

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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Extract from a Report on the Results of the first six months of the Campaign

Facts and Figures: The total number of arrests in the Campaign as of December 16, 1952, in 37 centers of the Union was 8057 distributed as follows: Eastern Cape, 5719; Western Cape, 423; Transvaal, 1411; Natal, 246; Free State, 258.

Reactions (Non-white): The Campaign has succeeded in arousing the political consciousness of the non-white people as never before. There is a tremendous awakening and the movement is becoming more and more popular. Frustrated by ruthless oppression and unbearable conditions, people from all walks of life are rallying to the call of the Congresses.

Reactions (White): The Campaign has succeeded in bringing forward sharply the grievances of the non-white people to the whites of South Africa. In quarters which are highly politically conscious it is realised that the Defiance Campaign is the only bulwark of democratic struggle in the country and as such has been supported. The struggle has proved to many that the non-Europeans are capable of effective organisation and are highly conscious of their plight. The dignified manner in which the struggle has been conducted has been appreciated. Farseeing men and women among the whites have been confronted with serious questions. Individuals have brought forward forcibly the question of the relationships between the whites and non-whites. It is realised that if the gulf between them, which is rapidly widening, is not bridged, it would do incalculable harm to the future of the country. Liberal minded and other well meaning people have supported the Defiance Campaign and have expressed their desire to solve the deadlock.

The reactions may be summarised as follows:

(a) Individuals have been moved to reconsider the question of relationships between the whites and the non-whites, and have supported the repeal of unjust laws and advocated concessions to non-Europeans. These include philosophers, liberals, university professors, and other prominent people among the Europeans.

(b) The Civil Rights League, the Institute of Race Relations, the Torch Command, and similar organisations have declared their concern over the plight of the non-whites and have demanded that the Government meet the Defiance leaders.

(c) Commerce, Trade, and Industry have shown grave concern about the situation and are also advocating a liberal and more humane policy toward the non-Europeans.

(d) The Campaign has been a challenge to the Christian conscience and the Churches are materially affected. Dignitaries of the most important churches have taken serious note of this Campaign and are pressing from pulpit and platform for the resolution of the impasse between non-Europeans and the Government.

(e) Realising the danger of the racial issues involved, particularly due to the policy of the Government, which seeks to divide the whites and non-whites into separate camps, the National Action Committee convened a meeting of Europeans in

Johannesburg. This meeting was attended by more than 200 persons and it established a provisional committee with the aim of propagating the idea of democracy without discrimination of race and colour among the Europeans.

(f) The most outstanding reaction among the Europeans was the direct participation of whites in the Campaign on the 8th of December, under the leadership of Mr. Patrick Duncan, the son of the late Sir Patrick Duncan, a Governor-General of the Union of South Africa. This active participation of Europeans opens up a new episode in the movement as men of all sections of the South African population have taken part and identified themselves with the Campaign for the Defiance of Unjust Laws.

Government Reaction: The Government allowed the Campaign to develop in the early stages and adopted a policy of wait and see. They believed that the Campaign would not arouse popular response as they thought the masses would remain apathetic. As this did not prove to be the case, the Minister of Justice declared, on the 5th of August, that new legislation was under consideration to deal with the situation. He also tried to link up the Campaign with violence. Since then he has developed the government onslaught on the Campaign as far as his Department is concerned as follows:

- (a) The police were instructed to be strict and the Government would stand by them, i.e., in the enforcement of the laws against which the Campaign was aimed.
- (b) Resisters were harshly treated and beaten, and supporters at court and other public places were provoked, but these police provocations failed.
- (c) Through provocations and shootings by the police, rioting broke out at New Brighton, an African township near Port Elizabeth in the Cape Province.
- (d) A shooting order was issued by the Minister (of Justice) and since then unprovoked shooting took place at Denver, Kimberley, and East London, which resulted in the loss of innocent life, both white and black.
- (e) Efforts were made to link up the Defiance Campaign with Mau Mau in Kenya.
- (f) Thirty-seven Defiance leaders were arrested under the Suppression of Communism Act, 20 of whom were sentenced to 9 months imprisonment suspended for 2 years.
- (g) Meetings were banned and restrictions imposed on freedom of assembly and movement of leaders in the Eastern Cape. This has now been extended to the Transvaal.
- (h) Regulations covering the control of meetings were proclaimed by the Governor-General on 28th November. The maximum sentence under this proclamation is 300 pounds fine or 3 years imprisonment.

A vicious attack on the leadership of the Congresses was made by the Government, dubbing it as "Communist-inspired" and "Indian-instigated" in order to weaken the ranks of the Congresses. Officials were intimidated and bogus organisations such as the Bantu National Congress, the Supreme Council, the Kleurlingbond, and the South African Indian Organisation were placated by the Government to accept their direction on the basis of apartheid. The Government is fostering a policy of divide and rule. They are provoking violence in order to bring about chaos. By doing so they desire to achieve the following aims:

- (a) Divide the Europeans against the non-Europeans and drive them into the arms of the Nationalists;

- (b) Divide the non-Europeans amongst themselves and cause riots;
- (c) Use the resulting situation to thrust a fascist dictatorship on the country.

The conviction of the Defiance leaders under the Suppression of Communism Act, the restrictions imposed on them under the same Act, the invocation of the Riotous Assemblies Act, and the promulgation of Proclamation 276 bring to the fore a new situation. The effects of these will be:

- (a) Bigger prison sentences for volunteers;
- (b) Organisational difficulties.

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From a letter: "We have a programme to meet the fascist challenge, and we are possessed of the ideals and objectives which place us politically and morally far ahead of all political groups in South Africa. We believe that we will be ready to meet any threat from the Government. We are creating a grass-roots organisation and a mass leadership which cannot be crushed."

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Note: Questions have been raised from time to time about the sponsorship of Americans for South African Resistance. This program was initiated by the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Congress Of Racial Equality. The FOR has contributed the staff time for a great deal of the work. In addition there is a group of individual sponsors, as follows: Roger Baldwin, Shelton Hale Bishop, B. R. Brazeal, Pearl Buck, Allan Knight Chalmers, Dorothy Day, James L. Farmer, William J. Faulkner, Homer A. Jack, Charles S. Johnson, Mordecai Johnson, Alfred Baker Lewis, Conrad J. Lynn, A. J. Muste, William Stuart Nelson, Adam Clayton Powell, A. Philip Randolph, James H. Robinson, Bayard Rustin, George S. Schuyler, William Sutherland, Arthur L. Swift, Jr., Norman Thomas, Richard Walsh.

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Literature

Candid Thoughts on Non-Violence, by Arthur W. Blaxall Reprinted from the NEW REPUBLIC.	.10
Nonviolent Revolution in South Africa, by George M. Houser Foreword by Z. K. Matthews of South Africa Published by the Fellowship of Reconciliation.	.25
Reaction and Revolt in South Africa Today, by Homer A. Jack Reprinted from the CHRISTIAN CENTURY.	.15
South Africa Today, by Alan Paton Public Affairs Pamphlet	.25