

R. Vigne
Personal
Archive

91, The Links,
Whitley Bay.
Northumberland
14 March. 65

I have no doubt at all that violence is capable eventually of overthrowing the Nationalists but as you yourself acknowledge this will scarcely constitute a "win" for us - and so you go on to hope rather piously that the commies won't forget our good intentions when the time comes to hand out the cookies. I think you are being naive - and quite uncharacteristically so as far as the commies are concerned. So where is the win?

I think in the realm of violence the commies can do bloody well without us. Our function then rather is to lessen the necessity for violence so that when violence becomes feasible it won't be so protracted as to bury for ever any prospect of the sort of society we would like to see. By lessening the necessity of violence I mean keeping Western opinion so informed and inflamed about what is going on in South Africa that they may be persuaded to act in the end before it is too late. I know that as far as we can see this is tantamount to a vague sort of deus ex machina but short of hopelessly compromising our particular political philosophy I don't see what alternative we have.

I agree that violence will form part of the attack - but I absolutely deny that this is the part of the attack with which WE should be concerning ourselves.

As for the Lessons of Disaster, I think you can scarcely compare your position with The Times's. They were indulging in disinterested editorial speculation and as their own attitude to violence is at least implicit there were no ambiguities. What you say about "the days of advocating violence or otherwise are over" is rubbish. Try telling that to Martin Luther King - or to any Christian body.

Dear Randolph,

I sent copies of your letter - exactly as you wrote it to the Herald, Dispatch, Times and Mail. Let me know you hear that any of them have been published, won't

I am sorry. I had not meant to imply that you were reluctant to talk about these things. The reluctance really is all mine - I find arguing with you painful, and not being very articulate prefer having time behind a typewriter to think about what I am saying.

I do see your point of view. But I cannot bring myself to share it. And I deny that to be "totally committed" one must necessarily approve of the use of violence. There is a kind of arrogance there echoed in your editorial when you write: "The idea that this is the end of revolution should be reserved for the (white) establishment". What right have you to consign to the "establishment" all those who happen not to subscribe to the philosophy of revolution? This is PAC language and not very helpful.

It would be ridiculous to suggest that commitment is folly if it appears you can't win. But I do say again that for purely political reasons there is precious little point AT THIS STAGE in telling people - however ambiguously - to chuck bombs at each other and blow up things when they are so obviously unprepared for it and when there is so little hope of their achieving anything.

Agree!
Lillian

I shall be perfectly happy with an editorial footnote to the effect that I have misunderstood you - thanks. But how about somebody replying to Messrs Nkwana and Kunene admitting the frustration they speak of but denying that the PAC/ANC record of violence is a solution?

I am frightfully sorry but I won't have the review ready for Lewis by the 24th but swear that I will bring it to London when I come down for another interview with Reuters on April 3. I AM sorry.

Got a telling off from Neville for having written to you about the editorial and advised that in future such matters should be addressed to the editors collectively. Oh dear, life is so complicated.

Fantastic that Barney should have been banned. Craighead next? Barney has never DONE anything, has he?

I had a letter from Adrian. He says: "Jill tells me that there was some consternation about my messages via you. I can do nothing about this unless I know what is causing the consternation, and until I am asked".

What is the Ockenden Venture? What is Gwen Carter thinking? I will do something about Max.

Surely James doesn't think that the half centimetre at the bottom of the page had anything to do with the paper and machining?

Sheila sends love. Janey flourishing in the Legums' Baby Bouncer. I am finding the hoops frightfully tedious.

Yours, John