

SOUTH AFRICA

Britain out of Apartheid

Apartheid out of Britain

The imperialist crisis has sharpened the struggle for freedom both in the imperialist and in the oppressed nations of the world in the last ten years. The world is clearly divided between the rich and poor, the oppressor and the oppressed. For the people of Southern Africa, the last ten years have been characterised by harsh and bitter struggle against the apartheid regime. That struggle is now at crisis point. The oppressed in Southern Africa have heroically proved their determination and will not be intimidated by repression or bought off by the promise of phoney reforms. But their struggle is not an isolated one. It is part and parcel of the struggles of the oppressed worldwide against imperialism and racism. The peoples of Southern Africa are at the sharp end of the struggle which will end not only with the defeat of apartheid, but with the final obliteration of all oppression and exploitation all over the world.

In Britain, the last decade has been marked by growing poverty and repression for many people who were expecting a secure and relatively privileged future in one of the world's richest countries. In the last five years, the divisions between rich and poor, employed and unemployed, black and white, have deepened as the British ruling class has tried to defend its interests at the expense of the British working class. Britain is now a divided nation both economically, socially and politically. The effects of the imperialist crisis have been manifested at every level of political life.

Such a significant shift in economic and social conditions in Britain has had profound effects at all levels of political life, including in the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Britain. *South Africa: Britain out of Apartheid, Apartheid out of Britain* examines recent developments in Southern Africa and the British Anti-Apartheid Movement's response to the new challenges before it. In particular it reviews the dispute between the Anti-Apartheid Movement leadership and one of its local groups, City of London Anti-Apartheid Group, and the possibility of building a mass movement in Britain in solidarity with the struggle for freedom in Southern Africa and against British collaboration with apartheid.

Reprinted in a 2nd edition with a postscript

an FRFI pamphlet

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Carol Brickley Terry O'Halloran David Reed

2nd edition

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The cover photograph shows a Friday demonstration
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the South African Embassy, London June/July 1984

Cover photograph by Paul Mattsson

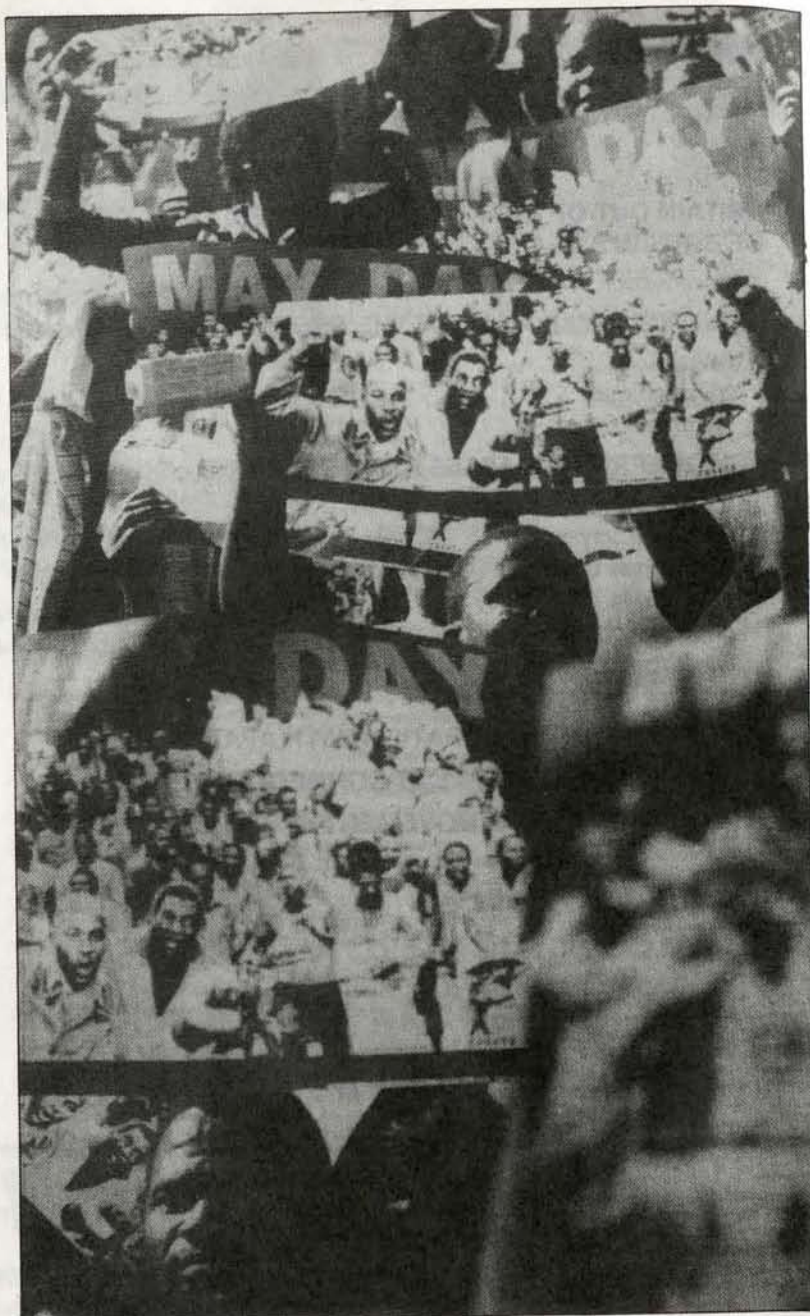
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May Day in South Africa 1986

BRITAIN OUT OF APARTHEID APARTHEID OUT OF BRITAIN

INTRODUCTION

1984-5 saw a dramatic change in the balance of forces in South Africa. At the end of June 1984 the Botha regime felt confident. Eight years of continuous military aggression by South Africa had forced Mozambique and Angola into non-aggression pacts with the Botha regime and to agree to restrict their support for the ANC and SWAPO. Botha had celebrated these 'victories' with a seven-nation European tour, including Britain, designed to welcome racist South Africa back into the imperialist brotherhood. The Reagan Administration was fully behind South Africa's refusal to implement UN Resolution 435 on Namibia, linking it with the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. Finally Botha with his new constitution offering separate parliaments for Indians and 'Coloureds' intended to hold elections in August 1984 as part of an overall strategy of 'reforms' designed to co-opt black collaborators, to break the unity of the black opposition to the regime and to give his imperialist backers a propaganda cover for their continuing political and economic support. Botha undoubtedly felt that his apartheid sewer had a chance of coming out of all this smelling like roses. A jubilant Dr Piet Koornhof, then South Africa's so-called Minister for Development, Cooperation and Education, announced at the end of Botha's European tour on 14 June 1984:

'South Africa is at the end of the beginning of her fight for peace, stability and prosperity in the sub-continent.'

A year later a quite different end was in sight. The elections fraud in August 1984 blew up in Botha's face when the Indian, Black and 'Coloured' masses refused to participate and demonstrated their contempt for those who compromised with apartheid, out on the streets. Massive opposition to the regime built up over the next period as uprisings rocked the black townships and political strikes hit South Africa's industrial heartland. After the first few months of 1985 Botha was forced to change his tune and to speak of 'a dramatic escalation of the revolutionary climate'.

The regime predictably responded with brutal repression—murder, arrests, detention without trial. In the nine months to 30 April 1985 the official death toll in the black townships was put at 381 people including 74 children and youths under the age of 18—the real figure is almost certainly over a thousand. Most disturbing for the racist regime is the death of a large number of collaborators with the regime—black councillors, policemen and other officials. The people have made it clear that those who compromise with apartheid and accept the crumbs off Botha's table will be ruthlessly dealt with.

Thousands have been arrested including most of the leadership of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and leading black trade unionists—44 of these leaders face charges of high treason. Botha's 'reforms' have bitten the dust as the courage and determination of the black masses in South Africa have demonstrated to all that the apartheid sewer remains a sewer and will always be so until it is destroyed.

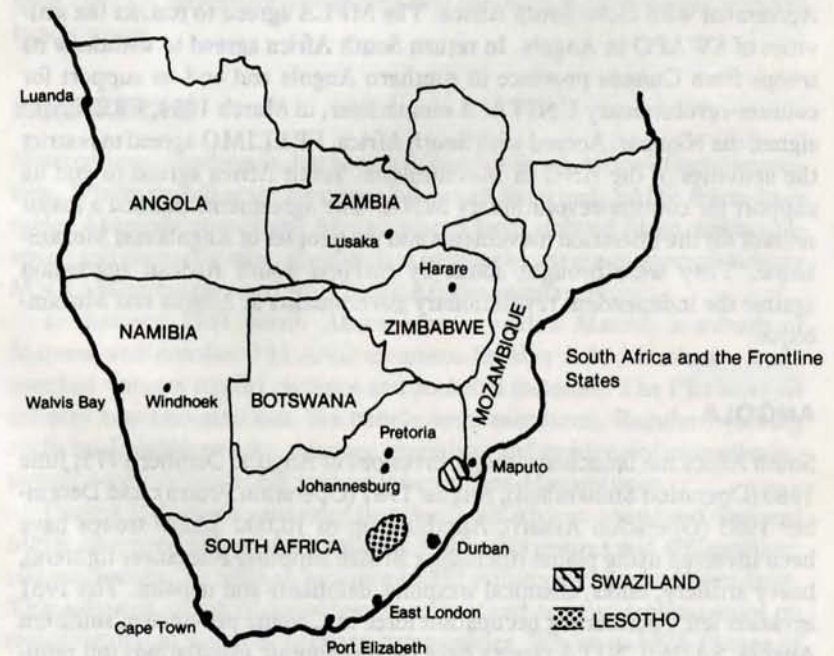
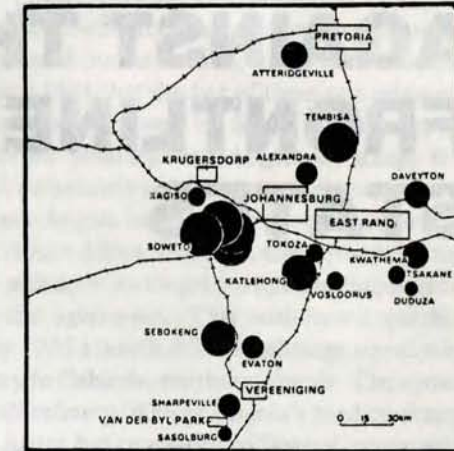
The non-aggression pacts with Mozambique and Angola have now been exposed as fraudulent. While Mozambique and Angola have abided by the terms of the pacts the South African regime has continued to give logistical support to the MNR bandits in Mozambique and is directly aiding Savimbi's UNITA gangs in Angola with great damage and destruction being done to both these countries. The so-called pacts have, however, failed to halt the military struggle in Namibia and South Africa, and Umkhonto we Sizwe (military wing of the ANC) has time and again hit back with military strikes in the heart of South Africa itself.

Finally, the courage and determination of the black masses in South Africa has, at last, had a response in the United States of America. A new and effective movement against US collaboration with apartheid initiated by black people, the Free South Africa Movement, came into existence in November 1984 and every month grows larger, more militant and gets broader support. At the present time it has forced a motion through the US House of Representatives calling for economic sanctions against South Africa.

The missing link in this chain of opposition to apartheid which now has spread from South Africa to many parts of the world is an effective campaigning movement in Britain, the country responsible for creating the

apartheid regime and which today is still its main political and economic backer. The building of an effective movement here in Britain against British collaboration with apartheid can hasten that inevitable day when the black people of South Africa destroy the racist apartheid regime. It is our internationalist duty to build it.

The townships of the Vaal Triangle



APARTHEID WAR AGAINST THE FRONTLINE STATES

In February 1984 the MPLA government in Angola signed the Lusaka Agreement with racist South Africa. The MPLA agreed to restrict the activities of SWAPO in Angola. In return South Africa agreed to withdraw its troops from Cunene province in southern Angola and end its support for counter-revolutionary UNITA. A month later, in March 1984, FRELIMO signed the Nkomati Accord with South Africa. FRELIMO agreed to restrict the activities of the ANC in Mozambique. South Africa agreed to end its support for counter-revolutionary MNR. The agreements marked a major setback for the liberation movements and the peoples of Angola and Mozambique. They were brought about by ruthless South African aggression against the independent revolutionary governments of Angola and Mozambique.

ANGOLA

South Africa has launched 4 major invasions of Angola: October 1975; June 1980 (Operation Smokeshell); August 1981 (Operation Protea); and December 1983 (Operation Askari). Anything up to 10,000 SADF troops have been involved using planes (including British supplied Buccaneer fighters), heavy artillery, tanks, chemical weapons, defoliants and napalm. The 1981 invasion left a permanent occupation force in Cunene province of southern Angola. SADF/UNITA targets have been economic installations (oil refineries, hydro-electric dams etc); Namibian refugee camps (styled 'SWAPO

bases' by the apartheid regime); Angolan civilians. By 1982 an estimated 10,000 people had been killed and more than £6 billion damage done.

Alongside outright invasions have gone countless South African raids and continuous military and economic support to UNITA.

The single most barbaric raid was that on Kassinga refugee camp on 4 May 1978. An estimated 1,315 people were killed or wounded. Over 600 refugees were murdered – many after being tortured. 300 were taken prisoner and tortured. Some were released but an estimated 200 were detained without trial. It was not until late 1984 that the last of them was released.

It was this international terrorist campaign by South Africa, and its stooge UNITA gangs, that forced revolutionary Angola to accept the Lusaka Agreement. The MPLA desperately needed time to reconstruct the Angolan economy and build a new Angola based on the people's needs and not on imperialist profiteering. South Africa, however, has repeatedly violated the agreement. It did not withdraw its illegal occupation forces until April 1985 – 14 months after the agreement. This withdrawal quickly proved to be a fraud, for in May 1985 a South African sabotage squad was caught heading for the oil refinery in Cabinda, northern Angola. The squad was planning to blow up the Gulf refinery. 80% of Angola's hard currency earnings come from oil. South Africa has continued to finance, equip and back UNITA arrogantly demanding that the MPLA share power with the bandit gangs.

MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique, like Angola, has been subjected to South Africa's fascist aggression. Whilst no full-scale invasions have been launched, SADF forces have raided Mozambique; South African planes have violated Mozambican airspace; and economic sabotage as well as murder by the counter-revolutionary MNR has been organised with South African assistance.

In January 1981 South African forces raided Matola, a suburb of Maputo, and murdered 13 ANC members. In May 1983 Matola was again attacked – planes strafed civilians and rocketed factories. The Petromac oil refinery was also attacked. Six people were murdered. Regular bombing raids, landmining attacks, sabotage operations and border violations characterised South Africa's war against independent Mozambique.

During 1982 it was estimated that the South African armed and financed MNR destroyed 489 primary schools, 102 health centres and 400 commercial enterprises. By 1984 an estimated \$333 million damage had been done. This sabotage of the Mozambican economy and reconstruction comes on top of the fall in prices of primary commodities. Whilst in 1975 13 tons of Mozambican cotton bought nearly 3 trucks, by 1984 it bought only one.

Mozambique's foreign debt has risen to \$1.4 billion. Further the devastating drought throughout Southern Africa since 1981 had cost 100,000 lives by 1984 as well as adding to the economic difficulties faced by Mozambique and other Southern African states.

It was this harsh reality that forced FRELIMO to sign the Nkomati Accord. The immediate consequence of the agreement was the reduction of the ANC presence in Maputo to a 'diplomatic mission' of ten people. Other ANC members were either deported or restricted to refugee camps which ANC leaders were not allowed to enter. South Africa, for its part, continued to give free rein to the MNR. The MNR campaign of sabotage and murder has continued to this day.

The true history of the Lusaka Agreement and the Nkomati Accord is a history of international terrorism and economic sabotage carried out by South Africa, aided by puppet gangs (UNITA and MNR) and backed by US and British imperialism. Britain and the US have repeatedly vetoed UN Security Council resolutions against South Africa's international terrorism. SADF forces have used British planes and other British war equipment. They have been backed by technological equipment and expertise supplied by Britain. The costly war has been financed by IMF loans secured by Britain and the US. British imperialism is up to its neck in the blood of Namibians, Angolans, Cubans and Mozambicans murdered by South Africa.

The aims of this international terrorism are two-fold: to undermine support for the liberation movements; to subvert the revolutionary independent governments of Mozambique and Angola. Blood-thirsty and profit-hungry apartheid South Africa seeks total economic and political domination of Southern Africa. It is necessarily, therefore, driven to attack revolutionary internationalist governments on its own borders. There can be no peace or reconstruction for the peoples of Angola and Mozambique until the apartheid regime itself is destroyed.

NAMIBIA

South Africa has occupied Namibia since 1915 and, since 1966, in defiance of international law but with the connivance of British and US imperialism. In 1960 SWAPO was formed to organise the Namibian people's struggle for independence. In 1966 PLAN (People's Liberation Army of Namibia) launched the armed struggle as it was clear that only revolutionary force would drive the apartheid occupiers out of Namibia.

The apartheid regime has sought to maintain its illegal grip on Namibia by a combination of terror against the people, and diplomatic trickery to disguise its true purpose: to maintain Namibia as a colony of South Africa.

In 1978 the UN passed Resolution 435 aimed at securing independence for Namibia. All the major imperialist powers and South Africa itself are formally committed to Resolution 435 which calls for free elections supervised by a UN force. SWAPO and its international allies have also agreed to the resolution. Yet since 1978 South Africa, with the overt and covert support of US and British imperialism, has consistently blocked the implementation of UN Resolution 435.

Initially the Pretoria regime hoped that it could cripple SWAPO and destroy its mass support by terror. Meanwhile the stooge Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), led by Dirk Mudge, could be groomed to take over as the government of a Namibia firmly under South African control. It soon became clear that this strategy was doomed. International pressure built up for implementation of the resolution. Then, in 1981, the US came forward with a new ploy eagerly adopted by Pretoria: the infamous 'linkage' demand.

Since 1981 South Africa has made Namibian independence conditional on the prior withdrawal of Cuban internationalist forces from Angola. Cuban troops went to Angola, at the urgent request of the MPLA, in November 1975 in response to the South African invasion of October 1975. Now, hypocritically, South Africa, whilst continuing to attack Angola, uses the legal presence of Cuban troops in Angola as an excuse for its own illegal occupation of Namibia.

Ever since, the 'linkage' demand and other equally threadbare ploys have been used by South Africa to block any progress. A dummy 'interim' government led by DTA was set up. It collapsed in January 1983. Then the Multi-Party Conference (MPC) was set up. MPC involves six stooge pro-South African parties, including the discredited DTA. In April 1985 Pretoria announced that MPC was to form another 'interim' dummy government. A spectacular inauguration ceremony is to take place on 17 June in the Namibian capital Windhoek. Among the participants will be Jonas Savimbi, leader of UNITA. In all these manoeuvres South Africa has been supported by US and British imperialism. Britain and the US have consistently vetoed UN Security Council resolutions for sanctions to force South Africa to implement Resolution 435.

British imperialism has no interest at all in a truly independent Namibia. 60% of illegal investment in Namibia is controlled by British companies. The illegal theft of Namibian uranium in the Rossing Mine is carried out by Rio Tinto Zinc. RTZ, Metal Box, British Leyland and Shell are among the companies operating in Namibia in defiance of UN Decree No 1 1974 which forbade foreign investment in Namibia as long as it was under South African occupation. No British government, Labour or Tory, has done anything to prevent this illegal British plunder. Indeed, the 1945-51

Labour government in 1950 opposed UN trusteeship of Namibia in favour of South African occupation.

Imperialist profiteering in Namibia is sustained by apartheid terror. The Kassinga massacre is detailed above. South African forces, particularly the Koevoet (Crowbar) Special Forces Unit, have engaged in systematic killing and torture of Namibian civilians and SWAPO supporters. Tortured Namibians have lost limbs, eyes and ears suffering permanent physical and mental damage. Electric shock torture is regularly used. SWAPO women have been raped before being sent to concentration camps like that at Hardap Dam near Mariental. SWAPO leaders have been illegally detained and imprisoned. Despite, or because, of Koevoet's central role in torture and repression, Britain demanded, in February 1985, that Koevoet police elections in Namibia.

South Africa is spending an estimated \$3 million a day on its war in Namibia. As with its war against the Frontline States, this war is financed by loans, including IMF loans, secured by Britain and the US. British companies operating in South Africa and Namibia also make direct financial contributions to the war. South Africa's consistent refusal to implement Resolution 435, its systematic repression of the genuine representatives of Namibian independence—SWAPO—and its promotion of stooge bodies like MPC, prove conclusively that apartheid South Africa will never voluntarily relinquish its control of Namibia. British and US imperialism rely on South African control of Namibia for their own plunder of Namibian resources.

Independence for Namibia requires the destruction of the apartheid regime and the ending of British and US collaboration with that regime.

SOUTH AFRICAN MASSES STRIKE BACK

The South African economy has suffered a sharp recession over the last few years resulting from the world economic crisis and sharp fall in the dollar price of gold—\$617 per ounce in 1980, around \$315 per ounce today. This recession has been accompanied by high inflation and massive unemployment—now over 3 million among black people. The cumulative effects of this, as well as the three year long drought, have been devastating in the black townships and bantustans. As black opposition to the racist regime has grown, the government has become ever more desperate to find credible black collaborators with the apartheid regime from among the puppet leaders in the bantustans, black businessmen, black councillors and churchmen. It has to do this in an attempt to divide the black opposition to the apartheid state, satisfy the aspirations of a small privileged layer of the black middle class, while ensuring the dominance and prosperity of the white minority. It has also to give its imperialist backers a propaganda cover for the vital political and economic support they give to the racist South African state. This is the significance of the so-called Botha 'reforms' of apartheid. In 1984-5 the massive black opposition to the regime has exploded for good the shell of these so-called 'reforms' and shown the continuing reality of apartheid as a brutal, oppressive, racist state system.

ELECTIONS FRAUD EXPOSED

A mass rally in Cape Town on 20 August 1983 which brought together delegates from 320 organisations and an estimated 12,000 people launched a

new national organisation in South Africa – the United Democratic Front (UDF). The rally on 20 August brought together organisations from throughout South Africa involved in struggle against the racist regime. From squatters groups in the Western Cape fighting a daily battle with the racist police in order to remain in their homes, to revolutionary trade unions such as the South African Allied Workers Union, to church leaders such as Allen Boesak, to student groups such as the Azanian Students Organisation, and women's groups such as the Federation of South African Women. It was one of the most representative gatherings of the people in South Africa since the Congress of the People in Kliptown in 1955 which adopted the Freedom Charter.

The UDF was formed in defiance of the racist regime's attempt to divide black people in South Africa by granting the vote to Indian and 'Coloured' people whilst still denying it to the black majority. Its first major test came a year later and the UDF scored a significant political victory. It succeeded in mobilising hundreds of thousands of people in opposition to Botha's phoney constitutional reforms. The extremely low turn-out in the elections for the separate 'Coloured' and Indian Parliaments held on 22 and 28 August 1984 was a recognition that the new constitution serves no other function than to further entrench apartheid.

The 'Coloured' Labour Party of Rev Allan Hendrickse was elected on a 30% poll, by only 18% of the 1.5 million eligible voters. In several constituencies in the Cape peninsula the poll was less than 5%. One Labour Party candidate 'won' his seat with 118 votes, in a 4.14% poll, and he now secures a £25,000 a year job plus perks. The Indian elections saw an even lower turn-out of no more than 15% of eligible voters.

The elections were marked by increased brutal repression by the apartheid regime. Mass rallies of the UDF, attended by thousands of people, in the run up to the elections were often viciously attacked by apartheid's police thugs as were protests at polling booths organised by AZAPO. Many meetings were banned altogether. But this did not stop the boycott campaign gaining more support, and more militant support at that. Revolutionary black youth took to the streets. Thousands of black students in schools, colleges, and universities throughout South Africa boycotted their classes for months on end. The homes of Indian and 'Coloured' candidates, stooges of the apartheid regime, were petrol bombed and there were petrol bomb attacks on the reviled apartheid police.

In pre-dawn raids, a day before the 'Coloured' elections, the police rounded up over 40 leading members of the UDF, including Archie Gumede (UDF Co-President) Patrick Lekota (UDF publicity secretary) and leaders of the Transvaal and Natal Indian Congress, affiliated to the UDF. Most were held under the notorious Internal Security Act, which permits

indefinite detention without trial. Over 200 UDF activists were interned and hundreds more demonstrators arrested during the course of the elections.

The UDF exposed the fraudulent elections and the world witnessed the brutality of the police against the black community which protested against them. Yet Britain, true to character, refused to support a UN Security Council resolution condemning the elections saying that it 'was too early to pass judgement'.

Britain's complicity with the apartheid regime was further exposed when in a courageous act of defiance, 5 UDF leaders and Paul David of the 'Release Nelson Mandela Campaign' walked into the 7th floor offices (above Barclays Bank) of the British consulate in Durban on 12 September 1984 seeking sanctuary and to highlight the wave of detentions sweeping the country. On 7 September the Natal Supreme Court had lifted the indefinite detention orders against them and they had gone into hiding before entering the consulate after new orders for their immediate detention had been issued by the apartheid regime.

The British government responded with what the six described as 'a sophisticated campaign of subtle coercion' conducted by the consulate staff, to try to force them to leave. This callous treatment by the British government included a refusal to provide the UDF six with facilities for talks with the regime or even to see their relatives and lawyer. Three left on 6 October and were immediately detained. The other three left on 12 December after a three month long sit in. Two of them – Archie Gumede, Co-President of the UDF and Paul David – were arrested on a charge of high treason. Five of the Durban six now face charges of high treason and could face the death penalty. Little wonder that their legal representative, Zac Yacoob, stated that 'Thatcher is now the policewoman for Botha' and in a statement to the international community during their occupation of the consulate the Durban six said:

'... It is now clear in our minds that the British government will not mount opposition to the South African government's racial policies but will by diplomatic means aid and abet the system as it is designed to keep the majority of the people in perpetual subjugation, dehumanised ...'

TRANSVAAL STAY-AWAY

Opposition to the new constitution spilled over into the black townships of the Vaal Triangle – South Africa's industrial heartland – into demonstrations against racist education, rent and fare increases. The town of Sebokeng was left in ruins in September 1984 after a protest against increases in rents

and subsequent police repression. Demonstrators were shot and killed. On 11 September the Minister of Law and Order, Louis le Grange, banned meetings until the end of September in the Transvaal. 598 mourners after a funeral in Sebokeng were arrested in an effort to enforce the ban – the police claimed the funeral was a political rally. The people fought back stoning police vehicles and in some cases setting up road blocks against the police. The demonstrations and meetings continued followed by arrests and detentions.

A meeting on 10 October 1984, convened by the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) called on student, community and workers' organisations to get together to discuss the civil, labour and educational crisis. The trade unions joined in. They discussed a stay-away protest and decided to go to the communities and assess their strength.

On 23 October, 7,000 troops and police moved into Sebokeng and sealed off the township. Systematic house to house searches were carried out and 300 arrests were made – nearly all for petty offences. Sharpeville and Boipatong received similar treatment. The operations were designed as a mighty show of strength to intimidate people into submission. They had the opposite effect with black youth taking to the streets to battle with the police and armed forces.

A second meeting took place on 27 October and it set up the Transvaal Regional Stay-away Committee (TRSC). Represented were 37 community and trade union organisations, involved in and strengthened through protest campaigns over the previous months. The unions which supported the stay-away included the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU), with 9 affiliates and a membership of about 110,000; the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA), with 12 affiliates and a membership of 150,000; and the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union with a membership between 100,000 and 130,000. The UDF as a collective organisation was not involved although a number of its affiliates were. The UDF supported the stay-away, which was called for 5 and 6 November around the following demands:

- The army and police should be withdrawn from the townships
- The community councillors should resign
- The increases in rent and bus fares should be withdrawn
- Detainees and political prisoners should be released
- Dismissed workers should be reinstated
- General Sales Tax and other unfair taxes should be abolished
- Democratically elected students' representative councils should be established in schools.

The two-day Transvaal stay-away mobilised up to 800,000 workers and

around 400,000 students boycotted school on the two days. Two state enterprises – SASOL and ISCOR – stopped working. Many industrial areas were at a standstill. It was the biggest protest since the 1950s uniting community organisations, trade unions and students. It was a direct political challenge to the racist regime and the racist police responded with murderous brutality. At least 20 people were killed and hundreds were arrested. On 6 November SASOL sacked 6,500 workers, paid them off and bussed them back to the human dumping grounds in the bantustans. (A FOSATU initiated campaign led to management 'inviting' the sacked workers to reapply for their jobs within two weeks.) On 8 November most of the committee which organised the strike were arrested and the offices of UDF and FOSATU were raided. These leaders were charged with subversion and face a possible 25 year sentence. But the people will not be deterred. As Thami Mali of FOSATU, chair of the TRSC and chair of the UDF in Soweto stated:

'We cannot go back now. Our duty as the oppressed is to step up resistance and create an ungovernable situation... we have power in our hands. [The stay-away] showed that we can bring the machinery of this country to a standstill.'

Thami Mali was arrested and detained.

WE WILL NOT BE MOVED – CROSSROADS FIGHTS BACK

Hearing that their forced removal to the sandy wasteland of Khayelitsha was to be speeded up, the inhabitants of the 65,000 strong Crossroads squatter camp near Cape Town, came out in force on 18 February 1985 to show the white racist regime that they were not going to be moved. Barricades were erected made up of overturned cars, tyres, trees, concrete blocks, trucks and anything else to hand – many were set ablaze. The black youth hurled petrol bombs and stones at the police, and small children made catapults to pelt the police with.

Corrugated iron shields were used as protection as they advanced on police lines. Crossroads was sealed off, and armoured police units fired round after round of live ammunition, as well as rubber bullets and teargas. Helicopters pumped out clouds of teargas from above. The official death toll after 3 days of fierce fighting was 18, with over 230 reported injured. Many of the dead had been shot in the back, most of the victims were very young.

Predictably enough the construction companies building the tiny breeze-block houses in the wasteland of Khayelitsha included the local subsidiaries of UK groups such as Wimpey and Cementation.

MASSACRE AT LANGA

The uprisings in the black townships continued unabated and reached a fresh crisis point in March 1985 in the Eastern Cape. The apartheid regime in South Africa marked the 25th anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre by opening fire on 4,000 mourners in Langa in the Eastern Cape, butchering more than 45 people and injuring countless more. At Sharpeville in 1960, the police shot dead 69 black people peacefully taking part in a demonstration against the pass laws organised by the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC). Twenty five years later, despite all claims of reform, the apartheid regime still answers the demands of black people for freedom and justice with murder and bloody repression.

Early in the morning on 21 March, thousands of mourners gathered in the Langa township to travel together to Kwanobuhle for the funeral of a youth murdered by police in the previous week. The police forced them out of the buses and taxis they were in so the people proceeded to march peacefully towards Uitenhage, the white industrial centre which lies between Langa and Kwanobuhle. All of a sudden, a black youth riding his bicycle in front of the procession was shot in the head, then without warning the police fired indiscriminately into the crowd. Many wounded people were shot dead where they lay and as they tried to flee the carnage. Fire hoses had to be called in to wash the streets of their blood.

The exact figure of those who died on that day may never be known. The fascist regime still churns out its lies that 19 died; they also concocted their version of what happened – that the police were forced to shoot in self-defence when rocks and petrol bombs were hurled at them by a ‘communist-inspired’ mob. Even the police evidence to the judicial enquiry contradicted the regime’s account of events. No traces of petrol bombs were found, and the police were seen planting stones in the hands of the dead.

Also in the Eastern Cape the weekend before Langa, hundreds of thousands of workers staged a 3-day stay-at-home around Port Elizabeth, which crippled industry in the area. Over 15 workers were killed. 21 March was also the first day in a 2-day strike organised in Uitenhage, centre of the motor industry, which succeeded in stopping production at the multinational factories of Goodyear Tyres, Volkswagen and Firestone amongst others.

Funerals are also treated as major political events, mobilising tens of thousands of black people in a show of strength and defiance. The scenes of 35,000 marching to bury the dead of Langa, to the rhythm of freedom songs with clenched fists, were an incredible demonstration that apartheid terror will never crush the determination of the people to be free.

The militancy of black workers in South Africa grows from strength to

strength in spite of mass unemployment and vicious repression. In the Eastern Cape major multinational companies continue to be beset by strikes and stay-aways. In March and April 1985 thousands of gold miners at the Vaal Reefs gold mining complex, the largest in the world, owned by Anglo-American, have staged sporadic strikes to fight for better wages and working conditions. On 28 April, over a quarter of the workforce, 14,000 black workers, were sacked as a result of these actions and ordered to return to the ‘homelands’. This they refused to do, and for two days they occupied their hostels surrounded by armed police, who eventually forced them out with teargas. Another 3,000 miners were also sacked by the Anglovaal mining corporation in Hartbeesfontein. Umkhonto we Sizwe, the military wing of the ANC, immediately acted in protest at the sackings by planting two bombs outside the Johannesburg headquarters of Anglo-American and Anglovaal.

DEATH TO COLLABORATORS OF APARTHEID

The immense hatred felt towards the stooges of apartheid, the black policemen and councillors who prosper from the oppression of their own people, has resulted in the burning down or petrol bombing of their homes and their own deaths. In the Kwanobuhle township, all members of the council have resigned. The only one who did not was killed by the people of the township, and his son was hacked to death and then his body set alight. In Tinus, a township near Port Elizabeth 18 houses were burnt down. The homes of councillors further away in Parys and Welkom in the Orange Free State have been attacked. In Stilfontein in the Transvaal about 150 black youth were only stopped from marching on to local government offices by police firing teargas at them. In Soweto, two hand grenades were thrown into a government office, causing considerable damage.

The number of black people who are now prepared to serve on local councils is negligible. At the end of April 1985 it was reported that there were 375 vacancies on town councils and community councils in townships throughout South Africa. When Lekoa town council in the Vaal Triangle tried to fill vacancies by holding by-elections no one put themselves forward as candidates.

The government, unable to find willing collaborators, is introducing legislation to fill the vacancies by nomination. The strategy to find among the black people junior partners in apartheid has completely failed.

APARTHEID CAN NEVER BE REFORMED

The people’s opposition has totally exposed the fraudulent character of Botha’s ‘reforms’. Following the abject failure of the constitutional elections

and in the face of deepening political and social crisis the regime moved quickly to detain the movement's political leadership.

In the first two months of 1985 there were 164 known United Democratic Front (UDF) detainees. There are now more than 40 UDF leaders and activists in detention facing charges of high treason. On 23 April, three more UDF leaders were rounded up – Patrick Lekota, publicity secretary of the UDF; Popo Molefe, general secretary; and Moses Chikane.

The 16 most prominent leaders facing charges of treason include the two UDF presidents, Archie Gumede and Albertina Sisulu; five of those who occupied the consulate in Durban and four leaders of the South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU) – a militant independent trade union affiliated to the UDF. Their trial began on 20 May. The apartheid regime clearly hopes to cripple the UDF by lengthy periods of detention and even lengthier trials which remove from the UDF not only its leaders but very many of its activists. The detainees may face up to 2 years in gaol while their case is heard.

In the face of these attacks the UDF has refused to be intimidated. At its annual congress on 5-7 April 1985, it reported 654 affiliated organisations, representing 2 million people. The UDF Congress promised to step up its campaign of civil disobedience, with mass action to stop the proposed New Zealand Rugby Union tour of South Africa in July 1985. It also reaffirmed its total opposition to imperialism, and promised to step up its campaign against British and American collaboration with apartheid.

The stark reality of Botha's so-called era of 'reforms' is that apartheid is as brutal today as it was 25 years ago. Black people, the vast majority in South Africa, are still being mown down in the streets, one person is arrested every three minutes under the pass laws, and they are still denied all basic democratic and human rights. The people's leaders remain incarcerated in apartheid's gaols, and while Botha makes offers of release to political prisoners, like Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu, on condition that they renounce violence, the leadership of the non-violent UDF has been put on trial for high treason. Black people in South Africa are not conned – apartheid can never be reformed, it has to be totally smashed.

UNITY OF DEMOCRATIC FORCES

'I cannot and will not give any undertaking at a time when I and you, the people, are not free. Your freedom and mine cannot be separated. I will return.'

On 10 February 1985, 10,000 people gathered at a rally in the black township of Soweto to hear these defiant words from Nelson Mandela, imprisoned

leader of the African National Congress (ANC), rejecting in uncompromising terms PW Botha's 'offer' of conditional release.

Nelson Mandela's daughter, Zinzi, read out his powerful statement to the jubilant crowd, in which he refused to condemn the revolutionary violence of the oppressed and renounce the armed struggle being waged by the people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe. Instead he challenged Botha to renounce the violence of the oppressor, the apartheid regime. In addition, Mandela exposed the bogus nature of the offer made at a time of increased repression,

'What freedom am I being offered while the organisation of the people remains banned?'

Mandela, who has spent the last 21 years in prison, and who is the acknowledged leader of the black people in South Africa, made it clear once again that neither his freedom nor that of his people could ever be bought,

'I cherish my own freedom dearly, but I care even more for your freedom . . . I cannot sell my birthright, nor am I prepared to sell the birthright of the people to be free.'

Nelson Mandela's principled stand and his unswerving commitment to carry on the struggle for freedom proves him to be the outstanding leader and unifying force of the anti-apartheid struggle.

A national liberation struggle of the intensity of that in South Africa inevitably leads to clashes between different trends in the movement. During May 1985 a series of clashes between members of the UDF and the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) – part of the black consciousness movement – resulted in at least five deaths. Such disunity could only aid the apartheid regime which was quick to take advantage of the hostilities.

In a tremendous display of unity hundreds of supporters of the UDF, AZAPO and other organisations met together on 19 May in Soweto to forge a new unity essential for the continued struggle against apartheid.

Similarly, representatives of leading black trade unions have been meeting to discuss the formation of a wider federation. Such a move will require overcoming differing attitudes to the wider political struggle against apartheid. This unity has become possible because of the role the unions have played over the last year of struggle. The main trade union federations, FOSATU and CUSA, participated in stay-away actions which represented the common interests of workers, students and the urban black community at large. This has brought them closer to the standpoint of SAAWU which has always seen its role, in fighting for its members, as participating in a political struggle of the broad community. It is clear that the struggle to defend workers' interests today in South Africa cannot be separated from the national liberation struggle of the people.



Flying picket – City Group occupies South African Airways, Oxford Circus Paul Mattsson

END BRITISH COLLABORATION WITH APARTHEID

Not by chance was it that an international gang of brigands met to discuss their investments in South Africa at Leeds Castle, Kent, in early March 1985. Many leading British companies – BP, Barclays, GEC to name but a few – attended. For British involvement in apartheid is rooted in economics. British banks and British multinational companies make vast profits from the enslavement of 24 million black people in South Africa. British collaboration with apartheid is very profitable.

Apartheid is not profitable for the 24 million black people in South Africa who live in poverty and under a brutal repressive regime. Unemployment amongst black people is well over 3 million. Apartheid is not profitable for the one in four families with children in Britain who now live below the poverty line as defined by the British government. But apartheid is profitable for the imperialist banks and multinational companies which make their highest rates of profit worldwide in South Africa. And it is profitable for all those who, through their collaboration with apartheid, their investments in apartheid, have a stake – big or small – in those profits.

In the five years to 1983, the United States companies' rate of profit from investing in apartheid was 18 per cent for manufacturing and 25 per cent for mining. This can be compared to 12.6 per cent and 13.7 per cent respectively in other parts of the world. Little wonder that 350 or so US companies operate in South Africa with assets in the region of \$2.3bn. If banking operations and gold stocks are included then estimates suggest that overall US investment in apartheid could be \$14bn (nearly £12bn).

British companies' stake in apartheid gives an average rate of profit of some 21 per cent. This is extremely high compared to a 6-7 per cent average return on investment in Britain. So it is no surprise that 500 British companies invest in South Africa and include the financial and industrial leaders

of the South African economy. Direct investment from Britain is in the region of £5bn – a third of all foreign direct investment in South Africa. It is very profitable. In 1981, while 6 per cent of Britain's total foreign direct investment went to South Africa, 13 per cent of all earnings from foreign direct investment came from South Africa. Indirect investment (share-portfolios etc) gives Britain a further stake of some £6bn and considerably more when all the assets of the major banks are taken into account. British banks and companies earned £1bn last year from their investments in apartheid.

In March 1985, British companies with a crucial stake in apartheid announced their profits for the previous year.

ICI profits topped £1bn for the first time this year. Around 60 per cent of ICI assets are abroad and it has a 38 per cent stake in AE&CI (South Africa) which has a monopoly in the production of explosives (largely for mining).

The Royal Dutch/Shell group had a net income of £3.6bn in 1984 and British Petroleum announced post-tax profits of £1.26bn. Shell and BP control 40 per cent of oil sales in South Africa.

Barclays Bank increased its profits in 1984 by 18 per cent to a record £655m. This was in spite of a 42 per cent fall in the profits of its 55 per cent owned South African subsidiary, Barclays National – a slight hiccup after its record-breaking profits last year. Still Barclays National's profits were £54m and its assets have risen some 25 per cent to R19.43bn or some £9.1bn. In 1985 it will almost certainly be back.

If one international group of parasites had a slight setback in South Africa, another immediately took its place. The fifth largest British bank, Standard Chartered UK, increased its profits by 8 per cent to £290.3 million. Its 52.8 per cent owned South African subsidiary, Standard Bank Investment Corporation (STANBIC), increased its profits by 27 per cent to over £100m – overtaking Barclays and becoming South Africa's most profitable bank. Its assets increased by 41 per cent last year to R16.1bn or some £7.5bn.

Barclays National and STANBIC control over 50 per cent of the banking sector in South Africa, and together with the British merchant bank Hill Samuel, are the major lenders for South Africa's capital investment programme in power, energy, transport, communication and the military. British banks had claims of \$5.562bn (£4.7bn) on South Africa (end June 1984), a rise of \$1.02bn (£0.92bn) or 22.5 per cent on the previous year. Britain's stake in apartheid is enormous. And precisely because investment in apartheid is so profitable, British collaboration with apartheid will not be easily broken.

Recent developments in South Africa are, however, beginning to worry

the international backers of apartheid. The South African economy is running into a deep crisis which, as unemployment grows, is bringing forth militant resistance by black people against the racist apartheid state. South Africa desperately needs financial support from the international banks. Its foreign debt has increased to over \$17bn – a 30 per cent rise on the previous year. This debt represents some 30 per cent of its gross national product and two thirds of it is due to be paid back this year. South Africa desperately needs support from oil companies, as some 60 per cent of its needs come from imported oil. It pays premiums of \$150-\$200m to buy oil secretly, costing it some \$2bn in a full year. A total financial and oil boycott of South Africa would bring it to its knees. But it would also destroy the foundation of those massive profits that the imperialist banks and companies get from their stake in apartheid. Faced with growing international demands for economic sanctions against South Africa, the international backers of apartheid are seeking a strategy to force cosmetic changes on the apartheid regime and to appease international opinion.

In early March 1985 an important gathering of British, US, South African and other multinational companies and banks with a stake in apartheid, met in Leeds Castle, Kent for a two day conference. It was chaired by Edward Heath, who said in 1981:

'the longer the bondage of blacks lasted, the more likely they were to turn to an armed struggle which the Soviet Union is only waiting to sponsor.'

The Leeds Castle conference was attended by Leon Sullivan who framed a code of conduct for US companies operating in South Africa – to make the brutal and profitable exploitation of black people acceptable to liberal opinion in the US, and no doubt in the vain hope of staving off black resistance to this exploitation. Leon Sullivan made the purpose of the conference crystal clear when he said:

'If something isn't done to bring full equality of opportunity socially, economically and politically for the black population of South Africa there will be no return from chaos . . . Time is running out. Business and governments must play a role in helping to bring about that solution.'

This conference saw a representative gathering of the most important gang of international exploiters ever to sit in one room: including Mobil Oil, General Motors, Citibank for US; Shell, BP, GEC, Barclays, Rio Tinto Zinc from Britain; Barlow Rand, Premier Group, Anglovaal from South Africa; and SKF from Sweden. Justice Jan Steyn, the Chief Executive of the Urban Foundation South Africa set up after the Soweto uprising, was also present. These representatives of international capitalism were organising to protect their interests – their profits in South Africa.

The black people of South Africa are also organising to defend their interests. They are heroically fighting back against the racist South African state and its imperialist backers. Many have been murdered, brutalised and imprisoned fighting for their rights, but they know that their struggle will eventually be victorious.

The time has come for us in Britain to take the side of the black people of South Africa by organising to end all British collaboration with apartheid.

Winnie Mandela carries coffin at Brandfort April 5 1986



BREAKING THE IMPERIALIST CONNECTION

The courageous struggle of black people in South Africa since 1984 has exposed Botha's new constitution and reforms as a phoney cover for apartheid barbarity. Just when the imperialists thought it was safe to come out openly in support of apartheid, the USA in particular has found that apartheid is a major issue in its domestic politics, because black and progressive United States citizens have responded to the liberation struggle in South Africa by building a formidable movement.

The militant, broad campaign in the USA against apartheid has forced a halt to President Reagan's policy of 'constructive engagement' just as the US imperialists had called for full steam ahead in collaboration with the regime. Inspired by the occupation of the British consulate in Durban by UDF leaders and the continuing uprisings in the townships, a massive direct action campaign erupted on 21 November 1984 when several prominent black leaders held a sit in at the South African Embassy in Washington and were later arrested.

The sit-in started a campaign against South African buildings, consulates and businesses selling Krugerrands throughout the States. Pickets outside the Washington embassy continue to be held every day and by May 1985 a total of 4,000 people had been arrested including Congressmen and prominent black civil rights activists. Central to the success of the campaign has been the participation of the black community and their leaders, including Jesse Jackson and Coretta Scott King, widow of Martin Luther King. Trade unions have also given their support.

The Free South Africa Movement has co-ordinated a massive campaign against US investment in apartheid, which stands at 20% of foreign direct investment in South Africa. So far Citibank, North Carolina National Bank Corporation, the Morgan Guaranty Trust, Manufacturers Hanover and the

Bank of Boston have announced that they will end loans to banks and private firms in South Africa.

The campaign also led to a massive response amongst university and college students who demanded that the administrators withdraw their investments in apartheid. On 4 April 1985 an anti-apartheid rally of 150 at Columbia University turned into a round the clock blockade supported by thousands of students. The campus protests spread like wildfire to universities and colleges throughout the USA which organised their own sit-ins and demonstrations. The students also extended their demands to cover anti-racist education policy in the USA.

The breadth and militancy of the campaigning – and most importantly, the involvement of black people, has forced politicians to take up anti-apartheid demands. The most likely to succeed is Senator Edward Kennedy's bill before both the House of Representatives and Senate to end all new investment in South Africa and Namibia, to ban loans to the South African public sector, the import of Krugerrands and sales of computers. On 5 June this bill was overwhelmingly passed by 295 to 127 votes in the House of Representatives. Progressive politicians cannot afford to be left out of the mass movement which has grown so rapidly over the last 6 months and forced even the arch-imperialist Reagan administration to stop in its tracks.

The Free South Africa Movement in the USA is unique in the history of the anti-apartheid movements in imperialist nations. So far it has forced greater setbacks than ever before on imperialist support for apartheid and has done so by engaging the widest possible support under the leadership of black people inspired by the masses in South Africa. With the level of struggle reaching new heights, it is even more remarkable that no movement has been built in Britain which can match the rising militancy in the USA. Why is this so? To find the answer we have to examine the history and politics of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Britain.

THE ANTI- APARTHEID MOVEMENT IN BRITAIN

The Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) in Britain was founded on 26 June (Freedom Day) 1959. It was the first such movement in solidarity with the South African liberation struggle to be formed. Yet today, after 26 years, no mass movement against apartheid exists in this country. The contrast between the low level of activity in Britain – the world's major backer of the apartheid regime – and the mass popular movement against apartheid sweeping the USA is staggering. The AAM has never, in fact, seen itself as a mass militant campaign. From its foundation it has been a liberal humanitarian pressure group confining itself almost exclusively to the techniques of a pressure group. The first issue of *Anti-Apartheid News (AA News)* exactly captured this liberal humanitarian tone in a front page article by Fenner Brockway explaining that he was against apartheid because:

'... the personality within a human form is more important than race or colour. We all belong to the human race.' (*AA News*, January 1965).

At the time of its formation, 1959, this approach made sense. This was before Sharpeville; before the banning of the ANC and PAC; before the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe and the launching of armed struggle. In Britain living standards were still rising steadily and there was an apparently eternal Tory government. The AAM turned naturally to the traditional institutions of British political life: the parliamentary parties (especially the Labour and Liberal parties), the churches and the trade unions. It sought to educate these elements on the reality of apartheid and persuade them to take action against it. But as political conditions began to change both in South Africa and Britain, the AAM failed to change its approach.

THE AAM AND THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT

In 1964 Labour came to power after 13 years of Tory government. Great things were expected of the Labour government. In 1963 Harold Wilson, as leader of the Opposition, appeared on an AAM platform and pledged the Labour Party to oppose apartheid. *AA News* was optimistic:

'At last there exists in England today a Government whose leaders have spoken frequently and boldly on the question of Apartheid. The way is wide open for Britain to initiate action which could destroy the very foundations of the Apartheid state.' (*AA News*, January 1965).

Unfortunately, this optimism was quickly proved to be unfounded. Far from destroying the 'very foundations of the Apartheid state' the Labour government was its firmest international ally.

- In 1964 it introduced an arms embargo but refused to exclude substantial contracts already signed and took no action to ensure that the embargo was effective. The subsequent 1974-79 Labour government *vetoed* a UN resolution for a mandatory arms embargo.
- From 1965 to 1970 it compromised with the illegal racist Smith regime; connived at the breaking of sanctions against Rhodesia; threatened to veto any mandatory resolution in the UN Security Council; refused to take decisive action in support of black majority rule in Zimbabwe.
- In 1965 the Labour Junior Minister for Trade, Lord Rhodes, declared: 'We are proud of our trade with South Africa. Make no mistake about that.' By 1967 British companies' investment in South Africa had almost doubled from £28 million a year (1961-66) to £53 million a year (1967-69) reaching a new record of £70 million in 1969. No wonder that Anthony Crosland wrote: 'Our concern to . . . avoid any economic confrontation with South Africa has been repeatedly made clear in Parliament and the UN.'

Having placed its faith in the Labour government, how did the AAM react as the truth became clear? It carried on in the old way as though nothing had changed. It issued appeals; called for action; held meetings with government officials and organised its usual demonstrations. Yet members of this treacherous Labour government were actually members of the AAM.

In May 1967 the AAM National Committee (NC) passed a resolution condemning a British naval visit to South Africa and calling on members of the Labour government who were also members of the AAM to resign either from the government or from the AAM. By July, following press publicity, the AAM NC abandoned its own resolution claiming that it had been 'misinterpreted' and passed a new one noting:

'that the ministers have not resigned and welcomes this affirmation of their support for the cause of the Anti-Apartheid Movement.' (*AA News*, July 1967)

One of these ministers was David Ennals who had been President of the AAM up to September 1966. By 1968 the AAM was obliged to issue an open letter calling on David Ennals to reconsider his position in the AAM. For the ex-President of the AAM was, as Joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Office, responsible for piloting the racist Commonwealth Immigrants Act through Parliament. The Labour government's unstinting support for apartheid in South Africa was complemented by its unremitting racism at home. Although the 1967 AGM adopted a resolution to 'consider racial discrimination in Britain as a basis for enlisting support amongst immigrant groups' (*AA News*, November 1967) nothing was done to unite the growing disillusion of the black community with the struggle against apartheid. To have done this would mean a direct political challenge to a Labour government which was racist at home and abroad.

STOP THE SEVENTY TOUR

The only effective mass campaign in this period – indeed in the whole history of the AAM – emerged independently of, and despite opposition from the AAM. This was the Stop the Seventy Tour Campaign (STST) set up in August 1969 by Peter Hain (then a Young Liberal, now in the Labour Party), Dennis Brutus (President of SANROC) and Hugh Geach (Chair Reading Joint Anti-Apartheid Committee). In 1969 the MCC invited a Springbok cricket team to tour Britain the following year. A Springbok rugby team was also due to tour Britain from November 1969. In his book on the campaign, Peter Hain writes:

'It was also clear that the representatives of the Anti-Apartheid Movement did not really want a new group formed at all, even one concerned specifically with the tour.' (p120, all quotes from Peter Hain, *Don't Play with Apartheid*, 1971)

A circular was issued announcing the formation of STST and provoked:

'... a great deal of pressure exerted by some people in the Anti-Apartheid Movement on Dennis Brutus and Hugh Geach to try to get them to scrap the idea of the co-ordinating committee.' (p121)

Hain further reveals that only at the last minute was the AAM persuaded to attend the STST founding press conference on 12 September 1969 (p122).

STST was so massively successful that the AAM was forced to back it.

STST organised large militant demonstrations against the Springbok rugby tour. Thousands of people previously uninvolved in anti-apartheid activity joined the campaign. From November 1969 to January 1970, the racist Springbok team was harassed at every turn. The campaign involved mass demonstrations; pickets; organised disruption of matches; sit-down occupations and even sabotage of pitches (in January 1970 on one night 14 cricket grounds were raided simultaneously). Hundreds were arrested. Many demonstrators were violently attacked by both police and white racist vigilantes. By the end of the rugby tour the Springboks could only play behind barbed wire and massed ranks of police. STST made the issue of apartheid a mass issue throughout Britain and succeeded in forcing the Labour government into 'persuading' the MCC to cancel the 1970 cricket tour. This was the first time that the Labour government had been forced to take action.

Hain describes the kind of movement that gained this victory:

'The STST movement, with its uncompromising strategy and fresh approach, captured the imagination of a tremendous number of people. At one end of the spectrum, support came from radicals and militants who had not previously been associated with the anti-apartheid campaign because of its more cautious approach up to this point; and, at the other end, from people old and young, some politically committed, but the majority of whom had not been involved in any campaign before.

'...the movement as a national whole was extremely democratic and idealistically attractive. The local and regional groups were only restricted in their autonomy by the specific aim of the campaign ...

'The fact that STST was militant yet flexible also helped the unity of the movement ...' (p196)

Hain concludes:

'We had injected new life into the anti-apartheid campaign and into the general anti-racist movement in Britain. But, above all, we had done the unthinkable thing of actually winning.' (p204)

Following the end of the STST campaign, the AAM quickly returned to its normal routine as a pressure group. It failed to learn from the experience of the STST campaign. This was a period when young people throughout Europe, especially students, were in revolt against a system they saw to be racist, oppressive and imperialist. The heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people against US imperialism had fired the imagination of people throughout the world. In Ireland the nationalist people of the Six Counties had risen up against British imperialism and the Labour government had sent British troops to Ireland to quell the revolt. In Britain the crisis was

making its first impact and unemployment had begun its inexorable rise. Political conditions had changed dramatically. Enthusiasm for the Labour government had turned to bitter disillusionment. Yet the AAM refused to change its course and reach out to these new forces in an effort to build a united broad 'militant yet flexible' campaign against British collaboration with the apartheid regime. Vietnam, Ireland, the student revolt merited no mention at all in the pages of *AA News*. The AAM carried on appealing to a Labour government deaf to its appeals. The opportunity passed it by. By 1984 when the police attempted to ban protests outside South Africa House, the AAM not only refused to take any action other than negotiations with the police and representations to the government, but went so far as to condemn the South African Embassy Picket Campaign for challenging the ban. City AA, for its part in achieving 'the unthinkable thing of actually winning' (defeating the ban), was hounded out of the AAM.

Efforts were made to persuade the AAM to change course, to adapt to the new conditions and new possibilities. At the 1967 AGM Young Liberals and others argued for the adoption of direct action tactics but were defeated in favour of the 'tried and tested techniques' of pressure group tactics (*AA News*, November 1967). In May 1969 Peter Hellyer argued, in *AA News*, for a new direction to revitalise the AAM and for the organised use of direct action. A reply to Hellyer in September 1969 is revealing of the AAM's standpoint. It argued for concentration on the British labour movement but emphasised that demands made on trade unionists should be 'realistic'. The writer explained:

'... it is pointless at present to appeal to dockers in, say, Southampton, or Tilbury, to "black" all South African fruit cargoes... because this type of work is one of the better parts of an unpleasant, dangerous and badly paid job. However, if research shows that we import any South African asbestos or lamp black, then an appeal to boycott these cargoes may well be successful, as handling these materials is highly unpleasant and dangerous, with a strong risk of contracting serious lung disease.' (*AA News*, September 1969)

Even the boycott campaign, the main reason for the formation of the AAM in 1959, was to be limited to demands that did not threaten the immediate self-interest of British trade unionists. The AAM had turned its face against mounting serious pressure on the Labour government, so likewise, it turned its face against mounting serious pressure on the British trade union movement. At the same time it refused to reach out to other forces to build a campaign which would also have drawn in its wake sections of the organised Labour and trade union movement.

SOWETO

Having failed to seize the opportunity in the late 60s/early 70s, the AAM was incapable of responding seriously when the black masses in South Africa erupted with the Soweto uprising in 1976. It stuck rigidly to its reliance on the 'tried and tested techniques' which had so clearly failed in the past. In South Africa thousands were killed and injured. Independent non-racial trade unions were being formed, the workers were striking against apartheid and the military struggle against apartheid reached new heights. Labour, once more in power, stood by and watched as the racist regime slaughtered black youth. Once again Labour proved to be racist South Africa's ally. The Labour government supported South Africa's request for an IMF loan in 1976. By the end of 1977 South Africa had borrowed \$464 million. In 1976 Labour allowed Marconi to export a multi-million pound communications system to the South African Armaments Board; refused to direct the newly-nationalised British Leyland to recognise black workers' unions in its South African factories; and vetoed a UN resolution for a mandatory arms embargo. By 1977 Labour had used its UN Security Council veto four times – every time in favour of apartheid South Africa. At home the Labour government abandoned its pledge to repeal the 1971 Immigration Act. It steadfastly implemented this racist legislation throughout its period of office. The story of 1964-70 was being repeated – the Labour government was racist at home and abroad.

Yet the AAM continued to restrict all its activities to pressure group tactics as though the Labour government could be made to change course by persuasion. The revolutionary character of the South African liberation struggle and its consequences for British imperialism were recognised by the Labour government. This is why it supported the apartheid regime: to protect British profiteering. The AAM failed to reach out to the growing ranks of the unemployed or to the black people suffering under the racist immigration laws or to Irish people suffering under the racist anti-Irish Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). Instead it continued to place its faith in persuading the organised Labour and trade union movement to act against the apartheid regime. As before, its appeals fell on deaf ears.

ZIMBABWE

The same dismal story was to be repeated in 1979-80 when the long and bloody liberation struggle in Zimbabwe was coming to an end. Throughout the period of the Lancaster House talks in London only one pitifully small national demonstration of 3,000 took place. The Thatcher government was able to manoeuvre against the Patriotic Front without fear of any significant

opposition at home. The AAM's continued refusal to adapt to new conditions and new possibilities, to seek to engage the support of the unemployed, black people, Irish people and others who had nothing to gain from apartheid, meant that it could not offer the Patriotic Front effective support in this crucial period.

THE AAM TODAY

By 1984 the Thatcher government was confident enough to extend the anti-Irish PTA to cover all liberation movements – including those of Southern Africa. It also organised the first visit of a South African Prime Minister to Britain for 25 years. The AAM's response to both events was of a piece with its past record. Instead of fighting the PTA as a threat to *all* forces opposed to imperialism and working for unity with others threatened by it, the AAM pleaded for the liberation movements *it* supports to be exempted, calling for an assurance that:

'... the powers in the Bill will not apply to perfectly legitimate activities of the OAU recognised liberation movements based in Britain.'

This response was not only sectarian in relation to liberation movements not recognised by the OAU (eg the Republican movement in Ireland, Central American liberation movements and others) but was also doomed to fail. An appeal for all to unite against the PTA might have found a response. The sectarian go-it-alone leave-us-out attitude of the AAM simply provoked disgust.

For the Botha visit the AAM issued protests and organised delegations as usual. It did organise a national demonstration of 30,000 on 2 June 1984: the largest demonstration it had ever organised. The demonstration revealed widespread anger against Botha's visit. Black people in particular were outraged by the visit of a man responsible for mass murder against their black brothers and sisters in South Africa. They saw the fight against apartheid as part of their own struggle against racism. Yet the AAM has done nothing to bring these forces into its ranks.

AAM: SECTARIAN AT HOME...

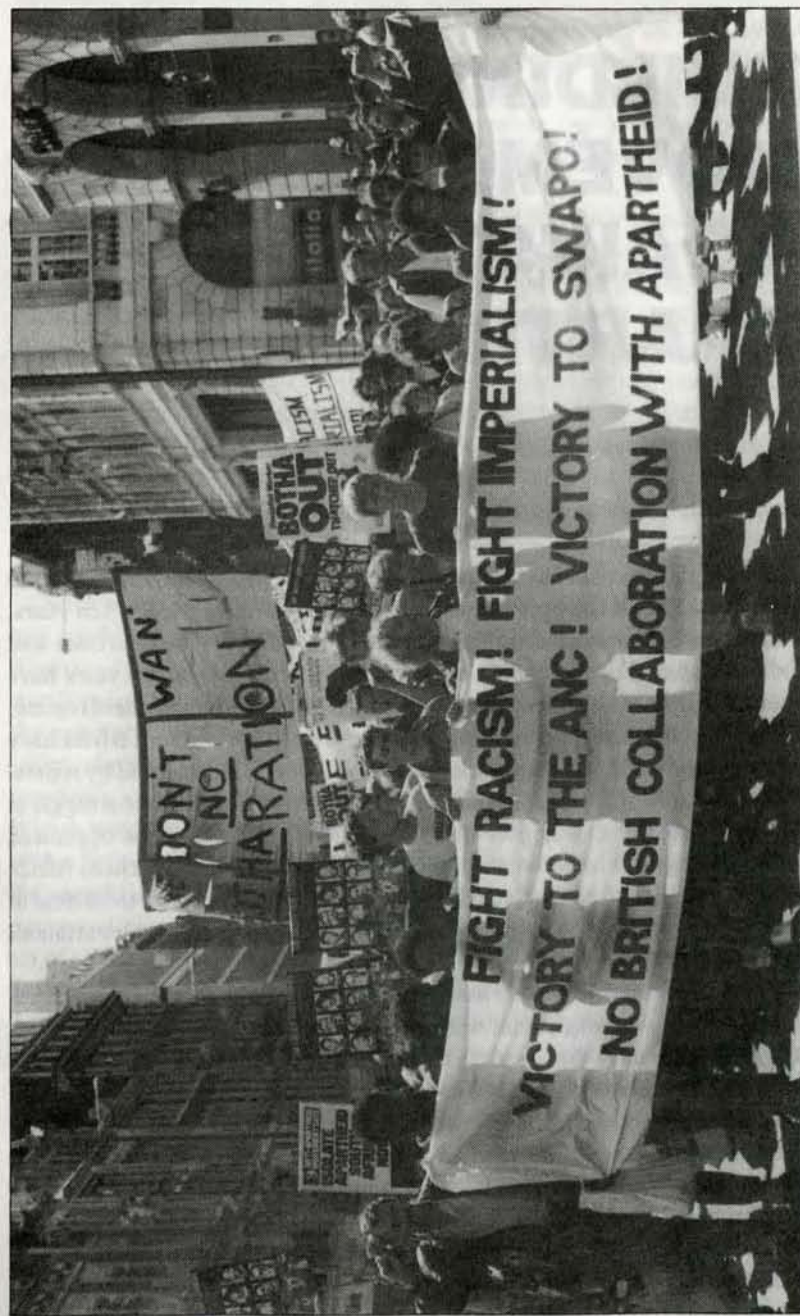
The history of the AAM reveals an increasingly sectarian refusal to adopt flexible and imaginative tactics aimed at attracting the active support of all those prepared to campaign against apartheid and British collaboration. It refuses to accept the evidence of its own history that the behind-the-scenes pressure group tactics of persuasion, education and delegations are not sufficient to undermine British support for apartheid. It greets all attempts to introduce alternative methods and approaches into the anti-apartheid

movement with sectarian hostility. Campaigning to win the support of the oppressed sections of British class society is seen as a threat to its strategy of relying on the organised Labour and trade union movement. It refuses to recognise that the liberation struggle in South Africa is a direct threat to British imperialism and that the victory of the revolutionary forces in South Africa will be a crippling blow to the British ruling class and all those in Britain whose social, political and material privileges are based on British profiteering in South Africa. It is this reality that explains why successive Labour governments have supported apartheid. It also explains why the trade union leadership can pass resolutions against apartheid yet allow reactionaries like Bill Sirs (ISTC) to visit South Africa in defiance of the wishes of the liberation movement – the same Bill Sirs who actively scabbed on the NUM during the 1984-5 miners' strike. The AAM's sectarian refusal to open its movement to all forces opposed to apartheid obstructs the building of a genuinely broad and effective anti-apartheid movement in Britain.

... AND ABROAD

The AAM's sectarian attitude to campaigning in Britain is matched by its sectarian attitude to the liberation movements in Southern Africa. Despite its constitutional commitment to support *all* liberation movements in Southern Africa, the AAM refuses to give solidarity to the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), AZAPO and other organisations in South Africa. For many years during the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe the AAM ignored or played down the role of ZANU. A guide to liberation movements in *AA News* in October 1969 was typical. This 'guide' makes only passing reference to ZANU and the PAC merits only one mention for being banned at the same time as the ANC after the Sharpeville massacre. The fact that the Sharpeville demonstration was called by the PAC is not mentioned. The AAM's refusal accurately to reflect ZANU's role was particularly glaring. ZANU's central contribution to the liberation of Zimbabwe was confirmed when it won a landslide victory in the 1980 election.

Not content with picking and choosing who can be allowed to join the AAM in Britain, the AAM also picks and chooses who can be recognised amongst the liberation movements in Southern Africa. Its sectarianism on both fronts has to be fought if a broad effective anti-apartheid movement is to be built in Britain.



PCG on the march, 2 June 1984

BUILDING A MASS MOVEMENT AGAINST APARTHEID

The imperialist crisis has sharpened the struggle for freedom both in the imperialist and in the oppressed nations of the world in the last ten years. The world is clearly divided between the rich and poor, the oppressor and the oppressed. For the people of Southern Africa, the last ten years have been characterised by harsh and bitter struggle against the apartheid regime. That struggle is now at crisis point. The oppressed in Southern Africa have heroically proved their determination and will not be intimidated by repression or bought off by the promise of phoney reforms. But their struggle is not an isolated one. It is part and parcel of the struggles of the oppressed worldwide against imperialism and racism. The peoples of Southern Africa are at the sharp end of the struggle which will end not only with the defeat of apartheid, but with the final obliteration of oppression and exploitation all over the world.

In Britain, the last decade has been marked by growing poverty and repression for many people who were expecting a secure and relatively privileged future in one of the world's richest countries. In the last five years, the divisions between rich and poor, employed and unemployed, black and white, have deepened as the British ruling class has tried to defend its interests at the expense of the British working class. Britain is now a divided nation both economically, socially and politically. The effects of the imperialist crisis have been manifested at every level of political life.

Perhaps the most revealing aspect of this major crisis for the imperialist system is that the growing numbers of jobless and oppressed in Britain have no political representation amongst the major political parties. As the

oppressed have expressed their anger against growing poverty and oppression – from the 1981 uprisings of black youth to the miners' strike of 1984-5 – so every major political party has distanced itself from their struggles. The Labour Party leadership's scabbing attacks on the striking miners, and most recently on school students acting against the YTS cheap labour system, have paved the way for the Thatcher government's wholesale attack on democratic rights and freedoms in Britain.

The pattern of corruption and betrayal by Britain's labour leaders is nothing new. As we have shown, successive Labour governments have in practice supported the apartheid regime. In the post war period, the British Labour Party, in or out of power, has systematically scabbed on the struggles of the oppressed – most significantly in Ireland over the last 16 years. It was in the north of Ireland that British imperialism practised and refined its strategy for repressing any opposition to its rule, with the help, or at best the total indifference, of the British labour movement. The last five years has seen the extension of that repression to Britain itself in order to deal with growing opposition to unemployment, racism, police repression, cuts in health, education and social services, in British imperialism's own backyard.

Such a significant shift in economic and social conditions in Britain has had profound effects at all levels of political life, including in the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Britain. From the standpoint of prosperous post-war Britain, liberal opposition to apartheid barbarity was a charitable act by the privileged in sympathy with the oppressed. This was the relationship which circumscribed the activities of the AAM in its formative period – a campaign to extend democracy and equality (supposedly enshrined in the British way of life) to the black people of South Africa – necessarily tinged with a little guilt at the leading role Britain has always played in sustaining the apartheid regime. But the 1980s has seen the growing involvement of oppressed people in Britain in the movement against apartheid, not as an act of charity or humanitarianism, but in recognition of a common struggle against a common enemy – imperialism. Whole sections of the British population now know that what is enshrined in the British way of life is not democracy and equality, but racism, oppression and exploitation of British people and oppressed people all over the world. It is not surprising that these forces have a very different view of what the movement in solidarity with the people of Southern Africa should be doing and how it should do it.

The present disputes in the AAM are a result of this conflict of interests. They have been most sharply demonstrated around the activities of City of London Anti-Apartheid Group. In particular, within that dispute, the RCG and supporters of its paper *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* have been accused by the AAM leadership of using City Group and the Kitson

family to undermine the AAM for 'splitting and wrecking' purposes. This is a familiar theme used by anti-communists to attack communists. It was precisely the same formula used to attack South African communists' involvement in the liberation movement in the 1950s. But no organisation, communist or otherwise can invent or create social forces or real political conflicts. If the anti-imperialist trend, of which City Group is a part, represented only the RCG and its political line, then it would long since have been destroyed by the AAM leadership's manoeuvres – in the same way that this leadership has destroyed all political opposition in the past. That City Group has continued to exist and grow in influence, is a measure of the fact that it is part of a growing social force in British political life which first of all is forced to do battle with an old movement which has ceased to represent progress.

THE NON-STOP PICKET

City of London Anti-Apartheid Group was formed in February 1982 following a short campaign to release Steven Kitson who had been detained by the apartheid regime during a visit to his father, David Kitson, a political prisoner in South Africa. What marked the campaign was not only its success in securing Steven's release within a matter of days, but also the lengths to which leading political figures in the AAM were prepared to go to prevent the campaign from growing or taking on any permanent character. Ken Gill, AUEW/TASS leader and CPGB opposition member, even took it on himself to attend a meeting of the campaign to argue that it should press for Steven's release through official political channels and end it as soon as possible. Others in his entourage argued that the campaign should be pursued through the long-established TASS Kitson Committee. Following Steven Kitson's release, City of London Anti-Apartheid Group was formed and affiliated as a local group of the Anti-Apartheid Movement.

In August 1982, City Group began a major campaign for the release of political prisoners in apartheid gaols, and in particular to secure better conditions for David Kitson and his comrades who were being held in the condemned section of Pretoria Central gaol which had no facilities for long-term prisoners. News had reached David Kitson's family in London that his health was very poor as a result of the cold and damp. Protests to the British Foreign Office by the family and the TASS Kitson Committee had failed to achieve any results, so City Group and the Kitson family began a non-stop picket outside the South African Embassy.

The response to the picket was remarkable. On the one hand, young people, many unemployed and black, flocked to join the picket and learned for the first time about apartheid in South Africa. They became the

mainstay of the picket and were determined to keep it going until victory. The picket probably represented the broadest spectrum of political opinion ever brought together on an anti-apartheid activity – with support from as far apart as Denis Healey and Irish prisoners of war in English gaols. Political parties from the left to the Liberal Party, trade unions, gay groups, black groups all joined in the events which attracted hundreds of people. A 450-strong rally held on 4 October included on its platform Bob Hughes MP (AAM Chair), Reg Race MP, Frank Dobson MP, Stanley Clinton-Davies MP, Vanessa Redgrave (WRP), Gerry Pocock (CPGB), David Reed (RCG), Jake Ecclestone from the NUJ and George Jerrom of the NGA. In short the non-stop picket – which lasted for 86 days and ended only with the move of the prisoners to better conditions – was a remarkable political event which drew many new forces to support the anti-apartheid struggle and united broad forces – old and new.

From the start the picket demonstrated an uncompromising attitude to the police who arrested 10 picketers at various times for obstruction, even though the arrangements for the picket had been agreed with them in advance. All but one of those charged were acquitted and the non-stop picket ensured that all those arrested were defended.

Yet even as the picket was growing from strength to strength with the unstinting support of young people, rumours were being circulated by its critics. Most serious of all was the charge (never made openly until Seumas Milne repeated it in *The Guardian* in October 1984 and again in March 1985) that the picket was called to support white prisoners, and detracted from the conditions of black prisoners. This was the grossest hypocrisy, when the AAM, through South Africa the Imprisoned Society (SATIS) and the TASS Kitson Committee had featured the imprisonment of David Kitson in *Anti-Apartheid News* over many years. Other more bizarre rumours were spread that the picketers were hired drug addicts and 'unruly' elements.

One thing is certain, whilst the AAM leadership stated both before and during the picket that it supported the activity, it excused itself from any practical assistance on the grounds of 'pressure of work'. It is only since the dispute between City Group and the AAM leadership reached crisis point in 1984, that the AAM leadership has claimed to have had 'reservations'. According to Milne (*The Guardian* 23 March 1985) the AAM leadership 'felt that it was wrong to concentrate on the plight of one white prisoner.' Such a campaign, they thought, 'risked diverting attention from ANC members facing execution'. Had the Anti-Apartheid Movement issued a call to all local groups and members calling on them to concentrate only on the issue of the condemned prisoners, this 'risk' of diversion would have been understandable. But in fact no such thing happened. In hindsight the

AAM has only accused one campaign of being diversionary – the non-stop picket – even though many other campaigns were running at the same time. The AAM itself launched a new campaign to free Nelson Mandela and all South African and Namibian political prisoners on 10 October 1982 with a sponsored cycle ride. This was not considered diversionary.

The inclusion of the phrase ‘one white prisoner’ is central to the AAM’s accusations. No-one who joined the non-stop picket had any doubts that the major concern was the condition of all political prisoners in apartheid gaols. It was through their involvement in the non-stop picket that they first learned about apartheid and the imprisonment of the leaders and freedom fighters of the liberation movement, most of whom are black. The picket was staunchly anti-racist, which is more than can be said of the rumour-mongers. The AAM leadership did not dare make this criticism at the time to the people involved in the picket – but were willing to cast a slur on City Group supporters two years later through the auspices of *The Guardian*. No acknowledgement has come from these cowards, that since his release in May 1984 after 20 years in gaol, David Kitson has confirmed that his health was seriously threatened by the prison conditions and that the picket outside South Africa House, alongside the prisoners’ own struggle, forced the regime to move them to better conditions.

When the picket ended in November 1982, City Group had grown to over 100 members and pledged to continue the pickets outside South Africa House every Friday in support of prisoners in apartheid gaols. Those pickets are still taking place every Friday with an average attendance of over a hundred.

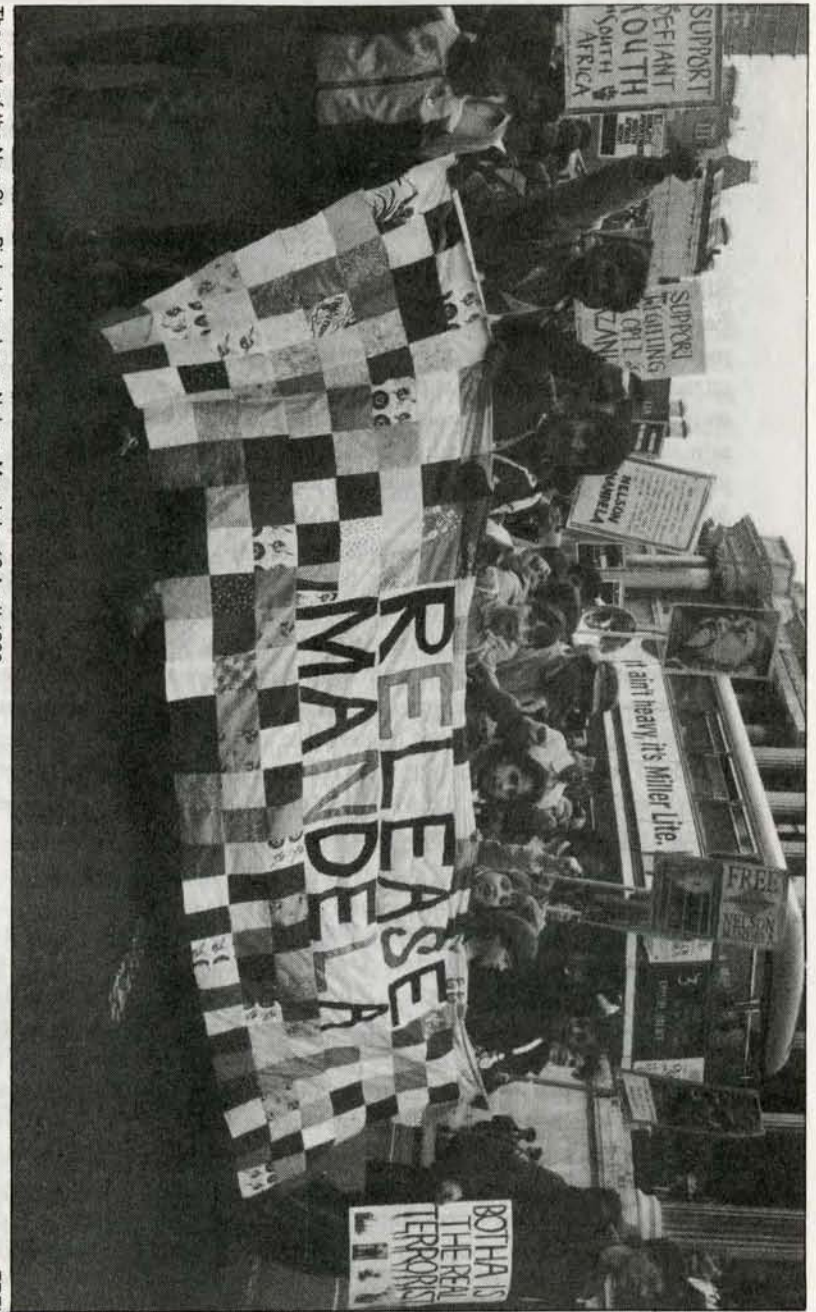
The AAM leadership were determined to play down the success of the picket. Scant coverage was given in *Anti-Apartheid News* and, given their later attacks, there can be little doubt that the AAM leadership perceived the picket as a threat to their own ‘tried and tested’ methods. On the other hand the young people who had supported the picket day and night, in the cold and wet, felt that the AAM was deliberately ignoring and sabotaging their work. It was no surprise that, after 86 days ending in a victory, they felt that the AAM’s traditional methods were ‘tried’, ‘tested’ and failed. Now was the time for militant campaigning against apartheid.

CAMPAIGNING AGAINST APARTHEID

If the AAM leadership breathed a sigh of relief when the 86 day picket ended, then they were too hasty. Out of it emerged a much stronger group, composed of forces which the AAM had consistently ignored – the young, the unemployed, black and oppressed. City Group was determined to continue its campaign on the streets, involving the general public in solidarity

The start of the Non-Stop Picket to release Nelson Mandela, 19 April 1986

FRFI



with the liberation forces in South Africa and Namibia. The Anti-Apartheid Movement with its 'pressure group' methods, did not require such open campaigning about British imperialism's support for apartheid – local group activity had always had a secondary place in the movement's work compared with the focus on pressuring the government, Labour Party and the trade unions. The conflict between an 'over-active' local group and the movement's leadership steadily grew over the next two years.

Silent pickets

For many years, the AAM had held pickets outside the embassy, not on a regular basis but in response to particular events. Some of these pickets attracted large numbers but the character of the pickets varied little. There were no speeches and very little chanting or attempts to organise. After the non-stop picket had ended, City Group supporters attended the AAM weekly pickets called to campaign against the death sentences imposed on 3 South African freedom fighters – the Moroka Three. Their presence was met with great hostility because they had a totally different notion of picketing. The AAM's justification for this hostility was at best spurious – the pickets were intended to be silent, they argued. Yet none of the pickets were silent. On the contrary the routine was to stand on the pavement chatting to neighbours, never attempting to make the Embassy aware of the protests or to engage passers-by. The non-stop picket had set very different standards. The Embassy was so aware of its presence and the support it received, that it lodged protests with the Foreign Office and the police to try to get rid of this thorn in its side. For the AAM leadership, City Group's activities were bringing the movement into 'disrepute'.

Political censorship

The other criticism vouchsafed by the AAM leadership was over the sale of political newspapers – only *Anti-Apartheid News* should be sold on pickets to avoid confusion, they argued. There was no doubt whatsoever that this was aimed at stopping sales of *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* newspaper of the RCG. In fact the *Morning Star*, paper of the Communist Party of Great Britain, had been sold regularly on Embassy pickets for years and the AAM had not batted an eyelid. But when it came to a newspaper which gives consistent support to the liberation struggle in Ireland, then the AAM brought all its arguments about 'single issue' campaigns into action.

In any political movement composed of broad forces, the issue of democracy is central. City Group had discussed this question early in its existence and decided that no censorship should operate – all political groups involved would be free to distribute their literature and make speeches on pickets. City Group's pickets have since become major political forums on

the streets of London, uniting forces as widespread as Labour MPs, trade unions, left groups, student, gay, black and anti-imperialist forces. Unlike the AAM, where its affiliates (with a few notable exceptions) have little say in the movement, City Group has made sure that its structure and activities are completely open in character. Once again the methods of City Group and the AAM leadership were in opposition.

British police – racist police!

Over the two years following the non-stop picket, the police attempted to enforce more and more restrictions on Embassy pickets and persistently harassed City Group supporters. Nine people, three of them black and amongst them City Group members, were arrested on 8 June 1983 at the 24 hour picket called by SATIS immediately before the death sentence was carried out on the Moroka Three on 9 June. From the start the police were determined on confrontation. They divided the picket in two, completely surrounded the picketers, objected to the mock gallows, and then began a series of arrests. The nine arrested were held in police custody overnight and the three women were strip-searched.

The AAM leadership refused to support the Trafalgar Nine defence campaign which followed and which was sponsored by 9 MPs, 20 local councillors and numerous trade union branches, anti-racist and anti-imperialist groups. In December 1983 eight of the nine were found *not guilty* by the British courts, despite the fact that the AAM had unofficially decided that they were not worthy of support and certainly guilty, once again, of bringing the movement into 'disrepute'.

In another series of police attacks, four black youth were charged and acquitted of threatening behaviour. The police had even considered charges against two of them under the PTA for wearing of 'political uniforms' because all three were wearing khaki jackets and blue jeans. In February 1984 one of City Group's secretaries was arrested in Charing Cross tube station after a picket, ostensibly for vagrancy, and later charged with assaulting a police officer. Even the magistrate regarded the police action as 'bloody ridiculous' and threw out the charges.

FIGHTING APARTHEID

Over the first three years, the AAM leadership also tried to criticise City Group for *only* picketing the Embassy. City Group's own statement of its activities during 1983/4 answers this point:

'During the Anti-Apartheid Movement March Month of Action in 1984, City Group organised a Call to Action Conference where Ken Livingstone was one of the speakers, and a local demonstration from

Hackney to Trafalgar Square, as well as pickets of Barclays Bank headquarters in the City of London and GEC Marconi.

City Group, through its activities, was responsible for collecting thousands of signatures on the petition to release Nelson Mandela.

We have also organised pickets of *The Guardian*, for its series of South African lying adverts about apartheid: the *Daily Mail* for its sponsorship of Zola Budd, the South African athlete who gained British citizenship in ten days when black Commonwealth citizens have to wait years and are often refused entry; the *Daily Mirror* for accepting South African adverts for miners during the miners' strike, which covered up the barbaric working conditions for black miners. City Group regularly pickets Barclays banks in central London because of Barclays' role in the oppression of black people in Southern Africa. We have also supported many events calling for freedom in Namibia and raised funds for SWAPO.

Most recently we have picketed and occupied South African Airways offices at Oxford Circus in support of the AAM's renewed Boycott Campaign and calling for the release of the UDF treason trialists. City Group has also given total support to the Dunnes Stores strikers in Dublin who were sacked for refusing to handle South African goods. The strikers came to London at the invitation of City Group, spoke at a major rally of 250 people in December 1984 and met GLC leaders at County Hall. In January 1985 City Group organised a trip to Dublin, where we joined Dunnes strikers on the picket line.'

SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY PICKET CAMPAIGN

The crisis in relations between City Group and the AAM came to a head in the summer of 1984 when the police decided to impose a complete ban on pickets on the pavement outside the Embassy. Despite the fact that there was considerable evidence to show that the police campaign against the pickets was motivated by complaints from the Embassy, the AAM leadership was tacitly on the side of the police and certainly blamed the arrests which followed on City Group. Just before South African Prime Minister Botha's visit to Britain on 2 June, a voluntary helper at the AAM national office threw paint over the front of the Embassy, and a group of NUM members deposited coal on the doorstep in protest at the import of South African coal. Together with the Libyan Embassy siege, the police used these events as an excuse to ban the pickets from 8 June onwards.

City Group's supporters were determined that the police should not be allowed to get away with the ban, which was the logical conclusion of the campaign of police harassment which had gone before. There was in fact only one way to defeat the ban – an open political campaign involving broad



Arrest during the South African Embassy Picket Campaign, 21 July 1984

Paul Mattsson

forces in the fight to preserve democratic rights in Britain and in opposition to British collaboration with apartheid.

The South African Embassy Picket Campaign (SAEPC) took place in a wider political context. The imperialists thought that the policy of 'constructive engagement' with apartheid was going to bear fruit following the Nkomati Accord. Botha had embarked on a much publicised tour of Europe and the regime expected that the constitutional elections to be held at the end of August 1984 would successfully head-off South Africa's deepening political crisis. The British police seized on the opportunity to gain an upper-hand outside the Embassy.

Political divisions had also been exposed in the British labour movement with the miners' strike into its fourth month. The Labour Party leadership was most anxious to distance itself from the violence on the miners' picket line, much preferring compromise with both the NCB and Thatcher. These political divisions, between the striking miners and the Labour leadership over issues which are still to the fore in the working class movement in Britain, were reflected in the divisions between City Group and the AAM leadership. City Group was determined that there should be no compromise with Britain's racist police. The AAM leadership were more anxious to ensure that the forces which City Group represented should be defeated, than to preserve the right to picket outside the embassy.

The South African Embassy Picket Campaign was formed by City Group and its supporters in alliance with much wider forces who were determined to preserve democratic rights in the face of attack. Over the eight weeks of the campaign there were 161 arrests including three MPs and five local councillors. The Friday night pickets attracted up to 300 supporters, and the arrests were followed by police station pickets which lasted until the picketers were released. Richard Balfé MEP said that 'City of London Anti-Apartheid Group has added a whole new dimension to anti-apartheid work, and they have put the Anti-Apartheid Movement back into the public eye.' The campaign ended in victory in the courts on 1 August 1984 when the magistrate at Bow Street found the test case, Richard Roques, not guilty of wilfully obstructing the police in their attempts to 'prevent a breach of the dignity of the embassy'. Charges were then dropped against the 135 others who had been arrested and the five who had been imprisoned for a week for breach of bail conditions. For the third time in its two year history City Group had been centrally involved in a major campaign uniting broad forces in the struggle against apartheid, and the Anti-Apartheid Movement had been keener than ever to ensure that it failed.

Soon after the campaign had started, and just at the time when five of the picketers went to prison, the AAM Executive issued a statement calling on its members and supporters not to take part:

'The AAM EC does not support their [the SAEPC] approach, believes that it damages the prospects of a removal of the ban, and therefore asks its members and supporters not to participate in this campaign.'

At every point, just like Neil Kinnock on the miners, the AAM Executive did all they could to distance themselves from the Campaign. They even admitted as much to the police. Part of Commander Howlett's (the police officer responsible for the ban) statement of evidence to the court consisted of the following:

'I met, at my request, in my office, Mr Mike Terry and Miss Cate Clarke of the Anti-Apartheid Movement. I explained the change in police policy and the reasons for it to them. A note of the meeting has been kept by the police. Mr Terry expressed their opposition to the change and indicated that steps to alter that policy would be taken and *that his organisation intended that those steps should be legal as his movement did not seek confrontation.*' (our emphasis)

The only possible reason for the last part of this statement was to draw the distinction between that AAM leadership's secret back-door methods and City Group's supposed policy of confrontation. Far better to make a concession to the police than be associated in any way with the forces associated with the SAEPC. So after Mike Terry and Cate Clarke had made it clear to the police that they were opposed to the SAEPC, the police moved quickly to call a meeting with Campaign representatives to advise that 'other organisations were seeking to change the ban through "political pressure" rather than direct action' and to urge the SAEPC to do the same. The AAM did not once issue a public statement condemning the police for their collaboration with apartheid, but instead pursued a policy of meetings, including with the Assistant Commissioner, which got them precisely nowhere. At the AAM Annual General Meeting later in the year, Bob Hughes, Labour MP and AAM Chair, in one breath accused the SAEPC of deliberate confrontation in order to sabotage the AAM's negotiations with the police and criticised the picketers for using the courts which he had always believed were instruments of class justice! There were no holds barred in the fight to destroy City Group.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Instead of recognising that the conclusive victory of the SAEPC was a result of its open campaigning and involvement of broad forces, the AAM chose to move immediately to destroy City Group completely. In September 1984, the Executive summoned City Group officers to a meeting where they demanded assurances intended to cripple City Group's work and

disperse its members. In future, the EC demanded, City Group should only operate within the City of London (1 square mile), that they should only recruit members from those who lived or worked in this area and that they should close down the SAEPC. The South African Embassy where City Group had won major victories would be outside its designated area. The EC's stated justification for this crackdown was that they did not believe that 'City AA group is functioning as a normal group of the AA'.

Whilst the Executive were unwilling to confront the British police, they had no hesitation about confronting City Group. To ensure that the questions were openly debated within the whole AAM and that the Executive was not able to secretly dispose of City Group, motions were put forward to the AGM deploring the Executive's treatment of the SAEPC and City Group organised to ensure that its supporters were present. Other motions were put forward recognising the fact that the struggle against racism in Britain is inseparable from the struggle against apartheid, and calling for the AAM to organise on this basis. City Group proposed 13 candidates for the National Committee: the Kitson family, all staunch fighters against apartheid; 3 RCG members and 3 City Group members, who were prominent in City Group's campaigning work; the 3 MPs and a local councillor who had defied the police ban outside the Embassy.

Central to the AAM Executive's attack on City Group was the involvement of the RCG both in City Group work and the leading role it had played in the SAEPC. To deal with this the AAM Executive called in reinforcements in the shape of Fleet Street, and days before the AGM unleashed its own version of the 'red scare'. The nomination of 13 people to the National Committee of more than 30 members became a 'takeover bid' (*The Guardian*), an 'improbable City takeover bid' (*The Times*), and a 'bid to head Anti-Apartheid campaign' (*Morning Star*) masterminded by the Revolutionary Communist Group. The AAM leadership was up against an 'ultra-left sect' (*The Guardian*), 'ultra-left elements' (*Morning Star*) and the 'heady rhetoric' of a group which 'support uncritically the IRA' and 'influence no one in the broad Labour movement' (*The Times*).

The Times accused City Group of attracting support from 'minorities' – women, blacks, gays, youth and 'now the miners'. Undoubtedly the majority of the population. Whereas the *Morning Star* tried to frighten its readers into believing that we were trying to narrow the base of the movement. In a red scare you can't win. And if you were still not convinced *The Guardian* warned that 'two hundred new members have been signed up by City Group this week. All will be able to attend the AGM and vote'. All this was an underhand appeal to the AAM's own inactive following.

The 'red scare' had the desired effect. The AGM had more than double the normal numbers present – over 600. By carefully fixing the debate

agenda and making sure the main debate took place in the morning the AAM leadership was able to pack the hall and win the crucial vote on the SAEPC, as well as getting its own National Committee slate elected (voting ended at 2.30pm). Even the tellers who count the votes were chosen in advance from Executive supporters. The AAM Executive had in fact put more energy into mobilising against the activists in City Group than it has ever done in mobilising to fight apartheid. But a 'red scare' also has unpredictable side effects.

Out of control

Those who can be mobilised by such means are not serious fighters against apartheid. Over 200 of them left after casting their vote. In the afternoon City Group and its supporters were close to having a majority. They were therefore able to prevent Bob Hughes's underhand attempt to suppress democracy and by-pass two City Group motions including one on the struggle against racism later in the day – he took the vote on this but refused to count it as he would almost certainly have been defeated. Both City Group motions were passed with large majorities.

Some of the more thuggish elements brought to the meeting took the 'red baiting' very literally. Two National Committee members physically attacked City Group and FRFI comrades. One of the attackers, a steward, was forced to apologise and was removed from his post after a protest had been lodged about his behaviour.

Following the AGM the AAM, with a solidly pro-Executive National Committee felt able to move swiftly to disaffiliate City Group from the AAM on the grounds that City Group did not operate as a 'normal' local group. Yet no-one in City Group was under any illusions about the real reasons for the expulsion. It was nothing other than a political witch-hunt against a force which had exposed the AAM leadership's failure to build a mass campaign against apartheid. The expulsion of City Group from the AAM took place both in the context of escalating struggle in South Africa itself and the rapid move rightwards of the British labour movement which successfully collaborated in the defeat of the striking miners. And the expulsion was carried out, not by a neutral Anti-Apartheid leadership, as they pretend to be, but by an alliance of Labour Party and CPGB members.

We must learn the lessons of City Group's experience. City Group stands accused of 'splitting' the movement at a time when there must be unity in solidarity with the fighting people of South Africa and against the apartheid regime. The RCG stands accused of a 'wrecking' operation for its own political purposes. Both accusations – the latest in the series which began in 1982 during the non-stop picket – are serious and require an answer.

In fact no-one has split the Anti-Apartheid Movement other than its own leadership. City Group was accused by the *Morning Star* of attempting to 'narrow the movement', when in reality a coalition of CPGB and Labour Party members restrict the AAM's sphere of influence to the Labour Party and trade union movement. Prominent members of the AAM leadership like Mike Terry of the CPGB and Chris Child, personal assistant to Neil Kinnock, attack the RCG's involvement in City Group, when, in reality, they prevent the emergence of a broad movement against apartheid because they use the AAM for their own political purposes. Their talk of unity is rot. They desire only a unity of their own political kind against forces who believe that the British state's support for apartheid is inseparable from its attacks on the British working class, black people in Britain, the unemployed and all the oppressed.

UNITY IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID

In South Africa the divisions in the movement between the UDF, AZAPO and other organisations have come to the fore as the struggle in the townships has escalated. On 19 May 1985 these organisations met together to forge unity between them in order to fight apartheid. They met to show their common determination to end the strife and combine together against the police, agents and collaborators who have been fermenting the hostilities.

In Britain a very different kind of unity is being forged after six years of Thatcherism and the defeat of the miners' strike. The unity which the labour movement is busily forging is a unity of the right in order to destroy all those who are in practice engaged in the struggle against Thatcher's onslaught.

Neither the Labour Party nor the trade union movement united in solidarity with the striking miners and their families over the fundamental issue of saving jobs. The only unity which the Labour leadership fought for was the unity of scoundrels and scabs such as Kinnock, Willis and Co who at all costs did not want to be allied to mining communities who were, literally, fighting for their futures. The consequences of this 'unity' of betrayers have been the pit closures, redundancies and punitive sentences inflicted on gaoled miners.

Following the end of the miners' strike, this unified right has turned its attention to the so-called 'hard left' in the Labour Party in order to consolidate a 'new realism' aimed at winning the next General Election. Although the Labour Party claims to oppose the YTS slave system, Kinnock and his brotherhood were quick to turn on school students who organised a strike on 25 April 1985 – the only real action against conscripted cheap labour yet to take place. Even Ken Livingstone, the former Robin Hood of the GLC,

has discovered that his real interests lie with the Sheriff of Nottingham, Neil Kinnock, leaving the campaign against rate-capping to flounder.

The CPGB has been anxious not to be left behind either by this rapid shift to the right. The call for a unified, broad, anti-Thatcher alliance is not a simple wish to defeat a vicious anti-working class government. One of the political ramifications of the 'new realism' is a stern critique of the miners' strike and picket line violence. And, of course, the 'eurocommunist' majority has moved swiftly to deal with its own opposition within the CPGB.

Amidst this rapid and unified shift to the right, the 'new realism' in the AAM turns out to be a very old brand of 'realism'. Once again they are pinning their hopes on the next Labour government for a radical approach to isolating apartheid. Kinnock was invited to address the rally after the AAM national demonstration on 16 June 1985. He will be the first Labour leader to do so since Harold Wilson performed the same function in 1963, before going on, as Prime Minister, to sell the people of Southern Africa down the river. Neil Kinnock seems all set to perform the same function.

This is not a ritualistic denunciation of the Labour Party along the lines of 'they've done it before so they are bound to do it again'. But it is an acknowledgment of one major lesson which has emerged from City Group's experience. Unity in action against apartheid, involving broad forces, is achieved not by making concessions to Labour leaders and their ilk – who left to themselves will always concede to the interests of British imperialism – but by building a force against apartheid out on the streets. British collaboration with apartheid is not challenged by secret negotiations with the police or the government, but by unity amongst those forces which are determined to take action to win. It is no accident that City Group has won three major victories involving not only those who have traditionally supported the anti-apartheid struggle – many Labour Party MPs, trade union leaders and members, local councillors etc – but also much wider and newer forces.

The example of the mass demonstrations against apartheid in the USA makes the point. The USA has been forced to back down from its openly pro-apartheid stance, with a President at least as vicious as Thatcher, by the mass action of black people in South Africa, united with demonstrations and embassy pickets on a daily basis throughout the USA. This anti-apartheid movement has involved at its centre the black community and their leaders. Oliver Tambo, President of the ANC, emphasised the point when he spoke to a large gathering in Washington on 25 April 1985:

'Daily you are getting arrested, daily we are getting arrested. There could hardly be a better way of demonstrating your solidarity.' (*Frontline*, USA, 12 May 1985)

This was not a call for us all to go out and be arrested, but an acknowledgement

of the unity of the struggles. Progressive people in the USA have built a movement, out on the streets, determined to take action against apartheid in response to the militancy of the black masses in South Africa. Through this, they have forced Congress to begin the process of imposing sanctions against South Africa and won leading US politicians to the anti-apartheid lobby. But in Britain the forces committed to mass action represented by City Group have been driven out of the AAM. During the South African Embassy Picket Campaign, the protestors received nothing but the AAM's criticism. A recent arrest of an AAM supporter and RCG member in Edinburgh was viewed as 'naive and unsophisticated' and was the excuse for the CPGB dominated Scottish AAM Committee to launch a sectarian attack on the RCG.

In contrast to the USA, the British AAM is sticking to its 'tried, tested' and failed methods. Instead of building a movement which will force Kinnock and leading Labour leaders to act against apartheid should they come to power, and to restrict Thatcher's support for the regime, the AAM is once again putting all its eggs in the Labour leaders' basket at precisely the point when they are moving rightwards not leftwards.

Such a movement does not require the involvement of the oppressed, the youth, black people or the unemployed. On the contrary, for such a truly elitist movement, the participation of the oppressed is an embarrassment. That is the real reason why City Group has been expelled from the AAM.

If it continues on its present course the AAM will once again fail to build a mass movement against apartheid and British imperialism will continue to rob the black masses of Southern Africa. The Revolutionary Communist Group and many others are taking a different course. Over the coming period we will be part of a broad united movement building solidarity with all forces fighting for liberation in Southern Africa. If the AAM chooses not to build that movement, then other forces who share the common enemy of the South African oppressed people, British imperialism, will certainly do so. In this process we will be fighting racism, oppression and exploitation both in South Africa and in the heartland of imperialism - Britain.

**Victory to the liberation forces in Southern Africa!
End British collaboration with apartheid!
Free Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners in
apartheid gaols!**

POSTSCRIPT

'Every day the blood of our children flows. While all this is happening, Reagan and Thatcher continue to call themselves friends of black people while in effect they are the friends of racists.'

Winnie Mandela, 6 April 1986

Since the first edition of this pamphlet, *South Africa: Britain out of Apartheid, Apartheid out of Britain* was published in June 1985, the black masses of South Africa have proved that they will not compromise and will not cease to fight until apartheid is smashed, no matter what sacrifices they have to make. The apartheid regime is ever more deeply entrenched, using murder and terror against the black townships and, once again, against the frontline states. The British state remains apartheid's foremost backer. Building a mass movement against apartheid, offering solidarity to all those fighting for freedom and challenging Britain's racist collaboration with apartheid, remains our most pressing task in Britain.

STATE OF EMERGENCY

On 21 July 1985 President Botha introduced a State of Emergency in South Africa covering 36 areas of the country. The State of Emergency was introduced in response to escalating militancy in the black townships and increasing attacks on the police and collaborators. During the State of Emergency, which lasted seven months to 7 March 1986, 7992 people were detained, many of them tortured, including young children. Daily, black people of all ages were shot down on the streets as the defiance escalated. Funerals continued to be used as political meetings. Two weeks after the introduction of the State of Emergency, South African police claimed to have quelled the township unrest, 'we are finally winning' claimed a police spokesman. He spoke too soon. Seven months later, it was clear that the aim of Botha's reign

of terror had failed. Black people emerged from the State of Emergency with organisations hardened and tempered by the struggle.

In the eighteen months up to April 1986, more than 1,500 people had been killed in the political unrest—more than half of those shot by the police were shot in the back. Yet despite full-scale repression and terror using both the police and army, banning of organisations and political meetings, and the detention of political leaders and activists at the rate of 35 a day, new organisations, such as the trade union federation Congress of South African Trade Unions, were formed and new leaders replaced those who were detained or murdered. Above all, the townships began to organise themselves through the election of Street and Area Committees. Young militants, calling themselves Comrades, are key to rapid mobilisation of the townships for political action. The Street and Area Committees impose their own discipline on the struggle and, through People's Courts, deal with domestic disputes as well as with criminal elements and collaborators.

The Comrades and Street Committees have proved such a threat to the apartheid regime's control over the black masses that it has moved quickly to divide and rule. The ruthless elimination of collaborators by 'necklacing' with burning rubber tyres was portrayed in the media as barbarous and indiscriminate. Yet the township communities know that collaborators wreak murder and havoc amongst black people. Vigilante groups, formed with the aid of the police, have emerged in the townships to terrorise the young militants and members of anti-apartheid organisations. In one week in May 1986 at least 44 people were murdered and 50,000 people were driven from their homes at Crossroads squatter camp in the Cape by an alliance of corrupt black vigilantes, 'Witdoeke', and the police. Once the so-called 'Fathers', armed by the police, had done the regime's work by attacking the local Comrades, police moved in with bulldozers and barbed wire to flatten and cordon off the area. What is portrayed by the media as internecine fighting between black people, is in reality a political struggle between those who stand for progress and those who will sell out their brothers and sisters for a few crumbs from apartheid's table.

As we go to press, the black masses across the nation are organising to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Soweto Uprising on 16 June with a general strike, political meetings and protests, despite a total ban on all meetings by Botha's government and the threat to reimpose a State of Emergency. The last year of political struggle has given confidence to the people that they can win freedom through mass united action.

ACROSS THE RUBICON

On 15 August 1985, three weeks after the introduction of the State of Emer-

gency, President Botha delivered a much heralded speech to the National Party. Botha, we were told by the press, would introduce new reforms and even, it was hinted, make an announcement about the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela. Instead, Botha made the first of a series of speeches which failed to announce substantial reforms, and promised further terror against the people. The speech became a serious embarrassment to the Reagan Administration which was making a last ditch stand to defend 'constructive engagement' and defeat a move in the House of Representatives to introduce limited sanctions. Large sections of the South African business community, which had called on Botha to begin open negotiations with black leaders 'even if some of these are currently in detention', were running scared as a result of the upsurge of black revolt. Only the British government, much schooled in the art of brazen lying, was able to describe Botha's speech as 'further evidence that the South African Government is embarked on a process of reform'.

On the day after Botha's speech, the South African rand fell to 38.5 cents against the US dollar. Two weeks later a new all-time low of 33 US cents forced the closure of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and by 1 September a unilateral suspension of repayment of its foreign debt had been announced. In the last week of August alone, 28 people were murdered by police in the Cape Town area, 500 children were arrested in Soweto, thousands marched on Pollsmoor prison to deliver a message to Nelson Mandela, the Rev Alan Boesak was detained and a mass miners strike was narrowly averted. This background of defiance led to mass sales of securities by foreign investors sent into a panic by the regime's transparent inability to guarantee their future super-profits. On 9 September the US Congress introduced limited sanctions against South Africa.

Botha's speech set the tone for the next nine months. Under the guise of 'pressing forward with peaceful reforms', the regime shed the blood of black people with abandon, not only in South Africa itself, but also in renewed attacks on the frontline states. In September South African troops were once again involved in an invasion into Angola coming to the aid of the bandit gang UNITA, and despite the Nkomati security agreement with Mozambique, the regime continued to supply and support the MNR. On 19 May 1986, in its most blatant act of terror, South African troops attacked so-called ANC offices in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana.

The reforms which have been introduced in South Africa, including the abolition of the pass laws, have not in any real sense altered the injustice of apartheid. The Botha government finds itself with increasingly less and less room for manoeuvre. Outright terror has failed to quell resistance, black people have made it clear that they will accept no compromise and are not fooled by the government's squalid series of partial reforms designed to fall

short of democracy and justice. Countries throughout the world, with the notable exception of Britain, have implemented wide-ranging sanctions against the regime, and even one of Botha's closest allies, Reagan, has been forced to call for at least the semblance of reform and negotiation with credible black leaders. But on Botha's right, the neo-fascist Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB), regarded as a lunatic fringe only six months ago, is rapidly gaining ground amongst National Party supporters for a last stand against black freedom. South Africa is teetering on the brink of revolution, and one country stands alone against the imposition of sanctions which could tip the balance in favour of the black masses – Britain.

THATCHER'S 'TINY LITTLE BIT'

The British government has remained South Africa's foremost backer. In a league table of foreign investors in South Africa, published in August 1985, Britain headed the list with £12 billion invested. South Africa accounts for more than 10% of British foreign investment. So when it comes to backing apartheid Britain is always to the fore. True to form, the Thatcher government blocked the implementation of very minor EEC measures against the regime in September 1985, in order to study the consequences. In late September the measures were introduced after Britain had 'discovered' that it was already operating these measures and all that was required was the recall of two defence attachés from Pretoria.

Real depths of hypocrisy were plumbed in October at the Heads of State Commonwealth Summit in Nassau. In the face of pressure from 41 Commonwealth premiers for sanctions, Thatcher was forced to concede only, in her words, 'a tiny little bit'. 'Concerted pressure' was to be used to 'dismantle apartheid'; krugerrand sales were to be banned along with new government loans; and a group of eminent persons (EPG) was to be formed to promote dialogue between black and white. Botha celebrated Thatcher's victory by murdering Benjamin Moloise on 18 October. Months later it transpired that the British government has taken no action to ban sales of krugerrands. The EPG bit the dust when it visited South Africa and Botha marked their visit on 19 May by bombing the frontline states. Embassy officials were summoned to the Foreign Office for a routine ticking-off for this latest effrontery, but the reality is that throughout another year of the most grotesque barbarity, Britain has yet to vote for a motion criticising South Africa at the United Nations and has yet to put any pressure, 'concerted' or otherwise, on the regime to end apartheid.

Throughout the Thatcher government has maintained that the imposition of sanctions will primarily harm the black community. What is meant by this is that sanctions will primarily harm Britain's profits from apar-

theid. Winnie Mandela gave the only response possible to Mrs Thatcher at the end of the Nassau Summit: 'We regard it as complete racism that she should think for us'. Thatcher, she pointed out, has not been appointed as the spokesperson for the black masses. 'It is an insult to us and to those who have paid the supreme price in our struggle for our liberation'.

In June 1986 the United Nations is organising a major conference calling for sanctions against South Africa and further measures are being introduced in the US Congress. The EPG is due to report on its failure to shift Botha even a 'tiny little bit' in August. One country is likely to stand alone against sanctions, and that country will be Britain. Now is the time for a solidarity movement to be built which includes the forces Thatcher's government most fears – black people, the unemployed, the thousands of people driven into political action by the attacks of Thatcher's government.

APARTHEID OUT OF BRITAIN

'As the oppressed have expressed their anger against growing poverty and oppression – from the 1981 uprisings of black youth to the miners' strike of 1984-5 – so every major political party has distanced itself from their struggles.' *Britain out of Apartheid, Apartheid out of Britain p35*

In September and October 1985, black youth in Britain once again took to the streets of Handsworth, Brixton and Tottenham to fight racist British police terror. In Brixton a black mother was maimed by a police bullet, in Tottenham a black mother died through police terror. One youth in Handsworth gave the message clearly:

'Every night on TV you see how the black youth are fighting back in South Africa. The same thing is going on here so we must fight back.'

But once again the major political parties, including the Labour Party and CPGB took the side of the British ruling class against the oppressed. At Broadwater Farm in Tottenham where the fighting was at its most fierce and the youth came closest to inflicting a defeat on the police, the community was left to face months of revenge actions by local police. Hundreds of youths were detained by the police, interrogated and their homes raided. Hundreds were framed on false charges including riot, affray and murder. Once again the divisions in Britain between the oppressed and the privileged were shown at their sharpest, just as they had been during the miner's strike of 1984-5. The Labour Party leadership, revived by its wooing of the privileged and ever ready to be anti-racist for as long as black people do not fight back, eagerly echoed every ruling class prejudice: 'We are strong in our condemnation of lawlessness and we totally abhor the

violence'. The CPGB – not to be outdone – proclaimed that black people's resistance was '...vicious and brutal' (*Morning Star*), 'supremely Thatcherite' (*Focus*). These very same forces, which once again proved so eager to condemn the fight of black people when it is too close to home, control the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Britain.

ACTION AGAINST APARTHEID

1985-6 should have been the year for building a mass campaigning movement against apartheid, and in particular, against British collaboration and support for the regime. Thousands of British people were outraged at violence and terror of South African police which they witnessed on their television screens and wanted to take action. Many joined the Anti-Apartheid Movement in order to join in the struggle, but once again the sectarian manoeuvres of the leadership of the movement have held it back from putting real pressure on the Thatcher government, or organising an intensive campaign for people's sanctions. In reality, the activities of the AAM have been geared solely to the re-election of a Labour government – winning the votes of the privileged is a priority. Over 1985-6 it was the anti-imperialists in City Group and FRFI who campaigned for action.

During July and August, when the regime introduced the State of Emergency, City of London Anti-Apartheid Group and *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* were out on the streets. A campaign was launched against the South African Embassy, receptions were picketed and on 1 August, when Victoria Mxenge was murdered, two women comrades chained themselves to the gates of the Embassy. A campaign was launched to allow effective picketing outside the embassy gates. The pickets grew to hundreds of people and 161 arrests took place which forced the police to allow demonstrations outside the gates for the first time in three years. Meetings and rallies were held and actions taken up and down the country during August when apartheid terror was at its most brutal and the regime was rocked by the defiance of the people.

19 October Surround the Embassy

In July City of London Anti-Apartheid Group planned a major event outside the South African Embassy for 19 October. It was planned to surround the Embassy in Trafalgar Square and to decorate the Embassy with flowers and placards commemorating those dying and fighting in the streets. This act of solidarity was met with opposition from two quarters, which on the day operated in alliance – the British police and the National Union of Students, politically led by the Labour Party and CPGB. The NUS called a demonstration on South Africa for 19 October intending to rally in Traf-

algar Square, pretending that the Embassy did not exist, and then march away to Jubilee Gardens. Despite attempts by City Group to organise joint action, the NUS decided to collaborate with the police in an attempt to sabotage City Group's event. On the day, the police issued Commissioner's Regulations which empowered them to clear the area and barricade the Embassy. NUS stewards were positioned outside the Embassy to send everyone over to the Square in line with the police instructions. What neither the NUS leadership nor the police had bargained for was that thousands of students, angry at the murder of Benjamin Moloise on the day before and at Thatcher's stance at the Nassau Summit, wanted, like City Group, to take action against the Embassy. Two thousand people blocked the road with a sit down protest. 322 people were brutally arrested by police – more than 300 were released without charge. Once again City Group had shown the way to protest against apartheid.

2 November AAM demonstration

In response to calls for a mass demonstration against apartheid terror, the AAM broke with its traditions and called a second national demonstration for 2 November. 100,000 people marched from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square in a tremendous display of solidarity with the freedom struggle. FRFI and City AA contingents, led by the banner of the Broadwater Farm Youth Association, marched in an anti-racist contingent – No to Racism in Britain! No to Apartheid in South Africa!

Once again the AAM leadership's sectarianism marred the day. In Trafalgar Square the police were given a free hand to arrest and terrorise previously selected targets – including black groups, anarchists and City AA. AAM stewards were told not to get involved and to persuade marchers not to be involved 'no matter how unjustified this police action may seem to you'. Carte blanche for the police resulted in many arrests and injuries.

AGM APPROVES SECTARIANISM

The Annual General Meeting of the AAM became the political battle ground between City Group and FRFI supporters and the AAM leadership. Held at the end of November, the CPGB and Labour Party mobilised its supporters to the biggest AAM AGM in its history. Once again thuggish stewards recruited from the movement's more backward elements carried out searches for political material at the door and physically intimidated more than one speaker. Protests at this treatment both at the time and after the AGM, were ignored by the leadership.

Yet Despite the fact that the leadership and their followers outnumbered City AA and FRFI supporters, anti-imperialist politics dominated the day,

as the AAM leadership exposed its backward cowardice time after time. For the first time, despite the fact that the AAM according to its constitution gives support to all forces fighting apartheid, the PAC representative, Comrade Keke, managed to force the platform to give him time to speak at an AGM, where he called for the reaffiliation of City AA on non-sectarian grounds. After the disaffiliation of City AA was confirmed, the Executive attempted to justify its refusal to fight to close down the South African Embassy, or to cease debating with apartheid on the grounds not all its 'supporters' agreed with such action. The Chair of the Movement, Bob Hughes MP, had 'debated' with apartheid representatives several times in 1985. The highpoint of the day came when the motion to oppose the Prevention of Terrorism Act was carried, with the Executive Committee attempting to back out of any real opposition despite the fact that the PTA had been used against SWAPO members twice in the previous year.

NON-STOP FOR MANDELA

In 1986 City AA has once again called for all out action against apartheid at a decisive time for the freedom struggle. Since 19 April 1986, City AA has organised a non-stop day and night picket outside the South African Embassy calling for the release of Nelson Mandela. 1,500 people took part in the first day of the picket, and many thousands have given their support since then. Since 2 November, it has once again been shown that the AAM has no intention of building a mass movement against apartheid in Britain and will not mobilise the forces which will force the implementation of sanctions against apartheid. In 1986, the AAM's national demonstration will march not to the Embassy, but through Knightsbridge (the richest part of London) to Clapham Common for a pop festival. This, of course, is the fashionable form that charity takes - first Band Aid, then Sport Aid, now Anti-ApartAid. But the politics of anti-imperialists, the politics of communists in Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! are not the politics of charity for the victims of apartheid. FRFI calls for solidarity with the fighters against apartheid who are answering the call of Winnie Mandela -

'We are going to dismantle apartheid ourselves. That programme will be brought to you by the ANC. Together, hand in hand, with our sticks of matches, with our necklaces, we shall liberate our country'.

We want action against the apartheid Embassy in Britain and against the British government's support for apartheid. We say *No to Racism in Britain! No to Apartheid in South Africa! Release Nelson Mandela! Support the Non-Stop Picket.*

9 June 1986

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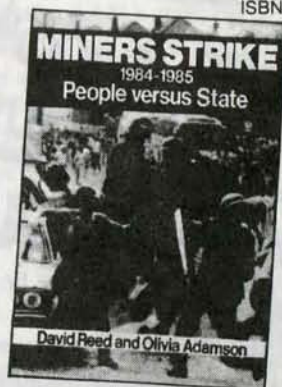
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