THE UNITED STATES AT U.N.O.

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Miss Marian Anderson, the great American Negro singer, is known across the world as one of the ablest and most popular cultural ambassadors the United States has sent abroad. In the newly independent nations she achieved both great personal success and warm affection. When Miss Anderson was noted by the *New York Times* of November 26, 1958, as having "dissented" from her Government's policy as its delegate to the United Nations Fourth (Trusteeship) Committee, she focussed brief attention on the sad fact that in colonial matters the U.S. protects the supposed interests of NATO and not those of Africans struggling for independence. NATO, says the State Department privately, must come first.

Now Miss Anderson did not, of course, say "I dissent," though she surely meant it, for she never took issue with the interpretation of her statement by the New York press. On the morning of November 25 she had, in her official capacity, proposed a delay on an issue concerning the Cameroons too complex for discussion here. NATO powers were on one side of the fence—hers. On the other were the former colonial dependencies led by Ghana and India—supported, as always, by the Soviet bloc. One after another the dark-skinned delegates and their friends had taken her to task: they were sorry indeed to hear such a proposal coming from so distinguished a representative of the United States.

Miss Anderson must have been stung by the implication that she stood opposed to the interests of dependent peoples. She had perhaps not understood what representing her country on Trusteeship would mean when she accepted the post as one of the distinguished citizens, annually replaced, with which the U.S. decorates the U.N. Committees, to be whispered to from behind by wiser heads, and given "position papers" and prepared speeches. But she has eyes, ears and a fine intelligence.

At any rate, in her firm and beautiful speaking voice and in full knowledge of what she was doing, she said, "There is no one in this room who is more interested in the people whose fate we are trying to determine than I. Like many of the representatives, I am a member of an instructed delegation, and we

are here to carry out what is wanted; otherwise we would not be here."

1958 was a strenuous year for African affairs at U.N. It might almost be called the "African year", said President Malik of the General Assembly. General de Gaulle had taken radical steps in Africa. Guinea was admitted to U.N. membership with everyone's approval and even France's grudging permission. Premier Olympio of Togoland, independence in his pocket, returned triumphant to a U.N. where he had been for ten years a humble petitioner. Independence for the Cameroons was announced: only Tanganyika and Ruanda-Urundi will be left of the original ten Trust Territories in 1960. Anti-colonialism was in the majority; not yet two-thirds for the touchy questions, but this was clearly round the corner.

The one important exception in the previous Assembly to the U.S. pro-NATO stand had been on the resolution concerning the treatment of Indians in South Africa, when the U.S. agreed that South Africa should negotiate with India and Pakistan—a position repeated in 1958, colonial powers abstaining.

In 1958 we went one step further. Early in the session George M. Harrison, an American Federation of Labour trade unionist, came out strongly in support of the resolution expressing "regret and concern" at apartheid in South Africa. This reversal of previous positions was noted as far away as the *Detroit Free Press*, a remarkable event in a provincial country such as ours.

This resolution, ably shepherded by India's A. K. Mitra, had been softened to achieve U.S. support, a concession for which Mr. Mitra said he had been much criticized. But it achieved, in plenary Assembly, the record majority of 70—5, with 4 abstentions. Speculation was rife among observers everywhere—was the U.S. at last joining the side of the angels?

She was not, as subsequent voting proved, and the most likely explanation of this happy but isolated aberration was the report (unconfirmed) that Mr. Harrison had declared that if the U.S. were to take any other position, he would not be its mouthpiece. A banner year, if this is true, for non-decorative temporary delegates.

The South West Africa debate this year was hot and heavy, the Fourth Committee being deeply disturbed that even the hint of partition and annexation had appeared in the Good Offices Report. Here there was first a long procedural debate on the question of whether items (a) the Good Offices Committee

Report, (b) social conditions, and (c) legal action to ensure the fulfillment of the Mandate, should be debated separately or together. South Africa, rather hopeful, one would guess, about partition and annexation, plumped for "separately": without, if you please, hearing from those untrustworthy, unrepresentative and ill-informed petitioners, Messrs. Scott and Kerina, on the subject of Good Offices. (Mr. Louw quoted *Africa South*, referred to as "a certain publication", to indicate Mr. Kerina's untrustworthiness.) NATO (U.S. included) plumped for separately, too, and without petitioners.

But the Fourth Committee was of another mind. Who was to present the reactions of the submerged South West African peoples if not their only authorized representatives? And were partition and annexation even to be remotely considered without reference to the appalling social conditions (described in the 1958 Report of the Committee on S.W.A.) which are maintained by the power that would administer and annex? The U.S. and NATO said privately, "Keep them talking, don't shut the door on them!" But keep them talking under such conditions?

The Committee, by a vote of 45—19 with 9 abstentions, said in effect to Good Offices: "You have not understood what we asked of you, and attempting to discuss your suggestion within the limits asked would be betrayal of a sacred trust and a helpless people." So it was decided to discuss the items interdependently and to hear the petitioners without further ado.

Mr. Louw, after suitable shock at the Committee's disregard of his warning of "serious consequences" should this step be taken, proposed an adjournment until he should hear from his Government. Four days and a week-end later he announced the Union's decision to withdraw from this debate only, somewhat less serious a consequence, one might add, than the previous departure from all debates.

Be it said to her credit, the U.S. joined the Scandinavian bloc against the other NATO powers in voting to hear the petitioners on item (b), a motion won 60—5, 9 abstentions.

Five other resolutions on S.W.A. were passed during the session. On the tricky ones (I: reject suggestion of partition while continuing Good Offices Committee for another year; III: express "deep concern" over social conditions) the U.S. (and friends) abstained, in part because of membership on the Good Offices Committee.

The remaining resolutions (II: transmit Report on SWA and observations of Fourth Committee to absent petitioners; IV: urge Trusteeship for SWA; V: resume discussion of possible legal action next session) were passed in plenary (as were all on SWA), and received U.S. support.

Michael Scott felt that the outcome—to have one more try at negotiation—meant only another year's delay. He would like to see the question of South Africa's possible violation of her mandate taken to the International Court for compulsory jurisdiction. Since the International Court cannot enforce its decrees, the Fourth Committee has preferred to exhaust all other avenues of approach. Meanwhile the *New York Times* of December 29, 1958, announced that the United States is hoping to help strengthen the Court "to help break the present trend toward making every international dispute a political crisis" and bring about arbitration.

I have dwelt in detail on South and South West Africa because these are complex and crucial questions in the U.N. to which much time was last year devoted. Algeria, an African question equally important, was less diplomatically complex, since no one really believed it would be solved in the U.N. The French Cameroons has been the scene of bloodshed for several years past, but such problems as exist for the banned U.P.C. party will probably achieve some kind of solution with the coming of U.N.-supervised independence. There is a border question between Ethiopia, and about-to-be-independent Somalia; but its solution lies largely between Italy and Ethiopia, and both countries agreed this session to find a mediator. Togoland's approaching independence was unanimously approved, as was U.N. attention to Togolese requests for aid.

One other problem, however, needs more than brief discussion. This item bears the innocuous title of "General Questions Relating to the Transmission of Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories," but behind it lie the vast African possessions of Portugal and those of Spain, as yet sealed against international scrutiny. Other colonial powers (Belgium somewhat erratically) submit annual reports to the U.N. (Sub-)Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories.

One can now read well-documented reports of forced labour and other indignities imposed on the great majority of Africans in Portuguese Mozambique and Angola, areas supposed to be

lacking a colour bar. Prof. Marvin Harris of Columbia University (New York), a reputable and scholarly visitor to Mozambique, has recently found the physical and economic restraints on Africans there similar to those in South Africa. Spain and Portugal deny that they have any non-self-governing territories, and claim that their African possessions are "integral parts" of their mainlands.

Since these nations became members of the U.N. in 1955, the Afro-Asian bloc has each year put through a resolution in Committee demanding a U.N. investigation of what constitutes a non-self-governing territory, on which reports should be rendered. Each year the resolution has been hung up on the two-thirds majority requirement in plenary Assembly for "important" questions. The same fate seemed certain for this year's resolution after frantic rallying of support by both sides, in spite of Guinea's admission to the U.N. just before the vote. Its sponsors thereupon withdrew it rather than suffer another defeat. Privately they feel that by 1960 the requisite majority will be theirs in added African membership.

The United States has consistently voted against this resolution in company with NATO, claiming that nations should decide for themselves whether they have dependencies subject to report.

Other voting (it should be remembered that, almost without exception, resolutions must have the support of the anti-colonial majority in order to reach the Assembly at all):

Trusteeship Council Report

U.S. and NATO opposed the setting of target dates for the independence of Tanganyika and Ruanda-Urundi.

(Passed in General Assembly by 57—18, but the decision means little without U.K. and Belgian support.)

U.S. and NATO opposed the study of the effects of the European Economic Community on certain Trust Territories.

(Passed in General Assembly, 54—15).

U.S. and NATO voted against hearing from petitioner John Kale on Ruanda-Urundi. He was heard, 36—23.

Non-Self-Governing Territories

U.S. and NATO abstained from a resolution which, considering that the European Economic Community was likely to affect the economic development of some Trust Territories, invited "Administering Members to examine the advisability of adopting . . . an investment policy which will ensure balanced economic development and the progressive increase of the *per*

capita income of the inhabitants of these territories."

(Passed in General Assembly, 58—5).

U.S. and NATO opposed a resolution asking study of the effects of the European Economic Community on Non-Self-Governing Territories.

(Passed in General Assembly, 55—16).

The U.S. supported renewal of the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories. The U.K. and three others abstained.

(Passed in General Assembly, 72—1).

Algeria

On the resolution "recognizing the right of the Algerian people to independence" and seeking "negotiations," the U.S. and four NATO nations abstained. This was considered by Algerian nationalists an advance for the U.S., since all colonial powers opposed the resolution. Of NATO, only Greece supported it. France did not participate.

The resolution failed by one vote (35—18; Guinea participating) to achieve the necessary two-thirds Assembly majority.

The U.S. did not speak in the debate.

This, then, is the United States record. Except for apartheid and the occasional mild shot at independent action, how firmly we stuck to our NATO friends.

An allegiance such as this does not go unnoticed. A delegation from the American Committee on Africa returned from the December, 1958, Pan-African Conference of political and labor groups (including many independence movements) at Accra, deeply disturbed at the waning influence of the United States on African thinking. In contrast, the U.S.S.R., which moves into newly independent countries with strong delegations and offers of economic aid, is a rising star.

"What can the United States do to help us?" was the question asked again and again by the not-yet-free.

The portent is clear, and one must speak the language that is understood. Is the alliance with NATO worth the loss of Africa? If Africa goes, what of NATO then? Is it really true that if the U.S. shakes NATO a little by a firm stand on colonial issues, France will go Communist, Britain Socialist? If NATO is synonymous with colonial oppression, is it a profitable alliance for the U.S. to possess in the modern world? It is very nearly too late—for the United States and her allies to face up to the African future.