Those who advocate trade sanctions and economic withdrawal to help my people and punish the whites in South Africa may be killing us with kindness. What we need is not disengagement, but full foreign participation in South Africa's overall economic development to create more jobs, higher wages and better training opportunities. I am no apologist for apartheid, but a realist who knows that a job may make the difference between living or starving for many black families in South Africa.

M. Gaulema Buthelezi
9 August 1973
Chief Executive, Independence Movement, South Africa

Don't kill us with kindness.

A NEW FACE FOR APARTHEID

The Africa Fund - 164 Madison Ave - New York, NY 10016
Three advertisements appeared in the New York Times and Washington Post in September. Their political implications are analysed below but it is also necessary to point out that the advertisements are full of distortions and half-truths. Thus Lucas Mangope is quoted as saying: "I have often expressed my differences with the white government of Pretoria in no uncertain terms. But the mere idea of total economic sanctions... makes me shudder." In fact the men and women who have expressed radical opposition to the South African Government have found themselves banned, house arrested or imprisoned for their actions, and to advocate, even verbally, the imposition of sanctions against South Africa is a crime under the Terrorism Act, punishable by a minimum five year jail sentence and the possibility of a death sentence.

Lucy Mvubelo, the signer of the second advertisement, is identified as "General Secretary National Union of Clothing Workers (S.A.). The advertisement fails to point out that under South African law Ms. Mvubelo, an African woman can only be a member of a non-recognised, non-registered Trade Union, which has no official right to participate in collective bargaining. Nor does the advertisement indicate that it is still virtually totally illegal for a black worker to strike under any circumstances.

Don't isolate us.

"For years I have heard all the arguments, proposals and suggestions for removing the apartheid system and I must express my doubts whether what has been suggested till now is either desirable or effective for me or my fellow African workers in South Africa. Don't isolate us, don't break off contact, and don't advocate disengagement and withdrawal of foreign investments—because you will still be talking in another 10 years' time and the situation will not have changed to any degree. Investments from foreign countries have created job opportunities for thousands of black workers who could otherwise have been unemployed."

Mrs. Lucy Mvubelo, General Secretary National Union of Clothing Workers (S.A.)

As for Buthelezi's claim that what the Black people of South Africa need is "full foreign participation in South Africa's economic development" he knows quite well that foreign investment has increased dramatically in the last decade without leading to changes in the exploitation, misery and oppression imposed by Apartheid. In the ten years to 1971 in which U.S. investment grew from less than $300 million to $964 million another record was set—90 new discriminatory laws were passed, all designed to perpetuate racial discrimination. White-black wage gaps have grown, not narrowed, and the average wage paid to Africans in ALL sectors of the economy is lower than the Poverty Datum Line—i.e. the level needed for bare survival.

DEFENDERS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAY OF LIFE

The South African regime's hitherto subdued public relations campaign, built around the use of black spokesmen and women took a large step into the open in September in the United States. Big, expensive advertisements with appeals against economic and political sanctions signed by Lucas Mangope and Gatsha Buthelezi, both Bantustan Ministers, and Lucy Mvubelo, appeared in two of America's most influential daily newspapers, the New York Times and the Washington Post. Both advertisements were sponsored by the Trust Bank—a bank dominated by Afrikaner capital and on whose Board sit many of the ruling Nationalist Party's leaders.

The South African Government has always tried to persuade the outside world that Blacks were happy under the system of Apartheid, exploitation and exclusion practiced by the white rulers. That way Western factory owners, British ship builders, United States motor corporations and commuter sellers could all continue to invest, do business
and make profits in South Africa with an easy conscience. The South African Government continued to tell this story despite the evidence of 69 people shot at Sharpeville in 1960 and 12 strikers killed at Carletonville in September 1973, despite hundreds of political prisoners and the one million arrests every year under the pass laws, despite the 80% of the African working population that is still paid below poverty datum line wages, despite the fact that no Black woman or man has any hope of ever having any say in shaping the laws and policies of their own land as long as the present system of government survives.

But the myth of the happy black man has become more and more difficult to maintain in the face of increasing internal and external opposition to the system, and the South African Government has had to adopt new and more sophisticated tactics to project a favorable image internationally. "Dialogue" with independent Africa, the visit of President Banda to South Africa, attempts to project an image of multi-racialism via sports events, the new willingness to allow prominent black U.S. visitors into the country—all these were sign-posts on the road the South Africans were taking in an attempt to maintain external credibility and strengthen internal control. No-one will believe whites who defend South Africa any more, so the racists have been forced to seek credibility by using black spokesmen and women. Few people in the world would believe the voice of Prime Minister Vorster or mine-owner Oppenheimer (Chairman of the Corporation which owns the mine at which the 12 workers were shot this month) when they promise that "things are changing and getting better." Hence the new tactic of using black voices to tell the story.

**SAFETY VALVE**

In fact the South Africans are attempting to do more with this new tactic than just pull off a giant international confidence trick. They are beginning to understand the usefulness of allowing the development inside South Africa of a black elite, which, by being given some freedom to criticise the Government, will capture the following of the black majority and curb the militancy of the people, acting as a safety valve for popular anger and frustration. Perhaps the clearest expression of this role is afforded by Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, who has at times made very strong speeches attacking various aspects of Government policy, and who has emerged as one of the most publicised black figures in the current controversy about African wage levels. In a recent speech Buthelezi said: "We need a complete re-orientation in our thinking about black workers. We cannot have industrial workers who do not get any, or so little, of the benefits of industrialization. If we do not do something about it we are asking for trouble. I wish to appeal to South African industry to ward off a bloody revolution by making our people feel that they have something to lose if anything went wrong in South Africa. A few million Rand set aside now to meet the aspirations and needs of black workers is a big investment in the long run. It is better to lose a few million Rand now than everything later."

*Economic sanctions make me shudder.*

"I have often expressed my differences with the white government of Pretoria in no uncertain terms. But the mere idea of total economic sanctions from abroad to assist us, makes me shudder. We, the black people, will be the first to suffer."

A. M. Mangope
9/8/73

Chief Minister L. M. Mangope,
B shekhathwane Government Service
The tactic of using this rising black elite as spokesmen, nationally and internationally satisfied a number of different needs at the same time, and coalesces the interests of a number of very different forces. It meets internal white interests politically, as described above. It also provides a strong platform for preserving international credibility. This is crucially important for South Africa. Apart from the importance of international military and strategic support, South Africa is still extremely dependent on foreign capital for its economic prosperity and growth. It is estimated that the total value of foreign capital invested in South Africa had reached $8,160 million by the end of 1972; $809 million dollars of new capital flowed into South Africa in 1972 alone. It is vital to keep that stream flowing. But corporations have been coming under increasing attack in the United States, as well as in Europe, for their role in supporting the white minority and colonial regimes in Southern Africa. It has become embarrassing for many of the giant U.S. corporations to have their role in southern Africa continually exposed and attacked. They are looking for a way back to respectability, seeking a way to justify their continued involvement in South Africa in terms of a "contribution to the process of peaceful social change". Not surprisingly, they have seized on men such as Buthelezi to provide them with the needed justification. Thus Buthelezi has recently been hailed by the prestigious American business newspaper, the Wall Street Journal as "the most prominent black leader in South Africa," in an article which launched a strong attack on 'reformers, particularly in the United Nations and American and British churches, who dream of eradicating apartheid through an anathema that would strangle the South African economy." Branding those who support international actions, such as corporate disengagement and economic sanctions against Apartheid, as people adopting a "posture of total moral purity" whose purpose is concerned less with correcting the specific evils than with "demonstrating the virtue of the posturer," the Journal indicates its preference for men of reason, such as Buthelezi. It concludes, "We can't help believing that if any good does come out of the unhappy situation in that nation, it will be less the result of the far-away critics than of the political prudence of men like Chief Buthelezi” (Wall Street Journal, August 27, 1973).

VISITS SPONSORED
South Africa's new black spokesmen have been receiving support and encouragement not only from the U.S. business world, but also from significant political circles. Thus the U.S. State Department has been sponsoring an increasing number of visits to the United States by black South Africans. The list of such visitors is interesting because it focuses heavily on men involved in one way or another with the Bantustan administrations… or with the parallel government institutions in the cities. The list of such sponsored visitors in 1972/73 included Chief Kaiser Matanzima (Chief Minister of the Transkei) Dr. David Thebehali (Johannesburg Urban Bantu Council), Mr. Lennox Sebe (Executive Counselor for Education, Ciskei), Mr. B. L. Dladla (Executive Counselor, Kwazulu), and Professor and M s. Ntsanwisi (Chief Counselor, Machangana–Tsonga Territorial Authority). Chief Lucas Mangope and Chief Gatsha Buthelezi also spent time in the United States, the latter having been especially invited, the last time he came, in order to help lead the argument against Church leaders calling for an end to U.S. corporate involvement in Southern Africa, in a struggle being fought out within the Synod of the United Church of Christ.

Two points of particular interest might be stressed in connection with all these visits. First that these black leaders travelled with the consent of the South African Government. Secondly, that the United States Administration, which has consistently refused to recognize the legitimacy of the liberation movements in Southern Africa, and which has steadfastly adhered to the position that it can only support "peaceful methods of change" has been quick to welcome these new "leaders."

There can be no doubt that the "change" being sponsored by the South African Government is not the kind of change being fought for by the black majority of southern Africa. Thus, whatever their motives, the so-called black leaders who lend their names to the South African propaganda campaign are giving support to the stability of that very authority which will have to be destroyed before there is real liberation in southern Africa. In this context their own personal honesty or sincerity is irrelevant, and the effect of their action is a betrayal of the freedom struggle in South Africa.

Jennifer Davis

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