

South Africa Fighting Apartheid

In May 1945, the African National Congress, the Communist Party of South Africa and the Council of Non-European Trade Unions organized a march in Johannesburg, under the slogan «Finish the Job - Smash Fascism in South Africa.» This year, the 40th anniversary of the victory over fascism, the Black masses in South Africa have mobilized on an unprecedented scale to further this end which is synonymous with their achieving liberation and democracy.

It is now over a year since apartheid President P.W. Botha toured Europe, waving promises of «reform» in hopes of returning South Africa to international respectability. Predictably, Botha's «reform» movement has already fizzled out without any reforms being made. Instead, on July 21st, the apartheid regime declared a state of emergency in 36 districts, granting near absolute power to the security forces. This was followed by Botha's mid-August speech which had been much anticipated by capitalist states seeking to avoid sanctions against South Africa. In fact, Botha outlined no concrete reforms. Even the Reagan Administration dared not laud this empty talk, though its own «con-

structive engagement» has been a major factor supporting Botha's no-reform policy.

Botha is truly «fiddling while Rome burns». The real movement to watch is that of the Black masses who are becoming increasingly militant and overt in their support to the goals of the liberation struggle spearheaded by the ANC. For over a year the African majority has been in a state of constant revolt. Ongoing mass protests, funerals turned into political manifestations, workers' strikes, school and consumer boycotts, and armed resistance show the people's refusal to have the claw of apartheid clamped even tighter in the name of «reform». Their experience has shown that

«reforms» proposed by the apartheid rulers are but a cover for harder repression: Since the popular uprising began in August 1984, over 650 persons have been killed by the police, in addition to massive arrests. This escalated to new heights with the imposition of martial law. Over 1000 people were arrested in the last week of July alone. Most were community leaders and activists, many from the United Democratic Front, seized in their homes in line with prepared police lists. This pattern continued with 152 persons arrested on August 17th alone. A few days later, 500 schoolchildren were rounded up in Soweto for boycotting classes. By the first of August well over 2,000 had been detained under the state of emergency, whereby they are held incommunicado without specification of charges or access to lawyers.

«Reform» under apartheid

The connection between «reform» and repression was put in a theoretical-historical perspective by Joe Slovo, leader of Umkhonto We Sizwe, the ANC's military wing, in a lecture delivered in August 1984: «The Botha

