



DON'T ADJUST TO APARTHEID
by the
Reverend Jesse L. Jackson

**Text of address delivered at the opening meeting
of the North American Regional Conference for
Action against *Apartheid* held at United Nations
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Foreword

I am glad that the Centre against *Apartheid* and PUSH are publishing the memorable address by the Reverend Jesse L. Jackson at the North American Regional Conference organized by the Special Committee against *Apartheid*.

The Special Committee has constantly emphasized that the domination, oppression, humiliation and dispossession of the African majority in southern Africa by a racist regime under the criminal policy of *apartheid* is one of the greatest moral challenges of the present-day world. It has been disheartened by the callous collusion of some Powers with the racist regime in South Africa and by the anxiety of vested interests to profit from the institutionalized racism in that country. But it has always maintained faith that when the common people of the world are made aware of the truth they will be outraged and will support the efforts of the oppressed people and of the United Nations to eradicate *apartheid*.

The address of Reverend Jackson was, in a sense, the voice of the conscience of America. It is also a powerful appeal for action in the best traditions of the United States of America.

I hope it will be read widely.

J.N. Garba
Chairman
Special Committee against *Apartheid*
August 1984

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Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished United Nations Ambassadors,
Members of the United Nations Special Committee
against *Apartheid*,

It is a distinct privilege for me to have this opportunity to share this significant occasion with you. I want to thank Ambassador Garba for his kind invitation to attend this North American Regional Conference, and I express my appreciation to Mr. E. S. Reddy and Reverend Bill Howard for having worked out the details.

This meeting is profoundly necessary and meetings like it all over the world, in large part because of the Africa policy of the United States and its Western allies.

A great Afro-American, Dr. W. E. B. DuBois, long ago called attention to "The African Roots of War", as he revealed how the policies of plunder and exploitation of the African continent led to war between the European and American Powers who had developed at the expense of Africa, and who often went to war between themselves over a redivision of the spoils.

Our Africa policy in the United States, our relations and attitudes towards the countries of the African continent, have always been in distinct contrast to our policy and attitudes towards the nation-states of Europe. Europe, in our perception, has historically been seen as a source of immigrants and culture. While Africa is perceived in our country as a source of cheap labour and raw materials to be exploited for the benefit of a privileged class of European settlers. This stereotype of Africa, as being without culture and civilization, a continent to be subjugated by the advocates of "master race" politics, has led to a kind of Tarzan, Jane, Boy relationship between the United States and Africa. This not only reflects racial chauvinism, but a grossly unreal attitude which underplays the significance of Africa to the world in general and to the United States in particular.

One of the tragedies of our own times that this history of negative attitudes has produced, is the massive starvation and drought in huge areas of the African continent. We live in a scientific age that recognizes that what are viewed as natural disasters are often the by-product of years of neglect and plunder. The hunger and death that stalks wide areas of the African continent today must become the concern of

the entire international community because it is a threat to the human family. Poverty and injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We, in North America, blessed with one of the most fertile and productive agricultural lands in the world, must cease being insensitive to the current suffering in Africa. We must mobilize our abundant resources, through both Government and non-governmental organizations, to bring assistance and relief to our brothers and sisters that are in Africa. It is a measure of the callousness of the present administration in the United States that it would pull 82 million acres of arable land out of production, while 5,000,000 people a year die of starvation in the Third World. This, too, is a dimension of United States Africa policy, when we, who have such abundant capacity to feed the hungry, deny members of the human family access to this relief from hunger and starvation.

This policy of cynicism and callousness has the United States in an official partnership with the racist *apartheid* regime in South Africa. Corporate greed, in the search for the maximum return on investments, has found in the racist *apartheid* system, with its brutal denial of human rights, a favourable climate guaranteeing the highest profits in the world. An American Government that pretends to be outraged by the human rights situation in Poland is apparently quite satisfied with the brutal denial of human rights in Pretoria. This is measured in part by the deafening official silence in our country concerning the plight of 8,000,000 black Africans who have been stripped of their South African citizenship and forcibly removed from the cities of South Africa and relocated into Bantustans, thereby made refugees and aliens in their own country. In the language of the *apartheid* regime, this is called "separate development" and the United States southern Africa policy which supports this barbarism is called "constructive engagement".

In the service of this policy, the Reagan administration has given the green light for loans to South Africa from the International Monetary Fund. It has allowed more South African consulates to open in the United States; expanded military ties with the *apartheid* regime, which includes training the South African Coast Guard; it has encouraged South Africa's repeated military invasions in Angola by withholding diplomatic recognition to the Angolan People's Republic; and has generally created a climate of official endorsement that has made the United States South Africa's number one trading partner. It must be remembered that the flow of foreign capital into South Africa, from the United States, Britain and other allies, is essential to the *apartheid* regime's economic growth, and economic growth in South Africa, as elsewhere, is essential to political stability.

In order to promote the political stability of the *apartheid* regime, United States policy invariably adopts a double-standard in matters of human rights. For example, when a solidarity union in Poland is suppressed and a leader is jailed, our official policy is to implement an economic boycott against Poland in response to this violation of human rights. When the ANC in South Africa and the trade unions affiliated to

it are suppressed and abolished, and leaders, like Nelson Mandela, are jailed, we respond to this violation of human rights by expanding economic, diplomatic and military ties with the regime. Furthermore, the United States veto is repeatedly used in the United Nations Security Council to frustrate every effort by the international community to effect economic sanctions against South Africa. We, in the United States, must measure human rights by one yardstick and free ourselves of this hypocrisy that increasingly alienates us from the peoples of the world struggling for human dignity and self-determination. Our national view of southern Africa must radically change from seeing it as essentially a piece of geo-political real estate to be used by the United States for selfish ends without regard to the aspirations of the people of southern Africa. This purely geo-political approach has led to a dangerous situation in which American nuclear technology has been made accessible to the *apartheid* regime. Now that regime has acquired the technical capability of producing atomic weapons. In this way, our Africa policy, together with that of Israel, has helped to create a situation that is a threat to the sovereignty of every nation on the African continent. The disarmament movement in our country must give far more attention to this particular nuclear threat than it has in the past.

The Reagan administration's "constructive engagement" policy is a multipronged strategy designed to help South Africa gain acceptance and respectability in the West and thereby break out of the isolation it has experienced in the international community since the late 1960s. This support from the United States has emboldened the *apartheid* regime and encouraged its military aggressions. This places a particularly heavy burden on the frontline States, who have courageously maintained a principled opposition to *apartheid* in the face of ever-mounting military and diplomatic pressures upon them to accommodate to South Africa's wishes. All of us have been inspired by the courageous struggles and sacrifices being made by these newly-emancipated countries, in an effort to overcome generations of economic and cultural deprivation that are the legacy of colonialism. The fruits of these sacrifices are now being threatened by a new form of subjugation coming from the most brutally racist regime on earth.

I need not tell you that we live in perilous times. I need not tell you that the vast majority of humankind wants peace, economic and social justice and the right of self-determination. This very institution was designed and built by the nations of the world, including the United States, to implement these goals. We in the United States have had a very special interest and mission in creating the United Nations. Our people have come from all corners of the globe, from Africa, Europe, Asia and the Americas. Our nation indeed is a mini-United Nations. I want to assure you that as I travel around this country and talk to the people in the towns, cities and factories, they tell me how important it is that we learn to live with the rest of the world especially because we are fast becoming a genuinely interdependent world. The electronic media brings to our living rooms the wars in Salvador, Lebanon and

Angola. The people of this country know and want a continuing dialogue with the rest of the world and they see the United Nations as a forum where this dialogue can take place. I would like to assure you that the political gimmicks to punish this or that international organization is nothing more than political gimmickery. After all, it is somewhat humorous when a major Power like ours begins to punish an international organization devoted to uplifting the small farmers of the world. The real American tradition is to stand by the seashore and wave people to come in and share our bounty and not to wave them goodbye.

The crisis in southern Africa needs our attention. This is 1984. For the people of Namibia 1984 means one hundred years of colonialism. For decades the United Nations has attempted to negotiate the independence of Namibia with the Republic of South Africa. Never before has the world come so close to achieving a solution as in Security Council resolution 435. But the Government of South Africa continues to place stumbling blocks on the road to Namibia's independence. The Government of South Africa introduces conditions that must be solved *prior* to addressing Namibia's independence. The Government of South Africa is delaying the independence of Namibia. The United States must not find itself a party to South Africa's obstructionist plan. We must not find ourselves supporting a Government that violates the basic principles of the United Nations Charter. The world has long recognized the inhumanity, immorality and injustice of *apartheid*. The global community has sought to isolate the *apartheid* Government. In every other part of the globe nations have made steps forward achieving greater social, economic and political justice for their people. South Africa chose to stand still/step backward. In every other part of the globe nations have given up or are giving up their colonies. South Africa chooses to stand still/step backward. The preconditions and extraneous issues raised by South Africa only delay Namibia's independence. The United States must not find itself a party to the delaying process. We can play a major role in developing a new strategy towards achieving independence for Namibia. This strategy should be undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations and include SWAPO as the sole and authentic representative of the people of Namibia.

This Conference today can be yet another milestone pointing United States public opinion in a new direction. One that insists United States Africa policy be consistent with justice and world peace. This requires a new formula in our relations with South Africa. The enfranchisement of the majority population in South Africa justifies investment in the economy of that country. "One person-one vote," freely exercised, is an internationally recognized principle consistent with justice and the rule of law. On the other hand, disenfranchisement such as exists on a mass scale in South Africa today justifies disinvestment by United States corporations in the South African economy. Not one more United States corporation should be licensed to do business in South Africa, and the more than 350 United States corporations

already doing business must be given a strictly enforced time-table for coming out of South Africa. We mean Ford, General Motors, Chrysler, IBM, Exxon, Control Data Corporation, and all the others. The present United States partnership with *apartheid* is a violation of our national morality. Choosing dollars over dignity not only in South Africa, but in El Salvador and Chile, and elsewhere around the world, is leading us as a nation down the road to moral suicide.

I am confident today that our social change movement in the United States for peace with justice has reached a turning point in the understanding of the foreign policy of our nation. There is a rapidly growing recognition of the urgency to move our nation in a new direction. Our "Rainbow Coalition" is the broadly-based vehicle and the rallying point through which millions of people are expressing their hope and determination to free themselves from injustice. The Rainbow Coalition is giving the people of America a vision of a peaceful world and a just society at home.

In recent months I have personally had extended to me a number of cordial invitations from distinguished representatives of the frontline States to visit their respective countries and to talk with the people. I intend to honour those invitations because I know such visits shared between us can help build the bonds of friendship and solidarity that can move the world away from the brink of nuclear holocaust into a bright dawn of human development and peace.

The United Nations, as an international forum, continues to be a beacon light and a vital centre of moral authority in these perilous but hopeful times. Because it is a meeting place for the whole of humanity, the United Nations helps us to see through the darkness the great possibilities for profound changes that are on the horizon. For those of us who play some role in moulding public opinion, one of our most important challenges is to make the work of the United Nations more widely known among the peoples of the United States. We accept that challenge and regard this Conference as a significant contribution towards helping us fulfil that task.

Struggle for freedom — continue to struggle — but it must be mass suffering, mass sacrifice, mass marching, mass prayer and mass resistance. You will then reap massive results. Suffer, but suffer voluntarily, for the sake of liberation and self-respect. Suffer because you intend to pay the price to go forward. Suffer, not by negation but by affirmation and determination to be free.

Don't adjust to *apartheid* — resist and rebel. Face the Crucifixion. Faith teaches that beyond the Crucifixion the stone will be rolled away, and you will then realize a Resurrection, new life, new hope, new possibility.

If you must die, do so with dignity, die nobly, die like a bear facing forward, not like a rabbit, running and ducking and dodging in humiliation.

Remember that suffering breeds character, character breeds faith, and in the end, faith will not disappoint. May God bless you.

