

DECLARATION

of the Conference

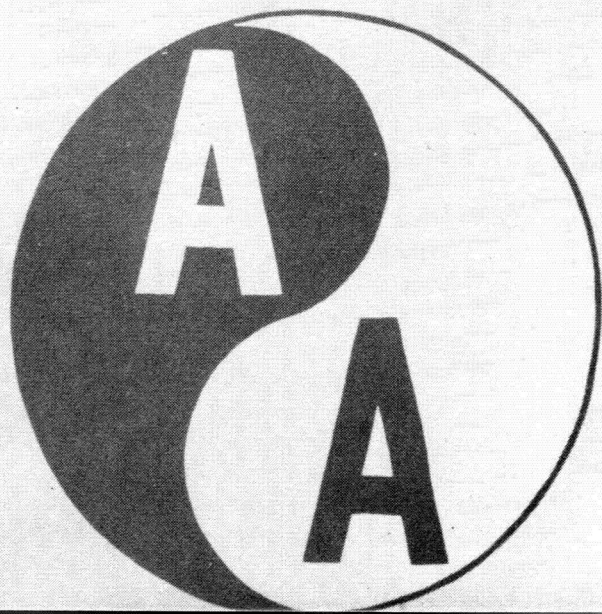
SOUTHERN

AFRICA:

THE TIME

TO

CHOOSE



SOUTHERN AFRICA: THE TIME TO CHOOSE took place from 11-13 March 1982 at the Wembley Conference Centre, London. The Opening Plenary Session on the evening of 11 March was held at TUC Headquarters, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1. The Conference was organised by the Anti-Apartheid Movement in cooperation with the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid. The Declaration of the Conference was adopted by acclaim at the Final Plenary Session.

The Steering Committee of the Conference was:

Co-Presidents

Archbishop Trevor Huddleston CR, President, Anti-Apartheid Movement
HE Alhaji Yusuff Maitama-Sule, Chairman, UN Special Committee against Apartheid

Members

Jack Jones CH

Robert Hughes MP, Chairperson, Anti-Apartheid Movement
HE Mr A B Nyaki, High Commissioner of the United Republic of Tanzania
to the United Kingdom

David Meroro, Chairman, SWAPO of Namibia
Alfred Nzo, Secretary-General, African National Congress of South Africa

Secretary

Abdul Samad Minty, Honorary Secretary, Anti-Apartheid Movement

The main work of the Conference was carried out in three Commissions:

Commission I considered the theme *South Africa's Military and Nuclear Build-up*. It was presided over by Professor Chimere Ikoku, Chairman of the Nigerian Anti-Apartheid Committee; the report of the Commission was presented to the Final Plenary Session by Abdul Samad Minty.

Commission II considered the theme *South Africa's War against Independent Africa*. It was presided over by Lord Hatch of Lusby and Jack Jones CH; the report of the Commission was presented to the Final Plenary Session by HE Mr Luis de Almeida, Ambassador of the People's Republic of Angola to France.

Commission III considered the theme *Southern Africa: British, European and Western Policy*. It was presided over by Senator S A Akintoye of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Mr Frank Dobson (Labour MP for Holborn and St Pancras South and member of the Executive Committee of the Anti-Apartheid Movement); the report of the Commission was presented to the Final Plenary Session by Senator S A Akintoye.

The Conference, **Southern Africa: The Time to Choose**, was organised in London from 11 to 13 March 1982 by the Anti-Apartheid Movement of the United Kingdom in cooperation with the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid.

The Conference was intended to consider, above all, the responsibility of Britain in relation to the grave situation in Southern Africa resulting from escalating repression and aggression launched by the apartheid regime of South Africa, the ominous implications of its nuclear plans, as well as the advance of the struggle of the oppressed people, including armed struggle, for liberation. As the sponsors pointed out:

Britain carries a major responsibility for the situation in Southern Africa. It ceded power to the white minority in South Africa in 1910. British trade and investment played a critical role in the build-up of the apartheid economy and Britain remains today the principal investor in apartheid. British migration, tourism and a host of cultural and sporting relations continue to sustain the apartheid regime. In this crucial sense British policy towards Southern Africa is of special significance; even more so today in the light of the overtly pro-apartheid policies of the United States administration.

HE Alhaji Yusuff Maitama-Sule, Chairman, UN Special Committee against Apartheid



PICTURE BY ANDREW WIARD (REPORT)

Archbishop Trevor Huddleston, the Chairman of the Conference, defined its purpose as follows:



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First: to assert once again and unequivocally that we are in the last phase of the conflict between those who believe in human dignity and the rights of man and those who support and sustain a racist ideology which totally denies these things.

Secondly: to warn Britain and the West that their choice *at this moment* will be decisive in terms of our relationship with the great continents of Africa and Asia. A choice against an effective sanctions policy is a choice for 'apartheid' and can be nothing else.

Thirdly: to show that if the West cares about peace in our world, it must act *now* to root out the cancer of racism represented in its most extreme form by apartheid and that such action is within our competence...

If we choose rightly, and if we choose now, we can be certain that we shall be contributing to a future for our world in which justice and peace will be infinitely more secure. But we cannot avoid the choice.

And we dare not delay to make it.

The Conference was attended by a wide spectrum of organisations in Britain, including political parties, trade unions, churches, and other non-governmental organisations.

It had the benefit of the presence and participation of leading representatives of the front line states, national liberation movements of South Africa and Namibia, and anti-apartheid movements from western Europe, as well as many other governments and organisations.

HE Dr Alex Ekwueme, the Vice President of Nigeria, delivered the keynote address for the Conference. He stressed the call of the African states and a large majority of the international community for the imposition of sanctions against the racist regime of South Africa. He said:

... We in Africa believe very strongly that sanctions are the only peaceful alternative to the bloody war which the Southern African problem will bring in its wake. Time is running out in Southern Africa. If the international community, by default or otherwise, cannot contain the racist, illegal and aggressive activities of the Pretoria regime by imposing comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against the irascible and obnoxious regime, then we are paving the way for inevitable bloodshed in that region...

We in Africa feel that the time has come when we shall no longer tolerate the disregard which some western nations display at issues that affect us seriously, and when we can no longer continue to ignore the action of these western nations in the Southern Africa region in our respective bilateral relations with them. In other words, there must be a clear linkage between what is happening in Southern Africa and our relations with these western nations.

We believe that the United Kingdom, faithful to her best tradition of freedom and justice, can, if she has the political will, bring sufficient pressure to bear on the South African regime to compel her to reverse the repressive and dehumanising system of government which she practises and which goes by the name of apartheid.

Five years ago, all the countries of the Commonwealth met and discussed the problems created for the Commonwealth by apartheid in the matter of sporting relations. Consistent with the noble traditions of the Commonwealth a consensus was reached resulting in the Gleneagles Agreement that member countries of the Commonwealth should sever sporting links with South Africa. Cutting South Africa off from international sporting contests would at least emphasise her moral isolation and could induce her to take the first steps towards the abolition of apartheid which has made her a pariah in the international community. We are not satisfied that Britain has tried hard enough to discourage sporting links with South Africa. Today, as we deliberate on apartheid, top British cricketers, some of whom have repre-

PICTURE BY ANDREW WIARD (REPORT)



sented England in world-class cricket, are giving succour and entertaining the white apostles of apartheid on the cricket test grounds of South Africa! How will history remember Gleneagles? Is it a venue into the coffin of apartheid; or is it a venue where some 'smart' members of the Commonwealth used a form of words to deceive their colleagues and to buy time for apartheid?

We do hope that the western countries, especially those who are members of the Security Council and who exercise veto powers therein will see the handwriting on the wall. We do hope that they will have a change of heart and agree with the majority of the international community on the urgent need to impose mandatory sanctions against South Africa.

The Conference was also addressed by, among others, HE Alhaji Yusuff Maitama-Sule, Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid; Mr Alfred Nzo, Secretary-General of the African National Congress of South Africa; Mr David Meroro, Chairman of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO); Mr Jacques Hodoul, Foreign Minister of the Seychelles; HE Sir Shridath Ramphal, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth; HE Mr Mohamed Sahnoun of Algeria, Rapporteur-General of the International Conference on Sanctions against South Africa (Paris, May 1981); representatives of front line states; and leaders of the British Labour and Liberal Parties, the Rt Hon Michael Foot and the Rt Hon David Steel; Mr Tom Jackson, Chairman of the International Committee of the Trades Union Congress; and representatives of many organisations and experts from Britain and other western countries.

These addresses and the discussions at the Conference stressed the extreme gravity of the situation in South Africa, engulfed in an escalating conflict; the legitimacy of the struggle of the national liberation movements of South Africa and Namibia; the need for effective international action to secure the liberation of South Africa and Namibia; and the responsibility of Britain and the West.



*HE Sir Shridath Ramphal,
Commonwealth Secretary-
General*

PICTURE BY ANDREW WIARD (REPORT)



*Rt Hon Michael Foot MP,
Leader of the Labour Party*

PICTURE BY ANDREW WIARD (REPORT)



*Rt Hon David Steel MP,
Leader of the Liberal Party*

PICTURE BY ANNI SILVERLEAF

As Oliver Tambo, President of the African National Congress of South Africa, said in his message to the Conference:

Because of the unavoidable intensifying liberation struggle in Namibia and South Africa, the apartheid regime is waging an undeclared and escalating war throughout Southern Africa. Britain stands at the centre of the history of this situation.

The Conference took note of and shared the assessment of the Summit Meeting of front line states held in Maputo on 6-7 March 1982:

The Front-line States Summit noted the ever-increasing aggressiveness of imperialism perpetrated by the racist regime of South Africa, its instrument of aggression in the region. The invasion and military aggressions, the utilisation of armed bandits and agents, the acts of sabotage and economic blackmail, the massive and subversive propaganda campaigns conducted by South Africa are proof that there is currently an undeclared war situation engendered and supported by South Africa.

These manoeuvres are aimed at increasing our dependence on South Africa, forestalling the harmonious application of our development plans and delaying at all costs the independence of Namibia and preventing the liberation of the South African people.

The occupation of areas in the southern part of the People's Republic of Angola by the Pretoria racist forces and the attempt to promote the Unita puppets aims at creating an international precedent which could be made applicable to any of the countries in the region. The African peoples have the right to expect a vigorous reaction from the international community, which should condemn and demand the immediate cessation of this intolerable violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity of a member state of the OAU and the United Nations.

The Front-line States Summit noted with satisfaction that as a direct response to the ever-increasing acts of repression and crimes committed by the Pretoria regime, the people of Namibia, under the leadership of SWAPO, are intensifying the liberation struggle in the country, and that in South Africa, under the leadership of the ANC, the people, through strikes and armed actions, are vigorously rising against apartheid.

The Conference expressed alarm over the recent relaxation by the United States government of the arms embargo against South Africa, as a further measure by that government in developing so-called 'constructive engagement' with the racist regime of Pretoria. It was equally concerned over the menace posed by that regime to the Indian Ocean territories.

The African leaders, as well as all the participants in the Conference, stressed that the West must make a choice without any further delay between racist tyranny in Southern Africa and the just struggle of the national liberation movements for a democratic and non-racial society, between friendship and collaboration with the racist and aggressive regime in Pretoria, and fruitful relations with independent African states and all others committed to African liberation.

They pointed out that all western countries have far more important economic and other relations with independent African states alone than with South Africa under apartheid rule.

They must be persuaded and pressed to support the cause of freedom and peace by effective action to isolate the apartheid regime and implement the resolutions of the United Nations. The glaring contradiction between their professed opposition to apartheid and their continued collaboration with, and protection of, the apartheid regime must be ended.

The participants stressed in particular the importance of a total cessation of all military cooperation with South Africa, and any assistance in South Africa's nuclear plans, and the effective monitoring of such an embargo. They stressed that the arms embargo must be complemented by an embargo on oil supplies and transfer of technology to South Africa. These were highlighted among a range of essential measures including the cessation of loans and investments to South Africa and other economic sanctions.

The participants also recognised the importance of a sports boycott of South Africa, as well as a boycott by entertainers and others, as actions of special significance.

They decided to cooperate in vigorous efforts towards the mobilisation of governments and peoples, during this International Year of Mobilisation for Sanctions against South Africa, in support of the struggle of the people of South Africa and Namibia, and for the total isolation of the racist regime of South Africa.



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Further copies of this Declaration can be obtained from:

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