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PREFACE

The anti-apartheid movement, now in its last phase, is gathering momentum and the world at large is fervently waiting for the dawn of freedom over Southern Africa and for its multi-racial peoples to have their own tryst with destiny. Even so, the Pretoria regime is preparing itself for a last-ditch stand supported with arms and funds from a few, but powerful, friends on both sides of the Atlantic.

In this context, there is a concerted move everywhere to sensitise public opinion and to express solidarity with the freedom fighters of Southern Africa, whose leaders are spending nightmarish life in many prisons that dot the map of that region. In New Delhi, this month are scheduled an International Conference of Youth against Apartheid organised by the Indian Youth Congress and a meeting of Heads of Governments concerned and connected with the AFRICA Fund, of which Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is the Chairman.

This modest publication consists of some of the writings and texts of lectures by E.S. Reddy, the distinguished crusader against apartheid and it provides a rich insight into the manifold aspects of the freedom struggle in South Africa.

Reddy, as an international civil servant with the UN for over three decades, has been intimately connected with the globalising of the South African problem through his writings, initiatives and actions. He has been the Principal Secretary of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid and later the Head of the UN Centre against Apartheid. As such, he has had immense opportunities to interact with South African and other world leaders and also help and promote the freedom struggle with the responsibilities entrusted to him. More significant is his personal involvement with Africa as a whole before he joined the UN and now after his retirement, as can be noticed in the following pages.

This book has been compiled and published in the hope that it will act both as a catalyst on the reader's mind and serve as a mini reference book for facts, figures, dates and events of South African history. This can be helpful for public debate till such a time, when the very word apartheid becomes another extinct monster of White racist minds and gets dropped from the civilised world's lexicon.

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WHERE FREEDOM IS TREASON¹

Thirty years ago, in December 1956, one hundred and fifty-six leaders and activists of the freedom movement in South Africa were arrested in pre-dawn raids all over the country and charged with high treason, an offence punishable by death.

The charge was based on the "Freedom Charter" - adopted by a multi-racial "Congress of the People" in 1955 - which proclaimed that "South Africa belongs to all those who live in it, Black and White" and called for a democratic state, based on the will of the people and ensuring equal rights for all the people, without distinction of colour, race or belief.

The prosecution tried to prove that "the holding of the Congress of the People and the adoption of the Freedom Charter are steps in the direction of the establishment of a Communist State and the necessary prelude to the revolution."

If the apartheid regime hoped to intimidate, discredit and disrupt the liberation movement through this mass trial, it failed miserably.

In fact, it brought together leaders and militants of all racial origins and of varied ideologies and virtually organised a convention in which they could become better acquainted, discuss the strategy of the struggle and attain greater unity.

The great majority of the accused were, as the regime well knew, not affiliated to the Communist movement. They included the late Chief Albert Lutuli, who was to receive the Nobel Peace Prize; the late Dr. Z.K. Matthews, the prominent educator; Oliver Tambo, the present President of the African National Congress; Nelson Mandela, the Volunteer-in-Chief of the 1952 non-violent Defiance Campaign; the late Dr. G.M. "Monty" Naicker, the Gandhian leader of the Natal Indian Congress; Helen Joseph, the White trade unionist and women's leader; and Archie Gumede, now leader of the United Democratic Front.

They also included a number of Communists like Moses Kotane, the ANC delegate to the Asian-African Conference in Bandung; Joe Slovo, now chairman of the South African Communist Party; the late Dr. Yusuf Dadoo, leader of the South African Indian Congress; and Alex La Guma, journalist and writer. Moosa Moolla, now ANC representative in India, was one of the accused.

The long trial contributed immensely to the building of a multi-racial national liberation movement. It also led to closer cooperation between African

¹ Published in *Mainstream*, New Delhi, December 16, 1986

nationalists, pacifists and Communists.

The trial itself proved abortive. In 1958, after a protracted preparatory examination, the prosecution was obliged to drop charges against 65 of the accused, including Chief Lutuli and Oliver Tambo. The indictment against 61 others was quashed in 1959. After listening to hundreds of witnesses and studying tens of thousands of pages of "evidence" in the marathon trial, Justice Rumpff acquitted the remaining 30 accused in March, 1961. He declared that the prosecution had failed to prove that ANC advocated violence or that it had become a Communist organisation or had been infiltrated by Communists.

Meanwhile, the Sharpeville massacre of March, 1960 had outraged world opinion and ANC's call for a boycott of South Africa found ready response among newly-independent States. ANC itself was banned in April 1960 and was forced to go underground.

Soon after the end of the treason trial, Nelson Mandela led a campaign in May, 1961, against the move to proclaim a White racist republic and for a national convention of representatives of all the people of the country. When that was put down with the mobilisation of the armed forces and massive repression, leaders of ANC took the fateful decision to prepare for an armed struggle and to build a multi-racial military wing - *Umkhonto we Sizwe* - with the cooperation of the Communist Party. Nelson Mandela became the leader of *Umkhonto*, which made its appearance twenty-five years ago on Heroes Day, December 16, 1961, with simultaneous acts of sabotage in Johannesburg, Durban and Port Elizabeth. Leaflets appeared in all major cities proclaiming that *Umkhonto* had been established, since government violence necessitated a new road for liberation. They added:

“We hope that we will bring the government and its supporters to their senses before it is too late, so that the government and its policies can be changed before matters reach the desperate stage of civil war.”

The apartheid regime learnt nothing from the treason trial or its aftermath and continued to rely on violence against the entire freedom movement which it persisted in branding as Communist. Since June this year, when it decided to reject the Commonwealth efforts for a negotiated solution, it launched an extensive propaganda campaign that it cannot negotiate with ANC as it is Communist and terrorist. It has found little support for its propaganda except among the ultra-conservative cold warriors in the United States, but it is among them that it has sought dependable allies for many years.

When it came to power in 1948, the apartheid regime was unpopular in the West because of the pro-Nazi antecedents of its leaders, the rabid racism of its election campaign and its hostility to English-speaking capitalists. It tried to join the Western alliance by taking advantage of the Cold War and the McCarthyism in

the United States and by participating in the Berlin airlift and the Korean War.

It enacted the Suppression of Communism Act in 1950, with an eye on American opinion, not only to outlaw the Communist Party but to silence all leaders of the freedom movement, including opponents of the Communist ideology. The result was to bring the victims of repression closer. African leaders, who disagreed with the Communist ideology, were persuaded to work with the Communists and were impressed by the diligence and sacrifice of many Communists. The equivocation of the West as regards international action against apartheid, and the constant support of the Communist States, increased sympathy toward Communism.

If the apartheid regime is incapable of learning from experience, will it be able to persuade the United States to be equally short-sighted?

The "Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act", enacted by the United States Congress in September, not only imposes selective sanctions against South Africa but calls for active American intervention to ensure that the liberation movements break any ties with the South African Communist Party. The amendments which the conservative Senators managed to insert in the law will only divert attention from the crimes of the apartheid regime. They may lead the United States to promote groups like Chief Gatsha Buthelezi's *Inkatha* against ANC and its allies, giving solace to the regime for which freedom itself is treason.

The task of the international community is to exert concerted pressure to bring the apartheid regime to its senses and promote a transition to a democratic society. It cannot afford to be diverted from that urgent task.

UNITED NATIONS AND APARTHEID: FORTY YEARS²

Four decades of discussion and action on the problem of racism in South Africa provide perhaps the best illustration of the limitations as well as the potentialities of the United Nations for the promotion of freedom and human rights in the world. They are also indicative of the response of the community of nations to the aspirations of the African continent — above all, for the *dignity* of the African person — which has emerged from centuries of humiliation and oppression.

The United Nations has been seized with the problem since the first General Assembly session in 1946, when India complained of discrimination against people of Indian origin in the Union of South Africa, and particularly since 1952 when in the wake of the non-violent defiance campaign in South Africa, Asian and African states requested UN consideration of the “question of race conflict resulting from the policies of apartheid.” Since then, the matter has been discussed in many organs of the United Nations and its specialised agencies, resulting in a record number of debates, reports and resolutions.

Apartheid is far from abolished. Indeed, there has been no diminution of racist oppression, but growing tension and polarisation in South Africa, resulting from the stubborn determination of the authorities to consolidate and perpetuate white domination; the forcible removal and resettlement of 3.5 million Africans, Coloureds, and Indians; and the enactment of draconian repressive laws. Massacres of peaceful demonstrators at Sharpeville in 1960, Soweto in 1976, and Uitenhage in 1985 have shocked the world. The freedom movement in the country, which inspired the world by its non-violent resistance against a ruthless regime and was honoured by the award of two Nobel Peace Prizes in a generation - to the late Chief Albert J. Lutuli in 1961 and Bishop Desmond Tutu in 1984 - was reluctantly obliged to resort to armed struggle.

Moreover, South Africa has been engaged in a colonial war in Namibia since 1966 when the United Nations terminated Pretoria’s mandate over that territory. It has committed aggression, terrorism and subversion against neighbouring independent African states, causing enormous human and material losses and undermining the hopes of the newly independent countries for economic and social development.

White Domination

² Published in *Africa Report*, New York, September-October 1985 and in *Mainstream*, New Delhi, annual number 1985.

It has built up a powerful military machine, increasing its military budget a hundred-fold since 1960 and acquiring nuclear capability. It seeks not only to maintain white domination in most of the country by creating caricatures of independent states for the African majority, but also to be recognised as the dominant power in the region.

The achievements of the United Nations in dealing with the problem are less tangible. Apartheid is now universally condemned, but there has not been sufficient international pressure even to persuade the regime to initiate discussions with the genuine leaders of the black majority on transition to a non-racial system. But it would be short-sighted to conclude that the United Nations has failed.

The United Nations has been a significant factor in ensuring that the balance of forces steadily turned against the racist regime and in favour of the movement for freedom and in enabling the latter to secure the widest international support from governments and organisations. It has helped avert a bloody racial conflict which would have shattered all hopes for a non-racial society in South Africa.

Despite its military power, the Pretoria regime has been unable to suppress the resistance of the black majority or enforce its master plan for perpetual white domination. It has been forced to recognise the need for a change of course, although it resorts to manoeuvres to preserve the essence of white domination. It is now confronted with a grave political and economic crisis, while the resistance is stronger and more determined than ever.

There is a grave danger that in its desperation the regime may precipitate a catastrophic conflict. But this crisis also represents an opportunity and a challenge to the United Nations which has helped over the decades to develop an international consensus for the elimination of apartheid.

An Affirmation of International Concern

The United Nations is an organisation of sovereign states, created primarily to deal with disputes and conflicts among states and maintain international peace and security. Only in the case of threats to peace, breaches of peace and acts of aggression is the Security Council authorised to decide on coercive measures, with the concurrence of its five permanent members, and make them binding on all member-states.

Although born at the end of a ghastly world war amid hopes for a new world order and a desire to eliminate the causes of war, the Organisation could only promote economic and social development, freedom and human rights through the slow and laborious process of the development of norms of international law and cooperation. The principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states has remained almost sacrosanct.

South Africa was a founding member of the United Nations and its Prime Minister, Jan Christian Smuts, played a significant role in drafting the UN Charter. It was influential in the British Commonwealth and had developed extensive economic and other relations with Britain and the U.S., as well as with other colonial powers in Africa. Africa, on the other hand, was mostly under colonial rule and had little influence within the international community.

The National Party, which came to power in South Africa in 1948 with apartheid as its policy, tried to overcome its unpopularity in the West by participating in the Berlin airlift in 1948 and the Korean War in 1950. It was invited to discussions on military, economic and other cooperation in Africa and the Middle East, and signed the Simonstown military agreements with Britain in 1955. It could thus count on the Western states as dependable allies.

When India's complaint against South Africa was brought up in the United Nations in 1946, many countries supported the South African contention that the question should be referred to the International Court of Justice. Even in 1952, a number of countries were wary of specific criticism or condemnation of the South African government and preferred a general declaration against racial discrimination.

Jurisdiction of the UN

For many years, therefore, the main task was to affirm the jurisdiction of the United Nations to consider the situation in South Africa as a political problem of international concern rather than one of many human rights violations in the world, and to develop an international consensus against apartheid. While Asian and African states argued that the situation was bound to lead to internal conflict and international friction, they asked for no more than universal condemnation of apartheid and diplomatic pressure by the Western states on the South African government. The annual discussions in the United Nations, however, played an important role in promoting sympathy and support for the freedom movement in South Africa.

The Sharpeville massacre of 1960, followed by a nation-wide upsurge of the black people and massive repression by the regime - including the outlawing of African liberation movements, the declaration of a state of emergency, and the detention of thousands of people - aroused world opinion and heralded a new stage in the UN deliberations. For the first time, the situation was considered by the Security Council as one likely to cause international friction. With the admission of many African states to the UN, there was pressure for a move from appeals and condemnations to concrete measures against the South African government.

A turning point was General Assembly Resolution 1761 of November 6, 1962, sponsored by the African states, which urged member states to impose economic

and other sanctions against South Africa and established a Special Committee (now the Special Committee against Apartheid) to keep the situation under constant review.

Many African, Non-aligned and Socialist states had already imposed diplomatic measures against South Africa, which was obliged to leave the Commonwealth in 1961. Since then, their main role has been to provide material assistance to the liberation movements, to promote wider support to the liberation struggle and, above all, to press for action by the Western states and other main trading partners of South Africa.

Threat to International Peace

The debates in the United Nations became increasingly focused on demands that the Western powers and Japan recognise the situation as a threat to international peace and support universal sanctions against South Africa. Behind the assertions that those states were responsible for the perpetuation of apartheid through their “business as usual” relationship with the racist regime was recognition that only they could exert sufficient economic and other pressures to oblige the Pretoria government to seek a peaceful solution and thereby avert immense suffering.

At the same time, the UN has been actively engaged in promoting a variety of measures to develop international norms against apartheid, to isolate the authorities in South Africa, and to assist the victims of apartheid and their liberation movements. It has done this not only through resolutions, declarations and diplomatic measures, but also by efforts to reach public opinion and encourage action by public organisations all over the world. In fact, on no other issue has the UN been as activist and its initiatives on apartheid have created many precedents for the functioning of the organisation. Its efforts have been supplemented by those of many of its specialised agencies.

The failure to reach agreement on mandatory economic sanctions, primarily because of the opposition of the three Western permanent members of the Security Council, has tended to obscure progress in other areas and undermine the image of the UN. While sanctions are the strongest measures under the UN Charter, it should be recognised that they cannot by themselves solve the situation. Sanctions should rather be seen in the context of other means to lend encouragement and support to the struggle in South Africa.

Progress in International Action

In a series of unanimous resolutions, the UN has condemned apartheid as a crime and recognised that the elimination of apartheid is of vital concern to the international community; called for the release of Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners and for an end to repression; and recognised the legitimacy of the struggle of the oppressed majority for its inalienable rights. It has denounced

the so-called “independence” of bantustans and no state has recognised those entities, thus, undermining Pretoria’s plans to deprive the African majority of its citizenship and create a *fait accompli*. Both the General Assembly and the Security Council have declared the 1984 constitution, which excludes the African majority, invalid.

The United Nations has defined its objectives as the total elimination of apartheid and the establishment of a non-racial democratic society in an unfragmented South Africa in which all its people would enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms, irrespective of race, colour, sex or creed. It has called for consultations among the genuine representatives of all South Africans and offered appropriate assistance toward that end. In resolutions adopted by large majorities, it has recognised the right of the liberation movements to resort to armed struggle, declaring that “freedom fighters” are entitled to prisoner-of-war status.

The South African government has been excluded from the General Assembly since 1974 when its delegation’s credentials were rejected. It is also excluded from other UN organs and conferences, as well as from most specialised agencies and inter-governmental organisations. Only about a score of the 157 members of the United Nations maintain diplomatic missions in South Africa.

On the other hand, the liberation movements of South Africa were granted Observer status by UN organs in 1974 and recognised by the General Assembly in 1975 as the authentic representatives of the overwhelming majority of the people of the country. They attend UN meetings and other international conferences, and exercise considerable influence on decisions concerning South Africa.

The United Nations and its specialised agencies have developed extensive information programmes to inform public opinion of the inhumanity of apartheid and to promote support for the struggle against apartheid. The persistent efforts of African and other states in the UN have led to some progress even on sanctions and related measures.

The Security Council called for an arms embargo against South Africa in a non-binding resolution in 1963. In the aftermath of the Soweto massacre, the death in detention of Steve Biko, and the banning of black consciousness organisations, it decided unanimously on a mandatory arms embargo.

Many Types of Boycotts

Several smaller Western countries began taking action to prohibit loans and new investment in South Africa. Sweden has also banned the transfer of technology to South Africa. Most of the oil-exporting countries, including Norway, have prohibited the supply of oil to South Africa. Beginning with the Nordic states in 1966, some Western countries began to support sanctions in principle and they now

constitute a large majority of the Western and other states.

The non-economic measures — especially the sports and cultural boycotts — have been effective in demonstrating abhorrence of apartheid. They have involved millions of people in many countries and have helped to educate public opinion.

Equally important is assistance to the victims of apartheid and their liberation movements. The United Nations has set up funds and programmes for this purpose and has constantly encouraged bilateral and multilateral assistance through other appropriate channels.

Set up in 1965 to assist political prisoners and their families, the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa now receives nearly \$2 million a year in voluntary contributions from governments. The United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa, which provides scholarships for higher education abroad, receives over \$3 million a year. Both programmes have unanimous support in the General Assembly. Assistance programmes have been established by the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNESCO, the International Labour Organisation and other agencies.

Assistance by governments, through national programmes and non-governmental agencies and direct grants to liberation movements, encouraged by the UN, is even larger in scope, as is assistance to the African frontline states which have suffered grievously because of their support for the liberation of South Africa and Namibia. No freedom movement has ever received moral and material assistance from so many governments and organisations all over the world.

Unanimity has been achieved at three levels: the condemnation of apartheid, the arms embargo and humanitarian assistance to the victims of apartheid. Overwhelming support, including that of a majority of Western countries, has been given to the principle of sanctions against the apartheid regime and on non-military assistance to liberation movements. Lastly, a number of states — although not the Western powers — have endorsed the legitimacy of armed struggle by the liberation movements and supported assistance to that struggle.

Growing Crisis

International action, however, has proved far from adequate in dealing with the determination of the South African regime to defend and consolidate white domination. Utilising its control over the economic and other resources of the country and the continued cooperation of various foreign interests, it has been able to build up its military repressive apparatus and resist demands for the abandonment of apartheid.

The international community, moreover, missed opportunities to exert decisive

influence when the South African regime was confronted with serious problems with the independence of Mozambique and Angola in 1975, the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980 and the resurgence of resistance by the black majority.

Hopes that the mandatory arms embargo of 1977 would be followed by other sanctions were frustrated as the major Western powers opposed any coercive action on the grounds that they sought to persuade the Pretoria government to facilitate the independence of Zimbabwe. Expectations that the independence of Zimbabwe would help focus attention on pressure against the South African authorities to secure the independence of Namibia and the elimination of apartheid proved illusory with the espousal of the policy of "constructive engagement" by the new American administration in 1981.

This policy is essentially antithetical to the UN strategy of pressure against the minority regime, support to liberation movements and encouragement of world public opinion toward these ends. It has been a source of distress to those who had expected the United States to be more responsive to appeals for action against apartheid than the major Western European powers because of its own historical experience with racism. Instead, they see a new "American dilemma."

The U.S. has not hesitated in opposing many resolutions on apartheid. With the support of conservative governments in the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany, it has retarded progress on international pressure against the authorities in Pretoria.

The South African regime proceeded to blackmail neighbouring African states with impunity in an effort to establish its hegemony in the whole region and undermine the liberation movements. While professing readiness to abandon some apartheid measures in response to persuasion by the U.S., it imposed a new racist constitution in the hope of dividing the blacks and consolidating white supremacy.

In fact, the new constitution led to the unprecedented mobilisation of the black people against the regime, an escalation of repression and resistance, and large-scale violence. The unwillingness of the major powers to exert the strongest pressure on Pretoria appears to have increasingly persuaded blacks that their only hope is massive and violent resistance.

Explosive Situation

The regime has been unable to control the situation despite its recent imposition of a state of emergency, its show of force against the townships and its mass detentions. There is a grave danger that unless the UN can respond with a new level of international action against apartheid, the situation in South Africa will become explosive.

Fortunately, the recent developments have led to greater public support and pressure in the West for effective measures to persuade the South African regime to end repression and seek a solution by negotiations with the genuine leaders of the majority of the population.

At the 1985 General Assembly session, several Western countries joined African and other states in co-sponsoring a resolution calling for sanctions and other measures against South Africa, which obtained an overwhelming majority of votes, including a substantial majority among Western states.

More recently, after the state of emergency was proclaimed in South Africa in July, 1985, France took the initiative to convene a meeting of the Security Council to decide on a series of voluntary sanctions against South Africa. A number of Western countries — Australia, Canada, France and the Nordic countries — have announced concrete, albeit limited, measures without waiting for mandatory decisions by the Security Council.

At the same time, pressure for divestment and other measures has greatly increased in the US, reflected by the actions of a number of states and cities, as well as legislation in Congress. It is most encouraging that proposals for such action have received bipartisan support. While limited sanctions that are not universally implemented are hardly adequate, these initiatives give hope for concerted international action.

Cooperation in All Measures

The potentialities of the UN as a forum for harmonising the attitudes of states must be utilised with a sense of urgency to prevail upon the major Western powers to cooperate in all appropriate and feasible pressures on the South African regime to persuade it to end repression, release political prisoners and negotiate with the genuine representatives of the black majority on a programme for the elimination of apartheid and the establishment of a state in which all of the people will enjoy equal rights. So-called changes or reforms by that regime, imposed unilaterally or with the support of its hand-picked black leaders, are totally irrelevant.

There should be no illusions that change will come easily, even with economic sanctions. But the South African regime is highly vulnerable to pressure, especially from the United States, the United Kingdom and West Germany on which it has become dependent. It is also dependent for its economic strength on black labour. With the rising resistance of the black majority and effective international action, a negotiated solution in the interests of all the people of South Africa may come sooner rather than later. The United Nations may contribute not only to the demise of an evil system, but also to averting immense bloodshed and suffering in the process of change.

ROLE OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE AGAINST APARTHEID³

I wish to pay my tribute to the Special Committee against Apartheid – not only to express my great appreciation to this Committee, to the service of which I have devoted more than half of my adult life, but also because the crucial role played by the Special Committee since its inception in 1963 is of utmost relevance to the theme of this special session.

The Special Committee was established in 1963 but its origins may be traced to the appeal of the freedom movement of South Africa in 1958 for international support and solidarity by way of sanctions against the apartheid regime, an appeal which found a ready response in the African Peoples' Conference in Accra in December 1958, in the subsequent conferences of independent African States and in the formation of boycott movements (later re-named anti-apartheid movements) in Great Britain and other Western countries.

The gruesome massacre of Sharpeville in March, 1960, the banning of the African National Congress of South Africa and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, and the activities of the leaders who went into exile to canvas international support led, after two years of effort by African States, to the adoption of General Assembly Resolution 1761 (XVII) of November 6, 1962, calling for sanctions against South Africa and establishing the Special Committee to focus world attention constantly on the situation in South Africa.

The next day Nelson Mandela was convicted for leaving South Africa illegally to meet African Heads of State and others. He told the Court:

“South Africa is out of step with the rest of the civilised world, as is shown by the resolution adopted last night by the General Assembly of the Union Nations
.....”

He pledged to continue his struggle, sustained by the fact that “the overwhelming majority of mankind both in this country and abroad are with me.”

The essential purpose of the Special Committee was, therefore, to draw world attention to the lessons of the Sharpeville massacre, to isolate the apartheid regime and to sustain the morale of those struggling for freedom in South Africa by promoting increased support to them by governments and peoples.

³ Text of farewell statement made at the special session of the Special Committee against Apartheid on March 22, 1985.

The Western powers and many other states declined to join the Special Committee – it was the first United Nations body boycotted by the Western and other group of States – and the Committee was regarded by many as at best a totally ineffective body entrusted with a “perennial” item on the agenda.

By its refusal to become frustrated by obstacles and by its dedication to its task, the Special Committee soon earned the respect and admiration of all states and numerous public organisations and individuals.

The Special Committee, I would venture to say, became a new phenomenon in the United Nations by its emphasis on action rather than words; by recognising the need to supplement diplomatic action by mobilising world public opinion in support of the struggle for freedom in South Africa and the resolutions of the United Nations; by its close cooperation with anti-apartheid movements and other public organisations, as well as men and women of conscience; and by its constant efforts toward concerted action by all United Nations agencies, governments, inter-governmental organisations and individuals.

Working in closest co-operation with the Organisation of African Unity and the South African liberation movements recognised by it – the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress – it tried to respond to the struggle and sacrifice of every organisation or individual in South Africa genuinely opposed to apartheid, and equally to the efforts of organisations and individuals in all other nations who were moved to demonstrate by action their solidarity with the struggle in South Africa.

It resisted bureaucratic attitudes and eschewed false notions of protocol in its determined, creative and imaginative effort to build a world-wide alliance of governments and peoples in support of the struggling people of South Africa. It tried constantly to confront the conscience of the world with the moral imperatives of the situation in South Africa, not only at times of great upsurges of resistance in South Africa but also when the oppressed people were trying to recover from the wounds of brutal repression and resume their struggle. In this process, it set many precedents which had a significant influence on the functioning of the United Nations and its family of agencies.

Precedents set by Special Committee

It was after the establishment of the Special Committee that petitioners from South Africa – a Member State – were first heard by United Nations organs.

The Special Committee was the first committee, and perhaps the only United Nations body, to arrange receptions in honour of leaders of a liberation movement at the United Nations Headquarters. The first such reception was held in honour

of Oliver Tambo, Bishop Ambrose Reeves and Miriam Makeba in October 1963 and received much attention.

The Special Committee was the first committee to treat representatives of the liberation movements not as petitioners, but as honoured guests – and even to seat them on the rostrum.

It was the first committee to provide fares and subsistence allowances to assist representatives of liberation movements to attend its meetings and conferences. It was the first committee to invite papers by the leaders of liberation movements for publication by the United Nations.

The precedents set by the Special Committee were instrumental in facilitating the granting of observer status to the African liberation movements in the 1970s.

The Special Committee was the first committee which proceeded to accord recognition and respect to anti-apartheid movements and other non-governmental organisations committed to the struggle against apartheid – not only inviting them as guests to its meetings and conferences but giving them full rights of participation, arranging joint conferences and campaigns with them and, above all, consulting them constantly.

The Special Committee was also the first United Nations body to establish closest relations with the Organisation of African Unity, even before the General Assembly granted it observer status.

The Special Committee was the first committee to recognise the vital importance of disseminating information on United Nations' concerns and efforts, especially in countries where governments failed to co-operate with the United Nations.

The launching of an information effort on apartheid, as long ago as 1965, was not in accord with United Nations information policy at that time. The initiative of the Special Committee led to similar action on Namibia and decolonisation, and in fact helped change the public information policy of the United Nations, well before the New International Information Order was envisaged.

The Special Committee, I believe, led all other bodies in the production of studies and information material of all kinds.

The Special Committee was the first United Nations body to launch the concept of a “campaign” by the United Nations – by calling for an international campaign against apartheid in 1966 and subsequently, after the Lagos Conference of 1977, for an international mobilisation against apartheid.

The Special Committee has perhaps done more than any other committee to forge the link between the United Nations and “We, the Peoples” in whose name the Charter was proclaimed.

The initiatives of the Special Committee in 1963 and 1965 in promoting humanitarian assistance by governments to political prisoners in South Africa and their families were without precedent, and led to one of the most important and worthwhile operations by the United Nations. The assistance was subsequently extended to political prisoners and their families in Namibia and Southern Rhodesia, and other humanitarian funds came into existence in later years.

The Special Committee became noted for some of the most imaginative activities – such as the sponsorship of one of the most impressive art exhibits of recent times. It led in organising international conferences of Parliamentarians, trade unions and others in support of United Nations efforts.

The campaigns it promoted and encouraged – such as the campaign for the boycott of apartheid sport – involved millions of people all over the world.

The activities of the Special Committee contributed greatly to United Nations action on racism and human rights. They had an impact, in the United Nations system and outside, on issues such as social responsibility of transnational corporations, the Olympic principle of non-racialism in sport, capital punishment and torture of prisoners.

Tribute to Diallo Telli and U Thant

Many chairmen and members of the Special Committee, many officials of the Secretariat and others deserve credit for the accomplishments of the Special Committee. I would like to mention two of them .

I must pay tribute to the late Diallo Telli, the first chairman of the Special Committee and the first Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Unity.

A great African patriot, he died tragically in his native land, which he loved deeply and of which he was immensely proud. His death was not announced immediately so that the Special Committee could not even observe a minute of silence in his memory.

I hope that the Special Committee will find ways, in cooperation with the OAU, to honour the memory of that great African.

The abiding interest of U Thant, Secretary-General of the United Nations, in the work of the Special Committee, indeed his special affection for the Committee, was crucial in the early years. His concern for the oppressed people of South

Africa and his regard for the Special Committee encouraged every relevant unit of the United Nations Secretariat to lend its cooperation to the Committee and its secretariat.

I must also acknowledge the unfailing assistance received from his Chef de Cabinet, C.V. Narasimhan.

Partnership with Anti-Apartheid Movements

While the Special Committee was a pace-setter in the United Nations, it was, of course, not the initiator of many of the campaigns against apartheid.

For instance, assistance to political prisoners was initiated by the Reverend Canon L. John Collins in 1952. The campaign for the boycott of apartheid sport was launched by the British Anti-Apartheid Movement in 1962 and the cultural boycott of South Africa by the British, Irish and American anti-apartheid movements in 1964-65. The campaign for the release of Nelson Mandela, in its latest stage, began inside South Africa after the independence of Zimbabwe.

The Special Committee responded to the campaigns by lending moral, political and other support to enable anti-apartheid movements to reach larger segments of public opinion and by helping to internationalise national campaigns. The Special Committee and the anti-apartheid movements cooperated as companions in the struggle.

I wish to make special reference to this partnership because I feel that ill-conceived suggestions that the Special Committee should direct and dictate to anti-apartheid movements or other non-governmental organisations would only make the Committee irrelevant to the solidarity movement.

People who have been moved by the struggle in South Africa to make sacrifices – and many of the members of anti-apartheid movements have made great sacrifices for long years – cannot be expected to succumb to pressure or petty inducements from the United Nations, but will carry on according to their own convictions and assessments as they did before the Special Committee was established.

New Stage of Struggle

The theme of this special session is “the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa and International Response”. I believe that the title is most appropriate since United Nations and international action has always been in response to the landmarks in the struggle in South Africa itself.

The passive resistance movement in 1946 against new discriminatory legislation against people of Asian origin and the African mine labour strike later in the year led to the consideration by the General Assembly of the racial problem in South Africa in the form of a complaint by India; the Defiance Campaign of 1952 to the consideration of apartheid and its repercussions; the positive action campaign and the national upsurge which followed the Sharpeville massacre in 1960 to discussion by the Security Council and subsequently to the General Assembly resolution on sanctions; and the Soweto uprising of 1976 to the mandatory arms embargo.

Each of these stages reflected a wider mobilisation of the people in South Africa and an extension of the struggle in defiance of escalating repression.

The developments in 1984 represent, in my view, a new stage in the struggle. The action of the Coloured and Indian people in rejecting privileges and inducements offered by the regime, and in fighting against the diabolic new constitution in alliance with the African majority, has few parallels in the history of nations, and is the result of common struggle and common sacrifices, as well as the righteous policy of the national liberation movement for several decades. The general strike in the Transvaal in November, 1984, in which a million workers joined in support of their leaders, was also of great significance.

The situation calls for a new and higher state of international action.

Treason Trial and Campaign for Release of Prisoners

The racist regime, of course, responds to the redoubled resistance by even greater repression. It has charged sixteen of the eminent leaders of the people with "high treason", threatening them with death penalty. They are led by Mrs. Albertina Sisulu, a woman of great stature and indeed, majesty.

Her husband, Walter Sisulu, is serving a sentence of life imprisonment with Nelson Mandela. All her children have suffered imprisonment and her daughter was brutally tortured in prison. She herself was subjected to constant persecution for three decades. She was jailed in 1958 and separated from her infant child. She has been severely restricted for some twenty years. Yet, as soon as the banning order expired, she gave all her strength to the efforts to unite and mobilise the oppressed people against the manoeuvres of the racist regime to divide the black people and denationalise the African majority.

If Albertina Sisulu and her colleagues are guilty of high treason for resisting the new racist constitution, then so is the Special Committee, which denounced that constitution, and so are the General Assembly and the Security Council which declared it null and void.

I salute Albertina Sisulu and, as an Indian, I would like to add that I am proud of the leaders of the Indian people who have struggled along with her and are now in the dock of racist courts with her. The accused – African, Coloured and Indian – must be honoured for committing treason against racism.

I am glad that the Security Council has unanimously condemned the trial of the sixteen leaders. I hope that the Special Committee will publicise the trial widely and promote an international campaign to free the accused leaders.

But beyond that, I hope that all efforts will now be directed at forging a world-wide movement for the unconditional release of all political prisoners in South Africa, an abrogation of the bans on public organisations and the ending of all other repressive measures as a prerequisite for genuine consultations among the people for the elimination of apartheid and the establishment of a non-racial democratic South Africa.

The racist regime is in a serious crisis and is resorting to various manoeuvres. I find it most disconcerting that some powers extol the mere suspension of “forced removals”, by a regime which has uprooted three and a half million people from their homes and land, as a welcome sign of change. Meaningful change in South Africa cannot come from that regime but only from the genuine leaders of the great majority of the people.

The progress achieved in the Union Nations as a result of the work of the Special Committee, the launching of the Free South Africa Movement in the United States and the advance of the anti-apartheid movements in other countries, as well as the struggle in South Africa itself, have created a basis for a new level of international action to enable the people of South Africa, at last, to exercise their right to self-determination.

Concerted Action

This Special Committee has from its inception striven to secure the widest international mobilisation in support of the struggle for liberation in South Africa. If it was obliged constantly to express its distress at those who impeded the struggle by their collaboration with the Pretoria regime, its purpose was not to condemn but to persuade by a fearless espousal of truth and by appeals to the conscience of nations which profess democratic values but reinforce racist tyranny in South Africa. Rejecting the meaningless consensus of mere condemnations of apartheid, it has helped build an ever wider alliance for action.

One need only point to the progress in votes since the General Assembly resolution 1761 (XVII). While none of the Western powers supported that resolution, today a majority of Western powers support sanctions against South

Africa and several of them are among the reliable friends of the Special Committee.

The Nordic countries alone, representing a fraction of one percent of world population, have contributed tens of millions of dollars in support of the oppressed people of South Africa and their national liberation movement.

The resolution at the last session of the General Assembly, on “Concerted Action for the Elimination of Apartheid”, co-sponsored by Western, African and other states, and moved by Sweden, can, I believe, be the basis for effective new action in the current year.

The Special Committee should urge all states which voted for that resolution to implement its provisions fully. It must exert all possible moral pressure on those few Western states, especially the major Western powers which failed to vote for the resolution, to co-operate. For this purpose, I would suggest urgent consultations with the anti-apartheid movements and others in the countries concerned.

Struggle of all Decent Men and Women

The time has come to proclaim that the issue is no more one of mere solidarity with the oppressed people of South Africa.

South Africa is a beautiful country with a population of diverse backgrounds – the African majority whose interests must be paramount; the Coloured and Indian people who trace their origins to India, Indonesia and Malaysia; and the Whites who trace their origins to Europe.

The issue in South Africa is whether people of such diverse origins can live together in harmony. The struggle is between the great majority of the people, who have faith in humanity, and a small ruling group which regards human beings as no more than beasts. This is not merely an African concern but a challenge to the United Nations and humanity.

The declaration of the General Assembly in the 1960s that the elimination of apartheid is a vital interest of the United Nations must be fully translated into action and the entire family of United Nations’ agencies must be mobilised for concerted and continuous support to the struggle for freedom in South Africa.

Some people had hoped that with the progress of decolonisation in Africa, apartheid would be isolated and weakened, and that it would disintegrate under combined internal and external pressure.

But, instead, the apartheid regime has acquired enormous military strength and has seemingly obtained the goodwill of some forces, blinded by so-called strategic considerations, in its efforts to dominate the entire region. The hard-won freedom of African nations is at stake and the Non-Aligned Movement – to which Africa has subscribed as a continent – is threatened. The security and genuine independence of southern African nations has become dependent on the victory of the forces of freedom in South Africa.

The struggle for freedom in South Africa is, more than ever, the struggle of Africa, of the Non-Aligned world and of all decent men and women.

Carry forward the Heritage

I would like to end on a personal note.

I leave the United Nations Secretariat with immense satisfaction at what I have been able to contribute to African freedom, and also with an acute awareness of what remains to be done.

I must express my deep gratitude to the successive chairmen of the Special Committee, to all its members, to the OAU and the liberation movements, ANC and PAC, for the privilege of serving this Special Committee for over 21 years. I must also express my gratitude to many governments, anti-apartheid movements and individuals for their co-operation. I will cherish their friendship and affection which has meant much to me.

For me, concern for African freedom predates my employment in the United Nations. It was an extension of our own freedom struggle in India to which my late father, a follower of *Mahatma* Gandhi, made some contribution.

In my work here, I have come to know and respect the leaders of the South African people and their great freedom movement. I have known many leaders and militants, who have been brutally assassinated and tortured. I cherish the friendship of leaders of other African freedom movements I have known, like Amilcar Cabral, Eduardo Mondlane and Herbert Chitepo.

They will continue to inspire me for the rest of my life.

The South African press has reported my recent retirement from the United Nations Secretariat with the headline “Anti South African official is forced to quit his post”, and sought to give the impression of a weakening of United Nations resolve against apartheid.

What they say about me matters little.

I love South Africa and will continue to love South Africa. For me, South Africa is its people, *all* its people, not the racist regime. Like the freedom movement of South Africa, I hate the system of apartheid but not the people with a white skin. I believe that great movement is the true custodian of the future of all the people of South Africa.

It matters very much, however, that the struggling people of South Africa and the leaders in prison are reassured that there will be no slackening of United Nations support to them until apartheid is totally eliminated and they are free.

It is up to you to provide that assurance by constant action to carry forward the great heritage of this Special Committee.

CONTRIBUTION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS⁴

The United Nations is an organisation of governments but its effectiveness in fulfilling its purposes depends on the informed and active support not only of governments but of the peoples of the world.

The Charter of the United Nations was formulated in the name of “We, the Peoples of the United Nations” and they must play their part in implementing its provisions both through the governments and through their voluntary organisations, agencies and institutions. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) form an important link between the “peoples” and the United Nations, not only through national governments but also directly.

On no issues have the NGOs played a more significant role in support of the United Nations than on the closely interrelated issues of decolonisation, apartheid and racism. And in no fields of its activity has the United Nations more actively sought the co-operation of NGOs than on the international campaigns for the liberation of South Africa and Namibia.

I am conscious of the very important role of NGOs on the over-riding issue of peace and disarmament, but the close co-operation between the United Nations and the NGOs in that field is more recent and has benefited from the precedents set on southern African issues.

In my many years of work in the United Nations Secretariat on African freedom, I have followed with close interest the work of NGOs in support of the liberation struggles in South Africa as well as Namibia and other nations, benefited greatly from their advice and tried to ensure close co-operation between the United Nations and NGOs. I appreciate this opportunity to make some observations, based largely on personal experience, on the past contribution of NGOs to the United Nations efforts for freedom in South Africa and Namibia, and their responsibility at this crucial time.

The Long History of the Solidarity Movement

Action by non-governmental organisations and individuals against racism in South Africa and in defence of the rights of the Namibian people began long before the establishment of the United Nations. The movement of solidarity with

⁴ Paper presented to the NGO Symposium on “World Peace and the Liberation of South Africa and Namibia”, Geneva, June 11-13, 1986.

the oppressed people of South Africa and Namibia has a long and glorious history.

The Pan African movement espoused the rights of the indigenous people in South Africa ever since its inception in 1900. It appealed to the Allied Powers in 1919 against the handing over of the administration of Namibia to the racist regime in South Africa. The Manchester Congress of the movement in 1945 was an important landmark in the struggle for Africa's emancipation. Dr.W.E.B. DuBois, the leader of that movement, deserves great respect for his unceasing efforts for over six decades to expose the atrocities of racism in South Africa and Namibia and defend the rights of the indigenous people.

The *Satyagraha* led by *Mahatma* Gandhi in South Africa in the first decade of this century owed its success to public support in Britain and other countries. India, because of historical reasons, has a long record of solidarity. The Indian National Congress began denouncing racism in South Africa from 1894, and India imposed sanctions against South Africa in 1946, long before the liberation movement appealed for international sanctions.

The Anti-Slavery Society denounced South African racism and colonial oppression in Namibia almost since the turn of the century.

While successive British Governments were betraying their promises to the indigenous African people, many organisations and individuals in Britain promoted public support for their rights and for the representations of the African National Congress since it was founded in 1912. Lord Fenner Brockway deserves special mention for over six decades of his solidarity.

In the 1920's Marcus Garvey helped promote support for the black people in South Africa and Namibia from the black communities in the United States and the Caribbean.

The Council on African Affairs, established in the 1930's under the leadership of Paul Robeson, not only informed the American people of the oppression and the freedom struggles in Southern Africa but provided useful information and advice to many members of the United Nations during the early years of the world organisation.

The boycott of South African racism also has a long history. Already in the 1920's, E.M. Forster, the British novelist, sold his shares in South African gold mines in protest against the treatment of African miners.

International Movement

With the development of a militant mass movement in South Africa in the 1940s, and the great struggles led by the South African people, the international solidarity movement developed in many countries.

Several churchmen played an important role in the initial period. The Reverend Michael Scott, who participated in the Indian passive resistance movement in South Africa in 1946, and then helped bring the appeals of the Namibian people to world attention, inspired and persuaded many people in Britain to follow and assist the resistance in South Africa and Namibia.

The Defence and Aid Fund, which has made a tremendous contribution to the freedom movements in Southern Africa – through assistance and information – was founded by the Reverend Canon L. John Collins in London and had its beginnings in support for the great Defiance Campaign in South Africa in 1952. Around the same time, a Committee for Support of South African Resistance was established in the United States by the Reverend George Houser, who had been active in the non-violent civil rights movement, and it later became the American Committee on Africa.

Father Trevor Huddleston, now President of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement, was the first to appeal to the world for a boycott of South Africa in the 1950s. The boycott of apartheid sports was initiated by sports bodies in the USSR, India and other countries in the mid-1950s.

Following the appeal of the African National Congress in 1958 for international sanctions against South Africa, endorsed by the African Peoples' Congress in Accra in December of that year, the Boycott Movement was launched in the West in 1959 and developed into the Anti-Apartheid Movement, one of the most significant public movements of our time.

The anti-apartheid and solidarity groups, which emerged in many countries, helped the Southern African liberation movements to reach the public, and in many cases governments in their countries, to seek support for their struggles. This became particularly important since 1960 when the national liberation movements in South Africa actively sought international support in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre and the banning of ANC and PAC, and when SWAPO was formed in Namibia.

It is necessary to recall the history of this solidarity movement to emphasise the proper relationship which should obtain between the United Nations and the NGOs active against apartheid. The NGOs deserve respect as pioneers and as the first to respond to the needs of the developing struggles for freedom. The United Nations should benefit from their knowledge and experience, and treat them as valuable allies and partners. Attempts to control them are as unwise as attempts to exhort them to action are superfluous. The task is to find ways to

work together in such a way that the United Nations and NGOs can make the maximum contributions within their respective competences and co-ordinate their efforts to obtain maximum impact.

The role of NGOs has been especially important in relation to the freedom struggles in southern Africa for several reasons.

NGO contribution to Freedom Movement

The moral issues in South Africa and Namibia are clear-cut and of universal significance. People all over the world were outraged at the inhumanity of blatant and violent racism, akin to Nazism, and inspired by the great non-violent campaigns in South Africa from the 1906 *Satyagraha* of *Mahatma* Gandhi to the defiance of “pass laws” in 1960, to the extent that they were informed of the situation. The national liberation movement was obliged, because of the violence of the regime, to abandon strict adherence to non-violence after the Sharpeville massacre. But the student uprising in Soweto in 1976 and the mass mobilisation by the United Democratic Front since 1983 have been essentially non-violent. The armed struggle, too, has been of a special character, avoiding the killing of innocent persons as much as possible, in order to avert a racial war and salvage a non-racial society. The struggle of the people in Namibia, led by working people and poor peasants dispossessed of their rights, has been particularly inspiring. Decent men and women could not be neutral or equivocal, much less divided, unless they were uninformed or misinformed.

The people of South Africa and Namibia became victims of inhuman colonial and racist violence because of the betrayal of some major powers and later because of the greed and alliances of a concert of colonial powers which showed little respect for the dignity of the lives of the majority of humankind.

South Africa was handed over to racist domination by the colonial power, Britain, not long after it had solemnly promised respect for the rights and aspirations of the indigenous people, as well as the Indian community. The Principal Allied and Associated Powers which designated Namibia as a “sacred trust of civilisation” became precisely the Powers which condoned the crimes of the racist regime against the Namibian people by preventing international action against it.

From the very first session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1946, the newly-independent nations from the “Third World” espoused the cause of the oppressed people of South Africa and Namibia, while the Western colonial powers generally opposed their proposals for action. Debates in the United Nations could hardly change the situation and other forms of action were imperative.

Above all it was essential to arouse public opinion in the Western countries. This was a task which the United Nations could not effectively perform – except to the

extent that the debates in the United Nations were adequately reported by mass media and had an impact on public opinion – but one that NGOs and public leaders could undertake.

NGOs are not bound by the constraints of governments, diplomats and civil servants. Moreover, many of the NGOs are led by men and women of dedication, who have made sacrifices in the cause of freedom and human rights, and thereby earned respect of the public. They are most effective in mobilising support for righteous causes.

Another important need was to obtain information on the developments and struggles in South Africa and Namibia and to disseminate information to the rest of the world. This was particularly vital in the case of Namibia in the early years.

The Pretoria regime stopped transmittal of petitions by the Namibian people to the United Nations and prevented them from leaving the Territory to seek hearings at the United Nations. In 1946, it even staged a fake “consultation” of the Namibian people through its commissioners and reported to the United Nations that a great majority of Namibians favoured annexation of their country by South Africa.

At that time, it was through the Reverend Michael Scott that the United Nations learned about the fraud perpetrated by the Pretoria regime in the guise of consultation of the indigenous people of Namibia, the dispossession and inhuman oppression of the people and the legitimate aspirations and appeals of the chiefs and people of Namibia. (I recall that one of the first petitions to the United Nations on Namibia was from the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom.)

Valuable Services of NGOs

Since then, there have been many instances when NGOs performed a valuable service in acquainting the United Nations and the international community of developments in South Africa and Namibia, and transmitting messages from the fighters for freedom.

Third, because of the ruthless repression launched by the Pretoria regime, assistance to the political prisoners and their families, and other victims of repression, became imperative. But the provision of assistance inside South Africa and Namibia became increasingly difficult because of the hostility of the regime and, especially after the banning of the Defence and Aid Fund in 1966, much of the assistance had to be confidential and clandestine.

NGOs such as the Defence and Aid Fund and the World Council of Churches initiated the assistance. The United Nations recognised the need for governmental assistance in 1963, but it could only provide such assistance in cooperation with NGOs.

Fourth, NGOs can often provide useful advice to United Nations bodies on the attitudes in their countries with respect to southern Africa and on the means to secure greater support for the United Nations efforts.

They can, and often do, suggest new initiatives for international action and prepare public opinion for such initiatives. For instance, in 1966, the call by the International Conference on South West Africa, held in Oxford, under the chairmanship of the late Olof Palme, for the termination of South Africa's mandate over Namibia was partly instrumental in facilitating action by the General Assembly on October 27, 1966.

Experience of the Special Committee

I would like to refer briefly to the efforts of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid and the Centre against Apartheid in promoting close co-operation between the United Nations and NGOs in action against apartheid.

The primary concern of the Special Committee since its inception in 1963 was to secure effective sanctions against the apartheid regime. It tried to do this initially by diplomatic efforts. The NGOs had a relatively minor role in its work – sending memoranda to it or appearing before it for hearings as petitioners.

But it soon became clear that the Western powers were not willing to take any action beyond a voluntary arms embargo against South Africa.

The Special Committee then recognised the need for a more active information effort in Western countries, independent of the governments, and sought the co-operation of the anti-apartheid organisations. In 1966, it launched the concept of an “international campaign against apartheid” in which the United Nations, Governments and NGOs were to participate as allies.

The NGOs began to be treated as guests at the meetings of the Special Committee rather than as petitioners. The Committee sent delegations to various capitals to consult with international and national NGOs.

It soon began to invite NGOs to its conferences, seminars and special sessions – providing expenses within its budgetary possibilities. More and more, the Committee avoided distinctions between government representatives and NGOs in the conduct of discussions. Within a few years, it even began to elect NGO representatives as officers of its conferences and seminars. The next step was to organise such events “by the Special Committee, in cooperation with” one or more NGOs or *vice versa*.

Grants to NGOs

A United Nations Trust Fund for Publicity against Apartheid was set up in 1975 and its resources were largely utilised for grants to NGOs to disseminate information against apartheid in consultation with the Special Committee and the Centre against Apartheid. Some NGOs, particularly the World Peace Council, even contributed substantial resources to such co-operative information activities.

Many of the publications of the Centre against Apartheid were prepared by the anti-apartheid and solidarity movements or other NGOs and experts associated with them.

Many of the proposals made by the Special Committee to the General Assembly or the Security Council had originated from suggestions made by NGOs. NGOs helped formulate the programme of action against apartheid by the General Assembly in 1976 and the revised programme approved in 1983.

The progress achieved in action against apartheid in the past two decades – especially the fact that the majority of the Western countries are now supportive of meaningful action – is the result largely of the co-operative effort of the United Nations and NGOs (together with the Organisation of African Unity and others).

The establishment of the NGO Sub-Committee on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Apartheid and Decolonisation in Geneva in 1973 – as a forum for liaison among committed NGOs – was an important development. The Special Committee and the Centre against Apartheid have cooperated closely with the Sub-Committee.

I wish to make reference to some lessons of the experience in the cooperation between the United Nations and NGOs in action against apartheid.

1. Governments and NGOs should not be seen as antagonists. The task is to promote co-ordinated action by committed governments and NGOs.
2. NGOs are a diverse community with many differences. In co-operating with the NGOs, the Special Committee and the Centre against Apartheid took into account the contribution of each NGO to the struggle against apartheid within its competence. They did not go by the consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, which was not particularly relevant.

Some NGOs may support all aspects of the activity of the Special Committee and some may only be able to contribute to certain campaigns – assistance to the oppressed people, for instance. What is important is, however, that they do their best within their mandates.

The activities, however, must be in harmony with the position of the United Nations and the liberation movements. NGOs which, because of their ideological bents, try to divide and disrupt the liberation struggle could not be reliable partners of the United Nations.

Institutions and Individuals

3. Anti-apartheid movements which concentrate on Southern Africa and are not influenced by considerations other than support to the liberation movements have a special role in the international campaign against apartheid.

At the same time, trade unions and other mass movements which reach millions of people and organisations of specific groups or with specific concerns, can also play a crucial role if they respect the primacy of the liberation movements in making decisions on the strategy for the freedom struggles in their countries.

The contribution of organisations such as the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation, the International Commission of Jurists, the International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, the International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations, the World Peace Council and the World Council of Churches were often commended by the Special Committee. It has specially commended Mr. Romesh Chandra, Chairman of the NGO Sub-Committee and President of the World Peace Council, for his contribution – in the tradition of *Mahatma* Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. W.E.B. DuBois, Paul Robeson and Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. and others – in stressing constantly that the struggle for peace and the struggle for liberation are inseparable.

4. The Special Committee has always sought to promote universal support to the liberation struggle, irrespective of ideological and other differences on other issues. If NGOs are influenced, like some governments, by “cold war” to the extent of opposing concerted action, they cannot play an effective role in campaigns under United Nations auspices.

5. In their co-operative effort, the United Nations bodies and NGOs should be conscious of their respective competencies. If the United Nations bodies seek to arouse public opinion by spending their resources on travel and conferences – instead of giving priority to providing moral and material assistance to NGOs which have proved their commitment and competence – they may be wasting funds. If NGOs spend their efforts lobbying delegates to the United Nations instead of promoting public awareness and action, they lose their primary reason for existence.

6. United Nations bodies should exercise great care in providing appropriate assistance to NGOs. Any attempts to control NGOs whose strength is in their autonomy and independence, any moves to build up groups to rival NGOs which have proven their usefulness and any favouritism in disbursing grants would be counter-productive.

On the other hand, NGOs should avoid undue dependence on assistance by United Nations bodies.

Public action is now more important than ever and the NGOs can play a crucial role.

The great anti-apartheid demonstrations in Europe, the Free South Africa Movement in the United States, and the greater participation of musicians, artists and others in anti-apartheid activities are most encouraging.

There is an urgent need for closest cooperation by NGOs and the United Nations bodies with the great majority of states which are truly committed to liberation of Southern Africa, for the mobilisation of public opinion all over the world, specially in the territories of the major Western powers, to denounce the manoeuvres of the apartheid regime and its friends, to ensure the imposition and implementation of comprehensive sanctions against that regime, and to provide all necessary assistance to the liberation movements in order to enable them to perform their historic task of destroying apartheid and racist domination.

FREEDOM MOVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA: ITS INTERNATIONAL IMPACT⁵

All national movements for freedom and justice spread ripples beyond their national boundaries. But some stand out as beacons guiding and inspiring peoples all over the world and for generations. Such was the great freedom movement of Ireland, and I believe the movement in my own country, India. Such, indeed, is the movement for freedom in South Africa which has been engaged in a long and difficult struggle against an injustice that has hardly a parallel.

The unique oppression that has, since 1948, been described as apartheid – despite the pseudo-religious justifications given by its proponents – is contrary to all ethical values. It seeks the transformation of an African Country into one where the children of the soil are aliens. It has forcibly separated people by “race” and even families as in the days of slavery. It has involved deliberate lowering of standards of education of Africans for an entire generation – because the “master race” has lost confidence in its superiority.

As against this has developed in the last century a movement which is unmatched in morality – a movement which rejects all hate and all racialism, which seeks to build a community of humankind, and which has been twice honoured by the award of the Nobel Peace Prize in the persons of Chief Albert Lutuli and Bishop Desmond Tutu. Nelson Mandela, leader of this liberation movement, confined in prison for over 22 years by a regime which hoped he would be forgotten, has received more honours all over the world than any political prisoner. He stands more than ever as a symbol of Africa’s indomitable will to be free and of humanity’s rejection of racism.

The South African liberation movement inspired and assisted freedom movements in all neighbouring countries. Leaders of the former High Commission Territories – Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland – were among the founders of the African National Congress of South Africa and could count on the assistance of the latter when they formed their own movements after the Second World War.

The Southern Rhodesian Native Welfare Association, founded in the 1920s, had close contact with the African National Congress of South Africa, while the Southern Rhodesia Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union, formed around the same time, was inspired by the powerful South African body of the same name. In the 1940s, the Southern Rhodesian African National Congress was

⁵ The Albert Lutuli Memorial Lecture under the auspices of the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement at the Mansion House, March 19, 1985. Published in *Mainstream*, New Delhi, June 7, 1986.

established after the pattern of the African National Congress of South Africa, and its main concern was also to protest against unjust “land apportionment” or rather the expropriation of ancestral African land by the European settlers and their descendants. After the Second World War, a Southern Rhodesian Youth League was formed and performed a similar function as the African National Congress Youth League of South Africa in revitalising the parent body.

Influence of ANC

SWAPO, the Namibian liberation movement, had its origins partly in the union of Ovambo workers formed in Cape Town in 1959. Eduardo Mondlane, the founder of FRELIMO of Mozambique, received his early political training and experience during his student years in the Transvaal, where he met many leaders of the ANC.

The influence of the South African freedom movement, in fact, extended much further afield in Africa since it was one or two generations ahead of freedom movements in many other African countries. Several leaders of those movements had studied in South Africa and had come into contact with the African leaders in South Africa. The hymn, *God Bless Africa*, composed for the founding conference of the African National Congress in 1912, became the hymn of freedom for many African nations in Southern Africa.

ANC had, from its inception, looked upon freedom in South Africa in the context of the redemption of the continent of Africa. It consistently opposed the ambitions and manoeuvres of the minority regime in South Africa to dominate the High Commission Territories, South West Africa and Southern Rhodesia.

The ANC delegation, which went to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 opposed the placing of South West Africa under South African administration in terms of a mandate agreement and espoused the cause of the African people of Southern Rhodesia. In 1946, when the President of ANC, Dr. A.B. Xuma, visited the United Nations in New York, one of his main concerns was to petition against the plans of the Smuts regime to annex South West Africa.

ANC participated since 1900 in Pan African Conferences, which brought together leaders from Africa, the Caribbean, the United States and Britain, and in the All Races Conference in London in 1911. In 1927, its President, Josiah Gumede, attended the Conference of Oppressed Nationalities in Brussels (which was also attended, among others, by Jawaharlal Nehru from India and Sean MacBride from Ireland).

The 1944 Manifesto of the ANC Youth League affirmed belief “in the unity of all Africans from the Mediterranean Sea in the north to the Indian and Atlantic Oceans in the South.” Many of the leaders of the post-war freedom movement were members of the Youth League. Nelson Mandela was its Secretary.

Impact on India and United States

More impressive than the impact of the South African freedom movement on the rest of Africa is its influence on far away lands across the oceans.

In 1893, an Indian barrister, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, went to South Africa. He returned to India 21 years later as the *Mahatma* to lead the people of the largest colonial country to freedom. If *Mahatma* Gandhi had a significant moral influence on the course of the South African struggle, his experiences and experiments in South Africa were decisive in determining the character of the movement in India. We, in India, owe a historic debt to South Africa, to all its people.

Many decades later, when the African National Congress launched a non-violent passive resistance movement – the Campaign of Defence against Unjust Laws in 1952, in which 9,000 people, African, Indian, Coloured and White, courted imprisonment – the impact on the Black people in the United States was remarkable. The campaign shattered the stupid racist myth that the African and Black people were somehow incapable of an organised and disciplined non-violent resistance.

Soon after the launching of the Defiance Campaign, Paul Robeson wrote in July 1952: “Just imagine if you started something like that in the South – or even in New York, Chicago, St. Louis, Indianapolis, Louisville and Los Angeleswe’d have our civil rights.”

The Black people in the United States were groping toward decisive and determined action for their dignity, and soon a civil rights movement was launched by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who had a strong identification with Black freedom struggles in Africa.

The Defiance Campaign and the struggles that followed its suppression in South Africa - the sit-in, the bus boycott, the potato boycott, the call for sanctions – had their parallels in the South of the United States.

The thousands of people who are now marching and courting imprisonment in the United States under the aegis of the Free South Africa Movement are, in a sense, repaying their debt to the South African freedom movement. The links that bind the non-violent passive resistance movements in South Africa, India and the United States are perhaps widely known.

In my work in the United Nations in promoting the international campaign against apartheid, I have been most impressed by the much wider impact of the South African struggle on many countries, especially in the Western world.

Role of Anti-Apartheid Movements

Since the Defiance Campaign of 1952, and especially the appeal of ANC in 1958 for a boycott of South Africa and the Sharpeville massacre of 1960, millions of people around the world have been moved to make sacrifices to show their concern for the oppressed majority in South Africa. The anti-apartheid movement became one of the most significant public movements of our time attracting people from all segments of life. Religious leaders have been prominent in the movement and many political leaders received their early training in it. Sportsmen and musicians have rejected offers of millions of dollars to play or perform in South Africa. Two thousand people in New Zealand went to jail in demonstrations against the tour of a South African rugby team in 1981. They have made sacrifices not out of pity for the oppressed millions in South Africa, not even merely in solidarity with the South Africans struggling for a non-racial society, but for their own sense of integrity.

Above all, I think of hundreds of activities of anti-apartheid movements who have sacrificed careers and worked with tremendous perseverance for over two decades to see that their own societies dissociate themselves totally from involvement in the crime of apartheid. They have countered vicious propaganda spread by the apartheid regime and its friends at a cost of tens of millions of dollars a year. Their work has had a significant impact in their countries, in focussing attention on the need for morality in foreign policy, at a time when the imperatives of the so-called "Cold War" seemed to overshadow the international commitments to "Four Freedoms", "One World", the Atlantic Charter, the United Nations Charter and all other war aims of the Allies. They have helped people not only to be concerned about apartheid in far away South Africa, but also to become sensitive to manifestations of racism in their own countries. The campaigns against apartheid were instrumental in educating public opinion on other social issues.

Impact Far and Wide

I would like to give two instances of the wider effect of the campaigns against apartheid.

In 1971, students in Australia organised protests against a South African rugby tour and secured the support of churches, trade unions and others. The government of the day confronted them with harsh police measures and almost hysterical propaganda, hoping to return to power as the party of "Law and Order." Many young men and women were injured and some five hundred people were jailed. One of the immediate effects of this experience was the growing public awareness of racism in Australia itself and the development of the movement for

the rights of the aboriginal people. Somewhat similar developments took place in New Zealand.

The issue of apartheid and the initiatives of the South African freedom movement and the anti-apartheid movements were instrumental in persuading the World Council of Churches to establish the Programme to Combat Racism in 1969. That programme not only assisted anti-racist movements in many countries but precipitated a healthy debate in the churches in the West on the problem of racism and the moral responsibility of religious bodies.

I am sure that in every Western country, and in many other countries, researchers can find evidence of the direct and indirect impact of the South African liberation movement and the anti-apartheid movement.

I must make special reference to the Nordic countries where the boycott movement spread rapidly in 1960 and began to have a significant impact on national life. There soon developed a solidarity with all African freedom movements and a friendship with independent African States. I would venture to say that this has been a significant development in international affairs since 1960. The Nordic governments and public have contributed hundreds of millions of dollars in assistance to the freedom movements in Southern Africa and to frontline States.

Goodwill from White Countries

The solidarity of the Nordic countries - and of other Western countries, among which Ireland deserves special mention - has been most helpful to the United Nations efforts against apartheid, especially in countering the ill-advised attempts of those who sought to drown the southern African freedom movements in the cauldron of the Cold War. Perhaps even more significant was the effect in preventing the growth of anti-White racism in Southern Africa and in Africa as a whole. If the national liberation movement in South Africa, and OAU, have consistently espoused non-racialism - despite all the crimes of the racist regime in South Africa - the goodwill and assistance they received from "White" countries was not an insignificant factor.

In the United Nations, the annual consideration of the South African situation until 1962, and the constant attention given to the matter since the Special Committee against Apartheid was established in 1963, have had a wide-ranging effect far beyond the growing consensus on total rejection of apartheid and support for the legitimate struggle of the oppressed people for freedom.

Many precedents were set, such as the recognition of liberation movements, the rejection of the legitimacy of the apartheid regime, the establishment of an inter-governmental fund for legal and humanitarian assistance to political prisoners and their families and, perhaps even more important, the effort by the United Nations

to reach public opinion in countries which resist effective action against apartheid. The concept of a United Nations "campaign" was initiated on the problem of apartheid and adopted many years later on disarmament.

Although racism was a matter of world concern at the end of the Second World War, there was little action by the United Nations on racism until the Sharpeville massacre of 1960 and the independence of African States. Since then, the United Nations adopted a declaration and a convention on the elimination of racial discrimination and proclaimed Decades of Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.

The sensitivity resulting from the discussion of apartheid, and the precedents set thereby, facilitated action on such issues as social responsibility of transnational corporations and treatment of prisoners.

The South African freedom movement, and the public organisations supporting it, helped the entire system of United Nations agencies to undertake greater action on violations of human rights.

Movement with a Vision

The influence of this freedom movement on world opinion has invariably been wholesome. For it results from the fact that it has been one of the most ethical and inspiring freedom movements in this century. The African people, brutally oppressed, have been sustained by a vision of justice, reinforced by the legacy of *Mahatma* Gandhi and carried forward by such humanists as Chief Lutuli.

The South African freedom movement readily accepted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as its objective and chose the 26th of June, the anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Charter, as its Freedom Day.

The African people and people of African origin, moreover, have been in the bottom of the pile in South Africa and elsewhere. Like the leaders of the struggle against slavery and the Pan African Movement, Chief Lutuli and other African leaders of South Africa have pointed out that the freedom of their people can be achieved only by freeing all the people including, in a way, even the oppressors degraded by their inhumanity.

Even when it felt obliged to abandon strict adherence to non-violence and undertake an armed struggle, the South African liberation movement has been most humane, eschewing militarism and terrorism, and showing great respect for human life. The restraint shown by the movement in the face of tortures of its members in prison and the cowardly and gruesome killings of its refugees in Lesotho and Mozambique, is truly remarkable.

No one could have morally blamed the African people if they had responded to the enormous violence of the racist regime by violence against the oppressors. If they chose that path and stooped to the level of morality of the regime, they could have killed many innocent Whites in the country where every White home has African servants and the whole economy is dependent on labour by the African majority.

But the leaders of the African people have been conscious that South Africa is a microcosm of the world with people of many racial origins. They sought to build a society in which all the people, Black, White, Brown or whatever, could live together. They were sustained in their faith as a result of common struggles in which the Coloured and Indian people, and even some Whites, participated, as well as by the support from all the regions of the world. The martyrs in the struggles include not only numerous Africans, but many Coloured people and Indians, as well as some Whites such as Bram Fischer, Neil Aggett, Ruth First and Jeanette Schoon.

In 1984 the Coloured and Indian minorities in South Africa rejected the privileges offered by the regime and with great courage, showed their full solidarity with the African majority by opposing a new racist constitution. That gesture has few parallels in history. Respected leaders of the Coloured and Indian communities are now charged with high treason along with African leaders and face the threat of a death penalty for their refusal to betray the African people. A movement with such a vision and such a record of inspiring people of all origins and backgrounds to strive and sacrifice for a just society deserves universal respect.

Seventy-five years, ago, on May 8, 1910, Count Leo Tolstoy wrote to *Mahatma* Gandhi, who was leading the Indian passive resistance movement in South Africa :

“And so your activity in Transvaal, as it seems to us at the end of the world, is the most essential work, the most important of all the work now being done in the world, and in which not only the nations of the Christian, but of all the world will undoubtedly take part.”

The freedom movement in the past generation, under African leadership, encompassing all the people, is even more significant. It has, indeed, secured wide international support from governments, organisations and individuals irrespective of ideological, religious and other differences.

Role of Western Powers

But it is tragic and painful that freedom has eluded the people of South Africa, that the winds of change have not yet swept away the racist order in that country

and that oppression has in fact increased despite the immense suffering of the people and the great sacrifices of the liberation movement.

The fact that two Africans from South Africa have been awarded Nobel Peace Prizes for 1960 and 1984 for the same struggle is, in a sense, an indictment of the international community which has been unable to secure the elimination of apartheid or even the isolation of a regime denounced unanimously by the United Nations for committing a "crime against the conscience and dignity of mankind." This failure should shame the civilised world, which already carries the moral burden of five hundred years of humiliation and rape of Africa.

A hundred years ago, in 1885, gold was discovered in South Africa. Instead of becoming a boon to the people, it has led to immeasurable sorrow for the children of the soil, who have suffered from the greed of the rulers and foreign economic interests.

More recently, framers of military and foreign policy in some countries professing to seek a "free world" have been carried away by short-sighted and ill-advised "strategic" considerations in dealing with South Africa, so as to make the oppressed majority an innocent victim of powerful forces.

While the great majority of Western states have come to support effective international action against apartheid, a few major powers and financial centres provide comfort to the racist regime. Their course is a sure prescription for a greater tragedy in South Africa and in the relations between the West and the rest of the world.

The people of the United States, the United Kingdom, France and the Federal Republic of Germany have a great moral responsibility.

I submit that the smaller Western countries – among them Ireland with its great heritage and its independence of military blocs – have a duty, particularly to exert all their influence on the major powers to persuade them to join in concerted international action against apartheid under the aegis of the United Nations.

The events of the past year should persuade the international community to act with a sense of urgency. The assessments of those who felt that any change can occur only through the benevolence of the racist regime and that it should be cajoled with such inducements as even acceptance of its suzerainty over the whole of southern Africa, have proved as erroneous as those of their predecessors, who believed that the centuries-old Portuguese colonialism could not be defeated by the African liberation movements.

The regime in Pretoria is now faced with a grave crisis and is unable to control the growing resistance of the African people whom it sought to deprive of their very

nationality behind the cover of propaganda about so-called reforms within apartheid.

A delay in decisive international action can only mean that the international community has stood by and abandoned the people of South Africa to a catastrophic conflict. I hope that history will not indict us and that we will discharge the great moral debt that humanity owes to the great freedom movement led by Chief Albert Lutuli and other leaders who have, under severe tests, shown their attachment to non-racialism, human rights and democracy.

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE NEED FOR ACTION⁶

For more than a year now, world public opinion has been shocked and outraged at the daily reports from South Africa of brutality by the police and the army against the black people, detentions and tortures, and indiscriminate shooting of peaceful demonstrators, even little children and infants.

The racist regime, despite all its military might, has been unable to contain the situation and is faced with a grave political and economic crisis.

This is not merely another campaign of resistance by the people or another crisis of the regime. The confrontation in the past year or two, I believe, is of historic significance.

The black people have carried on many campaigns against racist oppression during the past decades – for instance, the Defiance Campaign in 1952, the Positive Action Campaign in 1960, the Soweto uprising in 1976 – but the regime was able to restore “order” by resorting to new levels of repression and violence. It faced temporary economic and political difficulties but was able to overcome them.

Meanwhile, the regime was able to build up its economic and military power. Its military budget rose no less than a hundred times since 1960. On the other hand, the liberation organisations of the people were outlawed and most of their leaders were hanged, imprisoned, restricted or forced into exile. Numerous laws were enacted to prevent the organisation of effective resistance.

Yet, the freedom movement has overcome the reverses it had suffered and has emerged with greater force than ever to demonstrate the indomitable spirit of the oppressed people for freedom and human dignity.

The events of the past year show a greater mobilisation of the people than ever. There is a greater participation not only by the African people but by the Coloured and Indian people, and by democratic Whites.

Segregation Resisted

⁶ Lecture at a seminar of the Norwegian Institute for International Affairs, Oslo, October 1, 1985.

The racial segregation imposed by the regime at enormous human cost, as a means to suppress and subjugate the black people, has enabled them to turn the miserable ghettos into fortresses of resistance so that large areas of South Africa have become virtually “ungovernable”. The police cannot enter the African townships without large military escorts.

The racist regime is unable to control the situation, even with the deployment of armed forces in African townships and the imposition of a State of Emergency.

In many ways, the situation in South Africa is similar to that in my own country, India, in 1942 when *Mahatma* Gandhi called on the people to “do or die.” There was no going back.

Only a little over a year ago, we may recall, the Botha regime felt that it was so strong that it could break out of its isolation and, in fact, obtain recognition as a “regional power.” It had devastated neighbouring states and had launched a so-called “peace process” with active support from the major Western powers. It proceeded to implement a new racist constitution as part of its “final solution” to turn South Africa into a White majority country by excluding Africans, and obtained the blessings, however qualified, of the United States government. Prime Minister Botha made an unprecedented tour of Western Europe in May-June, 1984. Many commentators predicted that the African National Congress had been virtually neutralised.

But, contrary to their predictions, the resistance in South Africa became more determined and spread wider. In August, spurning all the enticements of the regime and defying intimidation, the Coloured and Indian people boycotted the elections to the segregated chambers of the new Parliament, and made a fiasco of the new constitution. I can think of no parallel for such a rejection of privileges by minority communities in solidarity with oppressed majority: the liberation movement deserves great credit for its consistent espousal of non-racialism and its efforts to unite all the people of the country against the system of racist tyranny.

The regime, however, proceeded to enforce the new constitution on September 3, 1984, and that day was the beginning of the present phase of national resistance in South Africa.

In 1960, the regime was able to contain the situation within weeks by mass arrests. In 1976, it required several months. Some resistance continued even after that and many school children were killed, wounded and blinded until 1980, but the events attracted little attention by the world media.

Sustained Resistance

The present resistance is much wider and more sustained. It encompasses not only a million students, who have gone on strike but also millions of workers and

entire communities. Religious leaders of various faiths have courageously resisted repressive laws. There is resistance by legal organisations as well as the underground movement and freedom fighters.

This may well be the beginning of a final confrontation between the regime of white domination and the black majority which has been struggling for over seven decades for the rights of citizenship.

The crisis of the apartheid regime and the resistance of the people present a challenge to the United Nations and the international community, as well as an opportunity to make a decisive contribution to enable the South African people to abolish apartheid and build a new society, thereby eliminating not only an evil system in South Africa but also an ever increasing danger to peace and stability in Africa.

The Challenge and the Danger

But unless really effective international action is taken at this time with a clear understanding of the present stage of confrontation in South Africa and agreement on the objectives of international action, the crisis will only grow deeper. Uncoordinated action and mere symbolic measures may only lull us into slumber and bring in a greater disaster.

On the one hand, the regime – which has resorted to new levels of repression and inhumanity at every crisis – is capable of further brutality if it is cornered or sees an opportunity to drown the resistance in blood.

On the other hand, the upsurge of the people, which has assumed unprecedented scope, has the potential to develop further, especially in the rural areas and the Bantustans. The resistance which is now primarily non-violent may become violent.

I am, therefore, concerned that inadequate action by the international community may lead to a bloodbath and a tragedy we seek to avert.

The United Nations should be enabled to play a central role in international action, building on the experience and lessons of the past four decades since it was seized with the problem of racism in South Africa in 1946. It is the most appropriate forum to work out common objectives, so that individual governments will not pursue contradictory approaches and complicate the situation. It has the authority, under Chapter VII of the Charter, to take binding decisions, so that the national measures now being taken by many states can be universally applied.

The Western governments, in particular, bear a special responsibility since only they can exert the pressures and provide the assistance necessary to avert

enormous suffering and bloodshed in the process of liberation. I believe the Nordic countries can make a very special contribution, more than ever before, because of their loyalty to the United Nations and the spirit of solidarity, which has become a force in their public opinion.

The problem in South Africa is not that the Whites in that country are any different from Whites elsewhere or even that they are Whites. It is that power was transferred to a small privileged racial minority in that country in the aftermath of slavery and colonial rule, leaving the African majority at its mercy. The successive governments, responsible only to the minority, have sought to preserve and even enhance the privileges of the Whites through the humiliation, dispossession and suppression of the Blacks. The situation is essentially no different from that which developed in Southern Rhodesia in later years. The policies of the minority regimes – against morality and against the tide of history – were bound to provoke resistance and conflict.

The Issue in South Africa

There have been two constants in modern South African history.

On the one hand, the successive regimes in South Africa since 1910 have sought to preserve and perpetuate White domination, in one way or another, as long as possible. Since apartheid came to power in 1948, there has been an attempt to enforce a “final solution”, to make White domination and Black dispossession permanent.

Towards that end, the apartheid regime has constantly subjected Whites who espouse full equality to repression. It has prevented meaningful dialogue between Black and White leaders. For instance, Chief Lutuli was restricted in the 1950s when he began addressing White gatherings. A law was enacted twenty years ago prohibiting multi-racial political parties, thereby forcing the Liberal Party to dissolve.

On the other hand, happily, the national movement of the African and other oppressed peoples has always espoused, in spite of all the repression and violence to which it was subjected, a society in which all the people of the country – irrespective of race, colour or creed – could live together in harmony, enjoying equal rights. It has won the support and loyalty of some Whites in its struggle for such a society and has so far been able to avert a race conflict.

At the first meeting of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid in 1963, its chairman, the late Diallo Telli of Guinea, felt it necessary to stress that the task of the United Nations was not only to support the just struggle of the oppressed people of South Africa but to help extricate the Whites from the morass they had landed in.

Neither Africa nor the United Nations have ever viewed the problem as a conflict between Blacks and Whites. They have always stressed the need for a just and lasting solution in the interests of all the people of South Africa.

The United Nations has clearly stated, in unanimous resolutions, that the objective is the total elimination of apartheid, the dismantling of Bantustans and other structures of apartheid, and the establishment of a non-racial, democratic society in which all the people of South Africa will enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms on the basis of equality.

It has recognised that the modalities of change are for the South African people to decide, in a national convention of the genuine representatives of all the people or by other such means. It has stressed that an indispensable pre-requisite for such consultations is the release of Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners, a general amnesty and negotiations with Nelson Mandela and other genuine Black leaders on the future of the country.

Apartheid Regime cannot be Agent of Change

Long experience has shown that real change in South Africa cannot come through so-called reforms by the racist regime.

To expect the minority regime, responsive only to the White voters, to build a non-racial society is to live in a dangerous illusion.

Successive governments have come to power in South Africa with the promise of preserving White domination. They have pandered to and encouraged the Whites who sought to put the Blacks in their place and aroused racist passions.

Whenever there is international pressure, they profess to make reforms and changes but the essential purpose of preserving White domination remains. The so-called reforms are accompanied by greater repression of the leaders of the movement for freedom.

In 1974, Prime Minister Vorster undertook to move away from all racial discrimination and promised major changes in six months. A few years ago, P.W. Botha made similar promises. The sequel, in both instances, was not meaningful change, but more repression.

In the past few months, Mr. Botha has again been announcing changes and reforms. These moves have not emerged from negotiations with the genuine Black leaders but have followed consultations with some Western powers which have totally misjudged the mood of the South African people and encouraged him last year to enforce a new racist constitution, thereby provoking the present crisis.

More Danger than Promise

It would be naïve to believe that there is already a change of direction from White domination to equality in South Africa with only the pace of change at issue – or that real change can ever take place through unilateral measures by the regime.

The crucial issue is the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners and the beginning of negotiations with the resistance leaders as a first step towards change. Unless the Black leaders are involved in the process of change and unless the process is irreversible, the so-called “reforms” by the Botha regime can only be regarded as tactical manoeuvres to divide the opposition, divert attention and stabilise the situation before beginning another wave of repression.

There is more danger than promise in talks by major Western powers with the Botha regime on so-called reforms. Even more dangerous are suggestions that the Botha regime should negotiate with so-called “moderate” blacks who eschew the *right* to armed struggle. Any negotiations excluding the African National Congress – the premier organisation of the African people and the leading force in the present resistance – would be seen by the Black people as a fraud and a provocation.

Most of the Member States of the United Nations agree that the situation in South Africa is such that utmost pressure is required on the racist regime through comprehensive and mandatory sanctions. While there has been growing support to this view, especially since Nordic States endorsed economic sanctions in 1966, the major Western powers have continued to oppose sanctions for one reason or another.

Case for Sanctions

I believe that today the case for sanctions has prevailed.

Even the United Kingdom and the United States have felt obliged to implement some measures. But they seek to implement only a minimum of measures to assuage public opinion. They continue to repeat the worn-out argument that binding economic sanctions would hurt the Blacks. They continue to resist measures by the United Nations Security Council.

The proposal for international sanctions, however, came from the liberation movement of South Africa more than 25 years ago, when it launched a boycott in the country. In the past few months, Black leaders and religious leaders in South Africa have defied the law to call for sanctions and a recent poll has indicated that the Black people support sanctions.

To the best of my knowledge, the argument that sanctions hurt the Blacks in South Africa was first advanced by Eric Louw, the South African Foreign

Minister. As this argument, picked up by the friends of the South African regime, became more discredited, the Botha regime found it necessary to threaten a few months ago that it would expel a million foreign Blacks from South Africa if sanctions were imposed.

There is no doubt that the apartheid regime will try to transfer any burden to the rightless Blacks. It has been doing that already, by transferring the effects of the recession and causing unemployment to millions of Blacks.

All boycotts involve some sacrifice. Only recently, the Black people in South Africa organised an effective boycott of White stores: they paid the price for a purpose.

But some sanctions - for instance, a ban on the supply of sophisticated technology and labour-saving machinery - can only increase the employment of Blacks.

The purpose of sanctions is not to devastate the South African economy nor even to punish the Whites. They will not by themselves bring freedom to South Africa. They are meant to assist the forces of freedom by weakening the racist regime and by obliging its supporters to shed their illusions. In that context, sanctions such as an oil embargo, prohibition of investments in and export of technology to South Africa, and a ban on import of coal, uranium, diamonds and agricultural products from South Africa are essential.

The national measures recently taken by several countries are important for psychological and political reasons, but their effect is limited since they are uneven and uncoordinated.

I am glad that co-ordinated action is being considered by the Nordic States and by inter-governmental bodies such as the European Community and the Commonwealth. I hope that these discussions will lead to binding action by the United Nations Security Council so that there can be universal implementation.

Determination of a Threat to Peace

As early as 1952, the Asian-African States warned that apartheid constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

But, as you know, the major Western Powers have constantly prevented, by their vetoes, a determination by the Security Council that the situation in South Africa constitutes a threat to international peace under Chapter VII of the Charter – thereby making that Chapter inoperative. In the meantime, there have not only been massacres in South Africa, but the apartheid regime has been carrying on a colonial war in Namibia, and has repeatedly invaded neighbouring States so that there is not a mere threat to the peace, but repeated breaches of the peace and acts of aggression.

The attitude of the major Western powers in refusing to recognise this reality – even though they have the right to veto any coercive measures – is nothing less than a gross abuse of power. They have prevented the Security Council from implementing its own mandate under the Charter.

On September 9, 1985, President Ronald Reagan of the United States signed an Executive Order on some measures against South Africa. The Order begins with the following sentences :

“I, Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America, find that the policies and actions of the Government of South Africa constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy and economy of the United States and hereby declare a national emergency to deal with that threat.”

But not a threat to international peace.

On September 20, in a unanimous resolution on the South African invasions of Angola, the Security Council characterised them as a “serious threat to international peace and security” (Resolution 571). But the delegate of the United Kingdom rushed to assert that “it is not a resolution falling within the terms of Chapter VII of the Charter or constituting a formal determination thereunder.”

I hope that at this critical time, all governments will exert their influence to prevail upon the major Western powers to desist from such tactics and enable the United Nations to utilise its authority under Chapter VII of the Charter.

Assistance to the Oppressed People

I am sure you will agree with me that assistance to the oppressed people – their liberation movements, trade unions and other organisations – is extremely important at this time.

I would only like to make two comments.

It is distressing that when the needs have greatly increased, the United Nations funds for assistance to southern Africans are stagnating or declining. The voluntary contributions to these funds and to similar funds outside the United Nations have no relation to the capacity of Member states to contribute. I hope that other Western states will be persuaded to match the Nordic countries in their contributions, so that the level of assistance does not decline further.

While many governments make at least token contributions to humanitarian and educational assistance, very few governments have yet been persuaded to provide assistance to the organisations struggling against apartheid. This is a matter that needs greater attention of public opinion in Western countries.

Apartheid can be eliminated

The freedom movement in South Africa has turned the offensive of the Botha regime into a crisis of that regime.

It has disproved predictions that the Black people cannot mount effective resistance because of the web of repressive laws, the power and ruthlessness of the security forces and the many Black informers recruited by the regime. It has buried theories that armed struggle cannot be carried on in South Africa, in the absence of secure bases in neighbouring states, especially because of the terrain and the balance of power.

It has obliged major financial institutions to impose sanctions against South Africa.

The apartheid regime is highly vulnerable to a combination of internal resistance and international pressure. Assessments in Washington last year that White domination will continue into the twenty-first century are as short-sighted as earlier assessments on Portuguese territories.

Apartheid can be eliminated, given a new level of international action. Happily, the South African freedom movement has earned understanding and support from governments and peoples in all regions of the world – more than any other freedom movement in history – and such action is, therefore, possible.

Regrettably, the United States Government, which could have played a very significant role, has almost been a part of the problem.

Its policy of “constructive engagement” has been based on the assumption that “White-led change” is the only realistic course, and that P.W. Botha can be the principal agent of change. Bishop Tutu and other leaders in South Africa have expressed great distress at this policy and have denounced it strongly. I believe it has been disastrous for the image of the United States foreign policy.

In my consultations as the head of the United Nations Centre against Apartheid, I did not find a single Western government which endorsed the policy of “constructive engagement” or felt that it was in the interests of the United States and the West. But hardly any government has spoken out warning the United States of its folly - as only a friend can do.

I hope that the Western countries, which have been supportive of the aspirations of the African people, will find ways, in private and in public, to persuade the United States Government to cooperate in international action against apartheid.

STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID: INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION⁷

Apartheid has become a bad word. It is now condemned unanimously by all governments of the world and, in fact, disowned by the regime in South Africa itself. But does it mean the same thing to all of us?

Apartheid - or apartheid - is generally understood as racial segregation and segregation is inevitably tied up with racial discrimination.

Apartheid is racial segregation and three and a half million people have been moved from their homes and land, often at the point of a gun, to enforce segregation.

There is gross inequality in South Africa, much more than in other societies which suffer from racial discrimination. A black worker does not earn 50 or 60 percent of the wages of the white worker, but 20 per cent or less. The government expenditure for the education of a black child is not a little less than that on a white child, but one tenth.

Moreover, racial segregation and discrimination are the official state policy in South Africa.

But apartheid is much more than institutionalised racial segregation and discrimination.

Its origins go back to the abolition of slavery and the beginning of diamond and gold mining and the plantation system in South Africa a little over a century ago. The Africans were forced through poll-tax, hut tax and other means to work in the mines and plantations where they were housed in compounds and kept in semi-slavery.

Immediately after Britain handed over self-government to the white minority in 1910, the Africans were largely dispossessed of land. In the aftermath of the First World War, when a serious "poor-white" problem developed, the white regime began to solve it by further restricting freedom of movement and employment of Africans. In 1924, the Stallard Commission declared categorically that the African should not enter the areas outside the reserves except to minister to the needs of the whites.

⁷ Lecture delivered at the Cornell University in the United States on November 5, 1985.

When apartheid became the official policy with the advent of the National Party to power in 1948, the policy itself was not new. The United Party of General Smuts, which lost power, was also committed to racial segregation and discrimination – even if it spoke of white leadership rather than white domination.

But there were at least three new elements.

First, the National Party gained power by a hysterical campaign about “black peril”, mainly because there was an influx of Africans into the cities as labour for war-time industries. The government became, in a sense, the executive arm of a racist mob.

Second, this regime came to power at a time when the Whites had lost confidence in their innate superiority and the Blacks began losing their inferiority complex – partly because of the developments in South Africa itself and partly because of the colonial revolution in India and other Asian countries.

One of the first concerns of the government was to put the Blacks “in their place”, and keep them inferior, through “Bantu education”, rigid colour bar in employment and other means.

Third, the new regime, probably under the influence of Nazi ideology, looked for its own version of a “final solution” rather than merely trying to perpetuate white privilege as long as possible.

Hence, its systematic efforts to fan tribalism and create Bantustans so that the country can be turned into a White majority country, with the fiction of African rights in the scattered reserves turned into Bantustans. Already eight million Africans have been denationalised by the creation of four “independent” Bantustans.

The result has been virtual genocide for almost four decades.

In the nineteenth century, Africans owned almost all the land and the Whites had a few patches of land. By 1913, the situation was reversed: the Whites took 90 percent of the land and confined African land rights mainly to the reserves.

Until a few years ago, the official statistics of South Africa indicated that Africans constituted almost three-quarters of the population. The African population is now reduced by one third and, under the regime’s plans, there will hardly be any Africans by the end of the century.

The problem of apartheid is, therefore, rather unique. The solution should be seen not in terms of gradual removal of racial discrimination, but in the context of emancipation from slavery and colonialism or national liberation and redemption.

To look to the present regime to eliminate apartheid through evolutionary reforms is a dangerous illusion.

The Movement for Freedom is rather Unique

The freedom movement in South Africa is also somewhat unique, because of the composition of South Africa's population and the ideology which emerged during the course of the long struggle.

The establishment of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1912, uniting many tribes and classes, to strive for the rights of indigenous African people was a landmark in that struggle. The era of resistance by African kingdoms against alien occupation had ended before the dawn of the twentieth century. Power had been handed over to the white minority by the British government, ignoring the pleas of the Africans and violating moral commitments. The struggle of the African people became one for equal rights in a multi-racial society.

The unity of the people in the freedom movement was extended further soon after the Second World War when the ANC, the South African Indian Congress and the Natal Indian Congress agreed on cooperation. It was not only cemented but extended to the Coloured people in the Campaign of Defiance against Unjust Laws in 1952. The participation of some Whites in that campaign led to further widening of the front.

Thus, the confrontation in South Africa is not between an African majority and a white minority but between the great majority of the people and a racist regime.

There was a fraud of self-determination in 1910 with only the Whites participating in the decisions on the destiny of the country. The Africans were not even consulted at that time, nor ever since. They have been seeking genuine self-determination by *all* the people of the country on the basis of equality.

Because of the complexity of the economic and social structure of South Africa and the long struggle for liberation, there are many organisations in the freedom movement, as well as differences in ideological orientation.

But the freedom movement as a whole espouses the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. South Africa is a multi-racial country and the freedom movement is multi-racial, but the objective is a non-racial democratic society. Despite all the inhumanity of the white minority regimes, the freedom movement has always avoided reverse racialism.

Since Africans constitute the majority and are the most oppressed, their interest must be paramount and their leadership in the struggle is essential. But the liberation of the African people will be the liberation of all the people, including even the white minority.

The attachment of the freedom movement to non-racialism and the unity it has built across the colour lines have been demonstrated not merely in declarations but in practice.

About four years ago, when Neil Aggett, a white trade unionist, was killed in detention, there were demonstrations by African and other workers all over South Africa. In Johannesburg, ten thousand Africans defied the law to march in the funeral procession.

In 1984, the regime staged elections to segregated chambers of Parliament for the Coloured and Asian minorities, under a new constitution excluding the African majority. It tried to induce at least a sizeable percentage of these minorities to vote, through many inducements as well as intimidation, but the elections were boycotted by 85 percent of the voters. The resistance against the constitution, in fact, solidified the unity of the black people in the struggle against the racist regime.

Even more important, the regime has repeatedly and indiscriminately shot and massacred thousands of black people – not only unarmed demonstrators against racism, but women and children in the refugee camp in Cassinga and exiles in their sleep in Mozambique, Lesotho and Botswana. But the freedom movement, even when it felt obliged to abandon its strict adherence to non-violence, has refrained from killing innocent whites.

If the present crisis continues, some Whites may be killed despite the restraint of the freedom movement. There is also the danger of killings by splinter groups seeking attention or by infuriated crowds. But I believe that the leaders of the mainstream of the liberation struggle will refrain from terrorism because their restraint is not tactical but is based on firm attachment to the objective of a non-racial society. Only the international community, however, can prevent indiscriminate killings by the racist regime and the white racist terrorists.

International Involvement in Apartheid

The situation in South Africa is also rather exceptional in the scale of involvement of external interests in the system of oppression.

That system is a product of Dutch and British colonial conquest and administration and the handing over of power to the white settlers.

When diamonds and gold were discovered in South Africa foreign interests rushed to the country. In order to obtain cheap labour, the Africans were impoverished, forced to seek work as migrant labour, and subjected to stringent restrictions such as pass laws and curfew regulations. The foreign interests thus share responsibility for the system of oppression.

The development of the manufacturing industry, especially since the Second World War, did not lead to relaxation of restrictions but to adjustments between the interests of the white farmers, white mine owners and white industrialists.

Foreign investment in South Africa grew enormously and with it the foreign trade of South Africa.

The book value of United States direct investment has grown from about fifty million dollars during the Second World War to over two billion dollars now and the real value was estimated some time ago at fourteen billion dollars.

Until the Second World War, most of South Africa's trade was with Great Britain. That has now become internationalised, with the United States, Great Britain and West Germany in a neck to neck race with about 20 percent each.

Apartheid has been extremely profitable to foreign investors and traders. In fact, an analysis of the foreign investments may show that they have shot up with hardly any new net flow of capital – that is, largely out of re-investment – while the repatriated profits are many times the capital.

Some years ago, an African Chairman of the Special Committee, comparing apartheid and slavery, commented that the Afrikaner rulers of South Africa were perhaps like the foremen holding the slaves under the whip and facing their anger, while the slave-owners were living in elegance in distant capitals. That may be an exaggeration, but there is no doubt that much of the profit from apartheid flows outside South Africa.

There are conflicts of interest between the racist regime and the business community. For instance, when the regime reserved skilled labour for white workers and they had to be paid exorbitant wages, some of the business community called for the opening of skilled occupations to blacks and “equal pay for equal work” so that they could reduce their wage bills.

Because of the divestment campaigns and other pressures, many corporations have declared adherence to the Sullivan principles and other codes. But whenever there is an industrial dispute and a strike, the instinct of the management is to call the police to break up meetings of workers and even deport them *en masse* to impoverished Bantustans.

At times, businessmen may take a longer view and advocate changes to diffuse tensions, while some politicians continue to pander to racist prejudice and resist any change. But the business community has been a part of the problem in South Africa. Its lobbies in Western countries have perhaps been the greatest hindrance to effective international action against apartheid. It can hardly be the main instrument for a change to an egalitarian society in South Africa.

Solidarity with South African Movement

Another important feature of the South African situation is that outrage at the inhuman oppression by the authorities and admiration for the humanism of the freedom movement have led to the development of a powerful international movement in solidarity with the struggle in South Africa.

International concern over South Africa has a long history. Until the end of the Second World War, this was mainly in Great Britain the imperial Power; India, because of treatment of Indians in South Africa; and the United States because of the missionary connection and the feeling of affinity among the blacks.

Since Britain was the colonial power, the British press had the most frequent reports from South Africa. Delegations of South African blacks, together with some liberal-minded whites, visited Britain on several occasions to plead for African rights. While they failed to prevent a betrayal of trust by the British Governments, they were able to meet and interest Members of Parliament, editors and others in the plight of the oppressed people.

In India, South Africa became a national issue and a major preoccupation of the national movement since racism in South Africa affected India's national honour and dignity.

After the abolition of slavery, the province of Natal recruited labour in India on five-year indenture to work on plantations. Tens of thousands of Indians went to South Africa under such contracts. They were followed by traders and their assistants who settled in Natal and the Transvaal. In the course of time, the traders, as well as the labourers who went into market gardening after the expiry of indenture, became competitors to white traders and farmers. A vicious agitation against free Indians was organised by the whites and the local governments began to try to subject Indians to humiliating restrictions.

M.K. Gandhi, who arrived in South Africa on a professional assignment in 1893, became involved in organising resistance and stayed on in South Africa for 21 years. It was in South Africa that he led the first *Satyagraha* (non-violent resistance campaign) from 1906 to 1914. The authorities were obliged to make a number of concessions.

The humiliation of Indians in South Africa and their struggle attracted national attention in India. The Indian National Congress adopted resolutions on the matter from 1894.

India was to play a significant role in promoting international support for the freedom movement in South Africa from September 1, 1946, when a national government was formed under the leadership of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

American Interest

In the case of the United States, the initial contacts were due to the American missions in South Africa. The American Missionary Association, which established missions in Zululand, was greatly influenced by the abolitionist movement in the United States. The African Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States established a diocese in South Africa in 1893.

Through the efforts of these missions, scores of black South Africans were enabled to study in the United States, especially from about 1895 to 1915 when the South African authorities made that difficult. They enrolled in black colleges as well as in liberal institutions like Oberlin College and Wilberforce University.

This took place during the formative period of the African national movement in South Africa. The United States thus had some influence on the emerging leadership in South Africa and many Americans began to show an interest in the situation in South Africa.

Pixley ka Isaka Seme, the founder of the African National Congress in 1912, grew up at an American Congregational Mission station at Inanda, Natal. An American Congregational Missionary, S. Pixley, arranged for him to study at Mount Hermon School in Massachusetts. He then attended Columbia University, where he graduated with a B.A. in 1906, and proceeded for further studies in Britain. He was awarded an honorary doctorate by Columbia University in 1928.

Charlotte Maxeke, founder of the ANC Women's League, spent several years in the United States. She toured the United States with an African choir in the 1890s and stayed on to study at the Wilberforce University in Ohio, where she graduated with a B.A. in 1905. At Wilberforce, she married another South African, the Reverend Marshall Maxeke. They returned to South Africa and founded the Wilberforce Institute, one of the leading secondary schools for Africans in the Transvaal. She was active in the freedom movement and welfare work until her death in 1939.

John L. Dube, the first President of the ANC, studied at Oberlin College and a theological seminary in Brooklyn.

Solomon T. Plaatje, the first Secretary-General of ANC, spent two years in the United States in the early 1920s and met the leaders of the NAACP and others.

Dr. A.B. Xuma, President of the ANC from 1940 to 1949, studied in the United States from 1913 to 1926 – at the Tuskegee Institute, the University of Minnesota, the Marquette University medical school in Milwaukee and the Northwestern University. His wife, who headed the ANC Women's League for several years, was an American.

The University College of Fort Hare – an important intellectual centre for African leaders in Southern Africa – was founded largely with money from United States churches.

Dr. W.E.B. DuBois constantly publicised the plight of the African people in South Africa and their struggle ever since 1900.

Marcus Garvey had contacts with South African nationalist leaders in the 1920s and 1930s, and supported their demands.

In 1937, an International Committee on Africa (later renamed the Council on African Affairs) was established in New York following discussions by Max Yergen, a former missionary in South Africa, with Paul Robeson. It devoted special attention to publicity and action on South Africa and provided a forum for the leaders of the freedom movement in South Africa. The Council was perhaps the first organisation abroad devoted mainly to solidarity with the liberation struggle in South Africa.

It is necessary to emphasise the long-standing American contact with the South African freedom movement because some Americans have been repeating slanders of the racist regime that the liberation struggle in South Africa is Soviet-sponsored. There is more evidence to allege that the movement was sponsored in the United States long before there was a Soviet Union. The fact is, of course, that the movement was rooted in the soil of South Africa though it has had international contacts since its inception.

The United Nations

The establishment of the United Nations provided an important forum for the development of international solidarity with the struggle for freedom in South Africa, but it suffers from severe limitations in the exercise of its nominal authority.

Colonial peoples had to fight for their freedom after the war and millions of people laid down their lives before their nations attained independence. Freedom was not handed to them, by the oppressors or by the United Nations. The accomplishments and failures of the United Nations must be seen in terms of its contribution in support of those struggling for freedom. In some cases, it proved a potent force and in others not so significant.

The United Nations was born in a revolutionary period of history, but with different approaches to the new international order. Many of the governments which founded the Organisation saw it mainly as an instrument for maintaining peace through settlement of disputes between states, and promotion of disarmament. Freedom, human rights and economic and social cooperation were

secondary objectives to be attained through the slow process of discussion, declarations and covenants.

While this was the structure that the governments of the time could agree upon, the movements of people under colonial and racist oppression, representing the newly emergent states and much of the world's population, believed that colonialism and racism were the root causes of war and that there could be no peace unless those root causes were eliminated. For them, the ending of colonialism and racism was almost as important as disarmament.

At the first session of the General Assembly in 1946, for instance, the primary concerns of the Indian delegation were colonialism and racism, including racial discrimination in the Union of South Africa.

As the colonial revolution advanced, the number of Member States committed to this approach increased. The allies of the South African freedom movement increased in number and the South African regime became more and more isolated. The Non-Aligned or Third World states now constitute two-thirds of the membership of the United Nations. But the majority, by itself, cannot adopt binding sanctions.

It is also necessary to take into account several other forces in operation on the international scene.

On the one hand, because of the "cold war," some governments and military establishments, as well as segments of public opinion in the West, tended to protect the South African regime as a reliable ally and were amenable to be manipulated by it. The growing economic involvement of Western countries in South Africa built up lobbies in those countries with a vested interest in preventing international action against apartheid.

On the other hand, the independence of former colonial territories not only changed the balance in the community of states, but weakened racist forces in some former metropolitan countries. The development of the freedom movement in South Africa and the increasing ruthlessness of the regime had a growing impact on public opinion all over the world. Public opinion and public action increasingly influenced policies of governments in the West and restrained Western Powers from alliance with the South African regime.

Perhaps, my own main contribution in the United Nations was to promote cooperation between committed governments and public organisations in Western countries to provide as much moral, political and material support, direct and indirect, to the freedom movement as possible; to persuade individual Western states to move forward in action, however gradually, and take national measures, pending Security Council decisions; and to press the major Western powers to end their collaboration with the apartheid regime.

Significant results have been achieved though inadequate after decades of constant effort.

The United Nations has taken important decisions on such matters as the legitimacy of the freedom struggle and the illegitimacy of the apartheid regime. The apartheid regime has been excluded from numerous inter-governmental organisations and conferences.

Substantial assistance has been provided to the oppressed people of South Africa and their liberation movements.

The international anti-apartheid movement became one of the most significant and effective movements of the post-war world, involving millions of people.

Even in the field of sanctions, progress has been made.

A mandatory arms embargo has been instituted against South Africa by the Security Council in November 1977.

All major oil exporting states, including Western states, have undertaken not to sell their oil to South Africa.

With the development of the confrontation in South Africa, and the proclamation of the State of Emergency this year, several Western states imposed national sanctions, without waiting for a mandatory decision by the Security Council.

There are grave dangers ahead, since the Apartheid regime is not only desperate but has reason to believe that the major Western Powers are not fully committed to a transfer of power to the representatives of the majority of the population in South Africa. Whatever its temporary successes, the apartheid regime can and must be defeated. The essential requirement is to develop further the close cooperation between the governments truly committed to liberation in South Africa and the public organisations which are equally committed, in responding to the needs and appeals of the great freedom movement in South Africa.

“We, the people” in whose name the Charter of the United Nations was formulated must become the driving force of United Nations action against apartheid.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS⁸

People in South Africa and abroad are now seriously discussing not only the final abolition of apartheid but the system that will replace it.

It is a very different atmosphere from a year and a half ago.

I must pay tribute to the great liberation movement of South Africa for this achievement - and also to the anti-apartheid movements and other groups which have struggled day after day for decades, to the frontline states and other committed governments – and last, but not least, to the Special Committee against Apartheid.

⁸ Extract from a statement presented to the special session of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid, November 25, 1985.

In February 1984, when there was much gloom and pessimism, I ventured to say that the apartheid regime was not so strong as pictured, but was faced with a political and economic crisis.

At this time, I would like to warn against over-optimism.

The apartheid regime is capable of much more violence. It is manoeuvring to control the situation by a combination of repression and moves to satisfy its external friends rather than the freedom fighters. We should not be taken by surprise if there is – and I am afraid there will be – a serious counter-offensive by the racists.

Let us not forget that the State of Emergency has not been terminated, but extended to wider areas. On November 1, the apartheid regime extended blanket immunity for its security forces and other officials to cover the entire country, not only the areas under the State of Emergency. Yet, the Security Council has not even discussed the implementation of its resolution of July calling for an end to the State of Emergency.

I think the moves in the United States to assist UNITA should be taken very seriously. This is not only a matter that affects Angola or Namibian independence. It will inevitably involve joint action (or “Parallelism”) by the apartheid regime and a super power in total disregard of the OAU and a very grave danger of the widening of conflict.

The policy of “constructive engagement”, I believe, has been a disaster not only for the South African people but also for the United States. Intervention in Angola can result in a much greater disaster – and I hope the friends of the United States will dissuade it from such a folly.

I would also take very seriously the attitude of the United Kingdom government.

Immediately after the Commonwealth summit, it not only declared in London that it would take no further action against apartheid, but its ambassador in South Africa chose to address the so-called black mayors on United Nations Day to welcome the “important changes” in South Africa and to argue against sanctions.

Her Majesty’s Government announced that it would not meet President Oliver Tambo because ANC is involved in a violent struggle – taking the cue from P.W. Botha. It used the Commonwealth Declaration as a pretext for vetoing the Non-Aligned draft resolution in the Security Council on Namibia.

Sir John Thomson, the United Kingdom representative, told the General Assembly that apartheid is an internal, not an international, problem –

contradicting the position taken by the United Nations for over three decades and by the United Kingdom since 1963. When Botha talks of a dozen population groups in South Africa, Sir John sees even more. And he says very bluntly that the United Kingdom will not make any economic sacrifices by imposing sanctions against South Africa “because South African Government is pursuing bad policies.”

I must draw your attention to the fact that in October, the Minister of National Defence of Chile, Vice-Admiral Patricio Carvajal, made a visit to South Africa and to the war zone in Namibia – and expressed “admiration” for the work of the South African Defence Forces.

How ironic that Chile was in the same month speaking on behalf of Latin America at the Day of Solidarity meeting of the Special Committee and at the General Assembly meeting on the 25th anniversary of the decolonisation Declaration – and it is a member of the United Nations body entrusted with assistance to the political prisoners and their families in South Africa and Namibia.

I wonder whether this visit of the Chilean Defence Minister is for the reinforcement of the “alliance of pariahs” to defy the world or was encouraged by others.

Role of Special Committee against Apartheid

In the past year, there has been a breakthrough in international action – especially as regards national economic sanctions – though the measures announced so far are very limited.

There is a possibility of much greater action if diplomatic efforts by the Special Committee and committed states are closely co-ordinated with public action by anti-apartheid groups.

The Special Committee has, since its inception, played a key role in providing correct assessments of developments, and proposals for action, in consultation with the liberation movements and anti-apartheid movements. That is now more important than ever, in view of the propaganda and manoeuvres of the Pretoria regime and its friends.

The Committee will need to see that outdated proposals are not revived in the United Nations and allowed to create confusion.

For instance, in 1953, a United Nations body proposed a round-table conference. In 1964, another body recommended a national convention. These proposals were correct at that time and were supported by the liberation movement, but the situation has changed since then.

The Pretoria regime is now hinting at a round-table conference with its puppets – perhaps with the inclusion of a few others to give it credibility – so as to isolate and downgrade the liberation forces.

The Special Committee should denounce such manoeuvres and stress that the first step is talks between the regime and those who are fighting against it.

Similarly, I think that the situation in southern Africa should no more be described as a threat to the peace. It is a war situation. The Pretoria regime has been at war with the South African people, the Namibian people, the frontline states and indeed the United Nations, for several years. Any “threat” to peace arises from the policies and actions of the states which assist that regime and protect it from international action.

I will conclude with three brief observations.

First, the coalition against apartheid now includes a majority of Western states. It is of utmost importance to preserve the unity of this coalition and expand it further.

Second, while the primary concern of this Special Committee is the situation in South Africa, its action should fully take into account the struggle in Namibia and the security of the frontline states.

Third, the Special Committee performed a crucial role in the years when the forces of liberation were on the defensive and trying to overcome the enormous repression. In recent years, however, they have recovered and advanced and seized the initiative. The Special Committee and the anti-apartheid movements must ensure that solidarity work responds to the new situation and is fully supportive of the needs of the forces which are engaged in the battle.

SIGNIFICANCE OF AFRICAN AND INDIAN JOINT STRUGGLE⁹

The struggle for liberation in South Africa – especially the development of the alliance between the African and Indian people in that struggle – became the base for the building of a powerful united democratic front to destroy apartheid and establish a non-racial democratic society.

The people in South Africa do not ask us to weep for them. They do not ask us for pity. They ask for solidarity with their struggle – a struggle of enormous world significance, which should make the people of Asia, Africa and the Caribbean and indeed all of humanity, proud of the indomitable human spirit of freedom.

This is a silver jubilee year for that liberation struggle.

In 1961, the racist regime proclaimed a so-called republic and suppressed, by a massive show of force, the national protest led by Nelson Mandela. The liberation movement then made the momentous decision to abandon its strict adherence to non-violence, and to combine peaceful resistance with armed struggle.

On December 16, this year, it will be the twenty-fifth anniversary of the dramatic appearance on the scene of *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (“Spear of the Nation”) – the military wing of the African National Congress – led by Nelson Mandela and including combatants of all the racial groups in the country, African, Coloured, Indian and White.

1961 was also the year, when the first major advance was made in the international isolation of the apartheid regime – with the exit of that regime from the Commonwealth and the decision of African states to break off relations with South Africa.

Since then, there have been many advances in the international movement of solidarity with the struggle of the people in South Africa.

I would like to commend the Caribbean countries for the significant role they have played in that movement – far beyond their population and size – and to express my confidence that they will play an even greater role in the coming

⁹ Silver Jubilee address at the University of West Indies, St. Augustine campus, in Trinidad, on March 18, 1986. Published in *Mainstream*, New Delhi, on June 28, 1986.

period, both before and after the victory of the revolution.

The Caribbean contribution was, of course, not in the Caribbean alone and not only by governments. West Indian organisations in Britain helped in the establishment of the Boycott Movement in 1959, which was renamed the Anti-Apartheid Movement in 1960 and had its office at first in the basement of the surgery of Lord Pitt on Gower Street.

Trinidad dock workers boycotted South African cargoes as early as April 1960 – even before their country became independent.

One of the biggest conspiracies to violate the arms embargo against South Africa was exposed by the dock workers of Antigua in 1978. And the West Indies have made a very special contribution to the boycott of apartheid sport.

The Caribbean governments have made their contribution in the United Nations, the Commonwealth and other organisations and by direct assistance to the liberation movements. In 1978, the United Nations awarded a gold medal to the then Prime Minister of Jamaica, Michael Manley, in recognition not only on his personal commitment and contribution but also that of the Caribbean governments and peoples to the struggle against apartheid.

A Personal Note

I became interested in the struggle for freedom in South Africa in my student days, especially in 1946. That was the year when the Indian people in South Africa launched a passive resistance movement against the “Ghetto Act” – the year when India imposed a trade embargo against South Africa and complained to the United Nations about racial discrimination in that country, thereby internationalising the South African problem.

It was also the year of the first strike of African mineworkers – which was suppressed brutally by the government of General Smuts, which did not hesitate to massacre the strikers on the streets and to force the miners down the pits, level by level, at gunpoint until they resumed work.

It was the year when the African National Congress and the Indian Congresses of Natal and Transvaal sent a joint delegation to the United Nations in the first joint action of the two communities. India was still under colonial rule at that time. Our generation saw our struggle for freedom as but a part of the struggle of all colonial peoples for emancipation.

We in India appreciated the support we received, in difficult days, from the great Pan African leaders – like Dr. DuBois and Paul Robeson, to name but two – and from the Pan African movement to which Trinidadians like Henry Sylvester-Williams and George Padmore made a great contribution.

At the fifth Pan African Congress in Manchester in October, 1945, it was George Padmore who moved the resolution on Indian independence on behalf of the standing Committee of the Conference. It reads :

“We, the representatives of African peoples and peoples of African descent assembled at the Fifth Pan African Congress in Manchester, do hereby send fraternal greetings to the toiling masses of India through the Indian National Congress and pledge our solidarity with them in their fight for national freedom and economic emancipation.”

I would also like to recall that in its resolution on South Africa, the Manchester Congress recognised that Africans are not the only victims of racialism and that Indians also suffered similar discrimination. It demanded “justice and human equality for the Indian community in South Africa.”

We too tried to do our share – for instance by action to prevent the dispatch of Indian and colonialist troops to reconquer Indonesia and the nations of Indo-China which had declared independence in August 1945 in the wake of the Japanese surrender.

Personal Involvement

When I came to the United States as a student in March, 1946, I was moved by the love of the Black people, who anxiously followed our struggle and I addressed several meetings organised by them and visited many black homes to speak about that struggle.

I met the delegation of the South African freedom movement when it arrived in New York and joined the protest demonstration organised by the Council on Affairs, led by Paul Robeson, in front of the South African Consulate-General.

I have ever since been increasingly inspired by the great liberation struggle in South Africa – a struggle that has united African, Indian and other peoples in that country, a struggle that has espoused a non-racial and international outlook similar to that of the Pan African movement and our own national movement in India, with courage and consistency.

It so happened that most of my later life – as a United Nations official from 1949 to 1985, and since then – has become dedicated to promoting understanding of that struggle and securing support for it from governments and peoples around the world.

I recall with great satisfaction that one of my contributions as head of the United Nations Centre against Apartheid was to organise international tributes not only to martyrs in the South African struggle but also to those who have made significant

contributions in solidarity with that struggle, especially the great Pan African leaders like Dr. W.E.B. DuBois, Paul Robeson, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., Marcus Garvey, Dantas Bellegarde, Frantz Fanon, Henry Sylvester-Williams and George Padmore.

People's History

The first Pan African Conference, convened in London by Henry Sylvester-Williams, barrister from Trinidad, said in its "Address to the Nations of the World" drafted by Dr. W.E.B. DuBois: "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colour line – the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the seas."

Sylvester-Williams had been concerned about the treatment of the black people in South Africa and the occupation of Rhodesia and had been involved in demonstrations in London against racist oppression in South Africa. Southern Africa had inspired him to convene the conference.

At that time, the British government was carrying on a war against the Boers and one of the causes of the war, as defined by it, was the ill-treatment by the Boer Republics of the indigenous African people as well as Her Majesty's Indian subjects. Both the Africans and Indians were, of course, to be betrayed soon after the end of the war and handed over to the tender mercies of the white settlers in one of a series of acts of perfidy.

But the words of the Pan African Conference have proved prophetic, as our peoples struggled to destroy the colour line and build a community of humankind.

Since the end of the Second World War, a hundred nations have freed themselves from colonialism at the cost of millions of lives and now constitute a majority of the international community.

The map of the world has changed its colours. A shameful era in human history, spanning four or five centuries, is nearing its end, with the last battles being fought in South Africa and Namibia.

History has begun to be rewritten more truthfully. Africa, for instance, is no more the dark continent without a history, but the continent with a heritage of great kingdoms and civilisations.

We must acknowledge with gratitude and respect the contributions of historians of Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, as well as black scholars like Dr. W.E.B. Dubois.

The time has come, indeed, to conceive of a people's history of the world – a history in which the majority of the people, with darker skins, are not mere

victims but actors.

Nightmare of Humanity

The period since the European navigators went in search of the wealth of the Indies and discovered Africa on the way or sailed by mistake to the Caribbean, the era when the European powers despoiled three continents, should not be romanticised as a story of European adventure, conquest and supremacy but treated as a long nightmare of humanity.

We must delve into our common experiences and the struggles our peoples have waged from the very beginning of European conquest and enslavement, and our march to redemption.

We must recall not only the breaking of contacts among our peoples, when our nations became the preserves of different colonial powers, but the new links which were forged by our common suffering and struggle and which determine our present and our future.

For instance, hardly anyone in India knows that India was also a victim of slavery, though on a very small scale. Some Indians were, in fact, taken to South Africa as slaves and their descendants are in the so-called 'Coloured' community.

Very little is written of the contacts between the national movements in colonial countries which led after independence to the Asian-African Conference in Bandung and the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity. The history of the Pan African movements is hardly mentioned in textbooks of world history.

Little is said of the extensive international contacts developed by the Indian national movement, especially under the leadership of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, with the freedom movements in Africa and elsewhere. These have had a great impact not only on the policy of independent India but also on the progress of the colonial revolution since the Second World War. They have led India to champion the cause of freedom in South Africa, Namibia and other African nations in the United Nations and other fora, at the cost of the hostility of major Western powers and thereby lay the foundations of the Non-Aligned Movement in which Africa has played an increasing role since the independence of Ghana in 1957.

Post-Slavery Period

One subject that deserves fuller study is "post-slavery," the replacement of slavery by new forms of bondage and servitude, humiliation and exploitation of human beings as mere beasts of burden – the systems of indentured labour, colonialism, neo-colonialism and their variants, not to speak of genocide.

For even today, after our countries have attained independence, our peoples are victims of decisions made in distant chancelleries and stock markets. Foreign governments attempt to decide our friends and enemies. They are choosing, even organising, so-called freedom fighters in our own lands and arming them with murderous weapons.

Soon after the abolition of slavery, Africa was carved up and almost the entire continent brought under colonial rule so that oppression extended from the coastal regions to the heart of the continent.

At the same time, the indentured labour system was invented to continue the supply of cheap and rightless labour, under conditions of semi-slavery, to South Africa and the Western hemisphere.

Indentured Labour

India – ravaged in the nineteenth century by famines, both natural calamities and tragedies created or aggravated by colonial plunderers – became the main victim of this system. Indian communities developed in south and east Africa, in the Western hemisphere and in some Asian and Pacific countries.

Indians were first brought to South Africa to work on sugar plantations in the Natal in the 1860s as the Zulu people were unwilling to work for the planters. More were brought later to work in the coal mines.

The Indian workers organised the first strike in South Africa, more than a century ago.

As the need for cheap labour increased with the discovery of diamond and gold mines, thousands of Chinese workers were brought in and there was even a move to bring some workers from the Caribbean. But that was not sufficient – and Africans were forced by the hut tax, the poll tax and other measures to labour in the mines, on the white farms and later in factories.

Coming after the dispossession of the Africans from most of their ancestral land in a century of so-called “kaffir wars,” this forced labour system set the pattern for the inhuman oppression of the African people.

Apartheid was not an exclusive invention of the Afrikaners, who trekked to the north in protest against the abolition of slavery. It was equally the creation of the mineowners – the British and American interests among them – in collusion with the local authorities.

Gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand in 1886. South Africa became prosperous but that brought no comfort to the indigenous people of that country but only immense sorrow and suffering.

This year, in a sense, marks the centenary of apartheid and must make us recall that prosperity has always made the racists more greedy and enabled them to invest more in reinforcing the chains that bound the black people and to shoot them.

The Africans who were forced to labour on the mines and the Indians who were duped by false promises to work on the plantations were in the same boat then. They are in the same trench today fighting for deliverance from racist oppression.

Not Reform but Elimination of Racism

Even today, in the vast literature on South Africa, most writers continue to contend that the oppression of the black people was mainly the crime of the Afrikaners, that peaceful evolution toward equality would have taken place if the coalition of General Smuts and the English-speaking people had remained in power, that apartheid began with the coming to power of the National Party in 1948 and that our task is to beg for so-called reforms so as to return to that course of gradual evolution.

Twenty years ago, I recall, British and American delegates in the United Nations used to advise us that we should pin our faith on liberal Whites. Since the advent of the Reagan administration, the advice from Chester Crocker is that we should supplicate that great reformer, P.W. Botha himself. The Boer Republics were, of course, based on racism. They proclaimed, misquoting the Bible, that there can be no equality between the Whites and the Blacks in church or state, and that has continued to represent the conviction of the racist Afrikaner leaders even since.

But the Indians had experienced worst racism – though sometimes camouflaged – at the hands of the English-speaking Whites in the Natal. It was in the Natal, not in Bloemfontein, that as late as 1946, European clubs carried the sign “Indians and dogs not allowed.”

General Smuts, extolled in the West as a liberal, was, in fact, the architect of much of the racist legislation in South Africa.

Dr. DuBois saw this clearly. The Third Pan African Congress of 1923 said in his words: “What more paradoxical figure today confronts the world than the official head of a great South African State¹⁰ striving blindly to build Peace and Goodwill in Europe by standing on the necks and hearts of millions of black Africans.”

The struggle in South Africa today is not for a change of racist masters, not for

¹⁰ General Smuts

the replacement of apartheid by camouflaged racism, but for the total elimination of racism and the building of a non-racial society in which all the people will enjoy equal rights in all fields and no one will suffer the slightest humiliation because of the colour of his or her skin.

It is in that context that I wish to deal with the development and significance of the alliance of the African and Indian peoples in their common struggle against racism, the role of this alliance in building a united democratic front of all the black people and the democratic whites, and the wider implications of this great struggle in South Africa.

The Parallel Struggles

1946 was a landmark in the development of unity in the struggle of Africans and Indians in South Africa.

Africans and Indians have, of course, struggled for their rights for decades before 1946 but their struggles had been parallel rather than united.

The first modern mass movement in South Africa was the Indian movement led by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi from 1894 to 1913. It was confined to the Indian community and had hardly any contact with the Africans.

I have heard Indians in the South African liberation movement – but never the Africans – criticise Gandhi for this. I believe we should understand the circumstances.

The Indians were indentured labourers or freed labourers or immigrants in South Africa. They were a small and vulnerable minority. Even some liberal whites who espoused African rights were not sympathetic to the settlement of the Indians in South Africa.

The Indian community included Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Parsis. Most of the Indians knew little English and spoke Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati, Marathi and other languages. To unite them in one movement was an enormous task and Gandhi deserves great credit for his leadership and organisational skill.

There were only beginnings of political organisation among the African people at the time, after the defeat of their kingdoms. The modern national movement of the Africans began only in 1912 with the formation of the South African Native Congress (later re-named African National Congress) which sought to unify the African people of all ethnic groups and classes in a common struggle for their inalienable rights.

Gandhi, for his part, was experimenting and learning in South Africa. He saw his mission as defence of the honour and redress of the grievances of the Indians in a

part of the British empire to which he owed allegiance. He felt that identification with the cause of the African majority would only scare the Whites into greater hysteria and endanger the Indians.

He had not at that time envisaged the independence of India or of South Africa. He became a “*Mahatma*” only after he returned to India, when he led the movement for national independence and looked beyond independence.

In 1946, he was to declare that “there is a real bond between Asiatics and Africans” which “will grow as time passes.” (*Harijan*, February 24, 1946). Asking Indians in South Africa to associate with the Africans, he said, the slogan today “is no longer 'Asia for the Asiatics' 'or Africa for the Africans' but the unity of all the exploited races of the earth.”

As I said, the Indian and African movements in South Africa early in this century were parallel movements.

The Africans sent a delegation to London to appeal to the British Government and Parliament against the handing over of power to the white minority. The Indian community sent its own delegation led by Gandhi.

Both communities were anxious to obtain sympathy and support of liberal-minded whites. Many of their white friends were the same and that may have established some bonds. I have in mind, for instance, several members of the Schreiner and Molteno families.

Until the Second World War, the activity of the African National Congress, with some notable exceptions, was largely confined to petitions, deputations and conferences, while the white regime continued to whittle down the elementary rights of the Africans. Militant mass action was mainly by the trade union movement which became a significant force in the 1920s.

The Indian Congresses, mainly under the leadership of traders, were also engaged in petitioning to the authorities against new discriminatory measures, seeking support from India from time to time, in order to ensure the survival and welfare of the Indian community.

There were already some efforts to bring the African, Indian and Coloured people together to deal with the common problem of racist oppression by the white minority.

The African People’s Organisation, founded by Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman and others, called for united efforts by Africans, Coloured people and Indians. Together with D.D.T. Jabavu, the African educator, Dr. Abdurahman organised Non-European Conferences in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

Africans, Coloured people and Indians also worked together in the trade union movement.

Some of the radicals established a Non-European Unity Movement in 1943. The Communist Party provided a forum for Africans, Coloured people and Indians to work and struggle together, along with some Whites.

But these were only early beginnings and did not carry the mainstreams of the black communities.

Three Doctors' Pact

During the Second World War, there was a great advance in politicisation of the black people in South Africa. Africans and Indians worked together in the Non-European Unity Movement, in the Non-European Trade Union Council and in many campaigns.

The African Youth League was established in 1944 and was within a few years to turn the ANC into a militant mass movement. Some of the founding members of that League – Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo and Walter Sisulu – have been in the leadership of the ANC for almost forty years.

The Indian community had changed, with most of its members born in South Africa, and they were no longer satisfied with mere petitions to the authorities for mitigation of oppression and harassment.

In the Indian community, a very important role was played by Dr. Yusuf Dadoo, a Marxist, who was in the leadership of many joint struggles, facing repeated imprisonment and persecution. He advocated that the Indian people should link their destiny with that of the African majority and join with the Africans in the struggle against racism.

His approach coincided with that of Jawaharlal Nehru and other leaders of the Indian National Congress who advised Indians abroad to identify themselves with the indigenous people.

Dr. Dadoo, and Dr. G.M. ("Monty") Naicker, a Gandhian from Durban, were able to displace the leadership of the Transvaal and Natal Indian Congresses and transform them into militant mass organisations.

In June 1946 the two Indian Congresses launched a passive resistance movement against the "Ghetto Act" which prohibited Indians from acquiring any more land. More than two thousand Indians, including 300 women, went to jail and many of them were brutally beaten up by white hooligans while the police stood by. Some members from other racial groups joined the campaign as an act of solidarity.

Before initiating the passive resistance, representatives of the South African Indian Congress visited India to explain the situation to the government and the public and obtain support.

The Government of India then broke all trade relations with South Africa and lodged a complaint against South Africa before the United Nations, thereby internationalising the issue of racism in South Africa. The Indian leaders also persuaded Dr. A.B. Xuma, President-General of the African National Congress, to lead a multi-racial delegation to the United Nations and collected funds for the purpose.

Out of this co-operation came the “Three Doctors’ Pact” of 1947 – an agreement signed by Dr. Xuma, Dr. Dadoo and Dr. Naicker – for co-operation between the ANC and the Indian Congresses in the struggle for equal rights in conformity with the United Nations Charter.

Unity forged in Struggle

The members of the African Youth League, espousing African nationalism, were initially rather hesitant about any alliance with other racial groups. But experience in the struggle removed their apprehensions and reservations.

The Youth League was impressed by the participation of Indians in the May Day work stoppage in 1950 in protest against the ruthless measures by the apartheid regime, which came to power in 1948. Eighteen Africans were killed and scores were injured when police fired at African crowds.

The African National Congress, the Indian Congresses and the Communist Party then organised a huge demonstration of mourning and protest on June 26, 1950. That date has since become the South Africa Freedom Day and the occasion for the launching of major campaigns.

Then came the historic Campaign of Defiance against Unjust Laws, jointly organised by the ANC and the South African Indian Congress and launched on June 26, 1952. Nelson Mandela was the Volunteer-in-Chief of the campaign and his deputy was Moulvi Cachalia.

More than eight thousand people went to jail in that Campaign defying discriminatory laws.

Until that time, some people in South Africa and abroad feared or insinuated that the African people were incapable of non-violent resistance. But if passive resistance was a gift of Indians, the African people in South Africa and then the black people of the United States have developed and enriched it into a potent weapon, at a certain stage of the struggle for freedom, even against the most inhuman oppressor.

Internationally, the Defiance Campaign led to the initiative of Asian-African States in calling for United Nations consideration of apartheid, and to the establishment of the Defence and Aid Fund, the American Committee on Africa and other groups to support the struggle in South Africa.

Inside South Africa, it resulted in the enormous growth in the membership of the ANC and in the establishment of the South African Coloured People's Congress and the (White) Congress of Democrats, and later the multi-racial South African Congress of Trade Unions. The five Congresses joined together in 1955 in the "Congress Alliance."

Freedom Charter

In June 1955, on the initiative of the African National Congress, a Congress of the People was convened in Kliptown, near Johannesburg, to draw up a Freedom Charter for a democratic South Africa of the future. It brought together 3,000 delegates from all racial groups and from all over the country and was the largest multi-racial conference in South African history.

At that Conference, the ANC presented its highest honour – *Isitwalandwe* – to Chief Albert J. Lutuli, President-General of the ANC, Dr. Yusuf Dadoo, President of the South African Indian Congress, and Father Trevor Huddleston, now President of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Britain.

The Freedom Charter proclaimed that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it" and laid down the guidelines for the South Africa of the future. It was subsequently endorsed by each of the Congresses and is still the banner of their common struggle. The alliance of all racial groups in the struggle for the abolition of racism and the establishment of a non-racial democratic society was cemented by this Charter.

Before the end of the year, the apartheid regime arrested 156 leaders of the movement in pre-dawn raids all over the country and charged them with treason. The treason trial which dragged on until March 1961, when it collapsed and all the accused were acquitted, further reinforced the alliance.

Though the separate Congresses for the different groups remained in existence because of historical and practical reasons and because that helped to develop African leadership, the struggles became more and more joint struggles – not only of Africans and Indians, but also of the Coloured people and some Whites.

They were together, for instance, in the South African Federation of Women, which was established in 1954 and which led the great march of women on Pretoria on August 9, 1956. They were together in many trade union struggles.

“Umkhonto we Sizwe”

Another milestone in unity was after the Sharpeville massacre, the banning of the ANC and the beginning of armed struggle.

With the escalation of repression, and the suppression of protests against the establishment of a White Republic in 1961 by a massive show of force, Nelson Mandela and others became convinced that they had to abandon strict adherence to non-violence and prepare for an armed struggle.

The *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (“Spear of the Nation”) the military wing of the ANC – which made its dramatic appearance on December 16, 1961, was a multi-racial organisation. Among its leaders were many Indians, Coloured people and Whites.

Since the Sharpeville massacre, a number of leaders of the struggle had to go into exile – on the instructions of the liberation movement – to promote international action against the apartheid regime and to arrange training of freedom fighters for the armed struggle. They worked together under the leadership of the ANC, instead of setting up separate offices of their organisations.

In 1968, the ANC Congress in Morogoro decided to open membership to other racial groups and to utilise the services of non-Africans in ANC offices abroad. Dr. Yusuf Dadoo was elected Vice-President of the ANC Revolutionary Command.

A further step was taken at the ANC Congress in Zambia last year when Indian, White and Coloured leaders were elected to the national executive committee of the ANC.

Black Consciousness

The emergence of the black consciousness movement in South Africa in the late 1970s has generated some misunderstanding and confusion. Some of the literature on the movement engaged in mysticism and it was often portrayed as anti-white and almost a black version of apartheid.

The movement had several strands but its essence and historic significance was in forging a firmer unity among the oppressed people in fighting the collaborators – the chiefs and others in the black community who tried to take advantage of the repression against the liberation movement by accepting the apartheid caste system and the crumbs from the oppressors – and in facilitating the revival of the liberation struggle with greater force.

Successive racist regimes had tried to maintain their domination by dividing the black people by a sort of caste system. The Indians were, however, in a peculiar position – on the one hand as a class between the Coloured people and the African

majority and on the other as a totally insecure community since the regime did not even accept the permanence of the community until the 1960s.

After the National Party came to power in 1948 with its apartheid policy, it enforced stricter segregation among the racial groups but by humiliating the Coloured people and the Indians, as well as the African majority, facilitated a greater unity of the oppressed people.

There has been some confusion about the use of the term “Black” to denote all the oppressed people of South Africa – and the regime has tried to compound the confusion by changing the official designation of the African majority from “Native” to “Bantu” and then “Black”.

But to me, “Black” is not meant to define the colour of the skin any more than “red” defines the skin colour of Communists or “yellow” the colour of stoolpigeons. “Black” today denotes those fighting against colonialism and racism.

The concept of “Black” to denote all the oppressed people in South Africa has had an international impact.

In Britain, for instance, as the Asian, African and Caribbean minorities began to unite to resist racist assaults and assert their rights, they tended to define themselves collectively as “black”. I must, in this connection, acknowledge the contribution of a number of leaders of Caribbean origin – and make special mention of the Hansib Publications and its founder, Arif Ali from Guyana.

I am confident that the Black unity forged in the struggle in South Africa will survive and grow.

As I mentioned earlier, the caste system imposed by the racist regime to divide the oppressed people was eroded by the greed of the apartheid regime, which robbed and humiliated the Coloured and Indian minorities and thereby facilitated Black unity under the leadership of the African liberation movement. During the past decade, partly on the advice of its friends abroad, the apartheid regime has been trying again to divide the oppressed people by offering some privileges to the Coloured people and Indians, but the latter have rejected them with contempt and reaffirmed their solidarity with the African majority.

The relaxations of some discriminatory measures against the Coloured people and Indians in an effort to entice them have been welcomed by the Reagan administration and hailed in apartheid propaganda as reforms. But these are really contemptible manoeuvres by the racists.

Soweto and After

By mid-1970s, the liberation movement recovered from the severe blows it had suffered in 1963-64, and there was an upsurge of workers, students and others.

The response of the regime was, as always, an escalation of repression – the massacre of African schoolchildren in Soweto on June 16, 1976, and the indiscriminate killing and maiming of students and youth all over the country for several years.

But repression and violence now only fuelled resistance, and the people resorted to mass defiance of the police, making many repressive laws inoperable.

It is, for instance, against the law to carry an ANC flag but when tens of thousands of people began marching with the ANC flag, the police could not stop them and the law was neutralised.

Thousands of young people went abroad to join the freedom fighters. Armed struggle escalated – deliberately restricted by the liberation movement to attacks on symbols of apartheid and carefully chosen targets like police stations, military bases, the nuclear reactor and the oil-from-coal plant – while taking great precautions to avoid killing of civilians. The initiative was thus seized by the people.

Faced with a political and economic crisis, the Botha regime tried, on the one hand, to counter the armed struggle by blackmailing and destabilising the frontline states and, on the other, by attempting to divide the oppressed people.

But when it staged elections for the South African Indian Council in 1981, offering some crumbs to the Indian community, the Natal Indian Congress and the Transvaal Indian Congress revived their activities and called for a boycott. There was a 90 percent boycott.

Then the apartheid regime proposed a new constitution offering separate chambers of parliament to the Coloured people and Indians, and excluding the African majority.

That only provoked widest opposition among the Black people.

It was at the conference of the Transvaal Indian Congress in January 1983 that the Reverend Alan Boesak proposed the establishment of the United Democratic Front, which was to become the largest mass organisation in South African history.

The Botha regime tried every means – intimidation as well as inducements – to persuade the Coloured and Indian people to vote in the elections in August 1984, but there was more than an 80 percent boycott.

But the regime went ahead to bring the racist constitution into force on September 3, 1984, and that became the signal for the beginning of the revolutionary upsurge in South Africa – to make South Africa ungovernable by the racist regime and its puppets, to destroy apartheid and to establish a non-racial democratic state.

The unity forged in the long struggle is the guarantee that from now it is, as they used to say in Ghana, “Forward ever, Backward never.”

I must pay the highest tribute to the great leaders of the African people for their vision and leadership, which has built this unity. They have seen their struggle not as a conflict between black and white, but as a struggle against a racist system. The liberation of the African people will be the liberation of all the people of South Africa.

That is why even some White people have been risking their lives in that struggle.

There are few instances in history where minority communities have rejected the enticements of ruling powers and joined the oppressed majorities in a common struggle. The solidarity demonstrated by the Coloured and Indian people with the African majority in South Africa is, therefore, remarkable.

Thousands of Indians have risked their lives and comforts in that struggle, ever since Dr. Dadoo and Dr. Naicker led them into an alliance with the African majority.

Suliman Salojee, Ahmed Timol, Hoosen Haffejee are among those tortured to death in racist prisons.

Ahmed Kathrada is serving life imprisonment with Nelson Mandela and others for founding and leading the *Umkhonto We Sizwe*.

Many Indians are in the leadership of the UDF, risking constant harassment, imprisonment and torture.

Mewa Ramgobin, a member of the Gandhi family in Durban, was among those charged with treason for leadership in the UDF.

In the family of the adopted son of Mahatma Gandhi – the Naidoo family in Johannesburg – every single member of the family for three generations has been in prison.

The story of the contribution of people of Indian origin in South Africa to the struggle for liberation needs to be written – because it should be a matter of pride to us in India and does great credit to the African leaders of the struggle. I am proud that the Government of India has always encouraged this alliance of Africans and Indians. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi publicly appealed to the

Indians and others in South Africa to boycott the racist elections in 1984.

I am also gratified to see the active role of people of Indian origin in the anti-apartheid movement around the world – of people like Abdul Minty and Vella Pillay in the British Anti-Apartheid Movement, Kader Asmal in the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement, and Sam Ramsamy, chairman of SAN-ROC leading the sports boycott – and many many others in local anti-apartheid groups and in scores of campuses, especially in the United States and the United Kingdom.

The struggle in South Africa has had a great effect in promoting the solidarity of the nations of Africa, Asia and the Caribbean and the achievements in the international campaign against apartheid are largely based on that solidarity, whether in countering collaboration by the major Western powers with the apartheid regime or in providing moral, political and material assistance to the liberation struggle.

New Challenges

We face a new challenge at this time when the revolution in South Africa is at a critical stage.

The apartheid regime is unable to suppress the resistance and overcome its crisis even temporarily. The end of apartheid is in sight.

Delegations from South Africa are now frequently visiting ANC leaders in Lusaka for consultations. Some Whites are leaving South Africa. It was reported that plans are being made in Israel to receive thousands of emigrants from South Africa.

But we should have no illusions that it will now be an easy walk to freedom. The apartheid regime has no intention to abandon racism, and it cannot exist without racism. Its so-called reforms are only manoeuvres to divide the people in South Africa and the world and prolong racist domination. It has built an enormous military establishment and will not hesitate to escalate force and violence to preserve itself.

The liberation movement too has great reserves it has not yet used and can escalate the armed struggle.

There is a great danger of prolonged conflict and bloodshed. There are also dangerous moves by external forces to make Southern Africa a theatre of cold war and complicate and situation. I have in mind particularly the moves by the United States to send military aid to UNITA in Angola – in utter disregard of international law and the unanimous appeals of the Organisation of African Unity. I cannot see how the United States can intervene in Angola except in collusion with the South African regime in violation of the mandatory arms embargo

against South Africa.

The policy-makers in Washington and London probably believe that our countries – which are still largely in the Western economic orbit and facing serious economic and other problems – can be ignored, but they may be making a grave mistake.

Only two years ago, the Botha regime was able to blackmail the frontline states and oblige Mozambique to sign the “Nkomati Accord.” Botha went on a tour of European capitals hoping triumphantly to undo international isolation. The Reagan administration in the United States hailed the “reforms” and the “peace process” of the Botha regime.

But the mobilisation of the people in South Africa, the great anti-apartheid demonstrations in Europe and the Free South Africa Movement in the United States turned the scales.

The offensive of the Botha regime collapsed, and the United States policy of “constructive engagement” was discredited.

I have no doubt that the present manoeuvres can also be frustrated – by the united action of African, Asian, Caribbean and other States, in co-operation with anti-apartheid forces all over the world, rallying behind the struggling people of South Africa.

I would like to make special mention of assistance to the liberation struggle, because we may need to consider new forms and levels of assistance as the struggle develops.

For instance, a million students have been on a prolonged strike in South Africa since 1984. They suspended the strike for a few weeks, at the request of their elders, on condition that the apartheid regime meets their demands. The regime has not acted and the strike is likely to be resumed. The liberation forces will need to set up alternative structures for education. In fact, they may need to set up alternative structures for health and other services as they build fortresses of resistance in the course of the revolution.

We will need to go beyond the concept of solidarity and recognise that the struggle of the people in South Africa and Namibia is our struggle.

The leaders of our freedom movement in India taught us that our struggle is not complete until colonialism is abolished all over the world. The leaders of Pan Africanism taught us that freedom and dignity of no Black person is secure until all of Africa is free.

The struggle in South Africa and Namibia is, therefore, not for the freedom of two

territories alone but for the dignity and honour of all of us.

INDIA'S SOLIDARITY WITH SOUTHERN AFRICA¹¹

Forty years ago, soon after the Second World War and before the independence of India, I left the shores of India on a long voyage to the United States for advanced study and then joined the service of the United Nations.

The final and triumphant stage of the colonial revolution in Asia had begun in 1945. I recall the huge demonstrations in Indian cities against the despatch of Indian troops to Vietnam and Indonesia to reconquer those countries for the French and Dutch colonialists. The Indian national movement demonstrated its solidarity with the nations of Asia and Africa because of its conviction that India's own long struggle for independence was part of the wider struggle against imperialism and was not complete until colonialism and racism were abolished all over the world.

There has been no World War since 1945 but colonial wars have caused millions of deaths and enormous suffering.

There have also been glorious examples of solidarity with the oppressed and newly-independent peoples – with Nasser's Egypt, which suffered a triple invasion by Britain, France and Israel, with Angola which has been repeatedly invaded, occupied and despoiled, and many, many others.

Many nations have risked their hard-won independence – as the frontline states in Southern Africa are doing now because of their solidarity with neighbouring nations struggling to shake off the shackles of colonialism. They earned the wrath of the colonial powers and have seen their hopes of economic and social development frustrated.

The history of solidarity will need to be written in the near future along with the history of freedom struggles which will end the shameful era of slavery, colonialism, racism and humiliation of the majority of humanity.

The struggles for freedom and acts of solidarity contribute to peace because colonialism and racism are the root causes of war and because they are, in fact, systems of permanent aggression against the oppressed peoples. In no colonial country have the people taken up arms until the rulers began to suppress peaceful protests and resort to massacres. The cause of peace cannot be served by surrender to or appeasement of colonialism, any more than it was served by the appeasement of Hitler in the 1930s, but by the elimination of those evil and

¹¹ Extracts from an address at Solidarity Conference in Bangalore on July 5, 1986. Published in *Mainstream*, New Delhi, July 19, 1986.

inhuman systems.

That is why the Non-Aligned Movement, the child of the colonial revolution and solidarity of oppressed peoples, has become a major force for peace in our time.

Most of my adult life has been spent in promoting the widest international support – by governments and organisations, irrespective of ideological differences – to the struggles of African nations for freedom and human dignity. I feel most gratified – on this first visit to India since my retirement from the United Nations – that the spirit of solidarity is very much alive in India and is reflected not only in actions of the Government, supported by all political parties, but also by public organisations.

Upsurge in South Africa

The visits of the Presidents of the African National Congress of South Africa and the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), Oliver Tambo and Sam Nujoma, to India and the visit of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to the frontline States of Africa in May were important events. I feel proud that India took the lead in hosting an embassy of SWAPO and in banning the entry into India of members of the racist "Parliaments" of South Africa.

The upsurge in South Africa – which began in 1984 when the apartheid regime imposed a new constitution to dispossess the African people and divide the oppressed people – is nothing less than a revolution of enormous significance. The regime is unable to suppress it despite all its military might and its brutal violence against the black people.

Many African townships have become ungovernable. The police are unable to enter them without large military escorts, the puppet councils in the townships have been destroyed. Several repressive laws have become unenforceable because of mass defiance.

The trade union movement has become a powerful force and has led strikes of unprecedented scope. A million students have been on strike intermittently for two years. The people are no more afraid of death, imprisonment and torture, and those released from prison go back into the struggle without any hesitation.

Some time ago, armchair revolutionaries used to pontificate that guerrilla warfare and revolution are impossible in South Africa because the regime has enormous military power and is backed by millions of Whites; because it had segregated black and brown people into ghettos which could easily be threatened by a few armoured vehicles or tanks; because it was able to recruit numerous spies in those ghettos, and because guerrilla fighters cannot easily find sanctuary in mountains and jungles or even in neighbouring countries, which can easily be blackmailed by military and economic pressure from the Pretoria regime.

Chester Crocker, an American academic, wrote an article in 1980 arguing that change in South Africa can only come through “White-led reform” and he was appointed by the Reagan Administration as its Assistant Secretary of State for Africa. He formulated the policy of “constructive engagement” which implied recognition of P.W. Botha and his military industrial establishment as reformers and persuading them to make reforms. The implementation of this policy involved hostility toward the liberation movement, supposedly engaged in “cross-border violence”, and pressure on frontline States which provided assistance to the African National Congress and SWAPO.

USA and Britain

The revolution in South Africa erupted precisely at a time when the apartheid regime felt it had intimidated the neighbouring states, obliging Mozambique to sign the Nkomati Agreement, and when Western commentators were predicting the demise of the African National Congress as a viable force. It was precipitated by the “constructive engagement” policy of the United States and its variant in Britain.

The United States and British Governments have been unable to understand the situation in Southern Africa. They cannot believe that the Black majority can defeat the White racist regime despite its monopoly of military and economic power. They have not learnt from their mistake of assuming that the 500-year old Portuguese colonialism would survive indefinitely.

The South African regime had been going through a growing political and economic crisis for several years before 1984 because of the growing resistance of the oppressed people and the international campaign against apartheid. But the policies of the major Western powers continued to be based on the assumption that the Botha regime could stabilise the situation, consolidate its power by coopting some moderate Blacks and even play a more dominant role in the entire region.

In August 1984, when that regime imposed a new constitution in the face of opposition by the African majority, as well as the great majority of the Coloured and Indian people, the United States State Department welcomed it as a “step in the right direction.” In September 1984, when six African and Indian leaders of the United Democratic Front and the Natal Indian Congress sought refuge in the British Consulate in Durban and appealed to the British Government to prevail upon the Botha regime to stop arbitrary mass detentions of popular leaders, the British Government refused even to meet representatives of the two organisations.

That was a clear indication to the Black people in South Africa that they could not count on any intervention by the major Western powers and that their salvation lay in struggle. African townships erupted in revolt and a million workers went

on an unprecedented strike in the Transvaal in November 1984.

International Action

As violence by the regime increased, international action in support of the liberation movement reached new levels. The Free South Africa movement was launched in the United States in November 1984: hundreds of thousands of people joined in demonstrations against the policy of “constructive engagement” and thousands courted arrest in the largest passive resistance movement since the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

Meanwhile, behind a curtain of silence imposed on Namibia, the armed struggle led by SWAPO has continued, and SWAPO was able to gain overwhelming support from the Namibian people.

The Botha regime is unable to overcome the crisis or suppress the resistance. The prospect in South Africa is a war with escalating violence unless there is firm international action to force the Botha regime to negotiate with the trusted leaders of the majority of the people on the dismantling of apartheid and the establishment of a democratic system.

Moreover, there is the danger that the Botha regime, in its desperation, will try to incite riots and killings among Blacks, escalate attacks against the frontline States, and even try to provoke an East-West confrontation in Southern Africa.

Responsibility of Major Western Powers

The South African people had to carry on a long and difficult struggle not only because they had to struggle against a large White settler minority poisoned by racism, but also because their oppressors could count on the friendship and even support of foreign military and economic interests which were deeply involved in that country. They have tried hard and patiently to unite all the oppressed and decent people of that country – Africans, Coloured people, Indians and democratic Whites – in an alliance against racism. This alliance includes people of all religious faiths and diverse ideologies.

The international movement of solidarity with the South African freedom struggle, which has now developed into a powerful force, also includes governments, organisations and individuals of varied ideologies and persuasions.

In 1962, when the United Nations General Assembly adopted its first resolution on sanctions against South Africa, none of the Western States voted in favour. Now the great majority of Western States support sanctions.

Socialists and Communists, Liberals and even some Conservatives have joined the campaign for sanctions which is supported by all trade unions, most Christian

Churches and numerous organisations.

If only the Governments of the United States, Britain and West Germany stop their obstinate opposition to sanctions against South Africa, and cooperate with the overwhelming majority of States, there will be the prospect of a speedy end to apartheid in South Africa and of the liberation of Namibia. The shameful era of the rape and humiliation of Africa will end, colonialism will be buried and a decisive blow struck at racism.

I do not wish to condemn any countries, because governments and policies can change. Our task is to find ways to secure a change in the policies of the three major Western Powers.

One need not be anti-Western to point to the great responsibility of these Powers. Their true friends were those who warned them against their blunders such as the intervention in China after the Second World War, the Suez War of 1956 and the war in Vietnam. India and the Non-Aligned Movement would be doing a service to them, as well as to the African people and to the cause of peace in Southern Africa, by opposing their disastrous policies and persuading them to change.

Indians in South Africa

India has a proud record of solidarity with all the oppressed people of South Africa and Namibia. But I would like to make a special reference to the role of South African Indians in the liberation struggle because that must necessarily be a dimension in our concern and our responsibility.

The origins of the modern mass movement for freedom in South Africa may be traced to the Second World War – particularly to 1942-43 when the "Quit India" Movement was launched in India and Prime Minister Winston Churchill proclaimed that the lofty principles of the Atlantic Charter do not apply to the people of India or the other oppressed peoples in the Britain Empire.

The moving force among the Africans was the African Youth League. Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela, the leaders of the African National Congress, were among the founders of the Youth League.

At the same time, within the Indian community, which was subjected to new humiliating restrictions, there was a revolt against the "moderate" leaders who were ever willing to compromise with the racist regime at the expense of the vital interests, and even the honour and dignity, of the Indian people. Dr. Yusuf Dadoo in the Transvaal, a Marxist, and Dr. G.M. Naicker in Natal, a Gandhian, became the leaders of the Transvaal Indian Congress and the Natal Indian Congress, advocating mass resistance and an alliance with the African majority. Their policies were in harmony with the appeals of Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru to Indians abroad that they should identify themselves with the indigenous

peoples in their struggles for freedom and refrain from seeking any special privileges or deals with the colonial powers.

In June, 1946, the Indian Congresses launched a Passive Resistance Movement against the “Ghetto Act” in which over 2,000 people went to jail. Some Whites courted arrest with the Indians and several African organisations declared their solidarity.

In the same month, because of the strong public sentiment in India, the Viceroy’s regime complained to the United Nations against South Africa, thus internationalising the issue and thereby encouraging the movement of solidarity with the struggle against racism in South Africa. A few days later, on July 17, 1946, India cut off trade relations with South Africa. That was many years before the African National Congress appealed for sanctions against South Africa and obtained support by independent African States and the United Nations.

Indian leaders in South Africa made every effort to promote a united movement against racist oppression in their country. In August 1946, during the historic African mine workers’ strike, Dr. Yusuf Dadoo was arrested and charged for supporting the miners. In November, a joint delegation of the African National Congress and the Indian Congresses went to New York to acquaint the delegations to the United Nations with the situation in South Africa. The Indian delegation, led by Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, warmly welcomed and helped them in their work. V.K. Krishna Menon shared the platform with them at a large public meeting organised by the Council on African Affairs in Harlem.

A few months later, the African National Congress and the Indian Congresses signed a pact for cooperation in the common struggle. The alliance of Africans and Indians was cemented and expanded in subsequent years in the course of joint struggle and sacrifice, to include the Coloured people and democratic Whites.

More recently, the proposal for a United Democratic Front (UDF) was launched in January 1983, at a conference of the Transvaal Indian Congress by the Reverend Alan Boesak, the Coloured Churchman. UDF, which was established later in the year, became the most powerful coalition of people’s forces in South African history and has been leading the peaceful resistance since then...

India can be proud of the important role played by the Indian people in South Africa in promoting unity in the liberation struggle in South Africa. They have always recognised the primacy of the interests of the African majority and the leadership of the African National Congress. They have asked for no special status. In fact, they have rejected the “privileges” offered by the apartheid regime in 1984 and called for a non-racial democratic society.

The leaders of the African Congress deserve great credit for their vision of a free South Africa and for their leadership of the alliance which has destroyed the caste

system which the rulers have sought to impose on the oppressed people in order to divide them. India has rightly honoured Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo, the twin leaders of the ANC.

But I hope that India will also appropriately honour Dr. Yusuf Dadoo and Dr. G.M. Naicker for their historic contribution, and that Indian public opinion will be better informed of the sacrifices of thousands of other people of Indian origin who have given their lives in the struggle or suffered imprisonment, torture and persecution – people like Babla Saloojee, Dr. Hoosen Haffejee and Ahmed Timol who were tortured to death; Ahmed Kathrada who has been in the struggle since he was eleven years old and is serving life imprisonment with Nelson Mandela; Billy Nair, who is still continuing the struggle after spending nearly twenty years in prison and being tortured in prison a few months ago; of Nana Sita, the Gandhian, who repeatedly went to jail for refusing to obey racist laws; the Naidoo family in which every member for three generations has been in jail; and many others like them. They have not only struggled for justice in their country but, by their sacrifice, helped promote indestructible friendship between India and Africa.

The Indians in South Africa are nationals of South Africa and their destiny is with the African people of South Africa. But India can never stand by if the Indian people anywhere are humiliated or oppressed because of their ancestral origin.

Let those who provide military, economic, political and other support to the apartheid regime know that we have a right and a duty to oppose them – even to retaliate if need be – both because we are against racism and because of our ties of blood with the oppressed people of South Africa.

If Margaret Thatcher of Britain or the governments of Portugal and West Germany refer to their kith and kin in South Africa and Namibia as an excuse to block sanctions against apartheid, let them know that we too have a million kith and kin engaged in a war of liberation against the Botha regime, that we will disown those who serve the racists and that we will not fail to defend those who fight for freedom and human dignity.

India may be separated from South Africa by an ocean but for all practical purposes India should always be in the frontline of those supporting the liberation struggle in that country.

What can India do?

While India has always supported the liberation struggle in South Africa and Namibia and took the lead in international action from 1946 to 1960, some passivity in action began by 1963 when India rightly decided to follow the lead of the Organisation of African Unity. There were hardly any Indian initiatives for over twenty years, even when OAU was divided or paralysed.

The Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, Major-General J.N. Garba of Nigeria and I visited New Delhi in August, 1984 and met Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to appeal for a more active role by India, especially because of the difficulties encountered by the frontline and other African States. At that time, Indira Gandhi took the historic initiative of appealing to the Indian and Coloured people of South Africa to boycott the new constitution imposed by the apartheid regime and stand shoulder to shoulder with the African majority. The recent moves of the Indian Government represent further steps in that direction.

The first priority for India must be to take the lead in all efforts to persuade the governments and public opinion in the major Western countries to abandon their short-sighted, immoral and disastrous policies; to oppose all manoeuvres to divide the oppressed people; and to avert East-West confrontation in Southern Africa.

India can also provide much greater political and material assistance to the national liberation movements of South Africa and Namibia, and to the anti-apartheid movements in the West. It should consider new levels of assistance, for instance to enable the forces of resistance to set up alternative structures of administration in liberated areas.

Above all, it is essential to promote greater public awareness and public action in India, supplementing and reinforcing the efforts of the government. Public organisations can do much more to exercise vigilance against any illicit trade between India and South Africa, to collect material assistance from the public for the liberation movements and to strengthen the international solidarity movement.

The time has come to go beyond the concept of solidarity and to affirm that the struggle in South Africa and Namibia is our struggle as much as it is that of the African Continent.

INDIA'S ROLE IN LIBERATION OF SOUTH AFRICA¹²

Forty years ago, on July 17, 1946, the Government of India banned all trade with the Union of South Africa in retaliation against the humiliating "Pegging Act" against the Indian people in South Africa. That was a proud day for India.

The action was taken by the then Viceroy's Government because of the strong public sentiment in the country. At that time, South Africa accounted for five percent of India's exports and one and half percent of India's imports. None of the Western countries which now so loudly complain of the cost of sanctions has more than one percent of its foreign trade with South Africa.

Already in June, the Indians in South Africa, under the leadership of Dr. Yusuf Dadoo and Dr. G.M. Naicker, two of the giants of the modern national movement in that country, had launched a Passive Resistance Movement in which 2000 people, including 300 women, were to court arrest. At their request, the Government of India complained to the United Nations against the Smuts Government in South Africa. The interim Government, under the leadership of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru took office in September 1946, before India's complaint was discussed in the United Nations. It placed the issue in the broader context of India's firm opposition to colonialism and racism which was to become an essential element of the policy of Non-Alignment. Within a few years India took up the problem of apartheid, which affected the African majority as well as the Indian and Coloured people, in the United Nations and helped build world sentiment against it. On its initiative, the South African regime was excluded from the Asian-African Conference in Bandung in 1955. A delegation of the African National Congress (Moses Kotane and Moulvi Ismail Cachalia) was received as an observer.

The past forty years in South Africa have been tragic. While the oppressed people have tried, under most difficult circumstances, to build broadest unity to secure a non-racial democratic society, the racist regime has resorted to ever increasing repression and built up a monstrous military and repressive machine. The military budget has increased more than hundred-fold since 1960. The riches of South Africa were used to tighten the screws of oppression rather than to alleviate the sufferings of the great majority of the people. The powers in the West which enabled and encouraged the Pretoria regime in its efforts to entrench apartheid and disposes the black people bear an awesome moral responsibility.

The Indian people in South Africa have played a crucial role in promoting the unity of the oppressed people under the leadership of the African National

¹² Published in the *Patriot*, New Delhi, on July 17, 1986, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of India's decision to break trade relations with South Africa.

Congress. They initiated the talks which led to the alliance of the African National Congress and the two Indian Congresses (in Transvaal and Natal) in 1947 – the “three Doctors’ Pact” signed by Dr. A.B. Xuma, Dr. Yusuf Dadoo and Dr. G.M. Naicker. They participated actively in the Campaign of Defiance against Unjust Laws in 1952. Nelson Mandela was volunteer-in-chief and Moulvi Cachalia, now in India, was his deputy. The proposal for a United Democratic Front which is now playing a crucial role in the struggle in South Africa, was first mooted at a conference of the Transvaal Indian Congress.

"Do or Die" Spirit

The people’s movement has become so powerful and the “do or die” spirit of the people is so irrepressible that the doom of apartheid is now as certain as the independence of India was in 1946. The only question is whether freedom will come through enormous bloodshed or whether such a tragedy can be averted by international action.

Until the end of 1950s, it was hoped that condemnation by world opinion could persuade the rulers in Pretoria to change their course and move towards the gradual elimination of racial discrimination and repression. Since then, after all peaceful protests were met with savage repression, the ANC decided to embark on an underground and armed struggle, and to call for international sanctions against the oppressors. Nelson Mandela organised the *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (“Spear of the Nation”) and Oliver Tambo was sent abroad to secure international support.

There has been significant progress since then. In 1962, when the United Nations General Assembly voted for sanctions, no Western country supported the resolution. Now, the great majority of Western countries favour sanctions. But the major Western Powers – especially the United Kingdom, the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany – remain adamant in their opposition to sanctions.

After the South African regime declared a State of Emergency last year, there was an expectation that they too had become persuaded of the need for effective pressure on the apartheid regime and that they could be persuaded to move forward. But those hopes have been frustrated.

The recent statements of Mrs. Margaret Thatcher represent an alarming retrogression.

India must assume a special responsibility at this critical time, and provide leadership in the international arena, especially since the African States are beset with serious problems and even the independence of frontline states is under constant threat. It must act in close consultation with the liberation movements and the African States.

We must broaden the coalition of governments and public opinion around the world against apartheid and find means to oblige the few recalcitrant governments to cooperate in universal sanctions. Those governments must be made to realise that the cost of collaboration with apartheid is greater than the cost of sanctions. At the same time, we must promote all necessary assistance to the liberation movements, to all those engaged in peaceful resistance inside South Africa and Namibia, and to the frontline States.

I am encouraged by the initiatives taken by India since the revolutionary upsurge in South Africa in 1984, particularly since they were in response to the requests of the liberation movement.

Indian Initiatives

The appeal by Mrs. Indira Gandhi to the Indian and Coloured people in South Africa to boycott the racist elections in August 1984 was valuable in frustrating the manoeuvres of the apartheid regime to divide the oppressed people.

Mr. Rajiv Gandhi has taken an important step in banning the entry into India of those who spurned that appeal and collaborated with the apartheid regime as members of its so-called Parliament.

The establishment of the first SWAPO Embassy in India set an example to be followed by other nations. The visits of Oliver Tambo and Sam Nujoma to India, and the visit of the Prime Minister of India to the frontline states, have provided a timely opportunity for consultations on further action.

These initiatives have been dignified and well-considered as behooves a nation like India, and are greatly appreciated by millions of people in South Africa and Namibia.

I am confident that the Prime Minister will follow up with all necessary measures and initiatives – backed by the total support of the Indian people – to ensure the speedy liberation of South Africa and Namibia, avert a ghastly conflict and save peace in Southern Africa.

It is eighty years since *Mahatma* Gandhi launched the *Satyagraha* in South Africa and forty years since the Indians in South Africa began, at the behest of *Mahatma* Gandhi and Pandit Nehru, to build an alliance with the African majority in struggle and sacrifice. The time for deliverance has come, but this last stage requires not only a determined struggle by the South African people but unflinching support by their friends.

INTERNATIONAL ACTION FOR NAMIBIA'S INDEPENDENCE¹³

I have followed the developments in Namibia since the United Nations took up the issue in 1946 and was privileged on several occasions to have been involved in United Nations action and assistance with respect to Namibia.

I believe that the Namibian liberation movement, SWAPO, is almost unique. It is a movement initiated not by "elites" but by contract labourers and peasants in a country where they were robbed of most of their ancestral land. To build a national movement - and, in fact, a nation - in a large territory under enormous difficulties, was a magnificent achievement.

SWAPO did not achieve the status of the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people because of any resolutions by the United Nations or OAU but because it sprang from the people and has been led by men and women of great integrity. SWAPO is Namibia: it is the nation. SWAPO and its President, Sam Nujoma, deserve not only our support but our great respect.

The Namibian people have every right to demand why the United Nations has been so ineffective in the implementation of its numerous resolutions on the independence of Namibia. We know the difficulties faced by the United Nations because of the attitudes of the major Western Powers.

The racist regime in Pretoria is the child of colonialism and regrettably the umbilical cord which binds it to its colonialist parents seems not yet fully broken.

But I believe that the United Nations, which has assumed direct responsibility for Namibia, cannot plead helplessness. It cannot resign to becoming a prisoner of a few Powers or of outdated legal concepts. It has contributed significantly to promoting political support for the struggle of the Namibian people, as well as assistance to them and their liberation movement. But it has potentialities which have not been fully used in the case of Namibia - and it is the duty of the great majority of its members and of non-governmental organisations to find ways to overcome the hindrances caused by a few Powers.

Non-governmental Organisations have played a very important role in the past in promoting United Nations and international action on Namibia. Forty years ago, when the South African regime prevented the Namibian people from obtaining access to the world, Reverend Michael Scott and several organisations in Britain

¹³ Statement presented at the International Conference on Namibia, Brussels, May 5-7, 1986. Published in *Mainstream*, New Delhi, June 14, 1986.

and the United States brought their views and appeals to the United Nations. The Defence and Aid Fund, led by Canon Collins, made it possible for the United Nations to provide assistance to the political prisoners and their families in Namibia. It was the International Conference on Namibia, organised in Oxford in 1966 by the Anti-Apartheid Movement and chaired by Olof Palme, which led to the United Nations decision to terminate South Africa's mandate over Namibia. The Brussels International Conference on Namibia in 1972 and the international conference on Southern Africa held in Oslo 1973 led to the United Nations recognition of SWAPO as the authentic representative of the Namibian people.

The proposal for Decree No. I for the Protection of the Natural Resources of Namibia and for the establishment of the United Nations Institute for Namibia did not come from governments but from public organisations and individuals.

We need to press for the immediate implementation of the plan for Namibian independence endorsed by the Security Council of the United Nations in its Resolution 435 (1978), in pursuance of its unanimous Resolution 385 (1976), but at the same time we need to secure increased support to the liberation struggle.

The Resolutions

Resolution 435 became possible because the South African regime could not defeat the liberation army of SWAPO or suppress resistance in Namibia led by SWAPO, because South African invaders were forced to withdraw from Angola as a result of the resistance by the MPLA Government and its army, FAPLA, aided by Cuban, African and other forces, as well as political support from the international community; because of the uprising in South Africa following the Soweto massacre; and because the major Western Powers exerted or threatened to exert pressure on the South African regime for a negotiated settlement.

The struggle of the Namibian people has further advanced and it is now reinforced by an unprecedented mobilisation of the South African people against the apartheid regime. Regrettably, the major Western Powers are playing a destructive role by opposing sanctions against the South African regime and even demanding that Angola abandon its arrangements for its security and national defence as a pre-condition for the exercise by the Namibian people of their inherent right to self-determination.

The decision of the United States to provide military assistance to UNITA is a very serious development. I hope that the United States Government will be persuaded to heed the unanimous appeals of the OAU and abandon its decision as it is against its own best interests. I am happy that there is now a serious debate on this matter in Washington.

The Stinger missiles are very dangerous and are known as ideal terrorist weapons. The United States sold them only to a few governments under very stringent

conditions: the launchers and the missiles, and even components of the missiles, have to be stored in separate facilities to avoid the weapons falling into the hands of terrorists. Supplying these missiles to UNITA - which has a record of terrorist acts, including the shooting of civilian planes and the taking of hostages - and thereby making them available to the South African regime which is involved, directly or indirectly, in terrorism in many countries, is not a responsible decision for a super-power.

I will conclude with one observation: Sovereignty in Namibia, as in all colonial countries, belongs to the people. The role of the United Nations and the international community has been to end South African occupation and enable the people to exercise their sovereignty. The original mandate of the United Nations Council for Namibia was to arrange for the independence of Namibia by June 1968. Almost twenty years have elapsed.

It was never the intention of the United Nations that Namibia or SWAPO should be the ward of the United Nations indefinitely. I believe it is not enough to grant observer status to SWAPO or for the Council for Namibia to consult it.

Happily, SWAPO has been granted full membership by the Movement of Non-aligned Countries and has been given diplomatic status by several countries, including India. I hope that the UN will find ways to enable SWAPO to represent the Namibian people in all international organisations and to enjoy diplomatic status in all countries.

INDIA AND NAMIBIA¹⁴

India's decision to grant diplomatic status to SWAPO is not only a culmination of forty years of solidarity with the Namibian people but has great international significance at this time when the racist regime in South Africa and its friends are intensifying manoeuvres to complicate the situation in the whole of Southern Africa.

For eight years, the implementation of the United Nations plan for the independence of Namibia, approved by the Security Council in Resolution 435 (1978), and accepted at the time by the South African regime and SWAPO, has been blocked. At first, the Pretoria regime sought to impose pre-conditions and resort to delaying tactics in order to find ways to conduct rigged elections and install a puppet regime. Since the beginning of 1981, there has been a deadlock because of the linkage introduced by the United States between the independence of Namibia through free elections and its demand for the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. The recent decision of the United States to grant military assistance to UNITA to step up subversion in Angola has been unanimously opposed by the Organisation of African Unity and the Movement of Non-aligned Countries. It is likely not only to further delay the independence of Namibia but to reinforce a community of interests between the South African regime and the United States and to create wider complications in the region.

On the other hand, SWAPO now enjoys not only the unquestioned loyalty of the Namibian people but widest international support, including that of a great majority of Western governments. Its struggle is reinforced by the unprecedented and irrepressible upsurge of the South African people against the Pretoria regime. The Namibian people and SWAPO can secure the independence of their country, given political and material support by the international community to overcome external interference.

India has shown, by granting diplomatic status to SWAPO and by offering increased material assistance to it, that she will continue to make a major contribution both as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement and after her term ends later this year. The example of India will no doubt be followed by a number of other countries. It is a warning against any manoeuvres to grant bogus "independence" to the puppets now installed in a so-called "interim government" in Windhoek and an undertaking to provide SWAPO with all necessary assistance for liberation by armed struggle if the negotiated settlement is frustrated.

¹⁴ Prepared in connection with the opening of the SWAPO Embassy in New Delhi on May 25, 1986. Published in *Mainstream* and several other Indian papers.

The actions of India should come as no surprise in view of the long record of support to the Namibian people in their struggle for self-determination and independence.

In 1946, during the second part of the first session of the General Assembly in New York, the South African Government submitted a proposal to annex the mandated territory of South West Africa (now Namibia) instead of placing it under the United Nations trusteeship system.

Field Marshall Jan Christian Smuts personally appeared before the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly on November 4, 1946, to move the proposal. He was the darling of the West, extolled as a liberal despite his racist record in South Africa. He tried to be very clever. He recalled that the mandate agreement had allowed the Territory to be administered as an integral part of South Africa, and continued:

“By now, South West Africa was so thoroughly integrated with the Union that its formal incorporation was mainly required to remove doubts, and thereby attract capital and encourage individual initiative, and to render unnecessary a separate fiscal system. Incorporation would thus admit the inhabitants to the full benefits enjoyed by the population of the Union”. (*All quotations from the official summary records of the United Nations.*)

Smuts presented a long document claiming that the wishes of the people had been ascertained, and that the Europeans and a majority of “Natives” (2,08,850 against 33,520) favoured integration.

He argued:

“The integration of South West Africa with the Union would be mainly a formal recognition of a unity that already existed. The South African delegation was confident that the United Nations would recognise that to give effect to the wishes of the population of South West Africa would be the logical application of the democratic principles of political self-determination.”

His racism, however, came through despite himself when he explained the nature of consultation of the people of South West Africa:

“The wishes of the European population had been expressed through the normal democratic channels, that is, through the press, through public utterances, and through the unanimous resolutions of the South West African Legislative Assembly.

“The wishes of the natives had been ascertained in an equally democratic but rather different form, with due regard to their differing tribal organisation and customs... the task of explaining the purpose of the consultation had been

entrusted to the most experienced officials, Commissioners who had long resided among the natives, who understood fully the native mind, and who enjoyed the complete confidence of the tribes."

The United Nations was then dominated by the Western and colonial Powers and General Smuts might have gotten away with his plot. The few Socialist States could have been ignored. Other delegations had little knowledge about the Territory. South Africa had prevented African chiefs from leaving the Territory and even held up their letters to the United Nations.

The only information, rather scanty, was from groups such as the Council on African Affairs in New York and the Anti-Slavery Society in London.

But Smuts received a shock and a surprise. A national government had been established in India, under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, and its delegation came to New York with instructions that colonial freedom was the foremost concern of India.

India had a few months earlier broken trade relations with South Africa because of new discriminatory laws against Indians in South Africa and had complained to the United Nations against the breach of agreements by South Africa.

At the very next meeting after Smuts spoke, Sir Maharaj Singh of India (who was ably assisted by V.K. Krishna Menon in the Fourth Committee) politely but firmly exposed the plot. He described the rampant racial discrimination in South Africa which belied the claim that the people would benefit from incorporation. He also exposed the fraud of consultation of the Africans in the Territory.

He stressed India's view that sovereignty resided in the people and that the purpose of United Nations trusteeship was to enable the people to accede to independence as soon as possible. He asked the Assembly to demand that South Africa place the territory under the United Nations trusteeship system.

India's statement encouraged many Asian, Arab and Latin American countries to reject the South African proposal. The United States delegate, John Foster Dulles, then conceded on November 14 that "the data before the Assembly did not justify the approval by the Assembly during the current session of the incorporation of the mandated territory of South West Africa into the Union of South Africa."

The colonial powers were anxious to get approval for trusteeship agreements for their own colonies and did not wish to jeopardise their interests by active support to South Africa.

The only exception was the United Kingdom. A.G. Bottomley, the British delegate, said:

“The Government of the United Kingdom was satisfied with the steps taken to determine the people’s wishes. In the opinion of Lord Hailey, a member of the Permanent Mandates Commission, the freedom of the people to express themselves on that question had been complete, and in accordance with normal tribal practice. Consequently there was no reason to doubt the fairness or the accuracy of the results of that popular consultation.”

After the statement by Dulles, it became clear that South Africa could not get approval by the United Nations for the annexation of the Territory. The matter was sent to a Sub-Committee.

In the Sub-Committee, the United States sponsored a resolution, agreeable to South Africa, to state merely that "the data before the General Assembly does not justify action of the General Assembly approving the incorporation..." India moved a resolution to reject incorporation and to call on South Africa to submit a trusteeship agreement for the Territory. The Soviet Union moved a more strongly worded resolution along the same lines.

Because of the composition of the Sub-Committee, the Indian resolution was rejected by 11 votes to 6, with 2 abstentions, and the Soviet resolution by 12 votes to 2, with 6 abstentions. The US draft was adopted by 12 votes to 6, with one abstention.

But the Indian delegation did not give up, as the United States draft left open the possibility of annexation. It reintroduced its draft when the matter was taken up in the plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

Again, it was Britain alone which fully supported South Africa. Its delegate, Sir Hartley Shawcross, argued that "the measures taken by the South African Government to ascertain the wishes of the inhabitants... were as complete and satisfactory as practicable" and the results "genuinely represent the wishes of the inhabitants."

India could not hope to obtain a two-thirds majority for her draft. But it embarrassed the Western Powers and they too became uncertain of a two-thirds majority for their draft.

A compromise was reached to add to the United States draft the Indian proposal recommending that South Africa place the Territory under the United Nations Trusteeship system. It was adopted as Resolution 66 (I) on December 10, 1946, with South Africa, Britain and several Western Powers abstaining.

The demand that Namibia be placed under trusteeship became the focus of United Nations resolutions until the General Assembly decided to terminate South Africa’s mandate in 1966. The integrity and the international status of Namibia were preserved.

India continued to take the lead in United Nations debates on Namibia until African states joined the United Nations and the Namibian people established a broad-based national movement, SWAPO, in 1960.

In 1949, India took the lead, against strong Western opposition, to secure a hearing for the late Reverend Michael Scott, to enable him to present to the United Nations the appeals of the chiefs and people of Namibia and to expose the fraud of the 1946 “consultation” by the South African regime.

In 1958 when a Good Offices Committee - consisting of the United Kingdom, the United States and Brazil - negotiated with South Africa the partition of Namibia, with the mineral-rich southern half to be annexed outright by South Africa and the northern half to be administered under trusteeship as an integral part of South Africa, India again led the fight to reject any proposal for partition or for annexation of any part of Namibia.

The major Western Powers continued to advocate negotiations with the South African regime - despite its constant defiance of United Nations resolutions and opinions of the International Court of Justice - knowing well that no solution ending racial discrimination in Namibia or granting genuine independence to the country could result from such negotiations. From 1962, India, along with African States, pressed for sanctions against South Africa as the only means to oblige it to comply with the demands of the United Nations.

India also joined with the Organisation of African Unity and African States in providing political and material assistance to SWAPO when it emerged as the dominant political force in Namibia and launched an armed struggle on August 26, 1966.

SWAPO has always been able to count on India as a reliable friend.

Namibia is far from India and India has no material “interests” there. But it is a country which was designated by the Allied Powers after the First World War as a “sacred trust of civilisation” - a trust that was cynically and repeatedly betrayed by the Powers concerned.

The Namibian people have suffered grievously under alien occupation. They were the victims of the first modern and organised genocide by the German conquerors. They have continued to suffer from South African racism and apartheid, as well as plunder by foreign interests. They have been robbed of their lands and reduced to the level of contract labourers or poor peasants in a country endowed with great riches.

It was enormously difficult to organise a national movement in the huge territory populated by many tribal groups, separated and repressed by the South African

regime, and denied educational and economic opportunities.

But SWAPO, a movement essentially of labourers and poor peasants, has been able to develop a national mass movement for liberation and, indeed, build a nation in the struggle for freedom. It has carried on an armed struggle for twenty years against a powerful and ruthless enemy and earned the loyalty of all the people, including the leaders of all the churches, except for a few chiefs appointed by the South African regime and a handful of renegades.

In 1986, as the Pretoria regime is under siege in South Africa itself, there is an unprecedented opportunity to secure Namibia's independence. But there are short-sighted and sinister plots to plunge the whole region in Cold War and prevent genuine independence of Namibia. India cannot but join with Africa in ensuring that the international community counters these plots and fulfils its sacred responsibility to the Namibian people.

SOUTHERN AFRICA AFTER SAMORA MACHEL¹⁵

The death of President Samora Machel of Mozambique and several of his Ministers has come at a very critical time in southern Africa when the frontline states have been bracing for a confrontation with the apartheid regime in South Africa, with Mozambique assuming a crucial role.

These states have suffered enormously in the past decade from incessant acts of aggression, destabilisation and blackmail by the apartheid regime, while the indifference and acquiescence, if not the connivance, of major Western powers or their secret services has greatly aggravated the situation.

The attacks began on a large scale after P.W. Botha, the militarist, became Prime Minister of South Africa in 1979. They escalated after the Reagan Administration came to power in the United States, evincing greater concern over Soviet influence in southern Africa than over the crimes of the apartheid regime.

Angola and Mozambique were persuaded - in their anxiety to avert a wider conflict and East-West confrontation in the region - to try to secure a cessation of South African aggression by the assurance that they would deny transit facilities to the freedom fighters of the African National Congress (ANC) and the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO). Angola reached an understanding with the Botha regime in February 1984 and Mozambique signed the Nkomati accord in March 1984. (Zimbabwe and Botswana had not provided such facilities to the liberation movements.) They hoped that the Botha regime would cease aggression and destabilisation - and that the Western Powers, the United States in particular, would prevail on it to conform to its undertakings.

But the Pretoria regime continued its attacks though in a clandestine manner, causing extensive damage, especially to Mozambique while it was suffering from unprecedented natural disasters.

All the railroads in Mozambique, except those leading to South Africa, were sabotaged. Assistance projects in the countryside had to be abandoned, as the MNR bandits, sponsored and directed by South Africa, killed and abducted foreign experts and volunteers. Mozambique's exports fell by three quarters. Zimbabwe and Zambia suffered as their shortest routes to the sea through Mozambique were closed, except for the Beira line which was restored for partial operation by the stationing of Zimbabwean troops.

It became clear that the Botha regime was not concerned only about ANC and

¹⁵ Published in *Mainstream*, New Delhi, November 8, 1986.

SWAPO guerrillas. It sought to establish its hegemony over the whole region and force changes of government to include its mercenaries.

The United States administration, which claimed credit for the agreements by Angola and Mozambique with South Africa, did little to prevent South African aggression, except to warn the Botha regime against attacks on American oil installations in Angola. Instead, it began to aid UNITA in Angola, while conservative elements in Washington began openly to support MNR in Mozambique.

The frontline states found that their restraint had only led to an intolerable situation and that the elimination of apartheid had become a matter of self-defence and survival.

Economic Sanctions

That is why they took a serious risk early this year in pressing for economic sanctions against South Africa. In the resolution of the Non-Aligned Summit at Harare on the AFRICA Fund, they showed great courage in undertaking not only to impose sanctions against South Africa, but “to fight the apartheid regime of Pretoria and to support the liberation movements in South Africa and Namibia.” Mozambique was destined to play a crucial role as the gateway to the sea for the landlocked frontline states.

The security problem had to be given urgent attention even while reconstruction of transport routes was undertaken.

Samora Machel, together with President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and Prime Minister Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, met with “Life President” Kumuzu Banda of Malawi on September 11, 1986, to warn him against allowing MNR to operate against Mozambique from Malawi. Malawi denied the presence of MNR bases, but early in October, several thousand fully armed MNR personnel crossed the border into Mozambique and occupied the frontier areas.

Samora Machel convened the frontline Heads of State meeting in Maputo on October 12 to deal with South African threats against him and the danger of a generalised war. He indicated that Mozambique would seek military assistance from the Soviet Union and the West as necessary. Zimbabwe began to recruit additional soldiers to guard its transport routes through Mozambique and other contingency plans were under consideration.

Then, on October 19, 1986, the day of the fateful flight, Presidents Machel and Kaunda, together with President Eduardo dos Santos of Angola, met with President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire to press him to use Angolan, rather than South African, ports for foreign trade and to prevent any assistance through Zaire to UNITA.

However, while India and other Non-Aligned states were focussing attention mainly on economic assistance to the frontline states, the South African regime was alert to the full significance of the moves by the frontline states. It decided to strike first by announcing the expulsion of Mozambican workers and threatening military action against Mozambique. There is suspicion that the landmine incident, which was used by General Magnus Malan, the South African Defence Minister, to threaten President Machel was fabricated by the South African military forces.

That was the context of the crash of the Mozambique presidential aircraft on South African soil. The incident has naturally given rise to serious suspicions.

It was strange that the first announcement - that an "unidentified aircraft" flying from Lusaka to Maputo had crashed on the South African side of the border - came from the Foreign Minister of South Africa rather than the civil aviation authorities. Though the occupants of the plane were apparently unknown, both the Foreign Minister, Pik Botha, and the Defence Minister, Gen. Magnus Malan, rushed to the scene. Subsequent reports indicated that South African radar had followed the plane from Lusaka and that the MNR office in Lisbon knew of the crash before the South African announcement. The South African liberation movement - recalling the terrorist record of the apartheid regime and its acquisition of sophisticated radar equipment - has held the South African military responsible.

With the death of Samora Machel - a man of the people with immense popularity not only in Mozambique but in neighbouring states - there has been much speculation about succession and prospects.

Mozambique has suffered a grievous loss at a time when it has to cope with enormous problems. But having known FRELIMO and its leaders since the inception of the movement in 1962, I have no doubt that the South African racists and their hirelings who seek to exploit the situation, will fail. FRELIMO has an excellent tradition of discipline and collective responsibility. Its able and tested leaders like Marcelino dos Santos, Joaquim Chissano and Mario Machungo can be depended upon to guide the nation to fulfil the legacy of their departed leader.

Some sections of the Press, echoing South African propaganda, have begun to describe Samora, the revolutionary, as a pragmatist and to berate his senior colleagues as "ideologues." That propaganda has little substance. The top leaders of FRELIMO have worked as a team for over twenty years through a difficult liberation war and through many crises.

Samora Machel joined the underground freedom movement in Lourenco Marques (now Maputo) in the 1950s while working as a nurse in a hospital. He was one of those who persuaded Dr. Eduardo Mondlane, then a United Nations official, to

give up his career and lead the movement.

Mondlane was able to unify the many scattered groups in Europe and Africa to form the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO). Among the founding members were Marcelino dos Santos, a poet and intellectual, who was a leader of the conference for the freedom of all Portuguese colonies (CONCP) based in Rabat, Joaquim Chissano, leader of the Mozambique students union in Europe, and Samora Machel.

Samora received military training in Algeria and helped organise the guerrilla army, which launched the war of liberation in September 1964. He spent most of the pre-independence period inside Mozambique leading the armed struggle and extending liberated areas. He proved his ability not only in organising and leading a disciplined and revolutionary armed force, but also in educating and unifying the various tribes and building a nation in struggle. Dos Santos and Chissano gained a reputation by their international and organisational work abroad.

When Eduardo Mondlane was assassinated by a parcel bomb in Dar-es-Salaam, at a difficult time in 1969, the leadership was assumed by a triumvirate - Uriah Simango, Marcelino dos Santos and Samora Machel. Simango proved to be totally unreliable and had to be removed. It was then Dos Santos and Chissano who ensured the election of Samora Machel as President.

Samora Machel continued to devote his attention primarily to the struggle inside Mozambique. FRELIMO began to hold all its conferences in the liberated area so that its decisions were taken by the movement without external influences.

After the fall of the Portuguese colonial regime, FRELIMO appointed Chissano as the Prime Minister in the interim government. He proved to be an exceptionally able negotiator, statesman and leader. When Samora Machel returned to Laurenco Marques on independence day to assume the office of President, the authority of FRELIMO was fully established and there were great expectations.

But FRELIMO and its leaders were internationalists and they showed as much concern for the march of liberation as for the reconstruction of their own country.

Even during the liberation struggle, they had helped ZANU to go through their liberated areas to initiate the armed struggle in Zimbabwe. When ZANU freedom-fighters faced difficulties, they sent hundreds of FRELIMO volunteers to fight with them inside Zimbabwe. After the independence of Mozambique, they made great sacrifices to ensure the independence of Zimbabwe.

The example and assistance of FRELIMO were also helpful in promoting the resurgence of the resistance movement inside South Africa. The close bonds between FRELIMO and ANC were reinforced. Mozambique thereby become the target

of massive destabilisation by the Pretoria regime.

Faced with an extremely difficult economic and security situation, Samora Machel signed the Nkomati Accord with South Africa in March, 1984. That was a painful decision for FRELIMO and created serious, though temporary, difficulties for ANC.

Samora Machel felt, from his own experience in the liberation war, that the agreement would make it perfectly clear that the struggle is essentially inside South Africa. Indeed, there was soon an unprecedented mobilisation of the South African people in resistance, frustrating the calculations of the Botha regime and its Western friends that the Nkomati Accord would help consolidate apartheid.

The Nkomati Accord is now virtually dead, killed by the perfidy of the Pretoria regime. Samora Machel took the lead in trying to consolidate the frontline states for a new confrontation with South Africa. He has left a legacy for his successors. They will, I am sure, rise to the occasion, but will need the goodwill and support of the international community.

The first priority is to mobilise world opinion in order to persuade major Western Powers to end all military and intelligence links with the Botha regime and to force it to cease all aggression and destabilisation against the frontline states.

Mozambique and the other frontline states should be assured of all necessary military and other assistance so long as the apartheid regime continues to act as an outlaw. That is an essential complement to economic assistance to enable them to overcome their current economic difficulties and become independent of South Africa.

India, as the largest Non-Aligned nation and Chairman of the Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement for the AFRICA Fund, will need to assume a special responsibility in providing diplomatic, political and other support to Mozambique and other frontline States.

AFRICA FUND : MORE THAN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE¹⁶

The significance of the decision of the Non-Aligned Summit in Harare to establish an AFRICA Fund – for “Action for Resistance to Invasion, Colonialism and Apartheid” – should be seen more in political than in economic terms.

The Non-Aligned countries, themselves facing serious economic problems, are in no position to contribute large-scale assistance to repair the enormous damage caused by South African aggression and subversion in the past decade or even to enable the landlocked frontline states to overcome their present dependence on transport routes through South Africa, much less to withstand further blackmail by the apartheid regime.

The damage suffered by the independent African states is estimated at twenty billion dollars. The restoration and improvement of communications in Mozambique – vital to the landlocked states – would alone cost some \$ 660 million.

These enormous needs can only be met by a major international assistance programme with generous contributions from developed countries.

Moreover, an assistance programme by itself is inadequate so long as the international community is unable to eliminate the root cause of the problem, the blatant acts of military and economic aggression by the apartheid regime and its sponsorship of subversive forces to destroy the railways, pipelines and other installations in the frontline states. There is little point in repairing railways, if they can be sabotaged again or building stocks of food, if the terrorist bands can prevent distribution to the needy.

The Committee for the AFRICA Fund – consisting of nine of the most active and dependable members of the Non-Aligned Movement – cannot confine itself to appeals for financial contributions. It will need to give serious and urgent attention to the means to prevent continued aggression and destabilisation by the apartheid regime and to protect the vital installations in the frontline states.

The apartheid regime has been able to act as an outlaw because the major Western powers have failed to discharge their responsibility to prevent aggression and have in fact, protected that regime from effective international action. Those powers – particularly the United States – will need to be persuaded to curb the apartheid regime and help protect the independent African states. That was perhaps the reason why the Harare Summit did not include Cuba and North Korea

¹⁶ Published in *Mainstream*, New Delhi, November 15, 1986.

– which provide substantial assistance to the frontline states – in the Committee for the Africa Fund.

The apartheid regime has always tried to take advantage of the Cold War to secure the goodwill and support of the major Western powers. It is not adverse to provoking African states to seek Soviet military assistance as it hopes that Soviet intervention in the region will assure it of Western support.

Aggression on Frontline States

It embarked on aggression against independent African states with the clandestine invasion of Angola on the eve of its independence in 1975. P.W. Botha, then Defence Minister, was able to secure the support of CIA as the Ford administration was under the traumatic effect of the Vietnam debacle. When the role of the CIA became known, there was an uproar in the Congress, which adopted the Clark amendment prohibiting CIA involvement in Angola. South Africa was obliged to withdraw its forces from Angola in March 1976. It continued, however, to organise and finance Savimbi's UNITA rebels for sabotage in Angola. The UN did not pay adequate attention to the matter in the hope a settlement for the independence of Namibia, which was then being negotiated, would solve the problem.

After the breakdown of the Namibia talks in 1978 and the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980, the apartheid regime, taking advantage of the resurgence of the Cold War, renewed large-scale aggression and destabilisation against the frontline states. After the advent of the Reagan Administration in the United States in January 1981, this developed into what the frontline states termed "an undeclared war" against the whole region.

The Reagan Administration, for its own reasons, was as anxious as the apartheid regime to exert pressure on Angola. When the South African forces invaded Angola in August 1981, it vetoed a resolution in the United Nations Security Council condemning the aggression. The Reagan Administration claimed to oppose all "cross-border violence" – equating acts of aggression by the apartheid regime with the transit of ANC and SWAPO freedom fighters to their own countries in the conduct of liberation struggles recognised by the United Nations as legitimate.

The apartheid regime understood the position as a license for aggression.

Mozambique and Angola became prime targets of destabilisation. Armed bands of UNITA and RENAMO, numbering some 20,000 were organised, equipped, financed and given air cover to destroy the railways and, indeed, the entire infrastructure of the countries. Zimbabwe also suffered considerable losses from sabotage by South African-sponsored terrorists, including the destruction of its military aircraft.

The frontline states showed great restraint and refrained from seeking military assistance from the Soviet Union in order to avoid widening of the conflict and East-West confrontation in the region.

Mozambique and Angola even heeded American advice and reached agreements with the apartheid regime early in 1984. Mozambique undertook to deny transit facilities to ANC freedom fighters in return for a pledge by the apartheid regime to stop subversion against it. Angola agreed to prohibit SWAPO freedom fighters from crossing its borders into Namibia in return for the withdrawal of South African troops occupying its territory.

The apartheid regime, however, has flagrantly violated the agreements. The United States Government did little to prevail on it to live up to its undertakings. Instead, the Reagan administration secured the repeal of the Clark amendment and ignoring repeated appeals by OAU, began military and other assistance to UNITA.

Harare Summit

The simultaneous attacks by South African forces against the capitals of Botswana, Zimbabwe and Zambia in May 1986, the rebuff by the Botha regime to the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group, the declaration of a State of Emergency in South Africa, and the threats of military and economic aggression against the frontline states forced them to choose between surrender to blackmail and confrontation with the apartheid regime.

The frontline states then courageously called for economic sanctions against South Africa and began to consider measures to withstand South African retaliation. Mozambique and Zimbabwe discussed further military cooperation to protect the vital communication links to the Indian Ocean. Mozambique invited assistance of military advisers from the East and the West.

That is the context in which the Harare Summit set up the AFRICA Fund “to strengthen the economic and financial capability of the frontline States to fight the apartheid regime of Pretoria....”

The present policy of the United States Government – more under the influence of myopic conservatives than the grassroots movement against apartheid – may well lead to disastrous consequences. An East-West confrontation in Southern Africa, ranging the West on the side of racism, will inevitably strain the Western alliance. Public opinion in the United States, concerned mainly with apartheid violence inside South Africa seen on the T.V. screens, has not given much attention to the violence of aggression and destabilisation in the region as a whole.

The conservative governments in the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic

of Germany do not fully share the assessment of the United States. The United Kingdom has been developing economic relations with Angola and offered military training to the Mozambican army. West Germany seeks to maintain normal relations with all the frontline states. But these two governments join with the Reagan Administration in opposing effective action against the apartheid regime and have failed to restrain the United States from intervention in Angola.

Most of the other Western States totally disagree with the strategy of the conservatives in the United States. Unwilling to confront the Reagan Administration, however, they have pursued the less difficult option of increasing economic assistance to the frontline States and SADCC.

The first task before the NAM's AFRICA Fund Committee is to persuade the Western states to prevail upon the Reagan Administration to cooperate in securing an end to South African aggression and sponsorship of armed bands in the frontline states. A powerful body of Congressional and public opinion in the United States would respond to such action.

A change in the attitude of the United States would make it possible to ensure effective action by the United Nations to protect the frontline states. In fact, the United States and the other major Western Powers alone can take decisive action to curb the South African military establishment.

Secure and lasting peace in the region requires the elimination of the root cause of conflict – the apartheid system in South Africa. But the frontline states cannot remain hostage to the apartheid regime until that takes place. The aggression against those States, in flagrant violation of international law, is a distinct problem though related to the issues of apartheid and Namibian independence.

Pending a change in the United States attitudes, NAM will need to assist the frontline states to secure the military assistance they need – particularly military training and equipment – to ensure the security of vital installations. It is for the frontline states to decide what assistance they need and from whom they wish to receive it. But NAM members should not only indicate a willingness to consider bilateral assistance but should persuade all other states, including the Western states, to respond to requests by frontline states.

Public opinion in the Nordic states, the Netherlands, Canada, Australia etc., should be helped to appreciate that economic assistance alone is not enough and must be complemented by military assistance to protect the projects financed by them.

The emphasis on such diplomatic and political action is in no way intended to belittle the importance of the economic and technical aspects of the NAM AFRICA Fund. The Fund can, even within the limited means of NAM members, make a vital contribution in covering needs which are not met by the assistance

programmes of other States and in providing technical assistance in the context of South-South Cooperation. It is not only symbolic of the commitment of the Non-Aligned states but can be a catalyst for promoting greater assistance from all other sources.

The frontline states have suffered enormously because of their geographical proximity to South Africa. But in the struggle to eliminate apartheid, all NAM members should find ways to be on the frontline.

The AFRICA Fund is a serious challenge to NAM and to India as Chairman of its Committee. It is the first serious effort by NAM to go beyond conference diplomacy into operational activity. It serves a cause that is dear to India and vital to the credibility of NAM.

It must succeed.

DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH PRISONERS IN SOUTH AFRICA¹⁷

October 11th is observed annually by the United Nations and the world community as the “Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners.”

That date was chosen for the international day as on October 11, 1963, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 1811 (XVIII) calling for the abandonment of the trial of Nelson Mandela and other leaders of the liberation movement and for the release of all persons imprisoned or restricted for their opposition to apartheid. The resolution was adopted by 106 votes to one, with only South Africa voting against it. It was the first resolution on apartheid which received a virtually unanimous vote, including the votes of Britain and France – and reflected an international consensus that a general amnesty and an end to repression were prerequisites for any peaceful solution in South Africa.

During that year, the racist regime had resorted to mass arrests of thousands of former members of the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress, the Communist party and other banned organisations. Armed with a new law enabling it to detain people *incommunicado* – without even access to families, lawyers or courts – it allowed the Security Branch of the police to torture the detenus brutally in order to extract information on the underground movement.

In July, it was able to capture several leaders of African National Congress and its military wing, *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (Spear of the Nation) at Rivonia Farm. They were charged – along with Nelson Mandela, who had already been imprisoned a year earlier, betrayed by Western intelligence as it has now become known – on October 8, 1963, in what came to be known as the “Rivonia Trial”.

I received the news of the arraignment early that morning and immediately contacted the Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid, the late Diallo Telli of Guinea. Within hours, we were able to arrange a meeting of the African Group and table an emergency resolution in the Special Political Committee of the General Assembly. A hearing was arranged for Oliver Tambo, the leader of the ANC in exile and the Rt. Rev. Ambrose Reeves, former Bishop of Johannesburg who was deported after the Sharpeville massacre and who was then the President of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement. The resolution was moved by Diallo Telli and seconded at his request by India.

Several Western states abstained on the resolution in the Committee, but when it was taken up in Plenary Session and voted by roll-call, one by one they changed their votes to the cheers of Afro-Asian delegations. I learnt later that when

¹⁷ Prepared on the occasion of the Day of Solidarity in 1986, and published in Indian newspapers.

Nelson Mandela, who had expected to be executed, was informed by his lawyer of the unprecedented emergency resolution, he was greatly moved and enthused. That has been a source of great encouragement to me in all my work against apartheid ever since.

The General Assembly resolution helped initiate a world-wide campaign for the release of political prisoners in South Africa and I did all I could to promote that campaign. We were immensely relieved when the lives of Nelson Mandela and his colleagues were spared and they were sentenced to life imprisonment.

Ten years later, following a request by the ANC, I suggested the proclamation of the "Day of Solidarity" and the Special Committee enthusiastically endorsed the proposal. The day was observed widely around the world and became an annual event. The General Assembly then formally proclaimed the International Day in 1976.

In promoting the Day, we constantly emphasised that our purpose was not to appeal for the release of the prisoners merely on humanitarian grounds.

They were not unpopular dissidents whose human rights needed appeals from the international community. They were the leaders of the great majority of the people, who were jailed for struggling for the principles of the United Nations – by a regime which practised the crime of apartheid. They should not only be free but should be enabled to lead their people to a democratic, non-racial society.

Solidarity with the political prisoners was thus support to the cause for which they have risked their lives and liberty. The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed in 1975 that the international community has a special responsibility to the oppressed people and their liberation movements, especially to the political prisoners.

Regrettably, the international community has been unable – because of the short-sighted and misguided policies of a few powerful governments – to secure the release of political prisoners, much less the elimination of apartheid.

In South Africa, as in most other countries, persons sentenced to life imprisonment are normally released after fourteen years. But Nelson Mandela is now in his twenty-fifth year in prison. Political prisoners in South Africa are granted no remissions and no paroles, except for a few who were persuaded to give undertakings to the regime.

Instead, with the latest state of emergency, the racist regime, in its desperation, has resorted to new levels of inhumanity.

Tens of thousands of people have been imprisoned, including 3,000 children under the age of sixteen, some as young as ten years. The regime has disclosed

that 850 persons have been charged with murder (of policemen, informers and members of the apartheid institutions) and face death sentences. In one case, 125 people have been charged with the killing of one member of the puppet community council. Those charged include many juveniles.

The regime of terror, however, has failed to curb the resistance, which has assumed revolutionary proportions. Faced with frustration of international action by the major Western powers, the people have decided to take their destiny into their own hands and struggle for power. Between January and May this year, the regime reported over 10,000 “unrest-related” incidents, including thousands of attacks on the security forces.

Resistance has spread to rural areas. The police are unable to enter many townships without large military escorts. Three hundred thousand families have joined the recent boycott. The local communities are building alternative structures for administration, justice, education and health.

The Botha regime has escalated its violence in the country behind the cloak of censorship and devastated the frontline states, but it is unable to suppress the mass resistance which defies all terror.

Twenty years ago, B.J. Vorster vowed to hold Mandela in prison “this side of eternity” and believed he would be forgotten. He has instead become a powerful symbol of the spirit of resistance. Internationally he has received greater recognition and honours than any prisoner in history.

In the 1960s when the resistance was trying to recover from the repression, I tried to persuade the rulers of South Africa to emulate the example of the British colonial masters in India – to talk to Nelson Mandela and release him as the British had done with Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, but they were then unwilling to bend. Now, the Botha regime is afraid to release Nelson Mandela for fear that his physical presence among his people will precipitate a massive upsurge leading to the end of the old order.

Solidarity with South African political prisoners has today taken on new dimensions.

It calls for the stepping up of the campaign for sanctions, for support to the liberation movement and for the defence of the frontline states. It also demands that we find ways to support the alternate structures being developed by the resistance inside South Africa.

The Pretoria regime has embarked on a propaganda campaign that the liberation struggle is led by Communists and it has found support in the United States administration.

Cold war thinking has unfortunately distorted American Policy for more than thirty years, undermining its professions of support to democracy and freedom except when Presidents were able to overcome the advice of the CIA and other Cold War institutions.

In 1963, some members of the United States delegation approached African and Asian delegates to advise them that the accused in the Rivonia trial included Communists, in the hope of dissuading them even from a condemnation of trial. Fortunately, their advice was not heeded and President John F. Kennedy and Ambassador Adlai Stevenson decided to support Resolution 1881 (XVIII).

Recently, however, the Reagan Administration has begun to support South African propaganda against the liberation movement. It is essential that world public opinion should assert that whatever one's own preferences in regard to ideology, support for freedom in South Africa cannot be conditional. It is for the people of South Africa to choose their own future in a democratic system. The hostility of the American administration to the ANC and its policy of "constructive engagement" have by all accounts only increased support for the South African Communist Party.

I cannot conclude without expressing my satisfaction at the more active support by India to the liberation struggle in South Africa, and its willingness to shoulder the responsibility of promoting effective solidarity by the Non-Aligned Movement with the frontline states.

The recent messages of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to Winnie Mandela affirming fullest support and solidarity of the government and the people of India have been a great boost to the morale of the Black people in South Africa. Nelson Mandela will prevail as did the illustrious political prisoners of our country, Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru, who have been a source of inspiration to him. How soon the victory will come will depend not only on the struggle and sacrifices of his people, but the effective solidarity of the rest of the world.