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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE POLICIES OF
APARTHEID OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEMORANDUM FROM THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA, NEW YORK^{1/}

Purpose

In many ways the South African situation has been and regrettably continues to be the raison d'être for the American Committee on Africa. The Committee was incorporated in 1953 as the result of the efforts of Americans to relate to and assist South African nationalists during the Defiance Campaign of 1952. From that period until the present ACOA has maintained its deep commitment to the people of South Africa in the context of the struggle for freedom throughout Africa. Although, as our title indicates, the American Committee has been active in issues related to the entire African continent, particularly in the latter phases of anti-colonialism, its primary concentration remains southern Africa, both in programme priorities and in financial commitments.

In this memorandum the American Committee would like to present, through the periscope of our own programme, our vision of both the South African issue and the very necessary role which non-governmental organizations can play in working with the Special Committee on the Policies of Apartheid.^{1/} This summary will be sub-divided into five parts dealing with (1) disengagement, both economic and non-economic; (2) policies of United Nations Member States towards South Africa, including military relations; (3) support for and aid to the liberation movements; (4) defence and aid activities; and (5) education and constituency building. Although this presentation will include a basic review of the American Committee's programme, it will also point out areas in which we feel the Special Committee might provide more effective leadership on South African

^{1/} This memorandum was submitted to the Special Committee at a special session held at the United Nations Headquarters on 17-18 March 1969.

7

issues or take the initiative in finding ways to implement United Nations resolutions which have not yet been translated into action against apartheid.

Disengagement

As reiterated in United Nations General Assembly resolutions, and at other international convocations, foreign financial and commercial support for the South African economy through investment and trade enables the totalitarian régime of South Africa to maintain a firmer grip over its own destiny and therefore impedes fundamental change in the status quo. Foreign economic support not only aids a white South African strategy to become an insulated, self-sufficient economy, but also provides significant psychological buttresses for the apartheid system. With such business friends, particularly in the West, South Africa has proceeded to widen her circle of influence within Africa and to oppose with economic power, easily translated into political and military influence, the forces of liberation.

To further a campaign against growing American economic ties with South Africa, ACOA has compiled data on the nature and strategic importance of such aid, and published this information in two special issues of Africa Today, "Partner in Apartheid: United States Policy in South Africa" in 1964 and "A Special Report on American involvement in the South African economy" in 1966. American institutions such as churches and universities and United States businesses have been urged to transfer their investments from South Africa. In the specific "Ban Campaign" ACOA worked with student groups advocating the withdrawal of moneys from American banks directly involved in a credit loan to the Government of South Africa. Initiated in 1966, the reverberations of the campaign have not ended, and disengagement is under consideration in a number of groups represented at this seminar. The campaign has included representations at stockholders' meetings of corporations functioning in South Africa, including the Chase Manhattan Bank, the First National City Bank of New York, the General Motors Corporation, and Texaco. Most recently students have protested the investment portfolios of their universities and the ties of academic dignitaries and trustees with South Africa. They have also raised the wider questions of investment, racism and corporate recruitment on American campuses. We feel that

disengagement as a policy remains the eye of the storm because it attacks profit from apartheid, from which defence of the system arises. In addition, the disengagement issue provides an effective means for educating the public about American complicity with South Africa. It has spurred a number of executives to attempt to justify their South African involvement. The Special Committee could follow this opening by calling together international businessmen to discuss with them the effect of their involvement in the South African economy. Finally, in reference to possible co-operation between African States and non-governmental organizations on the issue of corporate support for apartheid, ACOA has submitted a separate memorandum.

Similarly ACOA has undertaken campaigns related to non-economic forms of support for apartheid which aid white South Africa's self-confidence and international image. In 1966 a number of artists, writers and performers joined the cultural boycott of South Africa by endorsing a statement circulated by ACOA, entitled "We Say 'No' to Apartheid"; while in 1967 and 1968 ACOA, in co-operation with the South African Non-Racial Open Committee for Olympic Sport, encouraged an American boycott of the Mexico City Olympics if in fact the token South African "mixed team" were allowed to participate. Sixty American athletes signed a statement supporting the boycott proposal. Most recently ACOA has begun to work, through both public demonstrations and direct appeals to the United States Government, to end the flights of South African Airways to the United States and to expose South Africa's new tourist campaign in this country. These actions are often publicized in the South African Press, thus emphasizing the reality of international disapproval of apartheid. The cumulative effect of maintaining interest in South Africa and exhibiting opposition to her policies is important.

Policies of Member States of the United Nations

United States policy, at the United Nations and elsewhere, has changed gradually over the years to a willingness to support at least verbal condemnation of apartheid, and to a limited extent, action; but it needs constant attention. In 1966 ACOA played an important role in securing the first major review of United States policy in the Sub-Committee on Africa of the House of

Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee. By pointing out ways in which the United States aids South Africa (i.e. assigning South Africa a sugar quota; the placement of space tracking stations in South Africa; scientific and nuclear advisory and material exchanges; the use of South African port facilities; the helpful attitude of the United States Commerce Department toward private and American-controlled investment in South Africa), ACOA tried to expose the illusion of United States opposition to apartheid. The Special Committee could help by encouraging its subcommittee to look carefully into the ways in which Governments of Member States have contravened United Nations resolutions, and in particular to examine how Governments have bypassed resolutions on which they voted affirmatively. The most blatant example is probably the 1963 Security Council resolution on the embargo of arms to South Africa. A study, for example, of ways in which the United States and the United Kingdom allow the sale to South Africa of materials which are easily convertible into military equipment, would be important to our knowledge. The United States sells Boeing aircraft to South African Airways, allows automobile companies to manufacture engines in South Africa, and refines fuel for South African consumption - all of unquestionable military significance. The Special Committee could aid non-governmental organizations as a watchdog of such contraventions, citing them as specifically as possible.

Support for liberation movements

Through the Africa Defense and Aid Fund of the American Committee on Africa, we have provided over the years moneys for southern African liberation movements, either directly to their African headquarters or to their offices in the United States. Although these funds have been minimal compared to governmental and Organization of African Unity aid to the movements, they have been necessary to movement representatives and petitioners to the United Nations. ADAF funds have aided medical and educational programmes of nationalist organizations and have helped them meet publicity and travel needs. It is well understood that support for the movements takes many forms; on the one hand aiding the military and political programmes of these movements in whatever way possible; on the other hand, working within the American context to secure

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recognition of the legitimacy of the popular revolutions underway in southern Africa. ACOA has arranged tours for several nationalist spokesmen in the United States and Canada, and recently has conducted several week-end seminars for communities that wished to hear liberation movement representatives.

The right of captured freedom fighters to be treated as prisoners of war has been continually brought up in the United Nations and by the liberation movements. But more explicit direction to an international campaign to secure them this status is necessary. It should be directed to the various nations, which can act separately; to the International Committee of the Red Cross which can send observers; to other United Nations bodies, which could do the same; and to the belligerents with whatever pressure has been organized.

Press accounts have reported the return of captured Portuguese to the Red Cross, so it is obvious that the liberation movements are taking the best initiative they can.

In the general realm of material aid to the liberation struggle, an internationally recognized channel for contributions to movements would spur certain contributions. Whether this could be considered by the United Nations or not is unclear, but the fact that there are United Nations channels for educational and defense and aid moneys evidences the necessity of central co-ordination for contributions on certain levels. Naturally any move towards this kind of an international fund should be done in close consultation with the movements themselves. Other more specific ways of implementing the call to Member States for moral and political aid should be examined by the Special Committee.

Defense and aid activities

The Africa Defense and Aid Fund, which is affiliated to the International Defense and Aid Fund, and more recently the Africa Fund, a tax-exempt organization associated with ACOA, have been involved in providing funds for the legal defense of political prisoners, aid to their families, grants to refugee centres and programmes, including medical and educational projects, and help for specific individuals affected by political exile from South Africa. The

Africa Fund contributed \$50,000 to the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa in 1967. The political causes of the conditions necessitating defence and aid funds are obvious; the mounting need for more funds and programmes is apparent with the new way of "terrorism trials" in South Africa today. These trials must be carefully monitored and publicized by the United Nations, and made a catalyst for pressure on South Africa and on the Governments which still give South Africa their direct or indirect support.

Education and constituency building

In everything we do, education and long-range commitment are central to the ultimate goal. We are pleased that the Special Committee has created a sub-committee on information and publicity, and has developed new forms of organized information through the Unit on Apartheid publications, but far more is necessary. The Committee should set priorities for work within nations that support South Africa to build an informed anti-apartheid public opinion. Whether or not this means greater use of public media, advertising campaigns against apartheid and a de-emphasis on gathering more specific information on South Africa, is the choice of the Committee within its budget limitations. It is obvious, however, that well-financed South African propaganda and public relations efforts will reduce the effectiveness of the anti-apartheid struggle unless we counter that activity in the public forum. In a seminar like this, we talk to our friends, which is necessary for strategy planning and solidarity; but the more urgent task now is to reach the uncommitted; to educate, organize and mobilize new forces that can take us beyond verbal condemnation to action against apartheid.

The American Committee on Africa realizes in full the stalemate at the United Nations on meaningful policies towards South and southern Africa which results from the concentration of power in the hands of a few; and we pledge our strongest efforts to influence our own Government toward a consistent policy of supporting freedom. But it must be remembered that the smaller nations of the world have intimate economic and political connexions with these larger Powers, some of which could be utilized as pressure points of the South African issue. Unless new channels are used by those nations and individuals committed to the

the victory of the liberation forces in southern Africa, the onus of failure will sit even heavier than it does today. On the other hand, deriving inspiration from the liberation movements, continual activity and even small breakthroughs may help turn the tide against totalitarian apartheid in South Africa.
