

SAC Southern Africa Coalition

An initiative of churches, the Anti-Apartheid Movement, trade union organisations, local authorities, development agencies and others. Inter-Church House, 35-41 Lower Marsh, London SE1 7RT

THE SOUTHERN AFRICA COALITION

SAC is a Coalition of more than 60 organisations and churches, representative of many millions of British people, which have the common objective of increasing public understanding of the need for decisive measures to end apartheid and, through a programme of information, education and action, of seeking to secure a fundamental change in British government policy towards South Africa.

SAC grew out of the conference *Britain and Southern Africa – The Way Forward*, organised by the British Council of Churches (BCC) and Christian Aid on 28 February 1989; a date chosen as the anniversary of the historic march on Parliament by South African church and other religious leaders. They were protesting at the banning of South African organisations and community leaders campaigning for non-violent change. The BCC Conference was supported by many of the organisations which are now members of the Coalition. It focussed attention on the increased suffering and repression in South Africa and on the need for Britain to give clear support to the non-

racial democratic movement. It also called on the British government to bring further pressure to bear on the government in South Africa by supporting and reinforcing economic and other measures against it and by reducing the capacity of the South African government to suppress the black majority population.

APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa the situation for the black majority is deteriorating. The State of Emergency is in its fourth year, more than 30 democratic organisations have been banned, press and media censorship is rigidly enforced and assassinations and disappearances of community leaders are on the increase. Hundreds of innocent people have been terrorized or killed by vigilante groups operating with the connivance of South African government security forces. There is continued use of the death penalty against political opponents. The forced removals of blacks who are 'surplus' to the current needs of the South African economy to the, so called, 'ethnic homelands' has affected over three and a half million people and threatens another two million. Poverty increases. Infant mortality among African children is estimated at 80 per 1000 live births as against 12 for white children.

The claim of South African propaganda that fundamental change is taking place is profoundly untrue. The pillars and instruments of apartheid are still firmly in place.

RESISTANCE TO APARTHEID

In spite of the State of Emergency and the bannings of organisations, the Mass Democratic Movement in South Africa is progressively undermining and transforming the situation. A programme of mass actions including consumer boycotts, 'stay aways', and a defiance campaign targetted at 'whites only' areas and institutions, have contributed to demoralisation and division within the apartheid state. Since the State of Emergency was imposed in 1985 in response to black resistance, the South African economy has been under attack both externally and internally. A large number of foreign companies have withdrawn, there is constant movement of capital out of South Africa and foreign investment has been greatly reduced. Internally, South Africa is becoming an increasingly militarised society. Police and military occupy the black townships and each year a growing proportion of the budget is allocated to defence and security (in 1989, 16.26%). South Africa's external debt stands at \$21.2 billion (December 1988).

AIMS

The Southern Africa Coalition exists to mobilise support from the public, from organisations and in Parliament to ensure that Britain makes an effective contribution towards the ending of apartheid and securing peace and freedom in South Africa.

Through a programme of information, education and action the Coalition will seek to secure a fundamental change in British policy towards Southern Africa. It will in particular work:

1) for the adoption by the British government, banks and others of the proposals set out in the *Call to Action Against Apartheid* which are:

- The introduction of appropriate legal controls to strengthen and enforce existing British measures, in particular the arms and oil embargos and a ban on new investment.
- A compulsory ban on all loans, trade credits and export credit guarantees.
- A compulsory ban on all 'high tech' and computer exports to South Africa.
- A compulsory ban on importing of coal and agricultural products.
- An end to all promotion of trade and tourism to South Africa, and a suspension of airlinks.
- An urgent examination of the possibility of the sanction on gold.
- A refusal by British banks to make new loans to South Africa and their insistence on rapid repayment of existing debt.

2) for Britain to play a positive role in inter-governmental bodies such as the Commonwealth, the European Community, and the United Nations, by supporting effective international action against apartheid.

MEMBER ORGANISATIONS*

Africa Centre

Council of African and Afro-Caribbean Churches

Amalgamated Engineering Union

Anti-Apartheid Movement

Arundel and Brighton Justice and Peace Commission

Association of Metropolitan Authorities

Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union

The Baptist Union of Great Britain

British Council of Churches

British Defence and Aid Fund
Camden Council
Catholic Institute for International Relations
Christian Aid
Christian Concern for Southern Africa
Christian Ethical Investment Group
Church Action on Namibia
Confederation of Health Service Employees
Conference of Major Religious Superiors: Social
Justice Desk
Council for World Mission
End Loans to Southern Africa
General Synod of the Church of England
Friends of the Earth
Glasgow District Council
Hertfordshire Justice and Peace Commission
Industrial Mission Association
Inland Revenue Staff Federation
Iona Community
IVS Overseas
Jubilee Campaign
Standing Conference of Justice
and Peace Commissions
Lawyers Against Apartheid
Archdiocese of Liverpool Justice and Peace
Commission
Local Authorities Against Apartheid
The Methodist Church
Namibia Communications Trust
National and Local Government
Officers Association
North West Churches' Support Group
for Southern Africa
Nottingham Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission
One World
OXFAM
Plymouth Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission
Pax Christi
PRAXIS
Church of Scotland
Congregational Union of Scotland

Scottish Episcopal Church
Southern Africa The Imprisoned Society
National Union of Students
Student Christian Movement
Trade Union Congress
National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers
National Union of Teachers
United Nations Association
United Reformed Church
United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers
The Council of Churches for Wales
Union of Welsh Independents
National Board of Catholic Women
World Development Movement
World Gold Commission
World University Service

*as at August 1989

PATRONS*

Most Rev Father O A Abiola, Chairman, Council of
African and Afro-Caribbean Churches, UK

Robert Adley MP

Rt Hon Paddy Ashdown MP

Hon David Astor

Geoffrey Bindman

Baroness Tessa Blackstone, Master of
Birkbeck College

Most Rev Michael Campbell-Johnston SJ,
Provincial, Society of Jesus in Britain

Sir Hugh Casson CH

A M G Christopher CBE, Chair,
General Council, TUC

Rev Noel A Davies, General Secretary, Council of
Churches for Wales

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Anti-Apartheid Movement

Robert Hughes MP

Lord Hylton

Joel Joffe

Sibghat Kadri QC

Rt Hon Neil Kinnock MP

Jim Lester MP

John Macdonald QC

Rt Rev Dr W J G McDonald, Moderator of the
General Assembly, Church of Scotland

Ada Maddocks, Chair, Women's Committee TUC

Dr John A Newton, Moderator, Free Church
Federal Council

Sir Richard O'Brien,

Rt Hon David Owen MP

Jonathon Porritt, Director, Friends of the Earth

Anthony Sampson

Stephen Sedley QC

Rt Rev David Sheppard, Bishop
of Liverpool

Linbert Spencer, Chief Executive, The Fullempley
Group

Dafydd Ellis Thomas MP

Rev Bernard G Thorogood,
General Secretary, United Reformed Church

Ron Todd, General Secretary, TGWU

David Turner-Samuels QC

Rev Dr John J Vincent, President of the Conference,
The Methodist Church

Most Rev Thomas Winning, Archbishop of Glasgow

Len Woodley QC

Most Rev Derek Worlock, Archbishop of Liverpool

Rev Canon Kenyon E Wright, General Secretary,
Scottish Churches Council

*as at August 1989

In the words of Rev. Frank Chikane, General Secretary of The South African Council of Churches, addressing a July 1989 meeting of the Congress of South African Trade Unions:

“Through our struggle and our resistance we have precipitated an unprecedented crisis within the white power block and the apartheid state: a crisis of economic collapse and a crisis of political and social fragmentation. The state has been driven to the point where it has no option but to talk about talks, to send its emissaries around the world projecting its willingness to change and its readiness to negotiate. The danger inherent in their strategy is obvious . . . Fundamentally they have no intention of changing their policies. Their strategy for negotiating peace is to exchange one form of apartheid for another, and their plans for negotiation are limited to the boundaries of the framework of apartheid.”

THE BRITISH RESPONSE

It is within this context that the Southern Africa Coalition is calling on Britain to revise radically its policy towards South Africa. In the words of *The Call to Action Against Apartheid* presented to the British Council of Churches Conference: “Britain needs a new policy. A policy based on support for those seeking a democratic and non-racial South Africa in particular involving the application of effective international sanctions. There exists a broad consensus that the most effective pressure would be the application of comprehensive and mandatory sanctions by the UN Security Council. However, pending the adoption of such measures there is a range of sanctions which Britain could apply to bring its policy into line with the Commonwealth, Nordic and other European Community countries.”

The measures which the BCC Conference called on HMG to implement form the basis of the Coalition’s aims. They constitute “an appeal to the people of Britain to translate the widespread support which exists for the anti-apartheid cause into effective pressure on the British Government to develop a new policy towards South Africa; . . . (which) will not only contribute towards the speedy end of apartheid with the minimum of violence but create the basis for good relations between Britain and the future non-racial and democratic South Africa.”

SAC PROGRAMME AND FOCUS

The SAC is a short term initiative. It will be launched on 1st September and terminate on 28th February 1990.

The programme will focus on three main events:

1. The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, Kuala Lumpur, 18-24 October, 1989.
2. The Rescheduling of South Africa's International Debt – due for repayment by June 1990 (negotiations are expected early 1990).
3. A Southern Africa Week from 21st-28th February 1990, which will culminate in a National Lobby of Parliament on Tuesday 27th February calling for a fundamental change of British policy towards South Africa.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COALITION

Membership of the Coalition is directed principally at national groupings and organisations. If your organisation is not among those listed, please encourage it to join.

If it is already a member and you want to be involved in the three main areas of work listed above, contact your own headquarters direct for material which will enable you to support the Coalition.

If you are a member of a church congregation, trade union branch or other local organisation which does not have links with an affiliated Coalition member organisation, the Coalition Secretariat will supply you with further information on receipt of s.a.e.. [Individuals not affiliated to any organisations or groups will also be helped in this way.]

SOUTHERN AFRICAN COALITION

Chairman:

Rt Rev. Simon Barrington-Ward,
Bishop of Coventry

Vice-Chairman:

Mr Norman Willis, General Secretary, TUC

Coalition Executive Committee Chairman:

Rev. Michael Taylor, Director, Christian Aid

Vice-Chairman:

Mr Mike Terry, Executive Secretary
Anti-Apartheid Movement

Coordinator:

Miss Mildred Nevile MBE

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