

38 The Uplands,
HARPENDEN HERTS. AL5 2NZ
21 feb 1984

Dear Peter,

I am sure that you do not deserve another letter already, and you certainly do not deserve any money, but as you have threatened to cut off REALITY from this house if I do not pay up forthwith I thought that I had better silence you (only in that respect) for the next two years. God alone knows what might have happened to me before 1985 is out. We might even be without Mrs.T. - what a glorious idea.

So it looks as though the South Africans have done some sort of deal with the people from Maputo. It must be a relief for Machel, who might now be able to lead a somewhat less disrupted life, but what is Tambo going to do? One of the papers here reported that one of the S.A. conditions was that Joe Slovo should be exported and that he is a colonel in the KGB - I had to smile at that suggestion: I always thought that Michael Harmel was a general in that outfit. He certainly had the qualities for the job.

We have been talking about going to see the 'play' about Biko in Hammersmith, but then we always talk about going somewhere and fail to make the crucial decision. Bernard Levin wrote about it most warmly in The Observer (or was it in The Times?). There is also some Fugard on in London, but Celeste somehow is not very interested in his writings. Don't know why - we have neither seen nor read any of his material. A recent issue of REALITY mentioned some interesting stuff recently published by David Phillip, and I thought that I should really find a list of their output, only to reflect that I am so far behind with all my reading that I would be a really old man before getting around to that stuff. At the moment I am dreadfully behind with everything: about four half-baked reports lying around, at least two substantial reports that I should like to write (for sale to half-a-dozen suckers in various parts of the world) not much more than ideas in my head and a file of material that should by now have been a book that I was asked to write three years ago and for which I have now lost enthusiasm (the idea arose as a result of some lectures I was then giving at Queen Elizabeth College). So how in hell do I find time to sit down at this machine and write to someone who will reply six months hence? (You will no doubt be amused by some of the typing errors that keep on appearing and have not been erased: this marvellous machine has a correcting ribbon, but if I use *it* every time I have made a mistake in the middle of a word I would be replacing the correcting ribbon once a week).

You will no doubt have read that we now a Minister for Banana skins (Willie Whitelaw) as M.T. has decided that there have been too many 'accidents' in recent months. Be that as it may, I do believe that this government is the most despicable since Eden landed troops in Suez and I believe that the country will pay for the economic disaster for many years. There is however one black spot which is surely the responsibility of government and opposition, as neither has really lifted a finger to do anything about it : the continuing harrassment of Indian, Pakistani and West Indian communities. One reads reports about this quite regularly - the incidents, obviously mainly occur in the poorer areas of London and other cities - and I have the feeling that it is quite impossible for the ordinary person to do anything about it : it needs nothing less than a national campaign. And that takes one straight to the problem of police attitudes (of which you have presumably also read a little). That problem and the unemployment problem are to me the major crimes in our society today - besides these the question of how Thatcher got rich is wholly insignificant.

I am still doing my on-average three journeys a week to Loughborough, virtually all by rail, and that at least allows me to do some reading. I have also used that time to start learning some Spanish, which is quite fun, but don't ask me why I embarked on that. It may come in useful one day if some fool in some far-away country wants to ask me for some advice on the processing of edible oils, but I have yet to work out a good method of letting that unknown soldier hear about my skills in that field. So we shall in the meantime depend on Celeste to bring in the lolly.

It's really quite ridiculous having written all this simply because I had to send you some money. Anyway, after the indigestion of the letter I hope that you and all that mob are well. Had an interesting letter from AP quite recently - must try to respond to that.

Yours,

Leaf