

PC16/5/4/23



P.O.Box 71,
Hilton,
3245.

9th February, 1985.

Dear Wolf,

I hope you're not under the illusion that letters written in 1984 count for anything in 1985. They don't. In my 1985 book of rules, what is past is past. So here I go, one up already.....

I am ashamed to say I have not seen Archie, although he is now visitable and I hope to do so before long. "Treason" here can mean almost anything you want it to mean, so I suppose there will be a lot of evidence produced of a not-very-hairraising nature and the object of the exercise will be to keep the thing going for as long as possible so that it causes heartache, inconvenience and disruption, and costs a lot of money, even if there is no conviction in the end. One hopes it will just fizzle out, even if it takes a year or so to do so, but it might not be allowed to do so.

I think I would probably agree with the K-B assessment, although I would also agree with you that there is a bit more to it than that. I suspect that the people who really run the show have the affiliations he suggests, but the ANC in recent years has managed to achieve for itself a romantic aura in the eyes of many people, to which it isn't easy to subscribe unreservedly if you remember it as it was, and I think there are many such people amongst the organisations affiliated to the UDF. The whole picture is further confused now by PW's offer to release Mandela and Co. provided they renounce violence. Mandela's reply has yet to come, as I write, and seems likely to be a refusal unless the ANC is unbanned. However, the fact that PW has made the offer seems to me to be extremely significant. It would have been inconceivable even a year ago. Even if the present offer is rejected and the whole thing ends up in a messy round of recriminations, at least PW has breached the possibility of talking to Mandela at some time, and I find that gives me some faint hope. Perhaps PW is beginning to feel what I have felt for sometime, that Mandela may be the last person big enough to carry black SA with him into a solution which involved a considerable amount of Black compromise in return for a considerable amount of Afrikaner compromise. Or is that just wishful thinking?

Another thing which has given a slight boost to our morale in the past fortnight is the announcement that resettlement of black communities which are opposing their own removal has been suspended. This is the first faint softening of the line since Sophiatown and, as far as Natal is concerned, since one of our branches was destroyed when Kumaloville was moved in 1963. It is also the field which has been my main interest in recent years, so it is nice to have won a reprieve, with at least a faint hope that the "suspension" might become permanent. Keep praying, Hamm! Or should I be saying "Start praying, Hamm!"?

I see your winter did come after all. How did your coal stocks last? Or did you, in your retired state, just go to bed and stay there? Not to be outdone by you we have just had the hottest January for God-knows-how-long. I was in conversation with Archbishop Hurley on the phone the other evening and he told me that the humidity in Durban had been 110. If you had told me that, Hamm, I might have suggested that you were being got ready for things to come, but you can't very well say that to an Archbishop.

I had a nasty moment in December. I turned sixty! Part of the nastiness was removed (for the moment) by a very nice, rather boozy party we had here, attended by whatever old members we could persuade to come to it. The person we were happiest to have persuaded was Jean van Riet, who even someone of your advanced years and failing memory should remember. He drove all the way from Excelsior, OFS, and back again, in a car which still records in miles not kilometres,

(I bet you can't type like that last line) and told us that he had been happy to find on the trip that it could still do 100 mph. This at the age of 80. AF was there too, of course. He's also pretty tough. Before Christmas he went off to Brazil to see the Aguaso (?) falls and today he is in Johannesburg for Jonathon's daughter's wedding, before setting off to go through the Kruger Park from top to bottom.

I am not sure what the present state of play in your strike is. It seemed to be dieing on its feet on Monday but then, sometime during the week, I saw a report somewhere that the mines foremen were now going to support it, which I imagine would breathe new life into it...or at least make possible a compromise which did not look like a complete victory for Maggie. I don't like her but I don't like Scargill either.

Enough for now. All the best to all the Hams.