Bloodshed inevitable in South Africa

To the Editor:

Perhaps with the best of intentions, columnist Kenneth D. Leiter '90 has fallen into the same trap as so many Western correspondents in South Africa, namely seeing the country through the eyes of the white minority ["Apartheid cannot die quickly," Nov. 21]. The typical stance of the white "liberal" in South Africa is that it’s a shame that apartheid is so brutal, but we can’t change things too fast (or in any fundamental way) since only whites are really capable of running the country. Perhaps this is some- what less completely unconstructed support of apartheid. But it doesn’t count for much unless it leads to willingness to negotiate with, and eventually render power to, the accepted leaders of the black majority.

Leiter seems to have visited South Africa on the terms set forth by the South African government for foreign visitors as well as for its own white population — have a good time, but don’t mix with the black people or really see how they live and what they want.

Hence the acceptance of the standard view that only whites can undertake development. Never mind that South Africa is heavily into the business of sabotaging development in neighboring majority-rulled states. Never mind the example of white settlers who systematically smashed the infrastructures of Algeria, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and so on when they lost their privileged positions there.

Hence the acceptance of so- cialists of any race.

Yes, change in South Africa will be forced — by the majority of the population of that country, against an intransigent regime. And our choice is to stand with that majority, and try to help that change come as soon as possible, or to stand in white solidarity with the forces of apartheid and make the blood-letting be as prolonged as can be.

Perhaps this is the best of intentions. Perhaps with the best of intentions, columnist Kenneth D. Leiter '90 has fallen into the same trap as so many Western correspondents in South Africa, namely seeing the country through the eyes of the white minority ["Apartheid cannot die quickly," Nov. 21]. The typical stance of the white "liberal" in South Africa is that it’s a shame that apartheid is so brutal, but we can’t change things too fast (or in any fundamental way) since only whites are really capable of running the country. Perhaps this is some- what less completely unconstructed support of apartheid. But it doesn’t count for much unless it leads to willingness to negotiate with, and eventually render power to, the accepted leaders of the black majority.

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