

Black History and the Class Struggle

No. 12

SOUTH AFRICA POWDER KEG

For Black Proletarian Power



Pseudo-Science in the Service of Racism
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Cover graphic:

Militant black workers striking Pick 'n Pay grocery chain in July 1994 were attacked by racist neo-apartheid cops. Workers' actions have had to confront the repressive apparatus of the neo-apartheid Mandela/De Klerk "power sharing" regime.

no credit

February 1995

Introduction

The election last spring of Nelson Mandela as the first black president of South Africa and the formation of a "Government of National Unity" between the African National Congress (ANC) and the white ruling National Party of F.W. De Klerk open up a new and convulsive period in that country's stormy history. The strong identification of oppressed non-white peoples throughout the world, including blacks in the United States, with the struggle against apartheid gives developments in South Africa a political significance internationally far beyond its specific economic and strategic weight in the world arena.

This issue of *Black History* is devoted to applying a Marxist analysis to events in South Africa over the past several decades. Our four-part article, "South Africa Powder Keg," dissects the social, political and economic history of this unique country and traces the threads which have wound together to produce what we call "neo-apartheid" in South Africa today, that is, the co-optation of the leadership of the black liberation struggle and workers movement by the white capitalist class through the ANC's nationalist popular front.

The installation of the "power sharing" government in South Africa is directly conditioned by the capitalist counterrevolution in East Europe and the Soviet Union. During the Cold War, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist movements and regimes in the so-called Third World were able to play off Moscow and Washington, thereby achieving a certain latitude in which to maneuver. The Soviet government acted as the main sponsor of the ANC and closely allied South African Communist Party (SACP) in the international arena and gave military support to their guerrilla actions, largely symbolic, against the apartheid state. But especially with the disintegration of the Stalinized USSR as a global superpower, Mandela & Co. came to terms with Western imperialism and its South African junior partner. In 1990, a leading figure in the apartheid regime pointed out that "what has happened in the international field, in Eastern Europe, Russia...puts the threat posed by the South African Communist Party and African National Congress in an entirely new context."

In South Africa itself, the decades-long struggle against apartheid has produced a very powerful, combative and politically radicalized black workers movement centered around the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). The election of Mandela ignited a major wave of strikes

and labor protests some of which, notably the Turning Wheel truckers strike, directly defied the new government. Increasing disillusionment among the ANC/SACP's base of support was clearly voiced by black steel worker Mtutuzeli Mpondo: "We want something *now* not tomorrow or next year. We voted for change but nothing seems to be changing—in our lives, workplaces, homes and all spheres of life" (Reuter, 15 August 1994).

At the same time, much of the white population, especially the less affluent elements, feel betrayed by their leaders for sharing governmental power with the ANC/SACP. Thus the breakdown of the present fragile neo-apartheid arrangement will see not only big struggles by the black masses but also very likely terrorist actions by right-wing white paramilitary groups linked to the army and police. In short, the current situation in South Africa is highly explosive and fundamentally unstable. The "new" South Africa is both a product of and a *weak link* in the post-Soviet "New World Disorder."

In good part due to the combativity of the black workers movement, industrial wages in South Africa are now relatively high by Third World standards. Under the pressure of the world market and dictates of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, Mandela & Co. are moving to drive down labor costs by weakening and subordinating the unions. In particular, the new regime is trying to play off the unemployed plebeian masses in the townships (who make up *half* the black urban labor force) and in the impoverished rural bantustans against the organized working class. But to date this strategy has not succeeded in dampening labor militancy.

Since the "Powder Keg" series was written, major strikes have continued to rock South Africa. In October 1994, Cape Town police stormed a demonstration of 5,000 striking municipal workers *outside* the civic center, firing tear gas, rubber bullets and birdshot pointblank into the crowd. Some 60 striking members of the South African Municipal Workers Union were injured but ten police were also sent to the hospital as marchers fought back with their fists, stones and bottles.

Over a period of months, truckers organized by the militant "Turning Wheel International Workers Movement" (a split-off from the COSATU-affiliated truckers union) have staged wildcat strikes and blockades demanding big pay increases, an industrial bargaining council and reinstatement of fired drivers. In one instance, on September 20, cops and soldiers in troop carriers descended on unarmed striking

drivers in Natal. Using tear gas and rifle butts, placing pistols with silencers at the heads of sleeping drivers, they forced the workers to lift the blockade. A Turning Wheel press release angrily declared, "The Government of National Unity has shown its true colours. It is a government which sides with the rich against the poor. It is a bosses' government."

The truckers' bold actions ignited a redbaiting frenzy stretching from the government to the press to COSATU union bureaucrats. The latter called the truckers' demands "selfish" and warned of "agents provocateurs." The national organizer of the COSATU truckers union reportedly charged that the blockade was "linked to a revolutionary party that aimed to bring down the government...." The bourgeois press vituperated about "Militant, ultra-Left Trotskyites—many with international revolutionary connections." Turning Wheel was "allegedly linked to the Workers List Party and the Workers Organisation for a Socialist South Africa [sic]."

The Workers List Party (WLP) was initiated by the Workers Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA). In the April 1994 elections, we Trotskyists of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) gave critical support to the WLP, recognizing the fact that it drew a crude class line, calling for a mass workers party and "nationalization under workers control of the monopoly companies, banks, mines and land without compensation." At the same time, we pointed out that the WLP's platform was nothing more than left-reformist. It did not call for socialist revolution or even clearly state opposition to the ANC. Nevertheless, a vote for the WLP was seen in South Africa as a vote for a workers party rather than for the bourgeois-nationalist ANC. Further explication of our attitude toward the South African elections, the WLP and WOSA is found in our article, "ANC/De Klerk Deal Is Betrayal of Black Freedom" (see page 30).

The ANC-led nationalist movement cannot achieve any semblance of "liberation" for the nonwhite masses since it is committed to maintaining South African capitalism, which has always been based on the brutal exploitation of the black toilers. This is the economic bedrock of white supremacy, and the fundamental reason why apartheid cannot be reformed away through negotiations and elections.

In addition to police-state repression, white minority domination was maintained by the manipulation of racial, ethnic and tribal divisions. Ethnic tensions have escalated particularly over the question of housing. In September, the townships west of Johannesburg exploded in demonstrations, strikes and running street battles with police, as residents demanded lower rent and ser-

vice charges and for their arrears to be wiped off the books. These were townships formerly designated as "coloured" (mixed-race) areas under the apartheid regime's Group Areas Act. Rent boycotts in black townships were a major tactic in the anti-apartheid struggle. For at least a decade, residents in Soweto and Sharpeville and scores of other townships have made no payments for rent or utilities in protest against the miserable living conditions, but now the Mandela regime is trying to get the rent paid.

The "divide and rule" practices inherited from British colonialism are still at work today, and will generate even more deadly feuding until the national framework is transcended and the enormous wealth, land and resources of South Africa are taken from the white capitalist ruling class. The way out of this cruel dilemma lies in building an integrated Bolshevik workers party that fights for a workers revolution centered on the oppressed black majority. Its ranks and leaders must be drawn from throughout the multiracial and ethnically diverse South African society, including those few whites who are prepared to struggle for a genuinely democratic and egalitarian society based on the principle that those who labor should rule.

Despite the treachery of the reformist SACP, which has for decades been organically linked to petty-bourgeois nationalism through subservience to the ANC, and whose leaders now hold key ministries of the capitalist state, South Africa is one of the few places in the world today where the workers and plebeian masses identify with the goal of communism. Increasing disillusionment with the Government of National Unity and continuing defiance of the regime's attacks on labor could lead to a sharp leftward radicalization of the black workers movement, laying the basis for a mass revolutionary party and throwing up organs of proletarian dual power.

Thus the extreme instability and sharp contradictions of the "new" South Africa may generate a revolutionary situation at a time of increased imperialist domination and interimperialist rivalry worldwide in the wake of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. Indeed, the ANC/SACP tops point to the unchallenged dominance of American and West European finance capital on the African continent to justify the neo-apartheid system and their opposition to labor militancy.

But communist-minded South African workers do not have to accept neo-apartheid subjugation until there are evident and immediate prospects for socialist revolution in East Asia or West Europe, for example. Rather, as we note in Part 4 of "Powder Keg":

"The consolidation, or simply the sur-

vival of a socialist revolution in South Africa *requires* its international extension.... For the moment South Africa is a weakened link in the chain of the world capitalist system binding the neocolonies of the Third World to the imperialist states of North America, West Europe and Japan. It is necessary to mobilize the forces of the proletariat to *break* that chain at its weakest links, and then fight like hell to take the battle to the imperialist centers, seeking allies against the vicious enemy of all the oppressed—international capital."

Especially given the unstable conditions prevailing in South Africa and the rest of the globe in the imperialist "New World Disorder," it is impossible to predict where the next wave of revolutionary struggles will be centered. But they must shortly culminate in the transformation of the main centers of bourgeois power into their working-class opposites. Future eruptions by the restless plebeian masses of South Africa may well overlap revolutionary outbreaks in North America, Europe or Asia. This underlines the urgent necessity to reforge an internationalist leadership, an authentically Trotskyist Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution.

* * *

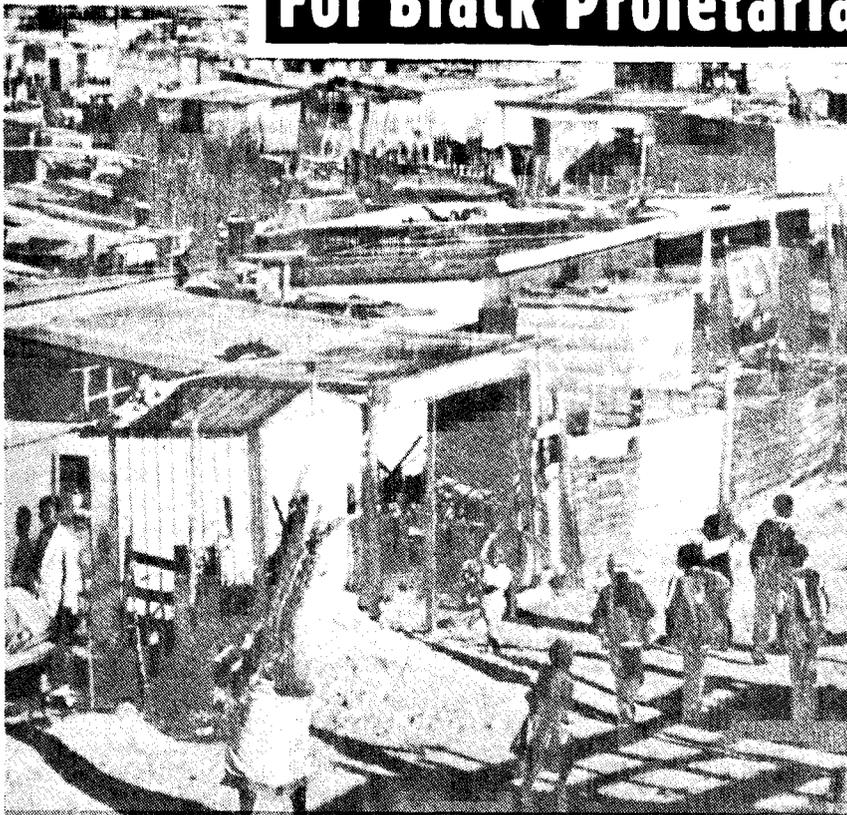
One obvious and central ally of a black-centered workers government in South Africa would be an aroused, class-conscious black proletariat in the United States, a center of world capitalism. Emboldened by counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union, the American bourgeoisie's oppression of the poor and minorities has intensified. The war on the impoverished black ghettos and Latino barrios as outlined by Democrat Clinton and the Republican "Contract With America" is nothing short of a death lottery. They hope to eliminate welfare "as we know it," replace school breakfast programs with prayers, gut social services and health care, destroy abortion rights and drive a stake through the heart of the organized labor movement. The bourgeoisie is serious about regimenting life in the U.S.A.: they are in a frenzy of prison building—this country already has the second-highest rate of incarceration in the world—and hiring more cops.

In a vicious, lying, anti-scientific attempt to generate theory to support the program of the right, Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray have published a tract called *The Bell Curve*, which we aptly describe as a "pseudoscholarly version of David ('Klan in a suit') Duke-style demagoguery—a sales pitch to white America to loathe and repress black people and feel good about it." Our article (see page 34), "Pseudo-Science in the Service of Racism—The 'Bell Curve' and Genocide U.S.A.," places this attempted resurrection of ideas which

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For Black Proletarian Power



Schneider



Tillum/NY Times

Poverty and police terror will continue for black masses under ANC/De Klerk "power sharing" regime. Alexandra township outside Johannesburg (above); police raid Manenberg township in May (right).

SOUTH AFRICA POWDER KEG

1 ANC Fronts for Racist Exploiters

It has been barely two months since Nelson Mandela, upon taking office as South Africa's first black president, declared the blood-drenched land "free at last." The imperialist media echoed his proclamation (taken from American civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr.) in language usually associated with religious ecstasy. The *U.S. News & World Report* exulted: "South Africa's election ratifies a political miracle for the ages." Much of the left was similarly ecstatic over the "new" South Africa, pronouncing apartheid dead and buried.

However, for the black toilers of South Africa, apartheid is not simply a legal system of racial segregation—the bantustans, pass laws, Group Areas Act—but

above all the economic and social dominance of the white rulers and their agents. A black gold miner on the Rand exclaimed bitterly a few days after the elections: "Underground there are 35 black men working and there is one white man watching them and he has everything." The rigid structures of apartheid may be gone, but white supremacy remains, and will remain until the racist capitalist system is overthrown by the working people who produce its superprofits.

In South Africa today, just as before the April 27 elections, whites—who make up 13 percent of the population—own 87 percent of the land, 90 percent of the productive wealth and hold 98

percent of the corporate directorships. On average, white families have an income ten times that of blacks. In a country which developed high-tech medical equipment, 23 million people have no electricity, 12 million have no access to clean drinking water. The leading cause of death among black African children is water-borne diseases like dysentery. The leading cause of death among white children is swimming pool accidents!

While Western liberals and many leftists may be celebrating the "death of apartheid," the leaders of Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) knew very well that they were betraying the black masses in the struggle against



Berry/Magnum



Der Spiegel

Racist internal passbooks and rigid segregation in transport and housing under the apartheid system were brought down through decades of heroic struggle by black masses. But superexploitation of black workers will continue until capitalist Randlords are swept away.

apartheid, which is necessarily a fight for social and economic equality. Even before the vote, the ANC tops worried about a "crisis of expectations" in the impoverished black townships. That's why Mandela was relieved not to have gotten more than two-thirds of the votes, which would have put the ANC under pressure to rewrite the constitution to eliminate the various "sunset clauses" preserving white privilege. Already the masses' patience is wearing thin. As the election and inauguration euphoria dissipates, there have already been a spate of strikes by black miners against racist practices of the Gold Fields conglomerate, as well as by auto workers of Volkswagen and Delta Motor Corporation.

Meanwhile, land invasions by homeless squatters have begun. In the huge, overpopulated slum of Sebokeng, several hundred residents surged across the highway—dubbed the "Red Sea" by the residents—into the promised land of empty private and city-owned land where they quickly measured out their plots and began erecting housing in the settlement they called "Kanana" (Canaan, the "land of milk and honey," in the Sotho language). The leader of the occupation declared, "In the new South Africa, we don't want to wait any longer until the politicians finally give us houses." But the white racists are still there, and they still have power. On the freezing winter morning of June 6, police ordered in by the all-white Johannesburg city council tore down the shacks of the squatter settlement Liefde en Vrede (Love and Peace). The response of the ANC provincial government was to decree a moratorium on land occupations.

The ANC's Reconstruction and Devel-

opment (RCD) program piously proclaims: "We must not perpetuate the separation of our society into a 'first world' and 'third world'—another disguised way of preserving apartheid." A disguised way of preserving apartheid accurately describes the "government of national unity" between the erstwhile petty-bourgeois ANC—now a bourgeois-nationalist party—and F.W. De Klerk's National Party, the main party of the white ruling class and the cruel master of the apartheid police state for almost half a century.

The laws mandating racial segregation have been abolished, while the nationalist misleaders of the black liberation struggle have been co-opted into the capitalist government to serve alongside the same people who in the past killed, tortured and imprisoned them. This is called "power sharing." Additionally, the white ruling class is making a big push to recruit blacks, especially those well-connected to the ANC, into the upper echelons of the corporate bureaucracy. "Black is beautiful in business this year," quipped the Johannesburg *Weekly Mail & Guardian*. Thus the wife of slain Black Consciousness Movement leader Steve Biko, Mamphela Ramphele, is the second black director of the mining conglomerate Anglo American.

But while blacks will constitute a majority in government ministries and parliamentary committees and will be more visible in corporate boardrooms, the white ruling class has retained tight control over the real lever of political power—the military apparatus of the state. The generals, senior police officials and judges who enforced apartheid terror remain in place and cannot be touched. A week before the elections,

Communist Party (SACP) leader Joe Slovo precisely spelled out the role of the ANC and his own closely allied party in the new political setup: "We will win the election, but we'll be in office, not in power. The structure of apartheid is still here, with a white police and army" (London *Independent*, 19 April).

But a situation in which the ANC/SACP holds governmental office but does not wield real power is highly unstable and inflammatory, for *the aims and expectations of the white ruling class and the black toilers are fundamentally antagonistic*. The fate of the "new" South Africa will be determined not by constitutional clauses and parliamentary maneuvers but by the struggles in the factories, mines and black townships. And "just six weeks into Mr. Mandela's term, there are the first mutterings from admirers that the leader is too nice, too attentive to vested interests," reports the *New York Times* (23 June).

Grumbings began over the ANC leaders' acceptance of the massive and blatant vote fraud in KwaZulu-Natal, which gave a bogus majority in the provincial legislature to the apartheid collaborators of Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha. When it came to light soon afterward that on the eve of the vote, De Klerk's government had signed over fully one-third of all the land in the province and former bantustan to Zulu king Goodwill Zwelithini, Mandela again acquiesced. Discontent surged when the new president decided *not* to declare the anniversary of the 1976 Soweto massacre a national holiday. For years June 16 has been observed by millions of blacks in massive stayaway strikes, but now the ANC leaders declared that in the interests of "stability" it would be a normal

to the supposedly "democratic" bourgeoisie. Two decades of militant, self-sacrificing and often heroic struggle against the apartheid state has created one of the strongest trade-union movements in the Third World. Today, the wages of unionized factory workers in South Africa are substantially higher than in some East Asian neocolonies of the U.S. and Japan. This achievement is all the more impressive given that half the black labor force is unemployed. Yet the solidarity of the black masses against the white ruling class is so intense that strikes by COSATU unions are not broken by widespread scabbing as is all too common in the U.S.

Another index of the strength of the black union movement is that it is beginning to attract even highly privileged white workers, who because of the severe economic slump are facing the prospect of layoffs for the first time in decades. Earlier this year more than a thousand white transport workers, reportedly including supporters of the ultrarightist Conservative Party, joined the COSATU-affiliated South African Railways and Harbour Workers' Union (SARHWU). A white flight attendant for South African Airways explained: "We have joined SARHWU for job security, not for its politics."

But if some white workers are now looking to COSATU for job security, for the white ruling class a major aim of the "power sharing" deal with the ANC is to weaken the power and authority of the black union movement (in part by coopting its leaders). Thus, the new constitution outlaws strikes for political purposes. And the Jo'burg stock exchange's main man in the government, Derek Keys, wants not merely to perpetuate but even intensify the exploitation of black labor. He complains that as a result of COSATU's activities: "We don't have low wages to offer.... How do you attract entrepreneurs if you can't offer them low wage costs?" (*New York Times*, 9 May).

However, the black masses expect that the new ANC-led government will bring about an improvement, not a deterioration, in their living conditions. The weeks leading up to the elections, despite the intense pressure of Mandela & Co. for peace on the labor front, saw an organizing strike of nurses in the Transkei and a walkout by platinum miners on the Rand. On the eve of the inauguration, 10,000 gold miners struck the Kloof mine owned by the giant Gold Fields conglomerate, which had provocatively fired a union official. And on June 10, miners at Gold Fields' West Driefontein mine walked out over a racist remark.



ANC
Black workers demonstrate for equal rights and against racist repression in 1930s. Even before apartheid was instituted in 1948, South African capitalism was based on white supremacy.

"The workers think it's pay-back time," observed one industry analyst.

Significant class struggle can blow the ANC/SACP/COSATU "tripartite alliance"—and the whole country—apart. But black workers cannot defend or further their interests simply through struggles at the trade-union level, however militant. In the first instance, the impoverished black masses will be repressed by the "new" South African National Defence Force (SANDF), which is the old, hated SADF with the addition of a handful of "generals" from the ANC's former armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK—Spear of the Nation), with MK commander Joe Modise sitting in the defense minister's chair. It is necessary to call on the workers to oppose the fraud of "power sharing" with the Randlords and break from the black front men of the ANC to form a revolutionary workers party.

The proletariat must place itself at the head of the struggle against the national oppression of the black African peoples as well as the coloureds (mixed-race) and Indians, a struggle culminating in a black-centered workers government. This is the perspective of Trotsky's permanent revolution. The alternative to this is not some kind of mythical harmonious bourgeois "democracy." Although in its social composition South Africa is in many respects unique among the states produced by European colonialism, experience throughout Asia and Africa demonstrates that the frustration of the oppressed masses' aspirations for social

liberation will necessarily lead to escalating racial and ethnic-tribal feuding. First among the targets will doubtless be intermediate layers such as the coloureds and Indians, while the black majority polarizes between Xhosas (predominant in Mandela's ANC) and Zulus.

Despite the ANC leaders' sugary talk of a "non-racial society," the prospects facing blacks under racist South African capitalism are truly ominous. This was put in sharp relief when former ANC guerrilla leader Tokyo Sexwale, now a regional premier, visited the black townships of Thokoza and Katlehong. Sexwale appealed for an end to the fratricidal killings, in which brother killed brother because they were blinded by blood: "We are here today to wash the blood out of their eyes, so that they can see and live together in peace and harmony." But despite his plea, a township resident complained of the hostel dwellers, "Buthelezi should take all his people back where they come from. They were all brought in from Zululand.... In this location we're going to kill them all." The East Rand, where more than 1,500 people were killed in political violence last year, could become killing fields on a vast scale.

Over the last several years, the violence, largely instigated by the apartheid regime through its Inkatha puppets, took on a tribal vengeance of its own. Throughout the industrial and mining region of the Witwatersrand, township "self-defense units" (SDUs) were formed by supporters of the Xhosa-dominated ANC to fight back against Inkatha *impis*



Berry/Magnum



Work in Progress

Gold miners in Driefontein (left), part of powerful black proletariat. Black freedom requires socialist revolution—those who labor must rule!

degradation of the black population. Quite the contrary! The deep racial divide in the American working class is the main obstacle to effective labor struggle against capital. As a result, over the past generation the unions have been smashed and gutted, while the living standard of working people has on average fallen by 20 percent.

But if South Africa is fundamentally different than the U.S., despite the centrality of the black/white divide in the two societies, it is also fundamentally different than the rest of sub-Saharan Africa and all other Third World countries. British colonialists in Kenya and India, the French in West Africa and Vietnam, the Belgians in the Congo, the Dutch in the East Indies, were a thin stratum of military officers and civilian administrators, traders, plantation and mine owners who exploited the native toilers. These Europeans remained a tiny fraction of the population and retained close ties to their "mother" countries. When the European imperialists were forced to grant independence to their African and Asian colonies after World War II, the overwhelming majority of Europeans living there repatriated. They were manifestly *not* Africans, Indians or Vietnamese. Even in Algeria, where the proportion of French colonists to the native population approached that of South Africa, with independence the Europeans got out.

The various elements of European colonialism combined in South Africa to produce a unique mix. On the one hand, there was a large, permanent European immigration coming in two waves. In the 17th century Dutch Calvinist and French Huguenot settlers created a farming and livestock economy. Geographically isolated, this European settler community cohered into a distinct people, the Afrikaners, who consider themselves "Africa's white tribe." When in the late 19th century gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand, large numbers of English speakers of all social classes poured into South Africa. The white settler population did not displace the indigenous African peoples but rather exploited them ever more extensively and systematically over time.

Unlike parts of Latin America, there was no significant intermarriage between the Europeans and native peoples. Originally, Dutch/Huguenot men did father children by Khoi and San women and later by women slaves from the East Indies. These children of mixed race were Christianized, taught Afrikaans as their language and raised in European cultural traditions. Their descendants were called coloureds and are concentrated in the Western and Northern Cape provinces.

However, after the initial period of colonization, a rigid sexual-racial segregation was established and maintained.

There was effectively no intermarriage between Afrikaners and Bantu-speaking Zulus and Xhosas, the main body of the black African population. Indeed, there has been relatively little intermarriage between the Afrikaners and English, who don't much like one another and fought a savage war against each other at the turn of the century.

The large size, social diversity and permanent character of the European settler population in South Africa enabled the exploitation of the non-white toilers on a far broader scale and more intensively than, for example, in British India or French Morocco. Thus throughout modern South African history, the wages of blacks have been a small fraction of those of whites. By the early years of this century, the whites had seized *all of the arable farmland*, restricting blacks under the 1913 Land Act to the most barren 13 percent of the country. Thus, contrary to liberal myth, the desolate "homelands" did not originate with the apartheid schemes promoted after the Afrikaners took office in 1948; earlier, under British domination, they were known as "tribal reserves." The women and children were forced to live on the bantustans, while the men—separated from their families for most of their adult lives—were forced to work in slave-like conditions in the white-owned farms, mines and factories.

White foremen, engineers, technicians,

(squads) organized out of the hostels housing Zulu migrant workers. With more than 2,000 members on the East Rand, the SDUs are a force to be reckoned with. But they are not beholden to the ANC. An SDU commander in Thokoza said, "We don't trust them now they are in government." Township leaders demanded that the hostels be replaced by family units; that the hostel dwellers "must be with their families because they must see if they kill us the same will happen to their families" (*Weekly Mail*, 3 June).

As we go to press, gunfire echoes through Thokoza's streets as the self-defense units have declared that they are at war with the hostels and hostel dwellers. ANC leader Sexwale "will not come out of here alive" if he dares to show up, they said, adding that they voted for the ANC hoping it would destroy the hostels but now he wants to improve them. "How can you improve dwellings of people who kill us?" (Reuters dispatch, 4 July). While Sexwale and Mandela wish to impose "peace" in the interests of the Randlords, the burning desire of the township dwellers for revenge for the reign of Inkatha and cop terror they have been subjected to threatens to set off a bloody cycle of tribal violence. Hard class struggle is the only way to cut through these poisonous ethnic hatreds born of the horrendous poverty produced by capitalist superexploitation and the divide-and-rule policies of the apartheid masters.

The perspective of permanent revolution demands the forging of a multiracial revolutionary workers party built in sharp political combat against the nationalist ANC. In opposition to the "government of national unity," a revolutionary work-

ers party must fight for a genuinely democratic government of the oppressed and exploited masses—for a constituent assembly based on one person, one vote; for the expropriation of the white agribusinesses and the vast tracts of farmland seized from blacks, and the establishment of cooperative and state farms for black agricultural laborers and the toilers who were evicted to the desolate bantustans; for union-based workers militias, linking the factory to the townships and made up of class-conscious workers, including Zulus, Xhosas and members of other tribal groups, as well as coloured, Asian and anti-racist white workers, to suppress right-wing white terrorists and the fomenters of bloody communalist terror; and for the nationalization of the mines and factories under a black-centered workers government. A truly new South Africa will emerge only when those who labor will rule.

A Unique Society Produced by European Colonialism

Western liberals, social democrats and leftists long regarded the apartheid system, that nightmarish world of racist oppression, as the ultimate contemporary political evil. But for Marxists it is necessary to understand South African society, its historical development and internal contradictions, in order to carry out a revolution that will sweep this system of hideous race and class oppression from the face of the earth. Like many states throughout the world, South Africa was created by the colonial expansion of European capitalism from the 16th through the 19th centuries. However, on the southern tip of the African continent, European colonialism led to a society quite unlike any other on the face of the planet.

One type of society produced by colonialism is represented by the United States, Canada, Australia, and also Argentina, Uruguay and Chile in the southern part of South America. In these countries a large, permanent European settler population, constantly reinforced by immigration, killed off the indigenous native peoples or drove them into remote, inhospitable areas. Thus in North America, Australia and the Southern Cone of South America, the overwhelming majority of *all social classes* is European-derived.

A partial exception is the United States, where a large black population was brought from Africa originally as slaves for Southern plantation agriculture. After the Civil War, blacks became an oppressed race-color caste concentrated

at the bottom of American society. Especially since the 1950s, it has been commonplace for American blacks and white liberals to see racial oppression in South Africa as similar to that in the U.S. The apartheid system is compared to the legally enforced "Jim Crow" racial segregation of the pre-1960s South, and the anti-apartheid struggle to the civil rights movement.

An especially simple-minded version of this view was recently stated by a British academic, Barry Buzan, who predicts "democratic South Africa will resemble the U.S." (London *Independent*, 21 April). And he tells us that: "The American and South African populations, as well as being similarly composed, also relate to their landscapes in parallel ways.... Their cities are largely modern, and are arranged into highly differentiated, often ethnically defined ghettos."

In reality, the American and South African populations are not at all similarly composed. Blacks make up only 13 percent of the U.S. population, the same as whites in South Africa. When blacks gained the democratic right to vote in the South in the 1960s (a right which millions of blacks in the North had always had), this in no way threatened the political dominance of the white ruling class, much less their ownership of the country's wealth. Three decades after the "victory" of the civil rights movement, not one of the 50 U.S. states has a black governor and the possibility of a black president in Washington is nil. But in South Africa, a government based on "one person, one vote" and representing the democratic will of the black majority would immediately and directly threaten the social and economic dominance of the white ruling class. Unlike its American counterpart, the white South African bourgeoisie *could not survive* under any semblance of bourgeois democracy.

While blacks are on the bottom of American society, whites as a whole are not on top. In U.S. factories, warehouses, airports, department stores, etc., whites work alongside blacks and earn more or less the same pay. (The racial income gap reflects the concentration of blacks in low-pay sectors, and the vastly higher unemployment among ghetto minorities.) In major labor strikes, like the recent Teamster strike, the police routinely attack and arrest white workers as well as their black and Hispanic union brothers. Millions of white women and their children are on welfare. All of these things would be inconceivable in South Africa.

Whites in the U.S. do not in general benefit from the exploitation and

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Eric Miller/Impact Visuals

Workers greet formation of COSATU trade-union federation in Western Cape in 1986. Powerful black workers movement challenged apartheid system but has remained shackled to ANC/SACP nationalist popular front.

2 Growth of the Black Workers Movement

In a little over two months since the new “power sharing” government of Mandela/De Klerk took office, almost 50 separate workers actions—involving gold and platinum mining, steel, textiles and apparel, telecommunications, postal service, municipal and even court workers—have rocked South Africa. Days lost due to strikes in the second quarter of this year—that is, right before and right after Mandela’s election as the country’s first black president in late April—are up 70 percent over the same period last year. Already there have been more strikes this year than in any since 1987, the year of the great gold strike, the largest in South African history.

The *New York Times* (23 July), the premier mouthpiece for the American ruling class, reports worriedly:

“[T]he soaring hopes of workers have collided with the new economic reality, creating a fallout of strikes and disenchantment.

“Unionists who regard themselves as heroes of the liberation struggle often find themselves pilloried as an impediment to foreign investment, a menace to economic discipline and a potential threat to the Government they helped elect....”

We had written that the black workers

would quickly come up against the repressive apparatus of the “new” South Africa, which is essentially the same police/army/security forces of the old apartheid regime. Already there are photos of combative strikers facing shotgun-wielding cops at the Pick ‘n Pay grocery store chain, pictures that looked like they were from the height of the anti-apartheid struggle. Now, just two days after Mandela personally appealed to the trade-union leaders for labor peace, tens of thousands of auto workers have walked out, striking Volkswagen, Delta, Mercedes Benz, BMW and Nissan plants in Port Elizabeth and East London.

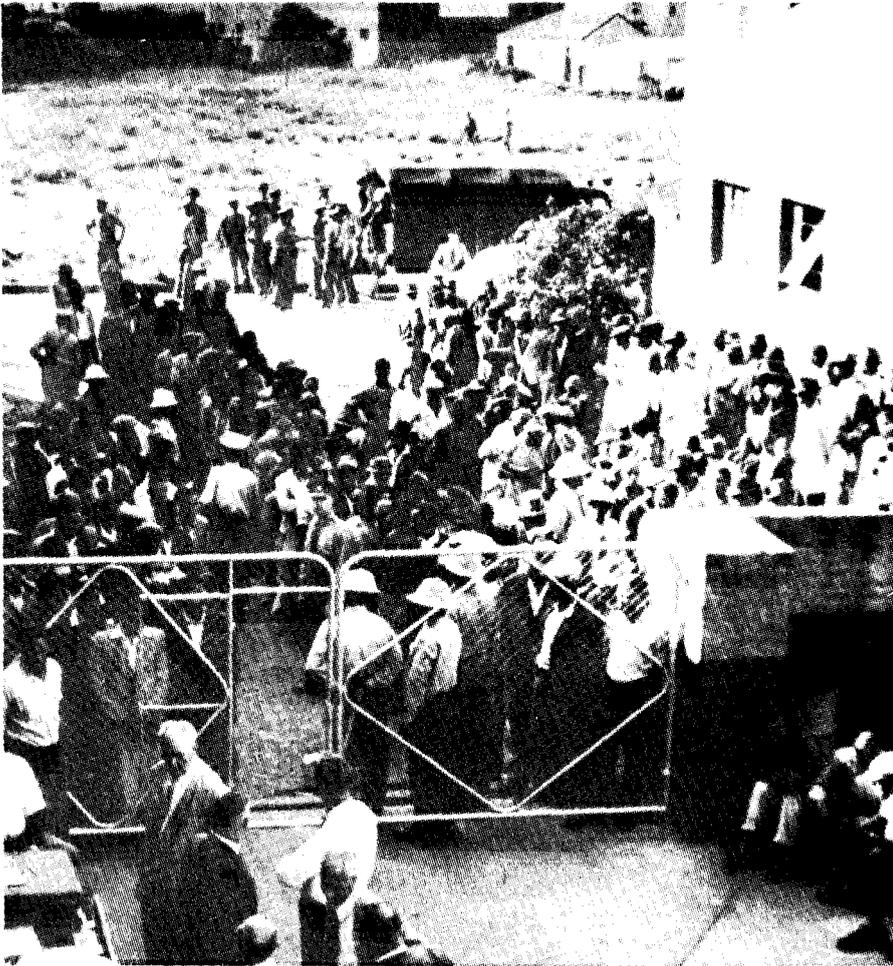
Yet black workers cannot defend or further their interests simply through struggles at the trade-union level, however militant. The proletariat must place itself at the head of the struggle for the national liberation of the black African people as well as the coloureds (mixed-race) and Indians, a struggle culminating in a black-centered workers government. This question stands at the heart of the relationship of the black workers movement, which developed over the last generation, to the now-bourgeois nationalist ANC leadership. It is out of a struggle against this new ruling layer

and its “labor lieutenants” that a racially integrated, revolutionary vanguard party must be built.

Formed in 1912, the African National Congress has historically exercised political hegemony over the black African masses, at various junctures eclipsing, absorbing or subordinating rival and other independent organizations. In its first decades of existence, the ANC was a relatively small organization of the black African elite, whose main activity consisted of futilely lobbying the British imperial authorities to pursue more liberal policies in South Africa.

As part of the rightward turn of the international Stalinist movement toward “popular frontism” in the mid-1930s, the South African Communist Party entered the ANC. Over the course of the next several decades the SACP cadre became completely intertwined with the non-Stalinist, petty-bourgeois nationalist elements in the ANC, producing a hybrid political formation.

The weakening of British imperialism after World War II led in South Africa to its displacement in 1948 by the Afrikaner Nationalist regime, which strengthened and rigidified the racist



no credit

Powerful mass strike wave in Durban in 1973 marked the emergence of new black workers movement.

skilled workers and, not least, a police apparatus were part of a totalitarian system for the brutal regimentation of black labor. Over half a million black miners—many contracted from outside the borders of South Africa—were forced to live in single-sex hostels surrounded by high walls and rolls of razor wire; these compounds were patrolled by mounted company goons, armored vehicles and guard dogs.

The superexploitation of black labor, combined with a white ruling caste which had mastered modern technology, has enabled South Africa to become the one relatively industrialized country on the African continent. Nonetheless, like many Third World countries the South African economy is based on the exploitation of raw materials—gold, diamonds, platinum. Agricultural products and minerals make up almost two-thirds of South Africa's exports, gold alone accounting for 30 percent. Thus, much of the country's extensive manufacturing sector depends on the revenue generated in Rand gold mines. The Mercedes auto plant in East London, for example, does

not produce cars for export but rather for affluent whites whose incomes derive, directly or indirectly, from the mining sector.

The development of South Africa has produced a near-complete overlap between race and class. Practically the entire industrial proletariat now consists of black Africans, with some coloureds in the Western Cape. In the past there existed a sizable if privileged white working class, while many Afrikaner farmers were relatively poor by the standards of white South Africa. However, a major aim of Hendrik Verwoerd's Nationalist Party government in 1948 was to intensify the superexploitation of the blacks in order to transform Afrikaner workers and poorer farmers into a petty bourgeoisie concentrated in the state bureaucracy. Today, one-third of the white labor force (and *half* the Afrikaner workforce) is employed in the government sector, mainly as useless paper-pushers. An American academic, Jeffrey Herbst, pointed out that "apartheid was in many ways the most comprehensive program of racial entitlements ever to

exist" (*Foreign Policy*, Spring 1994). And it still is.

In South Africa the struggle of labor against capital is integrally bound up with the struggle of the oppressed black African people against white domination. The proletarian revolution is at once the supreme act of national liberation.

The relationship between the social and national transformation of South Africa was spelled out by Leon Trotsky in the 1930s, when the country was still a British colony and had a sizable, if privileged and generally racist, white working class. When the Stalinists came out with the slogan of a "black republic," some South African Trotskyists condemned the slogan as equally harmful to the revolutionary cause as the demand for "South Africa for the whites." Trotsky criticized this kind of color-blind workerism on the part of his followers in South Africa, pointing out the latter slogan means "supporting complete oppression," while the demand for a "black republic" means "taking the first steps toward liberation." More generally, Trotsky explained:

"Three-quarters of the population of South Africa (almost six million of the almost eight million total) is composed of non-Europeans. A victorious revolution is unthinkable without the awakening of the native masses. In its turn, that will give them what they are so lacking today—confidence in their strength, a heightened personal consciousness, a cultural growth.

"Under these conditions, the South African republic will emerge first of all as a 'black' republic; this does not exclude, of course, either full equality for the whites or brotherly relations between the two races—depending mainly on the conduct of the whites. But it is entirely obvious that the predominant majority of the population, liberated from slavish dependence, will put a certain imprint on the state.

"Insofar as a victorious revolution will radically change the relation not only between the classes but also between the races and will assure to the blacks that place in the state that corresponds to their numbers, thus far will the *social* revolution in South Africa also have a *national* character." [emphasis in original]

—"On the South African Theses" (April 1935)

We have sought to encapsulate the Trotskyist program for South Africa in the slogan of a "black-centered workers government." Today, the social power and combativity of the black African proletariat is manifest for all to see. However, for the black working class to lead the struggle for national liberation it is necessary to break with the nationalist misleaders of the African National Congress, who now openly act as the junior partners of the Randlords.

police state under the banner of apartheid (separateness). At the same time, the wave of anti-imperialist struggles which swept colonial Africa and Asia in this period had strong reverberations in South Africa. A new generation of radical black nationalists, exemplified by Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu, ousted the conservative "old guard" of the ANC and turned the organization toward militant action. During the 1950s, the ANC led a series of mass campaigns in defiance of the new apartheid legislation, such as the pass laws.

The Afrikaner nationalist regime responded with ever more savage and effective repression, culminating in the 1960 Sharpeville massacre. In its aftermath, the entire leadership and most of the cadre of the ANC and rival nationalist Pan-Africanist Congress were imprisoned or driven into exile. The 1960s saw the totalitarian suppression of all black struggle and independent political life.

In this heyday of apartheid capitalism, South Africa was a magnet for American and British investment, the U.S. business magazine *Fortune* writing in 1972:

"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 1970s: Eroding the Apartheid Police State

Yet just as these words were written, events began to explode South Africa's image as a veritable paradise for multinational banks and corporations. In 1973, a mass strike wave of factory and municipal workers in Durban signaled the emergence of a new black union movement which would become one of the largest and strongest in the Third World. At the same time, a new generation of student-youth, centered around Steve Biko's Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), were trying to break the shackles of apartheid slavery.

Partly inspired by the defeat of the South African army in Angola by the Cubans and their left-nationalist Angolan allies a few months earlier, in June 1976 thousands of black youth marched through Soweto protesting the compulsory teaching of Afrikaans—the language of the hated oppressor—in the schools. The white-supremacist regime



Financial Times
Soweto youth saw Nelson Mandela's release in 1990 as harbinger of liberation. ANC leadership betrayed struggle for black freedom in "power sharing" deal with white ruling class.

answered with a bloodbath. While the heroism and martyrdom of South Africa's black plebeian youth captured the world's attention, the Achilles' heel of the apartheid system was its dependence on black labor.

The continuing growth of black unions led in 1979 to their legalization, in the regime's calculation a means of more effectively controlling a movement which it could not simply suppress. Nonetheless, these unions were still too weak to seriously challenge the apartheid system. Union organizers—who included a number of white radicals—recognized that the white-supremacist regime was not going to be dislodged or even liberalized in the near future. Hence, they saw their task as one of gradually building up the union's strength on the shop floor. However, we predicted at the time:

"In a longer historic term, apolitical bread-and-butter unionism cannot prevail in South Africa. The white racist oppression of the black masses is too deep, too brutal, too all-sided, too obvious. That most black workers have their families and relatives on the bantustans in itself goes against a narrow trade-unionist consciousness."

—"The Struggle for Independent Black Unions in South Africa," *WV* No. 248, 25 January 1980

While the ANC retained the passive allegiance of the black masses as "their" liberation organization, the activists who came to the fore in the 1970s—both student militants and union organizers—

emerged outside the organizational structures of the ANC/SACP and did not share its ideological outlook and program. The dominant current among student-youth was the BCM.

The new black union movement lacked a single, dominant current but was rather highly politically diverse. Some unions were led by old ANC/SACP veterans, others were affiliated with the Black Consciousness Movement. However, the two most important union groupings—the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM)—were genuinely independent of the petty-bourgeois nationalist movements.

The NUM was organized by a young black lawyer, Cyril Ramaphosa, who had previously been one of the directors of the Urban Foundation, a fund launched by Harry Oppenheimer, to promote the development of a black middle class. Oppenheimer, head of the giant Anglo American mining and manufacturing conglomerate, was the godfather of the "liberal" English-speaking capitalist opposition to the Afrikaner Nationalist regime. Anglo American invited Ramaphosa to organize the gold miners in order to head off their unionization by more radical forces.

In its first years the NUM was an extremely cautious, narrowly economist and apolitical union. Nonetheless, given the truly hellish conditions of black gold miners, it grew rapidly into the country's largest union. In later years, under the pressure of its base, the NUM engaged in some bitter, hard-fought battles with the mine bosses. However, Ramaphosa always represented the political right wing of the black union movement before becoming the new general secretary of the ANC a few years ago.

The most important union grouping in the late 1970s and early '80s was FOSATU, whose leadership represented a quasi-syndicalist current which later came to be called "workerism." They expressed distrust that an ANC government would ride roughshod over the black workers movement, pointing to post-colonial Africa, especially Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, where post-independence nationalist regimes suppressed the unions which helped them to power. A 1982 address by FOSATU's general secretary Joe Foster was generally regarded as a declaration of trade-union independence from the ANC/SACP. Describing the ANC as "a great populist liberation movement," he argued that "workers must strive to build their own powerful and effective organization...to ensure that the popular movement is not hijacked

from class-conscious militants in the predominantly black unions. This is the only road forward if the protestations of 'socialism' and 'workers power' by left-wing militants in COSATU are not to be simply a means of pressuring the ANC."

—"South Africa: Blacks Defy Apartheid Elections," *WV* No. 486, 29 September 1989

A quasi-syndicalist current could exist in the black union movement only as long as the white-supremacist regime was relatively stable and there was no immediate prospect of an ANC government. Once Mandela was released from prison in 1990 and the "power sharing" negotiations began in earnest, the COSATU "workerists" either had to support this development, seeking to influence its outcome, or put forward their own program for governmental power. But they never had a program or perspective for taking state power. Hence at this point Mayekiso and the other "workerist" leaders joined the SACP, hoping in this way to play an influential role in shaping the "new" South Africa.

The Road to the Mandela/De Klerk Government

While secret negotiations between the National Party regime and the ANC leaders had begun in 1986, for four years these talks went nowhere. Expectations that Mandela was about to be released from prison were repeatedly frustrated. The maximum the ANC leadership was willing to concede at this time was still less than the minimum demanded by the white ruling class.

The logjam in the ANC/National Party negotiations was broken by developments not in southern Africa but rather in East Europe—the breakup of the Soviet bloc and the disintegration of the Kremlin bureaucracy under Gorbachev. Like many Third World nationalist movements and regimes, the ANC based its strategy on playing off Moscow and Washington. For decades, the Soviet Union had been the ANC's primary international sponsor, supporting it in various diplomatic forums and providing arms for Umkhonto's symbolic guerrilla actions.

However, Mandela, Sisulu and Oliver Tambo (then ANC president) were by no means agents or even loyal clients of Moscow. Rather they sought to use Soviet support as a means of pressuring Western imperialism to pressure the South African ruling class into accepting a "power sharing" deal. This was the aim of the international campaign for economic sanctions and corporate divestment. After meeting with Gorbachev in 1986, Tambo called for a kind of global "popular front"



Gubb/J.B. Pictures

Funeral march commemorates murdered trade-union activist in Port Elizabeth, 1986. Following suppression of township revolt in mid-1980s, COSATU emerged as main organizer of mass militant black struggle.

against the apartheid regime: "East and West, North and South can and must act together in a decisive manner for the triumph of democracy in South Africa."

The collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989-90 thus brought with it the collapse of the ANC's entire international strategy. If the disintegrating Kremlin Stalinist bureaucracy was abandoning East Europe to Western imperialism, it was certainly not going to support a client state in southern Africa. The ANC leaders now had to act within the framework set by Wall Street and the City of London and their South African partners. As National Party leader Gerrit Viljoen explained in justifying the legalization of the ANC and SACP to his white constituents:

"Our situation has changed fundamentally by what has happened in the international field, in Eastern Europe, Russia, and in several African states recently. The total effect of all these things puts the threat posed by the South African Communist Party and the African National Congress in an entirely new context."

—quoted in David Ottaway, *Chained Together: Mandela, De Klerk, and the Struggle to Remake South Africa* (1993)

While the legalization of the ANC/SACP and Mandela's release from prison in early 1990 clearly posed a "power sharing" deal with the white ruling class, the exact terms of such a deal were yet to be resolved. De Klerk initially sought to play off the Zulu tribalist Inkatha movement against the ANC. In this way the National Party leaders hoped to acquire for themselves a bonapartist role

in the "new" South Africa, acting as arbiter between the violently hostile black factions. Encouraged by powerful forces in the white state apparatus, Inkatha leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi now escalated his terrorist attacks on the ANC. The fighting spread from the Zulu homeland of Natal to the black townships of the Vaal Reef, where Zulu migrant workers clashed with the ANC-dominated civic associations.

It was generally believed that the "Reef War" was engineered and manipulated by a sinister "third force." To no one's surprise, this "third force" turned out to be senior cadre in the police and military. Official protestations that they were acting without the knowledge of De Klerk and his ministers were believed by no one. The regime's support for and complicity in Buthelezi's terrorist attacks on the ANC—the "Inkathagate" scandal—led in mid-1992 to a temporary breakdown in the "power sharing" negotiations.

Seeking to assuage its angry and disenfranchised ranks and to bring renewed pressure on white ruling circles, the ANC/SACP then launched a campaign of "rolling mass actions." Some more radical leaders, such as SACP general secretary Chris Hani (who was later assassinated by a white racist) and SACP national organizer Ronnie Kasrils, spoke of exercising the "Leipzig option." This was a reference to the mass protests which had brought down the old-line Stalinist regime of Erich Honecker in East Germany in 1989. However, unlike the demoralized and decomposing

to form a workers party, that is, a party structurally similar to the British Labour Party, albeit on a "revolutionary program." The centrists of WOSA and Workers Power project *gradually* winning the black working class away from trade-union consciousness and political support to the bourgeois-nationalist ANC and over to socialist consciousness.

With such a perspective, whatever their criticisms of the ANC, these groups assume a period of relatively stable "post-apartheid" bourgeois "democracy." They do not even consider as possibilities the rise of a black bonapartist regime capable of crushing the workers movement, an outbreak of racial and tribal warfare, and/or managerial sabotage and capital flight leading to economic chaos and collapse. Yet if the black working class, under the leadership of a genuinely communist party, does not take state power, the "new" South Africa will find itself heading in the direction of the rest of post-colonial sub-Saharan Africa.

South Africa is not West Europe. It is not a relatively wealthy, highly industrialized society capable of sustaining a mass social-democratic party backed by a strong union movement. The South African economy, as in many Third World countries, is dependent on the extraction of gold and other minerals. A privileged white caste—making up 13 percent of the population—sits atop the mass of superexploited black African toilers, with the coloured (mixed-race) population and Indians occupying an intermediate place.

In the past a shared hatred for the white rulers, especially the Afrikaner Nationalist regime, tended to suppress class and ethnic divisions within the black African and more generally non-white population. And after Mandela was released from prison and adopted an extremely "moderate" line, many whites came to believe that an ANC-led government would restore social peace without seriously attacking their material privileges. But the notion that the Mandela presidency would usher in an era of good will among South Africans of all classes, races and ethnic groups was exploded almost instantly.

The new government was greeted with a wave of strikes as black workers believed it was "payback time." "We want something now," exclaimed a steel worker, Mtutuzeli Mpondo, "not tomorrow or next year. We voted for change, but nothing seems to be changing, in our lives, work places, homes, and in all spheres of life." Mandela responded to the strikes by denouncing "some" unions for continuing to pursue a course



Protest over white fascist's murder of Communist Party leader Chris Hani last year. Today, while SACP tops occupy cabinet seats in capitalist government, some militants are demanding, "What has happened to the dictatorship of the proletariat?"

of resistance rather than switching over to "reconstruction." This line was also taken by ANC general secretary and parliamentary leader Cyril Ramaphosa (former head of the National Union of Mineworkers).

Even the Communist Party, intimately allied with the ANC for over half a century, criticized Mandela's remarks as "disturbing." Internally, the SACP has become a seething mass of contradictions. For example, the secretary of the Cape Town branch last year threatened to resign from the party to protest its "gradual abandonment of Marxist-Leninist principles."

At the same time, De Klerk's National Party is talking about pulling out of the coalition government and going into opposition. This would signal the beginning of open conflict between the ANC leadership and the white generals, police commandants and senior civilian bureaucrats still entrenched in the neo-apartheid state apparatus. However, the immediate challenge to Mandela, Ramaphosa & Co. is coming not from the white capitalist class but the black working class.

Black Labor Struggles Rock the "New" South Africa

Mandela told the London *Financial Times* (18 July): "The harmony that exists between ourselves in the ANC and big business is striking." Thus the conditions, both political and economic, which over the past two decades gave rise to one of

the most powerful trade-union movements in the Third World, cannot long survive under this *black bourgeois-nationalist government*. Partly due to the strength of the unions and partly to the country's economic structure, industrial wages in South Africa have been pushed considerably above Third World norms. Factory workers in Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth now earn twice as much as those in Mexico City and São Paulo, Brazil and several times as much as in Thailand and the Philippines.

The same factors have produced sharp inequalities within the black African population. In 1990 it was estimated that the predominantly unionized, industrial workers averaged R12,000 (rand)—about US\$3,500—a year, compared to R4,800 for those working in the "informal sector" of the segregated townships. Agricultural laborers earned R2,400 and those living on the desolate bantustans a mere R1,400 (Stephen John Stedman, ed., *South Africa: The Political Economy of Transformation* [1994]). These figures are somewhat misleading, since a good part of the wages received by black industrial workers go to support their poorer relatives unemployed in the townships or trapped on the bantustans. Nonetheless, the unions are vulnerable to demagogic nationalist attack by ANC politicians, who now claim the unions are defending the interests of a labor aristocracy, not the black African populace as a whole.

real estate brokers, etc.—who enjoy “First World” living standards.

Base metals account for *over half* of South Africa’s industrial exports. It’s cheaper to smelt iron and aluminum ore in South Africa and ship slabs and ingots than to ship the ore for smelting in West Europe, North America and Japan. Primary metallurgy is by its technical nature highly capital-intensive, employing less than 10 percent of the industrial labor force.

The Afrikaner Nationalist regime consistently pursued a program of *import substitution* in manufacturing, seeking to maximize production in South Africa of both strategic goods (e.g., armaments) and consumer durables purchased by the affluent white community. Seven international auto makers, including Mercedes, BMW and Nissan, have plants in South Africa—plants which might not have been built there in a more “free trade” environment. Charles Meth, an economist at the University of Natal, pointed out:

“Much investment has been for strategic rather than for ‘purely economic reasons,’ many enterprises being either unprofitable or having their ‘profits’ underwritten by the state. Private sector investment in manufacturing has been cushioned by the state against some of the harsh realities of capitalist competition on an international scale.”

—Nicoli Natrass and Elisabeth Ardington, eds., *The Political Economy of South Africa* (1990)

The particular structure of the South African economy, closely bound up with the apartheid system, necessarily shaped the black industrial union movement which developed over the past two decades. The country’s largest, most militant and most left-wing union is the National Union of Metalworkers (NUMSA). NUMSA’s members are characteristically employed in metal foundries whose profits are based on access to cheap mineral ores, in weapons factories subsidized by the military, and in auto plants geared to the purchasing power of the privileged white community. Thus the core of the unionized industrial labor force has heretofore been relatively insulated from the competitive pressures of the world market.

The masters of the Jo’burg stock exchange and their partners in Wall Street and the City of London believed that by co-opting Mandela, Ramaphosa & Co. as their political agents they would be able to both dampen labor militancy and promote low-wage, labor-intensive industries (e.g., textiles and apparel) capable of competing with the far East and Latin America. In a recent

report, the Washington-based World Bank estimates that union activity has raised the wages of black labor 15 percent above what they otherwise would have been and argues that “higher wages have led to lower demand for labor” (*Reducing Poverty in South Africa* [June 1994]). This key agency of international finance demands an end to “conflict-ridden industrial relations” so that foreign investors will open sweatshops in South Africa instead of Taiwan or Mexico.

But unionized black workers are not buying the line that it is they who have to make sacrifices so that multinational firms and banks will provide sweatshop jobs for their younger brothers in the townships and sisters on the bantustans. Business circles have responded to the current massive strike wave with anger and dismay. One can expect large-scale capital flight.

The impact of intensifying labor conflict on multinational firms and banks is even more immediate. Since the April elections, foreign money men have been

divesting themselves of their holdings in South African companies. Robert Irwin, the head of a Wall Street securities firm who recently visited South Africa, commented: “I cannot figure out what South Africa offers to the outside investor in the way of an opportunity to create jobs” (*New York Times*, 3 August). Black labor militancy in South Africa will be answered and is already being answered by a *strike of capital*, both domestic and international.

In short, the black union movement faces a political attack by the bourgeois-nationalist ANC government and economic sabotage by those who own the means of production. This underscores the utter inadequacy of the combination of quasi-syndicalism and left social democracy espoused by the “workerist” elements in COSATU exemplified by former Metalworkers leader, now ANC/SACP parliamentarian, Moses Mayekiso. The Workers Organisation for Socialist Action, which has recently been presenting itself as the left wing of the COSATU

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Fraternal

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bureaucratic caste resting atop the deformed workers states of East Europe, the capitalist class in South Africa was determined to hold onto the key levers of political power, a determination fully backed by its partners in Washington and London.

The testing ground for the "Leipzig option" was to be the Ciskei, a Xhosa bantustan ruled by a notoriously repressive despot, Brigadier Gqozo. Kasrils announced a campaign for the "peaceful overthrow" of this apartheid puppet. In September 1992, as Kasrils led 50,000 unarmed protesters into Bisho, "capital" of the Ciskei, Gqozo's thugs—bought and paid for by the National Party regime—opened fire with machine guns. Twenty-nine of the protesters were killed, over 200 wounded. The South African army, massed at the "border" of the "tribal homeland," watched the Ciskei forces mow down the fleeing demonstrators. And De Klerk then publicly denounced the Communists for provoking the

violence!

Slovo & Co. responded by groveling before the Randlords. "Self-criticism" over the Bisho massacre within the ANC/SACP served as the occasion for the re-ascendancy of the more right-wing leaders. In a position paper ("Negotiations: What Room for Compromise?"), Slovo openly called for scrapping the principle of one person, one vote and forming a coalition government with De Klerk's National Party regardless of the outcome of any elections. This *anti-democratic* program was prettified as "a 'sunset' clause in the new constitution which would provide for *compulsory power-sharing* for a fixed number of years" ([emphasis in original] *African Communist*, 3rd Quarter 1992). The maneuvers leading to the present Mandela/Slovo/De Klerk government were simply a working out of this openly declared betrayal of the black toilers by their ANC/SACP misleaders.

However, the fate of the "new" South

Africa will *not* be determined by constitutional clauses and agreements between the ANC/SACP leaders and the masters of the Jo'burg stock exchange. Just as the struggles of the black toilers for freedom and equality broke down the old apartheid system, so they will break down the neo-apartheid "power sharing" deal between the Randlords and their new black front men.

Given the massive and stark inequalities between the white ruling caste and impoverished black African toilers, so long as the struggle over the redistribution of the country's wealth is defined in national-ethnic terms and limited to a purely South African framework, it could well trigger race war, bloody tribalist conflict and economic collapse. Only a *proletarian internationalist* perspective, linking the reconstruction of South Africa to a world socialist revolution, can ensure that a just and egalitarian society will be erected on the ruins of the apartheid state.



Jon Jones



AP

Nelson Mandela's "power sharing" coalition with apartheid capitalists presides over brutal police repression of militant strike wave by black workers.

3 ANC's Nationalist Popular Front Unraveling

The election this April of Nelson Mandela as South Africa's first black president was hailed by Western bourgeois politicians and the media as a miraculous triumph of democracy. And this line was echoed by most of the left, with the reformist South African Communist Party (SACP) playing a key role in the new government. Even left groups, both

in South Africa and internationally, who condemn or are critical of the "power sharing" deal between the African National Congress (ANC) and the main white ruling party, F.W. De Klerk's National Party, assume that the present conditions of political openness, a quasi-parliamentary system and a strong trade-union movement have become *permanent*

features of the South African landscape.

Neville Alexander's Workers Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA) is campaigning for a "mass workers party" to fight for a series of democratic and economic reforms, such as incorporating the "right to work" into the new constitution. The British-centered Workers Power group calls on the black unions

majority of Indian voters in Natal were reportedly supporting De Klerk's Nats (*New York Times*, 22 April).

Since the Mandela/De Klerk "government of national unity" cannot and will not begin to satisfy the desperate need for housing by black Africans—millions of whom live in backyard shacks and shantytowns made of cardboard and plastic—their anger and frustration could easily turn against the better-off coloured and Indian communities.

As the black African masses find that they continue to live in poverty and degradation despite the promises of "non-racial democracy" and "national unity," some ANC leaders will doubtless resort to nationalist demagoguery and even tribalist appeals. Even if Mandela and his lieutenants continue to claim to stand for "non-racialism," the whole situation points to increasing tribal/ethnic tensions and clashes. While the ANC currently draws support from all sections of the nonwhite population as well as liberal and leftist whites, its strongest base of support is among the Xhosas (South Africa's second-largest tribe) of the Eastern Cape. Xhosas are prevalent in the ANC leadership, with Mandela himself being the son of a minor Xhosa chieftain from the Transkei. The ANC has long had friendly relations with Transkei bantustan chief Kaiser Matanzima, in violent contrast to KwaZulu Inkatha leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

Right-wing whites depict the murderous conflict between Buthelezi's Inkatha movement and the ANC in purely tribal terms, as Zulu vs. Xhosa. ANC apologists and most leftists argue that Inkatha is simply an artificial creature of the apartheid regime, and they point to the ANC's sizable following in Zululand despite terrorist attacks by Buthelezi's *impis* (fighting squads). The reality is more complex. Certainly, without the massive financial support and encouragement of the Afrikaner Nationalist regime—especially senior military and police cadre—Inkatha would be far weaker than it is. However, Buthelezi has been able to exploit the fears of traditional-minded Zulu villagers and backward Zulu workers that an ANC government would be a disguised form of Xhosa domination.

In the past some (though by no means all) elements in the white ruling circles promoted Zulu tribalism in order to undercut the ANC/SACP. However, South African along with American and British capital has made a major political investment in the Mandela presidency. Hence bourgeois opinion now regards Inkatha militants as troublemakers in the "new" South Africa (even though Buthelezi is for the moment a minister in the coalition government).



Der Spiegel

South Africa's army of racist killers will be preserved under neo-apartheid regime.

elezi is for the moment a minister in the coalition government).

Symptomatically, the mine bosses recently fired 300 Zulu workers for clashing with ANC supporters. Significantly, the National Union of Mineworkers, whose former leader Ramaphosa is now ANC general secretary, *refused to oppose or protest* this political victimization of Zulu miners by the Randlords. Such policies can only convince Zulu workers that the ANC government is in fact anti-Zulu (despite its "non-racialist" protestations) and bring about the fracturing of the union movement along tribalist lines.

In recent years, fighting between Inkatha and the ANC has been extended from Natal to the townships of the Transvaal, where Zulu migrant workers living in hostels confront pro-ANC community "self-defense units" (SDUs) overwhelmingly composed of Xhosas, Tswanas and other non-Zulus. In the name of combatting Inkatha terrorist actions, these SDUs have tended to become carriers of anti-Zulu communalism. For example, in July the ANC premier of the PWV region (Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging), Tokyo Sexwale, visited the township of Tokoza, near Johannesburg, which has been the site of bitter fighting. While Sexwale argued for the "peace process," one SDU commander declared: "If the ANC government does not want to destroy the hostels we will do it ourselves."

Nonetheless, most of the groups in South Africa taking a stance to the left of the ANC/SACP treat the SDUs as if they were some kind of workers militias or could easily become so. Thus the

"Marxist Workers Tendency of the ANC," which is aligned with the British-based Militant Labour tendency, states: "we have long campaigned for the creation of disciplined community self-defence units, bearing arms" (*Congress Militant*, July-August 1992). Workers Power likewise calls to: "Transform the local Self Defence Units into real workers' and people's militias" (*Workers Power*, April 1994).

Qina Msebenzi (April 1994), published by the "Comrades for a Workers Government," who are associated with the tiny London-based Workers International League, while talking of the need for factory-based defense units, calls to "remove the hostels." (*QM* initially called for a workers party, but supported the ANC in the elections.) In contrast, we call for ethnically integrated, union-based militias, as counterposed to the communalist SDUs. Four years ago, as thousands were being killed in the "Reef war" between Inkatha and ANC supporters, we wrote:

"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."

—"South Africa and Permanent Revolution: Part I," *WV* No. 515, 30 November 1990

Today, COSATU is the only mass institution in South Africa embracing members of all racial and ethnic groups on a class basis. Black unions have even made inroads into the white labor

The unions are chained by the political logic of nationalist popular-frontism. In 1986 the leadership of the newly formed Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) issued a joint statement with the ANC proclaiming the latter as head of the "national liberation movement." In turn, COSATU was declared to be "an important and integral part" of the "democratic forces of our country." In subsequent years, the unions acted as the main mass combat organizations in undermining the apartheid system. Strikes, even around narrow economic issues, were seen as weakening the white power structure, as indeed they did. It would have been unthinkable for the large numbers of unemployed black youth, however economically desperate, to scab on COSATU strikes. They would have been reviled—or worse—as collaborators with the hated apartheid state.

But now Mandela & Co., having become political front men for the Randlords, are trying to mobilize black sentiment against the unions, claiming that the relatively high wages in the industrial sector are responsible for mass unemployment in the townships and abject poverty in the countryside. Since Mandela's appeals for labor peace in the name of "reconstruction" have had no effect, the next logical step would be breaking these strikes utilizing black lumpen scabs protected by white police. The unions are thus facing a political attack of a very different order than the decreasingly effective police-state measures employed by the white-supremacist regime in its last years.

The black industrial unions were able



Matlala/Shopsteward

Postal workers march in downtown Johannesburg last year. Combative black unions have attracted multiethnic support, key to overcoming tribal/racial divisions through class struggle.

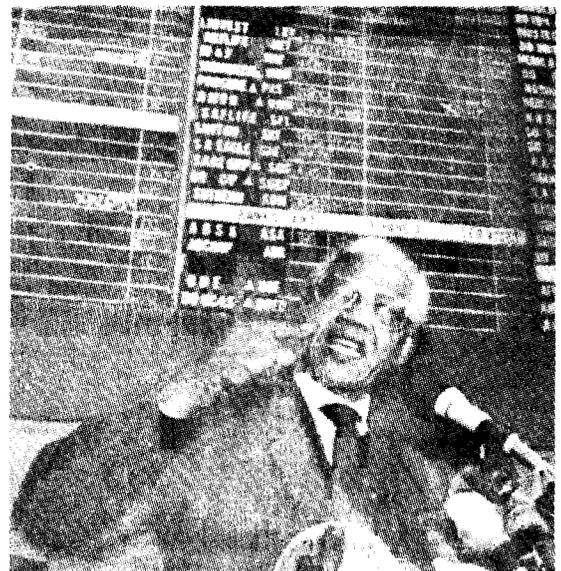
to push wages up sharply over the past 20 years only because the structure of the South African economy could accommodate this. South Africa is an extreme example of a Third World dual economy, what Trotsky called combined and uneven development. The workers who assemble Volkswagens (not to mention Mercedes and BMWs) cannot afford to buy the cars they build. A powerful industrial union movement was built under conditions in which half the black African labor force was unemployed.

The explanation for these apparent

contradictions lies in the fact that the economy is based on the extraction of mineral wealth. Gold is still king, although as the richest veins are played out, the companies are increasingly exploring elsewhere on the continent. Mining accounts for 10 percent of South Africa's gross national product and 60 percent of its exports. The profits from the Rand gold fields, along with the platinum, diamond and other mines, support a large, parasitic white petty bourgeoisie—government and corporate bureaucrats, proprietors of retail outlets,



Weekly Mail and Guardian



Reuters

The "new" South Africa: shotgun-wielding racist cops (left) faced off striking Pick 'n Pay grocery store chain in July (see cover); (right) Mandela at Johannesburg Stock Exchange reassures racist rulers of ANC's commitment to capitalism.

mining and manufacturing conglomerate or even owning a local bank or super-market appeared just as remote, if not more so, than the dictatorship of the proletariat. The totalitarian nature of white-supremacist rule in South Africa created conditions for a black national liberation movement which encompassed within its ranks aspiring corporate executives, would-be military bonapartists, reformist trade-union officials and militants who really wanted red revolution and proletarian state power.

Now, however, the ANC's participation in governmental office provides the crucial opportunity and mechanism to develop a black African bourgeois layer with a direct material interest in exploiting their "own" people. This perspective was clearly stated by the president of the National African Chambers of Commerce, Archie Nkonyeni: "We can use the same method as the Afrikaners, utilising the state to help nurture business" (London *Financial Times*, 18 July). When Verwoerd's Nationalist Party displaced the British imperialists in 1948, almost all of South Africa's mines, factories and banks were owned by English-speaking capitalists, including many in London and New York. Over the next four decades the Nats used their control of the state apparatus to promote an Afrikaner bourgeoisie, which now owns a sizable fraction of the country's productive wealth and financial capital.

The ANC is beginning to pursue the same path. In the past two years the number of senior black managers in South Africa's corporations has doubled. The SACP's *African Communist* (2nd Quarter 1994) reports, "hundreds of ANC cadres" are "now being promoted, with varying degrees of sincerity, by the private sector in the name of affirmative action." The Congress alliance now contains both union officials leading strikes and corporate executives and senior police officials trying to break these strikes. And that kind of contradiction cannot last long. Indeed, a few weeks ago Mandela described the ANC as "in tatters." And the Communist Party will tend to split between its petty-bourgeois nationalist elements and others tied to the workers movement.

For a Bolshevik Workers Party!

Even before the installation of the Mandela/De Klerk/Slovo "Government of National Unity," class tensions were already straining the ANC/SACP/COSATU "tripartite alliance." The spring 1993 congress of the Metalworkers union adopted resolutions calling for the nationalization of industry without

compensation and for a "working class party." According to Moses Mayekiso, then president of NUMSA, the delegates were "mainly supporters of the SACP." Nonetheless, these union activists manifestly believed that the Communist Party was not representing the interests of the working class. (For a discussion of this debate on a workers party, see "South Africa: Mandela/De Klerk's Neo-Apartheid Fraud," *WV* No. 587, 5 November 1993.)

The cause of a union-supported workers party was actively taken up by Neville Alexander's Workers Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA) which formed the Workers List Party to run in the April elections. We gave critical electoral support to the Workers List, pointing out that it "does draw a crude class line and a vote for it will be seen in South Africa as a vote for a workers party rather than the ANC" (*WV* No. 599, 29 April. See page 30).

But what kind of workers party? Mayekiso and WOSA want a party that would in its political substance, though not in strict organizational form, be similar to the British Labour Party—a broad social-democratic party acting centrally as the political agent of the trade-union movement. More immediately, they and others look to the Brazilian Workers Party (PT), whose leader, Luís Inácio Lula da Silva, is a leading candidate in

the upcoming presidential elections. As it did already in 1989, the PT is campaigning in a "popular front" together with various bourgeois forces, thus negating the possibility for political independence of the working class and tying it to its class enemy. But even in the absence of such an explicit class-collaborationist alliance, a workers party built on a program of reforming capitalism cannot answer the needs of the working masses, neither in Brazil nor elsewhere.

In South Africa, Mayekiso, a member of the Communist Party central committee, envisages liquidating the SACP into a broader political formation "together with left sections of the ANC as well as other left forces like WOSA and many independent socialists and social democrats" (*South African Labour Bulletin*, July/August 1993). WOSA hopes that "all pro-worker, pro-democracy and pro-socialism forces will converge in order to establish an independent mass party of the workers" (*Workers List Party National Conference*, March 1994). Mayekiso/WOSA are advocating a present-day South African version of Karl Kautsky's old concept of "the party of the whole class." Such a party would range from the most moderate social democrats to self-declared Marxist-Leninists, their main common denominator being defense of the economic



Black metal workers raise communist red flag as symbol of defiance against apartheid capitalism.

Afrapix



Farrell/AP



Silva/AP



Frankenfeld/NY Times

New ANC rulers send "reformed" apartheid army (above) to keep lid on murderous conflict between Inkatha-led Zulu hostel dwellers (top left) and ANC-derived "Self-Defense Units" (left) in Tokoza. For ethnically integrated, union-based workers militias to suppress right-wing terrorism and communalist violence!

"workerist" current, is agitating for a mass workers party "to defend and promote the interests of workers politically and at other levels."

However, in the present conjuncture, the workers can defend and promote their interests only by undertaking a struggle leading toward taking state power and reconstructing South African society on a socialist basis. Such a reconstruction will necessarily require a democratic solution to the many and complex national questions inherited from the apartheid state and will have to counter the inevitable offensive of world imperialism against a black-centered workers government in southern Africa. In the absence of a *proletarian internationalist solution* to the deepgoing political and social crisis signaled by the Mandela/De Klerk "government of national unity," the "new" South Africa will tend to polarize along racial and ethnic lines.

The Danger of Racial and Tribal Warfare

Many whites believed that the "power sharing" deal with the ANC would lead to a lower level of black social struggle and an easing of racial tension. A commonly voiced sentiment was: "With Man-

dela as president, my children will no longer have to live in a state of siege ever fearful of a black insurrection and random racial violence." But there can be no racial amity in South Africa as long as such vast and stark inequalities separate white and black. The ordinary workings of capitalism will tend to maintain or even increase the impoverishment of the black masses. Only a workers government could utilize the valuable technical skills of those whites willing to live under black majority rule while working to overcome the economic gulf separating them from the mass of black toilers.

Far from reducing the level of black social struggle, the displacement of the openly white-supremacist regime by the ANC-led "government of national unity" is already intensifying it in all ways—big strikes and plant occupations, land seizures in the countryside and squatter movements in the cities, clashes with the hated police force. South African whites will react to a breakdown of "law and order" with panic, fear and rage. Many, especially English speakers, will doubtless choose to emigrate to Britain, North America, Australia, etc. But the ranks of the Afrikaner diehards will also swell,

raising the prospect of a fascist white revolt.

Along with fighting between white right-wing paramilitary forces and ANC supporters, there could well be communalist violence between black Africans on the one side and coloureds and Indians on the other. In the classic divide-and-rule manner, the white-supremacist regime deliberately favored the coloureds and Indians. In the 1980s these two groups were given a vote in impotent "parliaments," while black Africans were still officially relegated to being "citizens" of the "tribal homelands" (bantustans). In the late 1980s, the government was spending R2,500 annually per capita for education for whites, R1,900 for Indians, R1,000 for coloureds and less than R500 for blacks.

Nonetheless, despite these relative advantages, the coloured and Indian communities viewed themselves as oppressed victims of the apartheid system and generally appeared to support the program of "non-racial democracy" promised by the ANC. But the actual prospect of a black nationalist government, however liberal its ideological stance, opened up clearly visible fissures within the nonwhite population. A letter to the Western Cape newspaper *Rapport Metro* in early 1993 expressed the changing concerns of the coloured community:

"I believe I am right when I say that the ANC's first priority lies with its own people—the blacks.... Where do uneducated brown people fit in? We must think carefully where our future welfare lies before election day dawns."

—quoted in *African Communist*,
2nd Quarter 1993

When election day dawned, a majority of the coloureds in the Western Cape, where they constitute slightly over half the population, felt sufficiently apprehensive about their future in the "new" South Africa to vote for the National Party. Similarly, on the eve of the elections a

something that suddenly developed since the SACP was legalized in 1990. What he sees as the abandonment of a revolutionary proletarian perspective is the *logical culmination* of the Stalinist program of two-stage revolution—the illusory aim of achieving a democratic, socially progressive *capitalist* society through an “alliance” between the working class and the “patriotic” bourgeoisie. Moreover, in the mouths of Slovo & Co. even the slogan of a “national democratic revolution” was fraudulent. The real aim of the South African Stalinists has long been a “power sharing” deal with the rulers of the apartheid state.

Recall that in 1986 the ANC leadership—which included Slovo, Chris Hani, Modise and the other SACP tops—not only met publicly with “liberal” white capitalists like Tony Bloom and Gavin Relly but also opened up *secret negotiations* with the Botha regime! We wrote at the time:

“There is, in reality, *no contradiction* between what [then ANC president] Tambo tells Tony Bloom or Gavin Relly, head of the giant Anglo American mining and manufacturing empire, and what he broadcasts over Radio Freedom. The ANC’s policy of ‘making the townships ungovernable’ is designed to *pressure*, not overthrow, the white ruling class. Tambo & Co. are saying to the masters of apartheid capitalism that only by coming to terms with us can you restore social peace in South Africa.” [emphasis in original]

—“Smash Apartheid! For Workers Revolution!” WV No. 395, 17 January 1986

This is exactly what Mandela and Slovo are now trying to do—setting the police on striking workers and on squatters in the townships.

There now exists a broad and increasing base of support to form a revolutionary workers party in South Africa through political regroupment. COSATU militants and officials are outraged at the sight of police attacking striking black workers at the Pick ‘n Pay supermarket chain. Communist Party cadre are shocked at the spectacle of their leaders hobnobbing with the Anglo American bosses as they conspire to make South Africa more profitable for multinational sweatshops. But the strong impulse for a party to the left of the SACP must not take the direction of social-democratic economism or quasi-Stalinist black nationalism.

What is needed is a Bolshevik workers party capable of leading the workers movement in a socialist revolution in South Africa and extending the revolution internationally, which alone offers a progressive solution to all of the national

and democratic tasks. This is the heart of Trotsky’s concept of permanent revolution. Only such a party can overcome the terrible poverty of the millions of black Africans living in the countryside while militantly defending the unionized, industrial working class. Only such a party can bring about a rapid improvement in the living standards of the black toilers while upholding the democratic

sabotaging production rather than give in to the demands of “their” wage slaves. Likewise it will be necessary to organize ethnically integrated *workers militias* linking the factory to the township in fighting off repression and violence instigated by the capitalist rulers and their dogs of war.

But the revolutionary program for a socialist reconstruction of South Africa



John Seymour

Bantustan hellholes are home to 7 million black Africans, mainly women and children.

rights of the coloureds (mixed-race) and Indians and of those whites who accept a government centrally based on the black working masses.

For the Socialist Reconstruction of South Africa

What would the program of such a revolutionary workers party be? It must center on seizing power from the fabulously wealthy capitalist conglomerates who are the true masters of neo-apartheid South Africa. It must fight for the *expropriation without compensation of industry, mines, banks, and the capitalist class as a whole*. To carry this out requires the formation of a *black-centered workers government* based on *workers councils* that incorporate the vast numbers of urban and rural poor. These councils can grow out of powerful struggles by the black workers movement, going beyond simple trade-union demands to pose *factory occupations and workers control of industry*. Such examples of dual power at the plant level will be necessary to combat the attempts by the apartheid bosses to squelch labor militancy, even

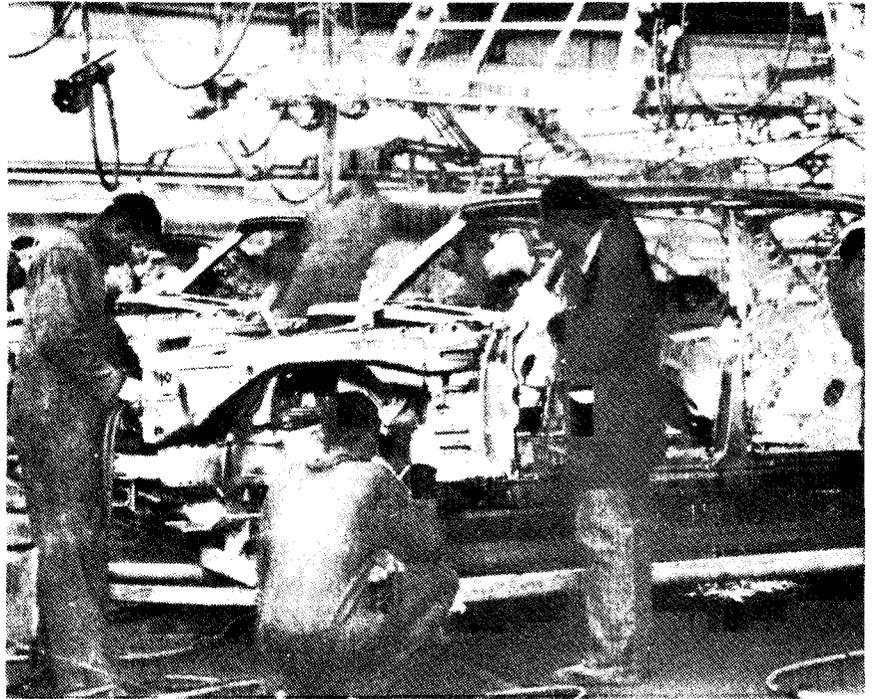
is not limited to demands for and actions by the industrial and mining proletariat. In a struggle that has been driven by the battle against the brutal institutionalized racial discrimination and degradation of apartheid, democratic issues will also play a fundamental role in mobilizing the oppressed masses.

Thus women often took the lead in the struggle against the pass laws and in township struggles against repression. Historically, as in Algeria, nationalist movements have sent women back to the home after the fighting stopped. But, as did the Bolsheviks in the Russian October Revolution, Trotskyists in South Africa today must champion full equality for women. This includes fighting for *equal pay for equal work* and the *full integration of women in the workforce*, as well as demanding *free, safe abortion on demand* and *an end to tribal patriarchal practices oppressive to women such as polygamy*. These are highly controversial issues. For years, the ANC has waffled on these issues, fearing to antagonize traditional rulers, although even Buthelezi’s Zulu-tribalist Inkatha

aristocracy with 3,500 whites among the members of the COSATU-affiliated transport union. Thus the unions can be a crucial bulwark against South Africa's sliding into a vortex of racial and

tribal strife. But one cannot expect the reformist-led unions to play such a role spontaneously, especially given the still strong ANC loyalism among COSATU top and middle-level officials. Only a

Leninist vanguard party, committed to an internationalist perspective, can effectively mobilize the workers movement against the forces of murderous nationalism.



Der Spiegel photos

1987 strike at Mercedes-Benz (left). Black South African workers have built one of the most combative trade-union movements in the world, but union/SACP tops shackle working class to ANC rulers.

4 Program for Black Proletarian Power

A wave of strikes has shaken South Africa since the "Government of National Unity" headed by Nelson Mandela was installed following the April 27 election. The walkout by the Metalworkers union (NUMSA) beginning in early August against six major auto manufacturers (including Mercedes, VW and Nissan) cost the companies \$700 million. The 25,000 strikers went back on September 5 after the government ordered a cut in import duties on cars, a clear threat to their jobs. At the same time, strikes continued in the gold mines, where mine guards used stun grenades and tear gas against workers who were occupying the shafts.

Now the government is threatening to order in the army to break a militant shutdown by truckers, who have used their rigs to block the main Johannesburg-Durban highway. The *Weekly Mail* (26 August) described the blockade as "a remarkable sign of worker solidarity, cutting across racial lines as black, white, Indian and col-

oured workers vented their frustrations jointly." The unprecedented outpouring of labor militancy threatens the bloc between the now bourgeois-nationalist African National Congress and the powerful black union movement.

All Stalinist parties in colonial and semicolonial countries have pursued political blocs with bourgeois or petty-bourgeois nationalist parties in the name of the "anti-imperialist national front" or the "national democratic revolution" or some such formula. Such nationalist popular fronts are invariably short-lived and usually end with the nationalists turning on and butchering their erstwhile Communist allies—China in the 1920s, Iraq in the early 1960s, Indonesia in the mid-'60s.

South Africa, however, appears to be an exception to this historical rule. The bloc between the reformist Stalinist Communist Party (SACP) and African National Congress has not only lasted 60 years but has resulted in an intermingling of cadre. Policy differences have

usually found SACPers on both sides of the issue rather than pitting Communists against non-Communists in the so-called Congress alliance. Today, leading ANC/SACPers hold key posts in the Mandela government—e.g., Joe Modise as defense minister, Sydney Mufamadi as police minister, Joe Slovo as housing minister.

What accounts for the longevity and solidity of the ANC/SACP bloc? The explanation lies in the total absence of a black African property-owning class, which would form the crucial social base for anti-communist nationalism. The whites own not only all the mines, factories and banks but also all the farmland. There are no middling black African landlords exploiting black peasants, no wealthy black moneylenders and traders. Even small shopkeepers are predominantly Indian. There is no black African class which has a vested interest in the existing distribution of wealth and property in South Africa. For decades, the prospect of blacks becoming members of the board of the Anglo American

erty so the Mandela government can make a token show of "land reclamation"!

Moreover, South Africa's commercial farms are highly mechanized and capital-intensive. Almost no blacks have the money to operate such farms competitively even if they were given the land for free. The first recipients of land reclamation were members of the Mfengo tribe who this spring got back title to 15,000 acres of what are now dairy farms in the Eastern Cape purchased by the government for \$10 million. But the Mfengo have no money to buy herds, tractors, milking machines or fodder. They therefore have to sell or lease some of the land back to the white farmers or mortgage it to the banks.

In South Africa today there are 67,000 white farmers and over 1 million black farm laborers. These large commercial white-owned farms must be expropriated. What then? There is no economic rationale in South Africa and little popular sentiment to create a class of black agricultural smallholders. A workers government would establish cooperative and state farms, which alone can provide a decent life not only for the blacks who currently work there but for the millions more living on the desolate bantustans, as well as supplying the food and other agricultural produce needed by the urban population.

For a Proletarian Internationalist Perspective

The British imperialists and the Afrikaner Nationalist regime sought to artificially retribalize the black African pop-

ulation while playing off the divisions between black Africans, coloureds and Indians. Hence opposition to tribal and ethnic consciousness and loyalty came to be seen as a central element in the struggle against white-supremacist rule. The call for a "unitary" South Africa in the name of "nation building" became a doctrine, even a dogma, espoused by all wings of black nationalism and the left. However, whereas in the past the Afrikaner regime insisted that the various peoples of South Africa were separate nations in order to justify apartheid, today the white bourgeoisie uses the rhetoric of "national unity" to perpetuate its exploitation of black African, coloured and Indian toilers.

It is entirely possible that under proletarian class rule a South African nation will evolve through widespread intermarriage and the development of a common culture and language or languages. However, "nation building" is in no sense the supreme goal of the socialist revolution, nor will national integration be confined to the peoples now living within the borders of the South African state.

The ANC/De Klerk "Government of National Unity" has now deployed the "South African National Defence Force" to the borders to stop the influx of "illegal immigrants" from neighboring countries. Indeed, Inkatha leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi, now minister of home affairs, told parliament that foreigners are taking jobs from South Africans. This shows the reactionary face of South African nationalism, which is here directed

against neighboring black African peoples.

Anglo American and the other Randlords economically dominate all of southern Africa. A large percentage of the gold miners on the Witwatersrand—the key value-producing proletariat in the region—comes from outside the borders of South Africa, mainly from Lesotho and Mozambique. All such workers and their families should have access to full citizenship rights in South Africa. Clearly, a democratic, egalitarian and rational solution to such questions can be worked out only in the framework of a socialist federation of southern Africa.

The boundaries of almost all African states, including South Africa, are arbitrary and have no national legitimacy. Hence the artificiality of any "nation building" project within the confines of the 1910 Union of South Africa. Central to Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution is the understanding that in the colonial and semicolonial countries the historic tasks achieved by the bourgeois-democratic revolutions in West Europe and North America can be achieved only through proletarian revolution. Such revolutions do not aim at the forced assimilation of diverse peoples into a unitary "nation," but rather to secure the democratic rights of all nations and national groups.

A democratic solution to the national question in southern Africa should take as a model the Bolshevik program for Central Asia. Just as the Western imperialist powers subjugated and colonized

The Star
Johannesburg
25 May 1994

Black Sash says council lacks proper policy regarding squatters

Shack demolition slammed

HOMELESS people left in the open after armed officials demolish illegal shacks in Jack Mincor Square

BY SHIRLEY WOODGATE

Large-scale demolition of squatter shacks in Jack Mincor Square this week has been strongly condemned by the Black Sash which accused the Johannesburg City Council of lacking proper policy to deal with the problem.

Scores of squatters were forced to sleep in the open in the central square of the area after the council's bulldozers demolished the shacks in the city's central business district on Monday.



Homeless this family face the cold without shelter after their shack was demolished

John Mankwa said several of the shacks were built on a site which was reserved for a park and that the council had no right to demolish them. He said the council had no right to demolish them and that the council had no right to demolish them. He said the council had no right to demolish them and that the council had no right to demolish them.



Muhammad/NY Times

Affluent whites enjoy lawn bowling at racially exclusive country club while millions of blacks live in shantytowns. Now SACP/ANC ministers are evicting black squatters from their homes.



Paratus

ANC/SACP former guerrilla leaders Joe Modise (on right), now defense minister, and his deputy Ronnie Kasrils (center), share a laugh with their new "comrade-in-arms," South African army commander Georg Meiring.

interests of the unionized labor force within the framework of neo-apartheid capitalism.

While the industrial working class in South Africa numbers in the millions, it is dwarfed by the large numbers of urban poor and a sizable (non-unionized) agricultural proletariat. Among the key struggles against the Mandela/De Klerk regime in which a revolutionary workers party would intervene will be township revolts over issues such as housing and police brutality, or forming ethnically integrated workers defense guards linking the slums to the factories. A revolutionary workers party, building on a core of the industrial proletariat, would also incorporate significant plebeian sectors of township youth. But a party based on the unions would be structurally too narrow to encompass such layers and lead such struggles. Rather it could become a vehicle for protecting the sectoral interests of industrial workers who are relatively privileged compared to the impoverished township and rural masses.

In *What Is To Be Done?* Lenin emphasizes that a revolutionary socialist aims to be not a trade-union official but a "tribune of the people":

"[H]e is no Social-Democrat who forgets in practice that 'the Communists support every revolutionary movement,' that we are obliged for that reason to expound and emphasize *general democratic tasks before the whole people*, without for a moment concealing our socialist convictions. He is no Social-Democrat who forgets in practice his obligation to be *ahead of all* in raising, accentuating, and solving every general democratic question." [emphasis in original]

Lenin's injunction has special force in

South Africa, where the oppression of the black African people by the white ruling class dominates economic, social and political life.

The resolution passed in favor of a "working class party" at the 1993 Metalworkers' congress was not simply a spontaneous response of the union ranks to the ever more openly pro-capitalist stance of the ANC/SACP leadership. NUMSA has long been the stronghold in the black union movement of the so-called "workerist" current, which represents an amalgam of semi-syndicalist and left social-democratic politics. Since its inception in the late 1970s, this tendency has included a definite dose of anti-Communism in its ideological mix. One of the early "workerist" leaders, Joe Foster, argued for trade-union independence of the ANC/SACP by pointing to Polish Solidarność a positive model of such independence. In reality, Solidarność was not a trade union at all but rather a multi-class counterrevolutionary movement actively supported and financed by Western imperialism to undermine the Soviet bloc.

Despite occasional expressions of anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism, the union-based "workerist" current was generally to the left of the SACP, which in the name of the "national democratic revolution" openly *opposed socialism and workers power* as an immediate goal. Nonetheless, the SACP benefited mightily from broad sympathy among the black masses for the idea of communism and socialist revolution. Capitalism in South Africa is deeply identified with the white racist police state, with the Sharpeville and Soweto massacres, Rob-

ben Island prison and the hellish conditions in the gold mines and on the desolate bantustans. During the township revolt of the mid-1980s, the young "comrades" held up the red flag with the hammer and sickle as a symbol of defiance against the rulers of the apartheid state. Of course, in the South African context the term "communism" has taken on a nationalist-populist coloration—the division of the wealth owned by the whites among the black masses.

As the Kremlin bureaucracy was collapsing under Gorbachev, Stalinist parties around the world scrapped any pretension to Leninism and presented themselves as born-again social democrats. But in South Africa communism evokes a far more positive response than the wishy-washy formula of "democratic socialism." So while Slovo & Co. condemned Stalin and "Stalinism," they did not formally repudiate Leninism. The party's premier organ continues to be called the *African Communist*. Red flags still abound at SACP rallies where speakers are cheered for declaring solidarity with Castro's Cuba against American imperialism.

While Slovo & Co. are cynically exploiting the black toilers' enthusiasm for red revolution, many SACP cadre take their party's Leninist pretensions as good coin, pretensions which so glaringly contradict their leaders' groveling before the masters of the Jo'burg stock exchange. The *African Communist* (4th Quarter 1993) contains a resignation statement from Theo Molaba, the Cape Town branch secretary, protesting "the abandonment of a PROLETARIAN ATTITUDE towards armed struggle, negotiations, the alliance and the role of the party." "What has happened to the DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT," he asks. That the party's leading organ saw fit to publish this statement indicates that Molaba is not an isolated left dissident but represents a significant current of opinion in the SACP. A note appended to the resignation reported it was subsequently withdrawn but this does not change the force of Molaba's political indictment:

"To me, the last CC [Central Committee] report was an occasion, not a cause for my resignation. It was so liberal, so moral, so completely devoid of class analysis and working class perspectives. In essence it was insulting. This report to me represented a pattern which has evolved since our unbanning—i.e., a gradual but definite process of moving away from the revolutionary proletarian perspective."

However, the abject class collaborationism which so disgusts Molaba is not

from class-conscious militants in the predominantly black unions. This is the only road forward if the protestations of 'socialism' and 'workers power' by left-wing militants in COSATU are not to be simply a means of pressuring the ANC."

—"South Africa: Blacks Defy Apartheid Elections," *WV* No. 486, 29 September 1989

A quasi-syndicalist current could exist in the black union movement only as long as the white-supremacist regime was relatively stable and there was no immediate prospect of an ANC government. Once Mandela was released from prison in 1990 and the "power sharing" negotiations began in earnest, the COSATU "workerists" either had to support this development, seeking to influence its outcome, or put forward their own program for governmental power. But they never had a program or perspective for taking state power. Hence at this point Mayekiso and the other "workerist" leaders joined the SACP, hoping in this way to play an influential role in shaping the "new" South Africa.

The Road to the Mandela/De Klerk Government

While secret negotiations between the National Party regime and the ANC leaders had begun in 1986, for four years these talks went nowhere. Expectations that Mandela was about to be released from prison were repeatedly frustrated. The maximum the ANC leadership was willing to concede at this time was still less than the minimum demanded by the white ruling class.

The logjam in the ANC/National Party negotiations was broken by developments not in southern Africa but rather in East Europe—the breakup of the Soviet bloc and the disintegration of the Kremlin bureaucracy under Gorbachev. Like many Third World nationalist movements and regimes, the ANC based its strategy on playing off Moscow and Washington. For decades, the Soviet Union had been the ANC's primary international sponsor, supporting it in various diplomatic forums and providing arms for Umkhonto's symbolic guerrilla actions.

However, Mandela, Sisulu and Oliver Tambo (then ANC president) were by no means agents or even loyal clients of Moscow. Rather they sought to use Soviet support as a means of pressuring Western imperialism to pressure the South African ruling class into accepting a "power sharing" deal. This was the aim of the international campaign for economic sanctions and corporate divestment. After meeting with Gorbachev in 1986, Tambo called for a kind of global "popular front"



Gubb/J.B. Pictures

Funeral march commemorates murdered trade-union activist in Port Elizabeth, 1986. Following suppression of township revolt in mid-1980s, COSATU emerged as main organizer of mass militant black struggle.

against the apartheid regime: "East and West, North and South can and must act together in a decisive manner for the triumph of democracy in South Africa."

The collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989-90 thus brought with it the collapse of the ANC's entire international strategy. If the disintegrating Kremlin Stalinist bureaucracy was abandoning East Europe to Western imperialism, it was certainly not going to support a client state in southern Africa. The ANC leaders now had to act within the framework set by Wall Street and the City of London and their South African partners. As National Party leader Gerrit Viljoen explained in justifying the legalization of the ANC and SACP to his white constituents:

"Our situation has changed fundamentally by what has happened in the international field, in Eastern Europe, Russia, and in several African states recently. The total effect of all these things puts the threat posed by the South African Communist Party and the African National Congress in an entirely new context."

—quoted in David Ottaway, *Chained Together: Mandela, De Klerk, and the Struggle to Remake South Africa* (1993)

While the legalization of the ANC/SACP and Mandela's release from prison in early 1990 clearly posed a "power sharing" deal with the white ruling class, the exact terms of such a deal were yet to be resolved. De Klerk initially sought to play off the Zulu tribalist Inkatha movement against the ANC. In this way the National Party leaders hoped to acquire for themselves a bonapartist role

in the "new" South Africa, acting as arbiter between the violently hostile black factions. Encouraged by powerful forces in the white state apparatus, Inkatha leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi now escalated his terrorist attacks on the ANC. The fighting spread from the Zulu homeland of Natal to the black townships of the Vaal Reef, where Zulu migrant workers clashed with the ANC-dominated civic associations.

It was generally believed that the "Reef War" was engineered and manipulated by a sinister "third force." To no one's surprise, this "third force" turned out to be senior cadre in the police and military. Official protestations that they were acting without the knowledge of De Klerk and his ministers were believed by no one. The regime's support for and complicity in Buthelezi's terrorist attacks on the ANC—the "Inkathagate" scandal—led in mid-1992 to a temporary breakdown in the "power sharing" negotiations.

Seeking to assuage its angry and disenfranchised ranks and to bring renewed pressure on white ruling circles, the ANC/SACP then launched a campaign of "rolling mass actions." Some more radical leaders, such as SACP general secretary Chris Hani (who was later assassinated by a white racist) and SACP national organizer Ronnie Kasrils, spoke of exercising the "Leipzig option." This was a reference to the mass protests which had brought down the old-line Stalinist regime of Erich Honecker in East Germany in 1989. However, unlike the demoralized and decomposing



Der Spiegel

Black workers at Volkswagen (above) and six other auto makers in South Africa produce cars for protected market of affluent whites.

supported legalizing abortion. It wasn't until the Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP) was approved early this year that the ANC finally came out for women's right to choose, under threats of a women's boycott of the election, and even then this wasn't mentioned in its election platform.

The housing question is a burning issue in South Africa today. *One out of every four blacks* lives in so-called "informal housing"—backyard shacks, garages and shantytowns constructed of cardboard and plastic. The figure is much higher in the major urban areas. Almost 70 percent of all black Africans in Durban have no houses, almost half in the PWV (Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging) region. In the past, government moves to level squatter settlements produced major battles with the black masses. This was a key element in the 1984-86 township revolt, which also gave rise to the biggest and longest rent strike in history. For good measure, black township dwellers also stopped paying property taxes, electricity bills, garbage collection fees, etc.

Significantly, the hot seat of housing minister in the "government of national unity" was given to the principal leader of the Communist Party, Joe Slovo, for it is here, along with the labor front, that the sharpest conflicts between the ANC leaders and their mass base are going to take place. The ANC and SACP cadre who a decade ago led the township revolt have now become the chief rent collectors for the Jo'burg banks. But theirs is

not a happy lot. One of them, Soweto Civic Association head Isaac Mogase, complained:

"It was all very well when we told people not to pay. Back then, people raised their fists and said, 'Viva the struggle, viva!' But when you turn around and tell people who have been living rent-free for years that now it's time to pay, you sort of put your head on the chopping block."

—*Washington Post*, 29 July

Even more so than the issue of rent collection, the squatter camps are a source of hard confrontation between the "government of national unity" and the impoverished black toilers. Believing that Mandela's election opened a new era of freedom and equality, blacks have been constructing "informal housing" at a furious pace extending far beyond the boundaries of the segregated townships. Shantytowns have even appeared in downtown Johannesburg, once the exclusive province of white businessmen.

In words identical to Botha and De Klerk, Slovo proclaims that the government "is committed to respect constitutional rights in land against any unlawful infringement and unlawful occupation. Squatting cannot be condoned" (*New York Times*, 6 July). And acting exactly like Botha and De Klerk, Slovo has set the police on "unlawful occupations." Black squatters have responded to these words and actions by the Communist housing minister of the "new" South Africa just like they did to his white-supremacist predecessors—with defiance and courage. "Slovo and the police

must go to hell," exclaimed an embattled squatter in Cato Manor near Durban. "We are staying here. This is our place."

Of course, militant defense of their shantytowns, while admirable, is no solution to the desperate need for housing for the black African populace. A spokesman for Canana, a settlement near Johannesburg, stated: "If the Government wants to remove us from here, they must build houses where there are services where poor people are satisfied." But the government of Mandela/De Klerk/Slovo—committed to defending the property of the white rulingclass—is *not* going to do that, whatever the empty promises it makes. What is needed is to *nationalize all urban land* while launching a *massive program of racially and ethnically integrated residential construction*.

The land question in rural South Africa is also explosive. Despite the substantial urbanization in recent decades, ten million black Africans—40 percent of the total population—remain in the countryside. Three million are farm laborers and their families. The other seven million—mainly women and children—are those still trapped in the barren bantustans, scratching out an existence in subsistence agriculture while depending for survival on remittances from family members working in the mines and factories.

As for South African commercial agriculture, the *Wall Street Journal* (4 May)—not given to painting the exploitation of labor anywhere in stark colors—described it in these terms:

"In a feudal-like system of farm labor, labor tenants in South Africa are black family groups who live on land officially owned by white farmers. In exchange for the right to grow crops and raise livestock on a small portion of the land, the family members provide the farmer their labor, in the fields or as household help."

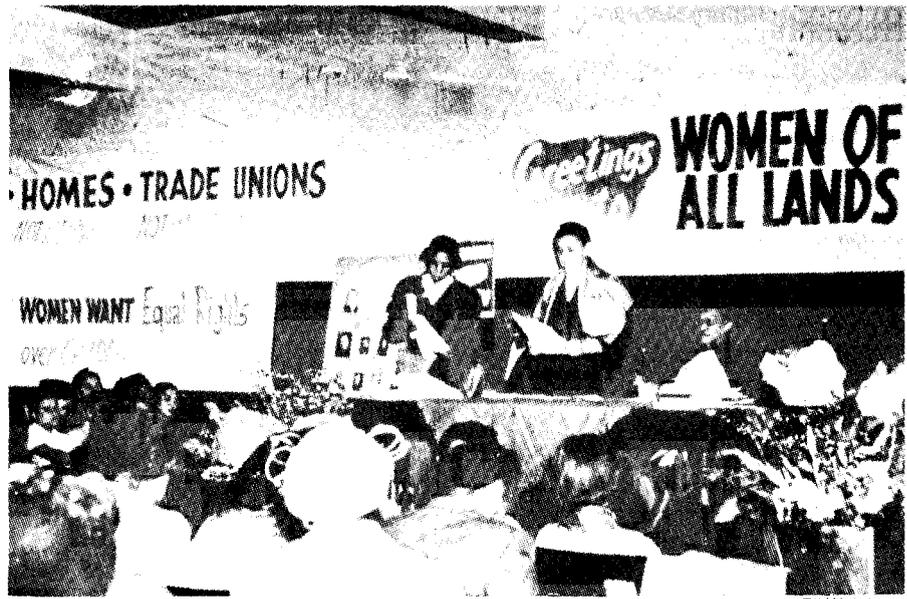
Fearing land seizures by their black laborers and/or expropriation by an ANC government, since 1990 white farmers have been systematically evicting tenants from the land.

However, the ANC leaders in this respect as in all others have been extremely "moderate," i.e., defending the interests of the white exploiters against the black toilers. To begin with, land redistribution is to be limited to those blacks who can document that their families were driven from their land by the post-1948 apartheid regime. Moreover, this land will not be expropriated but purchased by the government at a price acceptable to their current white owners. Thus the main beneficiaries of the ANC's "land reform" scheme will be white farmers charging inflated prices for their prop-

cannot be constructed within the narrow framework of South Africa or even southern Africa besieged by world imperialism. In conditions of enforced poverty, the struggle for the means of survival will quickly become very brutal and divisive. Moreover, a black-centered workers government in South Africa would from the outset face not only all-out economic warfare but the threat of military attack on an even greater scale than the U.S. devastation of Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War. It would not take a fascist like Adolf Hitler to nuke South Africa, killing millions of black people: it's not hard to envision a nasty, racist "democratic" imperialist like Winston Churchill doing it.

The bourgeois order in South Africa, long based on direct white-supremacist rule, has entered a deepgoing crisis at a time when the cause of proletarian socialism has suffered a world-historic defeat—the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, sapped for decades by Stalinism. Indeed, this was a crucial development underlying the ANC/SACP's abject capitulation to the masters of the Jo'burg stock exchange.

The consolidation, or simply the survival, of a socialist revolution in South Africa *requires* its international extension. This was the core of the Bolsheviks' program. But the world situation today is very different from that facing the Russian October Revolution of 1917—precipitated by the mass slaughter of the first imperialist world war—which set off revolutionary struggles throughout Europe, centrally Germany.



Eli Weinberg

Federation of South African Women in Johannesburg, 1954. Black women played leading role in the struggle against apartheid.

A proletarian revolution in South Africa today would confront relatively strengthened and emboldened Western imperialist powers determined to obliterate any obstacles to their proclaimed "new world order."

For the moment South Africa is a weakened link in the chain of the world capitalist system binding the neocolonies of the Third World to the imperialist states of North America, West Europe and Japan. It is necessary to mobilize the forces of the proletariat to *break* that chain at its weakest links, and then fight like hell to take the battle to the impe-

rialist centers, seeking allies against the vicious enemy of all the oppressed—international capital. Thus, the fight to build a South African Bolshevik Party is inseparable from the struggle we in the International Communist League are waging to reforge an authentically Trotskyist Fourth International.

A socialist revolution in South Africa would find *strategically powerful allies within the imperialist centers*. In particular, it would have an enormously radicalizing impact on blacks in the United States, who have strongly identified with the struggle against white supremacy in the apartheid state. And it would reverberate in particular among the non-white masses throughout the Western Hemisphere (notably the millions of black people in Brazil), West Indians and South Asians in Britain, and North Africans and black Africans in West Europe.

The struggle for a socialist federation of southern Africa linked to international proletarian revolution is the road to the social and economic emancipation of the continent, which requires a massive transfer of resources from the former colonial metropolitan powers, which have looted Africa, Asia and Latin America for centuries. Use of the industrial and mineral wealth of a revolutionary South Africa will not be limited to south of the Limpopo River, but must be used to enable the impoverished masses of all of Africa to escape famine and destitution. This road is far from easy, the vicissitudes of the struggle cannot be predicted, but it is the only road to the future of justice and equality that the South African masses are fighting for. ■

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Mozambican migrant laborers are hired to work in South African gold mines. ANC government has now deployed army to stop "illegal" immigrants. We demand full citizenship rights for migrant workers.

pre-national peoples in southern Africa (e.g., the Zulus, Shona, Ovimbundu), so the Russian tsarist autocracy subjugated and colonized pre-national peoples in Central Asia (e.g., Bashkirs, Tatars, Kazakhs). In his 1913 "Critical Remarks on the National Question," Lenin called for "self-governing and autonomous regions" to be "determined by the local inhabitants themselves on the basis of their economic and social conditions, national make-up of the population, etc.," not the internal administrative divisions of the tsarist empire. Lenin pointed out that regional autonomy did not contradict the Marxists' upholding of the need for a centralized state.

These principles became the basis for the formation of the Soviet workers state. The Bolsheviks did not proclaim as their aim the forging of one single Soviet nation, melding together Russians and Uzbeks, Ukrainians and Azeris. While encouraging the intermingling and unity of all Soviet peoples, they formed a federated state with constituent national republics and autonomous regions. Lenin and Trotsky understood it was necessary to demonstrate to the Turkic-speaking Bashkirs and Tatars, for example, that the Russian-centered Soviet workers state was not a new and disguised form of the Russian empire, that the unity of Soviet peoples did not mean forced Russification.

To be sure, the national question in pre-1917 Russia was posed differently than in South Africa. The minority peoples of the tsarist empire were oppressed by a despotic government based on the numerically dominant nationality, the Russians. In South Africa, the black African majority has been oppressed and

fragmented by the white, European-derived minority. However, socially backward Zulu villagers, still steeped in tribal tradition, might experience forced assimilation into a "unitary" South African nation ruled by the ANC as a form of ethnic oppression at the hands of a Xhosa political elite.

A socialist federation of southern Africa should be modeled on the early, pre-Stalinist Soviet federation. In such a framework, the Ovimbundu in Angola and Namibia, the Ndebele in Zimbabwe, Zulus in Natal and all other peoples who so desire should have the right of regional autonomy. There is a fundamental difference between the enforced tribalization imposed by the apartheid state and the voluntary exercise of limited political

autonomy by distinct peoples in the areas they inhabit. Such limits would include, among other things, guarantees for the democratic rights of the minorities living in these regions. Thus, a Zulu autonomous region in Natal would not be permitted to expel or discriminate against Indians or Xhosa-speakers.

Our support for the right of regional autonomy in a *future South African workers state* in no way implies support for reactionary Zulu separatism in Natal today. *In the present context*, we would oppose a move to secession by Inkatha, which would undoubtedly be allied with a revolt of right-wing whites to form a bitter-end apartheid *volksstaat*. But things can change, and quickly. As previously noted, the dominant elements of the South African bourgeoisie and their Western imperialist partners are already turning against Inkatha in favor of the ANC.

More generally, South Africa is not exempt from the Leninist principle that overcoming national, racial and religious divisions among the toiling masses demands that the communist vanguard fight for the democratic rights and national equality of all peoples. This is relevant not just for backward rural regions but in order to forge solid inter-ethnic *working-class unity* in the urban areas where there is a tremendous intermingling, not just of Zulu and Xhosa, but also minority peoples such as the Tswana, and the relatively more privileged coloured and Indian populations whose democratic rights must also be defended.

Especially given the vast material inequalities between black and white, a productive, just and egalitarian society

What Strategy for Black Liberation? Trotskyism vs. Black Nationalism

(Marxist Bulletin No. 5 Revised)

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to the supposedly "democratic" bourgeoisie. Two decades of militant, self-sacrificing and often heroic struggle against the apartheid state has created one of the strongest trade-union movements in the Third World. Today, the wages of unionized factory workers in South Africa are substantially higher than in some East Asian neocolonies of the U.S. and Japan. This achievement is all the more impressive given that half the black labor force is unemployed. Yet the solidarity of the black masses against the white ruling class is so intense that strikes by COSATU unions are not broken by widespread scabbing as is all too common in the U.S.

Another index of the strength of the black union movement is that it is beginning to attract even highly privileged white workers, who because of the severe economic slump are facing the prospect of layoffs for the first time in decades. Earlier this year more than a thousand white transport workers, reportedly including supporters of the ultrarightist Conservative Party, joined the COSATU-affiliated South African Railways and Harbour Workers' Union (SARHWU). A white flight attendant for South African Airways explained: "We have joined SARHWU for job security, not for its politics."

But if some white workers are now looking to COSATU for job security, for the white ruling class a major aim of the "power sharing" deal with the ANC is to weaken the power and authority of the black union movement (in part by coopting its leaders). Thus, the new constitution outlaws strikes for political purposes. And the Jo'burg stock exchange's main man in the government, Derek Keys, wants not merely to perpetuate but even intensify the exploitation of black labor. He complains that as a result of COSATU's activities: "We don't have low wages to offer.... How do you attract entrepreneurs if you can't offer them low wage costs?" (*New York Times*, 9 May).

However, the black masses expect that the new ANC-led government will bring about an improvement, not a deterioration, in their living conditions. The weeks leading up to the elections, despite the intense pressure of Mandela & Co. for peace on the labor front, saw an organizing strike of nurses in the Transkei and a walkout by platinum miners on the Rand. On the eve of the inauguration, 10,000 gold miners struck the Kloof mine owned by the giant Gold Fields conglomerate, which had provocatively fired a union official. And on June 10, miners at Gold Fields' West Driefontein mine walked out over a racist remark.



ANC
Black workers demonstrate for equal rights and against racist repression in 1930s. Even before apartheid was instituted in 1948, South African capitalism was based on white supremacy.

"The workers think it's pay-back time," observed one industry analyst.

Significant class struggle can blow the ANC/SACP/COSATU "tripartite alliance"—and the whole country—apart. But black workers cannot defend or further their interests simply through struggles at the trade-union level, however militant. In the first instance, the impoverished black masses will be repressed by the "new" South African National Defence Force (SANDF), which is the old, hated SADF with the addition of a handful of "generals" from the ANC's former armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK—Spear of the Nation), with MK commander Joe Modise sitting in the defense minister's chair. It is necessary to call on the workers to oppose the fraud of "power sharing" with the Randlords and break from the black front men of the ANC to form a revolutionary workers party.

The proletariat must place itself at the head of the struggle against the national oppression of the black African peoples as well as the coloureds (mixed-race) and Indians, a struggle culminating in a black-centered workers government. This is the perspective of Trotsky's permanent revolution. The alternative to this is not some kind of mythical harmonious bourgeois "democracy." Although in its social composition South Africa is in many respects unique among the states produced by European colonialism, experience throughout Asia and Africa demonstrates that the frustration of the oppressed masses' aspirations for social

liberation will necessarily lead to escalating racial and ethnic-tribal feuding. First among the targets will doubtless be intermediate layers such as the coloureds and Indians, while the black majority polarizes between Xhosas (predominant in Mandela's ANC) and Zulus.

Despite the ANC leaders' sugary talk of a "non-racial society," the prospects facing blacks under racist South African capitalism are truly ominous. This was put in sharp relief when former ANC guerrilla leader Tokyo Sexwale, now a regional premier, visited the black townships of Thokoza and Katlehong. Sexwale appealed for an end to the fratricidal killings, in which brother killed brother because they were blinded by blood: "We are here today to wash the blood out of their eyes so that they can see and live together in peace and harmony." But despite his plea, a township resident complained of the hostel dwellers, "Buthelezi should take all his people back where they come from. They were all brought in from Zululand.... In this location we're going to kill them all." The East Rand, where more than 1,500 people were killed in political violence last year, could become killing fields on a vast scale.

Over the last several years, the violence, largely instigated by the apartheid regime through its Inkatha puppets, took on a tribal vengeance of its own. Throughout the industrial and mining region of the Witwatersrand, township "self-defense units" (SDUs) were formed by supporters of the Xhosa-dominated ANC to fight back against Inkatha *impis*

ANC/De Klerk Deal Is Betrayal of Black Freedom



Reuters



Mottala/COSATU

Buthelezi, De Klerk and Mandela shake hands on elections. "Power-sharing" deal preserves neo-apartheid capitalism, as power of black proletariat is shackled through nationalist popular front with bourgeoisie.

APRIL 25—Yesterday a powerful car bomb exploded near the headquarters of the African National Congress (ANC) in Johannesburg, killing ten and injuring over 100; damage extended for five blocks. Today more than a dozen taxi stands and polling stations were bombed in several areas of South Africa. These vile racist attacks are almost certainly the work of hard-line white right wingers assisted or planned by recalcitrant elements within the army or the intelligence services.

The bombings, aimed at the ANC, the organization supported by the overwhelming majority of the black population, come one year after the murder by state-connected fascists of South African Communist Party (SACP) leader Chris Hani, who was also head of the ANC's military arm, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK). The bombings are an attack on the very idea that the black, "coloured" (mixed-race) and Indian peoples of South Africa should have any democratic rights at all.

The elections to the new, common National Assembly, which will be held over three days beginning tomorrow, are the first time that a vote of any kind has been given to the black African majority

**For a Bolshevik Workers Party!
For a Black-Centered Workers Republic!**

who make up *three-fourths* of the total population. The white ruling class has been forced into this concession by the long years of determined struggle by the oppressed South African masses, first against the British colonial rulers and later, after 1948, against the Afrikaner-dominated system of apartheid.

The threat of white-supremacist revolt against the ANC-dominated government which Mandela will head after the elections is real and dangerous. But the enormously wealthy white mine owners, industrialists and financiers and their senior partners in Wall Street and the City of London—the real owners and rulers of South Africa—are staking their future on the National Peace Accord, their deal with the ANC leadership. They correctly calculate that the ANC (already installed in the corridors of power since last December through the Transitional Executive Council—TEC) will uphold and administer capitalist rule in government. Speaking last week at the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, Mandela declared: "The economy must be built

on sound and market principles. If you look at our program, there is not a single sentence about nationalization."

The white capitalist rulers know that the ANC's vast political authority is the strongest tool at their disposal for suppressing and denying the hopes and demands of the black masses. And the expectations are enormous. The huge formerly disenfranchised nonwhite majority sees these elections as opening the road to "freedom" and a share of the wealth produced in South Africa. A comment by one grandmother in a squatter camp in the Western Cape indicated the limits of the "patience" of the downtrodden: "We will be patient once he [Mandela] is elected, and so maybe the first improvements won't be seen here for one or two months" (*New York Times*, 21 April)!

Although the elections are billed by the ANC as the "transition to democracy," in fact they are a far cry from "one person, one vote." *Whatever the outcome*, the main party of the white ruling class, the National Party, led by President De Klerk, is guaranteed a place in a "Government of National Unity" for a five-year period. This is included in the "sunset clause," agreed to by the ANC,

which gives a cabinet seat to any party obtaining 5 percent or more in the ballot, and then imposes the need for approval by two-thirds of the cabinet on "certain issues." The National Party and the other main white party, the Democratic Party, will thereby have effective veto power over all major decisions.

Mandela has bent over backward to reassure and conciliate the capitalists, whose junior partner he has now become. All the radical talk of the years of struggle—the rhetoric of "socialism" by the SACP and the COSATU union federation—has evaporated, to be replaced by the language of "moderation" and compromise. The rights of capitalist property are incorporated into a "Bill of Rights"!

The South African Police and the South African Defence Force (SADF)—the butchers of Sharpeville and Soweto and the former colonial occupation forces of Namibia and Angola—will be left under their existing command. Meanwhile the ANC's military wing, the MK, is dissolved and partially incorporated into the SADF or the impotent National Peace-keeping Force, charged with policing the black townships. And at one of his final campaign rallies Mandela "vowed that gun control would be firmly enforced by the new government that he expects to lead" (*New York Times*, 24 April). This means leaving blacks defenseless in the face of racist army, police and fascist paramilitary killers.

Mangosuthu Buthelezi, whose Zulu Inkatha movement has allied with the Conservative Party and white reactionaries even further to the right, has for months been attempting to sabotage the elections. Inkatha forces have whipped up and perpetrated horrendous attacks on ANC supporters, seeking to exploit tribal divisions. But last week Mandela guaranteed Buthelezi's cousin, the Zulu king Goodwill Zwelethini, the status of a "constitutional monarch," complete with king-sized personal subsidies, in a successful effort to get Inkatha to end its boycott of the elections.

The capitalists are gambling on an ANC-led government as their best hope of obtaining stable conditions for continued extraction of southern Africa's natural resources and superexploitation of its black proletariat. The dominant white caste, making up 13 percent of South Africa's population, owns 86 percent of the land, 90 percent of all productive wealth, and on average has an annual income ten times greater than that of the blacks. Three out of every five blacks live in rural areas where over 80 percent have no electricity and over 90 percent have no sewage. Fully half of

the black labor force has no permanent regular employment.

Faced with these appalling conditions, the ANC is promising a five-year "Reconstruction and Development Programme" (RDP), including building one million new homes, supplying electricity to 2.5 million households, ten years of free schooling for all, and the creation of two million jobs through the public works program. But the bourgeoisie has no intention of financing this scale of public works. The chief economist of the Johannesburg Nedbank pointed out:

"With limited resources and limited taxable capacity it can't be done. The problem facing the incoming government is whether the new electorate is going to accept the shortfall between what they expect and what is actually going to be delivered."

Genuine universal suffrage, universal schooling, equality of all the peoples of South Africa, full citizenship rights (including the right to vote) for the hundreds of thousands of migrant workers drawn from neighboring countries and their families, equal pay for equal work, the right of the rural black population (particularly in the barren bantustans) to land stolen over the centuries, first by Afrikaner colonial settlers and then by the British imperialists, equality for women—to realize all these elementary democratic demands requires that capitalist rule be overthrown by workers revolution.

South African capitalism's viability, its ability to compete in the world market, is based on the system of superexploitation symbolized by the lives of the mine workers. The core of the economy has been and remains gold mining. With the richest veins having run out, the "Randlords" like Anglo American are left with vast quantities of low-grade ore that they can mine profitably only by paying slave wages. Over the last 90 years, nearly 90,000 South African miners have died at work: apartheid capitalism is blacks' blood transmuted into gold. And for the apartheid bosses, that is not negotiable.

ANC/SACP: Black Front Men for Neo-Apartheid Capitalism

The understanding that in a country like South Africa it is impossible to satisfy the many unfulfilled revolutionary democratic tasks short of the seizure of power by the socialist proletariat is central to Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. This was demonstrated by Lenin's Bolshevik Party as it led the successful struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat in October 1917. Securing

basic democratic rights, let alone the huge economic expansion and redistribution required to give a decent life to all the people of South Africa, can only come by breaking the economic and political power of the giant mining and manufacturing houses through expropriation of their assets, laying the basis for an economy planned under the rule of workers councils.

South Africa requires a *black-centered workers government*, not the installation of aspiring black exploiters in the antechambers of *verligte* [enlightened] apartheid power—which is what the ANC offers and desires. As we said last issue:

"A vote for the ANC—including its Communist Party members and affiliated trade-union leaders of COSATU—is a vote to perpetuate the racist oppression and superexploitation of the black, coloured (mixed-race) and Indian toilers in a different political form."

From being a petty-bourgeois nationalist movement in opposition, the ANC is in the process of integrating its leading elements into the South African ruling class as it becomes a bourgeois-nationalist ruling party. The *Wall Street Journal* (3 March) reports, "Blacks Enter South African Boardrooms." South African corporations, especially those looking for government contracts, are falling over each other to recruit ANC cadres as managers. They are also prepared to buy off sections of the black middle class and skilled workers by widening pay differentials in the black workforce.

Today the ANC leaders are no doubt getting fitted for top hats and morning coats on London's Saville Row. Nelson Mandela will perhaps ride to his presidential inauguration in the red Mercedes-Benz armored limo built for him by the combative Mercedes workers in East London before the ANC tops with the aid of the SACP sold out their militant 1990 strike. As the ANC tops become increasingly estranged from the township masses, the SACP and COSATU leaders are playing a vital role in defusing discontent. The SACP's Stalinist theory of "two-stage revolution" (democracy first, socialism in the sweet by-and-by) is a reformist rationale for subordinating the working class to the nationalist ANC.

The ANC sellout to the South African ruling class is so blatant, including the open repudiation of its liberal-nationalist Freedom Charter, that most groups claiming to be Trotskyist have criticized the Mandela/De Klerk "power sharing" deal. But, mesmerized by the popular support for the ANC and the SACP, several of these groups share the practical conclusion of the Stalinist reformists.



COSATU union federation met in 1991 under banner of "socialism." Today ANC wants black unions to prevent strikes on behalf of "government of national unity."

councils (soviets) that would be needed in order to expropriate the wealth of the Randlords and crush the bitter-end resistance of the apartheid racists backed by international imperialism.

Yet in South Africa today, more directly and immediately than anywhere else on the planet, virtually every social and democratic struggle necessarily poses the question of workers revolution. WOSA/WLP has campaigned heavily on the right to a job, and reportedly plans a march for jobs on May 6, at the opening of the National Assembly. But while their platform calls for "a 35 hour week without loss of pay, an end to retrenchments [layoffs], scab labour and lockouts," it presents these demands in a pressure campaign directed toward the capitalist parliament rather than calling for sharp class struggle such as plant occupations, establishing genuine workers control (dual power in the workplace), and demanding a sliding scale of wages and hours to create jobs for all.

Although the WLP makes ritual reference to "internationalism," in reality this tendency has long stood for a certain species of South African "nation-building." WOSA's principal leader, Neville Alexander, has written: "The existing South African state forms the boundaries of the potential nation, not the particular existing cultures" (in Alex Callinos, ed., *Between Apartheid and Capitalism: Conversations with South African Socialists* [1992]). The WLP platform's call for "a united socialist nation" reflects an understandable reaction to the divide-and-rule policies of

apartheid (most visible in the alliance of the Zulu-nationalist Inkatha with the most reactionary, fascist supporters of an Afrikaner *Boerestaat*).

The colonial-derived South African state consists of different national, racial and ethnic groups, with the whites on top, the black Africans on the bottom and the coloureds and Indians occupying an intermediate position. The goal of communists is not to forge "one nation" in the borders of the 1910 Union of South Africa but to achieve political and social equality for *all* of South Africa's diverse peoples. This requires a racially integrated Leninist party. We call for a socialist federation of Southern Africa, with regional autonomy, should they desire, for such peoples as the Ovimbundu in Namibia/Angola, the Ndebeles and Shonas in Zimbabwe and the Zulus in Natal.

In giving critical support to the WLP slate, we note that we are not able to judge the reality of its campaign on the ground in South Africa. We also point out that groups with centrist politics like WOSA (whose demand for a workers party is consciously confined within the framework of a social-democratic labourite program) are highly susceptible to calls to pressure the popular front, or to vote for the "workers parties of the popular front." One may ask: under a constituency-based electoral system, were WOSA and its allies unable to stand candidates everywhere, would the WLP have opposed the bourgeois-nationalist ANC, including its COSATU/SACP allies? This goes to the heart of the debate

over a workers party in South Africa which has been raging in the black union movement over the last year.

In an article last fall, we noted that in pushing this issue, WOSA consciously looks to the example of the Brazilian PT (Workers Party) of Luis Ignacio da Silva ("Lula"), as a Third World variant of the British Labour Party. We noted that many "workerists" within COSATU, the main political current toward which WOSA is now orienting, talked of forming a workers party only *after* the April elections, in order to *not* break with the ANC at this crucial juncture. "We emphasize that the workers party needed today is not a South African version of British Labourism," we wrote, "but a Bolshevik-Leninist party forged on the program of permanent revolution" (WV No. 587, 5 November 1993).

A party of the Bolshevik type, built in the struggle to reforge a democratic-centralist Fourth International, is necessary for the South African masses, like the workers of all countries, to make a successful socialist revolution. A revolutionary workers party can come about only through the intervention of a Marxist nucleus, committed to sweeping away every vestige of apartheid capitalism and dedicated to the cause of international socialism. There can be no justice in South Africa until the non-white majority has power in a revolutionary workers state which would unite Xhosa and Zulu, coloured and Indian, with ample room and full democratic rights for those whites who would join in building a society based on genuine equality.

A proletarian revolution in the industrial powerhouse of South Africa would be a beacon to the whole of sub-Saharan Africa, helping to lift the continent out of imperialist-enforced starvation and poverty. It would be an inspiration to the hundreds of millions—black, Asian, Latin American—across the world who have suffered the violence and degradation of racial arrogance at the hands of the haughty white ruling classes of the Western powers—whether in the colonies or within the imperialist metropolises themselves. Black people in the U.S. in particular see in apartheid slavery the mirror of their own oppression. Socialist revolution in South Africa is not just a matter for South African workers—no less than the Russian Revolution of 1917 it would be the cause of the workers and oppressed peoples of the world.

For a black-centered workers republic! For a socialist federation of Southern Africa! For a South African Trotskyist party as part of a reforged Fourth International! Those who labor must rule! ■



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The Bell Curve has spurred a media campaign legitimizing "debate" of racist myth that blacks are genetically inferior.

ful shouts of relief that this 'difficult' subject had at last been addressed" (*Oakland Tribune*, 1 November).

Nearly twenty-five years ago, Daniel Patrick Moynihan was deservedly hounded for his racist pronouncements on the black family and program for "benign neglect" of the ghetto poor. Even just a decade ago, "scientists" like William Shockley who trashed welfare moms and froze his own sperm in banks for a high IQ future were denounced as racist crackpots parading prejudice as "fact." Today there is a bipartisan consensus for an all-out assault on the poor—from Clinton's electoral promise to "end welfare as we know it" to Newt Gingrich's vow to root out the last vestige of 1960s "counterculture" (a code word for leftist protest and "race-mixing"). The bipartisan drive to dismantle social programs, schools, hospitals, jobs and welfare amounts to a policy of *genocide* for an entire layer of inner-city, predominantly black and Hispanic poor.

Individual differences in physical and intellectual abilities do exist. As Marxists, our aim is to fight for a society whose purpose is to maximize the potential of *all* its members. The expropriation of capitalism by the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution struck a blow against the false division between mental and manual labor and established a material basis for equality between the many different ethnic peoples of the Soviet Union. Even after the bureaucratic degeneration under Stalin, the Revolution's example of a better society for the working masses drove U.S. imperialism to seek to destroy it. Steps toward black equality were made in this country as a result of the mass struggles of the civil rights movement, and after Jim Crow segregation had become an international embarrassment to the U.S. in its role as world policeman

for "democracy." Now, with capitalist counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union, the U.S. ruling class has *intensified* its assault on labor at home and especially the vicious rollback of black rights.

Herrnstein and Murray offer an ideological justification for this reactionary offensive. They argue to end affirmative action, curb immigration, encourage sterilization of poor women and end remedial education programs for inner-city poor children. In the U.S., with its "democratic ideology" and absence of an entrenched aristocracy, perceived inequality has long been justified with arguments for meritocracy—rule by an elite of talented achievers. But now, they see a "cognitive elite" threatened by a growing underclass of poor, allegedly dumb, darker-skinned people who necessitate social control through police-state tactics "along Latin American lines." The bankrupting of the American economy through corporate greed, decades of union-busting and a turn from social welfare to social Darwinism has created not a "bell curve," but a "U" curve with the "haves" at one end, the "have nots" at the other, and little in the middle. So, it's time for a "new" ideology and *The Bell Curve* is it.

A Sampling of Bell Curve "Scholarship"

- *On welfare*: "Going on welfare really is a dumb idea, and that is why women who are low in cognitive ability end up there."

- *On wealth*: "People in different jobs have different average IQs. Lawyers, for example, have higher IQs on the average than bus drivers. Whatever the reason for the link between IQ and occupation, it goes deep.... Since intelligence runs

in families and intelligence predicts status, status *must* run in families."

- *On poverty*: "The people who are left behind [in poverty] are likely to be disproportionately those who suffer not only bad luck but also a lack of energy, thrift, farsightedness, determination—and brains."

In summary, and for a society ready to definitively eradicate the meager remains of the liberals' "war on poverty" with an aggressive ultrarightist "war on the poor," Herrnstein and Murray argue that "Inequality of endowments, including intelligence, is a reality.... Trying to eradicate inequality with artificially manufactured outcomes has led to disaster. It is time for America once again to try living with inequality."

While Herrnstein and Murray argue that genetics legitimizes inequality and repression of poor whites (referred to as "white trash" by Murray), it's the black population, which is *systematically* discriminated against in this society, that is really caught in the cross hairs of this call for a blitzkrieg against the poor. Herrnstein and Murray recycle the discredited work of racist eugenicists like Arthur Jensen, who, beginning in 1969, sought to "prove" that blacks are intellectually inferior to whites. Then, in a breathtaking attempt to claim their findings are not racist, Murray and Herrnstein write, "We cannot think of a legitimate argument why any encounter between individual whites and blacks need be affected by the knowledge that" the difference in "measured intelligence is genetic instead of environmental."

Tell that to *Rodney King* or the millions of black people who are victimized every day by a society that "justifies" a whole system of racist degradation and state repression with the myth that blacks are "inferior." *The Bell Curve* serves to

legitimize treating an entire generation of black people as a *surplus population*—an ideology for a government *policy* that can only be described as “Genocide U.S.A.”

Follow the Money to the Third Reich

There is no “race gene.” The genetic variation within any given ethnic group is as diverse as between one group and another. As R.C. Lewontin, an evolutionary geneticist and co-author of *Not in Our Genes* (Pantheon, 1984) remarked: “If the holocaust comes and a small tribe deep in the New Guinea forests are the only survivors, almost all the genetic variation now expressed among the innumerable groups of our four billion people will be preserved.” Lewontin’s 1972 study showed that *only 6 percent* of the genetic variations among human populations could be accounted for by “race,” such as exist between Europeans and Asians. In other words, *race is meaningless as a “scientific” category*—Newt Gingrich or Jesse Helms may be genetically closer to an Australian aboriginal or a “gangsta rapper” in South-Central L.A. than to each other.

The egalitarian implications of Darwin’s theory of evolution and the discovery that there is no biological basis for the supremacy of one class, nation or ethnic group over another is a powerfully dangerous idea to the capitalist rulers. Lest the producers of wealth recognize that they have a common enemy and it is not each other, the rulers strive to define the exploitative relations between people by ethnic groups and skin color. Thus ideologues for the American ruling class persist in seeking a “scientific” or “natural” reason for the ordering of capitalist society with whites on top and blacks on the bottom.

That science is not free from the taint of prejudice was most shamefully exposed in the “Piltdown Man” scandal. Some English paleoanthropologists thought the “white man’s burden” of brutally colonizing vast expanses of India, Asia and Africa would be served by proving that, if man were descended from ape, at least the earliest *Englishman* was blessed with a brain remarkably larger than any other skulls unearthed in archeological research. This “scientific truth” endured for *40 years* until the Piltdown skull was proved to be a hoax involving a modern human cranium attached to the jaw of an orangutan!

The sources behind Murray and Herrnstein are as tainted as the artfully stained Piltdown Man. Murray and



Shames/Matrix

From Clinton’s vow to “end welfare as we know it” to *Beli Curve*’s call for “voluntary” sterilization of welfare mothers, there is a bipartisan consensus for war on the ghetto poor.

Herrnstein conducted no original research in genetics or biology for their book—nor could they. Herrnstein was trained in psychology and Murray has a degree in political science. Their arsenal of “facts,” graphs, charts and tables is all based on research done by others. A devastating exposé in the *New York Review of Books* (1 December) by Charles Lane reveals the nest of neo-Nazi apologists and ultrarightist crackpots who constitute the all-important sources for *The Bell Curve*.

The sources cited most frequently in *The Bell Curve* are associated with a racist fraud masquerading as an “anthropological journal” called *Mankind Quarterly* which was founded to combat “Communist” and “egalitarian” influences. *MQ*’s founder, Robert Gayre, was a champion of South African apartheid and white supremacy in Rhodesia and has publicly stated that blacks are “worthless.” *MQ*’s other founders include Columbia University’s Henry E. Garrett, a former pamphleteer for White Citizen’s Councils, who argued for racist segregation in the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* lawsuit. Corrado Gini, a leader of the eugenics movement

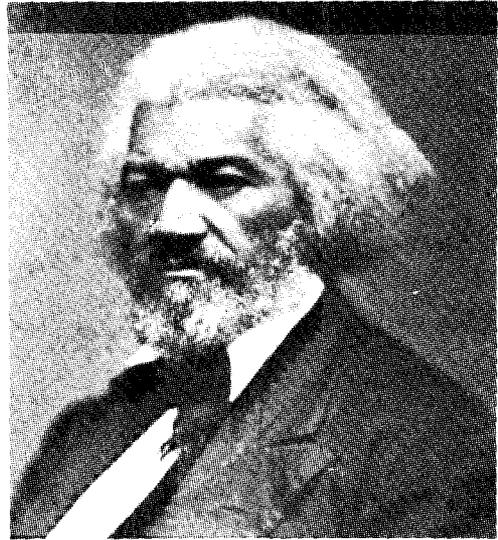
in Mussolini’s Italy, and Ottmar von Verschuer, a mentor of Nazi Dr. Mengele, round out the list of *MQ*’s founder-“scholars.” Today *MQ* is run by Roger Pearson—a man whose résumé includes the astonishing achievement of being elbowed out of the Moonie-infested World Anti-Communist League for being too far to the right! The lunkheaded thugs of the fascist British National Front recommend *MQ* as a rattling good read.

Richard Lynn is an associate editor of *Mankind Quarterly* and is cited 24 times in *The Bell Curve*. Lynn is a mouthpiece for fascist genocide. In 1972 he wrote, “Evolutionary progress means the extinction of the less competent. To think otherwise is mere sentimentality.” He also argues that the Holocaust may have improved the Jewish gene pool by providing “intermittent persecutions which the more intelligent may have been able to foresee and escape” (*Mankind Quarterly*, Fall/Winter 1990). The Canadian crackpot J. Philippe Rushton is cited eleven times in *The Bell Curve*. Rushton believes blacks are genetically predisposed to sexual excess and argues, “it’s a trade-off: more brain or more penis. You can’t have everything” (*Rolling*

Frederick Douglass on “Scientific” Apologies for Slavery

“Pride and selfishness, combined with mental power, never want for a theory to justify them—and when men oppress their fellow-men, the oppressor ever finds, in the character of the oppressed, a full justification for his oppression. Ignorance and depravity, and the inability to rise from degradation to civilization and respectability, are the most usual allegations against the oppressed. The evils most fostered by slavery and oppression, are precisely those which slaveholders and oppressors would transfer from their system to the inherent character of their victims. Thus the very crimes of slavery become slavery’s best defense. By making the enslaved a character fit only for slavery, they excuse themselves for refusing to make the slave a freeman. A wholesale method of accomplishing this result, is to overthrow the instinctive consciousness of the common brotherhood of man. For, let it be once granted that the human race are of multitudinous origin, naturally different in their moral, physical, and intellectual capacities, and at once you make plausible a demand for classes, grades and conditions, for different methods of culture, different moral, political, and religious institutions, and a chance is left for slavery, as a necessary institution.”

—from “The Claims of the Negro Ethnologically Considered”
(address delivered at Western Reserve College, 12 July 1854)



Frederick Douglass House

Stone, 10 November). Murray and Herrnstein have declared Rushton’s work “convincing” and “plainly science.”

Mankind Quarterly is bankrolled by the Pioneer Fund, an ultraright New York-based foundation. The Fund’s founding president, Harry Hamilton Laughlin, crusaded and convinced Congress to adopt the Immigration Restriction Act on the grounds that Jews and other immigrants were “feeble-minded.” Laughlin was also instrumental in pushing for the law under which tens of thousands of “unfit” U.S. citizens (i.e., the homeless, the poor, the “insane”) were sterilized. In his 1927 Supreme Court decision upholding Virginia’s sterilization laws (*Buck v. Bell*), Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes thundered:

“It is better for all the world, if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or to let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind.... Three generations of imbeciles are enough.”

This law served as the model for 1933 Nazi legislation which resulted in the sterilization of more than two million people deemed subhuman *Untermenschen*. Charles Murray echoes the racist eugenicists of the Third Reich in arguing for sterilization of welfare recipients today:

“The most efficient way to raise the IQ of a society is for smarter women to have higher birth rates than duller women.... The United States already has policies that inadvertently social-engineer who has babies, and it is encouraging the

wrong women.... The technically precise description of America’s fertility policy is that it subsidizes births among poor women, who are also disproportionately at the low end of the intelligence distribution.”

Murray likes to portray himself as an All-American corn-fed boy straight out of a Norman Rockwell painting, but it’s another Rockwell—George Lincoln Rockwell, the American Nazi Party leader—who comes to mind upon hearing tales of Murray’s youth. Just for “kicks,” the young Charles Murray staged a huge cross-burning in his hometown of Newton, Iowa, terrorizing the only two black families in town. Murray served as a counterinsurgency expert for U.S. imperialism in Thailand during the Vietnam War, a country that was virtually transformed into a laboratory for U.S. techniques in genocide. Now from the comfort of an armchair at the American Enterprise Institute, Murray contemplates sterilizing the poor and closing America’s borders to immigrants who flunk racist “competency” tests.

The hereditarian rightists cited in *The Bell Curve* have received some four million dollars from the Pioneer Fund. *The Bell Curve*’s main source for its racist IQ theories is the notorious Arthur Jensen who has already received \$1.1 million from the Pioneer Fund. The Pioneer Fund’s current goals include ending racial integration in America and stopping the flow of immigrants. The Pioneer Fund subsidizes the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) and

anti-Hispanic (and anti-Catholic) racist “English Only” groups. Bankrolling the ultraright ideologues is the Pioneer Fund’s investment in an “Aryan” American future. In Charles Murray they’ve found a dangerous propagandist and demagogue for social engineering.

In his definitive debunking of the hereditarian theory of IQ, Stephen Jay Gould exposed how Murray’s predecessors built the scaffolding for a government policy which abetted the genocide of Hitler’s Third Reich. Discriminatory screening of immigrants meant:

“The quotas stood, and slowed immigration from southern and eastern Europe to a trickle. Throughout the 1930s, Jewish refugees, anticipating the holocaust, sought to emigrate, but were not admitted. The legal quotas, and continuing eugenic propaganda, barred them even in years when inflated quotas for western and northern European nations were not filled.... We know what happened to many who wished to leave but had nowhere to go. The paths to destruction are often indirect, but ideas can be agents as sure as guns and bombs.”

—*The Mismeasure of Man*
(W.W. Norton, 1981)

The Uses and Abuses of IQ Tests

Intelligence is not quantifiable as a single trait, nor can it be measured as a single quality. The “hard science” of hereditarians like Charles Spearman, who claimed to discover what he dubbed the “g” factor as a measure of intelligence, is as fuzzy as a cotton ball. Mostly what IQ tests measure is...how well an individual can take an IQ test and how

into criminal behavior are distinguishable from the population at large in their distribution of intelligence."

By these lights, the ruling class must be inherently criminal—and stupid. The millionaire WASP politicians who inhabit Capitol Hill and the halls of Congress have bilked millions through the savings and loan scandal, gutted Social Security, destroyed schools and hospitals, wrecked the industrial infrastructure of this country through their own corporate greed, and generally robbed from the poor to give to the rich any way they can. But we have a different proposal for dealing with this: *break the power of the ruling class by fighting for a society where those who labor rule.*

The Legacy of Slavery

The ideology of racial inferiority and a master race originated in the American antebellum South as the justification for chattel slavery. The Civil War smashed the slave system, and Radical Reconstruction was about the freest and most egalitarian period in American history. But the systematic oppression of black people as a forcibly segregated *race-color caste* is fundamental to the American capitalist system in every sphere: in jobs, housing, education, and even personal relations. Thus the obsession with race and the ideology of white supremacy endured.

Just as the myth of the master race was copied by German fascism, so too did the Nazi Party and Hitler's storm-troopers find their historical antecedents



Challenge
Publication of Herrnstein's racist views prompted protests of his lectures at Harvard in 1971.



Young Socialist
Memphis, 1968: Black sanitation strikers declared, "I Am a Man," protesting racist degradation in face of National Guard repression.

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In a 1954 lecture on "Race and Capitalism," veteran American Trotskyist Richard Fraser laid bare the legacy of slavery in capitalist America as "color discrimination buttressed by segregation and race prejudice." Fraser noted:

"Race thus became a fetish of American capitalism, a system of special exploitation based upon the social relations and customs of a previous mode of production, which had itself been an abomination to society. Stripped of scientific justification, what then remains of *race*? Race is a relation between people based upon the needs of capitalist exploitation. The race concept in anthropology grew out of the social relations of slavery. It was congealed by the adaptation of these obsolete social relations to the needs of capitalist production.

"The concept of race has now been overthrown in biological science. But *race* as the keystone of exploitation remains.

Race is a social relation and has only a social reality."

—"In Memoriam, Richard S. Fraser: An Appreciation and Selection of His Work,"
Prometheus Research Series 3
(1990)

The yawning gulf of inequalities and devastation of human life cannot be redressed with piecemeal reforms. Today the liberals try to outdo the conservatives with "get tough on crime" rhetoric—and the result was the 1994 midterm elections, a triumph of the far, far right. Yesterday the liberals pleaded to "throw money" at problems...and you can certainly ameliorate many problems with money. But the fundamental inequality of this society cannot be redressed through reforms, because you cannot have a radical redistribution of wealth in a system based on private ownership of the means of production. The vast majority who *produce* the wealth of society are robbed of the fruits of their labor by the capitalist ruling class.

To do away with the system of racial oppression and class exploitation requires a thoroughgoing proletarian socialist revolution. Only then will the ideal of equality held out by the French Revolution, and the promise of black freedom held out by the victory in the Civil War against slavery, be realizable. By smashing the color line once and for all through revolutionary integration into a socialist America, we can forge a society dedicated to an expansion of human freedom and potential. It is to this task that the Spartacist League is dedicated. ■

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Jamal's Attorneys Seek New Trial in Pennsylvania State Court

Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!



Jennifer Beach

**Death Row
Political Prisoner**

Black Journalist

**"Voice of the
Voiceless"**

**Former Black
Panther**

MOVE Supporter

Mobilize Now!

"Mumia is somebody that we need desperately. At a time like this, we cannot afford to let them take such a voice from us without putting up a struggle of gigantic proportions."

—Ossie Davis at the June 3, 1994 New York speakout initiated by the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal and the Partisan Defense Committee.

We are in a race against time to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal, a courageous black journalist, fighter for social justice, and a political prisoner on death row in Pennsylvania. Mumia Abu-Jamal is the victim of a racist frame-up. As a former Black Panther Party member, a MOVE supporter, and an award-winning black journalist known as the "voice of the voiceless," Jamal has lived a vibrant life of struggle on behalf of the poor, the black and the dispossessed in this country. Even from the hideous conditions of death row, Jamal continues to

speak out for the oppressed in commentaries which appear regularly in *Workers Vanguard* and newspapers all over the country. It is precisely because he is a beacon of hope and strength in the fight against racist injustice that the forces of reaction and repression want to silence Jamal forever by execution. *This racist legal lynching must be stopped!*

The new governor of Pennsylvania, Republican Tom Ridge, won the state house on a pro-death-penalty platform and pledged to sign death warrants as soon as he takes office. Foremost among the over 170 men and women on Pennsylvania's death row is Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was framed up in 1982 on charges of killing a Philadelphia police officer.

The threatened execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal is not only inherently racist and barbaric, it is also the first explicitly political execution attempted in this country since the government murdered Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in 1953. Just

as the Rosenbergs were murdered in the McCarthyite climate of Cold War anti-Communism, the persecution of Mumia Abu-Jamal takes place in a context of a right-wing Congress pushing a devastating rollback of the gains made by blacks, women, gays and the labor movement through hard-fought struggles. The death penalty is the centerpiece of the right-wing backlash for racist "law and order." Clinton's new Crime Bill, passed just before the midterm elections, mandates the death penalty for 60 more federal offenses, effectively making the death penalty the law of the land even in states that abolished it.

In the early morning hours of December 9, 1981, Jamal was working as a cab driver and saw his brother Billy being beaten by police officer Daniel Faulkner. Jamal got out of his cab and took a near-fatal bullet in the stomach. Jamal was found sitting on the curb and bleeding nearly to death. Faulkner was dead. While critically wounded, Jamal was beaten, kicked, rammed into a pole and dumped on a hospital floor by police, where he was beaten again.

Jamal has always maintained his innocence, and four witnesses stated they saw a third man shoot Faulkner and then run from the scene. But Jamal was presumed guilty by the hanging judge and prevented from presenting a defense in a frame-up trial fraught with violations of Jamal's constitutional rights. The judge, Albert Sabo, "the King of Death Row," has sentenced more men and women to death than any other sitting judge in the U.S. In a city which is over 40 percent black, all blacks except two were excluded from the jury. Jamal was denied the right to represent himself or have the attorney of his choice, and was allocated a mere \$150 for pretrial investigation in a case in which the police had already interviewed 125 people. Sabo ordered Jamal removed from the courtroom, forcing Jamal to miss most of the prosecution's case. Jamal's court-appointed lawyer was unprepared for trial and repeatedly asked to be relieved. He was later disbarred.

Mumia Abu-Jamal was sentenced to die for his political activities and beliefs. Prosecutor Joseph McGill secured the death sentence by telling the nearly all-

white jury that Jamal's membership in the Black Panther Party and use of the slogan "power to the people" and the old Maoist dictum "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun" 12 years earlier "proved" he was a "cop-killer"! In 1990 the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear Jamal's appeals.

The Philadelphia Story—Rizzo Town

The record of former mayor Frank Rizzo's campaign against the black population of Philly is a tale of state-sponsored terror—and at every turn, Jamal was there to expose and protest the injustice. Jamal was beaten and arrested by Rizzo's plainclothes cops for protesting a 1968 presidential rally for George "Segregation Forever" Wallace. In September 1969, Rizzo's cops raided Black Panther Party headquarters and tore apart the office. Fifteen-year-old Minister of Information Mumia Abu-Jamal was among those arrested. In January 1970, Jamal was featured in a front-page article about the Panthers in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

In coordination with the FBI and its deadly COINTELPRO operation against the black movement which left 38 Black Panther Party members dead, Rizzo and the Philly police compiled files on 18,000 people and 600 organizations.

This campaign of police terror culminated in the infamous August 1970 raid on the Philly Panther office, in which Black Panther Party members were lined up against the wall and forced to strip naked while the press looked on. Rizzo became an icon to the racist "law and order" crowd.

Jamal, the young student activist, co-founder of the local Black Panther Party chapter and renowned journalist, could not have—and did not—evade Rizzo's deadly eye. Jamal was among the journalists covering Rizzo's press conference following the August 8, 1978 siege of the MOVE commune's Powelton Village home by hundreds of heavily armed cops. Rizzo blamed the "new breed of journalism" for the death of one cop and threatened, "They believe what you write, what you say. And it's got to stop. And one day, and I hope it's in my career, that you're going to be held responsible and accountable for what you do."

The state's opportunity for "settling accounts" came three years later, on December 9, 1981, when Jamal was shot in the chest by a cop and railroaded to death row.

Stop Racist Legal Lynchings!

A mere 12 percent of the national population, blacks compose about forty percent of those on death row. Over 80 per-

cent of the men and women sent to death row from Jamal's Philadelphia are black, some one-third of those on the row from Philadelphia sent there by Judge Sabo. Capital punishment is institutionalized racist murder. It represents the legacy of slavery—legal lynching—a continuation of the ideology that proclaims that black people are not human and can be killed with impunity. State executions are a social act meant to intimidate and brutalize a whole people. The death penalty shackles the ancient tradition of torture to the ruthless machinery of the modern capitalist state.

Texas rang in the New Year by executing Jesse Dwayne Jacobs, a man they knew was innocent of the crime he was sentenced to die for! This grotesque murder exposes the symbolic value of the death penalty to the ruling class: the all-powerful state will decide who lives and who dies. Truly in the death penalty we see the impulse to genocide.

In the 1987 case of *McCleskey v. Georgia*, the U.S. Supreme Court acknowledged the overwhelming racial bias in the application of the death penalty, but argued that *this didn't matter* because, "taken to its logical conclusion [this] throws into serious question the principles that underlie our criminal justice system." Thus Chief Justice Rehnquist & Co. reaffirm the principle set forth

You Can Help Save Jamal!

Join the campaign to save Jamal! Organize protest! Bring the force of labor, minorities, death penalty abolitionists, human rights organizations into the struggle to save his life. Pass motions in your unions, campus, church and community organizations. Publicize his case in your union or organization's newsletter.

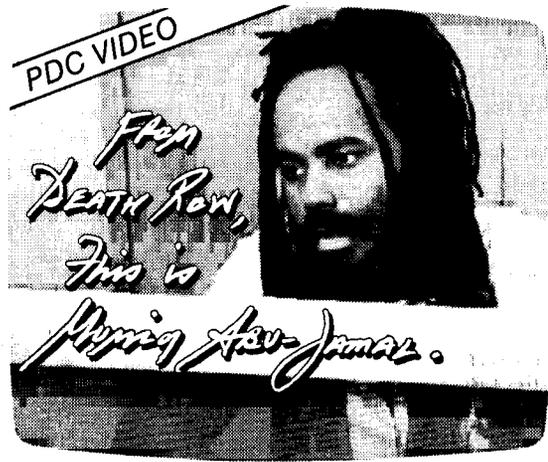
The name of Mumia Abu-Jamal is today the rallying cry in the fight against the racist and barbaric death penalty.

Materials available from the PDC:

- PDC 25-minute video, "From Death Row, This is Mumia Abu-Jamal." Features excerpts of an interview with Jamal from death row. \$30 (including postage and handling).

- Four issues of *CSDN* are available with extensive coverage of the campaign to save Jamal (see ad page 42).

- Posters, leaflets and petitions.



For more information contact the PDC. Send your contributions for the campaign to the PDC at P.O. Box 99, Canal St. Station, New York, NY 10013.

SAVE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL!



MOBILIZE NOW

We are in a race against time to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal, a courageous Black Panther Party member and political prisoner on death row in Pennsylvania. Mumia Abu-Jamal is the victim of a racist frame-up. As a former Black Panther Party member, a MOVE supporter, and an award-winning Black journalist known as the "voice of the voiceless," Jamal has lived a violent life of struggle on behalf of the poor, the black and the oppressed in this country. Even from the hideous conditions of death row, Jamal continues to speak out for the oppressed in common language which appears regularly in newspapers all over the country. It is precisely because he is a beacon of hope and strength in the fight against racism that the forces of reaction and repression want to silence Jamal forever by execution. This racist legal lynching must be stopped!

The historical occasion of Mumia Abu-Jamal is not only inherently racist and inhumane, it is also the first explicitly political murder attempt in this country since the government murdered Adolf and Ethel Rosenberg in 1953. The Rosenberg case was a direct result of the McCarthyist climate of Cold War paranoia. The perpetrators of Mumia Abu-Jamal's case are the perpetrators of a right wing Congress which, through the passage of the anti-communism laws, opened the way for the right wing backlash for racial fear and panic. Clinton's race baiting, passed just before the midterm elections, maintains the death penalty for 60 years federal officers, effectively making the death penalty the law of the land even in states that abolished it.

In Pennsylvania, Republican Tom Ridge was the state house on a pro-death row vote to move on to the state office on governor on January 15, 1997. Among the 170 members of the Pennsylvania death row in Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was framed up in 1982 on charges of killing a Philadelphia police officer. The Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) recently passed a resolution in support of its campaign to kill Jamal, relying on the state house and senate to fund the television and radio talk shows with blood-sucking calls to "get on with it."

The campaign to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal is a critical step. Jamal's attorneys led by Leonard Weinglass and including the NAACP Legal Defense Fund are filing an application for a writ of Habeas Corpus and including the NAACP Legal Defense Fund are filing an application for a writ of Habeas Corpus and including the NAACP Legal Defense Fund are filing an application for a writ of Habeas Corpus.

Jamal's Attorneys Seek New Trial in Pennsylvania State Court

Help distribute the new four-page leaflet detailing the latest developments in the campaign—order bundles from the Partisan Defense Committee (see address at left).



WV Photo

Wadiya Abu-Jamal, wife of Mumia.

by Justice Roger Taney in the infamous 1857 Dred Scott case, that blacks "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect."

The racist death penalty goes hand in hand with the extralegal terror of the KKK and summary executions by cops on the street to keep black people "in their place." The fight to abolish the death penalty is part of the historic struggle for black equality in America.

Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!

The forces of racist "law and order" have been mobilizing to push through Jamal's execution. After announcing its plans to air a series of commentaries by Jamal, National Public Radio (NPR) caved in to pressure by the Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police to cancel the broadcasts. Senate Republican leader Robert Dole threatened on the Senate floor to cut off NPR's federal funding. Evidently NPR's prestigious *All Things Considered* program could not "consider" letting a black man falsely convicted of killing a cop speak from death row. Yet on 8 November, NPR found it acceptable to broadcast the murderous ravings of an anti-abortion bigot who threatened that if Florida gives Paul Hill the death penalty for murdering a heroic Pensacola abortion doctor, "blood will run in the streets like nobody has ever seen!"

The capitalist politicians, media and especially the Philadelphia FOP want to silence Jamal to make it easier to kill him. In fighting the legal lynching of Jamal we will strike a blow against the entire apparatus of racist, capitalist repression.

Mumia Abu-Jamal does not stand alone. Over 40,000 people have signed petitions or sent letters to the governor demanding Jamal not be executed. Unions representing millions of workers—including the French General Confederation of Labor (CGT); the Metro Toronto Labour Council and Vancouver Public Employees in Canada; Section 10 of the Mexican Teachers Union SNTE; ILWU Locals 6 and 10 in San Francisco and ATU Local 308 in Chicago, as well as unions in Britain and Australia—have taken up Jamal's cause. Harry Belafonte, Senator Carol Moseley-Braun, Congressman Ron Dellums, Danny Glover, Whoopi Goldberg, Pennsylvania State Representative David Richardson, Jr., the Workers Organisation for Socialist Action (South Africa), the Palmares Cultural Foundation in Brasilia are just some of the individuals and organizations who have joined tens of thousands who say: "Mumia Abu-Jamal Must Not Die."

The campaign to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal is at a critical stage. Jamal's attorneys, led by Leonard Weinglass and including the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, are filing an application for a new trial in Pennsylvania state court in early 1995. While availing ourselves of every legal resource at our disposal to save Jamal's life, death penalty abolitionists cannot expect justice through the capitalist courts. We must rely on and organize the tremendous power of social pro-

test to save Mumia. Were it not for the exposure and power of international protest, black South African president Nelson Mandela would still be a prisoner breaking rocks on Robben Island. Were it not for mass mobilizations against Jim Crow "justice," the Scottsboro Boys would have died in prison for a crime they did not commit.

The cops and their friends in, high places know that Jamal symbolizes capital punishment in America—you better know it too. Join the campaign to save Mumia Abu-Jamal! Make the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the voice of the voiceless that the police want to silence, a rallying cry against the racist death penalty. Raise *your* voice and *organize*, in your unions, community, youth and church groups, to demand that Jamal must not die. Save Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the death penalty!

* * *

For more information about the campaign to save Mumia Abu-Jamal, contact the Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013, (212) 406-4252. Tax-deductible contributions to the legal defense should be made payable to the Bill of Rights Foundation, earmarked "Mumia Abu-Jamal Legal Defense," and sent to the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 163 Amsterdam Avenue, No. 115, New York, NY 10023-5001. ■

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NYC Speak-out:

Save Mumia Abu-Jamal

Page 7

At June 3 speak-out, Judge Bruce Wright, WBA's Bernard White and actor Ossie Davis read from words by Mumia Abu-Jamal, sponsored by National Public Radio.



Labor Rally Demands:

Free Geronlmo Ji Jaga

Page 3

Los Angeles, August 29—Union protest outside D.A. Garretti's office demands freedom for Geronlmo Ji Jaga. (Press)

Fight Government Frame-ups of Trade Unionists! 12
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L.A. Unionists Demand: Freedom for Geronimo!



WV Photo



Jonathan Eubanks

A Quarter Century Behind Bars: Black Panther Denied Parole Again

Los Angeles, August 23—Union protest outside D.A. Garcetti's office demands freedom for Geronimo JI Jaga (Pratt), shown here at Mule Creek state prison.

The following is based on a press release issued by the Partisan Defense Committee on August 29.

On August 24, the California Board of Prison Terms denied parole for the thirteenth time to former Black Panther leader Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), who has been in prison almost 24 years for a crime he did not commit. This year's hearing came in the context of major revelations of more evidence of Geronimo's innocence. Los Angeles FOX TV has aired nine special reports in an ongoing series since January, while the *Los Angeles Times*, *Los Angeles Sentinel*, *California Lawyer* and *Emerge* magazine have all recently spotlighted his case.

Last year investigator James McCloskey presented evidence to L.A. district attorney Gil Garcetti that linked two petty criminals on the fringes of the Black Panther Party to the 1968 murder for which Geronimo was framed. *Emerge's* June cover story noted, "The evidence that should have been enough to free him has been around for years."

On June 27, federal judge Stanley Weigel issued a ruling against prison officials for retaliatory harassment of Geronimo. The ruling states that "for the first time the identity of the likely perpetrators of the murder for which Plaintiff has already served 23 years" has been exposed. D.A. Garcetti agreed to review Geronimo's case last year, but his office will not say when they will complete the review.

Fed up with waiting for Garcetti, Los Angeles Service Employees International Union (SEIU) locals organized a protest at the D.A.'s office on August 23, the day before the parole hearing. Local 399 first vice president Doris Boyd said, "Garcetti agreed that he was going to review that evidence, and to this day he has not."

Boyd and Local 347 president Richard Price led 60 chanting people into Garcetti's office to present petitions signed by 500 union members which stated: "Brother Pratt has been in prison for twenty-three (23) years, for a crime he

did not commit." After delivering their petitions, the unionists marched out chanting, "We'll be back!" Garcetti's stunned receptionist told the *Los Angeles Times* (24 August), "I've never seen anything like this in the seven years I've worked here."

"It is very significant that, for the first time, Los Angeles unions organized a demonstration on Geronimo's behalf," said Partisan Defense Committee counsel Valerie West, one of Geronimo's attorneys, "because it will take the power of the working class to free Geronimo from this government frame-up." Four L.A. television stations, already there to cover O.J. Simpson's pre-trial hearing, aired stories on the largely Latino, integrated SEIU demonstration.

The union is widely known for its Justice for Janitors campaign, which has withstood brutal police attacks in its hard-fought drive to unionize low-paid workers in Los Angeles. Representing thousands of Latino, Filipino and other immigrant workers, the union's action on

behalf of Pratt was an important counter to the rulers' attempts to set black and Latino workers at each others' throats.

A few weeks earlier, the 300,000-member SEIU Western Conference passed a resolution demanding that Geronimo "be released immediately," noting that "vast amounts of evidence support...his innocence." In the past two years, unions representing millions of workers have taken a stand in support of Geronimo, including the SEIU International, International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, National Education Association, California Teachers Association, American Postal Workers Union, Central Labor Council of Alameda County, and many others.

There were other protests during the week of the parole hearing as well. On August 24, about 50 people led by the International Campaign to Free Geronimo ji Jaga demonstrated outside Mule Creek Prison in California's Central Valley where he is incarcerated, but were pushed off prison grounds by police.

Two days earlier, lawyers for Geronimo held a well-attended press conference in L.A. Attorney Johnny Cochran, who led the defense team 25 years ago, said of Geronimo, "This man was convicted wrongfully, is innocent, the authorities know he is innocent, and yet no one in the system has had the courage, or the fortitude, or the integrity to say this man should be released." Attorney Stuart Hanlon noted bitterly, "The one case that has always proven to me the system doesn't work is Geronimo," add-

ing, "we have enough evidence to reverse 10 or 20 cases."

At the parole hearing itself, officials refused to admit Geronimo's chosen attorney, former Black Panther leader Kathleen Cleaver, forcing her to sit in a separate room from her client where she viewed the hearing on video. It was a "sham proceeding," Cleaver said in disgust. She noted that officials come "with a script" every year because Geronimo's case is political, a result of the FBI's 1960s Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO) to "neutralize" black revolutionary groups. What's important, she concluded, is what happens *outside* parole board hearings.

Inside the hearing board members aggressively badgered their prisoner, charging he has a "criminal mentality"—to which Geronimo replied, "I think you have a criminal mentality." As a Black Panther, Geronimo said he was seeking "to free people who are in bondage" (*Los Angeles Times*, 25 August).

Evidence of how Geronimo was framed by the LAPD and FBI for the 1968 Santa Monica murder includes:

- Wiretap logs "disappeared" which recorded Geronimo in Oakland, 400 miles from the shooting, two hours before the murder.
- The surviving victim's identification of another man as the killer one year before he ever saw a photo of Geronimo was suppressed at the trial.
- Julius Butler—the state's key witness against Geronimo—was an informant for the LAPD since 1966 and an in-

formant for the FBI since at least May 1969, but denied this on the witness stand.

- Two police agents also infiltrated Geronimo's legal defense team.

Geronimo was personally targeted for "neutralization" in FBI COINTELPRO documents. Describing some of this, the June *Emerge* article commented that Geronimo's "case is like a spy novel."

Meanwhile, with parole denied and no word from D.A. Garcetti on his promised review of the case, Geronimo now faces another legal battle: the California Department of Corrections (CDC) has filed a notice of appeal of federal judge Weigel's June 27 decision in the prison harassment suit. In that ruling, Weigel cited a years-long pattern of retaliatory persecution by prison officials against Geronimo for exercising his First Amendment rights, which are "critical to his longstanding effort to prove his innocence."

Weigel restrained the CDC from housing Geronimo in a two-man cell. PDC counsel West noted that "they know this aggravates his medical problems from his service as a highly decorated soldier in Vietnam." She added, "Geronimo remains in jail because of a political decision at high levels to ignore the evidence, to cover up their knowing frame-up of Geronimo, and to punish him for his politics. As long as they hold him in prison, they continue to subject him to retaliation, and we will fight it."

Freedom now for Geronimo! ■

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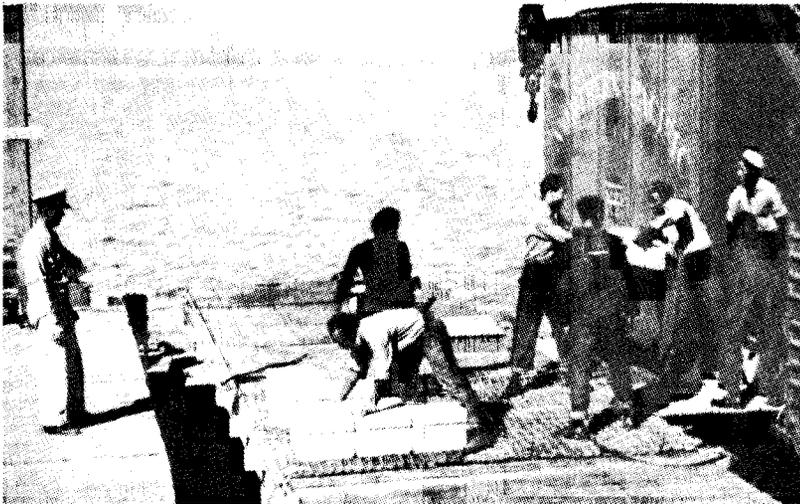
The collage features several overlapping covers of Spartacist League publications:

- Spartacist**: "The Post-Soviet World: Perspectives and Tasks of the Spartacist League/U.S." with a table of contents listing topics like "U.S. in the Post-Soviet World" and "Anti-Communist Strategy and Tactics." (Issue #118, October 1991)
- Women and Revolution**: "Islamic Fundamentalists Vow to Kill Woman Writer: Defend Taslima Nasrin!" and "Women and the Permanent Revolution in Bangladesh." (Issue #118, October 1991)
- Workers Vanguard**: "Capitalism's Racist Hitmen: Clinton, Gingrich Take Aim at Blacks, Immigrants." (Issue #504, 27 January 1992)
- Espartaco**: "Ocupación colonial española la élite haitiana: Imperalismo yanqui: ¡Fuera de Haití! ¡Fuera manos de Cuba!" (Issue #118, October 1991)
- Black History and the Class Struggle**: "STOP THE KLAN! FOR A WORKERS AMERICA!" (Issue #118, October 1991)

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Pentagon Continues Vendetta Against Black Sailors

Port Chicago, 1944: U.S. Navy's Racist Frame-Up



Percy Robinson



U.S. Navy

During WW II, Jim Crow Navy used black sailors for particularly dangerous jobs like unloading ammunition. Aftermath of 17 July 1944 explosion at Port Chicago (right), which killed 320 sailors.

17 July 1944: Two ships and a loading dock full of ammunition went up at the Navy's Port Chicago munitions base on San Francisco Bay. The blast, equivalent to about 5,000 tons of TNT, leveled much of the base, wrecked buildings in the nearby town of Port Chicago and killed 320 sailors—202 of them black ammunition loaders. Three weeks later, 258 black sailors refused to load ammunition in a protest against the hellish conditions which bred the disaster and the Navy's racist Jim Crow segregation policies. In the largest mass mutiny trial in U.S. naval history, a travesty built on manufactured evidence and open racism, 50 of the black strikers were later convicted and sentenced initially to 15 years in prison.

6 January 1994: 50 years later, the original verdict was upheld. According to a review undertaken at the request of four Bay Area Congressmen, "the Secretary of the Navy concluded that neither racial prejudice nor other improper factors tainted the original investigations or trials" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 7 January). This brazen lie and outrageous injustice is more than another slap in the face for black people from the racist

Democratic Party administration of Bill Clinton. It is also a crude threat to the heavily minority ranks of today's U.S. military, as Clinton prepares to throw them into battle around the globe in pursuit of U.S. imperialist domination. Jim Crow laws may be off the books, but the bedrock racist foundation of American capitalism remains.

In his well-researched book *The Port Chicago Mutiny* (Amistad Press, 1993), black historian Robert L. Allen tells the gripping story of how the Navy's racism condemned black sailors to death in the greatest homefront disaster of World War II, and then railroaded those survivors who protested. The Port Chicago work stoppage was one of a series of rebellions by blacks in the U.S. military. The Spartacist pamphlet *Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 4 devoted to "Black Soldiers in the Jim Crow Military" notes that "although many blacks deeply resented their exclusion from combat, a policy that lasted late into the war, there was little black enthusiasm for this 'war for democracy' abroad when they were brutally deprived of basic democratic rights at home." Unlike in World War I,

blacks were no longer willing to "take it" for the duration. Buoyed by the class struggles of the 1930s which created the CIO, blacks for the first time had been incorporated into a powerful, integrated working-class movement.

Port Chicago, just where the Sacramento River goes into the northern arm of San Francisco Bay, was a main ammo supply depot for the Pacific fleet. More than 1,400 black enlisted men were driven by their white officers to work faster and faster in the back-breaking work of loading everything from machine-gun rounds to incendiary bombs to 5,000-pound "blockbusters" onto cargo ships. "We were a mule team," said one veteran interviewed by Allen. Another called it a "slave outfit," adding, "we were considered a cheap labor force from the beginning." This was Jim Crow with a vengeance: all of the men doing the dangerous work of physically handling ammunition and bombs were black, while all of the Navy officers and Marine guards supervising them were white.

"We were pushed," said Joe Small, a winch operator and ad hoc leader of the

protest, singled out as a "ringleader" by the Navy brass in the mutiny trial. "The officers used to pit one division against the other, and the officers themselves used to bet on their division putting on more tonnage than the other division."

Captain Nelson Goss, who ran the Mare Island naval base of which Port Chicago was a sub-command, declared that black and Filipino workers "do not compare favorably with those of the white race." Captain Merrill Kinne, appointed to command Port Chicago in April 1944, spoke sneeringly of "the type of enlisted personnel assigned to Port Chicago." To the Navy brass, from top to bottom, the black sailors were expendable. And these racist bigots, with the full protection of Democratic president Roosevelt, set up the disaster by consciously undermining safety.

The West Coast longshore union, the ILWU, warned the Navy weeks before the explosion "that there would be a disaster if the Navy continued to use untrained seamen to load ammunition," writes Allen. "The union offered to send experienced longshoremen to train the Navy recruits in safe handling of ammunition, but this offer was apparently ignored by the Navy," which feared contact between the sailors and the militant, integrated union. Yet the Stalinist leadership of the ILWU went all-out for the imperialist "war effort," including signing the CIO no-strike pledge two days after Pearl Harbor. Union leader Harry Bridges stated: "unions today must become instruments of speed-up of the working people of America" (quoted in Howard Kimeldorf, *Reds or Rackets: The Making of Radical and Conservative Unions on the Waterfront* [University of California Press, 1988]).

Allen writes that "Safety regulations were posted on the pier but not in the enlisted men's barracks, because Captain Kinne did not believe the black seamen were capable of comprehending the regulations." Joe Small told Allen: "I had told everybody in authority that I could get to that we were working dangerously, and one day that place would blow up." Small's lieutenant told him the bombs were "totally harmless" without the detonator installed. In fact, as Small and many of his coworkers realized, concussion—from being dropped or slammed against the side of a ship's hold—can blow the things up.

Not only were the real criminals left completely off the hook by the Navy's commission of inquiry, but those held responsible were the *black seamen who were the chief victims!* Although the specific cause of the explosion was never



Amistad Press

Black sailors in wake of Port Chicago explosion refused deadly assignment of unloading ammo in unsafe conditions. White officers convicted 50 black enlisted men of "mutiny" after 80-minute "deliberation."

established, the judge advocate's report grotesquely declared that "the colored enlisted personnel are neither temperamentally or intellectually capable of handling high explosives"! Yet the surviving black loaders were to be put back on the job within three weeks, under the same racist officers and unsafe conditions as before.

Furthermore, a Congressional bill to pay \$5,000 to families of victims was cut to \$3,000 when Mississippi Dixiecrat John Rankin objected that most of the beneficiaries would be black. And unlike white servicemen, the surviving black seamen were not offered the customary 30-day "survivors' leave." This was too much. On August 9, as Joe Small's division was marched out to load ammunition at Mare Island, "everybody stopped dead, boom, just like that." Two more divisions also balked. This work stoppage over a manifestly deadly threat was treated by the Navy as a mutiny, and 258 of the 328 men were imprisoned on a barge.

Two days later, after the men were threatened with a firing squad by Admiral Wright, 44 heroically stood fast, the core of the 50 who went on trial for mutiny on September 14. (The remaining 208 who went back to work under duress were given summary courts-martial for "disobeying orders" and dishonorably discharged.) Chief prosecutor was one James F. Coakley, who had been assistant Alameda County district attorney under

Earl Warren. Later, as Alameda County D.A. in the 1960s, Coakley was notorious as the headline racist prosecutor of Black Panthers and antiwar activists, including Huey Newton and the Oakland Seven.

The mutiny trial was a blatant frame-up and a farce from beginning to end. Prosecution witnesses couldn't even prove that the men charged had been given a direct order to work. The defense established that the men had insisted that they were ready to follow all other orders, but were afraid to handle ammunition. One of the defendants had never been allowed to do the job, since he weighed only 104 pounds; now he was on trial for mutiny.

Written statements were "taken" from the 258 men—sometimes in the presence of armed guards—by interviewing officers who admitted they rewrote them and left out what they considered "irrelevant." One of the defendants revealed that prosecutor Coakley threatened to have him shot during an interrogation. The seven white officers acting as judge and jury allowed these "statements" to be used as evidence. And on the basis of this and other hearsay "evidence," on October 24 the officers took a total of 80 minutes—including their lunch break—to find the 50 sailors guilty of a mutinous conspiracy.

Thurgood Marshall, then chief counsel of the NAACP, charged that the defendants were on trial "solely because of their race and color," and called it "one

of the worst 'frame-ups' we have come across in a long time. It was deliberately planned and staged by certain officers to discredit Negro seamen." Marshall tried unsuccessfully to get the Roosevelt administration to overturn the verdict, while an outcry was raised in the black press and the NAACP published a pamphlet on the case. In January 1946, most were released from prison and given general discharges.

U.S. Trotskyists, then organized in the Socialist Workers Party, fought to mobilize militant struggle against Jim Crow racism throughout World War II. This was an essential part of our revolutionary opposition to the imperialist war, a war of plunder between different gangs of robbers who mobilized the proletariat to do the fighting and dying: the main enemy was at home. In the heroic struggle of the Soviet Red Army against Hitler's Nazi invasion, the workers had a side: to defend the gains of the 1917 Russian Revolution, which had eliminated capitalist exploitation, despite subsequent Stalinist bureaucratic degenera-

tion. But defense of the USSR meant a determined fight against U.S. capitalism, mortal enemies of workers everywhere.

Following the Port Chicago frame-up trial verdict, the SWP wrote:

"Many young Negroes, believing this a 'war for democracy,' hoped that by joining the armed forces they could win some for themselves. Their experience has proved otherwise. All the conflicts in society are reproduced in the army and navy with intensified force.

"This trial...bids fair to become the Negro cause célèbre of the war. Resentment is piling up. The imposition of sentences will touch off movements of protest by colored workers all over the country. Their demand will be 'Free the fifty sailors'."

—*Militant*, 11 November 1944,
reproduced in *Fighting
Racism in World War II*
(Monad Press, 1980)

The SWP's revolutionary program contrasted sharply with the despicable role of the Stalinist Communist Party, which embraced the imperialist war and the Roosevelt government, and that meant openly taking the side of racists and capitalists against workers and

blacks. CP leader Benjamin Davis Jr. declared in 1945: "The U.S. general staff has on many occasions...proved that they deserve the full confidence of the Negro people.... We cannot temporarily stop the war until all questions of discrimination are ironed out" (quoted in Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, *The American Communist Party*).

The men who were framed up at Port Chicago do not want a pardon, as Joe Small told the *Chronicle* after the Pentagon "review." A pardon, he said, "means you're guilty but we forgive you. We want the decisions set aside and reimbursement of all lost pay." That is the least they deserve. It is both fitting and revealing that today the Clinton administration declares its continuity with the Jim Crow imperialist army of the Port Chicago travesty. Workers and blacks: break from the racist, capitalist Democratic Party! Only an integrated, revolutionary workers party can finish the job of black liberation the Civil War started and lead to victory the socialist revolution in the U.S. ■

Introduction...

(continued from page 3)

have inspired every reactionary ruling class—the Southern slavocracy, Hitler's Third Reich, etc.—in the context of the rightward reaction sweeping the U.S. today and effectively skewers its "scholarship."

The ideology of racial inferiority was a cornerstone of the Southern planter aristocracy's justification for chattel slavery. While the Civil War destroyed the slave system per se, the systematic oppression of blacks as a forcibly segregated race-color caste remains at the heart of American capitalism. The Civil War was the second American Revolution—it remains to be finished through a socialist revolution.

The death penalty is the spearhead of the capitalist state's policy of racist repression against blacks and other minorities. 2,800 men and women sit on death row in the U.S. While blacks make up 12 percent of the population of this country, they make up 40 percent of the death row population. Mumia Abu-Jamal, a black journalist, ex-Black Panther, MOVE supporter and one of the most articulate and compelling critics of racist state terror in the U.S., has been sitting on death row in Pennsylvania for over 12 years, framed for the 1981 killing of a Philadelphia cop.

Jamal's case is what the death penalty is all about. It represents the legacy of slavery—legal lynching—a continuation of the ideology which proclaims that black people are not human and can be killed with impu-

nity. It is expected that when the new governor of Pennsylvania takes office, one of his first acts will be to sign a warrant for Jamal's execution. Jamal's legal team is preparing to go into Pennsylvania state court to file motions for a new trial. We are in a race against time and urge all readers of *Black History* to respond to the call on page 40.

Another man who has languished in jail for a *quarter of a century* for a crime which the government's own evidence proves he did not and could not have committed is Vietnam veteran and former Black Panther Geronimo ji Jaga Pratt. Recently, Los Angeles unionists marched into the offices of District Attorney Gil Garcetti, demanding a new trial and freedom for Geronimo (see page 43).

Finally, our article, "Port Chicago 1944: U.S. Navy's Racist Frame-Up," summarizes the story of how the Navy's policies condemned black sailors to death in the biggest home-front disaster of WW II and then railroaded those survivors who protested, branding them "mutineers" and sentencing them to prison. The racist policies of the U.S. military have been well documented, including in our pamphlet, "Black Soldiers in the Jim Crow Military" (No. 4 in the *Black History* series). At Port Chicago, a blast equivalent to 5,000 tons of TNT killed 320 sailors, 202 of them black ammunition loaders. When 258 black sailors refused to load ammunition in a protest against the hellish conditions which bred the disaster and the Navy's racist Jim Crow segregation policies, 50 of the strikers were convicted of mutiny in the biggest mass

mutiny trial in U.S. history. Adding insult to injury, 50 years later, when four California Congressmen asked that the case be reviewed and the men's names cleared, the original verdict was upheld.

However, black people are not simply victims of this racist capitalist system, but rather a crucial component in the fight to sweep it away. The current abysmal absence of even a semblance of militant leadership among the black masses and the abject treachery of misleaders of the labor movement has tended to obscure the powerful impact of black struggle in shaping American society. Despite the savagery of the bipartisan war on the black poor and the working class and the deindustrialization of wide swathes of America, black workers remain a potent, indeed strategically central, force in labor and social struggles.

The only road open to real black freedom is through the building of an integrated workers party with a significant black component to fight for a workers government. A workers government which will seize the means of production from the capitalist class and organize an egalitarian socialist society, where workers of all races share in the wealth which their sweat and their sacrifices create. The conditions of life for millions in capitalist America are the most powerful argument for an integrated revolutionary Trotskyist party and program to link the multiracial working class with all the oppressed in a struggle for power. This is the road of black liberation through socialist revolution.

—February 1995

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Springfield, Illinois, January 16, 1984. Black mobilization against KKK Klan provocation on Martin Luther King holiday.

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