

A great victory

The decision of the United Nations in November to impose economic and other sanctions against the White colonialists of South Africa was a great victory for the cause of peace and freedom. Only the United States, Britain and the other NATO countries, together with Japan—the only Asian country to commit this act of treason to the cause of human dignity—opposed the resolution at this historic General Assembly meeting. The great majority voted in favour.

Unfortunately, the minority of countries which opposed the resolution are precisely those with the closest economic ties with South Africa—and the greatest stake in maintaining White supremacy and apartheid. It is this factor which gives the racists of Pretoria such confidence that sanctions will be ineffective. Foreign Minister Eric Louw said openly he was “extremely doubtful that the economic boycott recommended by the General Assembly can be applied successfully”. He did not believe the imperialist countries would want to lose their “very profitable export markets and very profitable source of raw material supplies”.* He should have added the millions accruing to, primarily, British and American capitalists from their investments and exploitation of cheap labour in this country.

British and American speakers at the General Assembly made hypocritical speeches expressing their “repugnance” to apartheid and South African race discrimination—and went on to give all sorts of twisted reasons why they were voting against the resolution. A truer reason may be found in figures such as the following (reproduced from the official *South African Digest*, 15th November, 1962):

TRADE WITH SOUTH AFRICA, 1961 (figures given in millions of Rands**)

	S.A. Imports	S.A. Exports
United Kingdom	291 ..	311.6 ..
United States	176.6 ..	77.7 ..

Britain takes about a third of South Africa's total exports, and between them these two countries account for between 40 and 50 per cent of the total South African foreign trade (imports 46.4 per cent, exports 41 per cent).

* *South African Digest*, 11th November, 1962.

** 2 South African Rands equal £1 sterling.

As Eric Louw says, all this is "very profitable". That is what gives the apartheid regime such confidence that the United Nations resolution will remain a dead letter. They are sure that the handsome dividends and profits of the influential section of the British and American capitalist class which traffics with South Africa will be sufficient to induce these and other "Western" countries to flout the solemn decision of the United Nations.

However, there are certain considerations which do not seem to have occurred to the petty minds of Mr. Louw and his Cabinet colleagues.

In the first place, to disregard the decisions of the United Nations is a very serious matter indeed—as the South African government itself is learning to its cost. It means to undermine, and if continued long enough, to destroy the U.N. itself—which with all its imperfections remains, to millions of people everywhere, an instrument of peace. And to those millions—including those in the imperialist and satellite countries who opposed the resolution—peace is a very important question. Far more important than the interests of the tiny minority which benefits from the exploitation of semi-slave labour on the Witwatersrand mines, or trade with their masters. Once these millions understand the true issues involved—now, no longer only a question of solidarity with the oppressed people of our country, but the preservation of UN and of peace itself—we are sure they will not allow the policy of their governments towards South Africa to be dictated by the likes of such a tiny minority.

Secondly, the Verwoerd regime seems, as always, to underestimate the passionate disgust and contempt aroused by its race policy among the African, Asian and Socialist countries. For the people and the governments of these countries, the resolution on South Africa is no mere formality, and they will never allow it to remain a dead letter. The imperialist governments may care nothing for the sufferings and humiliations of the black man in this country. They may care nothing—as their behaviour in the Congo indicates—for the solemn decisions of the United Nations. But they do care—and they must be made to care—for their status and reputation in Africa and Asia as a whole. Let the "West" be made aware that if they flout the Resolution on South Africa they will stand condemned before the whole of Asia and Africa as upholders of apartheid and white supremacy; let them understand that by maintaining the South African trade they stand to lose infinitely greater advantages in the rest of Africa and the whole of Asia—and their

enthusiasm for their repulsive friends in the Republic will rapidly evaporate!

In short—the UN Resolution was, as we have said, a great victory: a victory for peace and for Africa. But it is a victory which can only be made effective and clothed with reality if the friends of South African freedom all over the world will work, with vigilance and determination, to make it so.

We cannot leave the question of this historic resolution without a final, somewhat bitter note. Of the 15 governments who voted, with South Africa, against the resolution, it was in some ways most saddening to find the representatives of Japan and the Republic of Ireland.

Do the people of Japan know the facts about race discrimination in South Africa? Do they know that—because some Japanese businessmen are prepared to go down on their knees and lick a white man's boots for the sake of extra profits—their representatives at UN dragged Japan's national honour and dignity, as a proud Asian people, in the dust?

Are the people of Ireland—Britain's oldest colony, whose epic struggle for independence has inspired and still inspires oppressed people the world over—are they aware how their representative voted on this matter? Do they know that, in so doing, in backing the South African colonialists, he insulted the memory of Wolf Tone, Patrick Pearse, James Connolly and generations of Irish freedom-fighters?

We are sure that the Japanese and the Irish people do not know these things; for if they did they would never tolerate them. And we are sure that the advanced progressive elements in these two countries will make it their duty vigorously to enlighten their compatriots.

Whither Algeria?

The long and heroic struggle of the Algerian people for their freedom and independence has aroused tremendous admiration of all Africa and the whole world. We had all hoped that with the signing of the Evian Agreement and the end of the fighting with France, independence would be consolidated, and the task of