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7 July 1986

Dear Randolph

Thanks for yours and the copy of Alan's letter. Here's a rather foggy copy of my letter to him, for what it's worth. Looking at all this stuff makes me sad. There is something quite extraordinarily childish, petulant and defensive about the chapters and the letters both to you and me. I think you put your finger on it in your first letter: that he seems to have interpreted all the events of that period as personal affronts. It seems to me, if I may say so, that this speaks of a huge and vulnerable ego, unable to distinguish between itself and the world, easily bruised by it and more or less incapable of accepting criticism. The tone is almost of a man who experiences the world passing him by, and he feels diminished by it. There is also bitterness, but perhaps that is the grumpiness of age. I suppose I was too young and stupid to recognise vanity in elders, in the early 1960s, but looking back now I can remember bits of behaviour in them (and Alan included) which I would now identify in such terms. It makes one think hard about the relationship between political outlook and behaviour, on the one hand, and personal needs and characteristics, on the other. I certainly have learned to explore some of that in myself, and I do not find it comfortable. It seems to me quite astonishing that Alan concludes that my judgement (and yours) of his writing in these chapters is determined solely because I (and, allegedly, you) find them 'painful'.

I shall be in London on Friday, 18 July. If you would like to have lunch, let me know.

Yours

Admin
