

THE CRIME - APARTHEID, THE PENALTY - ISOLATION

OPENING ADDRESS BY MRS. SINCLAIR, NATIONAL PRESIDENT.

TO

THE BLACK SASH NATIONAL CONFERENCE 1963.

Last year, in my address, I tried briefly to indicate the rapid change taking place in Africa; South Africa's resistance to that change, and the role of the Black Sash under these circumstances.

This year, it is my duty to show the disastrous effects which the policy of Apartheid is having on South Africa and South Africans. It is increasing racial tensions and hatred at home and it is severing our contacts with the outside World, one by one.

External pressures are rapidly forcing the country into isolation. Internal pressures have reduced the majority of White South Africans to an apathetic, fearful people seeking refuge in the White laager. These same internal pressures have denied to Black South Africans all legal avenues of protest and are reducing them to a state of hopelessness.

The Government, realising that its policy has already failed, is seeking to find a moral justification for Apartheid by carving up South Africa to form race-tight Bantustans, a policy whose end result no-one can foresee. The Government will brook no opposition and has, in fact, become absolutely ruthless in its application of Apartheid. Its totalitarian laws, its unbridled attack on liberalism and, in fact, on any thinking opposed to Apartheid, and on the English-language Press, are evidence that it has reached a situation which it cannot contain except by force. The appeal for White unity, the use of fear as a weapon, are instruments which are being used to keep the Nationalist Party together, the Government in power and the rest of the population in a state of fear. The White public is afraid, afraid of the Government, afraid of Black Nationalism, and is tumbling into the safety of the laager to preserve its White privilege, to maintain the status quo and allegedly to save White civilization for the World. White South Africans are sacrificing their principles for their material well-being.

Let us now turn to the external pressures which have built up against South Africa. In the eyes of the World, Apartheid is a crime; a crime against humanity, because it is based on discrimination.

The non-White people have been the victims of the most harsh and oppressive laws, the injustices and the discriminatory legislation which has been imposed upon them has made South Africa the best hated and the most bitterly opposed country in the civilized World.

Pressure, particularly from the Afro-Asian bloc, has been increasing over the years. With so many African States having gained their independence, and with South Africa's intransigent attitude, the volume of the pressure has reached considerable proportions. Not only is there pressure from the Afro-Asians, but our former friends among the Western Nations can no longer defend South Africa and are being forced into the position of having to apply pressure against the policies of the South African Government. The result is that South Africa is being pushed with the tide, further and further into isolation.

When Mr. MacMillan came to South Africa at the beginning of 1960, he made the attitude of Britain patently clear when he delivered his famous "wind of change" speech in Cape Town. He drew our attention to the change that was taking place in Africa and he said, "The most striking of all the impressions I have formed is the strength of African national consciousness,..... whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact..... This means, I would judge, that we must come to terms with it. I sincerely believe that if we cannot do so we may impair the precarious balance between the East and West on which the peace of the World depends".

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We all studied this speech and I think some of us, at least, understood the implications of what Mr. MacMillan was trying to convey. When one re-reads this speech to-day, it is terrifying to realise how little heed was paid to the solemn warning implicit in that address.

As early as 1946, before this Government came into power, South Africa figured on the Agenda of the United Nations General Assembly. At that time it was the question of the treatment meted out to South African Indians. This issue came up year after year and remained on the Agenda until two years ago when, owing to the pressure of the Afro-Asian States, the whole question of Apartheid came under review and the Indian resolution, per se, was dropped.

Last year, a resolution was passed in the General Assembly by 67 votes to 2, with a number of abstentions, calling for sanctions against South Africa. The pressure on South Africa is increasing every year in an effort to force our Government to abandon its policy of Apartheid.

While it is accepted that sanctions are almost impossible to apply effectively, South Africa is also facing a more serious issue, the issue of South West Africa. The following facts were given recently by Mr. R. B. Ballinger, lecturer in History at the University of the Witwatersrand.

In 1962, Ethiopia and Liberia, formerly members of the League of Nations, instituted proceedings against South Africa before the International Court of Justice. They alleged that the administration of South West Africa was a breach of the Mandate Agreement which South Africa accepted in 1920. Firstly, they said that South Africa will not submit to international supervision, neither will she render annual reports concerning the administration of the territory, nor will she submit petitions from South West Africa to the United Nations.

The case was based on a compulsory jurisdiction clause in the Mandate Document ; it reads "The Mandatory agrees that if any dispute whatever should arise between the Mandatory and another member of the League of Nations relating to the interpretation and the application of the provisions of the Mandate, such dispute, if it cannot be settled by negotiation, shall be submitted to the permanent Court of International Justice, provided for in Article 14 of the Covenant of the League of Nations".

The International Court of Justice is the only instrument of continuity between the now defunct League of Nations and its successor, the United Nations Organisation. All members of the United Nations are, ipso facto, members of the International Court of Justice.

The second allegation of Ethiopia and Liberia was "That the whole spirit of the administration of South West Africa was contrary to the two obligations of the mandate system, namely, as in the Covenant, that the mandate system shall constitute a 'sacred trust' and Article 2 which says 'shall promote to the utmost the moral and material well-being of the inhabitants.' " Ethiopia and Liberia then listed in their application the whole gamut of Apartheid Legislation.

The International Court first had to consider whether it was competent for the Court to consider the case. This they have done. You will remember that in December, 1962, by the narrow margin of eight votes to seven, it ruled that the International Court has competence to consider the allegations brought by Ethiopia and Liberia against South Africa. The case will now be judged on its merits.

In international law, a judgment of the International Court of Justice is held to be binding on all the member states of the United Nations. The Court is not being asked to pass sentence, but should the judgment be given against South Africa, the matter will go back to the United Nations to implement the judgment. The seriousness of this situation should be clear to us all.

From the day/---

From the day that Dr. Verwoerd took South Africa out of the British Commonwealth, the steps to isolate our country took a tangible form. This year they have reached alarming proportions. Scarcely a day goes by when we do not read of action designed to cut us off from the rest of the World.

Let us briefly examine the extent of our isolation. On leaving the Commonwealth, South Africa was automatically excluded from confidential information available to all Commonwealth countries, - a serious matter in this unsettled and dangerous World. Our Commonwealth preferences will come to an end, if they have not already done so, when the present agreements expire. Quite apart from the pressures in the United Nations itself, different countries have themselves taken action against South Africa. Trade with the African States is declining; there have also been trade boycotts in European countries; dockers in Denmark, Sweden, Australia and now in New York, have refused to unload cargoes from South Africa; there are efforts to exclude South African delegates from International Organisations, such as the International Labour Organisation; South African delegates to International Conferences are subject to humiliation and indignities. In fact, the policies of the South African Government are constantly being condemned at Conferences all over the World. All South Africans, even those who disagree with the Government's policy, are humiliated by the serious charges made against our country. Recently, the Olympic Games Committee, after months of preparation for its meeting in Nairobi, was forced to change its venue to Baden Baden, because the Kenya Government would not allow the South African delegates to enter Kenya. Our uni-racial sports teams have been booed when they have gone to other countries; Equity have decided not to allow their actors and actresses to play before uni-racial audiences. Taken to its logical conclusion, this would mean the cutting-off of South Africa from the cultural stream of art, theatre and music.

The decisions taken at the Addis Ababa Conference are being strenuously implemented. African States will not allow South African planes to use their air space and have forced South African Airways to take a longer and more costly route to Europe. Airlines from other countries may be forced to choose whether they will serve South Africa, or whether they will serve Africa north of the Limpopo.

Kuwait has severed trade and diplomatic relations with South Africa; Tanganyika too, has cut her trade ties; Ethiopia has banned passengers with South African passports from travelling on her airlines; Uganda has cut off trade relations, in fact, the East African countries are preparing to sever all postal, cable and telephone communications with South Africa; Israel, it is said, may sever air, sea and trade links with South Africa and has already recalled her Minister Plenipotentiary. There is pressure on the Western Nations not to supply arms and weapons of war to South Africa; America has not done so for some time. Should the Labour Party in Britain win the next election, there is a possibility that Britain, too, will put an embargo on arms for South Africa. There is no doubt that a Labour Government would take up a very much stronger attitude towards South Africa. There is pressure on American investors not to invest capital in the Republic. At the annual meeting of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, Ethiopia, backed by Mali, Ghana, Nigeria and Tanganyika, made a plea to cut off assistance from the World's financial institutions to nations which practised the doctrine of race segregation. Later in the meeting, when Dr. Donges rose to speak, only Sudan, Mauritani and Burundi of the African States were present and the Mauritanian delegate walked out after Dr. Donges had spoken a few words.

The Foreign Ministers of the Nordic countries have refused an invitation from Dr. Verwoerd to visit South Africa and see for themselves. These countries are now working on a plan for an alternative policy for South Africa, a plan for which they seek United Nations support. They advocate multi-racial government with the provision of safeguards for the Whites. They also say that the United Nations Assembly should state the readiness of the United Nations to lend, if necessary, its assistance during the transitional period to maintain law and order.

And now, on the 12th October, we opened our morning newspapers to read that the United Nations had passed a resolution condemning South Africa's failure to comply with the United Nations' demand to bring an end to Apartheid-a policy which is disturbing to international peace and security. The resolution also urged South Africa to grant unconditional release to all political prisoners and to all persons subjected to any restrictions for opposing the policy of Apartheid.

Countries such as Britain, the United States of America and France objected to the wording contained in the clauses on Sabotage trials and political prisoners. When, however, these clauses were included in the resolution as a whole all member States voted in favour of the resolution, with the exception of Portugal, Spain, Paraguay and Honduras, who were absent, and South Africa who recorded a negative vote.

After the debate, Mr. Diallo Telli, the delegate from Guinea, was jubilant. He said, "What we wanted to do was to isolate South Africa and we have done it".

This resolution is disastrous - certainly a disaster for South Africa, and maybe a disaster for the United Nations.

However much South Africans condemn the Afro-Asian bloc; however much they feel that the African States are discrediting South Africa when in their own countries they indulge in equally undemocratic practices; however much South Africans consider the World body to have become a farce; the fact remains that South Africa refuses to make even the smallest concessions; that despite the increasing demands of the United Nations to abandon Apartheid, the South African Government's answer is to enact ever more unjust and discriminatory legislation, and, through legislation, progressively to usurp the functions which rightly belong to the judiciary.

It is South Africa's intransigent attitude which has forced the Western Nations, who for years have done their best to prevent excessive demands for boycotts and sanctions from being adopted against South Africa, to feel that as South Africa is adamant in her determination to pursue her policy regardless of all appeals from the outside World, they can no longer jeopardise their own positions in the World organisations by remaining passive. Now, for the first time, South Africa's vote was the only vote recorded against a resolution condemning our country.

Whether South Africa is expelled from the United Nations, whether she withdraws of her own volition or whether she remains a member of the organisation, she is out on a limb, she is isolated and alone. This is what Apartheid has done for our country.

In the face of this World picture, what is happening at home? This year started with one of the most controversial sessions of Parliament in our history. In spite of all appeals to abandon the policy of Apartheid, from nations which were once our friends, our Government, without taking heed, placed before Parliament, which enacted it, legislation such as the Transkei Constitution Bill, The Publications and Entertainments Bill, an attenuated Bantu Laws Amendment Bill and the notorious General Laws Amendment Bill of 1963, that totalitarian measure which can detain an individual for periods of 90 days, even to eternity, without charge and without trial.

Millions of Rand are being spent by The Government in increasing the strength and the size of the armed forces; young men are being called upon to do nine months compulsory military training. A congress of the Nationalist Party has passed a resolution asking the Government to conscript women into the army so that "they can fight shoulder to shoulder with their men". 27,000 women are in pistol clubs.

The theme of the propaganda campaign is the dangers of liberalism. Over the radio, through the Afrikaans Press, from Cabinet Ministers and Government spokesmen, liberalism is equated with Communism and it is claimed to be an evil thing. The Government attacks all organisations, bodies and individuals holding liberal opinions, and by that I mean, opinions which are in conformity with the moral values and principles which are the standard in all civilised countries - N.U.S.A.S., the Christian Institute, the English Press, Alan Paton and others, in fact all those who hold views contrary to the Government. The principles of freedom of speech, freedom of movement, freedom from fear, etc., are being abandoned.

The S.A.B.C. is being used as a mouthpiece of the Nationalist Party. Every day the news broadcasts highlight every racial clash throughout the World. Political commentaries are all slanted to show how liberal thinking is a danger to the safety of South Africa.

Despite all this, liberal opinion will survive when Apartheid is dead and gone, for nothing will stop men thinking and nothing will stop the search for truth.

Under the oppressive apartheid laws, thousands of non-Whites are being uprooted from their homes under the Group Areas Act; job reservations hang over the heads of many like a sword of Damocles; Bantu Education may have put thousands more children in schools, but it is an inferior type of education and the standard is deteriorating, as the examination results indicate. The fact that R13.00 per annum is spent on the education of the Black child as against R100.00 for a White Primary School child and R140.00 for a White Secondary School child, speaks for itself. The vast majority of Africans are existing on poverty wages. The urban African lives so far from his place of employment that he has to spend two to four hours a day travelling to and from his work; transport is inadequate and costly. His whole life is tied to his reference book, it controls where he may be, for whom he may work, whether he qualifies for a house, even if he may have his wife living with him.

Last year there were 384,497 convictions for technical offences under the pass laws and influx control. In South Africa, with its comparatively small population of 16,000,000, there are 67,000 of all races in gaol - one in 238 of the whole population. Many hundreds of people are in detention in one form or another without charge and without trial; many more have been charged and are awaiting trial. Once again there are mass trials. African political organisations have been declared unlawful; their leaders are either banned, banished, in gaol or have fled the country; some of the more militant members of these organisations who are not incarcerated, have gone underground, are alleged to have abandoned the African policy of non-violence, and are resorting to terrorist methods and sabotage to bring about a situation which will see an end to Apartheid.

The issue which is of the greatest concern to the Black Sash and should be of the greatest concern to all South Africans, is the break up of African Family Life. Because of the Native Urban Areas Act, it is almost as difficult for a married woman to live with her husband as it is for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle.

Thousands of Africans, and many women and children on their own, are being endorsed out of the urban areas and sent back to the rural areas where starvation is rife, and without any provision for housing and employment. Their husbands are being housed in bachelor hostels. In the Cape Peninsula alone, a thousand Africans a month are being "endorsed out". Those of us who come in contact with some of these separated families have seen for ourselves the human suffering and the sorrow involved. How can South Africa, which professes to be a Christian country, carry out a policy which is anti-Christ and morally indefensible?

The Government admits that Africans may only remain in the urban areas as long as their labour is required for the White economy. We would remind the Government, and the employers of labour, that it is our labour force which we are using and abusing.

Having given a short analysis of the situation as I see it, what are the achievements of Apartheid?

We have a frustrated and embittered non-White population which is governed by myriad laws which control every aspect of their daily lives; a flourishing economy, set on a course to galloping inflation; a Bantustan in the Transkei, in the throes of its first general election, which is being conducted when the territory is under a State of Emergency; sporadic outbreaks of sabotage

and violence;/-

and violence; thousands of people in gaol, in detention, in banishment, banned, under house arrest or awaiting trial; the need for an army of unprecedented strength to maintain law and order at home and to ward off our enemies from abroad; a position of isolation in the World because there is almost universal condemnation of Apartheid; a White population in South Africa, fearing Black Nationalism, has forsaken its values of justice and humanity, and, mesmerised by the "Apartheid or Death" tune of the Pied Piper of Pretoria, is following him into what they believe to be the safety of the White laager.

In this atmosphere of hysteria and unrealism, South Africa is moving towards her destruction.

I ask White South Africans to cast their minds back thirty years to Hitler's Germany of the 1930's. Hitler came to power with the moral and financial support of the big industrialists. The rank and file soon followed and climbed into Hitler's laager. The German people closed their eyes to injustice, they allowed the Jews and Catholics to be persecuted, they did not protest about the concentration camps; they professed ignorance of the gas chambers; they accepted restrictions on their own liberty; they did not raise their voices, and they did not want to raise their voices, until it was too late.

Those who survived the war saw Germany utterly beaten, her cities destroyed, millions of her citizens killed and 6,000,000 Jews exterminated. They heard the indictments at the Nuremberg Trials, and to-day they are living with their consciences.

We beseech White South Africans to examine their consciences; to ask themselves if they are doing all that they can to save South Africa, and if they do not feel it is their moral duty to bring pressure on the Government to abandon its policy, and to introduce a realistic policy which would be just and fair to all South Africans. If something is not done soon to bring about change peacefully, will we not see a violent revolution? The future would then be dark indeed.

The Black Sash, I am thankful to say, is still resolved in its determination to continue striving for good government. It will continue to speak out against injustice where ever it may be found. It has the future to gain by pursuing its stand on moral principle; it has the future to lose by failure to do so. We are not concerned with who will be offended, or with expediency, or with how we will benefit, or with what the Government may do, or with what the public may think. We do not fear the Government, we do not fear the public, we are not afraid of the Africans, the Indians or the Coloureds; we are not afraid of justice, we are not afraid of freedom. We are afraid of the fear prevalent in our country.

We believe that, as history shows us, you cannot hold a people down, even by force, indefinitely. Apart from the fact that it is wrong, it is unwise. We do not believe that the White races are superior to the Black races; we believe that discrimination on grounds of colour is an evil thing and we believe that the sharing of our privilege is the best insurance for peace and happiness for all.

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The Black/ remains an organisation with liberal views, (the World's understanding of what the word liberal means) which is committed to non-violent action. We shall continue to use all legal and legitimate methods of protest and will strive in all ways open to us to bring about peaceful change.

During the last year we have had many demonstrations on a variety of issues; detention without trial, Group Areas, the Publications and Entertainments Bill, the No Trial Bill, the break-up of family life and others. These demonstrations have not in any way cracked the granite of Government determination to stick to its policy. Nevertheless, it is of the greatest importance that they continue. We shall never allow it to be said that the Black Sash acquiesced in injustice by remaining silent, and thus giving consent. A voice crying in the wilderness is better than no voice at all, and in my own mind I am convinced that in the end it will be heard.

The ordinary/---

The ordinary day-to-day work goes on unabated. The work done in the Advice Offices is both rewarding and distressing. It has given the Black Sash women an insight into the problems and difficulties with which the urban African has to contend to remain within the law. We understand now that so many Africans are working in conditions of near slavery, for many of them are there under permit to work for one employer. Loss of the job often means endorsement out of the urban area, back to the country where there is no hope of other employment. We understand how it feels to love your husband but not to be allowed to live with him. We know the difficulties of bringing up a family without the help of the father; we know the effects on the children. We know how these people, many of them married in Christian Churches, are finding their faith in the Christian religion shaken. We know of the frightful effect on the souls of these people who have to administer these harsh laws. What are we doing to South Africans? In this coming year we hope to devote much of our time to the break-up of African family life. To us, this is the most serious aspect of the South African scene. The home is the basis of stability and this break-up of African families, through the laws of this land, is destroying the moral fibre of the African people. It means that a generation of young people is growing up without security, with psychological disturbances, and without anchorage- We shall fight this issue to the bitter end. Next month we shall have an interview with the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, when we trust that the sincerity of these views will be considered by him.

A ray of light on the otherwise dark South African scene is the establishment of the Christian Institute. We hope that the courage and the leadership of a man like Dominie Beyers Naude will be an inspiration to all South Africans. We wish him and this organisation every success in the great work that they have before them.

The prospects for the coming year are gloomy. Events are moving rapidly outside South Africa and verbal condemnation is likely to be translated into action. South Africa will go through her testing time. We hope that all people of good will will not be found wanting.

THE CRIME IS APARTHEID - THE PENALTY IS ISOLATION.

22nd October, 1963.