

P.O. Box 71, PC16/5/4/4

Hilton,

3245.

3rd January, 1987.

Mr. Pat Poovalingam,  
P.O.Box 4862,  
Durban,  
4000.

Dear Pat,

At last a reply to your letter.

I agree with what you say in your letter to Dr. Gandhi about sanctions. I will be very surprised if they do us any good at all. I think the threat of sanctions was a useful lever to try to induce change here but one has the feeling that now that they are with us their effect is going to be to make the Government and its supporters simply feel that nothing much worse can be done to them now, so world opinion can go to hell. One area of particular concern to me is that of resettlement. Are we now going to see the abandonment of the principle of "no more forced removals"? I hope not, but it could happen. My own view is that forced removals were abandoned mainly as a result of pressure put on P.W. when he visited Europe a few years ago. He may not be worrying about that anymore.

I also deplore the steps taken to prevent you visiting India.

On violence, my feelings are the same as yours. The trouble here is that so often that is what seems to bring at least some change, whereas non-violence hasn't. But we see clearly today happening what I have always maintained was the inevitable consequence of the use of violence — it begins to feed on itself. I don't think there is a serious commitment to non-violence in any section of the black community today (let alone the white) and whatever public protestations their leaders may make about it neither the UDF, AZAPO nor Inkatha will hold back from using violence if they feel that it is to their immediate advantage to do so. Which paints a pretty gloomy picture.

Where I part company with you is in our assessments of the tri-cameral Parliament. I don't see it as an effective instrument for change. The last session suggests that where the views of the Coloured and Indian Houses conflict with those of the Nationalist Party they will simply be overridden. I find it very difficult to see how they will ever now establish sufficient credibility to win for themselves real support from ordinary people.

On the Soviet imperialist threat I am not as sure as I used to be. I have a feeling that, if Gorbachev survives in power, this may recede. I saw Hans Meidner in England in November. He visited Russia as a tourist not long ago and came back with the definite impression that the Russian commitment to peace was genuine. That doesn't mean that he is right, because obviously tourist's impressions must be very superficial, but he might be. And, of course, even if he is right, that doesn't mean that the official view will necessarily ever filter down to the Stalinists who probably still have influence in the ANC.

Another person we saw when we were in England was Bill Hoffenberg. I don't know if you ever knew him. He is on good terms with Tambo and is convinced that he is at heart still a Luthuli man. And Mandela? Certainly Tambo and Mandela seem to me probably still to be very close, even after all these years, and anxious to create a reasonable society here. But would they just be pushed aside by the young radicals if they tried to do so? If only the Government could bring itself to make a move dramatic enough to make it possible to start talking to them about the shape of the future. We seem to be much further away from that prospect than we were a year ago. But unless that happens, how will we ever know what support Mandela/Tambo have and if they can carry it with them into a negotiated future? And once they are gone, who is one left with? Certainly nobody I know of who could carry the same kind of following with them into an agreement with the Nationalists.

This doesn't really answer your letter or help much, but there it is.... thoughts, not answers.

Here's hoping — without much hope — for better things in 1987 than all the years before it have brought.

Regards to you both.

