ist government to make **restitution** for the havoc it has caused. It makes clear that a financial obligation on the part of the imperialist government arises not as an act of generosity, but as a debt which it has incurred in the course of subjugating an oppressed country.

Raising the slogan of **reparations** in the anti-imperialist movement at the same time calls the attention of the masses of people in this country to the urgent need of the Nicaraguan government to reconstruct economically, industrially, and socially the war-torn country which the U.S. puppet regime left as a legacy.

Aftermath of U.S. attack on Viet Nam in mid-1960s. The U.S. government owes reparations for damages to countries like Viet Nam, Laos, Kampuchea, and Nicaragua. Working-class internationalism and solidarity with the oppressed can best be promoted by demanding reparations rather then "foreign aid."

Differentiates position from liberal bourgeoisie

In raising the slogan of reparations, as against aid, the anti-imperialist movement must differentiate its position from that of the liberal bourgeoisie. The latter is primarily concerned with the effectiveness of U.S. aid for purposes of strengthening the position of U.S. imperialism in the oppressed country.

The debate in the ruling class always rotates around the axis of what is a sound policy for them, whether the methods are appropriate, and so on. Frequently, such high-sounding words as "moral," "compassionate," and "humane," are used to sugar-coat, and make more acceptable, a liberal bourgeois policy, the aims of which do not differ from that of the most reactionary except in words.

The policy of the anti-imperialist movement, on the other hand, must be aimed at weakening and undermining the imperialist position in the oppressed country.

Can it best effectuate working-class internationalism, for instance, by demanding of the U.S. government that it extend aid to the Nicaraguan government? Or would it best serve both the interests of the working class in this country as well as the Nicaraguan people by demanding reparations?

The difference is not at all of a semantic character. The first slogan implies that the imperialist government is a gratuitous donor, that it actually assists a revolutionary government, and that its imperialist interests are consistent with disinterested aid to a revolutionary government. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Imperialist aid is a cover for imperialist penetration. Reparations is a form of repayment for damage done.

Should expose 'strings'

It should be understood, however, that even a most revolutionary government of an oppressed country is frequently forced, by virtue of circumstances, to accept aid from an imperialist country. It is also frequently impossible for a besieged revolutionary government in an oppressed country to obtain the aid without conditions imposed by the imperialist government. Occasionally, some naive revolutionary militants in the metropolitan imperialist country, in frustration, tend to turn against the revolutionary government. This is wrong.

What is necessary is for the working class in the metropolitan imperialist countries to expose the avaricious and predatory character of the so-called strings, which are a means for recouping the lost imperialist position. In carrying out such necessary exposure, the working class in the metropolitan imperialist country is at one with the revolutionary position of the oppressed country in their common perspective of intransigent struggle against imperialism.

Fundamental difference

Naturally, the revolutionary Nicaraguan government would have preferred for the U.S. imperialist government to have assumed the $2½ billion debt on behalf of the banks and cancelled it. That would have freed the Sandinist government to obtain credit in the world market and would have obviated the need to accept U.S. aid in the form in which the U.S. Congress conditioned it.

Nicaragua is only one example of where the U.S. government owes reparations for damage done. The case for Viet Nam, Kampuchea, Laos, Angola, Mozambique, and others is clear once the U.S. role is fully exposed. The damage done to Viet Nam is so enormous that even with the full assistance of the USSR and other socialist countries it will take years to recover.

All the more necessary is it for the anti-imperialist movement in the U.S., and for the working-class vanguard in particular, to clarify the difference between imperialist aid, which is an **imposition by** the imperialist government, and reparations, which are an **imposition upon** an imperialist government. The difference is fundamental.

February 1, 1981

Workers World Vol. 23 No. 9, February 27, 1981

For a united anti-war mobilization

Nothing so much underscores the dangerous foreign policy shift of the new administration as the crude, cynical, and downright provocative symbolism employed by Reagan to stir up anew the jingoism and war hysteria which was an invariable concomitant to the discredited U.S. launching of the war in Viet Nam.

Reagan's explanation for Viet Nam

For instance, only yesterday Reagan took great pains to go to a ceremony at the Pentagon where a medal of honor was presented to a Viet Nam war veteran. Reagan went to this ceremony not just to praise "the bravery of the American soldiers in the Viet Nam war." He went so as to once again bring up what he had so often brought up before: "The U.S. withdrew from Viet Nam," he said, "not because they [U.S. soldiers] had been defeated but because they had been denied permission to win."

There you have it. The Viet Nam war was lost because no permission was given to win. Permission to do what?

The U.S. military colossus did **everything**, from destroying defenseless villages, bombing everything in sight, vandalizing and wrecking the environment—everything, including near genocide. Only one thing was not done—unleashing a nuclear holocaust. (But, as Lady Bird Johnson said in that famous article in *Heritage* magazine last year, the military was pressuring Johnson to do it, which the latter presumably declined, also declining to run for President again rather than assume that responsibility.)

Coincides with threats to El Salvador

All this, however, could be dismissed as mere threats, except that it happened to come on the same day that the U.S. revealed that it was not merely sending more advisers, helicopters, and gunships to El Salvador, but was actually proceeding with dispatching naval advisers and involving U.S. naval personnel in setting up a patrol off the Salvadoran Pacific coast. "It so happens," explains today's *Washington Post*, "that the U.S. Navy has a fleet of about 41 warships, including an aircraft carrier, around the Caribbean."

So Admiral Zumwalt was right when, in answer to a question a few years back about why the U.S. needs aircraft carriers when they cannot be effective against a vast land power like the Soviet Union, he replied that aircraft carriers are destined for the Third World.

"These vessels and aircraft," continues the *Washington Post*, "clearly could be used for some kind of blockade of Cuba, if that were planned, or to enforce some kind of U.S. threat to take action against vessels that cross a certain line off the El Salvador coast." It is clear from this that they are contemplating not only a blockade of Cuba but also a quarantine against all other ships which dare "to cross a certain line" set by Wall Street imperialism and the military-industrial complex.

In a word, the Reaganite unbridled military chieftains are ready to declare virtually all of the Western Hemisphere off limits to any but the U.S. multi-national corporations and their choice allies.

Build a broad, mass anti-war movement!

From this it should be clear that nothing is more important than to rally the broadest and widest coalition in a struggle against the emerging imperialist adventures by the Reagan administration.

The immediate and most visible target of the Pentagon is unquestionably El Salvador. By now the whole world knows this. Yet the forces that are truly capable of thwarting the plans of the military-industrial complex and the generals, admirals, and

WW photo: G. Dunkel

Because of the objective economic conditions, it is today not only possible but completely realistic to build an anti-war movement that is a true alliance of the working class, the oppressed people, and all other progressive elements in capitalist society.