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MR. JOHN SELWYN GUMMER MP

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Extract from a speech by Mr. John Selwyn Gummer MP (Suffolk Coastal) at Paddocks Number 2 Hall, Long Rd. Canvey Island at 8.15pm

On Saturday, Mr. Botha, the South African Prime Minister, lands in London for talks with the British Government. By then he will have visited Portugal and Switzerland. So he has not flown to Europe especially for talks in Britain. Far from it, Mr. Botha is on a tour of Europe to meet dozens of politicians of several political complexions including Mr. Mario Soares, the Socialist Prime Minister of Portugal, who invited him to Lisbon earlier in the week.

Many of my generation were profoundly influenced by Bishop Trevor Huddleston's book "Nought for Your Comfort". It remains the great indictment of South Africa's apartheid policy. That policy depends for its justification on a belief that some men are superior to others because of the colour of their skin. Nothing in the subsequent history of South Africa has fundamentally changed the attitude of Mr. Botha's ruling Party.

They see in so-called "separate development" the perpetuation of the power of the whites and the continuation of the subservience of the blacks. It is a view of human beings which cannot be justified, an attitude to individuals which must be abhorrent to us all.

And it is particularly abhorrent to Conservatives. We are after all the Party which considers people not as classes, groups, or races but as individuals; each worthy of consideration; each equal before the law; each with a right to make his own decisions and a responsibility to bear their consequences. A Party founded upon the principle of

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one nation cannot condone a constitution founded upon the principle of a superior race. A Party dedicated in its opposition to the class war cannot accept a nation divided into two classes distinguished by the colour of their skins.

The system of apartheid cannot be squared with the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, with reason or with morality.

There ought to be no dispute as to the nature of this system. The question is how best to change it, how to encourage effectively real change and avoid bloodshed and disaster.

Here too, Conservatives have a clear duty. We who are the friends of South Africa, Black and White, cannot stand by and do nothing as she moves inexorably towards disaster. We cannot take the leftist view, which believes it to be moral to wash their hands of the problem and satisfy our consciences in protest and boycott. Our duty is to seek for peaceful change, to work for real improvement, and to dirty our hands in the business of influence and encouragement.

The Pontius Pilate act of the extreme left a demonstration paid for by the GLC, out of the rates, has also nothing to do with the brotherhood of man nor with the fatherhood of God. Instead it is intended to provoke a warm and comfortable feeling that at no cost to ourselves we can show how upright and moral we are in our judgements. Ken Livingstone, who is happy to talk to the IRA, finds it immoral to talk to the Prime Minister of South Africa. His attitudes have nothing to do with morality, but a great deal to do with expediency. It is expedient for the extreme left to see that South Africa remains a suitable case for continual protest.

However, we have to deal not only with the real Labour Party of Mr. Livingstone and Mr. Scargill. We also have the stage army of Mr. Kinnock. If he and his erratic straight man, Mr. Healey, endorse the British Government's policy of talking with Mr. Chernenko, why can't they support discussions with Mr. Botha? The answer lies in Mr. Kinnock's double standards, and worse still his ignorance of foreign affairs.

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It is all very well, in Mr. Kinnock's little red book, for him to condemn and ostracise far right wing Governments. But in Mr. Kinnock's little red book far left-wing Governments, like the Soviet Union, require flattery and deference. This British Government, and this Prime Minister, neither flatter nor defer to Governments of any extreme.

We Conservatives are totally opposed to racism whether it is practiced in South Africa, or as anti-semitism in the Soviet Union. Why is it that if Mr. Kinnock was in Government he would hold talks with the Soviets but not the South Africans?

Mr. Kinnock's flannel of words is no substitute for policies. Indeed his behaviour throughout the European Election Campaign confirms what people, even in his own party, have long suspected that here is a ham actor moonlighting as leader of the Labour Party.

That is Mr. Kinnock - all ham and no beef. His antics do little credit to the acting profession and none to the need for serious political debate.

Nonetheless, there are good-hearted people who listen to Mr. Kinnock's words. They must face the double standard these words reveal. Sakharov, Sharansky, and Zonner can be shackled by the Soviet system but Mr. Chernenko is free to be met, welcomed and influenced.

The shackling of Nelson Mandela, Helen Susman and Bishop Tutu demand Mr. Botha's isolation.

Yet that is not the view of Mozambique or Angola. They have both signed treaties with the very Botha who must not talk to British Prime Ministers.

As the tanks roll in the streets of Kabul the cry goes up from the left that we must strive to influence the Soviet Union - a nation driven to these lengths by fear and encirclement. Yet those same philosophers condemn any discussion with South Africa, a nation equally haunted by fear and encirclement. The difference between these two cases

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not one of principle it is simply a question of power. In the eyes of the soft left, the USSR is too powerful to be ignored. They dare do nothing else but seek a dialogue. South Africa on the other hand is an easy target. Its isolation makes the protesters feel good at no cost and no danger to themselves.

What humbug, what hypocrisy for Mr Kinnock to salve his conscience at the expense of the deprived and downtrodden in South Africa. The truth is that South Africa must not be left to go her own way, driven back into the laager- resentful and resented, pursuing her deeply offensive policies, cut off from the real world. We in Europe have a responsibility placed upon us by history. The Portugese who first sailed to the Cape of Good Hope; the French Huguenots who landed and settled; the Germans, the Dutch, and the British, the nations who built the Union and South West Africa. We the countries of the European Community cannot ignore our duty and our trust.

That is an insight clear to all Conservatives and shared by sensible people throughout our continent. It is no accident that Mario Soares, Socialist Prime Minister of Portugal, entertained Mr Botha, condemning his regime, Mr Soares sought to influence and affect his policies.

In these European Elections we are seeking a strong voice for Britain in Europe. We are seeking a strong voice for Europe in the World. It is the countries of Europe who are trying to find the solution in Namibia. It ought to be the countries of Europe who are seeking to bring South Africa, by example and encouragement, more into the stream of world affairs. Only in that way will she see how damaging and devastatingly self-destructive her policies have become. In the real world South Africa can begin to understand that there is no place for apartheid.

End.