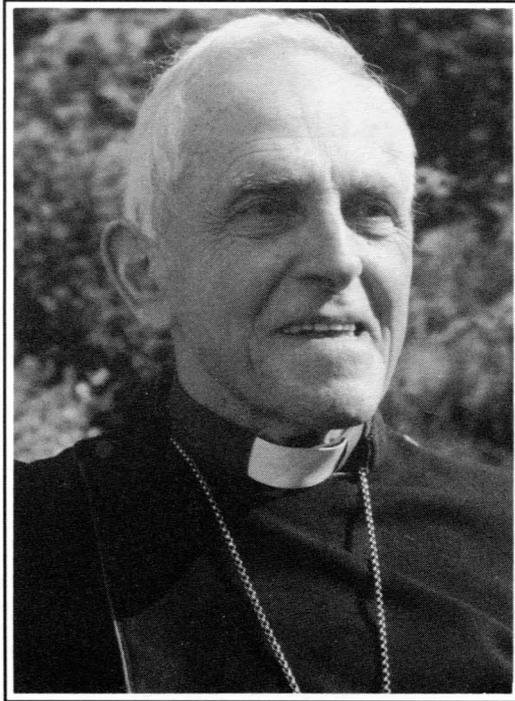


Message to British Local Authorities from
Archbishop
Trevor Huddleston CR
President of the Anti-Apartheid Movement



"There can only be a genuine end to apartheid when it is replaced by a democratic system of government both at a national and local level in South Africa".

This summer I returned to South Africa for the first time in 35 years. I was the guest of the African National Congress, who had honoured me by asking me to open the ANC's National Conference, the first to be held on South African soil since it was banned in 1960. The Conference was a remarkable experience and an example of democratic practice from which there was much that we in Britain could learn. Above all it set out the way forward for the campaign to secure a genuine end to apartheid and the creation of a new united, non-racial and democratic South Africa.

Throughout the Conference and wherever I went in South Africa one clear message came through to me - the need for the international community to keep up the pressure until we have achieved the goal for which so many have struggled and sacrificed - a genuine end to apartheid.

It is in this spirit that I am addressing this message to local authorities in Britain. I know how much so many of you have done to help achieve the progress we have witnessed so far in South Africa. Indeed I have enjoyed visiting many Councils to participate in events which have been organised in support of the anti-apartheid cause.

I want to stress that now is not the time for any of us to relax, although the nature of the contribution which we can make will inevitably change as further progress is made.

Local Authorities in Britain have always been a cornerstone of our democratic system and often more in tune with the electorate's aspirations than Whitehall. You can therefore play an important role in ensuring the widest possible understanding amongst the public that there can only be a genuine end to apartheid when it is replaced by a democratic system of government both at a national and local level in South Africa.

I have therefore been most encouraged by the large number of local authorities which have given their support to the "Vote for Democracy in South Africa" campaign which I launched on behalf of the Anti-Apartheid Movement at a special ceremony in Glasgow to coincide with the TUC Congress. I hope local authorities will continue to give their full support for this campaign.

The role of local authorities is of special significance since the ruling South African National Party envisages replacing the existing apartheid constitution with one that purports to be democratic and yet seeks to maintain the levers of political and economic power in the hands of the white minority. No where is this more clear than in its proposals for a system of local

government in which there will be two voting roles -those owning property will be on both rolls and entitled to two votes, - those without property will be entitled to only one vote. In practice this will mean two votes for most whites and one vote for most blacks. Local Authorities can play an important role in exposing the fraudulent nature of these proposals.

There is another specific contribution which local authorities can make. Already moves are underway to create new systems of non-racial local government in South Africa. These new structures will need support and solidarity. I know that already a number of British local authorities have assisted by providing training facilities for those who have been involved in Civic Associations. We need to start preparing now for the time when you can become directly involved in assisting the process of constructing non-racial local government in South African given the wealth of experience which local authorities in Britain have.

The most urgent task ahead of us all is the need to replace the apartheid regime with an Interim Government of National Unity. The "Inkathagate Scandal" was proof, if needed, that President de Klerk and the National Party cannot be entrusted with the government of South Africa during a period of transition. To achieve this we must keep up the pressure. That was the message from the Commonwealth Summit in Harare. With the exception of the British Prime Minister, there was unanimity amongst Commonwealth leaders that economic sanctions must be maintained in order to ensure that an Interim Government or some other agreed transitional arrangements are put in place.

Both the African National Congress and the Commonwealth are signalling that there are some areas of boycotts at which we need to look afresh. These are what are described as "people to people" sanctions. They are simply saying that we must not be working in a way that undermines the moves to create non-racial structures in South Africa. This is a sign of the progress that is being made. I would like to pay tribute to all those in Britain especially in local authorities who through the sacrifices they have made to make a reality of the cultural, sporting and academic boycotts have helped so much in creating the conditions in which non-racialism can begin to flourish in these areas in South Africa. But I would also counsel caution. Do not act prematurely to lift any restrictions your authority has imposed until there has been an opportunity for you to consult fully with the African National Congress, the UN, and the Commonwealth as well as the Anti-Apartheid Movement.

Finally I have appreciated deeply the role which the National Steering

Committee for Local Authority Action Against Apartheid has played in promoting and co-ordinating activity and more recently the important servicing role of the Local Authority Resource Unit On Apartheid. I hope that you will continue to give them your full support during this critical stage of the freedom struggle. There is so much that still needs to be done. Political prisoners continue to languish in gaol. Violence and repression daily threaten the peace process. Returning exiles and released political prisoners need to start new lives. And above all there needs to be agreement on a fair and democratic mechanism to draw up a new non-racial and democratic constitution - I hope South Africa will follow the Namibian model of an elected constituent assembly which worked so well. Local authorities, taking into account legal constraints, can do so much to help us make progress in these areas.

My message is simple - do not relax now. Keep up your work until we can celebrate a genuine end to apartheid with the creation of a new united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa.

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