

A MEETING WITH DR. FRITZ LEUTWILER

11 JANUARY 1985. ULUNDI

A FEW REMARKS ON THE OCCASION OF A MEETING WITH DR. FRITZ LEUTWILER  
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At rock bottom there are two salutary lessons which the South African Government has yet to learn. One is that the capitalist free enterprise system cannot survive to be efficient unless it exists in a Western-type parliamentary democracy; and the other is that no government can pursue the ideals of a Western industrialised society unless it respects the notions of equality before the law, civil rights and equality before the constitution.

Ever since 1948 the National Party has ruled South Africa in a desperate attempt to create an ideal Western industrialised environment for White South Africa, while denying Blacks even the most fundamental human, civil and parliamentary rights which the West has distilled out of so many centuries of experience. I see the present economic and political crisis in South Africa as two faces of the same coin. The bottom line of the South African problem is that the National Party puts Afrikaner power as its primary objective. It has seen White power as a necessary condition within which Afrikaner power could be exercised. If the State President this year abandoned hopes that Afrikaner power could be perpetuated, and went to the country with a package deal in which there was shared power, and in which there were goals to normalise South Africa as a Western industrialised state, in which there would be the rule of law and the free enterprise system would be truly free, he would get massive national support.

There are in South Africa driving social, economic and political forces working to normalise society. South African society as South African society is by no means lost to the Western world. We do not need revolution to make our society decent. Decency is in fact under threat now from two quarters. One is the National Party itself which refuses to embark on the kind of meaningful reform because this would entail relinquishing exclusive Afrikaner power, and the other is that Black quarter in politics which sees White racist power as having an unbreakable stranglehold over the country's politics and economics within the free enterprise system. In that quarter, no reforms would suffice. That quarter seeks only revolutionary change and the establishment of a revolutionary government of a Socialist/Marxist nature.

For me all reality demands the recognition that whether we like it or not, South Africa is locked into a north/south economic axis and whether we like it or not, the only hope for a future in which there are meaningful advances towards standards of decent living for the population at large, rests heavily on our ability to get

the free enterprise system truly efficient. This is not an ideological statement. I make it for the following reasons.

- (a) The richness of South Africa's mineral wealth depends on the free flow of capital technology and management skills of the Western industrialised world.
- (b) When I look around me in the world, I find no convincing evidence that the already existing level of industrialisation in South Africa could be preserved and the economy certainly could not be developed a great deal further unless South Africa was included in the Western industrialised hemisphere of interests.
- (c) Demographic reality in which over half of all Black South Africans are 15 years and younger and in which there is something like a three per cent growth rate in the Black population, demands that we must gear ourselves up to meet the requirements of a massive population bulge poised to enter the market place. Only the free enterprise system could maximise job creation and invite massive international participation in the country's economy.
- (d) The industrial development of every State south of the Zambezi rests heavily on industrial, mining and commercial progress in South Africa. South Africa's neighbouring States of Lesotho, Swaziland, and Botswana in particular are dependent on developments in South Africa.

Events elsewhere in Africa and the Third World tell me that when a majority of a people living in destitution, indecent government survives with great difficulty, if at all. Mass poverty is ungovernable. Whoever takes over the reins of government in South Africa will be faced with immense problems. If the development potential of South Africa is destroyed because the economy is destroyed in the process of liberating our country from apartheid, then we have a very bleak future ahead of us for generations to come. Furthermore, if revolutionary violence leads White South Africans to adopt a scorched earth policy to meet a scorched earth policy of a revolutionary approach which seeks to destroy the economy, and to produce ungovernability in chaos, we will inevitably face a truly horrendous race war and the reduction of South Africa to a Beirut situation.

The reforms the State President has thus far announced and has thus far talked about are totally inadequate to bring about a secure future for this country. There can be no stable future unless race discrimination is removed from our constitution. The population Registration Act must be abolished and there must be no legal and constitutional distinction between one South African and another on

the grounds of race, colour or creed. If the State President signed a Declaration of Intent to work towards South Africa being one country with one sovereign parliament, and equality before the law and the constitution, the problems of a transition period would be made at least manageable. Black and White South Africans would rally behind him to charter an orderly course to those objectives. That course would run a stormy passage, but it could be done. The State President needs to share the responsibility of keeping the process of change manageable. If he does not do so, Blacks will make whatever he is attempting to do unmanageable as they are now doing.

I face a very grave difficulty as a Black South African of having to contend with the political naivety of many Black and White influential persons and leaders. I am very close to them in sentiment. I share their anger and indignation about apartheid. I understand the fires which burn in them, because they burn in me too, but they are like someone who wants to take control over a packed bus rushing refugees from terror down a perilous mountain pass when that someone has never driven a motor vehicle in his life. This image occurred to me when I read the joint letter addressed to Banks by Dr. Beyers Naude and Bishop Tutu, and when I read their proposals to you through Price Waterhouse. In the statement to you, and I have not got a full statement (because they say the copy I received was slightly amended), I find myself in total agreement with all the points they make, but they come to conclusions which are suicidal for South Africa. They leap from a definition of the South African problem which would receive massive endorsement to a very narrow party political conclusions which the mass of South Africans would reject.

Their idealism drives realism from their heads when they call for the re-scheduling of South Africa's debts to be dependent on the resignation of the present regime is puerile. And I say this not only because it is puerile to hope that this will ever come about. The regime will certainly not resign in order to reschedule the country's debts. I say this also because the only way we can bring about national reconciliation in our country is to accept a phase of transitional politics in which reform would gather momentum without creating the kind of massive chasms which could only be resolved through violence. We need to recognise that the politics of negotiation and the tactics and strategies of non-violence are essential to weld the various population groups into one purposeful society. I know both of these gentlemen personally and have known them for a great many years, and there is a great deal more I could say, but I believe the point I have made is a point that needs to be made today.

Western bankers must join me in perceiving that there is vast stupidity both in South Africa's right wing and left wing politics. Politicians by nature are dangerous animals unless they are curbed within the restraints of a very comprehensive set of positive and negative sanctions which are thoroughly

institutionalised.

There is always a danger that strong tides of international opinion usurp reason. Every time I went abroad last year, I was amazed to find that prominent politicians, church leaders and even industrialists were talking as though South Africa was busy going up in flames. International indignation and anger at apartheid society in South Africa, was blinding people to the reality of the situation. Everywhere people were beginning to believe that the ANC Mission in Exile has the massive backing of ordinary Black South Africans. If their perceptions were true, the people would have heeded the call to cripple the South African economy. It is Black South Africans who are keeping the factories productive and keeping the mines open. It is Black South Africans who are keeping the civil service intact. Hideous violence flares in townships where mob behaviour can develop, where people are concentrated in their destitution, but Blacks who find relief from that destitution escape the tyranny of the mobs to go about their ordinary business of earning a living. More jobs would create more such Blacks. The elimination of unemployment in South Africa would reduce the ANC Mission in Exile's influence to virtually nothing. They thrive only on despair and have nothing to offer the broad masses of Black South Africans who want their society normalised.

In the very first year of Inkatha's existence it drew a membership greater than the old ANC even in its heyday. There is sentimental support for the very hallowed traditions of the old ANC. Those traditions run deep in the blood of the people but this must not be misconceived as solid support for the ANC Mission in Exile as it is now conducting its affairs. The ANC Mission in Exile thrives on the support it gets from celebrity leaders playing to galleries and it is the high profile posturing media-created leaders whom the West so often listens to intently. I do not posture for Western consumption. I have a vast Black constituency. I express no sentiment today which does not get massive support in mass meetings of Black South Africans. Inkatha is truly democratic; its leaders are elected at the Annual General Conference which is the supreme body of Inkatha. That is where Inkatha tactics and strategies are formulated, and that is where the ordinary peasant and worker, the ordinary businessman and professional, gather together to present the views and aspirations of their local and regional constituencies. Inkatha is Black democracy at work. It is an authentic voice of the people and it is a massive voice, but so often prominent spokesmen in the international community choose to ignore it.

I have always clearly perceived that the threat of a formidable escalation of violence and the threat of the international isolation of South Africa, have been positive and productive because they have been cautionary. I have argued, however, that the reality of mass violence, and the reality of real isolation, would be very counter-productive. I believe the rescheduling of South Africa's debt demands a parallel consideration. Black South

Africa is pleased that the South African Government is being made very uncomfortable before the international community, and we are pleased that the international community is shaking a political finger at the South African Government in this context. We need these pressures to bring the South African Government to its senses, but I believe there is a risk that Bankers and Western influences could be tempted into over-playing their hand in the matter. If they did so, they would achieve nothing for the oppressed people of South Africa, nor would they achieve anything for themselves.

Perceptions of the South African situation are confounded by internal political vested interests in Western countries. Our suffering is so often the grist of American, British and European political mills. I sincerely hope that the question of rescheduling South Africa's debts is not thus being compounded. I stand in total agreement with you, Sir, that the rescheduling issue is primarily a political issue, but I would greatly appreciate an opinion from you about the extent to which European and American bankers could possibly make a political football out of our economic troubles. It has been suggested to be that American and European Banks have different vested interests in the matter.

I hope, Sir, that your trip to this country will add to your wisdom and reinforce the soundness of your long proven sound thinking on economic matters.

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