



**Cold
Truth,
Liberating
Truth:**

**How This
System Has Always
Oppressed Black People,
And How All Oppression
Can Finally Be Ended**

Revolutionary Worker Special Supplement

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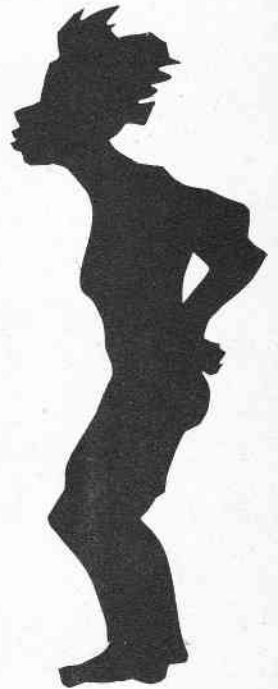
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Number One: The USA is, and always has been, a racist country. It is a country where white supremacy is the practice and all kinds of nonsense theories and notions about the so-called “inferiority of non-white peoples” are continually pumped out by the powers-that-be and the mouths they hire. This is the way it has been all through the history of this country, this is still the way it is today. And this is the way it will stay, so long as the system we now live under—this system of capitalist imperialism, this system of exploitation, oppression, and plunder, worldwide—is in effect and rules over us. But that may not be so long, after all. This system cannot go on forever, and there is a way to put an end to it and create something far better in its place.

At the heart of all this in the USA are the 30 million or more Black people in this country. Anyone who is serious and honest knows that the enslavement and exploitation of Black people has been a big part of building up the wealth and power that the rulers of this country have in their hands—wealth and power that these suckers use to *further* exploit and oppress people here and all over the world. And anyone who is honest and serious knows that for revolution to have a chance in this country—a revolution to do away with all this oppression and exploitation and to change society from bottom to top—Black people must play and will play a big part in this revolution.

All this is true and it cannot be dis-missed. But here we will get into it deeper, knocking down lies and bringing out the real facts. We use knowledge of the past to shine a light on the present and point the way toward the future: a future that **does** belong to us—all of us who have been counted as “nothing” but who shall be all—if we **dare** to seize it and **know how** to seize it. Getting it fully clear on how and why Black people have been enslaved, discriminated against, oppressed, and exploited throughout the history of the USA, right down to today, **and** how all that can finally be ended—this is a key part of knowing and daring. It has everything to do with emancipation that’s all-the-way and real, not a sham or half-way deal, not only for Black people but for all exploited and oppressed people, not just in the USA but worldwide.



The Problem

Any way you measure it, Black people are still catching hell in America, and equality is nowhere to be found. Racist attacks on Black people are mounting, from the streets to the campuses, and the situation of the masses of Black people is growing more and more desperate.

The average income of Black people is just over *half* that of whites, while Black people are unemployed at a rate more than *two times* that for whites. Health care for Blacks is harder to get and of lower quality. Black people are hit harder by malnutrition and disease. Even AIDS hits Black people harder.

Black children die in the first year after birth at a rate two times that for white children. In fact, in many inner cities of the USA, this rate of infant death is *higher* than it is in some Third World countries like Costa Rica and Cuba. And that's only a small part of the overall picture. Compared to white children, Black children are *twice as likely* not only to die in the first year of life but also to have mothers who got late medical care or no medical care while pregnant. Black children are *twice as likely* to live in lousy housing, be unemployed as teenagers, have no parent employed, see a parent die, live in institutions.

Black children are *three times* as likely to be poor, have their mothers die in childbirth, be in foster care, be murdered between five and nine years of age.

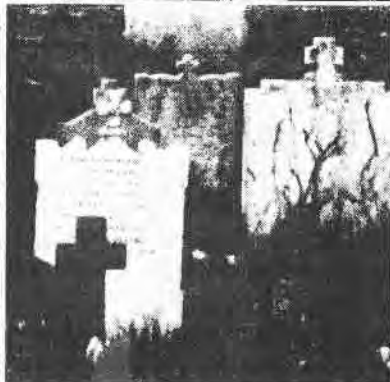
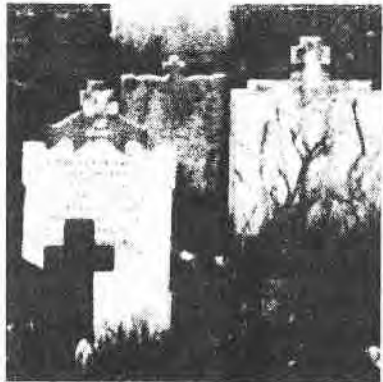
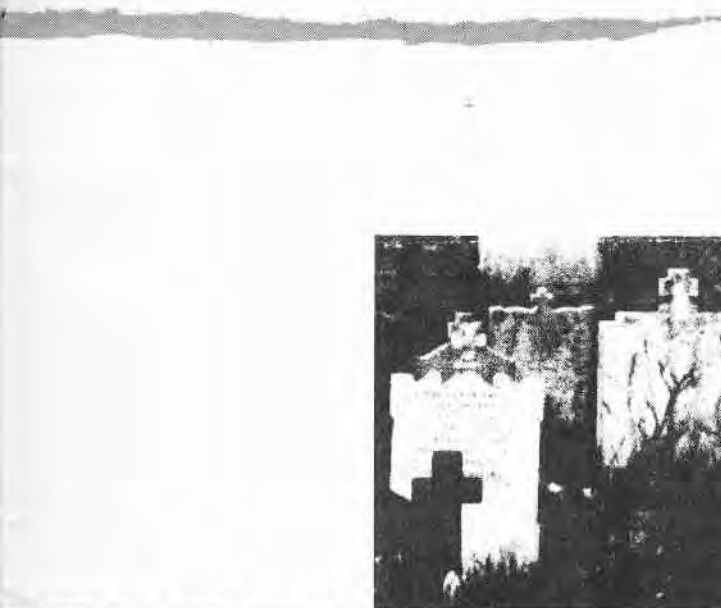
And Black children are *four times* as likely to live without either parent and be supervised by a child welfare agency, and to be murdered within one year after becoming a teenager.

Black people are much more likely than whites to be murdered by the police. Black

people are sent to jail at a much higher rate than whites. In fact the rate is incredibly high—it is the highest in the world. Blacks go to jail in the U.S. even more often than Blacks in South Africa!

If African-Americans lived in some other country—say, one of the Soviet-bloc countries—and suffered the same conditions, who in America would not say that this is a clear case of a people being oppressed by the system? But here in America the real deal with Black people—the real situation they are in and *why* they are in that situation—is lied about and covered up. So the basic question must be dealt with: What is the **PROBLEM**—who and what is **responsible** for this situation—and what is to be done about it? What is the **SOLUTION**?





Racism: Open and Underhanded



Cinque,
slave leader.

Today one of the most common, and underhanded, forms of white chauvinism (racism) is to admit—with a little arm-twisting or even upfront and willingly—that Black people's situation is one of being far worse off than whites but then to blame Black people themselves for this situation. Looked at in terms of Black people's overall experience in America, what this amounts to is the dirty trick of admitting that **in the past** Black people were subjected to oppression and discrimination in this country but claiming **now** that is no longer the case. "They have been given their chance to 'make it' and they have failed—so it must be their own fault and it just shows that they are inferior." So this racist argument goes.

This same kind of argument has been used to put down Black people—to add insult to the injury of slavery and other forms of oppression—all throughout their history in America. At any given point in this history, the oppressors and those who side with them

have tried to deny that there is anything unjust in the treatment of Black people at the time, while perhaps admitting that there was some injustice in the past.

Always the blame is put on Black people for their depressed condition. And always this is a lie—camouflage that covers for the whole economic and political system in the USA and those who run it, the ones who are in fact to blame.

Let's cut through their boring—and *lying*—"history" and deal with the real story. In doing this we will see that the forms of discrimination and oppression may have changed at different times in the history of this country but one thing has remained the same right down to today: Black people have been continually subjected to discrimination and oppression under this system. In looking at this we can get a much truer picture of the problem and thus a much clearer understanding of the solution.

Slavery and Capitalism

Everybody knows that Black people did not "come to this country seeking a better life." They were kidnapped from their homes in Africa, dragged in chains and loaded onto

slave ships—treated not like human beings but like things, commodities to be traded and used to enrich others. Tens of millions of these enslaved Africans died before even reaching America, so terrible were the conditions on the slave ships. Those who survived the trip and were then sold to plantation owners were treated like pieces of machinery. Slaveowners commonly referred to the slaves as "talking tools." That is how Black people were treated for the first 250 years of their experience in America.

Bob Avakian, the Chairman of our Party, has pointed out that the reality of the USA has always been that the government protects the property of white people, especially wealthy white people, more than the rights of Black people. And, as he says:

"It must never be forgotten that for most of their history in what is now the United States of America Black people *were* the property of white people, particularly wealthy plantation owners."

Nat Turner organizing
slave rebellion.





The “founding fathers” of the USA defended slavery and upheld the interests of the slaveowners against the slaves.

And the political leaders of the time—the “founding fathers” of the USA—defended slavery and upheld the interests of the slaveowners against the slaves. This is true of “the father of his country,” George Washington, who was himself a slaveowner, and it is true of the men who wrote the *Declaration of Independence* and *The Constitution of the United States*—men like Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Quiet as it’s kept, the *Declaration of Independence* condemned the King of England for encouraging slave revolts—and rebellions by “Indian savages”—and this cold fact alone screams out the real deal on people like Jefferson who had the nerve to write in that *Declaration* that “all men are

enslave those of Africa in order to use them to clear and cultivate such a vast expanse of land [in America].

“Sugar would be too expensive if it weren’t harvested by slaves. . . .

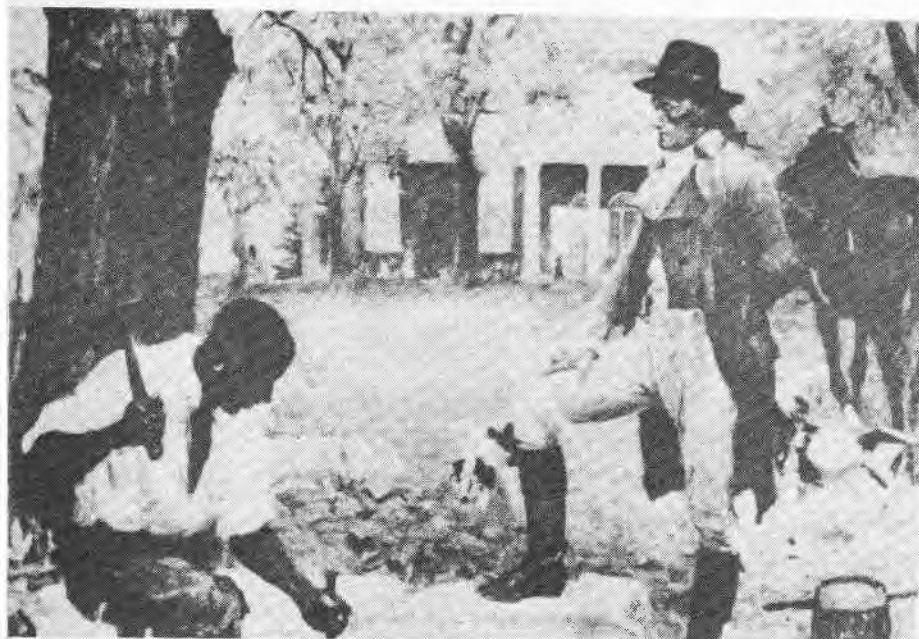
“It is inconceivable that God, who is a very wise being, could have placed a soul, especially a good soul, in an all-black body. . . .

“It is impossible that these people are men; because if we thought of them as men, one would begin to think that we ourselves are not Christians.”

Here again we see that the African peoples, and the native peoples in North America, were treated as something less than human—as though they were “beasts” or “savages” who never had reached and never could reach the “high level of civilization” of the Europeans. The fact that, both in Africa and in North America, there were highly developed societies and cultures long before Europeans came to dominate these places—this basic truth was denied and “written out of history” by the European conquerors and enslavers.

New Forms of Oppression Under Capitalism

Even though slavery was finally ended, after almost 250 years, Black people were still subjected to vicious forms of oppression—and still blamed for their own oppressed condition. First of all, Black people’s own major and heroic role in fighting against slavery is denied or downgraded by the “official histories.” The facts are that there were over 200 slave revolts, including the more famous ones led by Nat Turner in Virginia and Denmark Vesey in South Carolina, as well as other revolts that were covered up and “written out of history” by the slavemasters. And what about the Civil War that finally ended slavery? **Once they were allowed to**, masses of Black people flooded into the northern (Union) army in that war and fought courageously and with great sacrifice on the front lines—even though they were still subjected to segregation and discrimination, even down to the level where their pay as soldiers was



Thomas Jefferson with his slave.

created equal.” And these same men wrote into their *Constitution* that Black people only counted for three-fifths of a human being!

To many of these white overlords the enslavement and even the extermination of non-European peoples was so “natural” that they didn’t even disguise what they were doing. For example, the French political philosopher Montesquieu greatly influenced the writers of the U.S. *Constitution*. Along with what he wrote about politics and law, Montesquieu had this to say:

“If I had to justify our right to enslave Negroes, this is what I would say: Since the peoples of Europe have exterminated those of America [the Indians], they have had to

only about half that of the white soldiers! Nearly 200,000 Blacks fought in the Union army and one out of every five (almost 40,000) gave their lives in this fight—a much higher casualty rate than for whites in the Union army.

It is a lie that “Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves” because he was morally outraged over slavery. Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation freeing the slaves (and not all the slaves at first, but only those in the states that had joined the southern Confederacy) because he saw that it would be impossible to win the Civil War against that southern Confederacy **without** freeing these slaves and allowing them to fight in the Union army. Lincoln himself said clearly that

“My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy Slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that.”

Lincoln claimed it was his “personal wish that all men, everywhere, could be free,” but at the same time he said that the idea of “Negro equality” was nonsense (“a low piece of demagogism”) and he insisted that whites were, and must be, superior to Blacks.

“There is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will

forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. . .and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race,” said Lincoln.

Lincoln spoke and acted for the *bourgeoisie*—the factory-owners, railroad-owners, and other capitalists centered in the North—and he conducted the war **in their interests**.

The Civil War came about because of the clash between two different economic and social systems—slavery, based on plantation farming in the South; and capitalism, based on factory and other wage-labor centered in the North. Things had gotten to the point where these two systems could no longer peacefully coexist within the same country. The slaveowners and the capitalists were battling each other for control of the country, they were battling each other as the USA expanded westward. This expansion was carried out by slaughtering the native peoples (“Indian savages,” they were called) and grabbing their lands and waging a war to steal a huge chunk of land from Mexico. The slaveowners needed more land because their plantation system of farming was using up the land so fast, and the northern capitalists especially wanted the gold, oil, and other rich resources to the West. All this exploded into the Civil War.

To isolate and defeat the southern slaveowners, the northern capitalists had to prom-

Black soldiers in the Union Army during the Civil War.



ise the slaves their freedom and had to promise them (and poorer whites in the South) that they would get land and rights when the war was won. For a few years after the Civil War, some parts of these promises were kept, but even then the U.S. government used its federal troops to **put down** Black people (and poor whites who sometimes joined with them) who tried to get their promises paid in full. And before long, Black people were forced back onto the same plantations they had slaved on.

Now if they weren't actually slaves, things were still not all that different. Now the masses of Black people were exploited as sharecroppers and farm laborers, still working for The Man from "can't see in the morning till can't see at night." They were held down by debt they could never seem to get out of, and they were terrorized by scum like the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and a whole set of laws and codes—all working to chain them in new

ways to the plantation system.

Where was the U.S. government and what was it doing about this? It was doing what it has always done—protecting and enforcing the interests of the ruling class. The northern capitalists had gotten what they wanted and needed out of the Civil War: domination over the whole country and greater openings for the expansion of their capitalist system. Equality for Black people and an end to the plantation system—keeping the promises made during the Civil War—was in conflict with these capitalists' interests. So the promises were broken and brutal force was used to keep Black people poor, exploited, segregated and discriminated against, treated like peons on the plantations, now under the ultimate control and domination of the capitalists. And what excuse was given for this—what Big Lie was told then to try to justify this? The lie that Black people were "not ready" for full freedom and equality!!



Once Again: The Form Changed But Oppression Remains

It was not until World War 2—nearly 100 years after the Civil War—that a basic change began to be brought about in the situation of Black people in the U.S. Millions of Blacks went from a rural life to an urban setting. They went from being peasants (tied to the land as sharecroppers and poor farm owners) to being mainly *proletarians*—not tied to any one place or any one job but forced to live by selling their *labor power* (their ability to work) to the capitalists, or going unemployed if the capitalists could not get enough gold by working these proletarians.

Actually, the mass migration of Black people off the southern plantations to the cities of the North (and the South) began during World War 1. At that time there was a big demand for workers in the defense plants and other factories, and the war cut off the huge flow of immigrants from Europe who had come to America for years before that war. In short, the capitalists needed a lot of workers and there weren't enough white workers to fill the need, so some Black people were allowed in—on the bottom floor.

But not long after World War 1 the great

economic depression of the 1930s forced a slowdown of the migration of Black people to the cities—with massive unemployment everywhere the cities no longer seemed to offer hope of a better life. Yet when World War 2 broke out at the end of the 1930s and as production and employment soared through this war, masses of Black people once again began moving to the cities, especially in the North—away from the plantations, open segregation, and terror of the South.

The biggest change came in the years after World War 2. Southern agriculture was drastically changed. Tractors were brought in on a large scale, and mechanized methods of planting and picking were also introduced in a big way. Machines were replacing human labor and patterns of land ownership were being changed. Millions of Black people were uprooted from the land and pushed toward the cities by the "invisible hand" of capitalism and its supreme commandment: profit, and more profit. Even for those Black people who wanted to stay—who maybe owned their own land and were trying to make a go at farming it—the great majority were forced to give it

up anyway. Before, the interests of the capitalists dictated that Black people be forced and terrorized to *remain* on the southern plantations. Now, these same capitalist interests dictated that Black people *leave* the southern farmlands.

On the basis of these economic changes, certain political and social changes had to be brought about also. Segregation was brought under fire. Battles were waged, and barriers were knocked down. Black people could no longer be *legally* denied the right to vote or to eat in the same restaurants or even use the same bathrooms and drinking fountains as white people. Lynchings of Black people, which had been a common thing in the plantation South, became much more rare, though they did not stop completely.



The '60s Upheavals and Changes Since Then

These were among the gains of the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and early 1960s. But, first of all, these gains were the result of great struggle and sacrifice—they were *won*—they were not a “gift” from the “high and mighty.” And more, what the capitalists up top did give in to—the changes that they did come across with—were those changes that were most in line with their own interests and needs, or that posed the least threat to their whole system.

They were faced with a massive, militant struggle. They were faced with the danger that this struggle would continue to explode all out of control, especially as the Civil Rights movement gave way to a revolutionary Black Liberation movement in the late 1960s. And they were faced with the fact that openly treating Black people in the U.S. as “second-class citizens” cut against the game they were running in the Third World.

In Africa, Asia, and elsewhere in the Third World, people were rising up against colonialism, and the rulers of the U.S. were fronting as “champions of freedom and democracy,” trying to sucker the struggling peoples of the Third World into accepting domination by U.S. imperialism in a new kind of



Top: Pittsburgh, 1968.
Bottom: Detroit Rebellion, 1967.

colonialism. But this scheme was given a crushing blow by the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people, who went up against the tremendous firepower of the mighty USA and drove it out, wounded and weakened.

This was happening at the same time that in the U.S. itself the Black Panther Party, drawing inspiration from Third World liberation struggles, stalked onto the scene and called out the whole system. The Panthers and revolution captured the imagination of Black people—especially the new generation of Black youth—and of others as well. America was gripped by upheaval.



Black Panthers

The Panthers and revolution captured the imagination of Black people—especially the new generation of Black youth—and of others as well. America was gripped by upheaval.

The rulers of America showed their gangster soul in dealing with rebellion and revolution. The National Guard and regular Army troops were called out to put down uprisings in the ghettos, and they shot down many Black people. The police and government agents murdered more than twenty Black Panthers. Hundreds of Panthers and other revolutionaries were jailed. But at the same time the government and the media built up un-revolutionary so-called “leaders” and hyped schemes of “making it” within the system, declaring to the world that the USA was now living up to its promise of “liberty and justice for all.”

One result of all this was that some doors were opened, at least part way, and more

Black people were allowed to “make it” to “middle class” status. In fact, this “Black middle class” was built up as a kind of “buffer”—a group that should feel they have some kind of a stake in the system and that should act to keep the masses of Black people from rising up and tearing up the whole country. Along with this a lot more Black “fronters” for the system were brought out front: suddenly there were a lot more “Black faces in high places.” The plan has been to create “role models”—people who are supposed to prove that you can “be all you can be” by going along with the program. But what is the real deal with all this?

First, even the position of the “Black middle class” is not a secure one and they are still

subjected to discrimination and racist degradation. By the start of the 1980s about 20 percent of Black families (1 out of 5) earned \$25,000 or more a year, but this was still well behind whites: over 35 percent of white families (more than 1 out of 3) earned this much. And even those Black people who “make it” into higher-paying jobs are still concentrated in the lowest rungs of those jobs and still treated like “second-class citizens.”

Here is a story that gives a glimpse of what goes on. Recently it was found out that at Chicago’s O’Hare Airport supervising teachers for air traffic controllers “deliberately created unsafe flight patterns when Blacks were at the control panels to mar their training records” to keep them from getting a job as an air controller! Among the 100 air controllers there, one is Black (and only three are women) and the lone Black “repeatedly has been passed over for promotion.” (From an October 31, 1988 *Jet* magazine article based on a Congressional report.)

This is not an “isolated incident.” It is the kind of thing that goes on all the time. It is something all too familiar to Black people—and to anyone else who has looked at all honestly into the situation. And it happens on every level. Segregation in housing and discrimination by real estate agencies, banks, insurance companies, company management. . . police harassment and brutality. . . racist insults and degrading treatment. . . and on and on—this is what this society subjects Black people to, even those Black people who have “made it” to one degree or another.

Since the 1960s, Blacks have also made gains in education, specifically in the number of years of school they finish—with many more finishing high school and many more going on to college. But in recent years programs that opened up higher education to Black people, at least a little bit, are being cut back. And here is a cold fact that makes clear where things are really at: the average income of a Black family headed by a college graduate is less than the average income of a white family headed by someone who has only graduated from high school.

The fact is that, despite a certain buildup of the “Black middle class”—and despite the great publicity given to the very tiny handful of Blacks who have become millionaires, or whatever—there is no significant section of

Black people “making it big time” in the world of capitalism: Black businesses, with few exceptions, are very small-scale. There are very few, if any, Black companies among the list of big money-making corporations, and there are very few Black executives among the major white-owned firms.

There remains a big gap between whites and Blacks in the “middle class.” Looking at “middle class” households with incomes between \$24,000 and \$48,000 a year, the “net worth” (the combined savings and property) of white households is more than 3 times that of Black households in this income category.



Eviction in Atlanta

For the white and Black populations taken as a whole, the difference is gigantic: the average “net worth” of white households comes out to about \$40,000 for each household, while for Blacks the average is just over \$3,000 for each household—the white average is **more than 10 times greater!**

This is not to say that all white people are wealthy. In fact, the majority of poor people in the U.S. are white. But the *percentage* of Blacks who are poor is much higher. And while there is a sizable number of middle class white people who are more or less “economi-

cally secure," there is only a small minority of Black people in that category.

Since the 1960s, during the period when there has been some opening for the growth of the "Black middle class," limited as it is, the situation of the *masses* of Black people has gotten even more terrible. As just one measure of this, in 1981 over *half* of the Black families in the U.S. earned less than \$15,000 a year. In 1982, 35.6 percent (more than 1 out of 3) Black people lived below the "official" poverty line. This is a *higher* rate of poverty than in the 1970s—in fact it is higher than at any time since the beginning of the 1960s. In the inner cities unemployment is on the same level, or even higher, than it was in the country during the devastating 1930s economic depression.

For Black youth in the inner cities it is even worse. The number of kids in the inner city born in poverty is rising sharply, the unemployment rate for inner-city teenagers is sky-high, and the government admits that *half* of these youth may never see what it calls a "legitimate job." As the rap tune says, "*I went looking for a job every day last week, but it turned into a crazy game of hide and seek. Because every place I looked it seemed a job wasn't there. I might as well apply for food stamps or welfare.*" But of course government programs like food stamps and welfare are under attack from the highest levels of government and are being cut down and turned even more into programs of **control and repression.**

Is it any wonder—does anybody *really* not understand—why in a situation like this, crime in the inner cities is at an all-time high?! What answer can the powers-that-be give to a 16-year-old member of the Crips gang in Los Angeles who said: "Gangs are going to never die out. You all going to get us jobs?" No, the government has no answer. No answer but to blame Black people themselves once again for the miserable situation **the system** has put them in and is working to **keep them in.** No answer but bringing down the hammer—kicking down doors, ramming down homes, shooting down youths, trampling down rights.

What else could you expect from a system that has *never done anything but* oppress Black people in one form or another? A system that has always found it *profitable* to carry out this

oppression. A system that has white supremacy and racism *built into it*, in its foundation and on every level. A system that could **not do away with this white supremacy and racism.** For to do away with this oppression means to tear this whole system apart and throw it on the garbage dump. Unless you are ready to do that—unless you are working for a revolution that will bring down this system and bring about a whole different world—you have no answer to that 16-year-old youth and the millions like him.

More Lies and Alibis

One of the biggest lies around these days—another lie that is promoted from the highest levels of government—is the idea of so-called "reverse discrimination" or "reverse racism." This is the notion that Blacks are getting too many advantages—or too much is being done to make up for past discrimination—at the expense of white people. From everything we have shown so far, it should be clear that this idea is *ridiculous.* But let's cut into it even further.

It is true that perhaps the main area where some Black people have made real gains in getting jobs and earning more money is in government employment, especially at the city level but also on up to the federal level. And this has been connected to affirmative action programs in many cases. But the fact is that these affirmative action programs have **never come close** to giving Black people a position of equality with whites in job and pay levels. As study after study of this question has shown, Black people have a much harder time getting jobs, they have much less job security, and they are much more likely to be stuck in the lowest-paying jobs with less chance for promotion. Check it out. The way one writer put it in 1975 is still the way it is fifteen years later: the "better paid the job the less likely that Blacks are well represented in it." (From the book *Still A Dream: The Changing Status of Blacks Since 1960*, by Sar A. Levitan and others.)

Even where Blacks and whites hold the same job and get the same pay, the Blacks are still getting the short end. Because of discrimination and segregation, Blacks will pay more than whites for the same quality—or



worse—of everything from housing and insurance to food. And because of the much higher Black unemployment rate, Blacks holding a job will often have to support a much larger “extended family” with the income from that job. As we said at the beginning, equality for Black people is nowhere to be found, and even where it might seem on the surface that there is now equality, a closer, deeper look reveals real **inequality**.

The truth is that on every level, and in every part of society, discrimination and racism are not working “in reverse.” They are working in the same way they have always worked throughout the history of this country. They are working **against** Black people.

Taking a stand against this actual discrimination and racism—a stand **against white supremacy**—is not the same thing as being **against white people**. The answer to the question “why should ordinary white people have to pay for this?” is that **the system** should have to pay—it should be overthrown and done away with. Fighting against the oppression of Black people is a key part of moving to overthrow and finally end this system. Anyone who feels messed over by this system—who identifies not with the rulers but with the victims of this system—anyone with a sense of justice should feel deeply moved to join wholeheartedly in this fight.

Blacks and Immigrants

Yet another argument that is pushed from on high—another way of blaming Black people for their own suffering—is to say that other “ethnic groups” have come to America and “made it,” despite being “disadvantaged,” so if Black people are in such a miserable situation it must be their own fault. A more “sophisticated” and “updated” version of this says something like this: “Okay, Black people were mistreated badly in the past—they were kept as slaves and then held on the plantations of the South like serfs, segregated and discriminated against. But finally they were able to get free of that. Maybe they still face some discrimination, but so do other groups and yet those others are working hard and ‘working their way up,’ while Black

people are not doing this.” Let’s clear away this garbage argument too.

The immigrant groups that are most often singled out as recent examples of “success stories” are immigrants from Asia and from Cuba. The real story is that there have been very different experiences among immigrants from Asia in recent times. Some have prospered in the U.S., but many have not.

A look at a key group among them—immigrants from Indochina (Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos) in the 1970s and 1980s—gives a truer picture of what is actually going on. As a bourgeois news magazine recently admitted, “Indochinese refugees are touted as an American success story—in fact a staggering number are poor, out of work and on relief.” What happened was that, right after the U.S. was driven out of Indochina in the mid-1970s, a wave of immigrants came from Vietnam to the U.S. As the same bourgeois news magazine put it, this first wave “was largely an elite group. They were officials of the deposed South Vietnamese government, employees of the American military, dependents of U.S. servicemen and upper-echelon staffers of multinational corporations.” In other words, these were the people who sided with, worked for, and prospered under U.S. imperialist domination—until it was defeated. Naturally these people did well when they came to America—they had a lot of advantages *and* the U.S. government was anxious to see them succeed *because they were fleeing from countries where revolutions had taken place that opposed U.S. imperialism*.

But the story is very different for the second wave of immigrants from Indochina that came a few years later. These were poorer people, not from the elite in their countries, and in the U.S. they are still in poverty. Again from the same magazine article: “A staggering 64 percent of the Indochinese households headed by refugees who arrived after 1980 are on public assistance—three times the rate of American blacks and four times that of Hispanics.”

And these immigrants—as well as others who are “non-white” and whose languages and cultures are judged to be “alien” to Mainstream America—face discrimination and racism, whether or not they “succeed” economically. Sometimes this racism can be “subtle” or even be presented as “praise.” For

example, these days American businessmen, so-called "educators," and others are often quoted as saying that certain Asian peoples are "mentally superior" (even superior to whites). But this is just more racist garbage—another attempt to cook up a "theory" of "intelligence" depending on "race" and genetics—which in fact has no scientific basis at all. It is not hard to see how this can be used to victimize people—including the people who are said to be "superior"—much as declaring Black people to be "genetically better suited" for such things as playing basketball has been part of a whole racist assault on Black people!

As for Cuban refugees, here again there are different waves of these immigrants and they have received different treatment. The first wave of these immigrants came soon after the Castro-led revolution which took power thirty years ago. These immigrants were mostly well-off middle class, or even more well-to-do Cubans, who saw their fortunes fall as Castro came to power. Once again, they did well when they came to America—and the U.S. government *made sure* they did well because it would make Castro look bad and the USA look good.

But later waves of Cuban immigrants—and especially the ones who came to the U.S. after the 1970s—have not done nearly so well. Many of them are not well off at all—and in fact a good number of them are in jail, where they have staged major protests and rebellions recently. And look at how people fleeing Haiti are treated by the U.S. government. They are regularly turned back, refused permission to land in places like Miami, even when this means that they die at sea—or they are forced back to the clutches of the murderous government of Haiti. This is the same U.S. government that made Miami a pleasant home for Cubans fleeing Castro's government, especially the early, more upper class Cuban refugees. The basic reason for this difference in treatment is not that Haitians are Black but that they are fleeing a country and a government *dominated by U.S. imperialism* while the Cubans are fleeing a country and a government dominated by the *Soviet Union*, the main imperialist *rival* of the U.S.

If you check out the way immigrants from Mexico are mistreated—both by the immigration officials and by the whole power struc-

ture in the U.S.—and compare this with the favored treatment that early anti-Castro Cuban refugees have received, you will find that once again the key thing is that Mexico is a country under U.S. domination while Cuba is a country that once was under the U.S. boot but is now under the *Russian* boot. Again the "bottom line" is the economics and politics of imperialism, the interests and needs of the imperialists.

And, once again, the interests and needs of the imperialist system have dictated that Black people in the USA have been maintained in an oppressed condition. The reason that the masses of Black people did not "move up through hard work" in the last 20 to 30 years is certainly not that they did not want to work hard. The masses of Black people have always engaged in back-breaking work in the USA—whenever and wherever they have been allowed to—whenever and wherever the interests and needs of the imperialists allowed and demanded it. And when some "openings" and "opportunities" were created out of the struggle of the 1960s, Black people strained to grab hold of them.

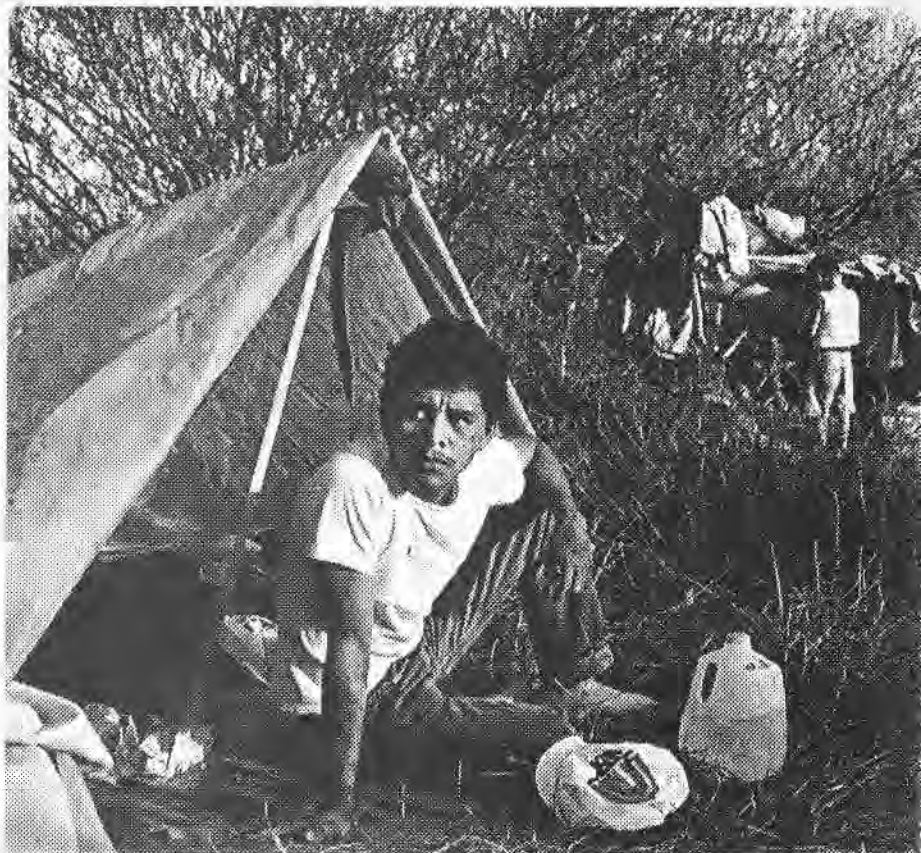
Some new jobs, both blue-collar and white-collar, were opened to Black people then. To give one dramatic example: immediately after the 1967 Detroit rebellion—the greatest of the urban rebellions of the 1960s—the Detroit auto plants began hiring Black people right off the streets! But, as we have seen, both in factories and in offices—in every part of the economy—Black people were still discriminated against and concentrated in the lower-paying jobs, and they still faced the same old situation of "last hired and first fired."

With every "downturn" of the economy—and with major shifts in the structure of the economy and patterns of employment—over the last twenty years Black people have been cruelly hit by the crunch. During this time many factories where Black people held jobs were moved out of the cities of the USA—closed down or shifted to rural areas or to other countries. Black people were not the only ones hit hard by this—many white workers lost their jobs as well—but once again Blacks were hit harder than whites. A U.S. Department of Labor study on this (covering the years 1981-85) showed that Black and Latino workers had an even harder

time finding a new job than white workers displaced by plant closings and cutbacks: "The percentage of those [Blacks and "Hispanics"] who were reemployed as of January 1986 was about 10 percentage points lower than the comparable level for whites."

There are two basic reasons for this. One, Black people, as always, are subjected to discrimination in seeking a job. Second, programs to re-train Black people for new jobs were cut back from the low level they were already on while at the same time companies consciously moved away from the inner cities. What is involved here is a deadly combination of the "normal workings" of capitalist money-making and deliberate moves to apply and enforce discrimination and segregation victimizing Black people. Both parts of this are main ingredients of "the American way of life"—of how capitalism has developed and operates today in the concrete situation of the U.S. and in terms of U.S. imperialism's role in economics and politics worldwide.

Comparing the situation today with that of earlier times in the U.S.—and contrasting the situation of "racial minorities" today with that of immigrants from Europe in earlier times—John J. Harrigan has written in his book *Political Change in the Metropolis*, "The urban America of the 1980s is much less conducive to the upward social mobility of the poor classes, particularly the poor classes within the racial minority communities." (page 43) Translated into human terms this



Mexican immigrants in Texas.

means that, while a small section of Black (and other "minority") people have been able to "move up and move out," the masses have been trapped in the rot and slime of inner cities that have been deliberately left to decay. This, once again, is what this system has to offer.

The Black Family and The "Traditional Family"

One more "theory"—one more way of covering up for the system and blaming Black people for their own oppression—that we will cut into right here is the claim that the real problem is the breakdown of the Black family and the lack of "male role models" for Black male youth in particular. This "theory" has been put forward by all kinds of mouthpieces of the ruling class, including people like Senator Moynihan of New York, and this should give us a tip that it is bullshit.

There are two things wrong with this "theory." First, it mixes up cause and effect—

it deals with certain effects, or symptoms, and covers up the deeper cause and the real problem. It is certainly true that over the past twenty years or so there has been a dramatic rise in the number of Black families headed by women and this has been connected with the high degree of poverty among Black people. But this "theory" doesn't explain why it is that the average (median) wealth of *Black* households headed by women is only \$700, while for white households headed by women it is over \$22,000—a difference of more than 30 to 1! Poverty among Black people is caused by the

The “traditional family” is itself an institution of oppression.

whole oppressive situation they are in. One-parent Black families is one symptom of this. And because of this overall situation, Black women who are raising children alone have much less to fall back on and much less opportunity to get a relatively decent-paying job.

The great increase of Black families headed by women is directly related to the great increase of unemployment among Black males, particularly young Black males. It has been in the last twenty years that there has been a great fall-off in the number of two-parent Black families. This has been a time when unemployment among Black men, especially young men, has become truly drastic. As the book *Families in Peril* points out, “the [falling] rate of marriage formation. . . among young black males” ran parallel with “the decline of employment prospects of young black males, which resulted in only 29.8 percent of black teens and 61 percent of black twenty- to twenty-four-year-old men being employed by 1978.” (page 13) In other words, young Black men are not getting married nearly as much as they used to because huge numbers of them have no jobs—or only very low-paying jobs—to support a family.

And, despite the hype, not many Black youths can make—let alone hang onto—big-time money doing crime, although much Black youth do big time in jail or are killed on the streets. This, too, is an effect—an effect of not only lack of jobs but the whole stinking oppressive situation these youth have been cast into. It tells you everything you need to know about this system that the government doesn’t spend funds to deal with the massive unemployment and rotting conditions in the inner cities, but it **does** spend funds to build more and more **prisons!**

Anyway, if the lack of a man in the family is the cause of poverty and all the other suffering of Black people, then what about the period between the Civil War and World War 2, when Black people were mainly poor farmers in the South? During that time, a very clear majority of Black families **did** have two parents, but would anybody say that Black people were not poor and oppressed then?! No, the real story is that the “traditional family” most corresponded to the economic, political, and social situation—that is, the particular forms of oppression—that Black

people were bound up with at that time. But with all the changes Black people have gone through since then—first migrating in massive numbers into the cities and being segregated and discriminated against there, and finally being trapped in the inner cities as they rot and decay—with all those changes, there is no longer the same basis for this “traditional family.”

This gets to the second thing that is wrong with this “theory” that the problem is the “breakdown of the traditional Black family.” This “theory” covers up the fact that the “traditional family” is itself an institution of oppression. It is an expression of the fact that society is divided into masters and slaves, and that division into master and slave is built into the “traditional family” itself, where the man is to be the master, lording it over his wife (and children).

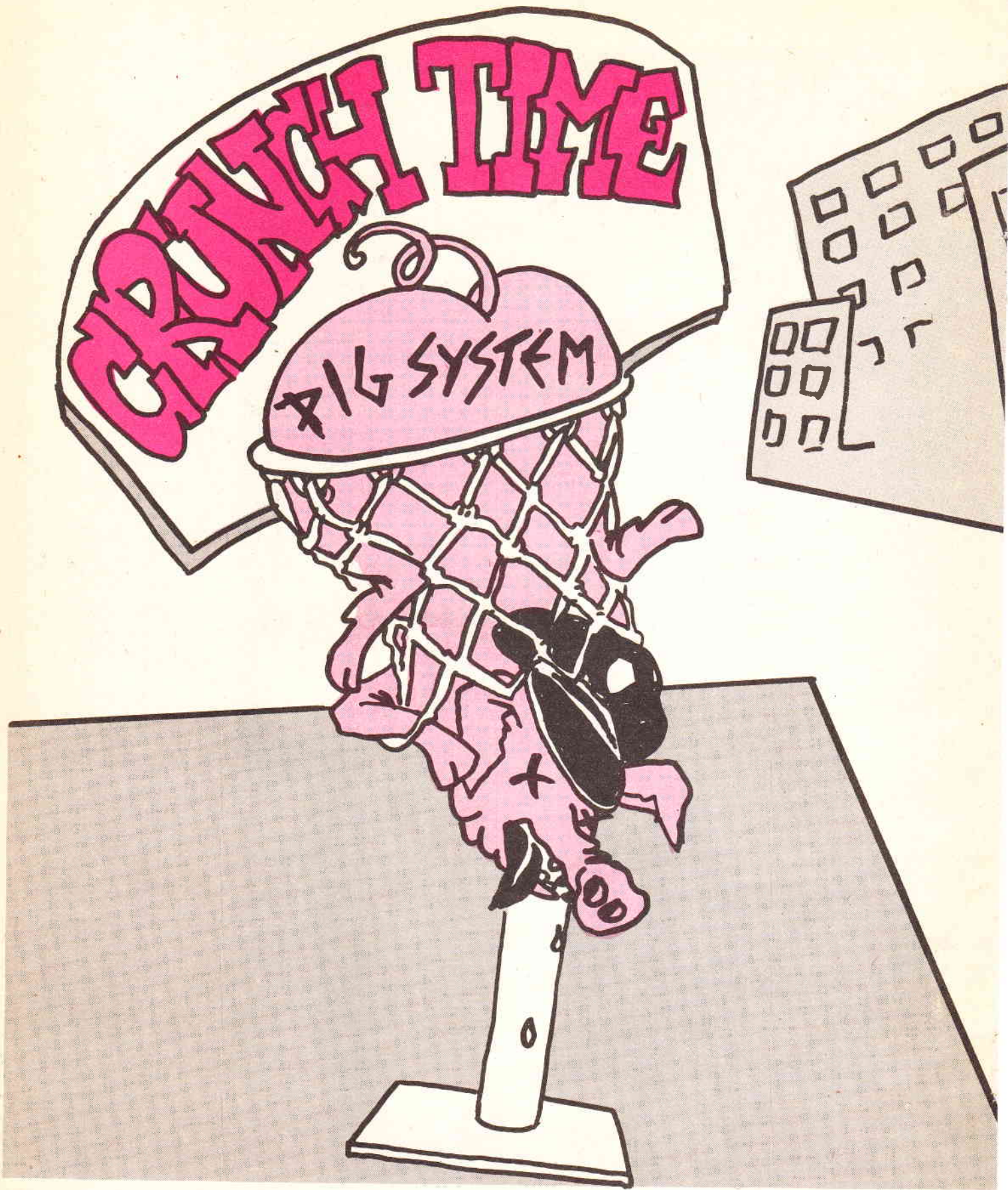
We can get a strong clue to this from the roots of the word “family,” which comes from a Latin word used in ancient Rome, *familia*. “Among the Romans, in the beginning, it did not even refer to the married couple and their children, but to the slaves alone. *Famulus* means a household slave and *familia* signifies the totality of slaves belonging to one individual”; and the head of the family “had under him wife and children and a number of slaves, under Roman paternal power, with power of life and death over them all.” (Quoted from Frederick Engels, in his book *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*.)

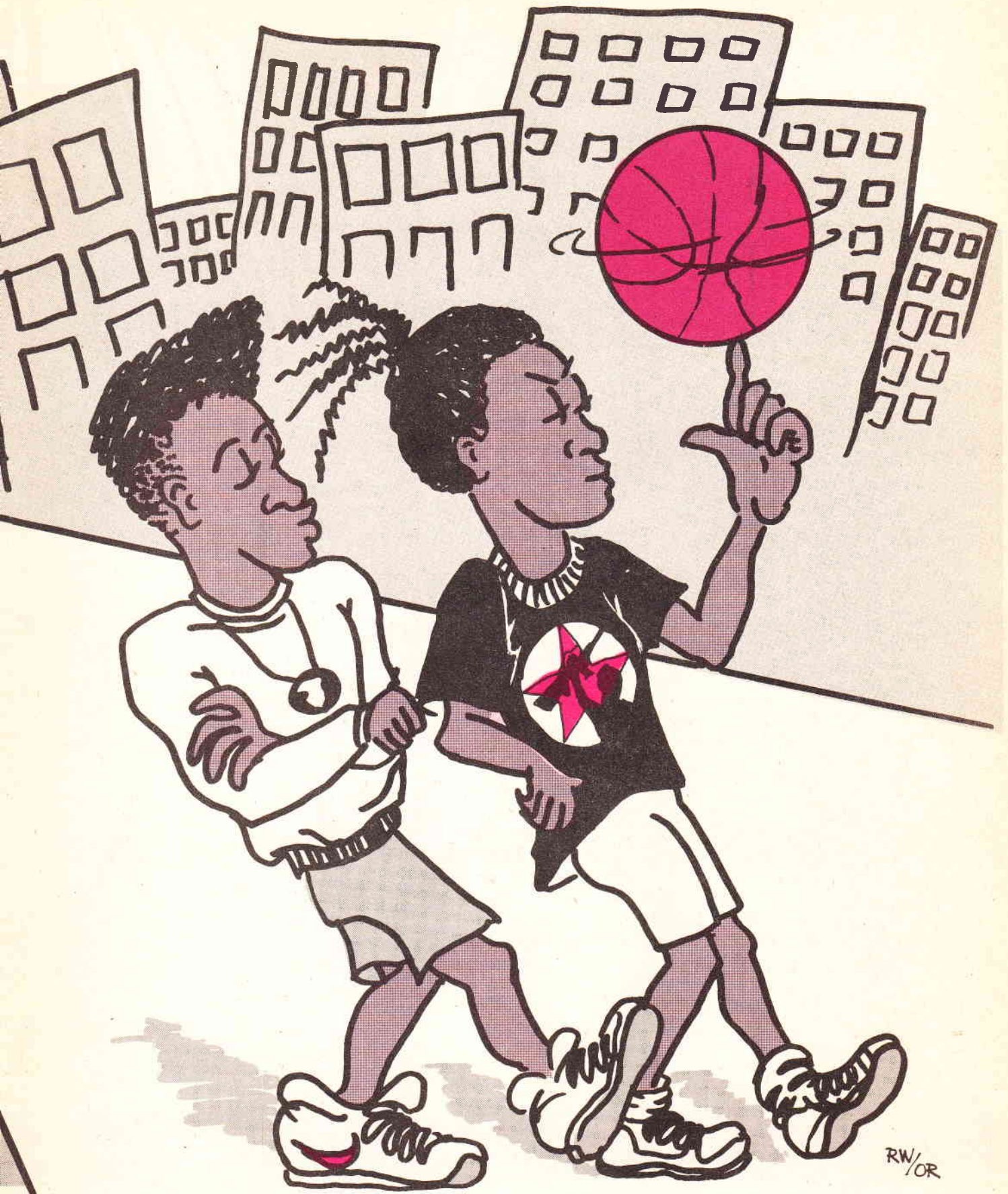
Along with all this has gone the idea that **A MAN IS STRONG** while a woman is **weak**. This is **bullshit**. It comes from the enemy—from those who run systems based on enslaving and exploiting. It should be put with the rest of the bullshit from systems like this.

And we cannot let our enemy tell us what “role models” we should follow. Youth of today, Black youth and youth in general, don’t need **male** “role models.” They need **revolutionary** “role models”—women and men. They need “brothers rising up with sisters—strong, proud, and with equality,” as our Party says. They need a struggle to end all inequality, all relations of oppression, all divisions into masters and slaves, all ideas of treating other people as something to be dominated and exploited.



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RW/OR

Black people are an oppressed nation—held down and denied their rights as a people, including the right of self-determination.

Summing Up and Pointing Forward

The whole history of Black people in this country has been a history of oppression as a people. But it is *also* a history that has brought Black people to the position of being able to play a powerful role in bringing down the whole system and moving to put an end to *all* oppression.

Black people are not simply a “racial minority.” They are a nation. Black people suffer not just racism but *national oppression*—oppression as a people, a people whose roots are in Africa but who developed into a separate nation based on their historical experience in this country. This nation was welded together beginning in slave days but more particularly in the period that followed slavery, when Black people came to share the essential characteristics of a nation: a community of people formed on the basis of a common territory, a common language, a common economic life, and a common culture. The development of Black people in the USA is completely, qualitatively different from people of European descent in the USA.

Some Europeans have faced certain forms of discrimination in the U.S., and many have retained at least parts of their “ethnic identity,” but Europeans in general have “melted into” the European-American nation. This is the dominant nation in the USA, it is the oppressor nation. Black people are an oppressed nation—held down and denied their rights as a people, including the right of self-determination.

The right of self-determination of nations means not only the right to determine their own affairs as a nation in general but more particularly the right to form a separate country of their own in their own homeland.

The historic homeland of Black people in (what is now) the USA is the area known as the “Black-Belt South” (more or less the old plantation area, given the name “Black Belt” because of the rich, dark color of the soil). This is the same general area that has been demanded by a number of Black nationalist groups as the territory of a new and separate Black (or Afro-American, African-American, or New African) republic. And there are millions of Black people still living in that area, including several million in rural areas as well as millions more in the cities.

The right to self-determination is just that—a *right*. Recognizing the right of self-determination is not the same thing as insisting that the right be used to set up a separate country. And, of course, if such a separate country were set up—in this case, an Afro-American republic—it would not mean that all Afro-American people would have to live there! The right to do something doesn’t mean that you *have* to do it. It just means that others—and especially those who have a whole history of oppressing you and denying your rights—must not be in the position of forcing the decision on you.

Whether or not a separate Black republic should actually be established is something that can only be decided in concrete terms in the course of the revolutionary struggle to overthrow the imperialist system here in the USA. Without overthrowing that system, self-determination for Black people will be impossible to achieve.

The standpoint of communists, representing the revolutionary proletarians of all nations, is to firmly uphold and fight for the right of self-determination in order to unite



December, 1986,
New York—
Day of Outrage
protests Howard Beach.

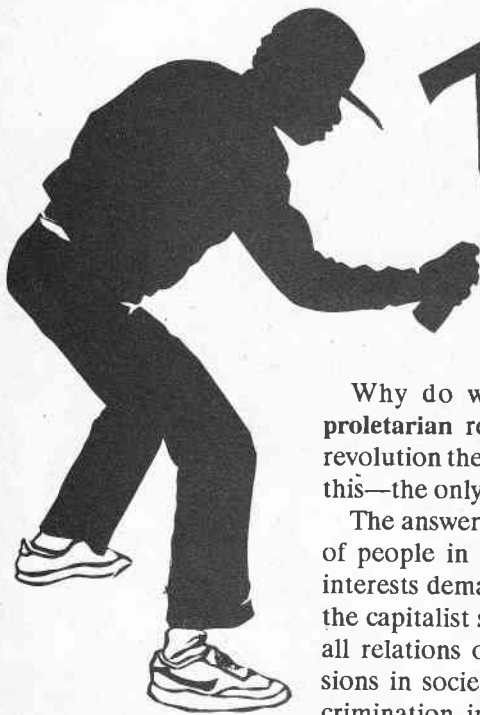
the ranks of the exploited and oppressed people and push forward the struggle for communism worldwide. In terms of the revolutionary struggle in this country, all other things being equal, the best situation would not be to see separate national republics established but to have one unified socialist state over the largest possible territory once the imperialist system is overthrown.

But that is just the point—things must be equal—there must be equality between peoples and nations, and that means the **right** of self-determination must be upheld for Black people. The masses of Black people must be relied on to resolve this question, free from force or intimidation, especially from people of the European-American nation. This is crucial in battering down inequality

and forging the most powerful revolutionary unity of the proletariat of all nationalities.

The masses of Black people in this country suffer oppression two times—oppression as a nation and as proletarians, concentrated in the most exploited sectors of the proletariat. This is the result of the whole long experience living the “American Nightmare.” But this also puts basic Black people in a strong position. A strong position in the fight to bring down the system that is the cause—the problem. A strong position to strike at the heart of the system, to help bring forward and unite the exploited and oppressed people of all nationalities and to help win the greatest number to the program that can deal with the problem—the program of all-the-way revolution—proletarian revolution.

Black people are in a strong position to strike at the heart of the system.



The Solution

Why do we say that the solution is proletarian revolution? Why is proletarian revolution the only thing that can deal with all this—the only **all-the-way** revolution?

The answer is that there is only one group of people in society, only one class, whose interests demand the complete overthrow of the capitalist system, the complete ending of all relations of exploitation and of all divisions in society which are the basis for discrimination, inequality, and oppression. That class is the *proletariat*—those of us, of whatever race or nationality, who are poor and exploited under this system, who are the modern-day slaves, and who have nothing to lose from rising up to overthrow this system . . . nothing to lose but our chains. In this country there are millions and tens of millions of us, and in the world as a whole we number in the hundreds of millions.

The proletarian revolution means emancipation for us—but beyond that it means emancipation for all of human society—emancipation from any conditions in which people face each other as oppressors and oppressed. In place of this, in its final victory proletarian revolution will bring about a whole new world—a **communist world**—a world of freely cooperating human beings. A very important part of this is overcoming and eliminating any situation where one nation dominates and oppresses another. In the U.S., ending the oppression of the Black nation and really bringing about justice and equality for Black people is a burning question and a big part of what proletarian revolution is all about.

But let's back up a second and speak to the question: *Why* do the interests of the proletariat, and only the proletariat, demand the complete overthrow and elimination of all relations of exploitation and oppression? The

answer has to do with the nature of the proletariat as a class and with the way human society has developed up to the present. Let's break that down.

Human society has not always been divided into exploiters and exploited. In fact, for a very long period of early human existence no such division existed. Early human societies may not have been "highly developed," people may have lived at a very basic level, but they had not yet come to be divided into different classes.

The fundamental division into masters and slaves finally came about when people had developed the means—the tools and such (the *productive forces*)—to have surpluses of things, beyond what people needed just to survive. But with this came the *private appropriation* of these surpluses—there wasn't enough for *everybody* to have a lot, and a few people were able to take most of the surplus for themselves. With this came the development of different classes in society. Those few who controlled most of the wealth and productive forces became the ruling class. The rest were forced to work for them and be exploited and oppressed by them.

Throughout human history since that time different systems have come and gone—different classes have risen up, overthrown the old order and set *themselves* up as the new ruling class. But one thing remained the same: society was ruled by a small circle of people who had a monopoly on the wealth of society—and the means to create wealth (land, machines, and so on)—and therefore had a monopoly on political power and armed force. And that is still the case today, not just in this country but in the world as a whole.

But something is different today—something that makes all the difference. In all earlier times, as society developed from one

stage to another—as one system of exploitation replaced another—this was because the tools and machinery and so on (the productive forces) were developed enough to produce increasing wealth so that a few could live far beyond mere survival, but the productive forces were **not** developed enough to make it possible for **everyone** to live above the barest survival level. In the world today that is **no longer the case**.

Now, for the first time in human history,

the productive forces have been developed to the point where scarcity and the mere struggle for individual existence is **no longer necessary**. Now the division of society into different classes, with the few exploiting the many, is not only a cause of great suffering—it also lacks any historical justification. It stands directly in the way of moving society forward to a new stage where human beings can make the most rational use of their productive forces (including their own abilities) without





any class divisions, without any exploitation or oppression.

The proletariat is the main exploited class in today's society. A *class*, in this basic sense, is a group of people who are defined by whether they are owners or non-owners of the means to make wealth, by what role they play in the process of producing wealth, and by what share they get in the distribution of wealth. In all parts of this, the proletariat is on the bottom in modern capitalist society. It *produces* the greatest share of the wealth but it *receives* the smallest share: proletarians get just enough to keep alive and keep working—if they get that. But there is something special about the proletariat—something that makes it different from all previous exploited classes in history. The proletariat can put an end to its *own* exploitation only by putting an end to *all* exploitation.

For the proletariat to free itself it must

overthrow capitalism and move on to change society, from bottom to top. It must eliminate the basis for inequality and oppressive divisions in society, or else the capitalist system will arise again and the proletariat will lose power and once more be exploited. The proletarian revolution must be carried out until capitalism has been uprooted worldwide, so that there is no longer any basis, anywhere, for capitalism to corrupt things or to make a comeback. In carrying out this revolution the proletariat will resolve the maddening contradiction between what existence *could be* for the whole human race and the suffering and torture it is *today* for the great majority of humanity. The point is: It is the proletariat, because of its position in today's society, that has the greatest interest and the greatest potential power to make this revolution a reality.



Miami, 1989.

How This Revolution Will End the Oppression of Black People in Actual Fact

Our Party's *New Programme* speaks to the history of vicious oppression of Black people, and other oppressed nationalities, throughout the history of the USA, and sums up the situation today:

“Discrimination, the denial of democratic rights, violent police repression, suppression and mutilation of their cultures and languages, exploitation and oppression as members of the working class, with the lowest positions, constantly high unemployment, the lowest paid jobs, the worst housing, the worst of bad health care and other social services—all this and more is daily life for the masses of these nationalities in the U.S. today. And it is these conditions that the proletariat in power

must and will eliminate.” (page 69)

We have underlined the last sentence here to emphasize that the point of analyzing the problem is **to move on it**.

As the Party's *Programme* goes right on to say: “All this, of course, cannot be done in a minute. But much of it can and will be. . . . Discrimination, for example, will be immediately and forcefully banned in employment, housing and all other spheres.” And along with this “the army of police which enforces all this [discrimination and oppression] through systematic terror in the ghettos and barrios and other areas where oppressed nationalities are concentrated will have been destroyed, just punishment handed out to its

hired thugs, and in its place will be armed and organized militia made up of the masses in these neighborhoods and areas.” (pages 69-70)

And further:

“The absurd contradiction represented by the ever-visible sight of masses of unemployed people hanging out on the street of their broken down neighborhoods—this too will be overcome at the stroke of the fist that knocks over capitalism. Instead of being held apart by the law of profits, these unemployed people will be put together with the materials needed and set to work on these neighborhoods. Not only will segregation be outlawed but the financial policies previously employed by the banks and insurance companies which feed and profit off it will have been ended along with their control of financial resources. . . .

“The youth, many of whom turn to crime not only for economic reasons, but because capitalism has offered them nothing, no purpose at all in life, will be given such a purpose—their full participation in the continuing revolution in society and the whole world.” (page 76)

The *Programme* makes clear the right of self-determination of Black people, as we have discussed it here. It points to the importance of land, autonomy rights, and equality of languages and cultures for other oppressed peoples, in particular Native Americans and Mexican-Americans; and it clearly supports independence for Puerto Rico, which is now a colony dominated by U.S. imperialism.

As we have pointed out, Black people and other so-called “ethnic minorities” in the U.S. do not simply suffer “racial discrimination”—they suffer **national oppression**—oppression as peoples with different national identities from the dominant European-American nation. But, of course, racism—so-called “theories” of “racial differences,” of “racial superiority” and “racial inferiority”—have been used throughout the history of this country to justify the enslavement and oppression of these peoples and their domination by the European-American nation. So the fight against this racist (white chauvinist) poison is and will be a crucial part of the fight against national oppression. On this the Party’s *Programme* is very clear: “Obviously this is a protracted process, but the first and

major qualitative step will have been taken when the capitalist system that is the source of this sewer, and in turn thrives off it, is swept away.” (page 74) But, the *Programme* points out, this is only the beginning—there is an ongoing struggle to be waged:

“Those who use the chauvinist banner to organize any kind of reactionary, racist movement and attacks on minority nationalities will be ruthlessly crushed. The KKK, Nazis and the like will be wiped out and their members forcefully dealt with, beginning with the leaders, who will be given the ultimate punishment.

“More broadly in society, the proletariat will deal with this problem by promoting education and struggle among the people. Education about the lives, cultures, history of oppression and resistance of all the formerly oppressed nationalities will be widely and deeply carried out. The capitalist source of the problems of all different sections of the oppressed will be constantly unveiled and hit again and again. The common myths among the people will be discussed and debunked, in large part by relying on organized exchange between the masses themselves, and the lies of the bourgeoisie will be ruthlessly and thoroughly exposed. All this will be greatly aided by the constantly closer contact between people of different nationalities as the policies of integrating the workplaces, neighborhoods and schools are carried out, thus breaking down the ignorance-breeding separation in which bourgeois ideology generally feeds.” (pages 74-75)

Of course, none of this will come easy. It will only come as the result of tremendous struggle and sacrifice and amidst the great upheaval and even destruction that will be involved in finally overthrowing and doing away with this system. It will come only as the proletariat seizes power and sets out to remake society in accordance with its revolutionary interests, using our Party’s *Programme* as its practical guide in this country. And as that *Programme* sets forth, much change can be brought about right away as capitalism is overthrown—and the door will finally be opened to even greater change. At long last, struggle and sacrifice will serve to completely sweep away the barriers to equality and emancipation.



May 1, 1989—
International
Workers Day.



Mural Photos courtesy
Police Misconduct
Lawyers Referral
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Rene X.

Any Other Way Is Confusion and Illusion

No other program, besides the program of proletarian revolution, can possibly end the oppression of Black people, for one basic reason. No other program can fully isolate the problem—the capitalist system—and provide the solution through abolishing capitalism and everything that goes along with capitalism.

Dreamers and schemers keep coming up with “solutions” that demand “working within the system” to seek change. But what have these “solutions” brought? Nothing. Nothing but leaving the system in effect, with all the suffering it causes, here and worldwide.

One of the more recent versions of this has been the idea of so-called “Black empowerment” through getting Black people elected as mayors and other public officials. Well, over the past twenty or more years, thousands of Black people have been elected to public

office, and many of the major cities—including Detroit, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C.—do have Black mayors. But what has been the result? Have the conditions of Black people improved during the time that these Black officials have held office? Have the cities become better places for Black people to live where they have had Black mayors? No. As we have seen, the situation of the masses of Black people has become even more miserable.

It is really necessary to understand that elections in this society are controlled by the capitalist ruling class. This ruling class dominates and controls the economy and on that basis it dominates and controls political power. Regardless of who is elected to office, this ruling class keeps its control of *the state*—the police and armed forces, the government bureaucracies, the courts and the rest of the

SLAVES,
NO NIGHT



Los Angeles, 1989.

legal machinery (the “injustice system”). Elections are used by the ruling class to trick those they rule over. At most, elections give the oppressed the “choice” of selecting **which group of oppressors** will rob and torment them! This is a basic “fact of life” under this system. To be treated as “second-class citizens” and not even be allowed to vote is an outrage. But to be told that the oppressed can gain power—power to change society in their interests—through elections under this system: that too is an outrage and only helps the oppressors.

It is true that certain middle class Blacks have gotten jobs in government bureaucracies and have benefited in some other ways from the fact that there are more Black government officials. And in some cases, murders of Black people by police dropped, for a while, after a Black mayor was elected

and more Black police were hired. But two things must be said about this.

First, this drop-off in murders of Black people by police is tied in with an overall strategy of the ruling class of penning Black people up in the inner cities, giving them, and especially the Black youth, no hope for a better life with dignity, and setting them up to murder **each other**. This serves the powers-that-be by making it look as if **they are no longer responsible** for the misery—as if **Black people are doing it to themselves**.

But second, police murders and all-around brutality against Black people are once again on the rise, including in cities where there are

Black mayors. And let's not forget the MOVE massacre in 1985. After bombing a house, murdering Black men, women, and children, and burning down a whole Black neighborhood, in order to get "the radical sect, MOVE," Mayor Wilson Goode of Philadelphia said he would do it again! Let that stand as a reminder of what such Black mayors will do in the service of the ruling class—the real power for whom these Black mayors front and

in whose interests they act. Let it stand as a symbol of the bankruptcy of these so-called "Black empowerment" schemes that promise results from "working within the system."

Those who hype this strategy of "working within the system" often claim to be following the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. And in reality, they are. King himself wrote in 1968 that

"The American racial revolution has been a revolution to 'get in' rather than to overthrow. We want a share in the American economy, the housing market, the educational system and the social opportunities. This goal itself indicates that a social change in America must be nonviolent." (From *Where Do We Go From Here*, by Martin Luther King, Jr., page 130)

But what King is talking about is not really a revolution at all. He is appealing to the aspirations of middle class and upper class Blacks to get a bigger "cut" of the loot plundered by U.S. imperialism. But the violent revolutionary uprising of the masses blows away schemes like this. When King insisted on nonviolence, he insisted on it only for the oppressed masses. In fact, during the rebellions of Black people in the '60s, King openly declared: if blood must be spilled, let it be ours. And during the most powerful of



The MOVE massacre, Philadelphia, 1985.



these rebellions, Detroit 1967, King joined in the call for the government to send in troops to put down the rebellion—which they did—with vicious violence.

King's whole stand in the '60s was directly opposed by Malcolm X. Although he was a nationalist and not a communist, Malcolm was a **revolutionary nationalist** who called out the system for its crimes, not only against Black people but other oppressed peoples in the U.S. and around the world. Malcolm boldly took the stand that if this system would not give freedom and justice to those it had victimized for so long, then the system should be overthrown. Despite attempts today to distort the real story on this, Malcolm remained firmly opposed to the role played by Martin Luther King and all others who tried to collaborate with the system and cover up the reality of the so-called "American Dream"—which is a **nightmare** for the oppressed. It was for his uncompromising stand in giving a voice to the deepest feelings of the most oppressed that Malcolm X was hounded and finally assassinated.

Three years later, Martin Luther King was also assassinated. But unlike Malcolm, King was not cut down because he was a champion of the oppressed, standing up for them against the system that oppresses them. He was a **defender** of that system, who wanted to "improve" it but not overthrow it. He was cut down by infighting among the cut-throat rulers of that system—the same infighting that cut down the Kennedys, John and Bobby, who played King as their puppet. Thus, today, those who promote "working within the system," with such disastrous consequences for the oppressed, are indeed carrying out the legacy of Martin Luther King.

This applies as well to people like Jesse Jackson and his recent election campaigns. Jackson's claim to speak for the oppressed while seeking the position of top oppressor is ridiculous. You don't represent the oppressed by trying to be "President" of the system that oppresses them. That's like representing the fish by trying to be "President" of the sharks that eat them!

While he is at it, Jackson has declared himself "The General" in the "war on drugs." But Jackson knows that this "war on drugs" is in



Malcolm X.

reality a war on the oppressed people, directed from the highest levels of the ruling class. If Jackson really wants to do some good for the oppressed, let him declare war on the system that is **responsible** for the situation where masses of people are poisoned with drugs and is using that situation to bring down the hammer of repression even more brutally. Let him stand up and say: The system is the problem—it is responsible for untold and unnecessary suffering for millions, even billions, of people, here and all over the world—and no change for the better can come about until this system is overthrown. But Jackson is not about to do that. He knows this system is the "hand that feeds him"—the *same* hand that brutalizes the oppressed masses, who **do** have every interest in declaring war on this system and fighting to finish it off.

You don't represent the oppressed by trying to be "President" of the system that oppresses them. That's like representing the fish by trying to be "President" of the sharks that eat them!

Nationalism and Internationalism



Nationalism has played a major role in the struggles of Black people in the U.S. and in the struggles of other oppressed peoples. But the basic question is: Whose interests does the ideology of nationalism represent and can nationalism lead to all-the-way liberation?

Nationalism as an ideology actually favors the bourgeoisie over the proletariat, and in the final analysis it promotes capitalism. Of course, not all nationalism is the same. Black nationalism is hardly the same as *white* nationalism. The nationalism of an oppressed nation is very different from the nationalism of an *oppressor* nation. The nationalism of an oppressed people does have to do with fighting against oppression—against discrimination and inequality—while the nationalism of an *oppressor* nation only has to do with enforcing oppression and trampling on justice and equality. There is a fundamental distinction between oppressor and oppressed nations, and it is crucial to recognize this fundamental dividing line, or else you will end up siding with the oppressors.

But when all is said and done, nationalism, of any kind, is still the outlook of the bourgeoisie and ultimately serves capitalism. It is still the outlook of exploiters and wanna be exploiters, even if those exploiters and wanna be exploiters are held down and discriminated against by bigger, more powerful exploiters. Black capitalists may not be big sharks like the white capitalists who rule in the system of U.S. imperialism—and it may be possible to some degree to unite with Black capitalists against this system of imperialism—but one basic truth remains: capitalism means exploiting people. Nobody has ever accumulated capital *except* by exploiting other people—and nobody ever could—that's the nature of the beast.

We can get a more concrete sense of how nationalist ideology ultimately serves capitalism by looking at the most influential nationalist movement among Black people in America in this century: the Garvey movement. Marcus Garvey was born in Jamaica, and his ideas have had a very large influence there, but they also have had major impact in the U.S. In fact, after World War 1 Garvey

organized a movement that was the biggest movement of Afro-Americans since the Civil War—the biggest movement until the upsurge of Black people's struggle in the 1950s and '60s. And Garvey's ideas have continued to influence nationalist movements and organizations among Black people, including the Nation of Islam ("Black Muslims") founded by Elijah Muhammad (originally a follower of Garvey) and other groups.

Garvey established the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), which rallied the participation and support of over one million Black people. The main base for Garvey's movement were landless or land-poor Black farmers who fled the South and migrated to the Northern cities beginning at the time of World War 1. In these Northern cities they still faced segregation, discrimination, unemployment, poverty, and other forms of being used and abused by the capitalists and the government. Garvey preached Black pride and he bitterly denounced white society and its treatment of Black people. But, in the final analysis, Garvey's program still came down to promoting capitalism and even working with the white oppressors to promote Black capitalism.

Garvey called for a mass exodus of Black people—a return to Africa. Garvey had dreams of setting up a new government in Africa—he declared himself President of Africa and formed a government-in-exile—with not one African included. But the fact was that different imperialists had already carved up and colonized Africa, and Garvey tried to work with the imperialists in pursuing his program. He openly declared capitalism to be a positive, progressive force and preached that Black working people should not wage struggle against their capitalist bosses.

Despite his attempts to promote capitalism and work with the imperialists, the U.S. government persecuted him because he had "stirred up" masses of Black people, and millions of aroused Black people always pose a great threat to this system. Garvey's organization was destroyed and his efforts finally ended in failure. But even if they had suc-

The question for the proletariat is: What ideology can unite the oppressed and exploited people to fight for their highest interests?

ceeded, even if Garvey had been able to carry out his program, it would only have resulted in some kind of new oppressive setup—a new form of colonialism in Africa, based in capitalist exploitation and controlled by U.S. imperialism.

But does it have to be like that? Is it bound to be the case that nationalism will ultimately serve capitalism?

Nationalism may claim to stand for everyone—for the nation as a whole—and not just the upper classes within the nation. It may even declare itself most in favor of the working classes and poor people of the nation. But to really represent the working class and poor people—the *proletariat*—a *different* ideology is needed. Because the proletariat, as a class, can win its emancipation only by ending exploitation and oppression, in every form, everywhere, the outlook that serves the interests of the proletariat is not nationalism but **internationalism**. Above all, the allegiance of the proletariat is not to any one nation but to the cause of emancipation—of ending all exploitation and oppression—**worldwide**.

The question for the proletariat is: What ideology can unite the oppressed and exploited people to fight for their highest interests? How can nationalism—even a revolutionary kind of nationalism that stands up against the system in the name of the oppressed peoples—build the highest and broadest unity? How can it build unity among all who must be united, on the best, the most powerful basis and with the most all-the-way revolutionary line in the lead? It cannot. Nationalism may be a powerful and a positive force in the struggle of an oppressed people up to a point. But nationalism cannot take things as far as they need to go—it cannot be the guide to complete liberation.

Nationalism falls short in uniting oppressed people of different nationalities. If nationalism is the guide, then everybody must look out for their own nationality first and before all else—that is what nationalism means.

Nationalism can't tell us what the fundamental interests of different classes and groups are, who should lead in the struggle against oppression, and how the leading group (or class) should relate to other groups and classes in the struggle.

Nationalism doesn't give a full picture of



Washington, D.C., 1979—
"Mao Tse-tung
Did Not Fail,
Revolution Will Prevail!"

our struggle as a world struggle and it isn't good enough as a guide in uniting with real friends to fight common enemies, not just in one nation or country but worldwide.

Nationalism doesn't begin to give the answer to the question of how to end all oppression, including the big question of how to end the oppression of women and how to fully unleash the fury of women as a mighty force for revolution. Even when nationalism in-

cludes equality for women in its program, it will not be able to carry through on this—it will not be able to end the domination of women by men because it cannot make a complete break with capitalism and its outlook.

Fundamentally, nationalism goes along with the interests of the capitalist class, which seeks to strengthen its control over the territory and economic life of “its” nation and to promote “its” nation above others. It is not in the basic interests of the capitalist class to promote the equality of all nations and the unity of the masses of people of all nations. The capitalist class does not want to work for the day when national barriers will have been overcome on the basis of equality. Nationalist ideology is in accord with the capitalist class on this. In expressing the viewpoint of “my nation first,” nationalism actually promotes

relations of **inequality** and the division of the world into nations that are in conflict with each other, a world divided into oppressor and oppressed nations. And this goes along with the division of society into classes, into exploiters and exploited.

To bring it all together: Nationalism can't point all the way to the final goal of moving human society forward, beyond the stage where it is divided into masters and slaves, exploiters and exploited, oppressors and oppressed—forward to a new world of freely cooperating human beings, no longer divided by class or nation.

There is only one ideology that *can* do all this: the revolutionary communist ideology of the international proletariat: Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

ALL THIS OPPRESSION CAN BE ENDED: WE HAVE THE PROGRAM, PLAN, LEADERSHIP, AND LINE

The program and ideology of the revolutionary proletariat are the weapon and guide in the fight against the oppression of one nation by another and all the chauvinist and racist garbage that is spewed out to “justify” this oppression. Even more basic, the proletarian line and program are the weapon and guide in the fight to finally end all forms of oppression and exploitation.

Proletarian revolution is not just a good idea. It is a concrete and practical goal that is being battled for right now in all parts of the world. Within the U.S. itself, this heartland of imperialism, proletarian revolution is not only something urgently and desperately needed—it is also something that can be done.

There is a proletariat in the USA—numbering in the tens of millions—with nothing

to lose but our chains and a world to win. Black people and other oppressed nationalities make up a very important part of this proletariat, but they are not alone. While there are certainly white people who are well-off, comfortable, and conservative, there are also many who are not. There are, in fact, millions of whites who are poor and exploited and whose most basic interests are with the proletarian revolution.

There are many allies and potential allies who can be won by the revolutionary proletariat. The key alliance that must be built for revolution in this country is the alliance between the struggles of the oppressed nationalities to end their national oppression and the struggle of the proletariat, of all nationalities, to end all oppression and exploitation through the overthrow of capita-



lism and the advance to communism world-wide. At the same time there are many others, including many middle class people, who can be united with in the fight against this system and can be won to support the proletarian revolution—or at least not to side with the system against this revolution. There are millions and millions of women, and large numbers of youth, and many others who are victimized and outraged by the workings of this system and the endless atrocities it commits.

There are the troubles this system is in, and the crises it must continually confront, all over the world. There is the very real possibility, at any time, of deep crisis and serious

setbacks for the rulers of this system—and this could come suddenly and seemingly “out of nowhere.” They say they’ve got it all under control, they act like they’re on a roll, but it’s not like that. For if that were the way it is, they wouldn’t need to be doing all the vicious shit they are doing. They wouldn’t need to be doing all the brutal repression they are carrying out against people who have no reason to stand with this system—people who would jump at the chance to go for the system’s throat if they saw it really exposed and weak. The powers-that-be fear people like this—that is why they are trying to move and crush them. They especially fear the masses of Black

people. And with good reason.

Even those who most smugly uphold this system of oppression and murder, even those who most boast of the stability and durability of this capitalist society in America, know that if there is a possibility that this could all be blown apart, Black people will be a powerful force in making that happen. Despite the fact that the ruling class is deliberately letting the inner cities rot and turning them into America's version of South African Black "reservations" ("bantustans"), the cities are strategic for society and those concentrated in the cities are in a strategic position for revolution. Despite the fact that the masses of Black people have been cast into an even more miserable and desperate situation and have been labeled "an underclass," this "underclass" is in fact a key part of the most revolutionary class, the proletariat. In rising from the bottom, this revolutionary class can move and raise up all those who are oppressed—can turn the whole system over and turn the world in a whole new direction.

Finally, there is the leadership we need—a Party of the proletariat that can lead the revolutionary struggle.

A Party with an understanding of history and of present-day reality. A Party with a rich

revolutionary history, with its roots in the '60s, but *also* with the bold revolutionary energy that comes from being engaged in the struggle on many fronts **right today**.

A Party that has consistently refused to sell out to the system and that is determined never to give in or stop short of the goal of communism worldwide.

A Party united with others like it in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM), drawing its strength from this Movement and doing everything it can to strengthen the Movement and advance the world revolution.

A Party with the strategy and plan to deal with the problem. A Party with the program to provide the solution—in the most all-around way, with the most sweeping vision, in the most basic terms, and on the most practical level.

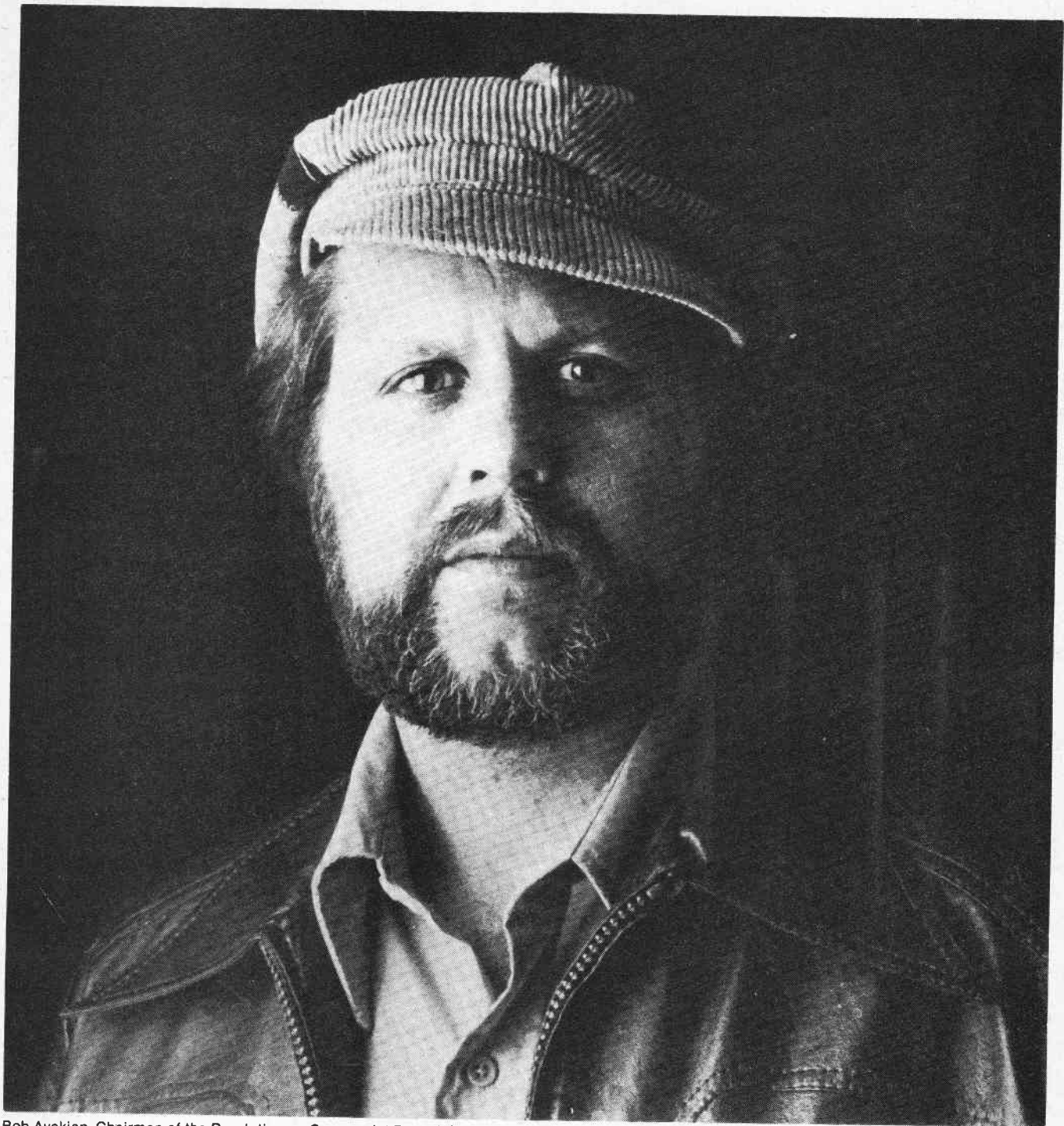
A Party that can recognize revolutionary opportunity and is preparing to take the lead in seizing it.

A Party armed with the ideology—the ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism—that can light the path to the future and turn our dreams about a world without oppression and exploitation into a living battle to win such a world.

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY
Get Down with the Party, Get Ready for Revolution!
Support, Join, Build Our Vanguard Party!

OUR IDEOLOGY IS MARXISM-LENINISM-MAOISM.
OUR VANGUARD IS THE
REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY.
OUR LEADER IS CHAIRMAN AVAKIAN.





Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA.

