

# ISOLATE APARTHEID



**Report of the Anti-Apartheid Movement  
Trade Union Conference held on November 27, 1982**

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## INTRODUCTION

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It gives me considerable pleasure to provide the introduction to this report of the Anti-Apartheid Movement's conference for the trade union movement on the theme 'Isolate Apartheid'. The conference took place in London in November 1982. For, if international trade unionism is to mean anything in the world, then opposition to apartheid must be the number one objective. Apartheid is the debasement of humanity to the greatest degree, a crime against humanity; we must continually ask how long we can tolerate the existence of this pernicious system.

We cannot escape our responsibility for the misery and bloodshed involved in apartheid. It is an absolute hypocrisy for the present British government to condemn the South African regime, as it does officially, as indeed all international opinion does, and at the same time provide the succour and support of investment and trade. Britain is the main foreign investor in South Africa, and still one of its biggest trading partners. Britain overtly and covertly collaborates in the military and nuclear field. Britain is one of the dwindling numbers of powers which stands in the way of United Nations mandatory comprehensive sanctions against South Africa.

Sanctions offer the means of destroying apartheid. If the United Kingdom were

really determined to apply them, the minority white government of South Africa could be on its knees. But despite this it is not easy to win support for this course of action among the majority of trade unionists. Without them we can do little to influence the thinking of the millions. It is necessary for those who recognise this to discuss together—as they were able to do at this conference -- how to overcome the problem.

Considerable progress has been made in the last few years. It was a particular pleasure to me that Len Murray, General Secretary of the TUC, was able to address the conference (reflecting the importance the TUC attaches to the question) and provide such a clear statement of the TUC's commitment to effective international action against apartheid. The unanimous support given by the 1981 Congress to the campaign for the imposition of sanctions was another indication. But much more needs to be done to translate these into effective action. I hope that this publication, like the conference itself, will provide a spur to trade unionists up and down the country, at all levels, to ask themselves how they can contribute to the elimination of apartheid.

**Jack Jones CH, Vice President AAM  
former General Secretary TGWU**

*May 1983*

## CONFERENCE AGENDA

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### **10.30am Plenary session**

Chaired by Jack Jones, Vice President, Anti-Apartheid Movement.

Speakers:

Len Murray, General Secretary, Trades Union Congress, on 'The Trade Union Movement and the Isolation of Apartheid'  
Abdul S Minty, Hon Secretary, AAM, on 'Britain, Sanctions and the Liberation Struggle'

**12 noon Morning workshops**, running simultaneously on:

1. Sanctions and the Struggle for Freedom in South Africa, chaired by Clive Jenkins, General Secretary, ASTMS, and introduced by Francis Meli, Director of External Information, African National Congress of South Africa, and Thozamile Makheta, South African Congress of Trade Unions

2. Sanctions and the Struggle for an Independent Namibia, chaired by Ken Cameron, General Secretary, FBU, and introduced by Jacob Hannai, Deputy Representative in Western Europe of SWAPO of Namibia.

3. Sanctions and the War against the Front Line States, chaired by Frank Dobson MP, AAM Executive, and introduced by Marga Holness, Angola Information, London.

**1.00pm Lunchtime meeting** for women delegates to discuss the AAM Women's Committee and its work.

**2.00pm Afternoon workshops**, running simultaneously on:

1. Military and Nuclear Collaboration, chaired by Ken Gill, General Secretary, AUEW-TASS, and introduced by Vella Pillay, Vice Chairperson, AAM

2. Trade and Exports, introduced by Chris Child, Deputy Secretary, AAM

3. Investment, chaired by Gerry Gillman, General Secretary, SCPS, and introduced by Christabel Gurney, Executive Committee, AAM

4. Imported South African Goods, chaired by Dick Pickering, Chairman, GMWU, and introduced by Chris Kaufmann, Agricultural and Allied Workers Trade Group, TGWU

5. Emigration, chaired by Fred Carneson, Executive Committee, AAM, and introduced by David Smith, Campaign Organiser, AAM

### **4.15pm Final Plenary session**

Chaired by Vella Pillay, Vice Chairperson, AAM

Report backs from afternoon working groups by Bruce Sanderson (AUEW-TASS), Paul Blomfield (Sheffield Trades Council), Gerry Gillman (SCPS), Roger Poole (NUPE), Fred Carneson (AAM)

Concluding speeches by:

Ron Press, SACTU

Vella Pillay, Vice Chairperson, AAM

Opening speech by Mr Len Murray

## THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT AND THE ISOLATION OF APARTHEID

I welcome this opportunity to speak to you on behalf of the TUC General Council at the opening of your conference. We welcome the fact that it is being held, and we look forward to hearing the outcome of your deliberations and exchanges, though it would be wrong of me not to remind you that what the TUC does and can do is determined by our own Congress and that what unions do and can do is determined by their members. But I hope that one important result of this conference will be to raise the level of awareness among trade unionists of this vitally important issue.

Trade unions are and always have been in the forefront of the struggle to eliminate apartheid. By its nature, the trade union movement is opposed to injustice in all its forms, wherever it occurs. The institutionalised racial injustice practised in apartheid South Africa is the most abhorrent kind of injustice there is.

Practically everybody deploras apartheid. Not only trade unions, not only churches, not only the Anti-Apartheid Movement, not only – though more recently – various sporting establishments, but just about every organised group in Britain joins in the general condemnation. The political parties condemn it – some more forcefully than others. The present government assures us that they condemn it too.

So there is no shortage of condemnation, no shortage of censure and stricture. If the resolutions adopted on the subject

were laid end to end they would reach from here to Durban. But if the bodies of the people who have suffered and perished as a result of apartheid were laid end to end they would reach from here to the depths of degradation. So the issue is how we can win the active support of people to translate words into deeds. That is not easy at the best of times, and these are not the best of times.

We who are here from the trade union movement know from long and practical experience that words are not enough against utterly ruthless and immoral and determined forces like the apartheid regime. To bring about change in those circumstances there must be action, and action is what is generally lacking from the struggle against apartheid – the struggle which everybody claims to support. In March the TUC took part in a conference organised by the Anti-Apartheid Movement at Congress House. It had as its theme ‘Southern Africa – The Time to Choose’. As far as our Congress is concerned the time to choose is past: it has made the choice about where it stands.

*I take it that the theme of this conference is ‘Southern Africa – The Time to Act’, and the time to insist that there is sustained action – international action, supported by and binding on the British government.*

That means the imposition of mandatory United Nations economic sanctions against South Africa, and it means persuading the British government and other governments to stop using the veto to block their introduction. It means ending the tacit approval given to the apartheid regime by the British government and the dwindling minority of other governments who voted recently in the UN to extend an IMF loan to South Africa.



*Left to right: Abdul S. Minty, Hon. Secretary of the AAM, Len Murray, TUC General Secretary, Jack Jones, Vice-President of the AAM and Chris Child, AAM Trade Union Organiser at the trade union conference against apartheid*

And it means action to reduce unilaterally Britain's heavy dependence on economic links with South Africa, and to protect our people against the consequences of breaking those links. Those links are not only morally unjustified, their maintenance lacks any commercially sound basis. Their very existence puts British trade and interests at risk in other parts of the world, notably in black Africa and other third world countries. And given those considerations and the probability of political convulsions in Southern Africa, British jobs which depend on South African trade are bound to be in jeopardy. So commercial self-interest—an argument I would expect even our government to understand — as well as morality, which is not, I admit, their strong point — both demonstrate that it is irresponsible for the government and British business to maintain the present level of trade with South Africa, let alone seek to promote and extend it.

The General Council are demanding that as a first step the government should end Export Credit Guarantee Department coverage and British Overseas Trade Board promotion in respect of trade with South Africa and they are following up the protests already made by their representative on the BOTB at the grossly disproportionate amount of promotion work devoted to South Africa.

Action by the government in those respects depends on what pressure we can exercise, along with pressure from other people and organised groups, on the government. But there is something we can do, and are doing, more directly in respect of investment in South Africa. As part of the TUC-led new initiative to win for workers more control over the pension funds which invest billions of pounds of their money, we are pressing trade union

trustees to challenge the use of those funds for investment in South Africa. Some pensions funds have — on impeccably sound commercial grounds — already taken action in line with this, as was reported to our recent conference of trade unions' trustees.

Given that the pension funds are a dominant factor in national investment decisions, that can be a very important way both of protecting their own members' future and at the same time of isolating the apartheid regime. We do not accept the argument that engagement in South Africa is the way to promote reform and to break down apartheid. Nor do we believe that the governments which use the argument are honest. If they were sincere they would, for example, have pressed for the ending of job reservation as a condition of the IMF loan recently extended to South Africa. They were not slow to impose conditions on Jamaica, or India — or Britain for that matter. But they did not act against South Africa even though job reservation is a serious economic constraint as well as a moral infamy. The General Council have asked affiliated unions to discourage members from emigrating to South Africa for employment, and they have opposed sporting links with South Africa, as when they recently endorsed a resolution of the Commonwealth Trade Union Council condemning a tour of South Africa by some English cricketers.

So we shall go on opposing and exposing apartheid and its open and covert supporters. But, like charity, action begins at home. What we are best at is what we do best — building strong and effective trade unions.

Our Congress is committed to the view that the development of strong and independent black trade unions in South



*British trade unionists picket outside the CBI to demand an end to UK support for apartheid*

Africa is an essential part of the process of national liberation. That is the key to the approach of the TUC and other national trade union organisations. For many years we have been giving — and intend to go on giving — not only moral support but practical assistance to trade unions in South Africa which represent black African working people. The decision our Congress reached — at a time when you, Mr Chairman, presided over our International Committee — has been shown to be correct and our policy of providing practical trade union assistance in South Africa has been fully vindicated. Black workers in South Africa have been forming and joining trade unions in increasing numbers ever since the Natal textile strikes in 1973, and the independent black trade union movement is now reliably estimated as being 300,000 strong. The process is still going on and it is irreversible.

Of course, international pressures have

an indispensable part to play in combating tyranny and compelling governments to observe basic rights. But experience has taught us that change in any country must be initiated from the inside, and there is no more powerful instrument for democratic change than strong, independent trade unions. The fact is not lost on the apartheid authorities any more than it is lost on other tyrannies such as those in Turkey, Poland and in the Latin American dictatorships. Independent trade unions are the motors of reform. They provide a voice and muscle to working people who would otherwise be without both. Why else would they arrest, detain and ban scores of black African trade unionists and do everything they can to weaken and remove the leaderships of independent trade union organisations?

The recent wave of repression against black trade unions in South Africa, the prolonged detention in appalling conditions of prominent leaders such as, for example, Thozamile Gqweta and his SAAWU colleagues and Emma Mashinini, the death in custody of Neil Aggett, are all proof of the lengths the South African authorities are prepared to go in their efforts to stem the growth of the trade union movement. But they will not win — not in South Africa, not in Poland, not anywhere — because working people will win. I have no doubt of that.

And the TUC is helping them to win. The international movement through the ICFTU is providing substantial relief to the trade union victims of repression in South Africa and their families. That humanitarian assistance — like our repeated appeals for clemency for political prisoners under sentence of death — will continue as long as it is necessary. At the same time, and even more importantly, the international trade union movement—

and the TUC has led the way in this — has accepted the responsibility of helping black African trade unions with their day-to-day training and organising activities. They know that it is by building their memberships and training that their officers and stewards — often in the teeth of vicious opposition — that they will survive the rigours of government repression and employer hostility. The TUC is committed to helping them in that task. That means helping them develop basic organising, negotiating and educational skills. The independent organisations recognise their needs — we must help to meet them.

It is of key importance that black African trade unions should win recognition and negotiating rights — and the two are inextricably linked — from employers in South Africa. That more than anything else enables them to establish their position and ensure permanent organisation and a growing power base. British trade unions can offer particular help in this respect by putting pressure on multinational companies operating in South Africa to recognise and to negotiate with independent, black trade unions.

Many of the companies concerned are based in Britain. Our unions deal with them here. The companies are not in South Africa to help black working people. They are there to make profits. And they are not there with the approval of the TUC or other trade union organisations. But so long as they are there, we intend to see to it that they behave as good employers and that they give independent and representative black trade unions the access and recognition they are seeking.

British trade unions — responding to requests by the TUC — have shown that they can influence British companies to settle disputes at their South African establishments through negotiation

rather than by strong-arm tactics. Our unions can persuade the companies to recognise black trade unions. There are several recent examples where British trade union pressure has been decisive in influencing management attitudes and practices in South Africa. The successful interventions with BL, Norcross and Unilever demonstrate that.

The intransigence of the Rowntree-Mackintosh subsidiary in its current long-running dispute with the South African Allied Workers' Union is typical of the attitude of British employers in South Africa. The Rowntree dispute is proving harder to resolve, but the British trade unions are keeping up the pressure. That is how we established ourselves here in Britain — read our history of opposition and repression.

Two things are sure. One is that all of the independent trade unions in South Africa appreciate trade union efforts over here to bring parent companies into line, and that they want us to continue with those efforts. The other is that, just as we succeeded, against what at the time appeared to be insuperable odds, they too will succeed. Of course, building trade union organisation is a slow process — much slower than you or I would like. It has to take root in its own environment — others can help but they cannot force its growth. And indeed, we all have to acknowledge that there are limits to what we can do. To promise in words more than we can deliver in action is not only to deceive ourselves; much more important, it misleads others and betrays their hopes.

Address by Abdul S Minty

## BRITAIN, SANCTIONS AND THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE

I am sure that everyone will agree that the statement by Len Murray today represents a landmark in the struggle against apartheid in Britain. It is therefore important that we ensure that his statement is distributed widely, not only in Britain, but also abroad in order to prepare for the international trade union conference next year which is being organised by the ILO in cooperation with the United Nations.

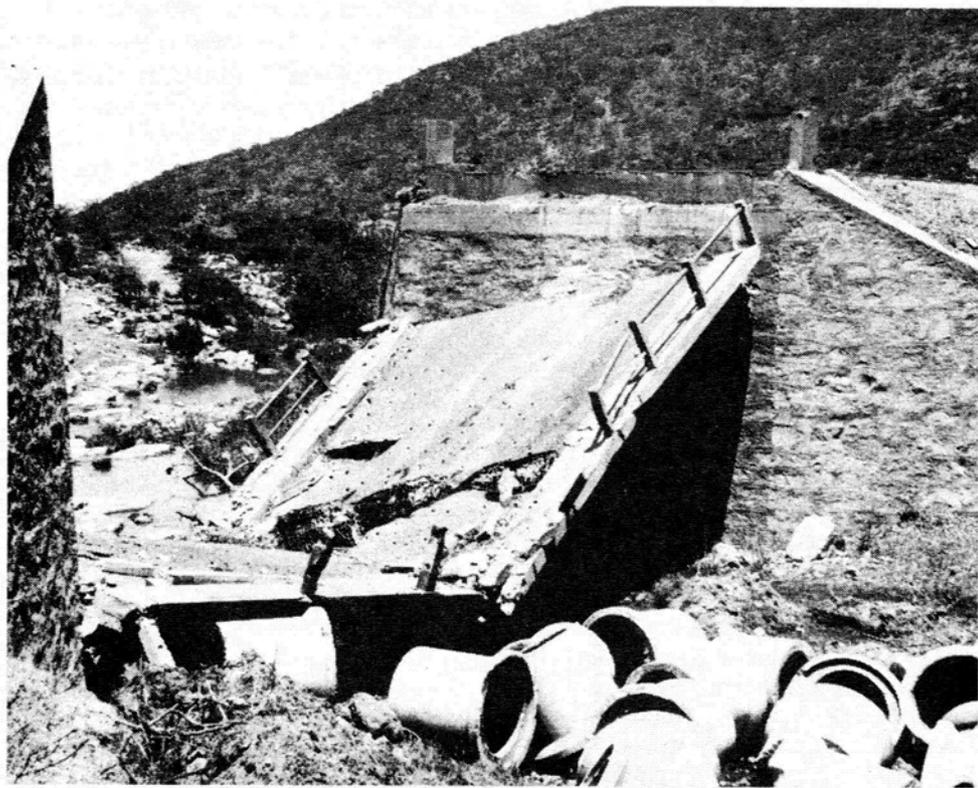
I have just come from a meeting in the Hague of West European parliamentarians and there with us was the Foreign Minister of Mozambique, Mr Chissano. In his statement yesterday he made a request, that all those in the anti-apartheid struggle should maintain vigilance because this week the South African regime has assembled hundreds of troops along the borders of Mozambique, particularly around Komatipoort, for what looks like preparation for a possible invasion against Mozambique. They may intend to begin a two-pronged attack, one against Angola and the other against Mozambique.

This news brings home to us, as it did to the parliamentarians in the Hague, the reality of the war that is going on in Southern Africa: an undeclared and secret war which every day is resulting in enormous damage and destruction of the economies of the front line states, as well as untold suffering for the peoples of those territories — and, of course, with the prospect of an ever-widening war.

For us, this conference is very impor-

tant, if not vital, because the work of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Britain has always relied on the support of the trade union movement and without it we are not much of a force in this country. As Len Murray has pointed out, many trade unionists in South Africa have suffered over the years and many have died. I think it also appropriate for us to note that some have been released from time to time, as more recently the SAAWU leaders. That is due, in some part, to the campaigns which we have conducted in Britain and internationally. I say this to point to the importance of engaging in all forms of campaigns in support of the trade unionists and others in South Africa who are being victimised by the regime. But whilst it is important and crucial that we support the struggle of the people in South Africa it is also vital that as citizens of Britain we try to work for the ending of British links with South Africa.

Not many people will have noticed in western countries that this year has been declared by the UN as the International Year of Mobilisation for Sanctions against South Africa. It is also 20 years since the General Assembly of the UN first adopted the resolution calling for comprehensive sanctions against South Africa. It is also over 23 years of the existence of the Anti-Apartheid Movement which was born out of the boycott appeal of Chief Luthuli and other South African leaders. What we have witnessed over these two decades and more is that as the resolutions have each year been adopted with greater majorities in the UN and other institutions, reflecting greater commitment to sanctions, at the same time it is also the period in which economic and other links with the apartheid system have expanded at a substantial rate: South Africa has never before traded as much as it does now and



*South African forces destroyed this bridge in southern Angola*

has never traded with as many countries before as it does now. It has also never had as much overseas investment as it has today. This is a major paradox of our time. We have to ask ourselves: why is it that after such a long period of appeals from the South African people and the international community for sanctions against South Africa, the western powers, and Britain in particular, stand so strongly against it?

But before we look at that it is important for us to recognise, as Len Murray has emphasised, that basically victory will come to an oppressed people only through the struggle of those people. And so in

South Africa too victory will come through the struggle of the people of that country, and sanctions must be regarded as a complement to that struggle and not as an alternative to it. It is only when we look at a programme of sanctions in that context that we can make a meaningful contribution to the struggle of the people of South Africa.

When we have called for sanctions from the late 1950s through the '60s and the '70s and now the '80s, the western governments have constantly repeated several slogans: that 'sanctions do not work'; that 'they will harm the very people for whom they are intended'; that

they are 'costly to enforce'; that they will 'drive the white regime to even greater extremes' and so on. They have declared, as a matter of policy, that they are against using sanctions as an instrument of foreign policy but today, particularly, we have to question the validity of that statement. We have to question it in the context of the action that Britain took against Argentina when it asked the Commonwealth, it asked NATO, it asked the European community and its other friends to impose sanctions against Argentina and they were implemented overnight without any authorisation by the Security Council of the UN. Thus, when we look at the programme of sanctions against Argentina as well as those imposed against several other countries in recent years by Britain and other western countries we have to come unavoidably to the conclusion that Britain is not against sanctions as a matter of policy. So if Britain is not against sanctions as an instrument of foreign policy, why does it so strongly refuse to support sanctions against South Africa? In short, of course, because it has no political will, because the economic links of Britain and other western countries are so enmeshed in the South African economy that they consider that the damage to the South African economy will damage themselves and deprive the multinational companies of the enormous profits which they gain from South Africa.

Basically, I wish to contend that it is really a policy that is operating in a wider framework, namely one where the British government is not committed to the destruction of the apartheid system as such. It is because of this that when we ask, for example, that simple humanitarian help should be given to the victims of apartheid and to the liberation movements, as do many Nordic and other western govern-

ments, the response from Whitehall repeatedly is that Britain believes in a policy of peaceful change, is against the use of violence and therefore cannot support the liberation struggle. It also goes on to state at times that it is committed, as a matter of policy, as Mrs Thatcher said in New York months after she got into power, that Britain is committed to preserving the apartheid state, in the sense that once Namibia is out of the way Britain will redouble its efforts to ensure that South Africa is brought back into the international community. So with that kind of western strategy with regard to South Africa, why shouldn't Premier Botha be encouraged in Pretoria?

It is in this context that Britain and other major western powers talk about trying to secure reforms from Premier Botha without changing the structure of the apartheid economy or the apartheid system. It is not therefore surprising that no reforms are coming from Pretoria; that despite the fact that there are no such reforms there is no change in Britain's policy. Thus, there is a very strong commitment to preserve the status quo in South Africa and that is why there are no sanctions against South Africa. Even on the question of Namibia one wonders what more South Africa has to do to show its total disregard of international law, of the UN, of its own commitment to the UN Plan for the independence of Namibia, and indeed of the repeated violations of the sovereignty of independent African states around it before sanctions are imposed.

The arguments are compelling, yet there is no action. Instead, we find that Britain is engaged in various ways in violating the UN arms embargo against South Africa and that it is ready to support the IMF loan to South Africa.



*Students in Soweto demonstrate against apartheid*

But today, in South Africa itself, there is a developing armed struggle and the majority people of that country are engaging in a courageous resistance which is nationwide and which we see symbolised by the action of trade unionists as well as students and other sections of the oppressed community. That resistance is increasing daily and the regime, which is getting desperate as a result of this resistance, is beginning to rely more and more on the exclusive use of force in order to keep itself in power.

In Namibia there is a major war with 100,000 troops, which means that there is one South African soldier to every four adult Namibians – a 'low intensity war' is how South Africa describes that situation.

We find too that South Africa, which last year did not make it a prior condition for the Cubans to be out of Angola before they settle Namibia – and they expressly stated that it was *not* a pre-condition – in the negotiations during the last year Washington has helped Pretoria to make that a vital pre-condition so that today Namibia is not on the way to independence due to this 'linkage'. In this context the policy of the Reagan administration and its relaxation of the arms and nuclear embargo has resulted in greater encouragement for South Africa, and so the Pretoria regime engages in even more brutal attacks against Angola and the other front line states. I have already mentioned the mobilisation of South African troops on

the Mozambique border, and there is also news that along the border with Zimbabwe roads are being built to connect the four special training camps of mercenaries and other recruits. South Africa is busy training them for action in Zimbabwe itself. Even this policy of destabilisation of Commonwealth and other countries in Southern Africa by South Africa is not resulting in the strict implementation of the mandatory arms embargo by the British government.

Indeed, the situation is so serious that coup attempts against Seychelles are not only planned in a London hotel but South African Airways is able to fly an aircraft with arms to Heathrow presumably to offload them here with the intention of reloading them on to other aircraft and to be taken to the Seychelles for another coup attempt. It is indeed remarkable to notice the degree of authority and influence, and almost sovereignty, that South Africa is able to exercise in Britain. This is not only with regard to the Seychelles coup but also with other matters — as we have seen in the court cases regarding the burglaries at the ANC and SWAPO offices, and the arms smuggling case of last month. In all these cases the role of the South African embassy has been clear and yet up to now no action has been taken against the South African embassy or its officials — despite convincing evidence produced in court in the case of arms smuggling that here is a government operating in London to violate British policy and British laws and encouraging individuals to become criminals in Britain in order to smuggle arms to South Africa.

Why is there so much tolerance of South Africa's behaviour against international practices in London? We need to ask this question and to ensure that the public has all the facts. If all this is not

enough, then taken with the fact that South Africa is refusing to adhere to reason in terms of negotiating the independence of Namibia; to produce changes in South Africa itself; to release national leaders such as Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners — what else does South Africa need to do before Britain commits itself to a programme of sanctions?

I should also mention an extremely serious matter which is not getting enough attention: it relates to the supply of aircraft to South Africa by a number of countries, including Britain, which were sold on the condition that they were for external naval defence. Now the Buccaneers and the Mirages and Italian Impalas are all being used against the front line states, including several Commonwealth countries, and yet there is not a single reaction from London to find out (1) why South Africa has violated those understandings — and as a result of that there should be some penalties; (2) how do those Buccaneers manage to keep in the air when they were supplied as long ago as 1965 without spares and equipment? Britain is not supposed to supply spares and equipment, so who supplies them to South Africa? We asked the Foreign Secretary last August to institute a high level investigation to establish how these Buccaneers are kept operational. The response simply is in a virtual single sentence reply that if there is evidence of violation of the arms embargo then the British government will be prepared to examine it.

If one needed any additional arguments for the withdrawal of British military attaches from South Africa, this is the strongest evidence to demonstrate that they do not seem to be performing their so-called 'useful role' in South Africa to establish how illegal armaments and

spares are reaching that country. Moreover, there is the well-known case of the supply of the Plessey AR3-D radar system, particularly well suited for South Africa's attacks against the front line states. Here, with one of the most modern systems in existence, developed by a British company, the first orders go to Pretoria. Several companies, including Plessey, are developing a pattern with their South African operations as well: of producing armaments and other repressive technology in South Africa and using it as a base for exporting these items to other countries. Thus South Africa, with the help of these companies, is now going into the international market, quite openly, to export arms. British firms are participating in the process of making South Africa a major exporter of arms.

On the basis of all this evidence, we have an overwhelming case to put across the proposition that, in the current situation in Southern Africa and South Africa's increasingly threatening and dangerous role in that situation, sanctions remain the most appropriate instrument of international policy against the apartheid regime. But we have to campaign for those sanctions.

Whilst campaigning for total and comprehensive sanctions we have to work to tighten the arms embargo, to ensure that the nuclear embargo is maintained. In this respect the British government has stated publicly to parliament and to the UN that it has no nuclear collaboration with South Africa, so how does it come about that up to 20 nuclear scientists from this country are now serving in South Africa after having been openly recruited by the South African regime through advertisements and other methods? Some of these officials are bound by the Official Secrets Act and yet there is no action taken against them, although there is growing

evidence that they are engaged in the South African nuclear industry. This matter, as Len Murray said, will need quick reaction and investigation by the British government, but that will only happen if we make adequate representations.

In addition to the arms embargo and the nuclear embargo, we have to work for an oil embargo because if South Africa is denied all oil supplies the war in Namibia comes to a stop, the war against the front line states cannot be conducted as at present, and certainly the whole repressive machinery of the police and the armed forces in South Africa itself will come to a grinding halt precisely because it does not have any oil resources of its own. In addition, of course, we have to campaign to stop new investments and loans flowing to South Africa.

Yesterday, when we were at the Hague conference, I drew attention to a rather remarkable document of the European Economic Community. You may recall that in the past the Anti-Apartheid Movement and the UN Special Committee have taken up with the European community, asking the officials in Brussels and the members of the EEC whether there are any special agreements with the Republic of South Africa. The replies have all been that there are no special agreements. Now we have a document which is a report from the Commission to the Council on negotiations with South Africa under article 28 of the GATT concerning the modification or withdrawal of tariff concessions under schedule 18. It is a recommendation for a decision to be taken by the Council concerning the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Republic of South Africa. This document, with all the concessions listed in it, was initiated by a representative of South

Africa and of the European Commission on 13 October 1981 and awaits the signature of the European ministers. Among many items for which concessions are to be withdrawn, expressly stated here, is a category on page 15: 'other fire-arms including very light pistols, pistols and revolvers for firing blank ammunition only, line-throwing guns and the like'; and another category: 'parts of arms, including roughly sawn gun stock blocks and gun barrel blanks'.

The members of the European community, like all members of the UN, are meant to be applying an arms embargo. These are descriptions of categories with a tariff concession to South Africa by the European community, which in fact exists today, and is to be withdrawn in terms only of the tariff rate when this document is signed by the ministers. Beyond page 16 up to page 37 is a list of other items for which special agreements have been negotiated between South Africa and the European community. This is therefore a vital issue to campaign on in the next few days and weeks to ensure that this document does not get adopted by the European ministers.

In conclusion, with the kind of crises that we are facing in Southern Africa, if we do not get international action then South Africa is likely to unleash even greater violence and terrorism in the region, encouraged a great deal by the Reagan administration. It is also pointing now to the actions of Israel in the Middle East by suggesting that South Africa will take the same kind of action. A couple of months ago Defence Minister Malan stated that Mozambique had SAM missiles to defend its borders. He added that when Israel found similar missiles with Syria they had to go into Lebanon and remove them. He then goes on to say it

will be necessary for South Africa 'to become more aggressive'.

The people of South Africa, as we see all the time through the news that comes through, are fighting very bravely with tremendous courage and determination, and we have to support them. But we can make their suffering less by applying economic sanctions against South Africa. We do not doubt that the struggle will be victorious in the end but whether that struggle will be longer or shorter, with the possibility of saving thousands of lives – and if it is left to the South African regime it may mean millions of lives – we can be instrumental in trying to save those by taking timely action and preventing a wider global confrontation from arising with all its unforeseeable consequences.

We are winning, on a smaller scale, just as the people of South Africa and Namibia are winning. Although they may be small victories, we applaud, for example, the action of the National Union of Mine-workers over the industry's pension fund; we applaud the actions of local authorities which have honoured Nelson Mandela and severed economic links in various ways with South Africa; we applaud also the actions of unions which are organising support for a blockade of the illegal importation of uranium from Namibia. We have to keep up the momentum with actions of this kind. Ultimately we want you not only to consider action of this kind but, if you are not an individual member of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, to join the Movement, and if your union is not affiliated, make sure that it does because in the critical time ahead we will need a strong and efficient and well-organised Anti-Apartheid Movement in order to match up to the responsibilities which all of us face in the crisis that is rapidly unfolding in Southern Africa.

## POINTS FOR ACTION FROM WORKING GROUPS

### 1. Military and Nuclear Collaboration

The workshop stressed the need for basic educational work among trade unionists about apartheid, and the importance of the issues involved for people in Britain. In the extremely dangerous situation in Southern Africa today, when there is the real prospect of an all-out war and even a nuclear attack by South Africa, it is vital that all forms of military and nuclear collaboration are halted. The British trade union movement has a vital role to play in ensuring that in future it will not be from British Landrovers that protesting schoolchildren will be shot dead in Soweto or from British Buccaneers that Angolan villagers will be bombed to death and their countryside ravished.

The workshop discussed a number of ways in which this could be done:

- (a) National trade unions, particularly those organising in the arms and related industries, should be urged to encourage their members to be vigilant at work to ensure that their company is not involved in breaking the arms embargo.
- (b) Trade unionists in transport industries should be similarly encouraged to monitor the enforcement of the embargo.
- (c) Trade unionists, through their representatives in pension funds, should campaign to secure the withdrawal of British companies from South Africa and an immediate halt to supplies of equipment to the South African police and military.
- (d) Trade unions affiliated to the Labour Party should secure copper-bottomed guarantees that a future Labour government will introduce comprehensive

legislation to enforce the embargo.

(e) The trade union movement should step up its general campaign to stop emigration to South Africa—in particular in this context the recruitment of nuclear personnel and personnel for the armaments industry and the armed forces; the unions in the printing industry need to consider how advertisements for such posts can be stopped.

(f) The trade union movement should work in cooperation with other organisations to secure the cancellation of the no-visa agreement with South Africa.

(g) The general campaign to strengthen and strictly enforce the arms embargo should be intensified and the government should be required to:

- (i) extend the embargo to include all items for the military and police, including so-called dual purpose items, and effective penalties should be introduced for those breaching the embargo
- (ii) make it illegal for British companies operating in South Africa to supply the South African military and police
- (iii) ensure that licences are revoked and measures taken to ensure that no spares are sent to South Africa for military equipment
- (iv) close the recruitment agencies for South African military and nuclear personnel, including closing South Africa's scientific mission and expelling its military attaches in London; the British military attaches in South Africa should be withdrawn
- (v) ban all forms of nuclear collaboration
- (vi) support measures in the UN Security Council to extend and strengthen the mandatory embargo.

It would be very useful too if trade unions could encourage their sponsored MPs to work for these objectives.



## 2. Trade and Exports

The workshop started with a general discussion of sanctions and the isolation of the apartheid regime. Concern was expressed about particular elements in Britain's export trade with South Africa—for instance in arms and oil. However, it was felt that partial or selective sanctions against these particular elements, whilst welcome in themselves, would not be enough. Sanctions should be *comprehensive*, so that all aspects of economic collaboration including trade would be covered; *imposed through the United Nations*, so that they committed not just one government but all; and *mandatory*, so that they were binding on all.

The workshop felt that trade unions had an important role to play both practically and in strengthening the political campaign for UN sanctions and activity to isolate the apartheid regime at all levels. The following ideas for action were discussed:

- (a) The need to convince trade union members of the arguments against continued trade with South Africa, including the distribution of AAM material and the organisation of workplace and trades council meetings on sanctions.
- (b) The investigation of trading links between particular areas and South Africa, and especially any companies in which a union has members, eg particular export contracts. Further information could be sought from the TUC or AAM.
- (c) Exposing the activities of those who trade with and export to South Africa and campaign against their links.
- (d) Making the companies themselves aware of trade union opposition to their economic collaboration with South Africa.
- (e) Working to ensure that members of unions do not work on contracts that are

in breach of the UN arms embargo.

(f) Campaigning to stop local chambers of commerce sending trade missions to South Africa; keeping informed about any such missions; refusing to meet trade missions from South Africa visiting the workplace, etc.

(g) Ensuring that action is taken by local authorities against companies which export to South Africa, and chambers of commerce which send missions there.

(h) Making MPs more aware of trade union support for an end to trade with South Africa.

(i) Involving other bodies in each union, as well as other unions in the campaign — all trade union organisations, branches, areas, districts, regions, trades councils, county associations of trades councils, regional councils of the TUC can make a contribution.

(j) Ensuring that unions nationally and other national trade union bodies such as national negotiating and shop stewards committees put pressure on companies, industry associations and the government.

(k) Applying pressure at all levels to ensure that the government is pressed more vigorously to, as a minimum:

- extend and strictly implement the UN arms embargo to ensure that South Africa receives no imports of goods that can enhance its military and nuclear capability
- support the imposition of an effective international oil boycott of South Africa and take action in Britain to stop British companies exporting oil to South Africa
- end all forms of BOTB, ECGD and other government support and promotion for trade with and exports to South Africa
- give support to the UN General Assembly decisions opposing trade with South

Africa and for the imposition by the UN Security Council of comprehensive mandatory sanctions against South Africa.

Those present at the workshop felt that the AAM should consider producing a trade union bulletin and that trade union journals should carry more information about trade with South Africa; and it was suggested that trade unionists should, as a very minimum, ensure that their workplace canteen does not buy South African produce.

### 3. Investment

This working group had a lengthy discussion on the role of investment in South Africa. Most participants felt that it played an essential role in propping up the apartheid system. British companies profited from the cheap and mobile labour force created by apartheid.

The top priority for action to stimulate disinvestment campaigns in the trade union movement was information about which companies were most heavily involved. The following firms were noted as having been designated by the UN for making 'a major contribution to the maintenance of the apartheid system':

Associated British Foods  
Barclays Bank  
British Leyland  
British Petroleum  
Consolidated Goldfields  
Dunlop Holdings  
General Electric Company  
Guest Keen & Nettlefold  
Hill Samuel Group  
Imperial Chemical Industries  
International Computers Ltd  
Lonrho  
Metal Box

Plessey  
Rio Tinto Zinc  
Shell  
Standard Chartered Bank  
Trafalgar House  
Unilever

The following points for action were noted:

- As a minimum, trade union investment portfolios should not include companies investing directly or indirectly in apartheid South Africa or Namibia.
- Trade union members of the controlling boards of pension funds should seek to end their holdings in companies investing in South Africa.
- Trade unionists should participate in campaigns to persuade particular companies to withdraw from South Africa.
- Trade unionists, especially in the public sector, should support the recent moves by some local authorities to declare 'apartheid-free zones' involving a pledge that no council funds will be invested in companies operating in South Africa, and that they will discourage investment from their area.
- Trade unionists should support the campaign to boycott Barclays and should ensure that their employers, eg local authorities, should do likewise.
- Much more needs to be done to make trade unionists aware of the need for disinvestment, by circulating material to branches, organising meetings, filmshows, exhibitions, etc.
- At a national level, the issue of sanctions could be raised on industry-wide national negotiating bodies.
- At an international level, trade unions in Britain should work through international trade union bodies to coordinate pressure for sanctions.

#### 4. Imported South African Goods

The working group recognised the importance of imports from South Africa, not just in traditional fields like fruit, vegetables and foodstuffs, but also more expensive items like the P100 Ford pick-up truck, coal, steel and ferro-chrome. The following points were made:

1. Recognising that Britain was a major purchaser, in particular, of South African foodstuffs, it was agreed that consideration should be given to a major re-launch of the Anti-Apartheid Movement's Boycott Campaign. It was suggested that it be re-launched on a date to be fixed nationally after all the preparatory work was done with the individual trade unions affiliated to the AAM as well as other organisations.

2. The arguments against a boycott, on the basis that it would hurt the black people of South Africa, must be confronted in the trade union movement in order to win members for the boycott campaign.

3. Whilst arguing the above point, it must be made clear to trade unionists that the boycott is only a part of the overall liberation struggle and should be seen in that light.

4. It was believed that the boycott was a very useful means of involving as many people as possible in making a political decision each time they went into the shops not to support South Africa by refusing to buy South African goods.

5. The AAM Trade Union Committee should be asked to organise the boycott campaign through the trade union movement and leaflets should be produced by the AAM which would contain messages from South African workers calling upon the British people no longer to purchase South African goods.

6. Linked with the boycott in shops should be a campaign to stop public

authorities and private employers purchasing South African foodstuffs for their catering requirements, in particular those with a large catering operation, eg British Rail.

7. South African products should be banned from workplace canteens.

It was also felt that the AAM and its trade union supporters should:

8. Make sure that purchasers know which goods come from South Africa — some goods have to state the country of origin by law. This requirement should be extended to cover all imports.

9. Stop advertising of South African goods by public authorities.

10. Promote trade union action at the point of import, distribution and sale to pressurise those who import, distribute and sell South African goods not to do so.

11. Reorientate the policy of companies away from continuing with the present pattern of imports from South Africa.

12. Apply greater political pressure for government action to end such imports.

#### 5. Emigration

The workshop on emigration noted the alarming increase in British emigration to South Africa over the last few years, due to high unemployment in Britain, the stepping up of the recruitment efforts of the South African authorities, and the lack of knowledge about apartheid among British workers. The workshop:

- Stressed that publicising the facts about apartheid was all-important, since the majority of British workers still knew too little about the problem.

- Suggested that unions be urged to withdraw union cards from members who emigrate to South Africa, and 'black' those members if they return to Britain.

- Proposed that local authorities be urged

to be as uncooperative as possible towards South African recruiting offices or visiting recruiting teams.

- Suggested that local authorities be urged to ban recruitment activities and publicity in or on premises or public transport under their control. Colleges of further education and polytechnics were mentioned specifically, as were billboards and advertising space on trains, buses and stations.

Other suggestions were:

- Newspapers and journals should be asked to refuse advertisements for jobs in South Africa; the print unions to be urged to take whatever action was possible and appropriate.

- Local papers should be used to give publicity to any union decisions or activities against emigration.

- The hidden dangers of emigrating to South Africa, such as insecurity, liability for military service, involvement in civil war, etc, should be drawn to the attention of British workers.

- Publicity should be given to 'bad experiences'.

- Unions should urge the publishers of trade journals to refuse to carry advertisements for jobs in South Africa.

- Unions should press their companies not to recruit any of their staff for posts in South African subsidiaries or associates.

- The TUC should be urged to include anti-emigration material in its bulletin to unemployed workers and to make anti-emigration publicity material available at its unemployment centres.

- Pressure should be put on the government to:

- prohibit recruitment activity by South African government diplomatic staff or direct agents

- instruct the Department of Employment to withdraw licences from

agencies recruiting for South Africa.

- The possibility of utilising the Race Relations Act against South African recruiting activities should continue to be explored.

- Trade unions should be urged to carry articles about emigration in their journals.

- Trade unions should be urged to make emigration an issue at their conferences and in their branches.

- Where hotels are used by recruiting teams, the trade union concerned to be urged to take action to withhold services.

- Similar action should be suggested to trade unions whose members service other premises used for recruitment purposes.

Attention was also drawn to the practice of some polytechnics of sending students on business sandwich courses to South Africa as part of their 'work experience'.

## REPORT ON WOMEN'S COMMITTEE MEETING

During the lunch break, the Anti-Apartheid Movement's Women's Committee held a well-attended fringe meeting. The Women's Committee has been seeking ways to expand its work within the trade union movement, and the meeting proved particularly useful as a source of new contacts and practical suggestions for forging others. Many of the women trade unionists present expressed interest in the regular newsletter produced by the Women's Committee and in the idea of organising in-plant meetings on Southern Africa for women workers and/or inviting speakers to local trade union branches. The need for material aid for South African and Namibian refugee settlements and the potential contribution from the trade union movement were among the other aspects of AAM's work raised.

## APPENDICES

### 1. Information on Participants

Two hundred and sixty-four delegates registered for the conference, from 160 different trade union organisations. Nineteen national unions were represented, including: NUM, FBU, GLC Staff Association, GMWU, UCW, SCPS, CPSA, NUPE, USDAW, ACTT, ASTMS, AUEW (TASS), AUEW (Foundry), NALGO, TGWU, NGA 82, IRSF, BIFU.

The following numbers of delegates attended from non-national trade union bodies:

IRSF 7, NUR 7, NUPE 9, POEU 3, AUEW (Engineering) 10, UCATT 3, TGWU 19, NUM 2, GMWU 3, APEX 12, CPSA 7, BFAW 1, SCPS 10, NALGO 14, Equity 1, UCW 8, ABS 1, NATFHE 1, USDAW 8, AUEW (TASS) 10, NUT 3, ASTMS 8, SOGAT 2, NUS 1, NGA 3, COHSE 2, ASLEF 1.

The following trades councils were represented:

Sheffield, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Brent, Harlow, Hillingdon, Nottingham, Peterborough, Birmingham, Bournemouth and Christchurch, Tower Hamlets, Brighton, City of London and Westminster, Ealing, Richmond and Twickenham, Edinburgh, Northampton, Battersea and Wandsworth, Dagenham, Stockport, Maidstone, Hackney, Leicester, Tottenham, Oxford, Sunderland.

The South West and South East Regional TUCs were represented.

### 2. Conference Papers

*Military and Nuclear Collaboration*  
*Trade and Exports*  
*Investment*

### *Imported South African Goods* *Emigration*

These are available either separately (25p each) or bound together (£1) from the Anti-Apartheid Movement, 13 Selous Street, London NW1. Please enclose payment with your order.

### 3. Trades Union Congress Resolutions on Southern Africa 1981/82

September 1981:

Congress welcomes the development of independent black trade unions in South Africa. This is part of the process of national liberation in Southern Africa.

Congress in particular condemns the South African intransigence over Namibia and affirms its support for SWAPO in its struggle for genuine independence.

Congress recognises that the policies of the government of South Africa pose a growing threat to international peace and security and condemns its acts of aggression against Angola and other neighbouring independent states.

Congress condemns the use by Britain of its Security Council veto power to block United Nations sanctions against South Africa. Congress pledges its support for the total isolation of the apartheid regime, including the imposition of mandatory United Nations economic sanctions against South Africa.

September 1982:

Congress reaffirms its support for the 1981 Congress resolution on Southern Africa and, in particular, its support for both the independent black trade unions there and the process of national liberation of which their development is a part.

Congress expresses great concern at the increasing detention, banning and all round repression of trade unionists in South Africa; records its horror at the death in police detention of Neil Aggett, Transvaal Regional Organiser of the African Food and Canning Workers' Union; and condemns the increasing regime repression of opponents of apartheid. Congress, in particular, condemns the increasing use of death sentences against opponents of apartheid.

Congress calls on the General Council to do all in their power to stop the execution of opponents of the apartheid regime and to support the worldwide campaign for the release of Nelson Mandela and of those detained or imprisoned by the apartheid regime.

#### **4. Message from His Excellency Alhaji Yusuff Maitama-Sule, Chairman of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid**

I welcome this trade union conference on sanctions against South Africa and send you greetings on behalf of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid.

The brutal repression and torture of trade union leaders in South Africa, and the mass dismissals and deportations of African strikers show that the so-called 'reforms' by the apartheid regime are a

fraud, and that the international trade union movement must step up action in solidarity with trade unions and workers in South Africa. They also underline that it is essential to eliminate apartheid and promote a democratic society in South Africa in order to ensure the observance of trade union rights and all other human rights.

The Special Committee is, therefore, gratified at actions taken by the trade union organisations in many countries in support of independent trade unions and the national liberation movement of South Africa. It welcomes the decision of the Workers Group of the ILO Governing Body to organise in cooperation with the Special Committee an International Conference of Trade Unions for Sanctions and other Actions against the Apartheid Regime in South Africa in Geneva in June 1983.

I have always had confidence that the working people of Britain with their great traditions would support efforts to abolish apartheid slavery in Africa.

I am encouraged by the resolutions of the TUC in favour of sanctions against South Africa and the initiatives taken by Len Murray, the General Secretary, for action against apartheid.

I look forward to closest cooperation between the TUC and the Special Committee.

I wish the conference success.

**Support the Anti-Apartheid Movement!**

**Freedom is coming in Southern Africa – but it needs your help!**

**Join and support the Anti-Apartheid Movement.**

Publicise the facts about apartheid

Campaign for the total isolation of apartheid South Africa

Expose British collaboration with the apartheid regime

Work for political, material and moral support for the liberation movements of South Africa and Namibia

The Anti-Apartheid Movement works in political parties, churches, universities, colleges, schools, with the general public and with trade unions and their members in support of those in South Africa and Namibia struggling for freedom and independence. Thirty-five national trade unions and 250 other trade union bodies are affiliated to the Movement. Many trade unionists are individual members and are active in the AAM's local groups. Join them!

Ask your trade union organisation to affiliate. It costs £10 pa.

Invite a speaker to your branch, shop stewards committee or Trades Council to talk about the freedom struggle and how you can help.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION WRITE TO: Trade Union  
Organiser, Anti-Apartheid Movement, 13 Selous Street, London  
NW1 0DW.**

*PRICE: 20p*