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ALAN PATON CENTRE UDF

UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT

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3 June 1987

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REQUEST FOR AN OPINION ON COMPOSITION AND FUNCTIONS OF THE
PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL AND ON "FURTHER FORMS OF NEGOTIATION"

Thank you for writing to me and asking for my views on the President's Council and as I understand the request, on ways and means of structuring this Council in order to accommodate State leaders. You are no doubt aware that I am one of the President's of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and as such I have a responsibility in consulting with my national executive before I respond to such requests. I have done so and I give below the opinion of the organisation which co-incides entirely with my own position on this matter.

The UDF from its inception has been committed to the attainment of democracy by non-violent methods. At the centre of its beliefs is the conviction that the main obstacle to the achievement of democracy, as it is universally understood, is the Government, its many agencies and its few allies,. The Nationalist Party in particular stands directly in the way of genuine progress. The President's Council is a creation of the Nationalist Party and forms one of the main pillars/.....

APARTHEID DIVIDES, UDF UNITES

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pillars of the three chambered parliament which has been re-
jected by the overwhelming majority of our people. Indeed
it may be argued that the Tricameral Parliament has been the
single most important cause of the upheavels and brutal
state repression over the past 3 years. In fact the Presidents
Council has been party to unjust legislation which has allowed
this repression to be pursued by the army and the police.
The point is that the President's Council cannot be uncoupled
from the worst excesses of the apartheid regime. It is
therefore totally unacceptable to us in its presently con-
stituted or any other form. It cannot be redesigned, it
must be scrapped.

Before this apartheid state can be transformed into a demo-
cracy it is necessary for all South Africans to participate
freely and fully without fear of harm in the political pro-
cess. We suggest that the appropriate conditions be created
to promote confidence in the motives of your Government. At
a minimum we would require :

- (1) Lifting of the Emergency
- (2) Release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners
- (3) Urbanning of the ANC
- (4) Release of all detainees
- X (5) Troops and police out of the townships and disbanding
the army
- (6) Guarantees to returning political exiles
- (7) Scrapping of all harsh and unjust security legislation
and allover discriminatory and unjust laws

You will recognise these demands for they have been made be-
fore and made repeatedly. We will continue to fight for these
demands until we are free. They are not diminished by being
restated but in fact should give you an idea of the strength
of feeling and resolve of millions of South Africans on
these issues.


Further /.....

Further should it be the genuinely held desire of your Government to enter into meaningful negotiations with the effective and genuine leaders of the Black people for the purpose of seeking a permanent solution for the economic and political problems which beset our Country it would not be remiss if your Government accepted as a fact that without the participation in such negotiations of the African National Congress whose leaders are amongst other Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo, they would be of no value whatsoever.

I may add that if these conditions which are conducive to peace are not created, and the state persists in responding to genuine demands of the people with violence, through its own forces or indirectly through vigilantes, then I am afraid people who continue to be attacked will adopt defensive measures and may even seek reactive measures. These events immeasurably decrease the prospects of a peaceful solution to our Country's problems.

I would be very pleased to hear from you when your Government can respond positively to my comments. I am certain you will not be averse to my making your letter and my reply to it available to the public through the media, as you are a public institution.

Yours faithfully



MR A J GUMEDE