



**Anti-
Apartheid
Movement**

for freedom in southern africa

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MEMORANDUM
TO
THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH
AFFAIRS

Oil Sanctions and Rhodesia

Anti-Apartheid Movement

20 September, 1978

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Introduction

Britain's failure to effectively apply oil and other economic sanctions against the illegal Rhodesian regime has had three major results.

It has guaranteed the survival of Smith's rebellion for almost thirteen years; it has convinced the Zimbabwe liberation movement that only armed confrontation will free their country from racist rule; and it has provoked widespread anger and hostility towards Britain in Africa and from the international community as a whole.

This memorandum argues the case for urgent and effective ~~action~~ to secure the immediate implementation of oil and other sanctions against Rhodesia.

Background

When the Smith regime declared UDI the then British Government decided to pursue a policy of sanctions against the regime, instead of direct military intervention. This action itself was the subject of widespread criticism in Africa, the Commonwealth and the United Nations. It also soon became clear that the policy of sanctions was to be pursued on the basis that a confrontation with South Africa was to be avoided at all costs. It is now obvious that this was the single most crucial factor in guaranteeing the survival of the Smith regime.

As early as June 1967 substantial evidence existed as to how the oil companies were fuelling Rhodesia. Much of this was contained in Labour's Record on Southern Africa, published by the Anti-Apartheid Movement. However, for ten years successive Governments failed to change the basis of the sanctions policy against Rhodesia - namely, no confrontation with South Africa.

In March 1977 the AAM with the Haslemere Group published a pamphlet on Shell and BP in South Africa which referred to allegations of sanctions breaking. This coincided with similar accusations from other quarters and shortly afterwards the Foreign Secretary announced the formation of the Bingham Enquiry. The Bingham Enquiry has had limited terms of reference, but has done a valuable job in identifying the means by which the oil embargo was being breached.

The continuing supply of oil to Rhodesia has clearly sustained the illegal regime in power and has resulted in those countries which have implemented sanctions, in particular Zambia, and more recently Mozambique, having to suffer serious economic consequences. A high price has also been paid by Rhodesians, both black and white, who have died as a result of the war which now envelops Rhodesia.

The primary responsibility of the British Government, in light of the Bingham Enquiry, is to identify and ensure the implementation of, effective measures to enforce sanctions so that there can be a speedy end to UDI and an effective transfer of power to the people of Zimbabwe so that peace can come to a free Zimbabwe.

Oil Sanctions

The declared intention of British policy is to bring down the Smith regime and so, the responsibility of the British Government is not simply to prevent oil reaching Rhodesia from British oil companies, but to stop all oil reaching the regime.

This must be a major priority for the British Government. We are confident, especially in view of the serious crisis in Rhodesia and the revelations of sanctions busting, that new possibilities exist to stop the flow of oil to Rhodesia. The British Government, with the support of the Commonwealth and the United Nations, should pursue this matter with a real sense of determination.

The British Government should approach all the oil companies involved, and if necessary the oil producing countries, to obtain assurances that no oil will be supplied to Rhodesia.

In addition, to secure South Africa's compliance, the oil companies should restrict the total deliveries to South Africa to pre-UDI levels. This would discourage South Africa from supplying Rhodesia with oil produced by the oil-from-coal process or by other means.

Other Sanctions

The revelations about sanctions busting raise important questions concerning the application of other aspects of economic sanctions. The illegal regime has continued to obtain supplies of vital resources, including strategic commodities. Examples include military and military related equipment and spares, chemicals, electronic equipment, computers, and the flow of foreign capital. There have been repeated accusations that British companies with subsidiaries in South Africa and Rhodesia have been involved in such sanctions busting. The Bingham Enquiry has revealed the extent to which subsidiaries of the oil companies in South Africa have broken sanctions and so it is vital that a similar investigation is instigated with the aim of securing the more effective implementation of sanctions.

South Africa's Role

South Africa's policy of consistently defying the mandatory economic sanctions imposed against the illegal regime is in complete contradiction to its responsibilities under the United Nations Charter, to which South Africa, as a UN member state, subscribes. The British Government itself argued at the Security Council that the rebellion in Rhodesia was a "threat to peace". Since it is South Africa that has sustained this rebellion since UDI it must be recognised that South Africa is itself threatening world peace by refusing to implement mandatory sanctions.

Britain, therefore, has a responsibility to seek immediate assurances from the South African Government that it will terminate all economic relations with the illegal regime and if such assurances are not forthcoming then it should ask for the extension of the mandatory sanctions against Rhodesia to include South Africa.

Conclusions

The British Government has to make a number of major decisions in the wake of the Bingham Enquiry. We are convinced that the most important would be for the Government to be seen to be taking action to stop the flow of oil to Rhodesia. Failure to do so will have serious consequences for the future of the Commonwealth and for Britain's relations with Africa and the Third World as a whole.

The following recommendations are put forward for consideration by the Foreign Secretary and the Cabinet. They set out the measures the Government should take in light of the Bingham Enquiry. (We should add that the AAM remains convinced that comprehensive sanctions should be applied against South Africa because the policies of apartheid pursued by the South African authorities threaten world peace.)

- (i) the British Government should establish a full enquiry into the role of Ministers and Civil Servants in implementing oil sanctions;
- (ii) the Director of Public Prosecutions should be encouraged to act swiftly to investigate fully all those who have committed criminal offences so that they can be prosecuted;
- (iii) the Government should establish an enquiry to examine the nature and extent of bilateral relations between Britain and South Africa which serve to undermine or breach United Nations mandatory sanctions against Rhodesia;
- (iv) all the oil companies involved, (Shell, BP, Total, Caltex, Mobil) and the oil producing states if necessary, should be approached by the British Government to obtain assurances that they will supply no oil to Rhodesia and that they will restrict the total oil supply to South Africa to the pre-UDI levels;
- (v) finally, unless South Africa gives immediate assurances that it will strictly implement mandatory sanctions against Rhodesia, Britain should seek action by the United Nations Security Council to require South Africa to implement those sanctions, if necessary by extending sanctions against Rhodesia to include South Africa.