

# Black History and the Class Struggle No. 8

## South Africa and Permanent Revolution



Paul Velasco/Afrapix-Impact Visuals

# Introduction

The release of Nelson Mandela from the prison hellholes where he had spent 27 years was greeted by black militants and anti-racist fighters in South Africa and throughout the world as a symbol of the impending collapse of the brutal rule of the apartheid system. But even as the masses of black South Africans in the urban shantytowns and in the impoverished townships were cheering his release and raising anew their demands for "Amandla," the debates were raging with renewed intensity among participants in South Africa's long and bitter freedom struggle: how at last to wrest the real power from the apartheid butchers and open the road to the liberation of the oppressed millions? To intersect the concerns of these militants, as well as those outside South Africa who have followed their struggles with sympathy, in particular black Americans who have seen in South Africa an intensified mirror of their own oppression by the racist capitalist ruling class of this country, we are devoting our 1991 edition of *Black History and the Class Struggle* to a collection of our articles on the fight against apartheid.

The title article appeared originally as a two-part series in *Workers Vanguard* last winter, along with the accompanying article on the strike at Mercedes-Benz. This material presents the characteristic revolutionary outlook of the Spartacist League/International Communist League, as well as

serving as a summary of the recent period of struggle. We follow with "South Africa: Razor's Edge," a major article from our press during the critical 1984-86 years of the township revolts. Here we laid out the stakes in the anti-apartheid struggle and discussed some important aspects of the history and social structure of South Africa which have shaped the confrontation between the racist police state and the masses of black working people.

The subsequent articles, reprinted in chronological order, have been selected not only to cover particular junctures in the South African struggle, but to highlight issues and themes of particular importance: history and economics, enforced segregation and the "immorality" laws which criminalized "race-mixing," the emergence of the powerful black union movement, the role of U.S. imperialism. We hope that our readers will find these materials informative and compelling in presenting our Trotskyist program of "permanent revolution" in South Africa: for a thoroughgoing social revolution under the leadership of the working class to smash apartheid and carry through the democratic and socialist transformation of society.

In particular, this pamphlet seeks to address directly some of the main questions being debated by activists in South Africa and their supporters abroad. These debates, which have raged within the African Na-

tional Congress and other anti-apartheid organizations under the underground conditions forced upon them by totalitarian repression, have now burst forth more openly: the effect of the "divestment"/sanctions strategy; the refurbished schemes for "power sharing"; the question of the role of the working class; the debate over the notion of "two-stage" revolution; the implications for communists worldwide of the deepening collapse of Stalinism in the USSR and Eastern Europe. A clear understanding of these questions is crucial for creating an authentic revolutionary leadership capable of smashing apartheid at its root and bringing the working class to power.

In selecting these articles from among the many dozens which have appeared in the Spartacist League's press, we have had to omit many topical articles which would give a more complete picture of our concerns throughout this turbulent period. In particular, numerous articles protesting the brutal repression and calling for defense of South African anti-apartheid activists and workers leaders have been omitted.

Today, South Africa is in the news again as promises are put forward by the regime, supported by the "moderate" ANC, talking of a new, "post-apartheid South Africa." Yet there can be no equality and no freedom for the masses who labor in the mines  
(continued on page 42)

## Table of Contents

— Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* Nos. 515 and 516, 30 November and 14 December 1990

ANC, Communist Party Seek to Repackage Apartheid  
**South Africa and Permanent Revolution** ..... 3

— Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 515, 30 November 1990

Mercedes-Benz South Africa  
**Sit-Down Strikers Raise Red Flag,  
CP Sells Them Out** ..... 14

— Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 376, 5 April 1985

Nationalism Is a Deathtrap for Black Masses—Build a Proletarian Party to Smash Apartheid!  
**South Africa: Razor's Edge** ..... 16

— Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 375, 22 March 1985

**Black Masses Battle Apartheid Repression** ..... 21

— Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 380, 31 May 1985

**Interracial Sex Ban Jolted in South Africa** ..... 24

— Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 387, 20 September 1985

**Wall Street and the Apartheid State** ..... 28

— Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 406, 20 June 1986

Massive Black Strike Under Apartheid Reign of Terror  
**South Africa Showdown** ..... 32

— Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 486, 29 September 1989

**Black Workers Strike Against "Divestment"  
Union-Busting** ..... 35

— Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 496, 23 February 1990

Mandela Released—Black South Africa Jubilant, Defiant  
**Smash Apartheid—Black Workers  
Must Take Power!** ..... 36

— Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 504, 15 June 1990

South African CP Leader Joe Slovo:  
**From "Uncle Joe" Stalin to Gorbys** ..... 40

By Mumia Abu-Jamal  
**From Darkness Into Light** ..... 42

— Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 504, 15 June 1990

Nelson Mandela in America  
**Smash Apartheid! For Workers Revolution!** ..... 43

adapted from *Workers Vanguard* Nos. 515 and 516, 30 November and 14 December 1990

## ANC, Communist Party Seek to Repackage Apartheid

# South Africa and Permanent Revolution

Nine months after the release of African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela from apartheid prison, South Africa is at a decisive turning point. The imperialist media talk of "power sharing" between the white minority regime headed by Nationalist prime minister F. W. De Klerk and the ANC as leader of the oppressed black, coloured (mixed-race) and Indian populations which constitute more than six-sevenths of the total. The *Economist* (3 November) publishes a special survey of South Africa titled, "After Apartheid." But while the name may change, what's being talked about is reforming and sprucing up the racist system. As constitutional commissions deliberate, there is bitter anger in black townships and factories against the murderous apartheid repression, and mounting disaffection with the ANC leaders accused of falling for De Klerk's honeyed words. Where is freedom, they demand, as the death tolls climb.

There can be no end to the system of apartheid slavery short of socialist revolution. Superexploitation of black labor is the bedrock on which South African capitalism has been built, and with it the whole edifice of white supremacy. Anything even approaching a minimum of *bourgeois* democracy (such as "one person, one vote") is incompatible with the continued existence of that social system. Fighting for the land which has been stolen from them, for the mines and factories which produce enormous wealth from their toil, South Africa's black masses sense this basic fact.

But as the decisive hour approaches,



Mattala/COSATU

**Combative unionists demonstrate for Workers Charter, October 1990. Black proletariat must fight for its own class power!**

the ANC leaders and the South African Communist Party are the greatest obstacles to black freedom, chaining the oppressed populations to the apartheid masters in a "popular front" alliance with De Klerk and the "verligte" (enlightened) capitalists. And now virtually

every leftist and anti-apartheid organization seems to be falling into line behind this betrayal. *Desperately needed is a revolutionary leadership which can lead the oppressed masses in the factories, the townships and the bantustans in forging organs of dual power in the*

# Smash Apartheid—Workers to Power!

**fight for a black-centered workers government in South Africa.**

As a wave of shadowy terror swept through the Transvaal, leaving over 500 dead in a two-week period in August, Mandela "urged the government to use the full force of its security apparatus to end the violence" (*Johannesburg Star*, 12 September). "Mandela wants an iron fist. We're going to give an iron fist," said Major General Gerrit Erasmus, police commissioner in the Witwatersrand. "Operation Iron Fist" imposed virtual martial law on 27 black townships, surrounding them with razor wire and brutal police occupation. With the lid clamped on, De Klerk traveled to Washington where he stood at the Reflecting Pool with George Bush and obscenely declared solidarity with Martin Luther King's "dream."

In May the ANC and the Nationalist government held "talks about talks" at Groote Schuur. In August, Mandela signed the "Pretoria Minute" with De Klerk, agreeing to give up armed struggle in exchange for release of political prisoners. It was a one-sided "peace": black townships were drenched in blood in the mysterious "Reef Wars," as Inkatha terrorists of KwaZulu bantustan satrap Mangosuthu Buthelezi and their police protectors roamed with impunity. As for political prisoners, the government claimed there were a grand total of 40-50, while the families of over 3,000 jailed anti-apartheid fighters have yet to see their loved ones.

Meanwhile, to reassure the capitalist rulers, the ANC backed off its long-held position for nationalization of the gold and diamond mines—the heart of South Africa's economy. But this is not enough



**CP leader Joe Slovo and Nelson Mandela campaign for "power-sharing" with masters of apartheid.**

for the capitalists. The *Economist* complains, "miners attend union meetings in military uniforms, armed with imitation AK-47s.... Production is disrupted by stayaways that have nothing to do with wage claims and everything to do with 'the struggle'." They worry about the Communist Party (SACP). But to show their commitment to a "post-apartheid" capitalist state, the ANC, SACP and their allies in COSATU (Congress of South Africa Trade Unions) have denounced militant sit-down strikes, sacrificing hundreds of unionists and pledging to protect company profits (see accompanying article on the Mercedes-Benz strike).

Last February, Mandela's first speeches after his release from Pollsmoor prison reiterated ANC commitment to "armed struggle" and the alliance with the SACP. We noted, "The morning

after, there was consternation in corporate boardrooms when Mandela reaffirmed the ANC's call for nationalization of the mines. The Johannesburg gold market sank to the floor" (*WV* No. 496, 23 February). The ANC has long advocated a "mixed economy" and some form of negotiated settlement with the white-supremacist regime. The famous phrase in the 1955 "Freedom Charter," that "mineral wealth beneath the soil... shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole," is purposely vague. The Jo'burg bankers and industrialists want the ANC to spell out its commitments.

In May, Mandela told a conference of *verligte* capitalists organized by Anglo American mining magnate Gavin Relly "a secret": "the view that the only words in the economic vocabulary that the ANC knows are nationalisation and redistribution is mistaken." In September Mandela told the *Financial Mail* that he has "never advocated socialism at all" and that he favors "the flourishing of capitalism among Africans." And at the beginning of October the ANC issued a revised economic policy statement saying that only state-owned industries, like utility companies, which the government is trying to privatize, "will be subject to immediate re-nationalization."

As the bosses decry "mayhem" and the country lurches chaotically, the black unions and anti-apartheid organizations are thrown into crisis, with raging internal debates over "which way forward." In the pages of the *Weekly Mail*, *Work in Progress*, *South African Labour Bulletin* and even the SACP's *African Communist*, articles and readers' letters abound on the key question of Stalinism vs. Trotskyism. This is no abstract debate: the issue is reform or revolution



**Cape Town police shoot at anti-apartheid demonstrators who came to greet Mandela on the day of his release.**

and the stakes are enormous. As Stalinist regimes collapse all across East Europe under the weight of their own contradictions and in the face of the imperialist onslaught, we have noted that the South African masses don't believe in the "death of Communism." Yet Stalinism in its death agony has one last gasp—trying to hold on in South Africa long enough to betray one more revolution to the bourgeoisie.

South Africa today expresses the quintessence of Trotsky's program of *permanent revolution* in which the most basic democratic demands—"one person, one vote," land to the tiller, ending slave-like oppression in the mining compounds and bantustans—can only be solved when the working class comes to power. Never before has the combative black working class been better organized. Yet the Stalinists of the South African Communist Party, playing out their historic role, try to contain this fight within the bounds of a "national-democratic" capitalist state. The urgent task is forging a Trotskyist party to lead the struggle for workers revolution.

### Behind the "Reef War"

While the ANC called off the "armed struggle," right-wing forces took this as a signal to launch a killing spree. The hideous murders have thus far taken more than 1,000 lives, and are sporadically continuing. The Western press tries to reduce this to "ancient tribal rivalries" between Zulu and Xhosa, playing up images of savagery, while liberals talk politely of "inter-ethnic conflict" and wring their hands about "black-on-black violence." But this slaughter grows out of a terror campaign by Buthelezi's Inkatha, whose gangs of thugs have murdered more than 4,000 people in Natal province during the last five years and have now extended their operations to the Vaal Reef. Seeking to scuttle, or at least reshape ANC-government negotiations, various elements of the apartheid regime and its puppets have conspired to touch off a tribal war, and have to some extent succeeded.

The theory of age-old "inter-tribal violence" is belied by the fact that the terror in Natal has pitted Inkatha Zulu *impis* (squads) against other Zulus who support the pro-ANC United Democratic Front. Furthermore, a recent book on the Xhosa, *The Dead Will Arise* by Professor Jeff Peires, chairman of the history department of Transkei University, notes that there was only one recorded clash between the Zulus and the Xhosas—in 1827, and even that was a minor skirmish which ended with the latter

pledging fealty to Zulu King Shaka. The very real tribal tensions in South Africa today are more the product of apartheid's "divide-and-rule" schemes, carving the black African population up into myriad bantustans and deliberately using migrant labor which is segregated off in men-only hostels to work the mines and other key industries.

There are curious patterns to the terror. For instance, its timing, breaking out precisely *one day* after the signing of the Pretoria Minute on August 6. Another is the seeming inability of the massive South African intelligence apparatus to find the perpetrators. Black miners leader Cyril Ramaphosa, speaking at Howard University on September 26, noted that in two months of right-wing terror throughout the Transvaal, the police made exactly one arrest. And that was when a township defense squad caught an Inkatha terrorist in the act of burning a house in Soweto and turned him over to the cops.

Allister Sparks in the *Washington Post* (22 September) described the military precision of the single most blood-curdling incident, the slaughter of commuters aboard a rush-hour train between

Johannesburg and Soweto on September 13. Masked attackers boarded the train at a Jo'burg station but made no move until after its next stop, when it became a partial express passing through two other stations, giving them ten minutes to carry out their gory attack:

"They ran through coaches, shooting and hacking at passengers, hurling dozens through exit doors to fall in a tangle of broken limbs down steep embankments. "At Benrose station, another gang was waiting on the platform. When the doors opened and the panic-stricken passengers spilled out, this second gang attacked, shooting and slashing at more people with long machetes. In all, 26 people were killed and more than 100 injured. "None of the attackers said a word throughout the carnage, leading to speculation that they were not South Africans."

Sparks cited reports that some Inkatha squads were trained alongside Mozambican "Renamo" mercenaries at camps operated by the South African army. The TV show *South Africa Now* raised similar suggestions in a 3 October report on "The Hidden Hand" behind the violence: "A Renamo speciality has been attacking transportation lines in Mozambique, very much the modus operandi of similar massacres on commuter trains outside

## International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

Correspondence for:	Address to:
<b>Spartacist League of Australia</b> .....	Spartacist League, GPO Box 3473 Sydney, NSW, 2001, Australia
<b>Spartacist League/Britain</b> .....	Spartacist Publications, PO Box 1041 London NW5 3EU, England
<b>Trotskyist League of Canada</b> .....	Trotskyist League, Box 7198, Station A Toronto, Ontario, M5W 1X8, Canada
<b>Spartakist-Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands</b> ....	SpAD, Postfach 51 06 55 1000 Berlin 51, Germany Verlag Avantgarde, Postfach 11 02 31 2000 Hamburg 11, Germany
<b>Ligue Trotskyste de France</b> .....	Le Bolchévik, BP 135-10 75463 Paris Cedex 10, France
<b>Spartacist Group India/Lanka</b> .....	write to Spartacist, New York
<b>Dublin Spartacist Youth Group</b> .....	PO Box 2944, Dublin 1 Republic of Ireland
<b>Lega Trotskista d'Italia</b> .....	Walter Fidacaro C.P. 1591, 20101 Milano, Italy
<b>Spartacist Group Japan</b> .....	Spartacist Group Japan PO Box 18, Chitose-Yubinkyoku Setagaya-ku, Tokyo 156, Japan
<b>Grupo Espartaquista de México</b> .....	P. Linares, Apdo. Postal, Mexico 06002, México 1, D.F., Mexico
<b>Spartakusowska Grupa Polski</b> .....	Platforma Spartakusowców, SKR 741 50-950 Wrocław 2, Poland
<b>Spartacist League/U.S.</b> .....	Spartacist League, Box 1377 GPO New York, NY 10116, USA
<b>Spartacist/USSR</b> .....	USSR 121019 Moscow, g-19 A/Ya 19

Johannesburg.” Among the “fingers” of the “hidden hand” are the Koevet, a counterinsurgency unit used by the South Africans in Namibia; the Inkatha vigilantes; and the army’s infamous “Civil Cooperation Bureau.” A recent government “inquiry” into this assassination bureau found no evidence of death squads, even though they had confessions from white and black members describing the murders they had carried out!

The fascist “white right” has also stepped up its activity lately, organizing for race war. The largest grouping, the AWB (Afrikaner Resistance Movement) of Eugene TerreBlanche, with its swastika-like emblem, has been recruiting for paramilitary “Boerekommandos.” Last spring, AWB-affiliated vigilantes in Welkom, in the Orange Free State, launched a murderous offensive against blacks in the mines and a nearby township. In early July there was a series of bomb attacks in Johannesburg against a synagogue, an anti-apartheid Afrikaans paper and a crowded black bus station, which were claimed by a previously unheard-of white-supremacist terror outfit. And the *Weekly Mail* (19 October) reports that “A spate of assassinations and attempted murders of African National Congress activists over the past week has raised fears that apartheid death squads are back in business.”

In the background of the “Reef war” there are different forces at work. Hardliners in the police and army—which have stood by and watched as Inkatha gangs attack—seek to shore up the crumbling ramparts of apartheid by scuttling negotiations. In addition to these die-hards, the De Klerk “reformers” (including the Broederbond secret society of Afrikaner leaders which was the hard core of the apartheid regime) want to expand the “negotiations” to include their kept dogs like Buthelezi. To dilute the influence of the ANC/SACP they have even extended invitations to the black nationalists of the PAC (Pan-Africanist Congress) and AZAPO (Azanian People’s Organisation), which are reportedly in turmoil over the issue. The terror campaign also works to create a climate of fear in the townships which, together with the police-imposed curfew, undercuts the feverish organizing campaign of anti-apartheid forces.

But in response to the terror, the response of the ANC...was to appeal to the apartheid police! Andrew Mapheto, regional ANC organizer in the PWV (Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vaal Reef) region, wrote in a revealing account:

“Unfortunately, the more reports of police misconduct reached us, the more



Peter Magubane

**Above: Inkatha thugs launched terror campaign. Below: Xhosas murder “suspected Zulu.” For racially integrated workers defense guards to halt bloody communalist warfare whipped up by apartheid rulers!**



Guardian [London]

we urged our people to work in consultation with them. The result was that we were often booed....

“During our visits to the townships, a desperate call for arms became deafening. And at meetings, unless a speaker said something very specific on the question of self defence and arms, his message fell on deaf ears.

“Some ANC workers even became reluctant to come face-to-face with comrades from conflict-ridden areas. They had no answer to the demand for arms.... Instead people felt the ANC was displaying a political paralysis and had fallen prey to De Klerk’s sweet talk.”

—*Work in Progress*,

September 1990

The imperialist press reports that the young “comrades” in the Vaal town-

ships are saying, “Give us MK”—short for Umkonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), the ANC’s armed wing—and “Give us Hani.”

Unlike many ANCers who after returning home have become the darlings of the white liberal cocktail circuit, Chris Hani, the MK chief of staff, has reportedly set up operations along with 2,000 fighters in the Transkei, where he is staying in the home of former chief Kaiser Matanzima. Some of his supporters refer to this as “the first liberated zone.” The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (14 November) writes: “In his speeches, often entirely in Xhosa, for which he likes to show up in a camouflage jacket, he calls

on his soldiers to 'stay in the trenches'." But behind the militant rhetoric, what Hani is actually doing is setting up an ethnic-regional local power in the Transkei (where pro-apartheid elements just attempted a coup against the pro-ANC bantustan military rulers). Does Hani, the hero of the "young lions" in the townships, want to succeed Mandela at the head of the ANC by building a Xhosa tribal base in a dressed-up bantustan?

The danger of tribal war is real. In order to undercut the ANC, which sells its liberal program with appeals to "non-racial unity" across ethnic lines, the Inkatha squads surged out of mainly Zulu migrant workers' hostels into surrounding largely Xhosa townships, killing at random. Soon Xhosas were launching murderous attacks on the hostels. This is attested to as well by the account of ANCer Mapheto, who while criticizing attempts to portray the violence as "a Xhosa-Zulu war" notes that often "all people who were Zulu-speaking were seen as being responsible," and in one area "sectors of the youth felt every home with Zulu-speaking inhabitants had to be burned or demolished." Mapheto himself was surrounded by a lynch mob of Xhosa youth who thought the ANCers were Zulus because their car had Natal license plates. And at report-back meetings, he says, people asked, "Give us guns and we will kill the Zulus."

It's not surprising that there is concern that a government of the ANC (many of whose present leaders are Xhosa, including Mandela, Tambo, Sisulu, Mbeki, Hani) would favor their own tribal grouping. For all its appeals for "non-racialism," the ANC's only answer to attempts to provoke tribal warfare has been to appeal to the apartheid regime to impose its racist "law and order," or watch as the Xhosa youth get swept into the communalist bloodletting. The history of neocolonial regimes in Africa, such as Zimbabwe where the government of Robert Mugabe based on the Shona has wielded supremacy over the Ndebele led by Joshua Nkomo, is replete with examples of domination by one tribe over another. That this has been the fate of much of post-colonial black Africa is tragic enough; in the industrial powerhouse of the continent this need not and must not happen.

What is needed is the formation of union-based workers defense guards, linking the factory to the townships, and made up of class-conscious workers including Zulus, Xhosas and members of other tribal groupings, as well as coloured, Asian and anti-racist white

workers, to suppress both the right-wing terrorists and the fomenters of bloody communalist war. In tsarist Russia, the Bolsheviks in the oil-producing center of Baku organized such workers military formations to suppress mutual communalist slaughter among the Armenians and Azerbaijanis, incited by the petty-bourgeois nationalists of both peoples. In South Africa today, workers defense guards could develop into powerful organs of *proletarian dual power* which can derail the ANC/De Klerk/Relly plans for a "post-apartheid" capitalist state.

Precisely because of the economic development fostered by South African capitalism, the various racial, ethnic and tribal groups are intermingled as nowhere else on the continent. Indians led by Mohandas Gandhi played a key role in the founding of the Congress movement. The Afrikaans-speaking coloured population in the Cape province has historically been in the vanguard of struggle against racial discrimination. And although the white population as a whole is a privileged caste enjoying relative prosperity paid for by the toil of black labor, many whites also have been active in anti-apartheid struggles, from the ANC to the black unions. But the ANC, with its popular-front program aiming at a "post-apartheid" *capitalist* state, cannot overcome the racial/ethnic/tribal communal animosities that are bred by the struggle for survival in

conditions of extreme poverty.

These are the existing lines of division along which a desperate competition for the spoils of office is carried out. This can only be transcended through socialist revolution eliminating the fratricidal competition for a few meager crumbs from the capitalists' table and placing the enormous wealth (presently in the hands of rich corporations like Anglo American) at the service of all the toilers. Desperately needed is an authentically communist party built on the program of *permanent revolution* and mobilizing the power of the black proletariat, which can unite and champion the rights of all, the Xhosa and Zulu, Venda and Sotho, migrant workers from Mozambique and Botswana, the coloureds and Asians, and those growing numbers of whites who do not wish to spend their lives in a doomed racist garrison state awaiting a fiery *Götterdämmerung* in their bunkers.

### Communist Party Against Communism

As part of the bargaining for the release of Nelson Mandela, last February the government legalized the South African Communist Party, which had been banned since 1950. In April, SACP general secretary Joe Slovo came home from Zambia after 27 years in exile. Over the last several months, the CP has been rapidly recruiting after years of clandestinity. This is significant internationally. While mass Stalinist parties are disintegrating from East Europe and the Soviet Union to the "Eurocommunists" of West Europe, in South Africa township youth and striking workers proudly wave the red flag and call themselves Communists. In the United States, the moribund CPUSA tries to give an impression of vitality by covering itself with the SACP mantle.

The Communist Party held its first open mass rally in a stadium near Johannesburg on July 29, drawing 50,000 supporters for the "welcome home" celebration. The event reportedly began with the singing of the *Internationale* in Zulu, and the stadium resounded to the stamp and rhythm of the *toyitoyi* dance of defiance. Nelson Mandela was the featured speaker, saying that the ANC regarded the SACP as a "dependable friend." The highlight was the announcement of the identities of 22 of the SACP's "internal leadership group," including many internationally known anti-apartheid figures. Nine are members of the ANC executive committee, an indication of the degree to which the ANC and SACP leaderships overlap.



Dhliadhla/AFP

**"Hidden hand" of apartheid state behind the grisly slaughter aboard Johannesburg-Soweto commuter train, September 13.**

Most significant was the number of prominent unionists among the Communist Party leaders. Many were surprised to learn that virtually the entire leadership of the "workerist" wing of the unions had been recruited to the SACP, including such figures as Moses Makhoko, general secretary of the National Union of Metal Workers (NUMSA), South Africa's second-biggest union, and top COSATU leaders Chris Dlamini, John Gomomo and Sidney Mafumadi. The absorption of what was seen as the independent socialist left of the black union movement into and under the discipline of the SACP is of enormous consequence. For decades, the CP was the favorite target of apartheid propaganda, gaining a reputation for militancy despite its reformist program, as the only substantial party which fought for racial integration and was itself integrated. Drawing on these credentials today, the CP is the vehicle through which South African rulers seek to tame the combative black unions and draw them into active participation in the construction of the "post-apartheid" capitalist state.

Here we see most vividly what American socialist leader Daniel De Leon and V. I. Lenin were talking of when they referred to the "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class." After four decades underground and in exile, the SACP old guard wants a share in administering state power in their lifetime. In a country with a working class that is one of the most combative and conscious in the world, where in 1984-86 the huge black townships rose up in revolt for months and since then have carried out the ANC policy of making them "ungovernable," that means policing the black unions and the ever-explosive black

**ANC leaders:  
Umkhonto we  
Sizwe commander  
Chris Hani (left),  
international  
director  
Thabo Mbeki.**



youth in the interests of their "enlightened" but hardly democratic bourgeois masters.

Earlier this year, SACP leader Joe Slovo got international attention with his pamphlet *Has Socialism Failed?* For the benefit of pro-Gorbachev CPers in the West who don't want to just throw in the towel, he makes a nod in the direction of "working-class internationalism" and "Marxist theory," while purging the latter of the dictatorship of the proletariat, that is, of workers revolution! Meanwhile, he assures the Jo'burg Board of Trade that this "Communist" is not talking about "the premature abandonment of any role for market forces" (see "South African CP Leader Joe Slovo: From 'Uncle Joe' Stalin to Gorby," pages 40-41 of this pamphlet). Now he has gone out of his way to spell out the real program and appetites of the SACP to reassure the Randlords and their imperialist overlords.

On a mid-October visit to the United States, Slovo spoke at a Monthly Review conference in New York on "The Future of Socialism." Aside from some remarks

for his leftist audience about being an "unrehabilitated utopian," his message was that "we as a Communist Party do not place immediately on the agenda the socialist project," and further that "in a situation in which the socialist project is not realistically immediately obtainable...an emphasis on it actually discredits the prospect of eventually building socialism."

The SACP/ANC leader was up-front in speaking to Wall Street and the White House through an interview with columnist Anthony Lewis in the *New York Times* (15 October):

"I believe the rights to property should be retained," Joe Slovo said. "It would be absurd for us to move into a post-apartheid society trying to eliminate the private sector, foreign investment and so on. We know that they aren't charities and they need security, they need the feeling that what they've got they're going to keep...."

"Mr. Slovo said he believed in the market system and in economic incentives."

Slovo also said that while "some" land would have to be redistributed to the black majority, "some efficient large farms would remain undivided" in the interests of "maintaining agricultural production."

These are no isolated comments. Just as the ANC has lately backed off from the question of nationalizations, so too the Communist Party. In its 1989 program, *The Path to Power*, the SACP declares that the "national democratic state" must ensure that workers and "the people in general play an important role in the running of enterprises," but that "the state will protect the interests of private business where these are not incompatible with the public interest." Where the ANC's "Freedom Charter" called for ownership of mineral wealth by "the people as a whole," the SACP now says that the "public interest" will be served by leaving Anglo American and other capitalist giants in control of the wealth and profits produced by the toil of black labor!



**Fascist  
shock troops  
of Afrikaner  
Resistance  
Movement.**

This is laid out at length in the pages of the SACP's theoretical journal, the *African Communist*, which ought more appropriately to be called the "African Capitalist." In the Fourth Quarter 1990 issue, an article on "Nationalisation or Free Enterprise?" by Phineas Malinga states:

"A crucial fact about the South African gold mining industry is that it produces a commodity which has to be sold on world markets at a price which the mines can perhaps influence by their marketing tactics but certainly do not control. The welfare of the industry—not only its owners but also its workers—and its contribution to the national balance of payments depend on its ability to keep production costs per ounce of gold below the market price. Does the ANC possess an alternative cadre of senior management who could be guaranteed to improve upon the performance of the present management in this respect? The answer is no. What then would be achieved by changing the structure of the industry from near monopoly to complete monopoly and putting civil servants in charge? The answer is doubtful. Therefore the application of the classical form of nationalisation to the gold mines is a project of doubtful worth."

The "classical form of nationalization" rejected by the SACP is clearly the social-democratic program of nationalization under a *capitalist* regime. But the real question posed is not whether or not the mines should be administered by "civil servants" but the expropriation of the wealth and power of the capitalist owners by a revolutionary workers government. For the SACP reformists, such a perspective is simply inconceivable.

These "Communists" are not just interested in an alliance with South African capital, but with the multinational corporations as well:

"The necessary expansion of the South African economy will undoubtedly require the investment of large amounts of capital.... Dogmatic opposition to foreign investment therefore seems an unpromising line to pursue.... A democratic South Africa will have considerable attractions to multinationals as a base from which to penetrate the African market as a whole."

For years our Spartacist tendency took quite a bit of flak for criticizing the liberal/reformist program of calling on the imperialists to impose economic "sanctions" on the apartheid regime and on the multinational corporations to "divest" in South Africa. Washington and Wall Street are no friends of South African blacks, we warned. So here you have the logical result of the "sanctions/divestment" strategy—the SACP and ANC envision themselves joining with Anglo American in administering South Africa on behalf of the World Bank, the IMF and Citibank, as a "base"

for imperialist capital to "penetrate the African market"!

Communism this isn't. And while Anglo American's Gavin Relly may look to Slovo to discipline "his" workforce, some of the younger generation of ANC leaders educated in the "broad front" politics of the UDF and MDM don't see the need for a Communist Party at all. Recently, in elections for the ANC's Western Cape regional executive, United Democratic Front leader Christian Pinto forced out two leading Communist Party members, declaring that "dual leadership" was wrong. "We believe in the [ANC-Communist Party] alliance. But this means separate parties," Pinto said (*Washington Post*, 2 October). Pinto, who is black, also made an ominous racialist appeal against SACPers Reg September and Sheryl Carolus, both of

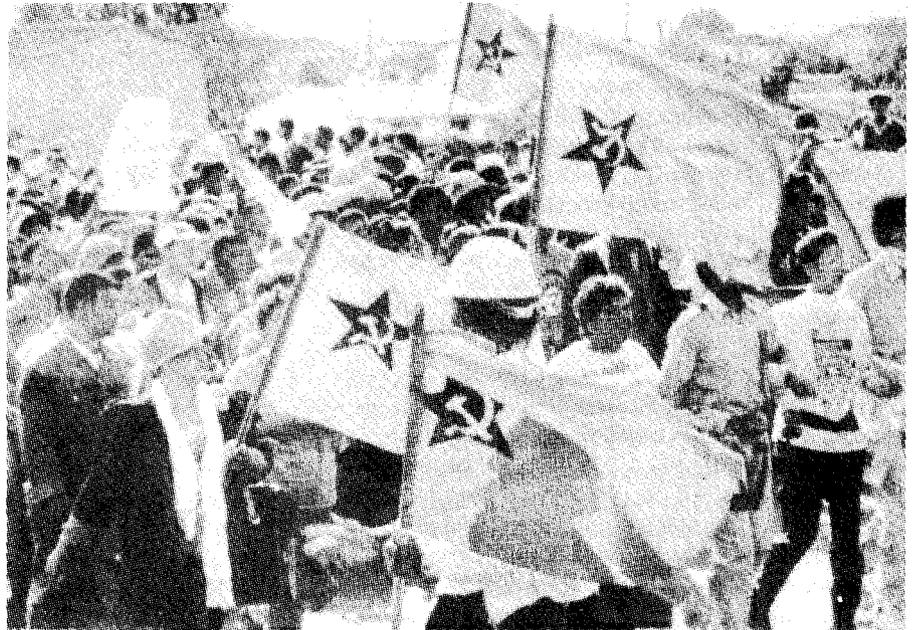
the situation,' says Michael Xego, the ANC's publicity officer in the Port Elizabeth area. 'But no one can expect the shacks, the unemployment, to just go away, poof, overnight.'

"Where once the ANC sought to exploit the impoverished township conditions to create social instability—'ungovernability' was the revolutionary word—it is now desperate to maintain stability. 'We are going to inherit most of the problems here,' says Michael Ndube of the ANC's youth branch."

A crisis of expectations may soon explode.

### The "Independent Left" in the Tow of the ANC/SACP

As the steam mounts in the South African pressure cooker, the pressure of the popular front is pushing the whole array of leftist and militant nationalist groupings into the wake of the ANC/



Afrapix

**South African trade unionists march under the hammer and sickle of Communism. Oppressed black masses want red revolution, not "power-sharing" with apartheid capitalists.**

whom are coloured (mixed-race). And in the ANC top levels, international director Thabo Mbeki is reportedly uncomfortable with the SACP's influence.

While a new generation of black yuppies in the ANC might like to dump the Communist Party in order to get on with the business of "power-sharing" with the apartheid bosses, the young black "comrades" in the townships grow uneasy about the direction the ANC is going. The *Wall Street Journal* (24 September) notes how black auto workers in Port Elizabeth, many of whom lost their jobs as a result of anti-apartheid sanctions, now look to the ANC to better their lives.

"Every resident in the area is expecting an ANC government to quickly improve

SACP. Black nationalists and "black consciousness" groups could have been expected to come forward now as young militants grow disillusioned with ANC. Indeed, the Pan Africanist Congress initially refused to join the negotiations with De Klerk, and as a result were reportedly recruiting after years of stagnation. But PAC leader Zeph Mothopeng died in October, and the group is reportedly split between "hardliners" and "conciliators." Now Mothopeng's successor Clarence Makwetu has declared that he can "work together" with Mandela for "democracy in South Africa"—i.e., to get in on the talks.

AZAPO also initially refused to participate in the government-ANC talks.



Campbell/Syama

**Gold miners are at the heart of South Africa's powerful black proletariat.**

However, their émigré mentors of the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania prevailed on them to drop this opposition, alleging a danger of becoming "marginalized." So now AZAPO is raising "conditions" for negotiations, demanding that a constituent assembly be convoked and negotiations be held "as far outside the country as possible." How about Washington or New York? In fact, these "militants" are calling on the United Nations to supervise voting for an assembly and to assume security and policing in South Africa (*Weekly Mail*, 14 September). Is that supposed to be before or after the UN fig leaf for U.S. imperialism invades Iraq? AZAPO wants to get in the diplomatic swim of things; communists must swim against the stream when it is heading to disaster.

In April, Neville Alexander's Cape Action League formed the Workers Organisation of South Africa (WOSA), declaring it an "independent political organization of the working class" which "shall strive to have a clear socialist perspective." Alexander is widely misidentified in South Africa as a Trotskyist, although his politics are more or less classic Menshevism with a black nationalist twist. In the past, his Cape Action League was associated with AZAPO in the National Forum.

In a "Proposed Resolution on Negotiations" (reprinted in *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*, July-August 1990), WOSA puts forth a defeatist perspective, asserting that "the balance of forces between the government and the liberation movement is still starkly in favor of the government" and that "our agitation

cannot be directed on the need for socialist revolution." If the level of mass struggle is now in a lull, it is not because the repressive apparatus of the white-supremacist state has become stronger; it is because the ANC/SACP is now policing both the townships and the factories on behalf of De Klerk and Relly.

And Alexander is tailing Mandela and Slovo. Thus WOSA won't come out hard against negotiations, as that would break the "spirit of unity and democracy." So instead they call for "advancing mass struggles," claiming that this will "destabilize" negotiations as the ANC/SACP are "at pains to demobilize the masses." So what do they say now that Mandela is calling for a campaign of mass mobilization, in order to consolidate control of the masses in order to sell them out? Instead of negotiations, Alexander et al. call for "a non-negotiable fight" for demands such as "one person, one vote," "dismantling of the repressive forces and fascist groups," "dismantling of the ban-tustans," agrarian reform, nationalization of banks and mines, etc. By whom or what, one must ask, if not the workers revolution which they, like Joe Slovo, claim is not on the agenda.

In a "self-interview" in the first issue of *Workers Voice* (August 1990), its theoretical review, the WOSA leadership talks of "strengthening the strategic position of the working class" through "the Workers Charter campaign." A few years ago, militants in the black unions counterposed a "Workers Charter" to the "Freedom Charter," in a syndicalist attempt to defend working-class inter-

ests in the event of the black petty-bourgeois leaders of the ANC/UDF coming to office—as in Zimbabwe, where Mugabe had just crushed a bitter strike. But this "workerist" tendency has since been co-opted by the Communist Party, which has a very different agenda. Today, COSATU's Workers Charter campaign is for including certain "rights" (union organization, minimum wage) in the constitution of a "post-apartheid" capitalist state. Thus COSATU's campaign bulletin questions even including the right to work, which is labeled a "long-term goal" rather than an "immediate right." The ANC/SACP/COSATU talk of a "workers charter" in order to cover up the fact that they seek a better contract under wage slavery rather than a fight for workers power.

Another pressure group on the ANC/SACP is the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC, supporters of Ted Grant's "Militant" tendency in Britain. Where the Militant group acts as an organic wing of the British Labour Party, rather than seeking to build a revolutionary vanguard party, the MWT acts as a component of the petty-bourgeois African National Congress, even after the ANC expelled it. In their paper, *Congress Militant* (October 1990), the MWT makes many correct observations about the appetites and program of ANC. But they see the ANC's "rejecting a strategy of workers' revolution" as a (correctable) "blunder," and write: "We believe the first task of every militant in Congress is now to arm the ANC with Marxist policies, and transform it into a mass workers' party to guarantee victory."

In the 1930s Leon Trotsky urged his followers to “unmask before the native masses the inability of the [African National] Congress to achieve the realization of even its own demands, because of its superficial, conciliatory policy” (“On the South African Theses,” *Writings [1934-35]*). While Trotsky exposed the ANC’s incapacity to carry out even a bourgeois-democratic program, Ted Grant’s supporters call on these petty-bourgeois nationalists to lead a proletarian socialist revolution! In this way they strengthen the authority of the ANC among the black toilers, an authority which is now used to *suppress working-class struggle*.

A frequent and sharp critic of the ANC/SACP is the journal *Searchlight South Africa*, published in London by the Baruch Hirson group. Hirson certainly knows the SACP and its programmatic appetites well, having battled the Stalinists since the 1930s, enabling him to see through Joe Slovo the born-again social democrat. But *Searchlight South Africa*’s alternative to the ANC/SACP line is simply to “democratize” the “power-sharing” negotiations:

“Delegates to such talks must be drawn from all parties, all organizations and all trade unions. The ANC has no mandate to speak for the disenfranchised, and no one has nominated them to act on behalf of all....

“At the conclusion of all talks, their results must be submitted to the public for approval.”

Interestingly, after calling for a negotiated transition to a supposedly classless democracy, *Searchlight South Africa* quotes extensively from Marx’s address to the Communist League in 1850, when he believed a new outbreak of revolution against Prussian absolutism and the petty German princes was imminent. But significantly they *omit* a key passage where Marx calls for armed organs of proletarian dual power independent of and counterposed to the petty-bourgeois democrats:

“...in order to be able energetically and threateningly to oppose this [bourgeois-democratic] party, whose treachery to the workers will begin from the first hours of victory, the workers must be armed and organised. The arming of the whole proletariat with rifles, muskets, cannon and ammunition must be carried out at once...the workers must try to organise themselves independently as a proletarian guard with commanders elected by themselves and with a general staff of their own choosing, and to put themselves under the command not of the state authority but of the revolutionary municipal councils set up by the workers.”

—Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 10

The arming of the black proletariat in South Africa today is, to be sure, far more difficult than in Germany in the period of the Revolution of 1848. However, the key task remains the same: breaking the plebeian masses from the petty-bourgeois democracy and the formation of organizations of proletarian dual power under communist leadership.

### For South African Trotskyism!

As the fate of the country and of the struggle for black freedom is being decided, South Africa is—not accidentally—in the midst of a “Trotsky boom.” Two years ago the SACP’s *African Communist* (Fourth Quarter 1988) published an article, “What Is Trotskyism?” by “Dialego.” In accord with the prevailing winds of glasnost, it presented a view similar to Gorbachev’s speech on the 70th anniversary of the Russian Revolution, admitting that Trotsky “did play an important role (as Stalin himself acknowledged) in the October Revolution,” but labeling Trotskyism a “form of ultra-leftism which promotes pseudo-revolutionary principles at the expense of practical politics.” What the SACP is pushing is Stalin’s schema of “two-stage revolution.”

In classical Stalinist fashion, “Dialego” tried to beat militants in the black unions over the head with the club of “Trotskyism,” saying: “Like Trotsky before them, the ‘workerists’ in South Africa get the relationship between socialism and democracy precisely wrong.” As opposed to “Fairy Tale revolutionaries,” who want to “pole-vault themselves into socialism” (Slovo’s pat-

ented phrase), demands must be confined to “*democratic struggle*” and the fight for socialist revolution postponed to the never-never land of the Greek calends. What this means in practice is that in exchange for some cosmetic reforms, strikes are now broken not just by the policeman’s *sjambok* (whip) but also, as at Mercedes-Benz, by the ANC/SACP/COSATU “revolutionary alliance” holding up the “stop” sign saying “don’t proceed beyond democratic stage.”

By the Third Quarter issue of 1989, the *African Communist* was obliged to say that it had received an avalanche of letters in response. However, they had “decided not to publish the contributions” since “undertaking a general reappraisal of Trotsky and Trotskyism is not the task of our journal.” This piece of glasnost censorship only produced a new spate of controversy, and the debate soon spilled over to virtually every anti-apartheid publication. In a widely reproduced article, ANC leader Pallo Jordan criticized Joe Slovo’s pamphlet *Has Socialism Failed?* for failing to go to the root of Stalinism and notes that “employing the method of historical materialism,” Trotsky “provided one of the most original critiques of the Soviet system.” The *Weekly Mail* has kept up a stream of articles and letters, including a pained reply from Brian Bunting under the heading “The SACP has not ignored discussion on Trotskyism and Stalinism.”

With all the ink devoted to Trotskyism in South Africa, there is precious little being published which accurately portrays what Trotsky stood for, and



ANC/SACP leaders talk of “post-apartheid” state. But even before the “apartheid” regime came to power in 1948 South African capitalism was based on white supremacy, superexploitation of black labor. Demonstration in 1930s for equal rights and release of imprisoned comrades.



WV Photo

**Trotskyist Spartacist League marches in New York protest, June 1983, demands internationalist labor solidarity, not imperialist sanctions.**

no group which can really be called Trotskyist without gagging. Thus Trotsky declared (in his writings on Spain in the 1930s) that "the Popular Front is the *main question of proletarian class strategy* for this epoch" and "the best criterion for the difference between Bolshevism and Menshevism." Summing up the experience of the Spanish Civil War, he wrote: "There can be no greater crime than coalition with the bourgeoisie in a period of socialist revolution."

What does the popular front mean concretely in South Africa today? The SACP's "Dialego" claims that Trotsky gets the relation between democracy and socialism wrong. Let us see. In South Africa, the *land question* is a major issue: the 1936 Land Act limits black occupation to 13.6 percent of the total territory (effectively that of the present bantustans). Moreover, the Pondoland peasants' revolt in the Transkei in the late 1950s was directed against the Xhosa tribal chiefs (as analyzed by CPer Govan Mbeki in *South Africa: The Peasants' Revolt* [1964]). Yet today the ANC, not only the "moderate" Mbeki Jr. but also the "militant" Chris Hani, is wooing the tribal chiefs of the bantustans.

Simply abolishing the discriminatory land reservation law, as some in the ANC propose, will not aid the impoverished peasantry scratching out an existence in the dirt-poor bantustans. Much less does it offer a solution to millions of township dwellers living a precarious existence as squatters until the next time cops and bulldozers drive them out of their tin shacks. For the impoverished blacks lack *capital*, and "freeing" the market forces will simply mean that land

will be bought up by real estate speculators and big farmers. The obvious demand is for *nationalization of the land*, which was raised by the Bolsheviks. As Marx and Lenin explained, this is a *democratic* rather than a socialist demand, directed against monopoly landholdings, but one that the bourgeoisie will vigorously oppose.

Or take the question of *political democracy*, which is at the heart of the "Freedom Charter." Today, the ANC is preparing to accept some constitutional subterfuge (a second house of parliament with veto power, in which whites will be disproportionately represented, or a "bill of rights" protecting "minorities") that will leave entrenched essential elements of white privilege. Against the negotiations, various leftist groups (AZAPO, WOSA, *Searchlight South Africa*) raise as their crowning demand the call for a *constituent assembly*. This is just spelling out "one person, one vote," calling to carry out the ANC's original program.

But there will be no "democratic" "post-apartheid" capitalist state. How can you have "majority rule" and expect that the oppressed majority will tolerate a situation in which average white income (R13,242 per person) is ten times that of blacks (R1,393); in which more than seven million non-whites live in shacks while the backyard swimming pool is standard in white suburbs; in which infant mortality for whites (9 per 1,000 live births) is less than one-tenth that of blacks (94-124 per 1,000)? South African capitalism *requires* cheap labor—and therefore mass poverty and disenfranchisement—of blacks.

The superprofits of the Randlords are based on superexploitation—paying black workers less than what it costs to maintain them and their families even at the most minimum level—which is incompatible with democratic rights. Take the situation in the mines. Here you have Anglo American, the beacon of "enlightened" capitalism, which took the lead in talking with the ANC. Yet it runs its mines through stark terror: concentration camps with black workers' compounds ringed with concertina wire, patrolled by heavily armed guards with vicious dogs. Why? Because their profits depend on it.

If Anglo American was willing to drop the color bar for skilled miners, it was in order to lower the wages from the \$90 a day they were paying white blasters toward the \$15 which migrant black laborers earn. As they discuss "power-sharing," Gavin Relly will persuasively explain to Nelson Mandela that raising all wages to the white levels would put the mine conglomerates out of business—they will not be competitive internationally and their profits will disappear. Yes, and that is why to pay black workers a real living wage and to place the wealth that they produce in the service of the impoverished majority, it is necessary to expropriate the mines, and the banks, industry, etc. and sweep away the whole profit system. No bourgeois regime will do that, only a black-centered workers government brought to power by the revolutionary struggle of millions of toilers led by a Trotskyist party of the proletariat.

The key question is *working-class power*, for as Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution holds, in the imperialist epoch the bourgeoisie is incapable of achieving democratic tasks. In 1915, Trotsky wrote an article on "The Struggle for Power," which he later appended to his essay "Results and Prospects" (written around the time of the Russian 1905 Revolution) when it was reissued in 1919, to explain his concept of permanent revolution which found its expression in the Bolshevik October Revolution. In his article, Trotsky calls for "a *revolutionary workers' government*, the conquest of power by the Russian proletariat":

"The demands for a national constituent assembly, a republic, an eight-hour day, the confiscation of the land of the landlords, together with the demands for the immediate cessation of the war, the right of nations to self-determination, and a United States of Europe will play a tremendous part in the agitational role of the Social Democrats. But revolution is first and foremost a question of power—not of the state form (constituent assembly, republic, united states) but of

the social content of the government. The demands for a constituent assembly and the confiscation of land under present conditions lose all direct revolutionary significance without the readiness of the proletariat to fight for the conquest of power...."

Many observers have noted in the uneven and combined development of South Africa today striking similarities to Russia in the early years of this cen-

tury: an autocratic regime which rules by the *sjambok* or the knout, which presides over vast areas of backwardness while the urban economy is built on the most modern technology. Its Achilles' heel is the young and vibrant proletariat, grouped in huge factories and mines, growing increasingly conscious of its social power. In ten years, the black unions have grown explosively, now

encompassing millions who inscribe socialism on their banners and see their fight as the spearhead of social emancipation and freedom. The Pretoria regime can no longer hold them down; for this it requires the services of the ANC and the SACP, to play the role of the Mensheviks and Kerensky in 1917. What's critically needed is the forging of the South African Bolshevik party. ■

reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 520, 15 February 1991

## South Africa and Revolution

The concluding paragraph of the article, "South Africa and Permanent Revolution" [see above], notes in the "uneven and combined development of South Africa today striking similarities to Russia in the early years of this century." We pointed to the autocratic regime presiding over vast areas of backwardness as well as a modern urban economy, and also to its Achilles' heel, a young and vibrant proletariat increasingly conscious of its power. However, there is a danger of drawing the Russian analogy too closely: there is also an important difference, centered on the racial/national question (the focus of the first half of the article).

In the tsarist "prison house of peoples" the Bolsheviks championed the fight for liberation of oppressed nations and nationalities, but the core of the revolutionary struggle was Russian workers rising up against Russian rulers. In South Africa, in contrast, the black workers are fighting a regime

based on a privileged white minority. This makes the fight for working-class power more difficult. With the Afrikaner laager mentality—a kind of frightened racialist nationalism—white supremacy in its death throes will have a broader social and military base than the Russian autocracy had at the end. And with the overwhelming weight of national oppression, until now workers' allegiances have been drawn, with the aid of the reformist Communist Party, to the petty-bourgeois nationalism of the ANC, which is unable to overcome the tribal/ethnic divisions adroitly exploited by the apartheid rulers.

This underlines our insistence that "The central strategic task for a communist vanguard in South Africa is to set the proletarian and plebeian base of the ANC against the petty-bourgeois nationalist and collaborationist tops in the struggle to create organs of *dual power*, the basis for a black-centered

workers government." While the reformists with their pipe dream of "power-sharing" are today *opposing* struggles of the black proletariat (such as the bitter Mercedes-Benz strike in East London), we raise the program of socialist revolution which can unite blacks, coloureds and Indians and the increasing number of whites who do not wish to live in a racist garrison state.

It is at the workplace, where the proletariat is physically concentrated, that serious struggles for class unity can be made. Organized initially independent of the ANC, the black trade unions have grown explosively to become the central focus for class struggle in South Africa. But they have since been co-opted by the SACP/ANC. The critical task is to break the working class from the nationalist/reformist stranglehold and free its enormous power in the fight to smash apartheid—for workers revolution.



Led by its Leninist vanguard party, militant Russian working class took leadership of 1917 October Revolution. On 18 June 1917, 400,000 Petrograd workers and soldiers demonstrated with Bolshevik slogans: "Long live the Third International!" "Down with the counterrevolution! Down with the ten capitalist ministers! All power to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants Deputies!"



South African Labour Bulletin



Morice/South African Labour Bulletin

Left: East London auto workers demonstrate in support of plant occupation. Above: CP leaders Joe Slovo (center) and NUMSA's Moses Mayekiso were brought in by Mercedes-Benz to squelch the strike.

## Mercedes-Benz South Africa Sit-Down Strikers Raise Red Flag, CP Sells Them Out

When the South African Communist Party held its first public rally last July 29, African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela arrived at the stadium near Johannesburg in a bright red Mercedes 500 SE armored limousine. The car had been built for him specially by the workers at the Mercedes-Benz plant in East London. The red, they had said in presenting it to him, stood for the blood spilled in the freedom struggle and the "revolutionary alliance" of the ANC, the SACP and the COSATU trade-union federation.

Two weeks later, the workers at Mercedes-Benz South Africa (MBSA) occupied the plant in a "sleep-in" strike and ran the ANC and SACP flags up the company flagpoles. Yet the ANC/SACP/COSATU alliance recoiled in horror, for the strike threw a giant wrench in their plans for industrial peace in a "post-apartheid" South Africa. At the company's request, SACP leader Joe Slovo and National Union of Metal Workers (NUMSA) general secretary Moses Mayekiso (also a top SACPer) flew to East London to tell the strikers to go back to work.

Strikebreaking on behalf of the "enlightened" apartheid bosses—the strike

against Mercedes-Benz sums up in a nutshell what the negotiations are all about. It also threw South Africa's black union movement into turmoil, dramatically exposing the "revolutionary" pretensions of its leaders. And because of this, it was downplayed by pro-ANC media.

The Mercedes plant was one of the most militant factories in all of South Africa. In a marathon 1987 strike they won the highest wages in the auto industry. This gave the workers confidence and a sense of their strength. A spokesman for MBSA management said that "we have had a factory with worker control since 1987. Supervisors used to clock in and then lock themselves in their offices for the whole day. They didn't dare go out on the assembly lines."

Another MBSA executive complained that "a highly organized and politicized workforce with very skilled union leadership had in many respects taken control." Some workers even stood at assembly lines with mock AK-47s or bazookas strapped to their backs, as a "symbol of defiance and rejection of the company which many workers believed was merely an extension of the repres-

sive apartheid structures." Mercedes-Benz was determined to smash this example of class-struggle militancy. And the ANC/SACP/COSATU served as their instruments in disciplining the workers.

The strike was directed against the National Bargaining Forum, set up the year before by NUMSA and South Africa's auto manufacturers. In 1989, national bargaining had raised the minimum for auto workers to R5.50 an hour. However, for the traditionally militant Mercedes workers it brought nothing, as their wages were already above this minimum. For 1990 they demanded a R3-per-hour raise above the national minimum. This was opposed by Mayekiso and the NUMSA tops.

The union leadership accused the Mercedes militants of "factory tribalism," abandoning "unity" with workers in other companies. This is a classic ploy of Stalinists and other reformists who call on the workers to "sacrifice" for the popular front. Salvador Allende's Unidad Popular in Chile accused copper miners of being "privileged" when they struck to defend their cost-of-living escalator. Now South African workers are being told to sacrifice even before

the pop front is in office.

Extensive post-strike coverage of the struggle at Mercedes-Benz by the *South Africa Labour Bulletin* (November 1990) reports that the movement began among several shop stewards as they traveled to and from the SACP rally in Johannesburg. While apologists for the union tops try to blame it all on the "immature militancy" of a small minority, in fact the strike was supported by 18 out of the 23 stewards and was voted by a general union meeting on August 16. Two thousand of the factory's 3,500 workers began the sleep-in, replacing the Mercedes star with the red flag with the hammer and sickle.

Already on August 21, NUMSA leader Mayekiso spoke to the workers inside the plant, trying to get them to leave with promises that plant-level bargaining could take up some of their demands; on September 3, COSATU vice president John Gomomo and ANC leader Raymond Mhlaba (both SACP leaders) spoke with the shop stewards. But the strike continued, although the numbers inside the plant began to dwindle.

The company continued to hardline it, refusing to grant any increase and announcing that 538 hard-core strikers were fired. For support they went to ANC international director Thabo Mbeki, who went to the Communist Party. On September 20, Mayekiso and SACP general secretary Joe Slovo spoke to thousands of MBSA workers at a church meeting hall in the huge Mdantsane township.

Mayekiso warned of the danger of Mercedes pulling out of South Africa. Slovo backed the union tops, saying: "It is not a question of right and wrong, but of power, of being able to continue struggling and making advances." Yet it was the stab in the back by the ANC/SACP/COSATU leaders that sabotaged this struggle. But still the strikers held out until October 8.

In order to end the nine-week struggle which caused them so much embarrassment, the NUMSA tops signed a groveling agreement pledging themselves to the "common objectives of industrial peace and stability," the "maintenance of acceptable work and behavior standards" and the "growth and viability of the company." The fired workers were out of the plant, and the union agreed to assign a top organizer to East London to keep the Mercedes workers in line. Instead of militant workers control, which represented dual power in the factory, the company and union intend to implement West German style "co-determination."

For years, the ANC/SACP was calling on the imperialists to impose economic "sanctions" on the apartheid regime, and

**Black auto workers at Mercedes-Benz have been in the forefront of class struggle in South Africa.**



on multinationals to shut down their South African operations. We warned against looking to international finance capital as saviors, and that "divestment" could sap the strength of the key force for freedom, the black proletariat, whose unions were strongest in foreign-owned plants like Mercedes. But now that the ANC and SACP see themselves "sharing power" they'll break strikes to keep the multinationals sweet.

The Mercedes strike showed in a microcosm what the ANC/SACP/COSATU negotiations with De Klerk for a "democratic" South Africa are all about. *South Africa Labour Bulletin* editor Karl von Holdt summed it up: the anti-apartheid forces are in effect "abandoning their call for disinvestment," and "these organisations are accepting that capitalists have an important and legitimate role to play in South Africa. They are also accepting that it is necessary to create conditions

that capitalists will find acceptable."

In South Africa today the returning ANC leaders and nouveaux riches in Soweto are notable for their predilection for Mercedes-Benz luxury automobiles. As a result, the nascent layer of well-off blacks who want to make it into the boss class are popularly known as the tribe of the "WaBenzi." As class divisions sharpen, the WaBenzi join their capitalist masters in cracking down on the Mercedes-Benz workers.

Although the East London strikers were defeated, the black workers of South Africa are combative and restive. In the present situation, as reformists seek deals with the government and companies, strike struggles could spark a wave of worker insurgency throughout the country. The issue of proletarian revolution would be posed, what's needed is a revolutionary party to lead it to victory. ■

## What Strategy for Black Liberation? Trotskyism vs. Black Nationalism

(Marxist Bulletin No. 5 Revised)

\$2.50 (64 pages)

Selected documents and articles on the black question in the U.S., 1955-1977.

### Contents

- Preface to Revised Edition
- Preface to First Edition
- For the Materialist Conception of the Negro Question
- For Black Trotskyism
- The Negro Struggle and the Crisis of Leadership
- The Secret War Between Brother Klonsky and Stalin (and Who Won)
- Rise and Fall of the Panthers: End of the Black Power Era
- Soul Power or Workers Power? The Rise and Fall of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers
- Black Power and the Fascists
- Black Power — Class Power
- Behind the "Roots" Craze
- Quotes from Frederick Douglass and Malcolm X: Developing a Social Conscience
- Quotes from "Roots": Romanticizing an Individual Heritage

Make checks payable/mall to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 376, 5 April 1985

## Nationalism Is a Deathtrap for Black Masses— Build a Proletarian Party to Smash Apartheid!

# South Africa: Razor's Edge

On Thursday, March 21, rallies were held in South Africa to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the massacre at Sharpeville, the black township near Johannesburg, where police of the white-supremacist regime mowed down 69 black demonstrators peacefully protesting the apartheid pass laws. This year black students in Sharpeville put up barricades and boycotted classes. At the strategic Vaal Reefs gold mine, the largest in the world, 40,000 black workers went on strike. And in the Eastern Cape province after a three-day "stay-away" shutdown by the black population of Port Elizabeth, the authorities celebrated Sharpeville by staging another massacre.

In Washington that evening, U.S. president Reagan vilely excused the police massacre at Uitenhage, saying that "rioting was going on" and that among South African blacks there is "an ele-

ment...who want a violent settlement, who want trouble in the streets." The administration's South Africa policy of "constructive engagement" was revealed as nothing but embracing racist murder. Democratic Senator Teddy Kennedy, meanwhile, joined Republican Secretary of State George Shultz in hypocritically denouncing the "evil" of apartheid.

In Pretoria, government spokesmen hastened to push Reagan's anti-Communist buttons, blaming it all on a supposed Soviet plot orchestrated through the banned African National Congress (ANC). And speaking on ABC's *Nightline* program, Prime Minister P.W. Botha declared, "I am going to keep order in South Africa, and nobody is going to stop me." That week 29 black groups, notably the anti-apartheid United Democratic Front (UDF), were banned from holding any meetings. On March 30 the army occupied black

townships throughout the Eastern Cape region.

\* \* \*

The massacre at Uitenhage was the racist regime's answer to eight months of defiant struggles by the oppressed black population of South Africa. A massive boycott last August by the Indian and "coloured" (mixed-race) communities doomed Botha's "reform" constitution to reinforce apartheid disenfranchisement and provide the executive with new martial law powers. Peaceful protests of rent increases in black townships around Johannesburg were met with police terror and the unprecedented introduction of the army. They were followed by black gold miners battling the police and army in September. In November came the massive two-day stay-away general strike in the industrial Transvaal. In February, black squatters at the Crossroads shantytown outside



Durand/Sipa



Campbell/Time

**Uitenhage, South Africa: Massively armed apartheid police state wants bloodbath. Black struggle for freedom needs program for proletarian power.**

Cape Town erupted in defiance of government plans to move them to an isolated township far from the city. Even though more than 250 blacks have been killed by Pretoria's security forces since the beginning of 1984, it hasn't stemmed the waves of revolt. But things cannot go on this way indefinitely.

South Africa appears to be rumbling down the tracks to a bloody confrontation. The system of apartheid—a bogus partition in which the whites give up nothing—is coming apart. Blacks have made it clear that they are not taking this oppressive situation any more. And the white population is armed to the teeth, determined to defend what they've got. The coasts are secure, there is a belt of cowed black African states to the north, and the struggle is along white-vs.-black national lines. So long as the national principle predominates, in a military confrontation, now and for the next period the whites will win hands down. The danger is of a pointless bloodbath, something on the scale of the partition of India in which hundreds of thousands died, and a very one-sided bloodbath in which the vast majority of the victims will be from the oppressed black, Indian and coloured majority.

Yet the *class* principle can prevail. In South Africa there is a black proletariat with a growing sense of its power. Over the past decade it has entered into struggle, from the gold mines and industrial heartland of the Witwatersrand to the auto plants of Port Elizabeth. By its very bulk, this five-million-strong working class has forced the petty-bourgeois black leadership to take it into account, but not programmatically. The black proletariat is still being used as cattle to haul the ideological cart of nationalism. A Bolshevik party must be built to lead a victorious struggle for "amandla," *power*, for the oppressed, through workers revolution.

Instead of the mass starvation and internecine tribal strife which have marked the "independent" neocolonial states of black Africa, proletarian class rule in South Africa will open the way to socialist construction, based on the higher levels of industry and culture, in which whites will also have a necessary place. Only such a perspective of a black-centered workers government, through forging a multiracial working-class vanguard which struggles for class power, can break down the iron white-vs.-black line.

South Africa is the one place in sub-Saharan Africa where there is the possibility for a workers state, because here the black population has been partially

**March 21, 1985 was a hot day in the black township of Langa, near Uitenhage, site of the big Volkswagen auto plant outside Port Elizabeth. A crowd gathered for the funeral of an African student activist killed by police the previous week. They boarded buses for nearby Kwanobuhle where the funeral march was to take place. When police arrived and ordered them off the buses, black men in shirtsleeves, women with sunshades and young children decided to walk instead. Their numbers swelled to 300-500.**

**A "hippo" police armored troop carrier drove through the procession, stopped and turned broadside on a rise up ahead. The funeral-goers then noticed a second "hippo" coming up behind them. With the first shot, a boy cycling at the head of the crowd fell dead, his head burst open. Then came a withering**

**crossfire from automatic weapons lasting five deadly minutes. Afterwards, police placed stones among the bodies to make it look like the blacks had been throwing rocks. They claim they killed 19; witnesses say at least twice as many were murdered.**

**On a hill overlooking Langa township, heavily armed poor whites looked down on the slaughter below. They feared the spectre of slave rebellion, wrote a foreign reporter, their intonation spanning centuries of Afrikaner history as they remarked that the police "did the right thing" in shooting down the marchers. "If the blacks had got into the white area it would have been much worse" said one. "Sure, some whites would have died, but a lot more blacks would have died with them" (*New York Times*, 25 March).**

absorbed, at the bottom, into a modern industrialized society which can, based on the revolutionary reorganization of society, provide a decent life for its citizens. The white population must have a place in an anti-racist society; the model is how Trotsky offered thousands of tsarist officers a job to do, placing their skills at the disposal of the new Bolshevik regime and the Soviet peoples. South Africa's two and a half million coloureds, who comprise a strategic part of the Cape proletariat, and the nearly one million Indians, mainly a commercial population, are no less a vital component.

\* \* \*

South African whites are an oppressor people who can easily and guiltily envision the terms of oppression reversed, and are determined not to be on the receiving end. That makes them extremely dangerous. South Africa is unique. Unlike Ulster Protestants, Israeli Jews, the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka, and, formerly, Cypriot Greeks, where the group on top is not qualitatively, if at all, economically advantaged, in South Africa you have, in bulk, one whole people exploiting another. Ulster is the triumph of ideology over social reality, for Catholic and Protestant alike are impoverished even by the standards of run-down British capitalism. In the Near East, Palestinian Arabs are at most half a social revolution behind the Israelis. But the Afrikaners have the qualitative military, economic, technical and cultural superiority to carry out the bloody "scorched

earth" program which the Zionists can only dream of imposing on the Shi'ites and Druze of Lebanon.

While the Botha regime is not crumbling, it has plenty of problems which cannot be solved by the *sjambok* (whip) and Uzi machine gun. A new generation of urbanized black youth burn with anger at their grossly inferior schooling, limited job prospects and the denial of their birthright. Black workers, getting a taste of their growing social power, refuse to continue servilely groveling before the white *baas*. With stones and petrol bombs, with boycotts and strikes, the black masses are defying not just the pass laws or residential restrictions but the whole oppressive structure of apartheid rule. The South African bourgeoisie—the English in the mines and the Afrikaners on the farms—thrived for a century on the slave labor of blacks. Now they need to stabilize a layer of black skilled workers in industry and to contain the labor militancy of the emerging black unions.

In the interests of economic development, there has been a quantitative narrowing of the wage gap between white and black workers. Through the Wiehahn reforms, black unions have been permitted to organize, though the regime tries to hamstring them with elaborate state controls. Recently several employer associations called on the Botha government to implement its vague promises of reform. But government spokesmen, representing the *verligte* ("enlightened") wing of Afrikaner nationalism, replied



Wide World

**35,000 black people defiantly marched on 25 March 1985 in funeral for youth killed by cops in township near Uitenhage, Cape Province.**

that "Businessmen should not call for black political participation without understanding the implications of what they were advocating" (*Washington Post*, 15 March). What may be economically rational for segments of the ruling class is not politically possible.

\* \* \*

Sharpeville 1960 brought a decade of police-state silence. All black resistance was crushed. South African society has experienced important changes in the quarter century since then, centrally the consolidation of a black working class and the beginnings of its organization. What this means is that today treason trials, mass arrests and the killing of some scores of blacks are insufficient to choke off black struggle. Two days after the Uitenhage massacre, a number of black collaborators of the apartheid regime were killed in the townships. And on March 24 an estimated 35,000 blacks, reportedly the largest demonstration ever in the Eastern Cape, streamed into Kwanobuhle to turn the funeral that had previously been broken up by the police into a mass protest. But Botha has made clear his intention to crush those "fomenting disobedience, violence and destruction." The Uitenhage massacre could be the signal for unleashing a Sharpeville many thousands of times over.

In a recent *New York Times* (27 March) article, the generally perceptive reporter Alan Cowell remarked that "Compared with 1960...the white authorities [now] seemed adrift, reliant as ever on force, but unable to provide any other answer to the questions spawned by their own troubled racial history...." This reflects a pervasive misunderstanding of South

Africa shared by the American bourgeoisie and the American "left." What's posed is not granting token democratic rights to an oppressed *minority*. In South Africa, a racial caste of 4-5 million whites share in the superexploitation of the 26-plus million blacks, Indians and coloureds. An important 1983 ABC-TV special on the rise of South African black unions was titled "Adapt or Die." But on the political level, South African rulers *cannot* adapt. White supremacy, whether in the form of apartheid or by some other name, is the foundation of South African capitalism, just as slavery was to the pre-Civil War American South.

What does majority rule, "one man, one vote," mean in South Africa? To the white minority, it can only mean one thing: "Drop dead." But they don't want to drop dead, and *they have all the guns*. ABC's Ted Koppel referred to a slogan painted on a South African wall, "Boer go home." But the Boers *are* home. The Afrikaners see themselves as a "white tribe of Africa." These trekkers who conquered the *veldt* (plains) lost the Boer War, but they won the country. In contrast to whites in Southern Rhodesia, the Afrikaners are not a settler colony anymore. The Rhodesians, like the Israelis in Lebanon, couldn't afford to lose steady casualties, even only ten a week—trivial numbers in the abstract, but not with such a narrow population base. The Afrikaners, however, have the weapons, a sufficiently large white population, an ideology and the religion, history and bloody-minded determination to prevail.

Genocide is not the aim of South Africa's rulers—they hardly want to kill

off the black proletariat that has produced their golden egg. But their whole security setup is designed for repression on a mammoth scale. They're probably already calculating what Henry Kissinger once cynically called the "raped nun gap"—how many atrocities against whites to allow, or instigate, to prepare foreign opinion for the bloody holocaust of blacks. (Recall the Western scare propaganda about raped nuns in Stanleyville which paved the way for the 1961 UN intervention against Lumumba in the Congo, engineered by Teddy Kennedy's elder brother JFK.) And when Botha lets loose it won't just be with Israeli machine guns firing out of gun slits of hippo troop carriers. The black townships were designed for civil war, laid out like giant concentration camps encircled by highways and empty "free fire zones," so they can be isolated and, if necessary, *napalmed* into submission. Pretoria is prepared to impose a peace of the graveyards.

The contradictions of the Botha regime can be seen in the gold miners' strike last September. After careful study and passing elaborate legislation, the government had granted a highly circumscribed right to strike. One of the tamer black unions went through all the procedures and finally declared a first-ever legal strike. The *Wall Street Journal* proclaimed the advent of "enlightened" labor relations in South Africa. But as soon as the legal strikers walked off the job, their example spread like wildfire through the gold mines, and the government responded by sending in the troops and shooting down unarmed strikers in cold blood.

\* \* \*

Meanwhile, the power of the black proletariat is still politically straitjacketed by nationalism. And this is no accident, for the structure of South African society subjects the black population as a whole to the most hideous forms of colonial oppression. They are treated as aliens in their own country, without legal rights, colonial subjects constantly threatened with deportation to their *kraals* on the starving bantustans. The capitalist class and its state apparatus are entirely white (except for black cops who rarely rise above sergeant). There is no black bourgeoisie in South Africa. The very depth and totalitarian nature of this internal colonialism has tended to produce a nationalist-populist outlook among the black African masses, including the industrial working class. Historically, the black struggle has been under the sway of nationalist formations, prin-

cipally the African National Congress.

At the same time, for the black unions, having to deal with economic reality tends to cut across nationalist principles, and there have even been reports of joint white-black union action, such as at the Highveld Steel plant where common mass meetings were held (*Work in Progress*, October 1984). In meetings of the National Forum, a nationalist coalition rivaling the UDF, exclusion of whites was rejected by leaders of black unions formerly associated with the Black Consciousness Movement. But politically the South African black unions are still inchoate where they are not directly integrated into one or another nationalist popular front.

In the case of the ANC, the strategy of seeking alliances with the more "liberal" wing of imperialism and its "own" ruling class extends back to its founding. Hoping to exploit the sometimes sharp antagonism between British capital and Afrikaner nationalism the ANC supported British imperialism in both the First and Second World Wars. And following the savage repression in the wake of Sharpeville, in 1964 ANC leader Luthuli appealed to "South Africa's strongest allies, Britain and America...for sanctions that would precipitate the end

of the hateful system of *apartheid*." As if the City of London and Wall Street, the butchers who slaughtered blacks in the "Mau Mau emergency" in Kenya and communist guerrillas in Indochina, are any more humane than Afrikaner leaders Malan, Verwoerd and Botha! They're just more remote and cool.

The "moderate" nationalist ANC talks of "multiracial democracy," but means by this a "power-sharing" deal with elements of the white racist ruling class, from the United Party in the 1950s and '60s to the Progressive Federal Party today. Meanwhile, Bishop Tutu, picked as the black savior of South Africa by the Nobel Prize committee, warns of the danger of a bloodbath, appealing for the intervention of the American imperialists. So that in the South African black movement talk of interracialism is exclusively associated with popular-front do-gooders of the CP/ANC stripe, and those who warn of the danger of a bloodbath turn out to be weepy friends of the Kennedys. The more militant of the nationalists, such as AZAPO which demonstrated against Teddy Kennedy's visit to Soweto last January, close their eyes to the dangers looming over them and harden up the enemy camp, driving whites into the Afrikaner *laager*.

The black movement in South Africa doesn't seem to realize that they're looking down the barrel of a cannon that's being wheeled out to blow them away. They vastly overrate the humanity of their oppressors. Botha & Co. are now looking for provocations—and they may get them. ANC sources indicate that their guerrillas are shifting their military strategy from attacking exclusively strategic installations to "softer" targets, exercising "much less caution about incurring [white] civilian casualties" (*Work in Progress*, February 1985). This, combined with their talk of moving from sporadic bombings by small commandos to "people's war" is a deadly dangerous fantasy, playing directly into the hands of the Afrikaner hardliners. Any actions along this line will trigger a monstrous slaughter without threatening Pretoria militarily. In contrast to such light-minded playing at war, well-selected actions by the black workers movement can strike the apartheid system in its Achilles heel, its absolute dependence upon black labor.

Unlike the Bishop Tutus, we do not talk of bloodbaths as an excuse to preach pacifism and reconciliation with the apartheid state. Blood will flow in South Africa: the question is whose blood, when, where, why and how. Certainly there is no solution in South Africa without a civil war. But if it is fought on a purely white-vs.-black, national basis it will be a disaster for the oppressed. One only has to look at Angola where a few hundred South African soldiers drove almost all the way to Luanda before the Cubans intervened to stop them.

\* \* \*

In the United States, the anti-apartheid movement has centered on the slogan of "divestment." This is a call for an international strike of *capital*, to force Pretoria to abandon apartheid, whose net result will be to allow some sharp speculators to buy South African shares at a discount. Only after Mondale's ignominious defeat in the November elections did black Democrats begin staging symbolic arrests outside the South African embassy in order to refurbish their tarnished credentials. When Kennedy tried to cash in on the South Africa issue with a visit in January, the Johannesburg *Financial Mail* ran an incredulous headline, "He's teaching us morals?" Who is demanding that the bloodsoaked American imperialists stop exploiting, Botha must be asking. The white racist U.S. ruling class can have "one man, one vote" and still keep the blacks on the bottom. The divestment campaign is an

## SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S. LOCAL DIRECTORY

**National Office:** Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116 • (212) 732-7860

### Atlanta

Box 4012  
Atlanta, GA 30302

### Boston

Box 390840, Central Sta.  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
(617) 492-3928

### Chicago

Box 6441, Main PO  
Chicago, IL 60680  
(312) 663-0715

### Cleveland

Box 91037  
Cleveland, OH 44101  
(216) 781-7500

### Detroit

Box 441043  
Detroit, MI 48244

### Los Angeles

Box 29574, Los Feliz Sta.  
Los Angeles, CA 90029  
(213) 380-8239

### Madison

Box 1492  
Madison, WI 53701

### New York

Box 444, Canal St. Sta.  
New York, NY 10013  
(212) 267-1025

### Norfolk

Box 1972, Main PO  
Norfolk, VA 23501

### Oakland

Box 29497  
Oakland, CA 94604  
(510) 839-0851

### San Francisco

Box 77494  
San Francisco, CA 94107  
(415) 777-9367

### Washington, D.C.

Box 75073  
Washington, D.C. 20013  
(202) 872-8240

## TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA

### Toronto

Box 7198, Station A  
Toronto, ON M5W 1X8  
(416) 593-4138

### Edmonton

PSSE P.O. Box 9605  
Edmonton, AB T6E 5X3

### Vancouver

Box 2717, Main P.O.  
Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2  
(604) 687-0353

### Moncton

P.O. Box 563  
Moncton, NB E1C 8L9

### Montréal

C.P. Les Atriums, B.P. 32066  
Montréal, QC H2L 4V5

appeal to the "democratic" hypocrisy of the mass murderers of My Lai and Hiroshima to get their South African ally to clean up its act.

For starry-eyed American reformists exemplified by the *Guardian* (3 April), the Uitenhage massacre "has created a crisis for the apartheid regime, as there is a virtually universal disbelief in the official version." The mortal danger to South Africa's black masses is ignored as they see only "apartheid's agonies." But apartheid is not on its death bed, and imperialist finger-wagging and public opinion will hardly bring it down. Liberal divestment lobbyist Dumisani Kumalo of the American Committee on Africa cynically remarks: "Every time they shoot people in the townships.... It all helps our cause" (*Detroit Free Press*, 16 December 1984). The cause of South Africa's oppressed will not be helped by looking to the Teddy Kennedys or other imperialist "saviors."

The Kennedy liberals who now call for "disinvestment" only have tactical differences with the likes of IBM president John Akers, who calls for U.S. investment, arrogantly claiming that his low-wage non-union operation in South Africa can be a model of race relations (like his non-union operations in the U.S.!). The pro-imperialist AFL-CIO tops go along with this line, parading the "Sullivan principles" of equal-opportunity exploitation by U.S. corporations in South Africa, while seeking to take over the new black unions before they get "out of hand."

Communists look to the working class, from Durban to Detroit, as the vanguard of the fight for freedom. We hail the action of militant Bay Area longshoremen last December who refused for ten days to unload South African blood cargo, in spite of the sabotage by the labor fakers and their fake-left waterboys. International labor solidarity, against their bosses and ours, is key to the struggle for workers revolution against Reagan/Botha racism.

\* \* \*

The savage apartheid dictatorship in South Africa is the result of uneven and combined development in which the latest advances in industry and technology coexist with imposed colonial backwardness of the oppressed black masses, condemned to suffer the most brutal aspects of serfdom, slavery and tribalism. The most elementary democratic demand or social gain can only be achieved in an anti-capitalist revolutionary context. The fundamental political right of "one man, one vote"—real majority rule—would

mean the overthrow of white-supremacy and would sound the death knell for the white ruling class. Those such as Bishop Tutu, the UDF and ANC who preach a "peaceful" end to apartheid through moral suasion and "economic sanctions" of international finance capital disarm the oppressed ideologically in the face of impending catastrophe in which it will overwhelmingly be the blood of the black masses that flows.

Today hundreds of thousands of black, coloured and Indian workers are enrolled in black unions, which have repeatedly broken through the labyrinth of state controls to unleash mass strike action. The economic organization of the black workers is a necessary condition for the South African workers, but it is not sufficient. A recent book titled *Power! Black Workers, Their Unions and the Struggle for Freedom in South Africa* (1984) reports a revealing remark by a shop steward of a black union in Port Elizabeth:

"We long for the day when there is majority rule government in South Africa and [imprisoned ANC leader] Nelson Mandela is our Prime Minister. But when that day comes we must have an independent trade union organisation to make sure the black workers don't get kicked around simply because our people are in power."

For the oppressed to emerge victorious from the inevitable civil war in South Africa, they must be organized and led by a class-conscious vanguard infused with the understanding that those who labor must rule.

Continuing Lenin's struggle for independent communist parties in the fight for a Fourth International, his companion-in-arms Leon Trotsky, founder of the Red Army, wrote to his supporters in South Africa in 1935. Trotsky noted:

"The Bolshevik Party defended the right of the oppressed nations to self-determination *with the methods of prole-*

*tarian class struggle*, entirely rejecting the charlatan 'anti-imperialist' blocs with the numerous petty-bourgeois 'national' parties of czarist Russia....

"Only thanks to this *irreconcilable* class policy was Bolshevism able to succeed in the time of the revolution to throw aside the Mensheviks, the Social Revolutionaries, the national petty-bourgeois parties and gather around the proletariat the masses of the peasantry and the oppressed nationalities."

—L.D. Trotsky, "On the South African Theses," *Writings [1934-35]*

In South Africa today, the construction of a Bolshevik party based on the black proletariat is more urgent than ever, but also the possibilities are possibly better than in the past. The government has a lot on its plate right now, and its highest priority probably isn't tracking down inconspicuous red nuclei in the workers movement. As a result of what has happened to government informers in the townships in recent months, there seems to be an involuntary relaxation of security control within the black population.

A Leninist-Trotskyist party in South Africa must be built in irreconcilable struggle against every kind of nationalism and popular-frontism, counterposing the program of *permanent revolution*, for the emancipation and reconstruction of the oppressed nation under the dictatorship of the proletariat. A workers revolution in South Africa, with its concentration of industry and wealth, will be the motor force for the liberation of the desperately impoverished black masses throughout the continent. Where to begin? Now is the time for internationalist communists, black, coloured, Indian and white, to undertake the construction of unobtrusive nuclei, in and oriented toward the workers movement, laying the basis for a multiracial revolutionary workers party in the struggle to reforge the Fourth International. ■



English/UPI-Reuters  
**Apartheid police prepare to attack black squatters at Crossroads, near Cape Town.**

reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 375, 22 March 1985

# For Workers Revolution in South Africa!

## Black Masses Battle Apartheid Repression

Black revolt against apartheid repression in South Africa took to the streets of Crossroads, the defiant squatters settlement near Cape Town, last month. This tightly organized community of 100,000 black toilers has been a living symbol of resistance to the white-supremacist regime. Under the dictates of apartheid, in which more than 3.5 million blacks have been deported to the starvation poverty of the bantustans since 1960, this community of "illegal" black squatters should not exist. And Pretoria has tried time and time again to bulldoze its humble shacks, schools and clinics into the dust and deport its Xhosa-speaking inhabitants to the bantustan hellholes of the Ciskei and Transkei. Recently, the Botha regime announced plans to "consolidate" the entire 250,000-strong black population living around Cape Town (including those with "legal" residence) into a concentration camp with one access road called Khayelitsha where the rents are too high and the cell-like "homes" too small for the desperately impoverished black workers and their families.

But on February 18 Crossroads residents took to the streets to protest their threatened removal. They built flaming barricades out of oil drums, old tires and logs. Three thousand protesters battled South Africa's heavily armed, brutally racist police for two days with stones and their bare hands. Eighteen blacks were murdered by these apartheid butchers, including two babies only two and six months old who suffocated from tear gas fumes; nearly 300 were wounded. But 28 police vehicles were damaged and 26 of the racist thugs were injured, and as a result of their defiance the courageous Crossroads residents once again have forced Pretoria to back down. On February 21 the white-supremacist minister of "black affairs" (a post akin to Hitler's minister of "Jewish affairs") Gerrit Viljoen indicated that plans to move the residents of Cape Town's three main black townships would be



English/UPI-Reuters

**Defiant Crossroads residents fight for their homes, face down bloody apartheid police attempt to remove them.**

scrapped. And five days later he proclaimed that Crossroads would be rebuilt as a "legal" black township, albeit with 70 percent of its inhabitants shipped off to Khayelitsha or the bantustans because of "overcrowding."

### Free the UDF 16 and All Anti-Apartheid Prisoners!

While black protesters battled apartheid's police in Crossroads, apartheid's security agents were busy busting into 70 offices and homes of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and its supporters. Eight leaders of this anti-apartheid coalition were rounded up and jailed on "treason charges." Together with eight colleagues arrested last year on similar charges, they are fighting for their lives.

The popular-frontist UDF is composed of more than 600 organizations, from black unions to merchant groups and sports clubs. The UDF and its liberal-utopian policies of "peaceful change" are backed by South Africa's oldest anti-apartheid nationalist organization, the African National Congress, and the allied Stalinist Communist Party

(SACP), both of which have been banned under Pretoria's draconian "Suppression of Communism" act.

Among those recently arrested was Albertina Sisulu, the 66-year-old UDF president who is the wife of former ANC general secretary Walter Sisulu. Along with Nelson Mandela and other ANC leaders, Sisulu has languished in South Africa's torture-chamber and murder-cell prisons for two decades, serving a life sentence from the "treason" trials held in the aftermath of the 1960 Sharpeville massacre. The recent arrests are also reminiscent of the notorious treason trials growing out of the arrests of 156 ANC leaders and activists in 1956. In order to dissipate growing support for the ANC's pacifist campaigns against mounting apartheid repression in the 1950s, the regime tied up the ANC in legal proceedings for five years. Finally in 1961 even apartheid's own courts found the last 30 defendants innocent.

The roundup of UDF leaders also included the leaders of its most important trade-union affiliate, the South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU).

Dedicated to a policy of non-racialism, SAAWU was formed in March 1979 after splitting with the "black consciousness"-inspired Black Allied Workers Union. SAAWU considers itself "as much a mass movement as a union" and has been heavily involved in anti-apartheid battles transcending the shopfloor, especially against the brutal oppression of the apartheid puppets that lord it over the Ciskei bantustan where many SAAWU members are forced to live. SAAWU itself split early last year into an East London-based wing led by SAAWU president Thozamile Gqweta and a Durban-based wing led by former SAAWU general secretary Sam Kikine. Gqweta at 31 is South Africa's most persecuted black union leader, having been detained at least nine times and narrowly escaping assassination attempts. He was one of the eight UDF leaders charged with "treason" last year. The recent roundup included Kikine.

The Botha regime is most threatened by the unions that link the power of labor to the more general struggle against apartheid slavery, even if it is under the auspices of the class-collaborationist UDF. Free Mandela. Sisulu, the UDF 16 and all anti-apartheid prisoners!

### Avenge Sharpeville Through Workers Revolution!

The UDF was formed August 1983 in opposition to a new white-supremacist constitution which elevated apartheid's führer P. W. Botha to "Executive President" with dictatorial powers. At the same time, to divide South Africa's non-whites the constitution established powerless ethnic puppet "parliaments" for the "coloured" (mixed-race) and Indian minorities while reinforcing the complete disenfranchisement of the 23 million blacks who constitute almost three-quarters of the population. The UDF led mass boycotts of these sham elections.

The successful boycott humiliated Pretoria. Subsequent peaceful protests against rent increases by impoverished black townships in South Africa's industrial heartland around Johannesburg were met with savage fury, including the unprecedented utilization of the army. The scale of the repression was reminiscent of the Sharpeville massacre whose 25th anniversary is commemorated this month. On 21 March 1960 the Pan-Africanist Congress, an anti-communist split-off from the ANC, called a nationwide protest against apartheid's hated pass laws. These laws strip black Africans of their birthright, turning them into foreigners and indentured servants in



Keystone

### Workers revolution will avenge Sharpeville massacre, 21 March 1960.

their own land. In Sharpeville, a black township near Johannesburg, 69 unarmed protesters were brutally murdered, another 186 were wounded. Subsequently, both the ANC and PAC were banned, their leaders hunted down, imprisoned and murdered, anti-apartheid struggle stilled for a decade.

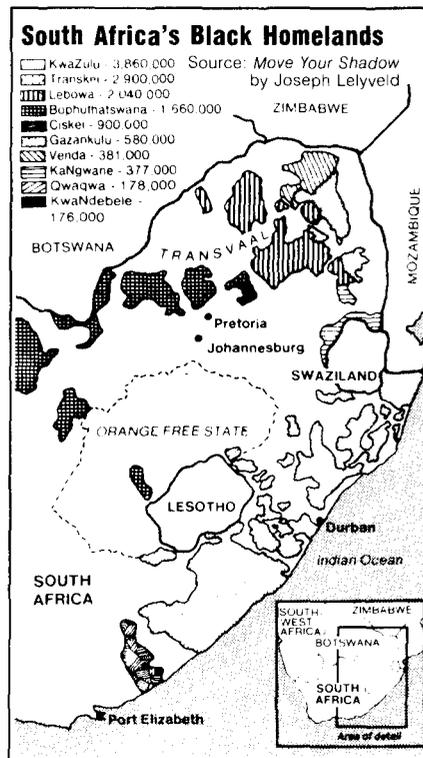
But in that decade a mighty giant—South Africa's six-million-strong black proletariat—was gaining the strength, organization and self-confidence to break the chains of apartheid. With the development of a nascent but potentially explosive black union movement, the thunder of the 1973 Durban strikes broke the post-Sharpeville silence. And last year township protests spilled over into

the factories and mines of the Rand. In mid-September the economic foundations of apartheid were shaken as the first legal (under apartheid's corporatist labor codes) strike by black gold miners exploded in battles with the armed forces. And in early November, in the most significant action to date, black unions joined with students for a two-day general strike which paralyzed the Transvaal industrial belt around Johannesburg.

The police shoot to kill in the townships. Black union and anti-apartheid leaders are jailed. But the apartheid rulers hesitate at trying to behead the black union movement for fear of proletarian upheavals which would shatter apartheid slavery. They cannot escape their dependence on black labor. It is the spectre of workers revolution that frightens the racist rulers, not only in Pretoria, but also their big brothers in Washington, London and the other imperialist capitals. For them, South Africa is not only a strategic producer of precious metals and minerals, but with its military and economic domination of southern Africa and its control of key shipping lanes, it is a strategic ally in their anti-Soviet war drive.

### No to Imperialist Saviors of Apartheid!

The rulers sense that token concessions cannot head off the boiling black revolt. "More than any other single event, the Transvaal general strike convinced everyone that we were in a crisis, that we had to act," said a South African company director. Sure enough, Chambers of Commerce representing 80 percent of South Africa's industry have now come out with a statement against the bantustans, detentions without trial and racist laws limiting blacks' economic mobility, and for "meaningful political participation" for blacks. But every attempt at "reform" opens another crack



New York Times

**Bantustan system is key to super-exploitation of black labor.**

for popular resistance while repression only fans the flames of revolt. Hence the apparent zigzags of the racist apartheid regime.

Thus, on the one hand, recent statements from sections of the ruling class that it will be necessary to negotiate with the ANC and rumors of talks in the offing, P. W. Botha's "offer" to release

led by the "black consciousness" Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) carrying placards with slogans like "Socialist AZAPO vs. Capitalist Kennedy" (see "Black South African Militants Protest Imperialist Swine," *Young Spartacus* No. 124, February 1985). We solidarize with AZAPO's just denunciations of this hypocritical imperialist politician, which

slavery of South Africa's gold and diamond mines. And under the boot of Pretoria's economic domination, Machel has been turned into a policeman for apartheid while Pretoria-backed Mozambique "contras" wreak havoc on that country's desperately poor and backward economy.

Throughout the African continent, ravaged by centuries of colonialism and imperialism, the questions of democracy and genuine emancipation are integrally linked to a socialist reconstruction of society. Given the weakness, politically as well as socially, of the proletariat in most of the balkanized states of sub-Saharan Africa, "independence" has meant imperialist-dominated bonapartist dictatorships based on tribal genocide, mass famine and pestilence. Given the tremendous social power of South Africa's black proletariat, it can command a better future for itself, and be the motor force for social revolution throughout the continent. But to do this it must, through the forging of an internationalist, Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard, overcome its own tremendous political backwardness which is in inverse relation to its potential social power.

The root cause of this backwardness lies in South Africa's peculiar internal colonial structure, the product of uneven and combined development. The dispossession through war of African land laid the basis for permanently settled European populations to organize on a mass scale a huge, migratory, superexploited and hideously oppressed black labor force. The black toilers confront a ruling class and tyrannical police state which is white. Given the extent to which oppression is shared by all strata of the black population it is relatively easy for them to be held under the sway of a nationalist agenda limited to the amelioration or elimination of white minority rule.

Yet economism, including its "left" variants, which divides the struggle for proletarian self-organization from the more general struggle against apartheid repression in all of its manifestations, is as much an obstacle to the proletariat becoming what Marx called a political "class for itself" as are the nationalists. The urgent necessity is for the black, coloured and Indian proletariat of South Africa to crystallize its communist vanguard based on the program which links the struggle for national emancipation to its own proletarian dictatorship and which sees the smashing of apartheid as the road to workers revolution—the program of Trotsky's Permanent Revolution. ■



**UDF rally celebrates successful boycott of sham parliament elections.**

Mandela and talk with the ANC if they will only renounce "violence"—these would have been unthinkable five years ago. Clearly their aim is to exploit the liberal illusions of the ANC (whose own "Freedom Charter" calls for a form of "power-sharing" that virtually guarantees white *economic* supremacy, i.e., the maintenance of capitalist rule) and the prestige of the ANC's courageous decades-long struggle against apartheid, in order to split and co-opt a neocolonial and comprador wing. But Mandela defiantly rejected Botha's "offer" with a challenge: "Let him renounce violence. Let him say that he will dismantle apartheid." Botha's answer was "treason" arrests of eight more leaders of the UDF, which explicitly repudiates "violence," and the racist rampage of his apartheid thugs in Crossroads. These actions are the fruits of Reagan's "constructive engagement" which emboldens Pretoria's savage repression.

Teddy Kennedy's recent grandstanding tour of South Africa was part of the strategy of "liberal" imperialism which, seeing the writing on the wall for apartheid, seeks to distance itself from the regime and cultivate credible and "moderate" black leaders who can one day keep the country safe for continued exploitation. Kennedy was invited by anti-communist Nobel "Peace" Prize winner Bishop Desmond Tutu, a patron of the UDF, and his visit was welcomed by the ANC, which met with him—but his steps were dogged by demonstrators

left bourgeois commentators worrying over the chord of hostility to capitalism that they struck among black South Africans.

### **For Permanent Revolution in South Africa!**

Given the clear strategic importance and social power of South Africa's black proletariat, all these nationalist groups pay lip service to it. Thus, the UDF hails "the leadership of the working class in the democratic struggle for freedom." ANC president Oliver Tambo declares: "the offensive of the working class is, and must be, an integral part of the national liberation struggle." AZAPO and its allies in the eclectic National Forum grouping call in the Manifesto of the Azanian People for a "democratic anti-racist worker Republic." What each of these groups has in common is they want to use the proletariat as cannon fodder in the service of an *alien* class program.

The ANC wants to give South African imperialists a democratic facelift, turning Harry Oppenheimer and Anglo American into "equal opportunity" exploiters. AZAPO and more radical nationalists want to displace the Harry Oppenheimers with a petty-bourgeois elite that aspires to exploit its *own* proletariat. It is indicative that AZAPO holds up Mozambique as a model. But Samora Machel's Frelimo has only displaced the Portuguese colonialists as labor contractors selling Mozambique toilers into the superexploited semi-

# Smash the Whole Apartheid Slave System!

## Interracial Sex Ban Jolted in South Africa

On April 15 the racist South African apartheid regime announced that it will repeal the Immorality Act and the Mixed Marriages Act which make interracial sex and marriage "crimes." These laws, like all the barbaric institutions of apartheid slavery, are concentrated and codified expressions of the chauvinism and racial oppression endemic to the decaying imperialist order. South African racism is unique, for not only does the color line determine who is on top and who is on the bottom—here *an entire people* oppresses and benefits from the exploitation of another. To consolidate the oppression of a people or prepare their extermination, strict separation must be enforced; ties of blood and deep emotion must be cut to delineate what Hitler called the *Herrenvolk* ("master race"). But the inevitability of interracial sex and marriage bonds within a common species is a fundamental challenge to every "master race" dogma, and a profound assertion that all races are equal and indissolubly mixed.

Therefore, it is out of considerations of elementary human decency that we as Marxists hail the repeal of vile measures which seek to regiment and suppress the most deeply felt human emotions. Of course, we fully recognize that this legislative measure does not touch the fundamental question of power in white-supremacist South Africa. Nor will it mean that the estimated thousands of mixed couples who have been living in the shadows are now suddenly free of the discrimination, humiliation and racist violence which is inseparable from apartheid. In a recent interview with a handsome interracial couple the *New York Times* (30 April) quotes Sylvia Vollenhoven: "We're not going to go straight out and hold hands in the Wimpy Bar in [Cape Town Afrikaner suburb] Bellville.... [As a mixed couple] you tend to chart a very safe route through life." But it is a good thing when you get the cops out of the bedroom, and in racist South Africa interracial sex and



Peters/Black Star

**Cape Town couple Sylvia Vollenhoven and Bob Sedon, with their son Ryan. Interracial sex and marriage challenge precepts of apartheid.**

marriage are particularly explosive because they contradict the basic precepts of apartheid.

The repeal of the Immorality and Mixed Marriages Acts is a calculated political move by the Pretoria regime of President P.W. Botha. His policy has been to make certain cosmetic reforms in the institutions of apartheid which leave intact the white-supremacist power structure based on the superexploitation of black labor. Take for example the May 25 announcement that the prohibition of multiracial political parties is to be dropped. How much does such a "reform" mean in a country where the black majority is completely disenfranchised, where "coloureds" (mixed-race) and Indians may "vote" only for completely powerless, segregated "parlia-

ments," and where even the leadership of the peaceful, multiracial anti-apartheid United Democratic Front (UDF) is on trial for treason?

The South African laws forbidding interracial sex and marriage are reviled around the world and by repealing them Botha gives the Reagan administration a sop to justify Washington's apartheid "constructive engagement." At the same time Botha seeks to give credibility to his widely discredited coloured and Indian parliaments. The repeal affects primarily whites and coloureds, as apartheid's brutal and all-sided segregation of blacks minimizes their social interaction with whites. As with his puppet parliaments, Botha's announced repeal of these laws is a continuation of the age-old colonial strategy of divide and

conquer. But while not changing the basic fact of white domination and black enslavement upon which apartheid is based, the repeal of these laws challenges its very rationale.

### The Color Bar in America

When American reporters quote Winnie Mandela's rhetorical question, "In what other society do people need to legislate against their own urges?" (*New York Times*, 16 April), they show their short historical memory by implying this is uniquely South African. Not only do the Immorality and Mixed Marriages Acts deserve comparison to the Nazis' 1935 Nuremberg laws, which forbade marriage and sex between Jews and "Aryans"; there is a comparison which is closer, and closer to home: the anti-miscegenation laws of the United States. In 1962, Lerone Bennett, Jr. noted in *Before the Mayflower* that "twenty-two states still forbid interracial marriages." In addition to barring marriages between whites and blacks, California and most of the Western states banned marriages between whites and Asians. The formal elimination of these laws was completed by the Supreme Court only as a result of the civil rights movement, in 1967.

Indeed the tradition regarding "miscegenation" in much of South Africa's history was not as harsh as that of the antebellum American South. In the South African slave society of the 18th century, and even until the middle of this century in the Cape province, the lighter the complexions of those of mixed race and the greater their wealth, the more freely they were allowed to "pass" into white society without too many questions being asked. In the American South the "one drop" rule was widely applied, condemning those with just a "touch of the tarbrush" to servitude.

Already in the American colonial period, Bennett reports that "sensing a deterioration of slavery if the barriers between masters and slaves were dissolved in the equalitarian crucible of sexual intimacy, they [racial purists] sought to stop racial crossing by statute." The first such law, passed in Maryland in 1664, was "aimed at white women who had resisted every effort to inoculate them with the virus of racial pride." This was no accident—there is a deep link between the oppression of women, of classes and of races. White men's sexual access to black women is essentially taken for granted in racist America. But the crime of crimes, the act that sets off the hysterical fury of the Ku Klux Klan and lynch mobs in the South, is the sex-

**Nazis parade woman through the streets for "crime" of sex with a Jew.**



ual liaison of a white woman and a black man. This crossing of color and class lines (especially in a slaveholding society) above all violates the white woman's subordinate role in patriarchal society as the passive, "pure" bearer of heirs. The central function of the monogamous family, and woman's role within it, is to be literally a transmission belt for the inheritance of private property to the next generation. The "honor" of white women so assiduously defended by the lynchers is based on the embodiment of private property in slaves defined by the color line.

Capitalist America is a deeply racist

society in which gains for black people are all too reversible. The anti-miscegenation laws were already repealed once before, during Reconstruction, the period of democratic gains for blacks won by the Civil War. In the era of Jim Crow reaction which followed, those laws were reinstated, often in harsher form. Indeed, the courts in America are still punishing interracial sex: in Georgia in 1982 Kathy Blackburn, a working-class white woman, had her white son taken away by the court after she had a baby daughter with a black man. It was a chilling punishment for a white woman stepping over the color line. The judge

Between 1949 and 1971 there were over 17,000 prosecutions under Section 16, the race clause, of the Immorality Act [apartheid South Africa's law making interracial sex a crime]. Subsequent prosecutions would bring the total to over 20,000....

Police officers hiding in the boots [trunks] of cars, in the ceilings of homes, perching up trees—all in the cause of obtaining photographic or other evidence of sex between two people of different colour—became part of the curious heritage of [South Africa].

The practice of police—feeling the warmth of the bed, searching for hairs on the bed linen, confiscating stained sheets, subjecting their suspects to examinations by the District Surgeon—were common knowledge. By the early '70s the tally of 34 morals cases a week in the Johannesburg magistrate's court was regarded as "normal."... [The results of the Immorality Act] have included a string of suicides, countless couples driven

into exile, separation of parents from children, forgery, non-support of children.

Most known suicides have been white men—many of them middle aged plattelanders [rural white Afrikaners] threatened with charges under the Act. One of the seven men accused in Excelsior, the Free State town which won notoriety in 1970 as a result of the Immorality Act, committed suicide....

At least one young white woman had her seven-month-old baby removed because it was not white and had the infant used in court to condemn her and her lover because of the dark skin it had inherited. And the very presence of the Immorality Act has left hundreds of black and coloured women bearing children of their white lovers—and quite unable to claim maintenance because they would have to reveal a "criminal" conception.

—*Argus* (Cape Town, South Africa), 16 April 1985

editorialized out of court, "How would you like to have a female relative living with a black man and having a child? I personally am opposed to it" (*New York Times*, 18 February 1982).

### The Nightmare of the "Volk"

A crucial strand in the web of racism which envelops South Africa originates in the embattled history of the Afrikaners, the majority of the South African whites. In the 19th century their Boer ancestors hacked out a piece of Africa for themselves against the more numerous indigenous tribes. In terms of social development, Bibles and guns barely divided one cattle-herding people from the

slaves and indigenous Khoi servants. The previous 1927 Immorality Act which had prohibited intercourse between white and African was amended to prohibit it between whites and *all* non-whites. The entire population was racially classified. "Questionable cases" were summoned before official panels to have pencils stuck in their hair (to distinguish a frizz from a curl), the widths of their noses measured, and so on. South Africa's white English "liberals" of the United Party stripe, more pragmatic racists, differed only in affirming that whites had enough "race pride" not to require laws to keep them from "miscegenating."



Eli Weinberg

**South Africa blacks burn pass book, mark of slavery.**

other. After being militarily crushed by British imperialism's war to seize the gold fields at the turn of the century, the Boers were economically driven to the cities. Here they competed with blacks for laboring jobs, while at the same time possessing the white skin privilege of the right to vote.

These were the conditions in which the fascistic Afrikaner nationalist movement grew. Coming to power in 1948, the Afrikaner nationalists took charge of a system of segregation whose foundations had been laid block-by-block under the auspices of British imperialism over the preceding decades. The Afrikaners moved quickly to tighten the existing system to totalitarian intensity. Reflected in the Immorality and Mixed Marriages Acts was a new harshness toward those of mixed race, the coloureds, who are largely descended from unions between white colonials and their Indonesian

But, like racists everywhere, the Afrikaner nationalists' war for "purity" was a war against themselves and their own history. In the U.S. slave South, it was said, "there is not an old plantation in which the grandchildren of the owner are not whipped in the field by the overseers" (*Before the Mayflower*). In South Africa, history has really taken revenge. One ardent supporter of passing the Immorality Act, a minister of the sternly Calvinist Afrikaans Dutch Reformed Church (which provided scriptural sanction for the act) turned out to be one of the first to be prosecuted! He is widely remembered in a couplet: "Beneath those dark and somber britches/Dwelt some dark, uncontrollable itches." Thousands of subsequent prosecutions left a trail of destruction among god-fearing Afrikaner nationalists. A turning point finally came in the rural Afrikaans town of Excelsior, when several leading citizens

were implicated and one committed suicide. After that the rate of prosecutions fell off significantly.

Along with all the racist violence and degradation of apartheid, South Africa is by and large a miserably provincial place, lorded over by an Afrikaner version of the Moral Majority: no movies on Sundays; no lying closer than 18 inches to each other by the pool if you're in the misnamed Orange Free State province; the book *Black Beauty* once banned because of its title. In short the concentration of cultural, sexual and racial repression could hardly be more volatile.

No wonder interracial sex has been an essential theme among white South African writers. André Brink seems fixated on the subject. Alan Paton uses it to show hypocritical racist ideologues with their pants down. J.M. Coetzee lays bare with his grim intensity the relationship of an Afrikaner farm woman with a black foreman. James McClure's hardened detectives trace multiple threads of sexual and interracial antagonism and entanglement in their investigations. Breyton Breytenbach, the best living writer in Afrikaans, first turned against the *volk* in a major way by marrying a Vietnamese woman and emigrating, perforce, to Paris. He was later convicted of returning incognito to South Africa to launch an underground white support group for the struggle to smash apartheid.

The very existence of the coloureds is a constant reminder to the South African racists of the lie of "white-supremacy." An Afrikaans scholar, Dr. Hans Heese, himself descended from a mixed family, is being sued left and right for libel by outraged Afrikaners for a book in which he shows that many leading Afrikaner families, including the Bothas and Treurnichts, are of mixed descent. Several Bothas sit in the South African apartheid regime's cabinet and Andries Treurnicht is head of the Conservative Party, an ultraright split-off from the ruling Nationalists which decries Botha's repeal of the Immorality Act as a sellout of the white man.

Botha now speaks for a Cape-based tendency in Afrikaner nationalism which sees the coloureds as "brown Afrikaners" who must be brought into the fold so they can stand on the white side of the line against the vast majority of 22 million blacks. Today this seems a vain dream, as is shown by the coloureds' massive rejection of Botha's puppet parliament. Further, this repeal of the racial sex bar poses some awkward anomalies for apartheid: In a society where residential areas are segregated by law, where will the legalized mixed couples



Cabell/Savannah Morning News

**Kathy Blackburn with daughter. Georgia courts snatched white son (in photo behind).**

live? How will children be educated? Treurnicht's ultraright supporters have a point when they ask: How can one allow people of different races to sleep together and have children, how can one integrate more public facilities, without eventually recognizing equal political rights for all in a non-racial South Africa? This is but one expression of the crisis into which Afrikaner nationalism, and white rule generally, have been thrown by the fundamental challenge of rising black power centered in the millions-strong black working class.

### For a Multiracial Working-Class Vanguard Party!

The liberal reformists who support the African National Congress simply dismiss the repeal of the ban on interracial sex and marriage, saying the South African government must show itself "willing" to make basic changes. Dr. Nthato Motlana, a black leader in the township of Soweto, said outright: "We are not interested in the repeal of these laws" (*Sowetan*, 16 April). We recognize the lifting of the bar as a democratic gain to be defended and extended like all others; at the same time we have no illusions that the apartheid state can be pressured into making fundamental changes in its society, which necessarily rests on the enforced segregation of blacks as a superexploited working class.

"In radical black terms," said Sylvia Vollenhoven in an interview last year, "it's a sellout to marry a white because it makes the society look normal." In fact, it exposes the insanity of apartheid. Her decision to marry a white Englishman "was a crisis of conscience between

what I hold as a political ideology and my personal life.... I'm still highly suspect," she said (*New York Times*, 12 September 1984). Antagonism to interracial marriages among blacks is in part an expression of the long accumulated and understandable bitterness of blacks toward what Lerone Bennett, Jr. called "the one-way prerogatives of the white male." Much of what interracial sex there is is exacted by the white *baas* from his black female servants, or takes place between white men and black women in warehouses on the edge of the bantustans and neighboring black statelets. (A similar pattern exists in the American South.)

As Marxists and revolutionary integrationists we fight for a socialist society in which "race mixing" is the free expression of genuine and all-sided social equality among all peoples. Hostility to interracial sex and marriage politically generalized by black nationalists represents acquiescence in the racist status quo and/or a program for race war.

South Africa is rumbling down the tracks to civil war with the whites armed to the teeth and determined not to give up anything and defiant blacks determined not to submit any more to the *sjambok* (whip) of apartheid slavery. In-

sofar as this confrontation takes place solely along race lines it will be a bloody disaster for the oppressed. But the Achilles' heel of apartheid is its absolute dependence on black labor and in South Africa, with its six-million-strong proletariat, the class principle can prevail. Hundreds of thousands of black workers are coming together with a coloured proletariat, Indians and even some courageous whites like martyred union organizer Neil Aggett, in a burgeoning union movement. This development lays the basis for the construction of a multiracial proletarian vanguard party based on the understanding that those who labor must rule.

As proletarian internationalists we fight against all forms of national oppression. Every people has a right to exist but no people has the right to oppress another. If the oppressed are to achieve genuine emancipation in South Africa, a black-centered workers government must struggle to place in its service the technical, scientific and administrative skills of the white population. As for the eventual assimilation of the whites into the far greater black population in a post-apartheid socialist South Africa, that is a possible development which we would in no way oppose. ■

## Women and Revolution

Journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League/U.S.

**Women and Revolution**

Journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League

**On Black Women in South Africa**

**Smash Apartheid! For Workers Revolution!**

See Page 12

Contents: 1. Black Women in South Africa (5)  
 2. Communists International's Work Among Women (5)  
 3. An Open Letter to Black Women (9)  
 4. Reagan's Sex Witch Hunt (9)  
 5. The Spartacist League's Stand on the Revolution (9)  
 6. Nicaraguan Women in Struggle (24)

**Women and Revolution**

Journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League

**Spartacists Fight Against Capitalist Reunification Fourth Reich: Mortal Danger to Workers...5**

**Defend the Gains of East German Women!**

**Islam, South Africa and The Satanic Verses**

**No. 31, Spring 1986**  
\$.50 (24 pages)

**Featuring: Black Women in South Africa**

**No. 37, Spring 1990**  
\$1 (48 pages)

**Featuring: Islam, South Africa and The Satanic Verses**

Subscriptions: \$3/3 issues

Order from/make checks payable to:  
Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116, USA

# Behind South Africa's Financial Crisis

## Wall Street and the Apartheid State

The prominent white South African liberal Helen Suzman recently observed that no one has to call for divestment anymore. It's already happening. Foreign investors do not want to touch South Africa right now. The bloodsoaked racist apartheid state has been hit by a massive flight of capital. Stocks of South African companies, even gold-mining shares, are going for a song. The value of the country's currency, the rand, plummeted to an all-time low of 35¢ late last month, half its value at the beginning of this year, a quarter of its value in 1981. American and West European banks have called in their loans to the tune of \$2 billion. They even threatened to seize the foreign assets of Nedbank, South Africa's largest domestically owned bank, if it did not meet its international obligations.

In just a few weeks David Rockefeller and his fellow bankers have upset the South African economy far more than decades of activity by the divestment/sanctions lobby. "We are being asked to pay all our debts in a minute—no country can do that," exclaimed the chief economist of Anglo American Corp., the giant mining and industrial conglomerate in South Africa. After temporarily shutting down both the stock exchange and foreign-exchange markets, Pretoria announced a four-month freeze on the repayment of principal on its \$19 billion in foreign bank debt. As if he represented some bankrupt Third World regime, the head of South Africa's central bank journeyed hat-in-hand to London and Washington, pleading with international financiers to roll over their loans.

While the actions of foreign bankers have made front-page news, the South African financial crisis was actually triggered by the flight of *domestic* capital. Whenever the unrest in the black townships threatens to spill over into their suburbs, well-to-do whites cache more liquid assets in Wall Street, the City of London, Frankfurt and Zurich. Last year \$2 billion fled the country. As one Wall

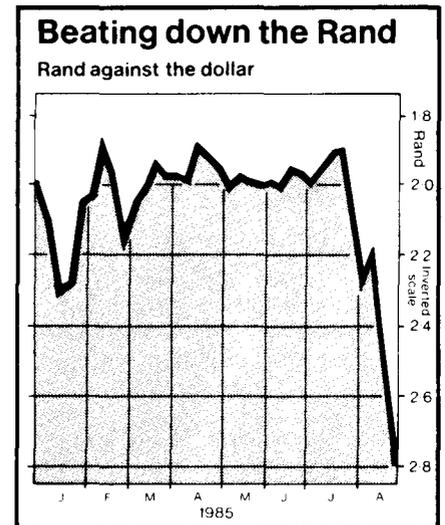


Checani/Business Week  
**South African rand plunges as capital flees.**

Street economist put it, "At the first sign of trouble, locally held funds move out" (*Business Week*, 26 August). And no one doubts that South Africa is in big trouble.

To be sure, no one who looks at the situation soberly also doubts that the white-supremacist regime can drown in blood a black upheaval at this time. But in the longer run international capital is deeply pessimistic about the future—and not just the distant future—of the apartheid state. Foreign investors ask themselves: "How much longer can a privileged caste of 4.5 million whites totally subjugate and hideously superexploit 26 million black Africans, coloureds [people of mixed race] and Indians?" Sooner or later, they figure, the white police state is going to crack, and after that the deluge...possibly a descent into anarchy and prolonged racial, ethnic and tribalist bloodletting.

But that is not the only alternative to apartheid capitalism. South Africa's mines and factories, its railroads and gold reserves, were produced by the sweat and blood of black, coloured and Indian labor, especially the black migrant workers from the bantustans and neighboring black states who are hideously superexploited in the mines. To paraphrase Marx, apartheid has created



Source: The Economist

in a six-million-strong black proletariat, stripped of every democratic and human right, its own gravedigger. The wealth of South Africa belongs not to the capitalists—the Wall Street, Frankfurt and London bankers or Johannesburg mine magnates—but to the toilers who created it. And the only kind of "divestment" that will benefit the exploited and oppressed will be proletarian revolution, and the expropriation of these riches by a black-centered workers government as part of a socialist federation of southern Africa.

The spectre of communism in South Africa also haunts Wall Street. *South Africa: Time Running Out* was the title of an influential 1981 study commissioned by the Rockefeller Foundation. The commission was headed by Ford Foundation president Franklin Thomas (Ford is a major investor in South Africa). This study concluded that "all the ingredients of a major crisis are present there. The dangers of political instability, large-scale racial conflict, and the growth of Communist influence are real."

At the same time, Western capitalism cannot write off South Africa as hopeless. The stakes are much too high. The ruling classes in the U.S. and West Europe have convinced themselves, in

the face of South African realities, that there is a reformist solution which will preserve their interests. Thus the Rockefeller Foundation study urges the U.S. government "to promote genuine political power sharing in South Africa."

However, these days South African "power-sharing" futures are selling at a large discount on Wall Street and other Western financial centers. The attitude of international capital toward South Africa is, let's get what we can while we can. *Business Week* (23 September) reports: "In the face of escalating strife and the deaths of more than 700—mostly blacks—since rioting broke out a year ago, nearly every American corporation in the country has an escape plan." Foreign capital in South Africa is highly volatile and invested in ways designed to minimize the risk when time finally does run out for the apartheid state.

### The Land Where Gold Is King

While South Africa is the only industrialized country in sub-Saharan Africa, in one fundamental way its role in the world capitalist economy is similar to that of a backward Third World country. It is an exporter of raw materials and an importer of manufactured products. And one raw material quite dominates the economy: gold. It accounts for 50 percent of South Africa's foreign-exchange earnings and almost 20 percent of its gross national product. As gold goes, so goes the South African economy. When the price of gold plunged from \$850 an ounce in 1980 to less than \$500 an ounce in 1983, hitting a low of \$285 earlier this year, apartheid capitalism plunged into the worst depression in 50 years.

It is, above all, a golden chain which binds the apartheid state to Wall Street, the City of London, Frankfurt and Zurich. South Africa supplies world capitalism with 60 percent of that commodity Marx called "the universal medium of payment" and "the universal embodiment of wealth." For a century the rich veins of gold on the Witwatersrand and superexploited black African labor have been a powerful magnet attracting capital—originally British, in the post-war period increasingly American—to southern Africa. The dominant mining company, Harry Oppenheimer's Anglo American Corp., is well named, since half of it is owned by Englishmen and Americans. Fifty percent of the stock of the seven mining groups which control South African gold production is in the hands of foreign investors (or was until they started selling off like crazy a few months ago).

The enormous wealth of apartheid



Matisson/Time

**Miners fired during recent South African mine strike. International monetary system rests on blood and sweat of black gold miners.**

capitalism and, indeed, the international monetary system rests upon the naked back of the black African miner, who daily risks being killed or maimed digging in 110° F heat and darkness of the deep pits, who when not working lives in males-only barracks under prison-like conditions, who faces being sent back to starve in the bantustan hellholes at any show of resistance.

Thus the threat of black revolt triggers international financial panic. This is the third time South Africa has experienced massive capital flight. The 1960 Sharpeville massacre provoked militant nationwide protests and mass stayaway strikes. The African National Congress (ANC) abandoned passive resistance and attempted armed insurrection. It looked for a moment like the long-anticipated black uprising was at hand. A billion dollars was withdrawn from the country in the space of weeks. The apartheid state faced the worst balance-of-payments crisis in its history.

In 1960, U.S. imperialism came to the aid of its beleaguered South African ally by arranging emergency loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). But it was not timely IMF loans which restored foreign investor confidence, however, it was the crushing of all resistance to white racist rule. Eleven thousand militants were arrested and every major anti-apartheid organization, including the ANC and Stalinist Communist Party, was driven underground, their leaders killed, imprisoned or forced into exile.

In the decade following Sharpeville a totalitarian police state reigned supreme over the defenseless, atomized and demoralized black masses. This was the perfect climate for foreign investment, which poured into the country. In 1972 the U.S. business magazine *Fortune* wrote:

"The Republic of South Africa has always been regarded by foreign investors as a gold mine, one of those rare and

refreshing places where profits are great and problems are small. Capital is not threatened by political instability or nationalization. Labor is cheap, the market is booming, and the currency hard and convertible."

—quoted in Martin J. Murray, ed., *South African Capitalism and Black Political Opposition* (1982)

The 1960s and early '70s marked the golden age, so to speak, of apartheid capitalism. Since then troubles have increasingly accumulated for the Randlords and their partners on Wall Street and in the City of London. In early 1973 the black working class shattered the police-state calm as the city of Durban was paralyzed by a mass strike. The rising level of workers' struggles converged with a new generation of black student militants in the 1976 Soweto uprising. Mass stayaway strikes in solidarity with the rebellious black youth embraced 70-80 percent of the labor force resident in Soweto, whose two million inhabitants make it the largest city in sub-Saharan Africa. At the height of the unrest capital once again fled the country. And Washington once again pumped money into South Africa via the IMF, almost half a billion dollars, to quiet down the panicky financial markets.

The Soweto rebellion inspired a rising line of black resistance on almost all fronts, most importantly the emergence of a black workers movement. In 1979 the official Wiehahn Commission warned that black unions "can unite with other unions through affiliation (as is happening now) without government approval and thus embrace strategic industries which can be paralyzed at any given moment."

At the same time, another fundamental contradiction of apartheid capitalism came to the fore. Industrial expansion was blocked by a growing shortage of skilled workers, traditionally and legally restricted to the white labor aristocracy.

In 1979 the Chamber of Mines projected that by 1982 there would be a shortage of 50,000 skilled artisans throughout the economy. But to scrap the industrial color bar and develop a large pool of skilled black workers would enormously strengthen the increasingly powerful and combative black labor movement.

### Apartheid Capitalism in Depression

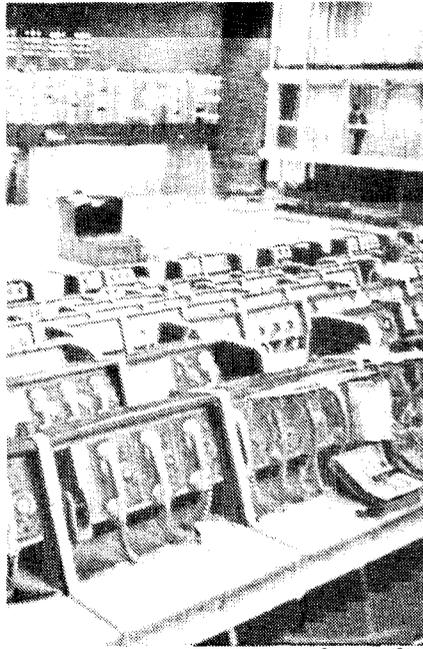
South Africa's manufacturing sector stagnated in the late 1970s, but the effect was offset and partially masked by the inflationary boom in gold. Then the bottom fell out for the South African economy. As monetarism/austerity swept Western capitalism—Reagan's America, Thatcher's Britain, Mitterrand's France, Kohl's West Germany—the price of gold plummeted. The world depression also hit South Africa's other metal exports (e.g., platinum, manganese). And to make matters worse, a severe drought has devastated agriculture throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

Black unemployment in South Africa soared to over 20 percent of the labor force. The hideous poverty of the townships became even more so. Famine and disease ravaged the bantustans. Even white South Africa did not escape the effects of the economic crisis. At the lower end of the white caste, unemployment reappeared for the first time in decades. At the upper end, well-to-do families now hired their black servants on a part-time basis as an economizing measure.

The Botha regime responded to the depression with a racist version of Keynesian deficit spending. The government budget jumped from 22 percent of gross national product in 1981 to 29 percent in 1984. Needless to say, this vastly increased expenditure did not go to the black masses starving on the bantustans. Rather billions of rands were pumped into the growing military sector, fueled by the war in Namibia; to subsidize the drought-stricken Afrikaner farmers (the original Boers); and to increase the salaries of civil servants by 30 percent. The state bureaucracy employs a *third* of the entire white labor force.

The effects of this apartheid Keynesianism were predictable. Inflation took off. So did borrowing from foreign banks. International debt jumped from \$12 to \$19 billion between 1981 and 1984. Half this money was owed by the government and its panoply of state-controlled companies. The rand steadily depreciated, which further fueled domestic inflation.

The business community was not



Gunston/Sipa

### Panicked apartheid regime closes Johannesburg stock exchange as black revolt continues to spread.

amused at the effects of Bothanomics. Bankers denounced the regime for borrowing abroad to pay inflated government salaries. The *Business Times* demanded, "hack the public service." The liberal *Rand Daily Mail* (which has since folded) editorialized:

"Wishful apartheid thinking lies at the root of our economic misery. The government is taking too much money from the productive sectors of the economy to pump into that overweight, overpaid, inefficient monolith that was created to administer the disastrous policies of the [ruling] National Party."

—quoted in *Wall Street Journal*,  
5 February

The Botha regime responded to these business pressures by imposing a monetarist/austerity program last year, driving interest rates to a historic high of 25 percent and further depressing the worst depression in 50 years.

The depression naturally also affected the multinationals operating in South Africa. The return on direct foreign investment slid from 20 percent at the beginning of the decade to 5 percent in 1984! Suddenly, the idea that divestment in South Africa might be a good thing, after all, began to be heard in corporate boardrooms from Detroit to London. Early this year Ford, then the largest carmaker in South Africa, sold 60 percent of its operation to Anglo American. Coca-Cola, likewise, sold off a majority interest, and International Harvester sold its truck operation outright. The British-owned Barclays, the largest foreign bank in South Africa, has reduced its hold-



Campbell/Time

ing by 20 percent. Overall, direct U.S. investment has fallen from \$2.8 billion in 1981 to \$2.3 billion. The conservative London *Economist* (30 March) observed with its usual cynicism:

"Disinvestment pressure has come at a convenient time for many American corporations, as profitability in South Africa falls and the Far East looks a more attractive market.... Managers have thus been able to reduce new capital flows to South African subsidiaries while holding onto market share, milking their profits and satisfying anti-apartheid lobbyists."

The notion of rad-lib activists that divestment means multinationals will no longer profit from apartheid displays a woeful ignorance of how capitalism works. Foreign companies can sell off every last asset and still *continue to superexploit* South Africa's black workers. A major business enterprise, a large factory or big bank, for example, is almost never sold for cash. It is usually paid for with *interest-bearing* notes. And when profits are at depression-level lows and interest rates near historic highs, *divestment is good business*. Over the past half decade international capital has significantly shifted the way in which it shares in the superexploitation of South Africa's black toilers.

### Smash Apartheid Capitalism Through Workers Revolution!

Even before the present black revolt erupted last summer, the South African economy was in deep trouble: unemployment, investment and profits were stuck at depression levels; inflation

was accelerating, and international debt was building up rapidly. What turned this severe conjunctural crisis into a wholesale financial panic is, of course, the prospect of bloody civil war.

Significantly the panic button was first pushed not by the multinationals and Wall Street banks but by South Africa's own white moneyed classes. Reporting from Johannesburg early this year, the *Wall Street Journal* (5 February) wrote:

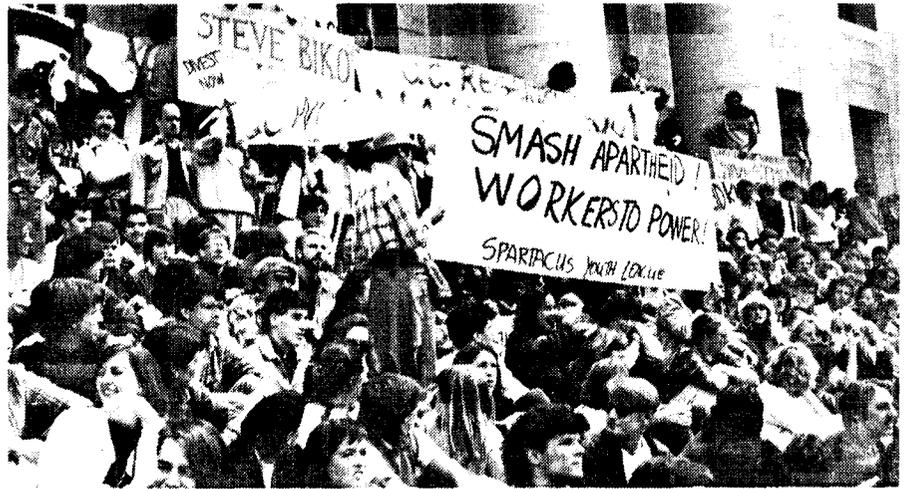
"Many whites here, clinging to their privileges and luxuries, nevertheless exude apprehension about the future. A small furor was created a couple of weeks ago by the private publication of a report entitled 'How You Can Get a Second Passport'—how, in other words, sanctuary can be arranged elsewhere if apartheid collapses."

While not many whites have as yet been leaving South Africa for sanctuaries elsewhere, they have been sending their money to sanctuaries elsewhere. The outflow of South African-owned funds tripled between 1983 and 1984, from \$700 million to \$2 billion.

Most of this white capital flight comes from middle- and upper-class English speakers rather than Afrikaners. It is not simply that the English are more fearful about black revolt. They do not relish living in a garrison state under a die-hard Afrikaner regime which has learned nothing and forgotten nothing since the Great Trek of the 1830s. What is involved is not just a clash of national cultures and historic enmities. A diehard Afrikaner government would likely turn the country into an economic *laager*, restricting the import of luxuries and the export of capital. The Botha regime has already moved in this direction by imposing a two-tier foreign-exchange system.

As massive white capital flight drained their reserves, South African banks were forced to borrow abroad ever larger amounts on ever shorter terms. Of South Africa's \$19 billion in foreign bank debt, two-thirds falls due within a year, almost half within six months. Such a lopsided debt structure is exceptional even by Third World standards.

Normally, there would be no question about rolling over these South African loans. But the situation in South Africa is anything but normal. The state of emergency imposed in late July and Botha's hardline speech on August 15 finally convinced international capital that South Africa was fast heading toward a bloody abyss. "The speech was so far removed from South African reality it breeds a sense of fear among businessmen," said a South African consult-



Young Spartacus



SL/SYL (above) call for class struggle against apartheid, not appeals to capitalists' "conscience."

ant for many U.S. firms. More starkly, a West German banker exclaimed, "I fear a bloodbath in which there will be no winners" (*Wall Street Journal*, 5 September). If the apartheid state succeeds in restoring the social peace of the graveyard, as it did after Sharpeville, the Wall Street loans and multinational investments will flow back. In the meantime...

For decades liberals and reformists in the West have demanded "Divest, divest, divest!" in order to pressure the Afrikaner nationalist regime into reforming apartheid. Now, they have divestment—as much as they're ever going to get—for exactly the *opposite* reason. Foreign investors are convinced that the Botha regime will not make the concessions, even verbally, which they hope will dampen black unrest.

The flight of capital can only further depress the South African economy. As revolutionaries, we do not believe in "the worse, the better" in South Africa or elsewhere. Except in a period when the revolutionary overthrow of the apartheid system is immediately posed, isolation from the world market is likely to result in massive dislocation and deprivation

of black toilers, weakening their capacity to struggle.

Wall Street is not only concerned about saving white-supremacy from itself in South Africa. It hopes, as do its political representatives in city halls, Congress and the White House, to exploit the "sanctions" and "divestment" issue to defuse the anger of a deeply alienated black population that sees all too clearly the parallels between racist terror in Soweto and in Harlem. Corporate America wants to convince black people that they have a "friend in Chase Manhattan."

But from Wall Street to the White House, the main enemy is at home! And every blow struck against that enemy by workers and their allies in this country is a real blow for black freedom in South Africa. As communists, we seek to unleash the power of the American proletariat for socialist revolution. The tremendous wealth and technology of this country, which have served to crush the oppressed of Africa and the rest of the world, must be placed in their service to build a socialist future free of want, exploitation and war. ■

# Massive Black Strike Under Apartheid Reign of Terror

## South Africa Showdown

### Forge a Bolshevik Party!

JUNE 17—South Africa's black masses observed the tenth anniversary of the Soweto rebellion, which was bloodily repressed by the apartheid state, with a general strike on June 16. The largest ever "stayaway," involving millions of black workers and shutting down major urban centers, was carried out in defiance of the regime's banning of any and all Soweto commemorations and under draconian nationwide "state of emergency" conditions. As we go to press, the near-total blackout of information from South Africa leaves only scraps of information gleaned from dispatches self-censored by the media to conform to apartheid *baas* P.W. Botha's "emergency" restrictions. In Paris, African National Congress (ANC) leader Oliver Tambo said that, contrary to official reports of "only" eleven killed on Monday, there were "unconfirmed reports of massive slaughter."

Film footage that has gotten through shows the streets of Johannesburg virtually deserted, as were the trains and buses that normally bring hundreds of thousands from Soweto to work in the factories, shops and offices. Reportedly the strike was completely effective in the Eastern Cape region, including blacks, coloureds (mixed-race) and Indians. One business source reported that up to 90 percent of the nation's black workers participated in the strike. In Durban, 40 percent of the workers reportedly stayed away today as well. However, mass demonstrations and the insurrectionary actions Botha claimed were being prepared by "radical and revolutionary elements" apparently did not materialize. In the June 16 test of strength between the Pretoria regime and the combative black masses, it appears that there has been a cold standoff, for now.

Botha declared the "state of emergency" June 12 after the bogus "parliaments" of coloured and Indian representatives balked at giving Law and Order

Minister Louis Le Grange martial law powers. In the early hours of the 12th, security forces rounded up at least 1,200 anti-apartheid militants, including leaders of the United Democratic Front (UDF), the president of the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) Saths Cooper, Piroshaw Camay of the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA), and clergymen. During the next days, over 4,000 were "detained," including many lower and middle-level officials of black unions and anti-apartheid groups, as well as the secretary general of the South African Catholic Bishops Conference and members of the End Conscription Campaign, a white group that opposes the draft.

Under the regulations, detainees may be held incommunicado indefinitely, and no security official can be tried for any actions under the "emergency," including murder. The offices of the Congress of South African Trade Unions

(COSATU) as well as those of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) were ransacked. Winnie Mandela, wife of imprisoned ANC leader Nelson Mandela, was barred from speaking to journalists and restricted to her house from 6 p.m. to 8 a.m. daily. Reporters were completely barred from the black townships and prohibited from reporting any "subversive" statements (such as a strike call), any actions by the police or army, or the names of detainees. On the 16th telephones were cut off for most of the day in the townships around Johannesburg, Cape Town, Pretoria, Port Elizabeth and Durban.

Pretoria geared up for repression on a massive, bloody scale. In an interview on ABC News, T.J. Swanepoel, the police commander who ordered the first shot fired in the massacre of over 1,000 black youth during the 1976 Soweto rebellion, said he would do it again: "I will kill a thousand people if I can



**Apartheid terror rumbles through Crossroads as black settlement burns, leaving more than 70,000 homeless.**

Reuters

stop the violence....” On June 15, police fired tear gas into a gathering of nearly 1,000 commemorating Soweto at the St. Athans Road Moslem Mosque in Athlone, a mixed-race suburb of Cape Town. According to the UPI: “Terrified worshippers broke doors and windows attempting to escape and several older people and children fainted and had to be dragged from the building, witnesses said. Police waiting outside the mosque beat fleeing worshippers with whips.” At St. Nicholas Anglican Church in the Cape township of Elsie’s River, 250 were arrested (including many children) by police who called the service a “subversive” meeting.

Despite Botha’s reign of terror, the massive strike was carried off. In the 20-month-long confrontation between the racist regime and deepening anti-apartheid revolt, police-state measures have failed to cow the oppressed into submission. Importantly, repression could not prevent the two previous general strikes, in the Transvaal in November 1984 and nationally in the recent heroic May Day strike. But as the prospect for bloody one-sided civil war looms ever larger, the question of power—who shall rule the country—is posed starkly. In confrontations such as this, the need for revolutionary leadership is more urgent than ever.

South Africa today has the smell of a revolutionary situation. In Lenin’s classic definition, it’s not enough that the masses can no longer live in the old way—their rulers must also be unable to rule in the old way. The government’s actions are losing coherence, going in different directions at the same time, trying for piecemeal “reform” of apartheid, ordering brutal repression of anti-apartheid revolt, fantasizing about a separate Afrikaner state. Meanwhile the open fascists are growing in strength. There appears to be a loss of nerve at the top, the inability of the state to act as the general staff of a united ruling class. Which doesn’t mean they’re not ready for blood—on the contrary, genocide can be the result. Hitler came to power in part because of a loss of nerve of the German bourgeoisie. But rather than uniting around a bonaparte, the South African rulers seem to be thrashing around in wild factionalism.

The enormous potential power of the six-million-strong South African black proletariat has once again been demonstrated. “A general strike could bring the country to its knees in a couple of weeks,” worried the chief labor specialist for the huge Anglo American mining

**Doing Botha’s work:  
black vigilantes  
torch shanties in  
Crossroads  
settlement.**



and industrial conglomerate (*New York Times Magazine*, 15 June). And the black unions have discovered that they can’t avoid politics. It all points to a revolutionary crisis brewing, but the key element for victory is missing. Unless the anti-apartheid revolt is organized along class lines, with the black proletariat led by a multiracial Bolshevik party, forged on the program of permanent revolution and leading the rest of the oppressed and disenfranchised in a fight for state power, the possibility of smashing the power of the white-supremacist capitalist regime will be squandered, with hideous consequences.

### **White Laager Digs In**

While the nationalists of the main anti-apartheid grouping, the ANC, pursue a strategy of “pressure” on the regime (from without through imperialist economic sanctions, from within through the “policy of chaos,” of making the townships “ungovernable”), Botha has increasingly responded to pressure from the right. Thus the South African bombing raids on the capitals of three black African border states, ostensibly aimed at ANC installations, in late May. Said Botha afterward: “South Africa has the capacity and the will to break the ANC.... We have only delivered the first installment” (*New York Times*, 22 May).

A genuinely fascist far right has grown, largely at the expense of Botha’s National Party (especially among the police). Hitlerite Eugene Terre’Blanche

led his *Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging* (AWB—Afrikaner Resistance Movement) thugs in storming a National Party meeting just days after the bombing of the black states. From the shoulders of his stormtroopers, as the AWB’s three-legged swastika flags filled the hall, Terre’Blanche ranted: “I want to tell the ANC: if you mess with the Boer Volk (people), we will blow you all to hell” (*Times* [London], 23 May).

At the Crossroads squatter settlements near Cape Town, the regime is giving a taste of what it is prepared to unleash on the black population. For years Crossroads has stood as a symbol of resistance to the apartheid “influx control” which makes it illegal for the majority of blacks to move to the cities. The government has unsuccessfully been trying to force out most of the Crossroads population into a new black “township” ten miles further out of town—a deathtrap with only one access road and military bases on two sides. As they have throughout the country, the cops spawned reactionary black vigilantes in Crossroads, called “*witdoekies*” for the white armbands they wear, consisting primarily of black cops, common criminals and some shop owners, to be used against the militant township youth, the “comrades.”

Between mid-May and mid-June, the police and army have backed up several thousand vigilantes in systematically destroying sections of Crossroads occupied by the “comrades,” killing at least 65 with machetes and guns, torching

thousands of shacks and leaving 70,000 homeless in Cape Town's winter rain and near-freezing temperatures. Pretoria's game here is clear, of portraying the events at Crossroads as "black on black violence." And Ronald Reagan joins in this pretext for terror, claiming, "It is blacks fighting against blacks" (*New York Times*, 14 June). As has been evident since the outset of the anti-apartheid revolt, Washington stands with its anti-Soviet ally in Pretoria, charged with policing the continent for the "free world."

This simple fact has not dissuaded the proponents of imperialist "sanctions"—who run the gamut from Bishop Desmond Tutu to the ANC and its "left" supporters. *Newsweek* (23 June) reported that "Tutu met with Botha for 90 minutes and appealed to him—in the name of Christianity and anticommunism—to lift the ban." Tutu emerged from the meeting with the complaint that the draconian measures would "not likely help restore law and order," i.e., they might backfire. And in an Op Ed piece in the *New York Times* (16 June) he spelled out the anti-Soviet "logic" of his call for sanctions, noting that the U.S. used sanctions against Poland, Nicaragua and Libya and still maintains a blockade of Cuba. But the ultimate absurdity and imperialist hypocrisy behind the call on racist mass murderers like the United States rulers to impose sanctions on their South African junior partners was exposed by the report that *Israel*, a major military supplier of the Pretoria regime, was considering a trade ban!

Similarly, the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group supports sanctions and pressure on Pretoria to negotiate with the ANC in order to forestall the coming to power of a "radical black government 'totally antipathetic' to Western interests" (*New York Times*, 13 June). Botha's reply to "the Commonwealth" was the bombing raid on three black African member states while the EPG was in South Africa. American leftists, meanwhile, are calling on the U.S. to "Boycott South Africa, Not Nicaragua." But KKK-endorsed Reagan, who alibied the March 1985 Uitenhage massacre and told the world that racial segregation had been abolished in South Africa, is in a strategic *alliance* with apartheid (even if an occasionally strained one) whereas it is committed to *overthrowing* Nicaragua's Sandinista regime.

### Smash Apartheid! Workers to Power!

Backing the Soweto Day general strike in a May 21 radio broadcast from

### Black unionists cheer founding of COSATU, November 1985.



his headquarters in Zambia, ANC president Tambo called for a total shutdown as part of a "death-defying" campaign to "bring the ruling class to its knees." But the ANC calls for "armed struggle" and "people's war" as part of its thoroughly reformist strategy of pressuring apartheid into a "power-sharing" scheme. Are unarmed black masses to go up against the massively armed racist ruling class and die by the thousands just so that Oliver Tambo can be South Africa's counterpart to Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, so Nelson Mandela's picture will be printed on Rand notes while Anglo American, Wall Street and the City of London continue to control the wealth of South Africa? To liberate the oppressed masses from apartheid slavery *those who labor must rule*. This can be accomplished only through the construction of a Leninist proletarian vanguard forged in struggle against petty-bourgeois nationalism and its pressure schemes.

Pretoria, spurred on by the Afrikaner ultraright, is gearing up to drown the black revolt in blood. But there are notable cracks within the white population, as demonstrated by thousand of white youth who are refusing conscription and the hundreds who defy police *sjamboks* and bullets to demonstrate alongside blacks. One of the stories to filter out of South Africa is that in the early morning hours of June 16, some 30 carloads of flowers collected the day before in liberal white churches were deposited on the outskirts of Soweto—which was

sealed off to whites. The flowers were seized by the apartheid authorities; apparently they too were "subversive." Later, some were dropped into the township by plane. Attached to one bouquet was a message that read:

"Many white South Africans feel a profound sense of sadness and shame at what happened in Soweto in 1976, and what continues to happen in 1986, and would like to express this in some way. Normal avenues of communication have been closed and so we search for a gesture to show black South Africans that we care, and that we too would like to see the creation of a just and open society in this country."

—*New York Times*, 17 June

Such gestures are all too rare in this racist police state. But a Bolshevik party can seize upon such openings while struggling tirelessly to overcome ethnic and tribalist divisions among the exploited and oppressed, especially among the strategic "migrant" workers who come from the bantustans and neighboring black states. The vision of a "just and open society" for all the oppressed—in which anti-racist whites must have a place as well—can only be realized in a black-centered workers government that turns the tremendous mineral and industrial resources of South Africa into a powerhouse for the liberation of the entire continent. The question of power is posed pointblank—and beginning the work of constructing a Leninist-Trotskyist party for the conquest of power, the urgent internationalist duty of all revolutionists, is long overdue. ■

reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 486, 29 September 1989

# Black Workers Strike Against “Divestment” Union-Busting

Strikes of black South African workers against the hellish conditions of apartheid rule increased dramatically in 1989, vividly demonstrating the social and economic power of organized black labor. But two key strikes this year have focused world attention on workers’ opposition to divestment. In May, workers at nine Mobil Oil installations struck against the company’s plan to “divest” by selling out to Gencor, a South African mining conglomerate notorious for union-busting. The Chemical Workers Industrial Union called the action to protest Mobil’s refusal to negotiate the terms of the sale, but later agreed to call off the strike in return for a cash settlement of one month’s pay (about 2,000 rand) per worker.

In July, 1,200 workers at Goodyear Rubber, represented by the National Union of Metalworkers, struck over the company’s sale to the South African company Consol. The strike demands of separation pay of 5,000 rand per worker, guaranteed conditions of employment, maintenance of existing labor agreements, payout of pension benefits, and writing off housing loans, reflect widespread anger over divestment’s victimization of the black working class. Goodyear’s response, on August 8, was to fire all the strikers, and go ahead with the divestment deal.

For years, liberal and reformist anti-apartheid activists, taking their lead from the ANC, have held as an article of faith that to be against apartheid means to be for divestment and economic sanctions. In 1985-86 big student protests swept U.S. campuses, demanding that university administrations sell off their financial holdings in corporations operating in South Africa. The Spartacist League alone stood up and told the truth: divestment is *at best* an empty moral gesture, and if foreign companies did withdraw productive assets from South Africa this would hurt black workers and weaken the black union movement.

Four years ago, it was cheap to advocate divestment, since there hadn’t been any. But since then, 136 companies—half of all the U.S. firms with direct investments in South Africa—have sold out to South African businessmen. This

was not primarily the result of pressure from divestment activists. On the contrary—divestment is simply good business for corporations, though not for black workers who have to live with the results.

With the apartheid state’s economy in its worst shape since 1985, foreign investors do not want to touch South Africa. Although sanctions and divestment have had limited overall impact on the economy, the cutoff of foreign loans from banks worried about the future of the white-supremacist regime is draining up to \$2 billion annually in repayments from an economy stretched to the limit. So with profits very low, and interest rates up to 20 percent, U.S. and other foreign capitalists can sell their assets for interest-bearing notes and make a killing while divesting.

Thus the primary demands of the reformist anti-apartheid movement have been fulfilled, as much as they can be, yet apartheid remains intact, while black unions are forced to try to negotiate the terms of divestment. The assumption of the divestment/sanctions movement, which includes such so-called “socialists” as the Communist Party USA, the Socialist Workers Party and the International Socialist Organization, really is that South African capitalism can be fundamentally reformed through the pres-

sure of other capitalist powers, especially the “democratic” United States. It’s obscene to imagine that racist American imperialism—which put its own citizens in concentration camps while A-bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which carpetbombed Indochina, and props up every “moderately authoritarian” butcher dictator on earth—can be pressured into pressuring their South African allies to dismantle apartheid.

The continued flight of capital can only further depress the South African economy. Except in a period when the revolutionary overthrow of the apartheid system is immediately posed, isolation from the world market is likely to result in massive dislocation and deprivation of black workers, weakening their ability to struggle. The wealth of South Africa must go not to the capitalists—American, European or Afrikaner—but to the workers who created it. The only kind of “divestment” that will benefit the exploited and oppressed will be proletarian revolution, and the expropriation of these riches by a black-centered workers government as part of a socialist federation of southern Africa. Here in the U.S., real solidarity with the courageous black masses of South Africa means a revolutionary fight to bring down the most rapacious imperialism of all. ■

**NYC demo  
against  
South Africa  
executions,  
June 1983:  
Spartacists  
call for  
class struggle  
to overthrow  
apartheid  
capitalism,  
not liberal  
“divestment”  
schemes.**



reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 496, 23 February 1990



Michel/Reuters

**Black masses of Soweto (right) throng to celebrate ANC leader Nelson Mandela's release after 27 years in apartheid prisons.**



AP

## Mandela Released—Black South Africa Jubilant, Defiant

# Smash Apartheid— Black Workers Must Take Power!

As Nelson Mandela walked out of prison Sunday, February 11, tens of thousands filled the streets and stadiums from Cape Town to Soweto in defiant jubilation. For black Africans, coloureds (mixed-race) and Indians, Mandela has become the embodiment of implacable opposition to white racist rule. After 27 years of demanding "Free Mandela!" as they sought to break the chains of apartheid slavery, many see his freedom as heralding their own. There were also many white South Africans in the crowds who don't want to live in a racist garrison state and see in Mandela a black leader who can overcome South Africa's deep racial divide.

At the same time, racist rulers from De Klerk in Pretoria to Thatcher in London and Bush in Washington also "greeted" Mandela. They are looking to the black leader to be a "facilitator" for a "negotiated settlement" which, while eliminating the hated apartheid structures, would preserve capitalist rule in

South Africa. But this "unity fest" of impoverished blacks in the townships with their oppressors and exploiters cannot and will not last.

As the cameras focused on Mandela walking out of Victor Verster prison, TV broadcasts carried the voice of South African president F.W. De Klerk declaring, "The season of violence is over." Meanwhile, troops in full combat gear with automatic rifles were moving into the center of Cape Town where tens of thousands had gathered to welcome the anti-apartheid fighter. Earlier, police shot into the fringes of the crowd, killing one man and injuring over 100. After one volley, more than 25 people lay in the street.

The imperialists' hopes in Mandela as "Mr. Peaceful Transition" were fading even as he began to speak. "The scene at the town hall was revolutionary," reported the *London Independent* (12 February). The green, yellow and black flag of the African National Congress fluttered from the flagpole. A red flag

with hammer and sickle draped the balcony from which Mandela spoke. "I am a loyal and disciplined member of the ANC," he said, reaffirming his support to armed struggle and saluting the South African Communist Party (SACP).

The morning after, there was consternation in corporate boardrooms when Mandela reaffirmed the ANC's call for nationalization of the mines. The Johannesburg gold market sank to the floor. Maggie Thatcher railed about Mandela's unrepentant words. The *New York Times* (15 February) complained that "Mr. Mandela" hadn't "reached out to other political currents," but instead supported armed struggle and praised the "comrades" of the SACP. One Jo'burg disc jockey told listeners that Mandela's speech "could have been written for him by Karl Marx."

This is not true. The African National Congress has from its inception advocated a "mixed economy" and some form of "power sharing" with the white-

**Forge a Racially Integrated Bolshevik Party!**

supremacist regime. Its sporadic recourse to guerrilla war has been as a pressure tactic to force negotiations. Thus Mandela reaffirmed the ANC's longstanding appeals to Anglo-American imperialism, by calling for continued economic sanctions against South Africa. And the Communist Party, whose hammers and sickles make the apartheid rulers see red, is decidedly *not* fighting for communism, but for a "democratic" capitalist "post-apartheid state." Yet the harsh realities of life in South Africa are such that there's no room to play "Let's Make a Deal."

In his Cape Town speech, Mandela declared: "Now is the time to intensify the struggle on all fronts." If the purpose of this call was to increase pressure for negotiations, the effect of an upsurge of black struggle may go far beyond what the ANC wants. The Nationalist Party's gamble has created an opening, and already it is being seized. From the Ciskei, where bantustan police shot tear gas at protesters, to Johannesburg, where 1,000 black postal workers did the fast-stepping *toyitoyi* march through the streets, the smell of rebellion is in the air.

### De Klerk's Gamble

The Nationalist Party under the new "*verligte*" (enlightened) leadership of De Klerk has adopted the "rationalist imperialist" viewpoint espoused by the likes of Anglo American Corporation mining mogul Gavin Relly. The economy has taken a battering as many multinationals pull out of direct operations (while keeping licensing agreements). This is partly due to sanctions, but also to the unrest and repression, and the lure of superprofits from restoring capitalist exploitation in East Europe. Meanwhile, many educated middle-class whites are emigrating to more respectable racist havens like Australia.

De Klerk & Co. would like to present a façade of democracy while leaving intact the existing economic structure. They figure that only Nelson Mandela would have the authority to pull this off. Mandela took pains in Cape Town to say he hasn't bargained away the struggle for freedom, and it's far from clear that the maximal changes the Nationalist Party is willing to make would meet the most minimal demands of the ANC. So far De Klerk hasn't agreed to lift the state of emergency or release all political prisoners, much less do away with the Group Areas Act or accept a parliament based on "one man, one vote."

The Nationalists risk alienating their own base. Diehard Afrikaner right-wingers in the Conservative Party won



**Black workers must bury apartheid! Striking South African rail workers, November 1989.**

31 percent of the vote in the "whites only" September 1989 elections. On February 15, some 15,000 turned out for a right-wing protest against the government's release of Mandela. The paramilitary fascist Afrikaner Resistance Movement hoisted their three-legged swastika-like symbol. The military is still smarting over their stinging defeat in Angola by Cuban forces at Cuito Cuanavale a year and a half ago. The cops have been shaken by exposures of police death squads assassinating activists.

Mandela, on the other hand, is faced with the fact that blacks expect fundamental change. He had to speak to this in his first speech after arriving in Soweto:

"We believe that apartheid has created a heinous system of exploitation in which a racist minority monopolizes economic wealth while the vast majority of the oppressed and black people are condemned to poverty.

"South Africa is a wealthy country. It is the labor of black workers that has built the cities, roads and factories we see. They cannot be excluded from sharing this wealth."

Yet long before the Nationalists introduced their elaborate "separate development" (apartheid) schemes, South African capitalism rested (as it does today) upon the superexploitation of black labor. Without starvation wages for the masses, no superprofits for the white masters who lord it over 20 million blacks.

The chasm between white and black in South Africa cannot be bridged by bourgeois democracy, which would intensify the enormous social contradictions to the point of explosion. Democracy for the oppressed majority can only come about through workers revolution. And a black-led workers government, incorporating as well the coloured and In-

dian masses, can offer to South African whites the chance to collaborate in the development, rather than the looting, of what is their homeland too.

Lenin defined as one of the hallmarks of a prerevolutionary situation that those at the top are unable to rule in the old way. Clearly this is the case with the Nationalists, whose iron grip on power since 1948 is palpably beginning to come unhinged. Dr. Gerrit Viljoen, the cabinet minister regarded as the brain-truster of De Klerk's "reforms," said



**No "negotiated settlement" can stop this. Anti-apartheid protesters brutally suppressed in Bloemfontein, 30 January 1990.**

early this month that the Nationalist Party would surrender power within ten years. Now he is already predicting the end will come in five.

Lenin's second criterion was that those at the bottom refuse to be ruled in the old way—something South African blacks have demonstrated time and again. The missing and key component is the revolutionary party which can take advantage of the evident disarray of the ruling class to mobilize the working class for the conquest of power. The forging of such an integrated, multi-racial Bolshevik party, acting as the vanguard of the workers and tribune of the oppressed—this is the urgent task at hand.

### Smash the Chains of Apartheid Slavery!

Nowhere in the world are the differences between white and black as vast as they are in South Africa today. In the aftermath of the 1984-86 black rebellion, the government has repealed not only a number of "petty apartheid" laws, such as segregation of public accommodations, but also the hated pass laws and "influx control" legislation used to drive blacks from the cities to barren townships. But the vast black majority is still disenfranchised, forcibly segregated and subject to police-state rule, whether through the "state of emergency," "banning" laws, bantustans or the militarized labor compounds where contract laborers in the mines are housed under lock and key.

Citing an article by Eddie Koch in the *Weekly Mail* (13 January 1989), South African Marxist intellectual Baruch Hirson graphically describes this hell: "Over half a million black workers in these compounds have always been closely guarded and closed to outsiders, but new measures seal them off even more tightly. According to Koch, the hostels are surrounded by high walls and rolls of razor wire; the areas are patrolled by mounted security men, armoured vehicles and dog squads, and in some mines white miners are active members of the security force" (*Searchlight South Africa*, July 1989). This is life under the so-called "progressive" capitalists—like Gavin Relly, head of Anglo American, who has taken the lead in "negotiating" with the ANC.

The gulf between black and white wages in South Africa is vast: in 1984 the average black miner made about \$200 a month, about one-sixth the average for white miners. In manufacturing, white workers make about four times as much as blacks. Moreover, millions of black workers have been made foreigners in their own country, forced to travel for hours every day from far-off bantustans where the apartheid state dumped them when it created these phony "independent homelands." While many South African whites lounge by their swimming pools, black children play in the mud along unpaved roads, drinking contaminated water from open sewers. A black child dies of hunger in South Africa every 20 minutes. This is the bru-

tal reality of apartheid, and no "negotiations" can change that.

But militant class struggle can, as the recent strike of black railway workers against the South African Transport Services (SATS) demonstrated. When the workers walked out in November, SATS immediately fired the 23,000 strikers. For the next three months it was hard class war. All told, 27 people died in one of the bloodiest labor battles in the recent history of the black trade-union movement. Then, on January 9, a train carrying hundreds of strikers to a union meeting at Germiston station was met by 1,000 vigilantes armed with *pan-gas* (machetes), knives, short spears and stones.

Despite the bloody mob assault, which was organized by the bosses and the police, the black South African Railway Workers Union (SARWU) held on and finally beat the attack. Their courage at Germiston sparked a solidarity strike from black telecommunications workers and an international campaign of labor solidarity. The government was worried about the impact of more killings of strikers on its plans to free Mandela. In the end, the wage cut was canceled and the firings were rescinded, as were evictions from workers' hostels.

As black people in South Africa see Nelson Mandela's release as a harbinger of liberation, there will be an acute crisis of expectations. Speaking on ABC-TV's *Nightline* (7 February), Winnie Mandela said that "for the ordinary man in the street, his liberation is tantamount to

## Subscribe!



### Workers Vanguard

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League (includes English-language *Spartacist*)

- \$7 for 24 issues
- \$2 for 10 introductory issues
- International rates: \$25 airmail/\$7 seamail

### Women and Revolution

Journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League

- \$3 for 3 issues
- International rates: \$6 airmail/\$4 seamail

### Spartacist (edición en español)

Organo de marxismo revolucionario

- \$2 for 4 issues
- International rates: \$4 airmail/\$2 seamail

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Apt. # \_\_\_\_\_ Phone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

BH8

Make checks payable/mail to:

Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116



freedom for the oppressed masses of this country." An article in the Johannesburg *Weekly Mail* (25 January) notes: "The 'Young Lions,' the radical township youth, are showing deep suspicion of the process of negotiations." It went on:

"The generation which grew up in the townships during the uprisings of 1984-1986 was one nurtured on militancy and radical solutions.

"Slogans like 'Freedom or death!' 'Victory is certain' or 'Long live the spirit of no compromise'...served to rally the masses and to express the revolutionary sentiment sweeping through the townships."

The article quotes ANC leader Walter Sisulu saying, "The problem is many of the youngsters are not really interested in the negotiations. In fact they've become a little bit angry. That's why I say that this chap De Klerk is moving too fast.... We want to educate our people." For this they will rely on the Stalinists like SACP leader Joe Slovo, who says "socialism is not on the immediate agenda." But hundreds of thousands of militant black workers in the mines and mills are demanding the full fruits of their backbreaking labor. If that is communism, they're for it—and the Stalinists in their terminal crisis will have no easy time "re-educating" them otherwise.

South African blacks haven't heard of the "Death of Communism."

### Black and Red in South Africa

To do away with apartheid rule requires nothing short of thoroughgoing socialist revolution. And the millions-strong black South African proletariat has the power. One of the biggest changes over the last decade has been the growth of the black union movement, which by virtue of its concentrated social strength emerged as a central force in the anti-apartheid struggle. But the black unions, at first a conglomeration of syndicalist- and nationalist-led organizations, have been drawn under the aegis of the ANC.

Cyril Ramaphosa, the president of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), was at Mandela's side in Cape Town and is now a major contender for succession to ANC leadership, after the older generation of Sisulu, Tambo and Mandela retire. Already more than once Ramaphosa has sent striking miners back to work defeated after reluctantly going on strike against the Anglo American bosses whom the ANC, despite all their talk of nationalization, look to as future partners in a "democratic" South Africa.

The fight for workers power means a break with the ANC and with the South

**Black masses want revolution, not "power-sharing" with "enlightened" capitalists. Jubilation over Mandela's release presages an acute crisis of expectations.**

Peters/Sipa



African Communist Party, which is *not* fighting for communism but for a *capitalist* "post-apartheid state." For more than six decades, the Stalinists have had a "two-stage" program: bourgeois democracy now, socialist revolution later, i.e., never. When this revisionist program was first presented by Stalin and Bukharin in the late '20s, some South African Communists objected, such as S.P. Bunting, who at the Sixth Congress of the Communist International in 1928 argued:

"Native workers and some peasants are pouring into the Party in preference to joining the purely native bodies, whether national or industrial, which have let them down and fallen into the hands of the bourgeoisie. They fully appreciate the 'vulgar Marxist' slogan of 'Workers of the World Unite,' of joint action by black and white labour against the common enemy; and at the same time they see that the CP sincerely and unreservedly espouse their national cause as an oppressed race."

—*Searchlight South Africa*,  
July 1989

While the Stalinists have consistently pushed their "two-stage" line, under Gorbachev's "new thinking" this has been intensified as the Soviet leader looks for a global deal with the imperialists. The Kremlin has put the financial screws to the ANC to begin "negotiations" with the apartheid butchers. Speaking in Harare, Zimbabwe in 1987, Victor Goncharov, the deputy director of the Institute of African Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences, said that socialism would come "maybe not in 25 years but in a century...I am an optimist."

Both when he followed Stalin's every

twist and turn and now following his new mentor Gorbachev, SACP leader Slovo has consistently opposed socialist revolution. Yet South Africa today is the most dramatic proof of the correctness of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, which was also the program of the early Communist International, that in the age of imperialism even the most basic democratic tasks can only be accomplished by the victory of proletarian revolution.

There must be a fight to forge an integrated multiracial Bolshevik party. An internationalist party, it will open its doors to the hundreds of thousands of migrant workers—from Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Botswana, Namibia— who pour into South Africa. And a South African workers state will become the motor force for liberation of the subcontinent. ■

## Spartacist League Public Offices

— MARXIST LITERATURE —

### Bay Area

Thurs.: 5:30-8:00 p.m., Sat.: 1:00-5:00 p.m.  
1634 Telegraph, 3rd Floor (near 17th Street)  
Oakland, California Phone: (510) 839-0851

### Chicago

Tues.: 5:00-9:00 p.m., Sat.: 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.  
161 W. Harrison St., 10th Floor  
Chicago, Illinois Phone: (312) 663-0715

### New York City

Tues.: 6:30-9:00 p.m., Sat.: 1:00-5:00 p.m.  
41 Warren St. (one block below  
Chambers St. near Church St.)  
New York, NY Phone: (212) 267-1025

# South African CP Leader Joe Slovo: From “Uncle Joe” Stalin to Gorby

Joe Slovo, general chairman of the South African Communist Party, returned home in April from decades of exile. During those years his wife and comrade, Ruth First, was murdered in 1982 in Mozambique by a letter bomb sent by a South African assassination squad. A week after his return, Slovo accompanied African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela, himself just released after 27 years in apartheid prisons, at the first-ever ANC negotiations with the white-supremacist Pretoria government in May. Now Slovo's pamphlet, *Has Socialism Failed?*, has become a hot item, a topic of discussion in meetings of disintegrating Communist parties from Chicago to Toronto and London.

Amid the terminal crisis of Stalinism, CPers are clinging to Slovo's pamphlet as a drowning man grasps at straws. As leaders of collapsing East European regimes seek refuge in the Second International, here is a party leader who still calls himself a Communist. And unlike Brezhnev-era dinosaurs like the CPUSA's Gus Hall, Slovo is a Gorbachev man all the way. Moreover, while Communist parties from Europe to North America are in the throes of demoralization and outright liquidation, the SACP is at the height of its popularity.

That the SACP's stock has gone up has nothing to do with any change in its program, which remains as wretchedly reformist as ever, at most calling for bourgeois democracy. In an interview with the *London Independent* (4 November 1988), cited by the South African Marxist intellectual Baruch Hirson, Slovo declares: “We are engaged in a struggle in which socialism is not on the immediate agenda or should be a criteria of participation in the struggle. For some while after apartheid falls there will be a mixed economy.... There is no pole-vault into socialism.”

In the context of the apartheid police state, even white liberals found in the Communist Party the only organized vehicle to struggle against racism and for basic democratic rights. It was the only sizable racially integrated party in South Africa, including not only blacks and whites but also Indians and coloureds

(mixed-race). At his 1964 trial under the Suppression of Communism Act, Nelson Mandela pointed out:

“For many decades communists were the only political group in South Africa who were prepared to treat Africans as human beings and their equals.... Because of this, there are many Africans who, today, tend to equate freedom with communism.”

—quoted in Mary Benson,  
*Nelson Mandela: The Man  
and the Movement* (1986)

The black African masses also equate communism with a thoroughgoing social revolution, with ripping South Africa's wealth out of the hands of the Randlords who have so cruelly superexploited them for over a century.

But they will not find the road to liberation in Joe Slovo's pamphlet, or in the party which for decades has sought “power sharing” with the “enlightened” slavemasters like Anglo American in a “post-apartheid” (capitalist) South Africa.

In *Has Socialism Failed?* Slovo glibly remarks, “Socialism certainly produced a Stalin and a Ceausescu, but it also produced a Lenin and a Gorbachev.” Oh well, the reader is to conclude, two out of four—not all bad. And his tract admits, rightly enough, “The Fault Lies

with us, not with Socialism.” Slovo embraces “the processes of perestroika and glasnost” as socialism's only hope of “*showing its essentially [!] human face.*” But unlike Gorbachev he still holds “the class struggle is the motor of human history,” and criticizes the CPs’ “unilateral ideological disarmament” in the face of the capitalist ideologues’ offensive.

The appeal is to those CPers who don't just want to throw in the towel. But to justify all the years when he followed “Uncle Joe” Stalin's every twist and turn, Slovo pens some patently self-serving “self-criticism,” like it is “now becoming clear that the virtual destruction of the command personnel of the Red Army, the lack of effective preparation against Hitler's onslaught and Stalin's dictatorial and damaging interventions in the conduct of the war could have cost the Soviet Union its victory.” *Now becoming clear?! In a similar vein, Slovo writes that “we kept silent for too long after the 1956 Khrushchev revelations.”*

Baruch Hirson bitterly commented last year on the SACP leader's belated discovery of Stalinism. “Slovo had heard these accounts of Stalin's crimes over many decades: was he deaf, or did he lack a sense of morality? He heard them from Trotskyists in Johannesburg in



**Joe Slovo (left),  
returning after  
decades of exile,  
with Nelson  
Mandela at  
political rally in  
South Africa.**

1943, he knew them when he read about the condemnation and rehabilitation of the Jewish doctors in the USSR..." ("Thieves in the Thieves' Kitchen," *Searchlight South Africa*, July 1989).

More than avoiding a painful re-examination of history, Slovo seeks to avoid renouncing Stalinism's *reformist* perversion of Leninism or analyzing its social roots. Thus Stalinism is defined as a "bureaucratic-authoritarian style of leadership," and "socialism without democracy." If Stalinism is simply overbearing centralism, therefore one does not have to analyze the material bases for the rise of a conservative, nationalist bureaucracy in the USSR, and the *program* it generated: "socialism in one country" for Russia and "two-stage revolution"—i.e., no socialism—elsewhere.

Slovo mouths platitudes about "*working class internationalism*" being "*one of the most liberating concepts in Marxism*" which "*needs to find effective expression in the new world conditions.*" This rings pretty hollow in the face of Moscow's world-historic betrayal of East Germany to a Fourth Reich, as well as its abandonment of Afghanistan, Nicaragua and Angola, to say nothing of Kremlin arm-twisting to get the ANC to come out foursquare for a "political settlement" with the apartheid state. Where was "working class internationalism" when Soviet deputy foreign minister Anatoly Adamishin flew over the Witwatersrand in a helicopter with South African foreign minister "Pik" Botha, with whom he worked out in secret negotiations the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola?

And while Slovo comes to the defense of "Marxist theory," he hastens to add that "this is not to say that every word of Marx, Engels and Lenin must be taken as gospel...." Which words exactly does he have in mind? Well now, it seems that "The concept of the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat' was dealt with rather thinly by Marx as 'a transition to a classless society'," dixit Joe Slovo. The Paris Commune, which Marx and Engels saw as exemplifying this rule of the working class, is dismissed as "an exceptional social experience." And Lenin's elaboration of the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat in 1917 is explained as due to other special circumstances:

"Understandably, the dominant preoccupation at the time was with the seizure of power, its protection in the face of the expected counter-revolutionary assault, the creation of 'democracy for the majority' and the 'suppression of the minority of exploiters'."



Gubb/JB Pictures

**For South Africa's oppressed black masses, the red flag of communism is a symbol of the fight for freedom and social equality.**

For Joe Slovo, that was then, and this is now.

Certainly it would be unfair to accuse him of such "preoccupations" as he hobnobs with the top exploiters of South Africa. We can't see Slovo chatting with Prime Minister De Klerk and "Law and Order" Minister Coetzee about the dictatorship of the proletariat. Indeed, Slovo writes: "*On reflection, the choice of the word 'dictatorship' to describe this type of society certainly opens the way to ambiguities and distortions.*" Like bourgeois ideologues, he equates the Marxist term for the rule of the working class with the Stalinist bureaucratic regime. And his purpose is to reject the program of socialist revolution, replacing it with "democracy" and a "mixed economy"—i.e., capitalism. But this is not Gorbachevite "new thinking." The SACP renounced the struggle for socialism decades ago... under Stalin.

Today Slovo & Co. imagine them-



no credit

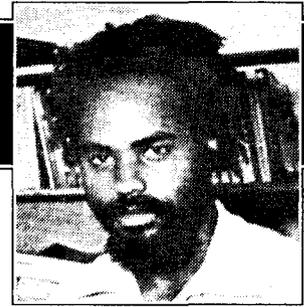
**Ruth First, South African Communist, murdered by death squads in 1982.**

selves negotiating a "post-apartheid state" with De Klerk, Coetzee and the rest of the capitalist ruling class. So while Anglo American publishes ads showing black miners as "shareholders," the SACP chairman talks of "reorganising social life" so that "the producers... have a real say not only in the production of social wealth but also in its disposal," and assures Jo'burg corporate executives he does not foresee "the premature abandonment of any role for market forces," etc. But while Slovo talks of "real democracy in the post-apartheid state," the young comrades in the townships and the workers in the mines and factories are flying the red banner of communism and looking for revolution *now!*

In South Africa, with its combative millions-strong proletariat, the brutally oppressed black, coloured and Indian population battling against overwhelming force, where numerous white students embrace revolutionary struggle and even some groups of white workers make common cause with the black unions, the SACP's commitment to the *maintenance of capitalism* is a betrayal of monumental proportions. Trotsky's program of permanent revolution explains that in the age of imperialism *bourgeois democratic* tasks cannot be fulfilled without socialist revolution. In South Africa, even "one man, one vote" can be achieved only by smashing the white-supremacist state through an uprising of the oppressed black, centrally proletarian masses.

Black miners laboring in barbed-wire compounds will be won to this program of workers revolution, not to Joe Slovo's nostrums of "power sharing" with their "enlightened" exploiters. ■

# From Death Row, This is Mumia Abu-Jamal



## From Darkness Into Light

Mandela: Amandla! (Power!)  
 Crowd of Supporters: Ngawethu! (It is ours!)  
 Mandela: Amandla!  
 Crowd: Ngawethu!  
 Mandela: i-Afrika! (Africa!)  
 Crowd: Mayibuye! (Let it come back!)  
 Mandela: Mayibuye!  
 Crowd: i-Afrika!

—Prelude to Mandela's speech  
 in S. Africa, Feb. 11, 1990

The extraordinary spectacle of South Africa's most renowned political prisoner, Nelson R. Mandela, emerging from the dark confines of prison into the warm South African sunlight marked a magic moment for Africans around the globe.

The frenzied toi-toi was danced by South Africans, both at home, and in exile, a dance of sheer joy at the falling of the last shackles of dubious legality, in a spiritual sunburst of loving welcome at the long-gone father, brother, comrade who has finally come home.

Many Black men and women wept with heartfelt joy at his coming.

Could South Africa, the hellish spawn of every Black nightmare, that earthly inferno of overt oppression on all Black life unlikely enough to be birthed there, really be changing?

The answer did not take long in coming.

Days before the African National Congress leader was freed, Mandela's daughter's mate, Clayton Sizwe Sithole, was found hung in the notorious John Vorster Square police station in Johannesburg.

Sithole, the father of Mandela's grandson, was a member of the Umkhonto we Sizwe, or Spear of the Nation, the ANC military wing of which Mandela, decades ago, was a founder and commander.

Like the police killing of rising Black activist, Steve Biko, in custody, this too was pegged "an accident," or "a suicide."

But for the Mandelas and the Sitholes, gladness was leavened with painful tragedy. Sithole was 22.

Days after Mandela's walk to freedom, Afrikaner police

opened fire on an African protest in Sebokeng, leaving Black death in the double digits.

The South Africa, then, of the massacres at Sharpeville and Langa (Uitenhage) remains a daily cruel reality.

Why then did this racist apartheid state take the extraordinary step to free an internationally acclaimed critic and political prisoner? The answer lies deeper—not in the South African heart, but in its wallet!

International anti-apartheid campaigns have cost the Pretoria regime badly needed trade dollars, billions of rands (S. African dollars) lost by spreading economic sanctions.

In this light, the actions of De Klerk, the regime's president, take on an intelligible aura.

To free one "kaffir," the government reasons, is a cheap price to pay to restore South Africa's grossly exploitative economy. Already, De Klerk's P.R. campaign has borne fruit with a new air of acceptance hovering over the world's image of Pretoria, although life for the average African there is still more nightmare than promise.

Ghanian sage Kwame Nkrumah once opined that "capitalism is but the gentlemen's form of slavery."

Is apartheid capitalism, which exploits Black labor power to undergird the racist regime, the ruffian's form of slavery?

Yes, Mandela is free, and that is a glorious thing—but the revolution must continue for all Africans to share the sweet taste of freedom! Amandla! On the MOVE!

12 May 1990

Mumia Abu-Jamal, a Philadelphia black journalist, is on death row at Pennsylvania's Huntingdon state prison. Framed up because of his political views, Jamal faces death for his defiance of the racist, capitalist order. His columns appear periodically in *Workers Vanguard* and other newspapers.

To get involved in the fight to save Jamal and abolish the death penalty, contact the Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal St. Sta., NY, NY 10013, (212) 406-4252. Send letters to Gov. Robert Casey, Main Capitol Building, Room 225, Harrisburg, PA 17120. If you wish to correspond with Jamal, you can write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, Drawer R, Huntingdon, PA 16652.

## Introduction...

(continued from page 2)

and factories and for the young rebels in the desperate bantustans, so long as the vicious racist capitalist state exists to enforce their exploitation and misery. As we have insisted, "There can be no end to the system of apartheid slavery short of socialist revolution. Superexploitation of black labor is the bedrock

on which South African capitalism has been built and with it the whole edifice of white supremacy.... But as the decisive hour approaches, the ANC leaders and the South African Communist Party are the greatest obstacles to black freedom, chaining the oppressed populations to the apartheid masters in a 'popular front' alliance with De Klerk and the 'verligte' (enlightened) capitalists."

Today more than ever the black

masses, and their allies among the coloured and Indian populations and among a layer of anti-racist whites, won't be satisfied with promises of "power sharing"; the most conscious militants know full well that what they need is nothing short of a revolution. It is our hope that this pamphlet can assist in forging a proletarian vanguard capable of waging and winning that struggle.

—July 1991

reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 504, 15 June 1990

# Nelson Mandela in America Smash Apartheid! For Workers Revolution!

Across the U.S., hundreds of thousands of people will turn out to enthusiastically greet Nelson Mandela, leader of the African National Congress, who arrives in New York on June 20, the first stop on his ten-day American tour. The man who during his 27 years' imprisonment was the symbol of the fight against apartheid slavery has also inspired black people in America, who see in the oppression of their South African brothers a mirror of their own. At the same time, some of the most powerful oppressors and exploiters of black people will join in a hypocritical celebration of "freedom" while the South African masses and minorities in the U.S. bear the deadly weight of racial oppression.

Mandela will get the red carpet treatment at the White House, staunch supporters of the white-supremacist Pretoria

regime, and chat with President Bush, former head of the CIA which engineered his 1962 arrest (see box, page 44). He will address a joint session of Congress—which talks of "sanctions" against South Africa while bankrolling the Salvadoran death squad regime to the tune of a million dollars a day. In NYC there will be a ticker tape parade down lower Broadway, where the ANC leader will doubtless meet with the captains of industry and the lords of high finance. He will pose with Mayor Dinkins, and there will be an enormous outpouring in Harlem organized by the "popular front" (including many labor leaders) which elected the black Democrat and now seeks to bask in Mandela's popularity while imposing anti-worker cutbacks which hit minorities hardest.

Mandela's message will be for a non-

existent "negotiated solution" in South Africa, which means *blacks will pay*. His trip grows out of the talks between the ANC and the De Klerk regime in early May, which came on the heels of the cop massacre in Sebokeng township, where 14 black protesters were mowed down and hundreds injured in March. The apartheid rulers, hard hit by six years of black revolt and economic losses, try to salvage their class rule by removing some of the most glaring segregationist legislation, partially lifting the state of emergency and releasing a few score political prisoners, while countless thousands remain in jail. A peaceful resolution of the conflicting interests of the multinational corporations and capitalist politicians who rule South Africa and the oppressed majority—including blacks, coloureds (mixed-race) and Indians—is impossible.

The imperialists are courting Mandela for they see in him the black leader whose unique authority as an anti-apartheid fighter is necessary to convince South African blacks to submit to a deal with the oppressive racist state. But despite these treacherous schemes, there will be no such "power sharing." The apartheid regime, whose wealth is based on the superexploitation of the black laboring majority, is necessarily at odds with the most minimal level of formal democracy. De Klerk's "reforms" cannot even include the simple demand of "one man, one vote" (keystone of the American civil rights fight against Jim Crow segregation) in a country with 28 million blacks and 5 million whites, let alone address economic equality, where white income is across the board *twelve times* higher than that of blacks.

The London *Financial Times* (11 June) bluntly laid out the purpose of De Klerk's negotiations: to "interrupt the



**Nelson Mandela (left) seeks to negotiate "power-sharing" deal with South Africa's biggest mining and industrial magnate, Gavin Relly.**

**No "Power Sharing" with the Randlords!**

# CIA Set Up Mandela

During Nelson Mandela's visit to the U.S., he will meet with George Bush, the CIA's man in the White House. Yet it was the CIA which set up Mandela for arrest in 1962, leading to his decades-long imprisonment in apartheid's hellhole jails.

On June 10, the *Atlanta Constitution* published an article by Joseph Albright and Marcia Kunstel quoting a retired U.S. intelligence official who verified what has long been whispered: that the CIA, using an agent inside the African National Congress, provided South African police with precise information about Mandela's activities that led to his arrest on 5 August 1962.

The official recounted how, within hours after Mandela's arrest, Paul Eckel, then a senior CIA operative, walked into his office and told him approximately: "We have turned Mandela over to the South African security branch. We gave them every detail, what he would be wearing, the time of day, just where he would be. They have picked him up. It is one of our greatest coups."

In the Cold War summer of 1962, the Kennedy administration was still smarting over its humiliating defeat at the Bay of Pigs the year before and gearing up to challenge Moscow to a nuclear showdown over Soviet missiles in Cuba. In Johannesburg, the South African apartheid regime had lost the "support" of the British spy agencies



Barry von Below  
**Nelson Mandela in 1961, shortly before he was forced underground.**

MI-5 and MI-6 as a result of withdrawing from the Commonwealth. The CIA was happy to pick up the slack by supplying tidbits to the "friendlies" in the racist regime.

Five years earlier, the American embassy in Pretoria had cabled Washington that South Africa's black intelligentsia was "psychologically susceptible to the extremes of Black Nationalism or Communism" and that black radicals "could become a cardinal threat to American security." Around this time also, the CIA was involved in the National Union of South African Students

(NUSAS) via the Agency's infiltration/control of the U.S. National Student Association.

The account of the U.S. official was backed up by retired South African intelligence operative Gerard Ludi, who disclosed that the CIA was running a highly successful "deep cover" agent in the ANC branch in Durban. The agent provided detailed accounts of the ANC's activities, including information on the whereabouts of Nelson Mandela, then being sought for his anti-apartheid activities. The morning after a secret dinner party with ANC members in Durban, Mr. Mandela, dressed as a chauffeur, ran into a roadblock. He was immediately recognized and arrested.

Today as at the height of the Cold War, the deadly U.S. "intelligence" network still has the same aim—to root out and destroy fighters against imperialism and capitalism. While the CIA was targeting anti-apartheid activists in South Africa, in the American South FBI informers were participating in bombings, shootings and beatings of civil rights marchers. The Fed's COINTELPRO operation sought to disrupt black organizations and set up militants for imprisonment and murder.

The CIA set-up of Nelson Mandela makes all the more grotesque the appeals by the South African ANC and American liberals to Washington to impose "sanctions" on The Company's junior partners in Pretoria. The fight for black freedom means revolutionary struggle against the racist capitalist rulers from Harlem to Soweto!

process of radicalisation among blacks." But despite the conciliation of their leaders, who are now backing away from even the "moderate" demands of the Freedom Charter, South African blacks know their liberation can only be achieved through a far-reaching social revolution which smashes the apartheid state. The fight to forge a racially integrated Bolshevik party that can lead the struggle for a black-centered workers government, drawing as well on the coloured and Indian populations, and growing numbers of whites who do not want to live their lives in a racist garrison state, is the task of the hour.

## Massacre in Welkom— South Africa in Microcosm

Last February we headlined, "Mandela Released—Black South Africa Ju-

bilant, Defiant" (WV No. 496, 23 February). We predicted an upsurge of struggle among the black masses, who saw Mandela's freedom as heralding their own, as well as an acute crisis of expectations: "The smell of rebellion is in the air," we wrote. Since then, revolt has spread through the rural bantustans, urban townships have exploded with protest and a strike wave continues (the government calculates that the number of workdays lost to strikes in the first quarter of 1990 is four times that of the same period last year).

Nowhere is this spirit more evident than in Welkom, Orange Free State, a gold mining town 150 miles southwest of Johannesburg. The Welkom mine produces 27 percent of South Africa's gold, and both the mine and the town are owned by the so-called "progressive"

capitalists of Anglo American Corporation. About 58,000 well-off whites live in comfortable neighborhoods with manicured lawns. Thousands of desperately poor black miners are jammed 21 to a room in the Saint Helena Mine hostel, and on the other side of town 138,000 blacks live in shanties along dirt roads in Thabong township. Last month, tensions in Welkom reached the flash point.

It began with the ANC leader's release last February. "As soon as they showed Mandela on the TV, then this started," one white shaft steward complained. The black miners began to wear ANC T-shirts, militant slogans were found scrawled on tunnel walls. They particularly objected to the segregated changing rooms and the preference given to whites in the process of "hoisting." This meant whites were the last to go down and first to

come up, spending two to three hours less underground. As black workers began to organize, the far right in Welkom formed vigilante groups organized by the Blanke Veiligheidswag (White Security Guard). This fascist outfit began "night patrols" on the streets of Welkom that meant carrying out attacks on black pedestrians.

On May 16, 31 black miners were dismissed by Anglo American for "disobeying rules," such as by wearing ANC garb. That afternoon, the fired black miners and a few of their union brothers approached company officials outside Shaft Number One. White security cops opened fire with rubber bullets and a 9mm pistol, wounding 18. In the clash which followed, two white mine managers were stabbed to death. Scores of blacks were arrested. On Sunday, May 20, there was a protest meeting in the black township of Thabong. About 1,000 miners and 500 youth formed a procession after the meeting and attempted to march into Welkom. Police opened fire on the procession, killing 11 blacks and injuring 90.

South Africa's two most prominent leaders of black unions, National Union of Miners (NUM) president Cyril Ramaphosa and Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) secretary general Jay Naidoo, arrived in Welkom and issued a conciliatory statement over the "regrettable" stabbing. But at funerals for the white managers there was a column of vehicles adorned with the swastika-like flag of the neo-Nazi Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB). Such paramilitary and fascist groups have been growing, in reaction to De Klerk's talk of "power sharing" with the ANC. On May 26, Conservative Party leader Treurnicht gathered more than 50,000 right-wingers and neo-Nazis from the AWB for a racist rally at the

Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria.

Welkom is one of the premier mines of the Anglo American Corporation, which owns 70 percent of the country's mining capital and has been known for its "far-sighted" approach to South African capitalism. The company recently ran a full-page ad in the *London Financial Times* to ask "Do We Sometimes Wish We Hadn't Fought To Have Black Trade Unions Recognised?" "Life has not always been easy since then," they sigh with paternalism worthy of a latter-day Cecil Rhodes, particularly when "our gold and coal mines" are struck. But they sought to bring in unions "for very sound commercial, as well as moral, reasons." Anglo American's commercial interests were clear: to set up a collaborationist labor bureaucracy to prevent an outbreak of revolutionary worker agitation.

Part of this strategy has been Anglo's attempts to co-opt the NUM, not least with its "employees shareholding" in a joint fund. This draws the union into direct collaboration with finance capital. The ad explains that these "verligte" (enlightened) tycoons understand there will be no class peace until blacks have political rights. Anglo chairman Gavin Relly (since retired) was the leading capitalist to venture to Lusaka for "secret" talks with the ANC, which led to two years of "negotiations" and the freeing of Mandela. Now once again, Anglo and Relly are trying to mold the shape of a "post-apartheid South Africa," orchestrating a late May meeting at Johannesburg's Carlton Hotel of 350 leading bankers and industrialists with a high-level delegation from the African National Congress.

At his first press conference after being released, Mandela caused consternation in corporate boardrooms by reaffirming the ANC's call (in its 1955

Freedom Charter) for nationalization of South Africa's mines and redistribution of the wealth. But in a joint news conference with Gavin Relly at the Carlton, Mandela backed off from this pledge:

"I would like to share a secret with you. The view that the only words in the economic vocabulary that the ANC knows are nationalisation and redistribution is mistaken. The ANC has no blueprint that decrees that these or other assets will be nationalised, or that such nationalisation would take this or the other form."  
—*London Independent*, 24 May

While Mandela was appealing for "cooperation of the corporate sector," Relly said they agreed on a "mixed economy," and that "one shouldn't jump about and get frightened just because people see the word 'nationalisation'." For his part, Joe Slovo of the South African Communist Party has been quoted as saying that redistribution of wealth does *not* mean "sectors of the economy would have to be nationalised."

### Imperialist Sanctions: Who Do They Serve?

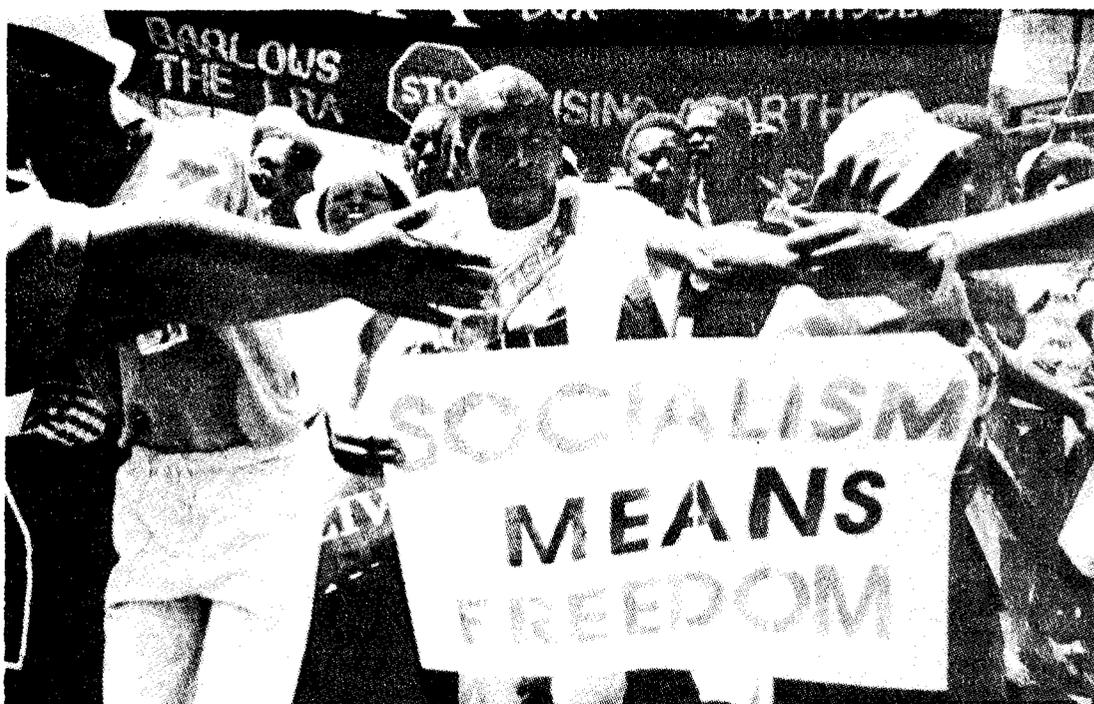
Mandela is using his tours of West Europe and the U.S. to appeal to the imperialist chiefs to maintain "sanctions" against South Africa. "Sanctions must continue to be applied until the whole structure of apartheid is brought down," he said (*New York Times*, 27 May).

We have pointed out how grotesque it is to call on American rulers, who dropped atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and turned Vietnam into a moonscape, who block effective school integration in the U.S. and whose program for ghetto poverty amounts to genocide, to pressure their South African junior partners to...fight racism. We noted that calls for "disinvestment" were at best an empty moralistic gesture, that when multinational corporations began withdrawing productive assets it was to

**White fascist  
paramilitary forces  
arming against  
any democratic  
concessions to the  
black majority.**

Weekly Mail





Steve Hilton-Barber/Atapix Impact Visuals

**Power of black labor can smash apartheid.**  
**Left: Militant black unionists in Johannesburg protest anti-labor laws, October 1989.**

protect their profits and, except when a revolutionary overthrow is directly posed, this would serve to *weaken* the black unions, the organizational embodiment of the proletarian power that can bring down apartheid capitalism. "So divestment has become good business. But it is *not* good for South Africa's black workers," we summed up (WV No. 434, 7 August 1987).

The Spartacist tendency (now the International Communist League) was unique in telling the truth about the liberal divestment movement when it was highly unpopular to do so. But forces in COSATU have begun questioning the policy of divestment and sanctions. COSATU's 1987 congress criticized selective sanctions, which "cause serious regional unemployment." The following year the Chemical Workers Industrial Union demanded that 41 foreign-controlled companies negotiate so that divestment not be at the workers' expense. And last year, the CWIU struck nine Mobil Oil installations against plans to "divest" by selling out to the South African mining conglomerate Gencor, while the Metalworkers union struck Goodyear over the company's sellout to South Africa's Consol.

A recent article on "Financial Sanctions and the Future of South Africa," by Paul Trehwela in *Searchlight South Africa* (February 1990), published in London, incisively analyzes the cause and effect of imperialist sanctions. Trehwela writes that while in the 1960s and 1970s the ANC called mainly for international consumer, sports and cultural

boycotts, today "the decisive practical role in the sanctions campaign now lies with world financial capital." He notes that at the height of the 1985 township revolt, U.S. financial capital—following the lead of Chase Manhattan Bank—imposed financial sanctions on South Africa, blocking new credits and demanding repayment of back loans. Since 1985 some \$15 billion in foreign debt was repaid by South Africa, while another \$10 billion left the country in capital flight. He observes:

"The action of the banks in July-August 1985, setting in motion the sole effective process of economic sanctions so far, was a measure by capital in its own defence against a future threatened loss.... What the banks require are political changes in South Africa that can assure them of future safety for their investments, and a safe field for future investment."

Trehwela notes that the present sanctions policy was designed by state technocrats of imperialist countries (notably Canada and Australia, the number three and four gold producers in the world after South Africa and the USSR). They were approved by meetings last year of the Commonwealth foreign ministers in Canberra and Commonwealth heads of government at Kuala Lumpur, and endorsed by the ANC, the Pan Africanist Congress and a delegation of COSATU headed by Metalworkers union leader Moses Mayekiso, "formerly a leader of the left wing of the unions." By looking to the banks as liberators, the ANC and its various allies and satellites are playing straight into the hands of the Inter-

national Monetary Fund and the drive to "mass pauperization" of the Third World:

"The convergence of real practical bank sanctions and the agitation of the ANC for financial sanctions marks its co-optation into the political operations of world capital. Outside the environs of Mrs Thatcher, it is hard to discover who does not either support or threaten to support their extension. Congresses of bishops and the Trade Union Congress, the UN and the Communist Parties, radical leftists and the far-seeing right: all look to the agency of money-dealing capital to undo what money-dealing capital set in place at the founding of modern South Africa, in the period of Rhodes and Rothschild.

"Ultimately it is the future of the workers in South Africa that is under examination.... The ANC has passed from the patronage of the USSR into the US sphere of interest. Its guiding policy in international affairs has in the last resort become that of the IMF and the US banks, the real authors of 'financial sanctions'. In aligning themselves with this politics, the leaders of Cosatu, and in particular Mayekiso, have become the means of transmission of the politics of the banks within the proletariat."

Through collaboration with the banks in the question of sanctions, and such schemes as the Anglo American employee shareholder plan and retirement fund, whose first chairman is NUM secretary Cyril Ramaphosa (who called off the 1988 mine workers strike), these are all measures that bring the black unions increasingly under the control of finance capital and of the capitalist state. The aim, as Trehwela indicates, is "to build up a trade union bureaucracy and a labour aristocracy among black workers,

through which it hopes to control the class." Whether this is possible in South Africa today is another matter.

### Black Workers Must Take the Power!

Trewhela holds that following the 1985 township revolt and subsequent growth of black trade unions, the existence of the apartheid regime has become "anomalous" to the banks. He assumes that a post-apartheid capitalist state is in gestation which will include an ANC presence in the government. This assumption is shared as well by a whole political spectrum, from De Klerk on the right through Gavin Relly to Nelson Mandela, Joe Slovo and leftists like Trewhela. At most this would mean that South Africa would become another Zimbabwe (where last week Mugabe's cops and army beat and tear-gassed striking schoolteachers and government workers). But this perspective is a conservative/liberal/reformist utopia. In fact, South Africa is barreling down the road to civil war.

While "verligte" capitalists and imperialists would like to strike a deal with the ANC, in apartheid South Africa there is very little middle ground. De Klerk's National Party is losing votes as white reactionaries dig in, arming themselves to defend their swimming pools, ranch houses and farms built on the toil of black labor. Moreover, it is far from clear that the maximum concessions by the Nationalist government can meet the minimum demands of the ANC if either side is to retain any support on its respective side of the yawning chasm that

separates the oppressed black majority from the layer of white oppressors, far smaller but big enough to wage a bloody fight to the death. And they will. The idea that apartheid, that is to say capitalist rule based on white supremacy, will pass peacefully into history is absurd.

In the period since the Mandela-De Klerk Cape Town talks, COSATU has pushed to get in on the negotiations. "We're meeting ministers almost every day," glowed one NUM official, and Ramaphosa referred to blood-drenched top cop Adriaan Vlok as "our minister" when they met in Welkom. The Pan-Africanists oppose negotiations, but their slogan of "one settler, one bullet" is simply a call to drive whites out of a black nationalist-ruled capitalist South Africa. The Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) also criticizes the ANC negotiations with the De Klerk regime and talks of building a "mass-based people's organization with a socialist orientation" (*Socialist Action*, June 1990). But its advocacy of "Black Consciousness philosophy" denies the central role of the black African proletariat capable of leading also the oppressed, coloured and Indian masses as well as those whites who accept a racially integrated, egalitarian South Africa.

Allied with AZAPO is the Cape Action League, whose youth group recently published a document calling for a constituent assembly rather than a negotiated settlement. CAL is led by Neville Alexander, whose latter-day Menshevism is often misidentified as Trotskyism in South Africa. The revolutionary-

democratic slogan of a constituent assembly is appropriate as the ANC prepares to abandon "one man, one vote" in practice, alleging the need to assuage white fears. But by itself this slogan does not go beyond the limits of bourgeois society. To overthrow the domination of the capitalists who have sucked fabulous wealth from superexploitation of the labor of South African blacks, to ensure equality and freedom for the oppressed masses and raise them out of poverty, it will take nothing less than proletarian revolution, with black workers in the vanguard.

Today the contradictions in South Africa are excruciating: the mood of demoralization following the exhaustion of the 1984-86 township revolts is past, the working class is insurgent as never before, yet never before has it been so politically dominated by the politics of class collaboration. A socialist revolution must be prepared and led by a genuinely communist party, forged in struggle against the reformism of the SACP and the petty-bourgeois nationalism of the ANC. It must be a racially integrated party, which includes not only blacks but also coloureds and Indians as well as whites as comrades. It will be a Trotskyist party, built on the program of permanent revolution, which says to black workers: the nationalists want you to pull the cart of capitalism as the apartheid rulers have forced you to with their *sjamboks* and bullets, but you have the power, you produced the wealth—take it, it's yours.

*Smash apartheid—For workers revolution in South Africa!* ■

## Prometheus Research Series

A memorial to comrade Richard S. Fraser (1913-1988), who pioneered the Trotskyist understanding of the black question in the United States.

After joining the Trotskyist movement in 1934, Fraser was an organizer and union activist for close to 30 years and a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee for 25 years. During internal debates in the SWP in the 1950s he developed and fought for the programmatic perspective of Revolutionary Integration, while the majority, with George Breitman as its spokesman, tailed the liberal pacifist/Democratic Party leadership of the civil rights movement and soon capitulated to black nationalism.

The bulletin contains material reflecting the entire span of Fraser's political life, including his seminal 1953 lectures, "The Negro Struggle and the Proletarian Revolution."

**A\$7.50 £4.25 Cdn\$8.50 US\$7**  
(includes postage) **108 pages**

Order from/make checks payable to:

#### Australia

Spartacist ANZ Publishing Co.  
GPO Box 3473  
Sydney 2001

#### Britain

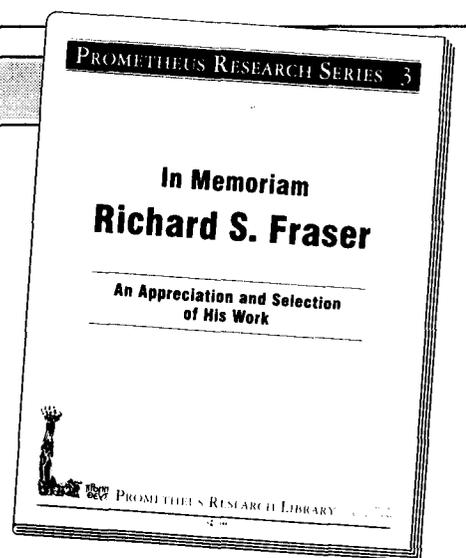
Spartacist Publications  
PO Box 1041  
London NW5 3EU

#### Canada

Spartacist Canada Pub. Assoc.  
Box 6867, Station A  
Toronto, Ontario M5W 1X6

#### United States

Spartacist Publishing Co.  
Box 1377 GPO  
New York, NY 10116



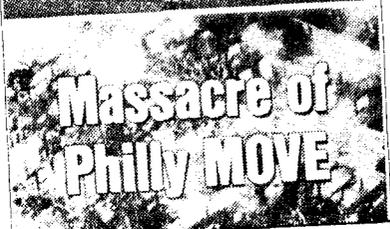
A Spartacist Pamphlet 25c

# Black History and the Class Struggle



A Spartacist Pamphlet 75c

# Black History and the Class Struggle No. 3



A Spartacist Pamphlet \$1.00

# Black History and the Class Struggle No. 5

## Finish the Civil War!



A Spartacist Pamphlet \$1.00

# Black History and the Class Struggle No. 7

## Black Soldiers Fight for Freedom

*Glory*



# Black History and the Class Struggle

No. 1 \$0.25 (16 pages)

Includes:

- John Brown and Frederick Douglass: Heroes of the Anti-Slavery Struggle

No. 2 \$0.75 (32 pages)

Includes:

- Ten Years After Assassination: Bourgeoisie Celebrates King's Liberal Pacifism
- Malcolm X: Courageous Fighter for Black Liberation
- SNCC: "Black Power" and the Democrats

No. 3 \$0.75 (32 pages)

Articles from *Workers Vanguard* detailing the grotesque racist bombing of Philly MOVE, signature of the Reagan years.

No. 4 \$0.75 (32 pages)

Articles from the press of the Spartacist League dealing with the military question and black oppression.

No. 5 \$1 (32 pages)

Articles from the press of the Spartacist League concerning the continuing struggle to finish the Civil War and fulfill the promise of black freedom.

No. 6 \$1 (32 pages)

Includes:

- Toussaint L'Ouverture and the Haitian Revolution
- Mumia Abu-Jamal Speaks from Death Row
- Malcolm X on Klan Terror

No. 7 \$1 (40 pages)

Includes:

- *Glory*—A Review
- Black Troops in Battle Against Slavery
- How *Mississippi Burning* Rewrites History

No. 8 \$1 (48 pages)

Includes:

- South Africa: Razor's Edge
- Mandela Released
- Smash Apartheid! For Workers Revolution!

A Spartacist Pamphlet 75c

# Black History and the Class Struggle No. 2



A Spartacist Pamphlet 75c

# Black History and the Class Struggle No. 4

## Black Soldiers in the Jim Crow Military



A Spartacist Pamphlet \$1.00

# Black History and the Class Struggle No. 6



A Spartacist Pamphlet \$1

# Black History and the Class Struggle No. 8

## South Africa and Permanent Revolution



Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116 USA