

PATON PAPERS

BC 3A 79/29 A 422/11
"VISTA", 2 Buchan Road, Newlands, Cape Town.
17.12.69

Dear Alan,

Thank you for your lovely Christmas card - please thank Anne too. Also, I will take Eddie's to his brother, so it can be sent on to him.

I am sorry I missed Leo's going. I had been intending to be very efficient and wound up a day late on the phone to Nel. Blame work and the current rush.

What I wanted to convey was that the news about Eddie is not promising. His case was put in the hands of a sympathetic and able young attorney, who approached Mr. Justice Steyn, Chairman of Social Services who seemed sympathetic, but said he would want to assure himself that E. had turned from violence before he could make any approach to the Minister.

(I feel able to tell you about this because I was shown a letter E. was allowed to write to his brother, for passing on to the attorney, in which E. described the Judge's visit)

Eddie said the Judge came accompanied by a fellow judge (witness, I guess). He said he came from the Minister of Justice (and this puzzles me, so perhaps E. misunderstood). His first question was whether, if E. was released on an exit visa he would be prepared to leave S.A. and live abroad. Eddie said he would. His next question was whether if E. was living abroad he would become involved in violence against South Africa, or advocate it. Eddie said he did not honestly know what he would do if he were to be suddenly pitchforked out into the great wide world. He had lived so long with a small group of people, that if he had to go suddenly abroad, he might go to one extreme or another - he could not say what he would do. At this the interview ended. Eddie subsequently wrote a letter to the Judge, thanking him for his visit, and saying that if the Minister wished to release him, he could do this and keep him in the country under restrictions.

E's brother and I are pessimistic about any chance of a recommendation that he be released. We feel his answer was honest, we know it was the only answer Eddie could have given and retain his integrity. I don't think the Judge will realise what an honest person he has been dealing with. I tried to comfort his brother by saying that E. was right in drawing attention to the small group he lives with. His morale is high, his health is good and he is studying. It would be silly to imagine him not disappointed, but possibly we outside are more hurt in some way - the way which says we would liked to have succeeded in helping

Eddie to get out of prison.

What puzzles me about Eddie's report that the Judge said he came from the Minister is that some months ago the Minister of Justice refused to consider an application for E's release, saying that his experience with others who had been allowed abroad on exit visas did not encourage him to think that if he allowed E. to go he would cease to "work against South Africa". So why ask him now if he would accept an exit visa?

Also, it seems unfair to me that they even asked E. that question about violence. I am pretty sure none of the other Cape Town ARM prisoners were asked that, so why should Eddie be treated differently?

You once said if Eddie needed any money, you had some for this purpose. There is an account from the attorney for R50.00. Do you want to pay part of this anyway? I am asking you quite baldly, because that is how I am with money. I can pay some of it and someone else I know has said he will give something. There must be others in Cape Town and I can go and find them. Let me know soon, please.

I was so glad to see you take up the matter of Albert Hertzog and the telephone tapping and the criticism of the BOSS law. At a Civil Rights meeting I tried to suggest that this should be taken up, but they misconstrued me thinking I intended a purely personal attack on Albert. Which is not so, though I don't admire him. What I was after was the dereliction of responsibility on the part of a law-maker, who agrees to a law which is rotten in principle because he believes at the time that it is going to be used only against his political enemies. The end justifying the means. I will take this up again at our January meeting.

Since I sent the photographs to you by registered post I am assuming they reached you. Doubtless Leo has a message for me, but I have not seen him yet.

On Friday I stop my job at Zonnebloem for a few weeks and am looking forward to the break.

Harry and I and the children send you both our best wishes for a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Love,

Bob

Vic Carpenter had sent me a large red & blue
lapel button, which says:-

"If you are not part of the solution

You are part of the problem"

Albert.