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My Dear Magnus,

Many thanks for your letter of 3rd. I've left it a few days before replying; not out of lassitude or rudeness but because I find, these days, that I prefer to write letters when in a more relaxed frame of mind on weekends.

It was kind of you to write to Muriel. She mentioned having got your letter in London, after I'd left to get back to the ILO and she'd stayed on for her September treatment. I haven't seen the letter, but I am sure that it was another of those welcome indications of longstanding friendship that are so warming when there is real trouble to be faced (the very time, of course, when they're most needed).

As I write, Muriel's back in London for the October chemotherapy session and should be here again in three days' time. The news is quite encouraging, actually: it seems that the therapy is having a useful effect, and that it has been reducing both the size and the extent of the growths. There are still some three sessions to go before it stops and the radiotherapy takes over (either here or in London: we're not sure yet) but for the present the prospects are better than I'd expected, if not yet exactly reassuring.

Thanks for the enclosures that came with your letter. I'd read the Karis piece when it appeared a couple or three years' ago, and commented then - as I still believe - that it is a fine example of self-serving whitewash. Since he's not ignorant, and no-one (not even a professional political scientist) can be that naively innocent, I can only conclude he was so enthusiastic about his premise that he wasn't too bothered about repeating it as his conclusion. In a curious sort of way, this resembles the style of the bad old days of Soviet writing, but I think it more an example of special pleading or - as I wrote to friend and colleague at the time - of loyaute de clerics! He must surely know very little of the Leninist theory - and practice - of "democratic centralism" to have us believe that a minority of Communists means that they're not able to control a situation. Poor old Masaryk defenestrated himself in 1948 as deathly proof of the opposite, and everyone has had hopes of a Prague Spring since - even, it seems, Gorbachev. On the purely factual side, I would question quite a few (if not the bulk) of the examples he gives of non-Communists on the Executive Committee. But I doubt that the facts are going to be allowed to get in the way of this sort of charade, designed as it is to pretend that the State Department might as well like what it will have to lump. I enclose a piece of journalism put out in London by Stan uys that gives a more revealing, if more scurrilous, slant on things; with about as much (if not actually a little more) proof.

I'd forgotten about that list in the SAIRR Survey: thanks for sending it. It's not a bad starting point for your enquiries, but I'm afraid it's far from complete. In fact, I very much doubt that anyone knows who all of the members were. The person with most knowledge at the time was, of course, Leftwich: his selfish insistence on wanting to know everyone in every part of the country was one of the reasons he was

such a menace in the organisation - and an even greater one when he turned State's evidence. But, as I think I indicated in my last letter, even he didn't spill all the beans - as you yourself know only too well. Just as you weren't "recognised" in the Cape Town street as Leftwich came out of the dentist, nor - so far as I know - mentioned at any other time during his sundry interrogations, nor were several others who had either been recruited into the ARM or had helped on the sidelines of various operations. There are at least two people I know in very high positions of authority, in their professions and <sup>still</sup> in South Africa, who fit into the former category; and there must be others. But there are many I don't know about, and I suspect the same is true of most of us. Piecing it all together is going to be quite a painstaking business. And, if you're truthful, probably a painful one.

What's more, you're going to get several very different versions of why and how the thing came into existence. Similarly, I think you will find that there are several different descriptions of its objectives as well as its activities - not always mutually consistent, because the left hand didn't (and often wasn't supposed to) know what the right hand was up to; I use the terms in their anatomical, not their political, sense. There are, to this day, bits of information dribbling out and those only in the possession - more accurately, the somewhat hazy memories - of all manner of people, living abroad in quite a few different countries and continents.

Add in the difficulty there is likely to be to get some people to admit to their sins (of commission and omission) not to mention their desire to paint pictures in colours which suit their present, and their past, interests - and you have a formidable set of problems.

To sum it up: a really good job is going to be very difficult to do. If it is done, it's going to take a long time, and it's going to wash a lot of dirty linen which will be uninteresting for most people, distasteful to some, sordid for others - with an overall effect which might well be harmful where it is accurate, bitty and in that sense partial, whether it is or not; but, most of all, damaging not just to those who can be sunk very easily in all sorts of innocent and/or turbulent waters, but even in terms of the ultimate objective of achieving a SA polity worthy, and capable, of absorbing all potentially useful participants.

Ah, you might argue: but aren't all of those objections little more than a description of the hazards of any worthwhile piece of research. I wouldn't agree. Where the dangers of so great a degree of probable imperfection are likely to impinge <sup>on</sup> the present and future peace of mind, security and even safety of quite a large number of people there must be an over-riding reason for abandoning the discretion of continued silence for a while longer in favour of the doubtful virtue of a passing swing at a part of the truth. If that sounds pompous, it isn't intended to be; just cautionary.

I was amused by the draft of the letter to Baruch, but do remember when polishing it up that he's a seasoned judge of leftwing factions, and these days rather a doyen of research into the byways of minor movements that sought to make their contribution on the left, 1930++.

Write soon

Yours  
Neville

(But the political is not inapt)

See the ad for his new journal in the SA Review to Gorbis.