

W HAMM

PC16/5/31/14
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7 Jan 79

Dear Peter,

You will notice immediately that this is a double-spaced letter, which indicates that I am not sure whether I have sufficient to write about to justify better use of space. Which suggests to me that you might be bored before you get much further - whom else should I be writing to without getting a flea in my ear in return (certainly not by return)?

We are just getting rid of our snow, the place having looked a little like Switzerland for a week or so. For the first time for many years I took the three days between Christmas and New Year off, so that we all had ten days or more at home. Not quite, actually, as Patricia, our almost seventeen-year old elder daughter, spent most of the time with a friend at her home in Northern France. It was a good time to get a certain amount of reading done, and just now I have drifted into reading de roqueville on the French Revolution. (This damned typewriter is despicable these days, I feel that I should buy an electric machine before I can't afford such luxuries any more.) Tocqueville makes interesting points about the causes of the revolution and all the time one is comparing the situation he describes with the Russian revolution and - dare one say it? - the revolution that could one day break out in parts of the world not a thousand miles from where you are. Unfortunately this reading is not part of any planned reading campaign, i.e. I am not planning to improve my understanding of the French revolution in a wider sense, and there is also the fact that the writer is nowadays acknowledged to be somewhat less than a total observer of that scene. Enjoyable nevertheless (sometimes it is not the machine but the typist that should be discarded). I have had various works 'of a philosophical nature' on my desk for more than a year, waiting to be read but cannot summon up the courage.

Last week I finally got around to writing to AP about the exchange in REALITY last September. I have not seen an issue since - there may have been a sequel. I believe that if you are going to try to sell federal ideas at all they almost have to be on a pro rata basis and I'm sure that

that would not be very popular. Altogether I feel that the federal idea leads you into so many difficulties that it can never be a solution by agreement, and what value does any other solution have ? I suggested to AP that liberals (and radicals) - I was very surprised by Alan disowning radicals - might campaign for the re-legalisation of the ANC and PAC. A very difficult task no doubt, but it could be a most useful activity if you could find the people willing to stick their necks out. They are after all willing to negotiate with SWAPO, 'murderers and terrorists', already - would it not make sense to get the govt. at least to think about when they will have to start talking to the ANC ? Easy for me in Harpenden !

My sister-in-law wrote to us the other day telling us, inter alia, that her daughter is going out with Jock Isacowitz's son. I immediately dug out my LP file and turned up Jock's last letters. A marvellous guy.

In this country we seem to be back in a confrontation free-for-all situation, and inflation is happily on the way up again. We could do with a guillotine, I'd happily name a few names, but am still unable to tell you how I would run the system. There is no doubt in my mind that we need some sort of incomes policy which regulates what people can take out of the system, but since I'm not (yet) a true-blue Tory I do not know what one should do about profits. I certainly would not want to see additional profits go into shareholders's pockets.

Why don't you ever travel ? I'm always complaining to people that I can never talk to anyone interesting (you?), what with Gerhard Cohn (who sends us a curious Xmas card) unwilling to come out here because of his tennis commitments - I sometimes drop in on him at his Hampstead shop - Jack and Beryl not letting on about their movements, and Tony O'Dowd (with whom we are having dinner next week, petrol willing) being completely silent on South African matters these days. It's bad enough to drive one back to SA !

Your writing record in 1978 was pretty poor and I think that in the public interest you should put pen to paper more frequently. Do you ever hear anything about the whereabouts of Pat vR these days ? Regards to all our friends in Natal and best wishes to you and the family.

Yours, Geoff

P.S. In the same file as Jock's I found a letter of yours from Oct '60 which I now find hilarious & undecipherable.