

PC16/107/2/113



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Dear Peter,

I was so glad to get your letter of the 5th May - but I really must apologise for being so slow in acknowledging it. I wanted to find time to go through my article again to see if there were any parts that needed correcting - I had a feeling when I last reread it that there were one or two words that needed changing - but I cannot find them. I must incidentally apologise for my shocking typewriting? but I have no intention of modernising myself and acquiring a word processor!

I am delighted that you can find room for the Havel article. I wrote it with REALITY very much in mind. I am sorry about its length but Havel's ideas are important and I did not want to emasculate them. It will be interesting to see how - if at all - people react to them. I gave a seminar on the subject in Harvard but the response was uncomprehending.

It is a strange coincidence that you should have written a day before your election and I am writing a day after ours. I gather that some good PFP people in Natal lost their seats but I have not yet come across a really detailed analysis of your election. Here we have been absolutely surfeited with election material and now all our analysts will be getting to work. I remind my Labour friends over here that they are lucky not to be living in SA where the election result was even more depressing. But I think the two results have one thing in common - they show how strong the urge is among the majority of voters to hold on to what they have got - not to risk great changes. And in some ways the two results will almost certainly lead to rather similar outcomes - a much deeper sense of social division.

I wish I could see some prospect of getting out to SA again - but the chances look remote. I can't afford a private visit and so on. In the old days I paid my way by lecturing - but I feel a great blockage about talking in public in SA at the moment - thus has nothing to do with an academic boycott (which I've always been against) - simply that living in comfort and security as I do over here, I don't feel that I have anything very meaningful to say to those who have to live with the degree of insecurity that being a South African involves. Really I would like to come out to listen or to converse not to give forth as I used to.

But paradoxically almost, I find myself better informed about SA than I have ever been - since I can devote much more time than I ever could before to reading SA books and papers - and I must add how useful I find REALITY. Your latest issue on the Education Crisis brought with it a sense of that bubbling of ideas which is an aspect of South Africa people find hard to understand over here. I should say that REALITY is more relevant and important now than it has ever been - I hope other people realize that and that your circulation rises

*To give my greetings to Colin & Joan. I would like to see Cheryl recently.
Yours Rob.*