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Speech made by the Prime Minister, Mr Olof Palme, at the  
"Swedish People's Parliament against Apartheid" at  
Folkets Hus on 21 February 1986

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It is a great pleasure for me to speak to this People's Parliament against Apartheid. We are very pleased to see leaders of ANC and SWAPO here as also representatives of the active opinion against apartheid from the United Nations and from all over our country.

I should especially like to address myself to Oliver Tambo, the indefatigable champion of freedom in South Africa for many decades. Because of his convictions, he was forced to leave his country 25 years ago. I met Oliver Tambo for the first time more than 20 years ago and since then we have had very many opportunities to converse. His work, his optimism and his belief in the possibility of change, that it will be possible finally to send apartheid to the lumber-room of history, has been a great inspiration to us all.

The other day I read a big advertisement published in the South African press by the white minority regime in Pretoria. The advertisement began :

"Revolutionaries may stamp their feet. The communists may scream their lies. Our enemies may try to undermine us. But here is the reality".

Further down in the advertisement we are told what "the reality" is:

"Our government is committed to power sharing, equal opportunities for all, equal treatment and equal justice".

As an example it is mentioned, amongst other things, that the prohibition of mixed marriages Act and the provisions of the immorality Act have been repealed.

What then is the reality of South Africa today?

When the prohibition of mixed marriages was repealed slightly more than a year ago, it was after considerable pressure had been put on the government. The minister responsible said in an explanation to the amendment of the law that "the responsibility now rests with parents, teachers, religious and other leaders". The responsibility for what? one may well ask. Of course, the responsibility for seeing to it that no mixed marriages take place. In parliament, where the black majority is not represented, the following questions, amongst others, were posed about the proposal:

- Where may a couple consisting of a white and a black live?
- Where may their children go to school?

The government's answer revealed that the intention was not to change anything except the formal prohibition. Thus, a "mixed" couple may not live in a white area. If they are accepted in an area for blacks, they can live there. They can also apply for permission to live in an area for a minority that neither of them belongs to.

The children of the couple are classified, as has been the case up to now, according to three criteria: heredity, appearance and acceptance. A child of a mixed marriage may be completely white or completely black, or coloured, i.e. of mixed breed.

May a white child of a mixed marriage go to a school for whites, asked one member of parliament. Schools for whites receive far more resources and can therefore maintain a higher standard than schools for other races. For this reason it is natural to try to get the child into one. It is possible that the white child may go to a school for white children, was the reply. But if the couple have another child that is coloured, may this child go to the same school as its sibling? Out of the question, was the answer.

The reaction to the abolition of the prohibition of mixed marriages among black apartheid opponents in South Africa was, to put it mildly, lukewarm:

"We are not struggling in the first instance for the right to marry white women", as one of them said.

But let me go back to the apartheid regime's advertisement. There, as I said earlier, they talk about equal opportunities for all.

The reality speaks another language. We know that South Africa is a country where black people do not have the franchise, where destitution in the black so-called

"homelands" is in glaring contrast to the affluent white areas. We know that the richest and most fertile 87 per cent of the land has been reserved for the white minority of scarcely 15 per cent of the population, while the majority of the population has been referred to the poorest 13 per cent of the land. This deeply unjust distribution is the result of a conscious policy and of one of modern history's cruellest cases of the removal of people.

And these forced removals of black people continue, we have examples from as late as a few weeks ago. The removal began of thousands of people from Moutse in Eastern Transvaal 90 km to a newly established homeland. The removal was carried out when the men were at work. Women and children were loaded onto buses and driven off. We must not forget this reality when we hear the regime talk expansively of their reforms.

In the advertisement we are told that the passes, which all black people have to carry, are to be abolished as also influx control to the towns. We are also told that the passes will be replaced by a new identity document, which will be issued to everybody. For the black majority, this only means that they will get a new

document. Many believe that this document will be connected to a computer system to make the control of black people's movements stricter than ever. More than 200,000 black people are imprisoned yearly for breaking the pass laws. Black people will still not be allowed to live where they like. The Group Areas Act, which regulates where different ethnic groups may settle, is not to be amended, this information was given recently by Pretoria.

In the advertisement, it says that the South African government is committed to a single education policy. At the same time the regime has declared that "the multi-cultural character of the South African community" must be recognized. The import is that the system with separate schools for different racial groups will be preserved.

Thus the truth is that apartheid in South Africa is not being reformed as the regime is trying to assert in its advertising campaigns. A system like apartheid cannot be reformed, it can only be abolished.

To the majority of South Africans all this is nothing new. By this stage they have a fundamental scepticism of everything the government says. They have previously heard that "South Africa must change, or die", as was said a few years ago. What is now new is that even the white people are beginning to doubt their government.

The leader of the opposition, the liberal Van Zyl Slabbert resigned from parliament on 7 February in protest against the regime's inability to set about the country's problems. And those white people that can are leaving the country. Emigration, mainly of well-educated, English-speaking people, is increasing and now amounts to more than a thousand a month. Industry is demanding rapid reforms and has entered into contacts of its own with African National Congress, ANC, which is forbidden since the time of the Sharpeville massacre in 1960.

Many of the keenest supporters of the regime interpret all talk of reforms as a sign of weakness. The result is that the regime has begun to doubt itself.

At the same time the opponents of apartheid have begun to rely on their ability to force the regime to abolish the system. Young blacks have boycotted the schools for nigh on two years and defied both the police and the military powers. Quislings have been chased out of black residential areas. Black consumers have boycotted the shops of white people until the businessmen have moved over to their side and demanded reforms. Trade unions have organized strikes and built up new organizations. United Democratic Front, UDF, has grown up as a nationwide, non-racist popular movement against apartheid. In 1984, UDF organized a successful boycott of the elections to

new parliament houses for Asians and coloureds, (i.e. of mixed blood), mainly because the black majority was still excluded.

All this has happened - and continues to happen - despite the fact that the government has unleashed a violence that is unequalled even in South Africa's history. More than 1,000 people have been killed in disturbances since the autumn of 1984, most of them victims of police bullets. Military forces have been put in in the black suburbs where there is now a state of emergency. More than 7,000 have been arrested under the exceptive laws. Reports reach us of torture and deaths in the gaols. Last year a member of ANC, Benjamin Moloise, was executed despite protests from the surrounding world. Six more have been sentenced to death, against their denials, for the murder of a representative of the government. UDF leaders have been accused of high treason, but some of them have been released and the indictment withdrawn, because the court has not been able to accept the grounds for prosecution put forward by the prosecution side. At present, the UDF leader, Murphy Morobe, is in prison in Johannesburg. On behalf of UDF, Morobe accepted the newspaper Arbetet's (Work) "Let Live Prize" in 1984. Cheryl Carolus, a coloured UDF leader from Cape Town, who visited Sweden just a few weeks ago, was released from prison a few days ago with strict bail conditions, which, amongst other things, forbid her to work for UDF.

In its defence of the apartheid system, the regime has not only intensified the oppression internally. Violence has also been escalated against neighbouring countries, which have been subjected to both threats and direct military attacks. South Africa regularly invades southern Angola and supports the UNITA guerilla. During 1985, it was revealed that South Africa had continued to give support to the oppositional RNM guerilla in Mozambique, in contravention of the security treaty that South Africa and Mozambique entered into in 1984. South Africa's commando troupes carry out sabotage in the neighbouring countries and kill refugees from South Africa.

The destabilization policy in relation to the neighbouring countries reveals ever more clearly that apartheid and the regime's defence of the system constitutes a threat to international peace and security. Nor are there any indications that South Africa is prepared to withdraw its army of occupation from Namibia and accept a peaceful solution in accordance with the UN plan of 1978. Quite the reverse, according to several reports, South Africa is increasing its presence, especially in northern Namibia. According to reports that reach us through SWAPO and the churches, the oppression there has been increased still more.

During 1985, South Africa has installed a new government in Windhoek. The South Africans have expressly removed

security and foreign policy issues from the new government's area of responsibility. The government in Windhoek has not succeeded in any other areas in showing that it is capable of pursuing an independent policy in relation to South Africa. No one, apart from South Africa, has recognized the internal government.

In the discussions that have been held between South Africa, USA and Angola on the Namibia issue, no progress has been made, despite the fact that, in the autumn of 1984, Angola declared itself prepared to discuss a withdrawal of the Cuban forces from southern Angola. South Africa obviously continues to protract and delay a solution according to the UN plan. A big responsibility rests therefore with the United Nations and its security council to put power behind its plan and force South Africa to agree to independence and free elections in Namibia. The plans for foreign military and other assistance to the oppositional UNITA guerilla in Angola is an example of a measure which can reasonably only obstruct a negotiated settlement and would be perceived as support of South Africa.

What we are now witnessing in South Africa is a vicious circle of increased violence in defence of a system that is already doomed. It is only short-sightedness, a disinclination to see reality as it is that makes the white minority cling firmly to power through continued oppression of its own population and terror against neighbouring countries. The white people must be aware of their own interests in a peaceful solution, while such a solution is still at all possible.

In this situation, the reaction of the surrounding world is of great importance. Pressure on the regime must increase. It must be made clear to the minority regime that it has no support in the world around.

The United Nations has a very important role to play as regards mirroring world opinion. It is a positive step that the security council, as a result of the increased pressure of opinion, recommended economic sanctions against South Africa for the first time last summer.

The United Nations also has the possibility of applying means of compulsion provided that consensus can be achieved in the UN security council. A decision in the security council for mandatory sanctions would in itself be an important signal to the apartheid regime that the patience of the surrounding world is at an end, and it would perhaps constitute the most important means of pressure on the white minority to abolish apartheid.

The main aim of our efforts is, as earlier, to bring about such a decision. I would like to repeat our appeal to the members of the United Nations security council, who have special possibilities of influencing South Africa, to take their responsibility.

If they were applied, sanctions would hit the whites' privileges very hard. The white people know this. The idea of economic sanctions has the wide support of the black majority's leaders. The liberation movements and the rest of Africa are also in favour of economic sanctions.

When, in the 1970s, we in Sweden began to pursue the issue of unilateral Swedish sanctions against South Africa, many people shook their heads and said it would have no effect and that no one would follow suit. But what spurred us on was the knowledge that, if we wanted to try to contribute to a peaceful settlement of apartheid, we must start in good time.

The Swedish initiative has now been followed by many countries. Criticism has died down. More and more people who were earlier doubtful are now beginning to understand that this type of action is necessary. Sanctions are not a guarantee that a bloody settlement can be avoided. But the surrounding world must take its responsibility and seek every opportunity of actively contributing. Also the United Nations and its security council could play an important role.

We are naturally prepared to contribute towards alleviating any destruction caused to South Africa's neighbouring countries and to work in behalf of other UN states also doing so.

Pending the achievement of consensus in the security council for mandatory sanctions, we must all make our contribution towards maintaining and increasing pressure on the apartheid regime. On the Nordic side we have long

sought to coordinate our measures to give them extra weight. Last October we adopted a new joint Nordic programme of action against South Africa as a follow-up and extension of the 1978 programme.

Included in the programme are increased joint efforts in the United Nations to increase the pressure on the apartheid regime.

The earlier ban on investments has been extended with a ban also with regard to loans, financial leasing and transfer of control of patent and manufacturing rights.

Within the framework of our international commitments we have included a number of measures in the trade policy area.

On the Nordic programme there is also a recommendation to importers and exporters to look for new markets. It comprises measures to prevent public procurement of South African products and the discontinuance of government support to trade promotion activities. We undertake to prohibit import of Krugerrands and export

of computer equipment to South Africa. Furthermore, we pledge to ban new contracts in the nuclear field and to give up commercial airlinks with South Africa.

Together with the other Nordic countries, we have also undertaken to further limit our contacts with South Africa in sports, and cultural and scientific fields. Visa rules for South African citizens are to be tightened up.

Last but not least we have agreed to increase, on a Nordic basis, our humanitarian support to the victims and opponents of apartheid, as also our development assistance to South Africa's neighbouring states.

However, we will not rest there. We see the Nordic programme of action as a platform for continued joint and unilateral measures against apartheid.

On a national basis, Sweden has introduced a ban on imports of agricultural products from South Africa. It means in practice a ban on the import of all consumer goods from South Africa. We have recommended that Swedish companies voluntarily limit their trade with South Africa. Trade has already dropped, and there are examples of companies that are actively looking for suppliers in countries other than South Africa.

The Government is now carefully following developments. If companies do not follow the recommendations of the Government and parliament, new measures must be considered.

To speed up the reorientation of companies from South Africa to other countries in the region, the Nordic countries and the so-called SADCC states have recently agreed on widened co-operation. It is a question of promoting trade, investments, technology transfer, cultural exchange, and communications between the Nordic countries and these countries in southern Africa.

At the same time as we put greater pressure on South Africa, we must be prepared to support the front-line states.

The Government is substantially increasing assistance to the countries and people in southern Africa that are hit by South Africa's destabilization and apartheid policy. With the proposal the Government recently put forward more than 40% of the bilateral assistance will be appropriated for southern Africa. This is equivalent to an amount of slightly more than SEK two billion for this fiscal year. To this is added our contributions to the various UN agencies. Sweden gives development assistance to the individual countries so that, despite the destabilization policy, these countries can develop and reduce their economic dependence on South Africa. Our support to the development coordination conference, SADCC, also aims to contribute towards the countries being able jointly to increase their own trade and thus get away from South Africa. ANC and SWAPO will directly receive increased assistance for their humanitarian activities for, amongst others, their refugees in the neighbouring countries. Through extensive and increasing assistance, other organizations and people, who are victims and opponents of the apartheid policy, will obtain both economic and political support from Sweden. Many popular movements are involved and are making a valuable contribution to this assistance.

We all have a role to play in opposing apartheid. I have described the Government's work in the United Nations and other international forums. We are also actively working to induce other countries to take similar measures of our own. One of the reasons why we very carefully make sure our measures are within the framework of international treaties is that it is then far more probable that other countries will follow our example. This was the case as regards the ban on investments. Likewise, the interest in the Swedish ban on imports of agricultural products from South Africa has been very substantial.

Municipalities and county councils in Sweden have been given the opportunity of participating in the boycott of South Africa. Several members of parliament, from all parties in the parliament, are participating in a European action group against apartheid. The organizers of today's meeting are a further example of how widespread is the interest today in southern Africa issues. This is exceedingly gratifying, especially since we know that our work here has its counterpart in many other countries. It is gratifying also because with increased international pressure on the minority regime, we can contribute towards speeding up the fall of the apartheid system.

It is by taking joint responsibility that we can contribute towards abolishing the apartheid system. This system can live on because it gets support from outside. If the support is pulled away and turned into resistance, apartheid cannot endure. If the world decides to abolish apartheid, apartheid will disappear.