



**Tuesday, 4 April 1961,
 at 11.5 a.m.**

New York

C O N T E N T S

Agenda item 72:

Question of race conflict in South Africa resulting from the policies of *apartheid* of the Government of the Union of South Africa (continued) 63

Chairman: Mr. Carlet R. AUGUSTE (Haiti).

AGENDA ITEM 72

Question of race conflict in South Africa resulting from the policies of *apartheid* of the Government of the Union of South Africa (A/4419 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and 2; A/SPC/L.59, A/SPC/L.60 and Corr.1) (continued)

1. Mr. BOGDAN (Romania) said that racial discrimination was an extremely acute form of the violation of human rights, and was universally recognized to be a major source of international discord and conflict. It was no accident that the Charter singled out racial, national and religious discrimination and condemned them explicitly. With Nazi Germany's dreadful practices of racial discrimination fresh in their minds, the founders of the United Nations had clearly sought to prevent such a policy from ever again threatening the peace of the world. His delegation wished to stress that point, because the tendency of certain delegations to reduce the debate on *apartheid* to a general debate on human rights would not help the United Nations to deal effectively with that clear-cut danger to international peace. The General Assembly should concentrate on ways of remedying the harm already done by *apartheid* to peace in Africa and preventing a further deterioration of inter-State relations in that area. It was becoming increasingly clear that time was running short for the United Nations if it was to play a useful role in the matter.

2. As had been pointed out before, the recent so-called "Bantu Self-Government Act" of which the Union Government so often boasted, was actually designed to set up a new colonial system in the Union of South Africa. The Bantu "self-governing" territories were to be reduced to the status of colonial territories having no voice at all in the South African Parliament. Mr. Verwoerd had made that clear in rejecting even the modest proposal to seat four members of the coloured community. Not satisfied with setting up a colonial system within its own borders, the Union Government was offering its racist policy as a pattern for other African countries. Mr. Verwoerd had only recently delivered a speech in Parliament openly advocating the necessity for a policy of white supremacy in Kenya, the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and elsewhere in Africa. Race relations were indeed a crucial problem for most of the new African States, but the right solution must obviously be sought in the recognition of the African peoples' right to full inde-

pendence based on full equality and mutual respect between whites and non-whites. In opposing such a solution, South African racists had often cited as a vindication of their policies the economic development of the Union of South Africa. But it was abundantly clear that it was based primarily on the exploitation of the non-white population. Statistics published by the Union Government itself showed that the non-white population received outrageously small wages in comparison with white workers. The Union Government was fighting simply to ensure the huge profits which a white minority—a minority even among the white population of Africa—was deriving from the ownership of African soil and the exploitation of African labour.

3. With good reason, therefore, colonialists everywhere in Africa looked to South Africa for support and leadership. The Press reported that Portuguese colonialists in Angola were contemplating a future bloc consisting of a white-ruled Angola, the Union of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. It had also been brought to light that many troops under the colonialist puppet régime in Katanga were composed of "white mercenaries" from South Africa. The rulers of South Africa were also trying to enlist the support of influential reactionary circles in the Western countries, in exchange for their services in furthering the political and economic aims of those circles in international relations. Indeed, judging from the fact that 40 per cent of United States capital invested in Africa was placed in the Union of South Africa, the efforts of the Union Government had met with success. That was a clue to the sources from which the Union Government derived encouragement to defy the United Nations and world public opinion in an attempt to transform South Africa into a rallying centre for all colonialist and reactionary forces in Africa and elsewhere. While the final victory in the contest between freedom and colonialism was not in doubt, the Union Government's attempts constituted a very real threat to peace and security in Africa and the whole world.

4. The United Nations had not only the right to discuss the situation in South Africa, but the duty to take appropriate measures to put an end to the policy of *apartheid*. The question arose what the United Nations should do. Suggestions had been made to utilize again the good offices of Mr. Hammarskjöld. Mr. Bogdan would merely point out that while the report¹ submitted in accordance with the Security Council resolution of 1 April 1960² stated that "the exchange of views in general has served a most useful purpose", Mr. Hammarskjöld had not specified what useful purpose they had served. In fact, since the Union Government had continued to harden its stand, the logical

¹ Official Records of the Security Council, Sixteenth Year, Supplement for January, February and March 1961, document S/4635.

² Official Records of the Security Council, Fifteenth Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1960, document S/4300.

inference was that the talks were useful as a cover for continuing the policy of *apartheid*. That conclusion should be carefully pondered by those who still believed in Mr. Hammarskjöld's impartiality.

5. The States directly concerned, the African States, asked for stronger measures, while some other States preferred a mild resolution of the kind adopted for several years. But the increasingly moderate resolutions of the General Assembly had been answered by increasing inflexibility on the part of the Union Government, which obviously regarded them as a sign of the Organization's weakness. Under those circumstances his delegation believed that more effective, stronger measures were in order. They would not only strengthen the authority of the United Nations, but might avert greater difficulties in the future.

6. Mr. BERNARDO (Argentina) noted that, although the Committee was discussing the question of *apartheid* for the ninth consecutive time, little or no change had come about. That was puzzling in view of South Africa's distinguished record in other directions. The present debate seemed, however, to have special significance. For one thing, serious new facts showed that the Union Government was not only persevering in its erroneous policies but was even intensifying them. Since the previous General Assembly debate, new repressive measures had been adopted which had finally culminated in the Sharpeville incidents of March 1960 and the resultant Security Council resolution of 1 April 1960. In addition, the Union of South Africa had decided in March 1961 to withdraw from the Commonwealth rather than revise its racial policies in the face of condemnation by all the Commonwealth members. The situation now facing the General Assembly was therefore more delicate than it had been before. While some speakers had pointed out a few hopeful signs, such as South African court decisions in favour of political prisoners and the growing concern in the country about the possible consequences of *apartheid*, his delegation did not feel that those factors outweighed the negative trend.

7. His delegation sympathized with the indignation and impatience of the newly-independent African countries at the mild measures adopted so far by the General Assembly, but emotional attitudes did not always serve to clarify the debate. It was somewhat disconcerting, for instance, to hear repeated allusions to the West and to Christianity. The debate on *apartheid* was too important in itself to be further magnified into a trial of the white man and Western culture. Indeed, nothing could be more unjust, for *apartheid* was the very opposite of the Western tradition.

8. The injustice of the policy of *apartheid* was not so much that it was practised by whites against Africans, or by a minority against a majority, as that it violated the concepts of the fundamental equality of all mankind and the dignity of the human person. It was on that basis that his delegation had opposed *apartheid* ever since the subject had first been discussed in the Assembly. It shared the conviction that the problem was above all a moral one inasmuch as all human beings had certain fundamental rights deriving from the nature of man and therefore preceding the establishment of any legal code. The fact that they were specifically referred to in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, however, expressly committed the signatories, including the Union of South Africa, to uphold them. Racial prejudice was incom-

prehensible to the peoples of Latin America. His own country had no laws expressly prohibiting discrimination, for the good reason that such an attitude was unthinkable to the Argentines.

9. His delegation maintained that under the provisions of Articles 55 and 56 of the Charter the United Nations was competent to discuss the item, and that Article 2, paragraph 7, was not applicable. Inasmuch as a solution of the problem of racial discrimination in South Africa would depend primarily on the good will of the Union Government, it would of course be very difficult to achieve. His delegation was aware of the sociological complexity of the problem and recognized that the existing atmosphere of tension was an obstacle to any peaceful solution. Indeed, it had doubts concerning the effectiveness of coercive measures. However, it was necessary and urgent to find a satisfactory solution to the problem. Perhaps the multi-racial societies functioning successfully in Latin America could serve as an example to the Union of South Africa.

10. Mr. SOBOLEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) traced the history of the discussion of the present issue in the United Nations since 1946. Far from being a matter exclusively within the Union Government's domestic jurisdiction, it had become a serious international problem, the solution of which could not be deferred much longer. The United Nations could not permit a small minority of colonialists to continue violating the fundamental rights and freedoms of the vast majority of the Union's inhabitants, creating an atmosphere of racial hostility and endangering peace on the African continent. Racial discrimination unfortunately existed in many countries, including that in which the United Nations had its Headquarters. In South Africa, however, it was elevated to the status of an official state policy. Antagonism between the races was part of the philosophy of the South African State and underlay every aspect of the economic, political and social life of that country. The purpose of *apartheid* was to preserve a society based on the exploitation of the cheap labour provided by a body of indigenous inhabitants who were denied the exercise of all political and civil rights and freedoms. Although the Africans made up more than two-thirds of the population, they now owned only 8 per cent of the land while the whites owned 92 per cent. Legal provisions concerning conditions of work enabled the colonialists to enrich themselves by ruthless oppression of the working masses. Furthermore, actual slave labour existed in the case of persons arrested for violations of the pass laws and sent to work on the plantations owned by the white settlers for the duration of their sentences. The extent of such slave labour could be deduced from the fact that more than a million people were arrested on such charges every year. The South African Government was clearly a Fascist régime of the most fanatical sort, yet its leaders did not hesitate to call it a bastion of Western civilization. Its racist doctrines were an anachronism in an era when the trend was towards the attainment of freedom by all dependent peoples.

11. The task of the United Nations was to ensure that the will of the peoples, as proclaimed in the recently adopted Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples (General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV)), was executed without delay. Among the measures required to achieve the purposes of that Declaration were arrangements to put an end to the oppression of the indigenous population in the

Union of South Africa and to grant them their rights as set forth in the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. World public opinion denounced the racist policies of the colonialist rulers of the Union and supported the legitimate demands of the Africans for freedom and equality, looking to the United Nations to do its part and ensure that the new Declaration was translated into reality.

12. The African and Asian States in a series of conferences had repeatedly raised their voices in protest against the policy of *apartheid*. Similarly the African States had called upon the United Nations to take decisive steps to put an end to that policy. The United Nations' repeated appeals had of course been ignored, and the Union Government had actually intensified its repressive measures, as indicated by the massacre of peaceful demonstrators at Sharpeville shortly after the adoption of the Assembly's latest resolution (1375 (XIV)) on the subject. Those acts of violence and the threat to international peace and security to which they had given rise had led to the adoption of Security Council resolution calling upon the Union Government to abandon its policies of *apartheid* and racial discrimination and requesting the Secretary-General to make arrangements for the upholding of the Purposes and Principles of the Charter in South Africa. A year had passed since the adoption of that resolution and the time had come to ask what was the current situation in the Union and what steps the Secretary-General had taken to carry out the task entrusted to him.

13. It must be acknowledged that conditions in South Africa had grown worse instead of better. Following the demonstrations of March 1960, thousands of innocent people had been condemned to prison and slave labour. The Sharpeville massacre had been followed by the incidents in Pondoland in which forces supported by tanks and aircraft had killed and wounded thousands of unarmed demonstrators. Such incidents, and the uprooting of the indigenous population in South West Africa, showed that the Union Government had no intention of complying with the resolutions of the United Nations. The plain fact of the matter was that the South African colonialists were able to ignore the resolutions of the United Nations only because they were receiving support from abroad. As the Nigerian representative had rightly asserted (236th meeting), even an abstention in the voting on a General Assembly resolution concerning South Africa had the effect of supporting the position of the racists. The solidarity of the colonial Powers with the Union of South Africa was obvious. It was based on the common desire of the monopolists of those countries to ensure the continued flow of the enormous profits which they shared with the Union. They stooped to any means, including the application of the policies of racial discrimination and segregation, to attain that end. The Union Government, confident of the support of the colonial Powers, openly defied the United Nations and the peoples of the entire world.

14. The Secretary-General's talks with the South African Prime Minister, inexcusably deferred until January 1961, had produced no results whatsoever, as was recognized by the Secretary-General himself in his statement that no mutually acceptable arrangements had so far been found. Obviously the discussions could not have led to any results satisfactory to the Africans when the Secretary-General himself supported the position of the racists and colonialists. According to Press re-

ports, he had said to the representative of South African colonialism that he admired the spirit in which they did the utmost to help their friends (the Africans) to achieve the goal which they had set for themselves . . . he hoped they would achieve their destiny as you see it. Thus he had clearly given the South African racists to understand that they could continue their lawless rule with impunity. When he was in South Africa he had not only made no effort to establish contact with the opposition parties and political organizations so that he could form an objective picture of the situation in the Union but had refused to receive their leaders or African petitioners. In the circumstances it was indeed surprising that the representatives of some countries were again proposing that he should continue a course which had only served to whitewash the activities of the South African colonialists. In his activities with relation to South Africa, Mr. Hammarskjöld was betraying the interests of the African peoples and making a mockery of the principles of the United Nations, just as he had done, with tragic consequences, in the Congo. That was one more reason why the United Nations could no longer allow its Secretariat to be headed by a henchman of the imperialists and colonialists.

15. The discussions in the Committee had shown that the overwhelming majority of delegations were deeply concerned at the Union Government's refusal to heed the resolutions of the United Nations. Developments had taken a particularly dangerous turn during the past year when it had flouted the decision of the Security Council. The United Nations should take whatever steps were necessary to put an end to the obsolete system of racial oppression prevailing in South Africa, for until it was eliminated every day would bring new sufferings to the non-white inhabitants of the Union and the existence in the Union of colonialism in its worst form was fraught with danger for the peace of Africa.

16. His delegation fully supported the position of those African and Asian countries which had stated that the time had come for the United Nations to take active measures to put an end to racism in the Union of South Africa. He shared the feeling expressed by many African and Asian representatives that the Union Government should be denounced for its defiance of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council. The representative of Ghana, at the 233rd meeting, had rightly called upon all States Members of the United Nations to support the resolution adopted by the Second Conference of Independent African States held at Addis Ababa in June 1960 recommending *inter alia* the severance of diplomatic relations with the Union of South Africa, the closing of ports to all vessels flying the South African flag, a boycott on all South African goods, the denial of landing and passage facilities to South African aircraft and the discontinuance of air, postal, telegraphic, radio and other communications with the Union Government. As the representative of the United Arab Republic had stated (233rd meeting), those proposals represented the minimum that the United Nations should do. That position was fully in accordance with the principles of the Charter. His own delegation considered it imperative that the United Nations should take urgent and effective steps to put an end to the suppression of the great majority of the South African population by a small minority of white colonialists and thus to uphold the principles underlying the Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial peoples and countries.

17. Mr. QUAISON-SACKY (Ghana) said that to delegations of African States the race conflict resulting from *apartheid* constituted a canker worm eating into the body politic of a part of Africa. For nine years, every effort had been made to persuade the Union Government to adopt policies in conformity with its obligations under the United Nations Charter; the answer had been the massacre at Sharpeville, and further killings not reported in the Press were even now taking place. For that reason, twenty-five Member States felt that firm action should be taken at the present session, and he was privileged to present the draft resolution (A/SPC/L.60 and Corr.1) on behalf of the co-sponsors. It provided for the minimum measures which could be taken by the Committee and the General Assembly. In the face of the denial of human rights by a slow but calculated process, it merely recommended States to consider taking the steps mentioned in operative paragraph 5. It represented the earnest hope of all African States, whether independent or not, and when the time came to vote on the draft resolution his delegation would request that the draft be put to the vote first.

18. Mr. WODAJO (Ethiopia) said that *apartheid*, as practised by one of the founding Members of the United Nations, posed a fundamental threat to the health of the Organization and to peace in Africa and the world. Although it was a complete negation of the Charter, it could not be described as a totally negative system; it was positive in so far as it represented a consciously and systematically worked-out philosophy and declared that its method was the only right one. The late Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, Mr. D. F. Malan, had said that *apartheid* was not a specifically South African product, and that Europe, consisting of some twenty-five sections, each with its own nationality, language and culture, was the outstanding example of *apartheid*. Speaking of its compatibility with Christianity, Mr. D. F. Malan had said that *apartheid* was founded in an act of divine creativity, in the natural differences between race and race, colour and colour. The South African authorities therefore argued that, since the African population was fundamentally different from the white people, its demand for the abolition of discriminatory laws and for representation in Parliament was self-contradictory; moreover, since racial differences were divinely decreed, the preservation of characteristics was a sacred duty. In support of that philosophy, the official version of history was that the white men had arrived in South Africa before the Bantu, the latter being an alien intruder who had destroyed the indigenous population and had therefore no moral or legal claim to land, or even to call the country his home.

19. The *apartheid* system, which claimed as its final goal the development, on a separate and culturally distinct basis, of the individual personality of each group of society, did not allow Africans to sit in Parliament or to hold any higher post in the public service. Separate amenities for the races, based on convention and strengthened by the authority of the law, were the norm of life in the Union. Social welfare was based on the system; the maximum old-age pension, for instance, ranged from £114 per annum for Europeans to £12 per annum for Africans. Under the Group Areas Act and the pass system, the movements of non-Europeans were controlled. Under the Suppression of Communism Act, it was left to the Governor-General to determine who was a Communist, and in the Union of South

Africa the achievement of full racial equality was regarded as one of the objectives of Communism.

20. Although based on a philosophy which rationalized prejudices and interests, in the final analysis *apartheid* was a system of exploitation which attempted to guarantee a life of comfort and luxury to the few million Europeans. That was clear from the practices of the labour unions, and from the fact that Africans imprisoned for the violation of discriminatory laws were forced to work in the plantations of white farmers. It was a system designed to keep Africans in the gold mines and in the plantations as producing machines for the welfare of the Europeans. But no system of oppression, however refined and perfected, could keep an entire people in subjugation as a source of cheap labour for maintaining the *status quo*, and the events at Sharpeville had foreshadowed blood baths and explosions yet to come which would endanger even more seriously the peace of the world.

21. The method employed by the United Nations thus far had been an approach to reason and to a sense of fair play, and a call to live up to obligations. Even after the Secretary-General, in implementation of the resolution adopted by the Security Council on 1 April 1960, had made the views of the United Nations known to the Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, the latter had made statements reflecting his Government's intransigence, while the application of the policies of *apartheid* had continued with increasing vigour, and further massacres similar to that of Sharpeville had taken place. If the Union Government had been amenable to persuasion, there would have been no better opportunity than the recent London Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers in March 1961, where such persuasion could have taken place without the glare of publicity; however, the Union Government had chosen to walk out of the Commonwealth.

22. In the view of the Ethiopian delegation, the United Nations had arrived at a very critical point in its consideration of the problem. The question was whether at the present session the Assembly should follow the tradition of appealing to the conscience of the Union Government, or whether it should learn from past experience and consider concrete measures. The answer had been given at the Second Conference of Independent African States at Addis Ababa in June 1960, when a strong resolution had been adopted. Ethiopia had implemented that resolution in full and had cut off all trade and economic relations with the Union; it was now co-sponsoring a resolution in similar terms to indicate its moral abhorrence of the *apartheid* policies of a minority group.

23. The time had come for Members of the United Nations to ask whether membership did not entail a minimum code of behaviour and decency; it did not seem reasonable that Members should be affected either individually or collectively by the vote of a Government which denied the validity of the principles of the Charter upon which its right to vote rested. That was why his delegation felt that the United Nations, having seen all its attempts at persuasion met by the intransigence of the Union Government, should now take decisive action. The measures recommended in the draft resolution (A/SPC/L.60 and Corr.1) were the minimum to be expected of the United Nations. In the first place, the draft resolution was an expression of indignation, moral revulsion and abhorrence of the evil, racial and hatred-imbued policies of the Government of the Union

of South Africa. Secondly, it marked a new departure in the policy of the United Nations, which for so long had been one of patient persuasion. Thirdly, since *apartheid* was fundamentally a policy to maintain the economic *status quo*, which enabled the minority to live on the labours of the disenfranchised and subjected majority, the resolution emphasized economic measures. In reply to the argument that the African, Indian and coloured populations of South Africa would suffer most from such measures, it must be said that the leaders of those communities agreed that they were the most ap-

propriate measures. If the draft resolution were adopted, it would be a day of victory for justice and for all the principles for which the United Nations stood.

24. Mr. BUNCHE (Under-Secretary for Special Political Affairs) said he considered it necessary, in the interests of accuracy, to point out that the derogatory references to the Secretary-General made by the representative of the Soviet Union were merely expressions of opinion having little or no regard for the facts.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.