

What will Kennedy say now?

The influential Washington-based Investor Responsibility Research Centre has concluded in a recent report that most black South Africans do not favour sanctions and disinvestment. The report by the IRRC is especially significant as the Centre's highly respected research has been a catalyst in the past for the US disinvestment campaign. The Centre is an independent non-profit research organisation.

**"MOST BLACKS
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tion. It based its latest findings on an analysis of existing opinion polls and interviews

conducted independently in South Africa by its own researchers. The report identifies considerable differences between black rank-and-file opinion and the positions of opposition elites whom Congressional sanctions proponents cite to justify their actions. The IRRC discounts claims that the polls have been distorted by fear of official reprisal. "The

State appears more concerned with silencing public figures (than ordinary people



seen in the photo
interviewed in
return from SA in 1985

who are capable of mobilising sanctions campaigns." Unlike most sanctions advocates, the IRRC finds the polling data sufficiently credible to conclude: "The majority of Africans in SA do not advocate that US and other foreign companies withdraw from SA

and do not favour economic sanctions against SA as a tactic to help end apartheid if those measures will also increase black unemployment." Based on two polls - the Mark Orkin survey of August-September last year and the German African Foundation survey of June-July - the IRRC shows support for sanctions at all costs by a "hard-core minority" measures between 14% and 26%. Three polls sponsored by separate organisations between June 1984 and May

1986 had shown evidence that a substantial minority of urban blacks - some 25% - advocated disinvestment by foreign companies. This is in direct contradiction to numerous surveys conducted by proponents of sanctions and disinvestment which when published received considerable publicity.

Mark Orkin, Director of the Community Agency for Social Enquiry working in association with the Institute for Black Research, published a book on sanctions called "The Struggle and The Future - What Black South Africans Really Think" (Ravan Press) in which he claimed that 73% of Blacks in metropolitan areas in South Africa favour some form of disinvestment. In the book Mr



Orkin was highly critical of the stance taken by Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the KwaZulu Government and Inkatha and produced figures which he claimed showed "minority support" for their decision to primarily oppose sanctions for moral and practical reasons. The IRRC report vindicates Dr Buthelezi's consistent claim over many years that the majority of South Africans do not support sanctions. The report also supports views expressed in Clarion Call, Volume 1, 1985.

The IRRC report said that what almost all of the polls also showed was that many more blacks might conceivably support sanctions and disinvestment if they were convinced that such actions would NOT increase black unemployment. "Some of the polls also show that many blacks are not convinced that disinvestment and sanctions will help end apartheid," it said. The IRRC said the "ambivalence" expressed in black opinion surveys was reflected by the leaders of organisations that had large black constituencies. "The policies of major union, political and church organisations range from unconditional support for comprehensive economic sanctions, to support only for sanctions that will not increase black hardship, to adamant opposition to any form of sanctions or disinvestment." In its analysis of organisation views, the study finds:

...The ANC, PAC, AZAPO and NACTU support sanctions and disinvestment unconditionally, with the SACC leaning strongly in that direction;

... Archbishop Desmond Tutu's views tend to be mixed, ranging between calls for sanctions specifically aimed at securing the release of political prisoners and open-ended negotiations at one extreme and for the symbolic severing of diplomatic relations at the other;

... The SA Catholic Bishops' Conference

and the Cape Action League seek specific tactical sanctions - an international airline ban, for example - but are "anxious that sanctions not be imposed that will destroy the economy or increase black hardship".

... COSATU, while broadly supportive of

sanctions, appears to be shifting position, especially on disinvestment.

The report noted: "Ideally, many COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Union) members would like to see the world impose comprehensive sanctions in one decisive blow that would disable the government relatively quickly. "Instead, they have been forced to deal with a situation where disinvestment and sanctions have been imposed piecemeal, which hurts their members' interests but does not visibly affect the white establishment."

THOSE WHO HAVE GONE

And what of the suffering left behind?

Another report compiled by the Investor Responsibility Research Centre has revealed that a total of 115 non-US firms have disinvested from South Africa since January 1, 1984 with 40 percent of the non-US firms withdrawing since the beginning of last year. During the same period 162 US firms have left. Of the non-US disinvestors, the largest number - 49 - were British. There were 12 Canadian, eight French, seven Australian and seven West German companies. Some 606 multi-nationals continue to have direct investment or employees in South Africa. These break down into: 195 British, 150 US, 137 West German, 29 Swiss, 24 French, 14 Dutch, 12 Australian, 12 Canadian, 8 Italian and six Swedish. In addition 88 non-US firms - mostly Japanese - maintain licensing, distribution and other non-equity relationships in SA. Mobil, the largest US employer in SA, is now 24th among foreign-owned companies. While most disinvesting companies that gave reasons for their withdrawal cited weak economic conditions in South Africa, some told the IRRC that domestic pressure in their home countries had become too difficult to withstand.