

WHY WE PROTEST

A joint statement by Anthony Scotto, President, Local 1814, International Longshoremen's Association, George Houser, Executive Director, American Committee on Africa, James Farmer, National Director, Congress of Racial Equality.

A line of pickets protesting South African-United States trade is marching before Port Authority Pier 6 in Brooklyn this morning, where the "South African Pioneer," bearing goods from South Africa, is waiting to be discharged. Members of the IIA, Local 1814, have refused to cross the line. The following statement gives reasons for the action and outlines what is hoped will be accomplished.

Our boycott of goods from South Africa is based on our conviction that racism and white supremacy are not purely national issues easily contained in any one country. On the contrary, we consider opposition to apartheid in South Africa to be a logical extension of the struggle for equality in the United States.

More specifically, we boycott South African goods...

Because the prosperity of South African white-owned mines, factories and farms is built on the sweat of disenfranchised, non-unionized and deprived non-white workers. Handling South African goods can only contribute to this vicious system of racial exploitation...

Because South Africa has ignored 28 resolutions passed by the United Nations calling upon the Government of South Africa to change its racist policies. Out of a recent General Assembly debate came the request that Member States close "their ports to all vessels flying South African flags" and "boycott all South African goods" (UN General Assembly Resolution 1761, November 6, 1962)...

Because US Ambassador to the UN Adlai Stevenson himself recently said that "the situation in South Africa is worse than it was three years ago...our efforts have yielded no tangible results;" adding that "the US would not cooperate in matters which would lend support to South Africa's apartheid policies."...

Because the AFL-CIO, at its Fourth Constitutional Convention, resolved to "call upon the US Government...to institute a policy of economic sanctions against South Africa..." and "to examine the possibility of trade unionists refusing to handle

South African goods in a world-wide industrial boycott..."

Because we wish to show solidarity with others throughout the world who have already refused to cooperate in any way with the apartheid regime. These include: The African Heads of State at Addis Ababa, pledged to the liberation of Southern Africa...Delegates to the International Labour Organization who voted to exclude South Africa from all activities in the organization except for membership in the General Conference...and the longshoremen of Denmark and Norway who refused to unload South African cargo.

What do we hope to accomplish with this embargo? First, of course, is the precedent set for other maritime and transport workers of the organized American labor movement. We are not the only ones concerned with racial exploitation for profit and power. Others will draw obvious lessons from our example. Second, is the focusing of attention of the US public as a whole on our trade with South Africa and our individual consumption of South African products such as lobster tails. We do not expect that consumer boycotts will bring down the regime, but it could help weaken it. The Verwoerd Government will not negotiate because it speaks from strength. As long as foreign investments flow in and products flow out, declarations of moral indignation will bounce harmlessly off the armor of apartheid. But let the flow of capital and goods turn to a trickle: fanaticism will be replaced, if not by reason, at least by a germinal desire for interracial accommodation.

We demonstrate, most of all, because we believe that our Government, which has already condemned apartheid in words, must now show good faith by supporting a resolution for boycotts and sanctions against South Africa at the United Nations this fall, and by placing its own embargo on American trade with South Africa.

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