

STOP SOUTH AFRICAN COAL!

Coal from apartheid South Africa is being imported into Britain and other EEC countries in defiance of worldwide campaigns for sanctions.

In 1986, at least 313,000 tonnes of coal were known to have been imported into Britain alone from South Africa — a staggering 3,000% increase over the last decade. In 1977 coal imports from South Africa were a mere 11,000 tonnes. This 1986 figure disguises the real level of South African coal entering Britain, as much more enters in blended form, from European ports such as Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Antwerp. And imports into the rest of the EEC are even greater. In 1986, 22m tonnes were shipped into the EEC from South Africa, thus providing the apartheid regime with much-needed foreign exchange.

The National Union of Mineworkers and the Anti-Apartheid Movement are campaigning together to stop all imports of apartheid coal.

Why?

Why stop apartheid coal?

- Black South Africans have called upon the rest of the world to isolate South Africa and impose sanctions. They have called for the boycott of all products of apartheid — including coal. The South African National Union of Mineworkers has been in the forefront of this campaign.
- For South Africa, apartheid coal is the second largest source of foreign exchange, which it is desperate to obtain in order to buy arms and fuel to keep apartheid running.
- South African mineowners maintain appalling conditions on their mines. This century 46,000 miners have lost their lives — deaths are now running at 600 a year. In 1986, 177 miners were killed at Kinross, where a PVC coating, banned in US and UK mines, caught fire, releasing toxic gases.
- In spite of South Africa's vast wealth, in 1987 the majority of black miners earn less than £18 per week. As migrant labourers they are herded into primitive compounds, where the traditional bed is a concrete slab and the diet is second grade porridge.
- The apartheid regime and the mineowners collaborate together to prevent mineworkers from organising for better conditions and a just society. The racist police and security forces brutally break up meetings, and workers are dismissed en masse — even for taking part in so-called legal strikes. Many trade union activists are subject to arbitrary arrest and torture.

STOP ALL SOUTH AFRICAN COAL — SANCTIONS NOW!

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The South African NUM

Today the miners in South Africa are on the move. They are not only struggling for basic trade union rights but they are also at the centre of the struggle to overthrow the apartheid system. Founded in 1982, the NUM now has over 365,000 members. They have argued forcefully for solidarity from the international trade union movement and in particular for a boycott of apartheid coal.

The British Connection

Britain is not only involved in importing apartheid coal. British multinationals like Shell and BP own some of the major coalmines in South Africa. They therefore have a direct stake in maintaining the flow of apartheid coal into Britain and the rest of the EEC. Oil companies like Shell are offered a coal export allocation, in order to make South Africa of strategic importance to the coal-importing countries.

Britain and the EEC

In August 1986 Mrs Thatcher gave a pledge to Commonwealth leaders that she would not block an EEC ban on coal imports from South Africa. But behind the scenes West Germany and Portugal were persuaded to veto such action. In September 1986 they did just that at a meeting of the EEC Council of Ministers. And the next day Mrs Thatcher flew to West Germany to personally thank Chancellor Kohl.

Mrs Thatcher is determined to block all effective sanctions against South Africa by the EEC, the Commonwealth or the United Nations. Now that the US Congress has imposed a ban on importing of South African coal into the USA, it is vital that we stop all apartheid coal coming into Britain and the EEC. France and Denmark have already announced that they will stop imports of coal from South Africa.

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST APARTHEID COAL!

- Refuse to handle all imports of South African coal.
- Ensure that no institutions, such as local councils, health authorities, etc, purchase South African coal.
- Support trade union campaigns to get a ban imposed at docks where South African coal is being imported.
- Urge your MP and MEP to support the campaign.
- Support the Shell boycott campaign.

United collective action has already cut back on Britain's lifeline to apartheid in a number of key areas. Today the people of Britain are responding to the call for People's Sanctions and taking action themselves to isolate South Africa.

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