

MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED BY THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS OF
SOUTH AFRICA TO THE U.N. DECOLONISATION COMMITTEE.

LUSAKA. 17 - 21 April, 1972.

Mr Chairman,
Your Excellencies,
Honourable Members of the Committee,

Twelve years after the adoption of the Declaration on Colonialism by the United Nations General Assembly, 18 million black people in the Republic of South Africa still remain under the most systematically brutal system of colonial domination.

The question of the removal of the apartheid system everyday becomes more urgent.

This is dictated to the world's peace and freedom-loving peoples by the worsening conditions of life of the oppressed people of South Africa, by the South African government's continued involvement in the suppression and colonisation of the peoples of Namibia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Angola, and by the acts of aggression committed against the peoples of independent Africa, particularly the Republics of Zambia and Tanzania.

The system of apartheid continues to exist as a base for the recolonisation of Africa and the greatest single source of tension and enemy to international peace in Africa south of the Sahara.

Inside South Africa the conditions of life of the 18 million black people under colonial, white minority domination continue to worsen.

The continuing policy of mass removals of the black people from the towns and the white-owned farms has already affected more than a million people, resulting in untold suffering.

The people are being forcibly removed from homes they have occupied for generations or decades, and are thrown out into the barren veld, without means of livelihood, into areas without health, sanitary, educational and other amenities.

Unemployment, disease and destitution among the blacks have increased sharply while the lives of the white population, the economy and profits continue to thrive. The people are getting even more impoverished through the continuation of the policy of the decentralisation of industry and the increased rate of inflation.

The system of pass laws, as a means for direct, forcible direction of African labour, is being refined with the establishment of the so-called aid centres. It is the intention of the South African government, through these measures, to make more active use of prison labour in creative

production.

The ~~importance of these~~ measures becomes clear if we consider that, according to Police Reports, ~~over half a million~~ Africans are arrested annually for ~~infringement~~ of the pass laws alone.

With the increase of the population, the pressure in school, hospital and other social amenities has also increased. Yet the white government does nothing as thousands of children are turned away at the beginning of each school-year and ready-prepared graves, waiting for the unattended sick to die, become a permanent feature of South African life.

As the oppressed people raise their voice, more insistently demanding freedom and a better life, the Vorster government launches a policy of open terror against the people and the patriots of our country.

Only recently, 13 people were sentenced to terms of imprisonment in Pietermaritzburg. As we speak here, a trial under the Terrorism and Suppression of Communism Acts for the solitary confinement, torture, imprisonment and execution of patriots, is in progress in Johannesburg.

The government continues to ban patriots and to use the system of house arrest, the latest victim of this oppressive system being the Secretary of the University Christian Movement, Stanley Ntwasa. The only crime he has committed is that he merely dared to say that apartheid is inimical to the principles and practice of Christianity.

The murder of Ahmed Timol at the hands of the Security Police on the now notorious 10th Floor of John Vorster Square Police Headquarters, is still fresh in our minds. The brutality of the police has become so openly cynical that South Africa's judges were compelled to issue an injunction forbidding the police from interrogating Essop Mohamed using illegal methods, to torture him or in any way to use force to extract information from him.

The judges were also compelled to subpoena doctors and nurses to give evidence about Mohamed's condition when the police brought him into the Johannesburg General Hospital.

Late last year, in the midst of a blaze of publicity, the police carried out dawn raids on 140 people, homes and offices and arrested scores of suspects.

That this was continuation of the policy of open terrorism against all who dissent from apartheid, in order to strike fear in their hearts, is shown by the fact that the police were able to bring charges against only a handful of those raided and detained, despite the very elastic definitions of terrorism and communism in South Africa's legal system.

The apartheid system of the super-exploitation of the black people and open police and military repression, continues to extend beyond the

borders of South Africa.

Only recently, the South African Police and military forces have been killing the workers and people of Namibia, following the strike there for the establishment of a free, non-discriminatory labour market, against the anti-black and exploitative contract labour system.

South Africa's para-military forces on Namibia's Caprivi Strip have been strengthened by the addition of black units.

South Africa continues to maintain her military presence in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Angola as well. Only recently a South African naval helicopter crashed in Luanda, Angola. This year, Dr Agostinho Neto, president of the MPLA confirmed that South African forces are operating against the patriotic forces in Angola.

Simultaneously South Africa continues to strengthen her economic foothold in these countries. South Africa now has more investments in Zimbabwe than Britain. That Zimbabwe is increasingly becoming an economic appendage of South Africa is shown by the fact that in consequence of South Africa's devaluation of the Rand last year, prices of South African goods have increased not only in South Africa, but also on the Zimbabwe market.

This year the South African government published its agreements with the colonial administration of Angola for the exploitation of the water resources of the Kunene River.

To emphasise the community of interests between the South African white minority regime and the Portuguese colonialists, this year's Rand Easter Show, Southern Africa's most important Trade Fair, at which traditionally all the imperialist countries and other countries within the world imperialist economic system exhibit, was opened by the Colonial Governor of Mozambique, dos Santos.

Thus South Africa is further activising her role as the single most important bulwark against the liberation of the peoples of Southern Africa from colonial domination, and is increasing her rape of the human and material resources of the peoples of Southern Africa.

She not only threatens independent Africa, particularly Zambia and Tanzania, but also engages in actual violation of their boundaries and national sovereignty, as Vorster himself admitted only last October in the case of Zambia.

In December last year, South Africa also announced that she had supplied Malawi with military materiel. As the government of the Republic of Tanzania correctly pointed out at the time, the explanation given that this was merely for the use of the Malawi armed forces, was but a flimsy cover. What Vorster was doing was to strengthen her military capabilities in Malawi, with a view to launching attacks on Tanzania, Zambia and other

African countries, whenever she saw fit. The recent dastardly attack on Tanzania by the Portuguese Air Force in Mozambique is yet another example of the policy of terror against independent Africa.

The South African government continues its aggressive military preparations. She is actively engaged in expanding her naval forces by the addition of French-built submarines, British-built naval aircraft and corvettes, reportedly to be built in Spanish shipyards.

France has sold South Africa licences to build Mirage aircraft. South Africa's armaments industry continues to expand.

South Africa's military training programmes are being further improved and changes at various levels of the military command have been made, with a view to increasing the readiness and efficacy of the colonial army of occupation.

The recently announced reinforcement of the white para-military units by the addition of black policemen is intended to raise the strength of the South African armed forces and to use the black people as front-line defenders and perpetrators of white minority domination in South and Southern Africa.

While the rulers of apartheid South Africa continue to preach and extol the virtues of peace and dialogue, claiming U.N. Secretary General Waldheim's visit to South Africa as vindication of their stand, and exchanging Presidential visits with Malawi, in keeping with the Hitlerite maxim, they are at the same time preparing for war, for the continued oppression of the black people of South Africa, for the continued colonisation of the peoples of Namibia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Angola and for the re-colonisation of Africa.

The main features of the apartheid system and the main directions of its development in pursuance of its goals in Southern Africa and Africa are known to this Committee and to the peoples of the world.

Since the days, nearly half-a-century ago, when the South African question was brought to the attention of the world's peoples by the leaders of our organisation at the Congress against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism in Brussels in 1927, in the presence of such distinguished participants as Mme Sun-Yat-Sen, wife of the founder of modern China, India's Jawaharlal Nehru and Lamine Senghor, the world's peoples have gone a long way in contributing their share towards the destruction of the pernicious system of white domination that holds sway in our country.

Having travelled so far, from the time in the history of the UNO, when the South African question was raised by the Indian delegation in 1946, it is the considered view of our organisation that we need to review the ground covered with a view to formulating and adopting such measures as may

be necessitated by the achievements of the world's anti-apartheid forces to date, by the current situation and by future developments.

The United Nations, through its various organs, has branded apartheid as a violation of the Charter of Human Rights. It has therefore called for the abandonment of the policy. It has called for the imposition of economic and cultural sanctions and an arms embargo against apartheid South Africa. It has called for the release of political prisoners and instituted a fund to aid the victims of apartheid.

The response of the South African regime has been two-fold. In the first instance, it has intensified, and refined the oppressive, exploitative and fascist system of apartheid. It has also expanded and improved its forces and means for the physical destruction of the South African movement for national liberation. This is in response to its increasing recognition that not only is apartheid hated by freedom-loving mankind, but also that the determination of the oppressed majority to overthrow the system has increased in spite and because of the intensified brutality in suppressing the liberation movement.

The white minority has recognised its fundamental weakness, despite continuing support from the imperialist countries, including the United States, Britain, France, West Germany and Japan.

Secondly, therefore, in order to postpone its inevitable demise, the Vorster government has introduced some reforms calculated to delude the world as well as the oppressed people of South Africa themselves, into believing that a revolutionary change is not necessary.

The Bantustan policy, the introduction of the so-called multi-national sports meetings, the declaration by a government minister that the government are committed to a policy of equal pay for equal work for the Coloured (mulatto) population, the re-classification of some jobs so that they can be lawfully done by black workers, are all examples of this reform programme.

The racist government of South Africa is supported in this policy by the imperialist countries and the big international companies.

The aim is not to work for the achievement of the fundamental prerequisite of a peaceful South Africa, the transfer of power to the black majority. It is rather to extend the life span of apartheid, but in the new conditions in which there is an intensified attack on apartheid South Africa, from both within and without.

It has become clear to the Vorster government and its supporters that in order to save the system, the old responses are no longer enough. The standing of the system is weakened to such an extent that in order for it to survive, it has to appear to be giving in to the demands of the oppressed majority and the world anti-racist movement.

In this manner the racists hope that they will be able to defuse the explosive situation in the country, build up a social group among the black people which will have a stake in the continuation of apartheid and thus increase the strength of the anti-democratic forces, and split and thus weaken the international movement of solidarity with the oppressed and struggling people of our country.

In such a situation, they would then be able further to refine the system, make it more impregnable and prepare the conditions for the sharper and more systematic oppression and repression of the majority of the black population.

Despite all the reforms we have mentioned, apartheid continues to constitute a crime against humanity, with the reforms being a screen which the racists have been forced to construct because of their weakness, behind which screen the racist rulers will continue to perpetrate brutally inhuman acts against the majority of the people.

Apartheid is a policy for the systematic starvation and impoverishment of millions of people on the basis of the colour of their skin and their race. It is a policy for the genocidal destruction of thousands of the black aged, infirm and "unemployable". It is a policy for the transformation of the black millions of our country into a people that is mentally and spiritually retarded and sub-normal. It is a policy for the brutalisation of the majority whom the racists deliberately put into such conditions of life that murder, rape, drunkenness and drug addiction become normal features of their lives. The policy constitutes a crime against humanity.

The stage has been reached when the UNO must classify the apartheid system as such.

In conditions in which the moral, political and economic bankruptcy of apartheid and the world's hostility to it have been more than amply demonstrated, and the racists weakened, instead of change, we find that they resort to manoeuvre and subterfuge in order to entrench their positions and continue the old policy in new guises.

As a crime against humanity, apartheid poses for mankind the obligation that the system must be destroyed, as the embryonic United Nations destroyed Hitler Nazism during the Second World War.

This is the main and immediate question that faces the peoples who are united in their hatred of racism and are united in their dedication to the flowering of man's creative ability and moral upliftment in conditions of freedom, liberty and friendship among the peoples.

The oppressed people themselves must of necessity remain the main and decisive force for the destruction of apartheid. It has therefore become incumbent on all those who condemn apartheid and racism to give active support to those who bear the brunt of the struggle against apartheid,

the oppressed people of our country who are led by their national movement, the African National Congress, struggling not for incidental improvements of the system so as to save it, but for its complete destruction.

In this respect we should like to place on record our appreciation of the concrete material support we have received from a number of African countries, including Zambia and Tanzania, from the socialist countries, particularly the Soviet Union, from the Republic of India and other peace and freedom-loving countries of Asia and Latin America.

We should also like to thank the Scandinavian countries and such organisations as the World Council of Churches and the United Nations itself, albeit this assistance is directed towards humanitarian purposes and towards aiding the victims of apartheid.

We need to point out here that though we deeply appreciate aid given for assisting the victims of apartheid, the order of the day is the question of the destruction of the system of apartheid which spawns these victims.

The recognition of apartheid as a crime against humanity must lead towards the recognition of the legitimacy of the struggle of the oppressed people of our country, using such means and methods as they may deem fit, and the recognition of their national movement, the African National Congress, united by bonds of common struggle and working side by side with other patriotic forces inside our country, as the genuine representative of the oppressed majority of our country.

In this regard, we would here like to state our support for the decision of this Committee to send a mission to Guinea Bissau and the reported public recognition of our brother organisation, the PAIGC, by this Committee, as the sole, genuine representative of the people of Guinea Bissau.

We would also like to suggest, Mr Chairman, that the UN set up such machinery or extend the mandate of the existing machinery, such that a way is established in which there can be quick and regular consultation between the UN and the South African liberation movement to discuss and resolve the many questions that necessarily arise in the course of the pursuit of our common goal of ridding our country, Africa and humanity of the cancer of extreme racist domination systematically applied.

In conditions in which the main strategic goal of the world's movement of solidarity with the struggling people of South Africa should be: "For the destruction of apartheid - all support to the liberation movement", we are convinced that this Committee and through it, the whole of the UN, will not fail to exert its maximum efforts:-

1. For the denunciation of apartheid as a crime against humanity;
2. For the rendering of maximum support to the liberation movement to continue the multi-sided struggle inside South Africa;
3. For the expulsion of apartheid South Africa from the UN;
4. For the complete isolation of the South African racists.

We thank the Committee for giving us the opportunity to appear before it and wish you, Mr Chairman, Your Excellencies and Honourable Members of the Committee, success in your work.

Thank you.

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