

BmR/011/0096/3

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Ireland.

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Mr. Teddy Pekane,
Chief Representative,
ANC,
PO Box 197,
1040 Brussels.

Dear Comrade,

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At the Brussels meeting of the Liaison Group which took place last week, it was as you know decided that it was vital to keep up the pressure for sanctions. We have therefore prepared a memorandum which we are submitting to the Johannesburg office of the ANC, and which we enclose for your information.

In pursuance of our decision, the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement invited Comrades Alfred Nzo and Mendi Msimang to Dublin to meet Mr. Gerard Collins, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and to press him to maintain sanctions during Ireland's Presidency of the EC. Mr. Collins himself, as you will see from the memorandum, warned of the huge pressure to relax sanctions, and the need for us to counteract this.

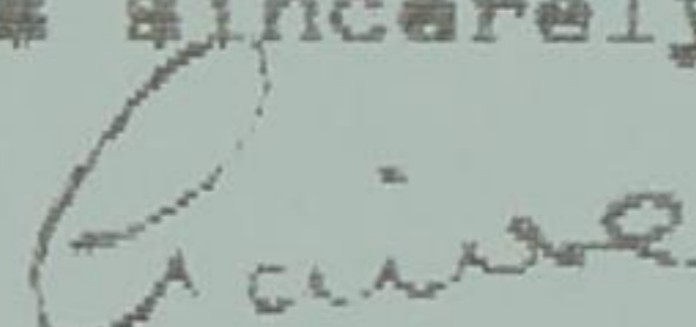
At the instigation of Comrade Nzo, we have prepared a model resolution for the European Parliament, which we are submitting to MEPs for their support in the May session.

I would also like to inform you that a number of people in different areas affiliated to the Liaison Group have been approached by MEPs to attend at Strasbourg during the visit of Comrade Mandela. His visit will take place at a vital stage in the campaign to maintain sanctions; we would be very happy therefore if you could arrange for our representatives to meet Comrade Mandela during his visit, either on 13th or 14th June.

We look forward to hearing from you,

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



Louise Asmal

The Liaison Group of National Anti-Apartheid Movements in the Countries of the European Community

BELGIUM

Akte Komitee Zuidelijk Afrika

Comité Contre Le Colonialisme et L'Apartheid

BRITAIN

Anti-Apartheid Movement

DENMARK

Landskomiteen Sydafrika-Aktion

FRANCE

Mouvement Anti-Apartheid

Rencontre National Contre L'Apartheid

GERMANY (FEDERAL REPUBLIC)

Anti-Apartheid Bewegung

GREECE

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Movimiento Anti-Apartheid

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Movimento Contra o Apartheid

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EUROPEAN COMMUNITY SANCTIONS A MEMORANDUM TO THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

Introduction

We have prepared this memorandum because of our grave concern over the possible imminent relaxation of measures which could lead to the collapse of the sanctions which have been imposed by the European Community and its member states. Already a number of EC countries have unilaterally lifted sanctions measures which have been imposed, eg UK - investment and tourism voluntary bans; Netherlands - visa controls; Spain - air freight flights; Italy - investment restrictions, etc. In addition the Danish government has decided to open an embassy in South Africa, and Nordic governments to relax some of their visa restrictions in relation to South Africa.

However our immediate concern relates to moves within the Community to agree to a partial or phased lifting of sanctions during June 1990. If agreement is reached on such a move it will not only represent a relaxation of international pressure, it could be widely interpreted as a signal that Europe is now prepared to align itself openly with the de Klerk regime which it sees as the main instrument of change. Thus instead of supporting the ANC and pressing for an end to the apartheid system, Europe could significantly strengthen the Pretoria regime's position in relation to any negotiating process.

Background

The European Community has adopted two sanctions packages. The first in September 1985 - the second a year later in September 1986. The September 1985 package was in effect a harmonization of existing measures eg arms embargo, sports boycott, etc. It did include the oil embargo (at that time no EC oil producing country was exporting crude oil to SA) and more controversially a withdrawal of military attaches (the UK refused to accept this at the meeting and only agreed two weeks later).

The second package - in 1986 - was more important in that it significantly extended the sanctions measures applied by EC countries. It involved a mandatory ban on gold coin imports and iron and steel imports (although not all categories) as well as a ban on new investment (national governments were allowed to decide how this latter ban was enforced; as a result, in some countries there were

regulations prohibiting new investment, and in other cases it was purely advisory).

Before the EC met, Commonwealth leaders decided upon certain sanctions measures, with Britain dissenting. Britain did however agree not to oppose coal sanctions if there was an EC consensus for such a measure. In the event a move to impose a Community-wide coal ban was formally blocked by the FRG and Portugal.

The EC measures that were agreed were imposed by the Council of Ministers - ie the Council composed of Ministers from each of the 12 countries. The Commission based in Brussels has no power to impose or lift such measures although it has considerable influence.

The Council of Ministers is chaired by the President - currently Ireland - this post rotates every six months on an alphabetical basis. Preparations for meetings are undertaken by the Troika - this consists of the current President, the immediate past President (now France) and the next President (Italy). Hence the Troika visit to South Africa in April consisted of Ireland, France and Italy plus the European Commission.

Matters concerning foreign policy are discussed within the framework of European Political Co-operation (EPC) which has a secretariat in Brussels with officials from each Foreign Ministry of the 12 member states.

The European Parliament has no direct say over such policy matters - its powers are extremely limited. Real power continues to rest with the 12 national governments.

Recent Developments

Since February the UK has been leading a campaign to secure the lifting of EC sanctions. Although isolated at the Dublin Foreign Ministers meeting in February, behind the scenes there has been considerable support for the UK position.

It is important to recognise that with the exception of Denmark there has been no EC country which has been in the forefront of the sanctions campaign. Ireland, Greece and the Netherlands have become generally sympathetic and France under Mitterand shifted significantly towards sanctions in 1985. The existing EC package is the weakest sanctions package of any group of countries.

The general assessment of the Anti-Apartheid Movements of the EC when we met in March this year was that the pro-sanctions forces had succeeded in holding the ground in relation to any moves for the relaxation of sanctions. This seemed to be confirmed by the Troika visit, and our expectation was that there would be no change during the Irish Presidency.

This is no longer our view. In a surprise move the Irish Foreign Minister flew to Brussels on May 16 to meet de Klerk and then announced that the issue of sanctions would be considered at an informal meeting of Foreign Ministers in Ireland at the weekend 19-20 May. They have now agreed upon a time-table of discussions:

- June 6th : Foreign Ministry officials meeting in Brussels to prepare proposals
- June 18th: Council of Ministers meeting (ie Foreign Ministers meeting) in Luxembourg to consider specific proposals
- June 25-6: Dublin Summit of Heads of Government (European Council)

It appears that these meetings will consider amongst other matters a proposal from the Netherlands for the phased lifting of sanctions. At present the UK, Portugal and Greece are all taking strong anti-sanctions positions. Ireland and Denmark remain in favour of sanctions. Belgium appears to back the Dutch position. If France, the FRG and Italy back the Dutch position - or any other similar moves - it will be extremely difficult for Ireland and Denmark to resist the move. Although EC decisions are taken by consensus whenever possible, South Africa is only one item on their agenda. Other inter-state interests can mean that considerable pressure can be brought to bear especially on smaller EC member states.

Political Consequences

The consequences of any such move by the EC are three-fold:

- 1) the economic impact - although limited in direct commercial terms because of the restricted scope of the EC measures, it could contribute to a more favorable economic climate for South Africa and lead to new inflows of capital and loans - thus removing a critical form of pressure. It already appears that the impact of de Klerk's visit to Europe may make it easier for South Africa to convert debt into loans and start to arrange new loans.
- 2) it will deal a psychological blow on the sanctions campaign and make it more difficult to sustain popular boycott campaigns if it is conceived by public opinion in Europe that the governments of the EC are united in wishing to see sanctions lifted. It could also lead to shifts of policy by the Nordic countries, US, Commonwealth, Japan, etc
- 3) Pretoria's friends and allies will present it as support for De Klerk and a snub to the ANC. Such an unfavorable development, placed in the context of coming events, could be even more damaging. The ANC Deputy President is due to address the European Parliament on 13th June. It would be natural for Cde Mandela to re-state ANC policy on maintaining sanctions. If five days later the Foreign Ministers agree to the partial or phased lifting of sanctions, the press and public will inevitably interpret this as a rejection of ANC policy.

A similar problem could arise with Cde Mandela's visit to Dublin on 1-2nd July. This will be within days of the Dublin Summit which may have already endorsed the relaxation of sanctions. This could place the ANC in a most difficult position, since EC sanctions policy could already have been undermined before the Deputy President's visit to Dublin. Also, Mrs Thatcher will be able to argue with greater authority that any such move is a "vindication" of her stand in February, and enable her when she

meets Cde Mandela to claim that she has Europe on her side.

At a time when it is important to place the world community on the side of the ANC, such moves on the sanctions front by the European Community could result in a completely different message being conveyed - that much has been achieved, and that De Klerk must be supported totally in his 'reform' measures.

Action

We do not wish to convey too pessimistic a message. Some of these developments can be prevented by timely and appropriate action. Of crucial importance are the Deputy-President's visits to Paris and Bonn. If in advance of these visits the ANC could secure undertakings from the French and FRG governments that they will not relax sanctions and block moves in the EC this could put an end to any such moves. But this will require a high-level intervention in advance by the ANC.

The ANC needs to make co-ordinated approaches at the highest level possible to all the key governments ie Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Greece and Denmark. Special attention needs to be paid to Ireland. To reinforce these approaches the ANC needs to approach the Socialist International. SI affiliates are in government (on their own or in coalition) in France, Spain, Belgium, Netherlands, and Italy.

The Front-line states should make their own representations to the European Community and they need to be approached to secure a high-level intervention, not only in the EC but also in the OAU and the ACP grouping.

Finally these pressures would be augmented if the MDM and wider anti-apartheid forces publicly expressed opposition to any moves by the EC to relax sanctions. Statements by the Church leadership especially the Catholics would be useful.

Conclusion

We regard this as a matter of great concern. At a time when we should all be intensifying sanctions and increasing pressure on the regime in order to improve the negotiating position of the ANC, events are moving in the opposite direction.

The central objective must be to maintain the commitment of governments to the UN Declaration on South Africa, especially at a time when the UN is preparing for the resumption in July of the Special Session on Apartheid. It is important to note that a number of governments are also privately resisting efforts to strengthen the arms embargo, on the grounds that now is not the time to increase the pressure on South Africa. The fact that the outcome of the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers' meeting in Nigeria was positive reflects the influence in the Commonwealth of non-aligned governments and does not imply that forthcoming EC meetings will have a similar outcome.

In this situation we have taken the liberty of making concrete proposals for actions since there is very limited time available if we are to ensure a positive outcome. From our side we are doing everything possible to exert influence on our own government, on members of the European parliament, political parties etc. in order to secure such an outcome.

Mr Gerald Collins, the Irish Foreign Minister and current President of the Council of Ministers when he met the ANC Secretary-General Cde Alfred Nzo earlier this week in Dublin emphasised that he was facing very great pressure to relax sanctions from major EC members and that concerted action was necessary, especially by the ANC, to ensure that the present position is maintained.

23 May 1990

Irish AAM on behalf of the Secretariat of the Liaison Group of the AAMs of the European Community