

The difference between what Botha says and does

Regarding the visit to your country by P. W. Botha, leader of the Nationalist Party and prime minister of apartheid South Africa, we write to you on behalf of the United Democratic Front, a grouping of some 600 political, civic, women's, youth, worker, student, religious and sporting bodies, representing South Africans of all races, formed last August to oppose the new constitution and the Koornhof laws.

Mr Botha's visit comes at a time when the apartheid government is seeking to portray itself as an instrument of reform, moderation, and peace. To confirm this image of peacemaker, Mr Botha will come armed with the new constitution in one hand and the Nkomati Peace Accord in the other. He will even have lunch with Mrs Thatcher, a move that will clearly reinforce the new image the apartheid government seeks to present.

We know however that the majority of British citizens stand opposed to racism, segregation, the homeland

system, detentions and torture, low wages, forced resettlement, and the destruction of homes and families. We know, too, and are strengthened by, their support for our struggle for a united, democratic, and non-racial South Africa.

But perhaps there are those who believe the apartheid government is changing and that, with more encouragement and less criticism, it will change faster. We here in South Africa would like to state very clearly and firmly that this is a mistaken belief.

Mr Botha's government has begun to reconstruct the traditional system of apartheid, not because of a sudden change of heart or burst of enlightenment, but because of the determined struggles of the majority of democratic South Africans.

The new constitution and related legislation do not signify a "step in the right direction" as some have claimed. Quite simply, the new constitution is based on the very pillars of apartheid: the pass laws,

the homelands, and the Group Areas Act. All that the new constitution does is reinforce these measures by presenting a more acceptable image to the world.

So we in South Africa ask that when you see a few black faces in the Springbok rugby team, or sitting in the tricameral parliament next September, take a second look at the realities behind the image. Look at the security legislation with its detentions and bannings; look at the closure of black schools in Pretoria after the protests of black schoolchildren against the hated Bantu education system; look at the mass removals of black people from urban areas, and at the starvation and destruction that accompany such actions.

Or better still, ask the English rugby team, currently touring our country, what they feel about the low wages paid to the black workers who attended to them in their hotels; the segregated beaches they visited; the Liquor Act that stopped them from

entertaining black athletes in all but special international hotels.

Mr Botha will of course tell you that he wants peace. But what he says and what he and his government do are two different things. Behind the "peace" of Nkomati lies the full might of the South African Defence Force. Behind the "process of reform" lies the full might of the Internal Security Act.

We in the UDF also want peace, but we know that until such a time that all South Africans can elect a single, democratic and non-racial government, there can be no peace in our land.

We therefore look to the people of Britain to tell Mr Botha in no uncertain terms what you think of his policies.

We ask them to join us in stopping the forced removal of more than 40,000 people from Crossroads, Capetown. We ask them to join us in campaigning for the right to organise; for the right to hold open-air meetings; for the right to enter

African townships without permits. We ask them to observe the forthcoming "elections" for the so-called Coloured and Indian people in August, where the UDF has called a nationwide boycott by all those eligible to vote.

We ask them to stand with us in calling for the release of Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, and all other South African leaders who are spending their twentieth year in gaol. It is only when these patriots are released, and are joined by those South Africans to whom Britain has given refuge, that we here in South Africa can begin to look forward to the day when a prime minister representing all South Africans will be able to visit your country.

M. Lekota,
P. Molefe,
United Democratic Front,
PO Box 10366,
Johannesburg.

In service to racial

DA101

Collection Number: AK2117

DELMAS TREASON TRIAL 1985 - 1989

PUBLISHER:

Publisher: **Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand**

Location: **Johannesburg**

©2012

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of the collection records and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document is part of a private collection deposited with Historical Papers at The University of the Witwatersrand.