

South Africa — a land of pain

During the last four weeks one of the world's most repressive governments watched silently as its police force killed over 60 people during anti-government demonstrations and injured hundreds more.

Hospital officials reported that victims were brought in with skull fractures, dog bites, whip burns, ruptured spleens, and gunshot wounds. The place was South Africa. The victims were black miners and students.

Tensions came to a boiling point again in South Africa in August when protesters took to the streets over a new constitutional law that allows Indians and "Coloureds" political power in the government, but denies such power to blacks. Police responded to rock-throwing protesters with guns, whips, clubs, tear gas, and attack-dogs.

The protests spread quickly and led to the largest black uprising in South Africa since the Soweto riots of 1976. Nearly 40,000 black miners staged an illegal strike, demanding the right to unionize. Over 100,000 students boycotted classes and fought with security forces in the streets.

If these incidents had occurred in the Soviet Union or Poland (such as when Solidarity dock workers confronted police in Gdansk), United States politicians would be screaming about police brutality and government-sponsored oppression. But South Africa is not Poland and is not communist. Instead of criticism, the Reagan administration has been silent.

Yet, in South Africa 22 million blacks don't have the right to vote because of the color of their skin. They are not citizens in the land of their birth. They are forced to carry identification passbooks wherever they go, and they are subject to arrest without reason and can be jailed without trial.

Black South Africans have also been subjected to one of the largest mass removals of people in peace-time. Millions have been evicted from "white only" areas and resettled into black homelands called "Bantustans," where unemployment and disease are rampant.

At the end of August of this year, South African security forces detained 572 people, more than the total for all of 1983. That figure does not include the 600 political detainees taken into custody during the last three weeks. This is all part of apartheid, a system of repression, exploitation and separation of peoples based on their race.

Reagan has not been totally silent on the subject of South Africa during his presidency. He praised South Africa's leaders for striving toward democracy. He called South Africa one of America's greatest allies and friends in the struggle against the evils of communism. He invited South African Prime Minister "Pik" Botha to the White House for "constructive talks."

Americans hear a lot from Reagan about the "oppressive" Sandinistas, the "evil" Russians, and the "dangerous" Cubans. But during the past four weeks, when hundreds of people protesting for freedom and equality in South Africa were beaten and shot by government forces, Reagan remained silent.

It is a terrible kind of silence, for as the blood of black Africans struggling for freedom flows in the streets of Johannesburg, Reagan's America looks the other way.



letters

Wrap it up!

Walking by the science building yesterday, I was struck by how strange a building looks wrapped in blue plastic. I also realized that it looks a lot better all wrapped up.

Without the plastic wrap, the building is very conventional in appearance, except that in front of all the outer windows there are hideous giant asbestos-covered "X's."

The building is currently wrapped in plastic to remove all the asbestos from the X-shaped supports. I think that instead of removing just the asbestos, they should also remove the "X's", or just leave the building wrapped.

Better yet, we can claim it as a work by the obscure self-proclaimed artist who simply calls himself "Cristo!" He's the one who has wrapped coastlines, valleys, and islands in plastic and other "artistic" materials and made money doing it. The idea of keeping the science building under wraps and making money at it seems very appealing.

Gregg Davis
Eugene

Protest moans

Re: Vincent Stickler's diatribe "Reagan must go" (ODE, Oct. 3rd), I would point out that Mr. Stickler shows how little he has been keeping up on politics lately when he makes his wild accusations against our president.

First, Reagan has not, as Stickler claimed, been avoiding the issues. Actually, during the last four years, his outspoken views on various issues have

been the catalyst for the excessive ranting and raving we've been hearing from the left — who are usually just 60's holdovers with nothing better to do than protest, moan, and groan about Reagan.

Reagan sleazy? Hey wait a minute! It's the Democrats now supporting the registering of convicts in prison. They're counting on their vote. Also, I've been to a couple of Mondale speeches (one during the convention in San Francisco) and they only let their staunch supporters get near their beloved liberal saviors.

I've also been to a couple of Reagan events (one here on campus in 1980) where hecklers made it near impossible to hear the speaker. It should also be noted that Reagan has condemned heckling at Mondale rallies no matter how much Mondale deserves it.

Michael Cross
Political science

Real fact?

Oh com'on Gerry Rempel. Anyone presenting Reagan as being against human rights should look at the Carter/Mondale record and see how hypocritical that liberal administration really was.

Carter and Mondale claimed to be champions of human rights, but generally ignored the plight of religious and political dissidents persecuted for their beliefs in the Soviet Union. And what about the enslavement of some five million persons in Soviet "Work" camps?

And boy did Jimmy and Fritz teach the Soviets a lesson for their genocidal destruction of innocent men, women, and children in Afghanistan. They imposed draft registration. Wow! That sure showed 'em who's boss. I'll bet a couple of politburo members died from laughing themselves to death.

Carter and Mondale's administration didn't say much about Marxist madman Pol Pot when he killed over three million Cambodians. Remember — that's nearly half the number of Ukrainians killed by the Soviets since 1933. Pol Pot did this in only a couple of years.

Carter and Mondale were very selective in their morality. They condemned little anti-communist countries for repres-

sion (whether it was sponsored by the particular government or not) but never did too much to get the Marxists mad. This is true even though at least 95% of all human rights violations world-wide occur at the hands of left-wing death squads either in power or trying to take power.

Dan Goulet
Journalist

Compassion

It made me extremely angry when I discovered the Democratic National Committee endorsed a national voter registration drive for prison convicts. Obviously the so-called "party of compassion" cares nothing about crime victims!

According to articles in Human Events (5/19/84) and U.S. News (5/14/84) the Democrats expect several hundred thousand inmates to register and vote this year. In Human Events, Lee Wood of the Committee to Abolish Prison Slavery — the group organizing the drive which the DNC has endorsed — states, "It is generally thought that all incarcerated persons have lost their right to vote... this assumption is inaccurate." In our state, prisoners with final felony convictions still maintain the right to vote.

I guess the Democratic leadership hope these inmates will prefer Mondale over Reagan because Reagan would appoint pro-victim judges. Despite Laura Romano's article "Is this compassion?" (Oct. 4) it's Reagan who would appoint judges who are more sympathetic to the victim's rights than the criminal's treatment. The criminals know this, the Democratic power elite know this and it's no surprise the DNC endorsed CAPS's prison registration drive.

I wish these power hungry liberal Democrats would crawl out into the real world and visit a hospital emergency room filled with rape and assault victims. Better yet, maybe they could brag about their "compassion" at a funeral service for a murder victim.

No way do I want a Democratic president appointing judges to the courts. In light of the DNC's activities I'll vent my rage towards their audacious actions at the polls on November 6!

Lori Parkman
Eugene

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