

THE PROGRAMME OF THE ANTI-APARTHEID COMMITTEE

OUR TASK

There is a new and important awareness in Britain about conditions in South Africa. This has been one of the consequences of the Boycott campaign. As an exercise in political education, the campaign possibly stands without parallel in recent years. It was because of this understanding that the massacres at Sharpeville and Langa drew such widespread expressions of outrage and protest. Our movement no longer needs concern itself with trying to convince the people of this country that Apartheid is evil and that the South African Government is the most brutal of regimes since Hitler-Germany. Public opinion is wholly convinced of these facts.

The Boycott campaign developed, as it was, on the broadest of levels, has been significant for another reason. It enabled a vast and ever-growing number of people to visibly and concretely express their abhorrence of the racial policies of the S.African Government. In this way the boycott became a considerable political demonstration of solidarity with the struggling people of South Africa, giving hope and inspiration to the S.African Congress movement, and other democratic elements in their own fight against Apartheid, and winning for the British people the respect and goodwill of the whole of Africa.

These achievements, great as they are, however, remain small when related to the present situation in South Africa. Police violence and terror have been let loose under the "state of emergency". The African Congress and other organisations have been made illegal. The urban African townships in the main South African towns are being scoured by the police, armed with modern weapons; people are being beaten and imprisoned. The political detentions continue unabated with no prospect of a trial or of charges being preferred. South Africa today suffers under the heel of a most brutal and violent fascist dictatorship. Inside the country a certain helplessness pervades the African population as they see their leaders imprisoned, their organisations banned, their people beaten up and terrorised. The Verwoerd Government has reimposed the hated Pass Laws and pursues, with even greater harshness, its policy of Apartheid.

A situation like this, taking place in a country which is part of the Commonwealth, cannot allow us in Britain to rest. There exists a new and profound urgency for greater and more decisive international activity to bring a halt to the unhappiness and the violence in South Africa. To bring a quick end to the Government of Dr.Verwoerd has now become a fundamental requirement for the easing of tension in South Africa. Indeed, as the TIMES commented, the future prosperity of South Africa depends upon its ability "to rid itself of rulers who have shown that they are quite incapable of acting in contemporary terms" and that "a sigh of relief would go up everywhere if news came through of a change of policy involving the recognition that Apartheid is dead and damned" (April 6th.1960).

The task of building up the pressures towards ridding S.Africa of the Government of Dr.Verwoerd can no longer be confined to democratic opinion within that country. Such opinion, as exists there, has to a large extent been suppressed and its most vocal elements imprisoned. For this reason, as for others, it has become a task for all of us in Britain and for all decent opinion outside South Africa.

It has become our task because we believe that the Verwoerd Government and its policy of Apartheid threatens the peace, the stability and security of the whole of the African continent in much the same way as Hitler-Germany threatened the European peoples. We, further believe that the Verwoerd regime casts a blight on the Commonwealth and prejudices its oft-declared purpose as a force for peace and friendship among nations. Hence, to assist in forcing through the withdrawal of the Verwoerd regime, we shall be helping to save South Africa from further bloodshed and Africa from turmoil. We shall be working for the fulfilment of the Human Rights Charter, of racial equality and the dignity of man.

CAMPAIGN TO "SHUN VERWOERD'S SOUTH AFRICA"

We believe it to be important to our programme to understand the views of the multi-racial South African Congress Movement. They represent the vast masses of the African people and have worked closely with democratic and liberal-minded whites in South Africa. Their views are important to us because we believe their policy closely approximates to a civilized and non-racial solution to the crisis which Apartheid and the regime of Dr.Verwoerd has brought to South Africa.

When the South African Government banned the African National Congress and imprisoned its leaders, the Congress

foreign governments to intensify their pressures, through diplomatic and economic means, to isolate the Verwoerd regime and make it impossible for it to maintain itself in the face of these pressures. Calls have been made to stop oil shipments to South Africa, to refuse landing facilities for South African aircraft, for intensified and official embargoes on trade with South Africa, for a cultural and sports boycott - in a word to "Shun Verwoerd's South Africa".

Our programme of work should recognise and respond to these pleas of the African people and democratic-minded Europeans in South Africa. What this now entails for us is the inauguration of a general "Shun Verwoerd's South Africa" campaign in which we should undertake to inform the British people of the pleas received from South Africa, to stimulate discussion in the various organisations sponsoring our work, and to consider, on the basis of these discussions, how far the campaign itself can be based on such precise issues as:-

- a) to demand the withdrawal of the British representatives in S.Africa;
- b) to work towards an intensification of the boycott in concert with a demand that the United Nations issue a call to member-states to impose economic sanctions against South Africa;
- c) to work for selected international activities through and with international organisations as, for example, an ending of oil shipments to S.Africa and a withdrawal of landing facilities abroad for South African aircraft;
- d) a cultural boycott of South Africa.

OUR PROGRAMME

The immediate consideration of a "Shun Verwoerd's South Africa" campaign is founded on our recognition of the urgency of the crisis in that country and of the need for a positive response to the pleas of the African people. In many ways such a campaign is implied in the following programme which was adopted at the end of March when the Boycott Movement was renamed the 'Anti-Apartheid Movement':-

- a) to advocate the continued boycott of S.African goods until Apartheid is abandoned in South Africa;
- b) the Anti-Apartheid Committee will assist in every way the internationalisation of the Anti-Apartheid campaign and the extension of the boycott to other countries;
- c) the Anti-Apartheid Committee will support the Defence and Aid Fund administered by Christian Action and will campaign for the raising of funds for this cause;
- d) the Anti-Apartheid Committee will give support to and sponsor other campaigns as situations arise; it will, in particular, support the work of the Committee against Racial Discrimination in Sport;
- e) the Anti-Apartheid Committee will ask all the local boycott committees that they continue in existence on the same broad basis as before and that these committees continue to inform the British people by organising campaigns, meetings and demonstrations against Apartheid, and for the democratic alternative indicated above.

Now, on the basis of these broad terms of reference, the Anti-Apartheid Committee hopes to bring those pressures which would assist in transforming the present situation in South Africa - to end apartheid and to open a new era of freedom and true democracy without regard to race or colour for South Africa's people.