



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

5 April 1984

The attached letter was delivered to Mr Peacock tonight.



PRIME MINISTER

CANBERRA

05 APR 1984

The Honourable A.S. Peacock, MP
Leader of the Opposition
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Peacock

Thank you for your letter of 5 April 1984 in which you advised me of the intention of the Opposition to invite to Australia three South African politicians and requested the Government to issue visas to them.

I am somewhat surprised at the importance attached to giving aid and comfort to South Africa in the Opposition's foreign policy, as evidenced by this invitation on behalf of yourself and a section of your Opposition colleagues, but acknowledge that this is your own affair. I now understand a little more clearly the report in the Capetown Argus of 29 February, attributed to the Opposition spokesman on Foreign Affairs, Mr Mackellar, that the Coalition Parties proposed to develop a more accommodating policy towards South Africa.

The Government takes the view that South Africans holding official positions will not be permitted entry to Australia if the principal purpose of their visit is to promote apartheid doctrine or policies. This follows from the peculiarly odious character of the apartheid doctrine practised by the South African Government.

It is not merely that apartheid is the antithesis of the fundamental democratic values of our open liberal society which you call in aid: but the racism of apartheid is fundamentally and intolerably anti-human. Apartheid discriminates on nothing more than the biological circumstances of one's birth: there is nothing over which one has less control.

It is moreover the case, as you will be well aware, that the South African Government does not allow prominent and vocal domestic opponents of apartheid to freely leave and return, nor does it allow prominent and vocal international opponents of apartheid to visit South Africa for the purpose of publicly challenging apartheid doctrine and practice.

To give aid and comfort under these circumstances to official South African spokesmen to promote apartheid doctrine and policies would not only be utterly at odds with the positions Australia has consistently taken in world forums, with our practice in specific policy areas such as sporting contacts, with our international human rights treaty obligations, and with the dignity and aspirations of our indigenous Aboriginal minority, but would lack any justification in principle.

It was because of his awareness of their intent to promote the racial obscenity of apartheid that my colleague, the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, decided last month not to issue visas to Messrs Durr and Rajab.

For any of the proposed delegates to be a member of the South African Parliament adds nothing to the quality of the case you make, given the utterly unrepresentative and undemocratic character of the South African Parliament with its wholly racially-based franchise.

If you are able to give me a written assurance that the proposed presence in Australia of the South African politicians, as the Opposition's guests, will not be exploited by them for the purpose of promoting apartheid, the Government will be prepared to approve the applications for visas which may result from your request.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R.J.L. Hawke', written in a cursive style.

R.J.L. Hawke