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АКАДЕМИЯ НАУК СССР

ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF THE USSR

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Cde Simon Makana
The Head of the Permanent
Mission of the ANC (SA)
to USSR

March 5, 1990

Dear comrade Makana,

I'm taking the responsibility of answering your letter of February 23, 1990 for the reason that Prof Anatoly Gromyko is at present on his vacation.

As you may remember, when I spoke to you at the ANC Anniversary meeting, held in Moscow in January we both have agreed to have a meeting together with colleagues from our Institute to discuss several issues. One of the issues that I was intending to talk about was the one concerning my visit to South Africa. This visit is due to take place in March of this year on the invitation of the South African Institute of Race Relations. As you should probably know from your secretary, afterwards I was several times trying to get in touch with you so as to organise this meeting but you were either busy, out of your office or not in Moscow. It is rather unfortunate that we didn't manage to have a conversation because otherwise I'm sure that there would have been much less grounds for your concern and, instead of rumours, you would have had the fullest information about our plans at the Institute.

Throughout our activities at this Institute and in planning the above-mentioned visit to South Africa we were always strictly following the conditions of the international cultural and academic boycott of the apartheid regime, including the recommendations of the ANC Position Paper on the Cultural and Academic Boycott, which was adopted by the NEC of the ANC in May of last year. More precisely, we were turning down every offer to establish close relations with those South African institutions or organizations that were promoting, defending or giving aid to the system of white minority domination. That is the reason why our Institute, despite numerous offers, has no official contacts with any of the South African academic institutions or universities and their related bodies.

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The South African Institute of Race Relations, the one that invited me to come to South Africa, is a well-known public research organization with a clearly defined anti-apartheid stance. Many social scientists, including those in the ANC research center, extensively use detailed data on various aspects of South African life and struggle that are published by this institute. The first contact our institution had with the SAIRR was through its executive director, Dr John Kane-Berman, who was in Moscow last November as a guest of the Institute for African Studies. During that visit Dr Kane-Berman and Prof Gromyko agreed on starting a joint project that will include a two-day round-table discussion with participation of social scientists from our two institutes that is due to be held in Moscow later this year. Later on Dr Kane-Berman had invited me to come to South Africa as a guest of his institute and I, taking into consideration the above-mentioned status of this organization and the provisions of the academic boycott as well as after consultations with my government, have agreed to meet it.

I understand that some people inside and outside South Africa probably may not be happy about this visit, as they were not happy with the similar visit of Professors A. Davidson and I. Filatova last December. But I want to state clearly now (and I assure you that I will state this clearly in South Africa too) that I was always supporting the ideals of the anti-apartheid struggle led by the people of your country against the oppressive, discriminative and basically non-democratic system that still exists there. In these circumstances the main objective of my visit, the way I see it, is to inform as much people in South Africa as possible about the present Soviet policies towards South and Southern Africa. The underlying principle of these policies has always been the principle of full support for the just cause of the national liberation struggle against the apartheid regime. Moreover, this visit, in my view, becomes even more important in the present situation when, as you have correctly stressed in your letter, there is a growing need for further consolidation by all forces, internal and external, interested in genuine change in South Africa. That only means that if the people inside South Africa, both black and white, will know truth about the policy of the Soviet Union and the positions taken on South African issues by Soviet public and academic institutions, especially in the light of those many distortions and misinterpretations that were recently published in the Western and South African press, this will only help to promote the ideals your own and other democratic organizations which sincerely strive towards democracy and peace.

I very much hope that my visit will help to strengthen the prestige of the Soviet Union and, under the present developments in your country and in the framework of observance of the conditions of boycott, I'm sure that it will not really tarnish the image of my country inside South Africa.

I understand that there are still many issues that need to be discussed between people from the African National Congress and scholars from our Institute. Using this occasion, I want kindly to

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repeat Professor Gromyko's and mine own invitation for you, comrade Makana, to visit the Institute for African Studies and to make a presentation here. We also still hope that comrade Secretary-General Alfred Nzo or some other ANC officials will find time to positively answer Professor Gromyko's letter of November 22 of last year inviting social scientists from the ANC to hold a joint seminar with my colleagues at the Institute for African Studies.

Let me express my hope that the relations between the ANC and the Institute for African Studies will receive in the coming future a new positive impetus which will certainly benefit our both organizations in this promising, full of hope and expectations, but still a very complex time for our two countries.

With best regards,

BTuxu

Dr. Vladimir I. Tikhomirov
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Institute for African Studies and
DEPUTY DIRECTOR,
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