

New Alternatives For South Africa

The Last Interview Of Juergen Ponto

SPECIAL REPORT

Just days before his murder at the hands of terrorists controlled by the Carter Administration, Jürgen Ponto, the president of West Germany's Dresdner Bank, told the South African-linked magazine *To The Point International* how South Africa can be transformed from a manipulated hotspot into an arena for international trade and development.

Ponto's "Last Words," as *To The Point* labeled them (reprinted below), correspond to the thinking of an increasing number of banking and industry figures in and around the Vorster government of South Africa who are desperately looking toward cooperation with Western Europe, conservatives in the USA, and even the Soviet Union as an alternative to the bankruptcy and war Wall Street is maneuvering their nation into.

Under the guise of "anti-apartheid pressure," Chase Manhattan has cut off credit to South Africa in expectation that the Vorster government will be forced into full-scale war against its black-ruled neighbors, in a "break-away ally" mode similar to that Israel has assumed.

The Vorster government's Afrikaaner banking and industrial base has begun to move toward adoption of the development policy outlined by Ponto below as their only alternative. As Ponto made clear, a development policy is the key to solving the problem of the "apartheid" system which is the core of South Africa's current labor policy.

The motion toward a development policy is still largely underground in South Africa's political and business circles. Nevertheless, the networks Ponto had organized in South Africa together with French industrialists and Protestant bankers are moving toward the creation of a gold-backed, hard-commodity credit based new monetary system. Nicholas Diederichs, South African State President and former Finance Minister, well-known for his sharp attacks against the U.S. pressures to demonetize gold, is reportedly negotiating with French and West German officials on that perspective. Also tied to the Ponto-Diederichs group is Anton Rupert, the head of the largest Afrikaaner financial-industrial group, the Rembrandt group.

This is the proper context to view French Foreign Minister Guiringaud's talks this week with the "front-line" states of Zambia, Mozambique, and Tanzania as well as the Patriotic Front forces fighting in Rhodesia. The French are aiming to cool down the southern Africa situation, capitalizing on the strong French position both in South Africa and in the developing black nations.

U.S. Connection, Soviet Approaches

The U.S. connection to the South African industrial forces is former Treasury Secretary and new Citibank board member William Simon. Simon was the featured speaker at a June 21-22 seminar on U.S. investments in South Africa held in Rye, N.Y., sponsored by the South African government and coordinated by Allegheny Ludlum and Union Carbide officials.

Reliable sources reported that behind the conference is the fact that leading South African policymakers such as Interior Minister Mulder are organizing a raw materials cartel with Rhodesia and proposing that the Soviet Union join. The heads of the South African steel industry, along with think-tankers at the Rand University, are also major proponents of the Soviet-South African cartel. Such a cartel would control most of the world's mineral supply:

platinum	99 percent
manganese	98 percent
vanadium	96 percent
chromium	96 percent
diamonds.....	87 percent
gold	70 percent
fluorspar (asbestos)	50 percent
uranium	40 percent

In itself, such a cartel would be an economic dead-end, but it implies a definite if cautious commitment to break the back of the Rockefeller and Rothschild-tied interests.

Similar rumors emerged from a South African Foreign Affairs Association Seminar held in Hamburg in the first week of June. The Association's journal was the first press organ to mention Soviet-South African contacts. Despite a wave of attacks against the South African government throughout the Soviet press these last two weeks, Soviet-South African diplomatic approaches have been confirmed to have taken place.

Another major development has intervened within the framework of the International Monetary Fund. The London *Sunday Telegraph* indicates that the Netherlands, in order to keep its seat on the IMF board, which IMF General Secretary Witteveen wants to offer to a Saudi government, is seeking South African support. The Dutch have reportedly proposed to the South Africans to be part of their country group coalition, which also includes Israel, Cyprus, Yugoslavia, and Romania — a coalition beyond the usually accepted political parameters. This comes precisely at a point when the Dutch government has given only token participation to the IMF special fund set up by Witteveen to bail out the New York banks.

Said the head of the South African desk at a leading New York commercial bank on the South African nexus:

"The Europeans are more amenable than we are to negotiate with the South Africans... They are successfully developing relationships with groups of diverse philosophies (Soviets and South Africans —ed.)... Russia, South Africa and Western Europe have common interests and I agree that gold and nuclear energy are key points of convergence. It could very well be a workable association, much better than what the Carter Administration is doing or can do...The present Administration has no credibility vis-à-vis the Soviets, no credibility vis-à-vis the Africans...Bill Simon is absolutely right. The corporate world in the U.S. agrees with the approach of the Western Europeans and disagrees with Andrew Young (who projects a posture of intransigence to provoke the South Africans into war —ed.)."

Citibank

The U.S. locus of western positive interest in South Africa is Citibank. Citibank has close associations with European interests, notably the Citibank-Lloyds common control of the British-based National and Grindlays Bank Limited. National and Grindlays has 206 commercial banking offices mainly in Britain, South Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Lord Aldington, Chairman of National and Grindlays, also sits on the board of Citibank. A close political partner of Lloyds, Barclays Bank is known for its important interests in South Africa — and Citibank itself is the New York bank with the relatively best implantation in South Africa. This gives a better idea of why Citibank has recently picked

up William Simon, who is positively regarded in South Africa, on its board.

Conservative elements in Citibank have imposed on the Rockefeller-related forces a set of agreements with West European governments in various regions of Africa, such as Algeria and Zaire. Citibank is thus pursuing a stabilizing effort, negotiated in particular with French, Belgian, and British bankers by Citibank Senior Vice-President Irving Friedman during his recent European tour.

Faced with such developments, forces tied to Chase Manhattan have reacted with bitter unhappiness. The *New York Times*, for example, has vigorously attacked a decision by the South African government to prevent the Oppenheimer interests — a David Rockefeller-related group — from taking over the South African manganese production now controlled by the state steel industry, a major proponent of the Soviet-South African minerals cartel.

The U.S. State Department reportedly is circulating a memo for a gentler approach toward South Africa, implying U.S. aid for an uranium-enrichment program and dumping of the Carter human rights crusade in return for a South African commitment to nuclear non-proliferation.

The problem Rockefeller faces in South Africa was sharply summed up by a qualified observer in the following terms: "If the Carter Administration keeps pushing, the Afrikaners, who are just like the Texans, will break."

Ponto's 'Last Words'

Printed below is the report of an interview with Jürgen Ponto, West German banker, with To The Point International, the day before he was murdered by the Baader-Meinhof gang. ToThePoint International is a weekly news magazine published in Belgium and linked to South African business and political circles.

Only days before his death, Ponto was interviewed by *To The Point International*. He spoke about the role of Europe in the Third World, as a balance to the machinations of the Soviet Union and the United States.

"Some African leaders readily admit they are more inclined to cooperation with European organisations like the EEC, than to be dependent on Washington or Moscow," Ponto said. "Europe is their nearest neighbour, with the longest experience of Africa."

Ponto said that in order to help the Third World, the rich nations had to climb out of the economic crisis of the Seventies. "If the stronger are to help

the weaker, as they must, then they must first get their own economic house in order. Priority must be given to creating a more stable currency system. If one small yet economically powerful part of the world like the EEC could start the ball rolling by ending its own currency chaos, we should be well on the way to achieving something."

He said that Europe should encourage closer economic ties between the richer African countries, like South Africa, Ivory Coast and Algeria, so they could assist the poorer countries. "They could generate enough food, employment and education for the whole continent, provided certain obstacles can be removed.

"Racial discrimination in south Africa should be dismantled, while on the other hand the militant pan-African agitators should stop calling us Europeans capitalist exploiters and slave drivers. That is a back-to-front approach. We must not preoccupy ourselves with past wrongs, but with the enormous possibilities of the future."