RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT AT 1730 HOURS ON WEDNESDAY 30 MAY 1984 AT 10 DOWNING STREET

Present:

Prime Minister	Bishop Trevor Huddleston
Sir John Leahy	Mr. Abdul Minty
Mr. Coles	

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The Prime Minister opened the conversation by saying that it was not necessary to attempt to convince her that apartheid was wrong. That was knocking at an open door. She hoped that Bishop Huddleston would speak freely.

Bishop Huddleston said that he was deeply grateful that the Prime Minister had agreed to receive the delegation. This was the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the Anti-Apartheid Movement. In itself that was a sad story. He had hoped to see the end of apartheid in his lifetime.

It was clear from the Prime Minister's statements in New Delhi and elsewhere that her opposition to apartheid was unambiguous. She had also played a major role in bringing Zimbabwe to independence. But he was worried about the consequences for the future of the South African Prime Minister's forthcoming visit to Britain. He himself had lived in South Africa during the period when the basic legislation enshrining apartheid was adopted. He had protested against these laws from inside South Africa. So naturally his own feelings were strong.

Mr. Botha had made clear that his main aim was to bring South Africa back into the international community. But he was not prepared to dismantle apartheid in any way. So the

cost of the endeavour to re-enter the international community would be paid by the Africans of South Africa. It could not be accepted that Mr. Botha should achieve this success without paying any price. It was a very grave error to give him this opportunity.

The desire to talk rather than fight was praiseworthy. But Mr. Botha had never attempted to talk to African leaders in South Africa.

The Anti-Apartheid Movement were concerned with the impact of the visit both on Africans in South Africa and on neighbouring states who had suffered from the South African policy of destabilization. The Nkomati Accord and other similar agreements had been achieved by a policy of massive aggression. South Africa had occupied a province of Angola and continued its illegal occupation of Namibia. Nor was it just a matter of occupation. The South African Government had committed very serious crimes against ordinary people in these territories.

The gravamen of his opposition to Western policy was that we had never effectively checked the South African policy of aggression. Lesotho was facing a terrible situation. Totally dependent on South Africa, it had been told to sign an agreement or else ... Similar pressure had been put on Botswana. The desperate economic situation in Mozambique, which he had visited in January, had been a powerful cause of the Nkomati Accord.

South Africa's policy was the policy of a bully. Massive aggression was applied to bring countries to their knees and force them to do a deal. As Tacitus had said "they make a desert and make it peace". Botha claimed in his propaganda that he was asking for peace but there could be no peace until apartheid was destroyed - and it could be destroyed if the will was there.

The Prime Minister said that Botswana was not economically weak nor had South Africa applied the same methods to it as it had used with other countries. **Bishop Huddleston** appeared to agree. He then said that he was deeply concerned that there might be some relaxation of the arms embargo. He would be grateful for a reassurance to the contrary. He also sought a reassurance that the British Government would not go back on UN Security Council Resolution 435 and its implementation in Namibia.

The basic issue was that Mr. Botha should not achieve credibility as a man of peace. Nor should South Africa be allowed to re-enter the international community until it changed its internal policies. The constitutional changes recently introduced had the effect of entrenching apartheid - four-fifths of the population would still be excluded from political rights. There was no democratic way of preventing the white minority Government from forcibly moving massive numbers of Africans.

In response to a question from the Prime Minister, Bishop Huddleston said that he had not been allowed back to South Africa since 1956. But he kept in close touch with, for example, the President of the African National Congress.

The Prime Minister said that industrialists informed her that industrial growth was helping to break down apartheid. The practice of job reservation had been much reduced. **Bishop Huddleston** said that he did not claim that nothing had changed. But the basic institutional fabric of apartheid had become more firmly entrenched.

The Prime Minister said that she was always concerned with the practical question of how one made progress - how one moved from an existing situation to the situation which was desired. It had to be remembered that countries elsewhere in Africa had been unsuccessful in the practice of democracy.

Taking up a reference by Bishop Huddleston to Tanzania, the Prime Minister said that its economic policy had been disastrous. **Bishop Huddleston** said that he was very prejudiced in favour of President Nimeiri. The West behaved very arrogantly towards the Third World. Since Nimeiri had tried to implement his policy of "villagisation", which was an essential policy in Tanzania, he had been accused of collectivisation and forced removals. At the same time he had been faced with world economic recession. He had worked hard for four years to secure an IMF loan but had been faced with impossible conditions. He had tried to lay the foundations for a sane society. He had also had to cope with Amin but had received no thanks for or help in that.

Returning to the Prime Minister's question as to the practical way forward, he believed that progress was infinitely easier in South Africa than it had been in former British colonies. There was a mature, reasonable African leadership. If people like Mr. Mandela and Mr. Tambo had been given an opportunity to share in Government, the country could have progressed. The real horror of apartheid was its total waste of human talent. The first step which Botha should take was to talk to his own African leadership and get these leaders out of prison and back from exile.

The Prime Minister suggested that something more sophisticated than merely talking to Mandela and Tambo would be needed. It was regrettable that South Africa had left the Commonwealth. That action had isolated them from useful influences. **Bishop Huddleston** said that after the Second World War Smuts could have introduced a liberal regime. But he did nothing. And the British Government had done nothing. What was the point of saying now that progress would be made through dialogue? The main step taken by the West had been to invest billions in support of the regime. When would we be prepared to say "thus far and no farther" over Namibia? **The Prime Minister** said that we were in no position to say this.

She recalled that we could never have brought Zimbabwe to independence without help from South Africa and from President Machel who had greatly impressed those who met him during his visit to the United Kingdom. A number of African leaders were now talking to Mr. Botha. **Bishop Huddleston** said that they had to. He was a bully, with massive forces. **The Prime Minister** said that she talked to representatives of a number of regimes of which she did not approve. The aim was to avoid the worsening of conflict in the world. She understood the point Bishop Huddleston had made about the constitutional changes. But it was not possible to solve all problems in the world at a stroke. She always preferred to look for the next practical steps. There was some movement in the right direction in South Africa.

Bishop Huddleston said that if Mr. Botha would agree to the implementation of Resolution 435 on Namibia, he would be very happy. **The Prime Minister** said that the South African Government did appear ready to envisage some movement. **Bishop Huddleston** suggested that they should be pushed further. **The Prime Minister** commented that the withdrawal of South African troops from Southern Angola was another helpful sign.

Bishop Huddleston said that he hoped our policy of non-recognition of the Bantustans would be maintained. **The Prime Minister** said that she knew of no proposal to change that policy.

Sir John Leahy, recalling his own experience of South Africa, said that that country's isolation gave it an odd perspective on the world. The only country that Mr. Botha had visited in recent years was Taiwan. **The Prime Minister** commented that such a situation was not healthy.

Mr. Abdul Minty said that industrial progress did present opportunities for Africans to better themselves - but this progress was not translated into political rights and the net

result was greater frustration. Each Prime Minister of South Africa was always said to be more liberal than the last. In fact, he was more oppressive. In the last two years there had been more treason trials than ever before.

The Prime Minister said that she believed that South Africa's isolation had meant that it was not exposed to influences which might make it more likely to move. It was desirable to maintain a dialogue. **Bishop Huddleston** said that he respected this view but he did not share it. The sports boycott had been immensely effective and had made South Africa feel that it must adjust. The real trouble was that the West was never prepared to invoke mandatory sanctions. **The Prime Minister** said that it would never do this. **Bishop Huddleston** commented that sanctions had been invoked in respect of Argentina. **The Prime Minister** said that that had been in a situation of war and the sanctions did not appear to have been watertight.

At the end of the meeting, Mr. Abdul Minty handed over a memorandum, a copy of which is annexed to this record.

A.J.C.

30 May 1984

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRIME MINISTER

ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT
13 MANDELA STREET
LONDON NW1 0DW

30TH MAY 1984

INTRODUCTION

The Anti-Apartheid Movement deeply regrets the decision to invite the South African Prime Minister, P.W. Botha, to visit Britain during his tour of Western Europe. He is reported to have said that he is trying "to find a place for South Africa in the international community of nations". We do not believe that South Africa can be accepted into the international community until the system of apartheid has been eliminated. We are particularly concerned about the implications of the visit and the effect it may have on the future of British policy towards Southern Africa.

NAMIBIA

Britain has voted for a series of Security Council Resolutions on Namibia, in particular 385 (1976), 35 (1978), and 539 (1983). In supporting these resolutions Britain has accepted a special responsibility for the situation in Namibia. Furthermore, the communique of the Commonwealth Heads of Government New Delhi summit stated:

> "In support of Security Council Resolution 539 (1983), Heads of Government urged members of the Contact Group to exercise their influence to secure the speedy and unconditional implementation of Security Council Resolution 435 (1978). If South Africa continues to obstruct the implementation of Resolution 435 the adoption of appropriate measures under the Charter of the United Nations will have to be considered."

In the period since November 1983, although there have been important developments in the region, South Africa has continued to obstruct the implementation of Resolution 435. There is widespread concern that South Africa may seek to impose its own settlement on the people of Namibia. The British Government needs to reaffirm explicitly that it supports the "speedy and unconditional implementation of SCR 435" and moreover, that it is prepared to apply effective pressure on South Africa to secure its implementation.

THE ARMS EMBARGO

Britain is obliged, under international law, to implement the UN Mandatory Arms Embargo against South Africa. Indeed, the British Government has gone further. At the New Delhi Commonwealth summit:

> "Heads of Government called for a stricter enforcement of the mandatory arms embargo so as to ensure that there are no loopholes in the implementation of Security Council Resolution 418 of 1977"

We have been particularly concerned that the UK has not strictly enforced this embargo and that export licences have been granted for items of strategic use to South Africa. In this context we are particularly concerned about reports that British Aerospace and South Africa are discussing the possible delivery of Coastguarder aircraft as a replacement for the South African Air Force Shackleton fleet. We would welcome an assurance that export licences will not be granted for any replacement aircraft for the Shackleton fleet, and that the Government will ensure that the arms embargo is strengthened and strictly implemented.

GLENEAGLES AGREEMENT

A major breach of the Gleneagles Agreement is occurring at this time, with the Rugby Football Union's English rugby tour of South Africa. We regret that the Prime Minister felt unable to follow her earlier example when she intervened personally last summer to oppose the proposed MCC tour of South Africa. It is regrettable that the meeting between the British and South African Prime Ministers which coincides with the first Test Match, will clearly give rise to widespread scepticism with regard to the seriousness of the British Government's committment to the Gleneagles Agreement.

SOUTH AFRICA AND ITS NEIGHBOURS

The South African regime openly proclaims that its recent "accords and agreements" with some African states are a direct result of its military aggression. It is no basis for peace.

To support this process is both short-sighted and dangerous because it will only encourage those elements in South Africa which are determined to impose a "Pax Pretoria" over the entire region. Britain and the Western countries should restrain South Africa in its aggressive role and therefore support those African States which are resisting powerful pressure to succumb to it.

ELIMINATION OF APARTHEID

We are particularly concerned about the attitude of the British Government towards developments within South Africa itself. Certain recent statements by Government Ministers have caused us anxiety since they convey the impression that the position adopted at the Commonwealth summit in New Delhi in November 1983, is no longer held. The Commonwealth communique stated:

> "Heads of Government were of the view that only the eradication of apartheid and the establishment of majority rule on the basis of free and fair exercise of universal adult suffrage by all the people in a united and non-fragmented South Africa can lead to a just and lasting solution of the explosive situation prevailing in Southern Africa."

We would welcome an assurance that the British Government policy remains unchanged and that it is committed to the eradication of apartheid and the adoption of "universal adult suffrage" for a "united and non-fragmented South Africa". We totally reject the so-called constitutional reforms being introduced by the South African Prime Minister P.W. Botha. They are designed to strengthen and entrench both the system of apartheid and the policy of bantustanisation.

The African majority are excluded from the political process and are being denied citizenship of the land of their birth. We are aware of widespread opposition to these proposals amongst the Indian and Coloured communities and we believe it is significant that referenda were not held amongst these communities, but only among the whites.

CONCLUSION

The visit by the South African Prime Minister, P.W. Botha, to Britain on June 2nd will be the first such visit to Britain since South Africa was forced out of the Commonwealth in 1961. Prior to 1961 Britain enjoyed the most cordial relations with South Africa and it was during this period that South Africa's unique system of racial tyranny was being imposed on the people of South Africa. Britain has taken a few important measures - though limited - to put pressure on South Africa. We want Britain to strengthen this aspect of its policy and work towards a programme of sanctions, as a peaceful instrument of change in order to prevent an impending racial catastrophe.

The Arusha meeting of the Heads of State and Governments of the Front Line States and the Presidents of SWAPO of Namibia and the ANC of South Africa, on 29th April 1984, provides the basis for a peaceful solution to the problem of apartheid:

> "The Leaders present again reiterated their strong preference for apartheid to be brought to an end by peaceful means. This can be achieved only through a process agreed upon in free discussions between the present South African regime and genuine representatives of the people of South Africa who are unrepresented in the present government structure of that country. A prerequisite for any such discussions would be the unconditional release from prison, detention, house arrest or 'banning' of Nelson Mandela and all other political leaders. Difficult as this step may be in the eyes of the present South African Government, there is no way to peace in Southern Africa except through discussions between the South African Government and the African people of South Africa."

The Botha regime has so far taken no steps in this direction and there is no indication that it will voluntarily do so in the future. This is why international action against apartheid should be stepped up: the present tour of P.W. Botha is intended to rehabilitate the apartheid system rather than destroy it.