

October 26 anti-apartheid actions in Detroit

By MARGARET GUTTSHALL

Over 100 militants, representing virtually every independent working class political organization in Detroit (the Communist Party, Workers World, the Socialist Workers Party, the Trotskyist Organization, the Revolutionary Workers League, the Revolutionary Socialist League, the International Socialists, the Democratic Socialists of America, etc.) marched through a working class neighborhood chanting "Boycott South Africa, not Nicaragua! Jobs not bombs!" Saturday, October 26, the second anniversary of the US invasion of Grenada.

This is one of the first times that so many of these organizations have been forced to make a common fight for a boycott of South Africa, in solidarity with Nicaragua!

Later that same day, at least 500 union members rallied under the slogan "Free South Africa" at the UAW Local 600 union hall, home of the largest UAW local in the world.

This crowd included many union bureaucrats and their friends, it did not call for a boycott of South Africa nor solidary itself with Nicaragua, and key speakers spent a lot of time praising America — "Where else in the world do Blacks have the rights they have in America," said one. "Where else can they rise to the top of a union as we have in America," he went on. Nevertheless, this rally was a sign of the times, of the tremendous support within the unions for the struggle of the people of South Africa. This is also the first time that the union bureaucracy in Detroit has been forced to take any concerted action against the racist South African regime, no matter how minimal.

How can we take advantage of this situation to advance the struggle to bring down the racist dictatorship in South Africa, to advance the struggle against racism and capitalist exploitation throughout the world, especially America?

First, we have to fight for all working class organizations to continue the fight for a boycott of South Africa, in solidarity with Nicaragua. And this is not going to be easy. Certain tendencies are probably already considering dropping the fight simply because the turnout for this slogan (Saturday morning) was not as large as the turnout for the vaguer, noncommittal slogan "Free South Africa" (Saturday afternoon). They do not understand the relationship of forces and they want to retreat when it is time to advance. We also have to clarify that what we want is a union boy-



South African soldiers arresting a Black student last month in Soweto township.

cott of South Africa. Workers, unions, have to take direct action. Neither we nor the people of South Africa can wait for the capitalist banks or corporations or Reagan to change their policy. Botha (head of South Africa) has just declared that police cannot be prosecuted for anything they do to Blacks today. This is, in effect, a call for mass terror.

Second, we have to fight for an alliance of working class parties, a workers electoral alliance, to lead this struggle in the unions, in opposition to the Democratic Party and the union bureaucracy, in the course of the 1986 Congressional elections, and as a first step in building a Labor Party. Forces in and around the Democratic Party are already trying to suppress any independent mobilization against racist South Africa, in solidarity with Nicaragua.

Jesse Jackson and Co. tried to suppress the April 20 march on Washington. They voted against national actions this fall against apartheid and US intervention. And the forces closest to the Democratic Party, or particularly concerned with their relation with it — the Nuclear Freeze Campaign, Central America Solidarity Committee (CASC), — did not even come to the October 26 demonstration.

This is because the Democratic Party is a capitalist party, tied to the same capitalist banks and corporations that profit from the super-exploitation of Blacks.

Democratic Party politicians — white or Black — cannot lead a fight for a union boycott of South Africa because a union boycott will hurt the capitalists who bankroll them. A workers electoral alliance is necessary to take the offensive against this party on its home turf — the Congressional elections — and build a Labor Party. Working class parties cannot hope to take on the bosses divided among themselves.

Third, we have to build a working class party. The Trotskyist Organization is the only working class organization prepared to lead this fight. The Trotskyist Organization fought at the Cleveland Conference in Fall 1984 for a boycott of supplies to the reactionary regimes in Central America, for workers candidates to lead this fight in the presidential elections. We were in the front ranks of the struggle to build the April 20 demonstration in opposition to the Democratic Party's attempts to suppress it. We fought to continue the April 20 demonstration in opposition to the Democratic Party's attempt to suppress it. We fought to continue the April 20 mobilization against US support to apartheid and intervention in Central America in Detroit, Chicago and at the Minneapolis Conference. We fought for a single workers candidate for Detroit mayor in opposition to the bosses and their candidates Young and Barrow. And we fought to build the October 26 demonstration for

Down with the Apartheid Regime!

Declaration of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International

The incessant mobilizations of the Black workers and youth of South Africa against the racist Pretoria regime are on the verge of opening a *pre-revolutionary crisis in Southern Africa*. This crisis is of *international* importance. The entirety of the imperialist order in the region is behind the South African regime — it is Botha's armed guardian — directly confronting the threat of revolution of the oppressed. But the nervousness of the powerful reactionaries demonstrates clearly that what is being played out is a crisis going beyond the boundaries of the Black continent. Fearful for the future of their large financial investments, the English and the German bourgeoisies sustain the Botha regime of terror without reparation. The French imperialists who maintain the Antilles and New Caledonia under their colonial domination propose "sanctions" with the hope of displacing the other powers, but compromised to the marrow by their support to apartheid, and facing the imminent fall of the regime. Such are the limits of the "democratic indignation" of Mitterrand and Fabius. As for Reagan's "sanctions," destined to silence indignation provoked by American support for what the White House calls the "reformist Botha government," they are of worthless economic value in the eyes of the whole world.

But for the workers of all countries, *what is being played out is their own struggle*. How could the masses of the colonial countries not feel as theirs the revolution of the oppressed people of South Africa? In the imperialist metropolises, how could the workers, and in the first place the immigrant working class and their youth — not discover the connection between their

"Jobs not bombs! Boycott South Africa, not Nicaragua" as a working class demonstration.

The Communist Party, Workers World, the Socialist Workers Party, and even the Socialist Workers Party oppositions (Socialist Action, Fourth Internationalist Tendency) have all opposed this struggle on the grounds that it would alienate the Democratic Party and the union bureaucrats. They oppose fighting for leadership of the working class in opposition to the capitalists and their agents.

That is why youth and workers must build the Trotskyist Organization. It is the only organization prepared to fight for leadership of the working class against the bosses, to unite the workers against the bosses and to build their party.

bourgeoisies and the hangmen of Pretoria, and the link with the actual racist laws? In the United States, the struggle against apartheid has been transformed into an American "internal affair" openly related to the Black question in the US itself . . .

The working class must intervene with its characteristic methods, with total independence, denouncing at each step the cynical pronouncements of the governments as well as their miserable "sanctions."

Union boycott of transportation, of all supplies and all commercial operations and banking with South Africa!

Support union militants and Black workers, and in the first place, the miners union engaged in full struggle, and victims of intense repression.

But what are the perspectives of the movement begun in South Africa?

In face of the threat of a revolutionary explosion — and still backing Botha, his police and army — the industrial and financial South African bourgeoisie explores the possibility of a negotiated outcome with the leaders of the African National Congress (ANC), aligned with the Kremlin. The conciliatory heads of the Church, such as Tutu, are being catapulted to the rank of political spokesmen of the oppressed masses . . . A race against time has begun to defeat the oppressed in a hurry.

This hasty reaction of the bourgeoisie illustrates the content of the barbaric apartheid regime, that of the deprivation of all democratic rights for the Black majority of the country, is likewise, an expression of a *brutal and frantic capitalist exploitation*. And in that sense, only a working class revolution, the violent destruction of the South African bourgeois state can finish with the oppression and the imperialist exploitation of South Africa, the pillar of which is its state. The Fourth International affirms that the proletariat must take the leadership of the revolutionary democratic movement against the apartheid regime, because the class in advancing its own solutions and perspectives (a *workers and farmers government, a Federation of Workers Republics of South Africa*) is the only one that can permit the conquest and resolution of the democratic aspirations of the oppressed masses:

Down with Apartheid!
Union Boycott of South Africa!
Immediate Liberation of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners!
Return of those exiled!
For political and trade union liberties of

the oppressed Black majority, their right to take in their own hands the destiny of the country and exercise power!

These immediate demands of the masses are inseparable from the revolutionary tasks without which no real liberty can be conquered:

Dissolution of the repressive corps and the racist tribunals!

Punish the torturers and those responsible for repression!

Liquidation of the Bantustans!

Land for the farmers!

Expropriation of the mines under workers control, nationalization of imperialist investments and confiscation of the huge fortunes amassed from the blood of the Black workers!

Only these methods, only a revolutionary government arising from a general strike and the uprising against the regime — *not a negotiated pact between the bourgeoisie and the Stalinist leaders or conciliators of the movement* (ANC, UDF . . .) — can deliver the workers from the police of the bosses, can give to the oppressed people the freedom to decide their destiny . . . Only these methods can open the way toward a *truly free election* and toward a revolutionary *Constituent Assembly* truly based on the workers and the Black population.

Such is the road that the Fourth International defends and it calls on the international proletariat and the youth to support the working class masses of South Africa through an energetic mobilization of solidarity.

Down with Apartheid!

Revolutionary Constituent Assembly!

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