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P.O.Box 71,
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3245,
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3rd February, 1988.

Professor D.R.C.Marsh,
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Australia.

Dear Derrick,

That address typed in there at such length is so that it will be somewhere where I can find it reasonably easily when you reply to this letter in a year's time.

Thank you for both letter and Christmas card. One more communication than we managed, I regret to say. If I had written I would have told you that we went back to England for another three weeks in June/July. We were based in Brighton, but at a safe distance from Vanessa and family, so that we didn't get in each other's hair. Our trouble is that we like Vanessa and the baby but don't much like the baby's father. Is that general? I remember now the mistrustful look in my father-in-law's eye when I asked for his daughter's hand in marriage, and know just what he was thinking. I must confess that I am not a Brighton fan, but we were able to spend a few days in London and I went off for two days to Stirling to stay with the good Doctor. He really has turned into a Scotsman, that fellow. He took me on a tour after supper on the day I arrived, one right across Scotland the next day, and another before breakfast the morning I left. I must say I enjoyed it, and old Meldner knows all about what he is showing you. We also spent a night in Oxford with Bill Hoffenberg, another acquaintance of Oliver's. I think we have spoken to you about him. An old drinking acquaintance who was banned in the 1960s when he was back teaching there, and eventually had to leave the country because he couldn't get a job. He paid our friends here back by becoming President of the Royal College of Physicians, being knighted (which he doesn't much like) and being appointed Master of Wolfson College at Oxford.

Back here the gloom persists. round Maritzburg things are worse than they have ever been. There has been escalating conflict in the black communities around the town since early last year, and it has now reached horrific proportions, with about 100 people killed in January alone. The fight is principally between supporters of Buthelezi and the UDF, with gangs of thugs probably taking what advantage they can of the general state of anarchy. Of the two main contenders, both are publicly committed to non-violence, but neither pays the slightest attention to that commitment. There are periodic injections of more police into the area but all the signs are that they have abandoned any pretence of impartiality and are there to support Buthelezi. I make a practice of giving lifts to people and talking to them and the overwhelming impression one has is of ordinary people who don't like either side, who sometimes are the victims of one faction, sometimes of the other, and just wish that both would get the hell out of their lives and leave them in peace. How the hell one ever stops a conflict of this kind God knows. Right now we are trying to build up a group from people who are not obviously identified with either side to see if we can bring some sense to both, but it is not easy to be optimistic.

On the domestic front things are not so dreary. Vanessa was here for a month over Christmas, which was fun, and Christopher is at last showing signs of marriage. His trouble is that he has only ever been interested in one girl who ditched him for somebody else 7 years ago, I think be-

because she got fed up with being taken for granted. Now she has swept back into his life, bearing gifts in the form of two small boys. Stop press news, which Phoebe has just given me, is that they're getting married on Wednesday. She's a very nice girl and Chris seems to manage the children very well, so we're quite hopeful about that one.

We got home on Thursday to hear that Elliot had called in on his way back from dropping his youngest daughter at training college. I haven't seen him since late last year. Sam is well. He came to the Berg with us before Christmas and caught his first fish for at least five years. Paton was also there. He keeps going remarkably and I will be seeing him next week. One has fears though about the effect on his reputation the second half of the autobiography may have. He takes a hardline view of John Harris and Adrian Leftwich, regarding Harris as weak and crazy and Leftwich as having done something unforgivable, and both of them as having betrayed the Party, and quite a lot of people won't like that, apart of the opening of old wounds for Leftwich and the Harris family. But Paton takes a strong, Victorian view of what happened and I don't think has ever understood the turmoil going on inside those people at that time.