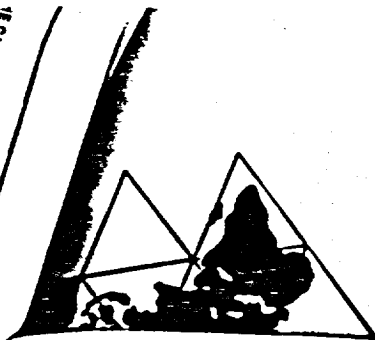


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OVERNIGHT CANADA/DU JOUR AU LENDEMAIN

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Fighting apartheid

Those who support increased trade sanctions as a means of forcing an end to South Africa's system of apartheid will be disappointed at the final communique issued by the Commonwealth committee of foreign ministers.

The ministers, while agreeing to lobby banks to put financial pressure on South Africa in the area of debt refinancing, had nothing new to say about trade sanctions. Instead, they will leave the controversial issue to the meeting of Commonwealth heads of government at a meeting in October.

In one sense the ministers are simply reacting pragmatically to the current situation.

Given the British government's refusal to support economic sanctions against South Africa, and given the inability of countries bordering South Africa to impose their own trade penalties, the committee's hands are tied.

However, the October meeting follows the whites-only election in South Africa this fall. The policies of the country's new president, and meaningful signals, if any, of attempts to dismantle apartheid, will certainly influence the government leaders when they meet.

On the positive side, the foreign ministers denounced South Africa's attempts to destabilize neighboring front line states, and called upon Commonwealth countries to express their strong opposition to planned sporting tours of South Africa by British and Australian athletes. They recommended giving Namibia assistance after it achieves independence from South Africa later this fall. And they will send Commonwealth officials to countries which have trade sanctions against South Africa, but aren't adhering to them.

The fourth and final meeting of the ministers did not produce great progress. Still, if the heads of state can pick up where the foreign ministers left off, there will be ample opportunity for further measures in the battle to end apartheid.