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215 East Dulwich Grove
London, S.E 22

Feb 28th 1959

Dear Alan

I was very glad to get your letter of Jan 28th. Keeping up an overseas correspondence is not easy for anyone in these days and less so for you than most with all you have in hand.

I have of course seen Alec Churcher several times since his return and have had some very interesting talks with him. I think he sees pretty clearly, so far as anyone who has only lived with the problems for a few months can, the issues at stake. That after all is the important thing at this end that he should make Toc H here aware of the realities of the situation. Except for minor things like Notting Dale the whole business of living in a multi-racial society is so utterly remote that it is difficult for people to grasp it. Still less is there any real understanding of the nature and power of the forces that are awake in Africa and in Asia. You are quite right in saying that the period of western domination is at an end. After all in the scale of world history it is a comparatively short phase. The awful problem is what is going to succeed it. It is becoming increasingly plain that democracy, as we understand it, makes singularly little appeal to the newly emancipated peoples. Sudan, Egypt, Pakistan, Burma, and others are portents. Does the future lie with racial dictatorships thinly disguised under a veneer of what is often quite pseudo nationalism? The concept of material progress looks like taking full precedence over personal freedom and who can blame the under fed hundreds of millions if they make that a first priority. It is as the exponent of this rather than as the repository of Marxist doctrine that Russia makes her undoubted appeal to the awakening peoples. No one can at present have any real conception of what is going to emerge but it is as you say the birth of a new world, entirely different from the one in which we grew up.

I am very glad you are going to complete Jan's life, even if you don't feel it should be published while the old lady is alive.

I myself am still keeping pretty busy but I am having to draw in my horns a bit physically. Last summer I had what appeared to be an attack of lumbago which refused to go. On investigation it was found that, as a result of the irregular strain imposed by the weak leg over all these years the lumbar vertebrae had suffered considerable mechanical wear and tear. As one can't be rebored, like a car, the only remedy is a stiff spinal support. This is not too bad but I get more easily tired than I did and have to take things rather more easily.

The main annoyance is not being able to carry even a light bag which is a problem in long distance travelling. However I have every reason to be thankful that I am as mobile as I am, when I see other polio cases. I am going off the Toc H Executive in April. I had meant to do so last year but John asked me to do another year. Now this additional physical handicap enforces what would anyhow have been my decision. It is essential that younger men should take over the month to month responsibility and of course John knows that at any time