

**BIG
FLAME**

Southern Africa Special 10p

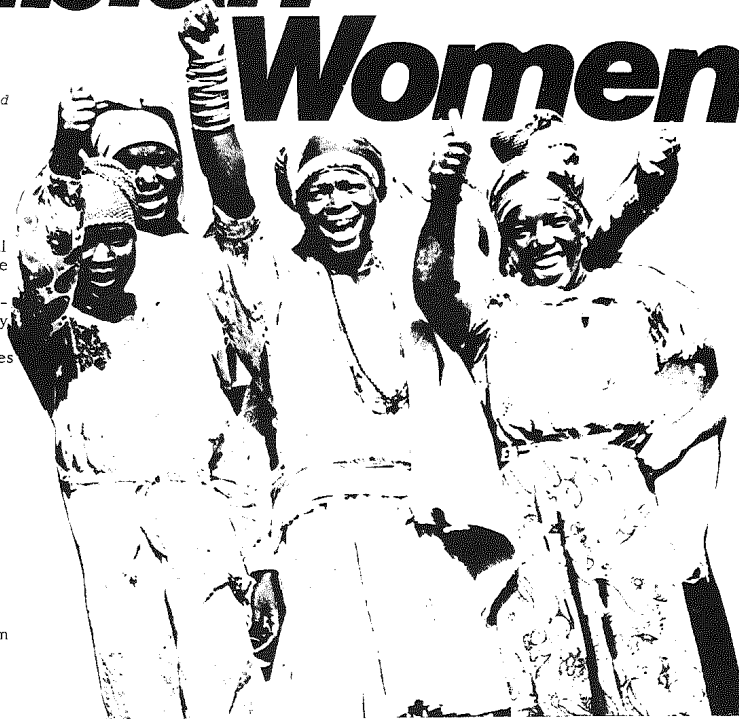
Namibian Women

This article, dealing with women's liberation in the context of the national liberation struggle in Namibia, has been written by Bianca Gawanas of SWAPO. The views expressed are hers, and not those of SWAPO.

Women all over the world are fighting the oppressive structures which exclude them from decision making. However, the forms of women's subordination are not universal. Patriarchal relations need to be analysed in their specific historical contexts. This is particularly true for the struggle of Namibian women to which many of the concepts expressed by Western feminists do not necessarily have any bearing. We reject the narrow view of patriarchal relations which merely locates women's subordinations within the context of male dominance as simply anti-men and therefore divisive. This view fails to speak on behalf of the women of the underdeveloped world and black women even in the West. Socialist feminists, on the other hand, have gone a long way in linking patriarchy to economic structures and explaining women's oppression in terms of class and race as well as gender.

This article attempts to deepen Western feminist understanding of the character of our struggle. As women with a common goal we have a lot to learn from each other's struggles, bearing in mind that our route and priorities differ because of the realities of our particular situations.

The Namibian women's struggle is not simply a woman's struggle but belongs to the Namibian people as a whole, who are fighting for national liberation. We are conscious of ourselves not as women but as black oppressed people. This may sound heresy to some feminists who see men as their main enemy. But once they realise that male oppression is the least of our worries, they will appreciate our involvement in a national liberation struggle. Our primary struggle is for basic human rights. What is a right to choose for women under Apartheid if there is no part of her life that she can call her own? What are equal opportunities for Namibian women if they live in the poverty imposed by the sexist and racist Apartheid structures. As Namibian women we do not deny that black men are able to oppress women but we do stress that



all black Namibians are all as much the products as the victims of race and class oppression. We can't separate our understanding of our sexual oppression from its specific historical context. This is how I wish to examine the situation of black women in Namibia and the way in which they challenge the ideologies which legitimise their oppression.

PRE-COLONIAL TIMES

Patriarchal attitudes in Namibia date back to pre-colonial times. Within traditional Namibian society there was a division of labour between men who reared cattle and hunted, and women who cooked, produced food, milked cows and cared for the family as a whole. Women were subordinate to all males within the family. Commonly men as heads of households had control of the lands and cattle, and although women retained substantial rights and a degree of social autonomy, there were limits on their control and ownership of wealth. Traditional practices such as lobolo (bride-price) - now fairly rare - and polygamy provided structures for male domination. Lobolo put a value on women's labour power. Marriage, even in the absence of lobolo, in an agrarian society turns women into property, conferring her owner the advantages of sexual pleasure, wealth, docile labour power and the production of heirs. Control over a woman's labour and fertility is thus effectively placed in the hands of men, overemphasis upon which transforms their relationship into a mere act of procreation. A woman's failure to bear children gives a man the right to disregard her at will.

COLONIALISM

Under colonialism, traditional ideologies are used to maximise the exploitation of cheap labour for super-profits. S. African colonialism has not only retained oppressive traditional structures but has developed certain aspects to suit its particular needs. In addition it has superimposed sexist and racist structures. The migrant labour system for instance, which forces able-bodied males into wage labour, is based on the division of labour in traditional societies - all males are required to work in the mines and factories thus replacing their cattle rearing function while women are left in the rural areas to perform their traditional tasks. But having destroyed family life, women are made to assume additional burdens formerly borne by men. The system also introduces another factor: since men, because of their prolonged absence, can no longer claim their traditional role as head of the family, women have to take major decisions and bring up their children alone.

This independence is not something we can romanticise about but it does demonstrate women's ability to challenge the pervading oppressive sexual stereotypes. The family is not simply the oppressive structure of Western analysis. Colonial power has split up the Namibian family in the interest of exploitation. The yearning for a family is therefore a longing for security and togetherness in a system which is rife with insecurity, emotional and financial hardships.

Men in the mines and factories receive wages and a better understanding of the system because of the common experience shared with other workers. Influx

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BOARDROOM BATTLE AS J.R. SACKS 6,500 OIL-FROM-COAL WORKERS

The mammoth oil-from-coal plants (SASOL) are South Africa's defiant answer to the threat of oil boycotts. And so, when thousands of SASOL workers joined the political general strike in Nov. '84, the regime made a point of sacking them. Helicopters, shotguns, gas masks, and armoured personnel carriers were brought into the men's hostels while shop-stewards had to jump from the 2nd floor. The man behind the Fluor Corporation, a California construction company which built SASOL, is J. Robert Fluor, a public defender of apartheid. But further right are his shareholders, outraged by J.R.'s training co-operation deal with a Chinese university. It seems that the corporate statutes governing Fluor, drawn up no doubt with a furtive glance towards the enemies of Reaganomics at Berkeley, specifically prohibit the company subsidizing Marxist-Leninist university teachers.

WORKERS POWER

In June 1984, South African Prime Minister P.W. Botha toured Europe, his confidence strengthened by the recent diplomatic agreements with Mozambique and Angola, and the forthcoming elections to the new, three chambered Parliament. His strategy - military might plus slow reform - was containing both the African National Congress (ANC) and the white Conservative Party, sustaining the war in Namibia and Angola while increasing economic pressure to force all neighbouring states to deal with South Africa.

By November '84 - the climax of class struggle so far - 400,000 students and 500,000 workers staged a 2 day political general strike in the Transvaal. South Africa has been in a pre-revolutionary period ever since. For the first time, the regime itself now speaks of apartheid as "outmoded" and strives to present itself as offering genuine reforms.

Now that there is a real prospect of a transfer of power involving the recognised leaders of the liberation struggle - the ANC - we need to look at some of the political debates which offer clues as to the character of the forthcoming revolution. This article will focus on just one of these debates: how should workers relate to the struggle for national liberation?

FOSATU

One starting point for the argument is the speech given by Joe Foster to the 1982 FOSATU Congress. FOSATU was the largest federation of industrially-based independent trade unions; together with the NUM (miners), the FOSATU unions form the core of the new Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) launched in December. As General Secretary of FOSATU, Foster argued:

"All the great and successful popular movements have had as their aim the overthrow of oppressive - most often colonial - regimes. But these movements cannot and have not in themselves been able to deal with the particular and fundamental problem of workers. Their task is to remove regimes that are regarded as illegitimate and unacceptable by the majority.

It is therefore essential that workers must strive to build their own powerful and effective organisation even whilst they are part of the wider popular struggle. This organisation is necessary to protect and further worker interests and to ensure that the popular movement is not hijacked by elements who will in the end have no option but to turn against their worker supporters."

In support of the Polish workers' movement Solidarity, which he saw as struggling "to establish more democratic worker control over their socialist society," Foster stated "... the fact that a country is said to be socialist does not guarantee that workers control their own destiny."

And while recognising both the internal and international credibility of the ANC, Foster characterised it as a "great populist liberation movement".

UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT

In July 1983, the United Democratic Front (UDF) was created inside South Africa, with the blessing of the ANC, as a popular front which aimed to coordinate all organisations campaigning against the new Constitutional Proposals which excluded the African majority. The debate amongst the independent trade unions then focussed on whether working class organisations like trade unions should affiliate.

The UDF itself aimed at gaining a "truly national character" and interpreted this as meaning "we embrace all races, and that we bring together all

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OUR LINE

Big Flame gives unconditional support for progressive national liberation movements (NLMs) which are fighting British imperialism and its main ally, American imperialism. National liberation is often a precondition for fuller social liberation. Our support for NLMs does not depend on their adopting a socialist-feminist programme. We do not, however, support socially reactionary movements such as Islamic fundamentalism (Khomeini).

In Britain, we support broad-based solidarity movements and strive to relate the international issues to the class struggle and social movements in this country, in a concrete way.

We aim to build comradesly relations with the NLMs we support, and think we have much to learn from each other. Without engaging in sustained solidarity work, no left group has the right to criticise an NLM. However, where we are actively involved, we do criticise from a socialist-feminist perspective and aim particularly to support socialists and feminists within the national liberation struggle.

Workers Power

classes. The presence of workers and the middle classes in the UDF is well discernable, but a significant section of the working class in some major independent unions still remains outside our fold." The FOSATU unions stayed out of the UDF, stating that affiliation would be divisive of their own union membership. A much stronger argument came from Dave Lewis, General Secretary of the General Workers' Union (GWU) which organises on the docks and also in the construction industry.

"But the UDF has to ask itself whether its style and tone, whether the language spoken (English), whether the pace at which it's developed, whether its programme, facilitate the fullest participation by working class people. Our members do not feel that way.

"...In those rare cases where the majority of a particular community organisation are in fact working class people, it's possible that these working class members will have little influence at the top of the organisation in the decision making structures of the organisation."

Lewis saw the danger that by affiliating to the UDF, where votes were not based on a mass mandate from the membership of the constituent organisations, the workers would be allowing their interests to be swamped by the prolific voices of all other groups opposed to apartheid. But he did not rule out the possibility of a formal relationship between "a national political/community centre like the UDF, and a national trade union centre". In fact, he alluded to the precedent for this in the affiliation of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) to the Congress Alliance during the 1950s.

The best argument from the UDF-affiliated unions came from Sisa Njikelana, vice president of the South African Allied Workers Union, a COSATU affiliate like the GWU. SAAWU led the 1981 struggle against Rowntrees, and has suffered brutal repression from the regime and the government of the "independent" Ciskei bantustan. Replying to Lewis, he wrote:

"It is questionable whether trade unions, with their accepted ambiguities, will represent the interests of the working class any better or more thoroughly than community organisations based within the residential areas of the same workers who are members of the trade unions.

To conflate the working class with union membership, is to confine the membership of the working class to union membership only, to the exclusion of dependants (husbands, wives, elderly parents and children) of those union members. Non-unionised workers and the unemployed constitute a vast portion of the working class. The community, women's, student, youth and other organisations based within working class communities, are also in a position to express the views of the working class and are also legitimate organisations of

the working class.

It is true that these other mass organisations will include other elements who often participate in the leadership and as activists. But this level of activists, of often petty bourgeois (and sometimes even bourgeois) origins and backgrounds, exist both in the mass organisations and in the trade union movement..."

"...Looking to other revolutionary experiences, such as those in Vietnam and Nicaragua, teaches us that the progressive forces, unlike the 'left' sectarians, drew the broad strata of the population into the revolutionary struggle; and had to struggle for leadership of the democratic organisations of the peasants, small shop owners, professionals, artisans, students and other petty bourgeois strata..."

(The aim should be) "maximum working class participation; and finally working class (not just union) leadership of the broad democratic front"

ANC

The ANC President, Oliver Tambo, has recently welcomed the formation of COSATU. But as recently as June '85, the independent trade unions were virtually ignored in his main report to the Lusaka ANC Consultative Conference.

The major theoretical influence on the ANC is the (pro-Soviet) South African Communist Party. It does recognise the debate, posing it as an argument between the "ultra-left" which is aiming for a socialist revolution now, versus the SACP/ANC who recognise the "two stage" nature of a "national democratic revolution" followed by a "transition to socialism".

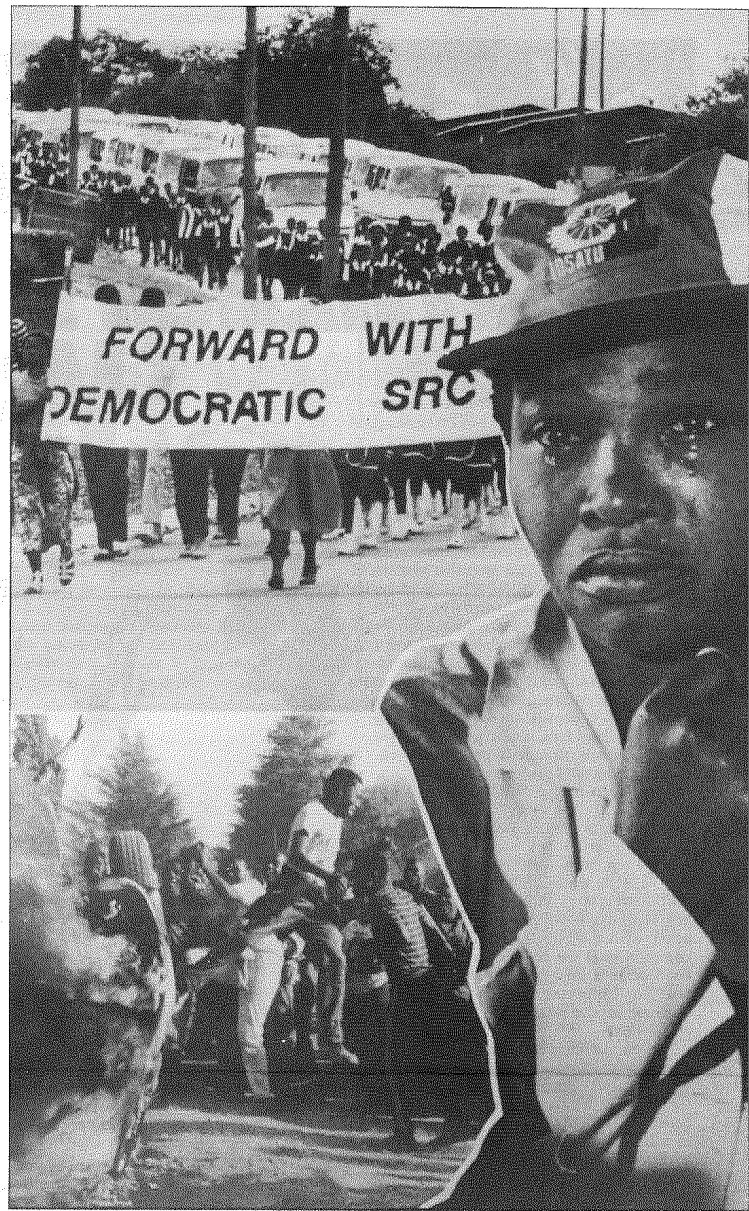
In an article titled "New 'Marxist' Tendencies and the Battle of Ideas in South Africa" (African Communist, Oct. '85), Nyawuza of the SACP manages to attack everyone outside the political sway of the ANC. A paragraph headed "Dangers of Sectarianism"(!) explains:

"The problem with people advocating 'socialism now' is that they expect those Blacks who cannot read or write to run socialist industries and mines. The danger here is that we can easily find ourselves depending on the expertise of the very forces we want to defeat: people who are against our socialist principles. The result would be an economic crisis. And the people will not only be against the new government but against 'socialism' in general because they will see their problems as caused by the socialism we have declared."

Forget about working class leadership of the current struggle in S. Africa, for Nyawuza the workers should not be in power after the revolution! In fact, it is possible for workers to learn whatever skills are needed to takeover the running of society. We have seen this in the brief flickers of popular power during and immediately after the Bolshevik revolution, in the Chilean copper mines, and for a time in Mozambique. The conscious, limited, attempt to foster workers' power in Mozambique came up against many obstacles, including the technocratic attitudes of experts from the German Democratic Republic and other "socialist" states. But at least FRELIMO (the liberation movement in Mozambique) thought the experiment was worth trying!

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

What then is the "national democratic revolution" which the SACP and ANC advocate before speaking of a "transition to socialism"? It is the defeat of the apartheid regime by a combination of popular front mass mobilisation through the UDF, military activity led by Umkhonto We Sizwe (the ANC military wing), and international pressure leading to sanctions against apartheid. Its aim is the creation of a free South Africa with a popular government dedicated to implementing the principles of the "Freedom Charter", the document drawn up in 1955 at the "Congress of the People". There is no question that this would be a spectacular step for-



ward from the horrors of apartheid, which would advance the democratic rights of black workers as well as all other classes and groups oppressed by the regime. But, in an economy dominated by multinational and State-owned industry and mining, subject to the world market and international banking, what economic programme does the Freedom Charter contain?

"The national wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans, shall be restored to the people:

The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole.

All other industries and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people.

All people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions."

The Freedom Charter does not suggest how the workers in a particular industry will exercise control, and the phrase "transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole" may be taken to mean "transferred to ownership by a popular State".

Last September, leading white South African businessmen met with the ANC leadership in the wake of the State of Emergency. Oliver Tambo is reported to have told the industrialists, including Gavin Relly of the giant Anglo-American (which sacked 14,000 black miners last April), that the ANC intended to nationalise some industries, but overall foresaw a mixed private and state economy in a non-racial democracy.

A different note was sounded by Cyril Ramaphosa, General Secretary of the black miners' NUM, when he told the COSATU founding conference "We work-

ers should seize power and build a new society."

CONFRONTING CAPITAL

All this has led some on the British left (SWP...) to issue the call for a workers' party. There is no sign, as yet, that black South African workers share these ideas. Their priority has been the formation of COSATU as a trade union federation to consolidate their growing power. It is quite possible that COSATU, in the spirit of unity which led to its formation, will affiliate to the UDF instead.

If the regime digs in its heels, the confrontation with apartheid will further radicalise the organised workers and school students, who are already naming capitalism as one of their enemies. But the closer the prospect of a socialist revolution in South Africa, the greater the pressure from American and British imperialism to force negotiations. And so, the most likely outcome is indeed a "national democratic revolution".

But an ANC government, on its current programme, would soon face impossible demands: how to give workers power within industry? how to recover from multinationals the wealth that they have robbed? These demands can only be met by confronting capital. If voices like that of Sisa Njikelana were to become dominant, a future ANC government might perhaps confront capitalism and Western imperialism.

But whether inside or outside the ANC's political orbit, workers' own organisations will be the best means of preventing the rise of a new bourgeoisie aligned with international capital, and the best catalyst for workers' own power.

Barry Furness
Liverpool BF

CHRONOLOGY

- '79 - present: rapid growth of independent trade union movement.
- July '83: formation of UDF.
- Jan '84: Nkomati Accords signed.
- June '84: Botha in Europe.
- July '84: Economic crisis.
- Aug '84: Tricameral elections boycotted.
- Sept '84: Rent strikes, riots, attacks on Councillors and police.
- Oct '84: Army in townships.
- Nov '84: Transvaal general strike.
- Jan '85: Eastern Cape erupts.
- March '85: Langa massacres.
- May '85: BTR Sarmool sacks 1000 strikers.
- June '85: puppet gov't in Namibia installed.
- July '85: State of Emergency. World press focussed on South Africa.
- Aug '85: US Sanctions debate. Repeal of Clark amendment. NUM strike. Rubicon I speech by Botha.
- Sept '85: UK vetoes Commonwealth sanctions. Anglo American - ANC talks.
- Nov '85: formations of CCSATU.
- Jan '86: Rubicon II. Savimbi in US.

A Question Of Solidarity

Last November 100,000 people marched in London against apartheid. Meanwhile in S. Africa the struggle intensifies on all fronts - in the workplace, in the townships, in the schools... British banks continue to underwrite apartheid. British companies continue to reap their profits, and trade goes on almost the same. So, there's both the need and the potential for effective solidarity. The Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) in Britain is the only body currently around to organise this nationally. The question is: what shape is it in to deliver?

AAM AGM

The recent AAM AGM had two main features. First was the ongoing row between the leadership and the RCG-dominated City of London AA Group (CLAAG) who were instrumental in setting up the long running SA Embassy Picket. Last year, CLAAG had tried to get a slate of candidates elected to the National Committee. Having defeated this attempt with the help of the ANC, the National Executive later expelled them on the dubious grounds of having mobilised people from out of their area, and having organised actions outside the City of London. Demands for their reinstatement along with resolutions calling for formal commitment to oppose the Prevention of Terrorism Act were rejected at this year's AGM in a meeting packed by both sides.

The second feature was a series of bland resolutions from the NC restating past AAM policy and calling for more of the same actions - recruitment, sales of more AA News, consumer boycotts, demonstrations, etc.

THE BRITISH ROAD TO NOWHERE

These two features are related. Set up 25 years ago with close links with the ANC, the AAM is founded upon an alliance between the CP, Labour Party, Trade Union leaders and the Churches. Its basic strategy has been to make apartheid a moral issue and to work for

Looking back, the African residents of Mandlenkosi township in Beaufort West, in the Eastern Cape, call 18 October "Helicopter Day." Police helicopters were flying low over the barricaded ghetto - a site of concerted popular resistance right through 1985 - when a young boy armed with a catapult climbed onto the roof of a house. "He fired, and amid a fearful clatter the chopper staggered off, one of its rotor blades damaged. The boy" (added the 'Cape Times' report) "is now a folk hero."

the return of a Labour Government committed to sanctions. Only with reluctance has it taken up 'hot' issues such as the Stop the Seventies Tour Campaign. The SA Embassy Picket with its noise and arrests were thought to threaten the AAM's respectable image.

Furthermore, having entered into a monogamous relationship with the ANC, other forces - such as the PAC (who called the Sharpeville demonstration in 1960), the independent trade unions (unlike SACTU, the exiled ANC trade union wing), and ZANU (unlike ZAPU with its fraternal links with the ANC) - have often been downgraded.

All this limited the kinds of solidarity action advocated here. There has been no attempt to link racism in Britain with the racism of apartheid, one obvious basis for a campaign within the black community. Unsurprisingly, many black activists committed to support for the struggle in S. Africa regard AA as a white, middle class and probably racist organisation.

By following every twist and turn of the SACTU line on the independent trade unions in S. Africa - once they were 'yellow unions', now they are a 'most significant development', though not, whatever they may say themselves, to be dealt with except through SACTU - they have passed up the opportunity of a campaign within the labour movement based upon direct links and concrete solidarity between workers here and in S. Africa. (Direct links work: when 2 Fords shop stewards were detained in Port Elizabeth, their union mobilised international contacts made at a meeting in Liverpool for Ford workers all over the world. Under pressure, Ford management in S. Africa acted to get their early release.)

So, while professing a broad strategy, the AAM leadership has in fact narrowed

down its options considerably, while maintaining its control through various bureaucratic devices.

THE ANC

None of this implies that the ANC is not the major liberation force in S. Africa. Rather, it means it is not the only force, and that there are swathes of people who support both the ANC and other organisations such as their unions.

A COUP

One possibility is the replacement of the AAM leadership either through voting in different faces, or through setting up an alternative structure with power residing

A black student applying for university entrance, invited to evaluate his high school education, writes (in careful "best" script): "This education is also useless when the working masses are confronting the machinery of the state - the Caspirs and the Buffels (two sorts of armoured vehicle). This education doesn't teach you the tactics and strategy of urban war, how to make petrol, acid, phosphorus bombs, etc., how to organise students effectively, how to run community organisations."

in delegates from local AA groups. (At present the NC is elected at the AGM by individual AA members and delegates). The problems are that the situation in Southern Africa won't necessarily wait, and that any challenge to the existing leadership is likely to meet an effective ANC veto.

LOCAL WORK

Unlike CND, which has to address itself to the State, there are all sorts of effective local and regional initiatives that can be taken over South Africa. By demonstrating that alternative strategies actually work, these could put the AAM leadership on the spot. Looking at the local level in Manchester, Merseyside and Huddersfield, it's obvious that this is already starting to happen.

GROWTH

Up until early '85, Manchester AA had 6 or 7 members and little public presence. Since then, with the declaration of the State of Emergency in S. Africa, and following a fortnight of action in October including a march against apartheid, a performance by AMANDLA (the ANC cultural ensemble) and the showing of "The Hammer and the Anvil" at public meetings in half a dozen libraries, there have been 9 or 10 new local groups set up in Greater Manchester. Membership of the city group has stabilised at around 30 and is involved in activities around Youth, the City Council, the "Boycott S. Africa not Nicaragua" campaign, and in support of the NW Labour Movement Conference on Southern Africa (see next page). All the local groups will soon meet to discuss areas of cooperation and the setting up of a Greater Manchester structure, to take up other issues such as Namibia.

In Merseyside there has been a similar upswing including three new groups, while the once defunct Huddersfield group has recently reformed and is planning a broad-based local conference to mobilise support.

CONSUMER BOYCOTTS

Nationally this has proved to be AA's greatest success with decisions by the COOP, Littlewoods, BHS and others not to stock SA goods; others are cutting back. Much of this pressure has come from local groups. In Moss Side, for instance, the local supermarket agreed not to restock with SA goods following a delegation from members of Moss Side Action on S. Africa. Having succeeded at the first attempt, it was not immediately obvious what the

next Moss Side target ought to be. As the consumer boycott bites harder, other groups are likely to be in a similar position.

THE BLACK COMMUNITY

In fact the Moss Side group has chosen to make the links between racism in S. Africa and in Britain, planning a major event aimed at local black youth to commemorate the massacres at

In a 'Coloured' (mixed race) high school in Cape Town, a riot police lieutenant demanded that all the pupils attend an assembly. He began by informing them "I come with a message from P.W. Botha" - at which (recounted a teacher present) "all the kids jeered him. They started dancing and singing freedom songs in front of him. Then he said, 'The ball is in your court,' and the kids shouted back, 'We will kick your balls in'."

Sharpeville and Langa.

In Huddersfield, the AA group has mounted a picket of a Barclays branch in a multiracial, working class area (rather than a city centre branch) and followed this up by door to door petitioning. Among the many positive responses was one from an Afro-Caribbean tenant, who said that "A victory against apartheid is a victory against racism that rings all over the world." As in Moss Side, connections have been made over the issue of policing here and in South Africa.

One of the new groups set up in Merseyside is in Liverpool 8 and based upon black activists in the community. In planning and mobilising for the demonstration on Feb. 15th, the Liverpool 8 group has had a major input, insisting that the march be routed down Lodge Lane despite objections from the police.

Merseyside and Manchester AA groups are actively supporting Garnett Korler's anti-deportation campaign (see box).

LABOUR MOVEMENT

AA activists in the N. West have a long history of working within the labour movement with a major conference in 1978 leading to the formation of the NW Trade Union Anti-Apartheid Liaison Committee which organised a series of workplace and public meetings between members of the liberation movements and workers in the North West. More recently two of the Dunne's strikers have been toured around Manchester and Liverpool. In the past general lack of awareness of events in Southern Africa has been an obstacle. Now, however, we are supporting a NW Labour Movement Conference in Manchester on April 19th (see next page) and expect a high level of rank and file interest.

Huddersfield AA, also backing the conference, are planning to get an invitation for SA Trade unionists to speak at a trades council meeting.

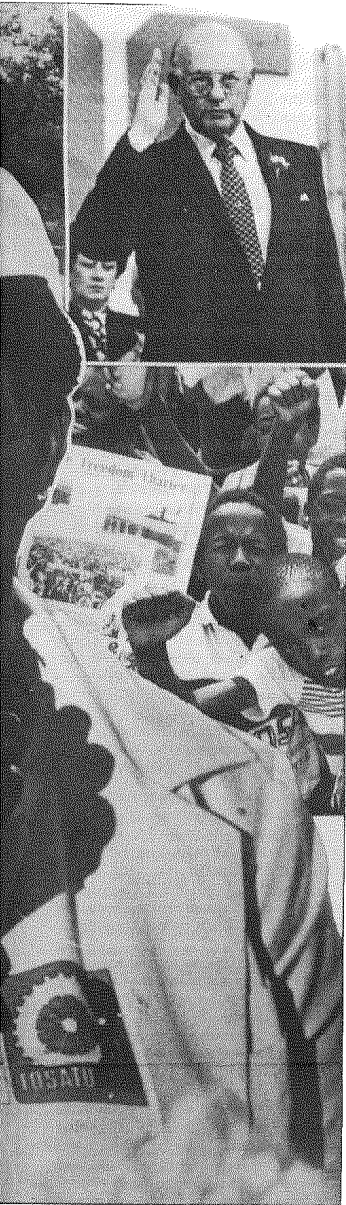
BOYCOTT SOUTH AFRICA NOT NICARAGUA

Both in Manchester and Liverpool, activists are making the connections between imperialism in Southern Africa and in Central America. In Manchester a major benefit is planned for May Day under the "Boycott S. Africa not Nicaragua" banner by the AA group and the Central America Solidarity Campaign. Meanwhile the Merseyside Namibia Support Group, affiliated to M'side AA, has joined with campaigns on Latin America to raise medical aid for Namibia, Nicaragua, and El Salvador via the "People's Health Campaign". Factory gate collections at Fords are planned.

THE MORAL OF THE STORY

Effective local solidarity can be carried out in various ways. The thread that links them all is solidarity, not as a moral issue, but as a range of practical actions - directly related to where people are at - taking up questions such as racism, imperialism, and rank & file trade unionism. In the long run these have got to count for as much or more than moral pressure on the government or body counts on national demonstrations.

Bill Gemmell
Manchester BF



SASRU photocollage

Defend Garnett Korler

Like God, racism works in mysterious ways. Garnett Korler is a black S. African who was involved in the S. A. Students Organisation. His relationship with a white woman in breach of apartheid's immorality laws meant that he left the country to get married in Britain.

After a couple of years his marriage broke down at which point the Home Office stepped in and decided that because he didn't have a relationship with a white woman he ought to be deported to S. Africa.

If this wasn't so serious it would be funny.

By the time you read this paper Garnett will have been interrogated at Manchester Airport (14th Feb.). If this goes against him there will be no right of appeal and he will be liable to almost instant deportation. At this point only a massive public campaign will be effective. Check in the press. Contact the Garnett Korler Defence Campaign, c/o MCR Law Centre, 593 Stockport Rd., Longsight, MCR. Meetings 7:30pm every Weds. in MCR Town Hall.



Namibian Women (cont.)

control legislation prohibits women from leaving the impoverished reserves or so-called homelands, effectively excluding them from wage-earning and trapping them in the rural areas.

URBAN AREAS

For women in the urban areas, life is different. Their right to be there depends on their status as wives or dependants of men. Both black men and women become dependent on the capitalist for subsistence. For women who manage to obtain work, the discrimination on basis of sex, race and class becomes more profound. They get the worst jobs, an extension of their treatment in education and cultural life, and have to work double shifts - firstly doing domestic work in the house of a white woman who is released from her own domestic responsibilities to seek waged employment, and then they still have to do their own domestic work. For single mothers, like rural women who cater for families on their own, the burden is particularly heavy.

ANTI-IMPERIALISM

The sufferings and hardships of Namibian women under Apartheid are well documented. Their experience under a colonial regime has made them understand that together with black men in Namibia they have to fight for the total destruction of colonialism, and its ally, imperialism.

It is in recognition of the fact that women's liberation is not contradictory to but can actually only be achieved through national liberation, that Namibian women participate fully in SWAPO.

The essence of SWAPO's struggle is that it installs within every man, woman and child an awareness, and a consciousness of us being members not of a sectarian group but of a nation. This kind of nationalism is progressive and anti-imperialist since SWAPO recognises that as much as we want to be an independent nation we have to forge solidarity with other nations.

Imperialism knows no boundaries. Whether in Namibia, Nicaragua, or Britain, whatever its methods the unity of imperialism lies in its aim of exploitation and keeping people in subjugation. SWAPO's struggle should therefore be viewed as not solely aimed at the destruction of colonialism in Namibia but as an important factor in the destruction of capitalism and its ally imperialism, and in the transformation of our continent and the world.

It is in this context that the Namibian women's long history of resistance, dating back to the era of German colonialism, can proudly be told. Women might not have fought with guns - an area traditionally set aside as the province of men - but the food they produced for the soldiers and the guns and ammunition they carried showed their equal participation in that struggle. Today, under S. African colonialism, organised resistance by Namibian women takes on

racial, sexual, and national oppression on an equal footing. When people are detained, tortured and killed, the South African regime knows no sex discrimination. When in 1959 it opened fire on a peaceful demonstration against forced removals, when in 1978 the Cassinga massacre left more than 600 dead, women are as much the victims as the men. Whatever demands Namibian women make, they must be for peace, equality, freedom and development for all our people.

CONTRADICTIONS

Although SWAPO recognises that the primary contradiction is between the oppressed and the oppressor, the secondary, non-antagonistic, contradiction between men and women still remains. SWAPO's emphasis is on both men and women fighting together the problem of women's oppression. Meetings are held where women and men discuss the role of the Namibian women with men being forced to recognise that both traditional and colonial attitudes to women need to be combated. This is clearly spelt out in SWAPO's aim and objectives.

The SWAPO Women's Council (which organises women, particularly in the refugee camps, in their daily struggle for health, child care, control over production and reproduction, for participation in political decision-making

and for education) was formed not as an autonomous women's movement concentrating on women's issues but as a wing of SWAPO. The main task facing SWC is not merely to mobilise women to participate in the national liberation struggle but to make them conscious of their rights, abilities and obligations: a consciousness of ourselves as women having rights to make decisions about issues that affect our everyday existence under Apartheid. Our very participation in the struggle poses a challenge to traditional and bourgeois notions of male dominance. This the Namibian men have to accept.

Feminist issues do exist in Namibia but black Namibian women have to work out their own priorities according to their experience and the future society they wish to see. Demands such as control over our bodies and our fertility are luxuries as far as Namibian women are concerned. Poverty, starvation, and a right to a decent living, the fight against violence, are our priorities - these are demands that would make sense for the peasant woman, for the working women - in short for all the black women in Namibia. If I asked a black woman in Namibia today what she wants as a black woman she would surely say: *I want to survive - to live a normal life - to have enough to eat.*



Women Resist New US Angola Tilt

The Reagan administration has recently decided to increase material support (equivalent this time to the amount voted for the anti-Nicaraguan Contras) for the South African backed UNITA sabotage squads currently attacking Angola. That war-torn country is home to the majority of an estimated 80,000+ Namibian exiles under the leadership of SWAPO. In the settlements of Angola, they face the day to day threat of South African attack. Often, however, Angolan civilians are easier targets for the South African military and their UNITA surrogates, whose attacks are intended both to undermine Angola itself and to increase the cost to the Angolans of their solidarity with SWAPO. This

January the Angolan news agency announced that S. African forces had set up joint battalions with UNITA in the south-eastern Cuando Cubango province. In the third week of December, 5 S. African battalions entered Angola, committing the now common atrocities against Angolan civilians.

WOMEN IN EXILE

While MPLA-led Angola continues its hospitality to SWAPO, the movement is able to cater for the needs of the exiles, many of them children, in its care. Much of the administration of welfare is undertaken by women, who constitute the majority in the settlements. About 200 women run the Natalia Mavulo kind-

ergarten centre, where 670 children from babies to 6 year olds are looked after - many of them war orphans, others whose mothers are away studying, participating in the People's Liberation Army of Namibia, or fulfilling other SWAPO duties. Here, a vegetable garden and the local clinic have helped improve the community's health. The women spend much of their time and effort collecting firewood and cooking. At SWAPO's large Health and Education Centre at Kwanza Sul, there are new vocational training projects, run with the support of the London-based Namibia Refugee Project (NRP) in shoe-making, construction (including brick making) and nursing (the first group of 9 nurses trained here graduated last November), and carpentry (a project run jointly by NRP and the SWAPO Workers' Brigade). In addition, the SWAPO Women's Council and SWAPO Department of Health have their own on-going activities. The latter is engaged in preventative as well as curative medicine, and in the last year has had to battle against both a malaria epidemic and measles, which killed some of the children in 1985. Among the projects run by the SWAPO Women's Council, in co-operation with the SWAPO Department of Education, is an adult literacy campaign, which has been fairly successful so far despite the lack of appropriate resources. The SWAPO Department of Education is also managing the schooling of tens of thousands of Namibian children in the settlements.

COLD WAR OBJECTIVES

Current imperialist diplomacy appears to be increasingly intent on trying to force Angola to renege on its anti-imperialist stance, relying on South African and US military backing for UNITA as well as continued open South African attacks to undermine Angola's economy, the MPLA's power, and the people's morale.

Washington has made its cold war objectives in Angola a tactical priority and put the Namibian settlement issue, to quote a U.S. diplomat, 'on the back burner'. With no immediate prospects of an end to S. Africa's occupation of Namibia, Namibian exiles in Angola will be trying to increase SWAPO's capacity to cater for hundreds more who will be attempting to escape S. African terror in Namibia. They will have to go on battling against the hot, humid climate and other physical obstacles to food production and health; against scarce resources; and against the war-weariness that many may feel after 2 decades of military conflict with the S. African army. They will also have to trust to Angola's resilience under military and diplomatic attack.

The Namibians in the settlements in Angola have achieved a great deal so far, and with SWAPO's on-going military successes (hardly ever reported in this country), their fighting spirit shows little sign of waning. There are a range of material aid projects undertaken by the Namibia Support Committee (address below), which SWAPO continues to support in this country to back. Most importantly Namibians in exile want their country's freedom, and have urged anti-imperialists to step up their attacks on British support for the S. African regime.

By a member of SWAPO Women's Solidarity Campaign
SWSC can be contacted c/o Namibia Support Committee, PO Box 16, London NW 5. 01-267-1941/2.

North West LABOUR MOVEMENT CONFERENCE on SOUTHERN AFRICA 1986 SATURDAY 19th APRIL 1986, MANCHESTER TOWN HALL

Sponsored by NWTUC, Lancashire Association of Trades Councils, NALGO NW and N Wales International Relations Committee, AUEW (M'cr South District), AUEW Tass No. 10 Division, TGWU 6/389 and 6/171, SOGAT '82 Gtr M'cr, Jim Slater(NUS), Manchester City Council, Manchester Ethnic Minorities Representation Council, Manchester City Labour Party, Stockport Constituency LP Women's Section, Gorton LPYS, Eddie Newman M.E.P.

Speakers: Peter Heathfield (NUM), Dianne Abbott (Prospective parliamentary candidate, Hackney North), Bob Litherland (MP), South African trade unionist from the Commercial, Catering, and Allied Workers Union of S. Africa.

This will be a major labour movement event open to T.U. delegates and individuals, aiming to lay the foundation of a massive campaign within the labour movement in solidarity with the struggles in Southern Africa. The emphasis will be on workshop discussion about practical campaigning within particular industries: Miners, Engineers, Shopworkers, Teachers, Public Sector, Transport... plus workshops for LP members and black activists in the labour movement.

Delegates £2.50. Sponsorship invited from TUs/LPs.

SOME THINGS TO READ.....
Current information on the trade union movements in S. Africa can be found in the South African Labour Bulletin (available from Collets International Books, Charing Cross Rd. WC1). The best single book on the trade unions is **POWER!** by MacShane, Plaut and Ward, Spokesman, which is widely available.

Raven Press publish many useful books: "Who's Who in S. African Politics"; "Working Women", a "South African Review" the latest issue covers 1984; a series on Workers which is very readable and cheap ("The Sun will rise for Workers" and "My Life Struggle"). They have a workers' diary for 1986 which lists addresses of the COSATU-affiliated trade unions.

"Pulling out from Apartheid" published by Tower Hamlets International Solidarity is a useful and readable pamphlet costing £1.50. It provides a short readable introduction to Apartheid and suggestions for activity. Pension funds, campaigns against companies, action by local government, trade union solidarity

This supplement was produced as part of the Feb. '86 issue of Big Flame.

and consumer boycotts all get a mention. Trade unionists can also read a pamphlet on "Apartheid..." from NALGO, and material from SACTU. SACTU women have a new pamphlet "Women Workers in South Africa" (8 Flower Mews Archway, London N19).

MAWU TOUR

Three delegates from the Metal and Allied Workers Union (affiliated to COSATU) will be touring Britain for three weeks starting at the end of February. They include the General Secretary of MAWU (a woman), as well as the Transvaal Regional Organiser and a steward from Amalgamated Engineering. In the North West, the tour is being coordinated by John Parkinson, Sec. of Preston Trades Council (contact at Preston Trade Union Centre, St. Mary's Street North, off Ribbleson Lane, Preston, Lancs.). Workplace meetings, stewards committees, and public meetings are planned in Preston, Manchester, and Liverpool.