

The Sullivan Principles

These principles, originally proposed by the Reverend Leon Sullivan, a member of the Board of Directors of the General Motors Corporation, have been adopted by numerous United States corporations doing business in South Africa.

The six principles are:

1. Nonsegregation in all eating, comfort, and work facilities.
2. Equal and fair employment practices for all employees.
3. Equal pay for all employees doing equal or comparable work for the same period of time.
4. Initiation of and development of training programs that will prepare, in substantial numbers, blacks and other non-whites for supervisory, administrative, clerical, and technical jobs.
5. Increasing the number of blacks and other non-whites in management and supervisory positions.
6. Improving the quality of employees' lives outside the work environment in such areas as housing, transportation, schooling, recreation, and health facilities.

Analysis

Responsible black South African organizations such as the African National Congress and the Pan-African Congress are opposed to the philosophy implicit in the Sullivan Principles. These groups are not working for the token amelioration represented by this type of approach; they are determined to completely dismantle the Apartheid structure erected by the white minority government.

Under existing South African law, it is clearly impossible to implement the Sullivan Principles. For example, under the Industrial Conciliation Act, Africans are denied the right to organize into effective trade unions, and to bargain collectively. Strikes are absolutely prohibited. The concept of "corporate equality" is not possible in a country which ensures through law and custom that no black may ever hold a position of authority over a white worker.

Approximately 1.5% of the black South African population is employed by U.S. transnational corporations. The remainder of the black population, strictly segregated into townships and homelands, would be untouched by corporate attempts at workplace equality. The real impact of U.S. corporations in supporting the Apartheid system is in terms of the technology and capital placed at the disposal of the South African government. Polaroid Corporation, until recently, supplied the photographic material used to produce the passes all non-white Africans are required to carry upon penalty of imprisonment.

The contingency plan drawn up by General Motors' South African branch graphically illustrates the role that organization expects to play in the event of civil insurrection on the part of the black majority. The report details expected cooperation of General Motors' personnel in a takeover by the South African Defense Ministry.

(Analysis from State Rep. Perry Bullard's office)