

Disease, Bigotry and Imperialist Hypocrisy

South Africa Torn by AIDS Crisis

The catastrophic impact of the AIDS pandemic ravaging South Africa was highlighted in early December when former African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela joined with F. W. De Klerk, the last president of the former apartheid regime, in launching a national "HIV/AIDS Day" at a Johannesburg cathedral service on December 5. With grotesque cynicism, De Klerk, who presided over a reign of terror against South Africa's black majority and whose National Party supported the Nazis in World War II, compared the AIDS scourge to the Nazi Holocaust of the Jews. For his part, Mandela appealed for compassion for the four million South Africans infected with HIV, implicitly rebuking his successor and current ANC president, Thabo Mbeki. Mbeki's anti-scientific diatribes have encouraged bigoted attacks on people with AIDS and provoked a furor at an international conference on AIDS that met in Durban last July.

Mbeki's ignorant statements challenging scientific evidence that HIV causes AIDS are aimed in large part at deflecting criticism over the refusal of his "tripartite alliance" government—which includes the Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)—to allocate medical resources to combat the epidemic. Seizing on this, the National Party's racist successor, the Democratic Alliance, campaigned for December 5 nationwide municipal elections on a promise of distributing anti-HIV drugs to pregnant women who have AIDS and scored unexpected gains, including among black voters. Meanwhile, the Western imperialists who hypocritically denounce Mbeki refuse to lift a finger to provide medical aid to the impoverished masses of sub-Saharan Africa. Last year, the Clinton administration threatened sanctions against South Africa for trying to buy AIDS medication at international prices lower than those set by the extortionate pharmaceutical monopolies. And Tony Blair's Labour government in Britain, home to the Glaxo Wellcome drug giant, continues to oppose any such effort by South Africa.

We publish below in edited form a talk given in Johannesburg on 18 October



Protesters outside International AIDS Conference in Durban in July demand access to medication. Extortionate Western drug companies, bigotry fanned by local capitalist regimes have exacerbated AIDS pandemic ravaging sub-Saharan Africa. Below: Southern African coffin makers.

2000 by comrade Karen Cole of Spartacist South Africa.

The AIDS pandemic that has reached every country on earth touches on a range of social issues. It exposes the most horrible, murderous aspects of capitalism in its death agony. And it underlines the need for international socialist revolution.

Diseases and infection will never completely go away. New diseases will develop: it's just an aspect of nature that microbes and parasites change, mutate and evolve to find an ecological niche in

human beings and other animals. It's possible that the AIDS virus will elude modern medical technology at its current state. The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution couldn't do anything immediately about the worldwide influenza pandemic of 1918. Three million people also died of typhus in the Soviet Union between 1917 and 1923. Nevertheless, the Bolshevik Revolution for the first time in history opened the road to get rid of oppression, exploitation and inequality that stand in the way of applying rational approaches to disease research and control and

Kim Ludbrook



opened the way for massive public health programmes under the direction of a workers state.

The gains of the Russian Revolution could only hint at what a worldwide planned economy could do. The *ABCs of Communism*, which some of you have read, a book used by the Bolsheviks to train workers in literacy and the principles of communism, significantly devotes its final chapter to public health care. It makes the point that the new dictatorship of the proletariat immediately implemented hygienic techniques for public communal kitchens and training for health care workers to control cholera and typhus. They nationalised all private hospitals, opening them to the masses for the first time.

The Bolshevik Party's programme was committed to wiping out age-old oppression and elevating Russia out of poverty and ignorance. The Bolsheviks understood that ultimate success required the extension of the revolution to the wealthy and advanced, industrialised capitalist countries. You can't fight cholera if you don't have the material resources to build river dams and water purification plants. The International Communist League fights for new October Revolutions in the centres of imperialism in America, Europe and Japan as well as in the "Third World." In South Africa, that means we fight for a black-centred workers government that would be centrally based on the black majority while guaranteeing full rights for the "coloured" [mixed-race], Indian and Asian populations and those whites who accept the rule of black workers.

Based on the experience of the Russian Revolution and the lessons of the aborted Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, Leon Trotsky and the International Left Opposition taught that the only way forward for the oppressed masses of the economically backward countries was the proletariat seizing power at the head of all the oppressed, linked through its revolutionary leadership to the proletariat in the advanced countries. This is the programme of permanent revolution. National liberation and all the basic democratic rights achieved in the advanced industrial countries in previous centuries are only realisable through the dictatorship of the proletariat and international socialist revolution.

The AIDS Epidemic and Capitalist Oppression

We are historical materialists and scientific socialists. Class struggle is the motor
continued on page 6



Witchhunt Against Anti-Zionist Protesters in Berkeley

OAKLAND—A furor against leftist protesters has been whipped up in the wake of a November 28 Berkeley demonstration against former Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Some 300 protesters showed up when Netanyahu was scheduled to deliver a lecture at a theater near the UC Berkeley campus. Netanyahu's cancellation—announced at the time the event was scheduled to start—became the signal for a storm of accusations that the demonstrators had suppressed Netanyahu's "free speech." The same line was taken up by the Berkeley mayor and all the media, from the UC Berkeley *Daily Californian* to the *Oakland Tribune* and the Hearst-owned *San Francisco Chronicle*, whose 12 December editorial typically declared that "about 200 demonstrators blocked" Netanyahu "from speaking at the Berkeley Community Theatre."

The demonstration, called by groups such as the International Action Center (associated with Workers World Party), the Middle East Children's Alliance and the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination



Young Spartacus

November 28: Spartacist/SYC contingent at UC Berkeley rally against former Israeli prime minister Netanyahu.

Committee, was characterized by an hour of almost complete silence at the main rally site, with candles in abundance. It was dominated politically by the mainstream secular Palestinian nationalists under the rally's two main slogans:

"Israeli Repression Made in the USA" and "Defend the Palestinians." A small but vocal Spartacist contingent near the main rally point was for a time the only organized presence, attracting attention from demonstrators with our bullhoring and chants, some of which were joined in by other protesters.

The charge that these largely middle-aged, peaceable (and largely pacifist) protesters prevented some one thousand ticket-holders, protected by upwards of a hundred well-armed Berkeley cops, from attending the lecture is clearly absurd. This ridiculous quality was captured by the emanations of the Berkeley Conservative Foundation (the right-wing junior McCarthyites on campus), whose rag, the *California Patriot*, raved breathlessly (and inaccurately): "Then without warning, three women, who according to the Daily Cal wanted to make sure Netanyahu didn't speak, broke the police barrier [yellow plastic tape] and stormed the theater."

One of these three intrepid women, Barbara Lubin of the Middle East Children's Alliance, noted in an "Open Forum" piece in the *Chronicle* (18 December): "We demonstrators did not intend to, nor expect to, prevent the speech.... We hoped to make Netanyahu feel unwelcome." She concluded that "what is really going on is not an effort to preserve free speech but an attempt to stifle the free speech of anyone who would criticize Israel."

The orchestrated furor stinks of a setup. There is no reason to believe Netanyahu ever intended to show up for the Berkeley talk. In fact, as various news reports admitted, it was Netanyahu who chose to cancel his appearance without ever arriving at the venue. That decision—and his subsequent cancellation of two other Bay Area appearances in San Mateo and Marin—undoubtedly had to do with Netanyahu's political ambitions in the Israeli elections, which were announced the same day as the scheduled

Berkeley talk. In the words of San Mateo police commenting on the cancellation, there were "events in the Middle East requiring Mr. Netanyahu's attention" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 30 November). Lecture organizers, police and media then blamed the cancellations on fabricated threats of "severe violence" in order to witchhunt protesters.

Appearing alongside the *Chronicle's* editorial was a letter from former activists in the 1960s Berkeley "Free Speech Movement," such as Bettina Aptheker, attacking the anti-Netanyahu protesters on the same hypocritical grounds. It is scandalous that those who claim to oppose the Zionist oppression of the Palestinians have lent themselves to this "free speech" frame-up of those whose only "crime" is to express outrage against the Zionist butchers. It is a measure of accommodation to this country's racist capitalist order that those who once opposed the murderous U.S. imperialists' dirty colonial war in Vietnam now hasten to join the current ideological assault on those who oppose war criminals backed by these same U.S. rulers.

We reprint below a letter sent by the Bay Area Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Club to the *San Francisco Chronicle*. A similar letter was submitted to the *Oakland Tribune*. Neither has been published to date.

* * *

To the Editor:

Your 12 December editorial ("Berkeley Violates Its Legacy") casts the November 28 Berkeley protest against former Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu as an attack on "free speech." This falsehood is a frame-up of those who express outrage at this war criminal and the bloody slaughter of Palestinians by the Zionist state of Israel, which has brutally murdered nearly 300 men, women and children since September—a slaughter Netanyahu aspires once again to personally conduct. The current head of Netanyahu's Likud party and architect of the 1982 slaughter of 2,000 defenseless Palestinians in Lebanon, Ariel Sharon, set off the current Zionist bloodletting with his deliberate provocation in strutting through the Haram al-Sharif in Arab East Jerusalem on September 28.

The orchestrated outcry over "free speech" instantly set in motion following the Berkeley protest amounts to a frame-up of people exercising their constitutional right to protest a notorious butcher. Netanyahu and his backers themselves have no interest in the "free speech" of their opponents. Rather they answer opposition to their bloody Zionist policies with the terror tactics of the Mossad and Shin Beth secret police and Israeli army assassins.

We Marxists of the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Club joined the November 28 demonstration as part of our resolute defense of the Palestinian Arab population against the brutal Zionist state of Israel, whose imperialist sponsors and financiers are the equally tainted capitalist rulers of the U.S.

Diana Coleman
for the Spartacist League
Laura Davis
for the Spartacus Youth Club



TROTSKY

Socialism and the Human Condition

While a cure for AIDS may currently be beyond the scope of today's scientific knowledge and technological means, the crisis ravaging southern Africa in particular is intensified by the profit-gouging of drug companies and the all-sided bigotry of capitalist society. As Polish Marxist Isaac Deutscher pointed out in a 1966 speech, communists fight for a society which roots out poverty, ignorance and degradation,

creating the conditions for a huge leap forward in the human condition. Such a society can only be achieved through world proletarian revolution, putting technology and economy in the service of humanity through socialist planning.

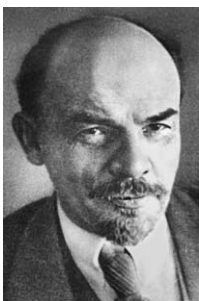
Man is the creature of nature, but more particularly of that part of nature which, as human society, distinguishes itself from nature and partly opposes itself to it. Whatever the biological basis of our being, social conditions play the decisive part in shaping our character—even the biological factors refract themselves through, and are partly transformed by, our social personality. To some extent man's nature, including his instincts, has so far been submerged and distorted by his social conditions, and only when these conditions lose their oppressive and distorting quality may we be able to take a clearer and more scientific view than we have had so far of the various biological and social elements in man's nature....

We do not maintain that socialism is going to solve all predicaments of the human race. We are struggling in the first instance with the predicaments that are of man's making and that man can resolve. May I remind you that Trotsky, for instance, speaks of three basic tragedies—hunger, sex, and death—besetting man. Hunger is the enemy that Marxism and the modern labor movement have taken on. In doing so they have naturally been inclined to ignore or belittle man's other predicaments. But is it not true that hunger or, more broadly, social inequality and oppression, have hugely complicated and intensified for innumerable human beings the torments of sex and death as well?

In fighting against social inequality and oppression we fight also for the mitigation of those blows that nature inflicts on us....

Yes, socialist man will still be pursued by sex and death; but we are convinced that he will be better equipped than we are to cope even with these.

—Isaac Deutscher, "On Socialist Man" (1966), printed in *Marxism in Our Time* (1971)



LENIN

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5 January 2001

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**No UN Imperialist Intervention!
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Wednesday, January 17, 7 p.m.
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LOS ANGELES

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Wednesday, January 17, 7 p.m.
U of T, International Student Centre
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TORONTO

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Hundreds Protest Klan Provocation in Skokie

CHICAGO—Over 500 people turned out in Skokie, Illinois on December 16 to protest a provocation by 20 Klansmen, many wearing hoods and robes and carrying Confederate flags, at the Cook County Courthouse. Defying the city fathers' urgings to "ignore the Klan" and the mobilization of over 200 cops and sheriff's deputies—including horseback patrols, canine units and SWAT teams—protesters forced the Klan lynchers to pack up early. Wisconsin "Grand Dragon" Michael McQueeney and his followers were pelted with snowballs and one of the racist skinheads who tried to break into the anti-Klan demonstration was acquainted with the pavement.

The Klansmen were escorted away by the cops, a police spokesman explaining, "We were responsible for their safety." Then the cops rampaged against the protesters. In all, more than 15 were arrested. George Ian Fritz and Corey Lovell were held all weekend and required to post \$5,000 bond apiece on bogus felony "mob action" charges. In a protest letter to Cook County State's Attorney Richard Devine, the Partisan Defense Committee demanded: *Hands off the anti-Klan protesters! Drop all the charges!*

The KKK cynically claimed that they were rallying in "solidarity with the Palestinians." A December 15 statement issued by the Arab American Action Network eloquently denounced the Klan's



Black/Chicago Sun-Times

KKK lynchers protected by wall of cops at Cook County Courthouse in Skokie, December 16.

ous rampage against Jews, blacks and Asians in Illinois and Indiana only 18 months ago by "World Church of the Creator" white-supremacist Benjamin Smith, who killed two people and wounded at least three others. On December 16, Spartacist League supporters carried signs reading "We Will Not Forget!" beneath a photo of Ricky Byrdsong, the black Northwestern University basketball coach shot dead by Smith on a Skokie street.

Sanitation workers in Skokie's Public Works department, including a couple of

December 2000) outrageously equated the Klan with those who came out to stop it, writing that "the worst of humanity came out—on both sides"! North Shore liberals like Democratic Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky, backed by the rabbis, preachers and the Zionist Anti-Defamation League, sought to divert any protest into a "Peace and Harmony" rally *the day after* the fascist provocation.

The reformist leftists who came out to protest the KKK on December 16 reject a perspective based on mobilizing the multiracial working class independent of



WV Photos

Spartacist contingent at Skokie anti-Klan protest warned: "Police Pens Are a Trap!" PL and other fake leftists went through metal detectors into area penned off by cops.



attempt "to portray Judaism as the common enemy of the Palestinians and the white supremacists," declaring: "We Palestinians are offended and outraged at the association of our struggle with the KKK's racist demagoguery. We condemn the KKK's ideology of white supremacy and its history of brutal violence against religious and ethnic minorities in the United States. We condemn the KKK's alliance with neo-Nazi groups in Europe that have historically terrorized Arab and Muslim immigrants." At the protest, Palestinians stood shoulder to shoulder with young Jewish immigrants from Russia against the Klan. Demonstrators joined in shouting down a racist from the Jewish Defense League, which is tied to anti-Arab Israeli fascists, when he tried to heckle an Arab speaker.

Fascists had not dared rally in this heavily Jewish Chicago suburb since 1978, when Nazis canceled a planned march in the face of a promised outpouring of thousands of Holocaust survivors and others. The aim of fascist "rallies" is to recruit to and incite racist terror. Tennessee Grand Dragon William Robert Moore was seen loading a .380 semi-automatic pistol on his way to the Skokie rally and was arrested. A black woman leaving the anti-fascist protest was attacked by skinheads and needed hospital treatment.

Underscoring the deadly threat posed by the KKK/Nazi killers was the murder-

black workers, were horrified to find hooded Klansmen spewing racist epithets in their locker room, where they had been taken by the cops to don their robes. On Monday morning, 80 workers (who are not unionized) refused to start work until the building had been swept for bombs. It is an outrage that the fascist murderers were able to rear their heads anywhere near Chicago, a labor, black and immigrant city. When Nazis threatened Chicago's Gay Pride Day march in 1982, the SL initiated a 3,000-strong labor/black mobilization that spiked the Nazi provocation. In another such mobilization initiated by the PDC in January 1994, 500 people—including a hard core of Chicago Amalgamated Transit Union members—braved near-arctic weather to turn out against a Klan provocation in Springfield on Martin Luther King Day, despite overt attempts by the state AFL-CIO bureaucracy to sabotage a labor turnout.

A mass mobilization of Chicago's integrated trade unions, standing at the head of blacks, Latinos, Jews and all the KKK's intended victims, would have kept Skokie's streets clear of the racist vermin. But the pro-capitalist labor misleaders are beholden to Chicago mayor Richard Daley's Democratic Party, which worked overtime to defend the Klan's "right" to recruit from the North Shore suburbs. Toeing the line, the black establishment *Chicago Defender* (19

the capitalist state and the capitalist political parties. They showed their faith in the capitalist state by acceding to the city's demands that anti-Klan protesters subject themselves to police control by entering a "counterdemonstration" area taped off by the cops at the side of the courthouse, which protesters could enter only after passing through a metal detector and agreeing to be searched. Our comrades on the spot repeatedly bullhorned: "Police pens are a trap—Don't go in!" Following

our lead, the vast majority of protesters stayed out of the pen, rallying on the road in front of the courthouse. They were joined by some supporters of the social-democratic International Socialist Organization (ISO), the Progressive Labor Party (PL) and the anarchoid Anti-Racist Action. But even with the majority of the demonstrators outside the cops' pen, these reformist outfits sent several supporters through the cops' metal detector into the pen.

It has become standard operating procedure for the cops to erect pens to prevent protesters from actually stopping the racist terrorists. And it has likewise become S.O.P. for the reformists to herd anti-racist youth into the police pens, where they are stripped of any means of self-defense and completely at the mercy of the state. At an anti-Klan protest in Columbus, Ohio in 1993, for example, protesters (including PL) were maced by the cops when they tried to break down the chain-link fence that separated them from the fascists.

In its article on the Skokie protest, PL's *Challenge* (3 January) fails to mention that it sent some supporters into the cop trap while enthusing that "the crowd turned on the police, trashing several police cars." PL's bravado, trumpeting how it occasionally lands a blow against an isolated fascist, is simply the flip side of submitting to police control. Both are ultimately premised on a belief that the capitalist state is benign or neutral and won't unleash its full might against reds and anti-fascist protesters. The racist rulers deploy their cops to protect the KKK because they hold the genocidal killers in reserve, to be unleashed against the working class when the capitalists' power and their ownership of the basic means of production are threatened.

For its part, the social-democratic ISO overtly fosters the illusion that the capitalist state and its cops can be "pressured" to serve the interests of workers and the oppressed. When the SL and PDC brought out thousands in a labor/black mobilization that rode the KKK out of New York City in October 1999, the ISO threw its energies into building a diversion organized by Al Sharpton and the rest of the Democratic Party establishment to promote "tolerance" for the Klan. While the Democrats offered to share a sound permit with the fascists, the ISO literally shared a platform with the cops of the Latino Officers Association. Three months later, when Benjamin Smith's Nazi mentor Matthew Hale came to the Northwestern campus in Evanston, Illinois, the ISO sought to divert any protest into a liberal "rally against hate" while the SL gave organized expression to over 200 protesters who disarmed Hale's cohorts and forced him to beat a hasty retreat.

Klansman McQueeney threatens to return to Skokie next summer. He better be driven out through a mobilization of labor/black power! To stop the racist terrorists once and for all requires building a multiracial revolutionary workers party that will fight to overthrow the capitalist system which breeds the fascist scum. ■

Black History and the Class Struggle No. 11

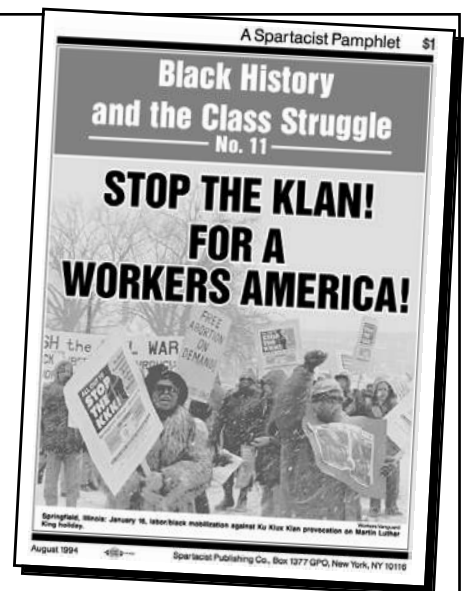
(August 1994)

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- Build an Interracial Revolutionary Leadership!
- A Proletarian-Centered Strategy to Fight Fascism
- Farrakhan Is Bad News for Black People
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- Clinton Whips Up Hysteria Over "Assault Weapons"

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Down With Anti-Strike Railway Labor Act!

Airline workers throughout the United States are seething in anger after years of wage cuts, forced overtime and management abuse. While the airlines have piled up billions upon billions in profits, the workers they exploit have been two-tiered, “down-sized” and wage-gouged to the max. Now the anger is boiling over. Fully **25,000** flights at United Airlines were canceled last summer when members of the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) refused to work overtime, forcing the company to agree to a large pay raise just before Labor Day and ending a chain of defeats in the industry going back to the 1981 smashing of the PATCO air traffic controllers union. Now the five largest airlines in the U.S. are in the middle of serious labor disputes.

Effectively denied the right to strike by the Railway Labor Act (RLA), union members at the top three carriers are pressing wage demands by working to rule, refusing overtime and generally throwing a monkey wrench into the bosses’ drive to extract maximum profits. Following the big win by the pilots, 50,000 United mechanics, ramp workers and customer service agents in the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) demanded a similar pay raise, instituting an overtime ban and carrying out maintenance rules to the letter. Three years into a ten-year contract with the company, the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA) is demanding a 30 percent wage reopener.

At Delta, pilots are engaged in an overtime ban to win wage parity with United, a demand raised as well by pilots at Continental. Also at Delta, based in “right to work” Georgia, ramp workers and other non-union employees are trying to organize into the Transport Workers Union (TWU), and TWU mechanics at American Airlines face a contract battle in March. With three of the country’s top four airlines forced to cancel hundreds of flights in recent weeks, *Newsweek* (4 December 2000) talks of “the new air war” and screams that “unrest is erupting in the skies.”

The deregulation of the airline industry in 1978 was a move to break the unions, driving down wages and dramatically increasing exploitation while profits multiplied. Airline workers are highly skilled and responsible for the lives of hundreds of people. Today, flight attendants with more than a dozen years’ seniority can make as little as \$25,000 per year and some earn so little that they have to get food stamps to support their children. At Continental, attendants only get paid once the cabin door is closed; until then, they are engaging in pure charity work, even if a plane is fully

Labor Turbulence in the Airlines



UPI

loaded and sits at the gate for hours. As happened regularly during the pilots’ action at United last summer, flight attendants are often put on “critical coverage,” requiring them to work extra flights on short notice. Those stranded by canceled flights are often crowded into flea-bag motels or even forced to spend the night on an idled jet.

The airline bosses prattle on about “safety first,” but all safety procedures are thrown out the window to ensure good “performance” statistics—and higher profits—resulting in accidents among the ground crew and endangering passengers and flight crews. Hundreds of flight delays and cancellations were caused at Chicago’s O’Hare Airport last summer when air traffic controllers made sure arriving jets were well-spaced after they had been made scapegoats for unsafe practices. At United, mechanics working to rule have been victimized, even fired. That the airlines put *profits* above all else is clear from the screams of outrage over lost income when pilots and ground crews are simply working according to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) rules!

Airline workers have enormous economic clout, made greater by the fact that global air cargo has tripled in volume over the past decade. While air freight constitutes a small fraction of the country’s total trade when measured by volume, in dollar value terms, planes transport fully **28 percent** of U.S. imports and exports. Today, the dollar value of international trade that flows through New York’s JFK Airport is greater than at any of the country’s deep-sea ports. With airline travel at an all-time high and skilled mechanics and pilots in short supply, the current job actions come at a time of maximum vulnerability for the bosses, pointing to an exceptional opportunity for *united, industry-wide strike*

action to reverse years of setbacks and givebacks.

Fraud of “Worker Ownership”

The current wave of unrest in the airline industry was sparked by the collapse of the “worker ownership” scam foisted on United workers by the leaders of ALPA and the IAM. In 1994, union leaders traded **\$5 billion** in wage cuts and other givebacks for a share of company stock and three seats on the board of directors. Pilots and machinists took immediate pay cuts of 15 and 10 percent, respectively, with additional concessions in pension contributions and work rules. The union tops sold profit-sharing by promising that the wage cuts would be amply compensated by a future pot of gold in dividends. The illusion that the workers had a stake in increasing the bosses’ profits—and their own exploitation—exploded when the companies slashed profit-sharing payments by as much as one half to deal with rising fuel costs, while year-end bonuses of the CEO more than doubled.

Today, virtually every airline has a “profit-sharing” program. The message from the bosses is: You should sacrifice for the good of the company because “we” are all in the same boat. Ground service workers and mechanics are pushed hard to get flights in and out on time—all in the name of “our profit-sharing”—and pilots and flight attendants are likewise pressured to work overtime and cut corners. In all this, the airlines seek to have co-workers stigmatize and ultimately rat on “slackers” for company discipline. The bosses tout these schemes for fostering “labor peace” and undercutting union organizing efforts. Pointing to last summer’s overtime ban at United, Continental crows in a 15-minute company propaganda video, “We don’t have con-

tentious labor issues,” concluding: “More profit-sharing for all of us.”

Yet the pro-capitalist union tops are quite proud of their record in setting up “profit-sharing” programs and employee stock ownership plans (ESOPs). The main selling point of an organizing brochure titled the “IAM Advantage” is “We’re experienced at negotiating ESOPs.” Such programs epitomize the supposed “partnership” of labor and capital preached by the trade-union bureaucracy—which means subordinating workers’ interests to the company’s bottom line. The labor tops have pushed one class-collaborationist scheme after another, from “profit-sharing” to no-strike pledges. In every way, they serve to tie the working class to the capitalist class enemy, above all through the union tops’ support to the Democratic Party, of which they are a key component.

The labor bureaucracy is a layer long ago separated out from the working class. In exchange for promoting “cooperation” with the employers and the capitalist government and policing the workers on their behalf, this bureaucratic layer is rewarded with privileges and perks. The truth is that the interests of the capitalists who own the means of production and the workers who have to sell their labor power to survive are diametrically *opposed*. To unchain the power of labor, a political fight is required to oust the pro-capitalist union bureaucrats and to forge a labor leadership dedicated to *class struggle* against capitalism.

The 1926 Railway Labor Act is a prime illustration of the labor bureaucracy’s class collaboration. Its preliminary draft was written by lawyers working for the American Federation of Labor. Faced with the threat of repeated strikes by one or another of the numerous craft unions in the railways, the rail barons agreed to formally recognize the unions’ right to organize while the union bureaucrats accepted the straitjacket of government control and intervention, all in the interests of “class peace.” A decade later, the leadership of the newly formed ALPA successfully lobbied for airline workers to be covered by the RLA, seeing this as a way to make the airlines recognize pilots’ union rights. Under the RLA, workers can only gain union recognition under rules set and administered by the National Mediation Board, which is appointed by the U.S. president.

A national airline strike, even if it lasted but a few days, would cost U.S. corporations in practically all fields hundreds of millions of dollars. Precisely for that reason, airline strikes immediately come up against the state. The RLA prohibits workers from striking when their



Marc Pokempner



Corey Sipkin

Profits first: Dangerously overstretched, outmoded air traffic control system, as at Chicago’s O’Hare, world’s busiest airport. Fuel tank explosion that reportedly brought down TWA Flight 800 in 1996 could have been prevented by proper safety procedures.

contracts expire. Instead, the National Mediation Board will “recommend” binding arbitration if a new contract is not negotiated. If the board declares an impasse, the workers still cannot legally strike until the end of a 30-day “cooling off” period. Even then, the law allows the president to halt any walkout by creating an emergency board to hammer out a settlement. Using these provisions, Clinton vetoed a 1997 strike by American Airlines pilots. After the pilots staged a sick-out two years later, a federal judge levied **\$45 million** in fines, which continues to hang over the union’s head as it faces a battle with the company. The RLA has also been used to keep Northwest mechanics on the job without a contract for *four years!*

While refusing to stop scabbing and shut down the airports during the bitter nine-month strike against Eastern Airlines in 1989, then IAM head William Winpisinger, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America, proclaimed (*New York Times*, 10 March 1989):

“To provide a more tranquil method of settling labor disputes, Congress enacted labor laws that protect worker rights and mandated Government agencies to protect workers from management abuses. The system has worked fairly well. The one notable exception is Eastern Airlines.”

The labor tops to the contrary, the capitalist government—whether under Democratic or Republican administration—is not neutral. Stripped of its “democratic”



WV Photo

Labor tops’ refusal to shut down airports in 1981 PATCO strike allowed union to be smashed.

trappings, which periodically allow working people to choose which capitalist party is going to screw them, the state is essentially an executive committee of the bourgeoisie as a whole, whose cops, courts and laws enforce the class interests of the capitalists. Writing over a century ago, Karl Marx explained in *The Civil War in France* (1871):

“At the same pace at which the progress of modern industry developed, widened, intensified the class antagonism between capital and labour, the state power assumed more and more the character of the national power of capital over labour, of a public force organised for social enslavement, of an engine of class despotism.”

It is necessary to shatter this engine of class despotism through a workers revolution and the creation of a workers state that expropriates the bosses and runs industry and transport in the service of those who labor. Like a myriad of other anti-labor laws, the RLA can be smashed in the course of class struggle. ***Down with the RLA! Break with the Democrats—For a workers party to fight for a workers government!***

For an Industrial Union of All Airline Workers!

It took hard and bitter struggles to build the unions, particularly in the case of the industrial unions which were an enormous step forward over the old, hidebound craft unions. The treachery of

the labor tops threatens the very existence of the unions they sit atop. While the IAM recently scored an organizing success in bringing in 19,000 United reservation and customer service agents, the union bureaucracy’s prostration has spurred breakaway moves by mechanics. More than half of United’s 15,000 IAM mechanics have signed cards in favor of the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA), a craft union whose spokesman declares, “We’re not anti-company, we’re pro-mechanics” (*Aviation Week & Space Technology*, 23 October 2000). Last year, the AMFA unseated the IAM at Northwest.

Divisions along craft lines, and between manual workers like ground crews and professionals like air traffic controllers and especially the pilots who are largely veterans of the military elite and overwhelmingly white, feed into the bosses’ incessant attempts to pit one section of the workforce against another. The labor tops help promote such divisions by ordering union members to cross picket lines of other striking workers. Pay scales for similar work differ widely from one company to another and one worker to another, with pervasive two-tier schemes mandating that new hires get paid far less. At TWA, it takes 20 years for flight attendants to reach top pay, and some earn half what Delta attendants earn while working more days. ***Equal pay for equal work! Airline workers need a single industrial union of all workers at all airline companies, from baggage handlers to pilots. An injury to one is an injury to all!***

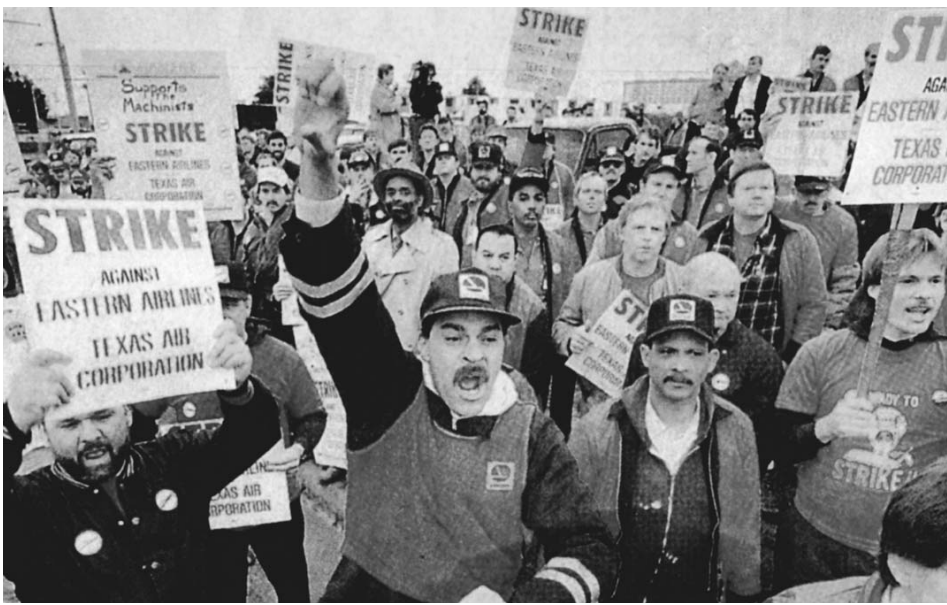
With different sectors often organized into different unions, airline workers are without a common grievance structure, allowing management to “arbitrate” worker complaints in order to discipline and fire as it desires. At many airports, such complaints often pit white pilots against black or Hispanic ramp workers. This system not only fosters resentment and division within the workforce but encourages the racist discrimination that is rampant in the industry. One white supervisor at Newark Airport reportedly allows only whites to work at one gate, which he calls the “cracker gate.” White lead workers who ask for extra help are more likely to receive it than black or Hispanic leads. At San Francisco Airport, Northwest Airlines was slapped with a federal Equal Employment Opportunity lawsuit last year by a Filipino mechanic who had been driven out by a campaign of racist harassment which culminated in a noose being hung in his locker.

Deregulation and Capitalist Anarchy

It was Democrats like Ted Kennedy and then-president Jimmy Carter who unleashed the war on the airline unions with the Airline Deregulation Act of 1978. Touted as a populist “reform” against monopolies, deregulation actually led to an increase in monopolization. In 1978, the top eight airlines accounted for 80 percent of all passenger miles flown; a decade later, these eight controlled 94 percent of all U.S. air traffic, while dividing up the country through the creation of regional hubs which tend to drive out smaller local carriers. United, the largest airline in the world, alone controls 20 percent of the U.S. market. Deregulation also paved the way for two decades of union-busting attacks. As described in Thomas Petzinger’s *Hard Landing* (1995):

“Even through the most relentless price cutting of the mid-1980s the airlines recorded their best operating profits in history.

“There was one additional and important reason for those increased profits: lower costs for oil and, more significantly, for toil.... The more junior employees at American and other airlines with b-scales had experienced no traumatic cutbacks but came into their jobs earning one half or less what their tenured colleagues were making. For the huge proportion of workers employed by struggling companies, living standards had plunged—whether gradually (as at Eastern, Pan Am, and TWA) or traumatically (as at Continental). In this respect as in



Spink/Atlanta Journal and Constitution

Bitter 1989 strike by machinists at Eastern (top) was derailed by union tops. Right: Striking flight attendants stood up to TWA bosses in 1986.



WV Photo

so many others the airlines were among the leaders of the United States economy: wage cutbacks would soon sweep through other industries.”

The Carter administration drafted the blueprint for breaking a strike by PATCO air traffic controllers, plans which Reagan implemented in 1981. Reagan’s wholesale firing of 12,000 PATCO strikers could have been beaten back by labor. For that, it was necessary to shut down the airports. But Winpisinger and the rest of the AFL-CIO leadership instead called for an impotent, losing consumer boycott. Union members marched in the hundreds of thousands in Washington, D.C. and other cities, only to be told that “solidarity” meant “vote Democrat.”

The AFL-CIO’s “victory” in electing Clinton in 1992 didn’t change anything. Not only has the Democratic White House kept the hand of the state on the throat of labor, it has deepened the deregulatory measures that have made air travel not just an exercise in massive inconvenience but a life-threatening nightmare. Thus the administration this past summer began eliminating flight limits at O’Hare and New York City’s La Guardia and JFK airports, unleashing a mad rush for markets by the airlines and creating havoc in the air and on the ground. Reflecting the high number of runway accidents, one airline official told the *Wall Street Journal* (18 August 2000) that his company alone spends \$18 million per year to repair planes damaged in “ground collisions.”

Until recently the FAA pushed a plan called Land and Hold Short Operation (LAHSO), which ***required*** pilots to use intersecting runways simultaneously, stopping short to avoid collisions, adding harrowing uncertainty to the most dangerous moment of a flight, the landing. ALPA pilots made short shrift of this insanity by simply refusing to carry out LAHSO. At the same time, the FAA routinely grants some 300 safety waivers a year to airlines. After the 1997 crash of TWA Flight 800, reportedly due to a gas explosion in a fuel tank, an FAA study found that most fuel tanks are dangerously hot 30 percent of the time. The solution is simple, and employed on military aircraft: to avoid the accumulation of explosive gases by filling up the empty part of the tank with fuel or an inert (non-flammable) gas. But instead of ordering immediate corrections, the FAA recommended better maintenance and...another study!

Airline maintenance managers con-

stantly push to have defective aircraft signed off and returned to service, a practice that contributed directly to the crash of Alaska Airlines Flight 261 near Los Angeles last January, in which all 88 people aboard were killed. That crash was caused by a jackscrew that had worn out because the airline had used the wrong kind of grease to save money and had not inspected the jackscrew within the recommended time limit. Alaska Air was already under federal investigation for falsifying its records to indicate that repairs had been done when they had not.

One mechanic at American told *Workers Vanguard* that union members continually battle with managers who want to “solve” intermittent faults by just changing a part and sending a plane back into service without thorough testing. Safe, quality work is further undermined by the large carriers’ increasing reliance on smaller, outside maintenance companies hiring inexperienced, underpaid mechanics who don’t have the union protection that’s needed to stand up to bosses who try to cut corners. ***The airline unions must organize these unorganized workers! Union safety committees must have the right to stop any unsafe procedures.***

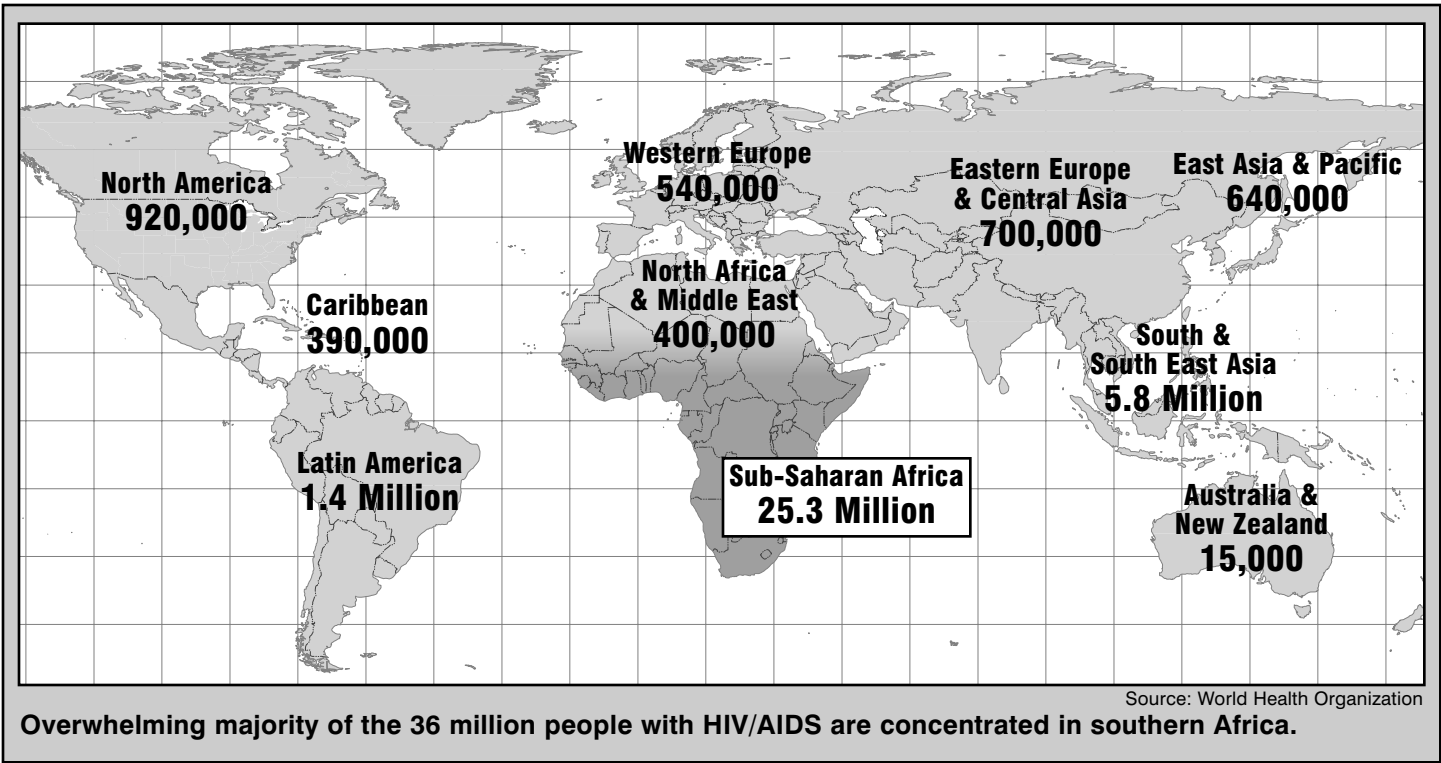
With the air traffic control system already stretched far beyond capacity and saddled with dangerously outmoded computer equipment, there are increasing calls, spearheaded by some of the largest airlines, for privatization of the system. A *New York Times* (26 December 2000) headline asked: “Can Capitalism Reduce Flights and Delays at La Guardia?” In Britain, where privatization of the railroads has been a horror story of derailments and deadly accidents, even sectors of the bourgeoisie are having second thoughts, reflected in a recent *Independent* (4 December 2000) article titled “The Capitalist Case for Renationalising the Railways.”

While deregulation has been a disaster for airline workers and passengers, the solution is not some sort of scheme for re-regulation by the capitalist state. The chaos in air transport today is merely an example of the anarchy and decay that reigns in capitalist production in general. The airline industry is inherently international and centralized. The massive waste, danger and inefficiency of the airline industry under capitalism cries out for centralized economic planning, but that will only come about when the ruling class as a whole has been expropriated under a workers government. ■

South Africa...
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force of history. Throughout history, humanity's ability to master its environment is determined by the level of the productive forces at each stage. However, scientific progress cannot rise above or be separated from class interests. Here's an illustration of what I mean, and it is directly relevant to the AIDS pandemic. Penicillin is one of the greatest medical discoveries in the twentieth century. Some of us in this room would be dead today if Alexander Fleming had not identified a mould that could kill staphylococcus bacteria in 1929. All modern antibiotics flow from this discovery. But the development of penicillin was virtually ignored until the U.S. imperialists massively funded and distributed it during World War II, 15 years later. Why then? American imperialism had an interest in keeping its soldiers from dying from battlefield infections.

And what other new technology was the U.S. funding massively around the same period? The atomic bomb, which killed some 200,000 people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, and was intended as a warning to the Soviet Union that the U.S. ruling class would stop at nothing to destroy the first workers state in history. So you see the relationship between the development of science and the class interests of the capitalist class. The bourgeoisie can mobilize when it wants to. One speaker at the July Durban AIDS conference complained that one-quarter of the U.S. defence budget for one year would provide anti-retroviral treatments for all Africans who needed them. That certainly may be true, but of course it is never going to happen. The underlying assumption of this statement is that if the



hypodermic needles, or from mother to child at birth or through breast milk. Because blood transmission is most efficient, sexually transmitted diseases that cause open sores on the penis or vaginal or anal passages increase the possibility of transmission, as do sexual practices that might tear the anal or vaginal walls. One of the reasons that AIDS has spread so fast in southern Africa is that untreated sexually transmitted diseases like syphilis, gonorrhea and pelvic infections are widespread. People may have the virus for many years without any symptoms. But eventually the virus will suppress the person's natural defences against infections, called the immune system, and the person will develop AIDS, Acquired Immune Defi-

HIV/AIDS is still spreading exponentially worldwide. In Africa, it was initially spread by those who travel a lot for a living such as airline workers, truck drivers, seamen and soldiers and spread rapidly among professionals such as teachers and doctors. Now, infection has become rampant especially in poorer areas and population groups. Less developed countries account for 95 percent of known cases and 70 percent are in Africa. Twenty-four million HIV-infected people live in southern Africa. Predictions of rates of increase must be continually revised upwards. The report of the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS that came out in June predicted that half of current 15-year-olds in South Africa and Zimbabwe may die of AIDS. In Botswana up to two-thirds of youth will die of AIDS. The rising number of orphans throughout southern Africa means there are a growing number of households headed by children. It's difficult to get accurate statistical surveys, which are basic to public health care and would inform development of a cure, because people avoid getting tested for fear of persecution. The vast majority of youth do not even know they are HIV-positive. Also some say, "Why get tested? There is no treatment available." More than with any other disease in modern history, every step in the search to control and cure HIV/AIDS has been hampered by the profit-driven capitalist system and all the backward, repressive, racist and anti-woman ideological crap that comes with it. This epidemic has arisen and is spreading in the epoch of capitalism's decline. The optimism of the scientific revolution that accompanied the rise of the capitalist class has long been on the decline, exemplified by the resurgence of religious fundamentalism, superstitions, prejudices and obscurantism. Even in the most advanced industrial countries, people with AIDS continue to be viciously stereotyped, ostracised and stigmatised. These prejudices are compounded many times over in Africa and other countries of the so-called "Third

World" like India. And because it is a sexually transmitted disease, the special oppression that women suffer under capitalism creates a major obstacle to a cure. All the guilt, shame and repressive taboos about sex that are designed to subjugate women via bourgeois morality also play a major role in sabotaging a scientific response to AIDS.

Imperialism and Neo-Apartheid Capitalism South Africa was built on the superexploitation of black labour, extracting huge profits for the imperialists. And the imperialists and Randlords' craven junior partners of the capitalist ANC-led Tripartite Alliance can only continue to perpetuate death and misery for the African masses by overseeing neo-apartheid capitalism. In South Africa, the contrasts of uneven and combined development are most sharp. The white ruling class and petty bourgeoisie live as well as anyone in America or Europe while the black masses live in conditions that have not been seen in America or Europe for several centuries. What incentive is there for the capitalist class to find a speedy cure or to treat those already infected? Internationally, the bourgeoisie views the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa as a convenient answer to unemployment and low productivity. An article in *Business Day* (November 1999) outlines the following: Every year the U.S. Investor Responsibility Research Center asks multinationals how they perceive the South African business climate. They reported that AIDS was no problem. The epidemic is mainly confined to those who are economically marginal: women and children, the unemployed and unskilled workers who can be easily replaced given the massive unemployment. Insurance companies are unconcerned because these people are not insured. Mines are closing, so miners are disposable, and due to the many job-related illnesses they suffer, they die quickly once their immune system is compromised. Investors are slightly con-



Johannesburg municipal workers rally during November strike against threatened privatizations. COSATU union tops chain powerful and combative black proletariat to bourgeois-nationalist ANC.

imperialist bloodsuckers could be pressured to shift their priorities and be more humane, then all will be solved. But the drive to war and plunder—to acquire new markets, raw materials and cheap labour with the aim of amassing profits—is inherent to the capitalist system in this epoch. The AIDS pandemic also exposes the lie of “nation building” rhetoric; it obviously cannot be solved within the borders of one country. Only world socialist revolution can tear the means of production out of the hands of the greedy capitalist class, ushering in an egalitarian socialist society. Then all the positive gains of modern science can be put at the service of mankind, and all the fake science that is used to justify and defend capitalist rule can be rejected. How we approach this grim epidemic is shaped by our vision of a communist future. Let me give a few facts up front about HIV and AIDS. You cannot get AIDS from mosquitoes or through casual contact with infected persons. The human immunodeficiency virus, HIV, concentrates in body fluids that are most commonly passed on through any form of sexual intercourse, through blood transfusions, needle sticks and the sharing of

ciency Syndrome—that is, they will develop life-threatening illnesses that almost never appear in healthy people with normal immune systems. In Africa, where people are already weakened by many untreated diseases and malnutrition, the virus destroys what's left of the already weakened immune system more rapidly. The virus is of a particularly complex variety called a “retrovirus,” which relates to its structure and how it reproduces itself. Anti-retrovirals like AZT and nevirapine suppress and slow down the advance of the virus. An inoculation ideally gives you immunity; that is, it actually prevents you from catching the disease in the first place. But the HIV virus can mutate—change its structure—rapidly. So treatment applied to one strain won't work on another, somewhat like the influenza virus where a new vaccine must be developed every year to prevent only the most common varieties. Edward Jenner proved the efficacy of vaccination against another worldwide killer, smallpox, in 1796, and the last person on earth who caught the disease recovered, in Somalia, in 1976—almost two centuries later. And smallpox was a very simple virus.

SPARTACIST

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SPARTACIST

Women and Revolution

Women and Permanent Revolution in South Africa

ANC neo-apartheid regime perpetuates superexploitation of black working masses and oppression of women

SPARTACIST

Women and Permanent Revolution in South Africa

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cerned that the disease is beginning to spread to skilled workers and teachers. But they are most worried that the South African government may choose to spend money on health care for people who, as far as they are concerned, will be dead within a couple of years, rather than spend that money to repay bank loans.

The 17 July edition of the widely circulated American magazine *Time* featured an editorial comparing the AIDS epidemic with the bubonic plague of 14th-century Europe. A full third of the European population died in what was then called the “Black Death.” The writer says that “every cloud has a silver lining”—good always comes of bad—wiping out much of the population in the 14th century led to an increase in labour productivity and paved the way for progress. Therefore, according to this, killing a third of the African population may be just what Africa needs to modernise!

Recently Clinton has decided to throw a few cents at AIDS programmes in Africa, partly to secure the black vote in the U.S. in an election year. Clinton is also motivated by fear that American soldiers may be exposed to AIDS when they are sent to war-torn African countries to protect American economic interests. During his recent visit to Nigeria, where his real worry is about the potential of militant oil workers interrupting the flow of oil, he promised some token aid. Tell the people of Iraq—where the U.S./UN starvation blockade causes up to 200 children a day to die of malnutrition and lack of medicines—about Clinton and the U.S. bourgeoisie’s concern for health care!

ANC on AIDS: Confusionism and Criminal Neglect

According to the UN report released in June, although Botswana has the highest percentage of HIV-positive people, South Africa has both the greatest absolute number and the highest growth rate in southern Africa. The fastest-growing sector is young women. The government’s response has been to deny that HIV causes AIDS, to deny that AIDS exists at all and to blame pharmaceutical companies and the CIA for spreading such “lies.” They have found endless ways to impede and postpone implementing the most minimal, well-known and tested medical treatments.

When Mbeki called together a panel of discredited researchers and local healers earlier this year to open a discussion on whether HIV causes AIDS, government spokesman Parks Mankahlana ominously warned that any critics of the government on this issue should be silenced. In response to the Durban AIDS conference statement reaffirming that HIV causes AIDS, Mankahlana said the statement “belongs in the dustbin.” Mbeki hailed another recent conference of these AIDS-denying pseudo-scientists in Uganda, which criminally called for stopping all HIV testing and condom distribution!

The confusionism and abject neglect has already resulted in untold deaths and misery. Social workers at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto have reported that patients, particularly husbands, have stopped coming to the clinics because the president says HIV doesn’t exist. And it also created the atmosphere that allowed a mob in KwaZulu-Natal in December 1998 to stone and knife to death Gugu Dlamini, a courageous young woman who spoke out on the occasion of World AIDS Day about her HIV-positive status. In rural KwaZulu-Natal, where the rate of HIV infection is the highest in South Africa, it is commonly believed that women are the source of the disease and all those infected should be killed. Gugu Dlamini’s body now lies in an unmarked grave.

Why have the bourgeois nationalists latched onto theories which fly in the face of almost 20 years of experience with this disease? Because Mbeki and the black front men for capitalist rule are incapable and unwilling to provide the most basic material needs. The imperialists celebrated Mandela and the ANC



Brett Eloff

Protester outside Durban AIDS conference. ANC president Thabo Mbeki with U.S. secretary of state Albright in December. Neo-apartheid regime promotes social backwardness, helps enforce imperialist domination.



Reuters

coming to power because they counted on Mandela’s moral authority to suppress the just aspirations of the horribly oppressed black masses. Therefore the ANC must lie and rationalise their attacks on the working class in service to their capitalist masters.

The neo-apartheid capitalist regime administered by the ANC, COSATU and the SACP—what we call a “nationalist popular front”—speeds up privatisations and retrenchments and is expanding the repressive state apparatus. From their golf clubs and African fashion shows, the government bureaucrats and new entrepreneurs—subcontractors for the capitalist class—exhort the masses that the days of “toyi-toying” [the defiant dance of

to abortion to the “individual choice” of doctors and nurses. We say health care workers who deny women abortions should find jobs in another industry. Health care workers who reflect the anti-scientific prejudices of the ANC government often abuse and harass AIDS patients, pushing bourgeois moralism and blaming them for their illness. In order to maintain one of the most unequal societies on earth, the bourgeoisie must pit one sector of the oppressed against the other to cover its own bankruptcy. Since they cannot provide the facilities for abortions or for care for AIDS patients, they have no interest in fighting backward ideas.

Women are promised full and equal

The ANC was recently on its knees eulogising the filthy rich Randlord Harry Oppenheimer, one of the latter-day architects of the brutal migrant labour system. A short time later, South Africa became the last country in the world to switch to the modern injected tuberculosis vaccine. Oppenheimer probably knew a lot about TB since it flourished in his congested hostels for migrant miners. Now tuberculosis is on the rise again because it can thrive in the weakened immune systems of people with AIDS. The mine and factory owners who condemned black workers to squalid, congested housing used to complain that blacks were biologically susceptible to TB; therefore, TB was “treated” by sending sick, used-up black workers to the rural bantustans to die. The TB death rate in South Africa is as bad today as a century ago; 10,000 mainly young men and women die every year from TB, which continues to be stigmatised as a disease of “fast living, hard drinking and smoking.”

Apartheid Crimes and Conspiracy Theories

The first recorded cases of AIDS in South Africa were white homosexuals in the 1980s. Considering there were no medical records kept for blacks, coloureds and Indians, it is impossible to trace the history of the disease in this country. The apartheid regime’s campaigns against AIDS in the ’80s included putting stickers on taxis from Jo’burg to Soweto that said, “You can’t get AIDS from swimming pools”—not exactly a relevant issue for the apartheid townships. The campaign used a drawing of a supposedly “neutral coloured” yellow hand. But for black women whose main occupation was as domestic servants, the yellow hand recalled the rubber washing gloves belonging to the hated “madam.” During the early ’90s, the Nationalist Party put up posters in Soweto with crude depictions of black men, warning that returning ANC exiles were bringing AIDS into South Africa.

AIDS conspiracy theories are widely held. There is an understandable mistrust of so-called “Western medicine” and white doctors who historically abused, neglected, poisoned and experimented on black people, and not just here. In the U.S., in the infamous Tuskegee experiments 400 Southern black men with syphilis were left untreated for over 30

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Emergency room in Soweto’s Baragwanath Hospital, 1991. Today this deteriorating hospital serves 3.5 million black people.

Der Spiegel



anti-apartheid marchers] are over; this is your government.

While the imperialists write off Africans as hopeless barbarians, their lapdogs of the national bourgeoisie expound about the “African Renaissance” and laud “African solutions” romanticising tribal societies and conciliating “traditional leaders” in parliament and local government. Meanwhile, the racist hypocrites of the Democratic Alliance and other foul leftovers of apartheid piously shake their fingers at Mbeki for his statements about HIV/AIDS while praising him for toeing the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank line of slashing jobs and cutting back social services.

The ANC health minister, Tshabalala-Msimang, has pronounced that it is unwise to spend money on AZT for HIV-positive pregnant women (which has proved to protect the fetus against infection) because these women will only create more orphans as a burden on the state. The message here to AIDS sufferers is “Drop dead!”

The South African constitution and the laws passed since 1994 are continually lauded as the most democratic in the world. For example, abortion was made legal. Currently the official position of the government is to leave the legal right

rights in the constitution, but the ANC has never even taken a public stand against female genital mutilation still practised openly in rural areas and secretly in the townships. In some cases, the clitoris and labia are cut off. In others, young girls’ vaginal openings are sewn up and later bloodily torn open when they wed. On top of all the physical and mental damage that accompanies such mutilation, these women are much more susceptible to HIV infection.

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South Africa...

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years and allowed to die to see its effect on their mortality rate—and on their children. Under apartheid, young women in Botswana were sterilised and given forced injections of the contraceptive Depo-Provera, at that time banned in the U.S. and other countries. South African women were forced into massive birth control programs, sterilised without their knowledge and administered IUDs (contraceptive intrauterine devices) as conditions for employment. Meanwhile, Afrikaner women were told to “Make Babies for Botha.”

Then there is the case of Dr. Wouter Basson. This apartheid regime version of the infamous Dr. Mengele in Hitler’s concentration camps carried out biological and chemical warfare “experiments” on kidnapped township residents in Zimbabwe and poisoned SWAPO prisoners in Namibia and then went along for the helicopter ride to drop them into the ocean. After a cover-up by the security forces in the so-called “Truth and Reconciliation Commission,” the reason Basson is on trial now is to further “reconciliation” with the apartheid butchers. Basson is still a practising cardiologist one day a week at a public hospital in Pretoria, so the ANC is paying for his legal expenses.



ANC government fired 6,000 nurses after 1995 wildcat strike. Strikers carried signs reading “Away with Mandela,” denounced ANC leader as “driver of gravy train” for aspiring black capitalists.

The workers in power would try him and many other apartheid murderers for their crimes.

With all the stigmas attached to AIDS, mothers are afraid to admit they are bottle-feeding their babies for fear they will be ostracised. The international manufacturers of milk and baby formulas have been remarkably silent regarding affordable bottle milk for babies at risk. Back in 1976, we supported international protest when Nestlé’s dressed up its salespeople in nurses’ uniforms to fool impoverished women and push expensive manufactured milk. While breast-feeding is more desirable than bottle-feeding because of the immunities it passes on from mother to child, the real issue with the former is malnutrition and with the later access to clean water. However, now that it has been proven that HIV is conveyed by breast milk, a basic preventive measure would be to provide free formula to all infected women.

Volunteer Cuban doctors are sometimes the only doctors who will service the rural areas, and are embraced by the population. That doctors from the Cuban deformed workers state do this service underscores why we defend the enormous gains embodied in the Cuban Revolution—the collectivised property forms and planned economy—as we do in China, Vietnam and North Korea against internal counterrevolution and imperialist attack. After the 1949 Revolution in China, large public health campaigns were launched, women were freed from slavery and concubinage. To this day,

the standard of living in China is higher than in capitalist India, a country which achieved political independence from Britain at about the same time as the Chinese Revolution, but which is devastated by imperialist neglect.

Union Tops, Fake Lefts Front for ANC

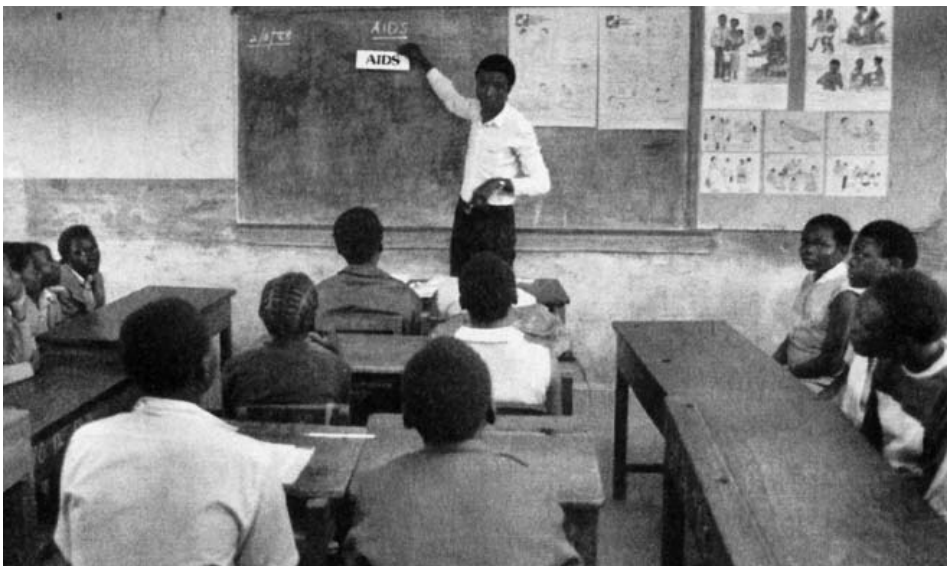
In South Africa, health care in rural areas is often a container car or a van that may arrive once a week. As we speak, there is a cholera outbreak in KwaZulu-Natal not far from Durban, which has been out of control for two months. Over 20 people have died so far; more than 2,000 people have been hospitalised. Every day there are newly reported cases, and many more go unreported because people have not gone to clinics for treatment. Cholera is an example of a completely understood disease that is totally preventable and treatable—and has been for over a century.

Unemployment is at 50 percent or higher, and latest reports are that the gap between wealthy and poor is increasing. It’s election time, so Mbeki has been double-talking about providing some token amount of free electricity, while always calling to get rid of the so-called freeloaders. This is happening while fuel wood is diminishing. Rural labourers are still paid in kind—for black and coloured workers in the Western Cape’s money-

making vineyards, this means a high rate of infant alcohol syndrome. The development of water resources is planned for livestock, not for women who have to haul water back to their dwellings.

The SACP-dominated COSATU leadership sabotaged the national protest called the day before the AIDS conference in Durban by mobilising the most token presence. Why? They could not embarrass Mbeki, their alliance partner. The pro-capitalist COSATU leadership’s treacherous role in the nationalist popular front is to keep the lid on the explosive and powerful South African proletariat, to tie the oppressed masses to the bourgeois-nationalist ANC. In the Metalworkers [auto, steel, etc.] union, NUMSA, discussion of AIDS is tabled to the “Gender Committee,” which is the code word for “toss it to the women.” The recent national COSATU congress supposedly did their big act of defiance of Mbeki by declaring it is “morally wrong” to deny drugs to pregnant women and rape victims. They buy the moralistic line that only some are innocent. How about everybody else infected? Teenagers, IV drug users, truckers, prostitutes, miners? Do they deserve it?

The SACP played its role at the conference of slavishly shoring up the class-collaborationist alliance against any opposition. After the conference, the SACP made a declaration on AIDS which cravenly capitulated to Mbeki, stating they have “not sufficiently studied the complex issues about anti-retroviral



Der Spiegel

AIDS education in Uganda, where the regime relies on preaching sexual abstinence to stem pandemic.

HIV/AIDS drugs so as to comment.” Meanwhile, those already infected continue to suffer miserable deaths. The fake left—from the International Socialist Movement and Keep Left [a group buried inside the SACP linked to the U.S. International Socialist Organization] to WIVL [Workers International Vanguard League] and WOSA [Workers Organisation for Socialist Action]—also echo the moralism, and deflect all criticism away from the nationalists by appealing to the multinational drug companies and the World Bank. At the 26 September protests here in Jo’burg in conjunction with the protests in Prague at the IMF/World Bank meeting, the fake left channelled the anger of the protesters into begging the imperialists to “cancel the debt.”

Militant South African workers, like the workers at the Volkswagen plant in Uitenhage, are looking for an alternative to the class-collaborationist national popular front. However, the South African proletariat cannot go forward on a narrow trade-union programme which accepts capitalism. The proletariat must take up the fight for permanent revolution by building a Leninist vanguard party, based on the most advanced layers, that will be a tribune of all the people, that will defend the Gugu Dlamini and all the oppressed.

Free, Quality Health Care for All!

Under the ANC regime, hospitals have been closed in the name of reducing duplicate services segregated under apartheid. Kempton Park Hospital outside Johannesburg was shut down. In Johannesburg, Hillbrow Hospital stands empty for years while the AIDS epidemic grows among the destitute immigrant population of the area and patients lie on the floor in Jo’burg Hospital and outside Chris Hani Bara admitting area waiting for beds. Retrenchments and privatisations are causing ward closings and cutbacks. The 26-year-old singer and star of the widely acclaimed movie *Sarafina*, Wendy Mseleku, recently died after being turned away three times from pub-

lic hospitals for lack of beds. In large parts of rural areas, where health care is solely in the hands of nurses, many of these nurses are the same young women who are being devastated by the disease.

Nurses and health care workers were among the first targets of the ANC’s anti-working-class programme. In 1996, the Mandela government was to decree free health care for all children under the age of six at local clinics and hospitals. As we wrote at the time, that was a cynical lie. No additional funds were allocated to hire more nurses and other health care workers. There was no equipment or medicines. When nurses went on strike, the SACP/COSATU bureaucrats called the nurses’ action “counterrevolutionary.” Isolated by COSATU, the strike eventually ended, and 6,000 nurses were dismissed by the provincial government of the Eastern Cape, headed at that time by Raymond Mhlaba of the SACP.

Black nurses and student nurses have been in the forefront of protests for decent health care for decades. Health care was totally segregated under apartheid—white hospitals were built in urban areas, and no hospitals were built in the rural areas where the majority of the black population lives. No matter how much experience a black nurse had, she was always under the direction of white nurses, often young Afrikaners who were incompetently trained in backwater Calvinist Dutch Reformed *platteland* schools. In the 1950s, black nurses were at the centre of protests against carrying passbooks, since they were almost the only black working women in urban areas. The police were turned on them in Soweto and Durban.

Back when the apartheid government decided to forcibly move the first black nurses from the all-black Baragwanath Hospital to the all-white Jo’burg Hospital because of a supposed “shortage of nurses,” the black nurses protested because the white hospital was at 50 percent capacity and Bara was over 100 percent. In 1985, hospital workers at Baragwanath went out on strike. Student nurses were assaulted by security guards, 700



El Shifa

AFP

\$30 million pharmaceutical plant in desperately poor Sudan was demolished in U.S. terror-bombing attack in 1998.

workers were arrested and 1,700 dismissed, sparking solidarity actions across South Africa and international protest. Today Chris Hani Bara services a population of 3.5 million blacks. The hospital is falling apart. In Khayelitsha Day Hospital in the Western Cape, doctors see up to 96 patients a day each. In most hospitals white doctors and black patients do not speak the same language, making diagnoses slow and difficult.

We sell our newspaper at Jo’burg Hospital, mainly to black nurses and hospital workers. The unionised staff is constantly threatened with being replaced by non-union contract labour, and some have been already. We talked to a doctor who staffs the Casualty Unit. He said that on an average day, two-thirds of the people coming into the unit have symptoms of full-blown AIDS. Many come in with ritual cuts on their bodies administered by inyangas and sangomas [traditional healers]. Doctors must treat people who are suffering from self-induced vomiting caused by herbs and from repeated enemas prescribed by traditional healers. When I asked the doctor what he thought of the latest vaccine trials, he answered despondently, “There’s no electricity. You can’t distribute a vaccine without refrigeration.”

Anti-retroviral drugs have extended the lives of those who can afford them, mainly in the advanced capitalist countries. The pharmaceutical companies make more profits on chronic illnesses like diabetes or AIDS which require a continual variety of medications and procedures and have no cure, so they have a marketing policy of pumping out copy-cat anti-retroviral drugs rather than engaging in long-term vaccine research with uncertain results. Years have been wasted because basic research for vaccines just does not turn a fast buck. Provincial hospitals have been defying the government to take limited handouts of drugs from different charitable sources.

What can we say about Uganda’s so-called reversal of AIDS? Uganda’s much-acclaimed campaign was centred around the “ABCs”—Abstinence, Be faithful to your spouse, use Condoms. A United Nations report claims that the prevalence of HIV in Uganda has fallen from a high of 14 percent in the early ’90s to 8 percent today. But to call Uganda a “success story” captures how bankrupt current programmes are, how hopeless are policies based on “don’t have sex” and how venal are the bourgeois nationalists. In Uganda, there are no medicines to treat AIDS-related illnesses, and there are 20,300 people for every doctor. Last year, President Yoweri Museveni called for the arrest of homosexuals. Uganda’s terribly low life expectancy, only 40-41 years, is all attributed to preventable conditions: childbirth circumstances, malaria, pneumonia, diarrhea, poor nutrition and unsanitary water. The average annual income is 1,850 Rand [US\$250]. As the bloody imperialist carve-up of the Congo [where Uganda has intervened] heats up, bullets will surely be a rising cause of death.

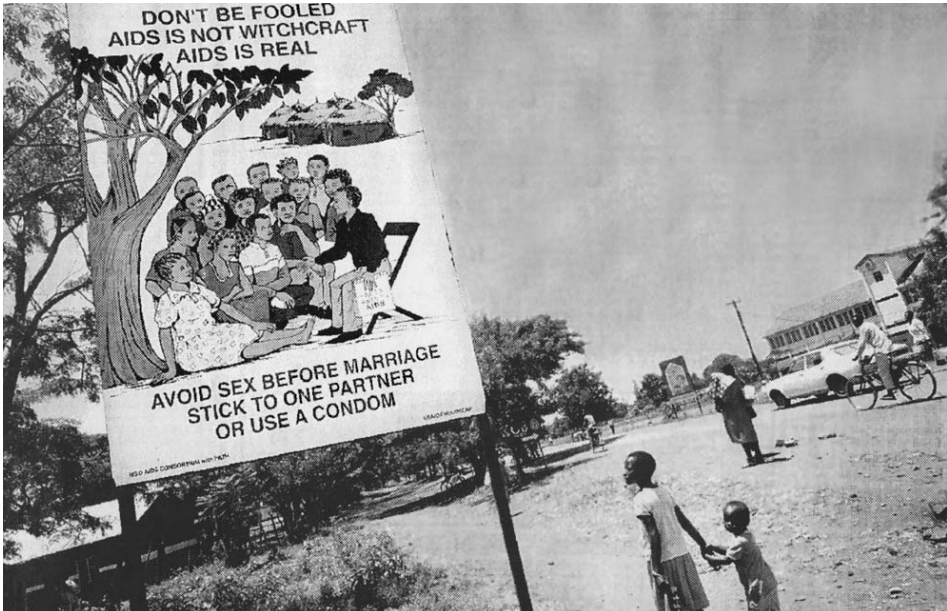
Imperialism, Nationalism and Social Backwardness

One example lauded as an “African solution” to AIDS is where thousands of unmarried women and children attend monthly virginity testing “ceremonies” in KwaZulu-Natal. This was a virtually extinct centuries-old custom that has been revived in the last four years. Girls are stripped naked and endure a humiliating half-hour examination by older girls to ascertain if their hymen is intact. There has been much favorable coverage of this in the media. Nomagugu Ngobese, who has just completed a book, *Fertility and Customs*, spoke recently at a government-sponsored Gender Equality and National Youth Commission meeting advocating these procedures. She stated, “Moral values are possibly the only solution we have to curb the rising HIV/AIDS statistics.”

At an educational conference in Pre-

toria, the deputy education minister said the “African Renaissance” should be founded on “a recovery of moral values and ethical conduct.” Mary Crewe, director of the AIDS study centre at the University of Pretoria, responded that linking AIDS with religion and morality has fed into denial and apathy around the disease and to marginalisation and social rejection of sufferers. The teaching of “right and wrong” related to AIDS was detracting from, as she put it, “the overriding moral imperative to save lives.” The only “morals” that the capitalist class has is to rake in profits, backed up in blood by the state—the cops, the courts, the prisons, the army—and ideologically by the conservatising force of religion.

Traditional healers are hailed by the government as the front line against



Sign in Kenya. Superstitions discourage people with AIDS from seeking treatment while leading to horrific attacks on HIV-positive women as witches.

AIDS. They are the only “health care” many people ever see. People are poisoned, murdered and raped by these “healers,” who encourage the revival of beliefs in witchcraft, beliefs which have caused mob killings of mainly old rural women. In fact, to be a woman and old is suspect in conditions where life is normally cut short by violence and “inexplicable” deaths from preventable diseases.

The Gauteng Health Department funds AIDS education for the Traditional Healers Organisation. Since bloodletting through razor cuts to communicate with ancestors is a common cure for witchcraft, the ANC “educates” these healers to use different razors for each client. Demonstrations through downtown Johannesburg feature banners reading, “One Man, One Razor.” Beside their role in furthering ignorance, these traditional healers are part of the repressive political structure that runs from the community “sangoma” straight up to CONTRELESA, the House of Traditional Leaders, which is officially part of the bourgeois state.

These bastions of reaction, former apartheid bantustan collaborators, are murderous remnants of pre-capitalist society. Throughout southern Africa, they fight tooth and nail to deny women abortion, inheritance and property rights. They are courted by the ANC just as they were courted by the original colonialists and the apartheid regime. They run much of KwaZulu-Natal, the epicenter of the epidemic in South Africa, and many parts of the most impoverished Eastern Cape. Bourgeois-nationalist ideology has always relegated women to being baby-makers. The capitalists and their lackeys are the enemies of women’s liberation.

We fight for women’s liberation through socialist revolution. Since the beginning of class society thousands of years ago, the institution of the family has been the fundamental source of the subjugation of women as dependent domestic slaves. In a socialist planned economy, the family as a social unit will be transcended by socialisation of child-care and household duties. Only then can relationships be entered into freely and without economic compulsion.

The oppression of women in Africa cannot begin to change and the drudgery and hardships women suffer cannot begin to be alleviated without a socialist revolution extending to the advanced capitalist countries. Women in southern Africa are still largely deemed minors with few enforceable rights of ownership or inheritance. Widows are still inherited by their husband’s brothers. Polygamy based on the economic subordination of women still occurs. Women are under tremendous economic pressure to demonstrate their fertility. And children are, in fact, the only potential means of support in old age.

Lobola [bride price] is pervasive, and *lobola* basically means women are property like cattle. Children are considered illegitimate and have no rights under customary law if *lobola* payments have

were driven back into domestic slavery. The apartheid migrant labour system that historically tore apart families continues and has been called the “engine of the epidemic” because it encourages multiple sex partners. The migrant labour system, which permeates all of sub-Saharan Africa, is perpetuated under neo-apartheid capitalism because it is the backbone of the superexploitation of black labour.

Foreign workers desperately seeking jobs in South Africa are targeted by the government. The apartheid regime used to send South African miners back to the rural areas to die from TB; now the neo-apartheid state carries on the same policy with workers from bordering countries—HIV-positive Mozambican miners are deported to die without even being informed of their status. The health minister recently argued that they cannot distribute nevirapine lest people from neighbouring countries flock to South Africa for treatment. We demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants, including access to schools and medical care.

Prostitutes should not be afraid to get health care and education and should not be at the mercy of gang violence. We are for the de-criminalisation of prostitution. Professional prostitution is actually a minor business compared to all the ways women living in poverty must sell sex for survival. Teenagers and young women need money and gifts to get through secondary and tertiary institutions. Women acquire “sugar daddies” to survive, and for money for their children. Youths hang out where trucks lay over along the highways of southern Africa to earn a bit of money. Domestic work is still the largest category of legal employment for women—sex for money is the only other option to housework. So-called educational campaigns about the sins of promiscuity are not only false and reactionary but also absurd in a situation where you are having sex so you can buy some maize for you and your child to eat. At the Durban AIDS conference, advocates of vaginally applied anti-viral foams—which may afford easy and private protection—protested that they are not being adequately researched and funded. Underlying the lack of interest in the foams is the morality issue again—sex for any reason but reproduction is deemed sinful.

Full Democratic Rights for Homosexuals!

Homosexuals continue to be scorned and threatened everywhere. In the ’80s anti-apartheid activists who struggled also for democratic rights for gays often

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(Fourth Internationalist)

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**Hate Trotskyism,
Hate the Spartacists**

— a bulletin of opponent material

NUMBER 1

**A Reply to
the Workers International
Vanguard League**

Introduction

"LRP's South Africa Lash-Up"
Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 667, 2 May 1987

**"Open Letter to the Spartacist League by the
National Central Committee of the Workers
International Vanguard League"**
Reprinted from an unpublished letter, 1 October 1987

**"A Reply to the Workers International
Vanguard League"**
By Spartacist South Africa, 18 July 1988

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South Africa...

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had to fight their way into the political organisations. Tseko Simon Nkoli, a young gay COSAS [Congress of South African Students] and ANC activist, was arrested in 1984 for speaking out in defence of the massive stayaway strikes that fall. He was kept in detention for 16 months and then brought to trial as part of the world-famous Delmas treason trial which started in 1985, along with Mosiuoa Patrick “Terror” Lekota and Popo Molefe [who are now respectively minister of defence and premier of North West Province]. He had to argue against the anti-gay bigotry of the other ANC defendants who wanted to throw him out of the case. On 30 November 1998, Simon Nkoli died of AIDS.

In at least 30 African countries it is illegal for a man to have sex with another man. In South Africa, the constitution, on paper, opposes discrimination based on sexual orientation. However, when Mbeki launched his so-called research panel, he motivated questioning the connection of HIV and AIDS by saying, “Are you aware, whereas in the West, HIV and AIDS is said to be largely homosexually transmitted, in Africa, including our country, it is transmitted heterosexually?” So instead of scientific investigation and understanding, there is vilification and prejudice. HIV/AIDS is not a “homosexual disease” or a “heterosexual disease.” HIV is a *virus*. Mugabe of Zimbabwe has called homosexuals “pigs,” “perverts” and “worse than beasts.” Until 1989 in Zimbabwe, putting AIDS as cause of death on a death certificate was banned. The heads of state of Zambia, Namibia, Kenya and Swaziland have all made public their contempt for homosexuals, citing both “African traditions” and “biblical teachings.” This



Peter Magubane

Mass protest by South African women against apartheid pass laws, 1958. In words of freedom song, “Now you have touched the woman, you have struck a rock, you have dislodged a boulder, you will be crushed.”

month, the minister of home affairs of Namibia called on the police to eliminate homosexual men and women from Namibia.

Evidence as far back as ancient San [Bushmen, nomadic hunters of southern Africa] cave paintings shows that homosexual relations have been around forever in Africa, just like everywhere else in the world. The suppression of gays is directly related to the suppression of sexuality and the subordination of women and youth in the social unit of the family, the main institution for the oppression of women and children in class society. Democratic rights are indivisible. Communists fight for full democratic rights for homosexuals. We fight against anti-gay bigotry and we are for the legalisation of all “crimes without victims.” The

guiding principle for sexual relations should be that of effective consent—that is, mutual agreement and understanding as opposed to coercion—and the state has no business interfering.

We are for free, quality health care and treatment for all and for massive medical research programmes. It certainly means that the working class must expropriate the pharmaceutical companies. It means education—including in scientific matters—which begins with teaching basic health care, medical precautions and sex education. Education here also means literacy. We are for expropriating the capitalist class as a whole without compensation—that means the land, the banks, the mines and industry. Free medical care requires building up the infrastructure, training nurses and doctors, construction

of hospitals and clinics, as well as uncongested housing, clean running water, electricity and paved roads. All of southern Africa needs a genuine socialist construction programme.

The organised and combative South African proletariat must take the lead under the leadership of a revolutionary internationalist Trotskyist vanguard party. This is why you must become a communist. Only the communist party we are building here and internationally has the programme to be the tribune of all people—women, gays, immigrants and the rural poor. We look forward to the day when all socialist humanity, using the knowledge and science of the past, will have the freedom to go forward and explore all the difficult questions of life. In summary, I would like to read a passage from a 1925 speech by Trotsky on “Dialectical Materialism and Science”:

“There are two aspects of by no means equal merit to the scientific contributions of the past which are now ours and upon which we pride ourselves. Science as a whole has been directed toward acquiring knowledge of reality, research into the laws of evolution, and discovery of the properties and qualities of matter, in order to gain greater mastery over it. But knowledge did not develop within the four walls of a laboratory or a lecture hall. No, it remained a function of human society and reflected the structure of human society. For its needs, society requires knowledge of nature. But at the same time, society demands an affirmation of its right to be what it is, a justification of its particular institutions—first and foremost, the institutions of class domination—just as in the past it demanded the justification of serfdom, class privileges, monarchical prerogatives, national exceptionalism, etc. Socialist society accepts with utmost gratitude the heritage of the positive sciences, discarding, as is the right of inventorial choice, everything that is useless in acquiring knowledge of nature but only useful in justifying class inequality and all other kinds of historical untruth.”

—*Problems of Everyday Life*
(1973) ■

Profiling...

(continued from page 12)

the drug trade, and they’re not run by West Indian immigrants!

Today, Jackson, Sharpton & Co. decry “racial profiling” and the “prison-industrial complex.” What has tripled the prison population in the last 20 years to over two million men and women—more than 60 percent of them black or Hispanic—is the racist “war on drugs.” More people are currently behind bars for drug offenses in the U.S. than the total prison population of all of West Europe. When that war was launched in the 1980s, the black Democrats weren’t merely its foot soldiers but its propagandists and recruiting sergeants. Under the Reagan and Bush administrations, prominent Democrats like Harlem Congressman Charles Rangel baited the

Republicans for losing the “war on drugs.” Jackson cynically played down KKK terror, proclaiming in 1986, “Ropes never killed as many of our young people as the pushers of drugs.” Sharpton organized anti-drug vigilante gangs in New York City ghettos as auxiliaries to the racist cops.

The SL calls for an end to laws against drug use as well as prohibitions against other “crimes without victims” such as gambling, prostitution and pornography. We insisted from the beginning that the “war on drugs” was a war on black people, subjecting the ghetto masses to an unprecedented buildup of police power. This has not only been wielded with devastating impact on the cities but in a particularly vicious manner against black people in small towns and cities across the South as well. Elite tactical units and paramilitary SWAT teams routinely brutalize minority youth, occupy public housing projects and crash into apartments to terrorize families. The drug war has also served as a pretext for implementing a broad assault on fundamental rights in order to regiment the population, particularly targeting millions of workers for potential victimization through random drug testing. The enormous growth of the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state is aimed at containing the explosive contradictions generated by the vast economic gulf between the handful of filthy rich and the many at the bottom of this society, a gulf which has grown ever wider during this “boom” period. And in racist America, the immediate targets of state repression, ultimately aimed at repressing the working class, are black people.

Intent on quelling the anger of the black masses, the Jacksons and Sharptons organize protests—including last summer’s “Redeem the Dream” march to commemorate the 1963 March on Washington—against “racial profiling” and appeal to the very federal government which wrote the book. As New York seethed with anger over the killing

of Amadou Diallo two years ago, Sharpton and the black Democrats rushed in to try to contain the protests within capitalist electoral politics, coming up with a program for police “reform” aimed at salvaging the authority of the racist forces of capitalist repression. On the eve of the “Redeem the Dream” rally, Sharpton met with Janet Reno to demand the government appoint an “overseer” of the NYPD and that it withhold funds from police departments which practice “racial profiling.” Of course, this would mean that not a single police department would be left in the country. What Sharpton is really preaching is the liberal lie that it’s all a matter of cleaning out a few bad apples from the police force.

On October 31, a New Jersey superior

court judge tossed out the indictments against the state troopers involved in the 1998 Turnpike shooting. Eight months earlier, an Albany court acquitted Diallo’s assassins. In the eyes of the capitalist ruling class, these racist killers committed no crime: they were doing exactly what they are hired, trained and paid to do. There will be no end to police brutality short of the destruction of the system of capitalist exploitation and racist oppression which the cops “serve and protect” as armed guard dogs. We fight to forge the multiracial revolutionary workers party necessary to lead the working class to power, smashing the capitalist state and erecting in its place a workers state. Finish the Civil War! For black liberation through socialist revolution! ■



AP

Governor Christine Whitman frisking black man stopped by cops in Camden, New Jersey, 1996.

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Turkish Justice Minister Hikmet Sami Türk obscenely declared that the “operations are geared to save human life” and claimed that prisoners set themselves on fire (*Turkish Daily News*, 20 December 2000). He is backed by the imperialist press, which went to great lengths to paint Türk’s bloody operation as downright necessary, even defensive in character. The *New York Times* (25 December 2000) headlined, “Behind Rage in Prisons of Turkey: Radical Bands,” blaming the government’s slaughter on “radical left-wing organizations” that “refused compromises.” The German imperialists were even quicker to take up the Turkish government’s lies. The 5 December *Frankfurter Rundschau* reported that “organizations like the militant DHKP-C wanted to keep the penal system as is because housing in large rooms makes the ideological indoctrination of their imprisoned comrades easier and keeps up the group pressure. Whether of their own free will or under pressure from their organizations, the prisoners appeared resolved to continue their protest until the bitter end.”

In Paris, Milano, Berlin, Hamburg and London, urgent protests were organized by Turkish leftist parties, the Guevarist DHKP-C, the Maoist TKIP and TKP/ML, and the petty-bourgeois Kurdish nationalist PKK, in which European sections of the International Communist League participated. Angry protesters assembled outside embassies, consulates and in Turkish and Kurdish neighborhoods, carrying pictures of their martyrs. At a December 23 march in Berlin, Kurdish and Turkish leftists joined in singing the “Internationale” and other working-class songs.

No Illusions in “Human Rights” Imperialism!

5 JANUARY 2001

In fact, the Turkish government's introduction of isolation prisons *is a result* of pressure from the imperialist European Union. The "F-type" prisons are modeled after the infamous "Stammheim" isolation prison built by Germany's Social Democratic (SPD)/liberal coalition gov-



ernment in the 1970s, aimed mainly at the guerrillaist Red Army Faction (RAF). Both of the RAF's principal leaders, Ulrike Meinhof and Andreas Baader, were alleged by the government to have committed suicide while under solitary confinement in Stammheim in 1976 and 1977.

Kurdish protests in West Europe against Öcalan's arrest two years ago were met with murderous repression, in which several were killed and scores injured. In Germany, the PKK, DHKP-C and another Turkish left group, the THKP-C, are banned and criminalized as "terrorist" organizations. The Spartakist Workers Party, German section of the ICL, defends these organizations against capitalist state repression—whether in Germany or Turkey. The criminalization of Turkish and Kurdish militants in Germany is aimed at splitting the working class along ethnic and national lines. We demand: *Down with the ban on the PKK, DHKP-C and THKP-C! Free all leftist political prisoners!*

alist organizations, too, harbor illusions in the imperialist European Union, as well as in the social-democratic parties that rule in most of Europe today and are responsible for racist state terror and drastic austerity measures against the working class. The Committee for Struggle Against Torture Through Isolation (IKM), which is supported by the DHKP-C, the TKIP and the TKP/ML, issued an appeal on December 20: “We call on the governments of the EU, the human rights organizations, as well as all parties that don’t want to share responsibility for these cruel murders to protest immediately and to send delegations of observers to Turkey.” The PKK-affiliated Kurdish Information Center in Italy issued a statement for a December 22 demonstration in Rome which states that “on the one hand, the international community should immediately move to stop the massacre in the prisons and impose a generalized amnesty, and on the other hand to stop the Turkish military aggression against Iraqi Kurdistan.”

We are opposed to such calls on the imperialists. The European and American imperialist powers are no friends of the oppressed! Take a look at the 1999 imperialist war against Serbia. In the name of “human rights” and “self-determination for Kosovo,” the U.S., Britain, France, Germany and Italy bombed Serbia. Now Kosovo is occupied by NATO troops and pogroms are being carried out against Roma (Gypsies) and Serbs. *All imperialist troops out of the Balkans now!*

While defending the DHKP-C, TKIP and TKP/ML and the PKK against state terror, we oppose the political programs of these organizations. They adhere to a petty-bourgeois guerrillaist strategy, combined in the case of the Maoist and Guevarist groups with the Stalinist/Menshevik dogma of “two-stage revolution” (first a “democratic” revolution and later—i.e., never—a socialist one). This concept has again and again led to terrible defeats for the proletariat, as in Indonesia in 1965 or Chile in 1973. At the root of this concept is the idea of “democratizing” Turkey while leaving the rule of the Turkish bourgeoisie intact. This is a dangerous illusion in a backward country like Turkey, which is heavily dependent on imperialism. The Turkish Stalinist organ-

Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program

\$1 (16 pages)

The combativity of the working class was shown on December 1, when Turkey was rocked by a massive nationwide strike of public sector employees sparked by government plans to adopt austerity measures demanded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Thousands of workers demonstrated in the capital, Ankara, and throughout the country. On December 7, miners of the Inmet copper and zinc mines in the northeastern city of Cayeli walked out on strike. Earlier, on November 11, hundreds of thousands of public sector workers took to the streets in protest against the IMF, calling as well for a general amnesty for all prisoners. This shows the potential for linking struggles in defense of workers' living standards with the fight against right-wing repression and terror.

Workers of Turkish and Kurdish origin are a militant and key component of Germany's working class, working in the strategic metal and chemical industries. These workers can be a living bridge linking the fight for Kurdish independence and socialist revolution in Turkey and the Near East to workers rule in the industrialized West. In Europe, the ICL fights to build multiethnic revolutionary workers parties in the tradition of the Bolsheviks which will lead the proletariat to the overthrow of imperialism. *For workers revolutions from Berlin and London to Ankara and throughout the Near East! Reforge the Fourth International!* ■

Available in Turkish

Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

Adopted in 1998 at the
Third International Conference
of the ICL.

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WORKERS VANGUARD

“Racial Profiling”: Business as Usual in Racist America



Sheerbell/SABA

New Jersey

From Birmingham to Buffalo, Los Angeles to New York, stopping, frisking, beating, shooting and choking black men and women for “driving while black,” “walking while black” and even “breathing while black” are standard police procedure. Over the past couple of years, however, with the ghettos and barrios simmering over a series of high-profile racist atrocities, capitalist politicians—not only liberal Democrats but a wide swath of Republicans as well—have suddenly “discovered” and taken to hypocritically denouncing “racial profiling.”

When three New Jersey state troopers

pumped eleven bullets into a van carrying four unarmed black and Hispanic students on their way to college basketball tryouts in October 1998, state officials feverishly denied what every black person knew—that driving on the New Jersey Turnpike meant cop harassment, arrest or worse. Meanwhile, these same officials were busy concealing evidence of just how routinely black and Hispanic motorists were singled out. Some 91,000 pages of recently released state documents reveal that black or Hispanic drivers accounted for at least eight of ten auto searches carried out on the Turnpike over the past decade. For his role in the cover-up, state attorney general Peter Verniero was rewarded by Republican governor Christine Whitman with appointment

to the state Supreme Court. A couple of years earlier, Whitman got in on the action herself, frisking a black man who had been arbitrarily stopped by state cops and then released after she got her vile photo-op.

For black Democrats like Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson and the reformists who trail behind them, the answer to racist cop terror has been appeals to the Clinton administration and Janet Reno’s Justice Department to oversee city and state police forces. But as the saying goes, “The fish stinks from the head.” Amid the recent investigation of the New Jersey state troopers, a *New York Times* (29 November 2000) article reported: “Though states like New Jersey have been the most egregious offenders, the

textbook on singling out minority drivers was written by the federal government” as part of the “war on drugs.”

In 1986, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) launched “Operation Pipeline,” enlisting police departments across the country to search for alleged drug traffickers on major highways. Since then the DEA and the Department of Transportation have financed a battery of programs instructing the police on the supposed ethnic and racial characteristics of “narcotics organizations.” Smacking of the Nazis’ racist stereotyping of “Jewish parasites,” the DEA singled out people with dreadlocks and asserted that Latinos and West Indians dominated the drug trade. The Mafia and the CIA dominate

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Massacre of Leftist Prisoners in Turkey



Reuters

Army helicopter over Istanbul’s Umraniye prison on December 21, as government readied murderous assault on leftist hunger strikers. December 1 protest in solidarity with hunger strikers featured photo of dead prisoner.



AP

We publish below an article written by our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany.

On December 19, Turkish troops, gendarmes and police units launched a bloody attack on 28 prisons at which over a thousand Turkish and Kurdish leftists were on a hunger strike, killing scores of prisoners and injuring many more. The hunger strike started on October 20 in protest against the government’s planned transfer of prisoners from the old, dormitory-style prisons—in which leftist prisoners had some group solidarity and protection—to the new “F-type” isolation prisons where they are likely to be cruelly tortured and killed with impunity by prison guards, essentially buried

For International Protest!

alive. Although the government recently announced an amnesty law to reduce Turkey’s growing prison population, it doesn’t apply to leftist political prisoners. The prisoners demanded the abolition of Turkey’s anti-terror law and the closure of the state security prisons. On November 19, one hundred of the prisoners decided to go on a death fast, refusing even to drink anything except water.

In its murderous attack, cynically code-named “Operation Return to Life,” the government arrayed helicopters, tanks and bulldozers against the cell blocks of

leftist prisoners. In the attack on the Bayrampasa prison in Istanbul, so much tear gas was fired that it affected journalists three kilometers [two miles] away from the site! The military fired automatic rifles at the prisoners and launched tear gas, smoke bombs and gas grenades into the cells.

In cities throughout Turkey, thousands demonstrated to show their solidarity with the prisoners. The police brutally waded into these protests, arresting many people. Prisoners’ family members, demanding to know what was happening to

their relatives were arrested and brutally beaten up. The Turkish police are notoriously infested with the fascist terrorist Grey Wolves, a group

openly linked to the ruling party, the MHP [Nationalist Action Party]. These protests, in defiance of the right-wing police state and in open solidarity with leftist political prisoners, are a significant development.

At the time of the Turkish government’s arrest of Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Öcalan in February 1999, the country was swept by huge chauvinist demonstrations, emboldening the Grey Wolves. But the Grey Wolves are not only deadly enemies of the

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