals who do not relate themselves to a revolutionary movement consider letter-writing, at best, to be "raw material," a sort of unspoken conversation. The worker, on the other hand, considers his or her letters sent to a newspaper the oft-spoken conversation that has been written down to be heard. That is why *News & Letters* devotes so big a part of its space to "Readers' Views," whether actually sent in as letters, or as heard in conversations with our readers. Indeed, a good many of our articles come from the same kind of discussions, in the words of those active in the freedom

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movements themselves.

As you can see from this, our final monthly issue, the voices from below include activity both within the U.S. and the world over, as we print reports directly from ongoing revolutionary movements in the Philippines, in Haiti, in South Africa. Insofar as South Africa is concerned, the Lead article by Jongilizwe reveals an affinity between the second America striving for freedom and the South African revolutionaries, as against Reagan's collaboration with the fascist apartheid regime.

It is this we are aiming to deepen, by meeting the challenge from this crisis-ridden objective situation and increasing the frequency of the publication of our newspaper from a *monthly* to a *biweekly*.

THE "CHANGED WORLD"— FROM LIBYA TO NICARAGUA

We have been talking about the need for a biweekly N&L ever since the "changed world" of the 1930s came to one kind of climax with Reagan's foray into the Gulf of Sidra, soon to be followed by the bombing of Tripoli, including the headquarters and sleeping quarters of Khadafy.

The changed world that began with Reagan's disregard of independent countries' boundaries intensified with his illegal arming of the contras in Nicaragua. Now that a C-123 planeload of arms, with Americans in the cockpit, has crashed in Nicaragua—and not only with Hasenfus alive to tell his story, but the arms and documents revealing more—how long will it be before Reagan attempts another of his fantastic schemes to order U.S. soldiers into that land?

To act as if this is minor, and the secret arms deal with Iran is a mystery, is escapism of the most ominous sort. The easy way to evade serious analysis of the objective events as presently seen in the secret deals between the U.S. and Iran, would be to use Churchill's rhetoric—as he was hiding the fact that he was already conspiring to begin the Cold War against Russia, when the Hot War of the Great Alliance against Nazism was still going on—by saying that Russia was a "riddle wrapped in an enigma inside a mystery." The only mystery about the sudden attempted illicit adventure between Rafsanjani and Reagan is that it was kept a secret, but even there we can get some illumination from 1) turning to the first Reagan-Gorbachev summit in Geneva; and 2) —what is really first and foremost—the inseparability of theory and practice in examining the "changed world" since Reagan engaged in summitry.

FROM GENEVA TO REYKJAVIK— ALL THINGS FALL APART

To grasp the meaning of events, objectively and subjectively, you need to have internalized what Marx meant by history-in-the-making. Naturally—though not out of whole cloth—each generation does bear the responsibility for how history is shaped and re-shaped in its age. Dialectics discloses, if you probe deeply, the process of development, objectively and subjectively.

The meaning of the event is grounded in the event itself; your method of examining it is not just as a single event or one which you judge in a quantitative way only, but in its totality, in its class relationships, where each class has an aim of its own. Rulers make headlines

because of their power to exploit and destroy; it is that military might that seeks to terrorize people, to make us believe that our fate is in their hands. In truth that is not so, and dialectics will help us see the truth. Dialectics shows the nothingness of accomplishment at the Reagan-Gorbachev summit in Geneva. It was made to appear as a great achievement but, in truth, the global crises that have brought the world to the edge reveal that the two Behemoths were simply not yet ready to launch a nuclear holocaust at that moment.

How long will that moment of acknowledged unreadiness last? It becomes imperative not to wait. It is imperative both to intensify all activities and to hold these inseparable from theory. That is why our newspaper's logo reads: "Theory/Practice." That is why we are increasing the frequency of appearance of N&L, by transforming it into a biweekly. The next issue you will receive, in January, will be the first issue of that biweekly. Time is of the essence, not just as analysis, but for action.

—Nov. 25, 1986

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