

Julian Amery MP Acked 7/2 1984
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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

7 February 1984

I enclose a copy of a letter which the Prime Minister has received from The Rt. Hon. Julian Amery, M.P.

I should be grateful if you would provide a draft reply for the Prime Minister's signature by Thursday 16 February.

TIMOTHY FLESHER

Roger Bone, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

BFC



FROM: THE RT. HON. JULIAN AMERY, M.P.

AM 7/2

RB(Fro)pm

1) Mr ~~Coles~~ ^{A.J.C. 6/2} to note
2) Prime Minister:

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We will
give you
a date reply
1st February, 1984.

Dear Margaret, J 6/2

I have been increasingly concerned, as I imagine you have, by the contradiction between our attitudes as a Government towards South Africa and the reality of Britain's relations with the Republic.

South Africa is an important trading partner, a major field of investment, a vital source of strategic raw materials and commands the Cape Route. English is one of its official languages and some 2 million people of British descent live there, many with roots in Britain. It has a capitalist economy, a relatively free press, an independent judiciary and a regime which, however reprehensible in certain respects, is the most stable in Africa and has fully safeguarded our material interests. Its attitude towards the struggle between East and West is very much in line with our own.

All this would seem to call for a cordial and friendly relationship as, indeed, existed until some twenty years ago. Instead we have allowed ourselves to be drawn into a series of manoeuvres designed to ostracise South Africa yet only very indirectly related, if at all, to our national interests. The U.N. arms embargo, the Gleneagles agreement, the cold shoulder at ministerial and international level, the cut off of places in our staff colleges and the constant public criticism of South African internal policy are all examples of attitudes which seem out of place in dealing with a state which by every objective standard should be regarded as a friend. It is ironic, and rather ridiculous, that the latest British Minister to visit South Africa should have chosen to hold up Nigeria to the South African Foreign Minister as a shining example of successful democracy in Africa!

The double standard which we all know has been the hallmark of our policy towards South Africa has been the result of a belief that any other attitude would 1) have cost us votes among liberal opinion at home, 2) lost us friends in the Commonwealth and at the United Nations, and 3) damaged our relations with other African states.

I seriously doubt the validity of this last argument. South Africa is, no doubt, a convenient whipping boy for African rhetoric and for Soviet propaganda but, apart from Nigeria, most of the African states are far more dependent on our goodwill than we are on theirs and the Soviets would seem to lack the resources to turn their political influence to much practical economic effect. Central Africa, moreover, is increasingly aware of its dependence on the South African economy and their mutual trade is increasing all the time.

I would, however, be the first to agree that apartheid, as preached and practised by Dr. Verwoerd and his predecessors, is difficult to defend on the platform at home or in the forum abroad. I recognise too how difficult it is to change gear let alone to go into reverse in foreign policy, especially in a democracy. Nevertheless my latest visit to South Africa, in January of this year (partly on business, partly on politics), convinces me that recent developments there both at home and in external relations, offer ample justification, if adequately explained, for abandoning attitudes we should never have allowed ourselves to adopt and returning to our former good relationship. This proved extremely advantageous to us in war and peace and could well do so again if events in Southern and Central Africa develop along lines which already seem possible and perhaps probable.

I attach two notes one on recent developments inside the Republic; the other on the Republic's relations with its Northern neighbours. These summarise my own conclusions but ^{are} drawn from talks with Foreign Minister "Pik" Botha, with Harry Oppenheimer and other leaders of the mining industry, with a leader of the Indian Community and with one of Chief Buthelezi's principal white advisers.

I am copying this letter and its enclosures to Geoffrey Howe, Nigel Lawson, Michael Heseltine and Norman Tebbit in the hope that you may consider calling for a full review of our policy and attitudes towards South Africa.

Yours ever,

Julian

Julian Amery

The Rt.Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, MP

SOUTH AFRICA - RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

The constitutional reforms proposed by the South African Government and the referendum endorsing them by an overwhelming majority of white votes has broken the mould of South African politics.

Around 35% of the English-speaking voters seem to have voted for the Government and about 30% of the Afrikaaner-speaking population seem to have voted against. (This last group, so the humourists say, was split between those who wanted to throw the Blacks into the sea and those who wanted to keep them off the beaches!) These figures suggest that the Government is now dependent on a very different constituency from the mainly Afrikaaner vote on which it was elected. This new constituency includes most of the relatively liberal English speaking business interests. Henceforth, therefore, the Government will have to pay more attention to their views than it has hitherto.

Nor is that the end of the matter. Despite some hesitations the Coloureds and Indians seem almost certain to participate in the new arrangements. They too will now become part of the Government's constituency. They will need to show practical results to their own electors if they are to justify joining the new system. It will be the Government's interest to make sure that they can.

Altogether, nearly eight million South Africans will now be involved in the political process with the right to vote in what have hitherto been free and fair elections.

What then about the Blacks? The Government could not have carried the referendum if it had presented the enfranchisement of the Coloureds and the Indians as a first step towards enfranchising the Blacks. Nor indeed is that what Ministers want at this stage. Their immediate objective is to bring the Coloureds and Indians on to their side of the racial barricade; and they made this very clear. As a result Blacks of all persuasions called on the Whites to vote "No".

The African National Congress naturally hoped for a "No" vote. They could then have said that the South African establishment was so inflexible that it was a waste of time to negotiate with them. Violence offered the only way forward. More moderate leaders, like Chief Buthelezi, had to express anger and disappointment that their own readiness to negotiate had produced no result. No doubt they expected this but have some difficulty in explaining the outcome to their supporters.

There is, nevertheless, much serious discussion in Government as well as Opposition circles as to how to deal with the twenty or more million Blacks not affected by the reforms.

About half of these live in the "homelands", four of which are fully independent and the rest autonomous. Our own disapproval of the "homelands" concept and the absurdity of the official concept that Urban Blacks belong to the "homelands" has tended to blind us to the extent to which they genuinely provide an outlet for able and ambitious Blacks. Many of these have gone to them to find positions of prestige and influence as Ministers, officials or businessmen. In the four "homelands" now declared independent they are involved in the political process very much as are their neighbours in Lesotho and Swaziland. In the others, particularly Kwazulu, they are well on the way to doing so. But for the "homelands" many of these young men might otherwise have joined extremist movements.

The ten million or so Urban Blacks remain outside the political process. Black Trade Unions, however, have been legal since 1979. They have had several unofficial strikes and recently held their first legal strike, though unsuccessfully. Job reservation has been virtually eliminated except in the mining industry. Several companies employ Blacks in managerial capacities and a few have Black directors on their boards. There are, of course, also a large number of Blacks in the medical, academic, legal and journalistic professions. The Government seem determined to give much greater autonomy to the Black townships where Blacks can and do secure ninety-nine year leases of their homes - a virtual admission by the

Government that they are there to stay and not migrant workers from the "homelands" as they were earlier regarded.

Most observers would agree that, at the present time, the Urban Blacks do not have a sufficient power base to enforce their claim to political representation at national level. But over the next decade this is likely to change. The spread of education, the rise of an organised labour movement and the ending of job reservation are bound to give them a much greater influence on national policies. Quite how the Whites will accommodate the political aspirations of the Blacks remains to be seen. But there is no reason why an executive President should not co-opt able Blacks into his administration even before they have a vote.

Meanwhile the process of Black political evolution is likely to be advanced by the increasingly close relations which South Africa seems bound to develop with its neighbours to the North - the subject of the following note.

The conclusion I would draw from the above is that the former rigid pattern of South African society has become far more fluid with cross-voting between English and Afrikaaner electors, the enfranchisement of the Coloureds and the Indians and the economic progress of the Blacks. This much more hopeful picture would seem to justify a more optimistic and hence a more cordial approach to our relations with the Republic.

SOUTH AFRICA - RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBOURS

In the euphoria engendered by Independence, Zambia, Angola and Mozambique saw themselves as the liberators of Rhodesia, South West Africa and even South Africa itself. They hoped that in this they could count on the active support of the Soviet Union and of liberal opinion in the West.

Experience, however, has not confirmed their hopes. The Soviet Union, though ready enough to supply arms and some limited expertise and keen to obtain military facilities, has been apparently unable or unwilling to invest in serious development. As for ~~as~~ the West; private enterprise has been scared off by Socialist policies; Governments have been reluctant to give aid to administrations which are inefficient and sometimes politically unfriendly. Zimbabwe, the latest to join the ranks of the so-called Front Line States, has met with much the same experience.

Disappointment with both the Soviets and the West has brought home to South Africa's northern neighbours the extent of their economic dependence on the South African market, South African finance, South African railways and ports and South African technicians. Even today a large number of ^{the} white technicians working in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mali and the port of Maputo are South African and many of the companies operating in Mali and Zimbabwe are South African based. This dependence seems likely to grow ^{the} as South African economy grows and that of its neighbours continues to decline.

If South Africa's neighbours have learned that they have much to gain by cooperation with the Republic they have also been taught that they have much to fear from confrontation with it.

Until recently SWAPO guerillas based in Angola were raiding regularly into Namibia. Today the boot is on the other foot. The South African army occupies a strip of Angola. UNITA, thanks to South African support, controls much of the country including the whole border with Zambia. The Marxist regime has been driven back to the defence of Luanda and the oilfields of Cabinda.

Mozambique which previously supplied bases for the ANC has suffered raids by South African regular Forces against Maputo itself and has found its entire economy disrupted by the South African supported RENAMA resistance movement.

Zimbabwe has been careful to avoid confrontation for fear of South African support for the rebels in Matabeleland and for other discontented elements among both Blacks and Whites. In short the freedom fighters are now moving from South to North instead of from North to South. The West has turned a blind eye and Soviets seem hesitant to do much more than strengthen the defences of Luanda.

All this is having predictable and favourable results.

South African, Angolan and US representations have met and opened negotiations on a cease-fire.

South African and Mozambique Ministers have begun negotiations over a whole range of subjects on which they might cooperate - electricity supplies, fishing, tourism, the restoration of confiscated properties and security.

Zimbabwe, though still avoiding Ministerial contacts has multiplied its contacts at official level.

It is early days to say how far South Africa will succeed in extracting Mozambique from the Soviet sphere, expelling the Cubans from Angola and bringing Dr. Savimbi into the political process, or stopping Zimbabwe from sliding into the Marxist Camp. But given Western support they should stand a good chance of doing so. Central and Southern Africa is a long way from the Soviet Union and indeed from Cuba.

Should Soviet influence be withdrawn from Central Africa there will be an urgent need to undertake its economic reconstruction. This is a task beyond the resources of South Africa alone but one in which the West could join to great advantage. Government aid will no doubt play its part. But the major role is likely to fall on

private enterprise. I doubt, however, whether European or American companies will run the risks involved except in cooperation with South African and Portuguese enterprises which have operated until recently or in some cases still operate in different parts of Central Africa. There are nearly half a million Portuguese refugees in South Africa.

There could be big prizes here for Britain, but the winning of them will require a quite new approach in our relations with South Africa.

Our ostracism of the Republic has not cost us much, as yet, except in military contracts.* But a more positive approach will be needed if we are to be in on the next phase of the exploitation of Central African wealth as well as South Africa's own home development.

I conclude that we need to recognise that new times call for new tunes. These should not be too difficult to sell to our own public opinion if presented as an opportunity to liberalise and develop what are now hungry and oppressive one party states.

* Lord Weinstock to whom I said this the other night tells me that I am quite wrong and that we have lost a number of contracts largely because of South African resentment at British attitudes towards them.