

Pce/11/13/1/7



P.O.Box 278  
Hillcrest,  
Netel.

October 13th. 1972

Sir William Collins,  
14 St. James's Place,  
London, S.W.1.

Dear Sir William,

This letter will no doubt surprise you. On October 17th., 1967, (five years ago) you asked if you could publish CLAYTON. I replied that I must first show it to the O.U.P. Then O.U.P. appointed as its South African manager a man in whom I had no confidence. Shortly after he took over, the South African editor, David Philip, in whom I had a great deal of confidence, decided to resign. Therefore I did not go to the O.U.P. I should, in terms of my letter to you of March 11th. 1968, have returned to you but did not, having temporarily lost my zest for life and interest in affairs. Meanwhile S.P.C.K. approached me, and I thought that in view of the probability that the readership would be largely Anglican, I would go to them. After that Jonathan Cape approached me, and I told them it had not occurred to me to go to them because they had decided in 1963 that they were not suitable publishers for HOFMEYER.

Meanwhile CLAYTON grew to be a considerable book of some 160,000 words. It turned out to be a book of more than Anglican appeal, and indeed from 1948-1957 (Clayton died in 1957) it became not only the history of the first eight years of Nationalist rule, but also the first part of the history of the clash between the non-Dutch Reformed Churches and the State (which is at its worst today), and of the personal clash between Clayton and Verwoerd. Huddleston and Scott also figure prominently, and add a great deal to the drama of the story, because Clayton, himself a great defender of justice, found Scott, and later Huddleston, incompatible.

When I told S.P.C.K. the book was finished and was 180,000 words (I think I miscalculated) they were jolted, and said it did not seem a very practicable proposition, and they could not afford to send anyone here to read it. I replied that I would withdraw my offer. They have not replied to this, but my decision is firm. I would have no confidence in a publisher who could demand the shortening of a book not yet read.

Therefore I am writing to you to ask whether you would still wish to publish it, and whether you have someone here or could send someone to read it. I myself have chosen five or six portions that should be shortened or omitted, but they would not amount to 10,000 words; perhaps 5,000. I have had five intelligent readers, and we agree very well as to what should be done, but naturally a publisher's

reader has his own point of view. The five readers were all complimentary, but that proves nothing.

If a reader should come, I would give him or her all my time, and do any re-writing on the spot. I shall be away from November 5th. to November 19th., recuperating! And from December 15th. to December 18th. My wife and I would be glad if the reader would be our guest.

I hope this comes off.

Yours sincerely

Alan Paton