

## THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND AMERICAN ACTION

(A paper for the International Seminar on Apartheid, Racial Discrimination, and Colonialism in southern Africa)

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This International Seminar on Apartheid, Racial Discrimination, and Colonialism in southern Africa is most timely. If there was ever any question about the essential unity of the struggle for liberation in southern Africa, it should have been dispelled by now. Several factors are common to the southern African countries (South Africa, South West Africa, Mozambique, Angola, Rhodesia, and even including Guinea-Bissau). These factors are a geographical proximity (excluding Guinea); white minority domination; police state conditions; racist practices; an announced policy by the white minorities of permanent domination, and therefore, denial of the right to independence for the majority; and finally a determination by the African people in these territories to struggle and win their freedom. The consciousness of these factors has affected the liberation movements so that they see the struggle throughout southern Africa as one.

The American Committee on Africa is proud to have been invited to participate in this International Seminar. We have been one of the few American organizations, ever since our establishment in 1953, which has tried to identify with the struggle for independence. We feel we have played, at least, a small role in supporting the just cause of the African people. We have done this through the contributions we have made from our Defense and Aid Fund to support the struggle, a Fund which is supported entirely by private contributions from concerned Americans. We have supported the cause by our introduction of many African leaders to the American people through American

Committee on Africa (ACOA) sponsored speaking tours. We have supported the cause by assistance we have given to liberation leaders who have come as petitioners to the United Nations. We have supported the cause through our sponsorship of Africa Freedom Day rallies, our campaign against American banks loaning money to the Republic of South Africa, through efforts to discourage American musicians and artists from visiting southern African countries, through public protest demonstrations, and in many other ways.

The task has not been an easy one in the United States. Generally speaking, the American people have not been well informed through the mass media or the more formal educational system, about the real issues in southern Africa, although this situation has improved slightly over the last few years. We have also had to contend with a certain amount of apathy toward critical problems in Africa. There has been a natural predisposition to be more concerned about pressing issues on our own doorstep, such as the struggle against racism in the United States. The Vietnam conflict has been an all-dominating one in the United States for the past several years. And in addition to this, the growing American economic investment and trade in South Africa has predisposed certain Americans in influential positions to look rather favorably on policies being followed in southern Africa as long as profits do not diminish.

In this statement, I would like to comment briefly, both on the situation in southern Africa and on the situation in the United States as it relates to southern Africa. The strategy which we must follow as an organization as we attempt to carry out our aim of

of supporting the struggle for freedom and independence, depends very much on our analysis of both the African and the American situations. As an American organization, we can only respond to conditions we confront, and cannot take a leading role in the struggle. We can only support. The question is, how can we best support the struggle at this moment in history.

First, then, what are the elements of the African situation. It is generally recognized that the task confronting the liberation movement in southern Africa is much more difficult than may have been supposed only a few short years ago. Many observers around the world had assumed that with the rapid independence of states in Africa, the momentum would spread rather easily to southern Africa and the revolutions for independence in the white and colonial dominated states of southern Africa would come to fruition very soon. A new reality is now emerging, which although it does not lead to a pessimistic conclusion, shows that the liberation struggle cannot be won by a foreseen specific target date. Rather, there will be much more suffering involved, much more determination necessary, a much stronger and better organized movement than had been thought to be the case only a short time ago. One reason for the recognition of this reality is that the colonialist and white minority governments have greatly strengthened and hardened themselves for the conflict. And the longer the minority governments are able to maintain their strength and apparent stability, the more likely they are to get significant support, especially by trade and investment, from the rest of the world, with specific emphasis upon western countries, of course,

but not excluding even some African countries. Economically, South Africa has expanded. Economic growth in South Africa has increased by 4% annually in recent years, although the average per capita income of \$427.00 in 1962 combined the average of \$1,380.00 for whites and \$167.00 for blacks. Militarily, South Africa has enormously inflated its budget appropriations. In 1958-59 a little over 51 million dollars was appropriated for military expenditures. In 1965-66, it reached over 321 million dollars. The South African Minister of Defense claimed in 1965 that South Africa could place 250,000 trained men into the field immediately. The fact that South West Africa police and military forces are integrated with those of South Africa means, of course, that military build-up has affected South West Africa as well.

Portugal has had to increase military expenditures in its attempt to defend its colonies in Africa and suppress the active military threats of the liberation movements. Expenditures have gone up between 1961 and 1965 by more than 50%. It is estimated that there are at least 50 thousand Portuguese troops in Angola. The number of Portuguese in Mozambique has grown from about 20 thousand in mid-1965 to at least between 40 and 50 thousand last year.

Although selective mandatory economic sanctions have been in effect against Rhodesia since the U.N. resolution of December 16, 1966, no one holds to the opinion that they can have the desired political effect of bringing down the minority white regime there. Certainly, even the most optimistic observers would say that as long as needed supplies are going through South Africa and Mozambique to the Ian Smith regime, it would be visionary to believe that sanctions could have more than a fringe effect upon the political realities and

power structure in Rhodesia.

The general analysis of what forces are available to bring freedom to southern Africa has undergone some change within the last few months based on the impotence of the United Nations both in implementing its resolutions on South West Africa and in bringing effective sanctions to bear against Rhodesia. Some optimists, only a few months ago, believed that the world community could take some effective action, both regarding South West Africa and Rhodesia, but such hopes have now proven to be very false. Without the backing of the big powers, and especially of Britain and the United States, it is impossible for the United Nations to be an effective force on the African scene. Because neither the United States nor Britain are prepared to have any sort of confrontation with South Africa, the United Nations is emasculated as an effective instrument to expel South Africa from South West Africa, or bring down the Ian Smith regime.

These realities have led the liberation movements in southern Africa to certain conclusions. First, they have rightly concluded that in the final analysis they themselves must generate the force to bring down the colonialist and white minority regimes in southern Africa. They cannot essentially rely upon the United Nations or on the big powers of the world either east or west. Nor can they assume that the African independent states will supply the power to bring about the necessary results. But they recognize that they must receive support for this task and will accept it from a number of quarters. And they recognize that unless they themselves are able to build up the essential force for the struggle, the desired end cannot be

achieved.

Second, the liberation movements have come to the conclusion that it is only by armed conflict that freedom can be won. Thus, those movements which are not already engaged in actual guerilla warfare, are actively and speedily preparing themselves for the eventuality. It is a sad commentary on the lack of insight of the white minorities and the Portuguese colonialists that the African liberation movements have come to this conclusion.

In addition to understanding the present mood and reality in Africa, those of us who are American must particularly reckon with the situation in our country. The reality of the situation is that the U.S. government's position will not be very helpful to the liberation movements in the immediate days ahead. At best, one could describe the official American position as one of reluctant concern. Officially, the United States government would like to sweep the complex of the southern African issues under the rug, and preferably, to see them disappear forever. Pressure from Afro-Asian states in the United Nations, and actions by non-governmental organizations in the U.S., plus efforts of the liberation movements, have led to some limited results on limited policy levels. The ban on arms to South Africa, adopted in 1963, seems to have been implemented more or less faithfully. Fairly wide publicity was given to denial of shore leave to American military men on board the aircraft carrier, Franklin D. Roosevelt, in January, 1967. On the other hand, there seems to have been no public action at all taken by the United States in criticism of Portugal's war against the liberation movements in her territories in Africa. The United States has apparently implemented limited sanctions against Rhodesia, but has taken no independent position

and has essentially backed up the British line. Further, the U.S. has refused to engage in any direct confrontation with South Africa on the South West Africa issue. One must conclude that United States policy will not be essentially moved on southern African issues until there is a wide conflagration, perhaps with cold war implications. Thus, at least for the time, the U.S. will tend to accept the status quo in all of southern Africa, but with the possibility of an occasional critical speech, and with the possibility of limited action, implying disapproval of racism. There will be a tendency on the part of many people in the U.S., and in the government, to accept the "new look" which Prime Minister Vorster is attempting to sell to the world.

But it must also be remembered that the U.S. is not a monolithic state. One can make a distinction between official U.S. government policy and attitudes of many millions of American people. There are strong forces at work in the United States, entirely sympathetic to the struggle against racism in southern Africa. These forces are drawn from the labor movement, from the liberal church community, from the mainstream of people in the civil rights struggle, and from large sections of the American student movement. It is our hope that a coalition of these forces, by gaining greater understanding of what is happening in the liberation struggle in southern Africa, will put renewed pressure on the American government to develop a dynamic policy toward the freedom struggle in southern Africa.

One of the keys to understanding the American official policy as outlined above, is the size of U.S. trade with and invest-

ment in South Africa. The official U.S. position is that the U.S. "neither encourages nor discourages trade and investment in South Africa." What this in effect means is that the status quo is maintained. U.S. investment has grown from about a 140 million dollars in 1950 to almost 800 million dollars now. There are over 250 American corporations involved in South Africa and they earn about a 100 million dollars a year or a 17-21% return on investment. Also, currently, there is a favorable balance of trade between the U.S. and South Africa amounting to about 4% of the total favorable balance of trade that the U.S. enjoys with the rest of the world. As the American Committee on Africa has pointed out again and again in campaigns urging Americans to withdraw accounts from certain American banks, loans are made which are of direct assistance to the stability of the South African government. Some of the American investors rationalize that the increased investment and trade with South Africa will make inroads into the patterns of apartheid. What wishful thinking this is! American interests are really hostage to the apartheid pattern of South Africa. They help to stabilize the investment climate in South Africa. They must conform to the long standing laws for racist industrial employment in South Africa. They must accept the industrial conciliation act which denies trade union rights to Africans, and the apprenticeship system which forbids non-whites from certain positions in industry. The South African government takes great pride in quoting American businessmen who comment favorably on what South Africa is doing. This is undoubtedly one of the reasons why the South Africa Foundation is now raising a large sum of money and is planning to establish one of its major

offices in the U.S. Both South Africa and Portugal recognize the importance of winning over public opinion in the U.S. and are putting millions of dollars into their public relations campaigns to gain their objective.

To summarize, we must adjust ourselves to something like the following, particularly those of us who are outside the African continent, as we plan our strategy for the future:

1. Domination by the white minority and colonial governments in southern Africa will not be relaxed in the immediate future. Military preparation will continue to grow and police state tactics will expand.
2. Although there will be some African states which will maintain trade ties with South Africa, Rhodesia, and Portugal, on the whole, there will be continued strained relations between the bulk of independent Africa and the white minority regimes in southern Africa.
3. Internal resistance to the minority regimes will become better organized. Over a period of time, the liberation movements will grow in effectiveness.
4. A long and violent struggle will take place. There will not be one cataclysmic confrontation, but a series of outbreaks, of struggles and riots over a period of time.

In the light of these assumptions, the task for outside non-governmental organizations, such as the ACOA, can be outlined briefly as follows:

1. Of utmost importance is the support of the liberation movements in southern Africa, in the form desired by these movements,

in any way possible. Of primary importance in this connection is our own Africa Defense and Aid Fund. We are affiliated with the International Defense and Aid Fund and in many of our activities we work in conjunction with this Fund based in London. This aid should include, not only direct assistance to the organizations of the movements, helping to supply vehicles and office equipment, but also should include legal defense for those arrested, refugee assistance, etc. I leave aside the question of military assistance, in as much as most non-governmental organizations do not have funds to help materially in this way.

2. Within the U.S. we must undertake such programs as:

- a. Mounting campaigns urging American economic disengagement from South Africa. Continuing our campaign urging people and organizations to withdraw accounts from banks loaning funds to South Africa. Raising the issues at stockholders' meetings. Urging the American government to adopt a policy to stop loans going to the southern African regimes.
- b. A vigorous campaign should be mounted urging an end to American military supplies to Portugal.
- c. In the Congress legislation should be sponsored ending the American sugar quota with South Africa, and pulling American tracking stations out of South Africa.
- d. A public campaign must be launched to keep South Africa out of the next Olympic games because of racist practices. Artists and entertainers must be discouraged from going to South Africa, or to Portuguese territories, or Rhodesia.

Two final recommendations which, hopefully, will be acted

upon by the Seminar:

1. The terms of reference of the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa should be expanded to include the Portuguese territories and Rhodesia as well as South Africa. This should be a logical recommendation coming out of a Seminar which recognizes the unity of the struggle in the whole of southern Africa.
2. The Seminar should pass a resolution urging that the next General Assembly of the United Nations vigorously urges both governmental and non-governmental efforts to support fund raising campaigns for Defense and Aid around the Sharpeville date next March 21st. Co-ordinated efforts at that time could go a long ways towards making the efforts on behalf of Defense and Aid that much more effective.