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On the “Driving Force of Anarchy” and the Dynamics of Change

A Sharp Debate and Urgent Polemic: The Struggle for a Radically Different World and the Struggle for a Scientific Approach to Reality

by Raymond Lotta

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The world is a horror. More precisely, the world created and reinforced by *capitalism-imperialism* is one of unjust wars and brutal occupations, of life-crushing poverty and savage inequality, of the pervasive subordination and degradation of women. This is a world—and here it is proper to speak of the planet—on which accelerating environmental crisis is not only part of the warp and woof of everyday life, but threatening the very ecological balances and life-support systems of Earth. The suffering of world humanity and the perilous state of the planet are, at their core, the outcome of the workings of the fundamental contradiction of our epoch: between highly socialized, interconnected, and globalized forces of production, on the one hand; and relations of private ownership and control over these forces of production, on the other. But locked within this contradiction is the potential for humanity to move beyond scarcity, beyond exploitation, and beyond social division—the potential to organize society on a whole different foundation that will enable human beings to truly flourish.

Which is to say, the world as it is... is not the way it must and can only be.

What is the problem before humanity; what must be changed in order to solve this problem; and how can that change come about? Communism is the science that enables humanity to understand the world, in order to change it—to understand the world ever more deeply, in order to transform it ever more profoundly in the direction of a world community of humanity. As with all sciences, communism proceeds from the world as *it actually is*, from the *necessity* (the structures and dynamics) that actually confronts humanity. Within reality lies the real basis to overcome exploitation and oppression, and to bring a radically different world into being through revolution.

And this brings me to the focus of this polemic.

In the international communist movement, there is sharp debate about the nature and process of working out of the fundamental contradiction of capitalism: between socialized production and private appropriation. The debate pivots on the forms of motion—and what is, overall, the principal form of motion—of this fundamental contradiction.

This debate involves crucial questions of political economy. But it also, and centrally, turns on issues of method and approach. Are we going to scientifically confront, analyze, and on that basis transform the world that actually exists, in its changing-ness and complexity? Or are we going to use Marxist terminology as an essentially pragmatic tool to locate sources of change and seek guarantees that history will “work out” for us,

that the masses will prevail, by constructing a metaphysical framework of politics and philosophy?

What kind of international communist movement will there be: one rooted in science and proceeding from the world as it is, or one that proceeds from “narratives” that force-fit reality into a reassuring belief system?

The defeat of the Chinese revolution in 1976 marked the end of the first stage of communist revolution. This first stage saw the creation of the world’s first socialist state in the Soviet Union (1917-56) and a further leap and advance with the establishment of revolutionary state power in China and the carrying forward of that revolution (1949-76). In the wake of the counterrevolution in China, Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA (RCP), began a process of sifting through and scientifically studying the incredibly inspiring accomplishments of that first stage of communist revolution, as well as its shortcomings and real errors, some very serious. Upholding the basic principles of communism and advancing the science in qualitative, new ways, Avakian has forged a new synthesis of communism out of a scientific summation of the revolutionary experience of the communist movement and by learning and drawing from broader streams of scientific, intellectual, and artistic thought and endeavor. Avakian has radically reenvisioned the socialist transition to communism and, at the same time, put communism on an even more scientific foundation. This new synthesis provides the framework to go further and do better in a new stage of communist revolution in the contemporary world.

The new synthesis of communism has developed in opposition to, and has been opposed by, two other responses to the defeat of socialism in revolutionary China: the one, a rejection of communism’s basic principles and an embrace of bourgeois democracy; the other, a rigid and quasi-religious clinging to previous socialist experience and communist theory that rejects a thoroughly scientific approach to summing up the past and further developing communist theory.¹

That is the backdrop of this debate. But the issues of political economy and methodology being joined in this polemic are not esoteric ones limited, or only of relevance and interest, to the international communist movement.

This debate encompasses issues of concern, theorization, and contention in broader progressive political and intellectual-academic circles, issues of profound import and moment. Is capitalism actually a system—with systemic drives and with systemic outcomes, that is, with its own laws of motion? How do we understand the scope for conscious human initiative, given capitalism’s structural dynamics? What is a scientific approach to understanding and changing society? And what indeed constitutes human emancipation in this epoch?

A passage from *Birds Cannot Give Birth to Crocodiles, but Humanity Can Soar Beyond the Horizon* by Bob Avakian concentrates a critical point of departure:

[T]his is how things actually are in regard to the present circumstances of human society and the possibilities for how society can proceed and be organized: It is a matter of either bringing about a radical alternative to the presently dominant capitalist-imperialist system—an alternative which is viable, and sustainable, because it proceeds on the basis of the productive forces at hand and further unfetters them, through the transformation of the social relations, and most fundamentally the production relations and, in dialectical relation with that, the transformation of the superstructure of politics and ideology—creating, through this transformation, and fundamentally the transformation of the underlying material conditions, a radically new economic system, as the foundation of a radically new society as a whole; either that, or, what will in fact assert itself as the only real alternative in today’s world—being drawn, or forced, into a society proceeding on the terms, and locked within the confines, of commodity production and exchange, and more specifically the production relations and accumulation process and dynamics of capitalism....²

I. A Crucial Breakthrough: the “Driving Force of Anarchy” as the Decisive Dynamic of Capitalism

A. Background

In the early 1980s, the RCP initiated important theoretical work and research into the political economy of capitalism and how the contradictions of the world asserted themselves and interacted. The question was being posed about the dynamics of capitalism and how this sets the “stage” on which the revolutionary struggle takes place, both in relation to the concrete world situation at the time and in relation to the larger question of the historical transition from the bourgeois epoch to the epoch of world communism.

Central to this theoretical work was an insight brought forward by Bob Avakian. He had identified the “driving

force of anarchy” as the principal form of motion of fundamental contradiction of capitalism, setting the overall terms for the class struggle.

The delineation of the “driving force of anarchy” as the principal dynamic of capitalism set off no small amount of upset and outrage from various quarters of the international communist movement (here I am referring to the Maoist forces and formations of the period, not to the revisionist communist parties associated with the then-social-imperialist Soviet Union, which had long given up on revolution).

It was argued by some in the Maoist movement at the time that this understanding effectively liquidates the role of the masses and of class struggle in history. Others held that since the exploitation of wage-labor, of the proletariat, is the source of surplus value (profit), and since maximization of profit is the *raison d'être* of the bourgeoisie—then it follows, logically and historically, that the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, rooted in the production of surplus value, is necessarily the principal dynamic of capitalist development.

The argument was also made that it is a core principle of Marxism that the masses make history, and that oppression gives rise to resistance that can be transformed into revolution—and so the class struggle and its revolutionary potential must be the principal form of motion.

It is objectively true that the masses make history. But it is also true that objective conditions actually set the overall framework for the class struggle, and that the *masses cannot make* history in their highest interests and humanity cannot get to communism without leadership, concentrated in the vanguard party, that bases itself on the most advanced scientific understanding of how the world is and how it can be transformed in the interests of emancipating world humanity.

This debate has surfaced anew, though now in the context of ideological struggle over whether the new synthesis of communism brought forward by Bob Avakian is the framework for a new stage of communism. At stake is the actual *need* and *basis* for all-the-way communist revolution in today's world, in order to truly emancipate humanity and safeguard the planet... and the need for an unsparingly scientific approach if that revolution is to be made and carried forward.

B. Digging into the Political Economy

The basic change wrought by bourgeois society is *the socialization of production*. Individual, limited means of production are transformed into social means of production, workable only by collectivities of laborers. Production itself is changed from a series of individual operations into a series of social acts, and the products from individual products into social products.

These products were now in fact the product of a single class, the proletariat.³

The proletariat, the class that is at the base of collective, socialized labor, carries out production in factories, sweatshops, mines, industrialized farms, and other industrial-agricultural-transport-storage-distribution complexes. It works in common networks and webs of production on the vast, socialized, and increasingly globalized means of production that capitalism has brought forth. It utilizes the social knowledge developed and transmitted by previous generations.

But this socialized production is owned, controlled, and deployed by a relatively tiny capitalist class. The proletariat and this form of socialized production are in fundamental contradiction with capitalism's private appropriation of socially produced wealth—in the form of private capital.

In *Anti-Duhring*, Frederick Engels shows that the contradiction between socialized production and capitalistic appropriation of the product of socialized labor manifests itself and moves in two forms of antagonism.⁴

One form of motion is the *antagonism of proletariat and bourgeoisie*. With the rise and development of capitalism, wage-labor had become the main basis of modern social production. These wage-laborers are separated from—they do not own or control—society's principal means of production. These means of production are concentrated in the hands of the capitalist class. Possessing only their labor power (their capacity to work), wage-laborers must, in order to survive, sell their labor power to capital. Labor power becomes a commodity under capitalism.

Employed by capital, these wage-laborers set in motion these socialized means of production. But the product of that social labor and the process of social labor are controlled by the capitalist class. Capital subordinates living labor to the creation of value, and aims to extract maximal surplus labor (surplus value)—the amount

of labor above and beyond the labor time embodied in their wages (corresponding to what is required for the producers to live and maintain themselves and families, rearing new generations of wage-laborers).

The struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie, along with other struggles arising from various social contradictions conditioned by and incorporated into the development of the fundamental contradiction of capitalism on a global scale, exert a profound influence on economy, society, and the world.

Let's take a few examples of how the class contradiction and other social contradictions are part of the ongoing necessity faced by capital:

A major concern of ever-more mobile manufacturing capital is social stability. There are tremendous competitive pressures goading capital to move from Mexico, to China, to Vietnam, etc., in search of cheaper production costs. But cost is not the only calculation; decisions are also influenced by factors of "labor unrest" and organization. Or consider the neocolonial state shaped and propped up by U.S. imperialism through the post-World War 2 period: one of its important functions was and is to enforce conditions of social order to facilitate deeper penetration by capital. There is the situation in Western Europe today, where the whole austerity offensive has been carried out with a calculus that includes anticipation of mass response. Going back to the 1960s and 1970s in the U.S., the hiring patterns of U.S. industry, the location of factories, and urban social policy were very much conditioned by the threat (and reality) of uprisings and rebellions by the oppressed Black masses. Again, the class contradiction and other social contradictions are part of the ongoing necessity faced by capital.

The antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is one form of motion of the fundamental contradiction.

The other form of motion of the fundamental contradiction of capitalism is the *antagonism between the organization of production at the level of the individual workshop, factory, enterprise, and unit of capital, and the anarchy of production in society overall.*

The individual capitalist strives to organize production efficiently in order to recoup investment costs and gain advantage and market share vis-à-vis other capitals. And to do so, the capitalist undertakes the scientific and "despotic" organization of production: input-output analysis, strict accounting, optimal scheduling, speed-up, stretching of work, and extreme surveillance and control of the worker. This takes place at all levels of private capital up through the contemporary transnational corporation (think Wal-Mart and the organization of its supply chains).

But as highly organized as production is at the enterprise level, there is, and can be, no systematic and rational planning at the societywide level. This has to be explained.

Under capitalism, the vast bulk of products that form the material basis of the social reproduction of society are produced as commodities. That is, they are produced for exchange (for profit). Buyers and sellers of these or those commodities—whether of means of production that are inputs into the production process or means of consumption—are taken as a given. But there are *no direct social links* between the agents of production; social production is not coordinated as a social whole.

Built into capitalist commodity production is a contradiction that has to be continually resolved. On the one hand, individual producers carry on their activity independently of one another: the many different labor processes that constitute the productive activity of society are *privately organized*. On the other hand, these individual producers are mutually dependent on one another—they are part of a larger social division of labor. How then does capitalist society's economic activity get coordinated? How do the different pieces fit together?

The answer is that these privately organized labor processes are linked together and forged into a social division of labor through exchange. Exchange is the exchange of commodities, and commodities exchange in definite proportions: they are bought and sold at prices that reflect the labor time socially necessary to produce them. This is the law of value, and social labor time is the regulator of prices and profits.

The *quest for profit* dominates privately organized labor processes. Profit determines what gets produced—and how.

In response to the movement of prices and profit, capital moves into high-profit sectors, and out of low-profit sectors. If an investment does not yield a satisfactory profit, or if a particular commodity does not get sold at a price that can cover its production cost, then capital is forced to raise efficiency, or to shift into another

line of production. The movements of prices and profits communicate the “information” on which production decisions are based. The market regulates in this way and also dictates reorganization... and so the auto industry closes inefficient plants, retools, cuts its labor force; companies get swallowed up and workers are forced to change jobs. Thus the social division of labor is forged and re-forged.

This is blind and anarchic regulation. It is hit-and-miss, too-much-and-too-little: a process of over-shooting and under-shooting of investment; of discovering, *after the fact*, what the market will clear or not clear, and whether the labor process under the command of this or that capitalist is actually needed or up to competitive standard. Marx says of the regulating role of the market based on the operation of the law value: “the total movement of this disorder is its order.”⁵ As Engels puts it in his exposition of the two forms of motion: “anarchy reigns in socialized production.”

Individual capitals produce and expand as though there were no limit (again, presupposing the necessary buyers and sellers). Why? Because, as Marx explains in *Capital*, “[T]he development of capitalist production makes it constantly necessary to keep increasing the amount of capital laid out in a given industrial undertaking... Competition compels [the individual capitalist] to keep constantly extending his capital, in order to preserve itself...”⁶

The fundamental contradiction of capitalism between socialized production and private appropriation develops through these two forms of motion: the contradiction between bourgeoisie and proletariat, and the contradiction between organization in the unit of production-enterprise and anarchy in production in society overall. Each of these forms of motion has its own effects and each interpenetrates the other.

But in an ongoing way, as long as the capitalist mode of production is dominant on a world scale, it is the anarchy of capitalist production that brings about the fundamental changes in the material sphere that set the context for the class struggle. Movement compelled by anarchy, the anarchic relations among capitalist producers driven by competition, is the principal form of motion of the fundamental contradiction. This was an important breakthrough in understanding made by Bob Avakian:

It is the anarchy of capitalist production which is, in fact, the driving or motive force of this process, even though the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and proletariat is an integral part of the contradiction between socialized production and private appropriation. While the exploitation of labor-power is the form by and through which surplus value is created and appropriated, it is the *anarchic relations between capitalist producers, and not the mere existence of propertyless proletarians or the class contradiction as such*, that drives these producers to exploit the working class on an historically more intensive and extensive scale. This motive force of anarchy is an expression of the fact that the capitalist mode of production represents the full development of commodity production and the law of value. Were it not the case that these capitalist commodity producers are separated from each other and yet linked by the operation of the law of value they would not face the same compulsion to exploit the proletariat—the class contradiction between bourgeoisie and proletariat could be mitigated. It is the inner compulsion of capital to expand which accounts for the historically unprecedented dynamism of this mode of production, a process which continually transforms value relations and which leads to crisis.⁷

The understanding of the primacy of the “driving force of anarchy” was further theorized, applied, and extended in *America in Decline*, which carried forward and advanced Lenin’s systematization of the dynamics of imperialism and proletarian revolution.⁸

With the rise of imperialism, accumulation takes place in the context of the qualitatively greater unification and integration of the world capitalist market—**no longer principally a function of the circuits of trade and money but now of the internationalization of productive capital (the production of surplus value)**. And accumulation takes place in the context of the political-territorial division of the world among the great powers and the shifting relations of strength among these powers in the world economy and **global system of territorially-based nation-states**.

Accumulation in the imperialist era has particular features. It proceeds through highly mobile and flexible forms of *monopolized finance capital*; through the *division of the world into a handful of rich capitalist powers and the oppressed nations* in which the great majority of humanity lives; and through geo-economic and geo-political rivalry concentrated in the rivalry and struggle for global supremacy among imperial national states.

The antagonism between different national imperialist capitals, and the struggle over the division over the world, chiefly grows out of, extends, and is a qualitative development of the contradiction between organization

at the enterprise level and the anarchy of social production. This antagonism led to two world wars in the 20th century. At the same time, the fundamental contradiction is also manifested in class terms. Among its key forms of expression are the contradiction between the proletariat and bourgeoisie in the imperialist countries, the contradiction between the oppressed nations and imperialism, and the contradiction between socialist countries and the imperialist camp (when socialist countries exist, which is not the case now).

One or another of these contradictions may become principal over a period of time, that is, one or another may influence the development of the others more than it in turn is influenced by them—and thus most determine how the fundamental contradiction develops at a given stage.

From the late 1950s until the early 1970s, for instance, the principal contradiction on a world scale was between imperialism and national liberation in the Third World. Revolutionary storms had swept through Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This contradiction was creating qualitative new necessity for the imperialist (and local) ruling classes and influencing the accumulation of capital on a world scale.

U.S. imperialism, in particular, was developing and applying, on a vast scale, doctrines of counterinsurgency. The Vietnamese liberation struggle was inflicting major setbacks on the battlefield; the war absorbed a huge fraction of the U.S. ground forces and spurred massive increases in U.S. military expenditure, which in turn contributed to the weakening of the dollar (and dollar-gold standard) internationally. During this period, the U.S. was promoting aid and development programs in South America, like the Alliance for Progress, the main aim of which was, in conjunction with repression, to stabilize social conditions and counteract the potential for revolution.

At any given time, the class struggle may be principal, locally (nationally) or globally. But generally, and in a long-term, overall sense, until the capitalist mode of production is no longer dominant on a world scale, the driving force of anarchy of the world imperialist system is and will be the principal form of motion of the fundamental contradiction. It is the *driving force of anarchy*—the underlying dynamics and contradictions of capitalist accumulation on a world scale, the various expressions of that, including but not only inter-imperial rivalry, and changes in the material and economic-social and, increasingly, natural-ecological conditions of life—that *sets the primary stage and foundation for the transformation of society and the world*.

And transforming society and the world on the basis of reality as it is, and not what we would like it to be, is precisely the point:

It is only *in the realm of the superstructure* that the contradiction between socialized production and private appropriation can be resolved. It is only through the conscious struggle to make revolution, to decisively defeat the bourgeoisie (and all exploiting-ruling classes) and dismantle its apparatus of control and suppression. It is only through the conscious struggle to constitute a new revolutionary state power that is a base area for the world revolution and on that basis creating a new socialist economy that operates according to different dynamics and principles than does capitalism (the law of value no longer commanding), and carrying forward the all-around struggle to transform society and people's thinking.

It is only through conscious revolution, based on a scientific approach to understanding and changing the world, that the fundamental contradiction of the bourgeois epoch can be resolved.

The historic mission of the proletariat is to abolish capitalism, to put an end to *all* exploitation and oppression, and to overcome the division of human society into classes, and to create a world community of humanity.

II. A Refusal to Come to Grips with the Nature of Capitalist Accumulation— Or Why the “Capitalist Is Capital Personified”

The identification of the “driving force of anarchy” as the principal form of motion of the fundamental contradiction has occasioned criticism and, at times, vitriolic attacks from some within the international communist movement.

One line of criticism unfolds this way: since a) the “ceaseless striving for more surplus” is of the essence of capital; and since b) this surplus rests on the exploitation of wage-labor; and since c) this exploitation calls forth resistance from the exploited—it therefore follows that the antagonism and class struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie stands at a deeper level of determination than does the anarchic interplay among capitals in the motion and development of the fundamental contradiction.

There is an apparent logic to this argument. But that is exactly the problem with the argument: its superficiality. It begs the question: *why* must capital “ceaselessly” accumulate? Is it merely the fact that there are proletarians to exploit (and opportunities to exploit)? I will come to this shortly.

Now some of the critics acknowledge the existence and force of competition but ascribe to it a secondary role. Competition is construed as something “external” to the deeper essence of capital, to the wage-capital relation. Some invoke Marx’s passage from Volume 1 of *Capital* where he references the “coercive laws of competition” but points out that “a scientific analysis of competition is not possible before we have a conception of the inner nature of capital.”⁹ And they raise the objection that the anarchy of capitalism is ultimately rooted in capitalism’s exploitative character—with some even attributing this view to Engels.

But Engels does *not* locate the anarchy of capitalist production in exploitation of wage-labor and extraction of surplus labor as such, but rather in the particular dynamics of capitalist commodity production. Let’s examine what he actually says:

[T]he capitalistic mode of production thrust its way into a society of commodity producers, of individual producers, whose social bond was the exchange of their product. But every society based upon the production of commodities has this peculiarity: that the producers have lost control over their own social interrelations.... No one knows whether his individual product will meet an actual demand, whether he will be able to make good his costs of production or even to sell his commodity at all. Anarchy reigns in socialized production.¹⁰

This general character of commodity production that Engels pinpoints takes a qualitative leap with the development of capitalism. On the one hand, commodity production becomes generalized, with the full monetization of the means of production and the transformation of labor power into a commodity. On the other, capitalist commodity production is carried out on the basis of unprecedented scale of production; the advance, and continuous advances, in technology; the dense network of interrelations among producers, now global; and the “scientific” and “rational” organization at the level of the individual unit of capital. And yet and still, the “social bond” of the individual producers, to use Engels’s phrase, remains the exchange of products—only now it is highly socialized production for exchange.

As for the argument that Marx treats competition in (secondary) relation to the “inner nature of capital,” here we must take note of an important aspect of Marx’s method in *Capital*. In Volume 1 of that work, Marx scientifically penetrates to and identifies the basic nature of capital, distinguishing capital from other forms of wealth and abstracting from the interrelations of the many capitals.

Capital is a social relation and process whose essence is the domination of labor power by alien, antagonistic interests and the reproduction and expanded reproduction of that relation. The most fundamental law of the capitalist mode of production is the law of value and production of surplus value. The most important production relation of capitalism is the relation of capital to labor. And exploitation of wage-labor is the basis of the creation and appropriation of surplus value.

This is scientifically established. But the critics want to explain anarchy on the basis of the exploitation of wage-labor, as this exploitation is foundational. This is not science. It is not proceeding from reality and the fundamental contradiction in its complexity, and the “real movement of capital,” but rather from a reductionist view of reality, a distortion of reality to serve the narrative of the primacy of the class struggle.

Which brings us back to the question: *what drives the exploitation of wage-labor?* Or to pose it differently: is there a compulsion to exploit wage-labor on a wider and more capital-intense basis? The answer is, yes, there is such compulsion, and it derives from competition.

Capital lives under the constant pressure to expand. In order to survive, it must grow: capital can only exist if more capital is being accumulated. At the concrete level, “capital-in-general” exists, and can only exist, as many capitals in competition with each other, precisely because capitalism is based on *private* appropriation. Marx explains:

Competition makes the immanent laws of capitalist production to be felt by each individual capitalist as external coercive laws. It compels him to keep constantly extending his capital, in order to preserve it, but extend it he cannot, except by means of progressive accumulation.¹¹

Competition, the “battle of competition” as Marx describes it, compels individual capitals to cheapen production costs. This mainly turns on raising the productivity of labor and extending the scale of production

and achieving what are called “economies of scale” (lower cost per unit of output) through mechanization and technological innovation, as well as organizational innovation.

The technological and organizational transformation of production demands more capital, which requires a growing mass of surplus value out of which to finance investment—thus the drive for more surplus value. The needs of accumulation are increasingly met through loan capital and the credit system, which enables capital to finance new investment and move into new lines of production—but this too is premised on an expanding pool of surplus value. In other words, for capital in its different forms, there is an underlying drive to expand, to increase capital accumulation. All of which is bound up with competition.

Those who move first to innovate are able to gain temporary advantage (extra profit), while those who fail to act and stay with the pack lose market share and position. Take the U.S. auto industry relative to the more innovative Japanese auto manufacturers from the late 1970s onward. Japanese capital was pioneering more efficient methods of production, which ultimately became generalized. This broke the monopoly of the “Big Three” auto manufacturers (in the U.S. market in particular) and forced the adoption of labor-saving technology.

The “coercive laws of competition” impose the imperative on individual capitals: “expand or die.” The reciprocal interaction of private capitals forces *the continual revolutionizing of the productive forces as a matter of internal necessity and self-preservation*. This is what accounts for the dynamism of capitalism. This is why capitalists cannot simply exploit and then just turn their wealth towards consumption—that is, if they are to remain capitalists. Because something deeper is at work: “as capitalist,” in Marx’s memorable and profoundly scientific phrase, “he is only capital personified.”¹²

This is also why capitalism does not achieve a steady-state equilibrium. As explained earlier, it is through the blind competitive interactions of individual capitals that norms of social production (efficiency, etc.) are established, and that capital is allocated into this or that sector (in response to price and profit signals). These norms of production, in turn, must be obeyed... if particular capitals are to stay competitive.

But individual capitals develop unevenly, the one overtaking the other; new lines of production open, only to be glutted; new capitals form and old ones split apart on the basis of colliding claims to surplus value produced throughout society; and new competitive hierarchies are established. New technology develops, and this opens up new arenas of investment; technology becomes a battleground around which new capitals form, split apart, or collapse. Think about the shifts that take place in the global computer and high-tech industries.

The accumulation of capital is a dynamic and disruptive process of expansion and adjustment and crisis.

More on Competition

In the *Grundrisse*, Marx explains that competition “executes” the laws of accumulation: “Competition generally, this essential locomotive force of the bourgeois economy, does not establish its laws, but is rather their executor.”¹³

What is this executor role? Competition impels growing concentration (new productive capacity, enlargement of the scale of production) and growing centralization (mergers, takeovers, etc.) of existing capitals. Competition impels increasing mechanization and specialization and complexity of social production and a rising organic composition of capital (more investment in machinery, raw materials, etc., relative to living labor), which underlie the tendency for the rate of profit to decline. The laws of accumulation driven by competition lead to the creation of a “reserve army of labor” (an important component of which are workers displaced by mechanization).

Competition involves the movement of capital from one sphere to another, in search of higher profit; it involves rivalry for market shares; it involves technical change that transforms the conditions of production.

In sum, capital necessarily exists as many capitals in competition, and *competition has determining effects*.

Competition is rooted in the private-ness of capital: in that private organization of discrete labor processes, organized around the production of profit (surplus value), but which are objectively interlinked with one another, with other privately organized labor processes. Competition and private-ness are rooted in the existence of independent sites of accumulation and discrete centers of decision-making in what is in fact an interdependent and integrated economic formation—where production is production for an anonymous market.

The very dynamism of capitalism arises from technical change embodied in the competitive process. That is the reality of capital accumulation.

Our critics are in a tight spot. They have to explain away the manifest dynamism of capitalism that arises from the expand-or-die urging that competition imposes on capital. They have to explain this dynamism by some other means in order to keep the class contradiction as the principal form of motion. So they trundle out another argument: worker resistance is actually the fount of innovation and mechanization. On this account, the capitalist invests to displace workers, to compress wages, and/or to better control a recalcitrant workforce. On this account, there is not the compulsion of competitive interaction, but rather the deliberate choice of technique and/or strategy to contain labor.

Let's return to the example of the Japanese auto industry to reveal some of the problems with this argument. The adoption of "just-in-time" production, of "responsible" work teams, the practice of keeping inventories tight (to reduce cost), and extensive robotification by Japanese capital constituted a critical transformation in modern manufacturing. But it would border on the absurd to argue that this was governed by the necessity to stave off or cut off resistance by workers; if anything, the Japanese proletariat was fairly docile at the time.

What in fact was going on in this period of the 1970s through the mid-1980s was that competition and geo-economic rivalry were intensifying in the Western imperialist bloc. Japanese imperialism, as well as German imperialism, was making competitive inroads at the expense of U.S. imperialist capital, even as this rivalry was subordinated to and conditioned by the more determining strategic global rivalry at the time: between the U.S.-led and then Soviet-led imperialist blocs for world supremacy.

Now it is certainly true that an important aspect of the "rationalization" of production, the organization of "supply chains" and forms of "subcontracting," the use of information technology, etc., serves the role of disciplining and controlling labor. But this is not what fundamentally drives innovation.

The dynamic of capitalism is not one in which the capitalist strives to maximize surplus labor according to his own desire for profit. It is not a dynamic in which the capitalist has the freedom to invest or not to invest, save for the limiting factor of resistance of the worker. In that case, the "logical" move would be for capitals to band together, agree to invest and produce at certain levels, normalize profit rates, make concessions, and achieve social peace. But that does not happen, because there is *compulsion* to invest, to expand, to win market share... on pain of ruin.

To return to Avakian's critical insight cited above: "Were it not the case that these capitalist commodity producers are separated from each other and yet linked by the operation of the law of value, they would not face the same compulsion to exploit the proletariat—the class contradiction could be mitigated."

The capitalist is subject to the "coercive laws of competition." The capitalist is compelled to cheapen costs and is the instrument of technical progress. As "capitalist, he is only capital personified."

III. The Driving Force of Anarchy, the World Created and Ravaged by Capital

The denial, by the critics, of the "driving force of anarchy" as the principal form of motion of capital makes it impossible for them to deeply and comprehensively understand major trends in the world and the stage on which communist revolution must be fought for and conducted. The "narrative" of class struggle and worker resistance not only obscures the major and unprecedented challenges before this communist revolution, but the great potential for revolutionary struggle as well. This is what I want to illustrate and explore.

A. The environmental crisis

On May 9, 2013, the Earth Systems Research Laboratory in Hawaii recorded that the carbon dioxide levels in Earth's atmosphere had reached 400 parts per million. The last time Earth supported so much carbon dioxide was some three million years ago, when there was no human life on the planet. Climate science has established that a rise in the Earth's temperature beyond two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels could lead to irreversible and devastating climate change.

The capitalist industrial revolution beginning in the 1700s, the leap to imperialism in the late 19th century, and the enormous acceleration of environmental stresses of the mid-20th century through today have created a dire environmental emergency.¹⁴

The impacts are already with us: extreme climate events (unprecedented floods, cyclones, and typhoons), droughts, desertification, Arctic ice melting to its lowest levels. Meanwhile the imperialists continue to make staggering investments in fossil fuels, with an ever-increasing share going to so-called "unconventional" oil

and gas reserves (hydro-fracking, deep offshore, tar sands, heavy crude, and shale oil, etc.). Global climate negotiations, most significantly Copenhagen 2010, go nowhere.

On the one hand, oil is foundational to the profitable functioning of the whole imperialist system. Six of the 10 largest corporations in the U.S., and eight of the 10 largest in the world, are auto and oil companies. On the other, oil is central to inter-imperial rivalry. Major capitalist firms and the major capitalist powers—the U.S., China, the countries of the EU, Russia, Japan, and others vie with each other for control over the regions where new fossil-fuel sources are to be found: in the Arctic, the South Atlantic, and elsewhere.

Rivalry among the great powers for control of production, refining, transport, and marketing of oil is in fact rivalry for control over the world economy. U.S. imperialism's military depends on oil to maintain and extend empire, to wage its neocolonial wars and to maintain its global supremacy. And, right now, one of U.S. imperialism's global competitive advantages is exactly its growing fossil-fuel capability: in 2012, the U.S. posted the largest increase in oil production in the world, and the largest single-year increase in oil output in U.S. history.

None of what is happening (and not happening) in the sphere of energy can be understood outside the framework of the drive for profit and intense competition and rivalry at the enterprise, sectoral, and national-state levels in the world economy and imperialist interstate system.

The most salient characteristic of recent climate negotiations is the fact that they have been sites of intense rivalry among the “great powers”—on the one hand, unwilling and unable to make any substantive moves away from reliance on fossil fuels; and, on the other, pressing climate-change adaptation into the tool-box of competitive positioning (the Europeans and the Chinese, for instance, having advantage in certain renewable energy technologies).

And not just energy: the major powers are engaged in sharp global competition for the planet's minerals and raw materials. It is a scramble for the reckless plunder of Earth's resources, or as one progressive scholar has called it, “the race for what's left.”

The emergence of China as the world's *second largest capitalist* economy, with its demand for resources and its growing international reach, is a major element in the ecological equation. Its growth has been fueled by the massive inflow of investment capital over the last 20 years, and that growth has been a major, if not the major, source of dynamism in the world economy. And China is now the largest emitter of carbon dioxide.

The real threat of unstoppable climate change is part of a larger environmental crisis. The planet is not only on a trajectory towards massive extinction of species but also the collapse of critical ecosystems, especially rainforests and coral reefs, with the threat of cascading effects on the Earth's global ecosystem as a whole. There is the real possibility of Earth being transformed into a very different kind of planet... one that potentially could threaten human existence. No one can predict the precise pathways and outcomes of what is happening. But this is the trajectory that we, and planet Earth, are on.

Why are tropical forests being wiped out by logging and timber operations? Why is soil being degraded and dried out by agribusiness, and oceans acidified? Why is nature turned into a “sink” for toxic waste? Because capitalism-imperialism invests, speculates, trades, and roams the globe treating nature as a *limitless input* to serve *ever-expanding production for profit*.

The short-term desideratum of expanded accumulation has long-term environmental consequences—but these are not of immediate “consequence” in the competitive battle. Individual units of capital seek to minimize costs to stay competitive, calculating with great precision (organization at the enterprise level). But the effects of production activities, like pollution, that fall outside the sphere of economic calculation of these units of private ownership do not “register” on the profit-and-loss ledger. These social and environmental costs are “externalized”: off-loaded on to society and the planet, and pushed off into the future (anarchy at the societal and planetary level).

The calamitous environmental effects of globalization have been greatest in the oppressed nations, yet caused disproportionately by the imperialist countries. Between 1961 and 2000, the rich countries generated over 40 percent of the environmental degradation around the world while shouldering only 3 percent of the costs of ecosystem change.¹⁵

When capitalist firms cut down rainforest in Indonesia for timber, and plant trees to produce palm oil for bio-fuels—a highly volatile sector of the world economy reflecting intense competition between world energy and

food markets—the carbon released into the atmosphere and the destruction of habitat of the Sumatran tigers are not part of the cost-benefit calculus of these capitals.

Now if someone is going to argue that the environmental crisis is principally the result of the class contradiction, that this crisis is the product of worker, peasant, or mass resistance, or the quest for labor-saving technology to control labor, I for one would be quite intrigued to hear someone make the case, although it strains credulity.

The inability of capitalism to interact with nature in a sustainable way... the devastation capitalism has caused nature... and the acceleration of planet-engulfing and planet-threatening environmental crisis are all rooted in the anarchic interactions of highly organized, private aggregations of capital, facing the compulsion to profitably expand or die—and rivalry at the global level.

At the same time, it is crucial to understand that the ecological crisis is impacting, and will impact, the class struggle in manifold ways. To begin with, environmental destruction is a fault-line of the global class struggle and a focal point of important mass resistance, especially in the oppressed nations, often connected with peasant and indigenous peoples' struggles, but also in the imperialist citadels.

Further, the kinds of instabilities and “environmental security crises” (as the imperialists call them) that might be set off by environmental degradation could very likely trigger massive social crisis, and could be an accelerant of revolutionary crisis.

Millions could be flooded out of densely settled delta regions like Bangladesh, prompting vast migrations. The effects of climate changes on agricultural systems, especially in the oppressed nations, will, similarly, cause enormous economic and social strains. According to some impact estimates, by the later decades of this century, 29 countries in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean and Mexico will lose 20 percent or more of their current farm output to global warming.¹⁶

And in the imperialist countries: Hurricane Katrina in the U.S. saw the intersection of global warming with the sharp oppression of Black people, and presented great necessity and opportunity to advance the movement for revolution in the “belly of the beast.” The Fukushima reactor meltdown and resulting contamination—and Japanese imperialism's vast network of nuclear power and its robust export of nuclear reactors has been one of its global competitive advantages—is also expressive of the kinds of dislocative events that will likely increase in the future.

The underlying causes and monumental implications of the environmental crisis do not register and cannot be fathomed through the narrow, economist filter of the class contradiction as the ongoing principal form of motion of the fundamental contradiction. Yet this crisis, driven overwhelmingly by the anarchy/organization contradiction, will be a major factor setting the stage on which the class struggle will unfold.

B. Urbanization and Slums

As the 21st century opened, and for the first time in human history, more than half the world's population lives in cities. For almost four decades, cities in the oppressed nations have been growing at a breakneck pace. This is chaotic and oppressive urbanization. More than a billion people live in squalid slums-shantytowns within and surrounding cities in the Third World—and this population will likely double by 2030—while an equal number eke out a desperate living in the so-called informal economy.

What is driving this urbanization? For one, leaps in the industrialization of agriculture and the transnational integration of food production and transport, with imperialist agribusiness grabbing up land and consolidating holdings, have undermined rural livelihoods based on small-scale subsistence agriculture.

Imperialism has been transforming national systems of agriculture into globalized components of transnational production and marketing chains, more detached from local populations; and, increasingly, agriculture is becoming less “foundational” to many national economies of the Third World. And the imperialist-led conversion of land previously serving food production into land serving production of ethanol and other crop-based fuels has further exacerbated these trends.

At the same time, environmental devastation, droughts, and civil wars (often fueled or taken advantage of by the great powers, as in Congo) have brought ruin to agricultural systems—and driven people into the cities.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) insisted, as a condition for loans, that governments of many poor countries eliminate subsidies to small rural landholders, and also “open up” economies to food imports from the West to expand markets and to allow for further capitalization of

agriculture. This has put incredible pressures on the rural poor, ruining livelihoods.

Vast swaths of humanity flee the poverty, devastation, and despair of the world's countryside.

Finally, China's rapid capitalist growth has siphoned hundreds of millions of peasants into the cities; this, the largest rural-to-city migration in human history, is propelled by the churning of market forces in China's countryside and the pull of jobs, often cheap-labor (sweatshop) manufacturing, in China's cities.

These phenomena are fundamentally governed by the needs, imperatives, and unforeseen consequences of accumulation on a world scale, particularly deepening imperialist penetration of the oppressed nations and globalization of production.

Urbanization and "shantytown-ization" cannot be scientifically explained as a primary consequence of the class contradiction. It's simply not true that class resistance in the countryside has propelled these social-demographic shifts. Is the argument of our critics that peasant revolts in the countryside were posing a threat to the social order such that the only way to stanch them was through the expulsion of peasant labor by means of undermining subsistence agriculture?

Is the argument that urban upheaval had brought about such levels of instability that the exploiting classes somehow have had to spur mass migrations of peasants into the cities in the hope that this might be a conservatizing and counterrevolutionary influence? This is not scientific methodology.

A brief historical aside and question: Would the partisans of this view argue that World War 1 was driven by the need to divert or re-channel the class struggle within the European countries—or was this war driven, as indeed it was, by intensifying inter-imperial rivalry and in particular contention over the colonies (even as Europe was the main theater of battle)?

The urbanization, proletarianization, and shanty-townization taking place in the oppressed nations, owing to the anarchic workings of capital, are having very contradictory effects on the masses: economically and ideologically. The uprooting of traditional ways of life in the countryside by imperialism and the instability attendant to urbanization of sections of masses who are not being incorporated into the "formal" economy have fed the growth and appeal of Islamic fundamentalism, Pentecostalism, varieties of religious millennialism, etc. These trends provide a coherent reactionary ideological and moral compass in conditions of uncertainty and dislocation.

Again, the underpinnings of what is actually happening, and the challenges this actually poses in terms of transforming society and the world, cannot be comprehended scientifically if the motion and development of the fundamental contradiction is viewed through an economist lens.

C. The Global Crisis of 2008-09

I have written on the factors propelling this crisis.¹⁷ Briefly, to identify some key dynamics of a particular trajectory of growth that turned into its opposite:

- The collapse of the Soviet-led social-imperialist bloc in 1989-91 gave new freedom to the Western imperialist powers, especially the U.S., to expand and restructure capital.¹⁸ In particular, a massive *new wave of globalization* ensued—on the level of production, trade, and finance. One of the most significant features of world growth and expansion leading up to the crisis has been the deepening integration of the world capitalist economy, central to which has been the fuller integration of the export-producing countries of the Third World into the world capitalist market, and the forging of a globally integrated, cheap-labor manufacturing economy.
- China has been at the epicenter of this process of *heightened globalization*, serving as a "workshop-sweatshop" for world capitalism in dialectical relation to which a powerful capitalist economic base is being forged. The generation of massive trade surpluses has amplified China's global reach and its role as major purchaser of U.S. Treasury debt and financier of the U.S. deficit (with the growing leverage that goes with that).
- On the platform of more globalized production and super-exploitation, the financial services sector in the advanced capitalist countries mushroomed. Growth in these countries became increasingly finance-led and credit-driven. The U.S. has been at the epicenter of this process of *heightened financialization* (with the mortgage-backed securities market a concentrated expression of this parasitism).
- The dynamic interrelationship between the U.S. and China was a decisive link in the growth of the first decade of the 21st century. Or, to put it differently, there is a profound link between the agony of super-exploited labor in the bowels of the new industrial zones of China and what was going in the stratosphere of high finance.

- These interrelated processes of globalization and financialization ultimately led to unsustainable imbalances and instabilities:
 - > bloating of the financial sector relative to the productive base in the U.S. and the more general imbalance between the financial system (and its expectation of future profits) and the accumulation of capital: the structures and actual production and reinvestment of profit based on the exploitation of wage-labor
 - > feverish expansion of credit leading to heightened financial fragility
 - > U.S. consumption and borrowing stimulating China's growth but China's breakneck manufacturing growth further fueling U.S. trade deficits and intensifying competitive pressures throughout the world economy, with productive capacity growing rapidly in China.
- U.S. imperialism has attempted since 9/11 to parlay superior military strength into forging a world order in which its global supremacy over rivals and against any obstacles to its domination (including reactionary Islamic fundamentalism) is locked into place for decades to come. But the weight of militarization, the deficit and destabilizing costs of financing this militarization, became a contributing factor to crisis.
- The crisis exploded and was focused in the financial centers of world capitalism. The financial institutions had attempted to reduce risk, and profit from risk, by dispersing more varied and complex financial instruments over a wider field of international investors—but this ultimately acted to draw investors and governments into a vortex of vulnerability and crisis.

The dynamics that spurred growth generated new barriers to the profitable accumulation of capital. In sum, the crisis is a concentrated, though highly complex and fluid, expression and outcome of the anarchy of capitalist production.

But some of the critics cannot let go of easily earned theoretical fallacies when it comes to analyzing crisis.

Some have argued that the class contradiction, particularly in the form of resistance to globalization and the IMF, has been a major driving factor behind this crisis, affecting structural adjustment plans and so forth. Indeed, there was a major wave of resistance to globalization. But a) significant as that had been in the 1990s, this opposition and struggle did not rise to a level that qualitatively impinged on the motion and development of world accumulation; and b) in fact, as sketched out above, the crisis that erupted in 2008-09 has deep determinants in the contradictions of a particular trajectory of expansion, marked by that dynamic of heightened globalization and heightened financialization.

The argument is also posited that collusion is principal among the imperial powers, this flowing from the joint need of capital to exploit labor power. But rivalry, propelled by uneven development and the shifting tectonic plates of the world economy, has been a major feature of contemporary imperial interrelations. This rivalry has mainly expressed itself economically and geo-economically, and not so much in the military realm.

This crisis broke out in the context of major shifts in the competitive relations and strengths among the great powers, among which: the “rise of China” and its transition towards becoming an imperialist power, with its influence reaching beyond East Asia to the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa and its growth now influencing the international division of labor; European Union market enlargement and regional currency integration providing a framework for advantage in scale and efficiency for globalized West European capital, and for pressing a monetary challenge to the dominance of the dollar; and a re-assertive Russian imperialism.

The crisis has in turn had repercussions not just for the stability of the world imperialist system but for ongoing power shifts and rivalries within it. Two of the more salient: the crisis has exacerbated contradictions between the U.S. and China, with the U.S. more aggressively seeking to counter China's rise and growing reach; and the crisis has posed new difficulties for the EU imperial project.

IV. The Stakes: A System That Cannot Be Reformed... The Revolution That Is Needed

In *Birds Cannot Give Birth to Crocodiles, But Humanity Can Soar Beyond the Horizon*, Bob Avakian makes the point:

[W]e may not like all this, but that's where we are. We may not like the fact that capitalism and its dynamics are still dominant in the world, overwhelmingly so at this time, and set the stage for the struggle we have to wage—we may not like this, but that's the reality. And in that reality is the basis for radically

changing things. It's in confronting and struggling to change that reality, and not through some other means. It's through understanding and then acting to transform that reality along pathways that the contradictory character of that reality does open up—pathways which must be seized on and acted on to carry out that transformation of reality.¹⁹

Avakian is not only commenting on the work of analyzing the dynamics of capitalism and how the contradictions in the world assert themselves and interact, and grasping why the “driving force of anarchy” is indeed the principal dynamic of capitalism. He is also focusing up a fundamental issue of science, of communism as a science: “whether” as he writes, “you proceed from objective reality and recognize the basis, within the contradictory dynamics of that reality, for radical change—or whether you're just proceeding from a set of ideas, including an idealized vision of the masses, which you are trying to impose on reality...”²⁰

In coming to grips with capitalism-imperialism and its functioning, we are dealing with its necessity—with particular laws of operation and laws of motion. These laws are independent of the will of individuals and independent of the will of a class, even one (the capitalist-imperialists) that possesses the greatest arsenal of repression and force in history.

Capitalism is not a system based on greed, or the “will to exploit.” It is not a system based on the profit motive as “first principle”—squeeze what you can from the workers. It is a mode of production based on the exploitation of wage-labor and driven by the inner necessity to expand. Not to grasp this is to objectively deny the need for revolution—if this system is not governed by necessity, by underlying laws and imperatives of accumulation, then perhaps... perhaps it can be reformed.

These laws and in particular the compelling force of anarchy do not, contrary to the charges of the critics, “liquidate” the class struggle. Rather, and to reiterate: this is what sets the primary stage for what has to be done to transform society and the world. If that is grasped, then it becomes possible, as Avakian emphasizes, to discover the pathways for radically transforming this reality. It becomes possible to seize and carve out freedom, because this mode of production and its laws are dynamic, are contradictory. And this opens up vast possibilities for the conscious factor, to act, on the basis of scientifically understanding reality—in its complexity and changing-ness.

There are diverse channels for change and for sudden eruptions. This scientific orientation is critical in building the movement for revolution, for a revolution that is *total in its scope*, and for recognizing and acting on the need and potential for that revolution—and the challenges before it. The environmental crisis is momentous in this regard.

There are the challenges posed by how the fundamental contradiction between socialized production and private appropriation *actually* develops. The growth of Islamic and other fundamentalisms at the same time that the productive forces have grown more socialized and the world more intertwined is a case in point. This “perverse” working out of the fundamental contradiction illustrates that its motion and development is not a linear process of modernization, proletarianization, and secularization. Rather, it is a complex process of changes in class and social configuration, of ideology and social movements interpenetrating with economic transformation, with need for a liberating morality and the question of uprooting patriarchy getting profoundly posed.

We are living in a period of transition with the potential for great upheaval: global capitalism in flux, heightening inequality and dislocation, environmental degradation, the horrors visited upon women, half of humanity. Capitalism in the imperialist era is a mode of production that is at once in transition to something higher and violently straining against its limits.

Are we going to invent realities and verities, and construct narratives that the class struggle is always principal, in order to console ourselves and ward off the real challenges? Or are we going to confront reality in order to transform it?

What is at stake is a materialist understanding of the world, of what must be changed in people's thinking and society, and how. Anything other than a truly scientific approach is going to leave the world as it is. What is at stake is the communist revolution that humanity needs: to resolve the fundamental contradiction of the epoch and to emancipate humanity and safeguard the planet. ■

Footnotes

1. For background, see *Communism: The Beginning of a New Stage, A Manifesto from the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA* (Chicago: RCP Publications, 2009), especially sections III-V.
2. Bob Avakian, *Birds Cannot Give Birth to Crocodiles but Humanity Can Soar Beyond the Horizon* (hereafter referred to as *Birds Cannot Give Birth to Crocodiles*).
3. As capitalism emerged and developed, a vast global peasantry continued to play an important part in world production, and was quantitatively dominant, but pre-capitalist relations of production became increasingly subsumed by, subordinated to, and penetrated by capitalism.
4. Frederick Engels, *Anti-Duhring*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), pp. 316-324.
5. Karl Marx, "Wage-Labor and Capital," in Marx-Engels, *Selected Works I* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973), p. 157.
6. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1 (New York: International Publishers, 1967), p. 555.
7. See Bob Avakian, "Fundamental and Principal Contradictions on A World Scale" *Revolutionary Worker*, September 17, 1982.
8. Raymond Lotta, *America in Decline* (Chicago: Banner Press, 1984), pp. 40-56.
9. Marx, *Capital*, 1, p. 300.
10. Engels, *Anti-Duhring*, p. 322.
11. Marx, *Capital* 1, p. 555.
12. Marx, *Capital* 1, p. 224.
13. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse* (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p. 552.
14. See the special issue of *Revolution*, "State of EMERGENCY: The Plunder of Our Planet, the Environmental Catastrophe, and the Real Revolutionary Solution," April 18, 2010.
15. R. Kerry Turner & Brendan Fisher, "Environmental economics: To the rich man the spoils," *Nature* 451, 28 February 2008, pp. 1067-1068.
16. William Cline. 2007. *Global Warming and Agriculture: Impact Estimates by Country* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Global Development and Peterson Institute for International Economics).
17. See, for instance, Raymond Lotta, "Shifts and Faultlines in the World Economy and Great Power Rivalry: What Is Happening and What It Might Mean," *Revolution*, July 24, 27, August 3, August 24 (2008), especially Part 1; and Raymond Lotta, "Financial Hurricane Batters World Capitalism System Failure and the Need for Revolution," *Revolution*, October 19, 2008.
18. The reader is encouraged to study the discussion in *Notes on Political Economy: Our Analysis of the 1980s, Issues of Methodology, and The Current World Situation* (Chicago: RCP Publications, 2000), Part 1, pp. 7-30, where the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA identifies problems in the analysis it made in the 1980s of the motion of the U.S.-led and Soviet-led imperialist blocs towards world war. Methodological lessons are drawn out as part of a deepening grasp of the scientific method.
19. Avakian, *Birds Cannot Give Birth to Crocodiles*.
20. Avakian, *Birds Cannot Give Birth to Crocodiles*.