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International NGO Action Conference for Sanctions
Against South Africa

THE STAND OF SOVIET PUBLIC ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF SANCTIONS AGAINST
SOUTH AFRICA

Submitted by Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity
Committee

Leonard Goncharov

USSR, Moscow, Kropotkinskaja str. 10

The policy of apartheid pursued by the government of South Africa is a cause of continuous concern for the UN. All the world public protests against apartheid as a system of racial discrimination and segregation. It has been denounced by the UN General Assembly as a crime against humanity. The UN Security Council has repeatedly emphasized that continued existence and consolidation of the apartheid regime posed a grave threat to international peace and security.

Documents such as the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1963), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), the resolution of the UN General Assembly on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (1969), which confirmed the legitimate rights of colonial peoples to fight for self-determination and independence and called on all states to render them moral and material support, were of particular importance for the fighting people of South Africa. In 1962 the UN General Assembly made an appeal to impose most varied sanctions that would force the South African government to renounce the policy of apartheid. In 1965, having qualified apartheid as a threat to universal peace, the UN General Assembly demanded that the Security Council should impose a stringent embargo on arms deliveries to the racists. However, the stance of Western powers which had repeatedly resorted to their right of veto has resulted in that an appropriate resolution was passed by the Security Council only in 1977. In view of violations of the imposed embargo by the West, the UN Special Committee against apartheid had to draw the attention of the member states to the need in a more effective control over arms deliveries to South Africa.

A majority part was played by the UN decisions to declare the year of 1971 a year of struggle against racism and racial discrimination and to declare a decade of action against racism and racial discrimination in 1973. In May 1980 the world's progressive public held a Week of Solidarity with the fighting people of Southern Africa. In 1979 the UN General Assembly adopted a USSR-sponsored resolution on the Inadmissibility of the Policy of Hegemonism in International Relations. Qualifying apartheid and racism as a manifestation of hegemonism, the document thereby denounced the policy of the South African regime, trying to impose its will on sovereign African states by means of nuclear blackmail.

One would think that quite a lot has been done to eradicate the last retreat of colonialism and racism from the African soil. The reality defies these suppositions, however. Despite a major propaganda campaign, launched in South Africa and certain Western states and designed to convince the protesting world that

the policy of apartheid will no longer be pursued in its current form, the racists take all possible measures to preserve it intact. There is no evidence that the Nationalist Party of South Africa, headed by P.Botha, is prepared to revise its underlying views. Quite on the contrary, following a new wave of mass manifestations of the opponents of apartheid and fighters for the rights of over 20 million black and "coloured" people of this country, which swept South Africa in May 1980, the government of P.Botha, having dropped all its pseudoliberal promises about "racial harmony" and "relaxing the system of apartheid", once again brought in military units and police to suppress the protesting people. At the same time the racists mount military aggressive acts against the neighbouring African states, particularly against Angola. Major punitive operations are being also continued in the South Africa-occupied Namibia.

The racist police uses bullets, clubs, mass arrests and deportations to deal with the protesting young people and striking workers and farm labourers. On May 28, 1980, for instance, police opened fire in Cape Town at a group of students, killing and wounding several people. The number of arrested within just a few days amounted to several thousand people. The situation in the country has flared up to such an extent that new mass uprisings of the kind that happened in Soweto in 1979 are possible at the moment.

The latest bloody events once again expose the true image of apartheid and underline the urgent need in joint struggle against the criminal Pretoria regime and in a stronger international support for the oppressed people of South Africa and Namibia. There are forces in the world, however, that render all-round political, diplomatic, military and economic aid to the racists. These are, above all, the major member-states of the aggressive NATO bloc, headed by the US, reactionary regimes that seized power in certain countries in Asia and Latin America, and finally, powerful transnational corporations and banks which extract fabulous profits from the sweat and blood of apartheid's victims. The allies of the South African racists are accomplices in their crimes against humanity.

The political outcomes of the activities by the UN and its specialized bodies could have been much more effective but for the numerous barriers put up by Western states. For instance, representatives of developing and socialist states have repeatedly underlined the need in a comprehensive approach to the situation in Southern Africa at the United Nations. It has been frequently pointed out that a solution to such questions as the elimination of apartheid, granting independence to Namibia and application of effective sanctions against Smith's Rhodesia could be achieved only through a complete boycott and isolation of the racist regime. Proposals to this effect have been incorporated in many resolutions of the UN General Assembly and

its committees, but have never been implemented owing to obstructive actions by Western powers.

For example, in 1973 the UN General Assembly adopted the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, supported by socialist and developing states. The US and Britain, however, voted against it. In 1976, the Security Council unanimously approved Resolution 385 which recognized the right of the people of Namibia to decide their future through free elections under the UN supervision. However, through numerous chicaneries the Western powers postponed its implementation and prevented the taking of active measures against Pretoria. Eighteen months of fruitless manoeuvres and negotiations secured the South African government a vital respite for working out a neo-colonialist solution, amounting to rigged elections and the creation of a puppet government.

The United Nations Organization has repeatedly emphasized that the activities of foreign economic circles on colonial territories were a major obstacle on the oppressed people's road to independence. However, despite these warnings by the UN and demands of the world public, capitalist countries have not only failed to sever their links with the racists, but have actually extended them further. From 1960 to 1977, the overall sum of private and state foreign loans, credits and direct and portfolio investments by capitalist countries into the South African economy grew from 3.1 billion Rand to 21.3 billion Rand, or approximately 7 times. Between 1960 and 1978 the turnover of its foreign trade grew from 2.0 billion Rand to 16.4 billion Rand, or 8.2 times. Thereby, the modern powerful military and police machinery of suppression has been set up by the racists with a most direct assistance of imperialist powers.

The flow of profits, transferred from South Africa to England, the US, France, West Germany and other capitalist states is getting stronger all the time: in 1960 it amounted to 272 million dollars; in 1972 it stood at 1,240 million dollars. It is in the name of these millions and billions that Western powers render help to the racists, who have crucified the indigenous African population of their country on the cross of avarice and lawlessness. The rate of dividends on foreign joint-stock capital in South Africa is one of the highest in the world.

In an attempt to disguise their part of accomplices of the South African racists, foreign businessmen resort to demagogic claims that African workers are not subjected to racial discrimination at their enterprises. One propaganda trick in this case is the so called codes of behaviour: rough guides for changing the regulations for employing African workers. However, both these conditions and subsequent statements are nothing but an attempt to deceive public opinion. For instance, the London-based Africa and New African magazines have quoted facts of codes of behaviour being elaborated by foreign monopolies in collaboration with

the South-African authorities and adopted only after their authorization by Pretoria. These tricks are used for accounting somehow for the colossal profits and investments of monopolies. But then the point is not only in the profits, transferred abroad or re-invested in South Africa. Foreign monopolies carefully suppress the fact that the vast amounts of money, paid by them to the racists' treasury as taxes, are used by the latter for cracking down on the fighters against apartheid.

A powerful military-industrial complex, capable of meeting 75 % of the racists' needs in arms through home production, has been set up in South Africa with the assistance of Western imperialist circles. This complex is a close entanglement of state corporations, directly or otherwise related to the arms industry, with giant local or foreign monopolistic associations. Its nucleus is made up of capital-intensive industries, producing machines and equipment. Technologies and funds are supplied by the major Western ZNC's, possessing 40% of the capital of South Africa's processing industry. Together with their South-African subsidiaries they supply the arms industry with parts and other essential materials for producing the principal types of arms. It is from this very source whence come the remaining 25% of the racists' arms and military equipment, which cannot be produced in South Africa so far. Transnational banks and their related financial institutions of the West, controlling about 60% of the assets of the country's 20 major banks, secure funds for the racist state for buying arms, produced at home or abroad.

According to the far from complete estimates, in 1972-1978 South Africa received 158 loans worth 5.5 billion dollars from 382 banks from 22 capitalist states. A major part of these loans was granted by financial institutions of 5 countries. Their list is headed by West German banks, followed by credit institutions of the US, Britain, France and Switzerland. The build-up of the campaign of protest by the progressive international public against Western collaboration with the racist regime forced the banks to enshroud their operations more thoroughly. A whole series of statements about cutting the flow of imperialist aid to South Africa ensued promptly. In effect, it keeps growing, although this is going on in an atmosphere of greater secrecy. However, sooner or later, all secrets come to the open. Not long ago there were exposing facts quoted in UN documents, saying that transnational banks raised over 9 billion dollars for the South African government, state-controlled corporations and private companies between 1975 and 1977 alone. This is more than they loaned all countries of Tropical Africa during the same time. One is inevitably led to the conclusion that they also played the decisive role in mobilizing the whole of the country's national debt. Had the transnational banks refused to give South Africa credit on cigarettes, the racists would have been forced to cut their spendings on the output of armoured vehicles.

As long as South Africa came to possess an advanced military-industrial complex, one should regard the entire foreign debt of the racists (622 million Rand as for June 1979), rather than only those loans, granted on arms production or purchases, as military-related.

One could hardly overestimate the role of transnational banks in beefing up the racist regime - the role, which they by helping the Pretoria authorities organize the sales of gold - their main source of foreign exchange earnings. It is exactly through gold exports that South Africa offset 62% of its goods imports in 1978, fully financing the costs of oil and oil products imports, which currently stand at no less than 2-3 billion Rand a year, in the process. In the 70's South Africa started selling 80% of its gold to the Zurich gold pool, set up for this purpose by three Swiss banks: Swiss Bank, Union Bank and Swiss Credit Bank. These banks buy gold directly from the South African Reserve Bank and have consequently turned into the major and most vital source of finances for Pretoria.

Transnational banks have also secured channels for selling South African gold coins - the 1-oz Krugerrands (practically - small gold ingots). This has enabled South Africa to sell gold away from the traditional markets and escape their periodic price downfalls. In 1977 the US became the principal Krugerrand market.

South Africa is exceptionally rich in minerals, but lacks any oil fields. This is the Achilles' heel of the racist regime. However, owing to the intensive use of other energy carriers and a hefty contribution by NTC's in the shape of modern technologies, it has managed to reduce its dependence on oil to only 1/4 of its energy needs -- the lowest level, compared with other capitalist countries. And yet, despite all this, the racists face the implacable need to import more than 15 million tons of crude oil a year.

Being apprehensive about a possible imposition of a comprehensive international embargo on oil deliveries, the South African government hopes for a solution to the oil problem through commissioning new works of the state-owned corporation SASOL, involved in converting coal into liquid fuel. If these expectations come true, the country will come to possess a colossal industrial complex worth 2.5 billion Rand. No less than 20% of its financing is effected through export loans from TNC's.

Without waiting for the commissioning of new SASOL works, the South African government takes steps to pile its own oil reserves. In 1979 these could meet the country's needs for 18 months. The Pretoria authorities daily demand further additions to these reserves from transnational corporations. This demand goes along with granting great privileges to the corporations in building or expanding oil refineries in South Africa.

According to South African laws, the refusal to sell oil to the armed forces is regarded as a crime. Consequently, the subsidiaries of such oil monopolies as Shell, BP, Mobil, Caltex and Total, operating in the country, regularly supply the racists' army with liquid fuel.

In the late 70's an oil crisis broke out in South Africa. It was a direct outcome of the policy of apartheid, with the Arab OPEC members and Iran suspending their oil deliveries to the racists in 1973 and 1979, respectively, in protest against it. The so called international cash commodities market became South Africa's principal source of liquid fuel. The situation turned so critical that in June 1979 the authorities imposed an emergency law, prohibiting publication of data on the country's possessions of oil. It was oil TNC's once again that came to their help in that case Oil started pouring into South Africa from sources, to which the monopolies had access under contracts concluded earlier. In addition to these sources, South African oil companies concluded contracts with international brokers. In summer 1979 the British government decided to call off all restrictions on the deliveries of oil and oil products to South Africa, which cannot be qualified as anything but an act of criminal solidarity with the racists.

The world public becomes increasingly alarmed over the disguised and open participation of imperialist powers in supplying the South African Army and police with arms. Starting from the early 60's, the Security Council has been regularly passing resolutions, proposing to impose an embargo on arms sales to South Africa. In the late 1977 it passed Resolution 418, prescribing a compulsory embargo this time. However, owing to subversive acts by reactionary Western forces, this embargo proved to be no more effective than a sieve. The continued military cooperation of imperialist powers with South Africa, whose authorities plan to push up their military budget to 2.5 billion dollars in 1981, is a flagrant violation of UN decisions. According to a report, printed in the Africa Confidential magazine on October 20, 1978, South Africa regularly receives large shipments of military equipment, developed or produced in the US. Despite the statements by the US government that it follows the terms of the compulsory embargo. Washington authorizes sales of the so called civil aircraft to South Africa, as well as deliveries of US-made aircraft engines via third countries. In this manner South Africa unrestrainedly buys about 150 helicopters and light aircraft a year directly from the US and purchases other planes, powered by US-made engines, from West European countries.

Apart from planes and support facilities which get into South Africa through the legal "civil needs" loophole, a large number of these is channeled there through illegal and clandestine passages. This is accomplished via "third countries" which re-sell arms to private buyers, companies and official organizations in South Africa. The racists receive continuous military aid from Israel which sells them arms and cooperates with them in developing new military equipment. Arms production is

being continuously stepped up in South Africa itself, which is made easier by the fact that countries such as Britain and West Germany allow the sales of licences and free travel of their experts to South Africa. Trade-marks of NATO member-states can be spotted today on the racists' naval ships, transportation and communications facilities.

As disclosed by South African Radio, the US has supplied South Africa with medium-range surface-to-surface missiles and sent in a group of instructors for their mounting and testing under a secret agreement on military cooperation. According to a statement by P. Botha, the use of these missiles will be coordinated with the US, Israel, Pakistan and NATO.

For several years now the Chinese Maoists have been buying strategic raw materials in South Africa, including chromium, tin, nickel, gold and copper. In return China supplies South Africa with arms in violation of resolutions of the UN Security Council.

The current nuclear potential of South Africa appears particularly ominous in the light of aggressive acts of the racists, who try to slow down the elimination of the last stronghold of colonialism and racism on the African continent and preserve the peace-threatening seat of tension at all costs, including the use of military force. The countries that have helped South Africa in developing its nuclear weapons: France, Britain, West Germany, Holland, the US, Belgium, Israel, Japan and Switzerland, bear direct responsibility for the build-up of the threat to peace. While all other South African reactors are to a different extent subject to control and inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) the uranium enrichment plant, built by West Germany in Walindab, (the principal opportunity for building a nuclear bomb) is an utterly unknown link to it. The plant was put into operation in 1975. In 1984 it will be able to turn out 5,000 tons of enriched uranium a year (building one nuclear bomb requires 20 kg of uranium). In 1986 the plant will hit its design capacity and will be providing the racists with 10,000 tons of high-enrichment uranium annually.

A decision by South Africa to produce nuclear weapons openly would undoubtedly trigger off a violent reaction of international protests and could entail economic sanctions against it. That is why South Africa eschews publicity, but, being scared about its growing isolation, pays extremely high attention to the development of nuclear power engineering. South Africa has never signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, having thereby left the door open for accomplishing its own programme for their production. Proliferation of nuclear weapons, encouraged by Western powers, and clandestine deliveries of equipment to South Africa, designed for setting up secret production of these weapons and subsequent blackmail, are a much more serious

crime than a crime in the regular sense of the word. It is aimed against the security of all mankind.

Cooperation with foreign capital is a vital condition for the development of South Africa's military-industrial complex. A boycott of the South African regime in the field of foreign economic relations would have heightened social contradictions and class conflicts in the country. According to estimates by South African economists made in 1976, a reduction in direct long-term private investments by only 20%, would bring about a shrinking of the gross domestic product by 0.5%, while with a full boycott the gross domestic product would shrink by 5% (according to assessments by Western experts, the South African regime needs a 5% rate of economic growth to escape political collapse). In its turn, a reduction of the foreign trade turnover by 50% would entail foreign exchange losses in the order of 3.7 billion dollars. It is not irrelevant in this connection to recall that the mass unrest of Africans in Soweto in summer 1976 coincided with the most profound economic depression in South Africa between 1974 and 1977, which was actually followed by a "flight" of foreign capital from the country.

Financial and material resources, created in South Africa, help partially replace foreign capital and maintain modest (in the order of 2% a year) rates of economic growth. However, the racists are still unable to meet their needs in modern know-how and technologies to the required extent - the factors of development that come from the outside together with the inflow of capital and goods. Discontinuation of economic relations with South Africa by industrialized capitalist nations would result in a complete disorganization of its economy, which still operates to a large extent (at least by 40-50%) on imported equipment. This would have most grave consequences for the apartheid regime.

In contrast to capitalist countries, the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist community do not maintain political or economic relations with South Africa and continue the irreconcilable struggle for its isolation on the international arena. The USSR comes out for the immediate granting to the people of Namibia of their inalienable right to self-determination and independence on the basis of preservation of the unity and territorial integrity of the country, for the urgent and complete withdrawal of the South African troops and administration from Namibia and for the handover of power to the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), recognized as the sole legitimate representative of the Namibian people.

It was on the initiative of the Soviet Union that the 15th Session of the UN General Assembly passed the historic declaration on the granting of independence to the colonial countries and peoples in 1960. Following a proposal by the Soviet Union, the 16th Session of the UN General Assembly set up a Special Committee on the control over the implementation of this

declaration in 1961. At the 17th Session of the UN General Assembly in 1962, the delegation of the Soviet Union expressed its full support for Resolution 1761 on the denunciation of sanctions against this country, including severance of diplomatic relations, discontinuation of trade and investments, etc. The Soviet Union has been sticking to this position at all subsequent discussions of the issue of apartheid at sessions of the General Assembly and at meetings of the Security Council.

The USSR firmly supports actions by the Organization of African Unity which fights for the complete liberation of the African continent from colonial bonds and termination of the policies of apartheid. The socialist countries act on the side of numerous international and public organizations which boycott South Africa and call for the implementation of economic sanctions against it.

Speaking at the 34th Session of the UN General Assembly on September 25, 1979, Member of the Politbureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Foreign Minister of the USSR A. Gromyko demanded a categoric rejection of all plots, designed to preserve the rule of racists and colonialists in the South of Africa, and suggested that those who ignored the UN decisions on this issue be forced to respect them.

On behalf of the Soviet public we proposed to fight for the implementation of Resolution 1761 of the 17th Session of the UN General Assembly of November 6, 1962, sabotaged by Western powers. Now is the time to impose comprehensive sanctions against the racist regime. The West's allusions to grave consequences for its industry as a result of the discontinuation of deliveries of mineral raw materials from South Africa are utterly unsound.

All the open and clandestine channels of supply of private investments, loans, oil, and arms to South Africa should be cut off. This would aggravate the difficulties experienced by the racist regime. A UN ban on purchasing South African gold and diamonds would have still more serious and even catastrophic consequences for it. Granted strict observance, this measure would place the Pretoria authorities on the verge of inevitable perdition. This is essential for the vital interests of Africa, its peaceful future and social progress.