AFRICA in Today's World

By CHARLES I. WEST, M.D.

"POSITIVE AND EFFECTIVE ACTION" by the Security Council of the United Nations to deal with the worsening racial situation in South Africa has been requested by 57 nations, most of them African.

According to Kathleen Teltsch, United Nations correspondent for the New York Times, the Council was urged to meet "as soon as possible" in an attempt to avert a conflict that could lead to disastrous consequences not only in Africa, but throughout the world.

The request was signed by virtually the entire membership of the Asian and African bloc, joined by Jamaica.

Jamaica apparently wished to be associated with the bloc's latest move to get South Africa to abandon her policy of apartheid, or race separation. The Council last debated the South African racial situation in December.

A joint letter said the 57 were asking for renewed Council debate because of grave new developments. It mentioned the recent death sentences for a number of African leaders who have opposed the South African Government's racial system.

The new developments, the 57 said, together with South Africa's refusal to heed past United Nations appeals on the racial issue, have created a situation that threatens peace and security.

Although no date for the Council meeting has been set, African delegates have been talking of a meeting on May 15. They said that at least four foreign ministers from Africa would come here to participate.

The four, who were named last year to lead the United Nations campaign against apartheid, are Mongi Slim of Tunisia, J. Rudolph Grimes of Liberia, Albert Sylla of the Malagasy Republic and Dr. John Karefa-Smart of Sierra Leone.

In December the Council voted unanimously for an extended arms embargo against South Africa to compel her Government to cease discriminatory and repressive measures against nonwhites. The same resolution requested amnesty for jailed African leaders and called for an inquiry by experts on how apartheid could be replaced by a society based on racial equality.

The most militant African states have been demanding tougher punitive measures against South Africa and are expected to press for a trade embargo.

This will create problems for Britain and the United States, the two main trading partners of South Africa. However, a number of Asian and African countries also continue to do business with South Africa, directly and through third parties.

The United States announced last December that it would cease all sales of arms to South Africa by the end of 1963 and also cut off ammunition and equipment that could be used to manufacture arms.

However, the United States said it did not regard multi-purpose products such as petroleum supplies as coming under the Council ban. South Africa is compelled to purchase virtually all of her petroleum from outside sources and would be severely hampered by a total oil ban.

A United States spokesman would say only that the Government's position remained the same and that no new policy has been announced on a possible broadened embargo.

VOICE READERS COMPRISE A $30,000,000 MARKET

EDITORIAL

We herewith present editorial comment from the New York Times dealing with certain Titles of the Civil Rights Bill that have not been widely discussed in the public prints:

Civil Rights

Senate supporters of the civil rights bill plan to move this month to force an end of the Southern filibuster. The importance of this safeguard for basic American rights, already passed with overwhelming bipartisan backing in the House, makes it essential that it be brought to a Senate vote swiftly. We have repeatedly expressed our own strong support for the measure. However, the long Congressional debate has been more successful in befogging than in clarifying the bill's provisions. In a series of editorials we intend to explain point-by-point why we consider its prompt passage imperative.

The most basic of all rights in a democracy, the right to vote, is the subject of Title I. That Congress should still be obliged to seek ways to protect that right for all citizens, a century after the Fifteenth Amendment forbade the states to deny or abridge it on account of race, is a disgrace. Yet the undeniable facts of discrimination make it urgent for Congress to take further action now.

Registrars in Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama and some other rural areas of the South are cynical in the obstacles they put in the way of Negroes desiring to register. A college graduate is flunked because he does not pronounce a word or "interpret" some obscure constitutional provision to the registrar's satisfaction. Meanwhile, illiterate whites are registered.

The Justice Department, under the Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1960, has been working vigorously in recent years to end such discrimination. But the case-by-case process is slow, and some Federal judges—both Eisenhower and Kennedy appointees—have dragged their feet.

The thrust of Title I in the pending bill is to speed up the process of enfranchisement. District courts of three judges instead of one could be appointed, with precedence for voting cases on the calendar. Registrars would be specifically forbidden to apply different standards to different citizens, to deny registration because of trivial errors or to use subjective oral "tests." Anyone who had finished six grades of schooling would be presumed sufficiently literate for voting purposes unless the state showed otherwise.

Such definite standards should simplify voting suits. The charge that they invade the right of the states to establish voting qualifications is baseless. All they do is to make sure that state rules are applied fairly to all—not, as the Supreme Court has said, with an evil eye and an unequal hand.

Indeed, the real question about Title I is whether it goes far enough. The dismaying facts are that only 5 per cent of Negroes in Mississippi are able to vote and that many Southern counties with Negro majorities have almost no Negro voters. Such facts really warrant more drastic Federal supervision of the registration process than this legislation provides.

The proposed title is a moderate step, an attempt to use the traditional process of the courts and encourage local reform.

Continuing our detailed analysis of the Civil Rights Bill as it now stands before the Senate, we examine today Titles 5 and 6.

Title 5 provides merely for extending the life of the Civil Rights Commission for another four years, almost a routine matter.

But Title 6 deals with a much more difficult and complex question: discrimination by state and local officials in the use of Federal aid funds. This is a particularly troubling problem that has agitated Congress for years. An elaborate mechanism to deal with it is set up in the pending bill.

First it repeals all inconsistent provisions of Federal statutes and declares that no person shall be subjected to discrimination "under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Then it directs agencies handling certain programs, not including Federal insurance activities, to take definite steps to carry out this purpose—including, if necessary, termination of aid to any institution that continues to discriminate.

Actual withholding of funds can come only after a series of protective steps. Each agency's rules against discrimination must be approved by the President before taking effect. Before funds are withheld for violation of agency rules, there must be an effort to obtain voluntary compliance, a hearing and 30 days' notice to the appropriate Congressional committees. Any final decision to stop funds is made subject to judicial review.

The title does not require suspension of an aid program to an entire state if one county or institution discriminates. The action would be directed only at that place or facility. The title has nothing to do with Federal installations such as Army camps. Its exception to mandatory action for insurance programs was written in to make clear that the individual farmer's crop insurance, the citizen's bank deposit insurance or the homeowner's mortgage guarantee could not be cut off.

Even with all the safeguards written into the title, we admit to some disquiet at the idea of cutting off Federal funds. But it is important to keep some considerations in mind.

One is the unfairness of excluding some citizens from the benefits of Government funds. When Federal money builds a dam and creates a lake in Mississippi, it is outrageous that Negroes should not be allowed to swim in it. A second point is that any Southern community can escape the threat of losing Federal support simply by ending its racial discrimination and complying with the Constitution.

There is, third, the practical consideration that the administrator of any Federal program will believe in it and will do anything he can to keep it going. The likelihood is that in almost

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