

**EXTRACT FROM STATEMENT BY DR. HORACE MANN BOND
BEFORE THE UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE
POLICIES OF APARTHEID OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

June 6, 1963

... In 1839, a ship-load of African slaves bound for a Cuban port revolted while at sea just east of Havana. The owners of the ship were left alive and ordered to steer eastward, toward the African coast. They did so by day; but by night, altered the vessel's course to the West.

The result was, that weeks later, the Africans found themselves on a strange coast - they knew not where - but certainly, not Africa; it was the coast of Long Island. The ship was seized by an American Naval patrol vessel, and the Africans taken to New Haven, Connecticut, and charged with high crimes including murder and piracy on the high seas.

The then-current president, Van Buren, was pro-slavery; and wished to return the Africans to slavery in Cuba. The New England abolitionists had different ideas; employing the venerable ex-president, John Quincy Adams, as chief counsel, they took the case to the United States Supreme Court, where, in 1842, the Africans were absolved of the crimes charged, and ordered to be set free.

The men who had rallied to the cause of the beleaguered Africans, now considered what should be done for them. It had been discovered, that they came from Sierra Leone; it was decided, to give such training as might be possible to the older members of the party; to send the younger ones to schools in America; and to repatriate the entire party. Beyond this, the interest aroused suggested the advisability of establishing a school in the African homeland; and out of this interest came the American Missionary Association, that established the school in Sierra Leone, Albert Academy, that was later taken over by another missionary society - the United Brethren - and that has been the secondary school where so many of the men who forged independence for Sierra Leone, received their secondary education.

The first Congregationalist mission body, the American Board, had already established a "mission to the Zulus", in the place that came to be known as Groutville. The American Missionary Association - committed to what was called "radical and absolute abolitionism" - aided this school, and also helped establish Adams College, where Chief Lutuli served for fifteen years as Director of Teacher Training.

The point to this story, is that Ntaba Lutuli, a grandfather of Albert Lutuli, was one of the first converts made by the American Congregationalist missionary,

Aldin Grout; and the grandfather, and his father, Martin, and the son, Albert, were all exposed to the ministrations of men who were exponents of the radical, New England American, idea of absolute human equality. Not all missionaries have been bred in the theory; Lutuli himself tells the amusing story of a brief stay he and his brother had on the farm of another missionary, where there was no school, and Chief Lutuli was assigned to the care of the mules on the farm. "It was my mother", he writes, "who rescued me from my intimacy with mules. She decided that I needed education and sent me back home to Groutville to get it."

There is more to the story of the enormous influence of an idea, where the channels through which ideas may flow, are kept open.

In the United States, the American Missionary Association devoted itself to opposing caste; and slavery; and to the establishment of schools and colleges where these principles were preached and practised. They helped support Oberlin College, in Ohio, the first institution in the United States to provide co-education for women - and for Negroes. They had the temerity to try to establish a college - Berea - that was inter-racial, in the slave state of Kentucky; the founder, John G. Fee, was mobbed seven times, but returned each time to this task.

After the Civil War and the Emancipation of the slaves, the American Missionary Association planted numerous schools in the former slave states; with them were other denominations, with a largely New England basis; and sharing with the Congregationalists this peculiarly "radical" theory of absolute equalitarianism, and opposition to segregation.

There are two notable connections, of these institutions, to our petition.

One was, that these missionary schools, largely staffed by New England white persons who were devoted to the idea of absolute human equalitarianism, became the places where the leadership of the American Negro people in their struggle for equality was trained. William Edward Burghardt DuBois attended Fisk University; now in his ninety-sixth year, he wrote to his Alma Mater last month, in commemorating the seventy-fifth anniversary of his graduation from that institution in 1888, to recall the gratitude he bore to the New England white men and women who had taught him at Fisk University, through their adherence to an uncompromising belief in absolute human equality; and the faith in his own capacities, and that of his people, with which they had endowed him.

Besides DuBois, the name is legion, of the American Negroes similarly taught and inspired, and set upon the way to fighting for the freedom of their people. And the legion includes the host of names, unknown to public acclaim and recognition, who taught in the schools in the South that were segregated; but who carried with them the impulse and love of freedom that they had been given, and that they passed on to another generation. This is one of the striking parallels, between the South African, and American, racial situation; that a Lutuli, a

DuBois, a Walter White, a James Weldon Johnson, should have come out of the intellectual loins of what was a small sect-like denomination in the United States, that conveyed to Zululand, as to Tennessee and Georgia, the ineradicable notion of absolute human equality.

There is another connection. Because of its association with the *Amistad* case, the American Missionary Association made concern for Africa one of its prime goals. In the schools they established, they earnestly recruited teachers and missionaries for their few African missions. When DuBois was a student at Fisk University, the appeals for Africa were frequent; I have no doubt but that this interest in the University led, later, to his pioneer Pan-African endeavors. Other mission colleges, sponsored by other denominations, where Negro students predominated, similarly cultivated, in their students, an interest in Africa. It is little known, but verifiable, that the American Negro interest developed had generally a profound influence on the earliest history of nationalism in Africa. John Chilembwe, who attempted a revolution that was suppressed in Nyasaland in 1915, was brought to this country, educated, returned, and later supported, by American Negro Baptists. A Negro missionary, Shepherd, educated at Hampton Institute in Virginia, and in the Stillman Institute in Alabama, went as a missionary to the Congo in 1891; he was expelled in 1911 after being arrested on the charge of "slandering" his royal Majesty, King Leopold; Shepherd had published some of the truth about the rubber situation in the Congo. Indeed, American Negro missionaries became so suspect, that the colonial governments generally had unwritten agreements with the big American missionary foundations, after 1910, to discontinue employing American Negroes as missionaries.

This influence was notable in South Africa. A few Zulus were sent to Oberlin College, and to Howard University, from the Groutville and Adams college stations, as early as 1872. But a great influx of South African students began in 1895, that was continued up to 1914, and the subsequent adoption of measures, by the South African government, making it extremely difficult for African students to come to the United States.

It was in 1893 that the redoubtable Henry McNeil Turner, a Bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, visited South Africa in pursuance of the conviction that American Negroes could best fulfill their destiny by "returning" to Africa. The church itself received its name in 1793, in Philadelphia, when the term "African" was an opposite description for people who were indeed recently from Africa; and took the name for themselves, and for their institutions, as easily as migrant Germans in America named their place of residence "Germantown", and the Irish named their townships "Londonderry" and "Cork" and "Dublin", and the Welsh called their new homes "Bryn Mawr" and "Tredryffin".

In 1895, Bishop Turner created, for his American Church, a new, South African diocese. Immediately, he began to arrange for South African youth to come to this country for an education. They came by the dozen; no less than 57 were enrolled

at Wilberforce University, in Ohio, between 1895 and 1915; some 12 at Tuskegee Institute, in Alabama, where Booker T. Washington welcomed them; no less than 27 at Lincoln University, in Pennsylvania, principally sent by a wise old pastor, Mzimba, who headed the separatist Presbyterian Church of Africa, and wanted to prepare his young men for the new day he thought was dawning - in 1900 - with the Boers defeated, and every prospect bright for an enlarged life for African youth. These students attended Howard University, and Fisk University; Bishop Turner even prevailed upon some of his friends in the Negro State colleges to give free bursaries to his South African scholars.

They returned, to find the bright hopes of the beginning of the century dashed on the iron rocks of growing white Nationalism and Apartheid. But let it be noted, in tribute to a great idea, and its power, that many of the leaders of black people today in South Africa, and in the Rhodesias, are the children and grandchildren of African students educated in America, largely in American Negro colleges. They were no less able, than Dr. Banda - brought first to this country by Bishop Vernon, of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, who discovered him in Johannesburg forty-five years ago; or, than Dr. Aggrey, brought to this country in 1898 by another African Methodist Episcopal Church Bishop, and sent to the Livingstone College, of the same denomination; nor Governor-General Azikiwe, of Nigeria, nor President Nkrumah, of Ghana, both educated at the predominantly Negro institution, Lincoln University.

The South Africans, I say, were no less able men; the tragedy of their apparent lack of fulfilment, after their American education, was the tragedy of a system that defeated the highest aspirations, and upward mobility, of finely-trained Africans whom Verwoerd calls "misfits", as indeed they would be, in the Afrikaner circumstances.

But it is impossible to destroy, permanently, a noble idea; once implanted, it lives as long as the men who carry it live; and, afterward, it lives in the children they father, and the students they teach. This is the glory of the educational process; this, also, is the shame of a system, as in contemporary South Africa, which exists to suppress the noblest of all human ideas; that of freedom, dignity, and worth, for the human race....