

80 Harrington St.
Cape Town.
12th March, 1948

Dear Mr. Mda,

I have been thinking of writing to you since our last meeting in Bloemfontein in December. You probably know that from there we went for a short visit to Johannesburg. I made it a point to hunt you up all over Orlando, with a view to sitting down for a proper political discussion with you. Unfortunately you were not in Johannesburg at the time. On my arrival in Cape Town I met Mr. Mandela, who was here on holiday. I had several discussions with him, and was favourably impressed by him. He struck me as an honest young man with a keen sense of his responsibilities and earnestly looking for the right road along which to lead the oppressed people. Any mistaken ideas he may have, ~~had~~ are not due to the desire for popularity or self-aggrandisement - as is so often the case to-day - but rather to the lack of opportunity for ~~political~~ proper political training.

Amongst the youth ~~the~~ to-day there is a crying need for this opportunity to receive political training and the lack of it is a heritage from the past. It is only now dawning upon the Africans that politics is a science and that, in the same way as a prospective lawyer or medical practitioner must submit himself to the discipline of a course of study, so he who seeks to participate in the leadership in the struggle for liberation must knuckle down to a course of training. He who would correctly formulate the policies and programmes of struggle must be clearly aware of the forces operating for the oppression of the people - forces not only local, but world-wide in their ramifications. He must be able to distinguish between the superficial and the fundamental, the ephemeral and the permanent, between cause and effect. He must be able to recognise that while oppression takes different forms in different countries (sometimes for different peoples in the same country) nevertheless they have a common content and a common basis. All this demands a thorough political training.

Since the middle of February I have been in the Free State organising for Convention, and for one short week-end I visited Johannesburg. Again, to my regret, I failed to find you. I met a few of your colleagues in the Congress Youth League. I also addressed the members of the other (Independent) Youth League in Sophiatown.

I must confess that I did not feel amongst your colleagues the same warmth, enthusiasm and desire to come to grips with the problems of to-day, as I had found in Mandela. There were, it is true, only about three of them in the group I was addressing. It appeared to me that in these fellows a free, intellectual flow was inhibited by considerations of political partisanship. In the first place there was an unwillingness on the part of Sisulu to call his colleagues to meet me. He insisted that no more than three of his group should be allowed to meet me. This attitude more than surprised me, coming as it did from one who professes to be seriously looking for the right political road. During the discussion, Mr. Sisulu seemed to be more concerned with misconstruing my words than revealing his own standpoint. Whether this was deliberate or not, I do not know. But this fact, taken in conjunction with his unwillingness to invite more than three members to meet me, casts a doubt upon his seriousness and single-mindedness. I regretted that I did not meet more members of the Youth League, for what we most need is a free and open discussion on our political problems and differences on a theoretical plane. Most people told me to try and meet you, but you were too far out of my way.

I suppose that you know that the Non-European Unity Movement is holding its Conference at Easter in Cape Town on the 29th, 30th & 31st March. You are entitled to send delegates. It is my earnest desire that you will attend. If your organisation has not yet decided to

affiliate to the Non-European Unity Movement, you are still welcome to attend as a fraternal delegate, without any obligations or commitments. Your stay here would give us an opportunity to have a full-range discussion on all aspects of our struggle.

I am looking forward to meeting you.

Yours sincerely,

J.B. Sabata

P.S. you might have noticed in to-day's Paper that Adv. Molteno, Native Representative in Parliament, has decided not to stand in the next elections. No wonder. He has had some pretty hard smacks from us recently. Cheers to the Boycott Movement!