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Letters to The Times

'Moralists Would Sink S. Africa'

The Times welcomes expressions of all views from readers. Letters should be kept as brief as possible and

Reagan's

The fallacy of Raymond Price's article (Editorial Pages, Sept. 6) is

In his eloquent expression of disdain for "moralists," Price asks what is so precious about democracy (in his view a "political abstraction") that it should be "imposed" on the black culture of South Africa, to which it is "alien." He ignores the demands of black Africans themselves for democracy, implying that they would probably mess it up.

He then goes on to demonstrate an infinite patience and tolerance for levels of repression in South Africa far greater than those that led to the revolutionary birth of our own nation. If this does not establish Price as a racist, then he certainly is an elitist, a distinction without a difference for South Africa's black majority.

Price also accuses "moralists" of "meddlesome arrogance," implying that they believe it is their "responsibility" and "right" to "impose" democracy on people who have known only repression.

First, "moralists" do not impose democracy on anyone; instead, violent change is the result of elite and racist intransigence, for which Price is a willing apologist.

Second, the United States was not "yielding" to "moralist clamor" when it replaced the popularly elected governments of Guatemala and Chile with brutal dictatorships, at tremendous cost in the "blood, terror, and suffering," which Price would have us believe is so repugnant to him.

Price's expressions of concern for repressed and brutalized people have a hollow ring; meanwhile, I'm sure that Mejia Victores of Guatemala, Augusto Pinochet of Chile, and other U.S.-supported dictators are grateful for his patience with them.

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