



10th November, 1985.

Dear Wolf,

Don't expect length from this letter -- just quality. I have decided that if I don't reply to your recent letter falsely dated September 5th very soon, I never will.

If you think you can impress me with a measley 23 pages of reminiscence just take a load of these 65 closely-typed pages I am sending you. And just to put you in your place, here's another 160 pages or so to keep them company. Even in your retirement you'll never be able to catch up now Hamm.

I think I threatened you with my Grahamstown contribution when I last wrote. I have added Simkins because I think he will interest you. He is a young man of Christian bent (don't let that put you off) who was in Maritzburg for some time a few years ago. Obviously very bright. While here he was most of the time banned for a rather peripheral involvement in Trade Union work. I was also banned at that time so I never met him, but he came to Grahamstown as an observer.

Thank you for the reminiscences, which I VERY MUCH enjoyed. I didn't really mean to say that in Capitals, the typewriter did it for me. You will now be learning as little about what is going on here as we are. The Cape Town scene, as you know better than we do, has been horrific. The Nats seem to have managed to achieve total polarisation there in a matter of a few weeks. Is it possible ever to undo such damage? Only change on a monumental scale can do that and there is no sign that it is about to happen. The dreary record of Right Wing gains in the by-elections of two weeks ago seems likely to have more effect on PW than all the explosions everywhere else. So, having spent the whole year not getting anywhere, he is quite likely now to stay right where he is, or go into retreat. One feels he has shot his bolt, and has sunk into a state of permanent dither. A new Nat with imagination could still, perhaps, stop the rot, but there is no promise at all that, even if PW went, that kind of person would take over. It is ironic that the person amongst the Nats who is probably most aware of what is needed now is ex-Broeder chief Gerrit Viljoen, but the experts tell me he has no power-base

We were in the W.Cape for a week-end about a month ago, when things were starting to warm up and it was quite eerie driving in from Somerset West and finding oneself with one eye on the roadside bushes in case a rock might suddenly come flying out of them. Now things are obviously much worse, the excesses of the police having, as usual, stoked the fires. Not that their opponents are a crowd of angels. As I have probably already told you, the things that have been done by them to black "supporters of the system" have been quite horrifying; ~~but~~ the W.Cape has been free of the worst excesses, but there has been quite a lot of bombing of the homes of people involved in the tri-cameral parliament going on almost all year, and this week there was the first report of a case of the ghastly "necklacing" which has been common in the E. Cape and Transvaal. It may well be that the braaivleis era is coming to an end but I certainly don't think we are anywhere near to a handover of power.

This last week, as you probably also know by now, the editor of the Cape Times published an interview with Tambo. It was a very courageous thing to do and, predictably, he is now in the process of being charged. I haven't seen the interview. I would be interested to know how Tambo looks from where you are. It is said here that more than half the top committee of the ANC are now paid-up CP members. It wouldn't surprise me, but what do you think?

Look forward to the next exciting episode in the New Year -- and have a nice Christmas.

Yours
AC