

A tolerant and free society is based on respect for other people. As it is codified in terms set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all individuals, irrespective of race, religion, sex or other characteristics, are, in a fundamental way, equal. That very principle of equality is blatantly denied and violated by the apartheid system which is rooted in racial inequality.

On behalf of the Committee, I welcome to Canada the South Africans both black and white who experience the full weight of apartheid: who have fought back: who represent the hope of the future for South Africa. We look forward to hearing your views and exchanging ideas with you. You bring an immediate reality to our deliberations.

One of those we invited is not here. Cyril Ramaphosa leads the United Mine Workers. The Government of South Africa would not let him travel to Toronto. It is clear that Pretoria does not want us to hear what he has to say. We regret Mr. Ramaphosa's inability to join us. The action taken against him is eloquent testimony to the nature of apartheid.

In Lusaka we decided that here in Toronto we would give particular attention to the problems posed by censorship in South Africa and the efforts of the Government of South Africa to mislead the world about the realities there. Our decision was timely. There have been new uses of old measures to control the press. Newspapers have been closed and others have been threatened to get across the message that the truth will not be tolerated. The new State of Emergency regulations added restrictions. The Government of South Africa will not permit the South African media to oppose or to expose apartheid.

From the South African Government we hear no willingness to negotiate a new form of government to represent all South Africans with those whom the majority can choose for itself in a free and unqualified manner. Legitimate black leaders respond from jail, or exile, or through the filters of banning and censorship.

In presenting a false image to the world, the Government of South Africa is also pretending to itself. By exposing South African propaganda perhaps we can force that Government too, to recognize the realities it tries to hide. We will have before us a Canadian strategy paper which will, I hope, help to guide our thoughts on this important subject.

I would like to close by renewing my welcome to Canada and to Toronto. Toronto has become Canada's largest city, and it has done so by attracting people to it from around the world. A city which takes so much pride in its diversity is an appropriate setting for a meeting of a Commonwealth Committee focussed on problems which have grown out of racism.