

Memorandum to the Home Secretary

prepared by the Anti-Apartheid Movement

INTRODUCTION

On Tuesday May 3rd the staff of the Anti-Apartheid Movement returned to work at the Movement's new Headquarters in Camden Town to discover that the premises had been burgled during the long weekend. Between the evening of Friday April 29th and the morning of Tuesday May 3rd one or more persons gained entry to the building through a small fire escape after having smashed the reinforced glass window and the lock. It is understood that the Private Office of the Home Secretary has sought a full police report.

We are convinced that this burglary was clearly motivated by political objectives. Whilst most items of financial value were not stolen (e.g. electric typewriters, petty cash etc.) the items taken included membership records, financial documents, campaign files and other similar types of material. It is clear that the burglars were disturbed as there were several boxes full of files and documents removed from desks and filing cabinets and stacked near the fire escape, apparently ready to be loaded onto a waiting vehicle.

In our judgement this burglary seems to have had the objectives of disrupting the Movement's campaigning activities; intimidating its supporters; and obtaining information for those presumably responsible for commissioning the break-in, namely the South African security services and / or the South African embassy in London. In making this judgement we note that the involvement of the South African authorities in the break-in has not been denied. An embassy spokesman has simply stated that "any suggestion of South African involvement would be totally unsubstantiated and malicious in the extreme". This vague statement is in sharp contrast to that made by the embassy on September 26th 1982 following court appearances of two men in connection with the break-ins at the offices of the ANC, SWAPO and the PAC during the summer of 1982. This statement read, "We deny categorically that this embassy is involved in any way with these burglaries..."

...We categorically deny...

"...We categorically deny that we either recruit terrorists or people to perform these acts of burglary in this country." This statement was proved to be a blatant lie in light of the findings of the British courts and the effective expulsion of a member of the South African embassy staff, Warrant Officer Kl... The Anti-Apartheid Movement reiterates its conviction that the South African authorities or agents acting on their behalf were entirely responsible for this burglary at its Headquarters.

BACKGROUND

On October 13th 1982 the Anti-Apartheid Movement presented a memorandum to the Home Secretary referring to the numerous acts of an illegal, clandestine or subversive character which were specifically aimed against opponents of the apartheid regime in Britain. The memorandum warned that the apartheid regime was using the United Kingdom as a base for "even more serious and disturbing operations". These included:

- a) the use of physical violence against anti-apartheid organisations in Britain.
- b) the surveillance of and gathering of information about opponents of apartheid in Britain, with the objective of planning assassinations.
- c) The systematic break-ins and harassment of anti-apartheid organisations in Britain.
- d) the use of Britain as a base for planning operations against the governments of independent African states and southern African liberation movements.

Since the presentation of this memorandum many of the Movement's fears have been confirmed, and since then even more sinister developments have been brought to light. There were three trials at the Old Bailey relating to illegal activities of South African agents in Britain: the trials of Messrs. Hammond, Cherrett and Aspin on 18th October 1982; the trial of Messrs. Caselton and Aspin on 17th December 1982; and the trial of Mr Wedin on 6th - 11th April 1983. These trials provided conclusive proof of the South African government's illegal and improper activities in the United Kingdom. These included:

- * the establishment of a 'front company' "African Avitation Consultants" in order to provide cover and for channelling funds into the United Kingdom to finance South Africa's illegal operations.

...* The recruitment of...

- * the recruitment of a British citizen, by South African embassy personnel and a South African agent, to carry out a series of burglaries and providing him with a weapon prohibited by law.
- * the recruitment of a British resident to carry out extensive surveillance operations of organisations opposed to apartheid.
- * the transport of property burgled from anti-apartheid organisations in Britain to the South African security services in Pretoria.
- * the use of Britain as a base for similar activities in Norway, Canada, the Netherlands and Cyprus.

The operations revealed in these trials were carried out with the active participation of staff of the South African embassy in London.

These trials also revealed that the Anti-Apartheid Movement was a specific target for these illegal activities. Aspinall (the British burglar) was reported in court evidence as saying " I was supposed to go to Norway on 22nd September to do a military office and a house out there with a lot of papers in it." This, in our Movement's judgement, referred to the Headquarters of the World Campaign against Military and Nuclear Collaboration with South Africa, which was initiated by the Anti-apartheid Movement, and whose Director is the Honorary Secretary of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement who resides in Oslo.

In the trial of Mr Wedin letters from Craig Williamson of the South African security police were read in court. In these letters Mr Williamson proposed various ways in which Mr Wedin could obtain documents of the Anti-Apartheid Movement.

These revelations, together with statements of self-confessed South African agents, confirm the Movement's experience over some two decades that it is a key target of South African subversive activities in Britain. Furthermore, in view of what has been revealed so far, in particular as a result of the arrest of Aspinall, it is equally evident that the full range of South African security operations in the United Kingdom extends considerably beyond those exposed by these developments.

THE HOME SECRETARY'S RESPONSE

On December 22nd 1982 the Home Secretary replied to the proposals set out in the Movement's Memorandum of October 13th and on other matters which it had subsequently raised.

The Movement regrets to state that none of the measures it proposed, measures which it regards as the barest minimum to remedy this intolerable situation, have been acted upon, the only exception being the effective expulsion of Warrant Officer Klue. The Home Secretary rejected the Movement's two most important proposals, namely the introduction of a visa regime and to refuse the acceptance of the credentials of any South African diplomat known to have a security, military or police background.

The failure of the Home Secretary to act upon these proposals is particularly disturbing since there is absolutely no evidence that any alternative measures are being pursued to stop the operations of South African agents in the United Kingdom.

We would like to refer to a number of cases which confirm in the Movement's view the seeming indifference and complacency of the British Government and its appropriate agencies to this problem.

A. The case of Warrant Officer Klue.

Mr Klue left the UK on November 23rd 1982. The British Government " had good reason to believe he had been engaged in activities incompatible with his official status in this country." This is welcomed. But when Klue's effective expulsion was publicised, the South African Foreign Minister declared, " I do not believe that the British people would have expected any British representative abroad to act in any other manner in respect of important information on IRA plans for violence in the UK". Leaving aside the fact that there can be no comparison between the IRA and the Southern African liberation movements which enjoy the official recognition of the UN and OAU; this declaration represents an official and public endorsement of Klue's activities. At the time the Movement's Chairperson sought a response from HMG, and in his letter he said,

"I find it intolerable that the Foreign Minister of South Africa, with which we have diplomatic relations, can publicly endorse the illegal activities of members of his diplomatic

service in the United Kingdom and that moreover he should bring our own diplomatic service into disrepute. If the British Government should fail to respond to his statement it will serve as a green light to the South Africans to continue their illegal and improper activities."

The Foreign Secretary refused to lodge a protest with the South African authorities and instead replied to the Anti-Apartheid Movement arguing that the South African Foreign Minister's statement did not endorse Klue's activities. This the Movement found incomprehensible. Further more it is understood that the South Africans have simply replaced Mr Klue with another operative. Requests in Parliament for the names of personnel in Mr Klue's category, i.e. persons enjoying diplomatic protection but not listed in the diplomatic list, have produced the response that such information is confidential. Moreover the embassy official responsible for Mr Klue's activities, Col. van Niekerk, continues on the embassy staff as does Mr S.G.Botha, who is in charge of DONS (the successor of BOSS) operations at South Africa House. Hence the effective expulsion of Mr Klue in practice assumed limited significance, and would have been seen by the South African authorities as a move designed to minimise any embarrassment which could have arisen had he been in Britain at the time of the trial of Aspinall and Caselton.

B. The South African Embassy financing of illegal arms sales to South Africa.

At the trial of Messrs. Hammond, Cherrett and Aspin, evidence was presented in court on the involvement of the South African embassy in financing illegal arms sales to South Africa. Mr Cranley Onslow MP, Minister of State in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, in a letter to the Movement dated February 15th 1983, stated the Government's view "although there is no conclusive evidence of the embassy's role in the case, there are prima facie grounds for suspecting that the embassy or members of its staff were involved in transactions for the supply of arms to South Africa in contravention of UK legislation."

The Movement was informed that the Government takes "a serious view of this". However we are also told that "since the events in question happened some time ago, it seems clear that any staff who may have been involved are no longer serving at their embassy in London".

...It is difficult...

It is difficult to understand this explanation. First, one of the Court Exhibits, which we have seen, was an invoice with an Embassy stamp. If this is not conclusive evidence, what is? Secondly, the Customs' authorities first became aware of the South African Embassy's involvement in June 1981, and yet the Foreign Office did not act on this case until October 1982. Its investigations were only concluded in February 1983.

Clearly if the Government did take a "serious view" it could have acted on the information immediately, when it was in a position to act against those directly involved. However this does not mean that it could not act now if it wishes by taking appropriate measures against the military section of the Embassy. The same applies to the South African arms dealer Mr Stoffberg. His involvement in smuggling arms to South Africa was also known to the authorities in June 1981 yet he was subsequently permitted to enter the UK on a number of occasions. Despite this no action was taken to bring him to justice.

It is therefore difficult for the Movement to take seriously the Government's assertions in the light of what is known.

C. The visit of Lt.Gen.Johan Coetzee

The head of the South African security police visited Britain in March of this year. Mr Coetzee is the official who has overall responsibility for Mr Williamson who in turn masterminded the illegal activities of Aspinall, Caselton and Klue in Britain. He has publicly boasted of his close involvement with Williamson's operations. And yet he was allowed to enter the UK without any restrictions. Mr Cranley Onslow MP has explained that "since there is no visa regime for travel by South Africans to the United Kingdom, we have no means of knowing about the arrival of South African citizens in this country.". However, he did confirm in his letter that the delegation of which Lt.Gen.Johan Coetzee was a member did "pass through London".

We find this admission the most serious of all. The South African Security Police can set up a major operation in the UK involving break-ins, burglaries etc, and yet the head of the Security Police is permitted to enter Britain with no action being taken against him. The Movement finds this unacceptable.

CONCLUSION

The issues raised in the Movement's memorandum of 13th October 1982 and in this document are viewed with the utmost seriousness. The Movement has been repeatedly disappointed by the lack of a real and positive response by successive governments when similar matters were raised over the past two decades. It was therefore greatly encouraged by the Home Secretary's letter of 1st December 1982 which stated "I can assure you that I take these matters very seriously, and I have asked that they should be very carefully considered."

However, following the break-in at the Movement's Headquarters over the May Day Bank Holiday weekend, there has arisen a real crisis of confidence in British policy. The South African authorities clearly have interpreted the policy of HMG and its agencies as allowing them to operate with impunity in this country and defy its laws. The Movement has been repeatedly informed when it raised these matters in the past that HMG will actively pursue allegations if supported by firm evidence. The South Africans now know that even when a large scale intelligence operation is exposed, involving South African agents and diplomats, the British Government's response will be minimal and ineffective. Whatever may be the intentions of HMG, this is the signal which is conveyed to the apartheid regime. If HMG chooses to maintain this policy then there is every prospect that the apartheid regime will escalate its illegal activities in Britain, and it is feared that this may involve further acts of violence such as the recent bombing of the ANC office in London.

The Movement believes that there must exist the necessary political will for HMG to stamp out the illegal and improper South African activities in Britain. This requires HMG to make it abundantly clear to the South African authorities that such activities will no longer be tolerated. As matters stand, the Movement, its membership, and influential sections of British opinion already face a crisis of confidence in British policy in this respect. Such concern is even more widespread in the Non-Aligned world and in particular among the African and Commonwealth countries. There exists a view that certain organs and agencies of the British Government have and do maintain a calculated indifference towards

the seemingly endless arrogance of the South African regime and its security services and their improper activities in the UK? May we quote Mr Roy Hattersley MP, opposition Home Affairs spokesman, as a reflection of this confidence crisis:

" If what is going on, and what we suspect is going on from London - this spying on private and legitimate organisations - if this was going on from an eastern European embassy I think British security services would take it a great deal more seriously. My worst fear is that in the security services many individuals actually know what is going on and I suspect that some of the activities are, in their crudest form, anti-communist and therefore are activities they don't want to stamp on."

In the light of this position the Movement urges HMG to agree that the Security Commission investigates and reports on South Africa's intelligence and related illegal activities in the UK, the corresponding responses of Britain's security and other concerned agencies, and to recommend measures to end such activities. It should also investigate and review any continuing co-operation between the British and South African security agencies with a view to terminating them.

The proposals set out in the Movement's previous memorandum provide, in its judgement, a necessary framework for a policy to end illegal and improper South African activities in the UK, and we accordingly urge the Government, in light of the break-in at the AAM HQ, to give them urgent consideration.

The Movement wishes to make the following additional proposals:

1. Given the fact that judicial proceedings have been completed, HMG lodges a formal protest to the South African government concerning the illegal and improper operations in the UK of South African security personnel and embassy staff. Such a protest should include a demand that the South African authorities cease engaging in any further such operations and activities in this country.
2. HMG requests the immediate withdrawal of the South African ambassador, and secures an undertaking from all successor ambassadors that they do not allow their embassy personnel to violate the laws of this country or engage in the organisation of activities which are improper or which interfere with the lawful rights of residents of the UK.

3. HMG should act immediately to put an end to the organisation of improper and illegal activities by the South African embassy, and in particular to:

- a) expel from this country all personnel known to be from the South African National Intelligence Service, including Mr S.G.Botha, First Secretary.
- b) terminate the agreement providing for a military section in the South African embassy and immediately to expel Colonel M.J.van Niekerk, Armed Forces Attache.

and

- c) investigate the activities of the Information Department of the South African embassy with a view to ensuring that it ceases engaging in improper and illegal activities, such as the clandestine funding of a British based organisation and the disruption of the legitimate work of the Anti-Apartheid Movement and similar anti-apartheid organisations.

4. HMG should maintain a full list of South African nationals who, by virtue of their known association with the South African security services or arms procurement agencies, as well as their past illegal activities in the UK, are to be excluded from entry to the UK. The categories to be on this list should include:

- (a) those known to be associated with the South African security services
- (b) associates of the South African arms procurement agencies.
- (c) those who have in the past engaged in illegal or improper activities in the service of the apartheid regime.