

conditionalities imposed upon Bosnia: the governor of the new Central Bank must be nominated by the IMF and “cannot be a Bosnian national,” he must be a foreigner. As if the assault against Bosnia’s national sovereignty were not enough, the “Country Director” stated publicly, she had just came back from a negotiating mission “both in Sarajevo and Pale.” . . .

The country that the Bank is blackmailing is, according to the Bank’s own report, one in which “the war has destroyed much of the infrastructure and disrupted the economic system.”

“The annual per capita income has fallen to about \$500 (compared to \$1,900 in 1990) and industrial output in 1990 was 5% of 1990 output,” says the Bank. Ninety percent of the population depends on humanitarian food aid. Water supply, power generation, roads, central telecommunication facilities have been “extensively damaged.” Seventy-eight percent of electrical generating capacity is damaged or out of operation. “Virtually all parts of the transportation system have been damaged.” Fifty-nine main bridges are lost, and 63% of all housing units have been seriously damaged, 18% destroyed altogether.

Out of a population of 4.5 million, 250,000 have been killed, 200,000 wounded, 13,000 permanently disabled, mostly young people. Water and sewerage systems are in such disrepair as to represent a health hazard. The number of hospital beds has fallen by 35%, infant mortality has doubled. Some 14,000 children have lost both parents, 24,000 have lost one parent. A state of psychological trauma is very common for children that often have seen their parents killed, tortured, or raped. Around 1 million people—almost one-fourth of the population—are refugees. Workers, especially those employed by the State administration, have not been paid wages for years.

In the face of this suffering and destruction, the World Bank warned the government to save the money it has *in order to pay the debt*, not to help the population. “Every effort should be made to limit the Government’s use of domestic banking funds,” says the Bank, which also calls for “rapid privatization of the idle assets of State enterprise,” a measure that brought misery and corruption in many countries of the former Soviet empire, countries that had not gone through four years of war and genocide. Finally the Bank’s specialists call for the “efficient deployment of scarce resources to help the poor.”

Efficient means here, as little as possible. In fact, “a bloated social assistance budget would undermine fiscal prudence needed for stability” and “inappropriate targeting and excessive amounts of social assistance would discourage work and enterprise restructuring, and inappropriate foreign aid distribution mechanisms would impair domestic production recovery.”

In the midst of this destroyed country, the World Bank even has the nerve to demand that “emergency food aid be phased out.”

Economic human rights assaulted in the U.S.

by Richard Freeman

While the Principals Committee has justified air war in the Balkans on the basis of “protecting human rights,” economic policies of harsh austerity and outright neglect now pursued in the United States are putting tens of millions of American lives at risk. Anything more than rhetorical concern about human rights, would start by overturning these, and the International Monetary Fund’s genocidal policies.

Here are discussed three long-standing human rights violations in America:

First, as **Table 1** demonstrates, the number of Americans not covered by health insurance is steadily increasing. Were something serious to happen to these individuals, because of the pro-genocide environment set up by health maintenance organizations, there is a growing danger that hospitals would not admit them.

The level of income is the major barometer of whether one has health insurance or not. Despite Medicaid, the Federal program which provides medical coverage for the poor, 11.2 million people, 31.6% of all poor Americans, have no medical insurance. As well, 25.4% of all persons who live in a household with income less than \$25,000 per year, have no medical insurance. By contrast, only 8.1% of all persons who live in a household with income of \$75,000 or more have no medical insurance.

In six U.S. states, at least 20% of the population is not covered by medical insurance: Mississippi, 20.1%; California, 21.5%; New Mexico, 22.6%; Arkansas, 24.4%; Arizona, 24.5%; and Texas (of Gov. George W. Bush), 24.5%.

Second violation: poverty

A second major violation of human rights is the large

TABLE 1
Americans without health insurance, 1987-97

	Americans without insurance (millions)	Percent of total population
1987	31.026	12.9
1990	34.719	13.9
1993	39.713	15.3
1995	40.582	15.4
1996	41.716	15.6
1997	43.448	16.1

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

number of Americans who are compelled to live below the poverty level. In the United States, 35.8 million people are *officially* living in grinding poverty, representing 13.3% of the population, or 1 out of every 6.5 Americans. This is not a recent development, but one of a quarter-century's standing, which should have long been corrected. These are people whom the bankers have dumped on the human scrap heap. In most cases, they are unable to afford the basic essentials—shelter, food, clothing—let alone the market basket of goods needed to produce creative, productive human beings.

As **Table 2** shows, the situation is worse today, in terms of the percentage of the population living below the poverty level, than in 1975. However, the official poverty level, as a measure of poverty, is a joke. The Census Bureau calculates the poverty level by the following method: It determines the bare food subsistence that a human being can live on, which is called the “thrifty food plan.” For example, under this plan, a lunch might include some broth, two slices of bread, two slices of cheese, and an apple. This expense is then adjusted by a multiplier, to get the total expense that a poor person can live on, and then multiplied by the number of people in a family. By this method, the Bureau of the Census has defined poverty for a family of four as an income of \$16,400 per year or less (there is a poverty level for a family of three, for a family of five, etc.).

EIR has shown that a more accurate poverty level would be what the Census Bureau classifies as “150% times the poverty level,” or an income for a family of four of \$24,600 per year. But even this is not even half of what it actually costs to maintain a family of four in the United States—approximately \$60,000 (pre-taxes) per year. **Table 3** shows the result.

Using this more accurate standard, more than 60 million Americans are below the poverty level, which represents 22.5% of the population. These are Americans who are not earning enough to get by.

Further, the Bureau of the Census publishes information on those people whose income is *only one-half the official poverty level*. This means that a family of four is living on \$8,200 per year or less (**Table 4**). The percentage of Americans living in extreme poverty is 1.5 times greater than it was in 1975.

TABLE 2
Official poverty in the United States, 1975-97

	Population (millions)	Number in poverty (millions)	Percent of total population
1975	210.9	25.9	12.3
1980	225.0	29.3	13.0
1985	236.6	33.1	14.0
1990	248.6	33.6	13.5
1995	263.7	36.4	13.8
1997	267.5	35.8	13.3

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

TABLE 3
Real poverty in the United States: 150% of official poverty level

	Population (millions)	Number in poverty (millions)	Percent of total population
1975	210.9	49.1	23.7
1980	225.0	52.0	23.1
1985	236.6	57.0	23.9
1990	248.6	56.7	22.7
1995	263.7	64.1	24.3
1997	267.5	60.3	22.5

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

TABLE 4
Extreme poverty: Americans living below 50% of official poverty line

	Number in poverty (millions)	Percent of total population
1975	7.47	3.5
1980	9.80	4.4
1985	12.38	5.2
1990	12.91	5.2
1995	13.89	5.3
1997	14.59	5.4

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

Cutting Social Security

A third violation of human rights is the attempt to “reform” the Social Security system. This “reform” not only includes the attempt to put a portion of the Social Security system into propping up the stock market bubble, but also includes—such as in the plan put forward in the State of the Union address by President Clinton—increasing the Social Security retirement age to 68 to 70 years of age (from the current retirement age of 65); cutting benefits, by lowering the cost-of-living adjustment; and other schemes.

Currently, there are 31.7 million Americans age 65 or older who receive Social Security, and another 12.1 million under the age of 65 who receive various Social Security benefits, for a total of 43.8 million Americans. Social Security accounts for more than half of the income received by 80% of older Americans (the average monthly Social Security benefit is only \$740). To chisel the Social Security benefits of the elderly, or put them into the stock market, threatens the survival of the elderly.

Without economic existence, there can be no human rights. These are three examples of systematic violations of human rights that threaten the lives of tens of millions of Americans. When will the British-American-Commonwealth faction and the Principals Committee be called to account for these violations?