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PRIME MINISTER

INTERVIEW WITH GRAHAM TURNER

Graham Turner has now produced the attached story, based on his talk with you, which he intends to be published in the Sunday Telegraph next Sunday.

As you will see, about half of it deals with South Africa.

I agree with everything you say about South Africa. I think it will go down well with the home audience. And most of it you have said before. The problem lies in the presentation and the timing in relation to the forthcoming Commonwealth meeting and the Foreign Secretary's mission to South Africa. I am bound to say that, in its present form, the article runs the risk of exposing you to sharp criticism for dealing too vigorously with Southern African problems at a very sensitive moment, for neglecting to say some things e.g. on the possible need for measures which would reassure the Commonwealth, for thus increasing the risk of confrontation at the forthcoming Commonwealth meeting, and for once again speaking out on this subject at the very moment when the Foreign Secretary is engaged in delicate negotiations. Some Commonwealth countries are likely to react badly.

Bernard is not so convinced about these risks. He thinks that the robust approach will go down well with the domestic audience.

For these reasons, it would be much better if we could persuade Mr. Turner and the Sunday Telegraph to drop this part of the article. They have behaved badly by bouncing you into talking on South Africa. Unhappily both Perry Worthsthorpe and Graham Turner are proving very resistant. They might be more disposed to negotiate on amendments to the text.

The possibilities are:

- (i) a further appeal to Perry Worthsthorpe and/or Conrad Black not to publish the passages on South Africa. This might be accompanied by a promise of a further interview on a topical subject in the autumn. But, in Bernard's view, this is most unlikely to succeed.
- (ii) attempt to negotiate some deletions from the text. I have marked on the attached copy the changes which I think we should seek. Again, Bernard is sceptical whether we shall succeed.

To have any chance of success in either ploy, we shall need to say that the request has your full authority. May we please do this?

C.D.P.

CHARLES POWELL
24 July 1986

Also - later events
on Saturday
could put a complexion
upon it - that it was
not intended to be.

CJ2ACG

Had it not been Arthur Turner
I should have refused to
do the interview last Saturday
because it was really obtained
on a false basis. I feel
pretty strongly about it. By all means
try very hard to negotiate the
deletions. This is the minimum we
can expect - especially as things have
worsened during the last week. They now also
say that the interview will be done piece over 8 days ago.

Sub meeting 15 or 16 July (before the day's other events)

At Chequers last weekend, the Prime Minister was in training for the political version of the Commonwealth Games. A lot of the athletes may have been ordered to stay away, but none of the Prime Ministers has scratched and Mrs. Thatcher is clearly anticipating a tetchy and difficult contest. "Hurdle after hurdle after hurdle", she murmured, musing on the ups and downs on the political steeplechase in general, in the manner of one who would welcome a few more races on the flat.

It has been a year to test the nerve and endurance of the bravest : Westland, the deal with General Motors which never was, the Libyan raid and now South Africa, with the charge that she has been deserted by her Cabinet, gravely displeased the Queen and put the Commonwealth at risk.

Yet, in spite of the encircling glooms, Mrs. Thatcher showed no sign of curling at the edges, nor indeed of temporising for the sake of a quieter life. For over two hours, she spoke with candour and undiminished vigour, in language liberally peppered with "poppycocks!" and "absolute nonsenses" both about the immediate perplexities and ^{about} ~~her~~ larger, long-term battle to "revive the spirit of Britain". At times like this, she makes Boadicea ~~seem~~ seem like a wimp.

Yes, she admitted, she was worried about the Commonwealth Conference, worried about whether we should be able to persuade the others that the view we were taking on sanctions was not only reasonable but also the way most likely to bring an end to apartheid better and faster than the alternatives.

As for the danger that the Commonwealth might actually break up over the issue, such a step, she declared, would be "absolutely absurd". After all, it wasn't the British Commonwealth, its members had long ago refused to have it called that. ["So it is their club, their Commonwealth. If they wish to break it up, I think that's absurd".]

Nor was it, in her view, a club whose time was past, not if the members really valued it anyway. It was a grouping which girdled the world, the only international conference she attended where no translators were needed and where debate was therefore that much freer and more genuine. What was more, some of its members didn't belong to another institution. In that sense, she implied, it was their only club

It would also be absurd to break it up because it had already weathered great difficulties. What sort of relationship was it that couldn't accommodate differences of opinion, particularly when what was being proposed would affect member countries very differently? There were vigorous differences in the UN, but nobody suggested the Security Council should fold up on that account.

"Good Heavens!", said Mrs. Thatcher, "just look at what it has had to withstand to date! [Don't think all the countries in it are democracies in our sense of the term. Some have military governments some states of emergency, some have had censorship at times, some internal massacres - and some have put Opposition people in jail without trial.]

"Of course", she went on, "we have withstood all that, partly because you understand that some countries do have problems, and it is not for us to pontificate about how they should deal with them". Just because some of them were not democracies in our sense, we didn't "go into a terrific argument" and say "do this or we shall leave the Commonwealth!"

Nor was the problem, she added later, essentially one of colour. You only had to look at the rest of Africa to see that. There was real trouble in both Angola and Mozambique, though there were no white people there. They had left long ago, but what had you got? Fighting. Angola could have a fantastic economy, it was rich, but instead you had fighting between different groups of people. The problem was ^{essentially} one of human nature, not colour.

So what she was hoping for was that the Commonwealth would stay together, that everyone would speak their minds courteously in the knowledge that the South Africans were doing things "which most of us find repugnant" and that they all wanted to bring apartheid to an end - "and it will end", declared the Prime Minister firmly, "I have no doubt of that".

But what did she mean by the end of apartheid - one man, one vote? "That sort of constitutional arrangement", declared the Prime Minister, "is not for an outside entity to determine. Once you have got dialogue going - and I think myself there will probably have to be two lots of negotiations, one with the black South Africans and the

second with them all together - then they have got to fashion their own constitution.

"After all, there used to be a Central African Federation, which we put together and the Africans then took apart. We have got to stop acting as if we can impose things upon them".

She seemed, I remarked, to have shifted somewhat towards the side of further measures. Had that been provoked, as had been reported, by being "deserted" by her Cabinet or having had a row with the Queen ?

"I have not shifted at all", retorted Mrs. Thatcher, "and I am amazed, utterly amazed at some of the stories I read in the Press". What went on between monarch and Prime Minister was totally confidential. So was what happened in Cabinet and, for that reason, she was not in a position to refute the assertions which had been made, but when, pray, did I imagine that she had been "deserted" by her Cabinet

So it wasn't true that she had been put under pressure by her colleagues on sanctions ? By now, the Prime Minister's indignation had reached simmering-point. "You know", she said, "people must think I have the strongest personality that was ever born on this earth" - they might indeed believe that, I murmured - "that I can get my own way regardless of what anyone else thinks at any time".

She did, it was true, argue a great deal but, if she got her own way, it was only by convincing other people.

But some of her critics had said she would have been better

advised to make modest concessions on sanctions at the outset and thus avoid accentuating the divisions which existed. "Whatever I do", said the Prime Minister, with just a hint of resignation, "they will complain".

The fact was that, by getting people to analyse what they meant by ^{comprehensive} sanctions - by asking questions such as 'do you realize what you are doing to farm-workers in the Cape where they have no supplementary benefit?', 'do you realize what you are doing to the British merchant marine which, on other occasions, you never hesitate to tell me is getting smaller?', 'do you realize that the Labour Party, when in power, utterly recoiled from sanctions for the same reasons?' - they had been made to face what sanctions meant in practice.

Was I really telling her that it was wrong to face people with the consequences of their day-to-day actions, and that that was handling the situation badly? [Poppycock!]

"What we have done", declared Mrs. Thatcher, "is to knock out general economic sanctions as a possible way forward, and get people to realise that there is no point in applying them if others pick up the business or it goes through third countries". Then, it merely arrived in this country at a higher price or, if it worked, it worked by starving people. She and the Government had no intention of creating a wasteland in southern Africa. Much better to have "a free and hopefully democratic society coming through in our way".

So, she conceded, the Commonwealth Conference was going to be tough but "if you care deeply about trying to get what you believe to be the best decision, then you go on being tough. If you didn't care two hoots, you wouldn't have to be. You would sit back and say 'if I didn't do anything controversial, if I took the easy way every time, maybe I would be liked.' But, if I did that, I would despise myself and in the long run, I wouldn't be liked anyway.

"Years from now, people would turn back and say 'look, they had their first woman Prime Minister and she didn't tackle the problems of her time'".

So she did not feel that President Botha was unable to move because his hands were tied by the South African military and police. No, declared Mrs. Thatcher, she did not, because more and more people there, both black and white, were ready to negotiate, though "whether we have got the time-scale too tight, I don't know".

She also had critics, I pointed out, who claimed that she would show more concern if it were whites that were being killed, and not blacks. The charge genuinely shocked her. She had never, she said, heard such an accusation. What concerned her were deaths, whether black or white. After all, there ^{might be as many as} were 800,000 people in South Africa many of them Indian, who were entitled to come to this country and she was naturally concerned about them.

"Can I just say", she went on, "that I find the necklace which black uses to kill black utterly ~~repugnant~~ repugnant and it ^{is} one of

the things which, faster than anything else, turned ~~off~~ my sympathies off any case which some of them might have been putting".]

But wasn't it just as bad that the South African police should have done to death people like Steve Biko, the black African leader ? "Oh", exclaimed Mrs. Thatcher, "it was absolutely appalling what they did to Biko, but no one stands up for that, everybody condemns it, while you actually hear people standing up for the necklace, or at least refusing to condemn it".

There was another story, I said, that she had already reached a private deal with Botha, that Nelson Mandela should be released during the Commonwealth Conference. "I have done no private deals", declared the Prime Minister categorically. Of course we worked for Mandela's release and for the lifting of the ban on the ANC, even though we disliked many of the things they stood for. The fact was that you couldn't have a negotiation unless Mandela and the ANC could come to it and speak freely.

"My basic wish", she said, "is that there should be more obvious and visible signs that they are going to get rid of apartheid". She was very much aware of Botha's timing difficulties, but there were signs that the South Africans genuinely wanted negotiations - "and I just hope".

But hope, in the minefield of southern Africa, seemed such a fragile flower. After the post-Libyan storms, the sneer that she was nothing more than Reagan's stooge, had it not been tempting to play

for safety on South Africa, to drift with the tide ? Or did she perhaps have some constitutional instinct to swim against it, an in-built contrariness ? It seemed an entirely new idea to the Prime Minister, who is not/^{much}given to self-analysis.

"I do not think I have ever thought", she said pensively, "shall I take the tough or easy way ?" I don't think I have ever said 'let's go the easy way for once'." On South Africa, it had ^{certainly} never ~~even~~ entered her head. She just looked at problems and decided what she thought was the right way - no, "correct" was a better word, because "right" made her sound so pious.

But hadn't it been at least tempting, particularly after the great shambles of Westland and BL ? "Well, you say great shambles", retorted Mrs. Thatcher, "but they were comparatively small things, in fact, if I may say so, very small things". Politically, though, surely not ? Yes, conceded the Prime Minister grudgingly, Westland had been difficult, but only because because the Press were more interested in the personalities than the underlying issue.

As for Libya, she was well pleased with the outcome. A bully only went on bullying so long as the people he was bullying didn't fight back. When they did, anyone who was contemplating being a bull was suddenly faced with the unknown. They said to themselves "Gosh! I can't just knock this group of people about, they might hit back". That was exactly what they had done to Gadaffi.

But hadn't one of the results of not taking the easy way out

been that, during her period of office, she had quarrelled with most of the major institutions of the State - the Civil Service, the universities, the Church of England.....?

"I have not quarrelled with the Church of England", interjected the Prime Minister. "What I did say in the House the other day was that I find it absolutely astonishing that, at one stage, we are asked to give more money to stop starvation in Africa and, at another, to pursue a policy which would increase it. Am I not entitled to say that because I believe it to be correct?"

The point I was trying to put, I said, was that these institutions were part of the basic framework of the State, and whether she regarded the State as simply the will of the Prime Minister, licensed by the people? No, retorted Mrs. Thatcher, she did not, but I was taking the opposite view that no Prime Minister could ever discuss anything with the institutions of State, she must accept what they said willy-nilly.

They came out with all kinds of things, and she did not complain but, now and then, she did exercise "a scintilla of freedom of speech"!

But did not the fact that these battles had taken place, with the sense of tension and conflict they brought, make it harder to govern the country? No, it didn't, said the Prime Minister. The GCHQ thing had been "a very limited exercise". As for the service in St Pauls after the Falklands campaign, she had simply been anxious that people

who had fought there should take part, and they had.

What I was arguing, though, she declared, was that everyone could have their say except a Prime Minister. "Good Lord!", she exclaimed, "if you ever dare say anything, you are quarrelling with the great institutions. Nonsense! I am not going to be gagged!"

That seemed a good moment to take a ^{break} ~~rest~~ from current headaches and look back at the long, hard road Mrs Thatcher has travelled since taking office in 1979. In how bad a state, I asked, had the country then been? Where were we heading? I expected an answer ^{purely} in economic terms, with a ghoulish vision of Britain sinking downhill towards, first, the Portugese and then the Mozambiquean condition. What I got was something quite different.

Of course, she recalled, we were in a state where the unions had become more important than the Government, where people thought Jack Jones more powerful than Callaghan, but there was a deeper malaise: the malignant blight of socialism was eating away the British spirit of enterprise and independence.

"They set out to do more things for people", said Mrs. Thatcher, "but what they actually do is try to control their lives and create a dependency on government. They want more council houses, so they can say who should go into them. They want more rent subsidies, so they can say who should get them and who shouldn't. They want more central and local government ^{jobs} so they have a hold over those people".

Nor did the blight stop there. The more dependent on government you became, the less independent you were and, by 1979, the socialists had given such large numbers of people a vested interest in the continuance of a Labour Government that we only just managed to get back to being a free society. In other words, she implied, we were on the road to becoming a nation of State-dependent drones.

"We had had 35 years when the government took a larger and larger part in life, so we had the safety net, but we ^{were forgetting} ~~had forgotten~~ the ladder of opportunity. After 35 years of that kind of thinking, with people even in our own Party believing that the touchstone of showing you ~~were~~ ^{were} for the people was to take more and more of their money to do more and more things for them, we desperately needed a reinvigoration of the spirit". It was taking a long time to bring that about.

One of the reasons the North of England was not recovering as quickly as it might was that it no longer had the same number of people ready to start up their own businesses. "The North", said Mrs. Thatcher, "as built by enterprise long before we had a Minister of Industry, but then it got so ossified that people just expected jobs to be forthcoming from the big companies".

No, when she really thought about it, she wasn't disappointed with the British people, nor did she consider them a sluggish bunch. When you had had the other spirit - "I've got a problem, the government must solve it" - for such a long time, you really mustn't

expect too big a turn-around in eight years, but it was coming.

There was another reason why she did not believe that the spirit of enterprise had been totally sapped : "where people see a direct relationship between the work they put in and the money they get out, my goodness, they go out and find and create jobs, and that is the black economy. That is the very evidence that the enterprise is still there if the incentive is".

Yet, while many people admired and liked her, I observed, there were others who, to judge from the vile abuse levelled at her, disliked and even hated her. Why did she think that was ?

"Because", Mrs. Thatcher replied bluntly, "anyone who has to do things which have been neglected for years upsets the ^{nice, even} ~~the~~ way of those who have been used to the old régime, and really rather like it. You see, there are people who are quite happy to be dependent on the State, quite happy.

"When things changed, it disturbed the even tenor of their ways. And I upset all those Labour people, who had got to the top of the unions and were Lefties and were running things, because they liked people to be dependent on them".

So it had nothing to do with their reaction to her personally ?
 "I think maybe sometimes it has", conceded the Prime Minister. "I have had to fight so hard and I suppose they are irritated that one has been able to go on. Yes, I do have to shout to make myself heard

and sometimes I say 'I am not going to shout any more like I did last time, I will just stand there until they are quiet'".

But some people alleged that she had simply created a more divided society. How did she respond to that? "Very simply", she replied. "There was a totally divided society in 1979, in the sense that the unions were in control. You did what the union leader said or you lost your job and, under the compassionate, caring Labour Party, if you lost your job, they made the employer sack you without compensation". So, far from having divided society, she had actually liberated many people.

The only division now was between a Socialism which wanted more and more people dependent on them and a Conservatism which wanted a strong, proud country of independent people.

So she did not accept that she had, perhaps, been unintentionally responsible for the increasing violence~~in~~ in society which had marked her period in office, that it might never have occurred if we had had someone more soothing at the top?

"Certainly not", retorted the Prime Minister, "that is absolutely absurd." Crime had gone up in every country during the post-war years and by roughly the same percentage. "And don't forget Mrs. Thatcher went on, "that we were seeing some very ugly scenes before we came into power. Don't you remember Saltley Cokeworks, where the trade unions were saying that, no matter what the courts and the government said, they were going to rule by that method?"

And, if I was suggesting that socialism was the alternative, the we'd seen that in action on the picket-line at Orgreave during the miners' strike, and you could see it in action now at Wapping, in Haringey and in Liverpool.

Had she, then, enjoyed her period in office or wasn't that quite the right word? She wasn't sure it was, replied Mrs. Thatcher, but it was the job she had wanted to do, and which she wanted to go on doing. It suited her and she felt natural in it.

But what was it that drove her on, particularly at moments like this with the storm-clouds gathering round her head again? Was it sheer love of power? Had that eaten into her soul after seven years? "No", declared the Prime Minister, "it does not eat into my soul at all.

"What is constantly in my mind is 'Look! There is a lot more to do before there is again running through the bloodstream of the British character the things which should run through it as a matter of habit: that Britain is a free and enterprising society, and that you cease to be free when you become dependent on the State."

As for the trappings of power, well, it was marvellous to be able to come to a beautiful place like Chequers but, given all that, what would be her greatest desire if she had an evening free? Really, just to go home. That was why she'd so much missed their little Chelsea house when they sold it. "No", she said, "it's wonderful to have this place, but it wouldn't bother me at all to give it up".

The conversation turned to less personal issues. Given the possibility of a growing tension between America and Europe, ought we to be seeking a new relationship with Russia, or was that always going to be delusory given the nature of Communism ?

Of course, said Mrs. Thatcher, she did not like Communism. It resulted neither in the dignity of freedom nor in the higher prosperity we achieved in the Western world, but we did have certain things in common and our differences must never come to a fight.

We didn't talk about attacking people, but the Soviet Union had attacked other people, and we had to make it clear to them : "One foot over that line, and we shall fight with all the capacity at our command - and you would not win, or the price is such that is never worth your starting!"

But the Russians, too, were entitled to their security, so we could negotiate with them on arms control and we could talk about fundamental human rights. ~~So~~ When she said she could do business with Gorbachov, it didn't at all mean that she regarded him in the same way as Mitterand or Kohl, but it did mean that there was some business which she could, and should do with him.

On the other hand, you had to take the measure of the person you were doing business with, you must never wear rose-tinted spectacles. Communism was going to be Communism in the same form for most of her lifetime.

And her future ? She obviously, I remarked, wanted a third

term, but people could fairly say that they had already had a large dose of her. Why should they put her in again? "For two reasons", replied Mrs. Thatcher. "First, if they believe what I believe in, the greater independence of people, the whole feeling that the State must ~~never~~ never become so powerful that it smothers the independent spirit. Second, if they believe in defending ourselves".

Then they should look at the opposing doctrine, at what the left wing unions had done and would like to do again, at the intimidation, and at the way the Bernie Grants, the Liverpools ran their societies.

But her critics, I suggested, might well say that her stance was so rigid that she could no longer take the country forward, that resistance to her was now so great that her usefulness was at an end. "How can my stance be too rigid", replied Mrs. Thatcher, "when what I am saying is more power/^{to}the people, together with more responsibility and more choice?"

People were paying vast sums of money for our schools and yet they were not getting the education for their children which they wanted. They had to go to the local comprehensive. She wanted to give them the chance to go to a different school, so how could people say she was inflexible?

She also wanted them to have more choice in housing. She felt deeply for people trapped in huge tower blocks. Those blocks had a lot to answer for. Before they were built, when children went out to play in the street, there was a visible authority from ~~the~~ the kitchen-

window - "now you just stop that!" Once you went up into a tower block, that had gone, the natural visible authority which parents exercised.

What, then, were the factors on which she would decide to call the next election? Surely nothing as small as choosing a time when she felt she could win? Mrs. Thatcher rose vertically to the bait. "That is not small", she bridled. "If the Government I lead believes in what it is doing - and it does! - then it is my duty ^{to see} that that is allowed to continue".

That was the prime consideration, but there were other things. One was that people didn't like elections too often, and they were quite right, because it induced an extra instability. All right, she had gone to the country after only four years of her first term, but this time it might be the full five - "and let me add this. People may say I have already decided when to have the election, but that is complete nonsense!"

And, when she did finally depart, what would she like people to say of her? "I ~~know~~ know what they will say", said the Prime Minister, ~~somewhat~~ somewhat sombrely. "The most complimentary will be 'oh well, she was a strong leader and a fighter and you did know where you stood with her'".

But what would she actually like them to say? Mrs Thatcher bowed her head, visibly moved. "What I would like them to say", she said haltingly, "is 'we think what she has done for Britain is really

right. It was a bit hard to face at the time, but perhaps it was right'. So not 'she was right' but 'perhaps she was right'".

And, so saying, the most remarkable and courageous Prime Minister of the post-war years departed to confront yet another high hurdle. She can be shrewish, and she can certainly be strident, but she sees through us as a nation, our sloppiness, our languor, our lack of enterprise and ambition and, whatever flak may come her way, she is determined that we shall not settle for second-best.

Too many of our recent Prime Ministers have taken the low road of shallow compromise. After Mrs. Thatcher, we cannot claim that we lacked a leader who gave us the chance to live up to the best of ourselves. If we reject her and put into office the shifty, the divided and the second-rate, we shall surely deserve our fate.

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STRICTLY PERSONAL FOR PRIVATE SECRETARY TO FOREIGN SECRETARY
FROM CHARLES POWELL

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TELEGRAM NO 185. THE BEGIN UNDERLINING
SUNDAY TELEGRAPH CEASE UNDERLINING ARTICLE HAS NOT SO FAR BEEN
PICKED UP BY RADIO, TELEVISION OR OTHER NEWSPAPERS HERE, OR
CAUSED ANY PARTICULAR COMMENT. IT WILL NO DOUBT BE A FEW DAYS
BEFORE WE KNOW WHETHER IT GIVES RISE TO REACTIONS IN THE
COMMONWEALTH. ONE OR TWO PEOPLE WHO MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO REACT
DIFFERENTLY E.G. ANTHONY SAMPSON, HAVE TOLD ME WHAT A GOOD
INTERVIEW IT WAS. WE HAD ALREADY IDENTIFIED THE POSITIVE POINTS
TO MAKE ABOUT IT (PARA 11 OF YOUR TELEGRAM).

MEANWHILE OUR ON-THE-RECORD STATEMENT THAT THE PRIME MINISTER
HAS NO PLANS WHATSOEVER TO VISIT SOUTH AFRICA WAS CARRIED
PROMINENTLY ON RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTS FROM MID-MORNING
YESTERDAY AND IS WELL REFLECTED IN TODAY'S PRESS.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE FOREIGN SECRETARY WILL OF COURSE
BE ABLE TO DISCUSS THE LATTER'S VIEWS AS SET OUT IN YOUR TELEGRAM
ON HIS RETURN. I HAVE TO SAY THAT SOME FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES
OF ASSESSMENT CLEARLY PERSIST. THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD ARGUE,
I BELIEVE, THAT THE VIEWS SET OUT IN YOUR TELEGRAM DO NOT GIVE
ADEQUATE WEIGHT TO THE NEED TO WIN THE ARGUMENT ABOUT GENERAL
ECONOMIC SANCTIONS IN THIS COUNTRY (WHICH SHE BELIEVES HAS
LARGELY BEEN DONE) OR TO THE IMPORTANCE OF DEMONSTRATING THAT
WE SHALL NOT BE BLACKMAILED OR BULLIED INTO SANCTIONS AGAINST
WHAT WE BELIEVE TO BE RIGHT AND AGAINST OUR OWN INTERESTS.

SHE WOULD STRESS THE NEED TO DEMONSTRATE OUR FIRMNESS AND
RESOLVE AHEAD OF THE REVIEW MEETING (TO LAY DOWN A BARRAGE,
TO USE THE JARGON). THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT SHE HAS UNREALISTIC
EXPECTATIONS OF THE REVIEW MEETING. I HAVE WRITTEN TODAY TO
ROBERT CULSHAW SETTING OUT THE SORT OF PACKAGE WHICH THE PRIME
MINISTER WOULD REGARD AS A TOLERABLE OUTCOME FROM THAT MEETING.
THE RELEVANT PASSAGE READS AS FOLLOWS:

'AN OUTCOME TO THE COMMONWEALTH REVIEW MEETING WHICH INCLUDED
THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS WOULD BE TOLERABLE:

- A. SOME STRONGISH CRITICISM OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S
FAILURE TO TAKE THE STEPS REQUIRED FOR THE EPG MISSION TO SUCCEED
- B. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT (PROBABLY GRUDGING) OF THE EXISTENCE OF
THE EUROPEAN INITIATIVE AND THE UK'S OBLIGATION TO MOVE IN
STEP WITH ITS EC PARTNERS
- C. RECOGNITION THAT UNANIMOUS DECISIONS ON FUTURE MEASURES
ARE NOT THEREFORE POSSIBLE AT THIS STAGE
- D. STATEMENT THAT NONETHELESS THE GREAT MAJORITY OF COMMON-
WEALTH COUNTRIES BELIEVE SUCH MEASURES TO BE REQUIRED IMMEDIATELY
AND ARE READY TO IMPLEMENT THEM
- E. IDENTIFICATION OF MEASURES WHICH SHOULD BE TAKEN, PREFERABLY
AS AN INDICATIVE LIST
- F. DECLARATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM'S READINESS TO IMPLEMENT
SOME FURTHER MEASURES FROM THIS LIST, PROVIDED (A) THEY ARE
JUDGED APPROPRIATE BY THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE, WHEN
IT HAS ASSESSED THE RESULTS OF THE FOREIGN SECRETARY'S MISSION
AND (B) SIMILAR MEASURES ARE TAKEN BY OTHER INDUSTRIALISED
COUNTRIES.

I RECOGNISE THAT ON THE BASIS OF PARAGRAPH 10 OF YOUR TELEGRAM,
THE FOREIGN SECRETARY MAY ARGUE THAT THIS IS NO LONGER ADEQUATE.
THE PRIME MINISTER, ON THE OTHER HAND, WOULD REGARD IT AS GOING
A LONG WAY TO MEET COMMONWEALTH VIEWS.

I STRESS THAT I HAVE NOT (REPEAT NOT) SHOWN YOUR TELEGRAM OR
THIS ONE TO THE PRIME MINISTER. IT IS MY INTERPRETATION OF
HER VIEWS. BUT IT MAY BE USEFUL TO IDENTIFY LIKELY DIFFERENCES
AHEAD OF WEDNESDAY'S DISCUSSION.

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STRICTLY PERSONAL FOR PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE FOREIGN
 SECRETARY FROM CHARLES POWELL, PRIME MINISTER'S
 OFFICE.

WE HAVE A POSSIBLE PROBLEM OVER AN ARTICLE WHICH WILL APPEAR
 IN THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH ON 27 JULY.

2. THE ARTICLE IS BASED ON A CONVERSATION WHICH THE PRIME
 MINISTER HAD AT CHEQUERS ON SATURDAY 19 JULY WITH GRAHAM
 TURNER, WHO IS A PERSONAL FRIEND. IT WAS NOT ARRANGED
 THROUGH NORMAL CHANNELS. THE THEORY WAS THAT HE WOULD WRITE
 ABOUT LONGER TERM ISSUES. BUT THE CONVERSATION ALSO TOUCHED
 ON SOUTH AFRICA AND THE FORTHCOMING COMMONWEALTH REVIEW MEETING.
 THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH HAVE CHOSEN TO HIGHLIGHT THIS PART,
 WHICH WILL REPRESENT ABOUT HALF OF THE ARTICLE. THERE IS
 NOTHING IN IT WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER HAS NOT SAID BEFORE
 (THOUGH A LOT WHICH SHE HAS). THE TONE IS FORTHRIGHT.
 COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES WILL NOT LIKE IT. REPEATED EFFORTS
 TO PERSUADE THE PROPRIETOR, THE EDITOR AND THE JOURNALIST
 CONCERNED TO AGREE TO MAKE DELETIONS FROM THE TEXT HAVE FAILED.
 THE ARTICLE IS THEREFORE LIKELY TO GO OUT IN ITS RAW FORM.

1

DEYOU CONFIDENTIAL

DEYOU CONFIDENTIAL

52517 - 1

I FIND IT HARD TO SAY HOW MUCH ATTENTION IT IS LIKELY TO
 ATTRACT. PROBABLY LESS THAN I FEAR. AS I SAY, THERE IS
 NOTHING NEW. NONETHELESS, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY WILL WISH
 TO BE WARNED THAT THE ARTICLE IS IMMINENT.

3. I AM NOT TELEGRAPHING THE TEXT SINCE THERE IS NOTHING
 YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT. BUT ROBERT CULSHAW WILL HAVE IT IF
 YOU WANT IT. OPEN BRACKET I REALISE THIS MAY REMIND YOU
 OF THE JEWISH TELEGRAM: 'START WORRYING, LETTER FOLLOWS'
 EXCLAMATION CLOSE BRACKETS.

4. PLEASE SHOW THIS TELEGRAM ONLY TO THE FOREIGN SECRETARY.

HOWE

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NO DISTRIBUTION

NO. 10

2

DEYOU CONFIDENTIAL

STRICTLY PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL



Jo ck

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

25 July 1986

SOUTH AFRICA

I enclose a telegram which I would be grateful if you would despatch to Tony Galsworthy. I see little point in sending him the text of the article. But you might like to see it in case he wants it.

Please show this letter and enclosure only to the PUS (whom I have informed).

CHARLES POWELL

R.N. Culshaw, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

STRICTLY PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

FILE

289

TELEGRAM TO PRETORIA

IMMEDIATE
D E Y O U

STRICTLY PERSONAL FOR PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE FOREIGN AND
COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY FROM CHARLES POWELL, PRIME MINISTER'S
OFFICE

REFERENCE MIPT

Below is text of article by Graham Turner which will appear
in the Sunday Telegraph of 27 July.

QUOTE //

Yes, she admitted, she was worried about the Commonwealth Conference, worried about whether we should be able to persuade the others that the view we were taking on sanctions was not only reasonable but also the way most likely to bring an end to apartheid better and faster than the alternatives.

/ As for the danger

As for the danger that the Commonwealth might actually break up over the issue, such a step, she declared, would be "absolutely absurd". After all, it wasn't the British Commonwealth, its members had long ago refused to have it called that. "So it is their club, their Commonwealth. If they wish to break it up, I think that's absurd".

Nor was it, in her view, a club whose time was past, not if the members really valued it anyway. It was a grouping which girdled the world, the only international conference she attended where no translators were needed and where debate was therefore that much freer and more genuine. What was more, some of its members didn't belong to any other institution. In that sense, she implied, it was their only club.

It would also be absurd to break it up because it had already weathered great difficulties. What sort of relationship was it that couldn't accommodate differences of opinion, particularly when what was being proposed would affect member countries very differently? There were vigorous differences in the UN, but nobody suggested the Security Council should fold up on that account.

"Good Heavens!", said Mrs. Thatcher, "just look at what it has had to withstand to date! Don't think all the countries in it are democracies in our sense of the term. Some have military governments, some states of emergency, some have had censorship at times, some internal massacres - and some have put Opposition people in jail without trial.

"Of course", she went on, "we have withstood all that, partly because you understand that some countries do have problems, and it is not for us to pontificate about how they should deal with them". Just because some of them were not democracies in our sense, we didn't "go into a terrific argument" and say "do this or we shall leave the Commonwealth!"

Nor was the problem, she added later, essentially one of colour. You only had to look at the rest of Africa to see that. There was real trouble in both Angola and Mozambique, though there were no white people there. They had left long ago, but what had you got? Fighting. Angola could have a fantastic economy, it was rich, but instead you had fighting between different groups of people. The problem was ^{essentially} one of human nature, not colour.

So what she was hoping for was that the Commonwealth would stay together, that everyone would speak their minds courteously in the knowledge that the South Africans were doing things "which most of us find repugnant" and that they all wanted to bring apartheid to an end - "and it will end", declared the Prime Minister firmly, "I have no doubt of that".

But what did she mean by the end of apartheid - one man, one vote? "That sort of constitutional arrangement", declared the Prime Minister, "is not for an outside entity to determine. Once you have got dialogue going - and I think myself there will probably have to be two lots of negotiations, one with the black South Africans and the

second with them all together - then they have got to fashion their own constitution.

"After all, there used to be a Central African Federation, which we put together and the Africans then took apart. We have got to stop acting as if we can impose things upon them".

She seemed, I remarked, to have shifted somewhat towards the side of further measures. Had that been provoked, as had been reported, by being "deserted" by her Cabinet or having had a row with the Queen ?

"I have not shifted at all", retorted Mrs. Thatcher, "and I am amazed, utterly amazed at some of the stories I read in the Press". What went on between monarch and Prime Minister was totally confidential. So was what happened in Cabinet and, for that reason, she was not in a position to refute the assertions which had been made, but when, pray, did I imagine that she had been "deserted" by her Cabinet

So it wasn't true that she had been put under pressure by her colleagues on sanctions ? By now, the Prime Minister's indignation had reached simmering-point. "You know", she said, "people must think I have the strongest personality that was ever born on this earth" - they might indeed believe that, I murmured - "that I can get my own way regardless of what anyone else thinks at any time".

She did, it was true, argue a great deal but, if she got her own way, it was only by convincing other people.

But some of her critics had said she would have been better

advised to make modest concessions on sanctions at the outset and thus avoid accentuating the divisions which existed. "Whatever I do", said the Prime Minister, with just a hint of resignation, "they will complain".

The fact was that, by getting people to analyse what they meant comprehensive by sanctions - by asking questions such as 'do you realise what you are doing to farm-workers in the Cape where they have no supplementary benefit?', 'do you realise what you are doing to the British merchant marine which, on other occasions, you never hesitate to tell me is getting smaller?', 'do you realise that the Labour Party, when in power, utterly recoiled from sanctions for the same reasons?' - they had been made to face what sanctions meant in practice.

Was I really telling her that it was wrong to face people with the consequences of their day-to-day actions, and that that was handling the situation badly? Poppycock!

"What we have done", declared Mrs. Thatcher, "is to knock out general economic sanctions as a possible way forward, and get people to realise that there is no point in applying them if others pick up the business or it goes through third countries". Then, it merely arrived in this country at a higher price or, if it worked, it worked by starving people. She and the Government had no intention of creating a wasteland in southern Africa. Much better to have "a free and hopefully democratic society coming through in our way".

So, she conceded, the Commonwealth Conference was going to be tough but "if you care deeply about trying to get what you believe to be the best decision, then you go on being tough. If you didn't care two hoots, you wouldn't have to be. You would sit back and say 'if I didn't do anything controversial, if I took the easy way every time, maybe I would be liked'. But, if I did that, I would despise myself and in the long run, I wouldn't be liked anyway.

"Years from now, people would turn back and say 'look, they had their first woman Prime Minister and she didn't tackle the problems of her time'".

So she did not feel that President Botha was unable to move because his hands were tied by the South African military and police. No, declared Mrs. Thatcher, she did not, because more and more people there, both black and white, were ready to negotiate though "whether we have got the time-scale too tight, I don't know".

She also had critics, I pointed out, who claimed that she would show more concern if it were whites that were being killed, and not blacks. The charge genuinely shocked her. She had never, she said, heard such an accusation. What concerned her were deaths, whether black or white. After all, there ^{might be as many as} were 800,000 people in South Africa many of them Indian, who were entitled to come to this country and she was naturally concerned about them.

"Can I just say", she went on, "that I find the necklace which black uses to kill black utterly ~~repugnant~~ repugnant and it ^{is} one of

(7)

the things which, faster than anything else, turned ~~off~~ my sympathies off any case which some of them might have been putting".

But wasn't it just as bad that the South African police should have done to death people like Steve Biko, the black African leader? "Oh", exclaimed Mrs. Thatcher, "it was absolutely appalling what they did to Biko, but no one stands up for that, everybody condemns it, while you actually hear people standing up for the necklace, or at least refusing to condemn it".

There was another story, I said, that she had already reached a private deal with Botha, that Nelson Mandela should be released during the Commonwealth Conference. "I have done no private deals", declared the Prime Minister categorically. Of course we worked for Mandela's release and for the lifting of the ban on the ANC, even though we disliked many of the things they stood for. The fact was that you couldn't have a negotiation unless Mandela and the ANC could come to it and speak freely.

"My basic wish", she said, "is that there should be more obvious and visible signs that they are going to get rid of apartheid". She was very much aware of Botha's timing difficulties, but there were signs that the South Africans genuinely wanted negotiations - "and I just hope".

UNQUOTE

A Scenario for Change

ANTHONY SAMPSON

As the debate about sanctions against South Africa reaches a new peak, both sides are putting forth doomsday scenarios. The pro-sanction lobby warns of the genocide that will follow if blacks are left to the mercies of the Afrikaner military. Their opponents warn that sanctions will cause starvation and misery. Both sides fear that South Africa could descend into the kind of economic and political chaos that has plagued some black African states. Yet they cannot offer a realistic, attractive scenario for continued white rule.

But will the imposition of sanctions necessarily cause greater long-term suffering? After revisiting South Africa just after the new state of emergency was declared, I am more convinced that sanctions—provided they are rapid and decisive—could open the way to a peaceful solution, and stop the slaughter.

What is very clear inside South Africa is that sanctions already are working—but in a way that provides no effective political leverage. As one leading Johannesburg businessman told me, “At present we have the worst of both worlds. Financial sanctions began when the banks pulled out last year. Together with boycotts, they are slowly undermining the economy. But they have no political clout.”

The argument that sanctions will drive the Afrikaner further into the laager is not supported by the record. After foreign bankers precipitated a debt crisis last August, President Botha promised to step up reforms and abolish the pass laws, and nearly released Nelson Mandela in January. He left no doubt that he was scared of sanctions. The sudden imposition of the state of emergency showed every sign of confusion rather than decisiveness: it made no sense to legalize labor unions and then to arrest union leaders, to talk of reform and enforce repression. It was a desperate last bid to call the bluff of the sanction lobby. If the West allows that bluff to be called, it will only lead to more repression and defiance.

Imposing sanctions—provided they are orchestrated with defined objectives—could open the way to a transition that need not lead to economic or political chaos. There is one scenario for South Africa that offers some hope for a peaceful transition. It goes something like this:

1. Immediate sanctions are imposed in the most sensitive areas—including the withdrawal of airline landing rights and government visas—making clear that Western nations are no longer bluffing.

2. The economic effects of that move, including a further flight of capital and a sharp fall in the rand, at last show whites that they cannot hope for any economic upturn, or for any assistance from their overseas friends.

3. The deepening economic crisis before the next reschedul-

ing by the banks in early 1987 gives Western governments additional leverage. It also provides Pretoria with a harsh choice: either to default—and opt out of the international system—or to accept the Western terms for financial support, which include releasing Mandela and legalizing his organization, the African National Congress (ANC).

4. The cabinet, which was closely balanced before the state of emergency, tilts back toward the liberals, who speed up President Botha's retirement and elect a successor who appears to be intransigent but prepares for compromise.

5. The cabinet releases Mandela, who appeals to South African nonracial patriotism, speaking partly in Afrikaans. He attacks the extremists in the black townships. He appeals for Western financial support. And he calls for a national convention embracing all groups—including the right-wing parties and the Zulu leader Gatsha Buthelezi.

6. Mandela attracts support from whites, including many Afrikaners, in much the same way that Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta won support from whites after his release from prison 25 years ago.

7. Parliament realigns with a centrist party committed to a national convention, which is then summoned. Mandela and the ANC insist on “one man, one vote” but dissociate themselves from the mounting excesses of the “comrades” in the townships. The ANC suspends violence and supports tough measures against both black and white bitter-enders.

8. A massive reconstruction plan is launched by a

consortium of international bankers, channeling funds into the black townships, and subsidizing emigration schemes to countries that welcome Afrikaner emigrants.

9. The first elections under universal suffrage, in the 1990s, return President Mandela with a broad coalition, including a multiracial party backed by big business. The extreme parties of right-wing Afrikaners and left-wing blacks organize sabotage and sporadic strikes, but are firmly suppressed by a new, multiracial police force.

This scenario has one indispensable ingredient: Nelson Mandela. He has the unique ability to moderate and defuse an otherwise uncontrollable crisis. And he made clear to the Eminent Persons Group that his priorities after his release would be to reassure the white minority, and to limit black expectations. Only he could achieve those objectives.

But time is running out. Though Mandela is in excellent health (“like a warrior,” as his doctor described him to me), he is now 68. Only unambiguous sanctions will persuade the Pretoria government to release him: to throw away that weapon is to condemn him to jail. This scenario may seem optimistic, but it is not unattainable. All the other scenarios spell disaster.

Anthony Sampson was editor of the black magazine Drum in Johannesburg in the early 1950s and has frequently visited South Africa since then.



Sanctions could open the way to a peaceful solution in South Africa



less happiness while at the same time enjoying it herself? If only politics could keep away, there would, of course, be nothing but good in the Commonwealth. If the Queen's Headship were simply a grander equivalent of Prince Philip's presidency of the World Wildlife Fund, what could be more agreeable? But it isn't and it never was. Was it right, for instance, that Commonwealth considerations should have deterred British governments from entering the EEC in the early Fifties (whatever one thinks about the EEC)? Was it right that Commonwealth sentiment should have framed the British Nationality Act 1948 to allow almost unrestricted mass immigration? Is it sensible that Commonwealth feelings now force the British Government into a corner over South Africa and provoke a full-dress political crisis over something so unimportant to this country?

There is a more general objection, too. It is the objection that Dr Johnson makes to 'Lycidas' that 'with these trifling fictions are mingled the most sacred and awful truths'. The history of Britain has involved a long fight about the derivation, scope and power of monarchy. People have killed one another over these things, and the questions involved can never be permanently settled. We are lucky to live at a time when there is broad agreement about the monarch's political position in Britain. This is a situation rare in history, one that not even Victoria enjoyed. It can only continue if people continue to believe that the monarch's position is coherent, that is, that the lines of responsibility are clear. The Headship of the Commonwealth is a title and a role which obscures those lines. The Queen cannot sustain a role which sets her against her own Government. It is frightening that her advisers do not seem to realise this.

Everything comes back to Britain. One of the trifling fictions which the Commonwealth invented is that the Queen's Headship, and her monarchy of particular members such as Canada, exists quite separately from her monarchy of Britain, as if, in theory, she could continue Head although she was not Queen of the United Kingdom. As Sir Robert Menzies told the Australian parliament at the time, 'We are not to divide the Crown up artificially', '... the plain truth is that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second sits on the throne not because of some law of Australia but because of the law of the United Kingdom'. She is Head of the Commonwealth for the same reason. Everything the Queen has and does derives from Britain and from nowhere else. (Her son married this week in Westminster Abbey, not Kuala Lumpur or Lusaka.) That is the fact, although royal families, like tax evaders, always keep an eye on a foreign escape route. We know that Elizabeth II has the heart and stomach of a Queen; that is not enough — they must be of a Queen of England too.

Thank you not

Prime Minister

NOT BLACK AND WHITE

An interesting article from the Spectator

Stephen Robinson returns to a Britain which over-simplifies South Africa

(Spotted by Caroline) 29/7

SINCE my return from South Africa three weeks ago many people have asked me if South Africa is really as bad as it seems on the television. Invariably my reply is equivocal. I am not one who sees — as do many white South Africans and some observers in Britain — a card-carrying member of the African National Congress lurking behind every BBC video camera. Yet somehow, the image of South Africa projected on British television screens, and to a lesser extent on the pages of the national newspapers, does not reflect how it feels to live there. What is happening in South Africa is neither 'better' nor 'worse' than it appears from the outside — it is simply different.

Recently it has become fashionable for expelled foreign correspondents to hold press conferences at which they make horrifying predictions about the country's future. One such American reporter was quoted recently as saying that the whole country was in flames, and that the whites did not know and did not care. It is to the second half of this statement that I take particular exception. If the reporter had spent all his time in South Africa travelling around the hinterland interviewing sheep farmers he would doubtless have encountered a bewildering complacency about events elsewhere in the country. But had he ventured into one of the major cities such as Johannesburg, Cape Town or Durban, he would have discovered that the country's uncertain future has become a national obsession. If it is possible to salvage any hope from the dreadful violence of the past two years it is that white South Africans have been forced — in many cases for the first time — to concentrate their minds on the political and economic iniquities of their system of government.

Anxiety about the future, about sanctions and the general state of the economy, and the fear that the violence could become totally out of control, dominate the lives of a high proportion of white South Africans. Several thousand have already voted with their feet and emigrated; many more have well-rehearsed contingency plans to get out quickly if the balloon really

goes up. But the vast majority will stay: some because they have nowhere else to go, but many more because they honestly believe it is cowardly to leave and that they should stay to sort out the mess.

Certainly many white South Africans have responded to recent upheavals simply by buying guns and bolting up their windows. But to imply that the vast majority of them are merrily swilling gin slings as the townships smoulder is wildly inaccurate, and grossly unfair to the thousands of people who are actively seeking ways out of the chaos.

Internal white opposition has changed beyond all recognition from what might once have been caricatured as a blue-rinsed Jewish lady standing in silent protest on a Johannesburg street corner. The formation of the United Democratic Front three years ago brought thousands of whites into a new non-racial form of extra-parliamentary opposition. The much maligned and mocked official liberal opposition, the Progressive Federal Party, has also risen to recent challenges by moving away from futile debates in Parlia-

One hundred years ago

Sir, — You often give us pleasant anecdotes of our four-footed friends. You may think the following worthy of record. I have a little dog, a not particularly well-bred fox terrier. He is much attached to me, and shows by his obedience, and sometimes in his disobedience, that he understands a good deal. Yesterday I was away all day, and he, I am told, was very uneasy, and searched everywhere for me. Every day at 5 p.m. I go to church. 'Toby' seems to know this is not an ordinary walk, and never offers to come with me. But yesterday, when the bell began, he started off and took up his position by the vestry door. I believe he reasoned with himself, — 'There goes the bell; now I shall catch the Vicar.' I am, Sir, &c.,

WILLIAM QUENNELL

The Vicarage, Tring, July 14

Spectator, 24 July 1886

ment towards establishing monitoring groups in the townships to uncover police brutality.

Many important political developments in South Africa are somehow overlooked in the desire to portray the dramatic clash between the 'white régime' and the 'increasingly restless black opposition'. Nine-year-old Afrikaner schoolboys dressed in khaki shorts with a pistol on the hip make dramatic television footage and do reflect the hardening of attitudes in some of the rural areas. Yet it is somehow harder to convey the agonised soul-searching of students at the University of Stellenbosch — traditionally the breeding ground for upstanding Afrikaner nationalists — whose recent efforts to initiate dialogue with the exiled ANC leadership so discomfited government ministers. Prominent in this group is none other than the grandson of Dr Hendrik Verwoerd.

The English-language universities have long been rallying points for opposition to the government. Indeed, many students who travel to study overseas return astonished by the Hooray Henry boorishness and political apathy of British and American campus life; others are merely perplexed that foreign students and academics should so obsessively seek to sever links with South African universities.

This same superficiality is apparent in the portrayal of black nationalist leaders. Mrs Winnie Mandela's profile has been somewhat lowered of late on account of her well-publicised 'necklace' gaffe. But Bishop Desmond Tutu, it appears, only has to open his mouth to be guaranteed front page treatment in Britain and the United States. He certainly cuts quite a dashing figure in his episcopal robes, but he also speaks a great deal of nonsense. The prediction he made last year to American journalists that black maids would

soon resort to murdering their white madams caused enormous offence back home, and not only to starchy Anglican matrons in hats.

It is of course predictable that the South African Broadcasting Corporation should prefer to ignore the turbulent archbishop-elect, but even liberal and radical South Africans view Tutu with some embarrassment and suspicion. True, he is a compelling orator; but most Anglicans — black and white — wish he would spend rather more time in South Africa ministering to his troubled flock than collecting awards in America.

By contrast Chief Buthelezi is commonly portrayed as the rogue stooge of southern Africa, dismissed by Denis Healey after a recent flying visit as a puppet of Pretoria. The Zulu leader is not everyone's cup of tea: he is nauseatingly pompous and self-important. His claim to represent the sole non-violent alternative to Marxist revolution is questionable to say the least, and his well-drilled impi regiments are among the most thuggish operators in South Africa. In a perfect world, or if Africa were like Europe, he would not exist. But the plain fact is that many Zulus — well over a million of them in fact — go for that sort of thing. He simply cannot be ignored, and ANC and United Democratic Front leaders admit as much privately. Only someone who has never lived in Natal would dismiss him as irrelevant.

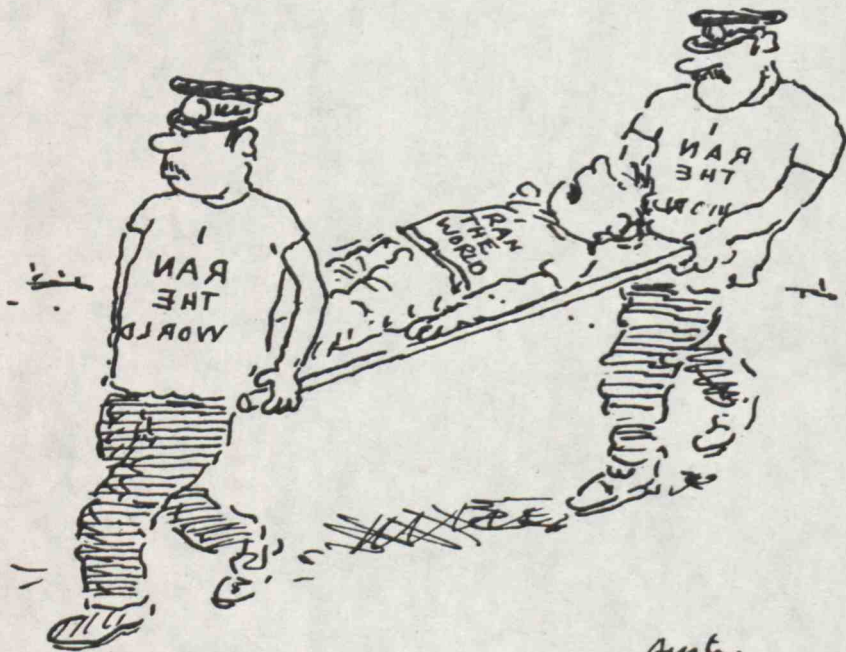
Surprisingly perhaps, relations between the races have not deteriorated over the past two years. Indeed, one of the most striking developments of the recent violence in the Western Cape, for instance, has been the growth in white sympathy for the lot of black and coloured colleagues whose living areas have become battle

grounds. Many whites have been appalled to hear about — and in some cases witness — the brutality and indiscipline of the security forces. The repeated use of terms such as 'white laager' and 'simmering black majority' suggests a coherence — an overwhelming sense of racial identity — which many South Africans abhor and reject. A casual visitor wandering around the more outré environs of Cape Town or Johannesburg and peering at the health food stores and alternative book shops could be forgiven for thinking he was in Islington rather than some latter-day Calvinistic laager. Certainly the racial question dominates South African politics, but it is not necessarily the only factor which determines how the people react to one another.

Yet an illogical racialism pervades British attitudes to South Africa. Dr David Owen, and some Conservative MPs, call for sanctions or measures 'which will only hit the whites'. This is based on the curious assumption that two separate economies operate in South Africa — one for whites, and one for the blacks. Only whites can afford to fly, the argument goes, so cut air links and send an unequivocal signal to Pretoria. This would doubtless inconvenience wealthy South Africans, which might make some people in Britain feel more cheerful. But the main effect of such a measure would be the total destruction of the South African tourist industry, and the loss of thousands of black jobs. Even if it were desirable in itself to attempt to aim sanctions specifically at whites, it would be patently impossible to put them into effect.

The South African government goes to much trouble and expense to fly foreign opinion-formers over to see how well blacks live in their new model townships. My guess is that they would do rather better to show the visitors that white South Africans do not all live in outrageous luxury, as most people here seem to believe. Most whites do not have enormous swimming-pools and tennis courts; many Afrikaners do not regularly beat their black servants. If this misconception could be corrected, I suspect many observers would feel less strongly about apartheid.

There is certainly little to be optimistic about in South Africa today, and the xenophobic tone of President Botha's recent pronouncements is probably only a small taste of things to come. But the majority of white South Africans are now at least aware that the violence can no longer be blamed on a minority of trouble-makers, and they do not require 'signals' from Whitehall to know they have problems. But most of all, black and white South Africans will be amused, and not unduly surprised, to note that in Britain the 'South African crisis' now has much more to do with Mrs Thatcher's problems with the Commonwealth than with black township dwellers on the wrong end of a policeman's sjambok.





10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

Prime Minister

South Africa

Two rather disturbing reports,
which you should see, about the
projects for the Commonwealth
Meeting. We are going to need
strong nerves.

CSB.