

PC 16/5/4/2/11



Friday (Good) April 5, 1985

Dear Peter,

Who's counting but I do indeed deserve a full-blown letter from you . The last I got from you was Feb. 1983 . But lets start this year afresh.

Mazeltov at qualifying for that Swinging Sixties Club. Not a 'bad moment' as you so described it in your letter. All the best people are there, like me for instance. So no one feels sorry for you- its a great life up, or down, there and here in Ontario 65 is the magic age. All sorts of things flow from that age- free medical care and big reductions on all sorts of things. It's a great help. I'm not quite there yet but Harry is, plus plus (He'll be 80 in July!!) and we find all these benefits very useful. Especially in view of the appalling state of the Rand. Our income from SA is almost a farce.

Apropos of that, I have just had a thought as I write . Last summer I had a market stall selling African beadwork which I had bought from Jo Thorpe. I have a monopoly on African stuff in Kingston and the stuff sold. For various reasons I didn't have a long enough time at it to make a profit but I broke even. This year I have been better organised and hope to do well. For many months now we have let our money from SA stay there and so I have been buying goods with Rands and hope to benefit by the sales here. Do you in your travels and/or contacts with rural areas come across any beadwork? For some inexplicable reason Jo Thorpe has dried up as a source. The last order I placed with her did not materialise and you know how odd she is. However I have gone to other suppliers but I am a little short of beadwork. Hoo boy! How forgetful can one get?? There is the IRR shop in PMB. It might become a supplier, people there might have changed since my time. so would it be possible for you to speak to them. I shall enclose an outline of the kind of stuff that I know will sell here. Payment will come to them in Rands from our bank in Durban on receipt of an invoice. Sorry about this Peter, I have only just thought about it vis a vis you.

Now to your sting in the tail of your letter. It was a coincidence that just about when I received your letter I was offering Keppel-Jones (he lives in Kingston) the few records I have of the early days of the Liberal Groups. He doesnt need it /them yet and so I have retained them. I shall produce something for you with pleasure . I don't know how useful it will be but I'll try my best. The early days are easier because they are documented but the 1964-68 period is less reliable. But I'll try. I had been told about the workshop in July and would very much like to be there. I hope to get some kind of a record of the proceedings from someone You perhaps?? Anyway give my love to Bradway, so to speak. A great Re-union it should be.

These days we are getting lots of news and commentaries and information generally about SA. Would that it were not so really because the reasons for all this interest is all the violence that goes on day after day. The news is certainly getting worse and worse. I wonder too how the Treason Trial is going.

We loved your story about Jean and his Taunus. He's a great traveller and is planning to come to the Americas again this year. Maybe we'll see him this time.

on SA

One of the feature radio programmes we heard included an interview with Helen Joseph. She felt that life was a lot worse than in the Fifties. Meetings were now impossible and even any kind of protest or expression of opposition. Some of these documentaries are quite good. One that Carmel Rickard did was excellent. It was on the release and immediate arrest of the British Consulate three. All these things produce very mixed feelings for me. The frustrations that one felt in SA still remain mixed with additional feelings of impotence. Perhaps whilst still in SA one is deluded that one is making any kind of contribution. There are no easy answers to these questions but that doesn't stop them being a daily constant in one's life. The latest responses of the police - shootings and general clamping down - would seem to be destroying what you called an illusion of hope - the noises that PW seemed to be offering to come to some kind of an accommodation. One only hopes that the noises about re-settlements turn out to be true, but I doubt it. I have become an almost constant pessimist about SA.

Most unfortunately, in Kingston, we were not able to see the ABC television series on SA. Dorothy has given by a good description of what happened and I am really sorry to have missed it.

Some commentators feel that the situation is akin to civil war? True or false.?

One of the more(only) amusing things to have come out of all these interviews etc is the following: Soon after the petrol price increased a woman, driving a Mercedes was asked about the increase. She replied in a strong SA accent, "Man, this is worse than Tutu getting the Nobel prize" ! We also witnessed Stevie Wonder receiving his Oscar and accepting it for Nelson Mandela. It is really interesting how Mandela is definitely the focus point here and in US for demonstrations.

(the L.P. not my thoughts)

I'll send my thoughts on the L.P. - in embryo and otherwise in a separate letter. I just wanted you to get this without more delay. Don't worry if there is a Congolese postal strike. A friend of ours works in America and he can post there for us. I'll try not to delay too long 'cos I realise you have to get things together for your presentation. Enjoy the re-union.

Love to Phoebe from us both

of to yourself

Chudney

PS. Reality gets better + better
The Natal issue especially good - despite messy pages!