

Opinion

Time to abandon sinking ship

While the recent brutal uprisings by blacks in South Africa may have only increased governmental oppression, the incidents helped draw many previous opponents of sanctions onto the growing international bandwagon. Britain, however, desperately clings to the rapidly sinking ship of constructive engagement.

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has long opposed economic sanctions, maintaining that they rarely work. "Economic sanctions are punitive and negative," Thatcher said before a meeting of the House of Commons. "The important thing is to try to end apartheid by negotiation."

But the main proponents of the negotiation method were stabbed in the back by the U.S. House of Representatives, which recently voted in favor of harsh sanctions against the South African government. While the move probably was nothing more than a powerplay by conservatives to put off a real sanction bill as long as possible, it made the primary sanction holdouts — the United States, Britain and West Germany — more aware of their shaky position.

Thatcher's time is running out, not only with

respect to other nations, but within her own country as well. The Commonwealth is united against the prime minister, as are church leaders and many members of Thatcher's own Tory Party, who are urging for some sort of trade embargo.

The world trend is reflected in a recent UN conference in Paris. "Comprehensive and mandatory" sanctions against South Africa were called for by 128 member countries, including many who opposed sanctions in the past but now see them as the only effective solution.

"Let's have no more of the tired argument that sanctions will hurt blacks in South Africa more than the government," said Oliver Tambo, president of South Africa's outlawed African National Congress. "Blacks are dying now."

Britain, as well as the other holdouts on the sanction issue, needs to realize that negotiations and constructive engagement, while noble in theory, are impotent policies.

While Thatcher is negotiating, thousands of blacks, stripped of their freedom, are dying.

The Battalion Editorial Board

Dellums bill has teeth, but lacks discretion

There is a lot of cynicism in the matter of the vote by the House of Representatives for sanctions against South Africa. It is reported that when Rep. Ron Dellums of California sprang up after a long afternoon's finicky debate about a moderate measure designed to levy progressive sanctions during the next year or so, the Republicans quickly withdrew to caucus: How should they vote on this extraordinary measure, asking us to do more by far than we ever did against Adolf Hitler or Joseph Stalin; moreover, a measure proposed by a congressman whose opposition to tyranny is confined to tyranny in South Africa (Dellums wept over the use of American force to liberate Grenada). What to do?



William F. Buckley Jr.

Well, the thing to do was pass it by voice vote. That way, the Congressional Record fails to reveal how an individual legislator voted. Depending on how the wind blows, he can later say that he was one of the yeas, or he can say that he was one of the nays.

But over all, it is said, Republican congressional leaders reasoned that this way, if the Senate happened to concur with the Dellums bill, which is unlikely, and it went to the president, he could easily veto it. The harsher the bill, the easier to veto it. President Reagan himself proposed some sanctions and brought them into effect a few months ago by executive decree. You can no longer buy a Krugerrand; big deal. But the Dellums bill has teeth in it, and forces us yet again to consider the consequences of attempting to emasculate South Africa's economy.

In the best of all possible worlds, the Botha government would announce basic reforms. Western democratic fundamentalism has made things especially hard for South Africa for one simple reason, and that is that Western opinion has consolidated around the proposition that unless every black in South Africa over the age of 18 is given the vote, there is still injustice in the land. But precisely what the government will not do is to grant political equality to everyone in South Africa.

Nor should it. It is preposterous at one and the same time to remark the widespread illiteracy in South Africa and to demand the universal franchise. There are a whole lot of countries in the Middle East against which Dellums

hasn't thought to propose sanctions against that don't allow the vote women; and indeed, quite a few don't allow the vote to anyone.

What's needed in South Africa is political equality but equality of opportunity. The most fundamental right, a nation making its way through feudalism, is the right of property. If South Africans were given the absolute right to own property of any kind, anywhere, the revolution against apartheid would be well under way. The second right, the qualified franchise conjoined with bills of rights. Bear in mind that a bill of rights is the equivalent of a bill of prohibitions: i.e., a list of what the government isn't permitted to do — for a stance, in our case, to pass laws abridging the freedoms of speech, assembly, religion, etc. Whites who cannot pass a literacy test should not be permitted to vote, nor blacks; and if they do vote, they must vote with reference to the bill of prohibitions.

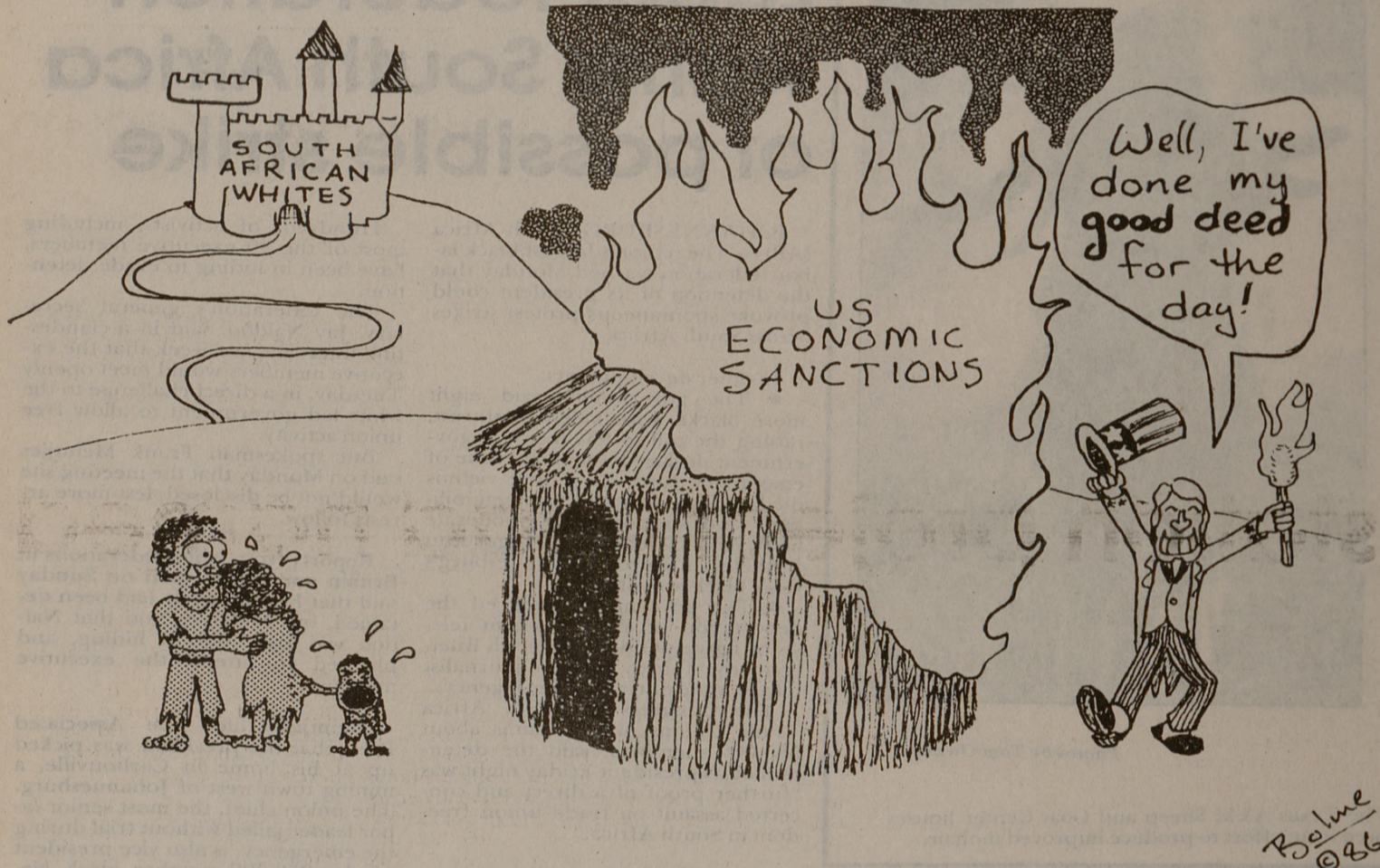
But the emphasis on overnight political equality is the greatest guarantee of ultimate resistance by over 4 million whites who are not going to divest themselves of the right to continue to own their property by presiding over the formation of a legislative assembly 70 percent black, with Nelson Mandela serving as premier and dedicated to a great deal of Marxist class politics.

Assuming the Dellums bill were passed, what would you expect South Africa to do? We are talking about \$2 billion, 60,000 jobs and such services as provided by IBM, Mobil Oil and American Express, to name three of the American-owned enterprises over there. What were you to do, if guided by the *dictum Salus populi, suprema lex* (The safety of the state is the primary concern)?

Exactly: Nationalize the industries, suing government bonds to the old owners. This is done all the time, and is legal under international law. South Africa wouldn't have too hard a time purchasing supplies in other markets — the excuse we always have used when the time comes to argue against embargoes against the Soviet Union or its satellites. The end result? We would become the largest creditor of the South African nation, hardly the moral posture Dellums is asking for.

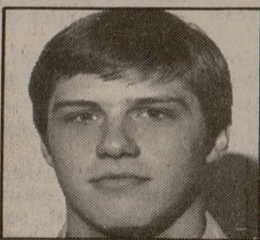
Continue our moral pressure, by means. But a) stop trying to fine-tune South African policy from the White House; b) pull back on the one-vote business; and c) forget black sanctions.

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U.S. selective justice threatens international law

President Reagan knows what justice is. He showed us by appointing Ed Meese attorney general. He showed us again when he made his nominations for the Supreme Court. In true Hollywood style, he administered high-handed justice to Libya for its known terrorist activities and showed the whole world he knows what justice is.



Loren Steffy

And recently, when he chose to ignore the World Court's ruling on our Nicaraguan involvement, he showed the world not only that he knows what justice is, but that he knows better than

anyone else. Justice, in the Reagan Dictionary, is whatever the president perceives it to be.

The World Court ruled 12-3 in favor of Nicaragua on charges that the United States violated international law by supporting the Contra rebels, saying that Washington must make reparations to the Sandinista government for its actions. The Reagan administration said fat chance.

In a more official tone, State Department spokesman Charles Redman said the court's decision "demonstrates what we have stated all along: The court simply is not equipped to deal with a case of this nature."

What, then, is the court equipped to deal with? When, in 1980, Iran pulled a Reagan and ignored the court's order to release American hostages, court members — especially the United States — were outraged. In that case, the State Department would agree, the court was "equipped" enough to make a justified ruling.

But now that the United States finds itself on the opposite side of the gavel of international justice, it questions the

court's "equippedness."

The World Court was empowered to render judgments on voluntarily submitted disputes between states and to give advisory opinions on matters referred to it. The court bases its decisions on the principles of international law.

International law, of course, lacks a concrete definition, which is why the Reagan Dictionary can define it the way it does. However, international law (the World Court's definition), especially to U.N. members, is considered binding. While the court has no actual power to enforce its rulings, it can call for sanctions against international perpetrators in a variety of forms — including the force of public opinion, self-help, intervention of third parties, sanctions by international organizations or even war.

The idea is that nations are supposed to be responsible enough to realize the importance of upholding international justice. It's a concept that's easy to maintain as long as the ruling isn't against your own country.

But in the Reagan Dictionary, communism, and its synonym Marxism, are dirty words and must be exterminated.

Mining Nicaraguan harbors may violate international law as the court defines it, but then the court is not "equipped" to deal with this situation. As Reagan defines it, however, justice is a commie-free world at any cost. In our overzealousness to rid the world of communism, we have stepped on some significant principles. According to Reagan, the ends justify the means — in this case.

No other legal system, empowered by a state, would tolerate such infidelity. But whereas most judicial systems get their power directly from their government and — in the best situations — indirectly from the people, the World Court draws its power directly from those it's supposed to have jurisdiction over. Its laws aren't any less important than those of domestic courts, but they require recognition of the need for laws between nations just as we need laws within them.

Justice, domestic or international is not selective. Laws are not made on the grounds that they may be disobeyed to appease someone's fanatical obsessions. They are based on principles that don't

waiver on whims. If Reagan is right then Iran was right — even Hitler was right.

Standing by the law when it's on our side is easy, taking our lumps when it goes against us isn't. But upholding laws between countries is the first step toward global cooperation and perhaps even peace. We can turn our backs on now, but we may find ourselves — as we have in the past — in need of its sympathies later.

International law is as just as we make it. We have a responsibility to ourselves and to the world to ensure that justice is not miscarried.

The World Court has handed the United States a difficult pill and asks us to swallow, but we spit it back in the court's face. Sooner or later we will learn to take our medicine. If we follow the remedies listed in the Reagan Dictionary, world relations may become very ill indeed.

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The Battalion

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Mail Call

Time for new tradition

EDITOR:
I'm proud to be an Aggie but now I have a question in my mind about another Aggie's pride. On June 20, I took my children to Cain pool to enjoy the cool water on a hot, sunny day.
We had fun until it was time to walk home. Someone stole my son's shoes (Nike sneakers, size 10) and socks from the locker where he put his clothes. The thief didn't even have the consideration to leave the old shoes in trade.
My son had to walk home to married student housing barefoot in 90 degree shade.

The disclaimer posted on the locker room wall is not a license to steal. If this is an Aggie tradition, I want no part of it. Maybe the thief could start a new tradition and return the shoes.

Sally Gauthier
Anthropology Department

Thanks for the foresight

EDITOR:
On behalf of the Brazos Peace Action, I would like to extend a heartfelt thanks, to those 70 faculty members — who amidst the controversy — signed

the petition to refund the Strategic Offense Initiative funding. We commend you for your courage and foresight. You have brought a ray of hope, lighting the way towards peace.

Right on, Karl Pallmeyer, for your Thursday column.
Larry McCain

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