

SOUTH AFRICA BULLETIN

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SECOND ISSUE

This is the second number of a Bulletin put out by the American Committee on Africa, a private, non-profit organization, formed in 1953. The Committee has basically three important aims:

1. To promote African American understanding, through its monthly magazine, *Africa Today*, by pamphlets written by specialists, and also through presentation of outstanding Africans on the lecture platform.

2. To further the development of an American public opinion and a U.S. Government policy favorable to the complete liquidation of colonialism and white domination in Africa. Assistance is given to U.N. petitioners; meetings and conferences on such problems as South African apartheid are sponsored; and demonstrations are occasionally organized around specific events.

3. To raise funds for humanitarian assistance of critical African needs, especially where a political context precludes assistance from major relief groups. Thus, current emphasis is on aid to victims of South African apartheid, and on medical relief to Angolans uprooted by the war in their homeland.

FOUR MINI CHILDREN



Nkosazana, 12 years old; Nomkhosi, 6,
Nonqaba 3, Vukile 10.

THREE PATRIOTS HANGED

On November 6th the all-white government of South Africa hanged Vuysile Mini, Zinakale Nkaba, and Wilson Khayinga, defying world opinion as emphatically expressed in resolutions of the United Nations, in personal appeals by U Thant, the U.N. Secretary General, Pope Paul, and over 2,000 letters and cables from all over the world, urging clemency for the three condemned African patriots.

The death sentences were based on several counts of sabotage and one of alleged murder: that of an informer in their group whom they considered a traitor, but whom they were not accused of themselves having murdered.

This editor knew Vuysile Mini personally, when he was one of the accused in the 4-year-long Treason Trial. A big, kindly man with a booming baritone, he composed many of the inspiring freedom songs sung by the prisoners during trial recess and in their cells at night. He was for years Secretary of the Dock Workers Union of Port Elizabeth, and a leading African National Congress member, as were also the other two victims.

TRADING FOR LIVES

Mini, Nkaba and Khayinga need not have died; they could have saved themselves at the last moment. All three left behind, in personal statements, the sordid details of official offers made to them to commute their death sentences to life imprisonment if they would testify against a friend and associate, Wilton Mkwai. They refused, and were hanged. One of their colleagues writes: "They chose to die rather than betray the freedom struggle and their just belief."

The three patriots left widows and 13 children: Mini 5, ranging from 2 to 14 years of age, Khayinga 6, all small, Nkaba 2. While Khayinga was awaiting execution, his wife and their six little ones were deported from Port Elizabeth to a remote rural area where they face abject poverty and near starvation. Regarding the Mini children, an informant, very recently in Port Elizabeth, states that their condition is most miserable. They desperately need clothing and food, and are even out of school, for lack of funds.

WE CAN DO SOMETHING

The *Mini Fund* has been launched by the American Committee on Africa to help ease the financial burden of these three brave African families. Six hundred dollars have already been sent to them, just before Christmas: money received as the first response to a limited appeal sent out in November. This is however just a drop in their ocean of need; remember that there are 13 children to be fed, clothed and educated.

Send your contribution to: *The Mini Fund*
American Committee on Africa, 211 East 43 St.
New York 17.

BOYCOTT ACTIVITY ON THE WORLD FRONT

Boycott activity against South Africa is continuing, and some new groups have joined, during 1964:

Melbourne, Australia: Last August, about 4,800 waterside workers stopped work on 37 ships in dock to protest South Africa's racial policies, and 2,000 waterside workers in Sydney likewise walked off 27 ships in harbour carrying South African cargo.

Scandinavia: Danish, Swedish and Norwegian dockers refused to unload South African goods from a Swedish ship, and two Scandinavian newspapers ran appeals to aid the dockers when they were fined in court.

Aberdeen, Scotland: The Town Council has decided to officially boycott South African goods in their town.

London: The important Cooperative Society now supports a complete boycott of South African goods.

Economic sanctions or boycotts were supported during 1964 by the Trades Union Congress in Britain; and the American Negro-Leadership Conference.

The World Health Organization, the Food and Agricultural Organization and the International Labour Organization have all excluded South Africa from membership.

The Assembly of Heads of State and Government of Non-Aligned Countries passed a strong resolution in Cairo, last October, calling upon all States to boycott all South African goods, to break diplomatic relations completely, and for African Governments to deny airport, airspace, port rights to South African flights and ships, and to discontinue all road and railway traffic with South Africa.

LOS ANGELES HUNGER SIT-DOWN AGAINST APARTHEID

The newly formed South African Freedom Action Committee held a demonstration during Human Rights Week in Los Angeles to protest against apartheid in South Africa. Martin Legassick, a young white South African student working on a doctorate at UCLA, staged a dramatic 90 hour hunger strike to symbolise the torture of 90 day detention in South Africa. He sat through his ordeal in the facsimile of a prison cell mounted on a pick-up truck parked in front of the South African Tourist Office in Beverly Hills. Ben Magubane, another South African student, led a picket line which at its largest numbered some 150 people, and which was kept going during nearly the whole 90 hours of Legassick's fast. Posters called for boycott action against South African goods, and 2,500 leaflets describing conditions in South Africa were distributed to the crowds which somewhat disturbed the equanimity — and it is to be hoped, the normal business — of the South African Tourist Office!

IN THE U.S.

Profits over Principles

The United States continues to expand its two-way trade with South Africa, ignoring the misery of malnutrition, tubercular children and high infant mortality brought about by wickedly low South African wages.

In 1962 our exports to South Africa amounted to 220 million dollars; they rose by \$53 million in 1963. The Department of Commerce stated last June that "barring unforeseen developments, U.S. exports in 1964 could surpass '63's by a substantial margin".

American imports from South Africa are also increasing both in variety and volume.

Bosal Afrika, manufacturers of automotive parts, proudly proclaims the U.S. as its "biggest overseas customer". The S.A. Wool Commission placed the U.S. as its fifth largest customer during 1963-64; *Dubin-Haskell-Jacobsen* of New York, one of the world's largest lining manufacturers, buys its materials from South Africa's *Good Hope Textiles*. It should be mentioned here that textile manufacturers are among the biggest 'wage-sinners' in South Africa. Many factories have been moved to the borders of African 'reserves', where the destitute country people will work for about half the usual city wage — for Africans!

On the Consumer Level

South African Rock Lobster is growing in popularity here. American purchases have grown from \$50,000 worth in 1958 to an estimated 15 million by the end of '64. The U.S. buys 95% of South Africa's lobster export quota.

A Johannesburg news report (Sept. 1964) comments: "Americans ask for South African lobster before all others".

We urge gourmets to stop asking

ACCUSED LAWYER DISAPPEARS

"Braam" Fischer, courageous and often unpaid attorney of arrested opponents of apartheid, himself lately on trial in South Africa under the Suppression of Communism Act, went "underground" on January 25.

Mr. Fischer, one of the defense counsel in the 4-year Treason Trial and chief counsel in last year's Rivonia Trial of Nelson Mandela and colleagues, had posted \$14,000 bail, which, one presumes, will be forfeited. He left a letter to the Court which was a passionate indictment of apartheid, declaring that he would not leave South Africa but rather remain — in hiding — to try to "oppose the monstrous policy of apartheid" as long as he could.

POLITICAL PRISONERS AND TRIALS

1964 can well be called "Political Prisoner Year" in South Africa. Thousands of people of all races have been incarcerated in the prisons of apartheid. Their crime – fighting the racial tyranny of the Verwoerd Government.

Their condition is intolerable. Automatically graded Category "D", the lowest prison classification, they are allowed only one letter and one visit every six months, and treated worse than criminal prisoners. Even the most serious offenders are granted 25% remission of sentence for good behaviour, but the Minister of Justice has said that under no circumstances will political prisoners be granted any remission. Even worse, a law passed in 1963 makes it possible to detain a prisoner indefinitely, on completion of his sentence! Robert Sobukwe, Pan Africanist Congress leader, has been so detained since May 2, 1963 – after he had completed a 3 year 'political' prison sentence.

ROBBEN ISLAND, A LIVING HELL

Let us take a look at one of South Africa's more notorious jails .. Robben Island. Robben Island is a "maximum security prison", 7 miles off the coast of Cape Town, where the "dangerous criminals" are confined. Some of the most well-loved African leaders are serving life sentences there, namely Rivonia trialists Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki and their colleagues, as well

as Sobukwe, earlier mentioned. Of about 1,500 prisoners on the island, 1,000 are 'politicals'.

Numerous affidavits from former Island prisoners have testified to the living hell that it is for political prisoners. Mr. John Gaetsewe, former Secretary-General of the South African Congress of Trade Unions, who served time there for leaving the country illegally, said in July last year that if there are any prison regulations to govern the island, "these are completely trampled on by prison warders".

HELL HEADQUARTERS

A recent affidavit made in November '64 by a released prisoner, refers to Robben Island as "Hell Headquarters". In former prisoner X's own words:

- "Prisoners are treated like group of undesirable wild animals –
- Food is so bad that it is regarded by prisoners as an attempt to break their spirit –
- Clothing so inadequate that prisoners are trembling from cold even in fine weather –
- Medical care is refused because, one is told, this island is no hospital!
- Only 2 latrines provided for a cell of 70 or 80 prisoners, and all water, including for drinking, is salt –
- Political prisoners work at quarrying stones, then breaking them with *hand hammers*. They are assaulted if they flag – "

Little is known about Mandela and his Rivonia colleagues, as they are housed in a separate block, *each in solitary confinement*, and out of touch with anyone else on the Island.

HARSH SENTENCES

Dozens of political trials have erupted all over South Africa recently, falling into two general classifications: those of persons accused of *sabotage*, in nearly all of which cases the loss of life has been deliberately avoided; and those – by far the greater majority – involving people belonging to or furthering the aims of illegal organizations, such as the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress and the African Resistance Movement.

Extremely harsh sentences are being given to those found guilty in the current trials. Recently sentenced to *life imprisonment*, under the Sabotage Act, has been African Leader, Wilton Mkwaiy,

charged together with David Kitson and Edward Matthews, white professional men, who were sentenced to 20 years and 15 years, respectively. Ten years' imprisonment has been meted out to Edward Daniels, young 'colored' photographer, for "belonging to an illegal organization" – the now nearly defunct African Resistance Movement. In the same case, Anthony Trew, Alan Brooks, university lecturer, and Stephanie Kent, physiotherapist, were given lighter sentences, but the two latter, both white, are accusing the police of grievous bodily assault during questioning. Brooks had an ankle broken; Miss Kent becomes the first white woman to be beaten by South African police.

PIKE TO CHAIR WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

A national conference on "The South African Crisis and American Action" will be held on March 21 to 23rd, at the Willard Hotel in Washington, D.C.

The conference is being organized by the American Committee on Africa, secretariat for the Consultative Council on South Africa, and will be chaired by the Rt. Rev. James A. Pike, of California. The purpose of the conference is not only to analyze the peculiar South African racism called 'apartheid' but to face the fact of American involvement in this critical world problem, and to discuss and propose programs for American action. Three major emphases:

1. *The Crisis* — with 6 panelists, on Monday morning, discussing the latest developments inside South Africa, South West Africa, etc.
2. *American Involvement*, dealt with in 3 seminar groups on a) government, b) business and financial, and c) private American involvement.
3. *What We Can Do* — recommendation of *action programs*, to be discussed on Tuesday morning in 4 groups, according to area of major interest:
 1. churches and synagogues, 2. youth and students,
 3. civil rights, 4. labor.

An opening public meeting will be held on Sunday night, March 21, 5th anniversary of Sharpeville, at which Oliver Tambo, Deputy President of the African National Congress will be the South African speaker. There will be two luncheons, with major addresses, and a dinner on Monday with entertainment to follow. The sponsorship of 35 organizations has been obtained to date, which includes churches, civil rights organizations, student and youth groups and labor. Still other organizations are waiting for action of their Boards, and several have associated themselves with the Conference in an "Interested" category.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. *Come to the Washington Conference on South Africa, March 21-23.*
2. If you cannot attend the Conference, *organize a demonstration in your town to observe the anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre, March 21*, by a March, downtown, with placards protesting abuses such as the executions of Mini, Nkaba and Khayinga; the life sentences in the Rivonia trial; the indefinite detention of Robert Sobukwe;
or a
Meeting on apartheid; ask us to suggest speakers in your area.
If there is no consulate or South African Tourist Office in your area,
Take pictures of your marchers, close-ups of placards, or photos of the speakers and crowd at your meeting,
And send them, with a letter protesting apartheid, to the
South African Mission to the United Nations,
H.E. Matthys I. Botha, 655 Madison Ave., New York
3. *Investigate food stores where you trade, for South African lobster tails; Speak to the proprietor about wages and conditions in So. Africa; Ask him to discontinue the purchase of South African products; Withdraw your business if he refuses, and send us his name; Organize a picket line, announcing: "This store supports economic slavery in South Africa!"*

WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTINUE RECEIVING THIS BULLETIN?

if so, please print:

(Mr.) (Mrs.) (Miss)

Address

Tear off, and return to: Mrs. Mary-Louise Hooper, American Committee on Africa, room 705, 211 East 43rd St., New York 10017.

(No charge is now being made for the South Africa Bulletin. Contributions are, of course, welcome.)