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SOUTH AFRICA AND ITS ACCOMPLICES

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The fatal combination of racist policy and profit-making

The Federal Republic of Germany belongs to one of the few countries which recently have been accused several times at the Plenary Session of the United Nations for its intense economic cooperation with the racist regime in South Africa but also for its military cooperation and its assistance in the field of atomic power. Bonn has always denied this and even tried to use pressure against countries of the Third World and of the Near East who voted against the Federal Republic of Germany.

At the beginning of December the Dortmund paper 'Westfälische Rundschau' referred to this accusation in the following statement:

'The countries of the Third and of the Fourth World which form a powerful coalition in the Plenary Session of the UN have again taught Bonn a lesson... Though the Foreign Office does not get tired to confirm again and again that neither a military nor a nuclear cooperation exists with Pretoria its South Africa policy remains dubious. This is due to industrialists and enterprises of the Federal Republic whose lively trade with the Vorster Regime is dominated by profit-thinking. It is therefore quite understandable that the attitude of countries which have to deal with their colonial heritage/towards Bonn is laden with extreme suspicion. They are well aware that weapons of West German origin reach the Southern part of Africa through several channels.'

On the 4th of November a seminary took place in the Fair-Congress-Centre of Dusseldorf which was organised by the Government of South Africa and by South African Banks. More than 200 representatives of West German enterprises participated. Subject: 'Investment in South Africa.' The organisers could be satisfied and return home with the certainty that the 5 000 million Dollars will soon be multiplied.

At this seminary Siemens made a lot of propaganda for investments at the Cape. The representative of the chairman of the board of Siemens Ltd. South Africa, W.E. Wentges) arrived by plane. In a so-called 'case-study' he explained how exemplary and worthy of imitation the engagement of his company with the South African racists was.

Wentges emphasized particularly the more than hundred years old close contact of Siemens with South Africa where today about 400 West German companies are operating. The bigrcbmpanies he named name: were the following: AEG-Telefunken, BASF, BMW, DEMAG, FAREWERKE HOECHST, KLOECKNER, KRUPP, LURGI, DAIMLER-BENZ, THYSEN-RHEINSTAHL and the VOLKSWAGENWERKE. According to his statements West German big banks play an important part, too. During the last five years, with 6000 million Marks they represented 'South Africa's most important source of capital'. With exports of 3,000 million each The Federal Republic of Germany and Great Britain were the most important supplier countries of South Africa in 1975.

Siemens started its first business contacts with South Africa in 1858. In 1895 the Siemens-Halske South African Agency Johannesburg was founded. In 1910 they established their own offices in Johannesburg and Capetown and several agency contracts were concluded. During the First World War Siemens lost its properties. However, in 1923, it could get a new footing with Siemens S.A. Ltd. The subsequent years of expansion were interrupted by the Second World War and the Siemens properties were put under administration as 'enemy property'. In 1947 the property had to be sold to South African buyers. Wentges explained in Dasselndorf how the big company got through its difficulties: 'Among the buyers was the Federale Volksbelegging Beperk. After some intermediary solutions Protos Engineering (Pty) Ltd. was founded in 1952 which had to represent the interests of Siemens Germany. It was necessary to choose a neutral name as three South African Siemens companies were already in existence of which Siemens could not get hold of. Protos had a Siemens majority. It is important to mention that Federale Volksbeleggings Beperk took over a number of shares.' Two years later one could put one's cards on the table. Wentges: On October 1, 1954, Siemens S.A. (Pty) Ltd. was founded and took over the

majority of the share capital.'

In 1957, i.e. three years later, the 'enemy property' which was confiscated during the Second World War was returned to Siemens. The only condition was that it had to be invested in South Africa. There was no reason not to agree to that as in this part of the world, the black labour force had to make do with 20 % of the wages which were paid to the white population.(And this applies still today.)

Result: Dividends of 30 %, 40 % and more.

According to Wentges' statements in the same year (1957) Siemens had already established the firm roots in five fields of industry which it has today: data technology, communications technology, energy technology, installation and medical technology. Thus the turnover rose from 12.000 million Deutschmarks to 530,000 million Deutschmarks between 1957 and 1976. The production and delivery contract with the South African Ministry of Post which was concluded in December, 1957, for a period of 10 years, was of great importance. This contract - according to Wentges - laid the basis for Siemens' deep-rooted involvement in the figegegfand data communication, the in South African industry:

public telephone service, data technology and communication technology.

This ten-year contract laid down that Siemens received one third of all government orders for such installations.

Ten years later, in 1968, a second two-year-contract was signed, which also included the delivery of installations of ?gilway signal system and by which the delivery share of one third was doubled to two thirds.

Today Siemens disposes of six factories, two factory-like workshops as well as of main offices in Johannesburg and Pretoria with of subsidiaries in Capetown, Durban and Port Elizabeth as well as/four engineering offices and three sales offices which employ a total of 7,000 people, the majority of which are Africans.

No wonder that Siemens as well as the other West German investors are on such good terms with the racist South Africa. In Dhsseldorf, the States Secretary in the Ministry of Finance of the Vorster Regimei Brown guaranteed them again an unhindered transfer of profit, extremely cheap credits, low taxes and cheap (coloured) labourers who are constantly kept in a position without legal rights.

'Please keep in mind', said Dr. Marais, chairman of board of the (South African) Bank of Africa, '... that particularly South Africa will very shortly become the new Eldorado of tomorrow's world. Those who are there now and those who come there first will reap a plentiful harvest. He got a lot of applause from the audience.