

MEMORANDUM FOR DISCUSSION WITH MR. ANTHONY ROBINSON OUTGOING
CORRESPONDENT IN SOUTH AFRICA FOR THE FINANCIAL TIMES, LONDON AND

MS P. WALDMEIR, NEW FINANCIAL TIMES CORRESPONDENT IN SOUTH AFRICA
BY MANGOSUTHU G. BUTHELEZI, CHIEF MINISTER OF KWAZULU

AND PRESIDENT OF INKATHA
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I am pleased to have this opportunity to meet your successor, Ms P.
Waldmeir, and to have this opportunity of discussing the South
African situation with both of you.

I am very conscious of a South and Southern Africa being a country
and a sub-continent poised for change. The re-definition of the

Soviet Union's attitude to South and Southern Africa, the renewed
efforts to place trade relations between Mocambique and South
Africa on a better footing and the momentous events which are
taking place in Southern Angola and Namibia, all coincide with
redefined relationships between the USA and the USSR, and coincide
with the National Party leadership and Cabinet post musical chairs
now in progress. :

It must be both an exciting and a difficult time for journalists
covering national and international events in this sub-continent.

I hope Ms Waldmeir that you will always find me attentive to the
need to provide journalists with my own perceptions and always
ready to respond to requests for comment.

I believe that the South African situation is one in which the politics of negotiation could well become a reality much sooner than most people think. I would protest if you wanted me to put a time factor on that statement. I speak only in broad terms of a situation in which there could well be dramatic moves in very short

spaces of time. South Africa is poised for doing what so many just did not believe would be possible in their lifetime.

I remember only too well how Mr. B.J. Vorster, the then Prime Minister, would say that the National Party would not have discussions with the ANC in his lifetime. Cabinet Ministers are not saying that now. The image of a monolithic National Party posed to maintain apartheid forever unless unseated forcibly has now been dispelled. The National Party is politically vulnerable; it is not a monolithic power and in fact it can no longer dictate the events in which it can seek the kind of survival patterns that it sought in the past.

It is in this flexible climate of dramatic things being possible overnight that I must be cautious in what I say about constitutional issues. I am on record as saying that I will settle for nothing less than one South Africa, with one Parliament resting

on one universal adult franchise system. I am on record as saying that however much my cherished hope is for the unity - of . South Africa as one sovereign country to be expressed in a unitary state with a one-man-one-vote system of government, I am prepared to look at federal or other alternatives provided that we maintain the

central principles of democracy as they have emerged in West Europe or North America.

I have endorsed the KwazZulu/Natal Indaba constitutional proposals in principle because they represent what could be possibly a pragmatic assessment of what can be done to make progress in constitutional development. I have also said that one could look at the Swiss Canton system for some inspiration and I add that perhaps one could even look at the political philosophy of co-habitation.

What constitution we will actually end up with will be determined by how apartheid is finally eradicated and what alignment of forces

emerge to call the tune during its eradication. It is in observing the forces at work on the ground that journalists have to make predictions about the future. Good journalists see the future in the present and avoid imposing their own ideological concepts on

the present and see only in current events what pleases their ideological make-up.

We each have our role to play in life. When I talk about the roles

of others, I do not do so in any derogatory sense. When therefore I say that academics and journalists have not been in the habit of actually destroying old regimes and establishing new regimes, I am

pointing to the fact that journalists move after events and do not create events.

There is a brand of journalist, however, who believe they are writing history and shaping the future by the way they present what

they see to their reading public. I am again and again accosted by journalists who lambaste me for what I am doing, despite the fact

that they really do not know half of what I am doing, or have completely wrong impressions of what I am doing.

You, Mr. Robinson, write that Inkatha is Zulu-backed and led by

myself as a Zulu leader. You write about antagonism between the comparatively conservative Chief Buthelezi and the more radical UDF. You write about struggles for black hearts and minds between the UDF/COSATU alliance and more conservative groups like Inkatha. You write about Inkatha linked warlords. You write to give credibility that there is tacit police connivance with the conservative vigilantes with whom the media associates me. You

write about the KwazZulu/Natal Indaba proposals as possibly leading to a Zulu/Afrikaner alliance.

Each of these things you write about, Mr. Robinson, need teasing out in the many reassessments which you need to make. I am talking simply and frankly because that is the way I think a political leader and a journalist should discuss matters. I have the unfair advantage of being the actor you write about and I have the unfair advantage of knowing my own motivations and intentions about which you write. I see myself in today's circumstances as I project myself into the future. You walk behind my present and you write

about the future as though it would be a natural extension of the past.

We are involved in the politics of change. The future will be different from the present and the past and journalists must be

mindful of the fact that the future will not be written by an[^] one lone actor. It will not be the future which is the dream of any

one actor. Pause only to think of how different Mozambique today is from the Mozambique that Frelimo dreamed of when it was still in exile in Tanzania. Think of how different Tanzania itself is to the Tanzania that great African statesmen, Julius Nyerere, dreamed of when he assumed power.

The future we are going to have in this country is going to be shaped by a multitude of forces interacting with each other. We

are all in the melting pot and each group and each leader will play its, or his or her role.

There is too much writing about current South Africa as though journalists know what is going to transpire and how it is going to

come about. There is perhaps more need than ever for journalists writing about South Africa to put preconceptions aside and to

listen intently to everybody.

I would say that on an average journalistic perceptions are perhaps something like two years behind those leaders and organisations who

are actually shaping events. You journalists write about what leaders have done, while they are doing what they are doing to lay

the foundations for what they will yet do. I am pleading for greater co-operation between journalists and leaders and I am

pleading for more dialogue and more discussion and more openness of mind.

I know what I am about. I know my own motivation and I know my own intentions. You journalists, Mr. Robinson, who write about me as

being ready to compromise with Pretoria and as a Zulu leader. You write about Inkatha as a Zulu organisation and are blind to the

national and international role which I am playing and Inkatha is playing. I am mobilising national forces and I am attacking

national problems even if I tackle them simultaneously at the local level, the regional level and at the national level.

It is a rare leader indeed who rises to any kind of national prominence who does not have a home base somewhere and does not

have a strong regional support system somewhere. Journalists are all too prone to be simplistic in their thinking and writing about

ethnicity and tribalism. Inward-looking tribalism and self-seeking ethnicity can be terribly dangerous, but the mobilisation of regional forces consolidating ethnic opposition to apartheid, in a demand for a multi-party, multi-racial democracy, is another thing altogether.

The time is coming, I believe, when it will be so much easier for journalists because they will not feel constrained to write about

me within the straitjackets my political enemies create. % will be the breakthroughs in which black unity will be established

on the basis of a multi-strategy approach in which holier-than-thou go-alongers will be endorsed into the sideline.

In broad terms, the National Party is now in a state of real flux and change and it does not matter even if the emerging leadership

on the eve of Mr. P.W. Botha's retirement tried to avoid change, it will come. The National Party can no longer orchestrate the events

within which it can project the image of a supreme power. (T now dependent upon appropriate Black political responses which are

not forthcoming.

The Tricameral Parliament has been rendered useless for the future by Blacks and there is now no escape from its deficiencies without

Blacks. Whites will now ever-increasingly want a political settlement with Blacks and there will increasingly be a move away

from the swart gevaar politics in which Whites thought they could control Black political developments. Black power is emerging

whether it is in the market place or in politics. Black bargaining power is increasing and can only continue to ensure that the

politics of prescription must come to an end.

South Africa is a dynamic place in which it will be increasingly difficult to follow the act and to forecast the next scene.

The Financial Times is a very influential newspaper. It probably

ranks as one of the most influential in the world. What Financial Times correspondents write about South Africa plays an important

role in shaping opinion about events, even if what is written does not shape the events themselves. My plea is, as I have said, for

more consultation between journalists and political leaders, more dialogue and less presumption in writing.

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