Claim 2 — Vital Economic Link

That South Africa's strategic minerals are vital to Britain, America and the West in general and are unobtainable elsewhere, and that sanctions against South Africa would seriously damage the economies of America and Britain, in the latter case putting some 200,000 Britons out of work.

The Facts

(a) South Africa's strategic minerals — platinum, vanadium, manganese, chromium and ferrochrome — are available in other countries;
(b) The West's dependence on South African sources is grossly exaggerated; and
(c) The proposition that sanctions against South Africa would seriously damage the British and American economies is untested by comprehensive research; it is certainly untrue in the case of America, and probably untrue in the case of Britain.

(a) The sub-committee on Africa of the Foreign Relations Committee of the United States Senate, under the Chairmanship of Senator George McGovern, published in 1979 a two-year survey of America's dependence on South Africa's minerals*. This survey showed such dependence to be substantially one of habit rather than necessity: alternative sources of key minerals existed in Australia, Brazil and other countries. It was later pointed out by Robert S McNamara that it would be in America's interests to develop such alternative sources.

(b) Evidence before Congressional and other committees of inquiry has indicated that in some sectors the West's own mineral development has been stultified by the long-held belief, fostered by the South African lobby, that only the South African grade of the relevant mineral was suitable for American industrial and military needs. Chrome is an example. Also, under apartheid South Africa has been able to obtain high quality black labour working long hours under tight discipline for low wages and has consequently been able to keep prices low enough to stifle competition.

(c) South Africa's claim that 200,000 British jobs depend on the South African market has not been tested, but some preliminary research in the steel, coal and apple industries indicates contrary possibilities. For example, Britain imports South African steel, which is marginally cheaper on delivery than domestic steel in the United Kingdom. (British steelworkers are paid far more than

* *Imports of Minerals from South Africa, United States Senate, 1979.*

the black steelworkers of South Africa.) Indications are that the consequent closures of British steel plants and redundancies in related industries cost Britain more in dole and welfare payments than the difference between steel-production costs in the two countries, so that importation of South African steel not only costs Britain more in the long run but actually increases unemployment. Similarly the importation of Cape apples has damaged Britain's own apple industry, causing further unemployment. Importation of South African oranges is certainly disadvantageous to the EEC because oranges from South Africa, which has no ties with the EEC, are subject to a 6 per cent tariff, while the tariff for oranges from the African, Caribbean and Pacific states, which have a formal association with the EEC through the Lomé Convention, is no less than 13 per cent.* Finally, some European countries — Denmark is the prime example — import large quantities of South African coal of a type obtainable elsewhere in Europe, including Britain.

Conclusion **Pretoria's claims about Western dependence on the South African economy are substantially and manifestly untrue.**

* *Sanctions against South Africa*, Barbara Rogers and Brian Bolton, 1981.