

Call to Mandela: Let some curbs go

Citizen 12 June 1990

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BONN. — ANC Deputy President Mr Nelson Mandela was asked in Bonn yesterday by leading German industrialists to consider accepting at least a partial lifting of boycotts and sanctions against South Africa, possibly in the field of sport and culture.

Speaking at a luncheon, hosted by the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce, Mr Mandela responded by saying he was not authorised to reply to this now on behalf of the ANC, but that he would be taking the representations back to the organisation's executive.

The ANC leader, however, reiterated the theme of his message to Europe that any lifting or easing of sanctions now would be counter-productive.

"By lifting sanctions now you are playing into the hands of those against peace in South Africa."

Mr Mandela was welcomed to the luncheon by Mr Hans-Gerd Neglein, a senior board member of Siemens, the giant German electric power generating group which has maintained substantial investment in South Africa while at the same time condemning apartheid.

Mr Neglein said German business in South Africa had always clearly stated its opposition to apartheid practices and had been in the forefront in racial integration of the workforce.

It was accepted that Mr Mandela's ANC and German business interests differed to an extent on

whether continuing sanctions could promote the negotiation process.

German businessmen and industrialists no longer wanted sanctions against South Africa to be used as a political weapon.

In his main address, Mr Mandela made clear the ANC wanted to allay fears of Western capitalist businessmen about the organisation's plans for nationalisation of key components of the South African economy to effect

a re-distribution of wealth in favour of those oppressed and deprived for decades by the political system.

"We don't care what the system is, as long as it brings about the needed redistribution of wealth ... it does not matter if the cat is Black or White, as long as it catches mice."

The working lunch, held largely behind closed doors with Mr Mandela and members of his del-

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egation, was attended by about 30 German industrialists, businessmen and bankers.

Included among the top institutions represented were the Mercedes Benz and BMW car manufacturers, Siemens, Hoechst, and the powerful Deutsche Bank — the world's largest bank outside Japan.

Speaking briefly to newsmen after the lunch, Mr Mandela said the sanctions issue had formed a very important part of the discussions.

"We have exchanged views and we are quite certain that they will consider our representations, as we will consider what they said to us.

"The important thing is that we feel we have made progress on this issue."

This view was contradicted by Mr Neglein, who commented his views, and by implication generally those of Germany industry, that sanctions should be lifted, had not changed, even though the opportunity for dis-

cussions with Mr Mandela were very welcome.

"According to our worldwide experience ... looking into history and recent developments, it is clear that any sanctions never had a positive effect, always negative to the community.

"So we really stated our point that in general, sanctions are counter productive."

The government was talking negotiation and peace with the ANC, but at the same time unacceptably allowing the Natal violence to continue in an attempt to destroy the organisation, Mr Mandela said at the luncheon.

He said nobody was asking the real question about Natal, which the government was presenting to the outside world as Black on Black violence.

In his meeting with State President Mr F W de Klerk before leaving for overseas, Mr Mandela

said he had asked him why, with such a strong, efficient and well equipped police force and army that had elsewhere quelled violence within a matter of days, the government had failed for over four years to stop the killing in Natal.

He had also put this question to Mr De Klerk previously, and "He has never been able to give me a proper answer ... I gave him the answer".

16/1/11

Thatcher forced New Nation 12/6/90 to recognise ANC

MARGARET Thatcher's meeting with ANC deputy president Nelson Mandela meant that she has finally recognised the organisation as a key player in South Africa.

The British premier's treatment of Mandela, which included sending cabinet minister William Waldegrave to welcome

him at the airport, was also a long way from her earlier tirade against the "typical terrorist organisation".

ANC officials also point to the cordial tone of the three-hour meeting and to the agreement to have regular consultations.

Mandela has been in a strong position after his tidal wave tour through the United States (US) and his successful lobbying. This had earlier led the European Community (EC) to keep sanctions, signalling a defeat for Thatcher.

And, by agreeing to meet Mandela, she climbed down from her rank hostility to the ANC.

One ANC official commented: "Britain, as an important international player, has finally accepted the role of the ANC in South Africa."

Mandela meets big business

BONN — ANC deputy president Nelson Mandela was asked yesterday by leading German industrialists to consider accepting at least a partial lifting of boycotts and sanctions against South Africa, possibly in the field of sport and culture.

Speaking at a luncheon hosted by the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Bonn, Mr Mandela said: "By lifting sanctions now you are playing into the hands of those against peace in South Africa."

He was welcomed by Mr Hans-Gerd Neglein, a senior board member of Siemens. Also at the closed-doors luncheon were about 30 German industrialists, businessmen and bankers, including representatives of Mercedes Benz, BMW, Hoechst, and the powerful Deutsche Bank — the world's largest bank outside Japan.

Speaking afterwards Mr Neglein said "it is clear that any sanctions never had a positive effect, always negative to the community. So we really stated our point that in general, sanctions are counter productive."

In his main address, Mr Mandela made clear the African National Congress wanted to allay fears of Western businessmen about the organisation's plans for nationalisation.

"We don't care what the system is, as long as it brings about the needed redistribution of wealth ... it does not matter if the cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice," he said.

But at a rally in Bonn last night, Mr Mandela said the continued suffering of blacks in South Africa meant nothing to those European Governments who were saying the time had come to lift sanctions.

He said: "We have made great progress in the peace talks, but the reality in South Africa is that apartheid is still in place." — Sapa-Reuter.

16/1/11

THE CITIZEN COMMENT

12 June 1990

Traitor J

WE have had Mr Nelson Mandela, the ANC deputy president, embracing Yasser Arafat, the Palestine Liberation Organisation leader and terror master.

We have had Mr Nelson Mandela embracing Col Muammar Gaddafi, the Libyan leader and terrorist master.

Since the ANC engaged in terrorism and received help from the PLO and Col Gaddafi, we suppose the association is understandable though deplorable.

Terror groups do help each other, and they do claim to be fighting just causes, though the families of their victims might think otherwise.

But when Mr Mandela embraces Mrs Ruth Gerhardt, the Swiss woman who, with her husband, Dieter, spied for the Soviet Union, then we must ask ourselves where Mr Mandela intends to draw the line.

For Mrs Gerhardt was no heroic "liberation" or anti-apartheid fighter.

She was a spy — and she and her husband accepted a great deal of money, seemingly about R2 million, as spies.

Dieter Gerhardt was commander of the Simonstown naval dockyard and was privy to secrets not just concerning South Africa but Western countries too.

Since his and his wife's trial was held in camera, we do not know the details, but their crime was serious enough for Dieter Gerhardt to receive life imprisonment and his wife ten years for high treason.

Mr Justice Munnik disclosed that from 1962 to January 1983 Dieter Gerhardt was engaged in espionage with the USSR, transmitting by various means South African military secrets to that country, for which he received payment.

Mrs Gerhardt assisted him by being a courier, carrying information in film form to various places in Europe, and on one occasion to Tananarive, in Madagascar, where she met representatives of the USSR to deliver the film to them, and on some occasions received fresh film and sums of money.

Mrs Gerhardt, in her defence, said she was sent by her husband to deliver films at pre-arranged meeting places "without knowing what it was all about".

Her husband had told her he was engaged in counter-intelligence work for South Africa.

From about 1980 she had begun doubting her husband's word and started "to believe in her heart of hearts" that he was a Russian spy.

However, as a result of threats of violence, she continued to assist her husband.

The court rejected these claims.

Gerhardt was picked up by FBI agents in Washington in January 1983 after American agents had received a tip-off from a Soviet intelligence defector.

He was interrogated for 11 days during which he made startling disclosures about the information he gave to the Russians, including intelligence on Nato and British defence systems.

By his own admission, he visited the Soviet Union five times. Mrs Gerhardt admitted accompanying him on two of these visits.

Mrs Gerhardt was released last month at the request of the Swiss Government, no doubt as a gesture to the Swiss during State President Mr F W de Klerk's visit to Geneva.

For Mrs Gerhardt to claim now that they spied as a "contribution to overcoming the inhuman apartheid system" is absolute rot.

Like all spies, the Gerhardts sold their country's secrets for money.

Neither is heroic; both are traitors to this country. And as a British solicitor who was nearly dragged into the affair said at the time: "There is a special place in Hell for traitors".

For Mr Mandela to give this treacherous woman any recognition is deplorable.

Her spying did not help the fight against apartheid. It did not help the ANC. It helped the Russians. And that's no excuse for betraying South Africa.

Mr Mandela must ask himself whether a woman who helps to sell her adopted country's secrets is someone to be trusted, never mind honoured.

He should have nothing to do with her.

THE film Being There is the parable of Chance the Gardener, an idiot savant who rises, quite innocently, to immense fame and influence because the powers that be sense in his simple-minded references to horticultural lore a Solomonic wisdom on the vexing issues of the day.

Isolated behind the garden walls of his employer for most of his conscious life, he in fact has no knowledge of the world beyond.

His infallibility rests in the desperate eyes of his beholders. When the truth ultimately begins to dawn on them, they dare not admit it.

Nelson Mandela may not be such an empty slate. That apart, it is worth pausing to wonder the extent to which he is the world's rather than his own creation.

Could it be that the Mandela to whom we must all now do obeisance was invented as he sat in his jail cell because the various parties to the SA drama needed a figure that did not exist in nature?

Mandela's claim to greatness — a claim, let it be said, that he has not made himself — rests principally on three things: his last words at the Rivonia trial, his long and nobly endured incarceration at the hands of the SA government and the testimony of those, both friend and foe, who saw him during that time and who have been in his presence since.

Of the first, it may be said that however fine Mandela's speech, the circumstances that led to its delivery involved a murderous conspiracy. Staunch ANC veterans who opposed the resort to violence were subsequently liquidated for their views.

As for the confinement, it happened to him, he did not do it himself. That he endured it with dignity and without cracking may be said of most of his fellow prisoners.

This brings us to the matter of testimony. Consider the witnesses. To be sure they now tell basically the same story, at least in public. This might seem persuasive.

It is less so, however, when one

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Is Mandela merely the hero the world needs so badly?

SIMON BARBER in Washington

stops to think about how the judgments were arrived at.

Pretoria, for example, is now determined, perhaps even more so than the ANC itself, that Mandela be great and good.

His authorised hagiographer Fatima Meer pointed out here the other day that "however they look at it, Mr Mandela is the best thing the government has and they had better look after him".

Confronted with a highly factionalised opposition, President F W de Klerk and his men are desperate for some kind of transcendent hero who can act as what the French, in Algeria, called a "valable interlocuteur".

Given his mythic status as the ANC's symbol of struggle over the past quarter century, they have seen little alternative to settling on Mandela. In the process, they have had to build him up among their own constituency just as the ANC marketed him as an international rallying instrument during his years in jail.

Their wish for him to be the kind of leader on whom they could pin their hopes has long since convinced them that he is that leader. As witnesses to his true character or intentions, they cannot therefore be trusted.

Abroad the urge to invest Mandela with all but superhuman qualities is no less great. Out here, nobody is interested in the individual as he really might be.

What people want is a saint, a sort of moral celebrity. Woe betide the policymaker, politician, scholar or journalist who evinces the slightest scepticism. Mother Theresa is scarcely more sacrosanct.

This is particularly true in the US where the civil rights movement has adopted Mandela as a sort of Martin Luther King reborn.

The sentiment is summed up by Roger Wilkins, co-ordinator of Mandela's US tour, who declared in the New York Times that the ANC deputy president was "our cousin, our king". The pun was apparently intended.

Such is the abyss into which racial politics has fallen here that news organisations have felt obliged to sanitise their coverage of Mandela's activities and statements.

The Washington Post, it is true, did remark upon the ideology of his first speech in Cape Town. That was a rare breach of protocol, however.

Mandela's praise of Fidel Castro as a beacon of human rights and embrace of both Col Gaddafi and Yasser Arafat (whom he has met now on three occasions) went largely unreported until members of the Jewish community started threatening to stage protests during his visit.

The last non-head-of-state invited to address a joint session of Congress was Lech Walesa. His invitation was made from genuine, across-the-board respect for a leader who had led the overthrow of a tyrannous regime without recourse to violence.

Mandela, on the other hand, is being accorded the same privilege less from any consensus that he should receive it than out of fear of the domestic political consequences if he did not. As it happens, very few of the congressional leadership were even consulted before the invitation was extended by House Speaker Thomas Foley at the insistence of Congressman William Gray.

To the contrary, the Mandela session was presented to most members as a fait accompli. Not even Senator Jesse Helms, perhaps the ANC's most dogged critic on Capitol Hill, could bring himself to complain.

Perhaps it does not bother Man-

dela that he is being used. However, the extent to which he is letting this happen surely casts doubt on whether he is the historic leader he is alleged to be.

One may even be inclined to think that the movement he represents sees him as little more than a useful PR tool to be trundled out when needed but otherwise kept on a tight rein. President George Bush might do well to think about this before the two meet.

Whoever runs the ANC clearly does not want him to spend a great deal of time at home. They have already blocked his inclination to make peace with Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

And now, a septuagenarian fresh out of surgery (however minor), he is supposed to undertake an itinerary that would exhaust a man half his age. His 10-day schedule in the US alone includes no less than eight major rallies, not counting the New York ticker tape parade and addresses to Congress and the UN General Assembly. In one 48-hour period, he must, among other lesser duties, speak at rallies in Atlanta, Detroit and Los Angeles, address a union convention in Miami and visit a car assembly plant in Detroit.

He is granted not a single day off throughout. This, say the organisers, ANC US representative Lindiwe Mabuba among them, is an abbreviated version of what they originally had in mind, specially pared down for the sake of his health.

Not, of course, that they admit his health might be a problem. Local ANC officials insist more loudly than anyone he is as healthy as an ox, problems in Geneva notwithstanding.

Insanity. And to what end? Merely to ensure that sanctions stay in place to strengthen the ANC's constitutional demands? That Mandela permits it is evidence at best of foolishness, but also of vainglory.

That his colleagues seem determined to have him proceed suggests the only use they have for him is to parade him overseas like some seductive but ultimately expendable artifact.

12 JUNE 1990

PAC gives details of constituent assembly

THE Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) has for the first time revealed details of the mechanics of a Constituent Assembly (CA) it says must be agreed on before negotiations take place with the De Klerk Administration.

The details are contained in one of three position papers dealing with a transitional constituent assembly, negotiations and the organisation's economic policy.

The PAC's position on the CA will be made public today when General Secretary Benny Alexander addresses a lunch

hosted by the Foreign Correspondents' Association.

In an exclusive interview with Sapa, Mr Alexander described the model as an inverted pyramid — "the model guarantees that the people will have the final say, with their representatives being directly elected and answerable to the masses on a non-racial basis."

According to the PAC document, negotiations can only take place once straightforward majority rule, the redistribution of resources, particularly land, and a constituent assembly are agreed upon by the ruling government.

The document states that the CA will consist of 265 seats, with representatives being elected on a proportional basis.

"This means that one would vote for a political party and not specific individuals in demarcated areas. The total national individual votes will be counted at the end of the elections to determine the winner.

"This means that the party with 40 percent of the total national individual votes will get 40 percent of the 265 seats in the

CA," says the document.

Once elected, "people's delegates" will appoint constitutional experts on a proportional basis.

"In effect, this will mean that 40 percent of the seats in the Constituent Assembly will appoint 40 percent of the experts to draw up a new constitution. The term of office of these experts will expire when the constitution is adopted."

Before the constitution is presented to the CA, delegates will be mandated to take it back to their verified support base for comment and verification before it is tabled again in the assembly for final ratification.

"Our belief in voting for representatives of political parties is a way out of the quagmire of racial representation and constituencies based along racial lines," said Mr Alexander.

There could be no question, he added, of the CA dealing with minority or group rights "as they would be directly accountable to the vast masses, who do not want apartheid in any guise". — Sapa.

Step down, Mandela

IF Nelson Mandela played rugby, he would have fitted as scrumhalf and would score many drop goals.

As a politician he is shrewd, as a strategist bold, as a leader charismatic, as an ideologist obstinate, and as an opportunist brilliant. Yet as a pragmatist, he is a failure and as a realist dubious.

This ambitious prominent Black politician of our times is venturing blindly into a unique situation that needs dynamism. Presently, he is creating more enemies for himself and his organisation by putting his organisation's interest first without considering the other real issues when dealing with the South African politics.

Actually, the impression he gives indicates that he is suffering from wrong conceptions. Like the old Muhammed Ali, who tried to wrest the heavyweight title at his prime age. Mandela, likewise, thinks that he still has an ego to enforce party policies down the throats of the millions of South Africans both Black and White.

It is good and wise that he has been given the opportunity to speak his lungs out, not that everybody can read in-between his mind and his mouth.

Equally all the controversy about his speeches will be exposed for everybody to see. Some people just listen and salute what he says without thinking or analysing those say-

ings. Be careful and cautious and believe not every word he utters. There is either a motive or the opposite of what he says.

Please, Mr Mandela, step down and retire like good old PW. You deserve it. To us you are just a bore.

We need people like Dikgang Moseneke, Dr G. Mosala, people with zest. You should be resting peacefully with Winnie and your grandchildren somewhere in the Transkei — Qunu is where you belong now. Our struggle needs fresh minds and fresh ideas and a dynamic leadership for a new South Africa.

FED UP

Johannesburg