

Successful diplomacy by Pretoria African

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A PERSONAL COMMENTARY

BREMER HOFMEYR, recently back from Europe, tells me of the extraordinary reception given by 700 people prominent in industry and labour all over the world, to a speech by a Pretoria African, Dr. William Nkomo.

The occasion was a Moral Rearmament conference in Switzerland. Dr. Nkomo referred to suggestions for boycotting South Africa and added: "I want to appeal to workers and management to take on South Africa in a new way. I believe that any effort to stop the economic development of South Africa will mean that the very people that some of you are trying to help — my people — will suffer from starvation, malnutrition and lack of suitable housing because of lack of capital in the country.

An American docker who had advocated boycotting ships to and from South Africa changed his views and said so. The influential Indian weekly Himmat (this means courage, and the paper lives up to its name) came out with a full page article based on Dr. Nkomo's speech. It was written by Rajmohan Gandhi, the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi and was entitled "South Africa's Voice."

A British labour paper, the Waterfront and Industrial Pioneer, took up the call and made a further point for

good measure: "Many of those who plan economic pressure (on South Africa) deliberately intend that the Black man will suffer. They believe that only when his standard of living is drastically reduced will he be ready to support a revolution of violence."

Mr. Hofmeyr thinks it significant that there are still world platforms from which South Africans are given a sympathetic hearing — and support. He is right.

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