South Africa Ends Bloody Occupation in Angola

PIECES BEHIND THE ANGOLA PEACE TALKS

As Angolan, Cuban, and South African military officers shared coffee last week at the Angola-Namibia border, the last of the South African occupation force withdrew from Angolan territory. The South African aggressors had seized territory in southern Angola and worked with the pro-U.S. army of UNITA to attack the Angolan government and cause much devastation among the people. Now the South African withdrawal is described as the first step in a "peace process" involving various forces in the complicated situation in Angola and Namibia. With the United States and the Soviet Union as the ultimate dealers, negotiations are going on for the mutual withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola and South African troops from Namibia and for the "independence" of Namibia. But South Africa, the attack dog for the U.S. in the region, is still poised to strike viciously at any time, and the reactionary UNITA forces are still getting Western support. Behind the talks of "peace," both the East and the West are conducting military deployments and buildups which could set the stage for even bigger clashes in the region.

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Who's Who in the Conflict page 7
Crocker's Secret Agenda page 15

SPECIAL TO THE RW

Ethiopia: Dergue in Trouble

WAR STORIES
a report from South Africa
Part 10
Points
Chairman of those who would like to see such an end to the system under which we now live, and prepare the ground for a revolutionary rising that has a burning desire to see a drastic change for the better. There is a challenge for all to lose but their chains: The main thing is only those with nothing to lose but their chains who can be united and create a new system that will put an end to exploitation and these injustices. This Party has the vision, the program, the leadership, and the organizational principles to unite all those who would like to see such a drastic change for the better can come about until this system is overthrown.

2) Many different groups will protest and rebel against things the system does, and protest, and rebellions should be supported and strengthened. Yet it is only those with nothing to lose but their chains who can be the backbone of a struggle to actually overthrow this system and create a new system that will put an end to exploitation and help pave the way to a whole new world.

3) Such a revolutionary struggle is possible. There is a political Party that can lead such a struggle, a political Party that speaks and acts for those coming to lose but their chains: The Revolutionary Communist Party, USA. This Party has the vision, the program, and the organizational principles to unite those who must be united and enable them to do what must be done. There is a challenge for all those who would like to see such a revolution, those with a burning desire to see a drastic change for the better, the all those who dare to dream and to act to bring about a completely new and better world. Support this Party, join this Party, spread its message and its organized strength, and prepare the ground for a revolutionary rising that has a solid basis and a real chance of winning.

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Ethiopia: Dergue in Trouble

Over the past several months the Dergue (the military junta ruling Ethiopia) has suffered serious battlefield defeats in its reactionary wars against the armed insurgents of the Tigray, Gondar, and Wollo provinces in northern Ethiopia. So far the Dergue regime has not been able to decisively reverse these defeats. Backing up the Dergue is the Soviet Union, which supplies most of Ethiopia’s military aid. But there are signs that the Western powers also want to help the current Ethiopian rulers survive while at the same time they try to drag the regime back under their control. Meanwhile millions of people in Eritrea and Ethiopia face the threat of famine. It is possible that the Ethiopian regime could sink deeper into crisis, and this situation is making the knot of contradictions in the strategic Horn of Africa even tighter.

Rebel Victories

In March the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) broke through the Dergue’s lines on the Nacla front in Eritrea. According to various press reports, the EPLF killed or captured some 18,000 Ethiopian troops. They also captured three Soviet military officers and a large portion of the Dergue’s military hardware—fifty tanks, over 100 military vehicles, and mortars, rockets, artillery, and light arms and ammunition. This was quickly followed by another battle at an Hachal. The EPLF reported that it took one-third of the Dergue’s army in Eritrea out of action through these battles.

Reports in the Washington Post and elsewhere have described how “the morale of Ethiopian troops is at a low ebb, and desertions are beginning to appear within the Dergue itself. Over the past couple of years a number of high-level government officials have defected.”

U.S.-Soviet Dergue Switch

Headed by the U.S.-trained Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam, the Dergue came to power in 1974 when the long-time U.S. lackey Haile Selassie was overthrown by mass uprisings. The Dergue set about consolidating its rule through the use of reactionary terror and repression. Government troops systematically rounded up and murdered over 100,000 of Mengistu’s leftist opponents, mostly students. In Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital, the Dergue is the Soviet Union’s main military base.

The Dergue, which claims to be “revolutionary,” also followed at the reactionary footsteps of the Selassie regime by using brutal violence to enforce the privileges of the dominant minorities over the vast majority. Although itself dominated by imperialism, Ethiopia is a kind of “prison house of nations” in its history has been one of brutal oppression against the Tigrayan, Oromo, and other peoples. In the 1950s Ethiopia took over Eritrea with the backing of the imperialist powers. When the Dergue came to power, far from acting with the demands of the masses for freedom and equality, it continued the bloody wars of reaction against the just struggle for Eritrean independence and for struggles for national self-determination of the Tigrayans, Oromo, and other oppressed peoples within Ethiopia.

The Horn of Africa is located on the northern end of the Red Sea on the southern end of the Suez Canal, making the Red Sea a “choke point” in the sea lanes from Asia and the Pacific to Europe. Because of the Horn’s strategic location, various big powers have fought for control of the countries in the area, especially Ethiopia.

In 1977 there was a dramatic shift in the military and political alignments in the region. The Soviet imperialists suddenly abandoned their policy of “support” for Ethiopian independence and their praises for “socialism” in neighboring Somalia. A deal was struck, and suddenly Lt. Col. Mengistu began calling himself a “Marxist-Leninist” and was praised as much by the Soviets and their allies around the world.

Ethiopia remained economically dependent on the U.S. and its allies, and today the West continues to have its hooks in the country in a number of ways. But soon after the 1977 switch, military hardware and advisers from the Soviet bloc began pouring into Ethiopia. Soviet-made napalm replaced U.S.-made napalm, Soviet, East European, and Cuban “advisers” replaced American, West European, and Israeli “advisers” in training the local troops in the vicious techniques of counterinsurgency warfare. Meanwhile the U.S. began backing the reactionary regime of Siad Barre in Somalia, and the U.S. Navy has been able to use the facilities at the Somalian port of Berbera.

The big flow of Soviet-bloc weapons allowed the Dergue at first to change the military balance in its favor against the rebel forces and enforce a measure of repression. But soon after the 1977 switch, military balance in favor of the rebel forces and enforce a measure of repression. But soon after the 1977 switch, military
A Woman’s Questions: Who’s Oppressing Who?

We received the following letter:

To the RW:

I never cease to be surprised when I hear black men putting out the idea that Black women are helping white society oppress them. For some time I thought this was just another “blame of capitalism,” the white people who think we’re “migrers.” But I’m beginning to see that, as Avakian says, your views of women’s oppression indicates your program for liberation: do you want to smash all oppression, or do you “want in” on a place within this rotten system?

I view this contradiction of oppressed race men playing the oppressor of women to be really critical because so much of a future revolutionary force in the U.S. will consist of Black and other oppressed race men, especially from the Black national forces. Since this backwards view of women persists among these brothers, it is a sign that many of them are fighting for something short of the thoroughgoing revolution. I also think this question will become a battleground in the struggle over revolution vs. reformism.

An example is the speech made by a reformist Black nationalist on African Liberation Day. He spoke primarily on the oppression of “The Black Man.” He gave statistics on deaths, homeless, health, working conditions and economic conditions of Black men, implying to the mainly Black audience of perhaps 70 percent women that women of color are NOT oppressed. But the “muscle” of this angry letter is an article in *Essence* magazine (clearly a “patch-up-the-little-flaws-of-the-system” magazine for Black women) entitled “Men Talk (No Women Allowed).”

First off — imagine the upsurge of Black men if this magazine ran “Whites Talk (No Blacks Allowed)” maybe as an article about white men and their gripes with their Black sisters. What’s the difference? And of course the article gets worse. When *Essence* invited six fine brothers to a breakfast and gave them lunch, wine, and 100 questions to answer about their feelings on love, sex, relationships, and Black women, they jumped right into a point that sisters may “become sensitized to the peculiar way we are oppressed. Black men are under an unbelievable amount of stress (having been defined and judged by white male society).” And the women? She “buys the measuring rod and beats you over the head with it.”

The discussion details for us their feelings about having to work hard all day and then have us asking if we help with the kids and the garbage (“I want him to be able to handle that without me saying how come you didn’t do it”). Abt the “frustration because I don’t have the luxury of being able to articulate problems... that have been bothering me on the job,” about feeling threatened when she hears her foot steps sneaking up on whatever prostitute she is. Because you may have achieved and “Black women are outstripping Black men academically and economically because of the way they’ve been socialized to achieve, to achieve,” the difficulty they have in committing to one woman and their possible responses to finding their mate (unfulfilling? “I would kill her” and “I will never get married”)

Secondly, the oppression of Black people has never resulted and does not result in a situation where Black women have a position of equality with — nor still less that they have a superior position to — Black men (or any other men). The fact is, Black women are oppressed by Black men in the same way as any other segment of the working class is oppressed by capitalist society — or in other words, by the whole system. (Of course individual cases where women have fucked over men can be cited among Black people as well as in general, and the same could be illustrated in terms of other relations between individual white people, but we are talking about basic social relations here.)

The ending of these unequal and oppressive relations between men and women is an integral and indispensable part of the overall struggle to end all oppression: the emancipation of the proletariat — and of mankind itself from the fetters and evils of class-divided society — is impossible without the emancipation of women. If you are thinking of means or must include having a woman (or more than one) to oppress, then you are still suffering for the “freedom” of capitalism, not the emancipation of oppressed men — you are only against official oppressors, and not against the whole empire.

From A Horrible End, or An End to the Horror? by Bob Avakian

Dividing Line Among the Oppressed

The Woman Question and the "Two Radical Ruptures"

In many ways, and particularly for men, the woman question and whether you seek to completely abolish or to preserve the existing property and social relations and corresponding ideology that enslave women (or maybe "just a little bit" of them) is a touchstone question among the oppressed themselves. It is a dividing line between "wanting in" and really "wanting out"; between fighting to end all oppression and exploitation — and the very division of society into classes — and seeking in the final analysis to get your part in this, the difference between real revolutionaries and Ah Qs.*

Black Women

The suppressed position of Black women in the 6th movement of Black people (this was true of women generally, but there were particular expressions of this concerning Black women that hold some valuable lessons, by negative example) and the rationalization of women who are nothing which cannot go — and indeed have not gone — unchallenged. From straight-up bourgeois scholars to so-called revolutionaries (including some women, such as the imposter Angela Davis, as well as many men) the notion has been propagated that there is a difference between women and men and the oppression of women by men does not exist or apply in the same way among Black people as among others — or that even if it is reversed! This includes the idea (whether stated straight-up or slightly disguised) that the emancipation of the woman question and the "Two Radical Ruptures" smash all oppression, or do you "want in" on a place within this rotten system?

* Note from the RW: Ah Q was a character created by the great Chinese revolutionary writer Lu Hsun. Mao made the comment, "Actually, all Ah Q understands by revolution is helping white women to be really critical because so much of a future revolutionary force in the U.S. will consist of Black and other oppressed race men, especially from the Black national forces. Since this backwards view of women persists among these brothers, it is a sign that many of them are fighting for something short of the thoroughgoing revolution. I also think this question will become a battleground in the struggle over revolution vs. reformism.

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UP AGAINST "FIREBASE CLEVELAND"

2,500,000 VIETNAMESE WERE KILLED
1963-1975

Cleveland, August 18-20. Organizers estimated 50,000 to 150,000 would participate in yet another welcome home parade for Vietnamese vets. The theme this time — "Firebase Cleveland" — was essentially and openly ridiculous. A firebase in Vietnam was a center of attack from which patrols were organized to go out and burn villages and terrorize the population. The logo for the event was a helicopter gunner descending on downtow n Cleveland. And the keynote speaker was none other than the defeated ruler of South Vietnam, General Nguyen Cao Ky.

But such reaction didn't go unopposed. Opening ceremonies weren't even through the national anthem when demonstrators appeared, parading out leaflets and carrying signs like, "Would you buy a used war from this man?" (Ky) and "No More U.S. Wars of Aggression." The demonstration was organized by "Firebase Cleveland," who knew the "Coalition to Stop the Rehabilitation of the Vietnam War and Oppose All Future Imperialist Wars." Angered by weeks of full-page "Firebase" ads in the local papers, a small group of activists had issued a call to demonstrate.

The call pointed out: "There's a very urgent point to raising this opposition. An April 14th New York Times article quotes sources for the Joint Chiefs of Staff lamenting the fact that they could not use U.S. troops to invade Panama because of "Vietnam syndrome" they define as "irrational fear of war" by 4 million Vietnamese were killed in that war. Fifty-eight thousand GIs were between supporting veterans and support everything else. We must make a agenda to say you're proud to be a vet was a genocidal war. Two and a half distinction, a very big distinction, be going to go unopposed. One member of this group is a member of the Vietnamese Women's Liberation Front. The Vietnamese intellectuals had issued a call to demonstrate. 

The small but lively demonstration at the opening "Firebase" ceremonies caught an immediate stir. It was attacked by a handful of patriotic vets, but protesters stood their ground and continued to talk with the vets and their families who had come to the program. Demonstrators made it clear that the attempt to reverse correct verdicts on the Vietnam War and "welcome home" vets as heroes was not going to go unopposed. One member of the coalition, a student active in the anti-intervention movement, said, "The Vietnamese War can never be justified. This is part of the whole reactionary agenda to say you're proud to be a vet and everything else. We must make a distinction, a very big distinction, between supporting veterans and supporting the Vietnam War. The Vietnamese War was a genocidal war. Two and a half million Vietnamese were killed in that war. Fifty-eight thousand GIs were killed... They were used and abused by the U.S. government. We feel this parade and reunion is an attempt to justify the Vietnamese War." The call to protest "Firebase" was controversial within the social movements. Some opposed the coalition's call, saying that the veterans had to be "separated" from the war they fought in. There were also some who felt that "Firebase" should not be opposed because it would "alienate" some vets. But people in the coalition struggled to work out the importance of opposing "Firebase" and exposing that the purpose of such parades is to "welcome home vets" exactly in order to uphold the U.S. crimes against Vietnam.

The demonstration brought out students, Black youth, and revolutionaries. The coalition worked on this forum which was sponsored by the Central American Coalition of Northeast Ohio and the CSU Students for Central America. The crowd of sixty people which included high school and college students, Black nationalists, and Central America activists, watched the movies "Witness to War" and "Freedom's Challenge." The keynote speaker was none other than the defeated ruler of South Vietnam, General Nguyen Cao Ky. The keynote speaker was none other than the defeated ruler of South Vietnam, General Nguyen Cao Ky. The keynote speaker was none other than the defeated ruler of South Vietnam, General Nguyen Cao Ky.

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Angola Peace Talks

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The participants have also announced that they have agreed in principle to the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola and implementation of UN Resolution 435, which involves withdrawal of South African troops from Namibia and holding of UN-supervised elections. And there was a report last week that Cuba's Ambassador to Zambia has been appointed as an "unofficial representative" of the Angolan regime and the pro-Soviet governments of South Africa, Rhodesia, and the withdrawal of the South African troops. This has now been carried out.

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The recent talks and agreements followed a year of heavy warfare in southern Angola in which both the Soviet-dominated MPLA government and the U.S.-sponsored South African forces suffered serious losses. In August 1987 government forces launched a major assault against the city of Mavinga, a UNITA stronghold. Only a massive intervention by the South African Defense Force saved UNITA. The South Africans in fact beat back the MPLA forces and forced them to retreat to Cuito Cuanavale. The combined South African and UNITA forces then launched a major attack on their own on Cuito. At this point the Cuban troops intervened in order to save the MPLA military from defeat. This was the first time that the Cuban troops stationed in Angola had gone head to head with the South Africans since the original battle for Angola in 1975-76. The attack on Cuito Cuanavale developed into a long siege described as the largest conventional battle fought in southern Africa. But the South African military lost the battle and, for the first time ever, reported large numbers of casualties among its white troops.

For the Soviets, the defeat suffered by the MPLA troops at Mavinga underscored the mess they had on their hands in Angola. The recent developments made it clear that any attempt by the Angolan army to wipe out UNITA would not only be unsuccessful but could quickly develop into a very expensive military situation. The Soviets faced the possibility of being sucked directly into the Angolan situation in a much bigger way.

But to leave things as it is in Angola is also impossible for the Soviets. The MPLA government is in deep trouble. Thirteen years of war with South Africa and UNITA has devastated much of the country, including large areas of the most productive farm and mining areas. Near-starved and displaced or severely affected by the war. The population of the cities has been reduced by as many as 90 percent, mainly to the west, while more than 60 percent of the annual budget is eaten up by the war effort. Angola's food needs for the next year will only be met by massive imports of food. Even the production of coffee, once a major export crop, has been reduced to a trickle by the war.

Because of Angola's strategic importance, the Soviets have continued to back the MPLA regime even though Angola is no longer able to pay for the large amounts of Soviet arms. By February 1976 the MPLA established a government, and the Soviets had gained the first major foothold in southern Africa at the expense of the West. They quickly turned Angola into a heavily fortified military garrison sitting in the heart of an area very important to U.S. strategic plans. The Soviets carry out their domination in Angola through their influence over the MPLA, which controls the state through its influence over the rival Western empire. They hope that a break in the military conflict would enable the MPLA regime to survive, even with the withdrawal of some or much of the Cuban troops, and that the agreement may even open up some opportunities for economic "sick" and "clean house" in Angola and make some tactical adjustments in order to strengthen Angola's position in the rival Western empire. They hope that a break in the military conflict would enable the MPLA regime to survive, even with the withdrawal of some or much of the Cuban troops, and that the agreement may even open up some opportunities for economic "sick" and "clean house" in Angola.

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The war in Angola was beginning to create opposition even within the apartheid rulers' social base inside South Africa. For example, the Dutch Reformed Church, the main Afrikaner church, came out to publicly question the South African occupation in Angola. But the U.S. maneuvers in the Angola/Namibia "peace" talks are also based on an attempt to take advantage of some of the shifts and adjustments that the Soviets are trying to make in Angola and the region as a whole in order to succeed in their declared goal of driving South Africa out of Namibia and getting elections in that country. It says that South African withdrawal from Angola and Namibia could still collapse quickly. Meanwhile, UNITA would still be able to operate from eastern Angola or even Zaire.

In Angola the South Africa troops have withdrawn for the moment but the U.S. is still trying to pressure the MPLA regime. The U.S. has declared that Angola would have to make even more sweeping internal changes before they are allowed to join the Inter- national Monetary Fund and World Bank and become eligible for Western "aid" and loans. Such changes no doubt would increase the West's already substantial economic position in Angola. UNITA is also still very much a thorn. In June UNITA leader Savimbi came to the U.S. and received another statement of support from the Reagan administration. Savimbi even met liberal Democratic Senator Dodd who said that UNITA would get "unanimous support" in the Senate if it is tied with South Africa. Around the same time the Reagan administration proposed that the U.S. aid to UNITA be increased from last year's $15 million to $40 million this year. U.S. aid to UNITA was increased from last year's $15 million to $40 million this year. U.S. aid to UNITA would be able to operate from eastern Angola or even Zaire.

Building Up the Guns on Both Sides

At this point, the agreement on Angola and Namibia could still collapse quickly. Even if the agreement is carried through, there are ominous military developments taking place behind all the "peace" talk which point to brewing confrontations. In April, just before the talks began, the U.S. launched a joint military exercise with Zaire along the northern border of Angola. As part of this exercise, code-named Operation Flintlock '88 and conducted by the U.S. European Command, AWACS radar planes were used to patrol the northern and eastern borders of Angola, and more than $50,000 was spent to repair the Kamina air base in Zaire, an old airbase built by the Belgians during their colonial rule in Zaire. Kamina is a base of the largest military air-bases in Africa and is one of the largest oil-rich provinces. South Africa has station ed more than 60 percent of its troops in Angola, and more than 60 percent of the country. Enough new MIGs have been supplied to the MPLA to give it at least parity with and, according to some claims, superiority over South Africa in the air. The Soviets seem to be confident that even if most of the Cuban troops leave Angola, the MPLA military battles would be "hard-fought" by the Angolans against the South African forces. The East and West blocs, each with their own interests in mind, have come to some temporary agreements in Angola and Namibia. But these agreements are based on guns and bullets, and sooner or later they are bound to break down and lead to even bloodier wars.
WAR STORIES

a report from South Africa

By Michael Slate

For three years a great upsurge rocked the apartheid regime of South Africa. This rising was more widespread and more ferocious than any rebellion there since the youth of Soweto kicked off a nationwide liberation movement in the late 1970s. The apartheid rulers responded with a brutal state of emergency which has been in force in some parts of the country for almost three years. Little news has come of the struggle in South Africa in many months. The Western press has gone right along with the big press blackout imposed by Pretoria, censoring themselves and preventing news of the situation in South Africa from reaching the oppressed people in the imperialist countries. But Michael Slate, correspondent for the Revolutionary Worker, traveled to South Africa where he was able to investigate the current situation, learn more about the upsurge, and talk firsthand to a wide range of revolutionary people. The Revolutionary Worker has been featuring a series of articles on his observations in the hope that this will contribute to hastening the day when the racist South African regime is brought down and genuine liberation for the black people from apartheid and imperialism is achieved.

Issues of the RW with the first nine parts of this series are available at Revolution Books and other local distributors. In Part 9, Slate looks at the how the apartheid system has ripped off the land and labor of the African people.

“Very few reporters get me fired up for the right reasons; they get me angry because of their ridiculous distortions about the war in occupied Azania and because of their imperialistic chauvinism. However, the RW reporter who brought Azania to the West in the series “War Stories” rekindled my anger on the situation in the country and brought the reality of the war in the streets of Azania alive. When I find truth in the RW about my country, it makes credible what I read about other struggles in other countries in the RW.”

Amandeli

An Azanian revolutionary living in the U.S.

Borders

But this is only the beginning. If apartheid was worked out to its final solution, the southern tip of the African continent would consist of ten separate and fragmented “independent Black nations” within something the Africans call the “independent white nation” of South Africa. Even now the madness of apartheid has created a mind-boggling maze of dozens and dozens of borders which have one function: to keep the masses of black people down and the apartheid regime in power.

There are the so-called “international borders,” the mostly invisible lines that separate the Republic of South Africa from the four “independent black states.” Transkei and Ciskei are both in the Eastern Cape and are supposed to be the home territories of the Xhosa-speaking people. Bophuthatswana, most of which is in the Transvaal Province with a little section in the Orange Free State, is supposed to be the home of the Tswana people. And Venda, in the Northern Transvaal, is supposed to be the home of the Venda people.

Next come the borders with the other six bantustans, the ones not yet considered “independent” but according to the logic of apartheid, on their way to “independence.” These include KwaZulu in Natal, Lesotho in the Northern Transvaal, Gazankulu also in the Northern Transvaal, Ovamboland, an extremely overpopulated and very tiny patch of land in the Drakensberg mountain range that straddles the Orange Free State and Natal, KaNgwane in the Transvaal and bordering on Swazi land, and KwaNdebele which is also in the Transvaal. And these borders are multiplied many times over since most of the bantustans are broken into bits. The original layout of the ten bantustans consisted of ninety-eight different bits. This extreme breaking up of the land...
A girl from a farmworker's family in rural Orange Free State

has been somewhat slowed over the years, usually by
adding land to or taking it away from the bantustans con-
cerned. In the early years the government quickly took
back any bantustan land that was found to have valuable
mineral deposits on it and just as quickly shed itself of
no-good farmed-out "white land" by handing it over to
the bantustans. Kwazulu today consists of ten different
sections separated from one another by islands of "white
land." Lebowa and Bophuthatswana consist of six dif-
f erent segments each, trying to deal with all of these
various "borders" on a daily basis is enough to drive one
insane. But there is a method to this madness.

Theft

Cattle whose hides stretched tightly over their ribs
wandered around in a daze searching for something to
eat on the severely overgrazed land by the roadside. As
the driver of our car pointed out, there's more than a
seeming insanity to apartheid's borders and bantustans.
The vicious logic and method of apartheid has been ex-
tremely profitable for the South African rulers and their
Western backers. And the bantustan system has played
an important role in maintaining this whole setup.

Carved out of the country with guns and a series of
laws, the original Native Reserves and the present-day
bantustans were a key element in the theft of the land
from the Azanian people. Through this process 87 per-
cent of the land was declared "white territory." This left
13 percent of the land to serve as "homelands" for the
masses of African people who make up at least 70 per-

Continued on page 10
WAR STORIES

Continued from page 11

these social functions. And the household work and subsistence labor of the women on the reserves is a big part of their subsidy to capital. Maids call this situation "superexploitation" — where the whole slave-like setup allows the capitalists to pay the workers below the value of their labor power, not just for a time, but as a rule. Today the bantustans are barren wastelands with a rapidly intensifying explosive potential. The contradictions of the apartheid system have been rubbed raw and even the production that was supposed to have existed in the bantustans has all but disappeared as the populations have doubled and tripled. An Asian nurse who had worked in a couple of different bantustans told me that as bad as it is in Transkei, there are other places that are worse. The Cape bantustan now has a population of 1,000,000 people and a population density of 2,200 Africanans per square mile. When in 1971 it had a population of less than 25,000. The land that was originally set aside for Qwa-Qwa was only capable of sustaining 1,000 people.

As we drove through the Transkei I saw little that even hinted that there was some kind of viable economic life in the area. There were a lot of rocks and dairy mountains. Villages consisting of traditional round huts were scattered along the highway. In the area closer to South African cities there were large resettlement camps that resembled the squatter camps seen all over the country. People in hopes of being able to get a job to secure a job in the industrial regions of South Africa or in the coal, gold, and diamond mines. I saw no farms and no crops. Transkei only produces one-third of the food it consumes.

Transkei is the most developed of all the bantustans, yet 70 percent of the three million people living there (in an area of approximately 18,000 square miles) live below subsistence levels, about two to three dollars a day. Most families live on the money sent back to them by migrant workers. About six in 10 of the employment earnings in the Transkei are actually sendbacks from the migrants. While the export of labor remains the main cash producer for all of the bantustans (except the showcase of "independent Bophuthatswana") which has the Sun City gambling complex and the world's largest gold, iron, coal, and platinum mines, I did hear that the government is encouraging investment in the mines. All kinds of cash incentives are being handed out as a lure for industry. Wages paid to bantustan workers can be as low as R10 a day, about seven U.S. dollars. Unions have been outlawed in many of the bantustans. However, because the workers, generally enough, love the cost of machinery or the wages of the workers, and easy loans are readily available companies wanting to start can often find workers. So far, the main investors have been Israel, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.

It is common for liberals in the West and reformists in Africa to think that racial restrictions and prohibitions of apartheid are out of sync with modern industrial growth. But the capitalists themselves who have gobbled up the bantustans have displayed the capitalist industry will gobble up apartheid. But as we left the Transkei, I was struck by the reality of the apartheid system. "It has been necessary to 'modernize' this system of superexploitation..." But such changes remain within the framework of apartheid. This is not a matter of irrationality or stubbornness but of things turning into their opposite: one of the safest investments in capital now is in concessionary production that is highly profitable is now burning at the seams."

Downpressed
and Hostel

As we drove into the Mzimhlophe hostel my companion, a revolutionary activist living in a backyard room in another part of Soweto, pointed to a few blocks of sun-down barracks. "Over there you will find mainly families these days. The Boers have converted part of the Mzimhlophe hostel into housing for some of the squat- ters in the ghetto. This is what they call their housing development program. They didn't really do anything to change the hostel, just threw up a couple of walls and moved a bunch of people in from Kliptown."

There are many hostels in Soweto, some new and some very dilapidated. All together they house about 50,000 migrant workers. For the most part the hostels house only the men who have come from the bantustans on a migrant labor contract. In recent years, however, a huge transformation has occurred. Most of the hostel residents take on the lowest paying and hardest jobs in the area — like working on the roads crews or collecting garbage. Many of the men in Mzimhlophe are one of the worst. It is completely isolated from the rest of Soweto. A narrow dirt road that was once surrounded by a high, barbed-wire fence. We turned into a narrow dirt road. Long barracks that looked as though they were abandoned ran along the road into a narrow alley that stretched as far as the eye could see. On both sides of the road groups of men sat around talking, arguing, and drinking. As we approached one of the barracks a group of angry men cut us off and demanded to know who we were and what we wanted. After my companion explained who we were and why we were visiting the hostel, one of the men offered to take us inside. The building was typical of all the older hostels. The front door opened up into a common room with a wood stove and a set of rough wooden tables and benches. There was no plumbing, no heat, bare electric wiring, and cold concrete walls and floors. Off to either side were little rooms with four or more concrete slabs that served as beds. The roof was ragged asbestos.

Mzimhlophe hostel into housing for some of the squat- ters in the ghetto. This is what they call their housing development for all of lite bantustans (except the showcase of Qwa-Qwa) which has the Sun City gambling complex and the world's largest gold, iron, coal, and platinum mines, I did hear that the government was encouraging investment in the mines. All kinds of cash incentives are being handed out as a lure for industry. Wages paid to bantustan workers can be as low as 14 Rand a week, about seven U.S. dollars.

This is not a matter of irrationality or stubbornness but of things turning into their opposite: one of the safest investments in capital now is in concessionary production that is highly profitable is now burning at the seams."

As we drove back to our car an old man in a wheelchair blocked our path. His legs had been ampu- tated above the knees as the result of an injury he had re- ceived while working as a migrant laborer in a factory many years earlier. He had been listening to our attempts to talk to the other group of men and wanted to add something. As my companion translated from Zulu to English, I got a sense of how the whole setup of the bantustans and the migrant labor system press on the proletarians to act against their own historic interests. "You'll find it difficult to get anyone to talk to you about the situation here or what is going on in the townships. It is too dangerous. We don't know you. You could be any- one — today we talk and tomorrow we are gone, picked off to die and never able to come back. Can you change that? Can you do anything for us? No! It is bad here but each of us knows that it is worse back where we came from. I stayed here even after I could no longer work because I knew that if I was to return to Zululand I would die. We came here to make a living, to be able to support our families. Each of those men had many, many people depending on them back home. We cannot get involved and we won't talk — it's too much of a risk."

As we drove back out of the hostel my companion began to talk about the history of the place. Some of these same men had been mobilized by the police and the reactionary Gatsha Buthelezi to attack rebellling students during the Soweto uprisings a decade earlier. As he spoke he pointed to graffiti slashed across the side walls of some of the barracks and the building housing the showers and toilets. They were Zulu slogans upholding and praising Buthelezi's reactionary Zulu-based Inkatha organization and the Inkatha-sponsored trade union. The African activists commented on the graffiti. "You see, these men are afraid to act or participate in things against the system because they know they can easily be sent back to the bantustan and replaced by someone else. They have seen what happens to the striking miners. They get sent back, replaced, and are unofficially barred from ever working in the cities again. But there are other things that help to keep up the conservativism here. In- katha and Buthelezi really run the hostel for the police and Pretoria. It is one thing to be on the bad side of the government, that is bad enough for these men. But if they also end up on the bad side of Inkatha and Buthelezi, then they and their families back in the bantustan might as well be dead."

A migrant worker's hostel.
The Girl with the Bottle

A long line of women and young children collecting water in assorted huge containers signaled the approach of a squatter camp. The Azanian revolutionary with me made a pointed observation: “Apartheid forces people into these camps. They don’t house people. They need these camps. They let our people gather there and then they take them when they want, use them to get the cheapest of cheap labor whenever they need it. But it turns back on them too. These camps are very explosive places and they become more so with each new crisis. This worries Pretoria. That’s why they spend so much effort trying to move the camps as far away from the cities as they can. That’s why they attack the camps so much. They know that they will never be able to get rid of them if they want to keep them under control as much as possible. The more pressure they bring on these places, it will make the explosion even more powerful.”

Durban is a city of squatters. Seventy-five percent of the urban work force lives in squatter camps. According to official统计数据, women and children are tied up in front of an open doorway. These were the ugliest and meanest chickens I have ever seen. They looked like “street chickens,” their feathers were ruffled, uneven, and dirty. They had long necks and no feather on their heads. My companion called out before going on and an old Indian woman came out of the shack and covered the chickens with boxes. The Azanian comrade laughed. “These are guard chickens. They are very rough and wouldn’t hesitate to attack you. They don’t have any feathers on their neck because they fight so much. Some of them even go after the snakes. This is one of the churches in Welbedacht. There are a couple of others scattered on the sides of the hills but this one has the biggest yard. You can see the snakes here if you want to find them. Sometimes it’s hard for even me to believe that this exists. Many of the shacks in Welbedacht were washed down with huge bundles of food or other supplies, heading in the same direction. About a hundred yards ahead the township seemed to end. It looked like the road just dropped off at that point, disappeared into one of the huge valleys of low trees and brush that cut between the mountains. We were sitting in a small shop in Chatsworth having a breakfast of “bunny chow,” a loaf of bread with its center cut out and filled with mutton, chicken, or some other type of curry. The Azanian activist who had put me up the night before had made it easy for us to return to the African township I had been staying in just then — suggested that we spend the day checking out Chatsworth. As the day grew later and we drove deeper into Chatsworth, I began to see the town from the point of view of men and women, both African and Indian, some loaded down with huge bundles of food or other supplies, heading in the same direction. About a hundred yards ahead the township seemed to end. It looked like the road just dropped off at that point, disappeared into one of the huge valleys of low trees and brush that cut between the rolling hills that characterize so much of the terrain in that part of Natal. And the people going along the side of the road just kept vanishing into the valley.

We drove towards the point where the tarred road ended and dropped out of sight. Beyond this point was a steep dirt road cutting down into the valley. Shacks that had been built out of cardboard, wood, and metal lined the sides of the road. About a hundred yards beyond the road similar shacks had been constructed on the side of the hills, some of them at an angle so acute it seemed that if a stiff breeze would have knocked them over and sent them tumbling down into the valley. This place is known as Welbedacht. Many of the people you see walking down into the valley live here in these shacks. Some are returning from work, some from looking for work. Azanian activists classified both Indian and African live here. They have for many generations. Some of the women walked down the road use this as a shortcut to the African township farther out. It’s horrible when it rains. It’s really difficult to get up and down the hills there.

There’s a river at the bottom of the valley and in a rainstorm people have to swim across it to get home. The local government, the ‘Indian government,’ is trying to evict all of the Africans from Welbedacht. They say that it is ‘Indian Only’ land and the Africans will have to relocate. The people are fighting this and I want to see if we can talk to some of the folks involved in the Residents Committee.

We pulled off of the dirt road as much as possible and parked. After walking through some low bush we came to a wood and tin shack with a cross on top. It was quite a bit larger than the other shacks I had seen. Two chickens were tied up in front of an open doorway. These were the ugliest and meanest chickens I have ever seen. They looked like “street chickens,” their feathers were ruffled, uneven, and dirty. They had long necks and no feather on their heads. My companion called out before going on and an old Indian woman came out of the shack and covered the chickens with boxes. The Azanian comrade laughed. “These are guard chickens. They are very rough and wouldn’t hesitate to attack you. They don’t have any feathers on their neck because they fight so much. Some of them even go after the snakes. This is one of the churches in Welbedacht. There are a couple of others scattered on the sides of the hills but this one has the biggest yard. You can see the snakes here if you want to find them. Sometimes it’s hard for even me to believe that this exists.

A few minutes later we were on our way to the bottom of the valley. We crossed a wide but shallow river on a dirt-covered, wooden-plank bridge that had been built to accommodate large trucks that sometimes came into the valley to get construction materials or dump off loads of dirt. Below us groups of women stood knee deep in the river washing their clothes. Upstream from them another group of women collected water for cooking and drinking in large plastic containers. The young guy from the “Advice Office” continued on: “This really is the third world here. Sometimes it’s hard for even me to believe that this exists so close to Durban. This river is the only source of water for all of the people living in Welbedacht. We’re trying to explain that it isn’t really clean, that it might contain cholera or other infectious diseases or other types of pollution, including chemicals, but people tell you that they have to take the chance, there is nothing else they can do.”

We pulled off into a small dirt clearing alongside the river. We walked up a path on a small incline and then entered a sort of compound. There were five or six shacks here. A young woman invited us in. She was a relative newcomer to Welbedacht. She and her husband had come in from the rural parts of KwaZulu in hopes of finding work. He had gotten a job as a migrant worker in Johannesburg and had to leave his family behind. She had stayed in Welbedacht with her three children because she felt they had a better chance of surviving and maybe even reuniting with her husband than she would have back in rural KwaZulu. There were four other women in the compound that day, and our young Zulu-speaking friend from the advice office asked them about the struggle against the evictions. The oldest of the women, about thirty-five, began talking. “I’ve lived here my entire life. My father came here when he was a young man, so my family has lived on this spot for maybe fifty years. Now they come and tell me that I don’t belong here, that this is for Indians only. Who are Indians? Who are Africans? We have lived here together for a long, long time. We are like family, I don’t look at my neighbors as Indians and they don’t look at me as Zulu. We are brothers and sisters. Let them say we can’t live together, but then try to move us. We will face you together and act as brother and sister. No, I do not think that I will be moving!”

Shortly after left Azania, Natal Province was hit by very heavy rains. Severe flooding left hundreds of thousands of people homeless. According to reports I heard from inside the country, the gentle river that ran through the bottom of Welbedacht became a raging killer. Many of the shacks in Welbedacht were washed away and many of the people living there were killed.
Ethiopia

Continued from page 3 to the West. And after the big military setbacks in the spring, Mengistu (the head man of the Dergue) shuffled his army command, executing and demoting top generals who were blamed for the recent defeats.

In April the Dergue suddenly dropped its previous preconditions and signed an agreement with neighboring Somalia to settle their long-standing border conflict. This allowed the Ethiopian government to free up soldiers and materials for the Eritrean and northern Ethiopian fronts.

In the past Mengistu refused to even admit that there were armed rebellions in Eritrea, and among the EPLF were kicked out, the Dergue itself delivered as people are starving to death in Eritrea. Rather, it is part of the West's "starving the rebellion" by having most of the Western food aid go through Addis Ababa. This guaranteed that none of the food reached the people in rebel-held areas. The West also supported the Dergue's "resettlement" efforts aimed at forcing peasants to move from the northern areas into government-controlled regions.

In the recent period, some food relief under U.S. control has gone to some relief agencies operating in rebel-controlled areas. But the U.S. is not doing this to help the starving people of Ethiopia and Eritrea. Rather, it is part of the West's "scarecrow and stick" pressure on the Dergue.

As part of its efforts to pressure the Dergue, the U.S. has also made some attempts to develop a pro-West, Contra-type fighting force in Ethiopia giving covert funding to a loosely knit group of officials from the previous Haile Selassie regime and feudal elements who came into some conflict with Mengistu's state-capitalist agrarian policies, joined by some bourgeois nationalist forces involved in the struggle to overthrow Selassie. But in the main U.S. policy has been aimed at wooing and pressuring the Dergue itself, or elements within the regime, back into the Western camp. The U.S. Imperialists have no fundamental problems with Mengistu. The indications are that at this point they see his regime as their best bet to keep the reactionary order in Ethiopia from completely collapsing. But the U.S. wants these hitmen to be working for the West, not the Soviets.

The Dergue's agreement with Somalia in April was one sign of how the U.S. seems to favor keeping the Ethiopian junta afloat. Given Somalia's dependent ties to the U.S., the Somali government probably would not have signed the agreement without a rod of approval from Washington. The Somali regime apparently hoped the pact would free its military to turn their attention to anti-government rebels operating in northern Somalia. But little fighting in Somalia has been reported, and according to Western press reports, more than 300,000 Somalians have been forced to flee across the border into the war-torn region of southeastern Ethiopia.

The coming together of these various contradictions in the Horn of Africa makes this a very complex and explosive situation. A major "switching of blocs" or other dramatic political realignments could take place, given the growing instability of the Dergue regime and the importance of the area to both imperialist blocs. One or both of the competing blocs could decide to intervene directly. The lives of hundreds of thousands of people in the Horn are being threatened by the reactionary regimes and schemes of the big powers. And it is possible that important new openings for revolutionary forces could develop very quickly.

The recent victories by the liberation fighters in the north are an inspiring indication of the possibilities that exist for developing a powerful people's war against the whole neocolonial setup in the Horn of Africa which would unite the oppressed of all nationalities in their common struggle against national oppression and imperialism. This in turn underscores the basic principle that for the people's revolution to succeed, even in its first, new-democratic stage, the existence and leadership of a vanguard party guided by Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is required. To carry out this principle is the urgent challenge facing revolutionaries in the Horn today.

Already more than 200,000 tons of food have piled up on the docks underwritten by U.S. aid as a "humanitarian" gesture since the U.S. and the UN organizations feel it is required. But the officials from the previous Haile Selassie regime and feudal elements who came into some conflict with Mengistu's state-capitalist agrarian policies, joined by some bourgeois nationalist forces involved in the struggle to overthrow Selassie. But in the main U.S. policy has been aimed at wooing and pressuring the Dergue itself, or elements within the regime, back into the Western camp. The U.S. Imperialists have no fundamental problems with Mengistu. The indications are that at this point they see his regime as their best bet to keep the reactionary order in Ethiopia from completely collapsing. But the U.S. wants these hitmen to be working for the West, not the Soviets.

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...
Rock Against Racism Concert Crosses Three Continents

Dear Revolutionary Worker/Obrero

Revolucionario:

This is a quick note to let readers, particularly revolutionary-minded proletarians, know about a set of inspiring and politically significant concerts held on June 18 in Paris, Dakar (Senegal), and New York. Organized by S.O.S. Racisme, these simultaneous international Rock Against Racism events, with live bilingual telecasts crossing the globe, sent the message "Touche Pas a Mon Pote! Hands Off My Buddy" out around the world.

Despite only limited publicity in the weeks before the show, hundreds of people of various nationalities — Black and white, European, African, Caribbean, and American — came out to make a statement together with the musicians. Five New York bands performed — The Dead, Terry Jenoure, Eye and I, Jean Paul Boureily, and the Black Rock Coalition Super Band. Several of the performers, members of the Black Rock Coalition, were also active in organizing the concert and spoke from the stage about why they were there. Jean Paul Boureily wrote a song for the occasion, called "Freedom," "about all the crazy racist happenings out here — and how by the time you're old enough to figure out what the deal is, you die." Parmela Yach, speaking for the SRC Super Band, said, "In case you haven't noticed, there's an epidemic in this country and many parts of the world: an epidemic of racism."

Some of the most stirring moments came via the live telecasts from Dakar and Paris, where many thousands participated in open-air concerts marked by a real joy of resistance. In New York, we saw (and sometimes heard!) footage of Ziggy Marley playing in Paris and Harlem, and of the Solidarity Super Band's segment of the show. There was a dynamic performance by Johnny Clegg and the group Savuka (which means "We Have Ansar") and included many top black musicians from South Africa. The song, "the white Zulu," but this was the first time I heard the music, which is terrific — a very hot sound with strains of English folk traditions and African rhythms, with lyrics in English and African languages. Born in England, Clegg grew up in Zimbabwe and later moved to South Africa. In defiance of apartheid, he became close friends with Africans and developed an affinity for the Zulu culture, choosing to go through the initiation rites for Zulu men. Bands he's been part of have been very popular with their barrier-breaking music.

It was also great to see Bruce Springsteen at the Paris concert. He said, "Racism is the poison at the heart of America, and I'm proud to be here!" Then he launched into "Promised Land" and a set that included "My Hometown" and covers of Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind" and Creedence Clearwater's "Bad Moon Rising." — Choices that, to me, indicate he's taking seriously the need to stand up to the racism and national oppression that's a fundamental feature in the landscape one of the New York musicians who's part of the Black Rock Coalition told me later that the Super Band's segment of the show was aimed at trying to bring out the necessity for individuals to take action and take responsibility. He said that you can't just talk about institutional racism, Ford Motor Co., or the universities without being willing to make a change yourself.

Especially because these events were not covered by the U.S. press, I wanted to make sure RW readers were aware of the happenings.

Reader/writer In New York

NEW ISSUE

REVOLUTION

SUMMER/FALL 1988

Bob Avakian:
Two Talks on
Preparations and Possibilities

- Some Thoughts
Fall/Winter 1987
- Some Further Thoughts
Early 1988

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September 5, 1988—Revolutionary Worker—Page 13
East vs. West in Angola and Namibia

Continued from page 6

ed in Angola, literally controls the in-
dustry. In fact, through a series of
management contracts negotiated with
the MPLA over the years, Gulf has total
control of its Angolan operations from
top to bottom. Even in the industries sup-
possed nationally by the MPLA, the situation remains the same. The Angolan
state nominally owns 77 percent of
DIAMANG, the main diamond mining
company, yet every aspect of its day-to-
day operations and management is firmly in the hands of a management firm which is a subsidiary of the South African-
owned De Beers Corporation. 
This situation gives an idea of what the Soviets' overall goals in Angola are. To
kick the West completely out of Angola
would require a revolutionary movement
among the people — something the So-
viet and the MPLA definitely do not want. Or it would risk an economic col-
apse in Angola, forcing the Soviets to
enter the scene in an even bigger way to
prop up the regime. Also, the Western-
controlled holdings in Angola have been
an important source of Western hard cur-
rency which Moscow needs for trading
with the West in order to acquire high-
technology goods. However, spurred by
depression, the MPLA is no longer able to pay the Soviets for the weapons
over the South Atlantic. Angola has also
served as a rear-base area for the pro-
Soviet SWAPO of Namibia and ANC of
South Africa in their low-level armed
campaigns (mostly in the form of occa-
sional sabotage) against the governments in those countries.
The Soviets have built up a large
and powerful military presence in Angola,
made up of over 40,000 Cuban troops (at
least count), the 80,000-man Angolan
army, and 5,000 to 6,000 troops of the
reactionary mercenary outfit known as
the "National Liberation Front of the
Congo" (which used to be known as the
Katanga Gendarmes when they worked

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East vs. West in Angola and Namibia

water part in Namibia, has been inte-
grated into the NATO-connected spy
and communications network based at
the Simontown naval base in South
Africa. In 1977 the Pretoria government
directly annexed Walvis Bay by declaring
that the port was part of South Africa’s
Cape Province.

At the same time, the South African
rulers have built up all kinds of political
parties in Namibia over the years, from
the Namibian branch of its own National
Party and other ultra-right political
groupings to various social-democratic
and tribally based pro-
government parties. Welding these
groups together is the function of a bloc
in one of the ways that South Africa plans
on limiting the influence of SWAPO.

For example, almost the entire Western
cmoves ignored a 1974 UN resolution for
bidding any country from developing
and exporting Namibia’s natural resources.
As of early 1983 there were 75 American,
68 British, 25 West German, 12 French,
and 10 Canadian corporations doing
business in Namibia. There were also at
least 25 corporations from other Western
countries in Namibia, including from
Japan, Italy, Switzerland, Israel, Sweden,
Australia, Norway, and Portugal. In 1982
the Contact Group disbanded, and the
U.S. took up the main responsibility
for Namibia within this bloc. At that time,
the Reagan administration introduced the
concept of “linkage” in relation to Namibia.
What this meant was that the U.S. made the removal of Cuban troops
in Angola a condition of some form of
“independence” for Namibia.

Soviet Schemes for Power Sharing

The Soviet maneuvering in Namibia has
been low-key. Because of the strength
of South African and Western control
over Namibia, the Soviets have had to
break up its Western political and
diplomatic maneuvers and instead focus
on limited areas in Angola.

The Soviet maneuvering in Namibia
was a response to the low-key strength
of South African and Western control
over Namibia. The Soviets have aimed
not to control the elections there, but to
persuade South Africa to end its oc-
pupation of Namibia. Because of the
strength of South Africa and the Namibian
people’s desire to end apartheid, the
Soviets have not aimed for even the phony
“liberation” that South Africa is attempting to
achieve in Namibia. Rather, they have been trying to get the pro-
SWAPO alignment in an election and become a force
within a government. This would give the
Soviets a foothold in Namibia.

South Africa has its own in-

terests in Namibia, and at times there has
seemed to be sharp disagreements be-
tween the Pretoria government and its
Western backers over the question of
Namibian “independence.” Up to the
early 1980s the U.S. along with France,
Britain, Canada, and West Germany
formed a “Contact Group,” supposedly
to persuade South Africa to end its oc-
pupation of Namibia. But the actual
seem to be sharp disagreements be-
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erade to the Soviets. Simmering conflict in
Namibia is not acceptable. The U.S. has in mind it does not include Soviets in Windhoek [capital of Namibia].

We believe we can set the Soviets out of
Angola, and provide a guarantee of
security whether Nujoma [the leader of
SWAPO] wins or not.

Several points are made clear by this
document. First, the U.S. officials place
their political and diplomatic maneuvers in
Angola and Namibia firmly in the con-
text of contention with the rival Soviet
bloc. Second, the U.S. makes it clear that
South Africa’s “security” is not a negotiable issue in any deals it makes. In
other words, the U.S. guarantees to de-
fer the white minority rulers’ position
within South Africa as well as their domination over other countries in the
region. Third, one of the goals of the
American government has been to bring
South Africa forward more openly as a
part of the Western “security frame-
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Lastly, the U.S. believes that a less bla-
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