

To Dwight D. Eisenhower

26 March 1960
New York, N.Y.

King and other civil rights supporters applaud the State Department's protest of the Sharpeville massacres and urge Eisenhower to issue a declaration "placing the administration firmly on the side of Negroes" in the South, adding: "Africans are turning to the UN for moral support and encouragement; must we?" In response, Gerald Morgan, deputy assistant to the president, referred to Eisenhower's earlier expression of sympathy for the "efforts of any group to enjoy the rights of equality."¹

THE PRESIDENT

THE WHITE HOUSE

WE ARE GRATEFUL THAT OUR STATE DEPARTMENT HAS PROTESTED THE MASS KILLINGS OF OUR SOUTH AFRICAN BROTHERS AND WE ARE PLEASED THAT THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL WILL MEET MARCH 29TH TO CONSIDER THAT OUTRAGE.²

1. Morgan to Abernathy, 11 April 1960.

2. Noting that the United States "does not ordinarily comment on the internal affairs of governments with which it enjoys normal relations," a State Department representative expressed "regret" for "the tragic loss of life resulting from the measures taken against the demonstrators in South Africa" (Dana Adams Schmidt, "Police Violence in South Africa Criticized by U.S.," *New York Times*, 23 March 1960). On 1 April, following four days of discussion, the United Nations Security Council blamed the violence on South Africa's "continued disregard" of United Nations resolutions "calling upon it to

WE URGE THAT BEFORE MARCH 29TH OUR GOVERNMENT ISSUE A STATEMENT PLACING THE ADMINISTRATION FIRMLY ON THE SIDE OF NEGROES IN THE SOUTHERN STATES IN THEIR PRESENT STRUGGLE FOR THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS, SINCE THEY ARE SUBJECTED TO INTIMIDATION, THREATS AND VIOLENCE WHEN THEY CLAIM THESE RIGHTS.

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FURTHERMORE, VOTING LAWS ARE USELESS TO SOUTHERN NEGROES WHO FEAR FOR THEIR LIVES AND FOR THE SAFETY OF THEIR FAMILIES IF THEY TRY TO REGISTER AND VOTE.

SUCH A STATEMENT FROM THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD STRENGTHEN THE POSITION OF OUR DELEGATION BEFORE THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD.

SOUTH AFRICANS CANNOT HOPE FOR HELP FROM A GOVERNMENT COMMITTED TO "APARTHEID" ; NOR CAN WE HOPE FOR HELP FROM LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS COMMITTED TO "WHITE SUPREMACY" .

AFRICANS ARE TURNING TO THE UN FOR MORAL SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT; MUST WE?

SIGNED:

THE REVEREND R. O. ABERNATHY, MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA;
PRESIDENT, MONTGOMERY IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION.

DR. JOHN S. CHAMBERS, LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY; EXECUTIVE SECRETARY,
KENTUCKY COUNCIL OF CHURCHES.

JOHN WESLEY DOBBS, ATLANTA, GEORGIA; GRAND MASTER,
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DR. M. D. PERDUE, LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY; CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION
ON STATE OF THE NATION AND NEEDS OF THE RACE,
GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF KENTUCKY BAPTISTS.

revise its policies and bring them into conformity with its obligations and responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations" (United Nations Security Council, 15th Year, *Official Records of the Security Council*, Supp. April, May and June 1960 [S/4300]).

26 Mar 1960 THE REVEREND FRED L. SHUTTLESWORTH, BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA;
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