

PC(6/5)3/1/6

Hilton, 3245.

Dear Neil,

Thank you for your letter. The questions which it raises, you can be reassured, are ones which have been very much on my mind ever since my ban ended, and particularly during the past six months, and even more particularly since your letter arrived to jog my mind into new consideration of them. This letter will probably not be finished very quickly, so don't be surprised if it only reaches you at the end of January -- today's date being the 7th!

With regard, first, to the idea of trying to revive something like the Liberal Party, my reservations about this -- and I think I am being honest about this -- haven't really got anything to do with anxiety about being banned again. ~~I certainly am not keen to be banned again but I would not be put off doing something which I thought would be effective by the prospect of being banned.~~ Let me say, though, that I think a ban does have an effect on anyone who is not a religious or a communist or a nationalist fanatic. I think that kind of person has a burning and unreasoning zeal which carries him through to the day of his death. Somebody like ourselves, ~~lacking~~ lacking the same fervour and whose ideas, or so we like to think, are based more or less on reason, ~~begins~~ begins to wonder exactly what the hell to do. In my case this ~~questioning~~ questioning is reinforced by what might be regarded as a rather sentimental attachment to my recollections of the Liberal Party. I do think it had something different from anything else and I find it difficult to get very enthusiastic about any of the other organisations I see around me which aim to do something of the things it tried to do. I find them all very much a second-best.

At this point you will say to me, well, start the Liberal Party again. I don't think this is possible, or certainly not at present. This is ~~not~~ <sup>partly</sup> not only because the law presents it, but <sup>mainly</sup> because the political scene has changed since the Party was closed down. In the public political arena you have Inkatha, the Black Consciousness Movement and a Progressive Party which is a great deal stronger than it was ten or fifteen years ago, <sup>you have</sup> and in all ~~these~~ of these groups you find people who were members of the Liberal Party or who would have been. You also find the same thing in the Labour Party, people who are against the Labour Party for participating in the CRC, and the same thing in Indian politics. I don't think you will persuade many people in any of these organisations, at this stage, to leave them for another political party kind of organisation. They just think that the political scene is sufficiently cluttered up with such things already and that they are likely to achieve more politically at present through working through the organisations to which they belong than through trying to start something new. For these various reasons I do not think this is the right time to try to start a new political organisation which would be competing for support in the electoral field with any of these organisations, in spite of the fact that one has real reservations about all of them.

Is there, however, something else one should be doing? Is there room for a pressure-group kind of organisation, whose ~~members~~ <sup>non-racial</sup> members would be committed, first-and-foremost, to the idea of a non-racial, democratic society and who would be required to hold this ideal always before the members of whatever other organisations they belonged to and try to influence them to accept it? I discussed this idea briefly with Jill and Ernie after Christmas and I find it quite attractive, but unfortunately the history of such things in our kind of politics isn't very good. It worked very well for the Communist Party and for the Nationalist Party through the Broederbond, but the influence of both of them was secret and not ~~known~~ <sup>known</sup> to the people and organisations they were trying to