

BLACK LIBERATION JOURNAL



TRIPLE-LAYERED CRISIS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY

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THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT

An Editorial

Last month the world viewed on the media scenes of a community in ruins. The photos, however, were not taken in Beirut, nor in any of the other war-torn areas from which we have come to expect such scenes. No, they were taken in the Constitution State and its City of Brotherly Love, a cradle of this nation's finest traditions.

The scene was the aftermath of a police bombing that horrifyingly symbolizes the danger that lies ahead unless the criminal lawlessness and racist repression of this nation's police forces are checked. The bombing and subsequent fire that took the lives of 11 people, including four children, and destroyed two blocks of a Black workingclass community should alarm all democratic-minded people. This wanton act represents a new dangerous level of state terror.

Throughout the history of this country Black and workingclass communities have been the targets of police raids and varied assaults. However, never in U.S. history has a community been subjected to such barbaric destruction. Guilty of no crime save being a "menace to the community" 11 men, women and children were brutally incinerated and 260 people rendered homeless.

The Philadelphia assault represents the reaping of the bitter harvest of seeds sown by the Reagan administration. It represents a most crude attempt at mimicking the so-called anti-terrorist campaign of Reagan's Justice and State Departments. These are the policies espoused by George Shultz and Edwin Meese and embodied in a president who preaches hate and contempt for Afro-Americans, whose foreign policies threaten the world with nuclear incineration, and who kneel at the gravesite of fascists.

What can one expect from a Ronald Reagan? This action is consistent with the policies of an administration that embraces and finances cutthroats, fascists and terrorists throughout the world from Nicaragua — whose counter-revolutionaries the president has likened to our founding fathers — to the Federal Republic of Germany, where the president recently honored Hitler's elite murderers, to Spain about which Reagan declared that the vets who fought and died with the Republicans "fought on the

wrong side."

The Philadelphia attack cannot be separated from the broader Reaganite assault on Afro-Americans on the streets, in their homes, in their workplaces and in the courts. The administration has attempted — as its first line of attack — to strip Afro-Americans of their most basic rights, with the gains of all working people as its ultimate aim. It shamelessly brings suit to restrict civil rights gains rather than extend them.

Thus, it is not surprising that, upon creating an atmosphere of contempt for Black, Latino, and other nationally and racially oppressed people, racist assaults have increased dramatically and with them the assaults on working people as a whole. The police departments in all the major cities have become the stormtroopers of Reaganism and the sanctuary for racist and neo-nazis.

As the facts unfold it becomes clear that this was a premeditated murder enacted upon innocent people as an experiment in terror. No amount of coverup or attempts to portray the victims as "terrorists" can hide the fact that this was a conspiracy involving the police, firemen and members of the city administration.

The murderers didn't care who was hurt or killed, whether they were innocent or guilty. Announcing the policy of the Reagan administration against terrorism, George Shultz, secretary of state, stated just one day before the bombing, that it was expected that innocent people would be killed in order to carry out the aims of the administration in combating terrorism.

It was known by the police that the children in the house had to leave everyday at a certain time. They made the decision not to wait and consequently four children are now dead. Mayor Goode stated one day before the bombing that there would be trouble and he hoped the children would not be hurt. The point is that even the slightest possibility of people being killed, especially children, should have prevented any action by the police.

It was a conspiracy pure and simple. The police claimed that all steps had been taken to evict the mem-

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Editorial Board

Charlene Mitchell, Editor

Robert Lindsay, Associate Editor

Ted Bassett, Pat Barile, J.J. Johnson, Kevin Mercadel

Production and Layout

Dolores Dwyer, Laura Dennison

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ETHIOPIA FACES THE NEW DAWN

By Henry Winston

Ethiopia is an ancient land consisting of a courageous and proud people who have never been subdued by a foreign conqueror. It has maintained its independence throughout its history even as Africa was being conquered by foreign imperialism and nations were turned into colonial vassals of the imperialist powers.

Ethiopia is a shining example in the fight against imperialism and racism. Existing for more than 3,000 years, long before Christ, it belies the racist slander of those who say Black people are inferior. It has made a tremendous contribution to the development of culture, science, and engineering.

Ethiopia some 11 years ago undertook the task of responding to the new dawn that was arising, the task of revolutionary development.

In 1974 a spontaneous rebellion developed among the people in response to rising gasoline prices. A powerful movement was set in motion that touched the hearts and minds of an entire people. What began as a strike by taxi drivers was engulfed by other sectors and classes of the population, each current bringing into the stream its own demands. Unrest broke out in the armed forces and its demands were merged with others. This movement spread to the countryside and embraced the mass of the peasantry, the majority of the population.

This spontaneous rebellion developed into a popular uprising against the monarchy, feudalism and marginal slavery — the second and third stages of social systems in human history. It grew into a movement against bureaucratic capitalism in Ethiopia.

At one fell swoop whole systems of society, long doomed by history, were erased. They were systems of society that should have long ago ceased to exist and been relegated to the museum of history. The revolution in Ethiopia put the country on a different road, one that leads to complete liberation from poverty and misery, and away from the worn path where for centuries the few

had enjoyed riches only because the many were denied the most elementary necessities of life.

The world community is expressing unparalleled humanity in its response to the drought and famine in Ethiopia. U.S. imperialism, always opposed to the needs and demands of the world population, seeks to use the drought to strangle the revolution.

Basic to heightening the activity of our people in support of the courageous people of Ethiopia and the historic trail they have embarked upon is the refutation of the lies that are consciously organized by the ultra-right think-tanks in the U.S. to create difficulties for the revolutionary government of Ethiopia.

ARCHBISHOP O'CONNOR AND THE POLITICS OF HUNGER

Archbishop John O'Connor went to Ethiopia and said, "Ideology need not hinder efforts to make Ethiopia's 42 million people self-sufficient in food. I know that there is a politic of hunger, but hunger knows no politics." He was apparently referring to policy differences with Marxist Ethiopia's refusal to allow "safe passage" of relief goods into rebel areas as requested by the U.S. "Hunger knows only pain, sickness and death," he said in Makele, capital of the northern region of Tigre, a scene of a long struggle for secession.

It is necessary to respond directly to the statement of O'Connor, who, I doubt, has never been in Harlem where hunger knows no bounds and homelessness is rampant. Let him act and say whatever he will against hunger, but what does he mean when he says that there is such a thing as "politics of hunger," but "hunger knows only pain."

O'Connor would have one believe that the victims of imperialist greed do not know that the drought and famine result from policies and practices of a system concerned only with profits. He states this in order to deny the class politics of transnational corporations.

O'Connor obviously feels that he is speaking to a humanity that is stupid. To hide his real motives, he speaks ever so innocently of the need for "safe passage"

Henry Winston is the national chairman of the Communist Party, USA. He and Fern Winston were selected by the Political Bureau to attend the Founding Congress of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia and the 10th Anniversary of the Revolution.

to the north part of Eritrea or to those areas where the rebels are to be found. He wants to deny the existence of the Ethiopian government to bypass it. He would overlook many victims of hunger and famine in order to announce with his blessings the rebels who are conducting counter-revolutionary warfare to overthrow the Ethiopian government.

Haile Mengistu Mariam, president of Ethiopia, was right when he said that difficulties with the U.S. did not begin with the drought. They began in 1974 with the establishment of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia whose very existence was anti-imperialist. U.S. military bases were eliminated and imperialism was checked in its aim to extend its rule over any and every thing anti-imperialist, socialist or socialist-oriented.

The world must know the role that Ethiopia is now playing in the fight for peace in the world and the fight for liberation in general.

The response of the U.S. people shows their humanitarian instinct. Any and all efforts to curb it by the false propaganda of anti-Communists have not been successful. The religious movement of every denomination is acting in some way to supply relief. They are not satisfied and will not be satisfied so long as a single child is suffering from hunger, too hungry to cry.

Besides Ethiopia there are 27 other countries suffering from the drought and famine. This is, of course, a natural calamity. But science and technology have developed to the point where the impact of natural disasters can be dealt with. Therefore the responsibility for allowing the suffering to continue has to be placed upon those who have the power to change things: U.S. and world imperialism.

'MORALITY' OF IMPERIALISM

O'Connor is not the only one who would use the famine to feather the political nest of imperialism. Flora Lewis, who represents the military-industrial complex, also sees the "politics of hunger," and, like O'Connor, she cloaks it in moral concerns.

In *The New York Times*, November 17, 1984, she wrote:

"The disaster famine in Ethiopia represents a moral problem for people who are not hungry. The regime of Mengistu has spent over \$100,000,000 [for the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the revolution] and has created an Eastern-style monopoly Communist Party with important help from East Germany and Bulgaria. The Eastern countries have substantial influence, but they have not used it to moderate a brutal, bloody regime that is now seeking to control for its own purposes the flow of

food that a compassionate world is trying to send to its people.

"There are three reasons for this. 1) The Ethiopian government wants to use the famine to weaken rebellious forces in the civil war in Eritrea, Tigre, and Ogaden; 2) to cream off money and use aid to gain influence; 3) bureaucratic infighting and incompetence typical of authoritarian regimes."

As we see, imperialism is interested in morality. Ms. Lewis argues that aid to Ethiopia will be a test of morality. A test of whom and by whom? It is a test for imperialism and more specifically U.S. imperialism. To Ms. Lewis who speaks for the military-industrial complex, morality is not a question of food. It becomes a question of morality of the East and the morality of the West. To her the regime that was established in Addis Abbaba is brutal and ruthless, "typical" of an "authoritarian regime" which functions along the line of Bulgaria.

What is the role of Flora Lewis? She says two things here and I will allow you to judge her credibility. She argues that for the 10th anniversary \$100,000,000 were spent. In an article in *New World Review*, Tesfatsion Medhanie exposed this brazen untruth. The money spent for the anniversary celebrations, he pointed out, was less than \$2 million. She spreads this falsity to put in the minds of the people that this "ruthless and brutal" regime cares nothing about the victims of the disaster. Why such a lie?

She argues that a Communist Party was created in Ethiopia. This argument from a supposedly intelligent woman. She writes as if she is an authority with access to all the facts.

The Ethiopians, however, did not create a Commu-



Housing construction in Addis Ababa.

ADN



Kindergarten in Asmara.

ADN

nist Party. This was never their intention. Why does she do this? Ms. Lewis' objective is to discredit the Ethiopian government thereby legitimizing support for organized movements to overthrow the present government in Ethiopia. That is her role despite her attempts to present herself to the world as being objective.

Daily World correspondent William Pomeroy wrote about the British minister in charge of aid for Ethiopia, who publicly stated that Britain and the U.S. undertook a program to deliberately withhold aid from Ethiopia. He knew that lurking behind the anger of the people of Ethiopia toward the monarchy ruling class was the drought of 1972-73 when 200,000 people died. This contributed to the overthrow of the Haile Selassie regime. The minister argued that if that happened with Selassie then the withholding of aid may now bring down the present government in Ethiopia.

In its attempt to strangle the Ethiopian revolution, U.S. imperialism seeks to make use of the Hincerloop-er admendment, which was made into law in 1963, to deny U.S. government aid to Ethiopia. This admendment bars aid to any country that nationalizes private property.

REAL ASSISTANCE

If one wishes to deepen assistance to the Ethiopian people suffering from a natural diaster and if one is concerned about morality of East and West, then consider these facts: warehouses in the U.S. are bulging with food, wheat and produce of every kind. There are billions of tons of food surpluses. Open up these warehouses. If one is sincerely interested in saving the lives of 7 million people, all that has to be done is to let this be known in Addis Abbaba. There will be no obstacle.

This would be fulfilling the wishes of the U.S. people, who are diametrically opposed to those representatives of the military-industrial complex in this country. Such an approach is in the best interest of our own coun-

try. It is a struggle against Reagan and Reaganism. This is the main thing.

At the congress one could see the unity between the Ethiopians and the people of the Soviet Union and the socialist countries, the liberation movements on the continents of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and the people of the metropolitan countries, including the U.S.

It is with shame that one witnesses the role of U.S. imperialism. Considering that there are 27 other countries facing the drought, there are 150,000,000 people facing natural disasters. Yet the warehouses are bulging with food. Is it any wonder African states, all progressive states, are demanding a new economic order.

It is reported in Ethiopia that the Ethiopian people hold high regard for the assistance that the socialist countries give them. "This assistance is qualified as the manifestation of truly fraternal solidarity at a trying time for socialist Ethiopia."

From the very beginning, the Soviet Union has rendered the greatest disinterested support in the form of food, trucks, helicopters and personnel.

It is a duty of all progressive forces and the labor movement in the U.S. to make the cause of the people of Ethiopia their cause. It is our cause because the technical backwardness of Ethiopia is due to the denial of technology by U.S. and world imperialism as they plunder the wealth of these countries while stealing and taking away money to the banks of Switzerland, London, Paris, Rome and to the coffers of Wall Street.

DEVELOPING A POLITICAL PARTY

For five years, the Ethiopians have been struggling for a political party. Faced with ideological debate over which social and economic path to take, over 900 organizations were established in the countryside. In discussion and debate, democracy was being introduced in practice for the first time. A most powerful peasant organization was created. A trade union movement was created. A revolutionary youth organization, a women's organization and an organization of defense was organized in every neighborhood, involving masses of people.

Before Mengistu assumed leadership of the Commission for Organizing the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia (COPWA), there was the Provisional Military Administrative Council in which different tendencies existed. One tendency represented those who sought to take advantage of the overthrow of the monarchy to create power among the old capitalist order. Masses saw that this was getting them nowhere and rejected it.

There was not a single political party in Ethiopia. There were all kinds of supposedly idealistic socialist

groups and there were conflicts. What was the debate? First, there was the question of what road to take to satisfy the fundamental interests of the people. This could not be the road of imperialism, which leads to neo-colonialism becoming the dominant form. But neither were the circumstances — political, economical and social — conducive for the Ethiopian people to take the road leading straight to socialism. They were singularly moved, however, by the lofty goals of abundance and happiness for the people and independence for the country from world imperialism.

But the Ethiopian people knew that the world situation was such that developing countries no longer had to rely solely on imperialism and capitalism. This is true because of October 1917 in the Soviet Union when real socialism was established for the first time in history.

THE CONGRESS

The representative of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, who spoke at the Congress, noted that Russia was in a situation similar to the Ethiopians after the revolution. The majority of peasantry in the country were technically underdeveloped. But the USSR is now a highly industrialized country and, as a result, many countries no longer are forced to go the capitalist route.

Ethiopia was not ready for socialism but the people wanted to take the socialist path. They therefore made a decision to establish a government that is socialist-oriented and which would erase all of the fetters of the

past, doing away completely with the personnel representing the old order and establishing a new state apparatus. This required industrializing the country, building up the countryside by removing landlord rule, nationalization, curbing foreign monopolies, and the education of the people along socialist lines. This would correspond with the objective conditions that now exist.

This is predicated on relations with the Soviet Union and the socialist countries.

The delegates were completely united around this program. Instead of socialist Ethiopia, it is now the Peoples Democratic Republic based on socialist orientation.

It is impossible to lead in such a direction and fight ideologically for such policies without a united party playing a vanguard role. Delegates agreed upon the rules of the Party. Delegates unanimously adopted, not on a Communist Party, but a workers party guided by the science of Marxism-Leninism.

All countries that have a socialist orientation are not on the same level. There are 10 such countries in Africa beginning with Algeria. It demonstrates that the masses of people are moving away from imperialism based on their national needs. This is quite different from such concepts as all-African etc.

The congress decided that the party must be one with the state. This achievement was more than a milestone. It spells a more rapid and speedy development. Achievement of the goals of the Ethiopian people are not so distant.



Tractors donated to the people of Ethiopia by the German Democratic Republic.

ADN

THE TRIPLE-LAYERED CRISIS AND THE FIGHT FOR EQUALITY

By Charlene Mitchell

The triple-layered crisis presents many new questions and new problems in the struggle for Afro-American equality. Here we discuss some of these questions, using as our point of reference the meeting of the Central Committee, CPUSA held in December 1984.

"The Party's assessments of political and ideological currents must be as scientific as possible to separate the reactionary sector from those who are influenced, often momentarily, by demagogic appeals based on a single issue. For instance, it is most important to be able to separate those who are conscious racists from those who are swayed by other issues that are related to racism. For example, in one case, workers said they were persuaded to vote for Reagan because of their fear of losing seniority rights. This is clearly related to racism. The Reagan campaign in one way or another worked to place all issues in a way to take advantage of racist influence.

"Most also agree that the elections do not in any way sustain the estimate of a popular right-wing political re-alignment. There was no swing to the right in mass thought patterns. The all-people's front against Reagan must be seen as the primary force that prevented the Reagan victory from becoming a victory for Reaganism." Gus Hall, *Fight-Back*.

CRISES REACH NEW LEVEL

Discussion takes place during a sharpening of the triple-layered crisis, a very important concept for understanding what is happening to Black people in our country today.

The triple-layered crisis is not one crisis sitting on top of another, but an inter-relationship among the general crisis of capitalism, the cyclical crisis and the continuing structural crisis, all of which have reached new levels.

Charlene Mitchell is a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party and secretary of the Afro-American Commission.

A Labor Department study shows that 11.5 million workers over 20 years of age suffered permanent job loss between January 1979 and January 1984. They are Black, white, Puerto Rican, Chicano, Native American and Asian-American workers.

The structural crisis, with its inherent unemployment, gives new meaning to the practices of "last hired and first hired."

Recent negotiations in the auto industry point to some of these problems. General Motors is opening its new plant, the Saturn project. It's a separate operation that will produce 30,000 cars a year, to compete with Japanese cars. There is to be a separate union contract.

Who will be hired in these new jobs? Will they be the same workers whom GM laid off before?

Who is being hired at the Toyota plant in California? Not the laid-off workers from the shutdown plants in that state. New Ford-Mazda plants are opening in Kentucky and Tennessee. Will laid off workers get those new jobs at the Saturn plant when it opens?

The meaning of "last hired and first fired" is even more significant since ever growing numbers of Black workers, and especially young Black workers, who have never had jobs, will not be going into these new plants. They are unemployed workers who will remain unemployed or underemployed over long periods of time.

In its attempt to divide the working class, the ruling class is using a new description of unemployed workers: "underclass." Workers who are unemployed because capitalism cannot put them to work are not lumpen. They are unemployed workers who must be organized.

The report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party analyzed the "right-wing shift" in the country:

"As is always the case with bourgeois electoral politics, the 1984 elections did not present the voters with any clearcut alternatives or viable solutions. Illusions and misconceptions about this class reality led to wrong assessments and inevitably to unwarranted pessimism. The 1984 elections can not be correctly assessed just by looking at Rea

gan's re-election. By itself it does not provide a rounded national electoral picture, nor does it properly estimate the political balance of power.

"The are many results that constitute an impressive counterweight to Reagan's re-election.

"In addition to Reagan's re-election, the ruling class and the Republican Party were out to win a landslide victory in the congressional and senatorial races and thus create a historic shift in political power. In this they failed. The composition of Congress remains about the same. The Reaganites also failed to win the governorships and the majorities in state legislatures they were after in spite of the well organized and superfunded ultra-right network. If the Reaganites had achieved their objectives there would have been a shift to the right. But this effort was turned back. The choices for leadership posts in the Senate and Republican caucuses are further indications of the resistance to the ultra-Right pressures."

ORGANIZED WORKERS VOTED AGAINST REAGAN

There are some who believe that organized workers — Black and white — bought Reagan's attempt to divide them. According to the breakdown of voting among AFL-CIO members in the Federationalist, 61 percent of all AFL-CIO members voted for Mondale, 39 percent for Reagan. By race, 94 percent of Black union members voted for Mondale, 6 percent for Reagan; 56 percent of white trade unionists voted for Mondale, 44 percent for Reagan.

These figures belie the argument that the majority of organized labor voted for Reagan. We can't accept that argument. To put white workers outside the framework of organized labor undermines the role of organized labor and the importance of organizing the unorganized.

'MIDDLE CLASS — UNDERCLASS'

Another important element in the arsenal of the Reaganites is the idea that "Blacks have made it," that Blacks have entered the middle class in such large numbers that there is no need for affirmative action. Indeed, according to the Reaganites such large numbers of Blacks have entered the middle class that the "underclass" could become workers if they would only accept the new fact of life: that workers have no entitlements. If they are willing to accept the subminimum wage, if they are willing to accept non-union jobs and to help break unions, they may get jobs for short periods of time.

The concept of an "underclass" implies that Black people are criminals. Bernhard Goetz is one of the results of such thinking: "If all Black people tend to be

criminals and if they are not working, then it is all right for them to be shot." And moreover, they become targets for racist police. Nationally more than 600 people a year are killed by police, double the rate three years ago.

The homeless grow as gentrification proceeds. These and other problems develop as a result of the growing structural crisis, even during an "upturn" in an economy that continues to be shaky and which will probably go into another cyclical crisis.

The report to the Central Committee concludes:

"Thus the economy will be the focus of the struggles and debates for the coming period. As millions wake up from the economic mirage to the harsh cold economic realities as the economic mirage turns into an economic desert, millions will be ready to move into action against Reaganomics II. But the fightback will be effective only if the sectors of the all-people's front can be organized and united into a single fist. As a result of its new role in the all-people's front the Communist Party now has a new role to play in the planning, organizing and uniting of Fightback II."

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

High on the agenda are the movements around South Africa. Reagan's constructive engagement is more quickly becoming uncovered. The Free South Africa movement is playing an important role. In a recent issue of Amsterdam News there is an article entitled, "Unions Step Up Apartheid Fight." It contains a most impressive list of people attending a conference to discuss support for the movement against apartheid. The participants included Barry Feinstein, president of Local 237 of Teamsters; Mary Futrell, president of NEA; Victor Gotbaum, executive director, District 37 of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; William Lucy, president, Coalition of Black Trade Unionist; Henry Nichols, president, National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees, 1199; Jan Pierce, assistant to the vice-president, District 1, Communications Workers of America; Cleveland Robinson, secretary-treasurer of District 65, United Auto Workers; Marc Stepp, vice-president, United Auto Workers; Richard Trumka, president, United Mine Workers, and William Winpisinger, president, International Association of Machinists.

That shows a new level of struggle — a coalition of trade unionists united against apartheid.

For the first time, a bill has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Kennedy (D-Mass) calling for sanctions against South Africa. Similar bills have been introduced in the House.

There are many questions: Will this struggle be won this year? Will the work of the Free South Africa movement make that possible? What is needed now to add to the Free South Africa movement? What is needed to add to the tremendously important role of the trade union movement and to that of Congress? What is needed is a clearly directed anti-imperialist movement that will lead and be involved in these struggles.

There are any number of questions that are being raised. Manning Marble has written a book called "Underdevelopment of Black America." In essence, this theory is somewhat like the "internationalizing the struggle" theory: Black people are an undeveloped colony in the U.S. and, therefore, must be developed as a nation distinct from that of the nation of the U.S.

BLACK-WHITE UNITY IS KEY

Preparations have begun for municipal elections in 1987. One such election will be in Chicago where the reelection of Mayor Harold Washington will be a key aspect of the struggle to defeat Council leader Ed Vrdoylak and the 29 aldermen who are holding up any progress in that city.

Important now is the mayoral election in New York City. There are two questions: Can Koch be defeated in New York? If so, how? New York is extremely important because what happens there will influence future coalitions between the labor movement, the Afro-American people and the movement among Hispanics.

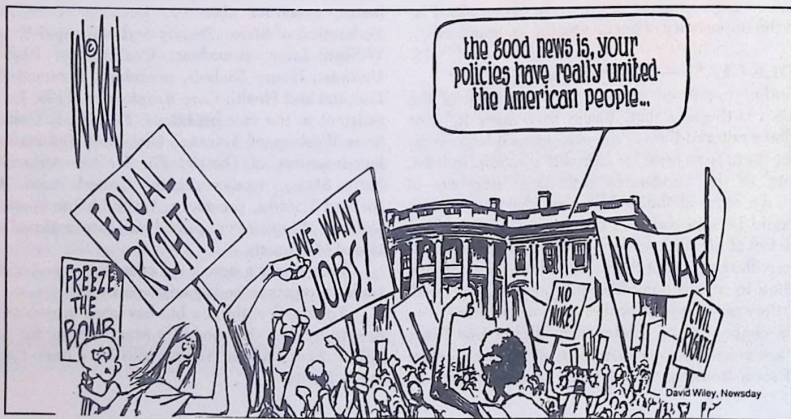
To achieve progress in the struggle for Black equality, there must be Black-white unity, in the first place,

unity of Black and white workers. The relationship between the Black people's movement for equality and the labor movement is absolutely essential.

No amount of disgust with the labor movement is going to make the battle any easier. There is no going around it by "internationalizing the struggle." The struggle for Black equality must take place within the U.S. but there will be allies in the three currents of the world revolutionary process. The struggle for equality of Black people in the U.S. is something that has to be accomplished by the unity of our class and our people in our country.

How to achieve this very important alliance between the Black people's movement and the labor movement is something that Communists must understand well. If we do not, we will be caught in a situation in which desperation and frustration will be the rule of the day in the movements of Afro-Americans, at a time when victory in those struggles becomes more possible.

In the 11-point program developed at the Party's Milwaukee conference we called for public ownership under eminent domain; special training in high technology skills, particularly for Black and other oppressed youth; and for opening the building trades unions to Afro-Americans, Puerto Rican and Chicano workers as a step toward rebuilding the cities. None of these are final solutions, but they begin to open the possibility of achieving greater victories in the struggle for equality and therefore greater victories in the workingclass movement as a whole.



THE FIGHT FOR EQUALITY AND WORKINGCLASS UNITY

By Scott Marshall

The structural crisis has a big impact on the working class and the labor movement, especially the basic industrial workers. Plant closings, layoffs, automation and computerization have hit hardest in the basic smokestack industries. This has resulted in a severe decline in union membership in the industrial unions.

The industrial workers hardest hit by the structural crisis are the Afro-American workers. The monopoly corporations which dominate these basic industries have fought tooth and nail to retain racist hiring, promotion and layoff policies. These discriminatory practices result in job losses for Afro-American workers far out of proportion to their numbers. They are also the framework for similar discrimination against other nationally and racially oppressed workers and women.

Historically Black workers have never started out, due to years of discrimination and oppression, on the same rung of the economic ladder as white workers. The Reagan administration's all-out offensive to abolish affirmative action, combined with the racist cutting edge of the budget cuts, has led to a dramatic increase in the income gap between Black and white workers.

The objective of the Reagan administration, which represents the extreme right of monopoly capital, is to shift the crisis on to the backs of the workers and to use racism to prevent an effective fightback. The crisis in the basic industries hits the Afro-American community as a whole particularly hard because of the overwhelming workingclass make up of the Afro-American people. Some of the best jobs available for Black workers have been in those basic industries hardest hit by the crisis such as steel and auto. All of Reagan's economic policies, however, result in increased exploitation and decline in living standards for the working class.

The devastating impact of the structural crisis points to the fundamental basis for the unity between Black and white workers who have a common interest — a class interest — in fighting the monopolies. The clearest expression of this common class interest is in the basic in-

dustries where the multi-national, multi-racial, male and female industrial workers most directly confront monopoly capitalist exploitation. This is also the objective basis for unity between the labor movement and the Afro-American community.

COMMON EXPLOITATION IS BASIS FOR UNITY

It is the concentration of Afro-American people in the working class and particularly in the basic industries that makes Black-white unity so central to the fightback. The class struggle, workers versus the bosses, them and us, is most clear in these basic monopolized industries. And it is in these situations that white workers, even those influenced by the bosses racist ideology, most often see their class interests in the struggle for unity.

HEART OF LABOR IS ORGANIZED SECTOR

The heart of the labor movement in the U.S. is its organized sectors. Though more than 80 percent of the working class is unorganized, the highest degree of unionization is in these basic smokestack industries. It is important to note that the industrial unions, with whatever weaknesses they may have, are the largest mass organizations of the working class. They are also, again despite problems and shortcomings, the mass organizations which most closely reflect the true multi-national, multi-racial, male-female composition of the U.S. working class.

While there is an objective basis for unity, class consciousness does not arise spontaneously. It is the role of the Left and of the Communist Party in particular to help develop class consciousness in the working class.

The ruling class — the monopoly capitalists and their servants, the Reaganites — have powerful weapons to blunt class consciousness. First they deny that classes exist. "We're all in this together, limited only by our talent, hard work and luck," we are constantly told. Labor-management committees, employee ownership plans, and profit sharing schemes are just a few of the devices used to blur class differences.

Scott-Marshall is the secretary of the Labor Department of the Communist Party USA.

Racism is the primary ideology and practice used to blur class relations and distinctions. Not understanding the class roots and origin of racism, many white workers under its influence identify with the ruling class along racial lines. Therefore, because one of the main thrusts of racism is to confuse class issues, the most effective way to fight racism is from a class struggle point of view. This is what differentiates a Communist approach from one based only on morality.

Without linking racism to the class question, or, more precisely, to the class enemy - monopoly capital - racism is seen only in terms of Black people versus white people, exactly the way the ruling class would have it. This results in an abstract and subjective approach to fighting racism which concentrates on how workers feel about one another.

A class struggle approach to unity and equality identifies the main proponents of racism, and makes specific and concrete demands aimed at making the bosses pay. These demands include specific affirmative action programs with quotas and time tables. These demands include a vigorous fight for jobs with programs aimed at providing first for those communities hardest hit by the crisis.

The class conscious forces must also fight the effects of racism within the class. This includes fighting for greater representation and leadership roles for Black workers in the unions. This is not just a fight for the rights of a section of the working class victimized by racism. It is a fight to strengthen the working class by bringing forward the strength of a vital section of that class. This struggle for democracy is a struggle for the whole class. The struggle for equality is one of extending democracy and unifying the class in the fight against the bosses.

Some of the greatest gains made in forging class unity have been in the context of rising class battles. The major breakthroughs in the unions came during the organizing of the CIO. The struggle against the open shop was conditioned upon the fight for equality and Black-white unity. Unity was advanced in the context of a major step forward for the whole working class. It was a conscious fight led by the Communists and the Left to make the fight against Jim Crow part and parcel of the fight for industrial unionism.

Openly racist ideas are becoming less and less acceptable in the working class and in the labor movement. And while large sections of the class are still influenced by the bosses' use of racism, open expressions are less and less tolerated. The organized labor movement is less hesitant in raising questions of equality and discrimination.

This does not mean that the ruling class gives up its open appeal to racism, but it does mean that the big business think tanks work overtime to come up with new ways of injecting the poison. Often these new ways include pushing new theories that do not sound racist but nevertheless aim at creating splits in the working class.

Lenin in his polemics against opportunism, pointed out that the petty bourgeois elements are often the carriers of such ideas in the workingclass movement. We might loosely refer to them as middle class elements. These middle class elements are often fertile grounds for opportunist ideas about the working class because of their basic discomfort with workers. For many it is an outright fear.

Among such petty bourgeois radicals there is always openness to "new" theories that change or revise Marxism in order that some class other than the working class is the key revolutionary force. Such "theories" are often presented in high sounding, sophisticated Marxist terminology. Some of them are very glib and bristle with passages which "render Marx more profound."

DISTORTION OF LENIN'S THEORY OF LABOR ARISTOCRACY

Some on the petty bourgeois left who have read Lenin have "rediscovered" the "Leninist theory of labor aristocracy." They have found sections in "Leftwing Communism: An Infantile Disorder" and some other places where Lenin speaks of the "labor aristocracy" or what Daniel DeLeon called the "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class" in the United States.

Ironically in most of these passages Lenin is polemicizing against those who called themselves communists in his time but refused to get fully involved with the trade unions because of the backward leadership of those organizations. In other writings, he is polemicizing against those who did not see the role of a Leninist party of the new type in working with the trade unions, while at the same time realizing their limitations.

The "new" theory goes something like this: A sizable section of the U.S. working class is bought off by the fruits of imperialism. That is, the ruling class and the monopoly corporations bribe large sections of the class, and particularly skilled white workers, with profits made by imperialism. These workers are bribed into supporting monopoly and become a base for opportunism and support for imperialism in the working class. The theory holds that by and large the bribed workers are the skilled white males in the industrial and building trades unions, and are in the top pay scales.

Furthermore, they reason, until Communists recognize this basic "backwardness" of so large a section of

the working class, we are doomed to unrealistic estimates of the strength and political awareness of the working class. We will fail to see that these workers have an interest in siding with monopoly.

Of course Lenin's concept of the labor aristocracy has nothing in common with the "rediscovered" version. Lenin said in his "Report at the Second All Union Trade

Only a small upper section were members, and of them only a very few were lured over and bribed by the capitalist to take their place in capitalist society as workers's leaders. The American socialists call these people labor lieutenants of the capitalist class. In that country of the freest bourgeois culture, in that most democratic of bourgeois republics, they saw most clear the role played by this tiny upper section of the proletariat who had virtually entered the service of the bourgeoisie as its deputies, who were bribed and bought by it... (my emphasis)."

We must keep in mind that at the time that Lenin wrote this there was no CIO or mass industrial unions in the basic industries of the United States. There were small craft unions of the AFL that organized only the most highly skilled workers. In many cases these unions were used to stop industrial unionism and to keep other workers in line. Most of these unions espoused the most narrow, prejudiced craft unionist mentality, and yet even here Lenin says only a "very few," a "tiny few." could be called labor aristocracy.

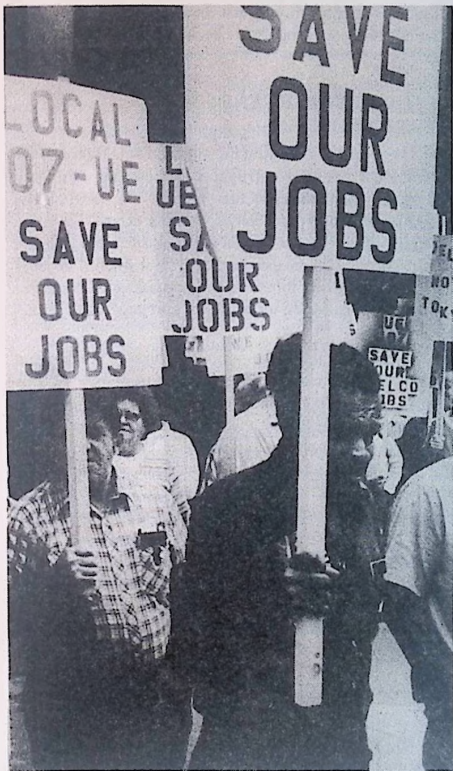
Clearly, Lenin's concept of labor aristocracy embraced only those tiny few who enter into the direct "service of the bourgeoisie as its deputies." Lane Kirkland could be considered in that light with his direct work with the CIA, and his soliciting of funds from Congress to support CIA efforts in undermining trade union movements around the world. But we could not even consider most of the AFL-CIO Executive Board the same way. Lenin never had any concept of giving up sizeable sections of the industrial proletariat to the class enemy.

DISTORTIONS AID REAGAN'S STRATEGY

Of course, the question here is not just who does or does not understand Lenin. The question is, where does this distortion of Lenin's thinking take us today. What's behind this "new" theory and what does it mean for trade union work under current conditions.

By lumping such a large section of the industrial proletariat into this aristocracy category, the basis is established for "official pessimism." Sections of the working class are written off. This "theory" plays right into the Reagan strategy.

This so-called theory not only disarms the workingclass movement in the fight for these workers and against racism, but it blinds us to new developments within the class and the unions. Holders of these ideas also see nothing new and developing in the labor movement. All they can see is "backwardness", "sluggishness," "conservatism" and "chauvinism." They therefore



Union Congress," January 20, 1919:

"The trade unions have never embraced more than one fifth of the wage-workers in capitalist society, even under the most favorable circumstances, even in the most advanced countries, after decades and sometimes centuries of development of bourgeois-democratic civilization and culture.

are unable to give an accurate assessment of new directions that can be built upon by the Left in the labor movement.

Just to give one important example. How can one explain the fact that all the basic industrial unions are on record for a nuclear freeze with the Soviet Union? Even a cold warrior like Kirkland has been forced to retreat on this issue and admit that a majority of union members support the nuclear freeze.

This false concept of the labor movement in the U.S. challenges the very essence of Marxism-Leninism, it challenges the revolutionary potential and historic mission of the working class. Those who push the labor aristocracy theory write articles bristling with references to workers and the working class, but the bottom line is lack of confidence that large sections of white workers can be won to the struggle for equality and to class consciousness. It is a surrender to racist ruling class ideology.

The labor aristocracy theory in its "new" form diminishes the key role of the industrial proletariat, and casts about for other sections of the working class to concentrate on. Most often the call is to work among the unorganized, the unemployed and the lowest paid workers. How can anyone object? No group in the United States has paid more attention to organizing the unorganized, the unemployed or the underemployed than the Communist Party. This work, however, does not take the place of concentrating among the basic workers.

Any theory that shifts the focus from industrial workers does not recognize the special role of Afro-American workers. It downplays the key position Black workers occupy in the working class and particularly in its industrial proletariat core. Black workers do not help organize local unions and run for leadership positions in order to write off large sections of white workers. Afro-American workers have consistently brought the fight for

affirmative action and equality to their unions and to the rest of the working class.

This "theory" fosters divisions in the working class. It provides a radical sounding cover as it gives up the fight against racism and abandons the fight for class unity. To proclaim such a theory that in effect says that many white workers have material interest in supporting ruling class racism does much damage to the building of alliances between labor and the Afro-American community.

MONOPOLY TIGHTENS SCREWS ON ALL WORKERS

The world is shrinking for imperialism. Victories for the national liberation struggles around the world are forcing the monopolies to turn inward and increase the rate of exploitation of its "own" working class. This is the meaning of the Reagan union-busting offensive and the all-out corporate concession drive. The overall general crisis of capitalism forces the monopolies to turn the screws ever tighter on all workers, and especially industrial workers.

At the time when the mood of workers is changing toward militant class struggle the proponents of this "theory" would write them off. Workers are more and more moving into sharp struggles. Automation and computerization is downgrading many of the skilled trades and shrinking wage differentials. A good example is what's happening to skilled machinists. These workers are losing the clout they once had to demand better wages and working conditions. The structural crisis is driving many of them into lower paying jobs.

There is growing evidence that these workers are ready to fight back. How else would we explain the tremendous mobilization of the building trades unions for Labor Day parades and their participation in "Dump Reagan" rallies?

Those who espouse the concept of labor aristocracy would probably explain it the same way they explain the unity and militancy these workers display in strikes and job actions. "Sure they'll fight to defend their own jobs and pocketbooks," they sneer. They should be reminded, however, that defending jobs and pocketbooks is the heart of class struggle trade unionism. A common defense of jobs and working conditions is the material basis for greater struggle against racism and other divisions in the working class. Class struggle trade unionism not only requires higher and higher levels of unity, but it is the most fertile ground for that unity.



THE ULTRA RIGHT GIVING AID TO APARTHEID

By Robert Lindsay

Soon after Reagan was elected to a second term he was hit with an outpouring of demonstrations against his policy of "constructive engagement" toward the apartheid regime of South Africa. What began as a civil disobedience resulting in arrest at the South African Embassy and Consulates has swelled to boycotts by dockworkers and sit-ins by students at university after university. Coalitions and alliances of labor, Afro-Americans, and other nationally oppressed people, Jews, students, seniors and professionals are being revived on a new level with the trade unions playing a leading role. Even Lane Kirkland of the AFL-CIO has joined in the demonstrations. City councils and legislative bodies of states have come out for divestiture in companies doing business with South Africa.

Reagan came to office denouncing the Carter administration foreign policy that supposedly was based on "human rights." Rejecting human rights as a criterion of relations between the U.S. and other states, Reagan advocated "constructive engagement" with apartheid. "Change will come as a result of constructive criticism to influence apartheid." It is nothing less than a call for an open alliance with the the most brutal, racist regime in the world today. It is a policy carved to fit the needs of the ultra right in its thrust for U.S. world domination. Though, according to them, apartheid may be obnoxious, "constructive engagement" is necessary for Western civilization's grand alliance against "world Communism." It is a right-wing doctrine that legitimizes the South African apartheid regime's oppression of the Black majority and its brutal aggression against Mozambique, Angola and the frontline states.

A CRUEL HOAX

Reagan's policy has aroused the anger, bitterness and hatred of the U.S. people, who now see "constructive engagement" as a cruel hoax that insults the intelligence. Far from changing apartheid, it encourages it.

The ideological and propaganda machinery of U.S. and world imperialism has shifted to high gear to stem the tide of protest against this policy. For what is being

challenged is not just the Reagan administration policy toward South Africa, but the ideological basis of the whole foreign policy of the ultra right which is based on aggression, military intervention and nuclear confrontation. The arguments in support of apartheid are the same used to justify intervention in Nicaragua and El Salvador, support for Pinochet in Chile, and the overthrow of little Grenada.

Seeing their foreign policy under attack from every corner of the globe, the Reaganites are scraping off old ideological rocks and scratching new surfaces with the hope of uncovering some thing prop up their position. They have come up with the most crude form of anti-Sovietism and anti-Communism. They have resurrected the fossilized arguments, whih justified and upheld the brutality of colonialist exploitation and snaked-oiled them with the stench of the ultra right.

As the enslavers, murderers and rapists went deep into Africa, Asia, and Latin America, racist ideology was born to dust the blood from their trail. Aided by "science," corrupted politicians and priests and popes alike, they were able to make racism a divine law and the whip and gun were the rod and staff of oppression as never before witnessed by humankind. Racism was the holy water, the oil that annointed murders and rapists. It was sprinkled throughout Europe and the U.S. for baptism in crime and forgiveness in sin.

The main premise of racism is supremacy of race over race, of white over Black. To sell their ideological wares, the colonizers created the lie that their deeds were good and humane, in the interest of the colonized. They were Christianizing the "barbarians." For centuries they maintained that the oppressed didn't merit democracy, freedom and independence. Therefore, for centuries millions were murdered.

Repentance came in 1917 with the Great October Revolution in Russia followed by world retribution in the wake of World War II. When the working class seized power in 1917 in Russia, for the first time the colonized nations had an ally, and the worldwide solidarity movement was now able to transform its moral indignation

into material aid. The front of imperialist collaborators was broken and international prestige was added to the demands and outcries of the colonized nations for justice and independence.

Following World War II, after the rout of fascist Germany by the allied forces with the Soviet Union bearing the brunt of the fight, the socialist community of states was born and imperialism lost its haughtiness and its insolent swagger. The countries not liberated by the Red Army and the national liberation forces during the war, won their independence afterwards with the timely aid of the socialist community. Overweight lords of colonialism were kicked out of India, China, Vietnam and many other colonized nations. Most of the African nations won their independence in the 1960s.

BULWARK OF REACTION

South Africa is the bulwark of reaction in Africa. It is the last vestige of colonialism. Following World War II it has figured significantly in world imperialism's strategic scheme of "containing Communism." It is a dagger pointed at Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and all the progressive countries in Southern Africa. South Africa, along with Israel, is part of an unholy reactionary alliance with U.S. imperialism to overthrow progressive governments in Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. It is a conduit for illegal arms to counter revolutionaries everywhere. To welcome it into the strategic club as outpost for world imperialism, it, along with Israel, has been granted access to the most sophisticated weapons, including nuclear weapons.

For decades now, world imperialism has wrestled with how to bring South Africa into a defacto alliance against progressive developing countries and assuage world public opinion at the same time. Its dream has been and still is to pull together a South Atlantic Treaty Organization, a southern counterpart to NATO, with South Africa playing a central role.

So, we see that South Africa figures heavily in the strategic plans of the ultra right for world domination, which includes rolling back the borders of socialism and re-establishing the old relations with the developing countries with imperialism as the top dog. South Africa, however, is not just a military outpost for world imperialism. It is also the strategic supplier of rare mineral resources needed for weapons of modern warfare. It is a source for cheap labor and huge profits for multi-national corporations. Slopping at the trough of apartheid, are the Pentagon, international corporations, anti-Communists and shameless advocates of racism.

This is the logic for the open alliance with apartheid. The question is how to sell it to the U.S. people. A

massive public relations campaign was organized, including a tour of Europe by Botha, in which he met with heads of states such as Prime Minister Thatcher, who would meet with the devil if he would cover up his horns. Each attempt at "humanizing" apartheid however, was met with increasing struggles of the liberation forces in South Africa. The Soviet Union and the socialist community and the developing countries have time and again placed the inhuman deeds of apartheid before the United Nations. Each time South Africa was censured with more resolution and determination. The world witnessed the true nature of Reaganism after the U.S. became the only country to veto proposed actions against South Africa.

Like a sagging blob of fat, the right-wing ideologues keep trying to tuck the rolls under its belt. Left exposed, they have reached into the graves of colonialism for salvation.

PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR BOTHA

Moved by the need to be "objective" CBS's 60 Minutes Magazine with Maurice Safer went to South Africa to interview, not the fighters against apartheid, but its main propagator and spokesperson, Prime Minister Botha.

With Botha narrating, Safer showed in graphic color the "contrast" between newly independent African countries and South Africa. On the one side is famine and hunger, lawlessness and endless coups. On the other there is the beautiful, idyllic South Africa, the shining outpost of democracy, freedom and wealth, where, believe it or not, there is relative peace and happiness between the majority Black South Africans and the white minority that rules. If the viewer did not accept the argument that apartheid is changing, he was left with the agonizing conclusion that Black majority rule would only lead to chaos, barbarity, and a destruction of democracy and "Western civilization."

In a letter to the New York Daily News, H.M. Laird from Kew Gardens, Queens, presented similar arguments. Criticizing the Rev. Jesse Jackson for organizing protests against the conditions of Blacks in South Africa, Laird stated that the "truth is that Jackson and most Black leaders don't have the guts to criticize a Black nation when it is wrong. Jackson wants to divert us from the horrendous situation in Ethiopia by bringing attention to South Africa's racial situation. He hopes we will forget that it is Blacks in Ethiopia who are killing their own."

During the Democratic Party primary elections, whenever Jackson would speak against apartheid, the question would inevitably be asked, "What about what's

happening in those countries where Blacks are killing each other. When are you going to criticize them." These arguments are not new. When Idi Amin was in Uganda, the mass media had a field day. They portrayed Idi Amin's rule as typical of the newly independent African countries and a portent of dire consequences for a South Africa with majority rule.

Accepting racism, Laird and Safer seek to convince the audience that apartheid is in the best interests of Blacks; their salvation from barbarity and uncivilized behavior.

Laird and Safer consider race the criteria of what is right and wrong. Laird thereby resents Jesse Jackson criticizing a fascist, racist regime which oppresses the majority of the people in their own land. Blinded by racial hatred, he cannot see the fight for the right of the majority to self-determination. Furthermore, both Laird and Safer do not see the struggle for full equality in each of the nations of Africa as a struggle against present day policy of imperialism toward "Black" nations. As if suffering from political amnesia, they deny the connections between the conditions of the newly independent African countries and colonialism and neo-colonialism.

Famine and hunger didn't begin with national independence, nor are they a result of political independence. They are rooted in 400 years of colonialism followed by neo-colonialism. In their search for cheap labor, minerals, ivory and other resources, the colonialists transported, enslaved and murdered millions. Traditions, culture patterns and social relations were uprooted and destroyed as were stable political forms and organizations.

The plunder of Africa continues today as imperialism seeks to maintain its economic hold on the African countries whose economies are fine tuned to meet the needs and interest of the U.S military-industrial complex. Imperialism profits through the inequality of the African countries. It is this parasitic stranglehold of imperialism on the newly independent countries that is the cause of hunger and famine. It is the past legacy of colonialism and the present greed of imperialism that nurtures and profits from political instability and gives rise to the Idi Amin and Mobotus, servants of imperialism.

A SLAUGHTERHOUSE FOR WHOM

In a letter to *The New York Times*, John P. Roche, professor of civilization at Tufts University, while professing abhorrence of the immorality of apartheid is nevertheless faced with a "Manichean" dilemma. He writes that he is "afraid of the danger of a Black revolution in South Africa" which would result in a "Black abattoir." Faced with such consequences, Roche can only click his heels,

salute and holler, Long live apartheid! All in the name of Western civilization.

The point, however, is that apartheid is an abattoir, a slaughterhouse for the Black majority. An illegal, evil fascist minority steeped in insolence and wealth as it feeds upon the blood, sweat and labor of 22 million Black people who live under conditions of mass murder, lynching, terror and imprisonment. Apartheid cannot exist except through ruthless force. Such is the history of oppressive regimes. Rapacious in their greed, determined in their power and beneficial only to a minority, they hold on to their privileges through oppression and slaughtering of the majority.

Contrary to a "Black abattoir" the struggle in South Africa is a struggle by the majority for democracy for all: Black, white, Indians and Colored. It is a struggle to remove the yoke of colonialism imposed upon the 22 million Blacks by world imperialism. Upon the victory of the struggle for self determination what are now reserved as privileges for the few will become the rights of all.

The real motive of Roche is to divide the solidarity movement in the U.S. Faced with the growing unity of labor, Blacks, Jews, and other national minorities against apartheid, Roche throws out terms such as "Black revolution" and abattoir. To hide the real nature of the struggle in South Africa, which is against colonialism and imperialism, Roche hopes to convince democratic and progressive whites that it is a Black against white struggle. Under this racist premise, whites should line up with imperialism and apartheid to save Western civilization and its so-called values.

AUTHORITARIANISM AND TOTALITARIANISM

To Roche, there are bigger problems than the freedom of the Black majority in South Africa. The "core problem" is "how do we design our policies toward authoritarian regimes and totalitarian ones." Of course the regimes to which he refers to are the "authoritarian" one of South Africa, which is not that bad in comparison to the "totalitarian" one which is the Soviet Union.

What is the difference between the two? According to Roche, "A major difference between the South Africans and the Russians is that the latter are affirmative action oppressors." Some people have no shame.

While authoritarianism is new, totalitarianism is not. The concept of totalitarianism was conjured up by U.S. imperialism to diffuse the groundswell of sentiment against fascism and for socialism which had developed in the fight against fascism during War 11. Increasingly labor and the people's forces were connecting fascism with

capitalism. Seeing the hatred which the majority of the people of the world had for facism and the danger this posed for capitalism, the ideologues of capitalism developed the concept of totalitarianism to hide the nature of facism as a form of capitalist rule. The real purpose of the concept of totalitarianism was to equate socialism with facism.

Authoritarianism, through its main spokesperson Jeanne Kirkpatrick, was conjured up to justify the present day foreign policy of the ultra right. With a foreign policy oriented on anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism, imperialism is forced to openly embrace facist dictators in the developing countries. To hide the nature of the racist and facist regimes, the ultra right ideologues labored over a concept that would make them acceptable for a broad alliance with imperialism against the Soviet Union, the "focus of evil in the world today." They came up with authoritarianism, a system where according to them, democracy existed but civil liberties were lacking for the majority of the people. As Kirkpatrick said, "A democracy for the whites and a dictatorship for the Blacks." Therefore, far from a revolution, all that is needed is more civil liberties to be prodded from the dictators through "constructive engagement."

The difference between the Soviet Union and South Africa is not to be found in the use of such terms as authoritarianism and totalitarianism. It is to be found in cap-

italism and socialism. Imperialism creates inequality, profits through inequality, and fights everywhere against affirmative action.

The Soviet Union has always had an affirmative action program. It supports the developing countries in their demands for an end to colonialism and neo-colonialism. It has proposed cutting the military budgets of the developed countries by 10 percent and using the money and resources to aid the economies of the developing countries. This was rejected by the U.S. While U.S. imperialism channels "aid" to insure the dominance of U.S. corporations, the Soviet Union and the socialist countries help build industries, dams and the public sectors in general, with no strings attached, that would change the economic dependence of the developing countries upon imperialism.

Once all the fabrications of a "Black abattoir" and the "evils of world Communism" are dispelled, one must ask how could anyone or any system in modern times support the evil of apartheid? The rape of Africa, the horrors of the middle passage, and the enslavement and murdering of millions is a telling indictment of capitalism and its racist ideology. But as Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "We have an obligation of atonement that is not cancelled by the passage of time." Atonement today lies in the destruction of the apartheid regime of South Africa.



A DUBIOUS EQUALITY: AFRO-AMERICANS ON TV

By Dolores Dwyer

One of the gains of the Civil Rights decade of the 1960s was more accurate representation of Afro-American people, at least numbers-wise, on prime time television. What before had been a white-out on the TV screen gave way to the occasional Black face. This progress, such as it was, extended somewhat to the Latino population. In a grand gesture of tokenism towards equality, we were offered such memorable — unfortunately — fare as *The Jeffersons*, *Good Times*, *Sanford and Son*, *Chico and the Man*, and a few assorted others. *Mod Squad* will be remembered as one of the first shows with an integrated team of central characters. *The Rookies*, also about cops, tipped its hat to the notion of equality on the police force.

The Jeffersons, one of the most disgusting shows ever to profane the airwaves, is the only one from that period still around on prime time. What is so funny about George Jefferson, an obnoxious cheapskate? — unless you are trying to make a joke of the fact that Blacks can be obnoxious too. But when there is such a lack of positive Black characters in the first place, do we really need to make this point? It's like saying: "So you want to be equal? Then show us your worst!"

But finally, another "all-Black" show has joined the evening lineup. *The Bill Cosby Show* has arrived like a breath of fresh air. It's your normal family, with both Black parents and Black children for a change. And while their income bracket may not be typical of most Black families — or most families at all, for that matter — it is refreshing to see a normal Black family going through what any other family goes through. It's a good human interest show, which people of all races and ages can enjoy.

In the family genre, however, a curious phenomenon has broken out in TV-land. With the onset of *Webster*, *Different Strokes* and *Gimme A Break*, we have seen the proliferation of Black kids with white parents, and vice versa. In the case of the Black children, creeping paternalism has set in. The Black children are

"saved" by being taken in by white parents. *Webster*, tiny, Black and cute as a button, lives with his adoptive white parents. He calls her "ma'am," which sends chills of horror down my spine. It was a sad episode when his uncle's effort's to adopt him failed. Similarly, Black kids on *Different Strokes* have a white adoptive father.

The syndrome reverses itself in an odious way when white children are involved, however. In *Gimme a Break*, they are not adopted, but rather mothered and cared for by a paid Black servant, played by Nell Carter. And as this is one of the only shows with a major Black female character, injury is added to insult with the inevitable jokes about her weight or the size of her breasts.

Shows, like *Benson*, *Facts of Life*, *Miami Vice*, *The A-Team*, *E/R*, *Hotel*, *Hill St. Blues*, *Trapper John M.D.*, *Magnum PI*, and some others have Black characters who are central, or who revolve around a central character, to one degree of prominence or another.

Benson is one of the longest-running shows with an Afro-American as the main character. Once head housekeeper for the governor's mansion, *Benson* was promoted from the position of budget director for the state. Would that such things really happened! Yet if we are willing to suspend our disbelief, we might be glad for *Benson's* sake that his intelligence was recognized, and happy for the people of the state that someone with a little common sense is directing their budget.

Although the plots are silly, *Benson* at least maintains his dignity throughout. While he is forever being cast into some silly predicament, he is never the butt of the joke, and always emerges victorious, because he figures out the common sense solution. He is, however, the only Black person on the show — a typical TV ploy to show that a Black person has made it when he or she has assimilated into the middle class white milieu.

A show like *Facts of Life*, while it may not appeal to all age groups or genders, makes at least some contribution toward the mixing of various races, class backgrounds and personalities. The theme of the show is how a group of college girls (who used to be in boarding school together) relate to each other, and how they learn

Dolores Dwyer is the associate editor of World Magazine.

about life through their relationships with each other. Again, most of them are upper middle class.

Miami Vice is an interesting show. A Black man and a white man share top billing as detective partners. The show, which incidentally uses some of the more innovative and realistic camera and acting techniques found on TV, presents an integrated world, from its main characters on out. Nevertheless, the circuit of night clubs, yachts and gambling joints is not the world of your average man or woman.

Hill Street Blues also is integrated, and probably comes the closest of any show now being aired to a realistic portrayal of people, Black, white, Latino, male and female, and of life itself. But why, oh why, must it always be cop shows, with their emphasis on violence and killing, which provide this kind of atmosphere. It's a subtle kind of propaganda to convince people that the cops are the good guys, and that whatever they do is excusable.

Mr. T from the A-Team wins the prize as the most stereotyped Black character I can think of. Anyone with his build wearing a Mohican hair style is supposed to be tough — but to be Black, well, that's really tough. This image of Black men as tough also comes through on Cheers, where a large Black man, a co-worker of one of the bar's regulars, makes an occasional appearance. All the white folks cringe in terror at the very sight of him.

Comparing the numbers of Black characters on TV with five or ten years ago is sure to result in the conclusion that things have improved. There are more Black characters, and, notwithstanding the blemishes provided by Mr. T and George Jefferson, most are respectable working people. Why then is TV still such a barren wasteland?

While TV networks have bent in the direction of having more Black characters on TV, they have done it in such a way as to render them devoid of any relationship to the everyday lives of most working people, Black, white or any ethnic or national group.

The class content is missing, and that is the most important component for people to begin to recognize their common experiences as workers, whether side by side at work, or even at different jobs but still being harassed and exploited by the boss. The white worker sitting at home in the evening watching a program about the trials and tribulations of a Black worker is going to see such similarities in their lives that no further exhortation about racism is going to be necessary.

Likewise, unemployed youths, white, Black, Latino or Asian, male or female, who see their counterparts on television, are going to recognize the fact that they have no job as a social problem, not an individual failure. And whether or not they put those very words to it, they will

more likely want to join with others in fighting the injustice, indeed, the very social system that has placed them in such a no-win situation.

Working parents who see a show dealing with the problem of finding day care for their child are going to get a healthy dose of validation of their experience. That's why this problem never comes up on TV.

This is the stuff of real drama and, yes, comedy too. Surely there are enough talented screen writers and directors out there to come up with something. The possibilities are endless, and yet what we are getting are more and more shows like *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*, *Rituals*, *Dallas*, and other evening soap operas about the problems of the idle rich. Incidentally, one has to wonder how much artistic freedom the writers and creators of these shows really have, when this is all they are turning out.

What about a comedy about a family that's poor? Lord knows, poor people have a sense of humor — what's the quote, "laughing to keep from crying"? Wouldn't the U.S. public be riveted to their living room sofas watching soap opera episodes where the Ipolito family, or the Smiths, or the O'Neills were on the brink of being evicted? Would Tom get the job? Is Elizabeth really pregnant? How can they feed another child? Will the corner dope dealer get his clutches into luring 14-year-old Alice? Will the plant shut down its steel rolling mill? Will Wells Fargo foreclose on the Jeremy's farm?

Some, particularly the top TV executives, would argue that people don't want serious television shows — that they prefer junk. Some would argue that people don't want to watch this kind of program, that they would rather see lighthearted meaningless shows.

There is definitely merit to the idea that people just want to relax and slip into some fantasy after a hard day's work. But then again, maybe they would like a choice. Maybe if they were offered something of quality once in a while, they would get used to it. Remember when *Roots* was on? Millions of people, of all races, tuned in and stayed to watch the entire week-long saga.

People are hungry for reality, malnourished in the nutrients of approval their daily existence. Imagine the power of a TV show that they can watch which will tell them, this is your life, and it is quite normal. It is very much like the lives of millions of other people. If there is any unhappiness or dissatisfaction in your life, you are not alone.

This is culture for the people. Most people view the word "culture" as somehow alienating, something high-brow, because it is something which has been kept from us, hidden away, and imposed from above as something we have to buy, or that we can't have until we live in an

apartment like the Jeffersons.

But culture is nothing more than the expression of our own experience, transformed into a different way of looking at it. It is a form which lets us look at ourselves and our world through different eyes.

This is precisely what the ruling circles of U.S. capitalist do not want us to have. In the first place, they want us to continue believing that we must buy our culture —

from them, of course. But most of all, they do not want us to get in touch with the inner strength of the working class united, the ideological understanding among us all that our experience deserves the highest forms of expression, that our needs come first. That is the revolution they fear. Once this understanding comes about, you can say goodbye to any workingclass allegiance to capitalism.

EDITORIAL

Continued from page 2

bers of MOVE. When confronted with the alternative of patiently waiting it out, we are all of a sudden told about some mysterious tunnel which could be used for escape and bombing of the neighborhood. No tunnel was ever found.

The fire department was part of the conspiracy. After the bombing it waited 1 hour and 40 minutes before it attempted to put out the fire despite the pleadings of the community.

It is not enough that those responsible should be fired or transferred to some other position. The criminals must be indicted for murder. This includes first of all Managing Director Leo A. Brooks, a former general in the armed forces, who gave the go-ahead for the bombing; Gregore J. Samabor, the police commissioner; and William Richmond, the fire commissioner.

Mayor Wilson Goode should be severely criticized for defending the actions of the police and fire departments. Instead of giving leadership against the racist terror which is a blight on the city of Philadelphia, Goode stated immediately after the bombing that he would do the same thing again. Even now he stills defends the bombing. Why? Why would we condone the killing of innocent children who not only had no responsibility but didn't even know or understand their "crime?" Instead of making the world better for the children, they were welcomed by bombs from racist Reaganites.

The Rizzos are not asleep in Philadelphia. They are still doing their work. Goode's responsibility is to the people of Philadelphia, to the Afro-American community in the first place who through years of hard work and

determination got rid of the burden of Rizzo and placed their hopes in him.

The crime was not only the bombing. It portends of officially sanctioned terror in the future. The ultra-right and fascist-like elements are already celebrating and huddling over where best to strike next. That is why this action must be condemned by all to send a message that this is intolerable.

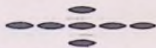
The incident also highlights the grave need for the real democratization of the police departments beginning with the firing of every racist and fascist. Civilian control of police departments should be established with prosecutorial powers.

The lawlessness, which has become the trademark of the Reagan administration, threatens the livelihood and lives of the U.S. people. From the invasion of independent Grenada to the mining of the Nicaraguan harbors to placing arms in outer space and erecting every conceivable obstacle to arms negotiations with the Soviet Union, to trying to deny and destroy every hard fought right of working people and their children, this administration stands in the first place for lawlessness.

The Communist Party pointed out from the very beginning that the so-called anti-terror campaign of the Reagan administration, though ostensibly used as a cover for intervention and terror against the sovereign rights of nations abroad, would ultimately be used against the democratic rights of the U.S. people.

It seeks to add the most unspeakable terror to its arsenal. It cannot be allowed to do so. All democratic and progressive-minded people must condemn this terrorism, demand restitution for its victims and punishment for its perpetrators.

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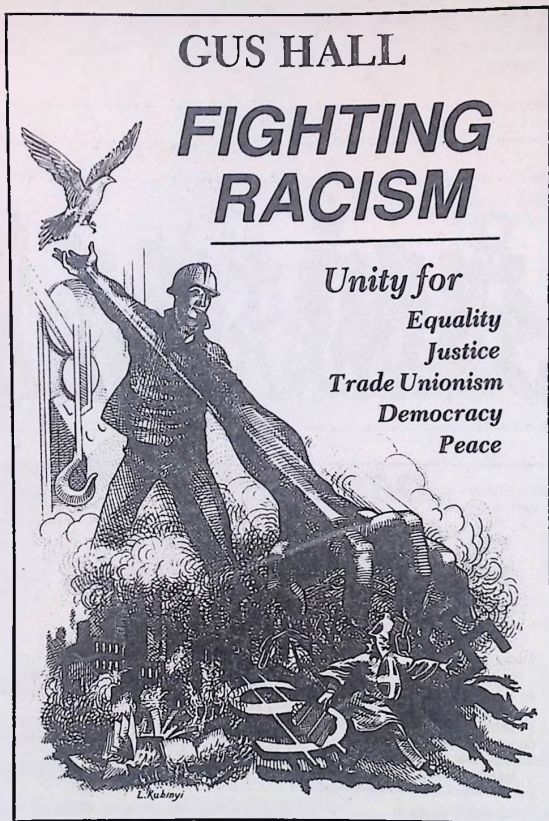
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