

use return to
Winston Courtney
197 Cleveland Drive
Columbus, Ohio 43204

General Theological Seminary
175 Ninth Avenue
New York, N. Y.

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The Chairman of the Fourth Committee
General Assembly
United Nations
New York, N. Y.

Dear Sir,

I am addressing this appeal to you on behalf of the people whom I represent in South West Africa in the hope that your wisdom may find ways and means of helping those who are in dire need. In so doing, you may help to overcome the deadlock that exists between the United Nations and the Union of South Africa. It is therefore an appeal not only to the United Nations, with the great work of the specialized agencies at its disposal, but also to the administrators who have the power to help them and others who would if they were permitted.

This is now the ninth year in which the United Nations has been occupied with negotiations and with the juridical and procedural aspects of this question. Nevertheless, all who have taken part in these proceedings must have done so with some sense of the substance of the matter and of respect for law and the instrument of justice and of the moral law whence these institutions derive their sanction and strength. This conception must be common not only to the Africans for whom I plead and who have shown such respect for constitutional procedures despite their history and their present experience, but also to those entrusted with the administration of that territory.

It is for these reasons that I would appeal to you to consider whether ways and means could be explored whereby the specialized agencies of the United Nations could conceivably assist those of different race in South West Africa who are in dire need of assistance. Procedurally, such assistance must be asked for by Governments from the respective agencies. But the Assembly is empowered to make recommendations; through

the Committee it has established to deal with the question of South West Africa, might it not be possible for the Assembly to work out in a coordinated way how the various agencies could help in overcoming these great dangers to all the South West African people of poverty, ignorance and disease which afflict so large a section of the population? These problems are referred to in the report of the Committee on South West Africa (A/2666) and the documents drawn up by the Secretariat with evident anxiety to arrive at the truth.

For example, the Committee noted the statement of the Union Government in 1946 that many children and older persons, particularly in the southern districts of the Territory, were undernourished owing to the severe drought. The Committee also considered that measures to improve and extend Native farming were essential to the provision of adequate food for the native population. It expressed the hope that greater efforts would be made to develop adequate water supplies in the Native areas, and referred to a statement made by the Government Long Term Agricultural Policy Commission that in several reserves the limit of production had been reached or even exceeded pending augmentation of water supplies in outlying areas.

The shortage of food in South West Africa is linked to the shortage of water supplies. "Owing to the generally low rainfall prevailing in the Territory, it is not possible to carry out agriculture on any considerable scale." (A/AC.73/L.3)

Even in the Grootfontein and Otjiwarongo districts, where the rainfall allows the production of some crops, the rainfall tends to be erratic and makes harvests uncertain....

Pakistan, with a similar water supply problem, enlisted the aid of the United Nations Technical Assistance Programme. With the help of an FAO land and water development expert, multi-purpose development plans were drawn up for irrigating some 10 million acres of land, generating hydro-electric power and improving waterways for transport.

On the basis of this plan, the United States Foreign Operations Administration

signed an agreement with the Pakistan Government to provide \$2million for the project. Furthermore, Pakistan has requested the Canadian Government, under the Colombo Plan, to supply a thermal power station.

Such assistance could well be used in South West Africa. It is estimated that the harnessing of the Okavango River and the draining of swamps could bring three million acres of land into cultivation.

Medical Services

The Committee noted that outside the Polize Zone, where most of the native population lives, there were no state hospitals, that the only hospitalization was provided by missions and that in an area where the disease rate seemed relatively high, the medical services were "inadequate to meet the needs of the people."

The Committee charged the government with the responsibility for providing the native population with medical services at least comparable with those of the white people.....

During 1953, the World Health Organization helped Burma, Colombia and Panama to survey and improve their national or local health services. With UNICEF-provided equipment and supplies, international teams of WHO doctors and nurses have been working with national staffs in maternal and child health demonstration centers in many countries.

South West Africa is in urgent need of such assistance.

Malaria

The Committee took note of the prevalence of endemic malaria in two areas of the Territory. This prevalence was ascertained by a government survey in 1950....

In the French Cameroons, a malaria survey was made at the beginning of 1953. By the end of the year -- WHO experts assisting -- plans had been drawn up for spraying operations to cover a total population of 48,000, and the plans were implemented in the early part of 1954.

For Better Livestock and Living

In a cattle country such as South West Africa, especially where distances and periodic outbreaks of cattle disease render mobility and marketing difficult, the work of UNICEF in aiding milk processing and drying plants could be of great importance. Results of this work could vitalize the agricultural economy of the country by having supplied steady and enlarged markets for milk and provided educational programs for dairy farmers in the improvement of milk production and milk production and milk handling practices.

The outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the northern areas of the Territory, which the Committee noted with concern, might be alleviated with the assistance of an experienced international expert. Ethiopia was helped by FAO experts to develop a long-term campaign to bring animal disease under control.

Education

The Committee asserted that native education "must form the foundation of all development in the Territory" and considered it urgent that the Administration give more emphasis to native education in all its aspects, including the establishment of secondary, technical and higher education.....

A number of governments are receiving technical assistance from UNESCO in re-organizing and expanding their primary and secondary education systems. For example, a mission of six experts assisted the Government of Libya to organize an educational training and production center consisting of two teacher training colleges, two model primary schools with kindergartens and a production center for educational materials. Another mission, in Costa Rica, worked on a double pilot project in rural education and the development of primary instruction and assisted the government in establishing new methods and programs suited to the specific needs of the country in the fields of rural education, primary education, teacher training and school administration.

Technicians, the Committee noted, are in great need in South West Africa....

FAO, ILO and WHO have set up technical training programs in many fields in as

many underdeveloped countries. In many cases, these training facilities are linked with or followed by the award of fellowships to candidates recommended by the governments concerned to enable them to follow specific courses at teaching institutions abroad.

The small proportion of the native students qualified for education above the primary level was noted by the Committee, which suggested that the possibility of granting scholarships for secondary, higher and professional education and of sending students to study overseas should be examined....

About 4,500 scholarships and fellowships have been granted by the UN Expanded Programme for Technical Assistance. One of these, a scholarship from the UNTAA, was awarded to a national of the Union during 1953.

UNICEF's Role

While the Union of South Africa ceased contributing to the funds of UNICEF in 1952, it is possible that South West Africa could make an important contribution to this noble work in the world by developing its own neglected fishing industry and encouraging the production of fish flour, which is becoming an important food for children in the protein-deficiency areas of the world. The Territory could then receive in return from UNICEF other necessary components of such processed food.

Other African territories under British and French administration are receiving aid this year from UNICEF totalling \$2,400,000. Most of this aid is not costly, such as health and nutrition programs in rural schools, which include vegetable gardening, nutrition and personal hygiene education and environmental sanitation instruction, in all of which the rural communities can be encouraged to participate.

Other Recourses

Assistance for South West African development could be bought from sources outside UN. This type of assistance is contributing much to the development of the French African territories. Bilateral agreements with Belgium and the United Kingdom have, for example, provided transport facilities across Nigeria and Gambia and ensured a supply

of power from Brazzaville to the Belgian Congo. The Committee for African South of the Sahara is engaged in scientific research for the benefit of all the African territories. United States technical and financial aid is being sent to these territories.

The people and Government of South Africa cannot be judged guilty of such misanthropy that they would reject out of hand the possibilities of assisting diseased and undernourished children. They would not turn away from technical and other forms of aid for developing agriculture and industry, which would, in turn, raise the purchasing power and economic level of the whole community and with it, the capacity for self-help of the African peoples themselves.

To deny assistance to the African people in all such ways would not be a mark of pride or self-respect on the part of any government -- particularly when it is recalled that the Union Government is receiving assistance in the matter of arms and ammunition to the extent of many millions of pounds and is requesting more from NATO.

South West Africa is not a poor country; it is rich in diamonds and in other mineral wealth, including copper. It forms, in fact, part of a whole area which has recently been described by the American Consul-General in Southern Rhodesia in a publication of the US Department of State as an area "of the most tremendous importance to this country and the other nations of the free world. It is the richest source on the face of the earth of certain strategic minerals so far almost unexploited." (Field Reporter; Vol. 1, No. 5; March-April 1953).

The Administrator of South West Africa recently spoke of the wealth of South West Africa, whose national income, he claimed, had shown an increase of 12% compared with 1952. With an unconscious irony he reported that the average income per person in South West Africa is 1,300 pounds per year compared with 520 pounds per person in the Union of South Africa, the national income being 65 million pounds and the European population 50,000. (South Africa Survey, June 5, 1954). The omission of the non-European population from his calculations is not an altogether untrue reflection of the conditions and distribution of wealth in the territory.

By a program of assistance, the United Nations could help to mitigate the consequences of this maladjusted economy and would, perhaps, in making such a positive and generous approach to the problem, overcome some resistance which political criticism has not succeeded in overcoming. It would thereby, no doubt, also make some appeal to those powerful interests which are engaged in extracting prodigious wealth from this dark sunlit corner of Africa.

A South African writer who visited South West Africa recently has written an account of his visit there. In it he says:

'I met an engineer who had flown in for a day's shopping from the Orange River mouth where...men dig up 30 million dollars worth of diamonds each year.

'Diamonds are by no means the only source of South West Africa's present prosperity. I met a Karakaul farmer who described how he slit the throats of the newborn lambs. 'They're only valuable for their fur,' he explained. 'A lamb must be killed before it's 24 hours old. A pelt sells for about two pounds. It's a six million pound a year industry.'

'I found the thought of three million newborn lambs having their throats cut depressing and said so.'

(Campbell, Alexander, Heart of Africa, Khoff; 1954)

(The minimum wage paid to the African shepherds of these sheep is 30 shillings (four dollars) per month.)

The African people of South West Africa have a great love for their land and their cattle. They are eager for knowledge and training in skills and new techniques beyond the opportunities available to them. There are many ways by which the United Nations could help them and the other people of that territory in education, health and economic development.

The Committee might study how the aid of the specialized agencies could be adapted to the local needs of South West Africa in ways which would bring an enrichment to the life of the people -- a potential advantage both to the people and the Government.

The gesture of a contribution from Member States -- even from those less favored with wealth -- to be earmarked by the specialized agencies for assisting South West

Africa might appeal to the conscience of South Africa and encourage many to work for a new approach to a more cooperative relationship in future between South Africa and the United Nations. By such means could be facilitated a solution of the juridical controversies that have been a source of such anxiety both to the United Nations and the South African Government for the past nine years.

Yours faithfully,

Michael Scott, Observer
International League for
the Rights of Man
25 East 64th Street
New York, New York

London address:

The Africa Bureau
69, Great Peter Street
London, S.W. 1
England

Examples of technical assistance projects are from the Sixth Report of the Technical Assistance Board to the Technical Assistance Committee (UN Document E/2566).

References to the Committee on South West Africa are from the Report of the Committee on South West Africa to the General Assembly, Ninth Session (UN Document A/2666).