

THE REVOLT IN WATTS

By Bill McAdoo

LOS ANGELES—In the summer of 1965, when the black ghetto of South Central Los Angeles (soon to be internationally known as Watts) exploded in angry rebellion, thousands of national guardsmen were deployed to the area. Waving machine guns and automatic rifles, driving in army trucks and jeeps, they poured into the area.

Some were deployed to guard small businesses and stores. What was not mentioned—either in the newspapers then or in the investigations afterwards—was that the heaviest guard was sent in to protect the most vulnerable point of U.S. imperialism at home: heavy industrial plants.

It is not surprising that the American people have been told nothing but lies and half-truths about the Watts Rebellion of 1965—truth is a rare commodity in this country. If the facts were known concerning the magnitude and the origin of the misery in which the black people of Watts live, the mark of doom would be put on those who live by profiteering on this misery. The truth about U.S. imperialism's greatest weakness would serve as a guide to powerful mass action, which could cost the rich white imperialists a thousand times more than the \$40 million property damage and international disgrace for its racist barbarism, which resulted in the police and army terror of August, 1965. These are the facts.

The rebellion covered the predominantly black area (of 46 to 56 square miles) known as South Central Los Angeles (commonly called South L.A.). The entire area came to be known as Watts, because Watts was the starting point of the Rebellion and is 92 per cent black. A 3 square mile segment of a huge black ghetto, Watts is one of many neighborhoods, including Avalon, Central, Exposition, Green Meadows, Florence, Willowbrook, and other units of the 46-56 square mile area.

But these subdivisions are artificial, existing only on maps or in custom. There are no boundaries except on paper; black people in South L.A. for the most part live in one continuous land area, in a continuous population concentration.

Within the total area there are 576,000 black people, about 80 per cent of the population of the ghetto. Mexican Americans make up another 10 per cent, so that as much as 90 per cent of the population is "non-white."

The boundaries of the overall ghetto roughly extend from Adams Blvd. and Washington St. to the north; Rosencrans Ave. to the south; Alameda St. to the east; and Van Ness St. and Crenshaw Blvd. to the west. With this information the man in the street can pinpoint the black ghetto of South L.A. on a Los Angeles street map, which can be obtained free at a gas station. The study of the map is of great strategic importance.

VAST UNEMPLOYMENT

There are about 50,000 unemployed black workers—and this figure does not include the young people who have never had a job and therefore are not in the official unemployment figures. Unemployment is three times higher than the overall city rate.

That's only part of the story:

* The average black man's wage is only a little more than half of what the white worker earns;

* Between 1960 and 1965 the average white family income rose 14 per cent—but the

black family's income fell 8 per cent;

* The vast majority of employed black people are service and domestic workers, or work at other low-paying menial occupations.

Rents in the ghetto are exorbitant. Two-thirds of the mostly wood-frame houses are owned by absentee white landlords who refuse to make repairs on their over-priced buildings, so the buildings are getting steadily worse. Coupled with the reduction in income, ghetto rents rose 14 per cent in the 1960-65 period.

'MEDICARE'—L.A. STYLE

Medical facilities are appalling. The eight private hospitals in the ghetto have just 454 beds! Only two of the hospitals meet minimum standards of professional quality. The two public hospitals—County General and Harbor General—are both outside the area, too distant and difficult to reach. There are three times as many doctors to serve the white communities as there are for the black (106 per 250,000 for blacks; 318 per 250,000 for whites). Medical fees are sky-high.

The death rate is far greater in the black community than in the white. For example, the infant mortality rate (from birth to one year) is 150 per cent higher for black people than for whites.

Ghetto schools are no more than institutions of ignorance. Teachers, teaching methods, and facilities are inferior. Average reading ability for fifth grade black students is ranked at approximately 20; for white L.A. students it is 50. In the eighth grade, black students are ranked at 14—a decrease—while whites remain at 50. Eleventh grade high school students: black about 28, white about 70.

Two-thirds of all black students who enter high school will drop out. Is that surprising? Even if they finish, they would graduate as functional illiterates! Perhaps more important, they know that the old song and dance routine about "finish high school and you will get a better job" is a fraud. Most graduates can't find work at all, much less a "better" job. Approximately 25 per cent of all six-year old black children aren't enrolled in school—a year after they're supposed to start. They don't even get the chance to drop out!

TRANSPORTATION: WORSE THAN N.Y.

Public transportation is worse than inadequate. The only form of public transportation in the whole area is buses that run only on the larger streets. Fares are high (25c); many black workers spend a dollar and more just to travel to and from work. There are so few buses that it is not unusual to wait 45 minutes for one.

A car, then, is absolutely essential in the ghetto, just as it is in all of L.A. But only 14 per cent of the black families own a car, while 50 per cent of the families in Los Angeles County as a whole own one. This is not just a measure of the poverty of black families; it is a clear indication of the degree to which they are locked within the confines of the ghetto.

The prices for food, clothing, home appliances and furniture in the ghetto are much higher than prices in the City as a whole. The merchandise is inferior, and the predominantly white merchants cheat the people with crooked installment plans. Trapped within the ghetto walls, the black inhabitants are forced to submit to this robbery!

The \$40 million in property damage from the August Rebellion is a drop in the bucket compared to the millions stolen by these cor-



A portion of the Industrial Zone Map, showing fa

rupt merchants each year! The black rebels were only taking back a token, symbolic amount of what they have had stolen from them!

The people have no rights that a white cop is bound to respect. Not a week passes without a black man, woman or child being shot down or brutally beaten by the racist cops who are there to protect the privileges of those who profit from the misery.

In short, the ghetto is a cheap-labor concentration camp for black people—a black colony of poverty, exploitation and brutality—in the richest country in the world. It stands as a symbol of the racist treatment given to 22 million Afro-Americans by U.S. imperialism—the leader of the so-called "free world." The same type of "freedom" the U.S. is attempting to force on other colored peoples of the world (such as the Vietnamese and the Dominicans): with gun barrels and napalm bombs...and systematic extermination.

OCCUPYING ARMY FOR INDUSTRIAL PROTECTION

But the meaning of the August Rebellion only begins with the above facts.

The black ghetto of South L.A. is the hub of a mammoth industrial complex. Not only is the ghetto surrounded by heavy industries, but there are industries in the heart of the ghetto where thousands upon thousands of white workers are employed.

This is the fact that the rich white imperialists and their apologists (like former CIA chief John McCone) would not reveal in their "reports" on the rebellion. Black workers have been systematically excluded from industries in the heart of the black ghetto! They are denied the right to work where they live. While factory smoke pours through their windows, poisoning their children, black workers are forced into the misery of unemployment. White workers must travel 20 and 40 miles down freeways into the heart of the

black ghetto, while they stand under the factory walls. In a ghetto in which the black population, the mere handful of black

What is U.S. imperialism's plea of its apology for the August Rebellion? They didn't know that the industrial area? Can the black workers know that, if black workers had factory jobs in proportion to the ghetto population, there would be no unemployment among them?

Of course they are. They have done everything. An Industrial Zone was obtained free from the mercy (404 Bixel St., a massive industrial western corner of the ghetto).

There is another industrial complex. It is a concentration of industrial plants in the ghetto.

It would have been the industrialists to reveal the systematic exclusion of black workers from industries within their ghetto.

'NEW JOB

The big noise about the man so he can get a job and a stall. Anyone who works in a factory work knows that 90 per cent of the jobs can be done by an experienced illiterate. The complex jobs take all of a day's work experience. The jobs require a man's one day's work experience.

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MARCH 16, 1966: THE REVOLT GOES ON

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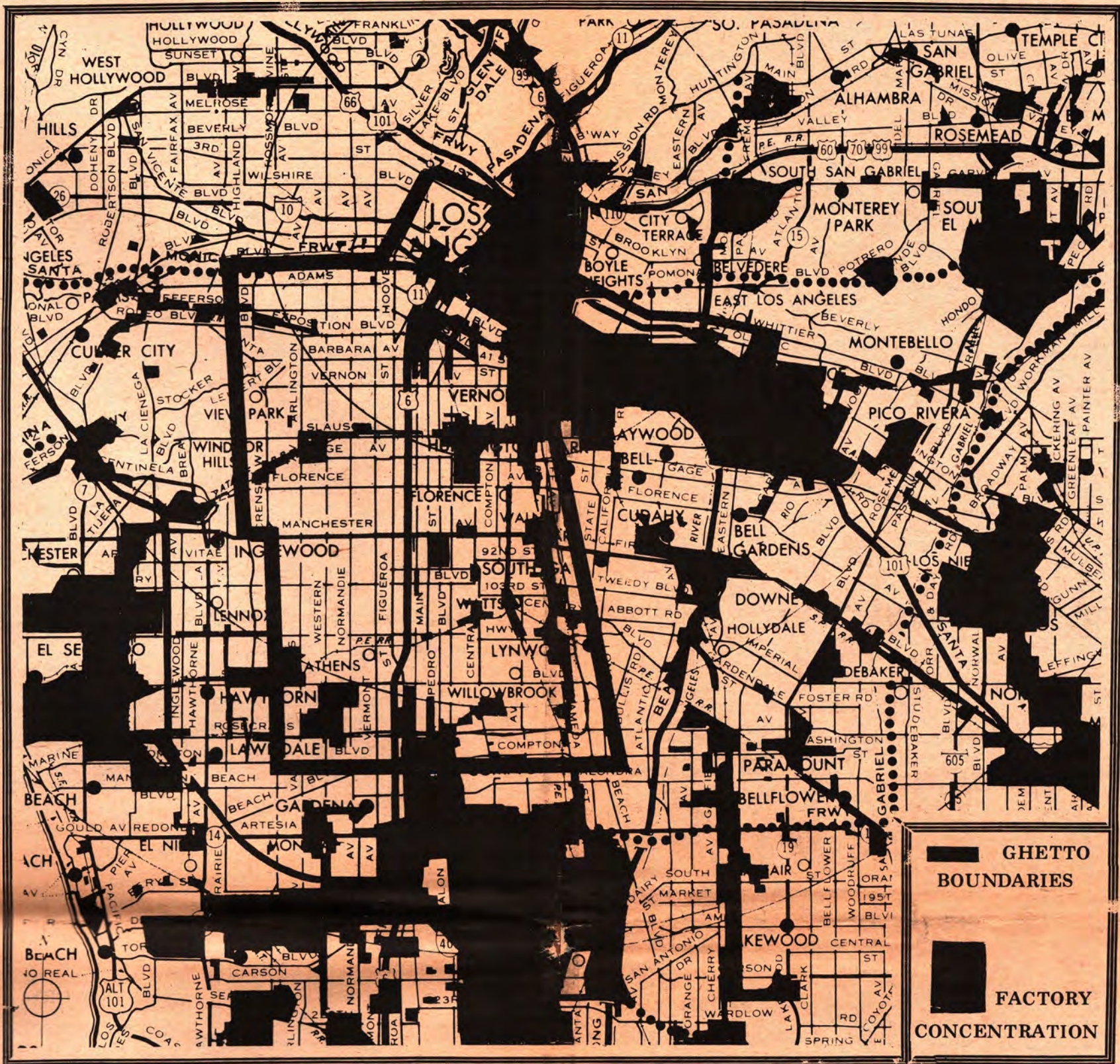
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A portion of the Industrial Zone Map, showing factory concentration and South L. A. ghetto boundaries.

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This is the fact that the rich white imperialists and their apologists (like former CIA chief John McCone) would not reveal in their "reports" on the rebellion. Black workers have been systematically excluded from industries in the heart of the black ghetto! They are denied the right to work where they live. While factory smoke pours through their windows, poisoning their children, black workers are forced into the misery of unemployment. White workers must travel 20 and 40 miles down freeways into the heart of the

black ghetto, while the factory worker living under the factory windows is unemployed. In a ghetto in which there is an 80 per cent black population, the ghetto industries hire a mere handful of black workers.

What is U.S. imperialism's plea? What is the plea of its apologists with their phony reports on the Rebellion? Can they claim that they didn't know that South L.A. was an industrial area? Can they say that they did not know that, if black workers were given ghetto-factory jobs in proportion to their percentage of the ghetto population, that there would be no unemployment among black ghetto workers?

Of course they are aware of this fact, but they have done everything possible to conceal it. An Industrial Zone Map, published by the American Industrial Real Estate Assn., can be obtained free from the L.A. Chamber of Commerce (404 Bixel St., L.A.). The map shows a massive industrial complex in the northwestern corner of the ghetto.

There is another in the southwestern corner, and on the eastern border there is still another industrial complex. It also shows the industrial concentrations throughout the entire ghetto.

It would have been devastating for the imperialists to reveal this fact concerning the systematic exclusion of black people from industries within their ghetto.

'NEW JOBS' FRAUD

The big noise about "retraining" the black man so he can get a job is a sham, a fraud and a stall. Anyone with any experience in factory work knows that from 60 to 90 per cent of the jobs can be performed by an inexperienced illiterate. Training for many complex jobs take all of a week or two. Most of the jobs require a mere demonstration and one day's work experience.

At the General Motors automobile assembly plant on the western border of the ghetto,

5,000 workers are employed almost all of them white. The work is broken down to its smallest component jobs. A worker turns a screw and the next worker does something else. How much knowledge does it take for one man to hoist a transmission in place while another worker screws in four retaining bolts? An illiterate can put a wheel on a car so that the next worker can screw on five bolts to hold the wheel in place.

Many of these jobs are now performed by white illiterates (with "superior educations") whose reading ability ends with the morning picture newspaper. This is living proof of the fraud being perpetrated against unemployed black people, who are considered "unprepared" to become workers.

The Goodyear Rubber Corp. plant, smack in the heart of the ghetto, also employs about 5,000 workers, including the handful of blacks. And this is true for a multitude of factories in the ghetto that employ hundreds or thousands of men.

Retrain for what? If black ghetto workers were given the factory jobs from which they have been excluded, not only would black unemployment be eliminated but black workers would make twice what they are now making in the menial jobs into which they have been forced.

Why have they been excluded systematically from these jobs? The answer is clear: Industrial automation and agricultural mechanization are eliminating hundreds of thousands of jobs every year. Whereas industrialization created more jobs than it eliminated, automation eliminates more than it creates. Workers are being driven out of the factories and off the farms. The population is growing; at the same time, the job market is shrinking.

The simple truth is that the black worker is being used by the rich bosses to absorb the first and most devastating blows of the impending crisis. White workers also are being affected by unemployment, but these

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The simple truth is that the black worker is being used by the rich bosses to absorb the first and most devastating blows of the impending crisis. White workers also are being affected by unemployment, but these

effects have been cushioned by forcing the black man on the bottom to take the full weight. That's why the black unemployment rate is three times greater than that of whites. This allows the white workers to hold onto their fading "American dream" a little longer at the expense of the black man, who is already living the nightmare.

The imperialists would rather starve and exterminate black workers—through police brutality and use as "cannon fodder" in Vietnam—than take the chance of white workers becoming revolutionary. What would happen if the TV tube went out for white workers, if their cars were repossessed? Would Johnson's fine words about the Great Society smooth the wrinkles of hunger? Would they be satisfied with Anti-Poverty Program crumbs or job training frauds? No! And that is why black workers are being systematically excluded from factory jobs in South L.A. White workers are being forced to play the role of parasites. This is the racist solution that the rulers of America are imposing with their "Great Society"!

The standard of living for white workers historically has been kept up by U.S. imperialism's robbery of its various colonial holdings in Latin America, Asia and Africa. The wars and intrigues being carried by U.S. imperialism against the colored peoples of the world are merely an attempt to continue the privileges of robbery and murder, and an army of white workers is being used for this purpose. Would white workers be willing to die in south Vietnam if their wives and children were starving at home? No!

The rulers of this country cannot reveal these reasons for excluding black workers from factory jobs, because it is clear that, if it is now the black worker who must suffer for the "holy" name of profits, it will be the white worker before long.

U.S. IMPERIALISM'S GREATEST FEAR

The greatest fear of the imperialist enemy is that the black people in the South L.A. ghetto will shut down the factories, stop production, and demand 80 per cent of the industrial jobs, because they are 80 per cent of the ghetto population—and demand to be employed—NOW!

This would be a direct attack on the real enemy. These factories are completely vulnerable and can be shut down with a minimum of preparation, personnel and effort. Once the weakest flank of the enemy is discovered, a million ways will be found to focus the full strength of resistance so that every blow drives straight to his heart (his profits).

When workers want to better their pay and

conditions they strike! They bring the wheels of production to a screaming halt. This brings profits to a halt.

The oppressor's greatest fear is that black people in South L.A. will raise the slogan: "IF WE DON'T WORK, YOU DON'T RUN!" Instead of the \$40 million dollars in property damage incurred during the August Rebellion, billions upon billions would be lost when industry stopped because of the fight for jobs by black workers. The merchant is a minor enemy who can be taken as a mere diversion. He is a small bandit who sells what the factories produce. But if the fight for jobs meant a halt in production, it would mean stopping the beating heart of the real enemy. It would be the basis for a vast black resistance movement, capable of uniting all black workers in South L.A., and capable of creating a mass political sea so that resistance leaders may be secure in the bosom of the people.

THE PRICE OF CRIMES

The enemy fears the development of a vast political sea, founded on the exposure of every crime that has been committed against black people. All these crimes discussed above, and the day-to-day murders, would then become part of the immediate political consciousness of the black people. Having identified the real enemy and his weakest point, the black people would have a definite purpose and direction of struggle. Every act would have political meaning and would further serve to unite black people in the pride of their new-found power to confront the enemy with awesome strength. There would be no begging for crumbs when you can take from the enemy more than he would be willing to give in a million years. Hopelessness and frustration would be dispelled. The revolutionary potential of the black masses would be heightened immeasurably. Instead of aiming to miss, those who defend our black men, women and children against racist extermination campaigns—would aim to hit! We would dare to win!

This, then, is what the enemy really fears. He fears the price he will have to pay for his crimes! He is at home here in America. Everything he possesses is right here. It is not as easy as murdering colored peoples 5,000 miles away. The battle will be brought right to his doorstep—right to the source of his profits.

The black people of South L.A. possess a weapon more powerful than twenty-two thousand guns! And black people can choose their own time and places of battle!



TAKEN FROM THE MINOR ENEMY