

WHAT SANCTIONS HAVE DONE

"The struggle to dismantle apartheid cannot be waged by remote control in company board rooms in New York, London, Paris or Bonn. Those who wish to be our allies in this struggle must be physically involved in the front line which is South Africa . . ." —

Dr Oscar Dhlomo



In recent visits abroad, the Secretary-General of Inkatha and KwaZulu's Minister of Education and Culture, Dr Oscar Dhlomo, has made it clear that blacks do not support anti-apartheid "moral indignation that wants to feed on black unemployment and starvation in South Africa . . ."

In an address to the US Council for International Business (Task Force on South Africa) at the Harvard Club in New York, Dr Dhlomo said apartheid could not be destroyed by "remote control" in the board rooms of New York, Paris, London and Bonn.

He said sanctions and disinvestment had pushed blacks back into the dark ages of SA politics.

Dr Dhlomo said blacks were "fully aware" of the pressures which were brought to bear on US companies — calling on them to withdraw from apartheid South Africa and

accusing them of propping up the system by remaining involved in the country.

"The expectation is that if American and other foreign companies withdraw from South Africa, the South African economy will be crippled and this will force the Government to dismantle apartheid and grant political rights to the black majority."

While blacks sympathised with this viewpoint and wished that the problem were as simple, the fact was that crucial considerations were ignored.

The first was that if sanctions and disinvestment did cripple the country, there would be no strong and vibrant post-apartheid economy capable of redressing the disparities caused by decades of apartheid neglect.

The second was the importance of distinguishing between SA ("the country black South Africans wish to govern in future") and apartheid ("the evil policy that must be destroyed if those black political aspirations are to be realised").

Dr Dhlomo said simple logic dictated that those who supported the aspirations of the black people should help them destroy apartheid — and not South Africa.

The advocates of disinvestment had to be asked: "How do you expect to free prisoners from a cell by bombing the cell itself?"

Disinvestment lobbyists should be told: "We want to be liberated on our feet — not as corpses."

Dr Dhlomo said Inkatha could not support any anti-apartheid moral indignation which fed on black unemployment and starvation.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED:

Dr Dhlomo said an examination of developments inside South Africa since some American companies had decided to withdraw, and since sanctions were imposed, clearly showed that disinvestment and sanctions had retarded the black liberation struggle.

The South African Government had become even more intransigent and the white electorate had withdrawn into the so-called laager.

The following were some examples:

... The ruling National Party had brutally suppressed the revolt in the townships by imposing a State of Emergency and detaining thousands of black South Africans, including children. There were no signs that the State of Emergency would be lifted.

... Stringent measures had been taken against the Press in general and numerous foreign correspondents had been expelled from South Africa.

... The Government had called a "whites only" election and won convincingly on an anti-disinvestment, anti-sanctions, anti-foreign interference and anti-insurgency ticket. On this same ticket the National Party also won overwhelming support from English speaking voters who would have traditionally supported the

"American companies presently involved in South Africa must (realise) that their involvement will have to be a long term one because there are no easy victories and no "quick-fix" strategies in the struggle to dismantle apartheid. There will be numerous and sometimes serious setbacks. These will have to be squarely faced, calmly analysed and overcome . . ."

— Dr Oscar Dhlomo

Progressive Federal Party and the New Republic Party.

... The more liberal PFP was dethroned as the official opposition and was replaced by the ultra-right Conservative Party.

Immediately after the election the Government began to adopt a hard line against the Group Areas Act offenders by sending them evacuation notices and

"In the absence of any impending revolutionary overthrow of the existing political order in South Africa, we must accept that the dismantling of apartheid must be regarded as a process and not an event, and that our task in this regard is to have mechanisms in place that would hasten and facilitate this process. Regional constitutional experiments like the KwaZulu/Natal Indaba which seek to challenge the foundations of apartheid should therefore be viewed in this light and supported by all those who are involved in the struggle."

— Dr Oscar Dhlomo

threatening to sell their properties by public auction.

... Cross border raids had been launched against three Frontline States.

... The price of gold had risen appreciably and the

Government was overcoming its international debt problems.

... On the factory floor, almost

all American companies that have withdrawn have been

taken over by South African interests — virtually overnight.

Some of these interests immediately announced that they would not be signatories

to the Sullivan Code and would do business with everybody —

including the SA Defence Force and the SA Police. Once

again it was the black worker who had to pay the price for

this irrational moral indignation by American companies.

"The door that had opened to a life of equal opportunity on the factory floor and on-the-job training was suddenly slammed on the black worker's face without even the decency of prior consultation."

"The first people to complain that departing companies were selling to South African interests were the very same advocates of disinvestment, who had previously toured the world calling for the withdrawal of foreign companies from South Africa . . ."

Dr Dhlomo said the confusion deepened when the trade union, COSATU, severely chided a group of black South African businessmen who attempted to form themselves into a consortium that would buy out foreign companies withdrawing from South Africa.

Clearly, withdrawal from South Africa had not proved to be a viable and acceptable alternative for American companies.

"Post-apartheid South Africa will not miraculously rise from the ashes of a destroyed

CALL TO TARGET MASSIVE AID

"Many South Africans, including myself, have called on Western governments and/or businesses which have an interest in the peaceful resolution of the South African problem to consider launching a massive aid programme carefully targeted to assist the victims of apartheid and equip them for the post-apartheid era.

"Simultaneously, Western Governments would have to collectively seek an undertaking from the South African Government that apartheid would be dismantled in terms of a clearly defined programme and within a clearly defined time scale and that negotiations with blacks would be started.

"The end result of such negotiations would be the establishment of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa."

"It is encouraging to note that some European business organisations are beginning to consider these suggestions more seriously. US business is also invited to consider them.

"The future of US companies in South Africa is assured but they will have to continue to stand with us and expedite the dismantling of apartheid and the improvement of the quality of life of its victims.

"They will have to temper their moral indignation with reason and accept that tackling an injustice is far more meaningful than walking away from it in disgust.

"Should they decide to walk away from apartheid and abandon its victims, we will regret their decision, and it will be difficult for us to forget that they left millions of defenseless black workers in the lurch in their hour of need."

economy," he added.

"On the contrary, a strong, vibrant and growing economy should be the foundation on which post-apartheid South Africa should be built."

Dr Dhlomo said American companies working in South Africa should expect to face more challenges in the future.

"We shall expect greater and more visible involvement on their part in the struggle to dismantle apartheid."

Greater solidarity with the victims of apartheid would have to be visibly demonstrated. For instance, employers whose employees became victims of detention without trial in South Africa would have to consider assisting them with legal costs and paying their salaries until they were released.

Positive constitutional experiments aimed at destroying apartheid — like the

KwaZulu/Natal Indaba — would have to be supported by business.

"It will no longer be acceptable for business to protest that it cannot support political parties even if those parties are involved in the same non-violent struggle to dismantle apartheid," Dr Dhlomo added.

"Those who share a common commitment towards the destruction of apartheid, be they businessmen, politicians or community workers, must stand together in South Africa.

"American companies must carefully identify their true allies in South Africa and stop being ambivalent by strengthening the very same forces that call for their withdrawal from South Africa.

"Many American businesses establish Trusts and Foundations, supposedly to assist victims of apartheid and then nominate administrators of these Trusts and Foundations from among the ranks of people who advocate disinvestment and are against the free market, capitalist, economy!"

Dr Dhlomo said Sir Winston Churchill was right in warning against "pleasing the crocodile in the hope that it will eat you last."

It was in this vein that Inkatha had consistently warned American Foundations and Government Aid Agencies against nominating politically biased people as administrators of scholarship and aid programmes. The result was that some students and communities who were meant to benefit from these programmes were discriminated against either on ideological or regional grounds.

"We cannot afford to play petty and sectarian political games with the plight of our people in South Africa."