

99 Claremont Avenue
New York 27, N.Y.,
November 16, 1952

Mr W.M. Sisulu,
P.O. Box 2948,
Johannesburg,
Union of South Africa.

Dear Mr Sisulu,

I suppose that by the time you receive this letter, if it will be delivered to you at all, you along with our other leaders will be standing trial on the charge that has been preferred against you. I am writing to ask you to convey to all the accused our best wishes. I feel sure that the whole of the freedom-loving peoples of the world will be with you in spirit and will follow the outcome of this trial with the deepest interest. History shows that the urge to freedom among all peoples has triumphed over all setbacks and disappointments, and Africa is not going to prove an exception to the general rule. The second half of the 20th century belongs to the peoples of Africa. Whatever the misrepresentations and distortions of the truth we have got to face, our consciences are clear. We want nothing from anybody except our freedom; we hate nobody except injustice; it is not our desire to threaten the life of anybody or to deny anyone a home in Africa but to stake our claim to a free life in the only continent we know. 'Africa for Africans too', not Africa for Africans alone -- that is our minimum demand.

You will know that the question of the race conflict in South Africa arising out of the apartheid policy of the Union Government is now being debated at the United Nations. There can be no doubt from the trend of the debate so far that most of the nations of the world do not approve of the apartheid policy, although they are not agreed as to the best course that might be followed to bring about a change in the situation. The S.A. delegation has of course maintained its view that the U.N. is not competent to discuss the matter as it is one "essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of a member State". That argument is beginning to wear very thin in U.N. circles, and the barren legalisms of Mr Jooste are doing the S.A. cause more harm than good. The height of the preposterous was reached the other day when the S.A. delegate suggested that 'discrimination was repugnant to ~~the~~ the people of the Union of South Africa more than to almost any other population in the world'. The obvious ~~conclusion~~ of course is that it all depends on which section of the population he was referring to. Naturally the sections discriminated against find discrimination repugnant, and that is why they are making sacrifices in the fight against it, but more the perpetrators of discrimination to say it is repugnant to them is no less fanciful than the statement of a wielder of a sjambok who says that it hurts him more to do so than the person on whose back it is applied.

By the way, ever since it became known that suggestion was being made in certain circles that I should be invited to make a statement before the Ad Hoc Committee to which the S.A. question has been referred on behalf of the non-white groups, S.A. representatives have been at pains to get me to give them an undertaking that I would not accept such an invitation as that would amount to giving testimony against my own country. I have refused to give any such undertaking on the obvious ground that there is no point in my anticipating an invitation which I have not received. A direct threat has also been communicated to Fort Hare by the Union Education Department that the acceptance of any such invitation by me would be regarded as a serious matter for them as an institution receiving a subsidy from the Government. All this intimidation is of course very annoying. The other day the Liberian delegate without my knowledge raised this matter before the Ad Hoc Committee, but he was prevailed upon by the Chairman not to press it. He tells me that he also has been subjected

to certain pressures which I need not go into here. The matter was referred to again by the delegate of Uruguay who made a spirited attack upon S.A. policy. I have of course made it clear to the Liberian delegate that he was misinformed in thinking that I desired to make an appearance before the U.N. in my personal capacity. The fact of the matter is that the African National Congress as far back as July was reported in the New York Times to have written to the Secretary-General Trygvie Lie asking for an opportunity to place the grievances of the African people before the U.N. It is only in the event of that request being granted that I may be called upon to decide whether or not to accept the invitation in my official capacity as representative of the African National Congress in this country. I was glad to receive your cable the other day authorising me to speak on behalf of the organisation. Thank you also for the copy of the memorandum of the Joint Action Council on this subject. You will realise from what I have said, however, that every effort is being made to prevent our case being heard before the U.N. Some of those who are opposed to this course are our friends who feel that the first and most important thing is to get the U.N. to agree to appoint a Commission to look into the theory and practice of apartheid, and not to get this issue clouded by a prolonged argument on whether or not it is in order for an individual or a non-governmental organisation to appear before the Committee. In their view the vote of censure is more important than the appearance of individuals or groups. Such individuals or groups will no doubt be given an opportunity to appear before the Commission which is to be appointed, if that is agreed upon. I intend, however, at the proper time to make public the fact that I have been subjected to threats and intimidation in order to prevent me from expressing the views of the people I represent before a world forum.

In the meantime I should be glad if you would send me immediately a copy of the communication you addressed to Trygvie Lie asking for an opportunity to be heard as an organisation. We have not been able to trace that letter here, and it is essential for me to have it. If you act promptly, that letter should be in my hands ~~before~~ by Saturday.

We have been very distressed over the riots which taken place in recent weeks resulting in the loss of lives, both black and white. The attempt which has been made to put the blame for these riots on Congress has not deceived any serious observers of the situation. On the contrary these events have served to strengthen the view that the present trend of policy in South Africa is a threat to peace and harmony between the different sections of the population.

I should be glad if you would send me regularly by airmail reports on the trend of events especially in connection with the campaign. I want you to send me full information, for example, about Chief Luthuli's case, and the way in which he has been victimised.

Finally, I have been asked about certain funds which have been sent to the National Resistance Fund which have not been acknowledged. Please get in touch with that Fund, and find out whether they have received any funds, and if so, whether they have acknowledged receipt. The interest in our cause is growing everywhere. Africa's cause must triumph. Greetings to all. Africa! !

Yours in the service of Africa,