

SOUTH AFRICA

BY

The ripping sound of the rotting canvas of apartheid is unmistakable. And so is the sight of the oppressed straining to break free not just of the bloody clutches of white minority rule, but of the chokehold of imperialism as well. From urban ghettos to rural townships a revolutionary explosion of the black masses has spread across South Africa that is as righteous and long-time coming as it is furious. Like a wounded beast, the regime has struck back with a vicious arrogance, killing and wounding hundreds, and arresting many more during the same period.

Rebels everywhere are eyeing these upsurges eagerly. They are a taste to the oppressor of what is in store for him, not just from the crevices of the badly eroding facade of his fortress in South Africa, but more and more from the masses in tinderboxes of his making worldwide. The crisis in South Africa is deep and thoroughgoing. It is a situation ablaze with prospects for revolution, one in which people are looking for ways and means to fight, from the tools of resistance to the political and theoretical weapons needed to make revolution. And from behind this canvas you can hear the accelerating pitch of further battle in preparation. Both sides are looking around, fixing their sights, and all forces, including those running panic-stricken in between, are sizing up their strength and organisation, and testing out their leaders. Who and what road will take the masses forward to demolish the intolerable oppression of apartheid and its imperialist grip on the Azanian people...or, who can smother the fires and generate smoke to choke or confuse the masses, and above all slow down the "alarming" speed of events challenging the old order.

What South African President P.W. Botha has warned is a "dramatic escalation of the revolutionary climate" is for the proletariat and oppressed worldwide truly a fine development.

A Political Crisis Unfolds

Over the last year the Azanian masses and the apartheid authorities have faced off in a growing number of clashes, over everything from the higher cost of living to police murders and repression to the host of paltry reforms polishing the terms of white domination. But as the bullets of the state have brought down victim after scores of unarmed victims, gradually a picture has emerged of a situation much more acute than at the time of previous major rebellions against the South African government. The shifting political and economic workings of South Africa 1985 translate to deepening crisis in both arenas.

A subjugated population straining to migrate to the relatively better potential for survival in urban areas is colliding head on with the necessity and the limits of naked political control to keep those areas as white as possible. The government's resort to their forcible removal has this time around—at Crossroads in this past February—provided a glimpse of a higher level of organised struggle and determination to resist the enemy's tanks and bulldozers. The rapid sequence of events in February and March, including especially the regime's replay of the Sharpeville massacre in Uitenhage, brutally escalated a process already set in motion through the long series of back and forth incidents over the year: each funeral of victims from the last political protest became the next round of battle with the regime.



Defiance has become the order of the day for the masses. Each time they set foot in the street, they know someone, or dozens, are likely to be killed. The only thing the ruling class can hold out in return is even greater terror. Certainly these developments are fundamentally rooted in the savage weight of decades of the most bitter national oppression and imperialist domination, lifetimes of suppressed rage multiplied geometrically and thrown against the backdrop of economic crisis and a particular chain of events over the past year. It is in this light that the *political* crisis this has generated, and in short why these upsurges are posing the most serious challenge to apar-

SUMMONED REVOLUTION



Street fighting at Crossroads, late February 1985.

theid's system of rule, becomes clearer. But as we will see later, this is laced up with the crisis of the imperialist system overall, in which South Africa plays no minor political role.

The Momentum...

The South African government had already begun to launch a halfhearted campaign to clean up its image to the outside world by early and mid-1984, passing a few petty domestic reforms and making some diplomatic safaris that ruptured with the past twenty years of *official* isolation. The newly incarnated "moderates" (President Pieter Botha and Prime Minister P.W. Botha) now running the government

had been photographed shaking the hands of imperialist leaders on their seven-nation tour of Europe, although a similar tour of Africa brought few such opportunities with black heads of state.

By the time elections were announced for August 1984 for a new three-chamber parliament with one chamber each for whites, Indians, and coloureds (as people of mixed ancestry are officially classified), the word "reform" had become synonymous with provocation. In a country where 4.8 million whites rule nearly 23 million blacks, and needless to say, where the issue of the right of blacks to vote was not even on the agenda, the effort was

transparent. Black students organised a series of school boycotts and protests, which spread rapidly. The elections backfired, boycotted by more than 80% of Coloureds and Indians. During election week, hundreds of thousands of black and coloured students boycotted classes, and when the new, meaningless constitution was adopted in early September, townships in a number of states rebelled.

By August 1984 and in the following months, the social seams of South Africa were bursting in nearly all spheres of society: the schools, mines, black towns and some rural areas. The townships around the cities—particularly the industrial

areas around Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape Province—erupted daily. When the government announced increases in bus fare, water, electricity and rent, the state of Transvaal blew up, and by mid-September, 45 youth had been killed in clashes with the South African police. Forty thousand people came out to their funerals, and from there it spread to Soweto, Crossroads, Evaton and other townships. Boycotts became so widespread that the schools were practically shut down.

In mid-October, the South African army was called in. Seven thousand soldiers alongside police combed through the townships of Sebokeng, Sharpeville and Boipatong. A half dozen municipal black councillors administering the townships on behalf of the apartheid regime were killed in anger by the masses in December, and dozens of others began resigning. Their homes and businesses became targets of political rage. In some cases local administrators backed down off the rent hikes. Miners' unions which until then had confined their strikes to strictly economic issues carried out major one-day strikes in solidarity with funeral protests. The black trade unions pulled off their first action against the government, a two-day general strike in November. On the regime's side, when killing dozens, massive arrests and the banning of indoor and outdoor political meetings didn't stop the explosion from building, heavier repression was brought down.

Economic Crunch and Whips of the State

South Africa is facing its deepest economic crisis since apartheid was instituted, largely a function of the dropping price of gold and other key exports, along with reduced foreign investment over the past few years, which has required bigger loans from abroad. (See accompanying article in this issue.) In a country where some of the highest profits in the world could be made, exactly because of the apartheid system, the effects of the crisis weigh heavily on a black population already driven down, living in conditions that contrast grotesquely on every front with

those of whites. Unemployment has reached at least 30% among blacks.

Underlying this is the system of political control over the black population, based on the premise that blacks are not citizens, in fact that they have no political rights at all. This is enforced in a set of modern leg irons called pass laws, which determine where black people can work and live, and are the justification for countless "identity" checks and arrests. One of the major functions of the pass laws is to keep blacks out of the cities unless they have a permit to work there. A whole administrative structure referred to as the "homelands policy" has carved up the country into townships outside the cities and ten bantustans (see map) in the more outlying areas. Together with the pass laws, this structure, backed up by open armed terror, exists to rigorously control the black masses. Entrances and exits to townships and bantustans are guarded by police fortresses surrounded by three-metre high fences, barbed wire and sandbagged barricades.

To contain the flow of blacks to the cities and rid themselves of unwieldy urban sprawls it can't easily control, the government has driven millions of blacks out of the cities and into the barren land allocated to them in bantustans, which take up only 13% of the land, and the worst land at that. But millions of blacks keep pushing back towards the cities to try to make a living, to escape the overpopulated, drought-stricken, economically depressed reservations. Huge make-shift settlements around the cities have mushroomed despite the arrests and deportations of those caught in these "influx control" checks. Outside Durban, for example, the squatter population is estimated at 1,440,000, that is, *double* the population of the city itself. In these squatters camps, there are no sewers, and running water and electricity are scarce. Shelters are most often of corrugated metal, scraps of whatever might serve to make a wall.

Because the very existence of these squatters towns is illegal, they have become both centres of resistance and special targets by the regime. Armed with bulldozers, tear gas and

clubs, it has repeatedly demolished them, burning anything in sight that could be used to rebuild a dwelling. One resident told how he dismantles his house nearly *every day* to keep the authorities from destroying it. "If I don't take it down and they come that day, they seize it and burn it. At 3 or 4 in the afternoon, we build it again, always before nightfall."

Crossroads and the Further Upsurges

The wave of rebellion that had been picking up speed since September 1984 started to crest in the squatters town of Crossroads near Cape Town in February 1985, exactly over this explosive situation. The government had been threatening for a long time to tear down the shacks of this town (literally an intersection of two roads originally) which houses nearly 100,000 people and forcibly move them out to the bantustans and to a new township sitting on a sand dune some 45 miles from the city of Cape Town. When word came that the eviction preparations were underway, the people of Crossroads stayed home from work and school for two days to defend the camp, throwing up barricades and attacking government vehicles and anyone or thing they suspected might be approaching to move them out. In the end, police sealed off the area and more than a dozen blacks lay dead and 150 injured from the battle. The government temporarily backed down from its eviction plans.

Shortly afterwards, in the township of Katlehong, near Johannesburg, thousands fought with police after residents organised themselves to protest a rent hike. In the Orange Free State, long a stronghold of the Afrikaaners (the descendants of the original Dutch-speaking white colonisers) where blacks had tended to be isolated from the rebellions in the cities, 3,000 youth took on the South African police. But a major turning point came on March 21st, when the spectre of the Sharpeville Massacre was resurrected with bloody ferocity in the industrial town of Uitenhage, near Langa township. In 1960, police had fired on peaceful anti-passbook protests in Sharpeville, murdering some 80 people, woun-

ding hundreds and gaoling dozens of leaders.

The 25th anniversary of this massacre became a calculated reminder of what is on the line in South Africa, stunning world public opinion and raising the ante all around. Police, who had prepared for this annual event because of the recent unrest, attacked the 4,000-strong commemorative march and funeral procession for victims killed in rebellions in early March as it tried to cross into the white suburbs just outside the city of Port Elizabeth. Forty-six new corpses lay in the streets. The people struck back with whatever was at hand, some fighting with spears and machetes against the guns and whips of the highly militarised state.

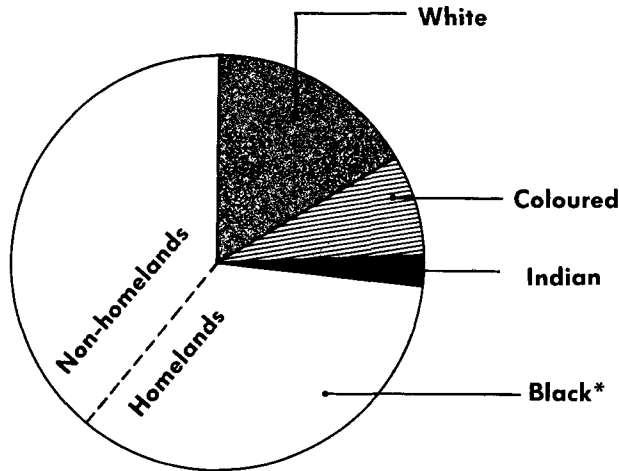
The masses reacted swiftly and bitterly as townships all over Azania blew up, concentrated around the Port Elizabeth area, but stretching to the Cape Province and to the Kimberly diamond mining area in the Orange Free State. The government responded with more repression, pulling out the army to guard white areas, ordering private doctors to refuse to treat wounded blacks so they could be arrested if they went to a hospital, conducting house to house searches and in some cases carrying out summary executions of Azanian activists on the streets. The government tried to ban the organised funeral protest on March 24th, but could not, and in the Uitenhage area, more than 35,000 marched, openly defying the armed forces.

In fact the masses stepped up the delivery of some immediate punishment of their own, striking out at targets they could get their hands on since they were unable to reach the white culprits of the ruling class directly. A number of black collaborators with the regime, particularly local administrators and black police, were killed, sometimes set on fire in the streets. This particular act has greatly alarmed those who are supposed to be doing the intimidating.

It is this picture of the masses no longer willing to accept the daily life of apartheid, breaking out in new and broader dimensions, drawing people from all sections of the black population into the struggle, that has

POPULATION BREAKDOWN IN SOUTH AFRICA

Blacks	22,803,688	72.8%
Whites	4,822,745	15.4%
Coloureds	2,803,174	9.0%
Indians	873,000	2.8%
Total 31,302,607		



***Official figures show the black population living in homelands and non-homeland areas (largely townships around the main South African cities) to be about 53% to 47%, but the actual ratio is probably closer to 35% to 65% because of the rapid shifting towards urban areas.**

provoked discussion on all sides of the potential for civil war in South Africa. For 1985, not surprisingly, has revealed a different situation and higher level of struggle than at the time of the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, or during the round of revolts in Soweto and other places in 1977 (which targetted the compulsory teaching of Afrikaans in the black schools). And for the ruling class clamping down in frenzied alarm to try to stop the movement as before, it is also no longer 1960. This greatest of political crises yet furiously staring at them is linked closely with the apartheid regime's political role in relation to the larger imperialist interests they are a pillar for, imperialists whose crisis worldwide is spinning towards a much bigger political confrontation that they also must prepare for—world war with their Soviet social-imperialist rivals. It is worth taking a closer look at South Africa's importance to Western imperialism to see why reining in this political instability is as crucial as it is difficult.

Apartheid's Strategic Role

The history of South Africa is a history of African struggle against foreign domination and national oppression, a reflection of its continuous occupation for centuries by a series of invading colonialist fortune seekers, starting with the Dutch settlers and continuing under British colonial rule. In other African countries, the colonial empires have evolved into some form of neo-colonialism to pursue the same basic social relations. The historical development of South Africa as a settler state with a substantial white population has been somewhat different. Although different classes have developed to some degree among each of the three officially defined "races," the country's defining feature is white rule, in which the white population as a whole makes up a social base (and provides the gunmen) for the indirect domination of the country by imperialism, especially British and U.S. interests. The elaborate and insane system of racial classification concocted in order to

justify and disguise this situation defines Africans as blacks in order to bolster the notion that the descendants of the white colonisers are equally African and thus have an equal claim to this piece of Africa, as though the fact that white settler rule has lasted a long time somehow changes its character.

The national oppression of the vast majority of the population is the source of the privileged position of the whites, of the tremendous super-profits extracted from Azania's workers which has been an important source of sustenance for the imperialist system worldwide, and of the misery of the vast masses of the Azanian people whether they labour in the mines and factories or starve slowly in the countryside while white farmers monopolise the best land.

Thus apartheid is the invention of the *modern* slavemaster, refined by a host of western imperialist architects as recently as the mid-1900s, who while easily qualifying as social neanderthals in most every respect, were quite conscious that their barbaric laws backed up by an armed white minority were simply the most efficacious route to superexploitation. That is to say, they are not merely blind racists uninitiated to the ways of the civilised world: their system of apartheid is a feature and a prop of their imperialist civilisation, serving in particular to maintain their position of domination within it. Its logic is their logic.

It is principally foreign capital that has developed the South African economy and financed apartheid's highly militarised repressive apparatus and all of its government bodies, from the Army, Navy and Air Force to its costly state administration. Its police and torture specialists were trained by the best U.S. and Israeli academies, and its arsenal has been stocked with the most modern weapons from the latest arms shows in France, West Germany, the U.S. and around the imperialist world.

South Africa represents not just abundant profits for the imperialist countries which have considerable trade dealings there or invest in its private sector (mainly banking, mining and manufacturing) and state corporations (arms industry, iron and steel, electricity and nuclear

power, chemicals, transportation, oil and coal).

Beyond the extremely lucrative economic holdings that the apartheid system has ensured, there are larger interests and bigger plans for the Western imperialist bloc at stake. In the face of the biggest economic crisis in South Africa in 50 years, and the social instability a system like apartheid inevitably engenders, the compulsion to pursue what has become risky business in South Africa only highlights the greater imperative: the strategic position and the role this client state plays in the deadly contention between imperialist blocs East and West.

As preparations towards world war escalate, this southern flank has indeed a crucial part in them, from several angles. The list of industries pumped by foreign investment along with the rich supply of key resources and minerals figure heavily in this war machine. South Africa is basically the only place the Western bloc can extract a number of these minerals necessary for waging both conventional and nuclear war. In addition, control of the shipping lanes around the Cape of Good Hope, where South Africa strategically sits, means control of supplies and materiel to the surrounding states in the southern African peninsula. This is already a major question since the Soviet Union has control of Angola, with Cuban troops stationed there, as well as significant influence in Mozambique. Further, nearly 80% of oil and 70% of raw materials used by NATO countries of Western Europe pass through these sea lanes. The other route from the Middle Eastern oil fields to Western Europe, the highly vulnerable Suez Canal, is incapable of handling larger supertankers.

In this situation, South Africa has willingly complied with its Western-imperialist assigned responsibilities. For instance, although South Africa has no public agreements with NATO, the port facilities at its Simonstown naval base—originally constructed by the British before World War II and totally renovated in 1975 to become one of the most advanced facilities in the southern hemisphere—are available, when needed, to "any country in the free

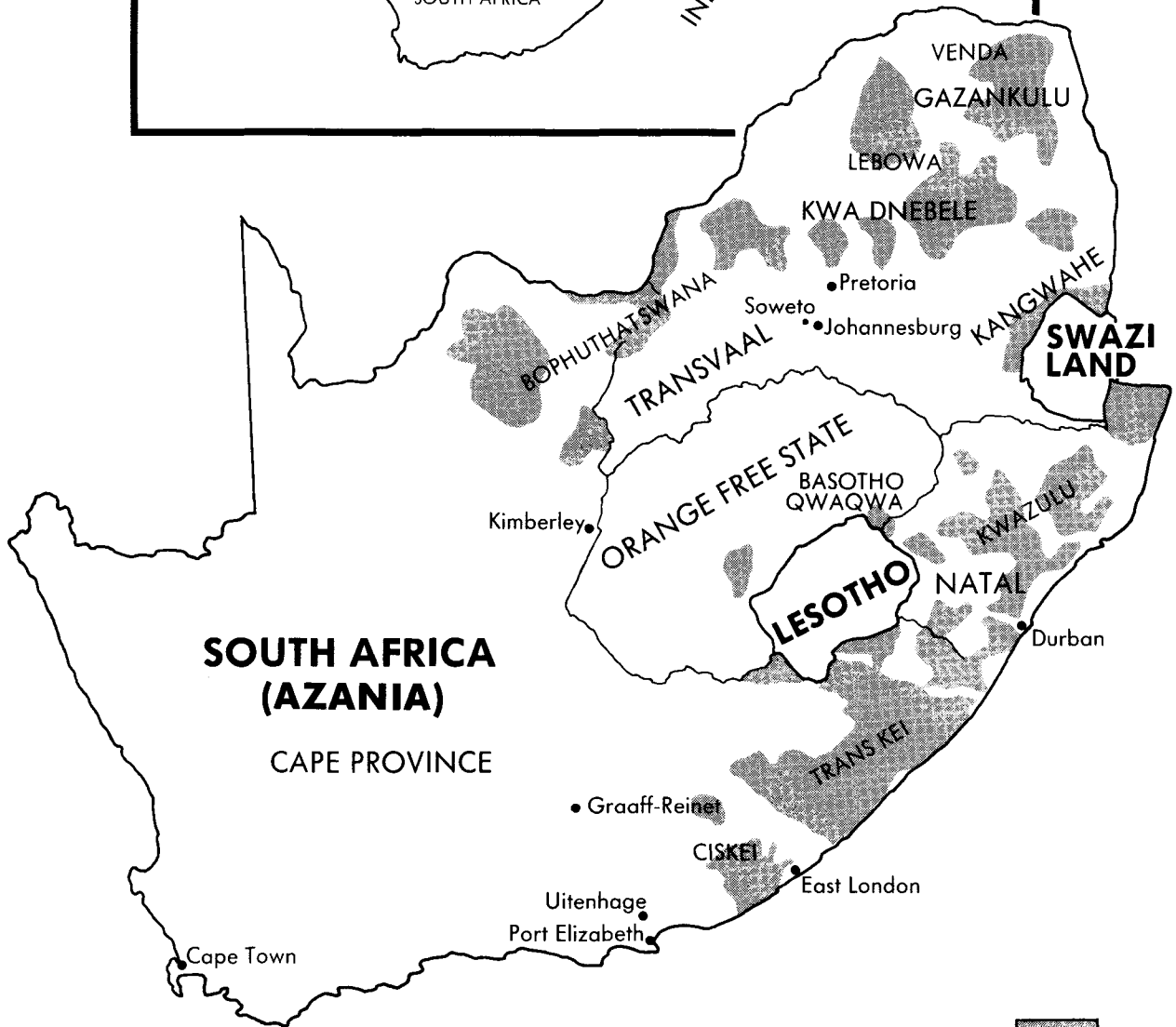
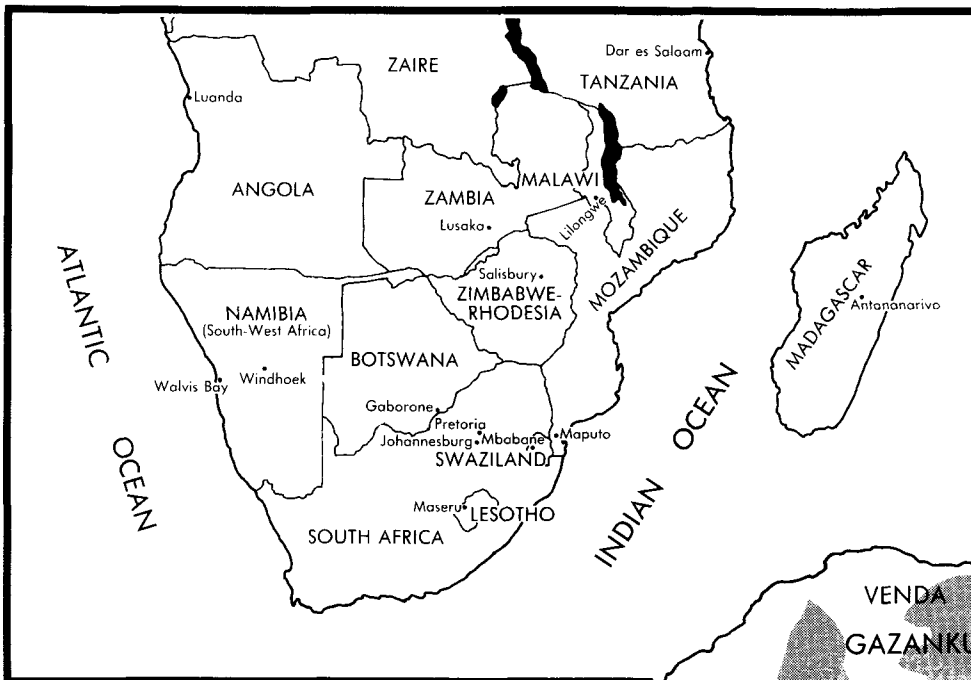
world," as Botha recently put it. The intelligence complex at Silvermine is also being modernised and equipped to monitor and control the sea and airspace from the South Pole to the Tropic of Cancer. It will have the capacity to carry out surveillance of more than 50 countries.

The Familiar Clash of East and West To describe South Africa as a *regional* gendarme captures only one of its military duties. It is important to the whole Western-bloc strategy of waging and winning nuclear war. Plans have long been (secretly) underway to integrate it into the design and strategy of the NATO alliance, through the creation of a South Atlantic Treaty Organisation (SATO) along with Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia and Brazil.

This role for South Africa has sharpened up since the mid-1970s when the Soviet Union gained a solid foothold in Angola and important influence in Mozambique after Portuguese colonialism limped out of Africa in the period when the U.S. was still feeling the effects of its crushing defeat in Vietnam. Shortly afterwards, Ethiopia fell to Soviet control as well. In each of these countries, the reins of power were taken up by bourgeois forces which degenerated into neo-colonial formations, failing to break economically with Western imperialism while to a greater or lesser degree falling under the political and military sway of the Soviet bloc as well. In this period the Soviets also gained important influence in the liberation struggle in Namibia (South-West Africa), which is occupied by neighboring South Africa.

Although by any stretch of the (imperialist) imagination South Africa is worth coveting in the global conflict shaping up, Soviet jockeying with the U.S. so far has been centred primarily on Mozambique, Namibia and Angola. The U.S. and South Africa have extensive ties with the economies of these countries, but the Soviets have been able to acquire military and political power that has enabled them to use these countries as springboards for extensive manoeuvring.

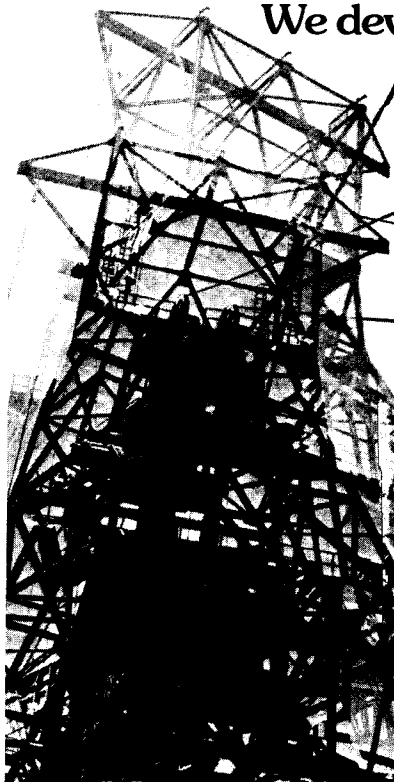
Inter-imperialist rivalry heated up




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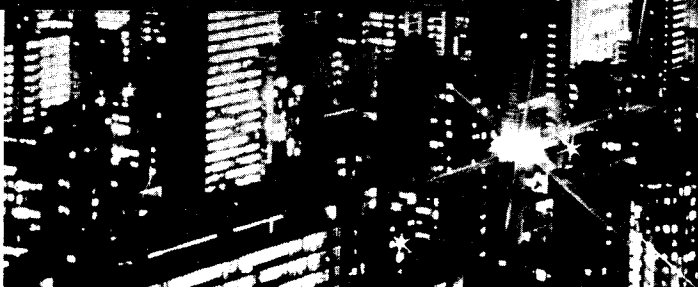
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in southern Africa with the invasion of Angola by South Africa in 1981, and the subsequent period of offensive by the U.S. which needed to pull together an alliance between the apartheid government and various pro-U.S. neocolonies in the region. A series of gangster diplomatic alliances forced on South Africa's neighbors were in turn used to bolster the apartheid regime's legitimacy. This is partially what lay behind the U.S.-instigated accords in Lusaka, Zambia between South Africa and Angola in February, 1984 and the Nkomati agreement between South Africa and Mozambique one month later.

Under the terms of these agreements South Africa was to implement a ceasefire with the Angolan government and gradually withdraw its forces from Angola. In Mozambique, it was to stop its support for right-wing guerrillas attacking Samora Machel's FRELIMO government, while increasing its economic "aid" to that country, including the enlargement of Mozambique's ports to handle the rising volume of South African imports. In return, the pro-Soviet Angolan ruling party, the MPLA (and



Africa to discuss "Meaningful Reform of Apartheid Today."

Cubans) agreed to stop the Namibian guerrillas of SWAPO (South West African Peoples Organisation) from operating out of neighbouring Angola. Mozambique pledged to cut off aid and sanctuary to the pro-Soviet African National Congress (ANC), a South African organisation operating partly out of Mozambique's territory.

These accords also definitely put the Soviets on the defensive and along with the heightening of contradictions internationally added to the internal destabilisation within already crisis-ridden Mozambique and Angola, in fact jeopardising the Soviets' position in the former.

The social-imperialists were not giving up, however. While MPLA troops were sent to make an ugly spectacle of themselves patrolling the country's southern border jointly with South African troops, they remained adamant about the continued presence of 25,000 Cuban combat troops in Angola until South Africa gives up its occupation of Namibia. These Cuban troops are supposedly to guarantee Angola's security against South Africa, yet have actively avoided directly engaging the South African army units

which have repeatedly raided Angolan territory.

Although some of the guerrilla groups bought and sold in these deals may not have liked it, they could not object too strenuously since they have staked their own political futures on that of the two imperialist blocs on a world scale. As for the black regimes which signed these accords as well as other "frontline" states which have made similar arrangements with South Africa, it seems that like the Soviets themselves they are not capable of envisioning and waging a war to the death against the apartheid regime. Instead they use their need to build up their own forces as an excuse for strategic capitulation to South Africa's continued existence, which is the only possible price for any long-term peaceful coexistence between the black "frontline" regimes and South Africa.

This suits the Soviet strategy in the area rather well, since its orientation at the moment is not to mount a decisive challenge to U.S.-bloc control of the region, through agreements or through force of arms, but to gain influence there precisely on the basis of their ability to control

the revolutionary masses through pro-Soviet organisations such as ANC and SWAPO which the Soviets have helped build up. They are pushing for some sort of "historic compromise" power-sharing agreement in Namibia while digging in and holding onto what they've got in the other countries, including maintaining the ANC as a sort of a pro-Soviet outpost (and bargaining chip) behind South African lines. Even if this requires some concessions, it is a decision based on viewing the situation from their strategic position in the region as a whole, not just in individual countries. For the bottom line is, even if they can't replace the U.S. as the dominant imperialist power in the region, they must position themselves so as to be able to significantly interfere with their rivals' ability to use South Africa (and eventually the region) as a giant and key military headquarters for waging world war, while manoeuvring to some day be in a position to seize control of the region as a result of an overall change in the balance of forces in the world.

Hardly shocking anyone, the South African government never even pretended to withdraw its forces from Angola, while continuing to provide arms and help step up the work of its puppet guerrillas in Mozambique. But on April 15th, 1985, more than a year after extracting these agreements from Angola, they once again announced their intention to pull out of Angola, openly seeking the withdrawal of Cuban troops from that country in return.

While South Africa may be forced to retreat from Angola during this period of internal upheaval and related international pressures on South Africa's imperialist mentors, any such withdrawal can only be temporary. South Africa itself declined to "rule out a re-occupation of Angolan territory." The bombing raids into Botswana and Lesotho shortly afterwards, supposedly to rout out ANC strongholds there, illustrate their intentions clearly.

Alternatives : Of Limp Carrots and Stouter Sticks

The apartheid regime and the bourgeoisies of the Western bloc which



Sharpeville, 1985.

stand behind it (those “backstage diplomats,” as the British press likes to call them) are in very deep trouble in South Africa. The heat being generated by the masses in South Africa, which has in turn inspired militant protest in the imperialist countries, has thrust an uncomfortable international spotlight on the ugly imperialist plantation down in southern Africa. While Botha and Company alternately wince from this bright light and thumb their noses, the Western imperialist bourgeoisies behind them can be seen in small huddles throughout the hemisphere racking their brains, consulting their counterinsurgency specialists and scanning their computer systems for a solution to this disturbing turn of events.

The sickening chorus of adjectives emanating from these imperialist ruling circles abroad in shrill harmony has undoubtedly already converted many to the anti-apartheid movements. Tragic ! shudders British Prime Minister Maggie Thatcher...Abhorrent ! shrieks U.S. Secretary of State George Schultz...Long live the struggle ! cries French “Socialist” Prime Minister Laurent Fabius. But beyond this expected demagogic display of shock over the injustices suddenly discovered “down there,” the main password put into circulation by the imperialists is *reform*.

While this is mainly a response to the upsurges of the Azanian people, the renewed support for the Azanian revolutionary struggle abroad, particularly in the U.S. as well as throughout the world, is also casting an accusing light on their own direct role in keeping apartheid afloat.

Thus the sudden clamour for “overdue, meaningful reforms” from the Western bourgeoisies, themselves up to their armpits in complicity and blood, are to divert the spotlight back to southern Africa. The short-lived flurry of threats coming from the imperialist capitals of levying economic sanctions “to bring Pretoria out of the Stone Age,” etc. never had any such aim. Of course the Western imperialists could cripple South Africa virtually overnight, if they wanted to violate their own interests at the same time. If South Africa were in the Eastern bloc, well then the world might witness a serious embargo, freezing diplomatic ties, and so on until the proper response came. Instead, the British press, for instance, argues that “the real pressure to change is to be made in the sports arena, right on the rugby field where it really hurts....”

To accommodate their partners’ demands for a facelift, the Botha government is trying, for the moment, to change its image to the outside world. They have admitted

to a few “excesses” by their police and proposed some legislative reforms. On the same day it announced the “intended” withdrawal of troops from Angola, the regime threw out the laws forbidding interracial marriage in South Africa. This sudden overturning of the notorious “Immorality Acts” would send the average observer of South Africa’s obscene behavior on every front into hysterics, if it weren’t for the sobering and degrading premise that underlies apartheid : the inequality of the “races.” Hypocrisy doesn’t get close to describing the perverse logic behind this : the courts have dropped a few pending “criminal” cases against people whose marriages have crossed the forbidden colour bar. But the bars themselves still stand. Internal Affairs Minister F.W. deKlerk reassured parliament that “facilities for the different races and residential areas would remain segregated.”

Thatcher and Reagan began applauding these “hopeful signs.” That is the point, after all. The rapid plastic surgery being performed on apartheid is of course precisely to enable the regime to keep things running just the way they are, to cement the Western alliance further, and get on with business as usual.

As ugly as it is, the sight of the South African ruling class dressed only in machine guns and the smal-



Botha's "Law and Order."

lest of fig leaves is both highly instructive and a tremendous spur to further exposure and revolt for the masses. It is in this light that the scrambling has begun in earnest for qualified demagogues, turncoats and sleeping pill vendors.

Job Openings in the Black Opposition

"The dilemma for the Government is acute, to say the least," wrote the London *Financial Times*. "Out there lies a great majority, hungry for meaningful reform which will improve their lives. But how can it find black leaders with real authority to accompany it along the path of reform without losing control of the speed and direction of change and without provoking a possibly violent white reaction?...Indeed, do such black leaders exist, or have they already been frightened off by the fate of black councillors and others who have become victims of violence against so-called 'sell-outs'?"

A rhetorical question, but as in any complex heightening of social contradictions, forces step forward to represent the interests of every class, and there are always those who offer peaceful routes ensuring nothing fundamental will change when conditions are ripening and the political mood is volatile.

One such person much in the news and being jetted around to different

banquet tables is the Anglican bishop of Johannesburg, Desmond Tutu, who comes from the small black middle class forces the South African government has been halfheartedly building up.

Tutu was recently awarded the Nobel Western imperialist peace prize for his continued appeals for non-violence, patience and faith on the part of the Azanian masses. Like most of the forces of the bourgeois opposition, he has embraced the "one-man, one vote" formulation as a way to reform apartheid instead of violently overthrowing it. "We must not proceed too rapidly," Tutu has declared, or "the white minority might lose its identity." ! Perhaps white passbooks could do the trick?

In August 1983 Tutu and the head of the Dutch Reform Church, Reverend Allan Boesak, founded the bourgeois opposition alliance called the United Democratic Front (UDF). When the U.S. (as if to underscore their political crisis in South Africa) dispatched none other than the bourgeois liberal senator Teddy Kennedy in December 1984, it was Tutu and Boesak who officially invited him. One of the main reasons for the Kennedy visit was to bolster forces within the UDF and its social base in general (which also includes some petit bourgeois whites, coloured and Indian groups, a long list of perso-

nalities in the clergy and business leaders such as Harry Oppenheimer, a "liberal" capitalist in his own right).

The abysmal failure of Kennedy's crucial departure speech in Soweto—where hundreds of demonstrators chanted "Reject Kennedy, Reject Imperialism," literally driving him out of the country—also dampened Kennedy's message that there are really strong allies in Washington that will help straighten out apartheid. This series of actions was organised by the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO), which has been active in the current upsurges.

Some within the bourgeoisie prefer less "radical" figures, and promote instead Chief Buthelezi of the Zulus, who is head of the one-million strong *Inkatha* organisation in Kwazulu Homeland. The London *Financial Times* characterised him as a "fierce but reasoned critic of apartheid," who "recognises white fears of being swamped by a one-man, one-vote system, and advocates a form of federalism...with built-in guarantees for minorities, including the white minority." (As if whites have any legitimate interests at all as whites.) His refusal to declare Kwazulu an "independent" bantustan, and thus deprive six million people of their South African citizenship, has won him some credibility among the masses, though he is at the same time hated for his role in organising migrant workers to attack the school boycotts back in 1977 in Soweto.

The ANC

Another force, the African National Congress, operates under the highly inaccurate title of national liberation organisation granted it by the Organisation of African Unity. Although long dependent on Soviet support and promotion, the ANC has also become somewhat attractive to some Western imperialist liberals looking for cosmetic experts. Kennedy, for example, met with ANC president Oliver Tambo in Lusaka, Zambia after being taunted out of South Africa.

Formed back in 1912 as a reformist vehicle to improve blacks' condition within the structure of existing

society, since the mid-1950s the ANC has been run by the largely white and thoroughly revisionist South African Communist Party (SACP), which has long denied that Azania needed national liberation and instead sought to insure some continued role for whites as whites in South Africa. The ANC and the SACP crystallised their non-violent, non-revolutionary programme in a document called the Freedom Charter in 1955, still the heart of their political line. The stated goals of this "charterism," as it's referred to by Azanian revolutionaries today, are the right to vote for blacks and the nationalisation of minerals and key sectors of the economy "by the people," with the strategic outlook that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white."

The ANC formed an armed wing in 1961 after it was banned in the wake of the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960. Its armed efforts over the past 20 years have been "marked by restraint," as a very generous writer for the unofficial U.S. State Department magazine *Foreign Affairs* described it. The ANC has limited its "armed struggle" to sporadic, mainly individual acts of sabotage against buildings, railways and power lines. The ANC even prides itself on being responsible for a total of only 22 casualties, including hardly any whites, in a five-year period until early 1983, which saw a limited ANC offensive in retaliation for South African government raids against ANC houses in Maseru, Lesotho. This is testimony to the fact that the ANC does not seek to develop the armed struggle of the Azanian masses themselves to seize political power, and does not seek step by step confrontations with the reactionary armed forces to build up the people's armed forces, but only employs violence to pressure the apartheid regime to negotiate. Even at this recent height of its military activity, the ANC's military line has continued to reflect its counterrevolutionary political goals.

From 1965 until fairly recently the ANC virtually ceased to exist outside of Soviet promotional activities and various diplomatic circles. During this period it was overshadowed by

a group of revolutionary nationalists who had split off from ANC back in 1959. In opposition to the reformism of the Freedom Charter, this organisation, called the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), called for liberation of the Azanian nation. It denounced the Soviet Union and was associated with then-revolutionary China.

While accepting Chinese revolutionary military aid, and for a time waging struggle independent of both imperialist blocs, the PAC never took up Mao's political and ideological line and thus proved incapable of providing consistent leadership to Azania's national and democratic revolution. It also seems to have been unable to surmount a series of splits that took place in the 1970s, although some forces which came out of the PAC were later very active in the Black Consciousness Movement and the Soweto revolts when the murder of BCM leader Steve Biko became a symbol carrying forward the struggle.

Revolution is Summoning South Africa

The structures of apartheid are being strained everywhere, and in a few places, the rotting floor boards are being punched through. The revolutionary situation that exists in South Africa is more apparent than ever today. Forces on all sides with various political lines and interests know it and are responding accordingly.

White rule is being shaken. Yet the only way for South Africa to continue to play its strategic and economic role for Western imperialism is for white minority rule to stay right where it is and be reinforced. The U.S. and British bourgeoisies as much as admit this outright. The reform train has no tracks; it's going nowhere because it has nowhere to go. More white minority rule means more repression. For the bourgeoisies, it means blood will run, the blood of the masses.

Another element in South Africa's calculations is the reaction of its white social base, which is a factor not totally under its control. However, this is generally used to pretend the government is somewhere to the "left" of its untamed nazi cowboys

at large in South Africa, as in the incredible announcement in June by the white "extreme right" that it intended to form its own separate "White Republic" (a white republic within a white republic?) based in the city of Orange. A hardly veiled threat by the South African rulers to any overzealous reformers that too much too fast might indeed bring worse violence.

This does not cut away from the fact that the ruling class is very worried and quite aware of the social dynamite it is piling up under it. From the mouths of the British press: "It is impossible to ignore the increasing radicalisation of township blacks, and especially students, trade unionists and the young. Religion and black nationalism may be the dominant ideological strands in black politics, but the Marxist ideas of socialism and Lenin's ideas of the role of the organised *avant-garde* are falling on fertile ground among the young."

This touches the heart of the matter. For the bastion of reaction, of imperialist domination and national oppression in South Africa, must be shattered—now, or later. And if that will become possible has a lot to do with whether a revolutionary party wielding Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought is fought for. South Africa represents an important flank in the proletariat's worldwide advance, and a revolutionary breakthrough there would certainly quicken the pace of struggle around the world, standing as a tremendous impetus and inspiration to the oppressed to wage similar warfare. No wafers or preachers will bring this about. Revolutionary leadership is at the top of the list on the summons being issued today in South Africa. □