



# WORKERS UNDER APARTHEID

**THE PEOPLE** of South Africa and Namibia have been fighting the apartheid regime for decades. They are now closer to victory than at any other time in their history.

Britain was directly responsible for laying the foundations of the apartheid system. Now we have a great opportunity to support the struggle to establish a non-racial, democratic state.

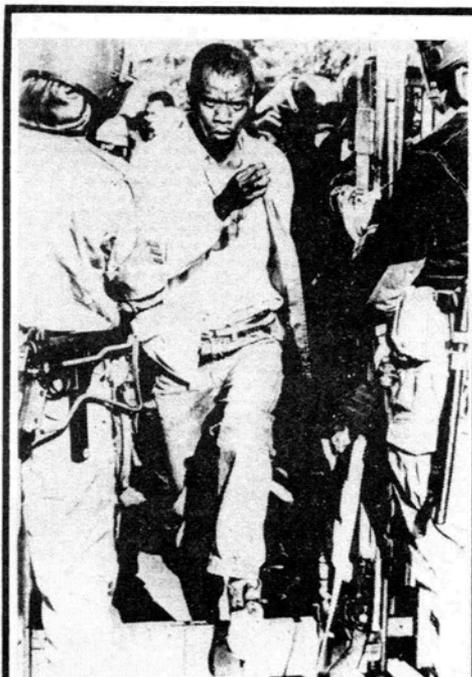
### Struggle

Trade unionists in South Africa are at the centre of the struggle. Likewise working people in this country are in a unique position to put pressure on companies that collaborate with apartheid, and on our Government which is becoming increasingly isolated by world opinion for its support of the apartheid regime.

### Common interests

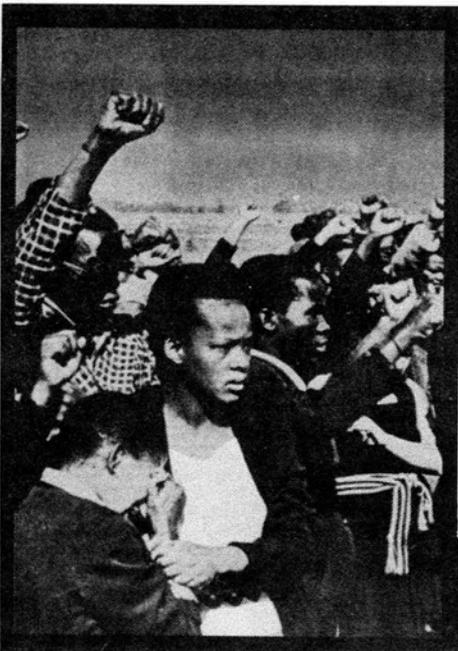
Workers in South Africa and Britain often find themselves working with and for the same transnational corporations. Under these circumstances our interests have much in common with South Africans fighting apartheid.

*We have a direct stake in their struggle.*



Armed police are frequently used in industrial disputes, as here during a Johannesburg municipal workers' strike in 1980. And the weapons are used, as in 1984 when police shot at striking miners.

Trade unionists suffer detention without trial like other opponents of the regime. And of 10,500 activists held without trial last year, 80% were tortured.



## FACTS ABOUT APARTHEID

- Only 16% of South Africa's 26 million people are white. But they are the only ones who can vote for the Government of the country.
- There are over 300 racist laws separating the people of South Africa at work and at home.
- Whites enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world, while 1/3 of all black children suffer from malnutrition.
- Safety for black workers is appalling. Over a recent 30-year period 19,000 workers died in gold mines alone. Black life expectancy is 15 years less than whites.
- Like Nazi Germany, the system of apartheid has been described as a 'crime against humanity' by the United Nations.

**FIGHTING BACK!** Inside we look at the growth of non-racial trade unions and our role in Britain

# APARTHEID A

**EIGHTY-SEVEN PERCENT** of the land in South Africa is set aside for the exclusive occupation of the tiny white minority. Only 13% — the most poor and underdeveloped — is available for the black majority to live. Consequently, blacks often have to travel for many hours to get to work. Even worse, others are forced to live away from their families under the 'migrant labour' system.

## BRITAIN'S STAKE IN APARTHEID

**MASSIVE PROFITS** are available for big business in South Africa. British transnationals have investments of more than £12 billion there. This money can get such a high return because of the low labour costs.

Black workers wages are kept at or below the poverty line, while trifling amounts are spent on health, education and social services, for them and their families.

For several years capital has been exported by British companies to South Africa seeking the profits of apartheid.

Many British firms have expanded in South Africa as they have run down their factories at home. Clothing, textiles, steel, and engineering products are among the goods that the apartheid state now exports to Britain.

The companies involved in South Africa are household names: Shell, BP, Wimpey, Unilever, BTR, Courtaulds, RTZ, GKN, Cadbury-Schweppes, Davy Group, British Leyland, GEC, BICC, BOC, Lonrho, BSC and many others.

British banks also cash in on the suffering of the people of South Africa. Barclays Bank has a particularly high stake, owning 40% of the largest bank in S.A. Britain loaned South Africa over £1.3 billion during the 18 months to the end of 1984 — loans greater than any other country.

### Migrant labour

The mining companies, which dominate the South African economy, started the 'migrant labour' system — but it has spread to many other jobs. Black miners are recruited on 3-year contracts — and are forced to live in a company compound, from which their wives and families are prohibited.

A miner has to spend his money at the company shops — the only ones allowed in the compound — in the same ways British workers were tied to 'truck shops' a century ago. If he cannot work through injury or illness, his contract is ended and he is returned to the 'homelands' where there is no work.

### DOMESTIC SERVANTS



**Many black women are forced into domestic service.** Working all hours required for at least six days each week, they undertake all household duties. Whilst separated from their own children, they look after the white children of their employers.

### WAGES IN SOUTH AFRICA

(Rand per month: R3 is roughly equal to £1)

|                 | African | White |
|-----------------|---------|-------|
| Coal Mining     | 317     | 1608  |
| Gold Mining     | 285     | 1566  |
| Metal/Machining | 450     | 1535  |
| Food            | 292     | 1334  |
| Local Authority | 313     | 1538  |
| Transport       | 357     | 1298  |
| Average         | 310     | 1210  |
| Average         | 310     | 1210  |

Source: Source African Institute of Race Relations Survey for 1984.

The wages shown are average figures, and do not cover agricultural and domestic workers, who are notoriously badly paid.

Minimum pay rates can be much lower, for example: unskilled underground miners earn only R166 per month (£55), surface workers R136 per month (£45). (July figures).

## FIGHTING

### Unions are part of struggle for freedom

**BLACK WORKERS** have struggled for many years to defend their rights by banding together.

The apartheid regime has done everything possible to prevent the formation of trade union organisation — vicious repression, suffocating laws, and the establishment of 'puppet' company unions. But the struggle has continued.

The first non-racial union co-ordinating body was formed in 1955 — the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU). It was prevented from operating openly, and forced to become an underground workers' movement — organising for trade union rights in workplaces throughout the country.

Despite brutal opposition, and operating illegally, trade unions have grown to pose an increasing threat to the regime. In 1979 the Government

# AT WORK

## The case for SANCTIONS

THE CALL for action to isolate the apartheid regime was first made by Albert Lutuli, South Africa's last Nobel Peace Prize winner and President of the African National Congress, in 1959.

Whilst in sport and entertainment, South Africa has been increasingly shunned, economic action has been limited. Now the situation is changing. Throughout the world, countries are introducing economic sanctions. Even in the USA, public opinion has forced President Reagan to take action.

Only the British Government refuses to act — itself isolated as apartheid's number one friend. Mrs. Thatcher argues that sanctions will have no effect — and then contradicts herself by saying that they will have an effect, by harming black South Africans.

Black South Africans themselves are clear. Although it is illegal to call for sanctions, all major leaders have. Polls show almost 75% of ordinary blacks support the call.

We must act to end the shameful stand of our Government — campaigning for a change of policy and taking action to impose our own sanctions on South Africa.



## G BACK

egalised' trade unions — but linked  
e move to laws which would minimise  
eir role. 'Legal' unions are required  
register with the state — which has  
owers to change union rules.

But the trade unions have rejected  
overnment limits and grown from  
rength to strength. In December 1985  
ey came together to form the  
ongress of South African Trade  
nions (COSATU), committed to:

Organise one union for every  
industry;

Campaign for improved wages  
and conditions;

Oppose the repression launched  
against opponents of apartheid;

Struggle against all discriminatory  
laws;

Demand the right to vote for all  
South Africans.

COSATU recognises that the  
uggle for workers' rights is just one  
rt of the wider struggle for freedom  
d 'that lasting solutions can only  
erge from the national liberation  
vement, headed by the African  
tional Congress', which has led the  
uggle for more than 70 years.

**Living quarters for black miners.** As many as 50 men live in each room in the compounds, sleeping on concrete bunks. Separated from their wives and families for months at a time, 'migrant labourers' are a virtual slave labour force for the companies investing in South Africa.

## The Exploitation of Namibia

IF IT is possible, the conditions faced by the Namibian people are worse than inside South Africa itself. Namibia borders South Africa and has been militarily occupied by it in defiance of international law and United Nations' resolutions.

Rio Tinto Zinc illegally mine uranium at the largest open-cast mine in the world — the Rossing mine. Namibian uranium is used to build nuclear weapons by British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL).

A Namibian worker at Rossing describes the conditions:  
'While the British continue to exploit Rossing Mine, black labourers are heavily exploited. Working in open air, under hot sun, in the uranium dust produced by the grinding machine, our bodies are covered with dust and one can hardly recognise us. We are inhaling this uranium dust into our lungs that many have already suffered effects. We are not provided with remedies and there is no hospital to treat us. Our bodies are cracking and sore . . . We are accommodated eight to ten people in one cell, there is no transport to the clinic. There is no hospital, bathing . . . or any recreational facilities.'

Thirty-five percent of all wealth produced by Namibian workers is sent abroad as profits, while half of all babies in the country die before the age of five. There has been brutal repression of the National Union of Namibian Workers who have demanded decent working conditions.

The South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) represents the aspirations of the people of Namibia who demand their freedom. Namibia is the last colony in Africa. Its liberation is part and parcel of the struggle to end apartheid.

# CALL FOR ACTION BY LOCAL TUC



SOME OF the NUPE, TGWU and COHSE members in Portsmouth who have been taking practical action against apartheid. Since January they have been refusing to handle South African and Namibian goods used by their employer, the Portsmouth Area Health Authority — and have held firm, despite wage cuts, lock-outs and harassment.

The Portsmouth action follows initiatives by Southampton dockers to halt the illegal export of arms for the apartheid regime, and South Wales dockers blocking the import of South African coal. In Dublin an eighteen-month strike by twelve shop workers has forced the Irish Government to ban the import of South African farm produce.

*THE Yorkshire and Humberside Region of the TUC has joined with the local Anti-Apartheid Movement in a call for 'concrete expressions of solidarity with South African workers'.*

*In a letter to trade union branches and organisations, Regional TUC Secretary Beryl Huffinley urges action to support South African trade unionists in the 'struggle to free themselves from the oppressive apartheid system'.*

*The regional TUC has detailed practical activities open to all trade unionists in stepping up the campaign for sanctions against South Africa. These ideas, and others, are listed below.*

## Find out more . . .

Return this form to Yorkshire & Humberside Anti-Apartheid Movement, C/o MP's Office, 54 Pinstone Street, Sheffield 1

- I would like more information on individual membership of the AAM
- I would like more information on trade union branch affiliation to the AAM
- I would like ..... more copies of this broadsheet and enclose a cheque for £ ..... to 'Yorks and Humb. AAM' (copies are available at 5p each for orders of less than 100, 4p each for orders of over 100 — postage free!)

Name .....

Address .....

Tel. No .....

## WHAT YOU CAN DO!

**EVERYONE** in this country can contribute to ending apartheid.

- *Don't buy South African or Namibian goods, and get them removed from works canteens, shops, etc.*
- *Don't handle any goods from South Africa or Namibia, or goods destined for the two countries.*
- *Campaign for funds to be pulled out of countries profiting from apartheid. Where does your pension fund invest its money?*
- *Campaign for the government to impose sanctions to isolate South Africa!*
- *Raise money for the SACTU strike fund to support South African trade unionists in fighting apartheid.*
- *Join the Anti-Apartheid Movement, and get your union to affiliate.*
- *Get more copies of this broadsheet for use in your workplace.*