

Special Committee against  
Apartheid  
535th Meeting (PM)



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ANTI-APARTHEID COMMITTEE HEARS SEVEN MORE STATEMENTS  
ON CULTURAL BOYCOTT OF SOUTH AFRICA

Concluding its hearings on the cultural boycott of South Africa, the Special Committee against Apartheid this afternoon heard statements by seven more organizations involved in the boycott.

It also heard statements by representatives of two national liberation movements: the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC). The Acting Chairman of the Special Committee and the Assistant Secretary-General of the Centre against Apartheid also spoke.

Representatives of the 16 organizations who spoke today reviewed the action that they have taken to help stop cultural contacts with South Africa. Their activities, they reported, included educating entertainers and public personalities about the situation in South Africa, picketing and supporting boycotts of concerts, and urging the public not to buy or play records of recording artists who have performed in South Africa.

The Special Committee has published a list of entertainers, actors, conductors, opera singers and others who have performed in South Africa in recent years, listing the dates on which they appeared. According to the list (available from the Centre against Apartheid as document 20/83), the entertainers who have appeared in South Africa in recent years have included the singer Frank Sinatra, the opera singer Montserrat Caballe, the country singer Kenny Rogers, the jazz pianist Chick Corea, the actor Telly Savalas, the singer Johnny Mathis, the Sha Na Na rock group, the band The Beach Boys, the singer and actress Liza Minnelli, and singers Nana Mouskouri, Julio Iglesias and Barry Manilow.

Several speakers during today's meetings observed that some entertainers who have formerly appeared in South Africa now support the boycott, and others have rejected large sums of money offered to them to appear in South Africa.

In his concluding statement, Enuga Reddy, the Assistant Secretary-General of the Centre against Apartheid, said that the Centre, with the co-operation of the Committee, would also publicize the names of those who had supported the boycott and refused to go to South Africa.

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In his statement, James Gbeho (Ghana), acting as Vice-Chairman of the Committee, recommended that the Committee's Working Group discuss the suggestions that had been made, and suggested that the Group recommend a concrete plan of action relating to a cultural boycott against South Africa.

He said that an occasion like this one was important to the struggle against apartheid, since it allowed supporters to "refuel" and to develop strategies. He stressed the importance of education, particularly in North America. If it were true that -- as one speaker had said -- that some thought that apartheid was the name of a tribe in Africa, much remained to be done. Pointing to the enormity of the task, he said that supporters "must be prepared to die a little, so that others may live".

Statements were made at this afternoon's meeting by representatives of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement, the Mouvement Anti-Apartheid of France, the Holland Committee on Southern Africa, the Foundation for the Community of Artists, the American Friends Service Committee, the Black Radio Advisory Council, the Canadians Concerned about South Africa, and TransAfrica.

#### Statements on Cultural Boycott

KATE CLARK, of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement, said that beginning in 1954 many artists heeded the call for a cultural boycott of South Africa. In recent years, however, South Africa had attempted to break its cultural isolation. Many artists claimed they had agreed to perform in South Africa because they were assured that Bophuthatswana was an independent country and that they would be performing before multiracial audiences.

She said that while some artists saw the cultural boycott as an attack on independent liberties, others had promised not to return to South Africa.

She said that student unions in Britain were active supporters of the cultural boycott, adding that often artists who performed in South Africa were not invited to perform at colleges. Over the past two years, she continued, the anti-apartheid movement had given priority to its work with local authorities, many of whom had subsequently issued declarations against apartheid. The Movement was working to get other communities to do the same. She said the British musicians union was another strong supporter of the boycott. Moreover, the Actors Union did not support members who went to South Africa. She said that the Actors Union would hold a referendum this year, and that, if endorsed, the Union would advise members not to go to South Africa. A notable success, she said, was a ban on showing the royal wedding of Prince Charles to Lady Diana in South Africa.

She said that anti-apartheid groups had organized campaigns to promote the cultural boycott throughout Great Britain.

She said that in July 1983, with the support of artists, an African festival in honour of Nelson Mandela's birthday was held, and was attended by

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more than 3,000 persons. A long-playing record of the festival would be released soon, along with singles by individual artists in support of anti-apartheid activities.

She said the British Anti-Apartheid Movement's Women's Committee had prepared sketches on women under apartheid which would be shown throughout the country. In conclusion, she said the Movement was convinced that much more could be done in the cultural field, for instance, to better inform artists regarding the apartheid system.

JEAN-PIERRE RICHARD, representative of the Mouvement Anti-Apartheid of France, said that the French anti-apartheid movement had advocated a policy of sanctions to help combat apartheid. The President of France, François Mitterrand, had initially indicated that he would review the French Government's relationship with South Africa and support the use of sanctions.

The French Government had taken some actions to limit contact with the regime, Mr. Richard said, but had actually expanded contacts in some areas. For example, the Alliance Française was co-operating with the French Government in South Africa, and had established numerous offices within that country.

His movement felt that there could be "no normal culture in an abnormal society", and had opposed such activities.

The "pseudodialogue" that had existed between Pretoria and Paris for over 20 years had led only to massacres, he said. One could not really have a dialogue with a Hitler-like regime, he concluded.

FRANCESCO MASCINI, representative of the Holland Committee on Southern Africa, said that because the Netherlands had severed cultural ties with South Africa in 1981, his country was very interested in the hearings on the cultural boycott of South Africa. He said that relations between the Netherlands and South Africa had a long history. He recalled that during the Boer War, the Dutch had sided with the Boers against the British. For a long time therefore there had been efforts to maintain Dutch as the language, and Dutch culture in South African life. A treaty was therefore signed in 1951 to maintain these ties. He said the Netherlands-South Africa Association, founded in 1981 and a pro-apartheid group, promoted ties between the two countries. In 1976, he said, the Government of the Netherlands opted for critical dialogue in South Africa but, unfortunately, with the wrong side.

On 1981, following protests by anti-apartheid groups, the Dutch Government finally decided to end cultural ties with South Africa and to cease support of the Dutch cultural institutions there. Even though the ties were cut, he said, Dutch students had continued to study in South Africa.

As regards cultural relations, he believed that the Netherlands should opt for an alternative agreement and that the money left over when cultural ties were severed with South Africa should be used. He called upon his Government to begin talks with the African National Congress of South Africa

(ANC) to grant scholarships to ANC students and to offer support for black trade unions and anti-apartheid groups.

He said his group had called upon all artists in the Netherlands to break all contacts with organizations in South Africa and to support the international boycott of South Africa. He expressed the hope that Dutch artists would stand by their convictions.

CHARLAYNE HAYNES, of the Foundation for the Community of Artists, said that the fight for liberation and human dignity for all in South Africa and the independence of Namibia demanded the commitment of all artists and supporters. Since the imposed cultural boycott had proven to be the most effective and immediate measure to isolate the racist regime economically, politically and culturally, the addition of an organized mass programme of attack by visual artists was timely and represented a widening of support in the arts community and a readiness to consistent action.

She said that through the Art Against Apartheid October Movement, artists sought to explore ways to keep their work out of South African galleries, recreation spaces, museums and homes and to eliminate opportunities for exchange programmes between South Africa and the United States. Her organization was also working with museums, community spaces and organizations willing to accept works of artistic statement against apartheid for public viewing. Such showings would inform the public of the lies of the "constructive engagement" policy adopted by the Reagan Administration as a disguise for its open alliance with apartheid, she said.

She urged all artists to join in actively participating in the efforts of the Art Against Apartheid October Movement to make South Africa's crime of apartheid a national public concern.

TANDI GCABASCHE, representative of the American Friends Service Committee, said that the campaign for the total isolation of South Africa was initiated through the ANC decades ago, when it became clear that international pressure would be necessary to force the regime to change its racist laws and policies.

Today, South Africa was waging "a gigantic campaign" to improve its image abroad. Millions of dollars were being spent to try to convince the world that all was well at home. Yet, she said, reviewing the statistics, 50 per cent of all children died before the age of 5. Entertainers who were taking huge sums for their appearances were accepting sums that should be used to better the conditions of blacks in South Africa. Those entertainers were taking bread from their mouths, and exploiting their blood, sweat and tears.

Entertainers such as Lena Horne, Roberta Flack, Tony Bennett and Muhammad Ali had turned down "fat fees" to perform in South Africa, she said. Those people were real "heroes".

Efforts to educate the public had to be intensified, she said. She hoped that her organization could receive assistance in dealing with this problem.

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BOB LAW, of the Black Radio Advisory Council, said he wished to add the voice of his organization to those fighting against apartheid in South Africa and in urging a cultural boycott. His group would do all it could to promote the level of participation in that boycott.

YOLA GRANT, of Canadians Concerned about South Africa, said hers was a nation-wide non-governmental organization. It had organized the Stop Entertaining Apartheid Coalition, as well as a boycott against South African products.

She said the Canadian Government had stated its opposition to the crime of apartheid. While Canada had no cultural ties with South Africa, it had economic links with that regime. She said the Coalition had tried to halt the sale of South African liquor in stores in Canada. While it had not halted sales, completed it had succeeded in reducing them.

She said the Stop Entertaining Apartheid Coalition was working to boycott artists who performed in South Africa. The Group had a problem to educate Canadians as to what apartheid meant; many thought it was an African tribe, she said. While her Group had not succeeded in stopping concerts, it had taken steps to inform artists so that they would not perform in South Africa again.

She reiterated the request for a boycott handbook for organizations involved in the cultural boycott. She also proposed a central forum for publicizing the successes of anti-apartheid activities.

DAVID NDABA, representative of the ANC, said that since the Centre had published its register of entertainers who had appeared in South Africa, the racist regime had stepped up its attempts to recruit "cultural mercenaries". It had tried to recruit, among others, the Temptations, the group Manhattan and the actors in the television series "Dallas". South Africa was also trying to encourage film production since it had been observed that black labour was cheaper there.

The solidarity that those present were showing, and that of other supporters, would not be in vain, he said.

LESOANA MAKHANDA, representative of the PAC, said that many had stood demonstrating, even in rain and snow, to protest against those who planned to entertain in Azania. He understood there would be an informal consultative meeting after the hearing.

He said the work of the organizations who supported the boycott had not been in vain. Immense victories had been scored. The PAC hoped that the results of this successful meeting would be considered by the Special Committee.

RANDALL ROBINSON, Executive Director of TransAfrica, said he represented the organization Artists and Athletes against Apartheid, chaired by Arthur Ashe and Harry Belafonte, to encourage their colleagues not to perform in

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South Africa. The activities of the group had also resulted in fewer artists and athletes performing in South Africa.

He said that towards the end of this month, on radio stations throughout the United States, there would be public service announcements taped by artists and athletes to commemorate the great sacrifices of those at Sharpeville and elsewhere in South Africa, and calling upon their colleagues to support the struggle and also not to go to South Africa.

Major events were planned for the future in support of the cultural boycott, he said. The Committee was growing, its efforts were gaining momentum and a greater participation of athletes and artists in the cultural boycott of South Africa was expected. In addition, he said that activists were making sure that artists and athletes who performed in South Africa did so at some public social consequence.

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