

17.04 hrs.

DISCUSSION *RE* : RACIAL RIOTS IN SOUTH AFRICA AFFECTING THE PEOPLE OF INDIAN ORIGIN

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, we go to item No. 19, Discussion under Rule 193.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO (Mormugao) : Mr. Chairman, how long is this discussion going to take? How much time is allotted? I am saying this because this is a very important issue and we are committed to this just cause. This should not be taken as a mere formality. We should have a discussion showing that Parliament is really concerned about this. It is not just a matter of formality.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Time allotted is 2 hours.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN) : Sir the despicable system of apartheid must be the starting point of any discussion of South African situation ..

MR. CHAIRMAN : Hon. Minister, the discussion is in the name of Shri Pratap Bhanu Sharma. So, he has to initiate the discussion.

SHRI G.G. SWELL (Shillong) : There is no harm in hearing the statement from the Government. After that, we can discuss.

MR. CHAIRMAN : First of all, the hon. Member will move.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO : Maybe, procedurally there is something wrong.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let us go by the procedure.

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : The statement can be made by me and then the discussion can take place.

SHRI G.G. SWELL : Let the hon. Minister make the statement. There is no harm.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You can make the statement after taking the permission of the House.

SHRI G.G. SWELL : It is quite regular for the hon. Minister to make the statement.

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : I beg to make the statement in the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I put it to the House to give permission to the hon. Minister to make the statement.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS : Yes. The hon. Minister can make the statement.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The hon. Minister may now make the statement. Let us go by the procedure.

17.06 hrs

STATEMENT *RE* : APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN) : The despicable system of Apartheid must be the starting point of any discussion of the South African situation. Apartheid was devised by the White minority to perpetuate its supremacy over other communities, who form 85% of the population of South Africa. The United Nations has rightly described Apartheid as a crime against humanity. The rights and freedoms defined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights are denied to non-Whites. Colour discrimination extends not only to employment and habitation, but to public transport, public places like cinemas, museums, sports stadia, restaurants and parks and gardens. People of different races may

not even be carried to hospital in the same ambulance. Political parties serving the interests of the oppressed majority, in particular, the African National Congress and also the Pan Africanist Congress, are banned and have to operate from exile.

Among the many reprehensible feature of Apartheid is the creation of the so-called "homelands" or "Bantustans" for the Africans. Though they comprise 73% of the total population, the Bantustans have been allocated only some 13.7% of the total area of the country. These are among the poorest areas which contain no major known deposits of minerals, no major industries or sea ports. Millions of Blacks and coloureds are permitted to live and work in "White" areas but only so long as this source of cheap labour is required by the ruling minority. Africans might be thrown out at any time if they are considered surplus to the requirements of White employers or have become old or sick. These Black residents have no political rights and must carry Passes which have to be produced on demand. Every day thousands of persons are arrested for contravention of the Pass Laws.

Opposition to Apartheid in the International community as well as within South Africa is well known. There is, however, a new surge within South Africa supported by workers in mining and other industries. People are coming out openly against the regime and are defying its laws designed to perpetuate its tyranny. White repression has increased in a futile attempt to put down the movement. In the last year or so, hundreds of people have been killed in police firings. Thousands have been imprisoned and scores have perished while in custody as a result of police brutalities. It is not possible to estimate how many are being held in prison without trial but the number is very large. The dauntless spirit of the anti-Apartheid movement is symbolised in the person of Nelson Mandela a winner of the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding, who has spent 23 years in the notorious Robben Island prison.

International opposition to Apartheid initiated by Gandhiji has also been gathering strength over the years. It was India which first brought the question of racial discrimination in South Africa before the United Nations in 1946. Since then, a powerful international consensus has developed against the racist principles of the Apartheid system.

It is unfortunately a fact that there is yet no unanimity about the need for imposing economic sanctions against South Africa. Certain important Western powers with considerable investments in South Africa are not to apply economic sanctions against South Africa. The latest events in South Africa have also demonstrated that the so-called policy of constructive engagement does not provide a viable alternative to effective action by the international community under Chapter 7 of the U.N. Charter.

In an attempt to confuse domestic and international opinion, the racist regime in South Africa has announced a series of cosmetic "reforms" which in no way reduce the rigours of Apartheid or confer real rights to the majority. Last year the racists introduced certain so-called "constitutional reforms" and created a tricameral legislature to give a semblance of representation to the Coloured and Indian communities. The new Parliament has 178 Whites, 85 Coloured and 45 Indians, each group supposedly empowered to discuss and legislate on matters pertaining to its own community. In fact, however, real power remains in the hands of the White minority. The majority of the population has no franchise. The attempt has proved to be a failure as is obvious from the fact that only a small minority of the Indian and Coloured electorates (about 20% of the Indians and 30% of the Coloureds) participated in the elections in August 1984. The vast majority boycotted the so-called elections, thereby rejecting the invitation of the racist regime to become junior partners in their own suppression.

The latest instance of the nefarious efforts of the racist regime to divide

[Shri Khurshid Alam Khan]

the oppressed masses concerns the recent disturbances in the township of Izanda, near Durban, earlier this month. Members will have seen reports about these disturbances, which were apparently triggered off by the murder of a black human rights lawyer, Mrs. Victoria Mxenge. People attending the memorial service for Mrs. Mxenge were attacked by some hooligans. In the ensuing disturbances, some 65 people, including a few people of Indian origin, are reported to have lost their lives. The turbulence also spilled over to the nearby Phoenix Settlement set up by Mahatma Gandhi in the 1890s and some buildings associated with Gandhiji were destroyed. The racist regime showed no inclination to intervene and restore peace and order. Its police did nothing to protect the lives and properties of people, including those of Indian origin, when they were attacked by anti-social elements. There is ample reason to suspect the hand of the South African Government and their hired agents in the disturbances. I would like to inform the House that this perception is shared by the ANC and leaders of other African States.

We are confident that the people of South Africa will see through the transparent attempts of the racist regime to create artificial divisions in their ranks. The racists' manoeuvres cannot stop the march of history. The oppressed people of South Africa will carry their united struggle to a successful conclusion.

I would like to assure the House that India will spare no efforts in mobilising world public opinion in support of the South African people's just struggle for a better, more equitable and humane order under conditions of full freedom.

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17.14 hrs.

DISCUSSION RE: RACIAL RIOTS  
IN SOUTH AFRICA AFFECTING  
THE PEOPLE OF INDIAN  
ORIGIN—*Contd.*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Pratap

Bhanu Sharma may initiate the discussion.

[Translation]

SHRI PRATAP BHANU SHARMA (Vidisha) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister has just now given detailed information about the racial riots in South Africa and the critical situation that has arisen there. It is naturally and undoubtedly a matter of concern for all of us, for the entire humanity, for those powers who believe in freedom and democracy and for a developing country like India which is chairman of NAM.

17.15 hrs.

[DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

The people of Indian origin who had gone to South Africa and settled there about 100 to 125 years ago had contributed a lot by dint of their hard work in strengthening the economy of South Africa. They joined hands with the South African people in every way and cooperated with them in the development of South Africa. Not only this, our country had been taking keen interest in the struggle for freedom of South Africa being waged by the South African people since long. Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of our Nation, had started his Satyagraha Movement on the soil of South Africa itself against the racist regime and the policy of apartheid practised by it. He spent 20 years of his youth in South Africa. During his stay in South Africa Mahatma Gandhi raised his voice against the White Government for the inhuman acts committed by them against the people of Indian origin and non-whites. He infused confidence among the people of South Africa that the voice for the independence of the country can be raised on the world forum with the support and cooperation of the Indian people. He launched movements and tried to bring round the White regime to his point of view in a non-violent and peaceful way. Thereafter when he returned to India, he became a hero.