

all



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Prime Minister
 This suggests that you
 are on safe-ground in
 seeing Bishop Tutu.

23 September 1985

But you will want to tell him
 personally that you are only
 doing so on the basis that he
 is opposed to violence. CDP 24/9.

Call on the Prime Minister by Bishop Tutu

Thank you for your letter of 10 September on the subject of Bishop Tutu's attitude to violence. We believe that the Prime Minister can safely meet Bishop Tutu on the basis that he is a committed opponent of violence. His position has been made public on several occasions in recent months as he has used, and indeed risked, his influence in an attempt to stem the violence in the townships.

We do not have a record of the television interview to which you refer. There would, of course, be a distinction between having some sympathy for those who are tempted to violence and supporting or condoning their actions. The information which we have all suggests that while Tutu is prepared to support, or at least not disavow, "civil disobedience" he does not support violence. In a speech on 11 September to a church gathering in Pietermaritzburg he said that he would organise a week long nationwide stay away from work and schools if the Government did not agree to lift the state of emergency, withdraw the SADF from the townships, charge or release political detainees and sit down and talk to authentic representatives of the black communities. But this was not a call for violence. Indeed, as Len Appleyard mentioned in his letter of 2 September, Tutu has gone of out his way publicly to oppose violence. After a funeral in Duduza in mid-July Bishop Tutu showed great personal courage in physically intervening, together with Bishop Simeon Nkoane, to save a suspected "collaborator" from a mob set on beating him to death. This incident was filmed by newsmen and given very prominent coverage here.

(!) In a further attempt to stem the violence Bishop Tutu spoke out violently against such killings at Kwathema on 23 July, threatening that if the violence did not stop he would leave the "struggle" and even leave South Africa.

His commitment appears to stem from his belief that he is enjoined to non-violence by the Christian faith. The following is an extract from an interview he gave to the June 1985

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edition of "Leadership SA":

"There are some things that our faith demands of us which I would much rather it didn't. When God says "Love P W Botha", I say to him, "You can't be serious, God". He then says "I am". The consequence of being a member of the body of Jesus Christ is that P W is your brother."

Bishop Tutu told our Ambassador on 30 July that he feared that young people of the black community would soon shake off his leadership and that of others like him "wishing to keep the peace". He contrasted his own position with that of those who wanted violent solutions.

Yours ever,

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South Africa, 1961s:

