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Guest (s): Rep. Arthur Winstead (D-MS) and Reverend D.F.B. DeBeer

Title: Race Situation in South Africa and Furthering the Bantu

Note: Questions were paraphrased and/or shortened by the transcriber. For the exact question, please consult the audiotapes.

Morphew: Introduction...we've been hearing about the conditions in South Africa and we've been getting only one side of the story...one question Americans have had is about the past system of natives working in South Africa which as been presented as some sort of a cruel system...

DeBeer: The first system, or as we call it, the reference book system, is merely a means of regulating the influx of the Bantu from their territories to the white cities and the towns. They all come in to get work, and not only do they come in but foreign and natives and Bantu from outside the Union come in to work on the mines in South Africa. Now, the government tries to protect its own Bantu peoples and does not let the Bantu come into the white areas unless he's assured of work, and the reference book is the system by which this influx is controlled. If they were allowed to come in just as they felt, millions would come in, they would not have work, there would be problems of unemployment and the white people wouldn't have work either. So before a man comes in, they try to ensure that there will be work for him and that reference book shows that he is employed, shows that he has paid his tax and is a means of identity. The white people also carry identity cards and there's no objection to making them quite similar.

Morphew: The books, the passes, I understand these are used as means of identification. The Bantu are required to carry them at all times, is that it?

DeBeer: Yes, they're required to carry it, and of course, the system can be harshly applied with which we do not agree. But there's nothing cruel or oppressive about it. The Sharpeville riots were originated by agitators who urged these Bantu not to carry their reference books and to provoke and challenge the police on the point.

Morphew: So, without this reference book an individual wouldn't have any way to prove he was in an area legally?

DeBeer: It's a great protection to the Bantu to have this book.

Winstead: In connection to that, what is being done to develop the Bantu people by South Africa?

DeBeer: Well, I can only say, Mr. Winstead, that South Africa's doing more for the development of its Bantu people than any other power in Africa. For instance, there are powers administering aboriginal populations in Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Gold Coast...Southern Rodisha, Northern Rodisha...and Swaziland, all in Africa. And that's a Bantu population of 47 and 1/2 million people and all those countries, having administrations in Africa together only spend 50 cents per capita of the populations which they care for on education, medical services, and social services. The Union of South Africa spends per capita \$5.80 per capita. In southwest Africa, which is a mandated territory also administered by the Union government, spends between 3 and 4 dollars per capita. I have here figures from other sources, official figures which show that in comparison to other countries like India and Congo and Peru and Nigeria and Rodisha, South Africa spends on education and health per capita of its Bantu population four dollars. And Rodisha comes next with one dollar seventy cents, whereas India who is always accusing South Africa in the United Nations, only spends three cents per head of its population on those services.

Winstead: You mentioned the Congo, we see what's happening there. If you should proceed too rapidly in your country, do you think that could happen there?

DeBeer: Yes, I certainly think it will be disastrous at this stage of development to hand over the country to the Bantu or other nonwhite peoples. It will lead to the destruction of Christianity and other civilization. The government, however, wishes every race and every nation in South Africa to develop to its full capacity and to have independence. So, this policy of separate development has been originated just to affect that, namely to develop the territories in which the Bantu originally settled when they came to South Africa, to erect towns and erect industries by means of self help, teaching the Bantu how to work these industries, how to work their farms, and then giving them, when they're in the position to do all that and to support themselves, giving them full political rights there so that they can eventually become independent countries. But I certainly do not think it would be wise to hand over these territories to the Bantu and to the other races now, before they have been trained for it. I think that's the great mistake that's been made in the Congo. But that is certainly the intention of the South African government, to develop these territories so that they can be self-supporting and they have already given them full political rights in their territories, not outside, but in their territories, they have full political rights and they will be able to become independent states in the future, joined the Union to white South Africa in the sort of commonwealth.

Winstead: I believe you have similar problems to us in the south, we find that most of our better educated negroes like that independence that segregation provides and they can develop leadership where they have a sufficient number.

DeBeer: That's quite, quite true. We try to develop them and to give them full opportunities to develop full leadership and in the case of the churches, the experiment has been very successful. They're quite happy in their own churches and controlling and ruling their own churches.

Winstead: South Africa has been friendly with the United States and the western world and I can't see why we would want to interfere with your internal affairs and I know in my section of the country, if you took the agitators out you would have no trouble with the masses.

DeBeer: That is the case, Mr. Winstead. We feel that people do not understand our problems and by the interference from outside our position is aggravated.

Morphew: During the time that you've spent in the U.S., have you experienced any hostility that you might have been expecting after reading some of the press reports here? Have you found the people of this country generally sympathetic and anxious to hear the truth about South Africa?

DeBeer: Well, I've found that in the South they are more understanding because they have similar problems. In the North I have found that they generally take the line that we are tyrannical and oppressive and un-Christian in our policy and they know very little of what is really being done for the indigenous races of South Africa. I certainly think that if the proportions were different in the United States, the United States would understand South Africa much better. If instead of having about a 160 million whites and about 15 millions of Negroes, you had here 113 million Negroes and 34 million whites and say 17 million Japanese and 6 million Indians. If these four races were living here in that proportion, I think then you would understand much better what the difficulties of South Africa are.