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Sanctions

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The circus

THE Mandela sanctions circus is receiving a mixed reception.

In his "repudiating Pretoria" act, Mr Mandela tries some moral blackmail: Either European leaders, businessmen and bankers agree with him that sanctions must stay, or they are supporting the "White supremacists".

It's balderdash.

Mr F W de Klerk, the State President, is moving so fast away from racism that the position of his own party is endangered, as shown by the Umlazi by-election result.

Given encouragement to continue his reforms, Mr De Klerk will deliver his non-racial, no discrimination, equal rights for all new South Africa.

European leaders know this is so, since Mr De Klerk has given them a first-hand account of his plans.

But Mr Mandela, playing his spoiling act, is following in Mr De Klerk's footsteps to persuade the leaders whom Mr De Klerk met not to ease sanctions.

Mr Mandela claims that he has swung French President Francois Mitterrand over to his view, after all the indications were that President Mitterrand would support an easing of sanctions at the European Community's summit on June 25.

He also claims that the Swiss Government has assured him its lax attitude towards sanctions will end.

Now, after meeting West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, he says Mr Kohl is prepared to reconsider his view that sanctions should be reviewed.

Mr Mandela has an ally in West German Foreign Minister, Mr Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who has been one of Pretoria's worst enemies, and seemingly still is despite Mr De Klerk's reforms.

Mr Genscher, according to Mr Mandela, supports the maintenance of sanctions until apartheid is abolished.

By contrast, West German bankers and industrialists say the time has come for sport and cultural boycotts to be lifted as a first step in ending sanctions.

They have told Mr Mandela this quite bluntly. Mr Hans-Gerd Neglein, a board member of the powerful Siemens electronics giant, said at a lunch hosted by the Federal Chambers of Commerce Association in Bonn: "We feel sanctions should no longer be used as a political instrument."

"They hit only the weakest in society."

"We welcome the political change initiated by President De Klerk and yourself and we would like to encourage you to put your full weight behind the negotiation process."

In his speech Mr Neglein also told Mr Mandela: "We feel that SA more than ever needs economic stability to successfully continue its present course of peaceful political change."

"According to our experience — and it appears to be acknowledged worldwide — a democratic system combined with a socially responsive market economy is the best precondition for economic and social development."

"Only under such conditions can long-term foreign investments be attracted, which would give SA the chance of being integrated again into the world economy as a participant in the international division of labour."

"Personally, I am of the opinion that only a very strong economy will be able to guarantee the catch-up process of the Black community."

In a remarkable show of truculence, Mr Mandela warned that the majority of South Africans, Black and White, would decide for themselves what was best. "It is not for you to tell us what is good for us and what is not good for us."

"What right has anyone to say (to us) that 'sanctions are not good for you'. You have no legal or political right."

Strange, isn't it? Nobody must tell Mandela and Co what to do, but Mandela and Co feel they have every right to tell the West Germans and others what to do.

We hope the bankers and industrialists stick to their guns and that they will press their government, Mr Genscher notwithstanding, to ease sanctions.

By Irw

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