

PRIME MINISTER

INTERNATIONAL GARDEN FESTIVAL OF
LIVERPOOL

With Mr. Heseltine's encouragement, the Merseyside Development Corporation are holding a major exhibition on reclaimed land in Merseyside which they hope will attract some three million visitors. About 20-25 other countries may well exhibit. Mr. Heseltine (Flag A) seeks guidance on whether the South Africans should be invited to exhibit and if not, what response should be given should they take the initiative. The Foreign Secretary (Flag B) would have no objection to the South Africans being invited. The Home Secretary, however, (Flag C) advises very firmly that the South Africans should be neither invited nor allowed to participate if they ask. His view is that South African participation would be seen as "an act of considerable insensitivity if not a deliberate affront to the feelings of the local community" and will be likely to provoke considerable disorder.

I agree with
the Foreign Secretary: If
such an invitation
could only cause growth

29 September 1982

ms



Reg Pol

2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB
01-212 3434

My ref: H/PSO/16689/82

Your ref:

18 October 1982

Dear Tim

Pa.

R

19/10

INTERNATIONAL GARDEN FESTIVAL OF LIVERPOOL
POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION BY SOUTH AFRICA

Thank you for your letter of 1 October, recording the Prime Minister's agreement with the Home Secretary that South Africa should not be invited to participate at this festival.

My Secretary of State has now written to Lord Aberconway to say that an invitation should not be issued, and to ask him to let this Department and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office know of any spontaneous approach from South Africa. This will allow for the co-ordination of response which the Foreign Secretary sought in his letter of 27 September.

I am copying this letter to John Holmes (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Colin Walters (Home Office).

Yours sincerely
R Bright

R BRIGHT
Private Secretary

Regional Policy, Inner Cities, 243

HERTS MANCHESTER
POLICE OFFICE



18 OCT 1982



[Faint, illegible text]



Regional Policy
H

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 October 1982

The Prime Minister has now seen your Secretary of State's letter of 10 September to the Home Secretary about the International Garden Festival of Liverpool; she has also seen the Foreign Secretary's minute of 27 September and the Home Secretary's letter of 28 September on the same subject. The Prime Minister agrees with the Home Secretary that South Africans should not be invited to participate in the Festival. She has commented that such an invitation could only cause trouble.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Holmes (FCO) and Colin Walters (Home Office).

TF

David Edmonds, Esq.,
Department of the Environment.

RH



QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

28 September 1982

Dear Minister.

INTERNATIONAL GARDEN FESTIVAL OF LIVERPOOL 1984
POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

Thank you for your letter of 10 September about whether or not the South African Government should be invited to participate in the International Garden Festival of Liverpool in 1984 and how to advise Lord Aberconway and the Merseyside Development Corporation to respond were the South Africans to take the initiative in seeking to participate.

I have also seen Francis Pym's minute to you of 27 September, and I fully appreciate what he says about our general policy towards South Africa. In the special circumstances of Merseyside, however, I believe firmly that the South Africans should neither be invited to participate in this Festival nor allowed to if they were asked.

Since the opening of the Festival is some eighteen months ahead, it is not at present possible to assess accurately whether or not South African participation would provoke disorder, either from members of the local population, including, but not only, the ethnic minority communities, or from demonstrators from elsewhere. It could, however, hardly augur well that, as I understand, the Festival site will be within walking distance of parts of Toxteth.

But, in any event, it seems to me evident that South African participation would be deeply resented. If we needed to distinguish the Festival from the Chelsea Flower Show, there is a difference of geography as well as of sponsorship. I understand that this summer there was a flower show in Southport at which the South Africans exhibited and which as a result was widely boycotted. It reflects his judgment of local sensitivities, both among the population generally and of political groups, that the Chief Constable of Merseyside declined an invitation to open that show or otherwise attend it.

This reinforces my judgment that to permit South African participation in the officially sponsored Festival would be seen as an act of considerable insensitivity, if not a deliberate affront, to the feelings of the local community. Whether the South Africans had been invited, or were merely allowed, to participate would be seen as a distinction without a difference. The inevitable controversy of their participation would embarrass not only the Government, as the prime movers of the Festival, but also Her Majesty The Queen, in Her capacity as its patron.

If in the light of these considerations colleagues share my judgment, it seems clear that Lord Aberconway should be informed as soon as possible that the South Africans should be excluded from the Festival. Even the suggestion that participation by them was being contemplated could do harm. No doubt you will consult Francis, as he has suggested, on how best to deal with an approach from the South African Government, if they were to make one.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and to Francis Pym.

M
as lon.

W.H.C.

Regional Policy, Inner Cities,
P43



Reg Pol
B

FCS/82/141

Await news
of Home Secretary

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

JH
27/9

International Garden Festival of Liverpool, 1984: Possible
Participation by South Africa

BU when
available.

1. Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 10 September to Willie Whitelaw.
2. Apart from certain specified fields where there are special constraints (arms sales, military collaboration, nuclear contacts and sport), it is policy to maintain normal relations with South Africa and to use our contacts to encourage peaceful change in that country.
3. From this point of view there would be no reason to exclude the South Africans from participating in the Liverpool International Garden Festival if they wished to do so. Such exclusion would be difficult to justify either to the South Africans, with whom our relations could be harmed, or in this country.
4. I realise of course that there are many people strongly opposed to any links or contacts between this country and South Africa. Whether adverse domestic reaction to South African participation in the Festival would be such as to create the risk of serious incidents which would outweigh the policy considerations outlined above is a question for the Home Secretary.
5. It will be clear from this that we should have no objection if it were decided that the South Africans should be invited. If, however, no invitation is sent but the South Africans themselves take the initiative in seeking to participate, we hope you would consult us again so that we can coordinate a response to any complaint they might make if their offer is rejected.



6. I am copying this minute to the Prime Minister and to Willie Whitelaw.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'FP', with a horizontal line underneath.

(FRANCIS PYM)

27 September, 1982

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Regional Play, Inner Cities,
Pt 3



John Coles

*will you
deal with this?*

mes 13/9

Reg'd

2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB

My ref: H/PSO/15426/82

Your ref:

10 SEP 82

*A wait views of Home
Secretary. S. U. when available.*

M 13/9

De l'Orléans

INTERNATIONAL GARDEN FESTIVAL OF LIVERPOOL, 1984
POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION BY SOUTH AFRICA

You may know that, at my invitation, the Merseyside Development Corporation will stage a major horticultural, landscape and leisure exhibition in Liverpool between April and October 1984, on a 250-acre Merseyside site which they are now reclaiming from a state of considerable dereliction. Her Majesty The Queen has agreed to be the festival's patron, and we estimate that as many as 3 million people may attend over the 6 months.

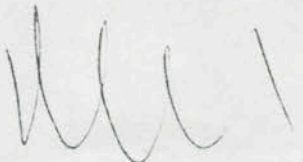
In June of this year, the Liverpool festival was formally awarded international recognition by the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) in Paris. This recognition allows the host Government to invite official participation at the festival from other Governments. We anticipate that between 20 and 25 other countries may well respond positively to an invitation, and contribute national gardens to the Liverpool festival.

BIE regulations require that a host Government should appoint a Commissioner-General of Exhibition to oversee arrangements for international participation. I have appointed Lord Aberconway, President of the Royal Horticultural Society, as Commissioner-General of the Liverpool festival, and he has raised the question of possible South African participation, and the possibility of domestic controversy, on which I would welcome your views.

Lord Aberconway has pointed out that, while South Africa regularly exhibits at the Chelsea Flower Show without exciting controversy, an official South African presence in Liverpool in 1984 might well provoke a disruptive reaction from local groups in Liverpool where race relations are difficult. Further, the Chelsea Flower Show is organised by a private body, the RHS, while the Liverpool festival will be Government-sponsored.

I think that Lord Aberconway is right to ask us to consider the question at this early stage. No invitation has been sent to the South African Government, and BIE regulations do not require that one should be sent. We need to decide not only how to act on the invitation, however, but also how to react to any possible approach from South Africa. If we decide against a South African presence at the Liverpool festival, we would have to advise Lord Aberconway and the MDC to turn down such an approach.

I see the potential for disruption which is of concern to Lord Aberconway, but this is clearly a sensitive issue on which I would welcome colleagues' views. I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and to Francis Pym, and would be grateful for an early reaction.

Yours ever


MICHAEL HESELTINE

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