

Spoken to Sir
Michael Scott. N.f.

①

C.P. 21/7

PRIME MINISTER

^{Michael}
Sir Peter Scott, Chairman of the Royal Commonwealth Society, telephoned yesterday to say that the Society would be very happy to offer you a platform on South Africa between now and the Commonwealth Review meeting in early August. You will recall that Mr Kinnock addressed them yesterday.

I told Sir Peter that you had set out your views on South Africa on several occasions in the House and in interviews in recent weeks; that I doubted whether you would want to deliver a public speech while the Foreign Secretary was in South Africa; and that anyway your diary between now and early August was already full. I thought it was very unlikely that you would want to accept, but would tell you of the invitation.

C.P.

No time now

Charles Powell

17 July 1986

C O P Y

Royal Commonwealth Society

From Rt Hon Lord Trend PC GCB CVO

24th July 1986

The threat to Commonwealth unity implicit in the current debate about South Africa is a matter of the greatest concern to all of us in the Royal Commonwealth Society.

As a "non-sectarian and non-party organisation" under our Charter, it is not for us to enter the argument about the best means of bringing apartheid to an early end with the minimum of conflict and damage. But, as a Society dedicated to promoting the contemporary Commonwealth and with members from all its regions, we would urge upon the decision-makers everywhere, in whatever stresses or strains there may be in the weeks ahead, the need to think as much about the value of Commonwealth cohesion in the world as about putting things to rights in South Africa.

It would be an ironic victory for the supporters of apartheid if the challenge which that repulsive creed presents to the conscience of the civilised world were to be made the occasion of weakening Commonwealth unity and so diminishing its influence for good in international affairs, instead of reaffirming the common purpose of all its members to promote justice and freedom as widely as possible throughout the world. The way to realise that purpose is not by leaving the Commonwealth or by seeking to force others to leave it, nor by pressing a difference of view about the means to be employed so far that it may call in question whether there is real agreement on the end to be achieved. This is not the first time that the Commonwealth will have had to show that it can accommodate divergent views about means when it is united about the end.

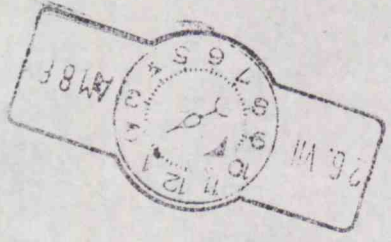
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Let us remember what The Queen said in Her Commonwealth Day Message last March - calling on everyone, especially the young, to show goodwill, tolerance and understanding in the cause of easing world tensions. That message must continue to govern the words and actions of all who have the true interests of the Commonwealth at heart; and this Society will do all in its power to contribute to that endeavour.

President

The Editor
The Times
1 Pennington Street
London E1 9XN



Prime Minister (2)

Royal ^{CDP}
28/7.
Commonwealth
Society

From Sir Michael Scott KCVO CMG

25th July 1986

Dear Charles,

While the Society cannot adopt a public corporate stance on political matters it has an obligation to speak up on behalf of the Commonwealth. Accordingly a letter from our President, Lord Trend, has been sent to the Editor of The Times for publication and I enclose a copy.

I have been asked to let the Prime Minister's Office know what the Society has done, especially in case the Editor chooses not to print it.

Yours ever,
Michael Scott.

Secretary-General

Mr Charles Powell
Private Secretary to
The Rt Hon The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London S W 1