

International Freedom Mobilization

310 East 44th Street, Suite 1703
New York, N.Y. 10017
(212) 697-2115

News

DR. GEORGE LAWRENCE
Director of Public Information

"APARTHEID - AN AFRO-AMERICAN VIEW"

COMPLETE TEXT OF ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY:

THE REVEREND DR. JESSE L. JACKSON,

NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF PUSH (People United To Save Humanity)

AT THE SUMMIT CONFERENCE OF BLACK RELIGIOUS LEADERS ON APARTHEID

Sponsored by the International Freedom Mobilization

3:15 P.M. - TUESDAY, APRIL 17th, 1979

at the United Nations Church Center,
777 United Nations Plaza, New York City, N.Y.

For Additional Information, contact: Dr. George Lawrence, Director, Public Information

Phone: (212) 697-2115

ADDRESS BY:

REVEREND JESSE L. JACKSON,
NATIONAL PRESIDENT,
PUSH (People United to Save Humanity)
at the
SUMMIT CONFERENCE OF BLACK RELIGIOUS LEADERS
ON APARTHEID
NEW YORK, NEW YORK
APRIL 17, 1979

First, I want to commend the International Freedom Mobilization and Kelly Miller Smith, its distinguished National Chairman, its officers and staff for having provided the organizational vehicle for bringing us together in this "Summit Conference of Black Religious Leaders" on South Africa. This three-day conference of work and inspiration is one of the great moments in the modern history of the black church in America.

In Search of a Family Reunion

We are summoned here by the events which have unfolded in Southern Africa over the last few years and by the courageous struggle of the peoples in that part of the international community who are making an enormous sacrifice in their noble struggle for human rights--a struggle that will ultimately free us all from the menacing barbarism of the apartheid regime: We are assembled here today in response to the appeals which come from our brothers and sisters in South Africa. The response is a natural one because we know

racism, in all of its forms, and the sacrifices required to mount a struggle to free a people from institutionalized racism. From the holocaust of the slavery period to the recent decades of mass upsurge for civil rights, the Black Church has been a source of moral power and material resources in our struggle for social change in the United States. Now we are called upon to mobilize that power in support of the struggle for liberation and human rights in South Africa. The urgency of this appeal is underscored not only by the day-to-day suffering of our brothers and sisters in South Africa, but also by the fact that the nation in which we hold citizenship stubbornly maintains economic, political, cultural and military ties to the illegal racist apartheid regime in South Africa. This reality persists in spite of United Nations resolutions calling for world-wide economic sanctions against South Africa, an action which accurately reflects the feelings of a majority of mankind.

Since the present situation which continues under apartheid in South Africa is part of the centuries old Dispora which people of African descent have experience throughout the Western world, we are today, assembled in this Summit Conference in search of a family reunion. For it is our responsibility here in America to take those

initiatives necessary for establishing durable bonds of moral support and concrete material aid with the people of the African continent.

The time is now for cementing this bond between these two continents, through which we will validate each other and advance our common cause of liberation. The network of churches across the length and breadth of America represented in this Summit Conference has both the moral authority and the organizational capacity to move this nation to disengage itself from South Africa. We must exercise that power now. It is time for us in our relations to the African continent, in general, to move from "lip service" to "ship service" and to translate rhetoric and ideals into concrete deeds and actions!

In this search for the family reunion, what are some of the things we can do?

- 1) We can tell the African story on this continent to the millions of people that we assemble in our churches every Sunday. And, we can open the doors of our churches to the freedom fighters from South Africa enabling them to bring their message of struggle to our congregations.

- 2) We can apply pressure, especially political pressure, as well as economic pressure on those opponents of African freedom in our country.

3) We can stop the cultural and economic expansion of the apartheid regime's influence in our country by mobilizing public opinion against South Africa's participation in sport events as was done in the case of the mass demonstrations in connection with the Davis Cup Tennis Matches in Nashville last year and the Kallie Knoetze-Sharkey fight in Miami in January of this year. In this regard, the exclusion of South Africa from participating in the 1980 Olympics should receive our wholehearted support. The isolation of South Africa from world sports competition is a unique and dramatic way of expressing the world's outrage at the brutality, torture and daily humiliation which the apartheid regime imposes upon the Black and Indian majority population in that country. Every time we succeed in putting the issue of apartheid on the sports pages of our nations newspapers, we are reaching into the American public mind in a qualitatively new and deeper way, and raising the level of public awareness.

What other things can we do?

4) We can stop the sale of the "Krugerrand" in each of our cities and appeal to the media to stop carrying advertisements for that gold coin. If the

ministers in any city make it publicly clear that the sale of the Krugerrand is an insult to the Afro-American community and to all who believe in human rights, the now lucrative market for the oppressors' gold will dry-up overnight.

5) We can mobilize the collection of food, clothing, medical supplies and school books for the men, women and children in the refugee camps in Angola, Zambia and Botswana. These supplies are particularly needed to keep the morale of African refugees high and stiffen their resistance to attacks, and save countless lives. Time and again, our churches have served as a source of support to "feed the hungry" and cloth the naked of our own country and the crisis now presents itself to do the same for the refugees from injustice in Southern Africa.

6) Ministers of the gospel and the huge audiences they reach every week are a virtually untapped source of strength for the growing movement to stop all bank loans to the apartheid regime in South Africa. This is already a widespread and effective campaign in California directed against the Bank of America and the Wells Fargo Bank. We are reminded that this Summit Conference is meeting only blocks away from the headquarters of Citi-Bank which loans more money to South Africa than

any other bank in the world--loans now totalling \$1.5 billion dollars.

In building these bonds in search of a family reunion between Africa and Afro-America, we must insist on more television and media coverage of African news and be prepared to challenge the licenses before the Federal Communications Commission of radio and television stations which continue to keep the American public uninformed about events on that huge continent. African studies included in the curriculum of our public schools must be regarded as an indispensable part of a quality education for our children so that we can all become better informed about that continent.

These are among the things that we can do. In total, it means expanding the scale of activity that is already taking place especially on the college campuses of our country by adding to that activity the massive involvement of the Black church. In our insistence that the United States break all economic, political, cultural and military ties to the apartheid regime in South Africa, we are setting the tone for an ethical quality of life for our country. Our sustaining interest rests, in part, in recognizing that we cannot solve the problems of mass unemployment and virulent racism here in American while U.S. corporations have the option of running away to South Africa in order to maximize their profits from racism there.

In taking such a stand for Justice, we are guided and inspired by the best examples in our common religious heritage and reminded of the age-old mandate expressed by the prophet Amos, "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a might stream..." ()

We are also encouraged and strengthened by the victories of the peoples of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau over Portugese colonialism. Now the unfolding revolutionary struggle in Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa are bringing to full fruition the process of social emancipation on the African continent. This is a great time to be alive!

The tyranny of apartheid is in a state of far-reaching crisis and its rulers are showing signs of desperation. The hanging of freedom fighters, the conduct of air raids and Napalm bombing of refugee camps in neighboring countries are acts of desperation, not of strength. They are spending millions of dollars buying up newspapers and other sources of communications and buying off politicians in many countries in an attempt to restore some credibility to their regime. This is being done on a scale so scandalous that sections of the white South African population are beginning to question the morality of the leaders of apartheid. This is the moment for all opponents of apartheid in our country to broaden out

their ranks and intensify the pressure for the complete isolation of the apartheid regime. Our brother, Nelson Mandela, and the other leaders of the African National Congress of South Africa, imprisoned on Robbens Island will be set free! The ideals of the Freedom Charter adopted by the people of South Africa in 1955 will be implemented. The pharaohs of apartheid will fall. It is towards these objectives that "the struggle continues."