

OBSERVE U.N. DAY TO END RACISM/APARTHEID COMMEMORATE SHARPEVILLE
COME TO NOON RALLY
AGAINST POLAROID/SOUTH AFRICA
AT TECH SQ.
MONDAY, MARCH 22

Sharpeville, 1960

On March 21, 1960, five thousand Africans marched through the township of Sharpeville, South Africa, to the municipal offices to peacefully protest the use of the pass system. In South Africa every black African must carry an identification card and produce it on demand to any policeman or one of the numerous classes of white officials who may require to see it. Failure to present it results in a harsh penalty. The pass is used to control the movement of the 13 million black Africans between their reserves and their places of work. The protesters at Sharpeville waited for a statement to be made by authorities about the pass system. Suddenly, "two white policemen opened fire and about fifty others followed suit..." In forty seconds the police killed sixty-nine people and injured 130.

The Sharpeville protest was not an isolated one. "During the ten years before Sharpeville, by means of boycotts, mass demonstrations, strikes and protests, the non-white majority had attempted by non-violent means to compel those in power to modify their racist suppression of all peaceful dissent from the apartheid system in South Africa. The passage of numerous laws, such as the Suppression of Communism Act and the Terrorism Act, turned South Africa into a police state.

After Sharpeville

After Sharpeville, world opinion against the apartheid regime was so great that the UN urged economic sanctions against South Africa. However, in this country, 300 of the largest corporations continued their business operations there. In fact, American business investment in South Africa has more than doubled in the past ten years. Polaroid equipment, including the ID-2 system, is used almost exclusively to make the identification pass books in South Africa and has thusly fostered the practice of apartheid. It is paradoxical that Polaroid in this country is spouting opposition to the theory of apartheid.

Polaroid, 1970

In the beginning of October, 1970, some employees of Polaroid in Cambridge, Mass., began to question Polaroid's complicity with apartheid. Demands were made to terminate all sales to South Africa. One employee was dismissed. The protest has continued. A boycott of Polaroid products is in effect until it withdraws from South Africa. Two more employees have been fired. All these employees are black. Polaroid has not altered its hypocritical stand. Polaroid's first response was to reiterate claims that "it has not sold its...equipment to the government of South Africa for use in the apartheid program." But Polaroid's distributor in South Africa, Frank and Hirsch Co., stated that it would continue to sell Polaroid equipment to the South African government, army and air force, for use in the apartheid program because "it will not flaunt South African government policy."

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