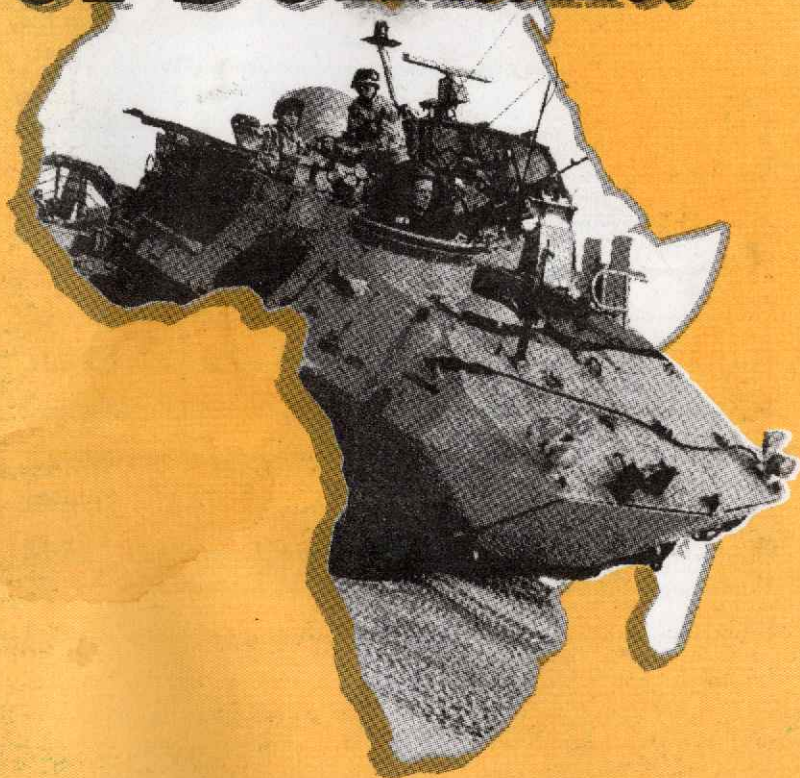


Behind the US Invasion of Somalia



Statements of the Workers League

Contents

Introduction	1
Why Is the US Invading Somalia?	5
The Return to Colonialism	11
Colonialism's Humanitarian Mask	17
Somalia: A History of Imperialist Brutality	23
The Ugly Face of US Colonialism	47
Imperialism's Drive to Reenslave Africa	51
US Massacre in Mogadishu	55
Notes	61
Maps: The Carve-Up of the Horn of Africa (1862-1925)	69
The Horn of Africa Today	71
Index	73

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Introduction

The US invasion of Somalia was launched with great fanfare by a lame-duck president who just one month before had been overwhelmingly defeated at the polls. Virtually overnight, and without even the semblance of a public debate, President Bush announced he was sending an occupation force on a “rescue mission.” President-elect Clinton immediately announced his full support.

Alongside the US Marines, the mass media were mobilized to overwhelm the American public with heartbreaking scenes of starving Somali children. For several weeks the words “invasion” and “military” were inseparable from “humanitarian.” Journalists and academics held forth on the new, “philanthropic” role of the Pentagon.

The complex web of historical, social and political forces that had produced the catastrophe in Somalia were reduced in the official presentation of events to a series of soundbites and epithets. There was the notable example of NBC News anchorman Tom Brokaw in Mogadishu describing the warring Somali factions as “yahoos.”

Insofar as there was any pretense of an explanation for the social calamity that had engulfed Somalia, it was limited to denunciations of the “war lords.” They became the latest in a growing list of officially designated malefactors — such as the “drug king” Manuel Noriega and the “tyrant” Saddam Hussein — whose transgressions had to be punished by dispatching the US military to bomb and shoot the local populations and occupy their territory.

There was no examination of the bloody and sordid history of

European imperialism in the Horn of Africa, or the more recent role of the United States in propping up tyrants like deposed Somali leader Siad Barre, sponsoring right-wing insurgencies and fomenting tribal warfare throughout the continent.

Silence about the past was required to justify the crimes of American imperialism in the present and those being prepared for the future. Journalists, scholars and political figures — from Andrew Young to former CIA chief Richard Helms — were brought forward to declare that the United States was acting selflessly and had “no strategic interest” in Somalia.

The invasion was greeted with universal enthusiasm across the spectrum of bourgeois politics. Faced with a unilateral White House decision to dispatch 30,000 troops, a naval armada, planes, tanks and attack helicopters halfway around the world, Congress did not even bother to go through the motions of a debate.

Within a few weeks of the American troops landing in Mogadishu, the media's preoccupation with the fate of starving Somalia had vanished as suddenly as it had arisen. With US, French, Italian and other forces attacking Somalis from one part of the country to the other, and the toll of civilian dead and wounded rising daily, the consensus had become: the less said, the better.

Moreover, the activities of US envoy Robert Oakley in putting together a new Somali political apparatus subservient to Washington, and establishing a US-trained police force were better left in the dark.

By the end of February, less than three months after being dispatched for the supposed purpose of feeding starving children, American troops in Mogadishu were gunning down youth demonstrating against colonialism as they chanted “US Out of Somalia.”

As of this writing, plans were being implemented for the military occupation of Somalia to be placed under UN auspices, with the United States maintaining some 5,000 ground troops and an offshore force of sailors and marines.

This book presents the record of the Workers League's response to the invasion of Somalia. It consists of articles and editorial statements published in the Bulletin, the party's weekly newspaper.

These articles are examples of what is a rarity today — the critical and historical analysis of contemporary political and social developments. At a time when the networks parrot the press handouts of the military and call it “the news,” when the Pentagon public relations office sets the political, ideological and moral tone for the country,

the thoughtful reader will find the assessment presented here both informative and stimulating.

A particularly vital challenge falls to the Marxist party under conditions of imperialist war and colonial conquest, when the machinery of hypocrisy and deceit of bourgeois society is placed on full throttle. The party which represents the socialist working class must cut through the maze of official lies and present a scientific analysis of events.

It must place the present developments within their real historical context, revealing the general trend of imperialist military, economic and political intervention. It must expose, behind the hypocritical statements of the policy makers, their actual aims and motives. And it must show the class interests which underlie the actions of the government, warning of the implications of imperialist aggression abroad for the democratic rights and social conditions of the working class at home.

The Workers League undertook this task from the outset of the invasion of Somalia. As the Bulletin editorial board statement of December 4, 1992 explained:

“In reality, the United States is preparing to carry out the military occupation of Somalia so it can install a puppet regime and establish American military and economic hegemony over the region.

“What is involved here is not simply an isolated military adventure, but the drive of American imperialism to recolonize Africa and large parts of Asia and Latin America.”

Succeeding issues of the Bulletin sought to expose the claims of Bush, Clinton and the media that the invasion was carried out for the purpose of feeding starving Somalis; to reveal the real economic, political and military aims of the intervention; and to provide an outline of the history of imperialist domination of the region — the real source of the social catastrophe which has befallen the Somali people, as well as hundreds of millions more throughout Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America.

The final three articles published in this book document the brutal reality of the imperialist occupation of Somalia, and the way in which the invasion of this country has already paved the way for the return of colonial troops to other parts of Africa.

The publication of this book is part of the Workers League's struggle to politically arm the working class and create the conditions for its mobilization in defense of the Somali people and all those oppressed by US imperialism.

Why Is the US Invading Somalia?

Almost overnight the United States has dispatched 1,800 marines to the eastern African country of Somalia and another 30,000 troops are on the way.

The occupation of Somalia has been undertaken with virtually no explanation from the Bush administration and without even the pretense of a public debate.

Only the flimsiest of reasons for the sudden dispatch of troops are being offered. Meanwhile the American people are being overwhelmed by a hypocritical and cynical media barrage which depicts the invasion as a noble act of humanitarian aid to the starving Somali people.

Its object is to politically chloroform US public opinion so that the occupation of Somalia is a fait accompli before the masses of people have even had time to consider its implications.

A moment's reflection, however, makes clear that the huge deployment of troops, ships, planes and supplies to the Indian Ocean, which began within a few days of the first public disclosure of the proposed operation, is the product of many months of intensive planning and preparation.

A human tragedy of incalculable dimensions is indeed unfolding in this poverty-stricken country in the Horn of Africa. Thousands of men, women and children are dying of starvation. But one would have to abandon all critical faculties to accept as good coin the assertions

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of the big business media and politicians that the current military action is motivated by a desire to alleviate the suffering of the Somali people.

Relief workers publicly dispute Bush's claim that there has been a sharp decline in recent weeks in the movement of food supplies to famine-stricken Somalis. And many of the relief agencies on the spot have denounced the US decision to send in troops.

A spokeswoman from the Somalia Relief Agency of Britain told the *Bulletin*, "The troops will contribute to the conflict. They will not help it.... The US is trying to use this situation to get back into the country."

No government official has even attempted to clarify why a 30,000-strong force backed by ships, attack helicopters and bombers is required to ensure the delivery of food supplies. Nor have they explained why American troops are to be stationed at key locations throughout the country, even though only a portion of southern Somalia is affected by the famine.

There are many places around the world where masses of people are dying from hunger and disease, including Mozambique, Angola, Bangladesh and India. One country where children face death from illness and starvation is Iraq. There the cause of the human disaster is well known — the genocidal bombing campaign of the United States combined with the economic blockade maintained by the United Nations, the very forces which now claim to be intervening into Somalia to "save lives."

But Somalia has been chosen from among these poverty-stricken countries as the target for immediate military occupation for definite reasons which have nothing to do with humanitarian concerns.

The White House and Pentagon interest in Somalia is based on the strategic importance of this region to the economic, military and geopolitical interests of American imperialism. The Horn of Africa faces across the Indian Ocean to India in the east; it lies along the Red Sea waterway to Egypt and Israel; it lies across a narrow strip of water from the oil-rich Arabian peninsula; and it provides a direct ocean path to the Persian Gulf and Iran.

For many years the US maintained a military and intelligence base in Berbera, on the northern coast across the Gulf of Aden from Yemen. A large percentage of Europe's oil supplies passes along the Horn of Africa and control of Somalia would give the US enormous leverage against its imperialist rivals. It would as well strengthen American military striking power in the Middle East, the Persian

Gulf, northern Africa and the Indian subcontinent.

The toll of disease and death in Somalia is the end product of more than a century of colonial oppression, carried out by the British, French and Italians, followed by the semicolonial enslavement of the country through such institutions as the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

The Stalinist bureaucracy in the former Soviet Union played a no less reactionary role, helping in the late 1960s and early 1970s to impose the brutal dictatorship of Siad Barre on the Somali masses and even proclaiming his regime to be a "socialist state."

The United States played a crucial role in preparing the present catastrophe, backing Siad Barre since the mid-1970s as a counterweight to the Soviet influence in neighboring Ethiopia. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Washington withdrew its support for the Barre regime, leading to its collapse in early 1991.

But Somalia is only one of many countries in Africa where American imperialist intervention and intrigue led to social disaster. As part of its Cold War struggle against Soviet influence on the continent, the US deliberately fomented civil war and backed counterrevolutionary mercenary forces in one country after another. Among its most notorious proxies were RENAMO in Mozambique and UNITA in Angola. Hundreds of thousands are today starving in these two countries alone as a result of US policies.

Bush has managed to cram two bloody invasions of small and oppressed countries into his single term, killing hundreds of thousands for the ostensible purpose of putting down dictators in Panama and Iraq.

Now, with the elections out of the way, and with the full support of the incoming Democratic administration, he plans to end his term of office with another military onslaught against a defenseless people.

American imperialism has always justified its acts of military aggression on the noblest "humanitarian" grounds. This was the case from the Spanish-American War of 1898 to the war in Vietnam. Reagan occupied Beirut and bombed Libya supposedly to combat "terrorism," and he invaded Grenada to "save American lives."

In every one of these wars, the official explanations given at the time — from the sinking of the battleship *Maine* in Havana harbor to the defense of "tiny Kuwait" — have subsequently been shown to be a pack of lies.¹

In reality, the United States is preparing to carry out the military occupation of Somalia so it can install a puppet regime and establish

American military and economic hegemony over the region.

What is involved here is not simply an isolated military adventure, but the drive of American imperialism to recolonize Africa and large parts of Asia and Latin America. As Washington Post columnist Richard Cohen declared this past week: "Yes, there's a whiff of white-man-burdenism here, but so what?"

The US intervention in Somalia is a warning of things to come, not just in Africa, but in "trouble spots" around the world such as Bosnia, the former Soviet Union, Haiti, North Korea, Cambodia and elsewhere.

It is a dramatic expression of a pronounced shift on the part of American imperialism to an increasingly aggressive policy — economic, political and military — directed above all against its main imperialist rivals in Europe and Japan. As in the gulf war, the United States is using its military supremacy to strengthen its strategic position and demonstrate to its "allies" Germany and Japan that it has the ability to act unilaterally.

This military action comes in the midst of deepening trade conflicts between the US, Europe and Japan and sharpening interimperialist tensions in the aftermath of the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Many columnists and capitalist politicians are stating that the United States should take advantage of the collapse of the Soviet Union and use its military forces to intervene all over the world. They openly cite Somalia as a test case and the first of many invasions to come. Considerations of national sovereignty, they proclaim, must not be allowed to block the US from intervening militarily throughout Africa, Latin America and Asia.

Jim Hoagland, the foreign affairs columnist for the Washington Post, wrote: "Freed from Cold War restraints and obligations, the American military may turn out to be the ideal organization for global humanitarian emergencies. Somalia could be a turning point in the Pentagon's search for vital new missions. It could revive and give content to the idea of an America-led new world order."

Speaking on the McNeil-Lehrer television news program, former CIA chief Richard Helms declared: "It's a new ball game. I've been saying for a long time that we haven't had the foggiest idea what to do with all these trouble spots in the world. You've only mentioned four or five. There are lots of others in the old Soviet Union, and so forth.

"This is an entirely different ball game.... It seems to me that Somalia is a great place to kick it off...."

Asked whether US intervention into an internal situation in another country worried him, former UN Ambassador Andrew Young said, "It doesn't bother me at all. One of the things we're going to have to do in places like Liberia, to some extent in Haiti ... we're going to have to find a way under the auspices of the United Nations to deal with internal questions.... It is appropriate that we learn what is possible and what is necessary in Somalia and then we see how that lesson can be applied with others."

The shameless subservience of the United Nations to the latest predatory moves of the United States further exposes its reactionary role. The fiction of the United Nations as a benevolent mediator between imperialist and oppressed nations has been exploded by the collapse of Stalinism and the breakup of the postwar imperialist order.

The turn by American imperialism to military force abroad is accompanied by the ever more flagrant disregard for the traditional forms of democratic procedure at home. The White House no longer makes even a pretense of seeking congressional approval for the launching of wars which could cost hundreds of millions of dollars and sacrifice the lives and limbs of thousands of young workers.

Bush announced his plans for troops to Somalia and a week later the first contingent of 1,800 marines was on its way, without a single vote taken or so much as a debate in Congress.

Congress and the politicians of both big business parties are, for their part, more than happy to cede all power to the White House, the Pentagon and the CIA.

It is no surprise that the lackeys of American capitalism who head the AFL-CIO and United Auto Workers give their support to the occupation of Somalia. Their backing for the bloodbath against Iraq was a pledge that the labor bureaucracy would do its part to subordinate the working class to the war machine of American imperialism.

The invasion of Somalia is, moreover, the clearest demonstration of the reactionary character of the incoming Clinton administration. It shows that there is no essential difference between the Democratic and Republican parties, both of which are political instruments of American imperialism.

How can one explain the ability of an administration which suffered a massive repudiation at the polls to take such drastic action after the elections, except for the fact that the military intervention was secretly discussed and agreed to in advance by Clinton and the Democrats?

Among the most enthusiastic supporters of America's new colonial aspirations in Africa are the liberal black Democrats, such as Jesse Jackson and Andrew Young, who thereby demonstrate once more their role as abject lackeys of American imperialism.

This latest military adventure is not an expression of any strength on the part of American and world capitalism. On the contrary, it reflects the deepening crisis and breakup of world imperialism, and the sharp decline in the world position of American capitalism. As in the Desert Storm assault on Iraq, America is seeking, with increasing recklessness, to use its residual military supremacy to offset its economic decline in relation to its imperialist rivals.

But the adventure in Somalia will no more solve the historic crisis of American capitalism than did the massacre carried out by the US in Iraq. Far from restoring imperialist "stability," it will ultimately fuel the flames of popular revolt against colonial-style oppression throughout Africa.

It will be accompanied by even deeper attacks on the democratic rights and living standards of the American working class at home.

Workers are faced with the necessity to draw the historic lessons of the growth of depression, fascist and racist violence and militarism all over the world. They are all symptoms of the mortal crisis of capitalism and its historically outmoded nation-state system.

The only answer to the drive of imperialism to world war is the international unity of the working class in the struggle for socialism. This is the perspective and program of the Workers League and our co-thinkers in the International Committee of the Fourth International.

The Return to Colonialism

1. The Workers League unequivocally condemns the US invasion of Somalia. The unleashing of tens of thousands of troops, backed by warships, jet fighters and attack helicopters, is a brutal violation of the sovereignty of the Somali people. It signals a return to the naked colonial enslavement of the oppressed peoples not only of Africa, but throughout the world.

2. The cynicism, hypocrisy, and downright lying that have accompanied this latest military adventure are extraordinary — even by White House standards. The military subjugation of an African country is being palmed off by the American government and its media lackeys as a "humanitarian mission"!

3. Just two days after the first marines landed in Mogadishu, Bush sent a letter to Congress repudiating his initial claim that the intervention would be over before the January 20 inauguration of Clinton. Bush acknowledged there would be no deadline for the troops' withdrawal, and that additional forces might have to be sent. Already the government is indicating that it has set into motion a protracted military occupation of the African nation.

4. The claim that 30,000 US troops are needed to feed starving Somali people is a fraud. Virtually all credible relief agencies in the country insisted that food could be delivered to those in need without placing the population under the jackboot of the military. Within 24 hours of the invasion, two Somalis were killed and seven more were

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wounded in a hail of bullets fired by American marines and French legionnaires. The Pentagon's marching orders, it seems, are to "save" the Somali people by killing any of them who get in its way!

5. The human tragedy which Washington invokes as the pretext for its invasion is itself a product of imperialist policy. The collapse of Somalia is only one example of imperialism's systematic destruction of the national economies of all the oppressed countries. US-controlled financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have imposed capitalist free market policies aimed at the wholesale privatization of state enterprises and a drastic reduction in consumption. These policies have condemned billions to hunger and misery.

6. The American invasion of Somalia marks the onset of a new imperialist drive to carve up Africa and the rest of the former colonial world. The countries of Africa and Asia which achieved political independence after World War II from the old colonial empires of Europe are once again to be placed under foreign military rule.

7. The lie that the US military represents the "humanitarian" solution to starvation in Somalia is a rationale for colonial domination by the United States of much of Africa, Asia and Latin America. The Wall Street Journal, for example, approvingly cited in a recent article the statement of a historian who wrote that the United Nations, acting on behalf of the major imperialist powers, should begin "moving into the business of government, taking countries into its trusteeship for varying periods...." The Wall Street Journal then commented: "There is a word for this: colonialism."

8. Much has been said about the "death of Marxism," but never has Lenin's analysis of imperialism been more clearly vindicated than today. In words no less relevant than when they were written more than 75 years ago, Lenin characterized imperialism as the "exploitation of an increasing number of small or weak nations by an extremely small group of the richest or more powerful nations."

9. The US invasion is a manifestation of the irrevocable breakdown of the post-World War II imperialist order. The conditions of extreme crisis and deepening world recession which characterize the world capitalist system compel imperialism to do away with the limited concessions, including political independence, granted to the former colonial countries in the postwar period. This global crisis is the source of the scramble for control of markets, sources of raw materials and cheap labor between the major capitalist countries. Moreover, the collapse of the Soviet Union, which was a key element

of the old world order, has enormously accelerated this process.

10. The invasion of Somalia sets the stage for a sharp escalation of the conflicts — economic, political and ultimately military — among the major imperialist powers. A pattern has emerged: from Panama, to Iraq, to Somalia. The US is seeking to position itself to obtain maximum advantage against its rivals. This global struggle is what consumes the incoming Clinton administration. For their part, Japan and Germany are neither able nor willing to stand by indefinitely while American imperialism seeks to reassert by military means its former economic hegemony. The new eruption of American military aggression thus contains the seeds of World War III.

11. This latest US intervention is not a sudden reaction to the famine in Somalia. It is the product of long-debated and well-prepared plans for the deployment of US forces all over the world. Last March The New York Times leaked the Pentagon's "Defense Planning Guidance" for 1994-1999, which called for an expanded use of military force to establish US domination over Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and the former Soviet Union. The document also called for measures to maintain American military supremacy over Germany and Japan. It declared: "Our strategy must now refocus on precluding the emergence of any future global competitor ... to prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources would, under consolidated control, be sufficient to general global power. These regions include Western Europe, East Asia, the territory of the former Soviet Union, and Southwest Asia."

12. Two months earlier, Jane's *Defence Weekly* magazine published an article entitled "Flash Points, Confusion, Chaos and Conflict," which listed dozens of countries around the world as potential areas for military intervention. The article cited 75 potential border disputes within the former USSR; in the Balkans it cited Yugoslavia, Bosnia, Croatia, Albania, Bulgaria and Romania; in the Middle East, Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, Israel and Iran; in Africa, Libya, Egypt, Morocco, Zaire, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya and other countries; all of the countries of the Indian subcontinent; in Southeast Asia, Burma, Korea, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam; Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and China in East Asia; and Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Columbia, Peru and Suriname in Latin America.

13. Workers should apply their critical faculties to the constantly repeated claim that Somalia is of no strategic interest to the United States. Anyone who looks at a map of the Horn of Africa, which

Somalia occupies, can see the absurdity of this assertion. The region is of vital military, economic and political importance. It lies across the Gulf of Aden from the oil-rich Arabian peninsula, down the Red Sea from Israel and Egypt, and across the Indian Ocean from the Indian subcontinent. In the aftermath of the Iranian revolution of 1979, the Pentagon dispatched teams to Somalia in pursuit of military base agreements to secure US imperialist interests throughout the region.

14. Since the beginnings of Europe's colonial empires, this was one of the most hotly contested regions of Africa. Britain, France and Italy all established colonial holdings in the Horn of Africa. After formal independence, US imperialism vied with the Soviet Union for domination of the region. As part of this Cold War struggle, the US fomented civil wars and backed military thugs in Somalia and many other African countries, creating the conditions for the famine that stalks the entire region today. The US poured hundreds of millions of dollars into Somalia and propped up the regime of Siad Barre for more than a decade, maintaining a military and intelligence base at the northern Somali city of Berbera. Under US protection Barre slaughtered tens of thousands of Somalis in the northern part of the country in the late 1980s. His regime collapsed when the US withdrew its support following the breakup of the Soviet regime.

15. What about the vast mineral wealth of Africa? Is not the dispatch of 30,000 troops connected to the rich deposits of titanium, cobalt, magnesium, gold and other precious and strategic metals and minerals that exist on the continent?

16. Clinton has declared his full support for the invasion of Somalia, and insisted that no time limit be placed on the deployment of American forces there. He told a Washington press conference on Tuesday, "We believe that this mission has merit and that an artificial timetable cannot be imposed upon it." Nothing could more clearly demonstrate the reactionary character of the incoming Democratic administration and the fact that Clinton is no less a representative of American imperialism than his Republican opponent in the elections. If anything, Clinton is promising to accelerate the use of American military force abroad. Last month he emerged from his first White House meeting with Bush and boasted of having discussed 15 international "trouble spots" with the outgoing president.

17. The assault on Somalia has laid bare the utter decay of so-called democracy in America. None of the big business candidates mentioned a word about impending war during the election campaign.

But once the vote was out of the way and the ruling class, by means of its two-party system and its media manipulation of public opinion, had selected its chosen representative, the war was launched. Overnight, hundreds of millions of dollars were allocated and thousands of youth were sent to fight without any public debate. The political eunuchs in Congress gladly ceded their constitutional prerogatives to the White House and the Pentagon. They did not even mount the pretense of a congressional debate, such as that which preceded the war on Iraq. The two political parties which had just engaged in months of mutual mudslinging were in total accord. And this far-flung operation, which has vast implications for the working class in the United States and around the world, was carried out by a lame duck government that had just been routed and humiliated at the polls!

18. The unbridled militarism which increasingly dominates American politics has the gravest implications for the American working class. A capitalist nation which imposes colonial slavery on workers and oppressed peoples abroad is compelled to attack the democratic rights and conditions of life of workers at home. The watchword of all class-conscious workers must be: US hands off Somalia!

19. It goes without saying that the official trade union organizations will hail the subjugation of Somalia. For our part, the Workers League stands on the side of the Somali masses and all oppressed peoples in the struggle against US imperialism. There is no doubt that the drive to recolonize the oppressed countries will generate massive resistance around the world. The people of Africa, Asia and Latin America will not accept enslavement by imperialist conquerors.

20. The ultimate end of this adventure, and of military interventions to come, will be a bloody catastrophe for US imperialism. American workers can prevent themselves from being dragged into this disaster only through the organization of an independent political struggle against American capitalism.

21. Long ago the Fourth International warned that the world would be brought face to face with the volcanic eruption of American imperialism. That time is at hand. The way forward in the fight against militarism, depression and the attack on democratic rights is the struggle for the international unity of the working class on the basis of the program of world socialist revolution.

Colonialism's Humanitarian Mask

In the past weeks the Bulletin has been asked by sympathetic readers and even Workers League supporters whether its opposition to the US intervention in Somalia is justified in the face of the starvation prevailing in that country.

Given the situation which exists there right now, they ask, is it not permissible to be somewhat less intransigent in opposing US troops?

Such thinking is perhaps understandable from an emotional point of view. But it tends to overlook that when it comes to formulating a policy, one must think not only of the "now," but also the "before" and "after." The solution to today's problems must be grounded in an understanding of their historical roots and the long-term consequences of the policies adopted to resolve them.

Let us review this question.

Washington has justified the occupation of Somalia by 30,000 combat troops, armed with the most advanced weaponry, with the claim that it is carrying out a "humanitarian" mission to bring an end to starvation in this African country.

The big business media never hint that there could be any other interests involved. It excludes any reference to the country's history, previous US involvement in Somalia or any real examination of the causes of the deadly famine which is stalking much of Africa and Asia.

Already the initial statements of Bush that Operation Restore Hope would be merely a short-term relief mission have been exposed

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as a lie. The White House, Congress and the media openly acknowledge that this is the beginning of an open-ended military occupation, both in terms of its duration and the number of troops.

Every worker recognizes the necessity of delivering food to a famine-stricken people. But no one has even attempted to explain why the conditions in Somalia can only be answered with the largest invasion of Africa since Mussolini's troops marched into Ethiopia.

When Bush first announced the planned US operation, he insisted that troops had to be sent immediately to deal with a drastic deterioration in the conditions facing the Somali people. He asserted that the movement of food to famine zones had been reduced to a trickle and that the rate of starvation was rapidly rising. This has since been exposed as a bare-faced lie. It is now universally acknowledged that, as bad as conditions remain, the level of starvation has been declining over the last several months and the worst of the famine is over.

Washington insisted from the outset that the vast military might of the Pentagon was the only suitable instrument for delivering food to the Somalis. This is one more lie. Many of those involved in Somali relief vehemently disputed this claim at the time and said that they were already overcoming political and logistical obstacles to the movement of food supplies.

Workers should consider the scope of the present US military deployment in Somalia. Some 30,000 marines and soldiers have landed and are fanning out throughout the country. Heavily-armed helicopter gunships fly constantly over the capital of Mogadishu in an attempt to intimidate the population. Already these gunships have fired tow missiles into pickup trucks, killing an estimated 15 Somalis.

US armored cars patrol the streets and alleyways of the city, while fortified roadblocks have been set up in many areas. In one instance last week, marines joined French Legionnaires in raking an entire family with gunfire when it failed to stop its van at a roadblock. Two were killed and seven seriously wounded. The New York Times in its report on this event referred to the men, women and children who were shot as "Somali gunmen."

Meanwhile, off the coast, a naval armada which includes an aircraft carrier and other warships patrols the strategically vital sea lanes linking the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean.

It is self-evident that such a massive military operation involves much more than the delivery of food to the hungry.

The media has good reason not to tell the American people

anything about either Somalia's history or the background to its present crisis. In the Somali invasion, they are following the same pattern established in Panama and Iraq. Fundamental questions are concealed so that the latest target of military aggression — whether the "drug-running" Noriega, the "Iraqi dictator" Hussein or the "war lords" of Somalia — can be demonized.

History shows that the present famine in Somalia is the end result of more than a century of colonial oppression and imperialist intervention, in which the United States has played a major role. The Somali people, like the people of all of Africa, are suffering from the bitter legacy of the colonial carveup of the continent by the European powers.

In the post-World War II period, the US played the major role among the imperialist powers in fomenting civil wars, backing mercenary armies and promoting conditions of economic collapse and famine in line with its Cold War struggle against Soviet influence on the continent. For example, the US supported the infamous mercenary forces of RENAMO in Mozambique and UNITA in Angola, contributing in this way to the famine which now stalks southern Africa.

In Somalia, the US backed the dictator Siad Barre from the mid-1970s, pouring in hundreds of millions of dollars in military aid and maintaining a military base in the northern port city of Berbera. Under conditions of the disintegration of the USSR, the US had no more use for Siad Barre. Washington withdrew its aid and the regime collapsed in January 1991, giving rise to civil war conditions.

From the onset of the invasion, the politicians and the media have incessantly claimed that the US has "no strategic interests" in Somalia. If this is the case, why have the imperialists been struggling for more than a century for control of the country? In reality, Somalia occupies part of the Horn of Africa, one of the most critical geopolitical positions in the world.

US imperialism bears responsibility for hunger not only in Somalia, but throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America. US-dominated agencies such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have imposed draconian austerity program in country after country, condemning literally billions of human beings to poverty and hunger.

In the Somali operation, the US and the United Nations are claiming the mantle of humanitarianism. Supposedly, they are operating on the purest motives, i.e., alleviating hunger and human

suffering. How is it to be explained that these same forces are involved in the deliberate starvation of other peoples? In Iraq, children continue to die by the thousands as a result of the US war and UN sanctions. Meanwhile, Washington has tightened its economic blockade of Cuba, threatening the people there with the cutoff of food and medicine.

Workers cannot allow their political judgement to be guided simply by an immediate emotional response to the suffering in Somalia. The ruling class and its media apparatus are experts in the cynical exploitation of images of this suffering to further the interests of American imperialism.

Moreover, it is necessary to bear in mind that when you give political support, you have to take responsibility for the consequences. If you support the intervention of US Marines in Somalia, you then share responsibility if those same marines shoot down Somali civilians. You have to take responsibility for what they do, not only in the next few months, but over the course of years.

As in every other major question, the working class must assume its own independent class standpoint. To cede to imperialism the task of rescuing its own victims is to accept the rationale for the recolonization of not only Somalia, but all of the oppressed countries, and for US military interventions around the world.

Even as US forces are consolidating their grip over Somalia, it was announced on Wednesday that thousands of imperialist troops are being dispatched to Mozambique and the US is pressing for "pre-emptive" air strikes against Serbia.

If American military intervention is justified by the starvation in Somalia, why not send US troops into other countries where capitalism has created starvation, civil war and mass suffering? India, the former Soviet Union, parts of Latin America and many other lands are all likely targets.

Leading spokesmen for US imperialism have been making a case precisely for such interventions. In a television interview earlier this month, former US Ambassador to the United Nations Andrew Young said, "We've got to find ways to stem the tide of chaos in the world ... in places like Liberia, to some extent in Haiti ... we're going to have to find a way under the auspices of the United Nations to deal with internal questions.... It's appropriate that we learn what is possible and what is necessary in Somalia and then we see how that lesson can be applied with others."

In an editorial published on December 17 entitled "Choosing

Wars of Conscience," The New York Times made the case for the "humanitarian duty of intervention." The editorial cited the Balkans, Liberia and the Sudan.

The invasion of Somalia is a brutal act of imperialist aggression. It signals the onset of a drive by imperialism to recolonize countries which gained their independence in the postwar period. In the last century, the rape of Africa, Asia and the Middle East by the European powers was carried out in the name of a "civilizing mission" and the "white man's burden." So too today, the American imperialists seek to mask naked economic interests — the control of markets, raw materials and sources of cheap labor — with the hypocritical rhetoric of humanitarianism.

Somalia

A History of Imperialist Brutality

The occupation of Somalia by the troops of 12 countries, led by the United States, is the latest chapter in more than a century of imperialist military aggression against the peoples of the Horn of Africa. Without a knowledge of this history, it is impossible to understand the present crisis in Somalia or the responsibility of the major capitalist powers for the conditions of starvation and civil war which are the pretext for the UN-sponsored occupation.

The capitalist media, which has been mobilized along with the US Marines and the French Foreign Legion as part of the imperialist assault on Somalia, systematically avoids any serious examination of the history of this region. Instead, it repeats the lie — peddled by the Bush administration and taken up by Clinton — that Somalia has “no strategic value” and that the sole reason for the occupation is to feed starving people.

But from 1870 onwards, following the opening of the Suez Canal, the Horn of Africa — and Somalia in particular — became the object of a ferocious struggle among the imperialist powers. Each sought to establish a position from which it could dominate the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea. The Horn of Africa was the object of intense imperialist interest during the Cold War, when the United States maintained military bases at various times in Eritrea, Ethiopia

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and Somalia. Today, when half the world's oil flows through these waterways, the strategic significance of this region is even more pronounced. The US Central Command, which is running the Somalia operation, is the same headquarters which organized the military onslaught against Iraq in the Persian Gulf war.

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Britain, France and Italy each established colonies in the area and answered the resistance of the Somali people with brutality and repression. So devastating was the British military expedition into Somaliland in 1902-04, for example, that it caused a famine in which thousands of men, women and children perished.

The onslaught of the imperialist powers resulted in the drawing of a myriad of artificial borders across the territory inhabited by the Somali people (as shown on the map, page 69). These divisions, made without the slightest regard for the interests of the people of the region, laid the basis for the wars which have wracked the area ever since. Today Somali-speaking people live in four separate states: Somalia itself; Djibouti, the tiny former colony of French Somaliland; eastern Ethiopia (the Ogaden) and northern Kenya.

The Somalis are a people of centuries-old tradition. The ancestors of the Somali people are said to have lived in this part of Africa more than 2,000 years ago. The Somalis had extensive trading contacts with Egypt, the Arabian peninsula and Persia at a time when these regions were at a higher cultural and economic level than Western Europe.

Arab penetration along the northern and eastern Somali coasts is of great antiquity. The earliest documentation — of immigration from what is now Yemen — dates from the seventh century. By the eighth to the tenth century, Arab and Persian merchants had set up trading posts on the coast of east Africa, including at Mombasa in Kenya, on the island of Madagascar and at Mogadishu, the modern capital of Somalia.

Over the last 900 years, the tribes which arrived from the Arabian peninsula gradually moved out of the hilly northern deserts in the Horn area towards the flatter and more fertile land to the south and west and then into the semidesert plains of what is now northern Kenya, displacing the local populations as they went. This migration continued into the first decades of the twentieth century. Most of the Somali clans were nomads, but on the southern terrain they practiced cultivation which they adopted from the original inhabitants.

The Horn of Africa was drawn into the theater of imperialist

competition in 1869, when completion of the Suez Canal opened a short route to India via the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. The port of Aden, which Britain had seized in 1839, from that time assumed critical importance. Its garrison drew its meat supply from the northern Somali coast, the region which would become British Somaliland.

The opening of the Suez Canal also brought France and Italy into this part of Africa. In 1862, when the canal was still under construction, the French purchased the port of Obock, on the northern Somali coast, from the local clan in order to gain a foothold in the strategic area south of Suez.

In 1870, an Italian shipping company bought the port of Assab in Eritrea. Britain, although at first hostile to this move, later came to view Italian involvement as a counterweight to the French, whose expansion it regarded as infinitely more threatening.

In the same year, Egyptian troops occupied the northern Somali coast, remaining there until 1884. Though nominally part of the Ottoman Empire, Egypt was financially in thrall to British and French bankers, who virtually controlled its affairs. As with the Italians, the British initially opposed the Egyptian expansion, but later accepted it as an alternative to seizure by another colonial power.

Until 1870, imperialist penetration of Africa proceeded relatively slowly. Britain, the leading imperial power, had expended considerable effort to control southern Africa, but her territorial empire in the hinterland was small. As in China, the Persian Gulf or South America, a larger "unofficial" empire was maintained through local rulers, who had learned that they either adapted to the wishes of the British consul or faced English gunboats.

After 1870, the pace of imperialist penetration suddenly accelerated and what became known as the "scramble for Africa" began. In 1876, King Leopold II of Belgium set up a private company to exploit the resources of the Congo and explorers, soldiers and administrators backed by Germany, France and Italy began making treaties with tribal rulers.¹ Britain also began to seek the conquest of large tracts of territory.

Over the next two decades, the entire continent was divided among a handful of colonial powers. This drive for colonization was deeply rooted in the economic changes taking place in the major capitalist countries with the emergence of imperialism. Economic life was becoming more and more dominated by powerful industrial

and financial monopolies which vied with each other internationally for every possible market and source of raw materials and cheap labor.

The brutal methods with which this plunder was carried out are depicted by Peter Mason in his book *Cauchu, the Weeping Wood*, where he quotes a missionary report of the way in which rubber was collected by King Leopold's company:

"Each town and district is forced to bring in a certain quantity to the headquarters of the Commissionaire every Sunday. It is collected by force; the soldiers drive the people into the bush. If they will not go, they are shot down, and their left hands cut off and taken as trophies to the Commissionaire ... these hands, the hands of men, women and children, are placed in rows before the Commissionaire who counts them to see that the soldiers have not wasted cartridges. The Commissionaire is paid a commission of about a penny a pound on all the rubber he gets. It is therefore in his interest to get all the rubber he can" (p. 54).

While the other imperialist powers attempted to depict the brutality of Leopold's men as an aberration, Lawrence James, in his book *The Savage Wars* makes it clear that Leopold by no means had the monopoly on violence. He describes the military campaigns conducted by Britain in Africa between 1870 and 1920 as "an arduous and brutal struggle in which columns ranged the countryside, burnt kraals, machine-gunned and stormed stockades and cornered and overwhelmed resisters in remote caves" (p. 183).

With the exception of the Boers, the descendants of the Dutch who had settled in the vicinity of the Cape in the seventeenth century, Britain's African adversaries still relied in pitched battles on weapons which had rarely been seen on European battlefields since the end of the Middle Ages: thrusting spears, swords, clubs and bows. If the native armies of Africa possessed firearms, these, for the most part, were single-shot, muzzle-loading pieces which had become obsolete in Europe by 1860.

England, on the other hand, availed herself of the latest in military technology, utilizing steamships and railways where possible. The British military was equipped with repeating rifles, which fired up to eight or nine rounds a minute with accurate ranges of over a mile; machineguns like the Maxim, which fired 600 every minute, and shell-firing artillery. The British armies also made use of motor vehicles and aircraft when they became available.

The ruling classes of Britain and France believed that they had a "civilizing mission" to fulfill on a world scale. This claim was used to

justify mass slaughter of the native populations. Torture was also used. The attitude of the British ruling class was summed up by Cecil Rhodes, who made his fortune in the diamond mines of South Africa.² In 1877, Rhodes stated: "We are the first race in the world and ... the more of the world we inhabit, the better it is for the human race."

In 1884, the Egyptian garrisons on the Somali coast were evacuated and the troops withdrawn to deal with an uprising in the Sudan, then ruled by Egypt. This led to the direct carve-up of the Somali territories by the European powers. British troops moved in to take control of part of the area vacated by Egypt and the French immediately grabbed Djibouti. France also made a bid for part of the area claimed by Britain. A potential conflict between the two powers was averted by a settlement in 1888 which fixed the border of French and British Somaliland approximately half way between Zeila and Djibouti. As a result, one clan, the Ise, was divided between the two colonies.

In an attempt to offset the French claims, Britain encouraged Italy to take over the Eritrean port of Massawa, which had also been evacuated by the Egyptians, and by February 1885, Italy had proclaimed a protectorate on the Eritrean coast from Massawa to Assab. In 1889, the Italians extended their claim into the Horn region, declaring the coastal terrain along the Indian Ocean to be the protectorate of Italian Somaliland.

The carve-up of Africa was officially ratified at a conference of the major colonial powers in Berlin in 1885, hosted by Bismarck.³ But the complete subjugation of Africa by the European imperialists — only Ethiopia (Abyssinia)⁴ and Liberia retained even nominal independence — merely set the stage for new struggles to redivide the vast tracts of the second largest continent.

For instance, the conference awarded the island of Madagascar to France in exchange for French concessions to British interests elsewhere in Africa. France had also acquired holdings in China. These developments gave France an even greater impetus to establish a base on the Red Sea route which was now a vital link in her overseas communications. Moreover, the British authorities at Aden were refusing to allow French transports to coal there so work began on the neglected port of Obock to establish an efficient coaling station.

France did not attempt to extend her direct holdings in the Horn region further, but worked instead to cultivate good relations with Ethiopia. The semifeudal regime in Ethiopia was hemmed in by colonial powers on all sides, but retained some residual indepen-

dence. In order to win the Ethiopian trade away from the British, France set about the construction of a rail line from Djibouti to Addis Ababa to divert traffic from the trade caravans which brought goods to the Somali coast at Zeila, in the British sector. The rail link, the only one in the entire region, was completed in 1917 and proved immensely profitable for France.

The British, for their part, had sought control of the northern Somali coast largely to prevent any threats to Aden and were unwilling to commit resources to the new colony. Italy, a late-developing imperialist power with few colonial possessions, sought to extend to the maximum the territory under her control in the Horn of Africa. In an attempt to join its two territories, in the Somali region and in Eritrea, Italian forces moved west from the Indian Ocean coast into Somali territory which had never before been conquered by Europeans and south from Eritrea into territory previously controlled by the Ethiopian emperor. The westward movement provoked fierce resistance among many of the Somali clans and tribes. The southern movement resulted in a conflict with Ethiopia, which culminated in a humiliating rout for the imperialists in 1896 at the battle of Adowa, a military debacle for Italy which brought down the government of Premier Crispi and lingered long in the memory of the rulers in Rome.

The last piece of Somali-inhabited territory to fall under direct colonial rule was the northern area of what is now Kenya. Britain declared an East Africa Protectorate there in 1895, having earlier, in 1887, extracted from the Sultan of Zanzibar a 50-year lease on the area for the British East Africa Company.

In 1900, a rebellion began among the Somalis which was to last for 20 years. A Moslem leader, Muhammad bin Abdullah Hassan, had joined the Salihya Order of the Islamic faith during a visit to Mecca. His followers became known as the Dervishes, the term "dervish" being used in Somaliland to refer to the adherents of the Salihya Order.

The British perceived in Muhammad's very existence a direct challenge to their authority. His followers in 1900 numbered more than 30,000. He had fought the Ethiopians in the Ogaden and was rapidly gaining influence. Moreover, one of the tenets of the Dervish movement was to oppose British taxes.

Between 1902 and 1904, the British undertook a series of expeditions against the new movement which were to involve over 16,000 British, African and Indian troops. They failed to defeat Muhammad,

although their scorched earth policy of destroying crops and livestock caused a famine in which thousands died.

The British efforts proved so fruitless that a decision was taken in 1912 to abandon the hinterland, which was considered a waste of money. However, at the end of World War I, with unrest in the region growing, the British government concluded that a demonstration of force was necessary.

The operation against the Somali people involved an unprecedented combination of infantry, naval units and air power. Six DH-9 fighters were crated to Berbera, and a landing strip prepared as the Royal Air Force base for the campaign. The aircraft were armed with machineguns and bombs, 20 pounds of high explosive and 12-pound incendiaries, which were to be dropped on the Somali forts at Medishe, Jidali and Taleh. As one writer noted, the methods of mass slaughter perfected on the Western Front were imported into Africa.

On January 21, 1920, the raids began. Special targets were the vast herds of camels which had been, in previous years, the means by which Muhammad and his supporters had slipped past the punitive columns. Jidali and stock grazing close by were bombed. The same day Medishe was hit.

For the next 14 days further sorties were flown against the forts and fleeing columns of Somalis were strafed. At the same time, land forces pursued what was left of Muhammad's army, in cooperation with the RAF. Two naval landing parties, armed with light machineguns and hand grenades, stormed Muhammad's coastal fort at Galibaribur and took it. Finally, the fort at Taleh was reduced to rubble through bombardment and Muhammad's followers were dispersed. Many Somalis were killed, although Muhammad himself managed to escape, to die a natural death within the year.

Far from establishing political stability, the crushing of the rebellion sowed the seeds of future conflicts in the region. The Ethiopian government, which had cooperated with the British in defeating Muhammad, succeeded in strengthening its control over the Somali clans in the Ogaden. Italy had also played a role in the war against the Dervishes, whose influence extended into Italian territory as well. The Italian rulers felt encouraged to continue their attempt to develop a full-fledged colony, which would serve both as a source of raw materials and a location whose agricultural potential might be exploited by settlers from Italy. Land was set aside for Italian colonists and forced labor was supplied from the Somali population. However, in 1909 the Italian governor of Somalia, Tommaso Carletti, was

obliged to report that hostility towards the new colonizers was such that a European could not venture outside any of the coastal towns without an escort of armed soldiers with fixed bayonets.

In 1922 Benito Mussolini, the fascist dictator, came to power in Rome and, from this time, Italy embarked on an even more aggressive colonial policy, intensifying its military operations against an anticolonial rebellion in Libya and tightening its grip on Somalia.⁵ In 1925, Mussolini launched a major military operation against the Somalis, in order to bring the two northern provinces of the Italian protectorate directly under Italian rule and install garrisons there. Despite the presence of some 12,000 troops, including three battalions from Eritrea and a division of marines with naval support and reconnaissance planes, the resistance of the Somalis lasted almost two years.

Also in 1925 the Italian protectorate was significantly increased in size with the cession by Britain of an area previously ruled as part of Kenya, including the port of Kismayu. This was part of Italy's modest share of the spoils of World War I. Once again, the new frontier between Somalia and Kenya was drawn without any consideration of clan distribution or grazing needs.

By a combination of bribery and aggression, the Italians began to expand their own influence over some of the clans in the Ogaden district claimed by Ethiopia. The Ethiopians succeeded in expelling some of the posts the Italians set up, but in 1934 a clash took place at Walwal in which the Italians forced the Ethiopians to withdraw. Futile negotiations followed through the League of Nations.⁶ Encouraged by Britain and France, which sought to satisfy Mussolini's appetite for colonies and woo him away from Germany, Italy invaded Ethiopia in October 1935 from both Somalia and Eritrea.

The Italian invasion of Ethiopia was one of the most notorious acts of imperialist violence carried out in the twentieth century and marked the opening of a new prewar period, which culminated in the outbreak of World War II in 1939. At the height of the operation, Italy mobilized 500,000 troops against an Ethiopian army of only tens of thousands and made widespread use of poison gas and indiscriminate aerial bombardment.

The mouthpiece for the colonial powers, the League of Nations, after considerable delay, imposed half-hearted sanctions on Italy, which were not observed. The US, in particular, continued to supply much-needed oil to Mussolini. The Soviet bureaucracy under Stalin played an utterly criminal role.⁷ They, too, provided oil to Mussolini throughout the war until, by May 7, 1936, Ethiopia finally fell under

Italian rule.

Following the Italian victory, the full force of the fascist dictatorship was unleashed in the new colony, Italian East Africa, which combined Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea. Interracial marriage was forbidden and the inhabitants of all three territories were subjected to institutionalized oppression. They resisted fiercely. In 1937 an attempt was made to assassinate the Italian governor at Addis Ababa and a reign of terror followed, with widespread arrests and summary executions. But the unrest became even more intense until in 1941, the Italian territories were invaded by a combined force of British and Ethiopian exile troops. From then on, they were controlled by Britain until the end of the war.

The Legacy of Imperialist Domination

The carve-up of the Horn of Africa during and after World War II provides further proof that this imperialist bloodbath was not a war against fascism or for democracy and self-determination. Like the first global conflagration which broke out in 1914, World War II was essentially a struggle among the imperialist powers over control of markets, colonies and strategic positions.

The main line of the conflict was between the Allied imperialist powers — the US, Britain and the French exile forces of de Gaulle — and the Axis powers — Germany, Italy and Japan.⁸ But the struggle for colonial influence went on in a different form within the camps and political overtures were made from time to time between the camps. This internecine conflict was especially sharp over the question of the British and French colonial empires.

In 1941, Churchill and Roosevelt issued the Atlantic Charter, which supposedly upheld the right of all peoples to choose their own government.⁹ American imperialism sought to wrap itself in the mantle of anticolonialism and democracy, intending that her own commercial interests would fill the gap left by the former colonial powers. Churchill, for his part, insisted that promises of self-determination applied only to the conquered nations of Europe, not British colonies. "We mean to hold our own," he insisted in 1942. "I did not

become the King's First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire" (M. Meredith, *The First Dance of Freedom*, p. 35).

De Gaulle, too, was determined to maintain French possession of her colonial territories. In his wartime memoirs, he explained his strenuous opposition to the armistice which Vichy France had signed with Hitler, insisting that France must participate in military actions in order to maintain her colonial possessions and, if possible, extend them.¹⁰ In relation to East Africa in 1941 he wrote: "France's positions there were sapped and coveted, and ... there was, on any hypothesis, no chance of her keeping any of them if, for the first time in history, she remained passive when everything was in the melting pot" (Charles de Gaulle, *The Complete War Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle*, p. 167).

From 1941 onwards, every Somali colony changed hands at least once. The first was British Somaliland, invaded by Italy early in 1941. British troops drove Italy back and invaded Ethiopia, Eritrea and Italian Somaliland. The peoples of these colonies then discovered that, having been "liberated" from the rule of the Italian fascists by British imperialism, they were now to be subjected to military occupation by that same power, an occupation which they strove to throw off but which remained in place long after the end of the war.

The capture of the Italian colonies by Britain further exacerbated the conflict among the Allies over who should control what position in the region. When de Gaulle requested British assistance to take French Somaliland from the Vichy forces, Britain delayed the action and finally implemented it only half-heartedly. De Gaulle somewhat bitterly articulated the British reasoning thus: "If, they probably thought, 'the competition which has set Great Britain, France and Italy at loggerheads near the sources of the Nile for the last 60 years ends in a strictly British triumph; if, when the Italians have been finally crushed, it is apparent that the French have remained passive and impotent, what an unparalleled situation England will have thenceforth in the whole area — Abyssinia, Eritrea, Somaliland, and the Sudan!'"

The US, for its part, attempted to impose its own solution in which Djibouti would be controlled neither by Vichy nor de Gaulle. But the French garrison declared for de Gaulle in November 1942 following the Anglo-American landings in North Africa.

Tensions also developed between the British and Americans in Eritrea. The Americans argued that the Allied war effort demanded

the establishment of a US intercept station there to monitor Axis telecommunications. For Britain, the potential military advantage of the proposal was outweighed by the danger posed to her interests in the area from what was by now the strongest of the imperialist powers. For as long as possible, Churchill opposed the US plan outright, finally giving permission only reluctantly.

Similar questions were involved in the US decision to extend Lend-Lease benefits to Ethiopia, which was establishing a commercial airline.¹¹ The US hoped in this way to undermine Britain's control of commercial civil aviation, which threatened the US plans for the expansion of Pan American Airways' rights in the Middle East. In 1943, the US even responded favorably to an appeal from Ethiopia for military assistance to put an end to the British military occupation. The British vetoed an initial request for 5,000 rifles as a possible threat to British security in northeastern Africa.

At the end of the war, the conflicts among the victorious imperialists intensified, as the colonies of the defeated powers were divided up. Britain, France and, to a lesser extent, Italy had been the principal beneficiaries of the sharing out of the German colonies in Africa at the end of World War I. This time, Italy's possessions, including Italian Somaliland and Eritrea, were among those whose fate was to be decided by the victors.

Transfer to another colonial power was hampered, however, by the deep-going crisis of the entire system of colonial rule. Britain had emerged from the war bankrupt and unable to maintain control of a far-flung empire, much of which had been conquered by Japan. The Dutch faced the same problem in Indonesia, the French, in Indo-China. In China, Southeast Asia, India, the Middle East and Africa, mass movements were emerging to challenge colonial domination. The imperialists feared that an uncontrollable revolutionary upsurge in the colonies would come together with the movement of the working class in Western Europe, threatening the entire fabric of capitalist rule.

The victorious imperialist powers, and above all the United States, which in 1945 exercised virtually unchallenged economic, military and political hegemony over the affairs of world capitalism, decided on a change in tactics towards the colonial countries. Self-government was to replace direct colonial rule for the former colonies. This policy was written into the charter of the United Nations, the organization founded in 1945 by the victorious Allies and which, in the final analysis, gave an international cover to the dictates of US

imperialism.

Britain and France were forced to concede independence to their colonies, in some cases on the basis of timetables ranging from a few years to a decade or more, and in others, only after bloody colonial wars like those fought by the French in Indochina and Algeria.

The imperialists cultivated the native bourgeoisie in the Asian and African colonies which, in return for a privileged position for itself, could be utilized to maintain capitalism. These bourgeois regimes would systematically suppress the development of independent revolutionary struggle by the working class. They would also ensure the subordination of the economy to the imperatives of the world market, itself dominated by the same handful of imperialist powers which had directly ruled the colonies. The granting of a nominal independence became a vital part of the postwar arrangements whereby imperialism managed to restabilize itself for a period of more than 40 years.

None of this would have been possible without the counterrevolutionary role played by the Stalinist bureaucracy in Moscow. In Western Europe, the bureaucracy, under Stalin, disarmed mass movements and propped up bourgeois governments in countries like Italy, France and Greece, where depression, fascism and war had discredited capitalism in the eyes of broad layers of the population.

In the colonies, the Stalinists systematically betrayed the struggles of the oppressed masses. Stalinist parties like the French Communist Party participated in imperialist governments which waged war against the colonial peoples. The Soviet bureaucracy itself pursued its narrow nationalist interests, promoting the national bourgeois regimes in the former colonial countries as the genuine representatives of the masses and subordinating the working class to such figures as Nehru, Nkrumah and Sukarno.¹²

Negotiations over the future of the Somali lands opened at the Potsdam conference in August 1945 and continued in London in September.¹³ Italy, when invited to make a submission, proposed that all her African colonies be returned to her. France, fearful of independence movements in her own colonies, supported the Italian position. Molotov, representing the Soviet bureaucracy, demanded a Soviet trusteeship for Libya, which had demonstrated its strategic importance during the war.¹⁴ If this was agreed to, the Stalinists were prepared to allow Britain and the US to decide the fate of Eritrea and Italian Somaliland between them.

The US countered the Soviet move with the proposal that the three colonies be ruled as UN trusteeships, for 10 years in the cases

of Libya and Eritrea, for an unlimited period in the case of Italian Somaliland. Britain supported the American proposal for Libya, but reserved comment on Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, hoping that if Eritrea were eventually handed over to Ethiopia, the latter might be persuaded to agree to Britain keeping the Ogaden, which was still occupied by British troops. Ethiopia was at this time seeking control of both Eritrea and the Ogaden, while Egypt proposed to take over Eritrea.

Egypt had earlier opened a campaign for the Unity of the Valley of the Nile, which would unite Ethiopia, Eritrea, French, British and Italian Somalilands, Kenya and Uganda under Egyptian control. In order to impose this plan, however, Egypt would have needed the support of one or more of the imperialist powers. Such support was not forthcoming, so the plan was dropped, although it was to be resurrected after Nasser came to power in 1952.¹⁵

None of these powers had the slightest concern for the wishes of the Somali people, who opposed the restoration of rule by Italy, Britain or Ethiopia. In 1948, when the formality of consultation was carried out and a Four Power Commission visited Mogadishu, violent clashes broke out in which more than 60 people died. The commission, however, recommended the restoration of Italian rule in Italian Somaliland, with three of the four commissioners (British, American and Soviet) urging that Italy be named the administering authority of a UN trusteeship regime, while France remained in favor of restoring outright colonial rule. In 1949, when news reached Mogadishu that the UN General Assembly was discussing the possibility of the return of Italian rule, riots broke out again and popular demonstrations were held in Mogadishu and elsewhere in the territory.

The bourgeois nationalist Somali Youth League, which had been founded in 1943, led the opposition to Italian rule. The SYL called for national unity, over and above clan divisions, invoking the early Somali states of the fifteenth century and drawing inspiration from the ideas of Muhammad bin Abdullah Hassan, who had led the rebellion against foreign rule at the beginning of the century.

The program of the SYL was the unification of the five Somali segments in the Italian colony, British Somaliland, French Djibouti, the Ogaden in Ethiopia, and the British-held Northern Frontier District in neighboring Kenya. The SYL campaigned for a unification of the Somali territories under UN mandate with four-power administration. Abdullahi Issa, the representative of the league,

wrote to the United Nations:

"We have repeatedly informed the honorable members of the Assembly that our people prefer death rather than return to Italian domination. We are not appeased by the suggestion that Italian administration in Somaliland will be a Trusteeship under the supervision of the United Nations."

Despite the mass opposition among the Somali people, the former Italian colony was declared a UN trust territory in December 1950, with Italy returning as the administering power for a transitional period, fixed at 10 years, prior to independence. The Italian administration was imposed by brute force. Military units were dispatched, demonstrations and riots were suppressed, and some members of the SYL were imprisoned. In 1952, Eritrea was merged with Ethiopia at the instigation of the US, which planned to expand its military installations there.

During the 1950s, the Italian administrators worked to create a petty-bourgeois layer among the Somali people to which the government could be entrusted at the end of the decade. To this end, administrators were trained and a collaborationist wing of the SYL was cultivated. This wing was led by Abdullahi Issa, who had written the impassioned plea to the UN in 1947, but who now became prime minister of the Italian sector. For the mass of the population, education continued to be denied and, in 1960, at the time of independence, the literacy level was only two percent. The British, for their part, did even less in this regard than the Italians and faced continuing riots and demonstrations throughout the 1950s, as first the Ogaden and then the Haud grazing lands were handed over to Ethiopia.

In 1956, the strategic importance of northeast Africa was once more highlighted by Britain's and France's invasion of Egypt when Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal. This episode also marked the establishment of US supremacy in the region, as the Eisenhower administration compelled Britain and France to withdraw in a public humiliation which led to the fall of the Eden government.¹⁶

On July 1, 1960, the UN trust territory became independent. At the same time, Britain agreed to the independence of British Somaliland, which had no British settlers and little commercial value. The two former colonies then merged to form the Somali Republic. Abdullahi Issa had become too discredited to remain in the post and was replaced by Abdirashid Ali Shermarke, also of the SYL. French Somaliland continued to be ruled directly by France until 1977, when

it was renamed the Republic of Djibouti.

The new state, formed by the union of two artificial constructs of imperialism, embraced little more than half of the Somali people. In 1962, Shermarke indicated the crippling effect of the boundaries which had been drawn by imperialism, saying:

"Our misfortune is that our neighboring countries, with whom, like the rest of Africa, we seek to promote constructive and harmonious relations, are not our neighbors. Our neighbors are our Somali kinsmen whose citizenship has been falsified by indiscriminate boundary 'arrangements.' They have to move across artificial frontiers to their pasturelands. They occupy the same terrain and pursue the same pastoral economy as ourselves. We speak the same language. We share the same creed, the same culture, and the same traditions. How can we regard our brothers as foreigners? Of course we all have a strong and very natural desire to be united."

The legacy of imperialist domination borne by the states which issued from the independence process was to prove fatal to their subsequent economic and political development. Dozens of countries in Africa and Asia — many of them now labeled "failed nations" by the capitalist media and targeted as candidates for recolonization — became nominally independent without having any of the prerequisites for modern life.

Somalia, for instance, was a country with no written language, where education was almost unobtainable, and the conditions of the masses had been maintained at the most primitive level. After 75 years of colonial rule, the country was left without railroads or any other significant economic infrastructure.

The domination of the world market by a few imperialist powers had long ago blocked the path to economic development of countries with far greater resources than Somalia. Nor were the richer states of Africa able to achieve any greater level of economic independence. The more developed their economies, the further they were integrated into the world market under imperialist domination. In all these countries, the successive bourgeois nationalist regimes have demonstrated their total incapacity to resolve any of the issues facing the mass of the population.

This was graphically demonstrated in Somalia where, even by African standards, the bourgeoisie was exceptionally weak. At the time of independence, about 80 percent of Somalia's estimated population of three million were nomads. The remainder were cultivators along the southern rivers or, between 5 to 10 percent, were

residents of towns. In the first two decades following independence, the small working class, employed in mining, manufacturing, construction and power, grew to 8.4 percent of the population.

The administrators of the new Somali state were drawn from the very small fraction of the population, perhaps one percent, who had mastered Italian and English and who enjoyed a privileged status. From the start, the interests of this thin bourgeois and petty-bourgeois stratum conflicted with those of the masses of the population, for which independence meant above all the hope for a significant improvement in living conditions.

Basil Davidson, in his book, *The Black Man's Burden — Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State*, notes, "Among the mass of rural and urban supporters of the anticolonial movements, there was small sign of any developing loyalty or attachment to this or that colony-turned-nation. What the multitudes wanted, by all the evidence, was not a flag for the people or an anthem for the people, nearly so much as they wanted bread for the people, and health and schools for the people.... The jubilant crowds celebrating independence were not inspired by a 'national consciousness' that 'demanded the nation'.... They were inspired by the hope of more and better food and shelter" (p. 185).

Far from beginning to fulfill the social aspirations of the masses, the new ruling elites engaged in a bitter rivalry for control of the resources within the country, made all the more intense by the fact that those resources were in such short supply. The parliament was modeled on the Italian system of proportional representation, which had been adopted in Rome after the defeat of the fascist government. In Somalia, the corruption which is endemic in bourgeois democracy quickly discredited the parliament, which had become "a sordid market place where deputies traded their votes for personal rewards" (I.M. Lewis, author of *The Modern History of Somalia*, quoted in Davidson). According to Lewis, the deputies "were ferried about in sumptuous limousines bearing the magic letters AN (Assemblea Nazionale) which the inveterate poor of the capital translated with bitter humor as *anna nolabay* — 'I'm all right, Jack'" (Ibid.).

This antagonism of interests between the rulers of Somalia and the mass of the people affected every aspect of government policy. Throughout the 1960s, the Gross National Product rose only one percent per year, and the opposition between the interests of the rural districts and the interests of the cities, where effective political power resided, deepened. As a state bureaucracy began to develop, it acted as a further drain on the economy. The class character of the

government placed its stamp not least upon the way in which it went about attempting to achieve the goal it had set for itself, that is, the political unification of the Somali people throughout the region.

The government first appealed to the rising national leaders in other African colonies for assistance in settling the issue. In 1962, on the eve of Kenyan independence, for instance, the Somali government invited Jomo Kenyatta, the head of the leading Kenyan African nationalist party, to Mogadishu for informal talks.¹⁷ Kenyatta had until recently been imprisoned for his opposition to British rule in Kenya, but he firmly opposed the unification of the Somali people in the Northern Frontier District with Somalia. Kenyatta made it clear to the Somali regime that he regarded the NFD an inalienable part of Kenya.

This was to be the attitude adopted by the vast majority of the African nationalists, who proved to be staunch defenders of the colonial boundaries. Britain, too, proclaimed that the NFD would remain part of Kenya after independence.

This failure of the government to secure political support for Somali unification had a profound impact on subsequent events. In 1963, Somalia broke relations with Kenya and Britain, while tension began to mount with Ethiopia as well over its control of the disputed territory of the Ogaden. Addis Ababa was being supplied with military aid by the US, so Somalia sought concomitant support wherever it could find it. In November 1963, Somalia accepted military aid worth nearly \$30 million from the Soviet Union, having rejected a smaller offer of Western aid. The following year the dispute with Ethiopia led to fighting for the first time, and Somalia signed further agreements with the Soviet Union.

In June 1967, Ali Shermarke became president of Somalia and Mohammed Hadji Ibrahim Egal, prime minister. Egal, was the leader of the Somali National Movement, which had been the main Somali party in British Somaliland. The following year, diplomatic relations with Kenya and Britain were resumed, but relations with Ethiopia deteriorated further with the growth of the Western Somali Liberation Front, which was contesting Ethiopia's control of the Ogaden. In October 1969, Shermarke was assassinated. One week later, the army seized control in a coup, and Mohammed Siad Barre, the head of the armed forces, proclaimed the Somali Democratic Republic.

Davidson describes the events leading up to the coup in these terms: "Presented as a multiparty system with the highest credentials, the constitution had led directly and indeed logically to a one-party

system which was in fact a no-party system. Offered as the framework for a unified nation, it had transformed Somali unity into dozens of quarreling and useless factions. Argued as the basis for a Somali capitalism, it had ended in a mere system of payola. Only between January and October 1969, Prime Minister Egal is credibly said to have paid out some half a million pounds to parliamentary clients from a treasury desperately short of cash. When the army moved in and stopped this carnival, not a single life had to be taken. That moment, on the contrary, was one of widespread satisfaction" (Ibid., p. 321).

The military regime nationalized foreign interests, such as the oil-marketing companies, and further developed relations with the USSR. (The largest Soviet military base outside the Warsaw Pact countries was established at Berbera on the Red Sea.) On this basis, Siad Barre announced in 1970 that Somalia had become a socialist state. In one of the poorest countries in the world, where the mass of the population still lived a nomadic existence, this claim was not only patently spurious. It was even somewhat grotesque. Moreover, it highlighted the fraudulent nature of the many other such claims being advanced at this time by the heads of bourgeois nationalist regimes, in Africa and elsewhere. The national bourgeoisie was everywhere proving incapable of providing a solution to any of the problems facing the masses and many regimes resorted to such tactics in an attempt to shore up their rule. These regimes became more and more repressive as popular dissatisfaction grew. Even more criminal was the boosting of such claims by the Moscow bureaucracy, which, in the case of Somalia, greatly expanded its influence in the early years of Barre's rule.

The Siad Barre regime began by consolidating its hold on power through a campaign against corruption. This was followed by a process grandiosely entitled "democratizing the state." This turned out to mean the decentralization of some government powers and the construction of a political network which gave the ruling party control over even the remotest districts.

Barre claimed that the "democratization of political power is the only way to interrupt the course of capitalism and to develop our national productive forces, with the people becoming participants in the political and economic management of the nation." But despite the rhetoric, Somalia remained a capitalist country and the reforms enacted did not go beyond elementary democratic questions — developing a Latin alphabet for written Somali, a campaign which

raised the rate of literacy to 60 percent, and the changeover to Somali as the language of state administration.

In September 1974, the Ethiopian emperor was overthrown in a military coup and replaced by a military council known as the Dergue (Shadow).¹⁸ The Dergue also employed radical-sounding rhetoric, proclaiming a "socialist state" based on "Marxism-Leninism." But Ethiopia remained a semifeudal and economically backward country under the rule of a tiny economic elite. Especially after the assumption of unchallenged power within the Dergue by Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam in February 1977, the regime moved ruthlessly to suppress all opposition from workers, students and oppressed nationalities like the Eritreans and Somalis.¹⁹

The guerrilla warfare in Eritrea, under way since 1962, flared into open civil war and half the Ethiopian army was sent to attempt to deal with it. Other armed rebellions broke out in the Ogaden and in Tigre province. Believing the situation opportune, the WSLF launched a military offensive in the Ogaden in July 1977 and, with the help of Somali government forces, made considerable inroads into Ethiopia.

This brought the Somali regime face to face with the utter cynicism of its patrons in the Soviet bureaucracy. In December 1976, the Dergue had signed a secret military agreement with Moscow and with the outbreak of war in both Eritrea and the Ogaden, the Ethiopian regime appealed for massive Soviet military aid.

The Stalinists airlifted a gigantic amount of aircraft, tanks, transport equipment and munitions to Ethiopia, together with aviators, Soviet officers and 17,000 Cuban troops. The aid eventually amounted to \$2 billion. The Barre regime responded by breaking relations with the Soviet Union in November 1977. By early 1978 its military forces were routed and it was forced to withdraw from the Ogaden.

The Soviet bureaucracy considered that the price of having to leave Somalia was more than compensated for by the increase of its influence in Ethiopia, a far larger and richer country, with a highly strategic position on the shores of the Red Sea and at the straits of Bab el Mandeb.

US imperialism moved quickly to fill the breach left by the withdrawal of support from the Soviet Union. Siad Barre, the self-styled "socialist," became enrolled among the allies of the "free world." Washington became his principal sponsor and for the next decade, armed and financed his regime.

In the wake of the 1979 Iranian revolution and Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the US efforts to establish bases in the Middle East were

intensifying. The US had closed its installation at Kagnew, in Eritrea, the previous year, at the end of its 25-year lease, and withdrawn to bases elsewhere in the region and in the Indian Ocean. In return for radar, trucks and nonmilitary aircraft, the Somali regime granted the Carter administration in 1980 the use of the former Soviet naval installation at Berbera. In 1982, Barre obtained a further increase in aid from the Reagan administration after an official visit to Washington.

In 1985, the situation in Somalia worsened dramatically, when a famine in Ethiopia drove hundreds of thousands of refugees across the border into Somalia, an estimated 440,000 of whom were still there in February 1991. But the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank insisted that stringent austerity measures be inflicted on the people so that loans would be repaid. In 1987, Siad Barre rejected the conditions which the IMF was placing on further loans and, from then on, foreign aid to Somalia was drastically cut. The Barre regime then imposed its own austerity measures, which were received with great hostility throughout the country.

Barre also found himself losing control over the armed forces, as he confronted growing opposition from a multiplicity of armed groups. In 1987, he entered into an agreement with Ethiopia in which he officially abandoned any claim to the Ogaden. This provoked a rebellion by the Somali National Movement which seized substantial territory. The SNM derived most of its support from the Somali Isaak people, who had been forced out of Ethiopia. The US sent guns to assist the government in putting down the SNM rebellion, and in August 1987 conducted joint military exercises in Somalia between US and Somali troops.

Washington's principal interest in Somalia had been as a bastion against the influence of the Soviet Union in the region and, as the USSR under Gorbachev abandoned its clients in Africa and prepared to withdraw from Afghanistan, the Reagan administration became less concerned with propping up the beleaguered Siad Barre regime.²⁰ In 1988, the State Department ordered a halt in aid to Somalia, using human rights violations as the pretext. This was the beginning of the end.

Barre failed to crush the SNM and, by 1990, faced rebellion by a number of other groups as well, including the United Somali Congress, created in 1989, and the Somali Patriotic Movement, which was active on the border with Kenya. Largely clan-based, these groups were as incapable of addressing the problems of the masses in

Somalia as the regime they opposed. In mid-August 1990, the USC, the SNM and the SPM coordinated their separate military campaigns to overthrow the regime and, on January 27, 1991, Barre fled, first to Kenya, than to Nigeria.

The USC took power in Mogadishu and immediately invited all opposition groups to participate in a national conference. Ali Mahdi Mohamed, who had been president for a time in the 1960s, was appointed temporary president. The SNM, which prevailed in the north of the country, and the SPM, which controlled the south, opposed his appointment and demanded his resignation. In May, the SNM formed an administration to govern the former territory of British Somaliland and seceded from Somalia, declaring a new state, the Republic of Somaliland. In Mogadishu, Ali Mahdi also faced opposition within the USC from Gen. Mohamed Farah Aidid, the movement's military commander, whose forces seized the southern part of the city.

Inconclusive fighting between the rival clan-based factions has continued for the past two years, destroying much of what remains of economic life and agriculture. As a result of this catastrophe, an unknown number of people have died. In early 1992, some 200,000 people were living in refugee camps around Mogadishu, and it was estimated that millions were threatened by famine. On March 3, 1992, a cease-fire was signed between Aidid and Ali Mahdi, but by then mass starvation had gripped much of the southern half of the country.

The major imperialist powers have seized on the tragedy of Somalia as an opportunity to initiate the most dramatic change in policy toward the oppressed countries of Asia and Africa since the Second World War. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the imperialists no longer feel the need to pay lip service to democracy and sovereignty in the former colonial countries. Driven by their own deepening economic crisis, and the reemergence of the same interimperialist antagonisms which produced World War I and World War II, the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Japan and Italy are seeking to revive forms of direct colonial rule and once again carve up large portions of the globe for their exclusive domination.

The return to colonialism is being carried out under cover of a propaganda barrage about concern over the fate of starving people in Somalia. But most of the Somalis in immediate danger of famine were allowed to starve to death over the last 12 months, while the UN

Security Council, the Bush administration and the other imperialist governments stood by and ignored the mass suffering.

The role of the US government is the most cynical of all. Having armed and financed the brutal dictatorship of Siad Barre and justified its crimes against the Somali people, the Bush administration stood back and allowed it to collapse, then used the ensuing chaos to justify military occupation of the country. US imperialism is itself directly responsible for the catastrophe of famine, disease and widespread violence from which it was initially claimed that the US Marines were "saving" the Somali people.

In addition to tens of thousands of US troops, Somalia has been occupied by soldiers of the French Foreign Legion, 2,000 troops from Italy, the former colonial power, and thousands of troops from 14 other countries. Chancellor Helmut Kohl announced that German imperialism, which once aspired to an East African empire centered on Tanganyika, would send 1,500 soldiers to Somalia.

The bourgeois nationalist regimes in countries such as Pakistan, Nigeria and Zimbabwe have also supplied troops to give an international cover to the revival of naked imperialist colonialism. No longer able to maneuver between imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy, the bourgeois governments in the former colonial countries have abandoned even the semblance of independence from the foreign policy of imperialism.

The catastrophe now engulfing Somalia is the product of its whole history of imperialist exploitation, in which the US has played a critical role. Capitalism in crisis is once more turning to the most barbaric methods to reestablish its unchallenged domination of the world.

This has far-reaching implications for workers in the United States and throughout the world, for the same methods are to be used against the resistance of the working class to the dictates of crisis-stricken capitalism in every country. The fate of Somalia and of all humanity depends upon the development of the international socialist proletariat, alone capable of opening the way to genuine independence for the oppressed masses.

Chronology of Events

- 1869 Opening of the Suez Canal
- 1870 Egyptian forces occupy Somalia
- 1884 Withdrawal of Egypt; Britain and France establish Somaliland protectorates
- 1889 Italy establishes Somaliland protectorate
- 1900 Britain begins military campaign in Somaliland
- 1920 Defeat of Somali rebellion by the British
- 1925 Mussolini begins military campaign against Somalis
- 1935 Italy invades Ethiopia from bases in Somaliland
- 1941 Britain invades Italian Somaliland
- 1950 Italian rule restored under UN Trust Territory
- 1960 British and Italian Somaliland unite to form Republic of Somalia
- 1969 Mohammed Siad Barre seizes power in a military coup
- 1977-78 War with Ethiopia over Ogaden; Siad Barre breaks alliance with Soviet Union, opens relations with United States
- 1991 Collapse of Siad Barre regime

The Ugly Face of US Colonialism

It is now more than six weeks since the invasion of Somalia by over 20,000 American troops. Operation Restore Hope was launched with great fanfare in the weeks before Christmas, sold to the American people as a humanitarian mission to rescue the starving Somalis.

Sufficient time has passed for the glow of the media's propaganda barrage to fade and for a sober judgement to be made about the real character of this military operation.

Reports from this African nation reveal a daily toll of Somali civilians killed and wounded by the US occupation force. In what amounted to a cold-blooded massacre, US helicopter gunships and Belgian paratroopers mounted an assault on the compound of one Somali faction in the southern port of Kismayu on Monday, leaving scores of people dead and wounded.

The Pentagon arrogantly dismisses questions about the number of Somali killed by its forces. It is no longer "in the business of body counts." For its part, the capitalist media has shown no interest in the issue. It remains the Pentagon's loyal publicity agent.

One revealing report did appear, however, in Monday's Washington Post under the headline: "In Shootouts with Somalis, Americans' Word Is Law." The article cites numerous incidents in which innocent Somali civilians have been gunned down by marines in the streets of the Somali capital of Mogadishu. It states that the Pentagon's rules of engagement have given "the soldiers on the streets far more

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leeway in determining whether and when to shoot than American soldiers have ever been granted outside of traditional combat zones."

In most cases, the Post notes, the bodies of Somalis killed or wounded are simply left lying in the street. Patrols which carry out such killings quickly retreat to avoid confrontations with angry crowds. There is never any attempt to verify whether or not those shot had posed any genuine threat to the US troops or, indeed, whether they had even been armed.

Marine Col. F.M. Lorenz, the chief legal adviser to the US command in Somalia, defended the US policy, declaring, "If we had to wait until we are absolutely sure he had a weapon before we pull the trigger, that would be too late." He added that US military officials ask few questions of soldiers involved in such killings, declaring, "That would tend to inhibit their future actions."

The newspaper cites growing anger among Somalis over the routine killing of civilians. "You can kill unarmed people and you are not giving us compensation," Hussein Musal, a Somali working for the British relief group, Save the Children Fund, declared. "It's up to the Americans to say, 'We thought he was a threat because he was raising his hand.' There is no international monitoring. It's like colonialism."

Precisely. Whatever happened to the "rescue mission," to "restoring hope" and feeding the starving children? Are they being fed? What have the daily killings in Mogadishu and Kismayu to do with providing food for the hungry? The capitalist media, which exploited the images of the refugee camps in the early days of the US intervention, now no longer even bothers mentioning the plight of Somalia's famine victims.

The real character of the Somali intervention is emerging with crystal clarity. It is a brutal imperialist intervention and part of the drive to recolonize Africa.

The military intervention launched in the Horn of Africa under the pretext of "rescuing" famine victims is only one of a growing number of US military interventions being carried out or being prepared all around the world. In the Persian Gulf, the Clinton administration continues military provocations against Iraq and the US military buildup in the region has steadily accelerated. Demands appear virtually daily in the capitalist press for the overthrow of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

The Clinton administration is conducting a complete review of US policy in relation to the civil war in Bosnia. There is open

discussion of US military intervention under conditions in which sensational US intelligence reports citing the existence of Serbian prison camps are leaked to the press with the clear aim of preparing public opinion for such action.

Meanwhile, the Wall Street Journal Monday published an article on the debate within the Clinton White House on Cuba, reporting that the new administration is considering the possibility of invading the Caribbean island nation.

The intervention into Somalia is part of this worldwide explosion of US militarism. It was launched not as some sudden humanitarian reaction to the suffering of the Somali people — a tragedy which is itself the product of more than a century of imperialist domination and colonialism in the region — but as part of a deliberate plan to assert US imperialist control over a vitally strategic area of the globe.

The American working class must join with its class brothers and sisters in Somalia and internationally in a resolute struggle against imperialist war and colonialism. The demand must be made for the immediate withdrawal of US and all imperialist troops from Somalia.

Imperialism's Drive to Reenslave Africa

It is now two months since Washington launched its Operation Restore Hope. In a dispatch buried by the capitalist press last week, it was reported that hundreds of Somali youths battled US troops in the port of Mogadishu, confronting combat-equipped marines with stones and their bare hands. The youth set up barricades of burning tires, following the latest of many incidents in which US forces shot and killed Somalis.

The US military intervention in Somalia was begun with great fanfare and supported by a media campaign exploiting heart-wrenching images of starving Somali children and touting the supposed humanitarian capacities of the Pentagon. With each passing day, however, Restore Hope emerges more clearly as a dirty colonial occupation, part of imperialism's resubjugation of the African continent.

In the first days of the US invasion of Somalia, the Bulletin rejected the official propaganda portraying it as a "humanitarian mission." In the issue of December 11, 1992, we wrote: "The American invasion of Somalia marks the onset of a new imperialist drive to carve up Africa and the rest of the former colonial world. The countries of Africa and Asia which achieved political independence after World War II from the old colonial empires of Europe are once again to be

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placed under foreign military rule."

This analysis is being vindicated not only by the evolution of the US occupation in Somalia, but by tumultuous events shaking the entire African continent.

In **Zaire**, the regime of President Mobutu Sese Seko faces its greatest crisis in its 27-year rule. Following clashes between rival army factions in the capital of Kinshasa, Mobutu announced the dismissal of his main political rival, Prime Minister Etienne Tshisekedi, who in turn has appealed for intervention by foreign troops to "restore order."

In Brussels, diplomats representing what are known as Zaire's "creditor nations" held emergency meetings and issued an ultimatum demanding that Mobutu "transfer authority to the transitional government." Reviewing the recent events in Zaire, the diplomatic note signed by the United States, France and Belgium declared, "These developments have brought Zaire to the brink of political and economic collapse, and are subjecting Zairians to unbearable hardships."

These nations now posing as the champions of democracy and the guardians of the Zairian people are fully responsible for the crisis wracking the African nation. France and Belgium were the original colonial conquerors of the Congo, out of which Zaire was formed. Between them, they were responsible for the murder and enslavement of millions of Africans, while they plundered the land for its rich mineral wealth. For its part, Washington served as the principal backer of Mobutu for the last quarter century, valuing him as the CIA's chief asset on the African continent and using Zaire as a base for counterrevolutionary operations and proxy wars throughout southern Africa.

French and Belgian troops are already deployed in Kinshasa for the ostensible purpose of evacuating foreigners. While diplomats refused to comment on the meeting in Brussels, it is clear that military intervention to assert direct imperialist control over Zaire and its vast deposits of diamonds, copper, cobalt and other minerals is being prepared.

In **Angola**, the government of President Jose Eduardo dos Santos charged this week that South Africa, Zaire and other foreign elements are intervening in support of the rebel UNITA forces led by Jonas Savimbi, who resumed a 16-year civil war after his defeat in last September's UN-sponsored elections.

While the South African apartheid regime and the Mobutu regime

in Zaire have dismissed Angolan charges, confirmed reports of foreign involvement came from expatriate oil workers in the oil-producing center of Soyo, who reported that contingents of combat-equipped non-Angolan whites entered the town with UNITA forces to seize oil installations.

In **Liberia**, reports emerged this week that fire had engulfed the world's largest rubber plantation, owned by Bridgestone Corp. The report, following heavy fighting between Liberian rebels and a West African force, appeared aimed at provoking an imperialist intervention.

The New York Times, in an article last Sunday which clearly reflected the views of the US State Department, listed 48 world "trouble spots," including 18 on the African continent. The article cited unnamed US officials who "suggest that the United Nations should go even further and in effect run countries that have failed to control their disparate forces from within. Such a role would revive the concept of United Nations trusteeships, an instrument employed after World War II to administer former colonies until they were ready for independence."

While the old system of trusteeships served the imperialist powers as a means of delaying and controlling the decolonization process, what is now proposed is an instrument for recolonizing the masses of Africa and the rest of the oppressed regions of the world.

This move toward recolonization is a direct product of the insoluble crisis of world capitalism. Confronted with global recession, stagnating trade and mounting interimperialist conflicts, all of the imperialist powers are driven to assert direct control over sources of cheap labor, raw materials and markets.

U.S. Massacre In Mogadishu

The massacre of unarmed civilians in Mogadishu this week has ripped the humanitarian mask off the US military intervention in Somalia.

Less than three months after being dispatched to the African nation for the supposed purpose of feeding starving children, US troops have gunned down Somali youth demonstrating against colonialism and chanting "US Out of Somalia!"

The carnage in the streets of the Somali capital has clearly exposed the criminal character of the US operation. American imperialism and the Clinton administration stand indicted for waging a colonial-style war of conquest and oppression against a poor and defenseless people.

After three days of clashes in the Somali capital, the death toll is unknown. US officials initially claimed that marines and other imperialist troops had only fired warning shots and were not responsible for any casualties.

Col. Fred Peck, the spokesman for the US occupation forces, was forced to admit Thursday that US forces had fired into the Somali demonstrators. "I wouldn't be surprised if there were casualties because we did engage the Somalis," the American colonel declared arrogantly. "We could not confirm any dead or wounded because the wounded would have been on the side of those who were being aggressive toward American soldiers."

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The massacre did not end with the mass demonstrations. On Thursday morning Mogadishu was rocked by constant and rapid gunfire, much of it from heavy weapons. Col. Peck confirmed that US forces were laying siege to a large part of the city. "We are conducting a sweep of the area from where we detected gunfire in the morning," he declared. "We have cordoned off the area." There is no doubt that such a house-to-house "search and destroy" mission will result in a far higher death toll.

Mogadishu's streets were filled Wednesday with young Somali men and women who set up roadblocks of burning tires and debris throughout the capital. Crowds attacked the US, French and Egyptian embassies and confronted combat-equipped marines and US tanks with stones, sticks and their bare hands. They also turned their wrath against the mission of the United Nations, which has provided an international fig leaf for the US operation, and the hotel housing the Western press, which has systematically lied about the events in their country.

US officials have attempted to dismiss this popular uprising as the outcome of a dispute between two rival "warlords." The upheavals in Mogadishu came in the wake of fighting Monday between rival militias in the southern port of Kismayu and public broadcasts by the leader of one of the factions, Mohamed Farah Aidid, denouncing US policy.

While Aidid's statements may have served as a spark for the demonstrations, their real source lies in the opposition of the Somali people to the attempt by US imperialism to subject them to a new form of colonialism. The limited scenes of the demonstrations broadcast on US television made this clear. Youth advanced under fire from US troops carrying banners with slogans denouncing the "recolonization" of Somalia and demanding the removal of foreign forces.

This is no mere phrase for the people of Somalia. For them, like the masses throughout Africa, colonialism is a matter of bitter experience of generations of workers and oppressed. More than a century of colonial rule and economic plunder by the European powers and the subsequent US-sponsored wars and counterrevolutions have left their scars throughout the continent. The killings in Mogadishu are only the latest in a long line of atrocities committed by imperialism against the African peoples.

The sheer scope of the demonstrations proved that they expressed something far more fundamental than a factional dispute between

rival militia leaders. As The New York Times indicated on Thursday, US officials are by no means optimistic that mediation between these leaders can halt the resistance of the Somali people: "Though General Aidid appeared conciliatory in his radio broadcast tonight, it was uncertain whether the chaos unleashed today could be contained in the coming days."

The big business media has imposed what amounts to a semi-blackout on the news from Mogadishu. Having played such a big part in selling the US invasion of Somalia as a "humanitarian mission" at the outset, the media either says nothing or cynically parrots the lies handed out by the Pentagon in order to disguise the meaning of these events. This self-censorship by the capitalist press reflects the unanimity of the American capitalist ruling class in support of Washington's military onslaught against a defenseless people.

Workers, however, should pose certain pointed questions. How is it that a humanitarian relief operation to feed the starving has turned into a bloody massacre of unarmed civilians demonstrating against foreign occupation? Why have thousands of Somali youth risen up and hurled themselves against the US troops and tanks which were supposedly sent to help them? Neither the official US spokesmen nor the capitalist media offer any explanations.

From the outset, Operation Restore Hope represented not an act of humanitarian relief, but a brutal violation of the sovereignty of the Somali people. The US invasion came six months after the worst of Somalia's famine was over and under conditions in which the horrific suffering of the Somali people had already begun to abate.

The pretense of feeding the starving was used to launch a long-prepared occupation of the Horn of Africa, a region with vital strategic significance for US imperialism and its drive to control the oil wealth and sea lanes of the Middle East and the vast mineral resources of Africa.

Within the initial 24 hours of the US invasion, American troops had claimed their first Somali civilian casualties. These killings have continued and intensified as the occupation has dragged on. The Pentagon refuses to account for these deaths. As the military brass puts it, "we're no longer in the business of body counts." The capitalist media, for its part, is indifferent to the suffering of the Somalis. Only a very few of these daily incidents ever find their way into television or newspaper reports.

Last Saturday, The New York Times published an account of the killing of a 13-year-old boy who was shot to death by a US marine

riding on the back of a military truck. The boy, who stood at a roadside stand 20 feet from the truck, was killed after he casually pointed at the marine. When the boy's family approached US authorities to recover his body, they were treated like criminals. The dead youth's mother was quoted as saying of the US troops, "The way these men are acting, they aren't solving problems, they're creating them. It's our fault. We asked them to come."

In an incident earlier this month, a marine shot and killed two children who had allegedly stolen food from the back of a truck.

Last Saturday, a US marine shot and killed a Somali worker who was part of a group attempting to organize a strike at a construction site near the Mogadishu airport.

It is this daily toll of dead and wounded suffered by a people under the jackboot of foreign military occupation which finally led to the explosion of popular anger in the streets of Mogadishu this week.

Meanwhile, the political and economic affairs of the Somali people are dictated by the US "special envoy" Robert Oakley. A veteran of US operations in Vietnam, Lebanon and Afghanistan, Oakley personifies the "ugly American" imperialist proconsul, contemptuously dismissing the will of the Somali people, while ordering killings and repression to further the aims of the US occupation.

Even before the first US troops landed, the Bulletin warned against the "hypocritical and cynical media barrage which depicts the invasion as a noble act of humanitarian aid to the starving Somali people."

In its December 4 statement entitled "Why is the US Invading Somalia?" the Bulletin editorial board said: "No government official has even attempted to clarify why a 30,000-strong force backed by ships, attack helicopters and bombers is required to insure the delivery of food supplies. Nor have they explained why American troops are to be stationed at key locations throughout the country, even though only a portion of southern Somalia is affected by the famine." The real purposes of this deployment have now become clear.

Dismissing Washington's "humanitarian" pretenses, the Bulletin declared: "The White House and Pentagon interest in Somalia is based on the strategic importance of this region to the economic, military and geopolitical interests of American imperialism."

We further warned that the intervention would provoke resistance from the Somali people: "The adventure in Somalia will no more solve the crisis of American capitalism than did the massacre

carried out by the US in Iraq. Far from restoring imperialist 'stability,' it will ultimately fuel the flames of popular revolt against colonial-style oppression throughout Africa." This prognosis is being dramatically confirmed in the streets of Mogadishu.

There is no end in sight for this occupation. Even after the proposed transfer of military forces in Somalia to a UN command, 5,000 US troops are to remain indefinitely on the ground. Meanwhile, a "rapid deployment force" of marines, tanks, attack helicopters and other war planes is to be kept in ships off shore, ready to intervene.

Anyone still harboring illusions about the "humanitarian" motives of this intervention should ask themselves: What role can such a force possibly play in feeding the hungry? Its sole conceivable purpose is the bloody suppression of an uprising by the Somali people.

The blood shed in the streets of Mogadishu is on the hands of Bill Clinton. The intervention in Somalia, like earlier US invasions and wars of aggression in Grenada, Panama and Iraq, was carried out with the bipartisan support of Democrats and Republicans.

Clinton, who was inaugurated as president in the midst of US bombings in Iraq and the occupation of Somalia by tens of thousands of US troops, fully endorsed the militarism of the Bush administration and has continued the interventions which it began.

The antiwar protester of the 1960s has exerted every effort to prove himself even more aggressive than Bush in the use of military force to defend the interests of US imperialism abroad.

Even as this aggression erupts in the massacre in Mogadishu, the Clinton administration is embarking on another military intervention under the cover of a humanitarian mission — this time in the Balkans. The proposed airdrop of relief supplies to Bosnia is motivated not by a desire to reduce the suffering of the Yugoslav people, but to create the conditions for a provocation which will allow direct US intervention into the region.

The source of the eruption of US militarism lies in the profound economic crisis of American and world capitalism. Mired in a global recession, beset by sharpening trade conflicts with its imperialist rivals and confronting the worst domestic social crisis since the 1930s, the American capitalist ruling class and its political representatives, Democratic and Republican alike, have turned to a desperate policy of military aggression. It is seeking to use America's remaining military superiority to offset its economic decline.

American capitalism's aim is to assert hegemony over world

markets, raw materials and sources of cheap labor at the expense of its capitalist rivals. This road leads inevitably to a bloody catastrophe for American capitalism and ultimately to a new imperialist war.

There are vital political lessons for the American working class in the turn of events in Mogadishu. The criminal intervention in Somalia was carried out under the cover of a full-scale propaganda barrage in the capitalist media, promoting a colonial occupation as a humanitarian rescue operation. Like all US military interventions, it enjoyed the unqualified backing of the big business stooges in the trade union bureaucracy.

These methods are not reserved solely for foreign interventions. The same elements are being brought into play in promoting the Clinton administration's deficit reduction plan, which is being sold by the media and the labor bureaucracy as a program to create jobs and improve the living standards of American workers. This is just as big a lie as the claim that US troops were sent to Somalia to feed the hungry. Both at home and abroad, it is the interests of profit, not of people, which determine the policy of the capitalist ruling class and its government.

It is impossible to defend jobs, living standards and basic rights at home without rejecting the perspective of defending the "national interest" of American imperialism abroad.

American workers must join with their class brothers and sisters in Somalia in demanding the immediate withdrawal of all US and other imperialist troops from that country.

The only answer to the worldwide eruption of militarism and the attacks on the working class at home lies in forging the international unity of workers in every country in the struggle for socialism. This is the revolutionary program and perspective fought for by the Workers League and our co-thinkers in the International Committee of the Fourth International.

Notes

Why Is the US Invading Somalia?

1. **battleship *Maine*** — A US vessel blown up in Havana harbor February 15, 1898. This was the pretext utilized by the US to provoke a war with Spain, which was blamed for the incident, in which 260 men died. President McKinley presented Spain with an ultimatum, some of the terms of which were actually being implemented when the US Congress declared war on April 25. The Treaty of Paris (December 10, 1898) ended Spanish rule in Cuba and the US gained the islands of Guam, Puerto Rico and the Philippines.

The Return to Colonialism

1. **Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich (Ulyanov) (1870-1924)** — The leader of the October 1917 Revolution and of the first workers state. Together with Trotsky, he was one of the two greatest revolutionary Marxist leaders of the twentieth century. He applied Marxism to the modern epoch in developing the theory of the revolutionary vanguard party, necessary for the proletariat to seize power. He fought for the understanding that scientific socialism had to be brought into the labor movement from outside the day-to-day, economic struggles in a conflict with the spontaneous consciousness of the working class. Lenin developed the Marxist analysis of imperialism as the final stage of capitalism, the epoch of wars and revolutions. An indefatigable opponent of opportunism in all forms, after the historic betrayal of the Second International in August 1914, Lenin set out to construct

a Third (Communist) International.

Somalia: A History of Imperialist Brutality

1. **King Leopold II (1835-1909)** — The ruler of Belgium from 1865. He established personal control in 1885 over the Congo Free State (now Zaire). His exploitation of the colony was notoriously bloodthirsty, even compared to the brutality being carried out by the other imperialist powers. He was obliged to hand over control of the colony to the Belgian government in 1908.

2. **Rhodes, Cecil John (1853-1902)** — A British imperialist politician and businessman. He emigrated from Britain to South Africa in 1870 and made a fortune from the Kimberley diamond mines. He founded the De Beers Mining Company in 1880. The following year he entered the Cape Colony parliament and became premier of Cape Colony from 1890 until he was forced to resign in 1896. He strongly advocated British expansion in Africa.

3. **Bismarck, Prince Otto Eduard Leopold von (1815-1898)** — A Prussian statesman and diplomat. His main objective was the forcible unification of the small German states and the creation of a single German empire under the hegemony of Junker Prussia. Bismarck became Chancellor of the German Empire in 1871 following the defeat of Napoleon III in the Franco-Prussian war. He was a vicious enemy of the working class movement, authoring the Anti-Socialist Law (Exceptional Law Against the Socialists) and other measures. In 1890, the Exceptional Law was canceled. Bismarck resigned the same year.

4. **Ethiopia (Abyssinia)** — One of the most ancient kingdoms in the world. Its former kings claimed descent from the son of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. As the kingdom of Axum, it was prominent from the first to the eighth century and the center of a vast ivory trade. It was converted to Christianity in the fourth century. The area was isolated after the Arab conquest of Egypt cut its ties to Byzantium. At the end of the nineteenth century, Ethiopia was a landlocked kingdom, striving for control of neighboring Eritrea as a gateway to the Red Sea.

5. **Mussolini, Benito (1883-1945)** — The fascist leader who ruled Italy from 1922-1945. Expelled from the Italian Socialist Party in 1914 for his rabid, social-patriotic support for World War I, he organized a militantly antisocialist and semimilitary fascist movement in 1919. He rose to power in October 1922. After 1926, bourgeois democratic forms were abolished and the labor movement

was bloodily suppressed. Mussolini was replaced in 1943 by Badoglio. In 1945 he was captured and executed by Communist Party-led partisans.

6. **League of Nations** — The imperialist talk-shop established by the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919. It was a mechanism of domination by the major imperialist powers. Lenin referred to it as a "thieves' kitchen." The Soviet Union was admitted as a member and given a seat on its council in September 1934.

7. **Stalin, Joseph Vissarionovich (Dzhughashvili) (1879-1953)** — The leading spokesman for the Thermidorean reaction in the Soviet Union who became the all-powerful Bonapartist dictator ruling on behalf of the bureaucracy which emerged in the USSR and of world imperialism. He played an insignificant role in the actual seizure of power in October 1917 but, under conditions of the isolation and backwardness of the USSR, came forward as the leading representative of the petty-bourgeois layers who became more and more concerned with the advancement of their own material interests at the expense of the international working class. During the 1930s, he organized the destruction of the Bolshevik Party, the butchery of the leadership of the Russian Revolution and the physical annihilation of every representative of Marxist culture in the Soviet Union. He directed the assassination of Trotsky in August 1940.

8. **de Gaulle, Charles André Joseph Marie (1890-1970)** — A French soldier and politician. He was president from 1945 to 1946 and from 1958 to 1969. When the French bourgeoisie capitulated ignominiously to Hitler in 1940, he started the Free French movement in England, believing that the interests of bourgeois France would be better served by playing an active role in the war. He was named premier on June 1, 1958 at the height of the Algerian crisis. He assumed new and wider powers in an attempt to avert civil war in France and became the first president of the Fifth Republic. His government was irreparably weakened by the general strike in May-June 1968. He resigned in 1969.

9. **Churchill, Sir Winston Spencer Leonard (1874-1965)** — One of the leading imperialist politicians of the twentieth century. As home secretary, he called out troops against striking miners and dockers in 1911. He was secretary for war and air from 1919 to 1921 and the leading supporter of armed intervention against Soviet Russia. During the 1926 General Strike he organized the antilabor government newspaper, the British Gazette. From 1939 to 1940, he was the first lord of the admiralty, becoming prime minister in 1940.

He was one of the main shapers of the strategy of the Allied imperialist powers in World War II and worked closely with Roosevelt. Defeated overwhelmingly in the 1945 General Election, he was Tory prime minister again from 1951-55.

Roosevelt, Franklin Delano (1882-1945) — US president 1933-45 during the Great Depression and World War II. His government recognized the Soviet Union in 1933. Roosevelt developed the New Deal, a set of policies which included a program of public works and the introduction of social security. On the eve of the US entry into World War II, his administration jailed the leadership of the American Trotskyist organization, the Socialist Workers Party.

Atlantic Charter — Signed by Roosevelt and Churchill on August 14, 1941, before the US entered World War II. It included a verbal recognition of every people's right to independence and self-determination. This was in line with the spurious claim that World War II was a war for freedom and against fascism.

10. **Vichy France** — Marshall Henri Pétain headed the government located in Vichy, a health resort town in south central France, after the German occupation of northern France in 1940. Under Laval, the Vichy government continued to collaborate with the Nazis after the whole of France was occupied in 1942.

Hitler, Adolf (1889-1945) — The Austrian-born, fascist demagogue who became the spokesman and all-powerful dictator on behalf of decaying German imperialism. A sworn enemy of the proletariat and communism, he expounded his racist and reactionary views in *Mein Kampf*. He became a leader of the German National Socialist Workers Party (Nazis), which, backed by big capital and taking advantage of the impotence of the Communist and Social Democratic Parties, took power in 1933. He set about destroying the German workers movement and launched a program of expansion of German imperialism which resulted in World War II.

11. **Lend-Lease** — A program initiated by Roosevelt in 1941. It was the way in which US imperialism funded the Allied nations in World War II. Total aid exceeded \$50 billion.

12. **Nehru, Jawaharlal** (1889-1964) — One of the leading political representatives of the Indian bourgeoisie. He became the first prime minister of India after nominal independence in 1947. Nehru joined the fight against the British occupation of India after the British massacre of Indian nationalists at Amritsar in 1919. He was president of the Indian National Congress from 1929 and was jailed in 1930 for his part in civil disobedience campaigns. He is the author

of *Glimpses of World History*, a collection of letters to his daughter, Indira Gandhi, who later became prime minister of India.

Nkrumah, Kwame (1909-1972) — A political representative of the national bourgeoisie in Ghana. He was prime minister of the British-ruled Gold Coast from 1951, then of the Independent Republic of Ghana from 1957. He became its president in 1960, gradually assuming dictatorial powers. He was overthrown in a military coup in 1966.

Sukarno (1901-1970) — President of Indonesia from 1945 until 1967. From 1927, he was a leader of the bourgeois wing of the independence movement which opposed the Dutch occupation of the archipelago. Imprisoned by the Dutch colonial authorities from 1933 to 1942, he was released by the Japanese with whom he collaborated. He was instrumental in creating the Republic of Indonesia in 1945. Like many of the other bourgeois nationalist figures of the period, Sukarno attempted to maintain some political independence during the 1950s and 1960s by balancing between imperialism and Stalinism. The policy proved particularly disastrous for the working class and peasantry, up to one million of whom were massacred by the army and its supporters following a military coup in 1965. Sukarno was ousted and replaced by General Suharto.

13. **Potsdam Conference** — Held in July-August 1945 in Potsdam, Germany, it was the last inter-Allied conference of World War II (earlier conferences took place at Tehran and Yalta). It was attended by the representatives of the victorious imperialist powers and the Soviet Union. Truman represented the US, Stalin, the USSR and Churchill represented Britain until he was replaced by Clement Attlee. They agreed that a four-power Allied Control Council would rule defeated Germany.

14. **Molotov, Vyacheslav Mikhailovich** (Skriabin) (1890-1986) — Stalin's right-hand man during the bloody liquidation of the Russian Marxists in the 1930s. He functioned as president of the Comintern during the disastrous ultraleft "Third Period" and as president of the Council of People's Commissars from 1930-1941. Later, as commissar of foreign affairs, he accompanied Stalin to the Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam conferences. He opposed Khrushchev and the limited revelations of Stalin's crimes in 1956, and was ousted from the leadership. Expelled from the CPSU in 1961, he was readmitted in 1984.

15. **Nasser, Gamal Abdel** (1918-1970) — Led a military coup d'état which overthrew King Farouk of Egypt in 1952. He ended the

British military presence in Egypt in 1954 and nationalized the Suez Canal in 1956. President of Egypt from 1956, he claimed to be implementing "Arab socialism," but in reality was a political representative of the Arab bourgeoisie. Nasser's experiment in achieving "pan-Arab union" by uniting Egypt with Syria to form the United Arab Republic in 1956 collapsed when Syria seceded in 1961. Under his leadership, Egypt suffered a disastrous setback in the 1967 war with Israel.

16. **Eisenhower, Dwight David** (1890-1969) — Commander of the Allied troops in Europe for the last two years of World War II and commander of NATO in 1950. He became US president 1953-61, the first Republican to hold office for 20 years. During his presidency the McCarthy witchhunt reached its high point. One of Eisenhower's first acts as president was to refuse to commute the sentence on Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, who were executed June 18, 1953 after being framed on espionage charges. In 1957, Eisenhower dispatched federal troops to Little Rock, Arkansas to enforce an antisegregation court order. His terms as president saw some of highest peacetime military budgets ever proposed. When he retired at the age of 70, he warned of the potential for "misplaced power" entailed in the "military-industrial complex."

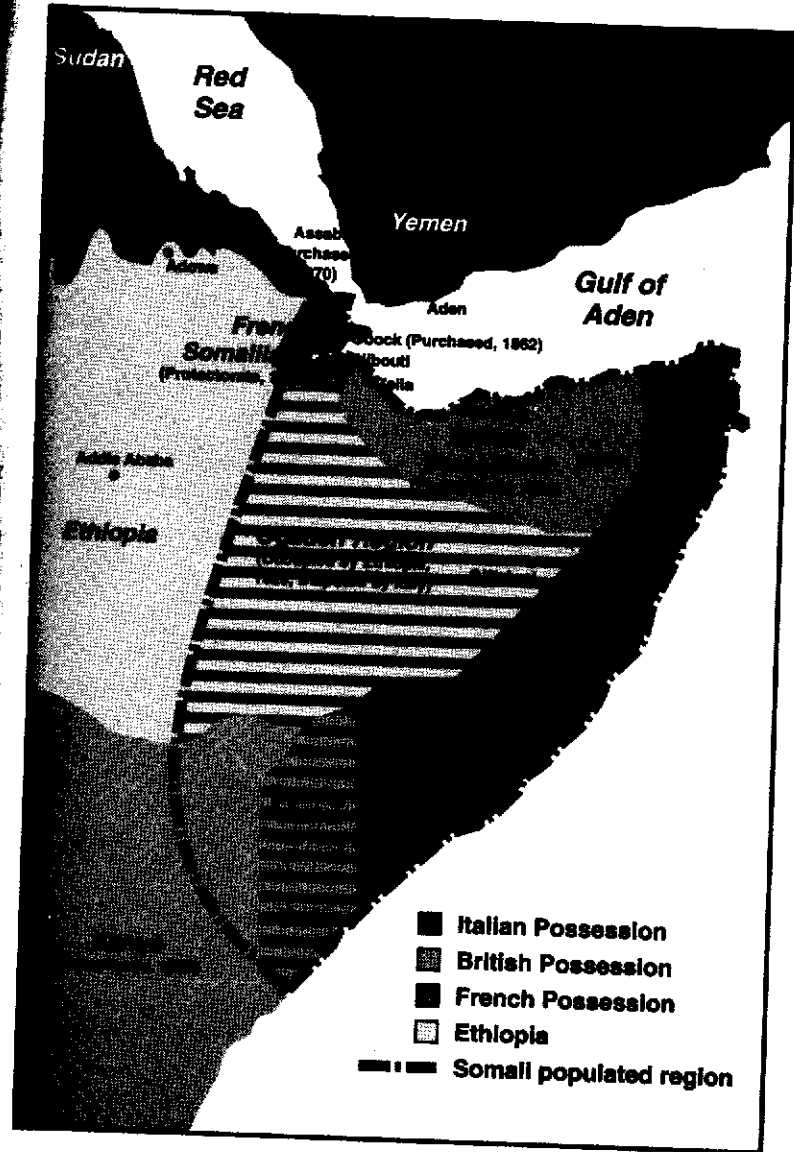
17. **Kenyatta, Jomo** (1891-1978) — A Kenyan bourgeois nationalist. He was imprisoned by the British in 1953 and accused of leading the Mau Mau rebellion, which he denied. Released in 1961, he became the first president of Kenya from 1964 to 1978. He was one of the most influential of the African nationalist leaders, but proved as incapable as the others of finding any lasting solution to the problems faced by the African masses.

18. **Haile Selassie, Ethiopian emperor** (1892-1975) — Under the name of Ras Tafari, he reigned from 1930 to 1974. He was driven out by the Italian invasion in 1936 and restored to the throne by British imperialism in 1941. He was overthrown in a military coup in 1974.

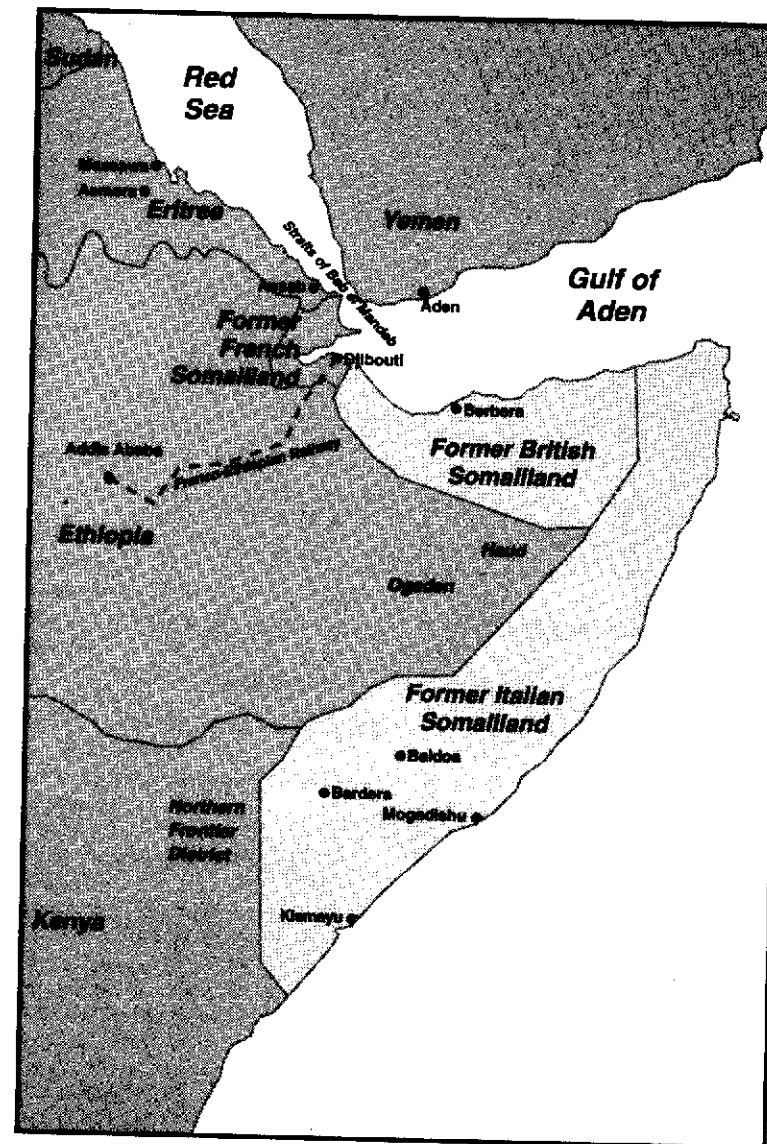
19. **Mengistu Haile Mariam, Lt. Col.** (1937-) — Led the military coup against Haile Selassie in 1974. He became head of state in 1977. With the backing of the Soviet Union, he embarked on an economic program known as Ethiopia First, which included nationalization. As relations with the Soviet Union began to weaken following the Soviet pullout from Afghanistan and Angola, Mengistu attempted to improve relations with the US. In March 1990, Mengistu's pretension to "Ethiopian socialism" came to an end and

he began the process of privatization, espousing free market principles. On May 21, 1991, with his army facing defeat by secessionists in Eritrea and insurrectionists in Tigre province, Mengistu fled the country, eventually being granted political asylum in Zimbabwe.

20. **Gorbachev, Mikhail Sergeevich** (1931-) — General secretary of the Stalinist Communist Party of the USSR from March 1985 following the death of Konstantin Chernenko. He presided over the turn by the Stalinist bureaucracy to the policies of capitalist restoration. A member of the Central Committee from 1971 and of the Politburo from 1980, Gorbachev in 1990 and 1991 supported the imperialist assault on Iraq, which had been a longstanding ally of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev resigned as the leader of the Communist Party August 24, 1991 following an unsuccessful coup attempt against his government. He resigned as Soviet president December 25, 1991, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the announcement of the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States, a collection of bourgeois states.



The carve-up of the Horn of Africa (1862-1925)



The Horn of Africa today

Index

- Abdullahi Issa, 35-36
Abyssinia, 32
Addis Ababa, 28, 31
Aden, 25, 27-28
Adowa, 28
Afghanistan, 42
AFL-CIO, 9
Africa, 13-14, 33; colonial carve-up of, 19, 25-27
Aidid, Mohamed Farah, 43, 56-57
Albania, 13
Algeria, 34
Ali Shermarke, Abdirashi, 36-37, 39
Allies, 31
Angola, 6-7, 19, 52-53
Arabs, and Somalia, 24
Assab, 25, 27
Assemblea Nazionale, 38
Atlantic Charter, 31
Axis, 31
- Bab el Mandeb, 41
Balkans, 21, 59
Bangladesh, 6
Beirut, 7
Belgium, 25, 47, 52
Berbera, 6, 14, 29, 40, 42
Berlin, conference of 1885, 27
Bismarck, 27
Boers, 26
- Bosnia, 8, 13, 48, 59
Bourgeois nationalists, see National Bourgeoisie
Breakdown of postwar order, 12
Bridgestone Corp., 53
Britain, 26, 28, 30, 36, 43; and Horn of Africa, 14, 34-35; colonial empire, 31, 33-34; role in Somalia, 7, 24-25, 27-32, 34-36, 39
British East Africa Company, 28
British Empire, 31
Brokaw, Tom, 1
Bulgaria, 13
Bulletin, 2-3, 17, 51, 58
Burma, 13
Bush administration, 5, 23, 44, 59
Bush, George, 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 14, 17-18
- Cambodia, 8, 13
Carletti, Tommaso, 29
Carter administration, 42
Central Command, US, 24
China, 13, 27, 33
Churchill, 31, 33
CIA, 2, 8-9, 52
Clinton administration, 9, 13, 48, 55, 60
Clinton, Bill, 1, 3, 9, 11, 14, 23, 59
Cohen, Richard, 8
Cold War, 7, 14, 23
Colonialism, return to, see Recolonization

- Commissionaire, 26
 Congo, 25, 52
 Congress, US, 9, 11, 15
 Crispi, 28
 Croatia, 13
 Cuba, 13, 20, 41, 49
- Davidson, Basil, 38-39
 Defense Planning Guidance, 13
 de Gaulle, 31-32
 Democratic Party, 9-10, 14, 59
 Dergue, The, 41
 Dervishes, 28-29
 Desert Storm, 10
 Djibouti, 24, 27-28, 32, 35, 37
 Dos Santos, Jose Eduardo, 52
- East Africa Protectorate, 28
 East Africa, 32
 East Asia, 13
 Eden, Anthony, 36
 Egal, Mohammed Hadji Ibrahim, 39-40
 Egypt, 13, 35, 36; role in Somalia, 24-25, 27
 Eisenhower administration, 36
 El Salvador, 13
 England, see Britain
 Eritrea, 23, 25, 27-28, 30-32, 34-36, 41-42
 Ethiopia, 13, 23, 27-28, 29-33, 35-36; emperor of, 28, 41; famine in, 42
 Europe, 8; colonial empires of, 14
- Four Power Commission, 35
 Fourth International, 15
 France, 25, 27, 30, 36, 43, 52; and Horn of Africa, 14, 27-28; colonial empire of, 31, 33-34; role in Somalia, 7, 24-25, 27-28, 32, 35-37; workers movement in, 34
 French Communist Party, 34
 French Foreign Legion, 12, 18, 44
- Galibaribur, 29
 Germany, 8, 13, 25, 30-31, 33, 43-44
 Gorbachev, 42
 Greece, 34
 Grenada, 7, 59
 Guatemala, 13
- Haiti, 8-9, 20
 Haud, 36
 Helms, Richard, 2, 8
 Hitler, 32
 Hoagland, Jim, 8
 Horn of Africa, 6, 13-14, 57; history of 1-2, 23-25, 31
 "Humanitarianism," claimed as motivation for US invasion, 1, 5, 7, 11, 17, 19, 21, 47, 51, 55, 60
 Hussein, Saddam, 1, 19, 48
- Imperialism, American 2, 8, 10, 13, 15, 19, 21, 31, 41, 55; and recolonization, 43-44, 53; conflicts within, 13, 31-32, 43; European, 2; see also Britain, France, Germany, Italy, United States.
- India, 13, 20
 Indo-China, 33-34
 Indonesia, 13, 33
 International Committee of the Fourth International, 10, 60
 International Monetary Fund, 7, 12, 19, 42
 Iran, 13-14, 42
 Iraq, 6, 13, 59; US war against, 9-10, 15, 20, 24
 Isaak, 42
 Ise, 27
 Israel, 13
 Italian East Africa, 31
 Italy, 25, 31, 34, 43; and the Horn of Africa, 14, 25, 27; role in Somalia 7, 24, 27-32, 35-36; war against Ethiopia, 28, 30; workers movement in, 34
- Jackson, Jesse, 10
 James, Lawrence, 26
 Jane's Defence Weekly, 13
 Japan, 8, 13, 31, 43
 Jidali, 29
- Kagnew, 42
 Kenya, 13, 24, 28, 30, 35, 39
 Kenyatta, Jomo, 39
 Kinshasa, 52
 Kismayu, 30, 47, 56
 Kohl, Helmut, 44
 Korea, 13

- Kuwait, 7
- Latin America, 13, 20
 League of Nations, 30
 Lebanon, 13
 Lend-Lease, 33
 Lenin, 12
 Leopold II, King of Belgium, 25-26
 Lewis, I.M., 38
 Liberia, 9, 20-21, 53
 Libya, 13, 30, 34-35; US bombing of, 7
 Lorenz, Col. F.M., 48
- Madagascar, 24, 27
 Maine, battleship, 7
 Marxism, 2, 12
 Mason, Peter, 26
 Massawa, 27
 Media, role in Somalia war, 1-3, 5-6, 18-20, 23, 47, 51, 57, 60
 Medishe, 29
 Mengistu Haile Mariam, 41
 Middle East, 13, 33
 Militarism, growth in US, 8-9, 15, 49, 59-60
 Mobutu Sese Seko, 52
 Mogadishu, 1, 11, 18, 24, 35, 39, 43, 47, 51, 55-57, 59-60
 Mohammed, Ali Mahdi, 43
 Molotov, 34
 Mombasa, 24
 Morocco, 13
 Moscow bureaucracy, see Stalinist bureaucracy
 Mozambique, 6, 7, 19-20
 Muhammad bin Abdullah Hassan, 28-29, 35
 Musal, Hussein, 48
 Mussolini, Benito, 30
- Nasser, Gamel Abdel, 35-36
 National bourgeoisie, in the colonial countries, 34, 40, 44
 Nehru, 34
 New World Order, 8
 New York Times, The, 13, 18, 21, 53, 57
 Nicaragua, 13
 Nigeria, 44
 Nile, 32, 35
- Nkrumah, 34
 Noriega, Manuel, 1, 19
 North Africa, 32
 North Korea, 8
 Northern Frontier District, 35, 39
- Oakley, Robert, 2, 58
 Obock, 25, 27
 Ogaden, the, 24, 28-30, 35, 36, 39, 41-42
 Operation Restore Hope, 17, 47, 51, 57
 Ottoman Empire, 25
- Pakistan, 44
 Pan American Airways, 33
 Panama, 59
 Papua New Guinea, 13
 Peck, Col. Fred, 55-56
 Pentagon, 13-14, 18, 47
 Persia, and Somalia, 24
 Persian Gulf, 48
 Persian Gulf War, 24
 Peru, 13
 Philippines, the, 13
 Postwar period, 19
 Potsdam Conference, 34
- Reagan, Ronald, 7
 Reagan administration, 42
 Recolonization, 8, 10-12, 20, 43-44, 48, 51, 53, 56
 Red Sea, 27
 RENAMO, 7, 19
 Republican Party, 9, 14, 59
 Rhodes, Cecil, 27
 Romania, 13
 Roosevelt, 31
- Salihya Order, 28
 Save the Children Fund, 48
 Savimbi, Jonas, 52
 Serbia, 20, 49
 Siad Barre, Mohammed, 2, 7, 39-43; relations with US, 14, 19, 42, 44
 Somali Democratic Republic, 39
 Somali lands, 34
 Somali National Movement (SNM), 39, 42-43
 Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM), 42-43

- Somali people, divided up by colonial boundaries, 24, 35, 37, 39; opposition to Italian restoration, 35-36; precolonial history, 24
- Somali Republic, 36
- Somali Youth League (SYL), 35-36
- Somalia Relief Agency, 6
- Somalia, 7-8, 12-14, 38-40, 44; bourgeoisie of, 37-38; claim of socialist state in, 7, 40-41; colonial conquest of, 23-25, 27-28; economic and cultural backwardness of, 37, 40-41; famine in, 5-6, 17-19, 43-44, 51, 57; history as colony, 3, 28-36; history since independence, 36-43; rebellion against British, 28-29; strategic significance of, 2, 6, 13, 18-19, 23; US occupation of, 1, 3, 5, 7-9, 11-13, 17, 21, 23, 44, 47, 55, 57; war with Ethiopia, 41. See also Somaliland, Siad Barre
- Somaliland, British, 24-25, 27, 32, 35-36, 39, 43
- Somaliland, French, 24, 27, 32, 35-36
- Somaliland, Italian, 27, 32-35
- Somaliland, Republic of, 43
- Somalis, as oppressed nationality in Ethiopia, 41; killed during US occupation, 11-12, 20, 47-48, 51, 55-58
- South Africa, 52
- Southeast Asia, 13, 33
- Southwest Asia, 13
- Soviet bureaucracy, 7-9, 34, 40, 44
- Soviet Union, 8, 13, 20, 42; collapse of, 8-9, 12, 43; role in Horn of Africa, 14, 30, 39, 41; role in Somalia, 40-41
- Soyo, 53
- Spanish-American War of 1898, 7
- Stalin, Joseph, 30, 34
- Stalinist bureaucracy. See Soviet bureaucracy.
- State Department, 42, 53
- Sudan, 13, 21, 27, 32
- Suez Canal, 23, 25, 36
- Sukarno, 34
- Suriname, 13
- Taleh, 29
- Tanganyika, 44
- Thailand, 13
- Tigre, 41
- Trade union bureaucracy, 15, 60
- Trusteeship. See UN
- Tshisekedi, Etienne, 52
- Turkey, 13
- Uganda, 35
- UN General Assembly, 35
- UN Security Council, 44
- UN trust territory. See UN trusteeship
- UNITA, 7, 19, 52-53
- United Auto Workers, 9
- United Nations, 2, 9, 12, 20, 33, 53; blockade of Iraq, 6, 20; role in Somalia, 7, 19, 34-36, 56, 59; trusteeships, 12, 34-36, 53
- United Somali Congress, (USC), 42-43
- United States, 6, 33, 43, 52; decay of democracy in, 9, 14-15; role in Horn of Africa, 2, 14, 23-24, 30-35, 42; role in Somalia, 6-7, 34-35, 42
- Vichy France, 32
- Vietnam, 7, 13
- Wall Street Journal, 12, 49
- Walwal, 30
- "War lords," 1, 19, 56
- Washington Post, 8, 47-48
- Western Europe, 13, 33-34
- Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), 39, 41
- Withdrawal of US troops, demand for, 15, 49, 60
- Workers League, 2-3, 10-11, 15, 17, 60
- World Bank, 7, 12, 19, 42
- World War I, 29-30
- World War II, 31
- Yemen, 24
- Young, Andrew, 2, 9-10, 20
- Yugoslavia, 13
- Zaire, 13, 52-53
- Zanzibar, Sultan of, 28
- Zeila, 27-28
- Zimbabwe, 44

Desert Slaughter

The Imperialist War against Iraq

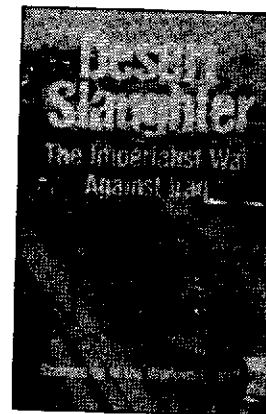
Statements of the Workers League

A collection of articles, statements and speeches written as events unfolded in the Persian Gulf is brought together in this book. It presents a comprehensive analysis of the Persian Gulf crisis, from the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait through the US-led assault on Iraq, and the postwar explosions in the region. The gulf crisis is analyzed at every stage from the standpoint of Marxist opponents of the US military intervention, focussing on the campaign initiated by the Workers League to demand a national referendum on the gulf war and take the decision out of the hands of the White House and Congress. The book also examines the role of the mass media in promoting the war.

This volume roots the gulf war in the basic requirements of US foreign policy, especially the growing conflict between the United States, Europe and Japan to control strategic positions and sources of oil and other raw materials.

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The Revolution Betrayed

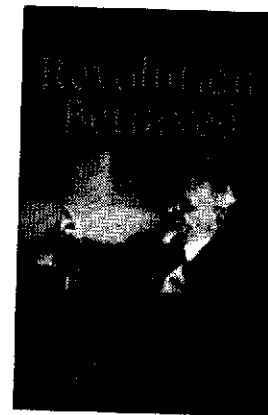
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Leon Trotsky

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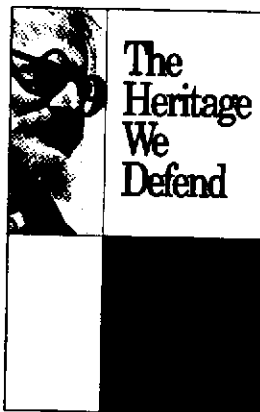
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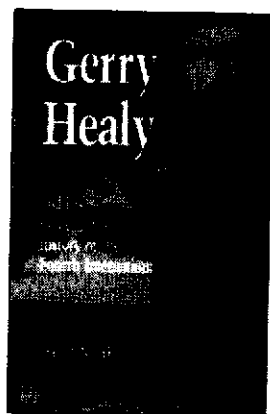
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David North

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North explains how Healy developed an increasingly nationalist conception of the building of the Trotskyist movement, and came to subordinate the work of the world party to the practical tasks confronting its British section. He explains the circumstances under which the revolutionary Marxists waged a counterattack against the WRP opportunists which ultimately won the support of the majority of the sections of the International Committee. The author gives a vivid picture of Healy's great political strengths as well as the political weaknesses that contributed to his degeneration.

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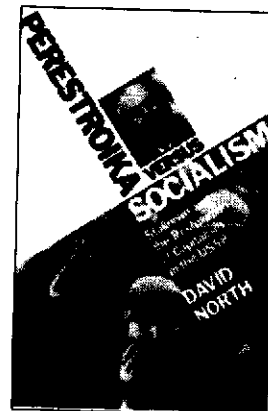
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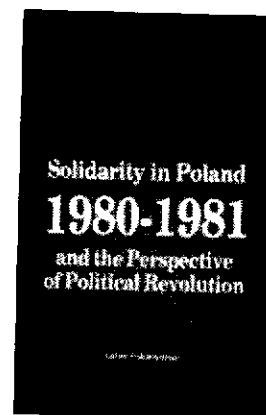
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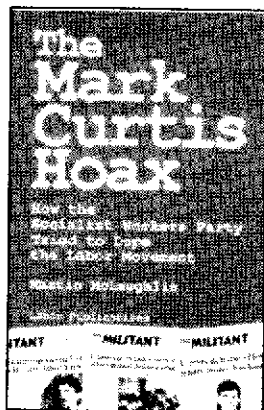
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Martin McLaughlin

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