

Telephone: Res.: Ngilazi 2, Office: (Ulundi 1/2/3) "Kwaphindangene"

P.O. Box 1, Mahlabathini 3865
Kwazulu, South Africa

Miss Mary Benson 15th June 1987

34 Langford Court
ABBEY ROAD

LONDON NW8. GREAT BRITAIN.

Dear Mary,

We are old acquaintances in the South African struggle for liberation and I have always respected you for your unflinching fight against apartheid. I regard you as a distinguished sister - a daughter of Africa. Circumstances seem to be driving us into becoming political opponents because we both passionately believe in what we are doing and there appears to be irreconcilable differences in our perceptions of the struggle for liberation which are the bases of decisions about tactics and strategies. How we differ about end goals in the struggle for liberation I think is relatively unimportant because ultimately we both know that the masses will in the end determine their own destiny.

| Joe Slovo is right in arguing the need for a phased struggle. He,
| you and others have the democratic right to have your own views
' about what should be done in the first phase of the struggle. You
have the right to have your own views of how it should be done.
You have the right to test your views against the will of the
masses. It is not political differences which are divisive.
There are political differences within the ANC. There always has
been and there always will be and the nearer the time comes to the
ANC coming home, the more it will become apparent that these
/differences are very real. There are masses here, Mary, you and
V I must respect, and in the broader view of the future, the ANC
will not be able to exercise the kind of narrow Party discipline
over the masses that it finds necessary to exercise over its
activist members and their supportive comrades.

I yearn for the day when I can stand with Oliver Tambo or oppose
him on South African political platforms. I yearn for the day when
Nelson Mandela is free either to oppose us individually or to stand
with one or another or with both of us. That is the way it is
going to be. That is the way it is going to be because the vast
realities of South Africa will dictate that that is the way it is
going to be.

Ours is a complex society, not in the narrow propagandist terms of the National Party pleading for criminal racist conclusions. It is a complex society simply because it is very vast and because millions of people will, whatever we do, seek to maximise their benefits and demand of their government that it helps them do so. It is complex because the problems of reconciliation are complex. I am not here simply talking about Black/White reconciliation; I am talking about White/White reconciliation as well; I am talking about Black/Black reconciliation; I am talking about the

complexities of a post-apartheid South Africa in which democracy, of whatever brand, will finally depend on the degree of national reconciliation for its survival. We dare not author a future in which whatsoever government following whatsoever ideological bent has to stay in power by the subjugation of free political thinking and by State brutality.

There is no prescription which the ANC, Inkatha or any other movement can now possible conceive of which will reconcile the people of South Africa and unify them into a nation willing to be governed the way they are governed. The degree of consensus on which effective government will depend after liberation will in fact only be achieved after liberation. What we now do and how we do it will determine how difficult that achievement will prove to be.

I am writing to you because I am now vividly mindful that what is happening now is dangerous for the future. I am talking about South Africa's future. I am talking about the future of the masses and I am perceiving that future as being so vastly more important than my own future, Oliver Tambo's future, your future and Nelson Mandela's future. As a conquered, oppressed people subjugated by White racist greed for power to support White privilege, we have had a tortured history. We must now escape those tortures. There is a ripeness of historic time right now in which it is imperative that we do so.

I am writing simply outside any self-defence or aggressive rhetoric. I understand the need for political propaganda. I understand the need for rhetoric in public places. I understand the need for presentation of reality in disguised forms to magnify Party political advantages. I understand what is taking place as different Black political groupings are locked in the battle for South African minds. I put all that aside in writing to you.

You know and I know that when the ANC was banned, it was very thin on the ground. We both know that the ANC had for many years been

top heavy and that too little attention was paid to organisational strength on the ground. We both know that after the banning of the ANC/ this lack of organisational strength on the ground expressed itself as a political vacuum. It was in that political vacuum that oppression made vast advances against the resistance of the people.

You know, Mary, and I know that SASO was not spawned by the ANC.

You know and I know that the Black People's Convention was not spawned by the ANC. You know and I know that Inkatha was not spawned by the ANC. We both know that June 16 1976 was not produced by the ANC. I understand the ANC's claim that it was the ANC spirit of resistance which expressed itself in the emergence of ^ the Black Consciousness Movement and the wave after wave of protest

J politics which followed June 16 1976. I understand why the ANC * claims authorship of this politics. It must do so to increase its credibility and its credibility has in fact been increased by these claims.

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I was in that vacuum. I was forced into political action by that vacuum. I more than any other Black leader attempted to fill that vacuum with a real ANC content. Before 1976 Black South Africans whispered to each other about the ANC. I gathered around me the masses in their tens of thousands in huge rallies where I slammed the South African Government for having been the author of the violent situation that was emerging. When others whispered about the ANC I stood there in broad daylight boldly reading from the words of Nelson Mandela and others. I showed South Africa that Black South Africans are proud of the ANC heritage. It was then at that time when those who despised the ANC in organisations like

was attacked by them. And because of the did not have a snowball's hope in hell of it was at that time that the ANC began You know and I know that Steve Biko was a third force while I was desperately political unity

between BPC,

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.SASO and the BCP, that I

false predictions that I

surviving politically,
looking askance at me.
attempting to set up
involving myself in cr^aTfing

Inkatha and ANC.

It was in that era of Black political insurgence that I saw

terrible dangers of third forces climbing over the backs of our

political martyrs and trampling the Black political heritage into
the dirt. That is why I got Blacks gathered together in the

strength of Inkatha to sing the old slogans and boldly fly the old
colours. These are colours of Black South Africa I was bringing
^back into life. I did that for South Africa, and yet you write as

you did in your book Nelson Mandela:

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"As for unity on the mainland, Black Consciousness followers and Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, chief minister of the KwaZulu homeland and head of Inkatha, the Zulu nationalist movement which he had founded, engaged in mutual recrimination; a dispute which had its parallel abroad, where Buthelezi was at loggerheads with the ANC. He used the ANC colours and claimed to lead the largest black nationalist organization, but Inkatha showed no sign of actively confronting the government."

I was then not at loggerheads with the ANC. It was at that time that I was proclaiming the ANC as being the liberation movement of the country. I boldly made that very statement in the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, crying defiance in the very institutions of homeland government which I turned into an arena to oppose the homeland policy. And this is in fact, not the way you yourself < wrote about me in your update edition of your book published by Penguin.

During those years I and Oliver Tambo embraced as brothers whenever we met. In those years one after another emissary went from South Africa to seek consultations with the ANC, but it was also in those years that the ANC was looking over its shoulder at the Black Consciousness Movement, frightened that it may turn against them. That was why the ANC only met me and my emissaries in the deepest of secrecy behind closed doors. It was those experiences that made me ashamed of the ANC's Mission in Exile and its leadership out there far removed from the heart of the struggle that led me in October 1979 to lead a formal delegation to London to meet formally with the ANC. I have never ever disowned the ANC. I have always encouraged Black South Africa by stating simply: "Yes, I did meet

Oliver Tambo." But Oliver Tambo slammed me for this very act of proclaiming the importance of the ANC and his leadership.

Since the London meeting in 1979 Tambo declared war on me. Even then the predictions were rife that I had--no"poTritical future. The ANC misjudged South Africa in this prediction. They could not read the signs of the times and they simply would not believe that Inkatha was a vital political development. It is horrifically MQ tragic that the ANC set about distancing itself from the masses whop gave me the allegiance they gave me because I reflected the time-I honoured values the ANC had always stood for. I understand all the rhetoric that must necessarily flow publicly from ANC spokesmen but I write now outside the framework of that rhetoric and talk to you about the things that you and I know about.

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Allow me to leap from the past into the future. The credibility of the ANC has in the last year been higher than it has ever been in the history of the movement. Do not squander this credibility by yet again blundering in misassessments of the South African situation. There will be no military victory and the ANC will not '

did Frelimo and ZANU/ZAPU. You and I know that the necessary conditions for a real revolutionary victory have not even begun to ^

emerge. There can be no such victory without very significai

come back to South Africa as a government returned from exile, as '

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defections among the rank and leadership of the South African tr Police and the South African Defence Force. We know that South Africa can go on indefinitely within the present level of ANC attacks. You know, Mary, that there is not a single bridge that is not standing; there is not a single factory that is not operating because of the ANC's war effort. Every railway line is intact; every pipeline is intact and the very worst that the ANC can do takes the South African Government only an hour or two to make normal again.

The very best that the ANC can do militarily has not spread

violence from Black townships into White areas. You know and I

know that the South African security forces have only toyed with the brutality of their power in their control of Black townships.

You know and I know that if things got very tough, townships could be isolated until violence burnt out and the demand for the life-sustaining normal flow of goods, water and people in and out of townships drove the people to drop violence of that magnitude.

There is no military victory in sight. The ANC will be fouled up by its own propaganda if it continues to promise the kind of revolution which they have been promising and which has not been

forthcoming. How long will the credibility of the ANC last if they

cannot deliver the revolution goodies their propaganda promises?

The world may now support a short, sharp, decisive, violent battle.

The world will not support years of failing endeavour to win this . r â– ^ battle. The ANC' s present international eminence rests on \ i)

expectations that the ANC itself cannot deliver. Now is the time for an historical ANC re-think. Now is the time to enter the

politics of negotiation because that is the way forward. 1

Whatever the ANC political propagandists say about me and however you add to that propaganda, you can be quite assured that I will W' not enter Mr. P.W. Botha's National Council until Nelson Mandela is " ^ released from jail. I will not talk about the future of my country 0 isolated from the people I belong with, while I have any reason to ' believe that I belong with them. Nelson Mandela has over the years continued to give me reason to believe that we belong together. He does so even now and I would serve with him or under him if that was the will of the people. But serve I will, with or without the ANC.

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Let the people decide who will finally rule and let the people decide the who's who of that rule. Come home now and involve yourself in a very massive, historical transformation of South African society. Come home to be part of history while it is being lived. Don't waste the years of your exiled agony. Don't waste the credibility of the ANC. Don't pursue failures.

What I have done my whole political life was launched by the old ANC. I took up the position at Nongoma and then later at Ulundi because that was the judgement of the ANC's leadership. If that leadership passes into political oblivion because of faulty analysis and constant misconceptions of the South African struggle, then I will be released from a life-long commitment to do what I set out to do and not to falter along the way.

I want to make the point that it is dangerous in the extreme to draw one-to-one parallels between the tactics and strategies succeeding elsewhere and the tactics and strategies which can succeed in South Africa. We urgently need the politics of negotiation to get off the ground for any of us to continue for any length of time in the pursuit of our ideals for the country. We need to add to whatever has taken place and is taking place, the dynamic power of Black negotiators. We need to negotiate from the top down and from the bottom upwards and we can undertake that negotiation with very, very powerful international backing which would be on our side in the negotiations. The first step is the eradication of apartheid and again while I understand polemic argument and propaganda, it is simply piffle, sheer nonsense, criminal negligence of fact, to believe that Germany, Britain and the United States do not want the eradication of apartheid. They are the nations which would have more clout in support of us for the politics of negotiation.

er we delay negotiations^ the more divided Black South Africa will become"; L^tme-warn-you rather bluntly, Mary, that the ANC is right now building up stumbling blocks for its own future by the way it is clamouring to claim the allegiance of all who owe it V, no allegiance. Bands of comrades will ever increasingly become vagrant, violent forces which will ever increasingly become embarrassments to the ANC because they are totally out of control. How long can the ANC build up the UDF and COSATU without them becoming the tail that wags the dog? What idiots will ANC leaders prove to be when they cannot lead effectively because the groups and individuals they have built up simply refuse to do their bidding? Get rid of the romanticism which is all too frequently

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there amongst members of the ANC in exile who have actually now fallen prey to their own political propaganda. Know that the world is not the world that the ANC makes it out to be in that propaganda. Re-enter the struggle with new determination. Have greater vision and don't squander that which has taken 25 years to generate.

The ANC will not be squandering my prospects if they squander their prospects. I am not writing out of concern for me or Inkatha. I am writing as a brother in the struggle sharing the yearnings for Black unity of the kind which is now needed for a final victory.

With my kindest regards,
Yours very sincerely,

MANGOSUTHU G. B

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