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HOLLAND COMMITTEE ON SOUTHERN AFRICA

oil
Amsterdam, 20 January, 1988.

To: Anti-Apartheid organisations and other organisations involved
in solidarity work for a free South Africa and Namibia.

Re: campaign "Shell out of South Africa and Namibia".

Dear friends,

In most Western Countries the campaign to force Shell out of South Africa and Namibia is one of the main topics in the support campaigns for a free South Africa and Namibia.

This letter is about:

- why the campaign focussed on Shell; and
- proposals for the campaign in the first half of 1988.

The letter also contains a questionnaire on your opinion about possible actions in support of the "Shell campaign".

The anti-Shell campaign: A contribution to the isolation of South Africa.

The campaign "Shell out of South Africa and Namibia" is part of the worldwide campaign to isolate the apartheid regime economically. During the last few years we have seen that Western governments have taken some (very weak) measures against the apartheid-regime. In addition to this, several U.S. companies were forced by people's sanctions and developments in South Africa to withdraw from South Africa. The gap left behind by the departing U.S. companies has partly been filled by European and Japanese companies. While the South African trade with Scandinavian countries and the U.S. decreased, the trade with, for example, the F.R.G. and Japan increased.

So in answer to the half-hearted withdrawals and the weak sanctions measures till now, South Africa changed the trade and investment patterns.

The withdrawal of Shell from South Africa and Namibia will certainly give us a new impetus to the economic isolation of South Africa. Especially because:

- Shell is the largest company in the world and has considerable investments in South Africa,
- it is a European company (Anglo/Dutch) with a long tradition of activities in South Africa,
- till now not one oil company with substantial investments in South Africa actually withdrawn, and
- Shell has investments in several key-areas of the apartheid-economy.

A success in the campaign "Shell out of South Africa and Namibia" will have both an important psychological and economical effect on South Africa.

Shell is propping up the apartheid system.

The Anglo/Dutch oil company belongs to the largest foreign investors in South Africa. The company has investments in South Africa of over one billion Rands and a turnover between 3 and 4 billion Rand. The company is involved in key areas of the South African economy. Among Shell's more significant operations are:

- * 50 percent ownership of South Africa's largest oil refinery (200.000 barrels a day) in Durban. The other owner is BP.
- * joint ownership (with Mobil, BP and the South African government) of the offshore receiving dock outside Durban where almost all the crude oil imported into South Africa is discharged.

- * operation of an oil pipeline (with South African Railways).
- * more than 850 gasoline stations in South Africa and Namibia.
- * extensive operations in the chemical, zinc, lead, household gas and stoves and candle industries.
- * 50 percent equity in the Rietspruit coal mine in eastern Transvaal which produces about 6 million tons of coal each year.

Shell has a share in South Africa's oil needs of approximately 20%. Shell's South Africa branche sells 10% of their oil products, such as fuel, to the South African army. Because of its significant activities in oil industry in South Africa, Shell is heavily involved in busting the oil embargo. Since 1982 Shell does not have its own ships delivering crude oil to South Africa, but it is working via other small companies to organise its oil imports.

Shell belongs to the most important exporters of South African coal, South Africa's second major source of foreign currency. It is responsible for at least 6.5 million ton of exported coal from South Africa.

Other important ways in which Shell is propping up the apartheid-system are the transfer of technology, significant new investments and an active anti sanctions campaign in the Western World.

Because of its strategic role in the apartheid economy, Shell has extensive relations with the South African Defence Force. Partly forced by South African laws, such as the National Key Point Act and the Supply and Procurement Act, and partly acting on its own initiative. In this respect Shell is topping up the salaries of their employees who are doing their military service.

Support of the campaign from South Africa.

The campaign to force Shell out of South Africa and Namibia has the full support of both the African National Congress and the South West African People Organisation. In a message on the anti-Shell campaign they wrote "Swapo of Namibia and the ANC welcome and support the international campaign to persuade Royal-/Dutch Shell to break all economic and other links with apartheid". Representatives of trade union and church bodies in South Africa also made statements of support to the anti-Shell campaign. For example dr. Beyers Naude made on 9 May a statement on the Shell campaign in which he wrote that "the action to force Shell to withdraw and cut its economic ties reminds black and white in South Africa of the world's determination to bring an end to apartheid". Secr Gen. of the National Union of Mineworkers, Cyril Ramaphosa, said to a Dutch journalist in autumn '86 "in the field of apartheid and union-busting Shell has built up a bad record. Yes we want this company to leave the country".

The international campaign "Shell out of South Africa and Namibia"

Shell is already a target of anti-apartheid campaigns in the Netherlands for a long period, the first protests started in '73. The international campaign began in January '86 when several unions and anti-apartheid groups in the United States started campaigning against Shell. Till now groups in more than 13 countries have decided to support the campaign, including Scandinavian countries, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Australia. Several international bodies such as the Miners International Federation and the World Council of Churches are backing the campaign.

Shell's reaction to the campaign.

Till now Shell decided several times to stay in South Africa and Namibia, but at the same time they stated that if the campaign will have such an effect that it is more profitable to withdraw they will change there decision.

To neutralize the campaign Shell started a serie of advertisements in South Africa in which it showed itself critical of the apartheid policy. In addition to this it has so called social programmes in South Africa. At the same time it started a propaganda campaign in Western Countries in which it tries to explain that it is playing a possitive role in South Africa.

Shell Oil in the United States hired an advise office to help with a strategy against the devestment campaign. In the past this office, PAGAN, helped Netsle during in breaking the boycott of its products.

The campaign "Shell out of South Africa and Namibia" in 1988.

During a conference of Western Anti-Apartheid organisations in Stockholm, Sweden, in November 1987, and on the ANC conference in Arusha, december 1987, one of the topics was the international Shell campaign. The conferences decided to continue the anti-Shell campaign in 1988. In Stokholm was decided to concentrate the campaign on the following issues:

- * Mayors call for Shell to leave South Africa.
- * International period of action in the second half of May.
- * Approaching bulk consumers and local authorities with the request to join the boycott campaign.

Mayors call.

Since september groups in several countries are collecting signatures of mayors under a call for Shell to leave South Africa. Till now mayors in the United States, the Netherlands, Denmark, Ireland, Canada and Chairpersons of local councils in the United Kingdom signed the call. We ask you to join this mayors initiative. You will find the text of the call on the back page of this letter. Please send your collected signatures as soon as possible to the Holland Committee on Southern Africa. All signatures will be delivered on the same date to Shell's headquarters in both the Uk and the Netherlands. Ofcourse you can deliver your national collected signatures also to the national branche of Shell, at this date.

International action in May.

Shell will organise its Annual Share Holders Meetings in London and The Hague in may. In all likelihood this AGM will be held in the second or third week of May. That is the reason why we want to organise an international period of action from 7 till 21 May. In the United Kingdom and in the Netherlands, there will be demonstrations and other forms of action around Shell's annual meetings. We ask anti-apartheidorganisations, churchbodies and trade unions all over the world to join this period of action.

All kinds of actions are possible, including picketlines, demonstrations, phone call actions to Shell, delivering petitions, etc.

Bulkconsumers.

In Stockholm one of the results of the discussion on the Shell campaign was to put pressure on Shell by approaching bulk consumers and local authorities with the request to join the campaign. These organisations can put pressure on Shell by finishing contracts with Shell and by protesting against the activities of Shell in South Africa.

MAYORS CALL FOR SHELL TO LEAVE SOUTH AFRICA

We, the undersigned mayors of ... cities in ... countries hereby call on the Royal Dutch/Shell Group to cut all its ties with South Africa, including the withdrawal of its subsidiaries from South Africa and Namibia.

We make this call based on the fact that Royal Dutch/Shell's continued investments in South Africa and Namibia help to maintain the oppressive system of apartheid.

We are aware of the fact that Shell has publicly renounced the apartheid system and the company has introduced a number of social programs in South Africa. However, these actions are negated by Shell's active strategic support for the South African government and economy, including the company's

- * supply of petroleum products to the South African military and police, and the South African economy at large;

- * provision of capital and technology to the petroleum, chemical, and mining industries in South Africa;

- * export of coal from South Africa, thereby providing foreign exchange to the South African government.

Our request for Shell's withdrawal from South Africa and Namibia is inspired by the plea for economic sanctions and disinvestment made by the organizations of the black majority of those countries, including the African National Congress, the Southwest African Peoples Organization, the United Democratic Front, the South African Council of Churches, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, and the National Council of Trade Unions.

Our request that Shell should withdraw from South Africa and Namibia arises from our abhorrence of racism and oppression and our conviction that these evils should be combatted wherever they appear.

We hope our call will serve as a stimulus for Shell's board of directors to decide to break all ties with the South African regime.