Guinea and the spread of African nationalism all over the rest of the continent are affecting the Bantus of South Africa.

In early March, the Pan-Africanist Congress, an organization of Negroes, called for a Bantu demonstration against the pass system. The idea was for masses of Africans to deliberately go without passes, submit to arrest and so fill the jails and disrupt the economy. The demonstrations began on March 21st. In the township of Sharpeville, a large crowd appeared outside the police station.

"Many people were shouting the Pan-African slogan, 'Izwe Lethu' (our land). But they were grinning and cheerful. Some kids waved to the policemen sitting on the trucks and two of the policemen waved back. It was like a Sunday outing — except that we knew that there were bullets in the guns on the trucks" (from an eyewitness report by Humphrey Tyler, a white newspaperman, in N. Y. Times for Apr.3).

The police turned loose with machine gun fire, massacring more than 70 men, women and children. The reaction was like the lighting of a fuse. Although the government arrested the leaders of the Pan-Africanist Congress, by April 1 the pass-carrying requirement was temporarily suspended. The situation remains explosive.

The struggle for Negro freedom from the tyranny of the South African white supremacists became another "shot heard 'round the world." Its white-hot exposure has touched every corner of the globe. Under worldwide pressure, the United Nations entered the picture, debating the subject, and, the Union of South Africa delegates walked out on the ground that this was meddling in the internal affairs of a member nation — in the grand manner of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.

This crisis is but another in a series of crises. The surge of nationalism in Africa is bound to win out for the native capitalists. Ultimately the Bantus will gain more measures of democratic forms although with the usual amount of violence and bloodshed accompanying them. What is not broadcast is that the new **status of exploitation** will be native ruling class over a native subject class. The exploited black in South Africa will have the same problem as their exploited white (red, yellow, etc., for that matter) brothers elsewhere.

The movement for nationhood historically is a chapter of the 19th century. Each state has fought for the sovereignty of its own national ruling class. As a matter of fact, the reverse is now more typical in our fast moving civilization. In the competitive struggle amongst the nations for survival, the world has shrunk to giant power-blocs. Each bloc has digested or is in the process of acquiring more satellites, witness — Czechoslovakia and Poland or, if you like, Mexico and Canada.

What is going on in Africa is a demonstration that historic events do not move simultaneously in all sections of the globe. Japan was not opened up for industrialism until 1853. Russia did not have its industrial revolution until 1917.

The rising of the African, the rumblings of the sleeping Bantu giant, stretching his muscles, may be stirring in some of its aspects, but it must not obscure the real job that still remains: The overthrow of the rotten relationships of capitalist society that will free all exploited people everywhere.

FENTON

MEN AND WOMEN WANTED

Readers of THE WESTERN SOCIALIST who have become convinced of the urgent need to organize for socialism, write to:

WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY
11 Faneuil Hall Square
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PARIS THEN — ALGIERS NOW

In the city of Paris on the 28th day of March, 1871, the man in white breeches who commanded the Versailles troops, General McMahon, announced: "Paris is delivered. Order, labour, security are about to revive." The Commune was destroyed. Lacking food and ammunition, facing superior forces which in turn had the support of its recent conquerors, the victorious German troops of the Prince of Saxony, the heroic Communards had no choice but to lay down their arms, useless without powder and ball. In many sector of workingclass Paris, pockets of Communards held out and would not surrender though their arms were gone. They fought with whatever they could lay their hands on until cut down by sabers.

Then the fury of the forces of "law and order" was let loose. The ultra-thin veneer of civilization that covered the bourgeoisie came away. The France of culture, the France of the French Academy, of Moliere, Racine, Chateaubriand, of Voltaire and Rousseau, overnight turned into a land of maddened beasts. What one witnessed was the reaction of a propertied ruling class when it felt its wealth, power and privileges to be endangered. The soldiers, consisting in the main of an ignorant, illiterate peasantry, encouraged by their priests, became converted into inhuman monsters. As was the case with their fathers, who had fought against the Republican Army of the French Revolution, these tools of reaction slaughtered without mercy.

In the words of a Communard participant who managed to escape with his life, Lissagueray:

"The Army transferred itself into a vast platoon of executioners. 5000 prisoners were led to the prison of La Rougette. A chief of bataillon surveyed the prisoners and said 'to the right, to the left.' Those to the left were to be shot. Their pockets emptied, they were drawn up along a wall and then slaughtered... In La Rouquette more than 1900 persons were thus murdered... The victims died simply, without fanfaronade. Many crossed their arms before the muskets and themselves commanded the fire. Women and children followed their fathers, crying to the soldiers, 'Shoot us with them,' and they were shot. Women till then strangers to the struggle, were seen to come down into the streets, exasperated by the butcheries, strike the officers, and then throw themselves against a wall waiting for death..."

There is no accurate account of the number butchered. At least 30,000 perished. many even buried alive.

What was the horrible crime committed by these workers that merited such horrible retaliation? The bourgeoisie perhaps could have forgiven those of the Communards whose motif was La Patrie, the defense of Paris against the Prussians. But on the Executive Committee were some who were members of the First International, who echoed the nebulous and utopian phraseology of National Workshops, with guarantees of full employment and vagaries of social justice; followers of utopian harmless dreamers like Louis Blanc, Cabet, Babeuf and Proudhon — harmless even to the easily frightened bourgeoisie. Even worse, however, there were a few who spoke of a Socialist classless society, with property in the means of wealth production to be commonly owned and used for the benefit of all. These few were not, under the circumstances, put down as harmless crackpots but as enemies of society who had to be exterminated. What they advocated was the unpardonable sin. The thought of a new society, without social parasites, a society without a Bourse, a society minus unemployment and poverty, was not only monstrous but sacreligious. The advocates of a classless society had to be wiped from the soil of France in order to assure the trembling bourgeoisie and their loyal henchmen, the clergy, that property rights would be safeguarded.