

ISSUE

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EDITOR'S NOTE

In this *Issue*, a symposium on South Africa is followed by commentary on United States policies towards South Africa, Rhodesia, and Namibia. In the fall of 1973, Professor Leslie Rubin organized the two sessions from which most of the papers on South Africa were drawn. Papers by Goler Butcher ("Reflections on U.S. Policy Towards Namibia") and Edgar Lockwood ("An Inside Look at the Sanctions Campaign") were originally presented at the 1974 Annual Meeting in Chicago on panels organized by the ASA Committee on Current Issues. The 1974 Presidential Address by Absolom Vilakazi goes beyond the otherwise strict focus on Southern Africa.

In his essay on the problems which arise when newly independent countries confront industrialization, Professor Vilakazi contends that the institutions which Africa inherited from its own past as well as from its colonial past are not capable of bringing a truly independent Africa into the modern world. Only if African peoples alter the institutions which control their lives will Africa survive. Professor Vilakazi's perspectives are valuable in exploring the issues which face South Africa—for where else have bourgeois social forms operated so completely to the disadvantage of the majority population?

In a thoughtful introduction to "South Africa 1948-1973: Twenty-five Years After Apartheid," Leslie Rubin places the material by Oliver Tambo, Neville Rubin, Lysle Meyer, E.S. Reddy, Winston Nagan, and A.M. Keppel-Jones in the context of South Africa's racial history. These articles lead us to observe that the tensions which permeate South African society are a direct consequence of the institutions—legal, educational, and political—which dominate the country.

The manner in which white South Africa responds to criticism from within its own ranks is dealt with by Neville Rubin and Lawrence Church in their references to the treatment of Professor Barend van Niekerk by the courts. The South African judiciary, which has long acted to protect the individual liberty of Whites, is now forced to assume a "compulsively defensive posture" of all South African institutions and policies. In his analysis of a recent defamation suit, Professor Church demonstrates that in a case which carries grave implications for free speech, the issue of free speech was not even addressed.

United States policies toward Southern Africa which bank on the stability of governments of countries where the denial of basic rights under minority regimes and the resistance to these regimes threaten not only the peace of Southern Africa but of the world appear as ill-conceived as our faith in the strength of the South Vietnamese regime. Are we doomed to repeat such mistakes?

In "Southern African Pressure Politics in the U.S.," Robert Janosik and Barbara Lawrence discuss the ways in which three major pressure groups (the South African Information Office, the Rhodesian Information Office, and the South African Sugar Growers Association) operate within the American business community to create the sense of economic solidarity which serves as an incentive to further capital investments in Southern Africa. The quiet maneuvering of these groups constantly influences American policymakers. Their unusual degree of success during the Nixon years is attributed to the contact between representatives of Southern African interests and Administration officials—facilitated by a network of old friends.

Edgar Lockwood takes a look at specific U.S. policies which have had little public support in his two commentaries on the campaign to restore sanctions against Rhodesia and on the national security memorandum which outlines the rationale behind official American acceptance of apartheid and the promotion of America's economic and strategic interests in Southern Africa. In her observations on the contradictory nature of the U.S. position on Namibia as well as America's long-term interests in Southern Africa, Goler Butcher suggests a series of measures that would render U.S. actions more consistent with official statements affirming the illegality of South Africa's presence in Namibia. Contrary to what American policymakers assumed in 1969, Mrs. Butcher believes that the United States *can* help induce significant change in at least one area of South African intransigence.

The most striking aspect of these analyses is not their revelation of certain trends in U.S. policymaking over the past five years, but their recognition that nothing is currently being done to reverse or modify these trends in a situation which is clearly becoming explosive. Events in Southern Africa over the past year have struck a tremendous blow to the white power structure, but the Ford Administration appears determined to broaden its relations with the white states. The past few weeks alone have witnessed the removal of apartheid-critic Donald Easum as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs—an action which, according to the *Johannesburg Star*, was precipitated by Mr. Easum's statement in Dar es Salaam that it was not American policy to try to preserve the status quo in Southern Africa. Mr. Easum has been replaced by Nathaniel Davis, a Latin American specialist who served in Guatemala prior to his appointment as American ambassador to Chile from October 1971 through November 1973. We also learned last December that the United States will furnish South Africa with the enriched uranium necessary for the establishment of its first large nuclear power plant.

As independence for Mozambique and Angola draws ever closer, South Africa is frantically pursuing a policy aimed at change. Vorster realizes that unless he can defuse the political tensions which surround South Africa, the entire region will be affected. If the United States continues, as it did in the Portuguese territories, to obstruct the inevitable transformation to greater representation for the majority, then we will be working against our own tangible interests. If we stick too long to Tar Baby—the foreign policy favored by Nixon for Southern Africa and still being implemented by his successor—Tar Baby will be difficult to shake off. Unless we begin to blacken our reputation in Southern Africa, our reputation in Black Africa will suffer even more.

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