

"ISOLATE APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA - SANCTIONS NOW"

Campaign Paper

Introduction

1981 is a year which will in all probability be decisive for the struggle for freedom in Namibia and South Africa. The independence of Zimbabwe has further isolated the apartheid regime, which now stands alone on the African continent.

The crises of white supremacy in Southern Africa flowing from the defeat of Portuguese colonialism in Mozambique and Angola has become particularly acute as a result of the victory of the Zimbabwe people. This in turn has shaken Western policy, especially after its initiatives to bring about "controlled change" in Zimbabwe and Namibia and the "reforms" of the apartheid system have come to the end of the road with so little to show. In Zimbabwe "controlled change" failed to produce a puppet regime and South Africa's intransigence has led to the breakdown of the Western Contact Group UN plan for Namibia. Within South Africa the apartheid regime's reforms have been exposed by the struggle of the oppressed people themselves. The reality of apartheid has been demonstrated again and again by the ruthlessness of the repressive policies of the regime and in particular by the current escalation in such repression.

The apartheid regime appears determined to stand firm in Namibia and on apartheid. It now apparently wants to call the West's bluff, more confident that the political situation in the major western countries is much more favourable for the apartheid regime than it was in the mid-1970's. This has emboldened the Pretoria regime to embark on a course of direct confrontation with the front line states. Unless there is now an effective international campaign, and effective international action against South Africa the prospect of an all-out war, including nuclear weapons, cannot be ruled out.

It is now clear that the western powers were prepared to give a range of guarantees to South Africa regarding its own future security - in return for its compliance with the UN Plan on Namibia. These, however, were insufficient to persuade South Africa to agree to the implementation of the plan. Any further western initiative on Namibia will mean even more concessions, both in relation to the UN Plan itself as well as over South Africa.

This is the context in which the AAM has launched the "Isolate Apartheid South Africa - Sanctions Now" campaign. It is clear that unless action to isolate South Africa is greatly intensified - that is action both at the governmental level and action by organisations and individuals - 1981 will prove to be the year in which South Africa will feel confident to intensify its terror against the people of South Africa and Namibia, as well as its aggression against the Front-Line states. Equally, its capability to pursue such policies will be greatly enhanced if western collaboration intensifies.

The central task of the AAM is our campaign for the total isolation of South Africa. This paper examines what this means in practice.

Isolate South Africa

A key objective must be to secure from organisations at a national level and locally, and from the "public" as a whole, support for and commitment to a policy of isolating apartheid South Africa. This is vital if we are to see action of any kind by the Government. However, support for sanctions against South Africa is limited.

This presents a major challenge to the Anti-Apartheid Movement. Despite twenty years of campaigning, with many successes, the key issue which led to the AAM's formation has yet to become a major political issue in Britain, and our view

still does not command overwhelming public support.

The AAM is convinced that systematic and persistent campaigning is required to transform this situation.

- * The National Petition Campaign launched in March 1981 is one very important feature of such work. We hope to collect hundreds of thousands of signatures by March 1982. This will involve much more than the circulation of the petition by organisations - although this is vital. It will also mean street collections by anti-apartheid and other local organisations, collections at work, in fact, the mobilisation of all those who are members of or support the AAM behind this petition.

- * At the same time support for such a policy must be sought from local and national organisations in such a way that there is a genuine commitment to the implementation of sanctions and a full understanding of the case for sanctions.

Consumer Boycott

The consumer boycott campaign - the campaign to boycott the products of apartheid - continues to provide one of the most effective means of winning support for a policy of isolation on the part of the general public. The picketing of supermarkets stocking South African goods, the distribution of leaflets, stickers, posters, etc, is a very basic way of getting over the message of the campaign, of getting support for the "idea of isolation". We hope that not only Anti-Apartheid Movement local groups and student groups but as many other organisations as possible will organise such activity during the period of the campaign. In addition to such activities, students should take up the campaign within colleges, to ensure that no South African products are sold in college or union shops or refectories. Students should join with other local organisations to end bulk-purchase contracts for South African goods by local authorities.

Oil Sanctions

Campaigning to expose the role of Shell and BP and to mobilise support for oil sanctions will be a special theme within the general sanctions campaign. The AAM has published two documents which examine Britain's role in busting the oil embargo against South Africa and we hope for the widest possible circulation of these. They show that there are four key issues:

- * Shell and BP's direct role in South Africa - together they market 40% of South Africa's oil;
- * the possible supply of North Sea oil to South Africa, either direct or through swap arrangements, together with the participation of South African companies in North Sea oil consortia - BP is currently discussing with Charter Consolidated, a company of the Anglo-American group, proposals to sell a stake in their North Sea oil interests;
- * the role of British tankers on charter to UK companies in delivering oil to South Africa;
- * oil supplies to South Africa from the British colony of Brunei.

Oil sanctions are of obvious significance because of the strategic role of oil as a commodity and also because OPEC and most other oil exporting countries embargo the sale of their oil to South Africa. Recent campaigns in Norway and the Netherlands have demonstrated the possibility of public support for such a policy.

In Britain much groundwork has to be undertaken to make this a public issue. Organise leaflettings outside Shell and BP petrol stations in your area. Action will also need to be pursued at the parliamentary level, in organisations of all

kinds and especially in trade unions related to the oil industry. Besides highlighting the role of the companies such action - like consumer boycott action - will we hope provoke discussion on wider questions, especially the need for government action in support of the oil embargo. Students should examine any direct link between the colleges and these companies.

"Stop the Apartheid Bomb"

During the past twelve months the AAM has been organising activity to highlight the threat of South Africa's nuclear weapons programme. There has been publicity in the press and the media, in particular the World in Action programme "South Africa's Nuclear Bombshell". Several thousands of the pamphlet South Africa's Nuclear Capability by Dan Smith, have been sold and thousands of signatures have been collected for the petition campaign. The petition has now been brought to an end and will shortly be presented to the Government. It is vital, however, that the campaign is now stepped up. A reprint of the Dan Smith pamphlet has already been made. Other material will be produced. We need in particular to intensify campaigns against training and recruitment, and especially the role of Trafalgar House, whose subsidiary Cementation was exposed by World in Action as having supplied nuclear shells to the South African regime.

However, the two most important initiatives are the convening of an international conference on Apartheid's Threat to Peace by the AAM initiated World Campaign against Military and Nuclear Collaboration with South Africa, which it is planned should be held in September, and a national activity in October on the theme "Stop the Apartheid Bomb".

Mobilising for all these activities will itself help to get across to the public the real nature of the apartheid regime and its threat to the peace of the world. It is planned to publish during the build up of this particular aspect of the campaign a pamphlet exposing the crucial role that western collaboration plays in South Africa's military and nuclear build-up.

This campaign is clearly linked with the Campaign against the Namibian Uranium Contract, which seeks to end the contract between the Central Electricity Generating Board and the Rio Tinto Zinc Corporation for the supply to Britain of uranium from Namibia. It can be argued persuasively that the growing western dependence on South African and Namibian uranium is the basis for the technological collaboration which South Africa requires to further develop its nuclear programme - both civil and military. CANUC is convened by the Namibia Support Committee and supported by the AAM and has recently expanded its public campaigning activities. It now produces a newsletter for subscribers, and plans to hold regular campaign meetings in different parts of the country. A petition and leaflet, and a pamphlet on the contract, The Rossing File, as well as a film and speakers are all available from the NSC. In the light of the revelation by the Government that 50% of all uranium imported into Britain for British use is from Namibia, that further Namibian uranium comes here for processing and re-export, that the uranium contract has been extended to 1984, and that even after the breakdown of the Geneva conference the Government are refusing to review the contract, it is more important than ever that this issue is taken up vigorously in our campaign.

Boycott Barclays

The role of banking links with South Africa and the importance for apartheid of the flow of foreign capital to South Africa is highlighted by the Boycott Barclays campaign. The AAM has been campaigning for this boycott for 12 years, with growing success. Support has been forthcoming from thousands of individual account holders and increasingly by institutions such as the University of Warwick, NUPE, COHSE and most recently Lambeth Council. In order to provide a focus for action during the campaign it is proposed that a national day of picketing should be organised on October 15 when thousands of Barclays branches will, we

hope, be subject to AAM leafletting and protests at their doors. This is particularly important for students, as Barclays will be trying to get new accounts from first year students, Student Unions should ensure that Barclays are not permitted to advertise in S.U. publications. For this build-up AAM and ELTSA, End Loans to South Africa, with which we work closely on the loans issue, have speakers, information and leaflets. In Scotland the new bank, which emerges from the Royal Bank of Scotland Standard Chartered merger will be the subject of a boycott campaign along the lines of the Barclays campaign, organised by the AAM Scottish Committee. Standard is the second biggest bank in South Africa, and will now have a presence on every Scottish high street.

Action against Trans-national Corporations

Action against a number of key transnational corporations has already been considered in this paper, for instance, Barclays, Shell, BP, RTZ. However, there are many other British based transnational corporations which are playing an important role in sustaining apartheid, for instance Plessey, GEC, ICL, British Leyland and so on.

It is planned to produce special leaflets on as many of these as possible in order to encourage action focussing on specific transnational corporations. Similarly, action in support of struggles within South Africa by Black workers employed by such transnationals needs to be organised.

This area of the campaign needs to be considered further so that we can campaign imaginatively both in exposing such companies and in generating greater awareness of the role of British companies in sustaining apartheid.

Disinvestment

Over the last ten years a number of student unions have succeeded in getting colleges to disinvest from companies operating in South Africa. However, many colleges still have considerable investments in apartheid, and where this is the case students should take up the campaign once again,

Recruitment and Academic Boycott

A key area for students in the campaign is to stop companies recruiting students to work in South Africa. In addition to the recruitment of students with very specialised skills (e.g. degrees in metallurgy and mining), South Africa is involved in a major push to recruit qualified white teachers and nurses. Students in the teacher education and health sectors should take up this issue and campaign against such recruitment. A briefing is available from AAM.

Students should also be vigilant and be prepared to act against academic collaboration with South Africa.