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Archives  
Personal

John Clare/Barrow

22 Court Chambers,  
Adderley Street,  
PORT ELIZABETH.

15th December, 1964.

But of course you don't really believe that it did fail. According to you it was a beautiful idea unhappily nipped in the bud. That's true, isn't it? In your own words it survived "until it was on the point of becoming effective for the first time". Where then is its significance? Merely in its potential? Two years "without a leak or a shadow of suspicion". But it now emerges that had there been any sort of communication between military intelligence and the Branch it would have been all over 18 months ago. (Have you heard about Mr David Plotz and Watson's ex, Sheila Jo Glover? It's a fascinating story). They got Adrian "by chance". Sure. But what the hell does "super security" mean? A detailed plan of action (the whole thing spelt out) in a book by your bed? Christ.

I never for a moment suggested that there was any need for you to "apologise for the ghastly collapse that followed". Of course it is perfectly understandable. Of course it happened at Rivonia. Of course it happened to PAC, to COD and to the Indian Congress. But why so bloody self-righteous? Why is it so important to you to prove that the Libs are no worse than anybody else? It's anyway a rather difficult thing to do now that almost everybody has got up in court to say how futile and stupid it all was. There was no Mandela in that lot to tell the world why he was prepared to die.

Basically of course we will always disagree about everyone to the left of us. I have read Feyt's thesis but ~~when~~ <sup>when</sup> he began by saying that he was going to explain why the ANC had failed I frankly lost interest - not regarding the failure as proven. *F = it?*

My dear Randolph,

Thank you very much for your letter which was almost totally decipherable after only the third reading!

First, is any sort of violence likely to lead to the kind of society we would like to see in South Africa? Surely the amount of violence that would be necessary to bring about a SIGNIFICANT change would, by its very nature, be uncontrollable? Isn't violence merely an over-simple solution to an incredibly complex problem? You see I have the unhappy feeling that with the ARM you were trying to PROVE something rather than ACHIEVE something. It was merely an extension of those warped, bloody bitch-sessions of you I know it is <sup>also</sup> argued that, like god, if the ARM hadn't existed it would have been necessary to invent it. But because a thing is thought to be inevitable does this make it rational - or right?

And what about your particular brand of violence - violence that failed? It was no good Eden after Suez saying it seemed like a good idea at the time and after all it NEARLY worked. It did not work and Eden had to face the "frenzy of righteous indignation, contempt etc" which you write about with such fine scorn and which you clearly are not prepared to face. It is precisely because you failed, because you got caught with your pants down, that what you did constitutes the most god-awful political blunder. And surely it is the law of the political jungle that, if you blunder, you are abused and scorned and consigned to the wilderness. "A significant but costly incident" - in exactly the same way as Suez. Significant for its failure, significant for its political stupidity and short-sightedness, and significant for its costliness.

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I am appalled by the level on which you conduct your rivalry with the commies. I am no more a communist that you are and nor shall I ever be, but I rejoice in their victories and mourn their losses as if they were my own because for the time being they are. You seem to regard their every success as a personal tragedy and if you are not actually triumphant about their defeats you are at least relieved by them. I would find your bitch sessions easier to understand if there was any evidence that you disapproved of their method of getting rid of the Nats - if you thought for example that violence is going to have the effect of merely delaying change, if you thought that violence must inevitably result in race war and ~~the~~ hence the replacement of one totalitarian system by another. I do believe these things but you clearly don't which makes your position seem to me to be very weak. Once we have got rid of the Nats then the struggle with the commies begins but so long as we are so far from achieving this we should cooperate in every possible way - keeping, of course, our eyes wide open. I cannot understand why you can't see this.

About the Ciskei - I would much rather keep it until I see you. I am to go again soon and have some work to do on the other side of river before I see Peter early in January. When I have talked about it with him things will be clearer in my mind and I will also be able to tell you his thinking. I can't get hold of a copy of Africa '64 - I tried before ~~because~~ because I wanted to read Delius - will you keep it for me?

I do hope Gillian is well. Appearances notwithstanding, I am DYING to see you...

Yours,  
John Clare