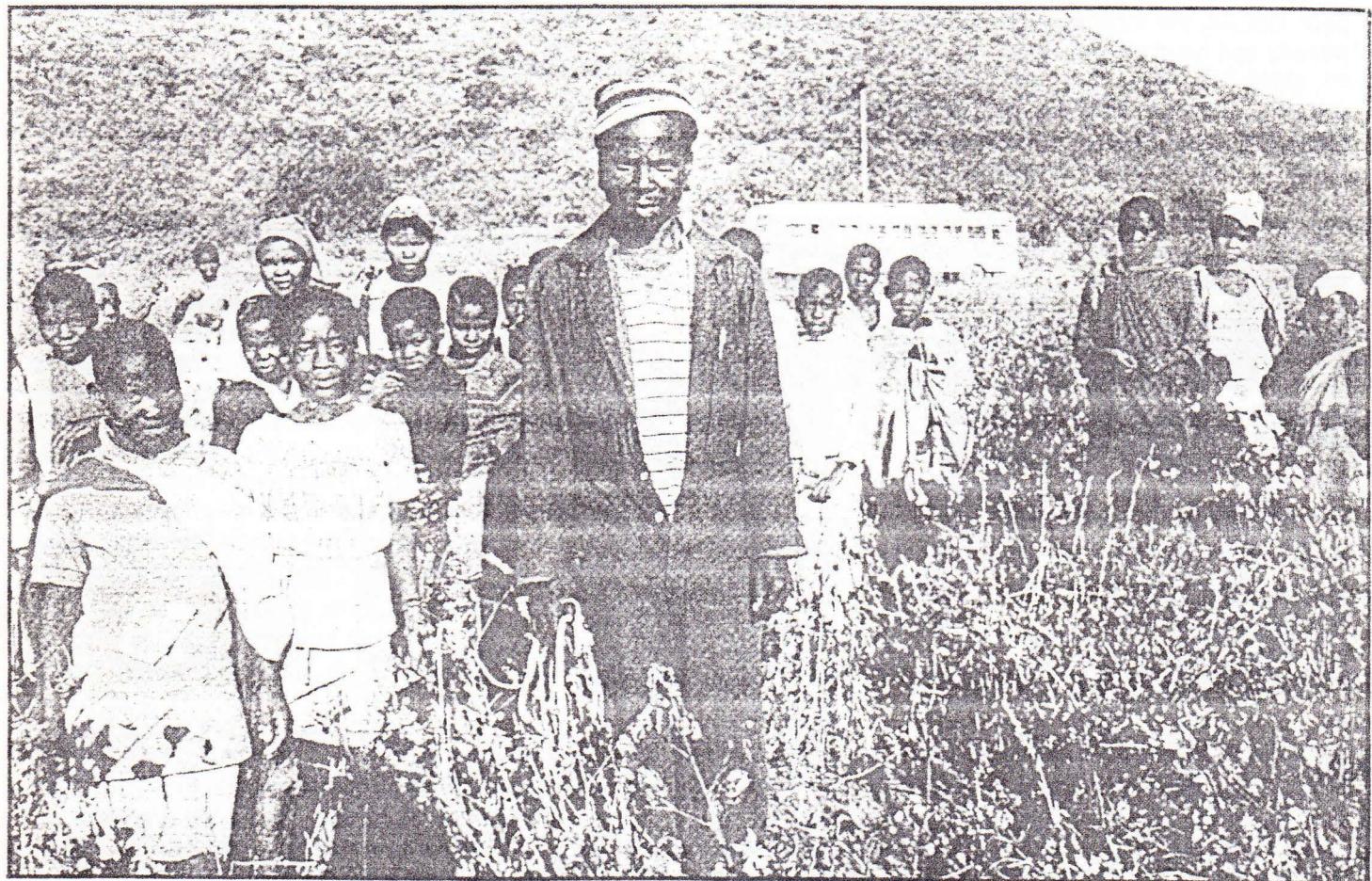


WORKERS' SOLIDARITY

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THE POOR MUST



TAKE BACK THE LAND

VOICE OF ANARCHIST-SYNDICALISM

UNDERSTANDING AND DEFEATING RACISM

We Anarchist-Syndicalists fight all domination and exploitation. We are for Stateless Socialism (Anarchism), grassroots democracy and individual freedom. The fight against racism is a central part of our program.

WHERE DOES RACISM COME FROM?

Racism is not natural or inevitable. It is rooted in class society.

Racism developed alongside capitalism and the modern State since these emerged 500 years ago. It justified the conquest, slaughter and enslavement of indigenous people in the Americas, Asia and Africa. Later racism was used to divide and rule the working class majority, and to super-exploit and repress sections of the working-class.

Racist arguments said colonialism, slavery and Black worker oppression were a "civilising mission". In truth, racism gave huge profits and power to the capitalist ruling-classes of Europe and Japan.

SOUTH AFRICAN CASE

Racism in South Africa developed from colonial conquest, genocide against Khoisan people, and slavery in the Cape.

The discovery of diamonds and gold in the 1870s strengthened racism. Why? The mine bosses and capitalist farmers needed ultra-cheap labor to make profits.

So the State forced Africans into wage labor through taxes and land dispossession. It imported Indian semi-slaves for the sugar farms. Repressive systems such as the compounds, and a lack of political and union rights was used to keep African, Indian and Coloured labor cheap and controlled.

Many Africans were *migrant labourers* based in the bantustans. This allowed the ruling class to keep their wages down as they only had to pay for the wages of a "single" man. It also slowed down the development of massive and volatile urban working-class ghettos by preventing Black people from settling in the cities..

White workers and poor whites were deliberately divided from their Black comrades through massive racial privileges such as high wages, political and union rights, and social services.

THE CRISIS OF RACIAL CAPITALISM

This system of racial capitalism worked well for the bosses up until the 1970s. It made huge profits and kept the masses down.



But the system entered a crisis in the 1970s. The local market was restricted to Whites and was thus too small for further capitalist growth. Also, massive skills shortages developed. Only Whites got a decent education and were allowed to do skilled work.

More important, the Black workers and poor (joined by some middle- and upper-class elements) rose in revolt: the 1973 Durban strikes, the Soweto rising of 1976, the emergence of a mass trade union and civic

movement in the 1980s, the revolutionary uprisings of 1983-6, the mass protests of the late 1980s.

ARE ELECTIONS THE WAY FORWARD?

This crisis forced the racist ruling class to the negotiating table in 1990.

The 1994 elections were a massive victory. For the first time in 350 years Black people are not ruled by a racist dictatorship. We have the right to vote, to free speech, to trade unions, to equal social services. We must defend these rights with mass action if necessary.

But elections do not bring real freedom. The State always serves the ruling-class. Power does not lie in parliament but in the State bureaucracy, the military and the corporate boardrooms. The State centralises power in the hands of a tiny, privileged minority of both Blacks and Whites.

We should boycott elections and rely on mass struggle to win change.

ABOLITION OF CAPITALISM

The fight against racism is a fight against capitalism and the State. These structures have been built on racism, and always create new forms of racism.

Yesterday, it was Apartheid. Today it is the arrest and deportation of so-called "illegal immigrants" from Africa. The immigrants are blamed for crime and unemployment, both of which are really the bosses' fault. The immigrants must be defended!

Black workers and poor people still suffer the legacy of Apartheid: poverty, rotten schools, landlessness, unemployment etc. These problems cannot be solved by the market. They require wealth redistribution, and an economy planned from below by the working-class to meet people's needs, not profits. In other words, they require the establishment of a Stateless Socialist (Anarchist) society.

WORKING-CLASS REVOLUTION

All Black people are victims of racism. But the Black middle and upper class elite is shielded from the worst effects of racism by their privileged status in capitalism. They can live in the suburbs, go to private schools and earn big salaries- we can't.

We must fight racism wherever it exists. *But we working and poor people must not build alliances with Black managers and capitalists, because they will always choose profits over socialism.* They want to exploit us. But we, the workers and the poor, create all social wealth. Only we can build a free society because only we do not exploit.

A united multi-racial class-struggle of all the workers of the world is the only road to freedom. A united struggle on a principled anti-racist platform is vital.

STRAIGHT TO STATELESS SOCIALISM

We *reject the so-called two-stage theory* which says that workers must first fight for a parliament which will destroy racism ("national democracy") and only later struggle for socialism. Capitalism and the State cannot be made non-racial. Also, the "leaders" who get into parliament get many privileges and thus start to fight against any talk of a second struggle for socialism.

SPECIAL ORGANIZATIONS?

As we mentioned earlier, united class-struggle is the only way to defeat racism for once and for all. In particular, there is no substitute for working inside the trade unions to turn them into mass, integrated, revolutionary unions aiming at the seizure of the land, factories and mines.

However, where Black people form a doubly oppressed minority of the working-class we defend their right to form special Black-only organisations. The role of these organisations is to make sure that Black concerns are not marginalised by the left-wing or the broader working-class movement. However, these special organisations must be based on the principles of class-struggle, and must build alliances with other movements of the workers and the poor. Without such allies, the Black special organisations are too small and isolated to win out against capitalism and the State.

Special organizations are probably not needed in South Africa. *The African workers and poor form the vast majority of the population. They have the most grievances against the racist-capitalist system. They are the most militant, combative and organised group in society. There is no large White-working class or left-wing which can ignore their demands. Clearly, the Black working-class will play the leading role in the struggle against capitalism and the State. The African working-class can draw other allies behind its struggle, from*

amongst Coloured workers, Indian workers and even anti-racist Whites.

WHITE WORKERS AND RACISM

All races are fundamentally equal. There is as much difference within each "race" as there is between "races". This means that there is no such thing as an inferior or a superior race, or as an inherent racial characteristic like mathematical ability.

Obviously this also means we do not accept the bourgeois-nationalist argument that White people are always racist.

Another issue that always gets raised is the question of whether White workers benefit from racism. In examining this issue we need to distinguish between different circumstances.

In South Africa, which was historically a colony of White settlement, the small White working-class received massive and real gains from the racist system because of the bosses need to strengthen racial-capitalism. With the fall of Apartheid, these racist privileges are rapidly eroding, opening up the possibility of sections of

White workers joining with Black in large numbers as reliable allies.

In countries like Britain and Europe, where the White working-class forms the majority of the population. The situation is more complex.

While White workers in these countries may receive some limited short-term benefits from racism, such as slightly lower rate of unemployment, these benefits are limited. Whites still make up the majority of the poor and unemployed here. And racism has serious long-term effects which outweigh short-term gains - it seriously divides and weakens working-class struggles. In all these countries there is a strong anti-racist working-class tradition, evident from large-scale White participation in riots against racial oppression. Racism is therefore not in the real interests of the Euro-American working-class.

CONCLUSION

To win we need to extend the fight against racism into a fight against capitalism and the State. And we need to organise on a class-struggle and anti-racist basis.

Workers Solidarity says: *Black Liberation through Class War! Forward to Stateless Socialism!*

ANARCHIST-SYNDICALIST HISTORY: ANARCHIST ANTI-RACISM IN ACTION

We Anarchist-Syndicalists are sworn opponents of racism. Racism is a tool of the bosses and rulers and must be destroyed through a revolutionary international class-struggle for a free stateless socialist (Anarchist) society.

REVOLUTIONARY FOUNDERS

The theorist-activist founders of Anarchist-Syndicalism were anti-racist revolutionaries. Mikhail Bakunin was a lifelong opponent of colonialism and national oppression. He was imprisoned for his activities several times. Bakunin stated that there must be a "recognition of human right and dignity in every man, of whatever race or colour."

Other activists, like Elisee Reclus and Rudolph Rocker, also did important work demolishing racist theories and campaigning against the racists' lies.

CUBA

Anarchist-Syndicalists placed the fight against racism at the centre of their struggles. For example, in the Anarchists won over the Cuban labour movement from the mid-1880s onwards. They led massive strikes and were active in the anti-colonial struggle against Spain. The Anarchists united people of African, European and mixed descent in struggles against the

legacy of slavery, such as racial discrimination and the physical punishment of apprentices.

THE IWW IN THE USA

From the beginning, Anarchists were in the forefront of the fight against racism in the USA. The (Anarchist) International Working People's Association, founded in the 1880s, had as one of the central points of its programme equality for all, regardless of race or sex.

Members of the International Working Peoples Association were central to the general strike for an 8-hour day in 1886. This brought out tens of thousands of workers on strike - both Black and White. In Chicago, the predominantly Anarchist Central Labour Union brought out 65,000 workers on strike. One of the main activists here was Lucy Parsons, a woman of colour and a working-class revolutionary. Her husband Albert Parsons was among 8 Anarchist union militants sentenced to death on false charges, as the bosses sought to crush the struggle. May Day, the workers' day, began as an anniversary of this frame-up and legal murder.

In 1905 militants founded the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) founded in the USA. The IWW was a Anarchist-Syndicalist trade union. It believed unions