

PC16/5/4/2/27

P.O.Box 71,
Hilton,
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23rd June, 1985.

Dear Audrey,

A letter-card is quite a long enough letter for you, so let's not have any of this complaining.

That doesn't mean that I can't lodge a complaint with Harry. Tell him those pants he gave me are no damned good. The zip doesn't work anymore. Can I change them for another pair?

As for missing pages in your REALITY, what do you expect when you won't pay your subscription? Were there really pages missing? Let us know and we'll send you another.

Your pre-LP stuff reached me about two weeks ago but by then I had had to send the thing off to be typed. It is fun to look at all the old stuff and I have enjoyed doing so, I hope you don't want it back.

Your commercial ambitions have, of course, given all of us a great deal of trouble. However, for old time's sake and all that which all leads up to the fact that I have just spoken to Deanne Lawrence of the local Art Centre who tells me that the beads are going off Air Mail tomorrow and the other things by surface. She will be writing to you about it.

The next REALITY is devoted to the Eastern Cape. What could be more appropriate? It was planned ~~long~~ before all the upheavals there, but couldn't have come at a better time. The only thing wrong about it is that the Kannemeyer Report on the shootings at Uitenhage came out too late for us to have an article commenting in any depth on it in this issue -- but we will have next time.

What can I tell you about things here? The situation has a feeling about it which is different from Sharpeville and 1976..... and in two different areas. In the area of white politics, or should one say Nationalist politics, most of the old certainties have gone. This is not to say that they are ready to hand over real power to anyone else, but they know now that apartheid will never work. The capitulation over 99-year leasehold, even now in the Western Cape, is an admission that influx control has failed completely. You can't stop all these people from going where they want to go and you don't want them to go. You may stop a hell of a lot but a hell of a lot get through. I don't think any of us have realised how total the failure of this part of Nat policy has been. We have kept hearing about all the ghastly horrors of arrests and deportations and God-knows-what-else of people caught in the influx control net but haven't been aware of how many have slipped through. P.W. seems to have decided that the safest thing to do is give such people some stake where they are - hence 99-year lease. But that, too, is very risky. Black attitudes are not what they used to be -- and this is the other area in which things are different from earlier upheavals. Young black people no longer seem to care whether they are shot or not. They seem sure that they are on the winning side and that, however many may die in the process, liberation is on its way. And the feeling is widespread. Have you ever been to Cookhouse? You wouldn't even notice it as you drove through it, but even in Cookhouse the police have been called out. Every day it happens somewhere, and almost every day at least one person gets killed. Even the Free State has had its moments. Only in Natal have things been relatively quiet, almost certainly because of the influence of Inkatha. And even in that part of the political scene there is not much consolation for PW. He was due to pay a visit to Ulundi later this year and this week Kwa-Zulu asked him not to come until he had made clear his intentions about eventual power-sharing.

I hope this does not give the impression that the Nats are in headlong retreat and majority government is just round the corner. Far from it. But there is definitely a feeling of flux, of a real prospect of breaking out of the vice-like grip of Verwoerdian apartheid? But to what? Things in the black communities are not good. Although there was an attempted reconciliation over June 16th, which still seems to be holding, murder, fire-bombing and assault have been as much a feature of relations between UDF and AZAPO supporters as have the relations between both of them and the police and community council supporters. Non-violence may be the official policy at the top, but at the bottom, anything goes. This, regrettably, seems to be the case, whether it is Inkatha fighting the UDF, the UDF fighting AZAPO, or all three fighting one another. No happy auguries for the future to be found there. One has the feeling that only Mandela has the prestige to be able to defuse the situation and he could only do it if he came out of gaol and could be seen to be enjoying real power. Not complete power necessarily, but real power in concert with ~~whomever~~ PW or whoever. I am afraid we are still quite a long way from that point and Mandela isn't getting any younger. Once he goes, I don't see anyone else around who could hope to control the process of change. All of which will give us some interesting things to talk about in Grahamstown.

Give our love to Harry -- and tell him not to forget that zip.