

BONN-PRETORIA AXIS

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ON DECEMBER 16TH, 1965 (Dingane's Day), Pieter Botha, as Defence Minister in the South African White minority government, announced loudly that South Africa possessed a 'secret weapon'. This weapon, the result of South African research will, he said, 'ensure the safety of South Africa'.

Speaking elsewhere on the same day, Dr. Albert Hertzog, then Minister of Ports, declared that:

the financial powers of the United States and Britain were prepared to sell out the white man in Africa for their own financial gain. (*The Times*, London, 17.12.65.)

Hertzog did not mention either France or West Germany, though France was supplying South Africa with supersonic Mirage jet fighters, Alouette transport helicopters and various other military equipment—certainly in defence of 'the White man in Africa'.

But what of West Germany? In the booklet, *The Great Power Conspiracy*, the African National Congress of South Africa had described West Germany as the 'secret ally' of the South African fascists. In secrecy West Germany had in fact worked with Botha's scientists to produce the 'secret weapon'.

This fact is documented extensively in a Memorandum *The Bonn-Pretoria Alliance* published by the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee of the German Democratic Republic. (Berlin, May 1967.) The Memorandum states:

As Defence Minister Fouche and Prof. le Roux (Vice-President of the National Council for Scientific and Industrial Research), let slip as far back as 1963, experts in the South African Defence Research Council are working on a combination, with long-range rockets, of Tabun, Soman and Sarin, which are particularly virulent gases which are colourless, odourless and tasteless. (p. 46.)

In Hitler's time these gases were the Wehrmacht's 'miracle weapon'. Today, they are Vorster's 'secret weapon'.

The scientists who developed some of these gases have now 'gone to ground in South Africa, with the help of the West German Hochst Dye Works', states the Memorandum. They are now working in chemical factories in Sasolburg.

More telling in the exposure of this alliance is the story of how the successor firm to the infamous IG-Farben, the Ludwig Bayer AG (Leverkusen, West Germany), have taken over Farben's death-dealing scientists, transferred 'their nerve-gas research and production experiments to South Africa'.

In the deal, negotiated by Verwoerd's personal scientific adviser, Dr. Moning, in 1961, Bayers ceded part share in these experiments to the South African government. In return, the latter ceded to Bayers:

control of the rich resources of chromium near Rustenburg, which can be mined cheaply, and thus (enable Bayers) to build up their international monopoly in chromium. (p. 46.)

As P. Tlale wrote in this journal:

The Wehrwirtschaft (in South Africa) has added a new dimension to the scope and scale of state/private capital co-operation . . . That these economic policies should be based on the Nazi pattern is no accident . . . (The Apartheid Economy: *African Communist*, No. 18, 1964.)

In the exposure of West Germany's participation in this Nazi-type war economy, this Memorandum renders one of the most valuable services to the revolutionary peoples of South and Southern Africa and the world.

It is a fact very often stated that South Africa's Afrikaner political leadership is composed of self-confessed Nazis. These men have not wavered in their Nazi convictions since the time that they supported Hitler before the war and were interned for their treacherous role as Nazi agents.

The history of the growth of Nazism in Germany has now passed into the stock of general human knowledge. We are, however, not sufficiently familiar with the methods and techniques employed by the South African Nazis in the building up of their supremacy in the economic and military fields.

In the latter, the dramatic high point is reached with the announcement about the 'secret weapon'. In the economic sphere, the new factor is this, as the Memorandum puts it, that:

A process which has completely changed the economic face of South Africa since the Second World War and the extremist Nationalist Party's rise to power, in 1948, is the rise of Afrikaner (Boer) Nationalist capital and complete domination of State capital by Boer Nationalists, until they are the strongest factor in the South African economy.

The old picture—Boer agriculture, British industry with U.S. participation, and controlled by Oppenheimer's gold and diamond empire—no longer reflects the facts. (p. 18.)

The critical breakthrough in the ownership of capital, and the control of the economy, then, has been achieved. As has been pointed out before (*The Rise of the South African Reich* by Brian Bunting: Penguin Books Ltd., England, 1964), state direction of the economy is a necessary part in the techniques required to ensure continuance of White minority dictatorship.

Hitler Nazism had among its aims the wiping out of socialism in the world, starting especially with the destruction of socialism in the Soviet Union, in the context of the world-wide contradictions among the imperialist powers. Nazism wanted to increase its sphere of influence by outright military conquest of the greatest number of states. Hence the massive build-up of an armaments industry in Nazi Germany.

The Nazis rallied around the 'theory' of the supremacy of the 'Aryan race' and the inferiority of others. This, as we know, resulted in the concentration and labour camps, such that the bourgeois monopolists realised their aims beyond their dreams. They did not have to worry about trade unions and organised labour. Practice was then based on the most negative features of capitalism, including the reduction of the proletariat to a condition of total slavery. This is one feature that marked out German capitalism in relation to capitalism in other countries in Europe and America, the latter being content only with such slave conditions in their colonies but not at home.

The Nazi advance was halted in 1945 by the victory of the anti-fascist forces against Hitler and his allies. In 1948, Hitler's erstwhile agents took political power in South Africa. What then was not clear was the *continued* alliance between the South African Nazis and those that remained in positions of authority in West Germany.

When, as is reported in the Memorandum, Rainer Barzel, leader in the Christian Democratic Party of West Germany said:

Our methods can and must change; our legal, moral and historical positions remain unchanged. (p. 91),

he was providing a clue to the methods of the West German Nazis in their attempt to re-establish lost positions. What they are trying to reproduce in Southern Africa is as a carbon copy of what Hitler tried to do.

In the construction of a fascist state in South Africa, the question of the control of the economy featured sharply. The slow but consistent build-up of Afrikaner capital has already been documented by Bunting (op. cit.). He writes that:

In 1945 there was only one Afrikaner company with a capitalisation of £1 million, whereas there were 116 companies on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange with at least that capitalisation. The Nationalists' great opportunity came with the capture of State power in 1948.

... the Nationalist political and business leaders entered into an alliance which has proved extremely beneficial to both over the years. (p. 285.)

It was, however, only up to a point that Afrikaner capital could make any relative gains, especially since it was in competition with other monopoly capital, such as British and American. Hence the emergence of the 'secret ally', and the pointed absence of derogatory reference to West Germany by Hertzog.

ISCOR, ESCOM, SASOL AND BONN

West German monopoly capital has established some of its closest ties with the South African Nazi structure through its participation in the state trusts. The capture of state power was vital to the growth of Afrikaner capital to the position of supremacy that it now enjoys. State trusts played a central role in this.

On ISCOR, the steel trust, the Memorandum reports:

ISCOR's first technical and office personnel came from the Ruhr area. Its South African engineers were trained in the Ruhr area. Down to the present day, the 'Gutehoffnungshutte', 'Demag', and other West German blast furnace firms deliver the s.m. furnaces, rolling mill trains and everything needed for further expansion of ISCOR. Technical innovations, such as the rotor process developed in the 'Gutehoffnungshutte', are also placed at ISCOR's disposal on the basis of contracts. (p. 19.)

Further:

ISCOR is also the state trust with which Oppenheimer's Anglo-American Corporation came to an agreement. The Deutsche (West German) Bank under Abs also supported ISCOR in a transaction of this kind with Oppenheimer by granting a credit of 50 million marks. (p. 21.)

The West Germans also play an important part in another state trust, ESCOM, producing electric power.

The West German A.E.G. (one of the two giant West German electrical industry trusts) has already provided most of the generators for the ESCOM power plants and in 1965 alone, it built equipment for ESCOM valued at 30 million rand—138 million marks. (p. 21.)

The other West German electrical trust, Siemens, is also involved in ESCOM through the expansion of the latter's 'hydro-electric and heat and atomic power stations'.

With the help of the Deutsche Bank and the Dresdner (West German) Bank, ESCOM had obtained advances which amounted to £348 million—about 3,900 million marks—by the end of 1964. Since then more advances have been obtained including 50 million marks from the

Dresdner Bank (together with a \$20 million credit from the U.S.-dominated World Bank).

In the other state trust, SASOL, the role of West German capital is even more prominent. (It is important to note that the build-up of SASOL, unlike the other state trusts, began in the early 1950s when the Nationalists had already gained power.)

The first liquefying plant at SASOL was set up on the basis of the West German Fischer-Tropsch process.

Eighty-five per cent of the machines and technical equipment came from West Germany. Licences came from the Ruhrchemie A.G. and the Lurgi Society for Thermal Technology (Frankfurt/Main), which alone planned and built more than a third of the SASOL works.

The experts came from West Germany including poison gas specialists . . . and rocket fuel specialists. Dr. Felix Prentzel,* Ministerial Director in the Federal Economics Ministry, acted as organiser, adviser and liaison. (p. 22.)

Further evidence of the alliance between state and private capital in building up the citadels of Nazi power in South Africa is provided by the intervention of Ludwig Erhard, then Economics Minister, into the affairs of SASOL. This was in the mid-1950s when the South African government ran into some difficulty in obtaining the necessary construction steel in West Germany. On this, the Memorandum quoted from *Afrika Post* (Pretoria, 1956) that:

Only after the intervention of the Federal Economics Minister . . . were the necessary quantities (of steel) allocated from German production and placed at the disposal of South Africa. (p. 22.)

This partnership between West German monopoly capital and the South African state trusts is not, however, straightforward. By credits granted by West German banks to the trusts the West German monopolists increase South Africa's debt to them. Further, to take only one year, 1965, West Germany's trade surplus with South Africa amounted to 595.3 million marks. The Memorandum, however, points out that only part of this surplus flows from South Africa to West Germany.

* Prentzel began his career during the Nazi period in the Office for Foreign Relations, the notorious IG-Farben industrial espionage office. After 1949 he became Ministerial Director (deputy state secretary) in the Federal Economics Ministry. Prentzel is now a member of the board of directors of IG-Farben i.L. (a society which is mainly intended to look after the interests of West German monopoly capital enterprises which were expropriated in the G.D.R.); he is also Director-General of the Degussa Atom Trust and a member of the administrative council of the Otavi Mining Company, the biggest West German colonial company with steadily growing involvement in South Africa. All these companies are controlled by the Deutsche Bank, i.e. by Abs. (p. 22.)

Such credits (and the surpluses) are used either at once for capital investments or after a certain period transformed into silent partnerships . . . (p. 16.)

Such are the tricks of 'the secret ally'. They extend further to the falsifying of statistics to camouflage the real purposes behind the Nazi coalition. (The South African racists have taken over some of these techniques. For instance, they have changed their sector categorisations so that they are incapable of being compared with any other in the world. By this means they seek to disguise the import/export trade they handle for Rhodesia's Ian Smith.)

This dependence of the Afrikaner capitalists on their West German allies is crucial. The dominance of the Afrikaner would not have been achieved so quickly if it did not have this ally. Indeed, historical experience would make us think rather that the giants of South African monopoly capital, such as the Oppenheimer trust, would have continued to increase their lead. This, however, has not happened and the intervention of West German capital is crucial in understanding this. One should not, of course, omit to mention that at the end of the war substantial Nazi funk-capital flowed to South Africa, where its safety was assured by the Nationalist take-over in 1948.

Behind the growth of this co-operation between West Germany and South Africa stand people who are old acquaintances, united in a Nazi *kameradschaft*. This is perhaps one of the most startling aspects of the Memorandum, exposing as it does the fact that Hitler's Nazis are still pursuing the demented designs of their grand master.

Vorster's past is well known enough. With him, however, stand other fellow-Nazis like Diederichs, South Africa's Finance Minister. A graduate of German universities and leader in the secret Afrikaner society, the Broederbond, Diederichs has been one of the main architects of the West German/South African alliance. He has risen to a position of prominence from lowly beginnings as a student in the Nazis' 'Anti-Komintern training school'.

In West Germany he has a close colleague in Hermann Abs, head of the Deutsche Bank, the leading West German bank. This same man had been described by the U.S. Department of Justice in 1945 as one of the big financiers and industrialists who exercised the strongest influence on the orientation of Hitler's policy. Abs was a member of the Nazi party from 1933 to 1945. Today he is the most powerful single man in the monopolist capitalist structure of West Germany, in banking, industry and in armaments production.

The Nazi scientists who are developing gas in Sasolburg and the experts imported into the South African state trusts are not the only West German agents in our country.

South Africa is also shielding Nazi war criminals, a number of whom were introduced into the South African defence forces. Thus it was that ex-s.s. officers could publicly meet West German Finance Minister Strauss in South Africa and present him with 'a badge of honour of the Kameradschaft'.

More important, however, as the Memorandum discloses:

. . . the decisive posts in South Africa's state-owned trusts are almost without exception occupied by men who come either direct from the West German monopolies or were trained in them. (p. 61.)

There is a string of doctors—Meyer, Kruger, Jordan—in ISCOR's management; Strassacker at the head of ESCOM, Rousseau and Thomas in SASOL, etc.

As part of the expanding sphere of state monopoly capital is the Industrial Development Corporation (I.D.C.). (Over the last few years the I.D.C. has been involved in almost every major project undertaken in South Africa.)

I.D.C. President is Dr. H. J. van Eck, who studied in Berlin and Leipzig. But the actual management and power of decision in this key organisation lies with Dr. G. S. J. Kusche, German financial expert and Director-General of the I.D.C. . . . (p. 62.)

German representatives are to be found also in the Atomic Power Board, representatives in the Afrikaner mining trust, Federale Mynbou Beperk, in other power points in South African life, including the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (C.S.I.R.). The head of the latter is Dr. S. M. Naudé. He is German-trained and is a member of the West German Physical Society. According to the Memorandum, 'Almost all important departments of the C.S.I.R. are headed by German experts'.

From the South African side, van den Bergh, chief of police, is a well-known Nazi. (In October 1966, he gave the Nazi salute at the funeral of his friend, Hans van Rensburg, the top man in the Ossewa-brandwag.) M. C. Botha is now Minister of Bantu Administration and a leader of the extremist clique in the Nationalist Party, together with his friend Albert Hertzog. Others known for their Nazi sympathies include men like Piet Botha, Minister of Defence, and the Commanding Officers in his armed forces—Hiemstra who refused, in 1939, to fight against the Nazis, J. F. Biermann, head of the Ground Forces, H. H. Biermann of the Navy, and Hartzenberg, head of the Armed Forces Administration.

So brazen have the neo-Nazi forces become in South Africa, that in March of this year, West German Minister of Interior Lucke, on

a visit to South Africa could express his thanks that South Africa:

... opened its doors to my countrymen who had lost everything in the fateful war. A friendship which has survived the most bitter want and despair will not be forgotten.

Finding not only willing partners in South Africa, but also labour conditions best approximating to what they had grown accustomed to in Hitler Germany, the West German monopolists have also launched a general economic offensive, striving for positions of leadership where other monopolists used to rule the roost.

The West German press is continuously trumpeting forth about South Africa's 'attractiveness' to the industrialists and financiers. It is a 'paradise for investors', a country where capital can be 'profitably invested', 'where there is still scope for business enterprise'. Diederichs himself told his West German friends that: 'There are still golden opportunities on the South African coast'. 'Nowhere do Coloured people have it so good as in South Africa', declared *Die Welt* not surprisingly on June 24th, 1966.

This propaganda barrage is accompanied by increasing West German investment in South Africa. The most dramatic of these ventures is copper-mining at Palaborwa in the Northern Transvaal. *Here is found Africa's largest copper mine. Most of its output goes to West Germany.* This is not surprising as the West Germans sit at the head of the international consortium which finances Palaborwa. The *Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau* has sunk 108 million marks into the project. Abs is chairman of the board of directors of this company. Apart from this, 'West German participation is guaranteed by the (Abs's) Deutsche Bank . . . and the West German government'.

Two factors should in time become prominent in this continued onslaught by the West German monopolists.

Firstly, the (West) 'German miracle' of economic recovery since the war, is palling, as it has begun to do already, with increases in production costs, balance of payments problems, etc. (i.e. current problems indicating contradictions within the developed capitalist system). So West German capital will more readily 'emigrate' to South Africa where the 'Aryan race' is in alliance with the 'White race', in favour of the maximum suppression of the African and other non-White workers.

Secondly, to an increasing extent, it should be expected that more and more government contracts will go to West German firms or to firms jointly controlled by West German/Afrikaner monopolists. In this way the West Germans should enjoy advantages over competing monopolists. (This can also be done by manipulation of import licences which the South African government operates.)

Already we have examples of what is to come. Rheinstahl, second biggest West German steel firm—and controlled by Abs—has joined the Federale Mynbou—General Mining Group, and, in future will conduct its South African business through this joint enterprise. The Lurgi Company has also founded a subsidiary which is to attend to the filling of its big contracts for the state trusts.

Clearly then, the 'financial powers' of West Germany are not intent on 'selling out' the White man. This is so in more ways than one. We have seen already how Hitler's gas experts are now in South Africa or have passed their information to South Africa.

Co-operation in the military field has already been documented by the G.D.R. Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee in their Memorandum of September 1964. More information is given in the new Memorandum. Co-operation extends from the sending of West German scientists to South Africa, to the processing of fissionable material, and the development of nuclear reactors and rockets. Behind all this are the West German big bourgeoisie, supported by the state.

In April of this year, one Prof. Hermann Oberth visited South Africa to inspect the development of the rocket which his firm Hermann Oberth Co., Bremen, is involved in. So reckless was he that he travelled with a delegation of the West German neo-Nazi N.P.D. of which he is a member. (Oberth was a rocket research pioneer under Hitler.)

South Africa's arms build-up has been treated in this journal before. What are its purposes, and does it fit into a pattern?

The Memorandum reminds us of what Hitler said in 1938, on the eve of the war he was soon to unleash. He said:

Circumstances have forced me for decades to talk of almost nothing but peace. Only by constantly stressing the German will to peace and our peaceful intentions have I been able to give the German people, piece by piece, the equipment needed again and again as the condition for the next step forward. (p. 95.)

Today, Vorster talks of 'friendship' with various governments in Southern Africa. The sweet tongue has seduced Malawi's Banda, among others. (v. *The African Communist*, No. 30, 3rd Quarter, 1967.) Banda has now signed off Malawi's entire foreign trade to a company set up in South Africa early this year, IMEX. The same company will build Malawi's new capital at Lilongwe. For the latter, Malawi will be indebted to IMEX to the extent of 120 million marks. It is as if Shakespeare's Richard III were to cry:

*A capital, a capital,
My kingdom for a capital.*

West Germany and South Africa are building up Southern Africa to become their reserve. They have ignored the sanctions against

Rhodesia decided on by the United Nations. Thus West Germany has become Rhodesia's main trading partner, moving from third to first place in Rhodesia's exports between 1965 and 1966, and from fifth to first place in imports between the same years. (United Nations' Secretary-General's Report of December 16th, 1966, as quoted in the Memorandum.)

South Africa is intensifying her connections with Salazar's Mozambique, the latest venture being the massive Cahora Bassa hydro-electric scheme which is meant to supply power to the whole of Southern Africa, and which is dominated by the South African I.D.C. which we have dealt with above.

Krupp is heavily involved in iron-ore mining projects in Angola, while in Portugal itself West German imperialism has ousted the other imperialist powers from first position. (Co-operation between West Germany and Portugal extends back to the Portuguese colonies again and to the 1,100 German junkers who fled to the highlands of Southern Angola when the first German socialist state, the German Democratic Republic, was established.)

Establishing all these contacts the German and South African fascists are still talking peace to the rest of the world. In the meantime, secret military agreements between Portugal, South Africa, West Germany (and Rhodesia) have been signed. The Algerian paper, *Revolution Africaine*, has reported in March of this year:

There are now over ten West German officers on the General Staff of the Rhodesian Armed Forces: about fifty West German officers are working as advisers to infantry units or as instructors in Ian Douglas Smith's Air Force.

While Vorster is talking peace, he is making preparations for war. If Africa will let itself be occupied by these neo-Nazis peacefully, then the only problem will be that of suppressing the national liberation movement within the borders of the White-minority-ruled countries of Southern Africa.

That, then, is what this invaluable Memorandum does—it lays bare the methods employed by resurgent fascism in Southern Africa, as closely aided by West Germany.

The purposes (even the methods) are as they were in 1938 when IG-Farben drew up the master plan for the ascendancy of Afrikaner Nazism in South Africa. Then a report was tabled by a commission which had visited South Africa on Hitler's behalf. The report stressed the importance of building up the state trusts, of exploiting deposits of rare ore and of 'possibilities of penetrating into strongholds of British-Jewish capital', and of camouflaging investment. As the Memorandum says:

It is striking with what consistency the South African racists have adhered to the plans worked out with the representatives of German monopoly capitalism in 1938, since they returned to power in 1948 after the interval caused by the Second World War. (p. 56.)

The Memorandum also goes on to point out other reports drawn up by experts to work out a 'consistent policy' on 'the natives'. One of these Nazi experts was Dr. Strohm who, in 1940, wrote of 'natives (who) have become so disreputable, fat, lazy and unwilling . . .'. The same Strohm was to become West Germany's second Ambassador to South Africa.

The Nazis have entered into the final stage of their plan in Southern Africa, conquest of territory by persuasion or by force—as their mercenaries in the Congo will tell.

They, however, think they have subjugated the mass of the people in Southern Africa to a condition of drugged subservience to fascism.

It is our task now, as it has always been, to destroy this monster in Southern Africa—to force peace—not only in this part of the world, but in Africa as a whole.

It is equally the task of the anti-fascist forces that destroyed Hitler's mob, together with other revolutionary forces, to stand up again and ruthlessly suppress the Vorsters and Krupps who want to follow in the footsteps of Hitler and Goebbels.

In this task we have to rely on the strength and discipline of the popular masses who stand not only against fascism but also against U.S. imperialism and aggression, as in Vietnam, and for socialism, national independence and peace.

It is they, together with their vanguard parties, who will prove a lie the assertion made by the West German weekly *Rheinischer Merkur*, that apartheid in South Africa—'was a measure suited to saving the souls of the black Africans'.