

# AFRICA-U.N.BULLETIN

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African Issues before the Next General Assembly: The 1958 session of the UN General Assembly was known as the "African Session" because African problems were so numerous and so critical. There is no reason to believe that they will be any less numerous or crucial during this next session, which opens on September 15. The most significant issues affecting Africa to be considered this fall are briefly discussed below under three headings: matters of perennial concern; issues treated for the second or third time; and new questions.

The Perennials: First and foremost is the question of the racial situation in South Africa and, closely related to it, the treatment of persons of Indian descent. Both these matters have been the subject of repeated admonition and censure since the early days of the UN; and the only result appears to have been an intensification of South African policy. The only substantial move made by the Assembly was the creation of a special Commission on the Racial Situation in South Africa, which was a fact-finding and reporting organization with no power to act on any of its findings; it lapsed at the end of three years for lack of a two-thirds vote to continue its existence. There has been occasional talk of reviving it or a more wide-ranging successor charged with looking into the racial situation in Africa generally, but apparently there is no great enthusiasm for such a move.

The most exciting development occurred last fall when the American delegation abandoned its former position that South African apartheid, although distasteful to Americans, was a matter of domestic concern over which the UN had no jurisdiction; instead of abstaining, the Americans supported a very mild resolution of criticism. In view of the present ugly and tense racial situation in the Union, where American capital has increasingly large investments and where the U.S. buys much of its uranium ore, the American government may be put on a very hot spot by the Afro-Asian bloc. Now that the United States has agreed that apartheid is a matter of international concern, her vote will be watched very carefully.

The question of South West Africa will also be presented before the Fourth (Trusteeship) Committee again, based on the report of the Committee on South West Africa. The Committee, which met in the spring and again this summer, appears to have little of substance to recommend to the Assembly. The special Good Offices Committee appointed two years ago has clearly been unsuccessful in finding any point of mutual agreement between the South African government and the UN on the proper disposition of the former German colony, now a "mandated territory" under a mandate agreement with the defunct League of Nations, to which the UN claims the rights of a successor. Since one of the terms of the mandate agreement is that the Union of South Africa must accept the jurisdiction of the International Court (the successor to the World Court) on questions as to interpretation and enforcement of the agreement, it is expected that the Reverend Michael Scott, Mbrumba Kerina, Jariretundu Kozonguizi, and (if he arrives) the latest petitioner, Hans Beukes, will ask the UN to bring the Union before the Court to determine whether the terms of the mandate agreement are being honored. It appears that the South West Africa Committee will again have no definite recommendation to make on this score. (See below the special report on South West Africa.)

Repeaters: Among the vital issues which cannot be put off again this year is the boundary dispute between Ethiopia and the Italian Trust Territory of Somalia. With Somalia scheduled to obtain its freedom next year, some satisfactory settlement must be achieved, or the UN will be creating a new nation whose very existence will be threatened from the time of its birth. The complicated history and claims of the two countries is set forth in detail in the Bulletin for March 13, 1957. In summary, it may be sufficient to indicate that the disputed area includes grazing lands which are not subject to the annual droughts afflicting Somalia. Since cattle represent the primary (and only) wealth of most Somalis, access to this rich grazing area is a necessity for the new nation-to-be. Ethiopia, on the other hand, sees the implicit territorial demands as a return round by the Italians, who started their war of conquest in the same area and who are the Somalis' mentors during trusteeship; in addition, as a Christian island in a Moslem sea, the Ethiopians are disturbed by threats of subversion from Somalis who tend to settle year-round in the lush grazing area without giving any alliance to the Ethiopian government, and who talk of a "Greater Somalia" (including the British and French Somaliland colonies) on Ethiopia's flanks.

In recent sessions the Assembly has been content, in last-minute breakthroughs on this question, to set up an arbitration commission to settle the boundaries, and to determine the terms of reference of the commission. Now, however, only months remain. If, as seems likely, the commission cannot report reasonable success, the Assembly itself must tackle the substantive issues or at least provide some sort of ad hoc boundary arrangement.

The most widely publicized of all the "repeats" is bound to be the Algerian question. The Independent African States have conferred on their strategy, with FLN leaders participating, and delegations have been sent to every continent to explain the Algerian point of view. Meanwhile, however, the subject remains fluid, for De Gaulle has apparently not made up his mind what policy he will pursue; and this in turn will influence the UN debate on the subject. Although the French earlier announced that they would walk out of the UN if the UN interfered, the French government is sending a strong delegation to New York, including several African members.

At the last session of the UN a resolution recognizing the principle of Algerian independence and asking negotiations came within one vote of the required number (the United States abstained, which numerically, though not politically, was the same as a "no" vote, since the resolution required two-thirds of all present and voting). It is assumed that, in the absence of some dramatic change, the African states can obtain a two-thirds majority this year.

The African countries anticipate that France will also be involved in one of the least known but most significant problems that the UN faces in relation to non-self-governing territories (colonies). Under its limited powers the UN requires reports on colonies from all colonial powers; Spain and Portugal have refused to respond on the grounds that their African territories are not colonies but overseas provinces with the same status as metropolitan provinces. Two years ago a resolution aimed indirectly at this assertion was voted down after clever procedural maneuvering in which the American delegation was instrumental. Last year the same resolution was withdrawn lest it be defeated again under the two-thirds majority requirement. The issues will, of course, be raised again at this session, and this may well affect France, too; for the French African territories which voted to support the DeGaulle constitution and remain in the French Union have been accorded a self-governing status by DeGaulle, and it is unlikely that the French will render any more reports on them. Such a situation will make the reporting provisions of the UN charter

almost meaningless, except as to the British colonies and a few odd bits of American real estate in the Caribbean and the Pacific, for the Belgians have been very balky in reporting on the Congo. Such a challenge to the UN may make this repeat as exciting as any new issue.

On the doubtful list of "repeats" are the British and French Cameroons. The African States are still unhappy about the final resolution approved last year granting independence to the French Cameroons without requiring general elections first, and their feelings have been heightened by the recurring stories of riot, bloodshed, and repression which filter out from the Trust Territory. If any chance of success appears, they may attempt to reopen the decision not to require a UN-supervised election before independence.

The last session of the Assembly left the question of the future of the Southern British Cameroons open, with provision for a plebiscite if the major political parties could reach agreement. If a plebiscite is to be held, the form and contents of the question may be the subject of considerable jockeying.

New Issues: In addition to the issues discussed, there are several new issues waiting in the wings, so to speak, which one or more of the African States is anxious to bring before the Assembly.

Perhaps the most important of all is the projected French atom bomb test in the Sahara. The Moroccan government has announced that it will introduce this subject, which is of overwhelming concern to every politically conscious African. The fact that French Minister Jacques Soustelle, a leading conspirator in the May 13 uprising against the Fourth Republic and apparently an exponent of the "integrationist" approach to Algeria, is in charge of the proposed test has added insult to anticipated injury. Nor has he improved French relations with the Africans by belittling their leaders' protests against the bomb tests; the average French African opponents of the tests are not allowed to be heard; and their only effective protests have been abortive attacks against the test installations in an attempt to destroy them. It is assumed that the issue will be raised in the UN as a threat to peace and will come before the Special Political Committee.

The Independent African States would also like to bring before the UN the problem of the Central African Federation -- the suppression of African leaders, particularly members of the African Congresses, and the key issue of the future of Nyasaland. Again the most likely method of introducing this issue is by labelling it a threat to peace.

Other problems which the African States would like to bring before the Assembly generally affect the non-self-governing areas of Africa, for by the end of 1960 only Tanganyika and Ruanda-Urundi will remain under trusteeship, and the former appears to be very close to self-government. But the Africans would like an investigation of conditions in Kenya, particularly in the detention camps, of which Hola is such a shocking example. They would also like to be able to focus UN attention on conditions in the Portuguese "provinces" where "forced labor" has replaced out-and-out slavery but the African still has no liberty and little hope in his own land.

In addition to the issues discussed briefly above, the General Assembly will have a great deal of relatively routine matter before it, some of which will affect Africa directly and exclusively, while other will affect it only tangentially or in passing. This will include the reports of the Economic Commission for Africa, the Technical Assistance Board, and various specialized UN service agencies. It may also consider studies on particular issues, such as the effect of the European Economic Community on various territories or the rights of peoples to permanent sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources ("self-determination").

South West Africa (by Special Correspondent): It is expected that the 1959 efforts to negotiate the "basis of a settlement" on this mandated territory by the UN Good Offices Committee (Britain, United States, and Brazil) with the Union of South Africa will have proved abortive by the beginning of the 1959 General Assembly. Last year's efforts brought only a suggestion for the partition of South West Africa which was quickly rejected by the General Assembly's Fourth (Trusteeship) Committee. As far as is known in late August, 1959, the government of South Africa and the Good Offices Committee members have not met since, although they were asked by last year's General Assembly to try to carry on discussions again.

The meetings of the UN Committee on South West Africa this spring and summer were enlivened by the testimony on May 1 of a new petitioner, Jariretundu Kozonguizi -- the first inhabitant of South West Africa to come to the UN directly from the territory. His oral petition concerned: (1) The forcible removal by police of the Reverend Markus Kooper of Hoachanas Reserve (African area inhabited by a Nama tribe) to a remote desert spot 150 miles distant. Kooper's congregation of 400 is shortly to follow him under the apartheid policy of removing "black spots" from white-settled areas -- however strong, as in this case, African claims to the land may be. (This was reported on in the July 17 Bulletin.) (2) The detention, temporary imprisonment, and exile to the remote North of Toivo Ja-Toivo, who petitioned the UN by letter last year. (3) The "explosive deadlock" between African residents of Windhoek over their forced removal (in 1960) to a location farther distant from the town, which will involve higher rents and busfares. Kozonguizi will join the Reverend Michael Scott and Mburumba Kerina as petitioners to the coming General Assembly.

The Committee on South West Africa passed a resolution, to be referred to the Assembly, asking that the large-scale Hoachanas removal plan be abandoned and Kooper restored to his people.

Yet another South West African petitioner, Hans Beukes, who had won a scholarship to the University of Oslo, cabled the Committee from Bechuanaland that his passport had been revoked by the South African government as he was about to depart for Norway. He was invited to testify at the UN but at this writing has reached only England.

Other new developments noted by the South West Africa Committee and to be incorporated in its 1959 Report:

1. The suggestion by Senator H. J. Steyn in the South African Parliament that 40,000 Africans of South West Africa at present in reserves in the white-settled area be removed to the purely African North. The Indonesian delegate feared that partition of some sort was still being considered by South Africa and that suggestions of this kind were part of the accelerating tendency to displace Africans for white settlement.

2. The proposed establishment of a military training school in South West Africa, contrary to the terms of the Mandate.

3. The request of Hereros in Bechuanaland for land in South West Africa to which they might be allowed to return. They fled South West Africa after the Herero War of 1904.

4. The introduction of compulsory apartheid into the nursing and midwifery professions, whose associations were previously interracial.

5. The appointing of a commission of inquiry to draw up a separate educational program for the "Native" and "Colored" communities, contrary to UN recommendations.

In the general debate Dr. Gebre-Egzy of Ethiopia proposed that a new approach to the South West Africa problem be tried -- an international publicity campaign, with world-wide demonstrations and the celebration yearly of "South West Africa Day."

Now that Good Offices negotiation appears to have broken down, General Assembly debate is likely to center around legal solutions to compel South Africa to adhere to the terms of the Mandate and bring about UN Trusteeship status for the territory. This might be accomplished by the bringing of a complaint against South Africa as having violated its Mandate by any member of the UN, for compulsory jurisdiction by the International Court at the Hague, a step long advocated by ACOA.

A specially appointed LegalSub-Committee of the Committee on South West Africa has prepared a report which reviews in documented detail for the guidance of the General Assembly the various legal possibilities proposed in the past. No recommendations, however, were made by the South West Africa Committee in passing this on to the Assembly. The discussion in this document centers around the concept of seeking an "advisory opinion" from the Court. The Reverend Michael Scott and ACOA feel, however, that the time has come for stronger measures along the lines of compulsory jurisdiction and whatever firm international action might be required to implement the Court's findings.

South Africa's disregard of UN recommendations, as well as of those legal obligations to its Mandate already determined by the Court, has now gone on for thirteen years. The situation of the Herero and other tribes, which has only worsened during this period, is, says Kozonguizi, now desperate. ACOA will bring out a comprehensive pamphlet on South West Africa this fall.