

STATEMENT BY

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to the U.N.
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE POLICIES OF APARTHEID
OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates:

I should like to take this opportunity to thank you for your willingness to hear my testimony and, at the same time, hope that whatever suggestions and information I present will contribute in some small measure to your work. The American Committee on Africa, which I represent, has applauded the formation of this Committee and will do everything possible to support its work. Perhaps it is not out of place to say an introductory word about my organization.

The American Committee on Africa is a private, non-profit organization incorporated in the State of New York in 1953. Our Co-Chairmen are the Rev. Donald Harrington of the Community Church of New York and A. Philip Randolph, President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Vice-Chairman of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. Our President is Mr. Peter Weiss, an attorney; Bishop James A. Pike of the Episcopal Church is Vice-Chairman of our National Committee. Our Executive Board and National Committee members represent many aspects of American life -- organized labor, civil rights groups, the arts, church, politics, etc. Names well-known here and abroad include: Roger Baldwin, Mrs. Chester Bowles, James B. Carey, Harry Emerson Fosdick, Hubert Humphrey, Martin Luther King, Wayne Morse, Reinhold Niebuhr, Sidney Poitier, Jackie Robinson, James Roosevelt and Norman Thomas. Our financing comes exclusively from our 15,000 members. I should like to emphasize that we receive no financial help from governmental or corporate sources. One of the basic purposes of the ACOA is to give active, tangible support to the liberation of Africa from colonialism, racism, and other

social and political diseases of the same nature. Through our Committee we hope to offer positive evidence of at least some American support for the struggle for freedom in Africa.

In its 10 years of service, the American Committee on Africa has consistently focused its attention on South Africa. In 1957, we organized a worldwide campaign called "Declaration of Conscience" appealing to the Government of the then Union of South Africa to cease and desist from its policies of racial oppression. In 1962, we undertook another campaign, this one called "An Appeal for Action Against Apartheid." These campaigns were sponsored by leading personalities not only in the United States, but in Africa, Asia, Europe and South America. Both campaigns were aimed at informing the wider public of events in South Africa in order to change the nature of the regime.

The first part of the objective has been successfully attained through combined efforts of many organizations and agencies: there is scarcely a spot on this globe where the meaning of apartheid is not known. Organizations whose specific goal is to rally public opinion against apartheid have sprung up in many countries, including England, France and the Netherlands, to name but three, somewhat pivotal Western nations.

But the second goal -- to change the regime -- has been quite unsuccessful; so much so, in fact, that it appears that the primary initiative for this move must come principally from inside South Africa.

What I should like to focus on then is the situation in South Africa as it looks to those who oppose apartheid, and then to make a recommendation about one important way those outside can help them.

For many years the struggle for freedom in South Africa was spearheaded by the African National Congress. And even though racial persecution was part and parcel of the Act of Union, the ANC adhered to legal, constitutional action in all

its activities. African leadership showed an extraordinary degree of tolerance and patience in their loyalty to the aim of achieving peaceful negotiations with their oppressors. The technique of non-violent resistance to unjust laws which they evolved and refined illustrated their basic faith in the rationality of the white government. This approach is now being seriously challenged as it is seen that those who rule South Africa have shown themselves to be fanatics not easily to be shaken from their commitment to white supremacy. In any case, the last great campaign to change the mind and heart of the oppressor took place in 1961. Yet, after Sharpeville, when Albert Lutuli was in Oslo to receive the Nobel Prize for Peace, he could still say:

"How easy it would have been in South Africa for the natural feelings of resentment at white domination to be turned into feelings of hatred and desire for revenge against the white community..."

But as Lutuli was speaking, other leaders were already discussing the futility of further legal action to achieve their goals. Around April 1962, exiled African leaders announced a change in policy:

"We are living in a new situation, a situation which dangerously borders on war. The enemy who is panic-stricken is preparing for unbridled acts of aggression against our people. Our outlook and style of work must change radically... the transfer of real political power must now be demanded and fought for in every village and location, in every hostel and compound... Power is ours. Power to the people." (South Africa Freedom News, Vol. 1, No. 1, April 1962.)

It should be noted that the leaders making this statement were responding, not only to the provocation of the Government, but also to the urging of those within their own ranks. In December 1962, the Spear of the Nation, a sabotage group, sent a letter to South African newspapers saying:

"We have adopted this course of action, i.e. sabotage and violence, because almost every avenue of legal and constitutional struggle has been closed by the State.... the only real answer will be a direct test in the field of armed struggle."

And they were absolutely right. At no time in the past 20 years has the Government of South Africa sought to talk over things with Africans who opposed apartheid. Is it credible that a nation whose government claims to represent a population of more than 15 million people has never consulted the wishes of more than three-quarters of its inhabitants? No machinery has existed for even the most rudimentary form of consultation since the so-called Native Representatives seats in the Assembly were abolished. And, in fact, the Government has taken the stand that negotiations with Africans is tantamount to surrender!

By banning political opposition, by banishment within the country, by jailing leaders, by house arrest, by ~~censorship of the press~~ ^{banning certain newspapers}, by police control of population movements, by making the usual procedures of justice a privilege for a few, by race registration, by job reservation, by marriage and sex restrictions and other means, the Government of South Africa has made it impossible for African leaders or for moderate whites to make any accommodation to the situation. Not that anyone would wish for such an accommodation, but rather that it might allow for a dialogue to take place between the opponents. Now, the opposition is cornered; no manoeuverability has been left to them. It is as if by breathing an African were committing an act threatening to "the future of the white race and western civilization."

This paranoia has gone so far as to impel an important South African Police officer to say: (Lt. Col. Pienaar, in charge of the police at Sharpeville)

"The native mentality does not allow them to gather for a peaceful demonstration. For them to gather means violence."

The whites have had more than 50 years in which to accommodate themselves to the Africans. They have refused and must now bear the full consequences of their obstinacy. For while the European population has largely acquiesced in taking away the dignity of African men and women, they could not take away their courage.

Violence has thus become the keynote. It is everywhere in South Africa. The Government is frantically arming itself.

In November 1959, Mr. Erasmus, who was then Minister of Defense, set the tone for the militarization of South Africa:

"A re-appreciation of the situation and a careful study of the course of events in Algeria have shown that the possible major task for the South African Defence Force is likely to be one of conventional warfare against lightly-armed forces of aggression."

He also spoke of beating off attacks by "fast, lightly-armed security forces." With this in mind, South African officers went to Algeria to observe how the French were doing things. On their return, South Africa started selling off her heavy fighting equipment such as the British Centurion tanks. In 1961, the police force received an additional R2 million, bringing its annual budget to R40 million; prison custodial personnel was doubled. Last year, South Africa's 30,000 policemen were given basic military training and formed into special security forces with their own helicopters and their own Saracens armored cars -- 80 of them. A white police reserve of 5,000 men was also set up. More recently, it has been decided to establish African and Cape Colored police reserves as well. Today, South and South West Africa are divided into 11 police zones. These zones more or less coincide with the Defense Force's 16 zones.

We must not forget that police stations are to be found in the center of all urban African locations and that white civilians have been greatly encouraged to arm themselves.

The army has also been greatly enlarged. The Minister of Defense speaks of mobilizing 250,000 men. The Defense Force which by purges and re-organizations has been turned into a sort of Nationalist Party private army, now fields 60,000 men. In addition to this, some 175 Rifle Commandos (80,000 men) must be added. The army reserves now get some 15,000 white youths annually -- for a total of 60,000 men in four years (after that they must be retrained, so their value as soldiers greatly decreases). To finance this enlargement, the 1962 defense budget was almost double that of 1961 (from R 61 million to R120 million).

By these means the Government has sought both to provoke non-whites into retaliatory action and, at the same time, assured themselves the ability to crush any such uprising.

Africans, fortunately, have not taken the bait. In fact, mass action has been pretty well abandoned as a method of opposition for the moment. Both African opposition groups -- ANC and PAC -- have become rather small, self-selected groups operating in secrecy. The three ^{underground} ~~sabotage~~ groups which they have given birth to -- POCCO, the Spear of the Nation, and the National Liberation Committee, have, between them, carried out a spectacular number of acts of sabotage. Trains have been derailed, electric and phone cables cut, homes and offices have been dynamited, even police stations have been attacked. Their use of high explosives is becoming more sophisticated and one can only expect more and better organization of sabotage in the future.

The prospect of a civil war in South Africa pleases no one, excluding, perhaps, those fanatics who look forward to the total annihilation of non-whites in much the same manner as Hitler did with Jews and Poles. As outsiders, we are almost powerless to change the prospect. What we can do, however, is to lessen the suffering by weakening the regime in the hope that at least part of their destructive abilities will be paralyzed. This was certainly the spirit behind the General Assembly's Resolution 1761 calling for sanctions and boycotts, and the establishment of this Committee to study and make recommendations on the implementation of the resolution.

The key to effective boycott and sanctions against South Africa does not, unfortunately, lie with the 67 nations which voted in their favor, as Eric Louw was quick to point out after the resolution passed. The real solution lies partly in the power of the governments of a handful of leading importers of South African products and partly in the nature and conditions of international trade.

The governments I am speaking of are those of the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Japan and Sweden. The international trade is that in wool, diamonds, copper, asbestos, fruits, sugar and uranium. Members of this Committee are no doubt aware that the movements of minerals, commodities and manufactured goods are predicated partly on political conditions, but also, most importantly on prices. Any tampering that is done with these movements will immediately affect world prices. Hence I think that this is part of the problem, heretofore ignored, but which this Committee should set itself to examining.

I am deeply indebted for the discussion which follows to Mr. Patrick van Rensburg. He is a white South African, once a member of that nation's diplomatic corps, but who has broken with the regime and is now operating a school in Bechuanaland. Western nations now trading with South Africa are reluctant to end the Republic's economic lifeline because they stand to lose a good deal of money. To persuade them to cease trading, therefore, it is necessary to guarantee them that at least some of their losses could be made up. This, I might add, is not only true for the countries listed above carrying on the bulk of trade with South Africa. It is equally true for many African and Asian countries which supported the resolution. Before suggesting a few ideas on how this might be done, I should first like to glance over the list of South African exports.

Gold is, of course, South Africa's most important export. Gold cannot be the subject of an international boycott, so there is no use discussing this much further. I should like to say, however, that most South African gold is sold in the London market by the South African Reserve Board. A British boycott of South African products would certainly be instantly met by South African retaliation; that is to say, gold would be sold through some other outlet. Now, the United Kingdom gains very little except prestige in being the world gold buying center. Still, certain commercial and financial houses in the city of Westminster would be

affected. These firms have a quite disproportionate influence on the British Government. Sad to say, they would probably place a great deal of pressure on any Government -- Tory or Labor -- to avoid boycotts. I fear that I can think of no way of avoiding this unpleasant truth. I merely mention it so that we can keep in mind where the opposition is likely to come from.

South Africa's largest exports are usually grouped together as "agricultural products." It is useful to break this down, however, into individual products, for each has its own particular characteristics.

Most important among them is wool -- £52 million in 1959 was exported, of which Britain took £10 million and the US some £7 million. Other important exports are canned fruits (£8 million, of which 80 per cent goes to the UK where preferential tariffs favor South Africa), oranges (£4½ million, half of which goes to Britain), and sugar (£7.5 million, of which £6 million went to Britain).

Every one of these commodities is produced elsewhere in the world. Wool, for example, is exported from Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Turkey, the Soviet Union, the United States and Uruguay. Oranges are grown at the same season of the year in Argentina, Australia, and Brazil. Canned fruits -- consisting mainly of pears, peaches, apricots, and pineapples -- are exported by the United States, Italy, West Germany, Japan, Brazil, Mexico and other nations. And so on.

The point I am trying to make is that there are no shortages of these commodities. However, this does not negate certain difficulties growing out of a boycott.

If Britain were to cease buying South African wool, the price of the product would drop rapidly in the Republic (wool producers are subsidized over there, but how much protection could the Government give them in the face of the total disappearance of their market?). Without international agreements among wool importers, lowered prices would immediately attract buyers who had remained in the market. Prices of South African wool would not remain depressed long. The

net effect of a boycott by Britain, then, would be to penalize the South Africans for a short period of time -- and rather lightly at that, and British importers heavily.

What is the alternative?

The alternative must be that, with the decision to boycott should come arrangements allowing Britain, for example, (or any other country for certain products) to buy her necessary wool from, say Argentina and Australia at prices which could not easily be undercut by the South Africans. The incentive to drop prices would be increased volume. Now wool is a fairly easy commodity to boycott because British-Australian trade is generally flexible and thus capable of adjustments.

A little more complicated would be the boycott of South African oranges by Britain. Here, Brazil, which is anxious to increase its export of this commodity, could take up the slack. But Brazil already has a favorable balance of trade with Britain -- a balance, incidentally, which is used to balance its deficit trade with the United States. A Brazilian arrangement to sell oranges to the UK would therefore have to be sealed either with a barter agreement -- that is to say, Britain might sell textiles and heavy machinery to Brazil -- or Britain might buy less coffee from Brazil in favor of, say, Tanganyika. The latter might be the best -- for Brazil is anxious to diversify its exports and Tanganyika, it is reported, is finding itself with surplus coffees over and above her international quota -- coffee which she is under pressure to sell to South Africa at present in exchange for abandoning her consumer boycott of the latter.

Two very important items in South Africa's overseas trade are uranium and diamonds. Each deserves a closer look.

South African uranium oxide is sold exclusively to the US-UK Combined Development Agency. Now uranium is a product which is found in abundance on this

globe. South Africa has actually been given great advantages by the Development Agency -- for heavens knows what reason. The present contract was due to expire in 1965, but it has been stretched out to 1967 in order to give the South Africans a chance to absorb the shock of losing this important export. There is no need to point out that on no account should a contract be renegotiated in 1967. Canada, for example, has ample supplies of uranium, but most of her mines have been closed down because of South African competition. So Canada stands to gain by effective boycotts.

Diamonds are another matter.

Almost all South African diamonds -- both industrial and gems -- are sold through the Central Selling Organisation (CSO) in London. The outfit is controlled by De Beers Mining. The USSR and Tanganyika producers of diamonds cooperate with De Beers and also market their stones in London.

It would not be possible to destroy the CSO -- but it could be rivalled. Guinea, Ghana, Sierra Leone and the Congo (from Kasai Province) do not market their stones through CSO. If the USSR and Tanganyika were to join them in a new central selling firm, De Beers' ability to set prices might be strongly challenged. The losses assumed by the new combine would have to be made up in some other way.

It is to examine solutions to problems such as this one that I should now like to make a recommendation.

In order to implement an effective boycott of South African goods, let this Committee set itself the task of examining the pattern of South African exports. That is to say, let it direct its Secretary to undertake this task by engaging economists and other specialists. Let, then, alternate sources of supplies of these goods be determined. Thirdly: let the Committee recommend how best to implement these new patterns of international trade, keeping in mind ways of sharing the losses. In this connection, incidentally, I believe that the joint action of nations presently trading with Britain and the United States, but

not with South Africa, could bring pressure to bear on the two Western nations. The combined trade of Africa and Asia are far more important than that of South Africa.

Side by side with this should be an open inquiry into the various public loans made to South Africa. I have in mind the accumulated sum of \$220 million in loans made by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development over a 15-year period.

I think that if these steps were followed, the banking and financial world now so anxiously aiding South Africa, would pause to reconsider its present confidence -- and if I know anything about bankers -- the flow of capital to South Africa would stop quite suddenly. And as you no doubt know, South Africa cannot generate sufficient capital internally to assure the industrial growth on which her vast apartheid edifice is built.

Even a temporary boycott -- that is to say, one lasting at least two or three harvest seasons -- could precipitate a crisis in the South African economy large enough to shake off the many non-fanatics who now support the regime. Hence we might in short order be able to establish those conditions under which Africans and whites might be able to work together. It is a slim chance -- but certainly one worth striving for when the only alternative is a long and pain-inflicting civil war to the death.