

P.O.Box 71,  
Hilton,  
3245.

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5th July, 1985..

Dear Rajen,

Phoebe complains so much about my writing nowadays that I have taken to typing most of my letters -- so that is why this is typed ! You will find my typing quite interesting, I suspect, because I don't often keep hitting the right key for long.

You must be wondering whether I'm still alive after/had neither a letter nor a thank you for that very, very nice beer-mug. Well, I am not to blame! About two weeks ago, out of the blue, came a phone call from Sashi Moddley, full of apologies, because you had given him a present to bring for my birthday, and six months later he had/managed to get/as far as leaving it at Sam's tea-room. We then arranged for Sam to bring it up and come and have supper with us, and then we opened it, found the beer mug and your letter and heard all your news -- as it was six months ago.

The birthday that your beer-mug missed was, as you may have guessed, my sixtieth, and we made it the occasion for quite a party and for getting together as many old Liberals as we could. It went off very well, but we could have done with the Naidoos at it. We half made up for your not being there by asking the Motala and Vasu Chetty families.

In the middle of this month, in Grahamstown, we are going to a gathering that you two would like to be at. It is a three-day workshop on the Liberal Party and we have tried to get to it as many of our more prominent and active members as we can. A lot of people, of course, won't be able to get to it, but from Natal are going, the Patons, the Hills, the Mathews, the Browns, Married Dyer, John Aithhison, Bill Bhengu, Pat McKenzie, Dempsey, Elliot, Chiss Shabalala, Norman Bromberger, Colin Gardner, John Mitchell and Tony Voss. You probably don't know either Norman or Tony Voss, both of whom were Grahamstown members, Norman being detained for quite a long time in 1964. The idea is to look again at what the Liberal Party did and stood for and to consider how to try to ensure that the more important things it stood for are carried forward into the post-apartheid society. We are going down on Wednesday 17th and coming back the following Saturday. Most people are staying in one of the Rhodes residences but we are going to stay with Terence Beard.

We hadn't seen Sam for a month or two when he came to deliver your present. He has been talking about building a house for years and has at last reached the point where he can at least afford to start on it. Lionel has advised him on the plan, which he brought with him to show us. It should be very nice. Sam isn't coming to Grahamstown, partly because he doesn't like talking in public but also, I think, because he feels he can't get away from the tea-room without making it difficult for the others. Dempsey also went through a stage when he said he wouldn't be able to come, but suddenly decided about a week ago that he could.

The family is well. Vanessa is, of may have just finished, writing her final exams in acupuncture. I think she will pass without much difficulty but she will then have to do a year of clinics before she finally can set up on her own. Christopher is on the farm still. Best news of all is that Anton has got a job. I suppose because of his awareness of his handicap and that he was very restricted in what/was possible for him to do, he showed no interest in any job for years. Then suddenly, early last year, he announced that he would like one. Where to find one? Pat came to the rescue and managed to get him into the Natal Society Library, where he still is, and thoroughly enjoying it. His job isn't terribly arduous but has done wonders for his whole attitude to life.

Your final election results haven't been announced yet. I hope the white voters are forgiven their very foolish vote for Smith. If white South Africans are ever going to change that need to be given every reassurance there possibly can be that a black government can be more maganimous than any of their own white governments have ever been.

As I am sure you know, Archie Gumede is now involved in his second treason trial. I went to see him a couple of times in gaol in Durban and have seen him twice since they were granted bail. He is not a great man, because I suppose he lacks a bit of charisma, but if ever there was a good man, that is him. I have seen the charges as they relate to him and, to my layman's mind, they don't amount to anything at all.

You ask in your letter about Pessa and Leslie. They are both well. We were hoping that Leslie would be able to come with us to Grahamstown but he now says he can't get off work because too many other people in the firm will be on leave this month. About a year ago his firm amalgamated with another. The idea, I thought, was that everyone would be able to have a proper break occasionally, but, as far as I can make out, Leslie still can't have a proper holiday.

He is the national chairman of Kupugani and has just become involved in a scheme to try to feed people who are unemployed in the Maritzburg area as a result of the recession here. And, talking about Kupugani, I was down at the Alcock project with Elliot last Thursday. I think Neil had already been killed in an ambush in the Msinga area when you were last down there. Since then Elliot and I have been on what they call their "farm committee" and have been going down there once a month for meetings. Creinalis determined to stay there and has so far done so very successfully. But about six weeks ago some young roughs broke into the house, assaulted her (not very seriously, luckily) and stole a lot of money. They have just been caught, which is something, but she was very shaken by the experience.

Your house sounds very nice. We will try to come and see you in it sometime but I will have to get a passport first. I haven't asked for one since my ban ended. I would certainly like to come and see Zimbabwe — but I think I will probably first have to use the passport to go and visit Vanessa in England.

I hope your studies are going well.

Our love to both of you.