

What to do with our first black defector

IT'S ONE thing catching "com-mies", but quite another having them fly in and ask to stay, especially when they're black.

The Government can do one of two things with Lieut Andriano Bomba, late of the Mozambique Air Force: they can send him back, to an inevitably dreadful penalty, or they can grant him the asylum he requests. The first seems to us to be intolerable, the second improbable.

Consider the obstacles to giving a black, presumably repentant Marxist a home in this particular bastion of anti-Marxism. Assuming that he is not in fact the thin end of total onslaught, with a MiG-17 for his Trojan Horse, but simply a nice young man who wants to shop where the shelves are full and visit discos, Lieut Bomba is still unwelcome.

The only way he can be legally in South Africa is as a foreign contract labourer. But that means he has to return home annually, and he may not have his family here with him. Nor may he stay in a prescribed area for more than 72

hours without finding a job.

To enjoy any right of citizenship he has to have a "homeland". Perhaps Venda will take him, if they can have the MiG too. On the other hand an investigation by the Race Classification Board may reveal that he has a small claim to being, say, Other Coloured. That will give him a chance to serve on the President's Council, and join a five-year waiting list for a house. Or he could be declared an honorary Japanese, with corresponding white privileges.

But to extend traditional South African hospitality and simply take the man in, house him and employ him, (if we can have black air hostesses on discriminatory pay, why not pilots too?) is unfair to indigenous blacks, voteless and largely jobless and homeless.

It is all so embarrassing. It does not have to be.

If South Africa's blacks were granted citizenship and the right to work where they pleased, this black defector would be no problem -- just another immigrant with a much-needed skill.

RDM 10/7/81