

This debate was stimulated by the disinvestment experience. The Rev. Allan Boesak expressed his fears when he said that he hoped for "quick and effective sanctions . . . not a long, drawn-out disinvestment that goes on over five, six or seven years and in the end leaves us with an economy that is a wasteland."³

It has also been argued that black trade unions, which represent the strongest part of the opposition in the post-Emergency phase, may be weakened by disinvestment. Some pro-sanctions academics have taken the argument further, stating that emphasis should be on financial, rather than trade sanctions, since these will cause less damage to trade unions. Factories, for example, could be closed down overnight if their markets were to disappear. The response of unions has been to sustain support for sanctions, including disinvestment, but to qualify this by demanding safeguards for workers in such situations.

Partial sanctions have been opposed by many in the democratic movement. They insist that deviating from the call for comprehensive sanctions undermines the case for external pressure, and provides loopholes which can be exploited by the South African Government. Total isolation is a clarion call, easy to understand and providing a straightforward goal.

This debate is echoed in discussion of the cultural, academic and sports boycotts, which have grown in strength over the past two decades. Critics of a total boycott have argued, with some success, that the outside world should maintain contact with organizations inside South Africa which oppose *apartheid*, and which are working actively to create what the ANC President, Oliver Tambo, called "a new South Africa." Artists, academics, and lawyers who oppose *apartheid* should be recognized and assisted in their efforts to bring about change. Sanctions should avoid damaging the very institutions which are part of the broadening opposition to the *apartheid* system.

The majority of South Africans who favour sanctions recognize the need to identify priority targets. Sanctions are not an end in themselves. Nor are they a moral crusade. They are a tool to assist the cause of peaceful change. As such, timing and strategy are fundamental if sanctions are to exert maximum pressure on the Government, and strengthen the opposition. At the same time, mandatory and comprehensive sanctions remain the formal public goal which unites the pro-sanctions movement in the country.

A BALANCE SHEET

By the end of the eighties, few disagreed that some sanctions were necessary. Embargoes on arms and on sophisticated computer equipment to the security forces have garnered widespread support. Equally, the majority of commentators agree that sanctions have had an impact on the position of the South African Government. In the words of the Commonwealth study, "partial sanctions have been a partial success."

One success is the process towards independence in Namibia, and the general abating of South Africa's devastation of the neighbouring states. Sanctions assisted in two ways. First, the arms embargo equalized the military balance between South African and Angolan/Cuban forces in 1988, and thus raised the human cost to South Africa of remaining in Angola. Second, by squeezing the South African economy, sanctions forced the Government to reappraise its occupation of Namibia and its war in Angola, which were costing between \$1 and \$2 billion per year.

Between 1987 and 1989, the State of Emergency curtailed black protests and censorship laws blocked media coverage in the West. This helped limit the pressure for new sanctions. At the same time the argument for sanctions strengthened, particularly among Commonwealth Governments (Britain excepted) and in the US. The main foundation of the sanctions movement — the grassroots and civic action — became stronger than ever, able to maintain pressure on both private and governmental sectors. Broadly-based sanctions targeted against two-way trade with South Africa were firmly established, even in some countries whose leaders were opposed to this.

At the beginning of 1989, as the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) regained initiative, the prospects for escalating sanctions pressure was strong. The rescheduling of South Africa's private debt in October 1989 restored trade sanctions to a pre-eminent position among options for action. In a report to the Commonwealth Heads of Government, experts developed a comprehensive plan for "ratcheting" up pressure through a steady reduction in trade. Not surprisingly, the most obvious target for further actions are the so-called bulk exports in agricultural products and non-strategic minerals such as coal, iron ore and base metals. In general, these commodities are in abundant supply, and there are readily available alternative sources. According to the estimates presented in the report, up to one-third of all South African exports are vulnerable.

Without Britain, of course, the economic impact of Commonwealth action would be small, but the Commonwealth report reflects the increasing sophistication of the sanctions movement worldwide. In addressing exports to South Africa, for example, it suggests two measures — barring the export of computer equipment and cars — which could be implemented even by those countries professing concern about the welfare of blacks. In both cases, black jobs would be created or at least preserved. The report also highlights the way in which trade credits cushion South Africa's balance of payments problem, and suggests that these be phased out over five years — a financial sanction that would hurt South Africa and dampen its trade.

AFTER THE 1989 ELECTION

The year following the election has seen a dramatic political transformation in South Africa — and the first