

1909

Audrey Smock, BHM world issues office

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This letter, sorry to say, cannot be an easy read: I'm scowling at "Divestiture Guidelines" (1168 CHRISTIAN CENTURY 12Dec84), and must --as an old BHM employee, thrown out in 1969 for being too radical (specifically, pro-violent in social change)--drop you a few notes:

1. I could document the profound evil of South Africa's torture and intimidation of white pro-black citizens. I'm no apologist for that government's tactics.

2. SA's strategy is a little better than much of its tactics. It wants to share power with nonwhites in ways that do not jeopardize the continuance of Afrikaans (i.e., white) government--as the USSR has managed (there being no nonwhites in the Politburo) and as Israel is trying to manage (there being no possibility, unless Israel is overthrown, of the dominance or even parity of non-Jewish power in the Knesset). Naturally, this doesn't sit well with Tutu; but does BHM know (by revelation? reason?) that SA is wrong in wanting to share power with nonwhites only within the limits of the government's life, which is the power-arm of the Afrikaans' life-style?

3. Is BHM so naive as to imagine that giving SA blacks the vote (1:1) would not result in a black-dominated government quite different from the present white-dominated government? The USA's 12% of blacks are now in an oreoing/ghettoizing debate: some are going white enough to participate in our white-power government, and some are opting (in one or other way) for enclaving (at various cultural levels, various degrees of white-culture "pollution"). But it would be hopeless for American blacks to imagine the co-culturing of our society (to say nothing of black dominance): we are a white Jewish-Greek-Roman-Christian civilization increasingly open to non-white participation while struggling to maintain, in our social and political as well as religious life, the dominance of "Western civilization." (See MacNeill's classic, THE RISE OF THE WEST.)

4. BHM, in a comfortably white-dominated society, looks to pressure SA, a society/nation/government anything but comfortable in its white dominance: a population 87% nonwhite! I think USA, BHM, et al should pressure SA against torture and exploitation--but must an apartheid ("apartness") society torture and exploit? Careful of a facile answer to that one!

5. The doctrine of inherency of the worth of human life (and of the dignity and equality of the individual) is Western-Enlightenment --and is an implicate, somewhat, of biblical religion (and not a biblical doctrine). "One-person, one-vote" is a political implicate of this doctrine, but it is not "Christian" in the essential sense ("bene esse" perhaps, but not "esse").

6. George Beitzel (#2 at IBM), Roger Shinn, and I talked about whether IBM (which has 1% of its commitment in SA) should pull out of SA. IBM has forced the government to permit the training of black IBM execs (which is against the law) by threatening to pull out if the demand is not met, and 100s of blacks are in training: should IBM interfere with this effort to subvert apartheid? I think not, and believe that is also Roger's opinion.

7. Any solid evidence that blacks can govern themselves at the trans-tribal (i.e., national) level? Black Africa is starving, but not SA blacks.

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