

Statement of Mr. James Forman, International Affairs Director of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (100 Fifth Avenue, Room 803, New York, N.Y. 10009; YU 9-1313) to the Fourth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, Twenty-Second Session. November 17, 1967

Mister Chairman:

On behalf of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and on behalf of other African Americans, I should like to thank this committee for granting our organization a chance to appear and to present a point of view on the agenda item before this committee: namely, Activities of foreign economic and other interests which are impeding the implementation of the declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples in Southern Rhodesia, South West Africa and territories under Portuguese domination and in all other territories under colonial domination and efforts to eliminate colonialism, apartheid and racial discrimination in Southern Africa.

While we extend our thanks to the entire committee for granting us the right to present our point of view, we call special attention to the efforts of the delegation of Guinea and Tanzania that provided us with an opportunity to attend and to participate in the United Nations sponsored conference on Racism, Colonialism, and Apartheid in Southern Africa held last summer in Kitwe, Zambia.

We deeply missed the Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid, Mr. A Marof, and we are happy to note that he has returned to his functions at the United Nations.

In Kitwe, Zambia, our organization presented and discussed a position paper entitled: The Indivisible Nature of the Struggle Against Racism, Apartheid, and Colonialism. It was our contention in that paper that any examination of the forces of apartheid, racism and colonialism had to not only observe the effect of those forces in one area or country but to consider their entire interrelations and manifestations elsewhere.

We were not unaware that our representation in Zambia and our active participation in that conference marked another milestone in the liberation of black people in the United States. For it represented the first time in the history of the United States that people of African descent now living in the United States had the opportunity to raise questions and discuss within a forum of the United Nations some aspects of our general condition in the United States. Unfortunately, we could only raise questions, make points of observation and comparisons. But we are confident that the day is not too far off when the desperate plight of the people of African descent who were wrenched from the shores of Africa... (See Appendix (1))

As our organization examines the agenda item before this Committee, we are fully aware that much documentation of the foreign economic forces operating in Southern Africa has already been presented before the United Nations and this Committee. We do not intend to burden the Committee with a repetition of this documentation.

We understand full well the economic interest of the monopolists, especially the United States, and the desire to suck profits from the colored peoples of the world, the people of Africa, Latin America and Asia. We condemn these activities. We will work untiringly to help in any way possible our brothers in Southern Africa, for our own experiences within the United States have prepared us to understand the emotional and psychological ordeal of a colonized people. Let us not forget that those of us of African descent living in the United States were first colonized inside the United States. It is merely an accident of history that we were not left in Africa where there are now independent black nations.

Therefore, when we talk of our point of view on the current agenda item, we speak with all the passion, the frustration, the anger, the hatred, the thrust for independence, the love for humanity of our colonized people who understand the injustice of their situation, who have lifted the veil and have seen the light.

Underneath, alongside and historically intertwined with the foreign economic interest and exploitation which the report of this committee has correctly condemned - we see a white western racial bias. Within this framework, we would like to interpret some facts. Led by the United States, with the newly emergent exception of Japan, all of the countries from whence flow the foreign economic interest under consideration by this committee share a common white skin, a Judeo-Christian heritage, a belief in the superiority of whiteness. This belief in the superiority of whiteness is grounded in the false concepts of the nineteenth and early twentieth century that the technologically advanced white western countries held that position by some superior brain power and higher ethical standards.

We see reflection of this white racial bias in the words of United States monopolists. For instance, in the United Nations Security Council Document No. S/6453 of March 30, 1966 it is reported that Milton P. Higgins, chairman of the Norton Company of Worcester, Massachusetts said in January 1965, in Johannesburg: "I think South Africa is going to remain a strong country, led by white people. I think foreign countries should leave South Africa alone. If they leave you alone you will get on and do a great job."

The investment policy of the Chase Manhattan Bank in South Africa is well known. In the paper we presented at the United Nations Seminar in Kitwe, Zambia we documented charges of the racially discriminatory practice of the Chase Manhattan at its headquarters in New York City with respect to twelve black employees.

The unwillingness of the United Kingdom to use force in Zimbabwe\*\* against the illegal white regime of Ian Smith is another manifestation to us of the white western racial bias, for that country has not hesitated to use force in other parts of the Third World.

The United States government says that change must come in South Africa through peaceful means. That same government has over 500,000 troops in Vietnam fighting not white people but brown Vietnamese.

In February of 1967 the U.S. Carrier Franklin D. Roosevelt enroute from Vietnam was scheduled to stop at Capetown, South Africa. This trip was not just a mere rest stop. It meant that the United States government was willing to let black sailors that had been fighting in Vietnam to protect the security of white America subject themselves to apartheid, racism, and the lily white practices of the South African government.

Notwithstanding the fact that this visit was cancelled after much protest - this incident must not be seen as an isolated event. Except for the desire to maintain the South African white controlled government as a necessary part of its industrial-military component and the white racial bias inherent in all facets of life in the United States, how else does one justify the lily white personnel practices of the United States Embassy in South Africa? How else does one justify or explain the establishment of tracking stations in South Africa by the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)? How else does one justify the fact that no African American works in that agency's South African bases?

And unless there have been some changes in the last few months the United States government is supporting the segregated facilities for those of our African brothers who are forced to work in so-called menial capacities in the Space Agency. \*

It is an undisputable fact that many of the United States businesses operating in South Africa have work contracts with the United States Defense Department, the largest employer in the United States. These contracts carry with them a non-discriminatory clause, that is, they are not supposed to discriminate against blacks in the United States. At the same time, however, these same companies are allowed to invest their profits, much of which they get from the U.S. Defense Department, exploit African labor, and conform to the racism of South Africa.

Can one expect any different policy when in fact the United States government itself engages in this type of activity? (See Appendix (2))

The United States has announced that since December 31, 1963, it no longer ships arms to South Africa. However, just as recently as July 9, 1967, the Johannesburg Sunday Times announced that the United States was now buying military equipment from South Africa. I would like to read that article. See Appendix (3)

From The Johannesburg Sunday Times  
July 9, 1967

U.S. ARMY PLACES BIG  
ELECTRONICS ORDER  
WITH SOUTH AFRICA

By Stephen Mulholland  
Sunday Times Business Editor

The United States Army has placed orders for about R900,000\* worth of South African-made

\* THIS IS NOT a private concern, but a concern DIRECTLY of the U.S. Executive Gov't  
\*\* 1 Rand equals \$1.40 or \$1,260,000 worth of material in this order.

electronic equipment for artillery survey, military map-making and engineering survey. The equipment was developed by a private engineering firm, Plessey South Africa Limited, and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (C.S.I.R.).

To the best of

It was designed to specification laid down by the United States Army and based on principles used in the delicate, electronic-distance-measuring equipment known as the Tellurometer.

The Tellurometer, an instrument for measuring distance through microwaves, was invented by a South African Scientist, Dr. T.L. Wadley, and developed by Plessey South Africa Limited and the C.S.I.R.

Tellurometer equipment is used by armies throughout the world. A Plessey spokesman said yesterday that "it would not be advisable" to name the countries whose armies are using it.

The company described the American order as one for "a specialized military instrument" which would also soon be in use by other armies throughout the world.

#### Exported

All production of the new instrument has so far been exported and the United States Army's order for 200 of the instruments is now being fulfilled.

They are built in the Plessey factory in Cape Town and then shipped in "knocked-down" condition to New York for reassembly at a factory controlled by Plessey. \*

A United States Army Officer has acknowledged and verified this purchase under a so-called Buy American Act. An Army spokesman when queried on this particular event, answered:

The Secretary of the Army has asked me to reply to your inquiry concerning purchases of electronic distance measuring equipment described in the 9 July 1967 Johannesburg Sunday Times.

The Army has not placed orders for South Africa end product described in the correspondence at-

United States is one having the cost of its components which are mined, produced or manufactured in the United States exceed 50% of the cost of all its components. The cost of components include transportation costs to the place of incorporation into the end product. In the case of components of foreign origin, duty is included.

The end products of electronic distance measuring equipment being supplied to the Army by United States firms contain 19.5% South African component parts, which is well within the Buy American Act classification of a United States product.

But yet the paper in Johannesburg says that the control of the assembly in New York is by the Plessey Company !!

But there is an even more glaring omission on the part of the United States Executive. We constantly hear from U.S. spokesmen that the United States government is opposed to apartheid, but let us look at its policy with respect to the sugar quota.

On July 3, 1960 the United States Senate gave President Eisenhower power over the Cuban sugar quota which at that time stood at 3,119,555 short tons. On December 16, 1960 Eisenhower established a zero quota for Cuban sugar. In other words he completely eliminated the quota. A reallocation of that sugar quota was made by the Secretary of Agriculture, Orville Freeman. The South African Sugar Association began to lobby for portions of the quota which they have obtained for the years, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966. The price paid to the South African Sugar Association is about seven cents per pound compared to the 2.2 cents per pound on the world market. All this is on the record, for on June 15, 1962, House bill, HR 12154, set the new quota schedule. South Africa was allocated 20,084 short tons and thus gained access to the U.S. sugar market and guaranteed U.S. premium prices which were higher than world market prices. Sales for the following years: (final adjusted quota) See Appendix (14)

1963	132,272 short tons
1964	119,960
1965	103,862
1966	55,292

February-March 1961, South Africa Sugar Association (SASA) hired the U.S. law firm of Casey Lane and Mittendorf to write "a proposal submitted to the Dept. of Agriculture for the purchase of 65,000 long tons of wheat by the Republic of South Africa in exchange for the granting of a non-quota sugar allocation to South Africa in the amount of 30,000 short tons of sugar." (Foreign Agents Registration, Dept. of Justice).

One of the general objectives of the International Sugar Agreement of 1958, (adopted 24 October 1958, Geneva Switzerland, UN Document # E/CONF 27/5, 29 Oct 1958 English) was to make it possible "to maintain fair standards of labour conditions and wages." Under Article 6, "The participating Governments declare that, in order to

avoid the depression of living standards and the introduction of unfair competitive conditions in world trade, they will seek the maintenance of fair labour standards in the sugar industry." (South Africa was a participating member.)

Admitting that the United States Sugar Refining Industry was bound to see the reallocation of the Cuban Sugar quota, how does one explain the granting of a sugar quota to South Africa? The basis on which a quota is given included the efficiency with which sugar can be delivered. In granting a quota to South Africa the United States accepted the stability of the South African government, a government in the control of white racists oppressing the majority will of the African people and blocking their efforts to eliminate racism and apartheid and to have self-government.

Now, Mr. Chairman, we have a few conclusions here that we would like to make.

The first conclusion is that in the Committee's report is a paragraph dealing with the disseminating of information. We feel that this is extremely important. Because much of what the United Nations has done with respect to South Africa does not get disseminated, certainly not within the United States.

We have been trying in our organization to do some of that within the limited time that we have been working on this problem. On the other hand, it seems as if the Committee ought to consider not just that we should do this but to consider how much of a budgetary increase you will make for the dissemination of information. It is a relevant fact because even now, when people write in for certain references from the Kitwe, Zambia Conference, and as they will be writing in for some of these documents.... Some of them are not available due to the cost of reproduction. The first basis for action is information about a situation.

In addition to this, of course is the South African Foundation which operates in the United States and spends a tremendous amount of money in propagandizing against the United Nations.

The second conclusion that I would like to put forward deals with the need for the Afro-Asian delegates to the United Nations to intensify their efforts to increase the kinds of hearings that we are having now. It is not enough to permit one James Forman who represents SNCC to appear before you, but to allow other African Americans in the United States who have been studying and dealing with this problem to come forward.

I am confident that much of the information that I have presented today on behalf of our organization will be extremely helpful, no matter what the objections may be from certain sectors. There are other people who are constantly researching this problem because we are very much interested in the whole situation.

And we are not interested just from an academic point and not just from a moral point of view. Those of us living in the United States who see ourselves and who are in fact, descendants of the Africans who were brought to this country, enslaved, and who are rebelling and revolting now against our oppressive condition, are extremely concerned about Africa. We see Africa as

our Motherland. We feel that we have a responsibility to speak with as much passion as any other African on this issue. Because we know that we are in the same box. The same colonial countries that are enslaving Africa - and especially in southern Africa - have combined and conspired to bring us to the U.S. and we have not been able to psychologically or any constitutionally kind of way, free ourselves from the legacy .

Therefore, we would propose that you give other people a chance to appear before this Committee. Try to do away with some of the difficulties that confronted me when I requested to address this body. I want to plead for other African-Americans to have the opportunity to come before this body and speak on some of these issues. Thank you.

(When the Chairman asked if any of the delegates would like to ask any questions of the speaker, the representative of Cuba requested that Mr. Forman elaborate on his statements about the Tellurometer. Mr. Forman responded as follows:)

We have not had time to find out what this Tellurometer does, or what other countries have it, and how many more are to be ordered in the future. (Mr. Forman at this point read from the letter that has been reprinted in this paper on pages 4 & 5) Mr. Forman went on to say:

The United States agreed to end selling arms to South Africa 3½ to 4 years ago. But the U.S. is currently buying arms, buying material and military equipment from S. Africa. This is a new development. What does it mean ?

It means that the U.S. Government is willing to give more money for foreign exchange to South Africa. It means a continuing stability or a confidence in the S. African Government. It also means that the United States is making a mockery of all the resolutions that the General Assembly has passed.

It is the duty of this Committee, in my opinion, to seek some answers to this question. If this develops further, then we can see the United States buying more and more arms from South Africa under the Buy American Act and it's just going to make the whole liberation of southern Africa indeed a mockery. This is not an issue that can be passed over lightly.

To us, it is an extremely important item and deserves serious consideration. Presumably, the American delegate will have some answer to this particular question which we have raised. Certainly, we don't want to be in a position of stating incorrect facts.....even though we cite the Johannesburg Sunday Times.. But we need to seriously examine this, and especially this Committee, and indicate somewhere in its report these particular facts.

(1)

At this point, the delegate of the United States objected to Mr. Forman's presentation stating that he was not abiding by the question before the Committee. He accused him of referring to the "internal and domestic problems" of the U.S.

The Chairman took the point of the U.S. delegate but hoped that the U.S. representative would bear with them all in the view that often one must draw parallels in presenting a point. The Chairman further stated:

"I hope the distinguished representative of the U.S. will appreciate that the Chairman is keeping as close a watch on the activities of this Committee as he is..."

The Chairman then stated that on behalf of the U.S. delegate he would intimate to the petitioner, Mr. Forman, that we have a particular item to which he hoped the speaker would address himself.

The representatives from Togo and Iraq asked to comment on the above.

The delegate from Togo reminded the Committee that on the previous day, the statement made by Great Britain, of which 3/4 was not the point under discussion, was permitted and that no one objected on those grounds.

The representative of Iraq declared:

"With all respect to my distinguished colleague from the U.S., I didn't find that the petitioner has dealt with any internal problem in the U.S." He then requested that the Committee's lay in hearing the rest of the statement.

The Chairman thereafter requested Mr. Forman to continue.

(2) Mr. Forman: "Now this is a very important point because quite often the U.S. says that those are private concerns and we have no control over them. But the Space Agency is a direct creation of the U.S. national government. All of the situations that I explained about the carrier, about the embassy policies .....these have NOTHING to do with the so-called private enterprise laterally speaking."

(3) In other words, you know we said that in 1963 the U.S. claimed it had stopped sending or selling arms to South Africa. Yet, in 1967, we are informed that the U.S. is purchasing equipment from S. Africa. And I'd like to quote the article and to cite other proof.... I'm now quoting from the Sunday Times of Johannesburg.

(4) There's a discrepancy in what was allocated and what was actually sold. There was an allocation of only 20,000 tons. But as you can see from the figures quoted, the actual sales were way above this allocation. This is a handsome subsidy that the U.S. is paying to South Africa. While the world market is 2.2¢ per pound, the U.S. actually pays the S. African Government 7¢ per pound. ( More than 3 times what other countries get). The importance of this is that this is not even a decision for the House of Representatives, nor for the Senate of the U.S. nor for Chase Manhattan Bank or Standard Oil... The president of the U.S. has the authority to reallocate the quota. The executive office of the United States is subsidizing the economy of South Africa.



I don't have the exact figures, but we could easily figure it out. 7½ a pound for 132,000 pounds is nearly \$1 million. Why is that just being done in South Africa? No other country in Africa got the subsidy. Why the preferential treatment for S. Africa? These are the questions that show the prejudicial relationship and the kind of stability in the S. African Government that the United States is trying to maintain.

Additionally, We all know that the merchants in S. Africa went shopping after the Shappville massacre in 1960 attempting to find and build confidence in the S. African economy. We know about the loans that were given from Chase Manhattan Bank and First National City Bank.

But here you have DIRECT United States governmental activity. Here you have the United States passing over many other countries in Africa. I would imagine that any country would begin growing sugar if it could get this kind of treatment.

But why just in S. Africa?

Furthermore, South Africa is outside the Western Hemisphere where the first sugar quota was designed for.