

# DISINVESTMENT

## *the ferment grows*

**A**fter many years of exhorting American companies in South Africa to be a force for change from within, the Rev. Leon Sullivan has now called for a corporate exodus.

Two years ago he issued an ultimatum: Unless apartheid ended by May 31, 1987 he would call for tough sanctions.

True to his threat, the Rev. Sullivan recently abandoned his 10-year-old employment code — the "Sullivan Principles" — and called for total US disinvestment from South Africa and a complete trade embargo.

The Chief Minister of KwaZulu and President of Inkatha, Dr M G Buthelezi, said he deeply regretted that the Rev. Sullivan had "endorsed himself out of the course of events which are going to lead to the realisation of things he himself has set as ideals . . ."

His timing, said Dr Buthelezi, was "all wrong."

"However good his intentions are, he has erred very grievously in his judgement . . ."

"However much I understand his position and however high my regard has always been for him, I must now say that he is abandoning what can be done in favour of courses of action which could well undo that which has been done.

"The Rev. Sullivan gave the South African Government 24 months to eliminate statutory apartheid and he then threatened to call on companies to leave South

### **Right intentions — wrong move**

"The Reverend Leon Sullivan could not possibly have known what South Africa in 1987 would be like when he set his time limit in 1985.

"There is now deep ferment taking place among black workers about the disinvestment question . . . at a time when the Rev. Sullivan has endorsed himself out of the course of events which are going to lead to the realisation of things he himself has set as ideals.

"His timing is all wrong, however good his intentions are. He has erred very grievously in his judgement . . ."

Dr M G Buthelezi

Africa if it did not do so in that time period.

"That 24 months has passed

and he is now doing what he said he was going to do.

"The point I want to make is

### **Poverty — the enemy of democracy**

"It has been calculated that something like a staggering R12 billion is now needed to cope with the immediate shortage of housing and thereafter the annual demand for housing will run to something like R6 billion per annum . . ."

"Meanwhile, across all population groups, only R1 billion per annum is utilised for the erection of new homes.

"Apartheid will eventually be torn apart by the homeless and the destitute — if necessary with their bare hands. Those same bare hands will tear everything apart which did not provide a remedy for the terrible circumstances in which millions live.

"When therefore I choose between political philosophies; when I set political aims and objectives and when I devise tactics and strategies, I aim to follow a course most propitious for the reduction of mass poverty.

"Mass poverty throughout the Third World is now the proven enemy of any kind of democracy.

"Any democrat anywhere in the Western world ignores this fact at the peril of the future of South Africa." —

Dr M G Buthelezi

that no force on earth could even now ensure that statutory apartheid will be eliminated in the next 24 months.

"The armed struggle has been waged now for more than a quarter of a century. The best that could be done through an armed struggle, supported by the best that could be got from the Soviet bloc and some other quarters, has not done what the Rev. Sullivan wanted done in 24 months.

"I and other black leaders have waged a war against apartheid for the whole of our adult lives and what the Rev. Sullivan wanted done in 24 months we have thus far not been able to do in our lifetime.

**A**merican indignation at apartheid is something I deeply respect but it is rank foolishness to put a 24 months limit on courses of action."

Dr Buthelezi added that the

## **Race against time**

***"There is a race against time between democracy and violence in South Africa and if the United States put the Rev. Sullivan's demands into action, democracy would not have a snowball's hope in hell of winning that race. To demand the total economic isolation of South Africa and to demand the severing of diplomatic relations with South Africa is to demand the circumstances in which violence overtakes democracy . . ."***

***Dr M G Buthelezi***

would be a dictatorship in South Africa tomorrow and then Americans would sleep easily because we would be just another dictatorship in the world."

***"We must do everything now that can humanly be done to foster economic development wherever it can be fostered in South Africa. If we smash the South African economy now, we will smash the free enterprise system in South Africa for ever . . ."*** — ***Dr M G Buthelezi***

black South African struggle was not only a struggle to dismantle statutory apartheid, it was also a struggle to replace bad government with good government and a struggle to replace a racist dictatorship with a race-free democracy.

"There was no word in Rev. Sullivan's statement (about his withdrawal) about the political outcome of the course of action he is advocating . . .

"Americans do not have sleepless nights because there are dictatorships in the world. That for them becomes a concern of international diplomacy.

"It is sad to comment that if America pursued the demands of the Rev. Sullivan now, there

**D**r Buthelezi said there was a "race against time" between democracy and violence in South Africa and if the United States was to put the Rev. Sullivan's demands into action, democracy would not have a "snowball's hope in hell" of winning the race.

"To demand the total economic isolation of South Africa and to demand the severing of diplomatic relations with South Africa, is to demand the circumstances in which violence overtakes democracy.

"It is revolution that is encouraged by real mass poverty. The United States is in

a position to take the kind of action which would smash all prospects of economic growth in this country.

"Every businessman and businesswomen knows that economies are not turned on and off at political will."

Dr Buthelezi said there had been a "ferment of thought" among Black South Africans on the disinvestment issue which would in due course work its way out into the open.

Black workers had been subjected to "very powerful lobbyists demanding that they substantiate what high profile celebrity leaders have said about black workers supporting sanctions . . ."

Ultimately, however, these leaders needed back-up from the workers themselves.

There had been a ferment among trade unionists and this was now beginning to see the light of day.

The media, for instance, was now reporting the existence of a study document prepared by economists and researchers for the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

"Even if by powerful connivance this report is now suppressed, the ferment will go on," Dr Buthelezi added.

The issue of disinvestment and sanctions could well split COSATU "down the middle and split again . . ."

"The issue could well re-align black trade union forces and worker forces.

"American industrialists know that every time they post vacancy notices on their factory gates, hordes of black workers clamour for the jobs they advertise.

"Trade unionists should be representing those hordes of workers and no amount of celebrity leader manipulation will redirect the real aspirations of workers.

"They aspire to work first and then they aspire to do other things. There is now a greater clamour for work among black South Africans than there has ever been before.

"The harder the economic recession bites, the greater that clamour will become."