

## LETTER

Dear Comrades,

On Saturday 15 March I and another City Group member, Danny, leafleted inside the Tesco Superstore at Neasden. It is the biggest Tesco's in London and possibly in the country. Thousands of people from North West London shop there daily.

We stood by the fruit shelves which were laden with South African melons, pineapples and plums. We leafleted for about twenty minutes and had a good response from customers. We were then apprehended by the store security chief and his assistants, frogmarched outside, and told that if we ever showed our faces there again they would have us arrested.

We spent the next hour in the store car park, giving leaflets to customers as they went in.

This store has sent me two letters (in response to my persistent complaints), stating that Tesco's policy is only to buy South African goods when they are unobtainable elsewhere. Yet they have South African pineapples sitting next to Ivory Coast pineapples, South African tinned peaches next to Australian ones!

Jan Ali

## Medical Aid to SWAPO

As we go to press City Group will decide this week its response to the sectarian and scurrilous article in the March 'AA News'. In the meantime, this is one member's letter which has been sent for publication in AA News:

Dear Madam,

**Re: Page 10 Anti-Apartheid News March 1986. 'SWAPO condemns dishonesty'.**

How utterly dispicable. An urgent appeal for medical kits for SWAPO raises a generous collection – but, because some anonymous beaur-crats dislike the collectors, the money is returned. Never mind the suffering people in Namibia. Listen to the joyful breast-beating of the little Bothas who have robbed them. Apartheid within Anti-Apartheid.

All with the blessing of AA News.

Yours etc,  
Frank E. Sully  
(One time overseas Red Cross worker)

## City AA's 1986 AGM

A copy of the minutes and the written reports presented to the AGM held on 16 February are now available to any City AA member on request to the office or at the regular fortnightly meeting.

## FUTURE MEETINGS

City AA meets once a fortnight after the picket starting at 8pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square (nearest tube Holborn) on the following dates: Friday 11 and 25 April.

## SAEPC Vindicated

Camden councillors Bob Latham and Jenny Wilmott have been awarded £800 by the police – damages for unlawful arrest on the South African Embassy Picket Campaign pickets to win back the right to demonstrate outside the embassy in summer 1984. City AA is taking legal advice on claims for all the defendants.

## Court Cases

Colette was found guilty at Bow Street of highway obstruction for taking part in the women's protest outside the Embassy on 3 February. She was given a conditional discharge and required to pay £15 costs.

Black activist Spartacus R of the Cultural Awareness Programme has been found guilty of obstruction and assault of the police, fined £250 and bound over for 2 years for the sum of £100. The charges arise from a picket of Tesco's in Brixton which the police broke up (see March Newsletter). Spartacus R has publicly campaigned against the frame up and this undoubtedly helped avoid the imprisonment that many feared.

Thursday 1 May, 10am Lambeth Magistrates Court, Renfrew Rd, SE11 (near Elephant & Castle tube). Trial of Andy, Danny, James, and Kenny from South African Airways

Tuesday 6 May, 10am Marlborough Magistrates Court, Great Marlborough St, W1 (near Oxford Circus tube). Trial of Jan as a test case from South African Airways 15 February.

Tuesday 8 April, 10am Bow St Magistrates Court, Bow St, WC2 (near Covent Garden tube). Trial of James charged with obstruction of the highway for petitioning in Covent Garden.

Tuesday 15 April, 10am Bow St Magistrates Court. Trial of Susanna and Sarah also charged with obstruction of the highway for petitioning in Covent Garden.

## HANDS OFF Winnie Mandela

The excellent video 'I Shall Never Lose Hope' and an inspiring speech by Norma Kitson to City AA's public meeting brought many volunteers to the campaign. So far £533.22 has been collected from the sponsored walk. There are some necessary expenses, but with further donations promised we expect to reach the £500 target. Many thanks to all walkers and sponsors.



**STOP PRESS: VICTORY FOR WINNIE MANDELA.**

On 2 April the racist regime announced the

## That's What We Want

£10,000 – what you could do with that – a new Mercedes, a world tour or the annual budget for City Group. The choice is obvious isn't it.

We do a lot of work, therefore we spend a lot of money, therefore we must raise a lot of money. Our GLC grant which covered the rent on our office is at an end. We need another phone of mobilising and for legal cover when little policemen object to our pickets. We've just bought a megaphone. It cost £200. We are giving out 10,000 plus leaflets a week and are now committed to this monthly newsletter that will need wide distribution.

Do you work for a living? If so you probably receive a wage. It helps pay for the regular outgoings. Well we have regular outgoings too. The rent, the phone – if we don't pay these we are likely to get kicked out, cut off or something painful like that. So help us with a regular income, make us out a standing order or complete our standing order form

Got some free time? We have all got free time. Some of us use it to go petitioning at Camden Lock or Covent Garden, outside concerts and plays, at festivals. Join us. It's good fun and for a good cause. If you can't join us, what about at work or college or school or the youth club. Leaflets, petitions and newsletters can always be made available.

Willing to donate a prize to our raffle? Let us know.

## JUMBLE SALE

12-2pm Saturday 12 April  
Marchmont Centre, Marchmont St,  
London WC1

(near Russell Square tube)

Jumble and helpers needed –  
see Antonia, James or Jan.

## BENEFIT

Saturday 7 June  
Africa Centre, King St, WC2

Helpers needed – see Colette

PHOTO: CHRIS POWER.

lifting of the banning order placed on Winnie Mandela. It had meant that she had been banned from her home in Soweto.

## Covent Garden

After the picket outside the Embassy for International Womens Day 8 March we went to Covent Garden to petition and leaflet. A WPC came up to us and said that we were allowed to petition and sell newspapers but we couldn't collect money. But what if people offered us money? we asked. You can't take it she said which was a pity because we were getting a lot of money, and by the way she informed us she was against apartheid too. A minute after she left 2 more police came up and went through the whole thing again. We carried on regardless. Then they came back and stood watching us. Right, we thought, we'll sing. So we started to sing. That stumped them. Afraid of the intolerable strain that independent thought might induce in their brains they sauntered off to get instructions. In the meantime quite a crowd gathered. The police returned with re-inforcements. You can't sing here, they said. Oh, we said, it's a crime to sing is it? (laughs from the crowd). No but you have to have a permit. Well watch out anyone here who sings in the bath, we shouted, as the police may bust in and ask to see you permit. (More laughs). As the police got a bit hot under the collar people in the crowd began to intervene. Maggie Thatcher's 'market forces' one said. Leave them alone, we like their singing, why are you picking on them, we want to hear them sing. Lets take a vote on it, we said. At this point the police made a tactical withdrawal warning us not to sing. So we got back to petitioning just as we had been doing in the first place.

All you lot who come down on Fridays why not come out with us on a Saturday, a lunchtime or in the evening. Or, get together with someone else and spread the word and raise some money - it's vital... and it can be fun!

Richard

## Viva Portsmouth Health Workers

Unknown to most of the British public, an industrial dispute has been running in Portsmouth for the last couple of months. It centres around the workers in a National Health Service store, who told the management that they no longer wished to continue handling tins of South African fruit, and that the management should therefore seek the alternative supply which was equally priced and readily available. The powers that be promptly locked the workers out, who in return began picketting the store. The van drivers downed ignition keys in support, but were on the point of going back to work - following talks - when it was suddenly discovered that the management had brought in Scab labour to do the storeworkers jobs! The drivers stayed on the picket line.

Very soon the strike began to have its effects, and the management capitalised on this and attempted to sway public opinion by declaring that the drivers' action alone had caused a backlog of dirty laundry, and stopped the passage of non-essential medical supplies. As a result they closed the hospitals to all non-emergency admissions until the drivers were forced to provide a reduced service to prevent further 'suffering' to patients.

The local paper sided with the authorities and called upon the workers to back down. It's Editorial declared that whilst public opinion was undoubtedly on the workers side, they should have refrained from direct action because of the effect it was having on the patients: 'The only satisfactory solution is for the workers to back down and pursue their campaign against South Africa by attempting to influence Public Opinion rather than by taking disruptive action'. (News Views - 11 March 1986).

WHERE HAVE WE HEARD THIS BEFORE?

## International Women's Day

Three women from City Group were among the 100 women from England, Wales and Scotland who travelled to the 6 Counties of Ireland to join the picket of Armagh prison on International Women's Day. Also on the delegation were Dr Maire O'Shea, fresh from her victory against the PTA, together with representatives of SWAPO, Women Against Pit Closures, the Irish Prisoners Appeal and the Women and Ireland Network who organised the trip.

The picket centred on the demand for an end to strip-searching and an ex-prisoner read out a statement from the Armagh women, emphasizing that whatever the authorities may claim to the contrary, strip-searching is *not* done for security purposes, but to humiliate.

City Group sent this message of solidarity:

City of London Anti-Apartheid Group sends greetings of Solidarity to the picket outside Armagh gaol and especially to the brave women within. We believe it would be blind to condemn the inhumanities perpetrated in South Africa whilst ignoring those which occur so much closer to home. We salute the brave, fighting women of Ireland who, like the women of Southern Africa, play a leading role in the struggle for liberty and justice.

We join in the call for an end to the humiliating practice of strip-searching and an end to British repression in the six Counties.

On the same day City Group supported the picket of Brixton prison for Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer who are being subjected to daily strip searches and the ANC/SWAPO/AAM picket of the racist Embassy.

## 2 November Defendants-Disgraceful AAM

Some of us will never forget the National Demonstration 2 November last year. The march itself was exhilarating. The City Group/ FRFI/ Broadwater Farm contingent had over 1000 people in it, striding militantly through London, occupying the whole street, ignoring lines of white tape, designed to give us only half the roadway. We sang and chanted and shouted our hatred of apartheid. When we arrived at Trafalgar Square it was already packed; speakers were addressing the crowd and the police had, characteristically, sealed off the Embassy. In the South East corner, by Northumberland Avenue, there was some 'trouble' - sticks and fireworks being thrown at the police, small groups of demonstrators making a dash for the Embassy and being carted away. We marched all the way round the square to the top corner by the National Gallery. It was relatively peaceful there until the police began to send snatch-squads into the crowd. I was arrested at 5pm and taken to Southwark Police Station where I was charged with Assault on the Police.

The following Monday I rang the AAM to see what was happening. They advised me to ring the solicitors firm, Bindmans. My voice and that of many other defendants persuaded Danny Simpson at Bindmans that it would be a good idea if the AAM called a defendants' meeting. Since then there have been a series of meetings, each one more poorly attended than the last. Despite the wishes of the defendants, the AAM EC made it plain from early on that it did not want a public campaign and that defence of democratic rights in this country could not be linked to the fight against apartheid.



The state forces conspired to dishearten us. 2 November cases were held in 6 different courts over a period of 5 months. A few of the most serious still remain to be heard. We all felt isolated. In court the police evidence was well cooked-up and most of us were found guilty. Our 'criminality' was emphasized, our beliefs treated as irrelevant. To its shame the AAM has by its silence allowed defendants to be criminalised. There was no coverage of our situation in AA News; we were told we could have a Defendants Support Group but not a Defence Campaign; there was no attempt to involve those defendants new to politics in the work of the AAM. We were seen as something separate, as not quite respectable, not part of the struggle against inhumanitarian apartheid.

There are 2 men in gaol because of 2 November. Both were part of the City Group contingent. Of the 148 arrests only 6 were City Group members or supporters but the police were quick to point us out in court. In the case of David Gard it was said that City Group had 'a bad record as far as Public Order was concerned'. David was acquitted. George and James were not so lucky. James got 63 days in Pentonville. George has been held on remand in Brixton for 2 months and was found guilty by Camberwell Magistrates Court on 17 March but has yet to be sentenced. We have been visiting and writing to both of them and urge more people to send cards and letters.

Most other people were fined between £25 and £200. At least one person has been served with a distress warrant for non-payment. The Defence Fund contains only £500, enough to deal with a handful of urgent cases. Lack of public campaigning led naturally enough to lack of response by the public. The fund is still open and needs contributions. Defence of activists is a political responsibility. We can not have a situation where only the wealthy dare go on marches! If the unemployed stay at home for fear of fines, then the state is winning and the fight against apartheid is losing.

**AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL - DEFEND THE RIGHT TO DEMONSTRATE!**

Nicky Rensten

James Cowperthwaite. N84704, and George Therpe N50889 both at: HMP Pentonville, Caledonian Rd, London N7