



# IBM: SPEAK UP!

By the IBM Workers United  
PO Box 356  
Johnson City, New York  
phone 798-0197

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## THE TRUTH ABOUT THE COMPANY IN

## South Africa

IBM is one of the largest American corporations doing business in South Africa where the white minority governments "Apartheid" policy makes the black majority second class citizens in their own country.

Under this apartheid, Blacks, Asians, and persons of mixed race are victims of strict segregation and discrimination. 4½ million whites (16% of the population) completely dominate 18.6 million Blacks, 2.4 million "Coloureds", (as persons of mixed racial ancestry are called), and three quarters of a million Asians. The white minority holds absolute political power, controls the economy, and enjoys most of the country's great wealth. Blacks have virtually no rights at all. They cannot vote, own property, join political parties or form unions, go on strike, or even bargain collectively with their employer.

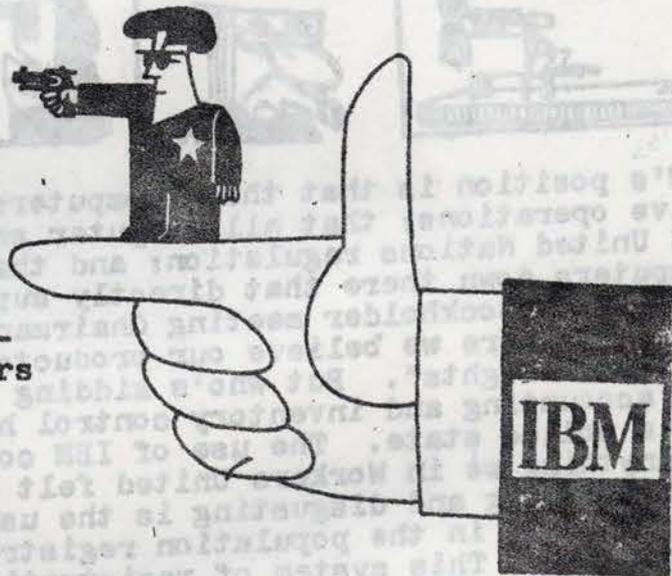
The upshot of this system is an incredible gap between the wages and living conditions of blacks and whites. More than 80% of the black population lives below the poverty line. Most black families must spend 70% of their income on food alone. Whites in this racist set-up do very well. They have the fourth highest per-capita income in the western world. Most live in comfort with swimming pools in the back yard, luxury cars, and of course...lots of domestic servants.

Obviously the cheap labor of black workers has been of great benefit not only to the racist apartheid regime, but also to foreign investors. IBM of course denies all such charges. According to the company's argument jobs for a few black employees in South Africa means money in their pockets and a higher standard of living for them than they would otherwise enjoy. This is true, but what of the rest of the 18 million blacks who suffer under the apartheid system?

At present IBM South Africa has a work force of 1478 with sales of \$163 million and assets of \$89 million - a tidy sum for any IBM operation. Responding to criticism against IBM's presence in South Africa, Chairman Frank Cary told us in a video-tape State of the Company address a few years ago that "business is business." That really seems to be the case in South Africa where IBM sells computer and systems to business and government for any purpose.

In doing our homework, Workers United found that the strong dema

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for electronic data processing equipment in South Africa is the direct result of apartheid. Since the employment of non-whites in salaried administrative jobs is strictly limited and controlled it puts a premium on automating such jobs - thus such companies such as IBM, Burroughs, and controlled Data are helping to solve the skilled white labor problem at the same time supporting racial inequality.

Like any other advanced industrialized economy, South Africa could not operate without the employment of the data processing devices our company and its competition offer for sale in South Africa. IBM computers are being used by many of the leading businesses in South Africa including the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, Chamber of Mines, Anglo-American Corp., and African Explosive and Chemical Industries.

At least one third of all IBM business in South Africa is with the repressive government. This computer service is as crucial to the maintenance of apartheid policy as it is to the administration of the business sector. Foreign maintained and serviced systems are in at least 18 government agencies.



IBM's position is that these computers are used in normal administrative operations; that all computer sales and services follow U.S. law and United Nations regulation; and that they know of no use of any IBM computers down there that directly support any part of apartheid. At IBM's last stockholder meeting Chairman Cary said "We would not bid any business where we believe our products are going to be used to abridge human rights". But who's kidding who?? Even routine functions such as accounting and inventory control have an important effect when used in a police state. The use of IBM computers in South Africa goes beyond anything we in Workers United felt could be called normal. Especially alarming and disgusting is the use of two of our IBM 378/158 systems packages in the population registration system known as the "Book of Life". This system of registration keeps track of Coloureds and Asians much the same way the Nazi's divided people into race categories in Hitler's Europe. Each person is forced to carry a passbook which contains an assortment of information about the individual. If he or she is stopped by the police and cannot produce it or has one that is improperly stamped - he/she is headed for jail. South Africa has one of the largest daily prison populations in the world, most offenders being passbook violators. The Department of Prisons also has an IBM 360/20, supposedly for "financial" use. IBM computerization delivers Book of Life information about millions of South Africans at the touch of a button to the racist government which represses and degrades them in their own country. A similar system keeps track of all Blacks in the country but IBM lost out on the bid for it in 1965. too bad corporate!

Yes Chairman Cary you are right - Business is business, but how do the rest of us who work for IBM feel about the sale of human rights for profit? Maybe its time for some real affirmative action against racism for a change. IBMers should be prepared to demand and support a U.S. business withdrawal from the South Africa economy. We should do all we can to keep companies such as IBM from carrying out such profit motive madness. Above all we should take time out to think about South Africa, and what our company is doing there. Don't be afraid to let your fellow workers and management know how you feel. IBM out of South Africa - End to the racist apartheid rule - Self determination for all the peoples of South Africa.

IBM Workers United  
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(MEL, Committee on Foreign Relations-U.S. Senate.)