

# The true record

By TONY NASIREMBE

IT WOULD APPEAR THAT the writer of the article: "A View of Africa" (*the Gazette*, Oct. 3) intended to pass some factual information about the political leadership in Africa to the readership of your esteemed paper. In my considered opinion the writer was quite good at exaggerating issues, missing out on important points and citing irrelevant historical facts. In this regard, I wish to make a few observations and corrections for the sake of keeping the record straight. I will point at relevant sections point by point for proper analysis.

● **Point 1:** The writer put it that "there are many other countries in Africa where human rights abuses are far worse and more numerous than in South Africa."

This statement should have been substantiated. The use of the phrase "far worse" denotes a value judgement of the writer about the African governments. The truth of the matter is that there is no African government, even a military one, except in South Africa, where:

- a) the majority of the people are not citizens of their country of birth by the mere fact that an "accident" of creation made the colour of their skin black or brown.
- b) the rights of movement of the majority group of people in the country is restricted purely on the basis of their race.
- c) proper education is provided only to the children of a minority race which is undemocratically in power. (In my opinion the South African government is an extreme case of fascism.)
- d) the people who work the hardest to keep the economic wheels turning are ironically the ones who are severely underpaid and whose work

● **Point 2:** The writer pointed out that "Black African dictators such as Idi Amin of Uganda have slaughtered millions of black citizens."

He may be quite right about Amin's record. However, it appears that the writer is unaware of the fact that the Ugandan people succeeded in ousting Amin and his dictatorship a long time ago. Right now Amin is living in exile in Saudi Arabia.

I have no idea why Amin was cited as an example of dictatorship in Africa. If the writer's intention was to draw the readers' attention to a dramatic historical fact, then he missed out on an important issue. At this stage we are not interested in reviewing the happenings of the past because if we did, there are few countries in the world which could be declared clean as far as the human rights question goes. One will find innumerable names of dictators and tyrants who ruled in many countries in Europe. To keep the record short, one could recall the leadership of: Louis XIV, Napoleon, Adolf Hitler and Mussolini as being less than democratic and quite lusty in the human rights regard. As a matter of fact it can be argued that dictatorship in Africa is a manifestation of "effective" teaching of European history in the African schools during the colonial era.

It may be observed and realized that what the African countries are experiencing now is a growth phase phenomenon. Dramatic happenings in the African countries are necessary, albeit unfortunate, episodes of maturation. I am not aware of any democratic country today which became "civilized" without undergoing chaotic stages in its development.

For those who may not remember, let them be reminded that when the United States of America won the war of independence from Britain there was a lot of chaos in that country. Many lives were lost needlessly. A

against South Africa now. I have deliberately used the word "normal" because in the history of modern civilization there is no evidence which points to the contrary in respect to the pattern of social-political-economic adjustments of a nation which has liberated herself from the powers of subjugation.

● **Point 3:** "Tanzania . . . . Under the socialist leadership of Nyerere, the country has undergone economic and political disaster."

This statement is an exaggeration of the realities of the matter. Although it is true that Nyerere is a socialist, he was democratically elected to lead Tanzania by his people in 1961. He has ever since been re-elected unanimously at every presidential election until this year when he chose to retire from the apex of politics in Tanzania. But the mere fact that Nyerere is a socialist does not make Tanzania a political disaster.

It is also true that Tanzania has many economic problems. The economic woes of the country did not result from incompetent leadership, however. There have been many external forces that made it impossible for Tanzania to gain economic growth in any significant way. One of the problems has been drought. For five years that country received no rain. Considering that her economy depends almost entirely on the agricultural industry, it is ridiculous for one to submit that lack of

economic growth in that country has been due to socialist ideals of its leaders.

● **Point 4:** "Unlike many other regimes in Africa, however, black citizens are allowed to leave the country if they so desire."

This is the most unfortunate statement that has ever been made in defense of the South African regime. Apparently the writer is not aware that in South Africa a black person has no citizenship of any country. Consequently, a black person in that country cannot have a passport. The Africans who have fled the Republic of South Africa are living as refugees in other countries. They did not leave South Africa (Azania)\* because they wished or desired. I have yet to see a human being who cherishes the idea of belonging to no country.

● **Point 5:** "Moreover, it would be wise to remember that South Africa provides its black residents the highest standard of living in black Africa . . ."

This statement would seem to contradict point 4 above. If Azanians are living a comparatively higher standard of life than their counterparts in the rest of black Africa, how come they prefer leaving South Africa for the neighbouring countries like Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zaire? By the way, what is the meaning of high standard of living in a situation where freedom and human dignity is begging? Can a person

who works for long hours in the mines, sleeps in a dormitory and is allowed to see his wife and family once a year be considered to be enjoying a high standard of life? Was the writer in essence submitting that the high standard of life for an African in South Africa is effected by the apartheid system? If he was not, and he seemed to be condemning the apartheid system at one stage, then how can he justify his view that the standard of life for an African in South Africa is high? Let us be serious, plain and straight forward rather than contradictory and irrational in making judgemental statements about other people.

In conclusion, I wish to observe that some people who may hold similar views to those of the writer of the articles in question need to be reminded that the status quo in South Africa cannot be perpetuated indefinitely. Whether the rest of the world likes it or not, the black people, the white people, and the brown people of Azania will in future breathe a fresh and sweet air of freedom and dignity. What is sad at this stage is that it is taking too long for the desired reforms to take place. It should be realized that the longer it takes for the reforms to take place, the longer it will take the civilization metamorphosis to take effect after the freedom war has been won and lost.

\* Azania is the authentic name of South Africa.

# S.A. Blacks will win

By PHILIP DEMONT

WITH THE RECENT WAVE OF rioting in South Africa the debate over the imposition of economic sanctions against the regime has been renewed with a vengeance. Both sides—pro and con—pull out their own sets of data and predictions about South African responses to back up their own viewpoint.

This concentration upon the numerical aspects of sanctions has only muddled the debate even more. A return to basics is needed to remove some of the prevailing fog.

First of all, advocates of economic sanctions should realize that, by themselves, economic sanctions will not result in the dismantling of apartheid. That was never the intention. Economic sanctions are only supposed to be one part of an overall strategy of dealing with South Africa. Only through a convergence of forces—internal and external—is change possible.

At present, in South Africa, this convergence of dissident forces appears closer to reality than at anytime previously. South African blacks have used all the weapons at their disposal from consumer boycotts to industrial strikes and demonstrations, to press their case. For once, western governments appear ready to help by taking serious action against the South African government. If this advantage is not pressed it may be some time before South African resistance will have sufficient strength to challenge apartheid again.

One should not be overly pes-

simistic about the ability of sanctions to affect the South African economy. Conventional economics dictates that economic sanctions will hurt the South African economy.

This conventional thinking maintains that economies only develop through free trade and other economic links with the rest of the world. If so, then the severing of these links could be seen as the opposite of free trade. Since free trade helps an economy the absence of such links should hurt that economy. Given a base level of economic strength, however, the South African economy should be able to survive such action, although at a lower standard of income.

The question of the desires of South African blacks concerning the imposition of economic sanctions is partially irrelevant. Given the present state of available information an answer to this question may be unascertainable. Although most evidence points to support for sanctions among South Africa's blacks, because of the difficulty in attaining true opinions in South Africa, these surveys may yield biased results.

Besides, many foreign policy decisions have been made without reference to the target population. The American government never consulted dissident Cubans before cutting economic ties with Castro's regime.

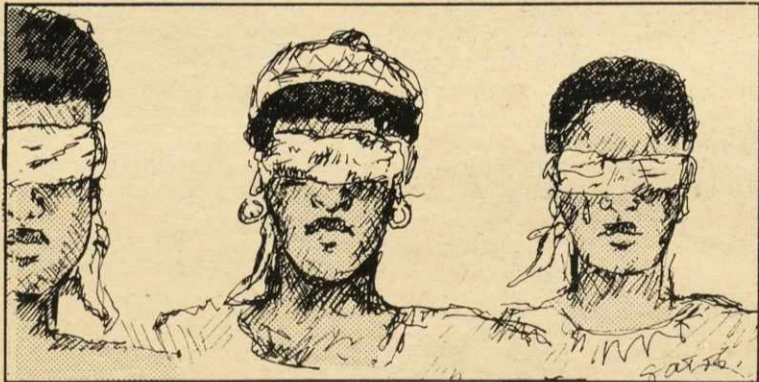
In dealing with South Africa the installation of economic sanctions makes good sense if only for domestic political reasons. The Canadian government should receive a boost in popularity since the majority of Canadians appear

to support such a move. As well, the government should be able to improve relations with third world nations by "taking the moral high ground".

Alternatively, the continued maintenance of economic ties with South Africa could be a dangerous policy for the Canadian government. Mulroney risks a negative reaction from its population, and the world, all for minimal economic gains given the small size of Canada's links with South Africa. If events turn violent, then, more than ever, the Canadian government risks being seen as supporting apartheid.

"Constructive engagement" has been the operative policy for western nations' relations with South Africa since before the Reagan administration coined the phrase. This policy has led to precious little progress towards the elimination of apartheid. Considering that dominant groups in a society rarely relinquish this position voluntarily, such intransigence from South African whites should not be surprising. The use of the "stick" rather than the "carrot" should be paramount in Canada's policy.

The South African government will have to be dragged, kicking and screaming, into the 20th century. And it will take a concerted effort by the world community, including Canada using all available tools to help the forces of internal change in South Africa. The Canadian government should follow the economic sanctions route in order to show some leadership in the international arena and place more pressure on South Africa.



conditions are inhumanly horrifying.

- e) the women of the majority citizens are sexually assaulted by the minority group in power and the illegitimate children born from the uncanny encounters are denied full rights of citizenship.

The list can go on infinitely; however, these few examples of important differences between the South African government and the rest of the African governments will show that contrary to the statement made by the writer, the human rights abuses in South Africa are uniquely repugnant.

lot of people fled and went to settle in other parts of the world where sanity prevailed. Incidentally, some of the refugees from the USA settled in Canada, many of them in the province of Nova Scotia. Sanity and democracy did not return in the heads of the American people until their civil war was won and lost.

The point I am trying to make is that the conditions prevailing in the African countries at this stage are normal. It is therefore unfair for anyone to point an accusing finger at isolated unfortunate cases for the purpose of justifying that economic sanctions should not be imposed