

Race Conflict in South Africa

The question of race conflict in South Africa was first placed on the General Assembly agenda at the seventh session, when India and twelve other Arab-Asian states submitted the item, asserting that race conflict resulting from the Union Government's policies of *apartheid* was creating "a dangerous and explosive situation which constitutes both a threat to international peace and a flagrant violation of the basic principles of human rights and fundamental freedoms which are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations". At its seventh session the General Assembly adopted a resolution which established a Commission of three members to study the racial situation in South Africa and to report to the eighth session. As the South African Government regarded the establishment of this Commission as outside the competence of the United Nations under the Charter, it did not recognize the Commission and would not permit it to enter South Africa. The Commission accordingly prepared its report in Geneva.

At the eighth session the question of race conflict in South Africa was referred to the Ad Hoc Committee together with the report of the study Commission. The South African Delegate opened the debate by proposing a resolution which noted that the question of race conflict in South Africa was concerned with a number of subjects (such as social security, education, public health, etc.) which were matters essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of a member state, and asserted that in view of the domestic jurisdiction clause of the Charter the *Ad Hoc* Committee had no competence to intervene in the matters above-mentioned. This resolution would in effect have denied the competence of the Committee to deal with the race conflict question. The South African Delegate based his main argument on the question of competence, but in passing questioned the accuracy and impartiality of the Study Commission report.

Indian Resolution

The Indian Delegation introduced a resolution co-sponsored by sixteen other countries which requested the Commission established at the seventh session to continue its study of the development of the racial situation in South Africa and to suggest measures which would help to alleviate the situation and promote a peaceful settlement. Delegates of forty-three countries participated in the debate which revolved around these two resolutions. On November 27, Mr. Alcide Côté made a statement to the Committee expressing Canada's opposition to all forms of racial discrimination and support for human rights and fundamental freedoms. He indicated that in Canada's view the United Nations was competent to discuss the racial conflict question because of the possible international repercussions of the racial policies of South Africa. He said that Canada would oppose the re-establishment of the Study Commission partly because of doubts concerning the competence of the United Nations but principally because further work by the Commission would not accomplish any useful result.

In the course of the debate the Chilean Delegation introduced an amendment to the seventeen-Power resolution which did not affect its principal terms but reiterated previous General Assembly resolutions in support of human rights and fundamental freedoms.