

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Background

The Boycott Movement was formally set up at the end of 1959 with the help of Christian Action as an ad hoc campaigning body to run the March 1960 month of boycott of South African goods. It had previously functioned informally under the auspices of the Committee of African Organisations which in June, 1959, had obtained the co-operation of various bodies in the organisation of a boycott at the request of representative leaders of the people of South Africa. After March, under the impetus of the upsurge of anti-apartheid feeling after Sharpeville and of repeated calls for a continued boycott, it was decided to continue the organisation as the Anti-Apartheid Movement for the purpose of initiating and co-ordinating campaigning work on South Africa; and after the formation of the South African United Front it was decided to co-operate closely with the overseas representatives of the South African movements comprising the United Front.

In particular the Anti-Apartheid Movement aimed

- a) to continue the boycott;
- b) to support the South African United Front's calls for economic and other sanctions on the South African Government;
- c) to promote regular propaganda against apartheid
- d) to react to special situations in South Africa

a) The Movement could not continue at the intensive level of the 1960 boycott campaign but it continued to publish the demand for boycott. There has been ^{up-to-date} no leaflet available giving a list of goods, however, since early in 1961.

b) The call for ^{economic} sanctions has been part of Anti-Apartheid's programme since 1960 but this is a call that we have found difficult to express in concrete terms meaningful to the public. It has been included in all our propaganda (e.g. leaflets for trade unions) and letters have been sent to Trade Unions, political parties and other organisations asking them to support the idea in resolutions. Delegations from the Movement have discussed sanctions with the main political parties, the Co-operative Party, and several Trade Union officials. Meetings were held at both Labour Party and Trade Union Congress Annual Conferences in 1960 and 1961 to explain the need for economic sanctions.

In 1961 the Movement helped to promote a study on the means of implementing sanctions to be undertaken by Patrick van Rensburg. This study was ready at the end of the year, and was used in turn to initiate a Study Conference on June 23rd, 1962, under the chairmanship of Dr. Ambrose Reeves and attended by about 60 people including economists, individuals of all political persuasions, British trade unionists and the General and Regional Secretaries of the International Transport Federation.

c) Duplicated monthly or bi-monthly Anti-Apartheid Bulletins have been published over the past year containing news of events in South Africa and of Anti-Apartheid activity here. These have been distributed to a list of nearly 1,000 contacts covering a wide range of supporters, including local committees in different areas. Financially, it has remained a liability as it has been difficult to collect the 5/- annual subscription.

A steady trickle of requests, though not much more, has continued to be received for speakers to address various types of meeting. Some have been requested to provide a background to showings of the anti-apartheid film "Let My People Go" but most have been for student and youth groups or youth sections of political organisations (from all Parties), trade unions and independent groups.

A special Trade Union Newsletter has also been published every two or three months on the basis of press information and information sent from South African Trade Unions. This has covered news of South African trade Union problems and activities, analyses of legislation affecting trade unions, banning and victimisation of trade union leaders and working conditions in South Africa. The Newsletter and special letters addressed to trade union bodies have led to many protests and messages of support reaching South Africa from British trade unions.

Press statements have been made on many major issues in South Africa and material from South Africa, e.g. from the South African Sports Association, have been circulated to the Press and to organisations. Special material has been published on various subjects, e.g. Co-operatives in South Africa, refugees in the Protectorates, Bantustans, etc..

d) In response to special situations, the Movement has arranged several public demonstrations in the past year: these included Trafalgar Square rallies on March 21st, 1961, (anniversary of Sharpeville), May 28th, 1961 (General Strike in South Africa). June 3rd, 1962, (call for sanctions and protest at "Anti-Sabotage" Bill and to mark the coming into force of the South Africa Act); also a demonstration against Mr. Louw on his return from the United Nations at the end of 1961 (on Ganyile).

A very successful Vigil outside the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference at Lancaster House was organised by the London Committee with the great help of the Chairman, Mrs. Barbara Castle, M.P., in obtaining the participation of many M.P.s as well as other well-known people.

Also in 1961, a programme of lobbying High Commissions and the British Government and the opposition parties demanding that South Africa be not readmitted to the Commonwealth on becoming a Republic, helped to create a climate of opinion in which concessions to South Africa became unlikely. In November a lobby of M.P.s on the issue of South-West Africa was held.

In December, 1961 a gathering of some 300 people greeted Chief Lutuli at 3 a.m. at London Airport on his way to receive his Nobel Prize in Oslo. A Conservative M.P. and six Labour M.P.s, including former Nobel Prizewinner Philip Noel-Baker, M.P., a representative of the Liberal Party and Canon Collins were among the reception committee and a torchlight parade greeted him outside the airport gates.

A lobby of M.P.s was arranged against the South Africa Bill, and the Movement's views were made known to the Government and to Opposition leaders, in March, 1962.

On the kidnapping of Anderson Ganyile a series of deputations visited the Commonwealth Relations Office and protests were made by organisations all over the country. The Movement was able to give the original news of the kidnapping to the Press and played a considerable part in the agitation that led to Ganyile's release.

In January, 1962, the Anti-Apartheid Movement, the Movement for Colonial Freedom and the Council for Freedom in Portugal and its Colonies arranged a conference attended by some 300 people, most of them delegates, on "Southern Africa - the Unholy Alliance". This conference helped to introduce the idea of the alliance between South Africa, the Central African Federation and Portugal into the Press and Parliament and has led to the publication of a leaflet and a pamphlet on the same subject. Basil Davidson and Conor Cruise O'Brien have co-operated in the production of the pamphlet. A small meeting of M.P.s was also held on May 23rd in the House of Commons on "No arms for Salazar and Verwoerd".

Several successful press conferences have been held. For example, the Movement was the first to release the news on the I.C.I.-De Beers munitions factories being built in South Africa and as a result Questions were asked in Parliament by M.P.s who support the Movement actively.

One of the difficulties encountered by the Movement has been the refusal of the Police to allow demonstrators or pickets or post parades outside South Africa House, thus making public activities of this nature almost impossible. So far, protests against such police action have been unsuccessful.

Plans for the Future

Our main immediate task is felt to be a much intensified campaign to educate the world public to demand economic sanctions against Verwoerd. The Sabotage Act is the most recent of a series of oppressive acts by the Verwoerd Government which will inevitably make violence an increasing part of South African life and if this trend is not halted, or at least mitigated by world pressure, a grim and bloody situation may very soon develop for which the world will share responsibility.