

Mississippi State University Libraries  
Special Collections Department, Manuscripts Division

Citizen's Council Radio Forums  
Acc. No. 597  
Stephanie Rolph Transcripts Addition

Audiotape ID number: 597-6036

Date: 1960

Guest (s): Rep. Arthur Winstead (D-MS) and Rev. D.F.B. DeBeer (Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa)

Title: South African Racial Question

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

Morphew: Introduction...the public moral secretary of DRCSA...what does your job entail?

DeBeer: My work is to combat social evils in the church at home.

Morphew: And a social evil would be for example, Communism?

DeBeer: Well, that is part of my work, but chiefly, it's questions like intemperance, gambling, and so on, immorality.

Morphew: You're on a tour of the United States, a two and a half month tour...how much of the country have you been across?

DeBeer: Well, I've completed a tour of about 4,000 miles in the North and in the South, but not in the West. I haven't been to the West. But I've been studying social questions, chiefly the temperance question.

Morphew: Quite a bit of misinformation on the current situation in South Africa, particularly as concerns the racial question...have you found that the American people knew the true facts or had they been misinformed?

DeBeer: I think the reporting of facts in South Africa has been very unilateral and very slanted from what I've seen here whilst I was here and from what we've read from reports that have been published here and sent back to South Africa, I don't think the American people were getting the truth. I could just name one example, that was quite a recent report on the announcement in South Africa by the prime minister of a referendum on a republic which was to be held on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October. The facts were correct in what he said, but there were headlines indicating that the whites fix rule in South Africa and

there was a paragraph interspersed to say that the black peoples have not got the vote which all tend to influence the reader against things going on in South Africa.

Morphew: A lot of people think that the U.S. has a very serious race problem, yet we have a colored population of about 10%, 90% white...if this is the case then I'm certain that the union of South Africa has a race problem because your black population was something like 80% of your total wasn't it?

DeBeer: Yes, I think we've got the greatest race problem in the world. We've not only got 80% nonwhite to 20% white but the 80% are made up of various nonwhite races. We have, for instance, 10 millions of Bantu people. They belong to different tribes, they are in different stages of civilization, have different cultures and speak different languages. Then we have a race, a mixed race of one and a half millions, called the colored people. They live mainly in the Cape. They have adopted the civilization of the white man and they speak the languages of the white man and they are very intelligent. And then we have a third group, consisting of the Indians, they live in Natal mainly and they are half a million and they too represent eastern traditions and religions and languages. So our racial problem is much more complicated than any other in the world and we expect the world to understand us and see what we are doing and not just condemn us all the time.

Morphew: Mr. Winstead, do you have any questions you would like to ask?

Winstead: I'd just like to this, having had the privilege of talking with Reverend DeBeer for something like an hour before coming here, he is so well-informed, I would prefer giving most of the time to him, but I would like for him to discuss their segregation policies and also give to us some information how these different races feel about your policies.

DeBeer: Well, Mr. Winstead, our policy is known as the policy of separate development. It also has an Afrikaans name called 'apartheid.' But the views we get of this policy in this country and in other countries like Britain is very slanted and very incorrect. By separate development, we understand the differential development of each indigenous race in South Africa to its fullest extent and for the service of its own people and according to the innate characteristics of each race. That is what we understand by separate development and each race, what the people of South Africa feel after 300 years of experience of contact with the indigenous races is the solution to our problem in South Africa.

Morphew: In other words, you are not attempting to enforce the culture of one racial group upon another group?

DeBeer: No, we avoid that. We want to encourage each group to be proud of its heritage and its culture, and we want to develop that group according to its own culture. That is why recent the government has established four universities in the country, one in the north for the people speaking the, for the Bantu speaking the Soto language. I ought to explain that we call our nonwhites in South Africa, Bantu, the largest group. We have one

university for them that speak the Soto language. Then we have another one in the free state speaking the, I'm sorry, I've made a mistake there, in the north we have one speaking the Sesotho (soto) language, we have another speaking the Xhosa (Kozo) language and we have a third speaking the Zulu language, in Natal. A fourth university has been established for colored people. There the languages will be the official languages of the country because they are the languages they speak. And so we endeavor to develop them through their own language and through their own traditions to become full-fledged, free people.

Morphew: What about local self government toward these various peoples?

DeBeer: The policy of the government has been laid down in a law made in 1951 by which the native peoples of South Africa receive self-government in their own territories. At present there are about 400 such territories, local territories, in the country. There are local territories, regional territories and territorial authorities. Territorial authority extends over the whole homeland or area in which that particular tribe lives. An example of this is the Transkei (trans-kay) where there are two million Bantu. They have their own house of parliament, at Umtata, a nice building. They elect their own representatives, they tax their own people and the chief sego (??), rules these two million people. Previously a white commissioner was the chairman of the territorial. He has now been withdrawn, and they carry on. Eventually, that territory will become an independent state and that will happen with all the homelands of the Bantu, about seven of them.

Morphew: Why have Americans heard so little about this separate development?

DeBeer: I can only say that the truth is being withheld and that you are getting only the news that the press wants the people to hear and not the full story. I've never heard this question, for instance, of the way Sego (?) rules these two million in the Transkei ever being featured abroad, neither here nor in Britain nor in any other place. In March, there were festivities at Umtata and Sego and nine of his chiefs sent a special message to the government in which they thanked this government and previous governments of South Africa for what they had done for the Bantu people, for education, for hospitalization, and for the right of self-government. They are perfectly satisfied, but we don't hear about that, we only hear of the agitators in the cities that make trouble there and impression is created that the whole Bantu people is up in arms against the government and is oppressed and they're not oppressed at all. They don't feel so.