

DRAFT RESPONSE TO WALKER 'DEAR COLLEAGUE' ON BUTHELEZI

Dear Congressman Walker:

After receiving your "Dear Colleague" of February 21st regarding Chief Buthelezi's statement on disinvestment in the Wall Street Journal, I thought it would be useful to bring to your attention certain points that are very critical to the disinvestment debate and the role of Chief Buthelezi.

First, it is important to recognize the Gatsha Buthelezi, while the hereditary Chief of the Zulu language group, is not the "leader of six million South African Zulus," not to mention the entire black population of nearly 27 million (23 million Africans, 2.8 million so-called Coloreds, and 800,000 Indians). Thus, when Buthelezi speaks in opposition to disinvestment, he cannot claim to be representing the majority of black South Africans or even the majority of Zulus. In fact, Buthelezi is widely perceived by black South Africans as representing and/or supporting the white minority government when he speaks in opposition to disinvestment as a means of pressuring South Africa to abolish apartheid and achieve majority rule.

In public opinion polls taken during the past four years in South Africa examining the political views and preferences of the black majority, Buthelezi has consistently scored lower than Nelson Mandela, Ntatho Motlana, and other black leaders. Even among Zulus, Buthelezi does not rank as the black leader they most support. On the other hand, he does consistently rank at, or near, the top of the list of black leaders who are disliked the most. Buthelezi's ethnic political organization called Inkatha, which he claims has a membership of 750,000, has also ranked much lower in the polls than the African National Congress (ANC). The ANC is considered by all to be the most popular black organization and has called for disinvestment for years. [According to many informed observers, many of the Inkatha members are coerced into joining in order to gain health, education, pension and other benefits in Buthelezi's bantustan, know as Kwazulu.]

Second, while discussing disinvestment we must always remember that it is against the law in South Africa to advocate disinvestment. It is considered "economic sabotage" and is punishable by sentences of five years in prison to death. Nobel Laureate, Bishop Desmond Tutu had his passport removed by South Africa's white authorities in 1981 because he urged western countries to adopt economic sanctions against South Africa. This internationally distinguished Man of the Cloth can now only go abroad with a "travel document" which says his nationality is "undetermined."

Third, we should also bear in mind that the approximately 350 American corporations operating in South Africa only employ somewhere between 70-100,000 black workers, or **less than one percent of the black South African work force**. While these companies may have grudgingly begun to create programs designed to improve the "quality of life" for this miniscule segment of the black majority, Corporate officials have publicly admitted that there is little, if anything, they can do to change the political and social fabric of South Africa. On the other hand, their contribution toward upholding the economic and material infrastructure of apartheid (through capital infusions and technology) is considerable.

Finally, I've enclosed for your review an important article by Dr. Clifton Wharton, Jr. on the issue of disinvestment. Dr. Wharton is Chancellor of the State University of New York; Chairman of the Board of the Rockefeller Foundation; and, a director of the Ford Motor Co. As a corporate director, Dr. Wharton had hoped that enlightened U.S.-style management at American plants in South Africa would set a progressive example for the country as a whole while providing economic opportunities for some blacks. He no longer believes this position is tenable and writes: "U.S. firms and corporations should withdraw all personnel and investments from South Africa, and as rapidly as they can...In commerce and foreign policy alike, we must treat the South

African government as the pariah it long ago chose to become."

Disinvestment is not "anti-black" as the Wall Street Journal article tried to suggest, disinvestment is anti-apartheid, anti-fascist and pro-democracy. It is therefore pro-black in the context of the South African reality.

Sincerely,

George Crockett