



10 DOWNING STREET

~~Bernard~~

On no account
should the passages
on South Africa —
pages 37-57 & 63/4 —
be published next
Friday or any time
before the Commonwealth
Conference. Please!

C.D.P.



10 DOWNING STREET

Charles 22/7.

Bernard would be grateful if you could give your assessment of the effect (good or bad) of the attached interview which the "Sunday Telegraph" intend to publish this coming Sunday. We are only interested in the South African references (pages 37-51 and 63/64).
Many thanks.
John Coe.

Commonwealth, on the surface of things, very deeply divided. How serious do you think the risk is that it will in fact break up over the South African issue?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well look! The Commonwealth is not Britain's Commonwealth. I mean, long ago they refused to have it called the British Commonwealth, although that is its historic thing. It is the Commonwealth. It belongs to all members. We have increased the membership of it during our time as more colonies have been brought to full independence. Dare I say it, we even brought the old Rhodesia to full independence to become the present Zimbabwe, in my time. It is their Commonwealth. Not the British Commonwealth. They refused to have it called the British Commonwealth.

INTERVIEWER:

Is there a risk it will break up over this, do you think?

PRIME MINISTER:

It would be absolutely absurd for them to break up their Commonwealth. Absolutely absurd.

INTERVIEWER:

Why would it be absurd?

PRIME MINISTER:

No Commonwealth

Well, first, because it is a grouping that girdles the world. It is their grouping that girdles the world. It is the only international conference that I ever attend which does not need any translators there and therefore the debate and the discussion you can have is much freer, much more genuine.

It is an institution which many people belong to who do not belong to anything else except the United Nations.

Some of us belong to other institutions; we belong to the EEC. Some of them belong to the Non-Aligned, but there are some of them, chiefly the Pacific, the Caribbean, that do not belong to any other institution. They come and they have a tremendous influence here.

INTERVIEWER:

But why would it be absurd for them to...

PRIME MINISTER:

Because it is their club. It is their Commonwealth. If they wish to break it up, I think it is absurd.

Why I think it is absurd is that *JW* we have been through many difficulties *[JW]* and what sort of relationship is it that just because you differ on some *points* views, and many of you have a different viewpoint - and many of you, what they are proposing would affect very differently indeed - that *J* this thing that we have built up and created and which they have created and which they have kept going, is not strong enough to take a difference of opinion, even though what is being proposed

affects people differently?

No Comment

Good Heavens, look what *it* has had to withstand to date! Do not think all countries in there are democracies in our sense of the term. Some of them have military government; some of them have states of emergency; some of them have had censorship at various times; some of them have had terrible internal massacres; some of them have put people in opposition into jail without trial. Of course, we have withstood all this, partly because you understand that some countries do have problems and it is not for us outside necessarily to pontificate how they shall deal with them all.

They have had, some of them, problems of a kind that we have not had. Some of them have ~~had violent minority groupings~~ *experienced violence between different groups*. They are having to struggle with them now, and when we have understood and...

INTERVIEWER:

So you expect them to understand your difficulties?

PRIME MINISTER:

Understanding has to be mutual, and if you belong to this great grouping it is theirs. Do not think it is just ours. I say, they will not have it called "The British" then I think you have to understand one another's problems. Yes, speak freely. I never mind people speaking freely. I prefer them to speak freely and openly.

INTERVIEWER:

So what are you actually aiming for out of that Conference?

PRIME MINISTER:

But to break up because there is a difference of view, goodness me, Good Lord, we have differences of view in Europe. Good Heavens, we have differences of view in the United Nations, very vigorous ones. Is one suggesting that the Security Council should fall apart because of that? ~~They undermine, I think, the very value of the thing if they do that.~~

INTERVIEWER:

What are you actually aiming for out of the Conference? What is the best and worst that could come out of it?

PRIME MINISTER:

I cannot say in advance exactly. I hope we stay together. Obviously they will speak their mind, but I do not mind at all and I am never offended if they do and I hope we can speak our minds courteously to one another and understand one another's problems, but what we are all trying to do is to end apartheid in South Africa and I am passionately trying to do it by negotiation and passionately trying to bring that negotiation about. I believe apartheid in South Africa will end.

INTERVIEWER:

But over what time-scale would you like to bring it about?

PRIME MINISTER:

We are trying to accelerate the time-scale obviously ~~and~~ do not underestimate the changes which have come about in the last two or three years and do not underestimate the differences of opinion among black South Africans. I do not say that I bear witness to that. You have only got to look at the columns of our press to have evidence of that and there are many many both what I call moderate white opinion, enormous moderate black opinion, and all of our tactics are to encourage the moderate people and to give strength to their hand and moderate people on both sides, I think, want to get rid of apartheid.

INTERVIEWER:

But what do you mean by "the end of apartheid"? Do you mean moving towards one man-one vote?

PRIME MINISTER:

The kind of constitutional arrangements are not for an outside entity to determine. That you will find is said in the Nassau Accord. That is what the Commonwealth said.

We want to do everything we can to bring ^{about} ~~the~~ negotiations together. South Africa is an independent country. Once you have got the dialogue going between all the people - ~~and there are white people,~~ there are Cape Coloureds, there are Indian people, there are black

South Africans - and I think myself there will probably have to be two lots of negotiation, one with the black South Africans and then the other with them all.] They will have to fashion their constitution.

INTERVIEWER:

But is that what you would like?

PRIME MINISTER:

It is not for us to fashion it.

INTERVIEWER:

No, but is it what you would like to see?

PRIME MINISTER:

It is not a colony. They had independence years ago.

INTERVIEWER:

But is it actually what you would like to see - a one-man/one-vote system?

PRIME MINISTER:

As I said in the House the other day, that really is not the argument. Some people want one person-one vote, and they will determine the constitution within which that one person-one vote is exercised. [Some people want one person-one vote in a unitary state.

It is for them to determine.

If I might say so, Africa is used to minorities, and if you look at it as a minority problem, then I think you get a very much better view of it. There are minorities, there are Sherna (phon.), there are Underbele (phon.), they have . . . minorities in Nigeria, minority groupings in Uganda, minority groupings in Ceylon, there are minority groupings in India - you know what happened there. There used to be a Central African Federation which we put together, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, Nyasaland - the three countries there did not like it, so they took it apart - they took it apart, not us, and we have got to stop acting as if we can impose things upon them.

South Africa is not a member of the Commonwealth. She is an independent country. She is doing things which most of us find repugnant. What we are trying to do is to bring about the negotiation which would end that, and it will end. I have no doubt that it will end.

INTERVIEWER:

Any idea of the time-scale?

PRIME MINISTER:

No, but I do just look back. Industry has been doing a great deal to end it. There are people who have been fighting for the end of apartheid far longer than some people here - Helen Sussman has - and they are saying and taking a similar view to Chief Bhutalesi (phon)

Sussman
Bhutalesi

and to many of the moderates: "Look! It will come about by negotiation, but do not do anything to stop that process of negotiation starting! Do not do anything which would harm the readiness and the understanding of most people that it has to start!" and they are trying to bring it about, and some of them have been trying to bring it about for far longer than some people here - and do not harm those who are trying to go in the direction in which one wants to go.

INTERVIEWER:

You appear to have shifted your view somewhat towards the possibility of further measures. Was that a purely tactical thing?

PRIME MINISTER:

I have not shifted it at all. Will you please look at the Commonwealth Accord - that if sufficient progress is not made, we will consider further measures [only "consider further measures"]. Please look at the EEC. ^[European Council on Janus which speak of measures which might be needed] I have not got them down here, I always have them with me at Questions - EEC, and ~~it was I who called a contingency~~ ^{made of} planning on 1 July [and the further measures were considered], but it is not automatic, because you have to look and take things into account.

[As you know, the Eminent Persons Group did not recommend economic sanctions, as Tony Barber pointed out. I have not shifted at all.]

Do not forget that both in the European Community and in the Commonwealth Accord there are measures in place.

INTERVIEWER:

That I am clear on.

PRIME MINISTER:

There are nine measures mentioned in the last Commonwealth Accord which we reaffirmed or which we put in place. There are nine measures there.

The two that you would call true economic sanctions: one is the defence one, which has been in place since 1977, mandatory, that we do not supply South Africa with defence equipment that could be used for internal oppression. That sanction has been in place. I may say it is not wholly working. And the other one, the Krugerrands, to which we also added the proteas, because the protea was beginning to take the place..the protea coin..of the Krugerrand..those are economic sanctions.

Some of the others are what I call signals.

INTERVIEWER:

So it was not a shift on your part because the stories were that you had been deserted by the Cabinet, that you had had a row with the Queen?

PRIME MINISTER:

I am amazed at some of the stories I read in the press, utterly amazed.

INTERVIEWER:

No basis, in fact, at all then those things?

PRIME MINISTER:

You know that I can never, and will never, say anything whatsoever. The relations between the Monarch and Prime Minister are and will remain totally confidential.

In Cabinet, the basis of Cabinet is that people express their minds freely there and of course you do to discuss.

INTERVIEWER:

But you were not pushed, because you had been deserted by the Cabinet?

PRIME MINISTER:

How absurd! When do you think I was deserted by the Cabinet?

INTERVIEWER:

I do not know. That is simply the story that has been put about.

PRIME MINISTER:

Look back at the evidence. Look back at the measures we put in place in the Commonwealth Accord. Look at them! There are nine. Look at what happened in the European Economic Community. Read

it! There has been no change since then.

They have only to look at the evidence. What is characteristic of politics these days is that you get assertions made and people know they can make some of these assertions and know, because of the fundamental confidentiality of the system, I am not in a position to argue in any way, and they want to ask me these questions to make me break that confidence. I will not do so.

I do not believe that Cabinet Government can continue to exist if there are assertions made outside about what happened inside. As you know, I thoroughly disapprove of people who write diaries about these things. I think in Cabinet you have got to be on the basis that you trust one another.

INTERVIEWER:

But you have not been shoved by the Cabinet?

PRIME MINISTER:

You know, people really must think that I have the strongest personality that was ever born on this earth!

INTERVIEWER:

Yes, I think they may think that!

PRIME MINISTER:

That I can get my own way, regardless of what anyone else thinks

at any time. I get my way, if I get it, by convincing the other people by argument that that is the way to go, and they, having discussed it, agree that is the way to go.

Yes, I do argue a great deal. What do you think you have a Cabinet of 21 people for, to sit round and say nothing?

INTERVIEWER:

Some people would have said you would have been better to have made modest concessions, conciliatory noises, earlier and they would say that you have perhaps accentuated the sense of divisions by the way that you have handled it.

PRIME MINISTER:

Oh whatever I do they will complain! The fact is that actually by trying to analyse what people mean by economic sanctions, to analyse their effect, to say: "Do you realise what you are doing to men, women and children? Do you realise what you are going to do, for example, to the British merchant marine but whom on other occasions you never hesitate to tell me is getting smaller? Do you realise that by saying what you are going to do to the farmworkers in the Cape in a country which has no supplementary benefit and no national insurance? Do you realise what you are doing by saying put more to stop starvation in Ethiopia but do something which you believe will destroy the economy of South Africa? Do you realise what you are doing in a country where you have good jobs or good social security,

are looked after? Do you realise what you are doing and do you realise what the Labour Party did when it was in power, totally and utterly recoiled from economic sanctions for the same reasons? " Do you realise this?

INTERVIEWER:

Yes.

PRIME MINISTER:

You are telling me that it is wrong actually to face people with the day-to-day consequences of their own action, it is bad handling. What we have done, Mr. Turner, is to knock out, I believe, general economic sanctions as a possible way forward, and also one has got them to realise that what is the point even of doing that if other people then pick up the business, if it goes through third countries? You stop it from going direct, so it goes through third countries, so it merely arrives in this country at a higher price, or if it works it works by starving some people, and do you realise that in some things which are absolutely vital for defence of this country the only other source for those minerals is the Soviet Union and do you realise that if you are going to put more and more power in this matter into the hands of the Soviet Union, where there are no human rights, is that your objective? And do you realise also the strategic importance of South Africa? That it can command the Indian Ocean, it can command the South Atlantic, and do you not think it would be better to get

an agreement by negotiation so that you have a sense of a freer society, hopefully of a democratic society, coming through truly in our way?

And that is called handling it badly! Poppycock!

So actually, by embarking on that course and moving it, we have actually got it back too. If that would be so damaging, how do we send signals?

All right, regardless of the effect of sanctions, some people apparently want them, and also, one has had to say: "Look! Supposing you close Bight (phon.) Bridge?" Some people look astonished. They are not quite sure what Bight Bridge is or what the effect of closing it would be. And do you realise what would happen to the three million black Africans who come to South Africa for work and send remittances home? Are you going to put the whole of southern Africa into acute difficulty? Do you know where you are going?

INTERVIEWER:

Yes, fine. So the Commonwealth, in your view, is not a club whose time has passed?

PRIME MINISTER:

No, not if they really value the Commonwealth. We have faced many many difficult things, and we shall go on facing many more, and there are many countries in the Commonwealth who will not have a democracy in the term that we understand it. We do not go into a

terrific argument and say: "Do this or we leave the Commonwealth!"
They are their countries.

We do try to put our views and I am as anxious as anyone else to bring an end to apartheid, but I am anxious to bring an end to apartheid with a country which has what South Africa has now - the strongest economy in the whole of Africa.

INTERVIEWER:

Yes, by a mile!

PRIME MINISTER:

And some of the best standard of living for many black Africans in the whole of Africa, and also, let us face it, to keep the possibility of democracy as we understand it in that country, and democracy as we understand it does mean include protection for minorities, and one must never forget that. Democracy is not meant to be a dictatorship of the majority. It is meant to be a democracy which for a period governs by the majority, but a majority which always has regard for the rights of minorities and has regard - as we believe they have not at the moment - for fundamental human rights, and that is what one wants to bring about.

So what we all want to get away from is go the other way and create a wasteland.

INTERVIEWER:

Is it going to be tough to get what you want in this Commonwealth Conference?

PRIME MINISTER:

All my life has been tough, it is always tough, and it is because - if I might use the word - you care deeply about trying to get what you believe to be the best decision that you go on being tough. If you did not care two hoots about it, you would not have to be tough. You would sit back and say: "Now, if I do not do anything controversial, if I take the easy way every time, maybe I will be liked!" but I would despise myself, and in the long run you would not be liked.

INTERVIEWER:

That is right.

PRIME MINISTER:

People would then turn back, years ahead, and say: "Look! They had the first woman Prime Minister and she did not actually tackle the problems of her time!"

INTERVIEWER:

*What would satisfy you in terms of progress in the short-term?
What is your basic wish?*

PRIME MINISTER:

My basic wish is that there are more signs, more obvious and visible signs that they are going to get rid of apartheid, that it is their intention.

I am very much aware that they do have a big congress coming up in the middle of August which, again, is a time factor we have to bear in mind. I am very much aware that the tenth anniversary of Soweto was always bound to be a very tense situation, and I think we were, many of us, aware of that in the European Economic Community, and therefore, it is a three-month period so that those things can be overcome and we shall have more signs that they are genuinely going to get rid of apartheid.

There are signs, I think, that they genuinely want to enter into a negotiation, and I just hope. The timing is difficult, but if you add up what they have done in the last eighteen months to two years, there has been quite a fundamental change of view and I myself firmly believe what Helen Sussman said in her article in "The Times" and she said: "We shall go on getting rid of apartheid. We shall, and it will come about, but do not let it virtually come about with a wasteland and with much more resentment than would have been the other case!"

INTERVIEWER:

And you do not feel that P.W. Botha is in the hands of his military and his police and cannot move more?

PRIME MINISTER:

No, because again, as Chief Bhutalese said, more and more, both black people and white people in South Africa are willing to negotiate and are ready to negotiate, and it is really how to bring that about. Whether we have got the time-scale too tight or not I do not know, but I believe it will come about.

INTERVIEWER:

Some people, of course, say if there were a lot of white people being killed - this is the criticism - that you would be more concerned than you appear to be. How do you respond to that?

PRIME MINISTER:

I have never heard that accusation. Whether it is black or white people being killed, the important thing is to get suspension of violence when the negotiation can take place.

INTERVIEWER:

So you are just as concerned?

PRIME MINISTER:

Of course. It is the deaths.

INTERVIEWER:

Whether black or white!

PRIME MINISTER:

Whether black or white. There are 800,000 people in South Africa who are entitled to come here. I do not think many of them are black South Africans, but I have not the slightest shadow of doubt that some of them are Indian South Africans.

INTERVIEWER:

Yes, and you are just as concerned about all of them?

PRIME MINISTER:

Of course! Violence is not a respecter of colour.

INTERVIEWER:

Just looking forward a bit to the future, let me ask just one or two questions, if I could, about whether you have actually enjoyed - this is going back to more general things -

PRIME MINISTER:

Can I say on that, I find the "necklace" which black uses against black utterly repugnant and it is one of the things which, faster than anything else, turned my sympathies off any case which some of those might have been putting. I do not understand how anyone can do it to another person.

INTERVIEWER:

But I suppose it is just as violent, you see, that the South African police put people to death like Steve Biko.

PRIME MINISTER:

Oh, absolutely appalling, but no-one stands up for it. You actually hear people standing up for the necklace or refusing to condemn it.

INTERVIEWER:

Very fair point.

PRIME MINISTER:

Absolutely appalling what they did to Steve Biko. No-one stands up for it. Everyone condemns it and tries to bring people to justice.

INTERVIEWER:

That is very fair.

It has been over seven years now that you have been in office. Have you actually enjoyed the period in office or is "enjoyed" the wrong word?

PRIME MINISTER:

I do not know whether "enjoyed" is the right word. It is the job which I wanted to do, which I want to go on doing. Using the word

always have been - Cain and Abel - and there always will be, and the lesson of history for the rest of us, which I hope we have learned since the last War, is so to keep enough in defence that we deter anyone, we make it so impossible for that person to seize power by force that he would never in fact do it. That is the fundamental thing of defence. You stop the bully by making it perfectly clear that he would get more than he gave and he would be stopped - and that is the fundamental argument for defence.

But it does not happen all over the world and it cannot happen all over the world and so what you also have to fight, the new thing of our age, is the taking of power by subversion, and that is what Communism does all over the world still - taking power by subversion and relying on the lethargy of people who believe in freedom not to do so much about their beliefs as those who are heavily organised by the Communists the world over. Always beware of taking power by subversion.

You have been talking about South Africa. There is real trouble in Mozambique. There is real trouble in Angola. No white people there. They left long ago, and what have you got?

You could have a fantastic economy in Angola. It is rich. What have you got? Fighting between several people.

What have you got in Mozambique? Fighting.

What have you got in Uganda? Fighting.

What have you got in Afghanistan, an occupied territory?

INTERVIEWER:

Exactly the same.

PRIME MINISTER:

What did you get when Viet Nam actually united her country and the Americans left? Did you get wonderful peace? This new Communist society?. No. She attacked her neighbour, and the murder and the massacre has been terrible, so you are always going to get that and you have to defend against it.

We have not got rid of terrorism in Northern Ireland.

There are problems between Greek Cypriots, Turk Cypriots. There are problems in the Middle East. You know, the worst problems if you look at it, are not between black and white; they are between adjacent, similar peoples, whether it is in Angola, whether it is in Mozambique, whether it is the tragedy in Cyprus, whether it is in Ireland, whether it is in Viet Nam-Cambodia, whether it is in the Tamils or the Singalese, whether it is in the Sikhs, and you cannot solve them all.

I remember I was suddenly shocked, but one thought it was right after a moment: there are some problems that are insoluble because they are problems of human nature and you cannot solve all of those, but you can only try to persuade and try to build structures which stop the worst things happening.