

Excerpt from “Don’t Adjust to Apartheid” by Jesse Jackson (November/December 1984)

[A] policy of cynicism and callousness has the United States in an official partnership with the racist *apartheid* regime in South Africa. Corporate greed, in the search for the maximum return on investments, has found in the racist *apartheid* system, with its brutal denial of human rights, a favorable climate guaranteeing the highest profits in the world. An American government that pretends to be outraged by the human rights situation in Poland is apparently quite satisfied with the brutal denial of human rights in Pretoria.

This is measure in part by the deafening official silence in our country concerning the plight of 8,000,000 Black Africans who have been stripped of their South African citizenship and forcibly removed from the cities of South Africa and relocated into Bantustans, thereby made refugees and aliens in their own country....

In order to promote the political stability of the *apartheid* regime, United States policy invariably adopts a double standard in matters of human rights. For example, when a solidarity union in Poland is suppressed and a leader is jailed, our official policy is to implement an economic boycott against Poland in response to this violation of human rights. When the ANC in South Africa and the trade unions affiliated to it are suppressed and abolished, and leaders like Nelson Mandela are jailed, we respond to this violation of human rights by expanding economic, diplomatic and military ties with the regime....

We, in the United States, must measure human rights by one yardstick and free ourselves of this hypocrisy that increasingly alienates us from the peoples of the world struggling for human dignity and self-determination. Our national view of southern Africa must radically change from seeing it as essentially a piece of geopolitical real estate to be used by the United States for self ends, without regard to the aspirations of the people of southern Africa.

SOURCE: Jesse L. Jackson, “Don’t Adjust to Apartheid,” November/December 1984. In *Let Nobody Turn Us Around: Voices of Resistance, Reform, and Renewal; An African American Anthology*, edited by Manning Marable and Leith Mullings, 550-554. New York: Bowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000.