

OTP/229/0067/5

Mr. Oliver Tambo

Dear Friend,

I take the liberty to address you in this way in view of the indirect contact that there has been from my side through the person of my friend W.F. who has for the past four years shared in confidence with me the convictions and concerns you have conveyed to him - especially as these relate to the liberation struggle in S.A."

Perhaps the best starting point would be to convey to you a summary of the reports which W. brought to me of his discussions with you as these would to my mind form a necessary basis for any ongoing relationship. In this regard I wish to make 4 points:

1. He conveyed to me your viewpoint regarding the need for trustworthy allies in the struggle for liberation. He told me that your own position was that of a committed African Nationalist striving for true liberation of all the peoples of South Africa, both black and white, and that from this independent position you had no problem in accepting allies from both sides - Marxists and Socialists from the left, as well as the Western groups and churches from the right - on the clear understanding that such alliances and the assistance offered by them should not bind or commit yourself and the ANC to any stand or action with which in principle you were not in agreement.
2. He also made it clear that although you did not expect the CI to condone violence you did not expect us to criticise the ANC because it has been forced to resort to violence. At the same time whilst you believe that violence has become a regrettable but necessary tool in the struggle for liberation, because of the unwillingness of the Western nations to take radical peaceful actions against South Africa, yet all avenues of non-violent action which could possibly bring about a fundamental change should be continued to be explored and implemented. That is why you felt that bodies like the BPC, BCP, SASO, SASM, Inkatha and the CI had an important role to play in the struggle for liberation as long as it was clearly understood that, for the sake of true unity and in order to prevent the danger of a Black civil war situation, the ANC would totally oppose the formation of military armed forces of other liberation groups.
3. After the banning of the CI and when serious consideration was being given to my leaving the country to strengthen the exterior leadership and work of the CI your judgment was conveyed to me by Walter, namely that you were convinced that my leaving the country would be a serious mistake and that you felt very strongly that I should remain here as long as possible.
4. Walter also conveyed to me your understanding of the role of the CI, knowing that we had never assumed the CI to be a liberation movement. Although you are critical of the lack of clarity of goals and the lack of united leadership which the organisation has displayed and of a strong discipline which an organisation such as ours should possess and display if it wishes to play a meaningful role, yet you have indicated that the CI was the only religious body which had identified itself so clearly and unequivocally with the liberation struggle in S.A. Therefore you were convinced that the CI could play a meaningful role in the struggle for liberation without in any way becoming a subservient body to the ANC.

I sincerely hope that I have truthfully and adequately reflected the insights on the above matters as they have been conveyed to me by Walter. If they need correction, please feel at liberty to respond.

Having said this, I feel I owe you an explanation of my insights in the present situation and where I stand in the struggle for liberation.

Firstly I wish to state that the Christian churches of S.A. are guilty of a serious neglect of duty in having failed to give any moral or financial support to the ANC during all the years of its public existence in S.A. (1912 - 1960) when it fought in a truly democratic way to promote the cause of racial justice and liberation."

Secondly I wish to make it clear that I regard the ANC as the liberation movement deserving of our strong support in view of the fact of its sincerity, the support it has been able to build for itself and its cause under very difficult circumstances throughout the world, of its continued emphasis on its non-racial nature, and its willingness to include all the people of S.A. I regard the ANC as the major political force of liberation and therefore needing all the support that we as Christians could give in agreement with our Christian principles.

Thirdly, I would emphasise that I am very strongly opposed to any other liberation movement or group setting up its own military wing or becoming a 'third force' - this phrase implying an independent or semi-independent military initiative. The tragic example of Angola must warn us to avoid a repetition of this at all costs.

Fourthly, I wish to emphasise that I would wish to do everything in my power to foster true unity between the different groups and organisations in S.A. which are working for liberation. These include BPC, BCP, SASO, SASM and Inkatha, and although it will be a difficult task to achieve, I am committed to at least try and make this possible.

Lastly, as a follower of Christ, I wish to state that Christians will have to enter into a meaningful dialogue with Marxists and Communists regarding the alternative to the present political, economic and social system which a future South Africa (what will our new name be?!) will require.

I would be grateful to get a response from you in this regard including criticism which you may feel compelled to utter to some of my views.

With sincere greetings,

*Beyers Naudé*