



Ford Hall Forum: Transcript of Beyers Naudé Forum

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Title: Reverend Beyers Naudé “South Africa,” at Ford Hall Forum.

Recording Date: 27 October 1985

Speakers: Reverend Beyers Naudé, Paula Gold, Donald Tye

Item Information: Ford Hall Forum: featuring Reverend Beyers Naudé on, “South Africa.” Ford Hall Forum Collection, 1908-2013 (MS113.3.1, items 0036 and 0037) Moakley Archive, Suffolk University, Boston, MA.

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Recording Summary: Reverend Beyers Naudé, an Afrikaner and General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches, discusses the future of apartheid in South Africa.

Transcript Begins

PAULA GOLD: Good evening, and welcome to the Ford Hall Forum. I'm Paula Gold, and I'm president of the Forum. Tonight, we are very fortunate to have a distinguished visitor from South Africa to discuss the situation in that country with us.

This program has been made possible through the cooperation of a great many organizations, including the New England Circle.

Before we begin, since I know that many of you are new to the Forum, I would like to briefly mention our upcoming programs. We have two programs remaining on our fall schedule. Both of them are part of our series on health and politics. Eleanor Holmes Norton, who served in the Carter administration, the first black woman to serve as a cabinet officer, will speak on the nationwide crisis of teenage pregnancy. That's next Sunday night, November 3rd, at Faneuil Hall. The following Thursday, Dr. Paul Starr will be speaking on the dilemma of healthcare costs and availability.

One final thing I'd like to mention before we begin is that these free lectures are supported by people like you who become members of the Forum. Without the help of our members, programs like tonight's would not be possible. So if you can, please join the Forum using the form in the green brochure or by signing up at the desk as you leave. By becoming a member, you will help ensure that programs like this continue.

It's now time to begin our program. Our interpreter for this program is Michella Slaytek [?], and our moderator this evening is Donald Tye. Don is in general trial practice in Boston, specializing in family and mental health law, and is a member of the Forum's board of directors.

Ladies and gentlemen, tonight's moderator, Don Tye. [applause]

[00:02:30]

DONALD TYE: "I think for the first time, the average young Afrikaner is confused and uncertain about the future, especially since the government announced the state of emergency on July 20, 1985. A lot of Afrikaners simply don't understand why there is rioting. The press is one-sided. Television is tightly controlled. People aren't exposed to reality so they have misconceptions of color."

[00:02:55]

These are the words of Anami Oosthuizen, a 23-year-old law student and the only woman among the Stellenbosch Eight, a group of eight Afrikaner students from the leading Afrikaans university in South Africa, who this week shocked South Africa's ruling white minority and the world by accepting the invitation of the outlawed African National Congress to go to the group's headquarters in exile in Lusaka, Zambia, for informal talks.

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Our speaker today, Reverend Beyers Naudé, a white Afrikaner, 49 years ago also graduated from the University of Stellenbosch and has spent much of his adult life accepting a similar challenge. Joseph Leliveld, in his 1985 book, *Move Your Shadow*, published by Time Books, compares Reverend Naudé to the dissident Soviet physicist, Andrei Sakharov. Naudé's apostasy, like Sakharov's, he says, was especially galling and unforgivable because it occurred at the very heart of a power elite. Once he had been the most highly Afrikaner clergyman of his generation. Any position his church or people had to offer could have been within his reach. Now, or so the top security officials contend, he is an agent of the underground, as Sakharov had illicit ties with the Americans. Where Reverend Naudé came from, a white who believed in black power, had to be at least a communist if he wasn't even more depraved.

At the age of 48, for the first time, Reverend Naudé actively engaged in viewing firsthand life in black townships, speaking to blacks about being black in white South Africa. In 1963, as senior minister of the most prestigious Dutch Reformed Church congregation in Johannesburg, he was chosen as a representative to an ecumenical conference on apartheid, sponsored by the World Council of Churches.

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Refusing to recant, as all others did, from the group's position of conscience, that all racial groups have an equal right to share the "responsibilities, rewards and privileges" of citizenship, he was becoming undependable by the church leadership, a political dissident. At this time, he began publishing an ecumenical journal called *Pro Veritate*, addressing itself to the church's role in society and the questions the church was evading.

In the late 1960s, Reverend Naudé gave up his pulpit to found the Christian Institute as an ecumenical movement aimed primarily at influencing the white churches. His own church, as others, soon formally proscribed his institute as a heretical organization. Although never having talked politics with a black nationalist, nor having dined in black homes, by the age of 50, Reverend Naudé was condemned as a traitor, isolated wholly within Afrikanism, isolated by his community and by even members of his immediate family, including his two sisters who have become permanently alienated.

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After offering organizational support to Stephen Biko and other blacks flaunting black consciousness, political authorities stepped up pressure. By 1968, his passport was seized and the Christian Institute was declared affected or subversive, curtailing its ability to raise funds from overseas. After Stephen Biko's death in 1977, the Christian Institute was banned as an organization. Until September 26, 1984, Reverend Naudé was banned as an individual. It was illegal for him to travel within South Africa, enter black areas, attend any public meetings or be quoted in any publication, even if he were to die.

Despite restrictions, Reverend Naudé's circle of contacts among black churchmen and activists was expanding wider than any white in South Africa. His example demonstrated that it could be done.

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At the age of 68, Reverend Naudé is still regarded as dangerous. In 1984, along with imprisoned Nelson Mandela, he was named a patron of the United Democratic Front led by Reverend Allan Boesak, and composed of 600 affiliated organizations, as an alliance against apartheid. In November 1984, Reverend Naudé was invited to become successor of Reverend Desmond Tutu as General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches and assumed that position on February 1, 1985.

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I am pleased to introduce the recipient of four honorary degrees, including one from our own Notre Dame University; University of Chicago's Reverend Niebuhr's Prize for Human Rights, together with Dr. Sakharov; the Bruno Kreisky Award for the Defense of Human Rights granted by the president of Austria; and the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Four Freedoms Award for freedom of worship, which he was not allowed even to accept; and the person who Reverend Desmond Tutu has described as the most resplendent sound of hope in South Africa today, Reverend Naudé. [applause]

[00:09:27]

BEYERS NAUDÉ: Mr. Moderator, ladies and gentlemen, may I be allowed to make two introductory remarks before I share with you something about the situation in our country, the crisis and the prospects of hope; first of all, to say that I understand that this building was the building where the Revolution started, leading to the Boston Tea Party and the overthrow of an unjust rule of the people of America. When I heard that, I immediately said, Well, then, this is a dangerous place to bring a guy like Beyers Naudé because I may start another revolution in what I may be saying to you or to others tonight.

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The second remark would be to say that this reminds me very much of one of our oldest congregations of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, where I had to preach, and where the minister told me and said, "Look, Beyers, we want you to know the benches

are upright, the seats are hard. If you don't say anything which is worthwhile, shut up." And I'm aware of that in what I am eager to share with you tonight.

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I assume that most of you are here tonight would be reasonably well informed about what is happening in South Africa. In more than one respect, I find it incredible, although deeply gratifying, that there is so much interest in our country because there are so many other concerns and problems that America faces from day to day. I think that you, during the last six months, through your media – screen, radio, publications – have certainly been able to gain much more information and insight and a visual conception of what has happened in South Africa than the vast majority of the inhabitants of the country. I have seen footage of what you have been able to view on your screens and in comparison with what has been shown, or not been shown, in our country.

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I had some time ago when somebody asked me where it would be possible to get a wide and a varied and an objective picture of what is happening, I had to say to that person, "If you wish really to know what is going on inside South Africa, you've got to go outside." That is partly true because of the fact that our television is state-controlled. Our radio is state-controlled. Our press is mostly government-owned, or also strongly controlled by a number of very serious restrictions with regard to publication. Especially as far as the 36 magisterial districts which have recently been declared as emergency districts in South Africa, where nothing can be published without having been put first of all to the police for their reaction or that respective department.

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So I'm not going to deal in detail with specific incidents and happenings and events in the country. I think it would be more worthwhile for me, in the half an hour or little more than half an hour at my disposal before you have the ample time for asking questions, I think it would be more helpful if I could try to summarize and pinpoint the essential nature of the crisis in which we find ourselves.

I believe that there is none of us who would gainsay or would dispute the fact that we are a country in crisis. I would go further and say that we are definitely a country which finds itself in a state of civil war. And I would be prepared to go even further by saying, if the situation continues to be handled the way it is being handled by the authorities up till now, we certainly are on our way to a revolution.

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Having said that, I think I should explain why I'm saying this. First of all, because if I were to reply to the question – what is the nature of the crisis? – I would immediately point to the educational situation in our country and say that black education in the country, for all purposes, is lying in shambles. Thousands and thousands of black schoolkids are in and out of school, are for a specific period in the classrooms busy with some form of education. The school is closed. The children have got to go home. And shortly afterwards it's tried again. The same applies to the majority of your black state universities.

And we've created a situation, or a situation has developed where, for all practical purposes, regular school and university education amongst the blacks, and now increasingly also amongst the colored– and forgive me for using these racial terms, but that's the only way in which I can describe a deeply divided society as such is South Africa – blacks being those of African ethnic origin; coloreds being those of so-called mixed blood; and the Indians or Asians, those who have come from India. And where for all practical purposes, any form of regular education amongst the African and the colored sectors of our community is simply not taking place.

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And I'm convinced, if my reading and if my analysis of the situation is correct, that except if drastic measures are taken by the government to meet the legitimate demands on the part of the people, there will be no meaningful, relevant, regular black or colored education in South Africa until a total fundamental political change takes place.

Now, how is it possible that a country could allow this to happen? If this were to have happened to white schoolchildren and to white students, the whole country would have been up in arms and immediate changes would have been made. The fact that it hasn't happened is an indication of the nature and the seriousness of the problem.

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But our crisis is also a political one. In that respect – and I want to pinpoint the essential nature of that because of the lack of time – we are dealing with a situation where in November 1983, the white community of South Africa had the opportunity in a referendum to accept a newly proposed constitution which would make provision for a three-cameral parliament – one for whites, one for coloreds, one for Indians – but in such proportions that the whites would always be the dominant voting factor, but with the total exclusion of any blacks in the political decision-making process of the country. 4.7 million whites; 2.7 million coloreds; .75 million Indians, and 22 million blacks, and the 22 totally excluded from the right to determine their own political future.

Sixty-six percent of all the white voters of South Africa approved that constitution. It was from that moment, a moment of historic watershed in the history of South Africa, where the whole black community, with the support of the major sector of the colored and the Indian communities, said, "Enough is enough. We're not going to take it. We're never going to subject ourselves to this." Because what the whites essentially were saying to the black community was, through that action, "You've never been part of South Africa. We don't see you to be part of South Africa. You will never be part of South Africa in future."

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That was the reason for the birth of the tremendous growth in popularity of an organization like the United Democratic Front. That was the reason why 450 organizations affiliated to this body, this umbrella – political movement for change in

South Africa. And that crisis will never, to my mind, be resolved as long as the present constitution remains in operation.

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That's the second serious crisis. The third one is the economic one. And I don't want to burden you with so many facts and figures because I do not believe that I need to convince you in this regard. I would just wish to summarize by saying that economically the situation in South Africa has taken a turn, very serious turn for the worse. For many years, South Africa prided itself on its wealth, its growth, its gold production, diamonds, minerals, raw materials sold to the outside world, in every respect. South Africa was proud to pay its debts because it had money enough. In fact, South Africa was so rich that it could afford a system of apartheid, run so many institutions parallel, highly privileged on the part of the whites, and where blacks, to a large degree, paid the price for the comfort and the luxury of the white minority.

A number of events in the last two or three years brought us into a crisis situation with regard to the economic position of South Africa – the high defense budget, a long drought, the drop in the price of gold, the weak exchange value of the rand, rising inflation, growing black unemployment, not only the rural, but also in the urban areas. All these brought South Africa to the point where for the first time the white community in South Africa began to discover the high cost of apartheid. And still they don't fully understand. But it's enough to let you realize how serious the situation has become.

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South Africa's external debt has been stated by the government to be 40 billion rand. In fact, it is not 40 billion; it is 55 billion rand. Now, I know that for Americans dealing with much larger figures, this may not sound to be so impressive or so difficult. But in the context of South Africa's economy, that is a tremendous amount of money. Of that 55 billion rand, 35 billion has got to be repaid within the next 12 months. And according to all the information at my disposal, and I believe this is very reliable information, South Africa is not able to repay that debt.

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And that is why, when Chase Manhattan Bank told Gerhard de Kock, the governor of the Reserve Bank, the ex-governor now, that Chase Manhattan was not willing to supply the bridging funds for the repayment of the short-term loans, it created a major crisis in South Africa and our stock exchange closed for five days in order to help the whites in the country in general to adapt itself to that tremendous emotional shock. And now South Africa is desperately trying to find the bridging funds, either from Swiss or German or other banks. And it'll be very interesting to note what those banking institutions are going to do.

So for all practical purposes, South Africa can be termed to be bankrupt. Because those short-term loans cannot be repaid. Not with the form of production of South Africa at the present moment. And with the increasing number of short- and long-term strikes, because the workers are demanding their rights and higher wages, which they deserve, and with the ongoing crisis and unrest in the country, and with the growing instability which this has created, we at least have come to a point where to a certain degree the whole discussion about divestment – to which I would like to return in a moment – or sanctions is in a certain sense being overtaken by the decisions of many overseas companies and businessmen looking at South Africa, looking at its growing instability, deciding for themselves: "It may possibly be better for us to get out while the going is good. Not because the churches in America or the universities or the institutions are pressuring us to do so, but because we ourselves have discovered that it may not be helpful any longer to let our capital remain in the country."

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Therefore, I cannot see that crisis can be resolved. Certainly not in the foreseeable future. And especially if you have thousands and thousands of young blacks in the urban areas of South Africa, unemployed, those completing their schooling, even half-completing their schooling, finding themselves without any form of income or of employment, or the

possibility of meaningful employment, then certainly that is a recipe for resistance and for revolution.

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But could I just for a moment point out that the crisis, I think, runs even deeper. All countries experience such forms of crises in the course of its development. But when that crisis itself goes to the very root of society – namely, the moral and the ethical concepts of justice, of human rights, of human dignity, denied to the majority of the people of the land – then we have reached a point where no other solution is possible than to attack that malady, that illness at the grass roots.

That is where the problem lies that the majority of your white community still wishes to support the system of apartheid. Yes, they would like to have it changed, they would like to have it amended, they would like to have certain reforms being presented, but the majority of them, of the white community in South Africa is not prepared to face, to meet the legitimate challenge and the legitimate demands of the majority of the people of the land by saying, "Basically, we want to share the same rights and the same responsibilities as you have. You have the vote? We also want it. You have certain economic rights and privileges? We also want it. You have a fairly good system of education? We also want it."

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What is revolutionary in that? What is undemocratic in that? Think of your own history. Think of the heritage of American pride in the institutions of your democracy, of your Bill of Rights, of the civil rights movement, which brought the message to the people of the United States, that basically every person is equal before the sight of God. That is what it is all about in its deepest essence. And as long as that is denied, the crisis will continue and will increase.

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Where has this brought us, friends? I think I would wish to summarize it by saying that it has brought us to the point of an increasing rebellion against the present political system, where the majority of the people are up in arms. Not arms in that physical sense of the word, but they are resisting with all the possible means at their disposal the present system and saying, "We will not rest and we will not be satisfied until we are having a meaningful share in the whole process of political decision-making in our country." Twenty-two million people excluded from any possibility of expressing their political views and making them felt, making them effective where they should be effective; namely, where the laws are made.

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The rebellion against that system is also a rebellion against the whole educational system. And I would like to repeat by saying that I see no possibility of any return to normal education in the black and the colored and increasingly also in the Indian communities until the basic grievance of an inferior, discriminatory, unjust educational system is addressed with all your blacks in separate schools, coloreds in their own schools, Indians in their schools, whites in their separate schools, and even the whites divided between your Afrikan-speaking children and the English-speaking children. And therefore, I see no possibility, except an ongoing resistance and rebellion on the parts of millions of young blacks who have come to that point where they've said, "Enough is enough. Even if we have to stand up, to be shot, to be killed, to die, it is better to die for a good cause than to live with such a bad system."

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It is also a rebellion against the whole concept of a false authority. And here, I'm referring especially to the whole legal system, the myriads of racial laws, the security legislation in our country where increasingly the black and the colored and the Indian and, thank God, also, a small percentage of the white community is saying that a legal machinery, the legal machinery of a facade of justice has been built up to uphold a legal system which is basically unjust, discriminatory and totally unacceptable from the concept of the rule of law.

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And that is why, friends, increasingly every form of respect also for the visible authority of the law has not only been so eroded and undermined, but has reached such a low point. The outlook of many of the young blacks that there is a growing total rejection of that system of upholding the legal position of the police trying to implement laws which the majority of your black and your colored and your Indian community regard – and justifiably regard – as unjust, as inhuman, and as oppressive. And when a country reaches that stage where the respect for law and for the offices of law reach such a position, it is the beginning of revolution.

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It is more than that. It is in fact the beginning of a situation where, as it gains momentum more and more, can only call forth the resistance on the part of an oppressive and an unjust rule. Therefore, if you wish to ask me what has been the response of the government to what has been happening in South Africa in the last year, especially in the last number of months – you've seen this on your news and I don't want to point out any specific particulars – I could share with you tonight many personal incidents which will not only shock you, but it will certainly bring home to you the anguish, the suffering and the pain of thousands of people.

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The government has responded, on the one hand, with a very hesitant and inadequate form of reform. The government has announced that it agrees to common citizenship for the future. It agrees to general franchise. It agrees to the withdrawal of the hated pass laws. On the other hand, the state president has, in practically the same breath, announced and said, "Yes, but this does not imply a unitary state with one-man-one-vote." And we don't have any indication of how long it will take before the pass laws will be withdrawn. We don't have any indication of what measures will be taken in order to implement these forms of reform.

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But even if they are implemented, the basic point which you have to understand is this: that PW Botha, can only go as far in these reforms as the white electorate who put him in power, will allow him to go. And the white electorate, with their self-interests, with the fear, with the tremendous privilege and power that they've enjoyed in being able to maintain this system for so many years, do you really believe that the majority of them would voluntarily relinquish their position of privilege and power?

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In fact, this is one of the major problems, that the separation which has been created over so many decades between white and black in the country, not only geographically and physically, but also mentally and emotionally and psychologically, this separation has been so successful and so almost complete that in the hearts and minds of the majority of the white community of South Africa, there has grown this schizophrenic fear of what may happen when blacks may receive the same rights and privileges as the whites. That's the major concern of many of the whites. And that is why in a survey which was undertaken amongst 1000 whites two weeks ago, in which this one question was asked, "Do you believe that there will be majority rule in South Africa," 66% of those who replied to that questionnaire said, "Definitely no."

How is it then possible, even if PW Botha wants to bring about fundamental reform, how is it possible that he will be able to do that if he doesn't have the backing of his own electorate? It simply cannot happen.

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At the same time, parallel to these reforms which have been announced, you have had the implementation of the security laws in those areas which have been declared as emergency areas to such a degree that police actions of brutality of the police and the army have reached frightening proportions. You've seen something of this on your screens; much more than that has taken place and is taking place. And the outcome of that has been that never in the history of our country have the feelings of the black

community of anger and bitterness against the state authority as reflected and symbolized by the presence of police and of the army in the black townships, never has it been so deep and so strong and so bitter as today.

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That is why you have the increasing attacks of young blacks on police, security police. That is why the homes of black councilors who support the government's system have been set alight and burned. That is why at funerals, when it is discovered that there is a black informer taking part in the funeral, young blacks get so angry that they throw petrol over such a person, grab him or her, and set such a person alight. I know, this is terrible! I know how you and I must feel about that. And that is being used and exploited by the government and by many others to say, "Do you see that? Do you realize that? That shows that the blacks are totally incompetent, even to be in freedom and in responsibility amongst themselves. How then is it possible to entrust the future government of the country to them?"

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People who say that, friends, have no understanding of the long, pent-up anger and bitterness over years in the hearts and minds of the millions of the blacks of the way in which they've been treated and the hundreds and more who have been in prisons, and the way they've been treated. And therefore, although I deeply regret it, I can only say that one has to understand, and one has to say, not first of all to those young people "don't do it," but you first have to address yourself to the system with its oppression, with its injustice and say, "Remove this injustice. Remove this oppression. Make the people free and you won't have this kind of retaliatory action which is taking place."

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But it's more than that. In addition to that, there has been the total refusal of some of the basic demands which have been made. Four such demands have been made. First of all, many of the black leaders have said, "End the state of emergency. Remove the security forces from the townships. Release all political prisoners. And allow exiles to return.

Allow a free plebiscite of the people to appoint and to elect their own authentic leaders in order to sit down and to plan the future of the country." The response on the part of the government has been a decided, definite, clear "no."

What hope is there, then, of any peaceful solution?

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In addition to this, the government has, over the past two, three years, especially, engaged in a deliberate process of destabilizing the surrounding countries. The incursions of the army into Lesotho, into Botswana, into Mozambique, into Angola, these are known historical facts that are reported in your press. And this goes on all the time. The government defends itself by saying, "If we regard any of these surrounding countries or the incursion of the African National Congress to be a threat to our security and to our dominant position, we will not hesitate to take action and, if necessary, to retaliate." This may be, from the political viewpoint of the government, understandable. But it certainly is not going to help us to a position of reconciliation and solution of our problems. In the meantime, the militarization of our country goes on without any interruption.

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And I would not be surprised if the state of emergency does not end, or if eventually, if the situation becomes to such a point of crisis that the whole country will have to be declared in a state of emergency, that then inevitably our country will move into some form of military rule. And if that's the case, we simply have to face a long, ongoing, low-scale form of guerilla warfare, of civil war, of wounding, of clashes, of conflicts, of killings, and of deaths.

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I know this may sound very depressing to you. I hope it doesn't sound sensational, because I don't want to be sensational. I don't want to be melodramatic. I'm too concerned about the future of the country. I'm too concerned about the concept of justice. I'm too much concerned about the role which we have to play in order to minimize violence and

to bring about peace. And I say this not only for the sake of the blacks who are suffering so deeply; I'm saying this also for the sake of the whites. I'm a white. I'm an Afrikaner. I don't deny my Afrikanerdom. I understand why my people are doing this. I don't agree with it; I totally and I utterly disagree. But I thank God that I don't hate them for what they are doing; I hate the system, yes, I hate the injustice, I hate the oppression, I hate the racism, because I believe it dehumanizes the oppressor even more than the oppressed.

But having said that, I cannot stand aside and silently view a country being led to a situation of suicide and revolution.

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And therefore, with that, I wish to close. The question arises, what can be done in South Africa? I believe that there is very little hope that the whites will, of their own volition, change the situation. I believe we have got to face the fact that there will be the ongoing pressures on the part of the blacks until the situation, both economically and otherwise, forces the white community eventually to say, "We cannot continue with what we're doing, what we've done up to now."

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And in closure, I think it is important to try and answer – I say try and answer – the question, what is there that you as people of the United States could possibly do? First of all, I would like to say that I believe that it is absolutely essential that you continue to pressure also your own government in order to apply more meaningful forms of disinvestment on our country. And why am I saying this? I'm saying this in the face of the fact that I know that I could be charged for saying this, but I'm saying this, friends, because this is one of the last peaceful measures remaining to us in order to avoid a conflict of violence and bloodshed in our country.

It is only when especially the white community begin to feel in their own pockets what it means in order to pay that price that they will begin to sit up and to say, "We have to reconsider what is happening."

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I believe it is also important that you as a nation with all the power at your disposal, that you apply the necessary pressures also on your Swiss and your German bankers to indicate to them that they can make a meaningful contribution to this struggle for liberation if they are prepared to cooperate with the American bankers.

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I believe it's important that you should see and place into its proper perspective the struggle for justice in South Africa. And I know that our government tries to sell, and sometimes sells successfully also to the people of the public of the United States this idea that our government is the strongest anti-communist force on the continent of Africa, and that it stands for the Christian values and the values of Western Civilization.

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If any of you or anybody else is impressed by that argument, let me answer you in one single sentence: That if anybody would like to ask me and say, "What is the strongest single factor of promoting the sympathy for communism in South Africa?" without hesitation my reply would be, the policy of apartheid. And as long as that remains, there is no way to solve the situation by all these false arguments. And to claim that we are a Christian government and a Christian people, I believe that in no other respect that makes a mockery of the real understanding of the Christian faith.

I believe it's important that you express increasingly your solidarity with the oppressed and with those who are the victims of apartheid. I am deeply grateful for many responses of active support which have come from the United States. I'm thinking of the demonstrations against the embassy. I'm thinking of many actions which have been taken. But I believe it's important to continue and to increase that support of your solidarity.

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But above all, I think it is important that you remove from your own society every form of latent or hidden racism which there still may be. Because as long as the white community in South Africa can point to the United States or to Britain or to any other part of the world and say, "You have no right to criticize us. You have no right to become involved in our struggle with all the forms of racism still evident and prevalent in your society," it makes it much more difficult for us to answer that.

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And above all, I believe that the tremendous and wonderful heritage which you have gained and which you hold dear, your respect for human dignity, for human rights, for the recognition of a person being a person in his own right, for the concept of human liberty and freedom, for true democracy, if you regard these values to be the most meaningful for the maintenance of a free society, please understand and support those in our country who claim to seek the same for themselves. They are the ones who need your support. They are the ones who look forward to you through your acts and through everything that you convey to strengthen them in their struggle until the day when they will be free. That day will come. I've no doubt whatsoever that that day will come. And when it comes, I would gladly wish to see that the people of the United States should have been seen by the struggling masses of South Africa not to have been on the side of the oppressor, but on the side of those who were oppressed and who struggled to achieve their liberation.

Thank you. [applause]

DONALD TYE: For the benefit of the radio audience, what I'm going to do is to repeat, as we usually do, the questions that are asked. We'll try to go from one side of the room to the other. And I'd like to ask you to try to keep your question as a question, as concise as possible, rather than attempting to make a protracted political statement. And we'll start from over here, please. Yes, sir?

Q: [off mic]

DONALD TYE: Reverend Naudé, can you guarantee that the government that takes over will be a democratic government with the protections of a democratic government?

[00:52:04]

BEYERS NAUDÉ: It depends how this takes place. It depends whether the people of the country would be given the opportunity to decide and to elect their own future leaders. I can only state clearly that as far as a body like the UDF is concerned, it has pledged itself to a democratic and a non-racial future. I can only state that everywhere where I went, and with all that I and many others have spoken, that there is nothing else but the deep and urgent longing to set up a fully democratic rule in South Africa. But if you were to ask me whether I could give that guarantee, certainly not; it is not possible. But on the basis of all the signs and the pointers and the indications there, I'm convinced that such a change is taking place and will take place. And when it does come, I believe it is essential that one gives such a government the full opportunity to prove itself.

DONALD TYE: Do we have a question from this side? Yes, sir?

Q: How many people have been detailed since the state of emergency and under what conditions are they being held?

DONALD TYE: Since the state of emergency, Reverend, how many people have been detained and what is the state of those, sir, that are being detailed?

[00:53:32]

BEYERS NAUDÉ: It is difficult to get the full figures because these are not regularly made known by the police, and it is impossible to ascertain it simply because people just disappear and you don't know for how long. And eventually some of them turn up, and some of them flee the country. But it has been ascertained that since September last year, altogether 15,000 people were detained for shorter or longer periods, and then, again, many of them released. Seven-hundred-forty people have died. And the number of deaths continue to take place with every week of the clashes which are taking place.

[00:54:15]

I only know that at the present moment, the South African Council of Churches, which provides legal defense for a number of political cases, that we at the present moment are dealing with about 1500 young people in different parts of the country being charged either with intimidation, with acts of violence, with arson, or with being in possession of banned literature and banned publication. And the number of court cases is escalating every day. I've got to read through the records of every one of those cases before I give my approval for that money to be paid out for the legal defense. And I can only say that our staff has found a tremendous escalation. In fact, we've had to increase our staff not only at the head office, but also in the regional offices, because the number of cases continue to rise every week.

DONALD TYE: We have a question, yes, sir, in the blue shirt. Would you please stand?

Q: Yes, Reverend Naudé, you expressed pessimism for the possibility for peaceful change in our country. Are there any circumstances of which you think that armed struggle is justified? And more specifically, are there any circumstances of which you would [55:41] of such a struggle?

DONALD TYE: Under what circumstances, sir, is armed resistance justified? And under what circumstances would you support such resistance?

[00:55:52]

BEYERS NAUDÉ: The South African Council of Churches has up till now declared itself to be fully in favor of peaceful change and expressed itself very strongly against violence in any form. In the course of the last number of months, I've pointed out to the Council that I believe that, although it is understandable that that stand was taken in the past, that is no longer possible in view of the fact that we have in South Africa moved into a situation not of violence versus non-violence, but in actual fact of a situation of

people trying to bring about change by a lesser form of violence over against a great deal of violence, that of the state and of the laws and of the police and of the army.

The debate is going on within the churches about the justification of the church or of the Christian community in order to support otherwise the armed struggle of people who are fighting for liberation. I have been actively engaged in stimulating that debate because I believe that the churches have got to account themselves for the stand that they have to take.

[00:57:13]

At this point in time, in view of the fact of this discussion taking place in our country, I do not feel justified as general secretary to express my personal opinions in this regard because I believe that is certainly not the right thing for me to do here. All that I'm saying is I've stated very clearly in South Africa that there is no justification whatsoever for the church or for anybody to condemn the armed struggle and to condemn the actions on the part of the young people if the church has not been able to prove that its peaceful forms of resistance are not more effective and could achieve that purpose.

DONALD TYE: Is there a question from the side? Yes, ma'am? Do you have a question? Yes, would you stand, please?

Q: To counter the argument, one of the arguments that countered divestment, it's often said that divestment is a one-shot deal and you'd lose any potential leverage you had. Do you see any of these transnational corporations who have made huge profits from apartheid, do you see them as ever having effectively argued for pressures and gotten some reforms from the government?

[00:58:33]

DONALD TYPE: Regarding divestment, have you seen, sir, any of the trends, the large corporations that have advocated divestment, seeing any actual progress from the government?

[00:58:46]

BEYERS NAUDÉ: I follow the debate and the pressures of the transnational corporations with great interest and concern. Let me say in all fairness that of all the overseas companies, the transnational corporations, your American corporations or the majority of them have, in comparison with the others, certainly been willing to do much more to bring about certain forms of change and of justice within their economic structure. But having said that, I believe that these are by far inadequate to meet the real problem in the country.

[00:59:24]

And I know that the argument of the corporations are that theirs is an economic interest and that the political aspect of the problem is not something which they should be asked to deal. In our situation in South Africa, I do not think that that argument is valid any longer because of the serious nature of the crisis of the injustice which there is. And therefore, I had hoped that there would be more meaningful measures which have been taken, and pressures put upon the South African government by your transnational corporations in conjunction with your South African business in order to do that. And that can be done; especially now that the economy of the country is in such a very, very fluid and sensitive state.

[01:00:15]

I sincerely hope that it will be possible. But let me say immediately that as far as the politically conscious majority of the black opinion in South Africa is concerned, the feelings are very strong that in view of the serious political crisis in the country and the longing for liberation, that they would certainly see as the first option divestment where possible. It is not because they want to harm the country. It is not because they want to harm the infrastructure. It is not because they do not want to see that blacks have an equal and full share in the economic advance and development of the country. But it is because of the fact that they are saying, "We first have to deal with the basic and fundamental

problem of injustice; namely, the political one. Once we've resolved that, then certainly we can attend to a meaningful economic growth in the country."

Q: Could you tell us more about what specific things the Council of Churches does in South Africa? Do you see it as a body that can continue what the Christian Institute tried to do? And also, do you fear being banned yourself any longer, or does your position in any sense protect you to be free to speak freely?

DONALD TYE: Would you describe what the Council of Churches does. And do you see any repercussions from what you're doing now back in South Africa? And how does your position protect you?

[01:01:47]

BEYERS NAUDÉ: As far as the Council of Churches is concerned, with regard to the— I'm not referring to the other aspect, but with regard to the struggle for liberation in South Africa, the Council of Churches has set up in the course of the last number of years a form of support for the families of political prisoners where every month an amount ranging between 80 rand and 100 rand a month is paid out to 800 families of political prisoners. We wish that that amount could be much more, but we are not able to raise more to give to them because the majority of that money comes from outside of the country because the white community in South Africa would generally not be willing to make any contribution.

[01:02:38]

Secondly, we've set up an emergency fund to make provision, first of all, for the cost of funerals, make provision for a grant to a family where the breadwinner has been shot and killed, assisting medical aid, provide legal defense, help fathers and mothers where children are being charged and their cases are being heard and the trials held sometimes long distances from their homes, to make available transport so that they can be there where their children appear in court.

In our emergency fund, we have also made provision for gathering the information on all forms of torture, of detentions, of the problems which arise for families if children, for instance, just disappear, to see what we can do to help such families.

[01:03:35]

In addition to that, we have embarked on a program where we're looking at an alternative form of education for those children who increasingly will not be able or willing to receive any regular form of black education. We're deeply concerned about the fact that there may be a generation of students, of three, four years, five years, who for that period, when other children are normally at school or at university, completing either their school education or the university training, that they, because of the situation in the country, are denied that opportunity. And we're desperately trying to see what we can do to set up such alternative forms of education. We do not know whether the government will allow it. It may be that the government will deny us that opportunity. But at least we can try.

[01:04:31]

In addition to that, we try to mobilize the feelings and the support of the worldwide Christian community with the situation in South Africa. We've divided the country in seven crisis zones. We have appointed four fieldworkers where we receive regular reports for what is happening in those areas so that we are in a position to judge, hopefully, much more effectively and correctly what is happening in the country than just to depend upon news reports which in many respects are unreliable. And this information we try to make available to all concerned people and groups and organizations who wish to be informed.

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[00:00:02]

BEYERS NAUDÉ: We are actively cooperating with the Catholic Bishops' Conference, with bodies like the Black Sash, with the black community in trying to see what we can do to give them the necessary support. And that is the reason why, as general secretary, I

have tried to make my contribution in my visit, for instance, to the States, and from here to Canada.

[00:00:29]

With regard to the question of what this could entail by way of possible actions against me, I'm aware that the stand of the Council and of myself against divestment, in favor of civil disobedience, and other opinions which I've expressed could lay me open to a similar charge as that under which Dr. Allan Boesak is charged, and under the Subversion of the Internal Security Act and where he has to appear in court on November 6th. As you may know, Dr. Allan Boesak is the president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and is due to appear in court in Cape Town, or in Malmesbury near Cape Town, on November 6th. He has been charged on subversion for three counts – one, for his stand on divestment; secondly, for him supporting the whole call for a consumer boycott of white businesses; and thirdly, for the support of your school boycott. And if that could happen to him, it could certainly equally happen to me.

[00:01:31]

So I do not know what the outcome of that may be. But in view of the fact that the situation is so serious, I feel that that's the least that I can do, to inform concerned people about what is happening for the sake of minimizing the violence and the bloodshed in the country and bringing about what I believe to be a more just dispensation. [applause]

DONALD TYE: Yes, ma'am?

[00:02:05]

Q: Two questions. Can you tell us anything about a commission made up of several American professors and others led by a Professor Peter Broger and its relationship to the government in South Africa, firstly. And secondly, what do you make of the meeting between white business leaders and the ANC leaders earlier?

DONALD TYE: Would you, sir, describe— the first question we'll start with. Would you describe the commission led by Peter Broger and its relationship to the political issues in South Africa? And then when that's through, then we'll ask the second question.

[00:02:44]

BEYERS NAUDÉ: I do not have enough information to evaluate or to assess what the outcome of that could be. If I know more of what exactly is entailed, what is in mind, and what they hope to achieve, then it is possible to assess it. All that I wish to say with regard to any such an effort, regardless of whether it comes from the United States or any other part of the world, I think there are two or three primary conditions which have to be met before any such a meeting or any such a venture could be seen to be meaningful or successful.

[00:03:21]

First of all, that if such a group of people coming to south Africa does not put themselves in touch with the relevant black leadership in the trade unions, in the UDF, in the other bodies, in the women's organizations, amongst the students and elsewhere, there is no point in trying to gain their information from the other sources and believe that that is going to be in any way reliable and meaningful.

[00:03:51]

And secondly, I believe it is of vital importance that, for the information that they wish to have, that they should certainly not rely themselves purely on the press, purely on your government sources, or purely on the sources of your white community. And therefore, we would gladly place ourselves at the disposal of any individual or organization who would wish to come to the offices of the SACC. Because there we would be able to share with them in depth with the information of what is happening in the country. And not only with regard to the facts, but also with regard to putting them in touch with people themselves who have been the victims, the victims of police brutality, of army brutality, the victims, for instance, children and mothers. We have 700, 800 children in Soweto simply being grabbed by the police, thrown in prison for two nights, and then released

after that. To experience something of that and to understand something of the agony and the pain and then the anger on the part of the mothers and fathers to say, "What on earth is happening? Why is this a way in which people are acting against our children?" And we would gladly wish to do that.

It's only that personal experience where you are faced, where you are confronted with the agony and the pain and the anger and the feelings of the people, only then that you begin to realize what in fact apartheid is doing to our whole society.

Q: The second question is, what do you make of the meeting between business leaders and the ANC earlier this week?

DONALD TYE: What do you make, sir, of the meeting between the ANC and the business leaders? And would you describe, please, what the ANC is.

[00:05:46]

BEYERS NAUDÉ: The ANC is the banned political organization, African National Congress, which was banned in 1960. From 1912 to 1960, when in 1912, the African National Congress was established, it was a perfectly legal organization. It had as its central goal equal and meaningful political rights which the whites enjoyed. It took a very strong stand in favor of peaceful change. Its leader Albert Lutuli, before his death, was a very strong exponent of the whole concept of peaceful change. In every respect, the ANC advocated fundamental change without violence. For 48 years.

[00:06:34]

During that 48 years, as far as I know, there was not a single church in South Africa which as a church body ever gave any sign of recognition or of support of this body. And that is why if people in South Africa, if they wax eloquently about peaceful change, my first question to them would be, Where were your voices when those who struggled for peaceful change asked for it in vain?

The ANC was banned in 1960 and went underground and formed its military arm, Umkhonto we Sizwe, stating clearly that it was forced to turn to arms because of the increasing repression on the part of the system. The ANC has been operating outside South Africa, has grown in strength inside South Africa, especially during the last number of years. Surveys which have been undertaken have proved that the ANC has the support of certainly two-thirds of the black community of South Africa in its goals and aims. Perhaps not necessarily in its methods, but certainly in its goals and aims.

[00:07:59]

The headquarters of the ANC at the present moment are in Lusaka. Recently, a number of top businessmen decided to send a mission to Lusaka in order to consult with the ANC on their future vision of South Africa. The fact that your business community – in this case it was mainly English- and Jewish-speaking businessmen, because the Afrikaans-speaking community was not willing to accompany them – the fact that they decided to do so, I think, was an implicit proof that the business community looked at the future of the country and said to themselves, if they did not say it to others, "We have got to look to the future of the country. We have got to start negotiating with those who may be in a position of the ones who are going to decide the political future of the country. And those ones are certainly no longer in Pretoria; they are elsewhere."

[00:09:10]

The outcome of that was interesting from the viewpoint of the businessmen, in which they felt a very sympathetic response, although a very clear difference of opinion on a number of matters. They were impressed by the very, very well-informed way in which the ANC was informed about the situation in South Africa. They were impressed by the arguments which were used, by the stand which was taken by the ANC leadership, by the indications of what the ANC felt was necessary in order to bring about fundamental change.

I do not know whether there's any other further outcome to that, but I believe that paved the way for the Progressive Federal Party to go two weeks afterwards also to visit the

ANC and to see whether it would be possible to come to an understanding of the political future of the country.

[00:10:06]

Then a number of Afrikan students from Stellenbosch wanted also to go and visit the ANC. Under the leadership of a white minister of the white Dutch Reformed Church in Stellenbosch, where upon PW Botha immediately clamped down and removed their passports and denied them the opportunity to go to Lusaka.

[00:10:28]

I think that was a clear indication of the growing fear on the part of the government; that the ANC was gaining in such power and popularity that it was time simply to call a halt. I do not believe that is going to make any substantial difference, because there is no possibility of the political future of South Africa to be decided without the ANC being meaningfully included in all the negotiations. It is not possible. And anybody who is going to try to do that is going to meet with failure after failure.

DONALD TYE: Sir, over here, on the far right, please.

Q: In September, the US Secretary of State George Shultz justified the administration's policy of constructive engagement by saying this was necessary to maintain American influence with white South Africa which held the key to change. Can you comment on that statement? Can you tell us how the black majority refused constructive engagement?

DONALD TYE: Would you comment on Secretary of State's Shultz's policy of constructive engagement, please.

BEYERS NAUDÉ: Yes, gladly. It is neither constructive, nor meaningful engagement. It is destructive from the viewpoint of our struggle for liberation, and it is not going to be an engagement, but it's certainly going to be a confrontation, which will leave us in a

situation much more serious and severe than we are at the present moment. And let me explain why.

[00:12:12]

Because the Reagan administration has time and again stated that what it is trying to do is in order to assist the white government to bring about meaningful reform. How long has the policy of constructive engagement been pursued in South Africa? Four years? Five years? Looking back on that period, what in fact has it produced? From the viewpoint of the black community, further repression, greater anger, more resistance, less meaningful involvement with a view to a solution of justice. In fact, it has gone further. It has clearly strengthened the hands of the government of PW Botha to know that when there is a crisis and when the crunch comes, they in the last sense can continue to depend on the support of the Reagan administration.

[00:13:28]

The same argument and the same conviction holds with regard to the British government. And that is why when reluctantly your President came to at least recognize the need under pressure for certain limited form of sanctions, the Commonwealth was able to force Maggie Thatcher at least to accept the same.

[00:13:55]

But I have to say this, friends – and I say this with a deep love for the United States and for much which I deeply respect in your society, in your life, in your outlook – I think you should be aware of the fact that the feelings of anger and of bitterness in the hearts of millions of blacks, not only towards the policy of constructive engagement, but also towards the Americans as such, in the hearts of millions of blacks, those feelings run very deep and very strong as negative feelings of the lack of the necessary support.

I know that you may respond by saying, "Yes, but please, they should distinguish between those of us who disagree." I understand that. But from their viewpoint, most of what they experience coming from the United States is a clear, visible sign of the support

of the policy which they feel is a strengthening of PW Botha's position in order to entrench apartheid further and stronger.

[00:15:21]

And when that is further strengthened by the visit of somebody like Jerry Falwell, who comes to South Africa, who is given wide publicity, has an audience with a state president, and who belongs along two journalists who are given the permission to go and interview Nelson Mandela, which is not given to anybody else, and then comes back with a report which cannot be identified, and cannot be pursued to be seen to what degree it's been correct, because these were from notes, and Nelson Mandela is not in a position to respond to say whether in fact he did say what he said and he did say it in the context in which it was published in the *Washington Times*, then you get the anger of the black community and they say, "If this is what we receive on the part of those who comes in the name of the government of the United States, we don't want them."

[00:16:16]

Please, friends, for the sake of America's wellbeing and honor and good name, do not export these convictions and these kind of actions to South Africa. We don't want them and we don't need them. [applause]

AUDIENCE: Is the Reverend opposed to direct investment in black housing, education and social services? And also, what advice would he have for a young South African who's facing military service and is opposed to apartheid?

DONALD TYE: Are you opposed to direct investment in social services, sir? And also, what comments would you have to a young South African who's facing military service?

[00:17:15]

BEYERS NAUDÉ: I should say that as far as the SACC's concerned, we've made it very clear that we have never been opposed to any meaningful investment in social services, in housing, in the promotion of education of your blacks in order to train them

and equip them for their position of leadership. But the problem was in the past, that is not what investment was all about. Investment was there in order to gain more profit, and the profits then to be again taken out of South Africa, or many of them. Whereas, there was very little of that concern in order to promote that. It was only when the pressures started being applied that all of a sudden these interests came there to be. But certainly, we need every form of support with regard to what is meaningful in order to promote the whole process of liberation.

[00:18:08]

The second question, conscription. During the period of my banning of seven years, I embarked upon a service of pastoral counseling of many people, one at a time. I could never see more than one person at a time. And I spent many hours with many young people – I'm talking about young whites – who were deeply troubled about the whole situation of conscription and who felt that to them it was a matter of conscience whether they should proceed. I had to point out to them that basically there were three options: One was to undertake the military service and face the consequences for themselves, whether they could do that or not. The second was to refuse to do so and face a six-year sentence in prison. The third was to leave the country.

[00:19:07]

I never felt that I had the right to say to a young person, "Go to prison." How dare I do that? I never felt that I had the right to tell somebody, "Leave the country." What I did do was that I said to them, "If you feel that you can serve and enter and do your national service with the full consequences of what that entails, calling you up at some stage into a black township where you may be called upon to shoot a young black, it's up to you to decide what you have to do."

[00:19:50]

The result is, of the whole situation in South Africa with regard to conscription, that many young whites have left the country. We don't know how many. And they're continuing to leave. I don't condemn them, I don't blame them. Because many of them

have said, "We are not prepared to waste six years of our precious young lives in jail, and that for nothing." Those who have decided and opted to go to jail, I have said, "I deeply respect you." Because I do not believe that this is a waste of time. Although I understand that there will be those who say, "We are not prepared to do that."

[00:20:36]

But it has created a tremendous problem. And that is why there was a new group which started a year ago of which I am one of the patrons, called the End Conscription Campaign, a campaign to call upon the government and the authorities to say, "Stop the whole system of conscription. Allow young people to choose freely. Then to form an alternative service and not to go into the army." In any case, not as long as apartheid has to be defended. But it has created a tremendous agony and struggle of conscience in the minds of many, many young whites in South Africa.

And I'm afraid that that is part of the whole terrible tragedy of our country, where a situation is being created where thousands of young people are being asked to defend the indefensible.

DONALD TYE: Yes, sir, in the yellow shirt, right there? Or ma'am, I'm sorry.

AUDIENCE: What role do you see Chief Gatsha Buthelezi and Inkatha playing in your integration struggle there?

BEYERS NAUDÉ: The question is, what is happening with regard to Chief Gatsha Buthelezi and Inkatha. Inkatha is the movement, the liberation movement of Chief Buthelezi. I'll explain.

[00:22:01]

May I explain for those of you who may perhaps not have the necessary information that Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi is the hereditary chief of the Zulu Tribe of South Africa, which is the largest single black tribe in South Africa, with approximately five-and-a-half

million Zulu followers? He has established a number of years ago what he termed a liberation movement called Inkatha in order to build up the sense of cultural pride and service in the Zulu community.

[00:22:36]

Recently, there have been a number of very painful and deeply regrettable clashes of followers of Inkatha in Natal between them [OMISSION]

DONALD TYE: –behalf of the Ford Hall Forum, we'd like to thank Reverend Naudé.
[applause]

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