

BULLETIN

A M E R I C A N S F O R S O U T H A F R I C A N R E S I S T A N C E

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This Bulletin reports three developments in regard to the South African situation. First, the nonviolent Campaign Against the Unjust Laws continues unabated. As reported in one of the letters quoted below from a South African correspondent, over 7,000 have now been arrested, and it is expected that at least 10,000 volunteers will have gone into action by the end of November. The original call last June by the African National Congress was for 10,000 volunteers to be prepared to risk arrest or worse in the Campaign. This figure will be reached shortly, and many more thousands still are prepared.

Second, the newspapers, at least in New York, have been reporting rioting and violence almost every day. Three "riots" particularly have been reported. The first was in New Brighton, a native location near Port Elizabeth in the Cape Province. All we knew of this from the papers was that a mob of Africans had chased and killed a theater owner, two other men, and the son of one of them. As reported in our last Bulletin, the African National Congress deplored this violence. There are some valuable comments on how all this got started and what the African National Congress did about it, as well as how the government tried to deal with it in two letters which are quoted in this Bulletin. The second reported riot took place in Kimberley. The third took place in East London, when a religious meeting was broken up by the police. The statement of Professor Z. K. Matthews which is attached gives some valuable insight into this riot, and also an important interpretation of how this violence is getting started. As Professor Matthews points out, the leaders of the Campaign are definitely maintaining the nonviolent approach in the action which is under their direction.

The third development is at the United Nations. On Tuesday, November 11th, the special Political Committee of the United Nations approved by a vote of 41 to 1, with 16 abstentions, a resolution that had been presented by fifteen countries having to do with the treatment of the Indian group in South Africa. The United States voted for the resolution. The resolution sets up a Good Offices Committee whose function it will be to bring the governments of India, Pakistan, and the Union of South Africa together to discuss the problem of injustice to the minority. This simply reiterates the position that the UN Assembly has taken before. It is hoped this time that South Africa will cooperate.

Debate has now started at the UN on the racial policies of the South African government. Two resolutions have been presented before the special Political Committee. One, presented by South Africa, would make it out of order for the Assembly to consider this question, since it is of only domestic concern, according to South Africa. The other, sponsored by 18 countries representing Arab, Asian, and South American countries, would set up a special study commission to report at the next meeting of the Assembly on conditions in South Africa and whether they are a threat to the peace.

At this time it is not known for certain how the United States delegation will vote. It would definitely be in order for any interested persons to write to the US Mission to the UN, 2 Park Avenue, New York 16, expressing a deep concern that the United States not alienate the under-privileged people of the world by supporting the colonial powers. It will be the colonial powers, such as France, England, etc., that will oppose this most vigorously, along with South Africa. These letters should be sent immediately since the vote may come by the 21st of November.

Extract from a letter from an African correspondent in South Africa, November 5, 1952

Over seven thousand volunteers have gone into action since the beginning of the struggle. By the end of November the ten thousand mark will have been reached.

I must tell you about the New Brighton Riots. The information as far as we in the Congress have it is that an African got off the train before it stopped at New Brighton station. He was accosted by a policeman and a quarrel ensued. Two other Africans joined in the argument. After a few minutes' argument a scuffle began during the course of which the policeman took out a revolver and shot this chap. The Africans who were standing around rushed into the location and told the people that an African had been shot at the station and the people rushed the place with stones. The police fired shots and killed six other Africans. The people then realising that it was no use getting shot here retired. Later during the day they started the anti-white cry, set fire to the Rio Cinema, the post office, and various shops belonging to Jews in the location. Four Europeans were killed and two badly injured.

All the leaders of the A.N.C. were not at P.E. (Port Elizabeth) on that day and this is a pity because they might have been able to check this. But the Youth League fellows failed utterly to pacify the mob. The following day a series of house to house campaigns got the people completely under the control of the A.N.C. leadership. As you can imagine the riot coupled with the stories about the Mau Mau in Kenya was just the thing to send the European public into hysterics. The Nationalists with unusual alacrity sent Minister (of Justice) Swart down to confer with the P.E. officials. Verwoerd (Minister of Native Affairs) also did his first job of investigating since he took over the portfolio of Native Affairs and rushed to P.E. Both of them arrived at the expected conclusion that this was something organised by the A.N.C. They created a war atmosphere with armed men all over and armoured cars patrolling, etc.; buses were not coming into New Brighton but were stopping on the edge of the location. Armed police were in both trains and buses, and they made it their duty to be unpleasant. We demanded the withdrawal of the police and that the buses should enter the location as the emergency was non-existent. A boycott of the trains and buses was called to support the demand. After two days of total boycott the authorities called for talks and agreed to call off the police and the buses came into the location.

Meantime Nationalist Ministers (of the Cabinet) made the wildest speeches, linking up the defiance campaign with this and refusing to appoint a judicial commission to inquire into the riots. We have challenged them to do so and of course they dare not, as it will rob them of a useful propaganda weapon. Others said the A.N.C. must call off the defiance campaign. Strydom (Minister of Lands) says the Union Government must take the same measures as are being taken in Kenya. He says the Government has now lost patience with the defiance campaign. The P.E. City Council fell into the trap. When Verwoerd was in P.E. he also blamed the so-called liberal policy of the City Council for producing this. He said that if the Council did not introduce passes, etc., the Government would have to do so. The City Council met and decided to ask for a ban of A.N.C. meetings under the Riotous Assemblies Act and also asked the Minister to introduce a curfew from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. We have called a strike in the Eastern Cape from the 10th November unless the Council withdraws these suggestions. The strike will be total. In the meantime we are continuing to send in batches of volunteers. The Congress cannot be intimidated in its campaign by guns and threats. We will carry on until the unjust laws specified in the Joint Planning Council report are removed. The campaign is now truly Union-wide. Even the Transkei has now come within the framework of the struggle. I hope the Government will be warned not to hope for miracles to smash the campaign. Nothing, not even armed force, is now capable of crushing an organised movement such as the A.N.C. The only thing I am worried about is that groups outside the Congress might start this terrorist thing as a reaction to force and violence on the part of the Government. I hope that this will not happen but one never knows.

Extract from a letter written by an African woman on the South African situation

The situation in South Africa is very very tense. Relations between white and non-white have deteriorated from bad to worse. You must have heard of the recent riots in Port Elizabeth, and the consequent loss of 11 lives. As you may expect the unfortunate incident has broken up a hornet's nest against Congress and sympathizers, and any who dare to voice the so-called "liberal" views. Swart (Minister of Justice) flew from Pretoria, stayed a few hours, and decided he knew all about the causes of the riot, of course as you might expect, i.e., that it was instigated by no other people than Congress leaders, Communists, and agitators. Verwoerd (Minister of Native Affairs) also went to P.E., ignored the members of the City Council and did not meet a single member, thought he had found an opportunity to have a "dig" at them, and made a statement through the Press attributing the causes of the riot to the City's liberal policy. "Where stern measures were applied against the natives there were no riots and the Passive Resistance Movement was not as strong as it is in P.E.", he said. After that he sent the City Council an ultimatum. They must abolish their liberal policy -- the Native is an ungrateful creature. Curfew regulations, Registration (of service contracts), and passes must be enforced, etc., etc. Over 90 arrests have so far been made in connection with the riots. Dr. Njongwe made a statement explaining that Congress had no connection with the Riot and demanded a Judicial Inquiry into the causes of the riots. Many S. A. papers have supported this proposal but the powers-that-be are not prepared to make this inquiry. This refusal makes everybody suspect that the Government fear the inquiry may reveal the unpalatable truth about the causes of the riot. Now the City Council has decided that no open air meetings should be held, other than religious, in New Brighton.

Following the P.E. riots, in Grahamstown too an attempt was made to burn down the Municipal Location offices and the Municipal Recreation Hall. Almost every window of the newly built Beer-Hall was smashed by an unknown person or people one fine night. No arrest has been made. Again Congress has been blamed. There has been rumour in the air that more attempts at arson were going to be made and European lives were threatened. Of course all this was just false rumour and must have been the work of some mischievous people. This place (Grahamstown) too is now in a state of emergency. Armed police guard the place soon after 5 p.m. till dawn. No one dares venture out and wander about in the neighborhood of the Location offices at night. One does so at the risk of one's life. We all think to keep in doors is the better part of valour. How long this state of tension will continue no one knows, but surely right thinking people all are agreed that something must be done soon to restore peace and confidence in one another, and wrongs done by one section of the S.A. population to another righted. Some are advocating that a temporary truce at least should be made. African leaders should be summoned and the whole non-European question discussed and people come to agreement. On the contrary the Government extremists do not want to hear a thing about consultations with the "Natives". They are adamant in their way of thinking. "The Native requires nothing less than very stern measures applied against him to kick the whole nonsense out of him. He can never be an equal of a European," they say.

Congress is launching an all workers' strike on the 10th of November throughout the Eastern Province against the P.E. City Council's ban on all meetings other than religious. What the outcome will be I cannot tell. The outcome may be very serious.

The South African Crisis

Statement by Professor Z. K. Matthews

The race conflict in South Africa arising out of the anti-black policies of successive South African governments and culminating in the ultra-racist apartheid policy of the present Malanite regime is going from bad to worse. Race relations are deteriorating so rapidly that every second day brings a report of some fresh outbreak of a clash between white police armed with Sten guns and other automatic instruments of mass destruction and unarmed Africans with nothing more dangerous at their disposal than the stones thrown, probably by agents provocateurs planted in their peaceful protest meetings.

An attempt is being made to fasten the blame for recent riots in South Africa which have resulted in the loss of both black and white lives on the African National Congress, because that organization launched on June 26, 1952, a campaign for the defiance of unjust laws to which the non-whites have been subjected for generations. As intimated to Prime Minister Malan before the campaign was launched and as emphasized repeatedly since by the leaders of the movement, the campaign is entirely nonviolent, and nothing which has occurred since June has led the leaders of this movement to alter their determination to keep the campaign nonviolent. The leaders of the African National Congress have not only repudiated the suggestion that they have had anything to do with recent violent outbreaks, but have challenged the Government to appoint a Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the causes of the riots. When it is remembered that if such a Commission were to be appointed not a single non-white would be included in its membership, it will be realized that the African National Congress feels that it has nothing to fear from such an inquiry. This idea of an Inquiry has been supported by certain sections of the white Press in South Africa, but the Government is not prepared to consider this proposal. In their view "The Native requires nothing less than stern measures applied against him to kick the whole nonsense out of him."

The suggestion made by a number of prominent white persons that steps should be taken to bring together African leaders and representatives of the Government for a round table discussion on the whole question of white-black relations in South Africa has also fallen on deaf ears. The present troubles in the country are attributed by Government representatives to the liberal policy followed in certain areas in the Cape Province which have not yet wholly fallen into line with the "stern measures" which alone are supposed to be effective in the matter of "keeping the Native in his place". Hence the City of Port Elizabeth which has hitherto followed a more "liberal" policy and which has been the center of the civil disobedience campaign in the Cape Province has been ordered to abandon its "liberal policy", and to adopt immediately the usual curfew regulations, registration of service contracts, and pass regulations. It does not, of course, occur to the Government representatives who in the main hail from the traditionally illiberal North of South Africa, that the Africans of the Cape are the most resentful of the present trend of Union Native policy because they have lost most as a result of it since Union. These are the Africans who enjoyed citizenship rights on an equal basis with other sections of the population from 1854 until they were deprived of these rights in 1936. They have seen the more liberal tradition of the Cape gradually at first, more rapidly in

recent years, submerged by the ideas which caused a white exodus from the Cape over a hundred years ago. It is not surprising therefore that the present apartheid policy should have evoked the response it has done among them. But that this feeling is not confined to the Cape may be gathered from the fact that the Passive Resistance movement has spread to all provinces of the Union.

It is perhaps not without significance that these violent outbreaks should be occurring just at a time when the United Nations, in spite of the protestations of the South African delegation, is engaged in discussing various aspects of the treatment of non-whites in South Africa. It all fits so well into the picture of a small minority of whites who are struggling for survival against a menacing non-white majority. What with the harrowing details and gruesome reports of Mau-Mau terrorism in Kenya against altruistic whites who have brought the benefits of western civilization to savage Africa, and now equally precious white lives lost in South Africa, surely the poor white man in Africa ought to be left alone to carry on his "civilizing mission" without being interfered with by international busybodies such as delegates to the United Nations! "Civilizing mission" indeed when it has to be bolstered up by Sten guns and armored divisions!

In connection with the recent riot at East London where among others a Roman Catholic nun (white) lost her life under shocking circumstances, Press reports have given the impression that the trouble was precipitated by Africans who were holding an unlawful meeting and who when called upon to disperse threw stones at the police, who were then compelled to fire in self-defense. A cable to me from Congress circles, however, indicates that the Africans in question were holding an open-air religious service for which they had in terms of the law sought and obtained permission from the local authorities. Police arrived at the Location and without inquiry alleged that the meeting was held in defiance of a ban under the Riotous Assemblies Act. When called upon to disperse, the people naturally refused to do so, whereupon the police shot into the crowd indiscriminately, and the people retaliated with stones. If this version is correct, it is not surprising that the crowd, infuriated by this example of police terrorism, thereafter indulged in the deplorable acts which resulted in the loss of life and destruction of property reported. It is worthy of note that the police who were supposedly acting in self-defense when they fired their automatic rifles suffered the least harm. An inquiry into these disturbances has been demanded not only by the African National Congress but also by lawyer J. G. N. Strauss, the leader of the South African Opposition. Whether these reasonable requests will be granted by the Malan Government remains to be seen.

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A letter just received from Manilal Gandhi, Mahatma Gandhi's son, dated November 11th, contained this paragraph:

"The struggle has so far gone on very smoothly. There is a tremendous amount of provocation on the part of the authorities. Instead of the police being pulled up for excesses, it is being given full encouragement to act ruthlessly and unscrupulously. You must have heard about the riots in Port Elizabeth. They are not in any way connected with the Passive Resistance Movement. But every effort is being made to link them up with it. The Minister of Justice is adamant in ignoring public demand for an impartial judicial inquiry to get to know the truth. In the absence of that there are of course all kinds of rumours. It seems the whole thing began from the brutality of a police officer who shot an African dead while going to arrest him for a paltry offense."

Literature List

We have a limited supply of the following pieces of literature:

"South Africa Today", by Alan Paton. Public Affairs Pamphlet.	.25
"Civilization in Africa", by Michael Scott. Fellowship of Reconciliation.	.05
"World Opinion on Apartheid". India Information Services.	.15
"Passive Resistance in South Africa", by K. N. Menon. Published in India.	.15
"Action Taken by the Government of the Union of South Africa under The Group Areas Act, 1950". Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs.	.15
"South Africa on the Nazi Path". Published in India.	.25
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