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ANC
statements

PRESIDENT TAMBO'S MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE OF WESTERN EUROPE – A CALL TO ACTION

Oliver Tambo, President of the African National Congress of South Africa, has today, May 20th, condemned the invitation extended by a number of Heads of Government to the Prime Minister of Apartheid South Africa enabling him to tour Western Europe in late May and early June 1984. His statement, in the form of a message to the President of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement, Archbishop Trevor Huddleston, CR, is as follows:

“The decision of Mrs Thatcher, Chancellor Kohl and other Heads of Government in Western Europe to invite PW Botha to visit a number of Western European countries is an insult to the peoples of Africa and Europe alike.

PW Botha does not represent the people of South Africa. He represents the white minority racist regime which is only able to maintain power by the brutal repression of our people and by exporting its policies of terror and racial tyranny into all the neighbouring states in the region.

The invitation to tour Europe is an act of racial solidarity and must be condemned by all who cherish freedom, justice and equality. The African National Congress congratulates the Anti-Apartheid Movement and all the other organisations and individuals who have responded so promptly by mobilising opposition in Britain.

We in the ANC have always believed that a distinction should be drawn between the British Government and the British people; between those who aid and abet the apartheid regime and those who support our people's struggle for freedom. We hope the British people, in a united and massive demonstration, will disassociate themselves from Mrs Thatcher's action and re-affirm their abhorrence of apartheid.

We are equally encouraged by the efforts made by anti-apartheid and solidarity movements in other West European countries which PW Botha intends to visit.

On behalf of the African National Congress and the people of South Africa I appeal to the people of Europe to make the maximum effort to oppose this apartheid propaganda tour and thereby demonstrate for all the world to see where they stand. ✕

The purpose of PW Botha's visit to several European countries as head of the apartheid system – which has been declared by the United Nations to be a crime against humanity – is to enable South Africa to break out of its international isolation and to confer respectability on the Pretoria regime. It is intended to bring about the rapid collapse of those limited measures which have been adopted by the international community to isolate apartheid South Africa, in particular the arms embargo. This entire exercise also represents a reward to South Africa for the apparent success of its policies of aggression and destabilisation. ✓

We should not forget that this tour of Europe is taking place against the background of the rapidly intensifying liberation struggle both in Namibia and in South Africa itself, which is generating a growing crisis for the white minority regime in Pretoria. It is in response to this crisis that South Africa is seeking increased support from its allies in order to maintain and strengthen its domination over our people and the whole of Southern Africa.

We are confident that, as before, mass action by the British people can frustrate South Africa's allies in your midst and we wish you all success in your campaign.”

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