



For Class Struggle Against Neo-Apartheid Capitalism!

## South African Bourgeoisie Backs US War on Afghanistan

The criminal attack on the World Trade Centre deliberately killing thousands of working people of all races, nationalities and religious beliefs, provided the American ruling class with a golden opportunity to demonstrate its military might abroad and increase state repression at home. The weeks of massive, relentless terror bombing of Afghanistan produced the intended result. Hundreds of civilians have perished and tens of thousands have been driven into starvation-plagued refugee camps. Villages have been reduced to rubble, with hospitals destroyed, Red Cross facilities obliterated, entire families blown to smithereens.

The South African Randlords and their front men in the African National Congress-led government have fully supported and share responsibility for the imperialist orgy of destruction and death. Spartacist South Africa, a section of the International Communist League, raised the call, "For Class Struggle Against Capitalist Rulers At Home—Defend Afghanistan!" At forums in Cape Town and Johannesburg in October and early November, our speaker underscored: "Our duty in South Africa is to mobilise the working masses against our 'own' bourgeoisie and to overthrow the capitalist system, just like it is the duty of our American section to mobilise the working class against the war aims of the US rulers."

ANC leaders moved to enlist in the front ranks of US commander-in-chief George W. Bush's "war on global terrorism" following September 11. President Thabo Mbeki offered material support and "intelligence" to the Pentagon war machine. Speaking from the White House Rose Garden in November arm-in-arm with Bush, former president Nelson Mandela stated: "It would be disastrous if the president gave in to the call that the army must now withdraw before he has actually flushed out the terrorists...I support him to continue until those terrorists have been tracked down."

But the ANC tops have had much trouble in selling support for US imperialism to the working masses of South Africa. The American war on Afghanistan has further exposed the **class divide** between the bourgeois-nationalist ANC leadership and the black, Coloured and Indian toilers of South Africa. This is especially the case because the terror bombing of Afghanistan takes place at a time of increasing working-class opposition to the government's

"free-market" economic policies. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) two-day general strike against privatisation (*See page 24*) dramatically demonstrated this in August. The immiseration of the workers and exploited has only deepened as the value of the South African Rand has plummeted against the US dollar, losing over 30 percent of its value, leading to dramatic hikes in the price of petrol and basic foodstuffs like mealie meal and bread.

The black, Coloured and Indian toilers of South Africa remember that the US **supported the former white supremacist regime** against them. They remember when the ANC, which was allied with and supported by the Soviet Union against the so-called free world during the Cold War, was branded as a "terrorist organisation." It was not only the Afrikaner National Party in Pretoria but also leading right-wing politicians in the US and Britain (e.g., Margaret Thatcher) who went after anti-apartheid fighters. The US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) worked closely with BOSS, South Africa's political police, to repress the black national liberation struggle. In fact, a CIA informant helped in the capture of former president Mandela and other ANC and Communist Party leaders following the Sharpeville massacre in the early 1960s.

In the decades-long struggle against apartheid, Mandela, Tambo & Co. appealed for support from the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America who were themselves subjected to colonial and neo-colonial oppression and exploitation by American and European imperialism. There remains a strong sense of solidarity among the non-white toilers of South Africa—in the mines, factories and townships—with the dark-skinned peoples of the Third World. There is particular sympathy for the Palestinian Arabs under the murderous military occupation of Zionist Israel. People in South Africa know that Israel is the main American ally in the Near East, massively armed and financed by US imperialism.

The images on TV of hundreds of dead, wounded and orphaned children in Afghanistan provoked revulsion among working people in South Africa. Characteristically, opinion polls showed that opposition to the war was greatest among the black, Coloured and Indians sections of the population. The bombing of Afghanistan and the daily

US/UN/NATO Out of Afghanistan, Central Asia, Persian Gulf, Near East!  
Israel Out of the Occupied Territories!

images of Palestinian youth gunned down by the Zionist war machine have led to explosive anger in the diverse Muslim communities of South Africa. When Mandela showed up at the historic Grey Street mosque in Durban, he was booed for his Rose Garden embrace of the imperialist campaign in Afghanistan.

The so-called "tripartite alliance" has resorted to its usual political division of labour between the ANC tops on the one hand and the Communist Party/COSATU union leadership on the other. Mandela went to Washington where he echoed the bellicosity of the US imperialist chief George Bush. But the South African Communist Party/COSATU bureaucrats have a different role to play. Their job is to maintain the support of the black<sup>1</sup> working class for the Mbeki regime, a regime which upholds the rule of the white capitalist class and its senior partners in Wall Street and Washington. This job requires a different diplomatic posture than Mbeki and Mandela. On October 10, COSATU participated in a demonstration initiated by the Muslim Judicial Council, which brought out several thousands in a march to the US consulate in Cape Town. They issued a statement opposing the war against Afghanistan and instead called for the UN to help in "resolving the current impasse between the US and Afghanistan." But the UN is a fig-leaf cover for the terror and destruction by US imperialism and its allies throughout the world.

Faced with popular opposition to the imperialist war, the ANC leadership employed political damage control to deflect the anger of South Africa's working class and toilers away from the neo-apartheid ANC capitalist regime. Mandela issued a statement indicating that his previous position of pursuing Osama bin Laden was "one-sided and over-stated." ANC-heavy Jacob Zuma paraded before the cameras sporting a Palestinian khaffiyah. Mandela's supposed turnabout and Zuma's parading in khaffiyah are stage-playing meant to disguise the fact that the ANC capitalist government is an agent of Anglo-American imperialism and the main enemy of working people and the poor.

### **Down With Increased State Repression! Full Citizenship Rights for Foreign Workers!**

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the former Soviet Union was an unparalleled defeat for working people all over the world, leading to intensified rivalry amongst the imperialist powers. The current international crisis of the world economy spiralling into recession together with the international "war on terrorism," directly intersects a long-standing source of conflict between American and European capitalists—the economics of oil. For their own reasons and without exception, every state power in Europe and elsewhere has turned the indefensible attack on the World Trade

Centre into an opportunity to put the forces of state repression into overdrive to wage war against the working people at home, especially oppressed racial minorities and immigrants.

The South African reflection of the international "war on terrorism" was an intensified campaign of harassment against Muslim organisations in general as well as the reactionary vigilante group People Against Gangsterism And Drugs (PAGAD).

The media and Parliament were filled with calls for the speedy enactment of the previously proposed Anti-Terrorism Act. If passed, the law would define "terrorist" extremely broadly, rendering labour action and the activities of leftist organisations subject to its extraordinary measures, including long detention without charges and scuttling of the rights to remain silent in the face of state interrogation.

In the United States, just about every bombing raid has been accompanied by a new assault on democratic rights. The new Office of Homeland Security will coordinate spying and repression by dozens of US Federal Agencies, including the CIA. The USA-Patriot Act broadens the definition of terrorist to include just about everybody deemed an opponent of the government. More than 1 200 immigrants, predominantly Near Eastern and South Asian immigrants, have been rounded up. The government witchhunt encouraged a wave of anti-immigrant attacks on the streets. In San Francisco, the Bay Area Labour Black League and the Partisan Defense Committee, which are fraternal organisations of the Spartacist League/US, initiated a labour-centred protest in defence of immigrant rights for February 9. (*See page 19*). As the call for the demonstration stated: "What America's racist rulers can get away with will be determined by class struggle. We must fight *now* to defend our rights and jobs, and the rights and jobs of our immigrant brothers and sisters...the 'war on terrorism' is aimed straight at the heart of the working class. Down With the Anti-Immigrant Witchhunt! No to the USA-Patriot Act and Maritime Security Act!"

### **UN: Cover for World Imperialism**

The primary axis on which the South African bourgeoisie has sought to exploit the "war on terror" has been by stepping up its role in "peacekeeping" on the African continent under the blood-soaked banner of the United Nations. The UN has been from its inception a rubberstamp for US imperialist adventures from the Korean Peninsula to Iraq to Serbia and now Afghanistan. The UN starvation blockade of Iraq has killed over a million children and continues in force. Today, following the lead of US imperialism, the South African ruling class seeks to use the cover of the UN to advance their interests in the region. The South African bourgeoisie longs to play a strong role throughout sub-Saharan Africa, both as the troubleshooter for Western imperialism, and as a regional power monitoring and expanding its mining and other economic interests.

Mandela and his successor Thabo Mbeki are the political agents of the white capitalist class who runs

<sup>1</sup> In these pages, "black" and "black African" are used interchangeably, in contrast to the Black Consciousness terminology adapted by the ruling party where "black" is used as a collective expression for people of African, Indian and mixed-race origin.

the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and their senior partners in Wall Street and the City of London. The ruling class that organised the Sharpsville massacre and murdered thousands of youth in Soweto in 1976 now claim to "make peace" in Africa. What a grotesque spectacle! Yet this new role could only be realised under the cover of an ANC capitalist government where the political executive is largely black African. The ascendance of a layer of ANC politicians as black front men for white-capitalist rule, not only in government but also in major mining conglomerates such as Anglo American, has facilitated South Africa's role in the renewed imperialist scramble for the African continent's vast resources. Under the ANC government, the racist South African bourgeoisie, as a junior partner of US and British imperialism, has sharply increased capitalist investment in southern and Central Africa.

To back up this expansion, the South African ruling class is committed to bleeding and testing its military, and UN peacekeeping missions provide an ideal cover. As the attention of the world has been fixed elsewhere, SA troops have been deployed under UN auspices to Burundi. SA troops and advisors are also on active duty in Congo. On the eve of national elections, the British and Americans are pressing the Mbeki regime to play a more assertive strongman role in Zimbabwe. Spartacist South Africa says: UN/South African troops out of Burundi! Imperialists hands off Congo! All US/UN/British troops out of Africa!

The slightest illusion in the UN is a deadly danger for the working masses. Yet COSATU and the SACP fulsomely endorse UN "action." The 8 October 2001 statement of the pro-capitalist COSATU tops was explicit in building up the UN as a neutral arbiter and a friend of the poor:

"COSATU condemns attacks against Afghanistan by the US and its allies.... Preferably, the UN should have taken leadership in resolving the current impasse between the US and Afghanistan. The US track record as a referee and a player, particularly in the Middle East is questionable. Hence the need for an impartial world body such as the UN to play a key role in resolving the current impasse... The South African government has a duty to mobilise other UN members for a political solution to the current impasse."

In its response to the September 11 attacks, the SACP approvingly quoted UN chief Kofi Annan on bringing "the perpetrators to book." As in countless times past, the role of the SACP is to provide the ideological cover for why the workers must follow the capitalist class enemy and its agencies. Saying "UN" instead of "US," the SACP slavishly aligns itself with the international war aims of US imperialism and the aspirations of the South African bourgeoisie who see a promising future for South African troops in blue helmets.

The multiracial proletariat has the social power to sweep away the imperialist system that breeds war and misery. To win, workers must break from the labour misleaders who tie the exploited to their capitalist enemy. The SACP-dominated COSATU leadership is the

key prop in maintaining the "Tripartite Alliance," a nationalised popular front that keeps the working class chained to the capitalist ANC in the name of "national-unity." **Break with the ANC/SACP! For a Revolutionary Workers Party!**

### Afghanistan and the Cold War

Bin Laden is a Frankenstein's monster that turned on his creator, American imperialism. He and other Islamic reactionaries, like the Taliban, were unleashed against the Red Army in Afghanistan in the 1980s as part of its decades-long drive to smash the Soviet Union. In its crusade against "godless Communism," Washington readily accepted the re-enslavement of Afghan women as "collateral damage." Now twenty years later, the fate of Afghan women is a cause célèbre in justifying the bloody bombings. As our speaker said in Johannesburg on 10 November 2001: "Those who already damned Afghan women to be subject to this tyranny and oppression are now making a hue and cry over the rights of women in Afghanistan ... a whole array of feminists, liberals, fake-leftists are now portraying the Northern Alliance as champions of the rights of women which is criminal."

In 1979, the Soviet Red Army intervened in a civil war between the left-nationalist, modernising People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan regime against Islamic reactionaries and to protect the USSR's crucial southern flank against imperialist incursion. This bloody civil war began when the *mujahedin* rose in armed rebellion after the left-nationalist government sought to implement some minimal reforms: land distribution, freeing women from the veil, lowering the bride price and offering education for girls. Such elementary democratic reforms can be explosive in a horribly backward country like Afghanistan. It was the first and only time in modern history that a civil war was ignited centrally by the issue of women's oppression. As a measure of historical progress, compare the abysmal conditions under which women in Afghanistan live now with some facts before Soviet forces were withdrawn in 1988. Then there were 245 000 women workers and 440 000 female students were enrolled in educational institutions. Women made up 40 percent of the doctors and 60 percent of the teachers at the University of Kabul.

Noting that what was posed was not only defence of the Soviet degenerated workers state but also the possibility of extending the social gains of the October Revolution to the hideously oppressed people of Afghanistan, particularly women, we forthrightly declared, "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" It was only the Soviet intervention that opened the way to social progress for women and for the oppressed Afghan masses. That's why we raised the call, "Extend the social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples." We in the International Communist League (ICL, previously the international Spartacist tendency) stood for the unconditional military defence of the Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution, while fighting for proletarian

political revolution to oust the parasitic bureaucracy that undermined the October Revolution. That is our position today with respect to the remaining deformed workers states: Cuba, China, Vietnam and North Korea.

When the Soviet forces pulled out in 1988-89, paving the way for a bloody onslaught against the Afghan peoples, we denounced this enormous betrayal by the Stalinist bureaucracy. We warned that it was far better to fight and defeat the forces of counterrevolution in Afghanistan than to be forced to take them on inside the Soviet Union itself. We pointed out that, "If the mujahedin succeeded in butchering every leftist, teacher and unveiled woman in Afghanistan, their blood will be not only on the hands of the Bushes, Thatchers and Kohls, but also on their 'left' camp followers" (*Workers Hammer* No. 105, March 1989).

For aspiring revolutionaries, the history of Afghanistan is key to understanding where the various ostensible revolutionary organisations in South Africa and internationally line up on the terror bombing of Afghanistan. In the Afghan Civil War of the late 1970s, virtually every self-professed leftist organisation on the planet, including the forebears of the Workers International Vanguard League (WIVL), Keep Left, and assorted anarchists, *stood on the side of imperialism and its mujahedin cutthroats against the Soviet Union*.

The American co-thinkers of the South African Cliffite "Keep Left" said at the time: "Just as socialists welcomed the defeat of the US in Vietnam, we welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan. It will give heart to all those inside the USSR and in Eastern Europe who want to break the rule of Stalin's heirs" (*Socialist Worker* [US], May 1988). Likewise, the positions of the WIVL's predecessors in Gerry Healy's "International Committee for the Fourth International" (ICFI) were viscerally hostile to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. The ICFI called the actions of the Soviet Army a "brutal campaign of military and police repression against a semi-colonial people" whose "national rights were being criminally violated" and stated that "the movement of the Red Army into Afghanistan" was "aimed at sealing off the radical impulse of the [Khomeini-led] Iranian Revolution" (*Bulletin*, July 8, 1986). After the implosion of the Healyite organization in 1985, the Slaughterite Workers Revolutionary Party never repudiated these views. In 1988, the Slaughterite theoretical journal called the intervention of the Red Army a "counter-revolutionary military invasion" ("The Ten Point Call Expanded," *Journal of Trotskyists of the Preparatory Committee for an International Conference*, vol. 2 No.1, Autumn 1988). (See *Hate Trotskyism, Hate the Spartacists*, No 1 July 1998.) WIVL has never rejected these positions.

Most anarchists at the time in practice abandoned Afghan women to the mercies of America's murderous "freedom fighters" in the name of fighting "Soviet imperialism." Why? Because anarchists share the anti-Communist hostility of the bourgeoisie to these "authoritarian" states. If your only criteria are "authority" and "democracy" as abstract phrases floating above social reality, you end up in the camp of the "demo-

cratic" imperialist ruling class. As opposed to this "radical democratic idealism," Marxists, as materialists, understand that class struggle is the motor force of history.

### Keep Left, WIVL Tail Islamic Fundamentalism (Again)

While the Muslim community took to the streets in numbers in protest, revolutionaries must point out that these were very contradictory mobilisations. Despite COSATU contingents at some demonstrations, Islamic fundamentalism was the dominant influence. Demands for an end to the terror bombing and the attacks on the Palestinian people were intermingled with anti-Semitic slogans and placards praising bin Laden and the September 11 attack. The political presence of woman-hating fundamentalists in these protests, as at the Durban anti-racism conference last August, have provoked **not a word of comment** by the South African fake-left groups. The tailing of the fundamentalists by the fake-left does not fall from the sky. National narrowness (and just plain cynicism) means that the South African fake-left groups duck and dive when it comes to taking responsibility for the views of their political predecessors and allies.

WIVL in particular has a history of chasing behind Islamic fundamentalism in the Western Cape, enthusing over the initial popular support garnered by the reactionary vigilantes of PAGAD. PAGAD's military wing, Qibla, was well known to be led by elements who fought alongside the *mujahedin* cutthroats in Afghanistan and Bosnia. Today, WIVL continues their old ways addressing themselves to the fundamentalists as a misguided but progressive force.

What the WIVL does not say is as important as what it does. And WIVL does not say anything about women's oppression. Central to a revolutionary perspective is the fight against the age-old subjugation of women, a strategic task that these fake socialists have long ago forsaken. The bedrock of Islamic fundamentalism is restoring and reinforcing the seclusion and degradation of women in traditional Muslim culture. The regimes of the Taliban and the Northern Alliance subjected Afghan women to the most barbaric conditions imaginable. What Islamic fundamentalists hate about Western society is not capitalist exploitation. Bin Laden is a millionaire son of one of Saudi Arabia's wealthiest families. He is just as much a privileged product of modern globalised capitalism as George Bush. For bin Laden's followers and sympathisers, what they revile most is secularism and the relatively liberated condition of women.

With the demise of the USSR, the rise of political Islam reflects both the absence of a communist alternative and the manifest dead end of nationalism. The weak national bourgeoisies acting as local agents of imperialism, cannot provide for the real needs of the toiling masses or realise their aspirations for national liberation. As champions of the complete liberation of women in all countries and especially Third World countries, we

communists are the most implacable enemies of Islamic fundamentalism and all forms of religious reaction. The social and national liberation of the working class and oppressed masses from the Near East to South Asia requires the seizure of power by the proletariat, standing at the head of all the oppressed and led by revolutionary internationalist parties.

## Trotskyism vs. Anarchism on Imperialist War

A group of anarchists put out the leaflet, "No War But The Class War," (undated) which states, quite rightly; that "The US government is the single biggest terrorist group in the world." Unlike groups such as Keep Left and WIVL, which invest Islamic fundamentalism with an "anti-imperialist" character, these anarchists recognise that the fundamentalists' aim "is to establish repressive capitalist 'Islamic' states that ban workers' organisations, repress women and gays, and in this way generate higher profits through, in particular, oil exports based on cheap labour."

However, in line with the basic anarchist doctrine that all states are equally bad, they equate backward neo-colonial countries with the imperialist powers that oppress, exploit and periodically devastate them militarily. Thus they write that the attack on Afghanistan by the Pentagon war machine "is not a 'war between East and West' but a growing confrontation between different groups of capitalists who are, however, UNITED against the working class." This argument erases the difference between imperialist states and their victims, between oppressor nations and oppressed nations.

As we wrote in the International Communist League statement of principles:

"In wars of imperialist depredation against colonial, semi-colonial or dependent nations, the duty of the proletariat in every country is to aid the oppressed nations against the imperialists, while maintaining complete political independence from bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist forces" (*Spartacist* [English edition] No 54, Spring 1998).

In keeping with these principles, when the US started bombing Afghanistan in October, we argued that, "It is the obligation of the proletariat internationally, especially workers and minorities in the US, to defend Afghanistan in the face of the imperialist attack.... The reactionary nature of the Taliban regime does not in any way diminish the duty of revolutionaries to stand in military defence of small countries like Afghanistan against the most deadly imperialist power on the face of the planet" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 766)

Similarly, in the 1990-91 Gulf War we stood for the military defence of Iraq, even under the reactionary bourgeois-nationalist regime of Saddam Hussein, against American imperialism. By lumping together the American government with the Afghan Taliban or the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein as "different groups of capitalists," these anarchists in effect take a neutral position in the face of imperialist military attack against oppressed peoples of Third World countries. Our call to

defend Afghanistan and Iraq against imperialist attack does not imply one iota of political support for the brutal Taliban or Iraqi regimes.

## Fake Left's Anti-American Nationalism

The ICL's opposition to the US terror bombing campaign of Afghanistan flows from proletarian internationalism. We take a side with the working class and oppressed against US imperialism. The main thrust of the South African fake left's opposition to the war is anti-American nationalism. This reinforces black African nationalism, the core ideology of the ruling ANC. The fake left disarms the working class politically and ties them to their own exploiters. As our speaker in Cape Town on 13 October 2001 further pointed out, "we say the anti-American stance adopted by the fake left is very cheap because in the process they are only seeking to amnesty their own bourgeoisie ...they are not talking about the ANC or the role that 'our' government is playing in all of this."

Keep Left not only gave electoral support to the ANC in 1994 and again in 1999, but their members work inside the SACP which plays a central role in the Mbeki government. So it's hardly surprising that in page after page of material in the Cliffite magazine relating to the September 11 attacks and the war in Afghanistan, the South African bourgeoisie merits no mention.

Our emphasis on a class struggle perspective here has meant swimming against the stream of a mood that the September 11 attacks were "just desserts," and that the "US had it coming." It is not surprising that many ordinary people in countries such as South Africa where mass poverty prevails and indeed where the national oppression of the black masses was perpetuated for decades with the backing of US imperialism may have felt satisfaction at the September 11 attacks. But for supposed leftists to pander to such backward sentiments as the South African fake left has done is a gift to the neo-apartheid rulers. The Keep Left said "some of us felt sick ...others cheered" (*Keep Left*, No. 25). This cynical dodge is a capitulation to the prevailing false consciousness that there is no distinction between the American working masses and their bloodthirsty ruling class.

While the WIVL states "the killing of innocent US workers and members of the middle class must be condemned," they nonetheless apologised for those who celebrated the World Trade attack. WIVL said on September 17, "When the poor are dancing in the streets across the world, do they rejoice at the death of innocent civilians? **NO!! Their joy is at the destruction of a symbol of the cause of their daily suffering—world imperialism and principally US imperialism** [emphasis in original]" (*Workers International News*, Sept-Oct. 2001). We reject this backhanded justification. The World Trade Centre is not a symbol of US imperialism any more than a steel plant in Chicago. It was a complex of commercial buildings, nothing more and nothing less.

Unlike the WTC, the Pentagon is the command and administrative centre of the American imperialist

war machine and as such a genuine military target. That recognition does not translate this particular attack into an "anti-imperialist" act, nor do we think that the plane-load of innocent passengers which was used as a massi/e bomb "deserved to die" (or the janitors and secretaries who were employed at the Pentagon). As Marxists, we oppose terrorism as a strategy. It is counterpoised to mobilising the proletariat in class struggle against the imperialist rulers. The fact that innocent civilians are often killed in terror attacks, and that the end result only serves to bring down the jackboot of the capitalist state on the necks of the working class and the oppressed, underlines the futility, and stupidity, of terrorism as a strategy for the liberation of the masses.

### For a Leninist-Trotskyist Party! For New October Revolutions!

Proletarian opposition to the imperialist depredations of the exploiters around the world needs to be based on the understanding that, in the words of Leon Trotsky:

"To condemn war is easy; to overcome it is difficult. The struggle against war is a struggle against the classes which rule society and which hold in their hands both its productive forces and its destructive weapons. It is not possible to prevent war by moral indignation, by meetings, by resolutions, by newspaper articles, and by congresses. As long as the bourgeoisie has at its command the banks, the

factories, the land, the press and the state apparatus, it will always be able to drive the people to war when its interests demand it" ("Declaration to the Antiwar Congress at Amsterdam," 1932).

Our perspective is based on the programme of the Bolshevik Party which led the workers to victory in the October Revolution of 1917, which triumphed amid the slaughter of World War I, creating the world's first workers state, expropriating the bourgeoisie as a class and establishing a planned socialist economy.

The two-day general strike in August showed the potential power of the South African proletariat in action. The task of revolutionaries is to unleash that power, to educate and mobilise the proletariat in the understanding that defence of workers here against increasing exploitation and oppression is integrally linked to the defence of Afghanistan against imperialist attack. And that requires the political struggle to break the ANC nationalist popular front. Only the Leninist commitment to combat bourgeois nationalism and class collaborationism and to win workers to a revolutionary internationalist programme and party can prepare the way for the overturn of capitalism here and the necessary extension of social revolution to the imperialist centres.

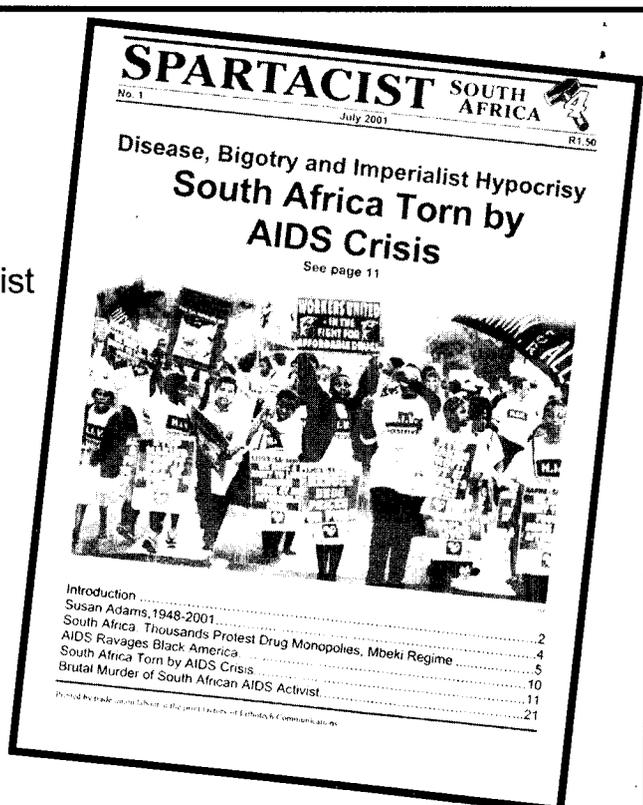
## Spartacist South Africa

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# Oppose Domestic Repression, Imperialist “Retaliation” The World Trade Centre Attack

## Statement of the Political Bureau of the Spartacist League/US

The September 11 attack on the World Trade Centre and hijacking of civilian airliners was a heinous act of indiscriminate terror in which thousands of innocent working people were killed. In its aftermath, the South African government deployed the army at the main airports of Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. Mbeki and Co pledged allegiance to their imperialist masters in the US, vowing to help hunt down the “terrorists” and offering up South African cops to assist. The ANC capitalist government will now try to use the terrorist attacks to rally its police apparatus to greater repressive powers and to criminalise any perceived opponents. Its main target: the workers movement, which has recently waged a major strike against the government over privatisation.

The ruling ANC-led government pushes bourgeois nationalist ideology, which asserts the common interests of all classes as part of the “nation.” The ANC uses nationalism to tie the workers to the bosses and suppress labour struggles. Hand in hand with the whipping up of nationalism and war preparations goes increased domestic repression. The bourgeois rulers aim to broaden Operation Good Hope, which has already ensnared scores of Cape Muslims and immigrants in particular. The ANC government has also singled out People Against Gangsterism and Drugs—a reactionary vigilante organisation centred in the Coloured community of the Western Cape and dominated by Islamic fundamentalists—and Muslim groups in Cape Town and Durban, where thousands have recently mobilised in solidarity with the Palestinian people. While the vengeful imperialists prepare for their murderous “retaliation,” Israel is already carrying out a murderous campaign in the West Bank and killed scores of Palestinians since the attack on 11 September. We say: **Defend the Palestinian people!**

Condemning the bombings, the reformist South African Communist Party echoed its senior partner in the “Tripartite Alliance” and endorsed the view of United Nations General Secretary Kofi Annan in calling for “cool and calm minds in working hard to find and bring the perpetrators to book” (12 September). Appeals to the likes of the UN, the fig-leaf cover for the starvation blockade and terror bombings of Iraq, builds illusions in this “den of imperialist thieves” that has rubber-stamped US imperialist policy since its inception.

Meanwhile, pockets of South Africans wrongly view the bombings in America as “just deserts” in a “one super-power world” dominated by US warplanes and dollars. This Third World nationalist perspective writes off the American working class as hopelessly bribed by the riches of their own bourgeoisie. Such sentiments in fact buy into the very same mentality of whoever perpetrated the vicious World Trade Centre attack—equating the American working people with their racist capitalist exploiters and oppressors.

In contrast to variants of nationalism, we Trotskyist internationalists draw a class line: against the capitalist rulers at home, and in solidarity with our class brothers and sisters abroad in the fight for world socialist revolution. Anti-imperialism abroad means class struggle at home! The only solution to bigotry, backwardness, religious obscurantism, and the ever more imminent threat of world war is the struggle for working class power. Today more than ever the international working class and the oppressed is faced with two choices: Socialism or Barbarism.

We of Spartacist South Africa, section of the International Communist League, are honoured to reprint the statement by our comrades of the Spartacist League/US writing under difficult circumstances and from inside the juggernaut of a wounded and dangerous imperialist beast.

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SEPTEMBER 12—Yesterday's attack on the World Trade Center, carried out through the hijacking of civilian airliners that killed hundreds of passengers and crew, was an indefensible act of criminal terror. While it may be viewed as a symbol of the wealth and global reach of U.S. imperialism, the World Trade Center had workers of all races, ethnicities and religions who were employed there. And at 9 a.m. on a workday morning, thousands of other workers—transit, construction, office and countless others—were traveling through or in the vicinity of the Twin Towers.

It is not simply that the target wasn't even an institution representing the brutal and murderous U.S. imperialist rulers. Those who perpetrated this horrific attack (and there is no evidence at all as to who that was) **embrace the same mentality as the racist rulers of America—identifying the working masses with their capitalist exploiters and oppressors!**

The ruling parties—Democrats and Republicans—are all too eager to be able to wield the bodies of those who were killed and wounded in order to reinforce capitalist class rule. It's an opportunity for the exploiters to peddle "one nation indivisible" patriotism to try to direct the burgeoning anger at the bottom of this society away from themselves and toward an indefinable foreign "enemy," as well as immigrants in the U.S., and to reinforce their arsenal of domestic state repression against all the working people. This is particularly convenient as hundreds of thousands more jobs are being axed—adding to the mountain of human poverty, misery and all-sided degradation that has been created by the American ruling class over the past decade with the destruction of social programs benefiting the working class, minorities and the poor.

The theme is "rally 'round the flag" as Republican president Bush, with complete bipartisan support from Congress, readies the Pentagon war machine for terror attacks and worse against the people of those countries they claim "harbored" the terrorists. The last

such "retaliation," following the bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, rained 80 cruise missiles down on Afghanistan and on a pharmaceuticals plant in Sudan. Previous to that, there was the all-out war against Iraq in 1991, a war which continues with regular U.S. bombing raids, while over one and a half million Iraqis have been killed by the UN starvation blockade. The capitalist media recalls "Pearl Harbor" in blaring headlines. But it was U.S. imperialism that was the first and only country in the world to use atomic weapons in the 1945 nuclear incineration of a **quarter-million people** in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

As communists in the belly of the imperialist beast, we fight to mobilize the working people here in opposition to the war aims and military adventures of the American rulers abroad. We stood for the military defense of Iraq against U.S. imperialism during the Gulf War and in the face of the subsequent terror bombing, and opposed the starvation blockade—an act of war—from the outset. Likewise, in the face of the U.S.-led NATO onslaught against Serbia two years ago, which destroyed the entire infrastructure of that country, we raised the banner: Defeat U.S. imperialism through workers revolution! Defend Serbia! In the case of both Iraq and Serbia, we said that it was the task of the workers of those countries to overthrow the bloody nationalist regimes that oppress them.

In the wake of the World Trade Center attack, various concocted "incidents" have been flying fast and furious in the bourgeois media. Stories that the plane which crashed in Pennsylvania was on its way to Camp David (how would they know?), that a bomb had been planted at the Washington Monument, that the military had shot down a plane over Washington, D.C.—all vanished almost as soon as they were reported. This is standard imperialist war propaganda, just like the manufactured Gulf of Tonkin incident which the U.S. used to escalate its war against Vietnam, killing three million Vietnamese before the heroic workers and peasants of that country defeated the American behemoth.

The attack on the World Trade Center has been attributed to the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Islamic groups like Hamas, the Afghan Taliban government and Osama bin Laden. All have vehemently denied any responsibility. But even if it were bin Laden, now the all-purpose enemy of U.S. imperialism, he is the creature of the American imperialist rulers who bought and paid for his services in the Islamic "holy war" against the Soviet Army in Afghanistan. We **hailed** the Red Army intervention in Afghanistan, noting that this was one of the few genuinely progressive acts by the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy, offering the possibility of extending social gains of the 1917 Russian Revolution particularly to the hideously oppressed women of Afghanistan. The purpose of bin Laden and his CIA-backed Islamic fundamentalists was to perpetuate barbarity and enslavement in Afghanistan.

But it is not simply the apparently ubiquitous and unidentifiable "enemy without" that they are gearing up to brutally repress. The capitalist rulers will also seize on the attack on the World Trade Center to dramatically increase the powers of their state—the cops, courts, prisons and armed forces—against the "enemy within." In the aftermath of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, Clinton's Democratic Party administration enacted the "Omnibus Counterterrorism Act" under which immigrants and all "aliens" can be subjected to star chamber proceedings in secret trials without any charges even being presented. The Democrats, with the full support of the Republicans, also enacted the Effective Death Penalty Act greatly extending the number of crimes punishable by death.

The most immediate targets of the forces of repression will be any and all people of Near Eastern descent, as this chauvinist hysteria goes into overdrive. This is true not only in the U.S. but in West Europe where, for example, the French government has flooded the subways with paramilitary police forces to terrorize those of North African and Near Eastern origin. More fundamentally, the purpose is to intimidate and constrain the multiracial working class from any social struggle. To be sure, the bourgeoisie's labor

lieutenants in the AFL-CIO bureaucracy—who tie the workers to the parties of their exploiters, particularly the Democrats—do their utmost in this regard. But as the gap between the handful of filthy rich who profit from the increasingly brutal exploitation of labor and the rest of the society grows exponentially, the rulers fear that even the spark of protest could provoke a social conflagration. Continuing to build up their forces of domestic repression, which they have long deployed against the hideously oppressed ghetto and barrio masses, is crucial to maintaining their class rule.

With the counterrevolutionary destruction of the former Soviet Union, a workers state which however bureaucratically degenerated did represent an alternative to capitalist exploitation and oppression, the U.S. boasted of being the "world's only superpower" and the American imperialist rulers thought they would face no challenge as they run roughshod over the rest of the world. It is a measure of the intense hatred for U.S. imperialism that the destruction of the World Trade Center, at the cost of likely thousands of innocent lives, could be greeted enthusiastically by many around the world. It is also a measure of the lack of any perceived possibility of defeating U.S. imperialism from within. The men who run Wall Street and Washington can and must be swept away **from within** by the working class in the U.S., which includes large numbers of black, Latino and, increasingly, immigrant workers from the Near East, the Indian subcontinent and East Asia.

The pusillanimous reformist "left" in this country, particularly typified by the International Socialist Organization (ISO), now points a finger at the American rulers' support to bin Laden and the Afghan Taliban as "freedom fighters" during the Cold War. Left unsaid is the ISO's own support for these reactionaries against the Soviet Red Army. In Europe, the groups that were once called the "far left" long ago sold their political souls to their "own" bourgeoisies. For them, railing against American imperialism as the "main enemy" is simply an alibi for their fealty to the social-democratic governments that were

installed to carry out massive austerity against the working class.

In the neocolonial countries, where the masses of people are confronted with the complete bankruptcy of petty-bourgeois nationalism, there has been a growth of religious obscurantism, particularly Islam. In the face of the armed might of the U.S. imperialists, and the genocidal Zionist rulers they bankroll and arm, some see little alternative than to strap their bodies with explosives and hurl themselves against their perceived oppressors.

Whoever the perpetrators of the suicide attack on the World Trade Center, it demonstrated the mindset of those who, typically religious fanatics, believe they have a god-given mission to exterminate all “non-believers.” Such Islamic zealots see trade unionists, leftists and unveiled women as infidels deserving of god’s wrath. In its essence, their outlook is no different than that of Christian fundamentalist bigots who bomb abortion clinics in the U.S., where the domestic secret police, the FBI, was until recently headed by Louis Freeh, a member of the truly sinister Catholic Opus Dei. Nor is this outlook any different than that of fascistic Zionists who seek to “cleanse” the Palestinian nation from what is deemed to be the Jewish “holy land.”

Terrorist bombings tend to be carried out by nationalist or religious forces because they are at best indifferent or at worst hostile to the entire population they consider to be the enemy. The World Trade Center attack was and could only have been aimed at the indiscriminate slaughter of as many—ordi-

nary, multiethnic, working—people as possible.

As Marxists, we oppose terrorism as a strategy, even that which derives from real, if misguided, anti-imperialist impulses and takes as its target genuine institutions of state repression, which was manifestly not the case in the attack on the World Trade Center. Substituting individual acts, however heroic in particular circumstances, is counterposed to proletarian **class** struggle and the consciousness the working class needs if it is to stand at the head of all the oppressed in the revolutionary overthrow of the entire system of imperialist exploitation and repression. Rather, such terrorism serves mainly to provide a pretext for the bourgeois state to intensify repression.

In the aftermath of capitalist counter-revolution in the Soviet Union, the American imperialist rulers have sought to find a surrogate for the war against “godless Communism” in the spectre of “Islamic terrorism.” This is the new external enemy against which they have sought to rally the population, and they aim to use the attack on the World Trade Center for furthering public support for their imperialist terror abroad, fostering the lie that the working people of the U.S. have a common interest with their capitalist exploiters. We say: U.S. imperialism hands off the world! The main enemy is at home! Our purpose is to build the proletarian, internationalist, revolutionary party that will infuse the working class with the understanding of its social power and historic interests as the gravedigger of U.S. imperialism.

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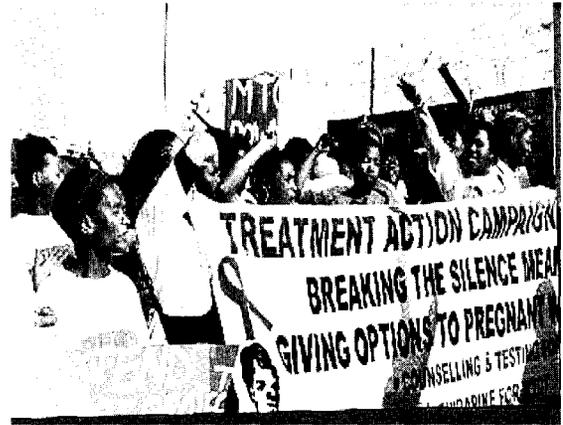
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# For Free AIDS Treatment And Quality Health Care for All! ANC Government Condemns AIDS Sufferers

9 FEBRUARY—Last December, the Pretoria High Court found in favour of the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) claim that the African National Congress-led government has a duty to offer Nevirapine to medically suited HIV-positive pregnant women. Days later, ANC Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang announced the state would block the decision in the Constitutional Court. This legal wrangling means hundreds of thousands of HIV-infected pregnant women will continue dying, and can be certain their children face premature death. No gains have been made for the working class as far as affordable access to HIV treatment is concerned. The skirmishes in the courts between TAC activists and the government simply underscore the fact that the anti-working class, anti-woman, anti-poor ANC regime is intent on doing next to nothing about AIDS.

South Africa has an estimated 4.7 million people infected with HIV, more than anywhere else. About 200 000 HIV-positive women give birth each year in the country. Without treatment, at least one third of them are likely to transmit HIV to their child, either during pregnancy or during labour and birth, or by breastfeeding. Despite overwhelming evidence that a course of anti-retroviral medication can prevent transmission of the virus to the foetus, the ANC continues its ban on anti-retrovirals at state hospitals.

The issue of AIDS treatment to pregnant women has raised a political clamour. One day in late January, the KwaZulu-Natal premier, Lionel Mtshali, a member of the right-wing Zulu tribalist Inkatha Freedom Party, announced that the province would provide Nevirapine to HIV-positive mothers. Reactionary tribalist rivals in the ANC-IFP “partnership” running KwaZulu-Natal are compelled to posture in cynical political maneuvers because even they cannot ignore that 36 percent of pregnant women in the region test HIV-positive. The bourgeois daily *Star* headlined, “AIDS drug defiance sparks furor” and claimed that research sites dispensing the anti-retroviral drug are mushrooming in Gauteng. Doctors and health-care workers have reportedly initiated “an underground resistance movement,” secretly defying the government’s ban by smuggling Nevirapine in children’s toys to offer the treatment “illegally.” AIDS activists in TAC, COSATU and Médecins Sans Frontières announced at the end of January that they had imported anti-retroviral drugs from Brazil in violation of drug-company patent rights but with the backing of the national Medicines Control Council.



*Credit: TAC Website*

***Treatment Action Campaign pressures ANC government to give “options to pregnant women.” The fight for free AIDS treatment and health care for all requires broad-based mobilisation of the working class.***

The ANC government has done nothing to reach any agreement with the drug manufacturers or suppliers to get anti-retrovirals to the sick and dying, rejecting donations of the drugs and even shutting down volunteer efforts to distribute them. After a two-day meeting in early February of provincial Health Ministers, the policy was reaffirmed despite growing discontent from all layers of society. In the usual division of labour among the ANC top dogs, former president Nelson Mandela hypocritically declared that the importance of preventing mother-to-child transmission was “beyond argument or doubt” in fighting HIV/AIDS. President Thabo Mbeki’s government ban on the distribution of anti-retroviral drugs is rapidly spiraling into a serious political crisis, testifying to how deeply South Africa is torn by the AIDS crisis.

## **ANC on AIDS: Confusionism and Criminal Neglect**

In defence of the capitalist order, the ANC regime bolsters the most reactionary and repressive aspects of pre-capitalist society. Thus the government embraces backward, anti-scientific dogmas even though the most advanced capitalist technique and knowledge is known to be available. Mbeki claims bloodthirsty Europeans seeking to use South Africans as drug-research “guinea pigs” have overblown the estimates of the AIDS epidemic. He claims the statis-

tics released by the Medical Research Council last September, citing AIDS as the leading killer, undermine the African continent's "renaissance" with a racist portrayal of Africans as "promiscuous carriers of germs." Opposing anti-retroviral drug therapy, the government pushes "awareness"—the puritanical "ABCs plan"—that is, Abstain, Be faithful and Condomise. Preaching abstinence basically presumes AIDS sufferers brought the disease on by having sex. Meanwhile, poorly staffed public hospitals, which are denied access to proper AIDS drugs, are filthy and overcrowded, putting off people from seeking any kind of medical treatment.

Mbeki's demagogic denunciations of Western media claims are intended to disguise the fact that the ANC government is itself the main political agent of world imperialism in South Africa. And world imperialism is ultimately responsible for the horrific scope of the AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa, because it perpetuates the conditions of economic impoverishment and cultural backwardness expressed, for example, in the superstitious belief that sex with a virgin can cure AIDS. Mbeki's contention that the HI-virus is not the cause of AIDS is in its own way just as anti-scientific. As we wrote in *Spartacist South Africa No. 1* (July 2001):

"Mbeki's ignorant diatribes last year denying that the HIV virus causes AIDS were aimed in large part at deflecting criticism over his government's refusal to allocate medical resources to combat the epidemic. While the ANC nationalists talk of 'nation-building' and an African 'renaissance,' they are beholden to the imperialists."

South African government officials have repeatedly argued that the state could not afford to provide the drugs and that making treatment available to one group—pregnant women—would be unfair to others needing treatment because there's no way government can give treatment to all. Tshabalala-Msimang has added that the drug will not stop all HIV cases of transmission from mother to child. In fact, the Western Cape first launched a project for HIV-positive women in the black township of Khayelitsha in 1999, yielding high success rates. In KwaZulu-Natal, the latest study has shown a 100 percent success rate in Nevirapine treatment. From Nigeria to Botswana, South Africa's neighbour, several African countries have begun providing free anti-retroviral cocktails.

Gold Fields, the country's second-largest gold producer, has agreed to a plan aimed at stemming the spread of HIV among miners. This is not because blood-sucking mining bosses now have found it in their hearts to offer treatment to their workers—in fact the agreement is meant to help those who are not infected, rather than get anti-retrovirals to the sick. The capitalist exploiters do worry about maintaining a skills base and trained workers and avoiding health insurance and mortality payouts. The South African bourgeoisie is making cold calculations of how many people they can afford to let die and still keep the profits rolling in.

Endorsing Mbeki's AIDS policy, *Business Day* columnist Simon Barber wrote that, "If government decides to provide the therapy, it will have to do so on a tightly rationed basis. Without strict rationing, budget deficits will metastasize, crowding out other government services for the healthy.... Employers will pay to keep alive those infected with HIV who are needed for production" (23 January).

### TAC: Loyal Critics of Capitalist ANC

Yet even as the ANC regime fights every measure that could help HIV/AIDS patients, TAC chairperson Zachie Achmat maintains, "It is clear that public pressure and TAC court action has made the government listen. We urge them to make the appeal to the Constitutional Court an urgent one because lives are at stake" (*Mail & Guardian*, 10 January). The TAC leadership's touching faith in the capitalist state—its courts, the bourgeois constitution and the "conscience" of the bourgeois-nationalist ANC—locks young women and men fed up with the policies of the government into the dead-end perspective of pressuring the capitalist enemies of the working class and poor.

At TAC offices, a crew of liberal lawyers churns out reams of legal briefings. Activists are drowned in lengthy lectures intent on convincing them the Constitution is the answer to all ills. In fact, it was working-class struggle and township revolts of the 1980s that brought about the removal of the legal strictures of apartheid. The white capitalist class, which runs society, remains the same as in the apartheid era. Despite many changes to the political apparatus, the economic basis of apartheid—the system of superexploitation of black labour by white capitalists—remains intact. This system of neo-apartheid is ruled by the ANC who act as political front men for the white capitalists, running the army, police, and evicting squatters, cutting off electricity and propelling privatisation. While the 1996 Constitution promises free health care to pregnant women and their children, these provisions are paper-thin, with the health care system rotting in decay. The Constitution enshrines "rights" of the bourgeoisie and ANC officialdom to exploit and oppress the overwhelmingly black working class and poor. The cops, courts and prisons—the armed bodies of men comprising the bourgeois state—exist to perpetuate the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the superexploited black toilers.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), a partner of the "tripartite alliance" which comprises the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP), said the decision to appeal was "extremely regretful" because a drawn out legal battle on the issue would result in thousands more babies dying. Since the World AIDS Conference in July 2000, COSATU has called the government's denial of drugs to rape victims and pregnant women "morally wrong." The SACP hailed the court decision favouring TAC, saying, "We support access to affordable medicine and good health care for all. We're asking for unity in ac-

tion" (*Saturday Star*, December 14, 2001). In fact, SACP cadres already act in "unity" as bourgeois ministers of the state, with central committee members spearheading the privatisation drive that has resulted in the closure of several public hospitals. Their doubletalk is meant to hoodwink the working-class base of the party into continuing to support the ANC-led government that's responsible for non-delivery of services.

Despite proclamations and press releases supporting TAC's lawsuit, the COSATU ranks have never been mobilised broadly to demand a national AIDS treatment programme. Why? It's because SACP cadres and others completely beholden to the bourgeois-nationalist programme of the ANC-led regime dominate the COSATU bureaucracy. The brand of nationalism pushed by SACPers paints the ANC as a "people's movement" in government that can be pressured into carrying out the demands of workers and the oppressed. AIDS activists argued with Spartacist sales teams that the ANC is "our" government, based on a party that is a mix of workers and others. On the contrary, the ANC is a capitalist party of a ruling black elite whose aspirations are basically realised in the "new" South Africa.

Most recently, the few marches built to demand affordable drug therapies for AIDS patients have been narrowly limited to demands to treat rape victims and infected babies and featured bible-thumping clergy and church groups. This is catering for petty-bourgeois public opinion. Even the bourgeois critics at *Mail and Guardian* headlined: "Manto, AIDS drugs do work after rape." Protesters who want to see quality health care for the whole of the working people are being straitjacketed by TAC leadership into limiting the campaign to demands made up to be more palatable to the bourgeois rulers. The strategy of pressuring the ANC capitalist government undermines the broad-based movement of activists who want AIDS treatment for all. The ANC regime's rationalisation of treatment puts some AIDS sufferers ahead of others. The TAC and COSATU tailing the government's policies are doing the same thing.

For example on World AIDS Day, calls to "Save God's Babies" fell in line behind the government push for "moral rearmament" of the family. Coming amid a 16-day government "Campaign to end violence against women and children," the thrust of the demonstrations was to downplay the urgent need for treatment for all, in favour of moral exhortation against drugs, alcohol abuse and gambling—all blamed for attacks on women and children. While we support demands for access to treatment of any scope, Spartacist South Africa calls for free quality health care for all. We oppose the reactionary moral hierarchy that promotes care for "innocent" AIDS sufferers—children and raped women and girls. It implies other AIDS sufferers—the ones who got it from gay sex, or sex workers or sexually active youth—are somehow "guilty" and deserved it. We demand: Free AIDS treatment for all!

Many activists who helped to put the ANC in power now say, "this is not what I fought for," because the main obstacle to setting up even modest care and services for HIV/AIDS sufferers is that self-same ANC government. AIDS activists must struggle against the TAC strategy of relying on the "Tripartite Alliance" with the bourgeoisie. Those AIDS activists seeking an alternative to the dead-end, peaceful-legal strategy of relying on the capitalist courts should look to the labour movement which has the social power to bring down the capitalist system and wrest from the profiteering bosses the material resources needed to provide affordable treatment for all.

It is desperately necessary for the working class movement to fight against all forms of social oppression such as the ANC government's denial of affordable treatment for HIV/AIDS sufferers. To implement this strategy requires a fight to oust the pro-capitalist COSATU bureaucracy that enforces capitalist austerity in the unions on behalf of the ANC, while paying lip service to the interests of the working people and poor. Revolutionary leadership in the unions would fight for the class independence of the proletariat from the ANC and all other parties of the capitalist bosses. The future of South Africa depends critically on the building of a multiracial revolutionary vanguard party based on the black, Coloured and Indian toilers and those whites that accept the rule of the black proletarian majority. We say: "Down with Neo-Apartheid Capitalism! For a Revolutionary Workers Government! For Black Proletarian Power!"

Many SACP members disgruntled by their own party's abstention around the fight for affordable AIDS treatment have joined TAC lawsuits and campaigns individually. A non-governmental organisation of petty-bourgeois activists, the TAC shares with the SACP the strategy of pressuring the ANC government, so it's no coincidence that some SACP members who want to do something around AIDS find TAC a suitable arena in which to work. The SACP encompasses leading elements of the capitalist state apparatus and outright bourgeois nationalists as well as militant workers seeking a revolutionary perspective. We revolutionary Trotskyists seek to break the militant base of the SACP from its reformist misleaders. Key to this is the forging of a revolutionary Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party that champions all the oppressed and exploited. Break with the ANC/SACP/COSATU alliance! Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!

### **For Permanent Revolution!**

To talk about AIDS in South Africa is to talk about the oppression of women. As we wrote last year:

"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.... 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" (*Spartacist South Africa No.1*).

Instead of a rational scientific approach to treatment, HIV/AIDS sufferers are left only with the tender mercies of township inyangas and street-corner purveyors of muti. In the face of the government's ban on anti-retrovirals and touting of anti-scientific theories, mythology and mysticism hold sway over science and rationalism. It is within this context that the myth that sex with a virgin can cure AIDS has become a catalyst in escalating incidents of rape of young girls. The horrific gang rape of nine-month-old Baby Tshepang from Uppington last November was followed only a few weeks later by the rape of a five-month-old baby girl at the Action Cinema in Joubert Park, sparking a growing outcry. In the aftermath, the *mothers* were vilified and arrested for negligence. Tshabalala-Msimang and various well-garbed ANC Women's Leaguers have protested these criminal attacks outside arraignments of accused rapists—the government's version of championing rights for women. This takes real cheek! The government's policy of restricting distribution of anti-retrovirals can only continue to fuel the child rapes linked to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

South Africa is an extreme example of what Marxists call combined and uneven development. Large-scale industries and a modern industrial and mining complex exist because of the superexploitation of the black toilers by the white exploiting class. Black working people, rural toilers and lumpenised youth are mired in "Third World" conditions of extreme poverty, superstition and pre-feudal, tribal relations. At the same time, the privileged white minority enjoys living standards comparable to the wealthiest enclaves in North America and West Europe, including having access to the best medical care money can buy.

The AIDS epidemic is a striking indicator of social injustice locally and internationally. AIDS activists frequently exhort the ANC to scrap its controversial arms deal in order to fund AIDS treatment. But

to the extent capitalist rulers implement even such elementary measures as distributing free condoms, it is done out of a material stake in the survival of their own profit system, or as a result of massive pressure from the working class which threatens their rule. The fight for a proletarian revolution that expropriates the greedy profiteering Randlords and the profit-hungry drug giants can begin to liberate the resources necessary to alleviate desperate social conditions in South Africa and throughout the region.

In countries such as South Africa, the burning democratic tasks, such as agrarian revolution, equality for women and tribal/ethnic minorities and breaking the yoke of imperialist subjugation can only be realised through the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution: the seizure of state power by the proletariat standing at the head of the rural toilers and all the oppressed. In the imperialist epoch, the bourgeoisie in countries of belated capitalist development, tied by a thousand threads to the imperialist rulers, and fearful above all of its own proletariat, is unable to resolve these tasks historically associated with the bourgeois-democratic revolutions of previous centuries in West Europe and North America. Ultimately, overcoming the hideous impoverishment and cultural backwardness of sub-Saharan Africa requires an *internationally planned socialist economy* based on proletarian revolutions in the advanced capitalist countries of North America, West Europe and Japan. This is the perspective confirmed by the experience of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik party in the 1917 Russian Revolution that we fight for today.

The oppression of women and children are intimately bound to the role of the bourgeois monogamous family under capitalism, where women are treated as property of men, slated to raise the next generation of wage slaves. The solution can only be the destruction of the capitalist system by the working class expropriating the capitalist class through victorious socialist revolution, preparing the way toward a classless society. Then AIDS and quality health care and treatment for all can be put at the centre of society's urgent needs. Only a communist vanguard party, conscious of the centrality of these tasks to the fight for permanent revolution, can provide the required revolutionary leadership. Spartacist South Africa is the nucleus of that party. Women's Liberation through Socialist Revolution!

# The “new” South Africa Does Not Provide Power to the Poor

The government's Service Delivery Framework (SDF) another empty and cynical promise, stipulating 50 percent and 100 percent suspension of the debt for general residents and pensioners respectively, is another new chapter in the ANC bourgeois nationalist book of deceiving the people. But the residents have learnt through their experiences not to trust this government, shown by lack of eagerness in going to sign new deals with Electricity Supply Commission (Eskom). Spartacist South Africa demands immediate and unconditional cancellation of the debt owed by township residents!

Electricity cut-offs have left many mainly black African, Coloured and Indian households without this basic need as the ANC capitalist government intensifies its war against the working class and poor. These attacks are spearheaded by the state-owned power supply conglomerate, Eskom, in its crackdown on “electricity defaulters” which is a big lie. Eskom is effecting massive electricity cut-offs to recoup revenue lost during the anti-apartheid township revolts led by the today ruling ANC which then called on the township residents to boycott payments of electricity and other services. This strategy was to pressure the then apartheid regime to agree in striking a deal for the ANC-led black elite to play a role in oppressing the majority. This is what Nelson Mandela's ANC and De Klerk's Nationalist Party negotiations and 1994 elections were all about.

Any township resident found paying for electricity and other services in contravention of the above-said boycott was at best denounced as a sellout, but a lot of people lost their lives for not supporting what was considered a necessary sacrifice for the liberation of the oppressed majority. When the ANC came to power in 1994, they promised to cancel the debt incurred as a result of such non-payments in the course of “liberation” struggle. Gauteng ANC provincial government, under the premiership of now black empowerment lapdog and junior partner for the diamond mining white bosses, Tokyo Sexwale, announced that the debt was to be cancelled in black African townships only. He denounced the Coloured protesters' request to include their debts, saying he wanted to “vomit.” In 1997, the ANC government unleashed police and troops against the protesters in the predominantly Coloured townships of El Dorado Park, Westbury and Newclare in southern and western Johannesburg, killing four and injuring several others. At the same time, the anti-government protests, whose demands were entirely justified, were infused with an anti-black thrust. The aim of the neo-apartheid ANC-led government is to pit the oppressed against each other while they grow fat riding the backs of the poor.

The cancellation was neither implemented in black nor Coloured townships, another cruel hoax in the chain of bourgeois-nationalist ANC betrayals of the struggle for national liberation. Subsequent to that other broken promise, individual households were invited to negotiate closed-door deals with Eskom about monthly payback rates according to what each can afford. Spartacist South Africa demands: Free electricity and other social services!

In 1997, individual families made agreements with Eskom on varying rates toward backlog repayment. Following the logic of nationalism, the masses greeted the ANC taking the reins of power as the final arrival at Caanan, the promised land of “milk and honey.” This was accompanied by the dissolution or severe weakening of plebeian organisations like Civics and Street Committees. As a result, the black front men for the white bourgeois class could unleash their vicious attacks, condemning millions for extended periods without electricity without any organised resistance. And the timing was to start it when chilling winter weather was setting in. Perhaps one of the best methods of torturing the poor for being poor.

The current round of hostile attacks started with Eskom, which is run by ANC Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs Mlambo Ngcuka, reneging on the negotiated deals. They started massive power cut-offs without even the decency of prior notice. Residents still paying according to negotiated deals ran to Eskom walk-in offices only to be told the agreement was no longer an issue “...Eskom wants its money paid in full.” This is only a taste of the ANC capitalist government's arrogance and contempt toward the poor. In the “new” South Africa, yesterday's heroes of the oppressed during township anti-apartheid revolts are today's rent collectors for the white bourgeoisie, signing letters termination of electricity and other services as administrators in the newfound South African “nonracial” capitalism. Many lies have been advanced and new ones are being cooked up for this sudden change of heart, including blaming residents for not honouring their “negotiated settlement with Eskom.”

At the core of these attacks is the government's privatisation policy pronounced to be “at an advanced stage” (*Sowetan*, April 2, 2001) by Jeff Radebe, Public Enterprises Minister and central committee member of the thoroughly reformist, class-collaborationist, South African Communist Party, a bourgeois workers party. As Lenin explained, a bourgeois workers party has a working-class base, but a thoroughly pro-capitalist leadership and programme. The abject class-collaborationism of the SACP leadership must be politically defeated within the working-class movement.

The Anti-Privatisation Forum, which consists of the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee, Keep Left, Anarchists, Socialist Party of Azania, the Taafeeite Democratic Socialist Movement and other fake lefts, are working overtime providing left cover for the ANC crimes against the poor. They are preaching illusions that this government can be persuaded to serve the interest of the oppressed at the expense of the profits for the South African bourgeoisie and its senior partners in Wall Street and London. They are left tails of the ANC-led nationalist popular front bourgeois government, serving to arrest disgruntled, left-moving elements of the revolutionary-minded student and proletarian youth. They cannot tell the truth about the class character of the ANC as guardians of the system based on wage slavery, i.e., wealth for a few and misery for the rest of the people.

Lucien van der Walt, a spokesman for the Ivory-tower leftists at University of Witwatersrand, true to the class-collaborationist outlook of this Anarchists milieu, wastes a lot of ink accusing Eskom without making a single connection to policies of the government running this company and leading this attack (*Sowetan*, April 10, 2001). This is not because he doesn't have an opinion on what this government is about, but rather, as he has argued with Spartacists on numerous occasions, he thinks the ANC government represents a step forward for the working class since apartheid is gone. This is the irony of the Anarchists self-proclaimed opposition to all forms of state power in shoring up the ANC capitalist government and it's not a coincidence but inherent to the class collaborationist political outlook of this milieu.

In a leaflet last March calling for a protest march on Human Rights Day, the Anti-Privatization Forum is down on their knees appealing to the "human face" of capitalism: "privatisation violates human rights," "Water and Electricity cut-offs violate human rights." When the words "human rights" are tossed around, the aim is to appeal to the class enemy's sense of "decency." In fact, the rights guaranteed under the decadent capitalist system mean everything for the filthy rich minority and unemployment, poverty, disease, ignorance and death for the majority of the population. There is no shortcut out of this mess, short of the mobilisation of the proletariat, the only revolutionary class in modern capitalist society, led by its revolutionary vanguard party, wiping capitalism off the face of earth.

Eskom workers have the social power, organisational capacity and objective political interest in fighting for **Free electricity for all!** The obstacle to this kind of revolutionary workers struggle is the pro-capitalist COSATU bureaucracy, which polices the unions for the capitalist ANC, while pretending to serve the workers interests. Under revolutionary, class-struggle trade union leadership, Eskom workers would put forward as one of their central bargaining demands against capitalist bosses: **free electricity for all! Scrap debt owed by township residents from Soweto, El**

**Dorado Park to Chartsworth!** They would lead electricity reconnections for Operation Khányisa, thereby rallying all the people behind the proletariat as the tribune of all the oppressed under capitalist society. This is the essence of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, the only weapon for national emancipation for countries of belated capitalist development like South Africa.

There was initially a conspiracy of silence by both the bourgeois media and the left opponents of working class revolution about the township resistance to power cut-offs. Eskom would switch off during the day and residents would defiantly light up when they returned from work, the origins of what is known as Operation Khanyisa. These events have amongst other things led to unfortunate killings of some Eskom workers instructed by their employers to enforce these criminal switch-offs. Some of these dead workers did not have electricity in their own homes as well. It is not difficult to see that APF, led by expelled ANC councillor, Trevor Ngwane, manipulated these protests to channel them into confines acceptable to the government. In an Internet message (December 7, 2001), they complain that the countervailing government Service Delivery Framework document, "disregards demands that the SECC long put to government." At the end of the same message, they pose the question: "Should the SECC-led boycott of electricity rates and its campaign to 'illegally' reconnect electricity, Operation Khanyisa, draw to a close?"

Eskom's response to "illegal" reconnections has been to remove the whole cable, which would be very expensive and beyond reach for many of those affected to reinstall. The militant, direct-action tactics of Operation Khanyisa need to be broadened to the point where township working people and poor are linked to the powerful industrial proletariat in a fight to overthrow capitalism. The APF is not the instrument for leading such a struggle. What's needed is a revolutionary workers party. Especially under conditions where 40 percent of the black labour force is unemployed, the working class cannot improve or even defend its economic conditions simply at the level of trade-union struggle. Class-conscious workers must oust the pro-capitalist COSATU bureaucracy which preaches the lie of a partnership of capital and labour. It is necessary for the workers movement to fight for the right to quality housing and services, schooling, treatment for AIDS sufferers and for better conditions of rural workers terrorised by continuing apartheid on the land.

Eskom was an initiative of the Union of South African colonial regime of the early second decade of the twentieth century under Jan Smuts, designed to provide electricity "at cost" for SA industrialists and mine owners. Following this, Eskom extended provision of electricity "at cost" to exclusively white municipal governments. Writing in *Electricity, Industry and Class in South Africa*, Renfrew Christie says: "It has been remarked that in the Union of South Africa the native

## Partisan Defense Committee Statement 18 December 2001



# Jamal Death Sentence Reversed Mobilise Labour/Black Power to Free Mumia Now!

Federal district court judge William Yohn today reversed the death sentence that has been hanging over the head of Mumia Abu-Jamal since his 1982 frame-up conviction for the killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. Although Yohn rejected the mountains of evidence demonstrating Jamal's innocence—including the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly testifying that he had been hired to kill Faulkner—this ruling represents the first crack in the state's 20-year legal vendetta against Jamal. And the forces that have worked overtime to ensure Jamal's execution are literally screaming bloody murder. Maureen Faulkner, who has headed this campaign on behalf of the Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police (F.O.P.), condemned Yohn as a "sick and twisted person." Democratic Party District Attorney Lynne Abraham, who has done more than her share to see that more black people are sentenced to death in Philadelphia than any other city in the U.S., immediately convened a press conference to announce that the prosecution will be appealing Yohn's ruling.

The F.O.P. and the Philly D.A.'s office fear that the explosive new evidence of Jamal's innocence, which the capitalist state and the press have worked hard to bury, could finally be heard in a court of law. Prosecutor Hugh Burns made that clear when he declaimed today, "If there was a new sentencing hearing, it would probably entail the empaneling of a jury...and whatever evidence the defendant wanted to review again would be presented to the jury." Yohn has also worked assiduously to ensure that the overwhelming evidence of Jamal's innocence is buried. His decision affirms the original frame-up murder conviction, which was secured on the basis of "eyewitness" testimony coerced by the police through the promise of favors and outright terror, a manufactured "confession" and completely concocted ballistics "evidence."

Yohn's ruling only allows for a new sentencing hearing within 180 days, which would at best consign Jamal to life behind bars.

As Mumia himself said of life imprisonment in one of his writings from death row: "'Life' is thus but a grim metaphor for death, for only death releases one from its shackles. 'Life,' it might be said, is merely slow death." *Mumia Abu-Jamal is an innocent man!* An award-winning journalist, former Black Panther and MOVE supporter, Mumia's only "crime" is that he is an outspoken champion of the oppressed and exploited. And he has continued to speak out, unbowed and unbroken, from his death row cell. *Don't let them bury Mumia alive!* Workers, minorities and all opponents of racist capitalist repression must now redouble their efforts to mobilize mass protest centered on the social power of the labor movement to demand Jamal's immediate freedom.

From the time the Partisan Defense Committee took up Jamal's case 15 years ago, we have insisted that the fight to save this innocent man cannot rely on the capitalist courts but must be based on social struggle. What has kept him out of the clutches of the executioner is mass protest and publicity, in this country and internationally, especially by trade unions representing millions of workers. Now more than ever the PDC says: No confidence in the capitalist courts, all confidence in the power of the working people and oppressed!

Jamal's case throws into stark relief the whole nature of racist American capitalism. His prosecution and conviction were an extension of the COINTELPRO terror campaign by the FBI in which dozens of Black Panthers were assassinated and hundreds more sent to prison. Among them was Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), who was finally released in 1997 after 27 years in prison hell for a crime the state *knew* he did not commit. Jamal's case is a demonstration of the machinery of repression wielded by the capitalist rulers against any perceived threat to a system based on the exploitation of the many by the few, which in America is

rooted in the forcible subjugation of the black population at the bottom of society.

As ever more death row and other prisoners are exonerated of false convictions through DNA evidence, popular support for the death penalty has waned and America's imperialist rulers have faced growing diplomatic embarrassment around the world. And Jamal's case shows what the racist, barbaric death penalty in the U.S. is all about. On December 2, the Paris city council voted to make Mumia an honorary citizen of the city, an indication of the breadth of support for his cause around the world. This new court ruling comes even as the right-wing Bush administration, invoking the need for "war measures" as it bombs the people of Afghanistan, is gearing up a new COINTELPRO-style campaign of terror and provocation. Targeting people of Near Eastern descent in the first instance, the government's "war on terror" is aimed at all immigrants, minorities, labor, leftists and all perceived opponents of the government.

What is needed is a massive struggle centered on the social power of the multiracial working class to fight for Jamal's freedom! Based on the only significant integration in racist America—the workplace and the factory floor—the trade unions have the social power and the potential to become battalions in the struggle against capitalist exploitation and racial oppression, to shake the foundations of this decaying capitalist system and ultimately topple it. If undertaken with a mobilization of the union movement at the forefront, the fight to free Mumia and to abolish the racist death penalty would be a first, giant step in that direction and would strike a significant blow against the draconian new repressive measures being implemented by the Bush administration with bipartisan support. To that end, labor must break the chains with which the trade-union misleaders have shackled the unions to the political parties—centrally the Democrats—and the state agencies of the enemy class. *No illusions in the capitalist courts! Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty!*

**PC Partisan Defense Committee**

September 2001      Pamphlet      \$ .50

## Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!



**New Evidence Explodes Frame-Up**

Affidavit of Rachel Wolkenstein ..... 7  
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 Declaration of Mumia Abu Jamal ..... 23  
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*The Partisan Defense Committee is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defence organisation which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League/US.*

# Down With the Anti-Immigrant Witchhunt!

We reprint below a press statement on the Labour Black League/Partisan Defense Committee-initiated united front demonstration which drew hundreds who oppose the anti-immigrant witchhunt in America and internationally. Spartacist South Africa, section of the revolutionary International Communist League, sent comradely greetings and stood in full solidarity with the demonstration mobilised around the demand: "Down With the Anti-Immigrant Witchhunt!" and "No to the USA-Patriot Act and the Maritime Security Act!"

This action went directly against the grain of the current pervasive "national unity campaign" which American imperialism has championed in its bombing raids on the people of Afghanistan and its international campaign of "war against terrorism."

The ICL built support for this demonstration internationally. In South Africa, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa endorsed.

We seek to bring the working class to the understanding that defence of immigrants is integrally linked to the fight to smash the capitalist class on an international scale on the road to proletarian class rule. As we wrote in greetings sent to the Bay Area demonstration:

"Here in South Africa, the bourgeois-nationalist ANC escalates its attacks on immigrants, workers and the poor. Day by

day, immigrants are rounded up and locked into pick-up trucks by cops, the armed fist of the capitalist African National Congress government. ANC Women's League politicians run a deportation camp for immigrants known as Lindelani, where immigrants are tortured and subsequently deported.... Zimbabweans, Mozambicans and Basothans make up a sizeable proportion of the migrant workers who slave in the mines and on the land in South Africa. These workers face constant harassment, roundups and deportations by the state, and terror attacks from anti-immigrant vigilantes, and are used as scapegoats by the bourgeois-nationalist ANC for massive unemployment. The latest round of state terror is aimed especially at people from Zimbabwe who are fleeing political violence under the tyranny of Robert Mugabe's rule and being swept into police dragnets. Meanwhile, the ANC government condemns millions to death by ignoring the horrendous AIDS pandemic, oftentimes blaming immigrants for the spread of the disease, and deporting migrants in the mines who test positive for the HI virus. At the same time, the migrant workers are a living link between the South African proletariat and workers throughout the region. It is crucial that the labour movement take up their defence against state repression. We say: Full citizenship for all immigrants!

\*\*\*\*\*

10 February—Over 300 workers, immigrants, blacks and youth rallied Saturday in front of Oakland's City Hall against the Maritime Security Act and the USA-Patriot Act, demanding an end to the anti-immigrant witchhunt. The demonstration, which marched past the Federal Building and the offices of the dock bosses, the Pacific Maritime Association, was the first in the country in which organized labor mobilized to demand a stop to the attacks on immigrants. This Black History Month demonstration was addressed by Adwoa Oni of the Labor Black League for Social Defense, who said: "Black rights, immigrant rights go forward hand in hand and our struggles advance the cause of emancipation of the whole working class."

Secretary-Treasurer Clarence Thomas of ILWU Local 10, who spoke on behalf of the many longshoremen who came out in their union jackets and hats, said that the background checks enforced by the Maritime Security Act are a move "to undermine the authority and the power of unions." Thomas added that "Racial profiling has targeted blacks, people of color, and our union is one of the most diverse unions in the country. So we see the background checks as a means of determining who can and cannot work on the waterfront, and that is wrong."

Members of AFSCME Local 444 came with a banner reading: "Down with the Anti-Immigrant Witchhunt! Mobilize Union Power!" Also present with banners were National Parks & Public Employees Local 1141 LJUNA and the San Francisco Day Labor Program, whose speaker, Eduardo Palomo, said, "We call on all workers, nationwide, to come out and protest these laws!" Guillermo Ponce de Leon spoke for the Filipino Workers Association. Students came from around the Bay Area.

A statement of solidarity from Mumia Abu-Jamal, America's foremost death row political prisoner, was read at the rally. Another former Black Panther, Kiilu Nyasha, spoke in defense of the many black militants framed up and jailed for their political views. Brian Manning, speaking for the Marxist Spartacist League, summed up: "This is the first effort to mobilize the power of the working class independently, against 'national unity' here in the belly of the American imperialist beast."

Greetings were sent from around the world, including from the Federation of Metal Workers and Employees in Brescia, Italy, and the National Federation of Undocumented Workers from Paris, France.

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## **Polemics on the South African Left**

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Exploitation, poverty and social degradation can be eliminated only through proletarian revolutions in the imperialist centers, as well as the neo-colonial countries, laying the basis for an internationally planned socialist economy.

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petty-bourgeois nationalists of the Pan Africanist Congress and AZAPO (successor to Steve Biko's Black Consciousness Movement) also supported the COSATU stayaway strike.

The political significance of the two-day stayaway was punctuated by COSATU's own role as a component of the governing Tripartite Alliance. Under the intense pressure of their working-class base, the union bureaucrats were forced to take some action—even if only a protest—against the government. Moreover, in the period leading up to the stayaway, COSATU leaders reverted to the leftist rhetoric of years gone by. In mid-August, COSATU president Zwelinzima Vavi told a labour rally in Pretoria:

"The struggle involves the working class and its struggle against a capitalist class and its cohorts. When this happens, militants who fought next to you against apartheid, will now take up the struggle against you while protecting new class benefits.... Some blacks are business leaders, millionaires, director-generals."

Mbeki was so personally enraged at this that he went after COSATU himself rather than leave the job to one of his henchmen. He issued a vitriolic statement against the union leaders:

"One of the lies they tell is that our government has betrayed policies agreed by the broad democratic movement with regard to the issue of the restructuring of state assets. Thus they argue that, because of this, we have abandoned the pursuit of the objective of a better life for all."

Mbeki went on to denounce the COSATU leadership for trying to "use workers as cannon fodder to launch an offensive aimed at defeating their own liberation movement!" (*ANC Today*, August 25, 2001).

By the time of the strike, the COSATU bureaucrats, almost all of them in the SACP, were in a grovelling damage-control mode, offering an olive branch to Mbeki & Co. Addressing a rally of 10 000 in Jo'burg, union officials *minimised* their differences with the government. Their line was not to actually stop the privatisations but rather that they should be included in the negotiations to sell off state assets. They were using the stayaway strike and rallies to let their worker base blow off steam. But on the ground, our comrades selling *Spartacist South Africa* could feel the widespread anger among the workers and others as to what privatisation has in store for them—union-busting, slashing benefits, rate increases in basic services like electricity.

The COSATU stayaway was scheduled in part to embarrass the Mbeki government during the United Nations-sponsored "anti-racist" conference in Durban. Hence the August 30 labour rally in Durban had a quite different character than elsewhere in South Africa. Activists in the Landless People's Movement took to the streets, joined by Palestinian militants, black activists from Brazil,

"untouchables" from India, Aboriginal activists from Australia and many more.

By contrast, the official government "anti-racist" rally a few days later was a total bust. The union tops did not mobilise their ranks. The government was reduced to busing in schoolchildren to pad the crowd and the marchers occupied only the sidewalks to make the march look bigger.

### **Break with the ANC! For a Revolutionary Workers Party!**

The general strike exposed and aggravated the tensions within the South African Communist Party between its base in the labour movement and its pro-capitalist tops ensconced in leading positions in the ANC government. Jeff Radebe, the SACP minister centrally involved in the privatisation drive, remarked that the party was "caught between a hammer and a sickle." On the one side, the official SACP statement endorsing the strike called it "a conscious offensive against capitalism itself and for the building of a people's economy." On the other side, SACP ministers Fraser-Moleketi and Radebe were the first and most aggressive spokesmen for the Mbeki regime *against* the strike. As revolutionary Marxists, we seek to break the black working-class base of the SACP from its reformist misleadership.

The same sentiment that caused workers to drive Fraser-Moleketi from the Pretoria rally has led tens of thousands of workers to drop out of the SACP in the past few years. These workers now look solely to COSATU rather than the SACP to defend themselves against the mounting attacks of the Mbeki government. But the working class cannot defend and further its interests solely through trade-union struggle and other forms of social protest. It is necessary to sweep away the neo-apartheid capitalist order administered by the ANC government—which is the political agent of South Africa's white capitalist class and its senior partners in Wall Street and the City of London—and to replace it with a revolutionary workers government centred on the black toilers in which there will be full democratic rights for Coloureds, Indians and those whites who accept the will of the black majority. To achieve such a government, we seek to build a Leninist vanguard party that champions the cause of all of the exploited and oppressed.

To the left of the SACP are a mélange of groups which falsely claim to be Trotskyist or are conventionally identified with Trotskyism. Among these are the Keep Left group, which is affiliated internationally with the British Socialist Workers Party formed by the late Tony Cliff. Another such social-democratic outfit is the Democratic Socialist Movement (DSM), part of the international current led by Peter

## "New" SA...(Continued from Page 16)

[black African] areas can generally be distinguished on a map by the fact that these areas are generally excluded from the otherwise well-developed railway system. The same is generally true of the electricity system in both rural and urban areas." It is within this general historical context that one can understand why Sandton millionaires are paying less on electricity than the Soweto poor, for example. Many people have been and are still being electrocuted trying to "illegally" reconnect electricity. To get a taste of this desperation, one need not go further than the route mostly used by ANC rulers, i.e., the N2 between Cape Town International Airport and national Parliament in Cape Town city. Live electricity wires connected from street poles cross

streets to nearby shacks. So those, like APF, who preach reliance on the "goodwill" of the ANC bourgeois nationalists are pulling wool over the faces of the masses. The working class is the only motive force for effective struggle against superexploitation and oppression under capitalism. The emancipation of the working class is the act of the working class itself. Those who labor must rule! This is the proletarian, revolutionary, internationalist programme of Spartacist South Africa, section of the International Communist League, Fourth Internationalist. Join us.

## General Strike...(Continued from Page 21)

Taaffe's Socialist Party, also in Britain. Until quite recently, the South African Cliffites and Taaffeites **openly supported the ANC government** of Mandela and his anointed successor Mbeki, for example, urging workers to vote for it in national and regional elections. The Taaffeites, in fact, were for years buried **inside** the ANC. And, for its part, Keep Left has for the past few years been part of the SACP.

In response to the increasing hostility of the working class to the Mbeki regime, these fake-left groups are now seeking to pressure the COSATU bureaucrats to form a "genuine opposition" to the ANC. Their main vehicle to implement this pressure tactic is a lash-up called the Anti-Privatisation Forum. The Forum does not even pretend to be anti-capitalist nor does it call for socialism. Rather it espouses the usual reformist pablum of redistributing the wealth from the rich to the poor.

The latest issue of *Keep Left!* (August 2001) calls for pressuring the union leadership to, in turn, pressure the Mbeki government: "We can help to keep the pressure up by leafleting in favour of the strike and organising more unionised workers in the Anti-Privatisation Forum." Telling here is Keep Left's emphasis on unionised workers, ignoring the millions of non-unionised toilers, especially agricultural labourers and the inhabitants of the former bantustans (largely women) who make up the most impoverished and oppressed section of South Africa's black population. Keep Left is too far to the right to even raise a call for an opposition political party in print.

The Taaffeites have always held up as their model for a workers party **not** the Russian Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky but the British Labour Party,

which currently administers the British imperialist state in the interests of the City of London financiers. The DSM leaders see themselves as potential left advisors to the bureaucratic tops of a South African version of the British Labour Party. That is what they mean when they "call upon Cosatu to start the process of forming a mass workers party on a socialist programme" (*Izwe Labasebenzi*, September 2001).

The question of forming a workers party, centrally based on the COSATU unions, in opposition to the ANC is not at all new. It has been raised periodically by leftists and even some top union officials since the transition from the white supremacist regime to the ANC government in the early 1990s. We have always emphasised that the decisive question is the nature of such a workers party - reformist or revolutionary.

We have raised the call for a Bolshevik workers party in South Africa in a way clearly and sharply **counterpoised** to a reformist (i.e., pro-capitalist) party such as the British Labour Party or the Brazilian Workers Party. A revolutionary workers party would not simply defend the particular interests of the working class, especially its unionised sector, but would fight to eradicate all forms of social oppression—the lack of modern medical care for the millions infected with AIDS, the mass homelessness in the black townships, the hideous conditions suffered by the millions of Africans still trapped in the former bantustans, the degradation of women in rural villages where tribal traditions remain strong. The increasing hostility of the working class to the bourgeois-nationalist ANC, dramatically indicated by the August general strike, demonstrates both the possibility and urgency of building such a Bolshevik workers party in South Africa.

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## Two-Day General Strike in August Workers Combat Privatisation



Reuters

**Mass labour rally in Johannesburg, August 29. Two-day strike protesting privatisation plans was fuelled by mounting anger against neo-apartheid ANC rule.**

On August 29-30, South Africa was shaken by a two-day general strike. The "stayaway" strike, which included huge protests in most cities, was one of the largest labour actions since the white-supremacist regime was replaced by the bourgeois-nationalist African National Congress (ANC) in 1994. Organised by the two-million-strong Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the immediate focus of the action was to protest the plans of the government of ANC president Thabo Mbeki to privatise the state-owned railways and the electricity, telecommunications and waterworks companies. "We did not fight for liberation so that we could sell everything we won to the highest bidder," read a placard carried at the Jo'burg labour rally.

Underlying this massive mobilisation are years of mounting working-class anger and frustration at the openly pro-business, anti-labour and union-busting policies of the ANC-led "Tripartite Alliance" government, in which the South African Communist Party (SACP) and COSATU are both junior partners. When the minister for public service and administration, SACPer Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, showed up at the August 30 rally in Pretoria, she was booed down and driven off the speaker's platform. Fraser-Moleketi is especially

hated by the workers for her past role as the government's hard cop against public employee strikes.

COSATU officials claimed that five million people stayed off the job. Predictably, spokesmen for the ANC government and its masters on the Jo'burg stock exchange downplayed the impact of the strike. But the strike seems to have been effective in the key economic sectors. It was reported that the gold mines in the Free State province were brought to a standstill. Particularly hard hit was the auto sector, which has barely recovered from a three-week strike over wages that ended just prior to the stayaway. At DaimlerChrysler, reportedly more than 70 percent of the workforce stayed away. Ford SA and Nissan did not operate their assembly lines. Meanwhile, a potential strike by 500 000 public sector employees looms large as the latest round of wage talks have hit a dead end.

It is also quite important that other pro-ANC mass organisations—the "civics" based in the black townships like Soweto and the student organisations—supported the COSATU action against the Mbeki government. Likewise significant was that the rival National Council of Trade Unions—representing 500 000 workers—which is led by a bloc between the