

APARTHEID AND THE BRITISH WORKER

A handbook for
trade unionists

2nd edition
(updated to May 1974)



Trade Union Department, Anti-Apartheid Movement,
89 Charlotte Street London W1 (01-580 5311)

10p

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Introduction

In the modern world the gross exploitation of any section of workers is a threat to all workers. Today goods from South Africa can be sold on the British market at a cheaper rate than British goods. At the same time British Capital is flowing to South Africa, chasing the fat profits to be made there, while the British worker is constantly threatened with redundancies.

Thus the interests of British and black South African workers are the same: to end the gross exploitation of black labour in South Africa and to help achieve the overthrow of the apartheid system.

This handbook shows that the British workers are in a vital position to help end the tyranny in Southern Africa. It details how the apartheid system works and how it is related to Britain and most importantly, it points to the way British Trade Unionists can act. It outlines no simple recipe for success, because no firm will easily give up the fat pickings found in South Africa. Success can only come through strong and informed campaigns. In this respect the authors of this handbook, the Trade Union Committee of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, offer their full assistance in any way that you think useful.

Further copies of this handbook are available from:

The Trade Union Department
Anti-Apartheid Movement
89 Charlotte Street
London W.1.
(01-580 5311)

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"All African nationalists, like the late Chief Albert Luthuli, have demanded withdrawal of foreign capital from South Africa. Any agreement to the contrary, however plausible, is merely intended to perpetuate slave labour and is motivated by greed for profit."

J.D. Akumu,
Organisation of African
Trade Union Unity,
Geneva, June 1973.

The General Situation

The conflict within Southern Africa significantly deepened in 1973. Popular opposition to the apartheid South African Government was demonstrated by the massive waves of strikes by black workers that spread throughout South Africa, in particular during February. In Namibia and Rhodesia opposition has taken several forms, including armed struggle. In Angola and particularly Mozambique, the liberation movements have taken giant strides. The results of the recent coup in Portugal remain to be seen but it is bound to have a considerable effect on the Southern African situation.

The debate on British investment in South Africa which was initiated by The Guardian has provoked a deeper sense of awareness, but the solutions generally put forward by the national media and later by the House of Commons Select Committee, merely served to confuse the role played by British capital. Advice on improving the situation flows freely from Britain's boardrooms and from armchair theoreticians. Workers have learnt from bitter experience to doubt the sincerity of employers when they advocate apparently progressive proposals. None more so than African workers in South Africa, and it is their voice that should be listened to.

The British Government has continued to give its active support to the Vorster regime. On many occasions at the United Nations Britain has been one of the few countries to line up with the racist governments of South Africa and Portugal. On 14 December 1973, Britain - with South Africa and Portugal - voted against UN Resolution 3151 G (XXVIII) calling on UN member states to end military and economic ties with South Africa. Military links continue. In 1973, the largest ever naval fleet from Britain visited South Africa to hold joint exercises.

The sharpening of the conflict in South Africa has been reflected in the debate within Britain; no longer are resolutions on Southern Africa passed on the nod. It is therefore vital that the facts are available to counter the arguments that are used to try and confuse the opponents of apartheid.

The Apartheid Structure

Since the first stages of colonization of South Africa, by the Dutch, and later the British at the beginning of the 19th Century, black workers have provided by sweat and toil the white man's profits. This is still the situation today. In real terms, black workers are worse off now than they were at the end of the Second World War, despite the very rapid industrialization that has occurred during this period. This exploitation is at its most systematic level under the apartheid system.

The apartheid system provides the white-run economy with a cheap, controlled and unorganized black labour force. It encompasses an ideological doctrine of white supremacy, but it is the exploitative economics that are the decisive part of the system. The system is maintained by a complex structure of oppressive legislation, backed up by wealth and a military strength, all controlled by the white-only parliament. Some of the main characteristics of the system are important to understand:

1. Population:

Africans	15,057,952	70%	
Asians	620,436	3%	
Coloureds	2,018,453	9%	
Whites	3,751,328	18%	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	
	21,448,169	100%	(1)

2. The Migratory Labour System:

The migratory labour system is a cruel and degrading one. Under it every African belongs to a 'tribal homeland' or 'Bantustan', even though he, his father or even his grandfather may never even have been there. These fragmented 'Homelands' total 13% of the land area of South Africa, the other 87% being allocated to the white population who make up less than 20% of the population. Outside of the homeland, the African is classified as a migratory worker, with virtually no rights. There is little industry or employment in the homelands, which are effectively labour reservoirs for white owned industry. Thus the overwhelming majority of African males become 'migrant workers', working for periods of 9 to 12 months in the white areas, separated throughout that time from their families, left back in the homelands, by hundreds of miles. The migrant workers are obliged to sign a contract with the labour bureaux, who control all African labour outside of the homelands. In most cases the labour bureaux authorities deduct money from the meagre earnings of the migrant workers, which is returned to them at the end of their contract.

Many migrant workers come from outside South Africa, in particular from Mozambique and Malawi. The economies of these nations need the money the South African companies pay them for their workers.

(1) 1971 Survey of Race Relations in South Africa.
Published by the South African Institute for Race Relations.

3. The Pass Laws:

Every African is required to carry a reference book, most commonly called a pass. He must carry this pass 24 hours a day. The pass book contains sections on tax, employment, residential permit, etc. All these sections must be kept fully up to date. Any African can be stopped at any time by a policeman to check his pass. Each year well over half a million Africans are brought before the courts for pass offences. They risk stiff fines, imprisonment or removal back to their homeland. In many cases this means removal to an area they have never seen before in their lives. Thus, the pass laws provide the mechanism and deterrent necessary for the implementation of the migratory labour system. From July 1970 to June 1971 615,075 people were sent to trial for pass offences. (1)

4. Labour Legislation:

Africans cannot form registered trade unions or negotiate wage and other conditions. Their interests are supposed to be represented by white officials who sit on the negotiating bodies. Wage determinations are decided by the employers, government and white trade unions (in those industries where these exist). Africans are not allowed to strike. In the summer of 1973 the government proposed legislation to legalize some African strikes under certain conditions. These conditions are so complex and restrictive, with many let out clauses for the government, that it seems unlikely that any legal strike will take place under them. The penalty for Africans striking illegally is a maximum of a £500 fine and three years imprisonment. The term strike is broadly defined to cover other actions, such as go-slows, etc.

5. Job Reservation:

Africans, Asians and Coloureds are severely restricted in the jobs they are allowed to do. Under a variety of job reservation measures, skilled and managerial work is reserved for white workers. Whatever the qualifications of a black worker, he is denied jobs in these fields because of the colour of his skin. Although job reservation does produce minor difficulties for employers, due to the grave lack of white skilled labour, it is fully implemented by them and frequently forms part of the demands of the white unions. It is the government however that has complete control over the job reservation system and has the power to grant temporary exemptions in areas of white labour shortage. In this way the jobs are reserved for the whites, and if a recession occurs it is the black worker who loses his job. An example of the extent of job reservation is indicated by the racial composition of

Apprentice Contracts/....

(1) 1972 Survey of Race Relations

Apprentice Contracts. In 1970 contracts registered in all industries were: (1)

<u>Whites</u>	<u>Coloureds</u>	<u>Asians</u>	<u>Africans</u>
8983	1626	353	nil

Under the 1956 Industrial Conciliation Act, the Minister of Labour has the power through the Industrial Tribunal (a body of five government appointees) to investigate "any undertaking, industry, trade or occupation or class of work" and to make a recommendation as to whether a colour bar should be applied and in what form.

6. Wages: £1.00=R1.70

Of course, the level of wages are a vital factor for the whole of the South African population. Here there are two particular facts which highlight the overall situation. Firstly, that the differential between black and white wages is increasing steadily and shows no signs of slackening. Secondly, that approximately 70% of the black population lives below the poverty datum level. It is this second factor that has been given great publicity in Britain (see section on British Investment) and needs clarification. The poverty datum level (PDL) is the calculated level of wages a family in South Africa needs to survive. Compare it to the fuel a machine needs to run on and you won't go far wrong. It is nothing more than a survival level that keeps the worker in a fit state to work. Anything from a broken window, crockery, a pair of shoes, medical expenses, paper stationary, books, cleaning materials, to cigarettes, beer and entertainment are not allowed for.

In mining the ratio of white-black earnings is over 20:1. A leading South African economist, Dr Francis Wilson, who has published an extensive study of the gold mining industry in 1972, concluded that in real terms black cash wages in the industry in 1969 were no higher than they were in 1911, while real cash earnings of whites had increased by 70%. (2) In manufacturing, construction and public authority sections, the white-black ratio is 6:1, and in agriculture, where the government refuses to publish statistics, many black workers receive less than R10 a month.

7. The Franchise:

Blacks in South Africa do not have the vote. The all-white Parliament is elected only by whites. Previous legislation that permitted a small number of blacks to have indirect representation has been rescinded. Thus, the Parliament, with control of defence, the judiciary, internal security and the economy, is representative only of the white minority.

(1) Workers Under Apartheid, Alex Hepple, 2nd edition 1970

(2) *ibid.*

8. Legislation:

Since the Nationalist Party came to power in 1948, they have introduced a battery of oppressive legislation to implement their apartheid policies. Much of this legislation deals with the implementation of the points described, but another sector has been developed to enable the State to suppress any opposition to its policies. It is police state legislation and it has grown more and more severe as opposition grows. Laws such as the falsely named Suppression of Communism Act (1950), and the Terrorism Act (1967) put the police outside the control of the courts (who themselves are far from neutral), provide for indefinite detention without trial, and have such broad terms of reference and definitions that they can be and are used to detain and prosecute virtually anyone the Government wishes. The all-white parliament has a very limited right to information on detainees, conditions, etc., but the rights of detainees and their relatives are non-existent. Laws which legally debar all political parties from being multi-racial have been passed to outlaw the African National Congress and the Pan-African Congress. As a result of imprisonment, hangings, detentions without trial, house arrest and bannings, massive numbers of those opposing the apartheid system have been victimised.

9. Health and Education:

There is the most severe discrimination in both these areas. In Health, there is one white doctor for every 400 whites, and one African doctor for every 44,400 Africans. (1) Infant mortality rates amongst Africans is estimated at 10 times that for whites (the South African Government does not produce figures for Africans); one in four African children die before the age of one, mainly as a result of malnutrition. In many areas the level is much higher, and the Johannesburg Star of 10th May 1969 reported that a survey in 1966 indicated that half the children born in a typical African reserve died before reaching the age of five. (2)

Education is segregated and highly discriminatory. The 1969-70 per capita expenditure on white school education was R282 and for Africans R17. Nearly 95% of Africans are forced to drop out of school before they reach secondary school. For whites education is free and compulsory, for Africans it is neither. All higher education has been segregated with the establishment of inferior tribal colleges for black students. In 1969 at all institutions of higher education, the African enrolment accounted for 5.05% of the total, and the majority of these were on correspondence courses. (3)

(1) 1972 Survey of Race Relations

(2) UN Special Article by Dr. Raymond Hoffenberg, "Inequality in Health Care in South Africa".

(3) UN Journal "Objective Justice" Vol 3, No 3 (1971)

African Trade Unions

African unions have been in existence from the early part of this century. They clearly represent a threat to white supremacy so every attempt has been made to intimidate and crush them. In almost all cases Africans have tried to build South African trade unionism on a non-racial basis, it is the white unions who have rejected this. Thus, when TUCSA (Trades Union Council of South Africa) excluded Africans from membership in 1954, African workers combined to form the non-racial South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU). The majority of Unions affiliated to SACTU were African but there was no rejection of white workers.

African trade unions cannot be legally registered and therefore receive no protection from the law. Between 1960 and 1965 over 160 SACTU officials from different levels were gagged by the Government. Sometimes this meant a banning order, or house arrest; more often it was detention under the Suppression of Communism Act or similar laws; frequently it has meant long prison sentences and in some cases, execution. In addition it has meant the confiscation of material, raiding of offices, denial of access, breaking up of meetings and many other obstructions of normal trade union practices.

Africans are also denied the right to strike. But strikes have taken place:

On August 12th 1946, 74,000 African miners struck for more money, and 13 mines stopped work. The Government's was to send in the police and army to force the striking miners back down the pits. Over 1,200 miners were injured and many were killed. (1)

In January 1961, 194 bus drivers and conductors went on strike in Port Elizabeth, demanding a minimum wage of £1 per day. The bus drivers were arrested but pressure was exerted by black workers through a bus boycott and the workers were awarded an increase. They were however fined for striking illegally, and subsequently ten of them were imprisoned under the Suppression of Communism Act. (2)

In April 1969, 3,000 black dock workers in Durban struck for higher wages. Armed police and the Special Branch moved in and all the strikers were sacked and given four hours to leave Durban. After screening, 450 were reinstated but the others lost their jobs, their homes and access to other work. (3)

These are just examples of the difficulties faced by Africans who strike.

(1) "Labour in the South African Gold Mines 1911-1969", Dr. Francis Wilson, Cambridge University Press.

(2) Workers Under Apartheid

(3) ibid

It is thus even more remarkable that at the beginning of 1973 over 100,000 workers went on strike, mainly in Durban, and tens of thousands have subsequently struck. The strikes began in October 1972 with the Cape Town stevedores. In November 1972 Durban dockers went on strike. By January 1973, workers on strike included brick and textile workers, bus, train and rail workers, with many other industries being affected. The peak of the strikes came in February 1973 when bakeries, laundries, textile mills and milk bottling plants were stopped in Cape Town, and Durban's ship-building yards and municipal services were brought to a halt. During this month over 100 factories alone were affected. Subsequent strikes have been organised by metal workers, meat porters, building workers, blast-furnacemen, clothing workers, etc. Significantly the strikes were biggest where SACTU was strongest at its peak in the sixties. This new wave of industrial action is more widescale than anything since the actions following the Sharpeville massacre. A new mood of militancy and organisation is emerging and this is an important development in the fight against apartheid.

The history of African trade unions is a brave one. Led by SACTU, black workers have acted in the best traditions of trade unionism.

The White Unions

The white trade unions in South Africa have always been primarily concerned with protecting their own privileged position. Because they represent only white workers, a small proportion of the total workforce, and that the level of unionisation amongst white workers is very low (approximately 28%), they have relied heavily on government protection.

There are two main white confederations of trade unions:

The Confederation of Labour: Consists entirely of white workers and is openly racist and discriminatory. The Confederation includes unions such as the Mineworkers Union (extremely right-wing) and the Iron, Steel and Allied Industries Union. It has fought consistently for job reservation and wage discrimination and has refused to assist in the training of black workers for skilled work. The Confederation is strongly supported by the Government but has virtually no international links. It accounts for a major proportion of organised white workers.

The Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA): which is ruled by a white executive also has black workers (only Coloured and Indian) in membership. When formed in 1954 it decided to exclude African Unions, partly because of Government pressure, but this decision also reflected the attitude of the white unions in membership. African membership has always been a controversial issue, separate decisions to expel Africans have been taken on three separate occasions. It is fair to say that in the main white rank and file have been against African membership and this is reflected in the disaffiliations TUCSA suffered when it tried to admit Africans both in 1967 and '69.

TUCSA's leadership have always claimed to have the interests of Africans at heart. This is partly for international consumption, where they are concerned about their growing isolation. Additionally they would like to bring under white leadership, Africans in semi-skilled work who pose a potential threat to the white privileged position.

It should be made clear that whilst all workers have the right to protect their interests, the white unions in South Africa are doing so by teaming up with the employers and the Government to maintain a structure of exploitation which benefits those groups alone. It is rather similar to the way in which most unions registered under the Industrial Relations Act in Britain work with the employers. Indeed the black workers who are in TUCSA, the Coloured and Indians, have failed to benefit from membership of a white-led confederation. Since they came into membership in 1954 the wage gap between them and white workers has widened considerably. TUCSA has not lifted a finger to assist African trade unions or their members when they have been under Government attack. In the widespread government attacks on SACTU, when workers were being suppressed and detained, there was no voice of protest from TUCSA. On many occasions, while African trade unionists have been risking their futures by striking, white workers have been acting as blacklegs.

TUCSA's policy reveals their true position. They are in favour of white immigration into South Africa, of increased foreign investment and of the supply of foreign arms to South Africa.

They oppose all boycotts of South Africa. All these policies are contrary to the policy of SACTU and against the interest of black workers.

Perhaps the most biting example of TUCSA's failure to support African workers is the fact that between 70% and 80% of African workers earn less than the poverty datum level. This after 20 years of the most intensive industrialisation. It is in this light that TUCSA's hollow concern for black workers should be seen.

The British TUC has, for many years, maintained relationships with TUCSA to the exclusion of SACTU. This position is now being challenged; for it is vital that the TUC severs relationships with the enemies of the African working class and builds up solid fraternal bonds with SACTU and the individual non-racial unions in South Africa.

British Economic Links

The West, and Britain in particular, have a high stake in the apartheid system.

60% of all foreign investment in South Africa is British, this is currently estimated to total over £2000 million. The average rate of return on this investment is 13%, making it the most profitable area for British capital. Three out of the top ten South African firms are mainly British owned, and 25 out of the top 100. In all, over 500 British firms have subsidiaries in South Africa. (1)

22% of South African imports are from Britain and the British market accounts for 29% of South Africa's exports.

The "Guardian" Controversy

It's no surprise that when the Guardian showed the appalling wages paid by British firms that there was an immediate reaction by those firms to justify their presence in South Africa. They rely on the high profits from their South African operations, and would strongly oppose moves to force their withdrawal. Companies acted in different ways. Jim Slater of Slater Walker firstly denied knowledge of the situation and then stated that it would be put right. After a rushed visit by the firm's representatives to South Africa 100% wage increases were announced for the lowest paid workers. It sounds a lot. But it hasn't made a lot of difference to Slater Walker's black employees. After the 100% increase on the lowest grade a single man's wages are £0.98 per week, and a married man's £1.39. (2) Remember that even the poverty level is estimated at £11 per week.

Companies in the labour intensive industries were in more difficulties. Mining bosses for instance have been building vast fortunes from the slave conditions for decades. If they paid a decent wage their profits would be eaten away. Their response was to claim either that the black worker was stupid or that he did not want more.

These attitudes were well summed up by the Chairman of the United Kingdom South Africa Trade Association, W.E. Luke, when he told a British Parliamentary Sub-Committee:

"There is a tendency with black Africans, if you pay them more money, to put in less time. He will absent himself as soon as he gets enough."

and "We do still live in a capitalist world and we do expect to get a return on our investment which we do not do if we pay a high wage to incompetent labour."

All the public pressure that has recently been exerted on British companies has either resulted in marginal wage increases of the type of racist utterances above. What will happen next year if the public pressure is not maintained? Will these marginal

increases/.....

(1) "The South African Connection", First, Steele & Gurney, published by Penguin, 1973.

(2) "The Guardian" 14th June 1973

increases still be sustained? It must be remembered that even at this time the wage gap is getting bigger, that British companies are continuing to implement job reservation, segregation, wage discrimination, the migratory labour system and in general are contributing vast amounts to the apartheid system and to Vorster's exchequer.

The organisations of black South African workers and people have all called for a boycott of South Africa, and the withdrawal of British capital. Unless the continued presence of British capital in South Africa is opposed, particularly by the labour movement, the exploitation of black South Africans will continue and the struggle to overthrow the apartheid system will be made more difficult.

British Redundancies

There are many examples of capital being transferred from Britain to South Africa, with British workers being laid off as one of the results. All the major multi-nationals such as BLMC, ICI, Rio Tinto Zinc, GEC, and even the British Steel Corporation are involved. American firms such as Fords are also considering cutting down their operations in Britain as a result of expanding their South African activities.

There is also pressure within South Africa for greater "South Africanisation". This means more and more parts are made in South Africa itself. Now it is often cheaper to manufacture in South Africa and export to Britain rather than manufacture here. Other British workers have felt the effect of the South African link. In several industrial disputes parts have been brought in from South Africa to weaken the position of the industrial action here; Fords and Pilkington disputes are examples of this growing trend. This is a very real threat to the interests of British workers.

The lessons of the transfer of British investments to South Africa are clear for British trade unionists. Continued investment of British capital there weakens our own negotiating position, threatens redundancies and helps the employer in undermining industrial action.

Demands for the withdrawal of British capital, and certainly a complete block on new capital are an urgent necessity. Coupled with this must be demands for the full recognition of African unions. SACTU has called for the withdrawal of all foreign capital and for the right to organise and for free collective bargaining. Interests of British and South African workers are at one, but the need for action is very pressing.

Emigration

Over a quarter million whites of the total 3½ million have emigrated to South Africa since 1961. About 20,000 whites emigrate from Britain each year, the largest number by far from any single country.

White skilled immigrants are vital to the South African economy. In 1968 the Minister of Immigration and his deputy told a Nationalist Party Conference that "without the annual immigration intake of between 28,000 and 30,000, South Africa would not be able to maintain the normal 5½% economic growth rate set out by her planners". Dr. Mulder claimed that between 12,000 and 13,000 skilled workers vacancies could be filled by non-whites but "the Government rejects the idea". (1)

This is the kernel of the issue. Through job reservation, the prohibitions on vocational and artisan training for blacks, the criminal sanctions imposed on Africans who take strike action or go-slows; through the refusal to permit African workers to form recognised trade unions which have status as negotiating bodies; by the pass laws and the use of migrant labour on the mines and on the farms; by the recent laws which deprive Africans of any residence rights in cities; by such means the Government maintains the 15 million blacks as a vast reservoir of unskilled cheap labour. It is on this exploited labour that the whole apartheid economy is built.

In Britain there are at least seven permanent recruiting centres - in Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow, Liverpool, Sheffield, Newcastle and London - run by the South African government. In addition recruiting teams from South Africa arrive here regularly. In recent years these have included teams hoping to recruit bus drivers, print-workers, telephone engineers and electricians. In situations of high redundancy, e.g. after the Rolls Royce collapse, recruiting teams actively seek to cream off the top skilled workers. Many British companies actively encourage emigration to South Africa, and Barclays Bank have gone to the trouble of publishing a booklet advising prospective emigrants.

Coupled with the emigration of skilled personnel, is the transfer of expertise in the form of the transfer of licenses and patents and other expertise built up in Britain that is urgently needed by the South African economy. Many South African projects are still designed on British drawing boards and executed as a result of British know-how. Those who benefit from this accumulation of technical skills are the white section of the population.

(1) "The South African Trade Union Movement", ANC Publicity Bureau

Examples of activity undertaken by trade unionists

Arms to South Africa

In February 1971, after much controversy in the country and Commonwealth the Tory Government decided to sell 7 Westland Wasps helicopters to South Africa. At that time the management of Westlands were assuring workers that the order books of Westlands were full. It is understandable that, in spite of this, there was some concern by Westland workers about taking action against the South African order. The local AUEW-TASS branch at Yeovil Westlands stated that it would not work on the helicopters at this time. In the autumn at a meeting of the Westlands shop steward combine the job situation was far from secure. Workers at the Hayes factory in West London had been told that the factory was to be closed and jobs transferred to the West Country factories. It was at this meeting that the combine decided not to work on the arms order. In the winter of 1971 the South Africans confirmed the order but still no attempt was made by the management to put it into production. The following summer the AUEW Conference decided to oppose the sale of arms to South Africa and to support any worker who refused to work on arms to South Africa. The clear and principled stand taken by the Westland shop stewards has directly contributed to the current situation that despite it being Tory policy no arms have been sold to South Africa since they took office in 1970.

The fears of workers that they may lose jobs as a result of taking similar actions are very real fears. In the above case, an understanding of the importance of not making these weapons of oppression was firmly grasped by the shop stewards. Workers asked to take this form of action should be provided with full information, so that they can fully appreciate the long term mutual interests of British and South African workers.

An Example of Activity by Local Trade Unionists

In March 1971 it became known that a shipment of South African coal was being sent to Bristol docks. The local NUM in Somerset were alerted of this and they contacted the South Wales NUM and Bristol Trades Council. Union approaches were made to the dockers, NUR in Bristol. As a result of the concerted action of all the above, the dockworkers threatened to black the ship which was sufficient to divert it from Bristol and it was blacked at all other British ports. Many ports in Northern Europe also blacked it and it was not clear whether it was unloaded eventually or whether the load was dumped in the sea.

Union Investments

In 1970 many Unions held large holdings in British companies with South African interests. During 1971 several unions took action on these holdings including APEX, NUJ, ASLEF and CPSA. At the TUC Congress that year a motion was passed urging Unions not to hold such investments and the following year Congress instructed the General Council to sell all its shares in firms with South African subsidiaries. Many of these shares have now been sold and the TUC has also withdrawn from the Trades Union Unit Trust which has several million pounds invested in such companies.

The stimulus given to the campaign by this action has resulted in a number of other unions such as SLADE&PW, UPW and ASTMS taking action. However the most important case is that of the General and Municipal Union whose 1973 Conference decided to sell all its shares in these companies, the market value of which is over £2 million. Many Unions, especially the NUR and the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation appear to continue to have large holdings in firms with South African subsidiaries, as does the Trades Union Unit Trust.

Emigration and Union Links

It is the policy of the TUC and the three major international trade union confederations, the ICFTU, WFTU and WCL, to oppose and discourage the emigration of workers to South Africa.

In 1947 the Musicians Union instituted a ban on its members playing in South Africa and have successfully implemented it since. ACTT have a similar ban. The National Union of Mine-workers broke off its links with its South African counterpart many years ago as did the AEU (now the AUEW/Eng. Section) in the fifties. Many unions still retain links, in particular the Boilermakers. These links, often tied up with membership of trade union internationals, enable workers emigrating from Britain to obtain a union card in South Africa and be assured of a card if they return.

Nearly all Union journals refuse to publish advertisements for jobs in South Africa. Many Unions actively discourage their members from emigrating to South Africa. Nevertheless, many adverts for jobs in South Africa continue to appear in the British press (see section on "Emigration"). Thus it is vital that activity is undertaken at both a national and local level.

Several activities have been organised against South Africa's recruiting offices but these need to be intensified. These types of action, and the local publicity that they receive are important in creating an atmosphere of continued hostility to the presence of these offices.

Campaigns on Political Prisoners

Dave Kitson, a member of AUEW-TASS (then DATA), was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment for political offences in 1964. A Kitson Committee was formed in the Union to campaign for Dave's release. Committees in local divisions were formed and the campaign built up. Money was raised to enable his wife to visit him in South Africa. As the campaign progressed it naturally widened its terms of reference and as a result there is now at all levels of TASS a deep understanding of the exploitation in Southern Africa and the need for British trade unionists to act.

Towards the end of 1972 the son of a Coventry T&GWU shop stewards convenor was held in solitary confinement in South Africa, accused under the notorious Terrorism Act. His name is Sean Hosey, and in March 1973 he and five others similarly accused were brought to trial in Pretoria. His father, John Hosey and large sections of the labour-movement in Coventry joined together to form a Defence

Committee for the release of Sean Hosey and the other Pretoria Six. Support poured in from the labour movement in the Midlands, public meetings were held and money raised which enabled John Hosey to go to South Africa to observe the two month trial. The defendants were found guilty, and sentences ranging from 5 to 15 years were passed. Sean Hosey received five years. There is no remission for political prisoners in South Africa.

The AAM Trade Union Committee

The Trade Union Committee of the Anti-Apartheid Movement works with all sections of the labour movement to promote understanding and action by trade unionists in support of the oppressed peoples of Southern Africa and against all British links with the white minority regimes.

Some twenty trade unionists, from a variety of unions, and including the London representative of SACTU, sit on the committee and are available to speak at branch and divisional meetings, etc. Work is undertaken on particular campaigns such as are described above but also on a general basis including meetings at trade union conferences, providing research and general propaganda material, lobbying union leaders, etc. The Committee is serviced by a member of AAM staff who is responsible for initiating action and steps are being taken to extend contact with shop stewards and union branches. 18 National Unions are affiliated to the Movement, as are 30 Trades Councils - another area of expanding activity. National affiliation is on a sliding scale from £5-£50 and for Trades Councils and divisional, branch and shop stewards committees £2.

The Committee welcomes enquiries from interested trade unionists as it is seeking to expand its work as widely as possible. An affiliation form is included at the end of this handbook.

Opposes the sale of arms to South Africa;

(Insert p.19)

Urges affiliated Unions not to invest in firms with South African subsidiaries (the TUC has sold its own shares in such firms);

Opposes any sell-out of the peoples of Rhodesia;

Strongly discourages British workers from emigrating to South Africa;

Calls for the breaking of links with white-only South African trade unions;

Supports, both morally and materially, the Southern African liberation movements.

APPENDIX I

TUC Policy on Southern Africa

(as adopted at the 1969, 1971 and 1972 Trades Union Congresses)

A delegation of the TUC General Council, consisting of Vic Feather, Jack Jones, Cyril Plant and Danny McGarvey, accompanied by Allan Hargreaves, the Secretary of the TUC International Committee, visited South Africa from 6-20 October 1973. This was in spite of the opposition to the visit voiced by some members of the General Council and other leading Trade Unionists. SACTU and the National Committee of the AAM also called on the delegation not to go. Renewed efforts were made to have the visit called off following the shooting by the South African police of 11 unarmed miners at Carletonville on 11 September 1973, only a few weeks before the visit was due to begin. The visit went ahead, its purpose being stated to be:

"(i) An enquiry into the organisation of South African unions, (ii) and in particular the part African workers play, or could play, in the conduct of industrial relations and wage determination."

Fairly extensive sections of the 40-page report prepared by the delegation deal with the oppressive and discriminatory nature of the migratory labour system, the pass laws and industrial legislation, and the delegation were clearly representing the view of the British trade union movement when they said in their press statement at the end of the visit:

"...apartheid offends against the dignity of man and its continuation cannot be justified."

However, the report makes no mention of SACTU and only one page is devoted to unregistered (i.e. African) unions. Perhaps because of this the proposals presented at the end of the report leave much to be desired.

Proposal 1

The continued opposition to further British investment in South Africa, unless British firms operating in South Africa show that they are encouraging the growth of African unions.

Criticism

As the TUC report itself shows, the most basic freedom of all workers - the right to organise in a union - is not the only freedom the African worker is denied. If foreign firms granted trade union recognition to their African workers, job reservation, the migratory labour system, the pass laws, etc., would still remain. When have employers anywhere encouraged their workers to organise except into tame company unions? The report suggests that "if non-white people are given free democratic rights in industry" all will be well. But why should they only be given freedom in industry?

Proposal 2

The General Council should declare firmly against white emigration to South Africa.

Criticism

Although the TUC has already declared itself opposed to emigration of white workers to South Africa by resolutions adopted at the 1969, 1971 and 1972 Congresses, a reaffirmation of this policy by the General Council would be welcome. What, however, is needed is some firm action on implementation - one possibility is the "blackening" by printers of advertisements for jobs in South Africa.

The TUC should also press for the amendment of the Race Relations Act to outlaw such advertising.

Proposal 3

That the ICFTU and the TUC should seek to establish a national African trade union centre in South Africa to encourage the growth of African unions.

Criticism

This seems to be a somewhat pious hope. If the centre were to operate outside South Africa's racialist laws, the South African Government would not allow it to continue for long. If it were to operate within the apartheid laws its effects would be counter-productive. Instead, support should be given to the existing authentic organisations of African workers and their political organisations.

Proposal 4

The ICFTU and TUC should set up a committee in London and raise a fund of "say £100,000" internationally to help organisation in South Africa by TUC favoured bodies.

Criticism

The 1973 ILO Workers Section Conference Against Apartheid (see Appendix II) adopted a comprehensive resolution on South Africa which was supported by Cyril Plant as the TUC representative. So why is a new international body required when the TUC is already pledged to back ILO action? The unity on opposition to apartheid forged by the major world federations of trade unions (ICFTU, WCL and WFTU) into the resolution adopted at Geneva in June 1973 should not be thrown so rapidly aside, for this would be a disservice to the African workers. Instead, the TUC and ICFTU should support the implementation of the ILO resolution.

On 2 May 1974 a special TUC conference of union general secretaries and presidents was called to discuss the delegation's report - "Trade Unionism in South Africa". Despite strong opposition from a number of union representatives - notably ASTMS, the Textile and Garment Workers and AUEW (TASS) - Jack Jones, summing up on behalf of the delegation, said:

"The delegation's proposals are not opposed to ILO policy, they are as much in line with that policy as they can be, under the circumstances. The General Council plans to go ahead with the collecting of money to assist trade union projects in South Africa."

Who has given the TUC General Council a mandate to do this since the report has never been discussed by a TUC Congress?

TUC affiliated unions at all levels should bring pressure on the General Council to implement agreed TUC and ILO policies. As John Gaetsewe, Western European Representative of SACTU, said in a statement issued on 22 April 1974:

"We believe that the vast majority of trade unionists in Britain and elsewhere honestly desire to assist the oppressed people and workers of South Africa....If you want to help us, talk to us and let us work out together how to combat the vicious apartheid system, starting with the policies of the International Trade Union Conference Against Apartheid."

APPENDIX II

International Trade Union Policy

At an International Trade Union Conference on Apartheid organised by the Workers' Section of the International Labour Organisation and held in Geneva in June 1973 a resolution on Apartheid was unanimously adopted. The Conference, which represented over 180 million trade unionists, decided on the following:

A call to all governments to sever political, commercial and diplomatic links with South Africa and to stop public and private investment in South Africa, as well as emigration;

An urgent recommendation that trade union organisations throughout the world pressure their governments to refuse to sell arms to and close their ports and airports to South Africa;

A pledge of support to the oppressed workers of South Africa and in particular: a campaign for the recognition of African trade union rights and the right to strike; action to procure the release of all trade union and political prisoners; a call for the end of the migratory labour system; and the raising of material support for the workers and people of South Africa through their authentic trade union and political organisations;

A campaign to:

- oppose emigration to South Africa;
- put pressure on economic groups which operate in South Africa and boycott the loading and unloading of ships and planes to or from South Africa and Namibia;
- boycott all sporting and cultural links with South Africa.

Establish national trade union committees against apartheid and the racist and colonial regimes in order to implement the resolution;

To commence a world-wide week of action beginning December 10, 1973, the twentyfifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

The motion provided for consultation between the Preparatory Committee for the Conference and the UN Special Committee on Apartheid in the implementation of the Resolution.

APPENDIX III

Anti-Apartheid Movement Policy

The Anti-Apartheid Movement works in relation to all the white-ruled territories in Southern Africa. These are South Africa, Namibia (formerly South West Africa), Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and the Portuguese colonies of Angola, Mozambique and Guine (in West Africa.) The regimes in these countries are closely related and to a large degree interdependant in the military, economic and political fields.

South Africa rules Namibia in defiance of the UN and the World Court of Justice and it has troops in Rhodesia and Mozambique. The illegal Smith regime also from time to time has given military support in Mozambique and it relies heavily on Portugal and South Africa to evade sanctions. Portugal needs South Africa's military support as well as the economic support given by South Africa through the Cabora Bassa Dam project. Portugal has 160,000 troops defending its colonies against the liberation movements and thus becomes an important ally of South Africa in preserving white minority rule.

The liberation movements in the different territories have all tried to achieve political independence by peaceful means. In the case of the African National Congress of South Africa, this process began in 1912 and the ANC conducted nearly 50 years of non-violent opposition before it was banned and outlawed in 1960 following the Sharpeville massacre. The other liberation movements have all suffered similar repression when they tried to protest peacefully and have had no alternative but to take up armed struggle. It should be remembered that Southern Africa was conquered by colonial powers through the force of arms and apartheid and the other minority regimes are maintained in this way.

The Anti-Apartheid Movement supports these liberation movements and all other forms of opposition to the minority regimes. In parts of the Portuguese colonies FRELIMO and the other liberation movements have established liberated areas where new social structures of a cooperative nature are being developed. Material aid to assist this process is an important area where we can help.

The Anti-Apartheid Movement calls for:

1. A total boycott of South Africa including economic, military, cultural, sporting and academic boycotts;
2. An intensification of sanctions against the illegal Smith regime in Rhodesia and No Independence Before Majority Rule (NIBMAR);
3. The end of NATO material support for Portugal's wars in Africa;
4. The withdrawal of South Africa from Namibia and for the withdrawal of all British investments there;

AFFILIATION AND MEMBERSHIP FORMS

.....Trade Union
Branch/Division/Shop Stewards Committee/Trades Council* has
decided to affiliate to the Anti-Apartheid Movement. *Delete
where necessary.

I enclose the sum of £2 plusdonation to cover a years
affiliation.

Authorising signatory or stamp

Name:.....Position.....

Address:.....

.....
Send to the Anti-Apartheid Movement

TheTrade Union
Branch/Division/Shop Stewards Committee/Trades Council* is
interested in affiliating to the Anti-Apartheid Movement and
wishes to receive further information. *Delete where necessary

Name:.....Position.....

Address:.....

.....
Send to the Anti-Apartheid Movement

I wish to become an individual member of the Anti-Apartheid
Movement and enclose my £2 (£1 for apprentices) membership fee
plus £..... donation.

Name:

Union and Position:

Address:.....

.....
Send to the Anti-Apartheid Movement.
89 Charlotte Street
London W.1.
(01-580 5311)