

EF 8.1.3

SOUTH AFRICAN CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS

P.O. Box 17133,  
Hillbrow,

Johannesburg  
South Africa.

PRESS STATEMENT ON THE RESOLUTION ADOPTED  
BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ASKING SOUTH AFRICA  
TO WITHDRAW FROM THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR  
ORGANISATION.

The South African Congress of Trade Unions, representing 53,000 workers of all races, welcomes the resolution of the General Assembly of the I.L.O., asking South Africa to withdraw from that body. The resolution is an acceptance of the fact that the policies of the South African Government are incompatible with the sentiments of justice and humanity for which the I.L.O. was founded.

Every year, complaints are lodged by our organisation and others against contraventions of accepted labour standards; e.g. the use of convict labour; the use of forced labour and the violation of trade union rights. Recently, the I.L.O. advised the South African Congress of Trade Unions that "no purpose would be served" by pursuing these matters with the South African Government as such complaints are ignored. This, in itself, is an admission that the time has long since come for positive sanctions against South Africa by member states of the I.L.O. The resolution asking South Africa to withdraw is the first step. It should be followed by the imposition of diplomatic, economic and political sanctions on South Africa.

The South African Congress of Trade Unions does not believe that if South Africa withdraws from the I.L.O., the workers of South Africa will have no voice in the I.L.O. For too long have the interests of South African workers been represented by sectional trade union bodies, which themselves practice racial discrimination and are not qualified to speak on behalf of all workers. The South African Congress of Trade Unions has lodged objections against this practice. The resolution asking South Africa to withdraw is an indication of the support which South African workers have won among member states. There is no reason to fear that these same states will forthwith neglect or overlook the needs of South African workers.

The United Nations General Assembly has recognised that the policies of Apartheid are not an "internal matter" of South Africa, but are a threat to all humanity. This resolution of the I.L.O. is a further recognition of this fact and the passing of the resolution has enhanced the status of the I.L.O. in the eyes of the majority of South Africa's workers.

Johannesburg.

30th June, 1961.



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