



# the Anti-Apartheid Movement

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Memorandum to Her Majesty's Government 29th April 1976

The Operation of the British Arms Embargo:

The United Nations Security Council first called for an international arms embargo against South Africa in 1963, followed by a stronger resolution adopted in 1964, with the then Conservative Government voting in favour. Implementation of these resolutions has always been regarded as the minimum action which a government could take to assist in ending the evil policies of apartheid.

The Labour Party has been committed to implementing an arms embargo against South Africa since 1963. In the October 1974 general election the Labour Manifesto stated: "By a decision of the Government, arms are no longer being supplied to South Africa."

In December 1974, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Mr. Callaghan, re-affirmed the Government's commitment to the international arms embargo and pledged to enforce it strictly. This pledge was warmly welcomed by all the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting at Kingston, Jamaica in 1975.

The formal policy declaration of HMG appears to be in line with the decisions of the UN Security Council and the Labour Party Manifesto. However, the way in which the arms embargo is interpreted and implemented by HMG makes a mockery of declared British policy since it enables the Pretoria regime to obtain a wide range of British military equipment for its armed forces.

There are gaping loopholes in the British arms embargo policy:

1. The Export of Goods (Control) Order 1970 which came into operation on 28th September 1970 prohibits the export of certain specified goods to other countries. Certain goods listed in schedule 1 are prohibited for export but may be sent to any "port or destination in the Commonwealth, the Republic of Ireland, the Republic of South Africa or the United States of America". It is remarkable that South Africa should be accorded a special status which is apparently denied to most western European countries including members of the EEC and NATO. Among the items listed in Group 3 which can be exported without control to South Africa include, "communication, navigation, direction finding and radar equipment"; "airborne radar equipment"; "ground and marine radar equipment"; certain types of "electronic computers"; "data communication equipment"; "electronic cathode-ray oscilloscopes"; "valves"; "magnetometers"; "equipment employing tropospheric, ionospheric or meteoric scatter phenomena"; "radio transmitters and components"; and "thermoelectric materials and devices". Items listed in Group 4 covers chemicals and under this section South Africa is permitted to obtain various compounds and mixtures including "primary explosives and priming compositions". Group 5 deals with a wide range of minerals and metals, many of which can be exported to South Africa even though they can be of use for military equipment and electronic components. Group 6 deals with Engineering products which include, "anti-friction bearings"; "chemical plant and equipment"; "welding and machining equipment"; "furnaces"; "gas turbine engines for marine propulsion, whether originally designed as such or adapted for use from aero-engines"; a wide range of "machines and apparatus" for manufacturing various equipment; "presses"; "vacuum pumps"; "rolling mills"; and "wind tunnels and devices capable of simulating environments at velocities of Mach 1.4 and above..." - these and other items in Group 6 which can be exported without control to South Africa are particularly

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suites to facilitate the production of aircraft and other military equipment by the Pretoria regime. Group 7 permits the export of "trailers and semi-trailers" and Group 8 includes "fluoro carbon compounds"; "fuels for aircraft engines"; "hydraulic fluids" and "lubricating oils and greases".

A close analysis of the 1970 Control Order reveals that the list of items which are exempted for export to the designated countries including South Africa cover precisely the type of materials and equipment needed by the Pretoria regime to develop and expand its own internal armaments industry. The Control Order could not have been prepared much better if it was deliberately designed to undermine the arms embargo and enable British firms to participate directly in assisting South Africa to build up its military capability.

2. A second category are items of military equipment which require a licence to be granted by the Ministry of Trade. It has so far been impossible to secure from the Government a list of military equipment which would be refused an export licence to South Africa. It has been just as difficult to ascertain how many licences have been issued over the years for military equipment supplied to South Africa. From time to time, the Anti-Apartheid Movement has learnt of specific orders placed by South Africa with British arms firms and each case has had to be taken up individually with HMG; it has always proved to be extremely difficult to obtain the relevant information in good time. For example, when the news about Marconi planning to sell the Troposcatter system to South Africa broke in December 1975, representations made to the Foreign Office on behalf of AAM brought the response that it has been referred to the Ministry of Trade. To date there has been no reply from that Ministry and meanwhile Marconi claims that it has received Government approval for its South African contract.

Another example is that of Hasler(UK) of Croydon being involved in providing Hasler(SA) Ltd. with a message switching unit. On 21st April 1976, Mr. Robert Hughes, M.P., in a letter to Prime Minister Callaghan mentioned that he had good reason to believe that the unit was in fact destined for Rhodesia. It is not known whether,

- (a) this system requires a licence
- (b) what criteria is applied in granting such licences
- (c) what monitoring system is used to ensure that the equipment does not reach Rhodesia.

Despite the considerable publicity surrounding these two cases there has been no statement so far from the Government.

3. A further category is British designed equipment, licenced to a third country, which in turn supplies it to South Africa. The most flagrant violation of the embargo in this area involves Rolls Royce engines sub-licenced initially by Rolls Royce to an Italian firm. Several years ago, under these arrangements, Rolls Royce engines were installed in 150 South African Impala MkI aircraft. A new generation of the Impala - the MkII - are now in production in South Africa and powered by Rolls Royce Bristol Viper Mk 632-43 engines. The Impala MkII is a version of the AerMacchi MB 326K which is an ideal operational trainer and light ground attack aircraft with advanced combat capabilities. Representations were made by the AAM to HMG at the time to block the loophole which enabled the engines to be provided for the Impala MkI - it appears as if no action was taken and once again British designed engines are to be used for the MkII. The AAM wrote to the new Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Mr. Crosland, on 23rd April 1976 urging him to "take immediate steps to ensure that Rolls Royce, as

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the principal licence holder, revokes all sub-licences which enable South Africa to obtain Rolls Royce engines". There has been no response to date.

4. Yet another indirect method of providing South Africa with military equipment is to send it via another country. A recent example is that of British rocket motors made by Martin-Baker Ltd., transported to France and then exported to South Africa. This information became known almost a month ago and it has been covered extensively in the press - yet there has been no response from the Government so far.
  
5. A glaring violation of the arms embargo came to light over engines supplied by Aviation Jersey Ltd. for South African Centurion tanks. An official of the firm, J.R. Chalmers claims that "Any association we had with South Africa was with the blessing of the Ministry of Defence". Prime Minister Wilson informed the House of Commons on 18th March 1976 that he could not anticipate any possible criminal proceedings and the responsibility rested with the Government of the Channel Islands. Enquiries by AAM have so far failed to establish whether the British arms embargo is in fact implemented by the Channel Islands. There is strong evidence to suggest that British military equipment can be exported to South Africa via the Channel Islands without any restrictions at all. There has been no further response from HM Customs or the Government of the Channel Islands.
  
6. The South African defence authorities rely heavily on being able to obtain the most modern technical information and military know-how. The 1970 Control Order does not prevent British firms or defence institutions from passing on military information to South Africa. The Pretoria regime is thus able to secure the latest information and know-how for use in its internal armaments industry programme as well as for its armed forces.

From the above it is clear that the British arms embargo policy needs urgent review: the South African defence authorities are able to secure a wide range of vital military equipment from this country in order to strengthen its military power and efficiency. In June 1975 the AAM published documents which revealed that the NATO codification system for spares and equipment had been provided to South Africa and used to construct its Advokaat communication system. It was also disclosed that certain equipment for the Advokaat Project was of British origin. In November 1975 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office informed the AAM that the equipment in question related to "spares such as bulbs and valves which are in common commercial use and available from a number of sources; they relate to items of a non-military nature"

It appears that the British arms embargo policy permits items "of a commercial nature" to be exported to South Africa even where the equipment is ordered directly by the South African Defence Ministry. It is also unclear as to how the distinction is made between items of a "commercial nature" and that of a "military nature". From what has already been mentioned in this document it appears as if any equipment which can conceivably be described as being of a "commercial nature" is in fact supplied to South Africa without any control.

The AAM believes that these facts warrant an urgent review of the British arms embargo policy and calls for a full Parliamentary enquiry into the operation of the embargo. It calls upon HMG to take immediate steps to:

- (a) ensure that the British arms embargo is implemented strictly and
- (b) that it gives full support for the embargo to be made mandatory by the UN Security Council.

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