

B2.83
Fort Hare
Alice. C.P.
2nd. October 1952.

My Dear Papa,

Its quite some time now since papa received a report from me. We have been so engrossed in arrangements concerning this case that somehow I have not found time to write at some length (as I have to) on developments up to the present time.

Regarding the home front the situation is quite normal. The pressure of exams on the gang overshadows every other problem. Youth as papa knows is blessed with a super optimism which is at times indiscreet and even dangerous. But in the crisis we face as a nation this quality is an advantage as it enables the gang to regard problems as transient and capable of easy solution. In other words the home front is just as it was the same routine, the same subject at table, digs at the members of staff at Fort Hare and Lovedale etc. I have been here in P.E. for a week now for the preparatory examination and so I have not yet attended to this months financial tangles. I will be home tomorrow and will be able to deal this. Aunt Sheila is back from jail due to very bad tactics on the part of Omp Bon. In my absence here at the preparatory examination Omp Bon persuaded Tahe to pay the rest of the fine when the women volunteers who had a part of their sentence suspended had a few days to go. So they got the money and paid the fines. There was a huge reception for these returned volunteers. But they , annoyed at the idea of them having their fines paid and thus not abiding by the spirit of the campaign attacked the local leaders bitterly and I think they regret having done that. It will be difficult for me to rebuild Tahe's reputation again. As for Omp Bon I do not know when he will discover that the politics of a Defiance ~~campaign~~ campaign are too difficult for him to understand. I was just beginning to have confidence in him again after he had given us a lot of trouble. Any way these are some of the little hitches that teach us the mood the people are in. The East London Jail is no ~~k~~ joke and our volunteers are prepared to go through without squealing to indicate their opposition to Apartheid.

We are in the fourth month of the Defiance ~~campaign~~ campaign and we are only now settling down to the real thing. Again the Cape is the centre in the spread of the campaign to the rural areas. With the entry of Kimberley, Aliwal North, Stellenbosch, Ceres, Alice, Fort Beaufort, Kingwilliamstown, the campaign had spread over a wide area indeed. We are left with certain pockets and then the vast areas of the Transkei. We are aware of the fact that Control of the Transkei which is the chief reservoir of labour will bring about an entirely new situation in South Africa and will render the demands contained in the Joint Planning Council inadequate and out of date. But we are not making a bid ~~g~~ for direct power in the state just now and the attitude towards the Transkei is coloured by this fact. We have decided to consolidate the tremendous gains made so far in the campaign and to meet the government counter-attack which has grown tremendously in scope and extent the more desperate the government becomes. I must tell papa about the entry of Peddie into the struggle. They have already sent in 154 volunteers into action. For the first time the red-blanketed African has entered the fight and this will have revolutionary effects on the fight against the rehabilitation scheme. Given a few months I have no doubt that we in the Cape will be ready to meet any challenge by the government short of

arms. Already we are in a position to call a strike in the Cape in which the main towns and a great number of small ones could be brought to a standstill. This is true of the Africans but not true of the Coloured group.

I would like to say a bit more about the government counter-attack. First of all the magistrates would say a lot of things at the end of each trial of volunteers. These remarks would be directed at the leadership of the Movement. They would point out that the Africans are being misled by a few unscrupulous leaders who are not really interested in their welfare but want privileges for themselves. This tactic failed utterly. Then suggestions would be made to people in the jail itself, when they were already sentenced that the leaders are using the money for other purposes. That in fact the dependants are not being looked after. This too failed hopelessly. Then the crude method of beatings is being used. This too has undoubtedly failed and is merely serving to introduce a note of hatred to the movement which we who are in leading positions will find difficult to keep down. It is noticeable that the attitude of those who have been to jail is uncompromisingly opposed to any talks with the whites unless all our demands are going to be met. The idea of beating up volunteers just will not work. Whilst I was in jail I personally witnessed the beating of nine of our boys. Immediately after they had been caned they told the police that they would return to defy unjust laws until they were removed. The attitude of these boys and other who have suffered physically in the fight has made me more poignantly aware of the bankruptcy of the idea that the vote should only be given to educated Africans. These boys would not have qualified according to the advocates of this policy but yet they were prepared to make sacrifices for their beliefs and that is more than our educated lot are willing to do. As a matter of fact a feature of this struggle is the absence of the so-called intellectual group. Most of them are of course teachers and I suppose it is reasonable to excuse them on the grounds that the work they do is for our children. But the Whites do not realise that the educated are just not in this thing to the extent that one would expect. I for one am not prepared to tolerate any suggestion that will give the benefits of the Defiance campaign to people who did not actually suffer, or work for its success. That is why any discussions must be on the basis not of sections of the Africans but of the whole people, whatever their class.

Another tactic being adopted by the government is the old one of pretending that this campaign is being carried out by a few disgruntled individuals. Dr. Malan at a Congress of the Nat. Party revealed that there existed a movement ~~called~~ called the Bantu National Organisation which had a membership of four hundred thousand Africans. This remarkable organisation has never had a meeting, its leaders are unknown, and we do not know its areas of operation. Perhaps the movement is on the breederbond model. We understand now that this is the herbalist Bhengu affair. What fools people can make themselves! Even Dr. Malan must realise that as P.M. he must be careful what he says even if it is just mere propaganda. But Dr. Dinges was even more ridiculous. He said this organisation has a membership of two million! He has gone further and suggested that Bhengu will go to U.N.C. with a few others who support Apartheid. Well Well! Dr. D.

does not think much of the intelligence of International gatherings. I feel he is being very badly advised by someone. This tactic of producing bogus leaders and organisations is not going to go very far. A more dangerous propaganda is that the Indians are using the Africans. It is only the fact that the Cape has led the campaign so far that has killed this vicious propaganda. It is quite clear here that there are no Indians to talk about so they cannot say the Indians are leading the struggle in the Cape. But then they cannot explain why it is that precisely in that place where there are no Indians the campaign is a power. They are lately resorting to tribalism to help them. For instance the big thing now is to go round saying this is a "Xhosa thing". So they repeat things like this.. "the Volunteer-in-Chief is a Xhosa--Mandela, Sisulu who is the real leader is also a Xhosa. Moroka is not the leader of the campaign. Mji is a Xhosa, Njongwe is a Xhosa. That is why the Xhosas are behind the campaign to this extent". That is the type of thing being attempted. Well papa can see that the Afrikaners do not understand the mentality of the people at all. They have isolated themselves so long from the Africans through this segregation that they just cannot deal with the situation. A more subtle approach has been the call made by the D.R.C. for a conference of all groups to discuss the racial situation. Dr. Nkomo, Tema, and even Dr. Molema have expressed themselves in favour of it. The Bantu World has given it great publicity and gives the opinions of these worthy gentlemen. They seem to think that something can come from this. Only political infants can believe such trash. No one will take this conference seriously except people like Molema and others who think an attitude of sweet-reasonableness will endear them to the Fascist Malan clique. To us the value of this conference is that it will expose once and for all the chaps whom we must eliminate to clean up our political life and enable us to isolate all reactionaries who are unredeemable. The Bhengu type of reactionary is already exposed. Also the ultra-left reaction of the Trotskyites has been exposed. Now we are left with the Molefe, Nkomo, Tema, Thema, Ngwenya type. I do not know where Xuma is, but he will have to declare himself soon. There can be no neutrality lest one is misinterpreted.

The U.P. group is completely mixed up. The liberals are trying to stage a comeback but I think their campaign died two days after they had issued their statement. Mrs. Ballinger, her husband and others have issued a call for the return to the old Cape tradition. Can papa think of anything more unrealistic. If their idea could possibly be ~~accepted~~ accepted by one of the major parties it could be taken seriously. As it is, it is out of the question. Either one supports the Defiance campaign as the Springbok legion has done or they join the Nats. Our leadership is strong, self confident, and politically advanced. Just a few changes will have to be made in the leadership to render it absolutely sound. Ras's statement on India and a few other things which have disturbed us, which I cannot discuss here, make it doubtful if there will be much enthusiasm for him at conference. Anyway I hope nothing will happen. The likely thing is that he will himself withdraw. In that case we will push papa in and let Njongwe act or some such thing. What does papa say? I do not know what will happen at conference this year. Kimberley is ready.

I must tell papa now a little about the court cases. I am enclosing a copy of the charge so that papa can have an idea of the case these fellows are trying to bring against the Defiance leaders. It is a very weak case and already ministers are admitting that the Suppression of Communism Act is not enough to deal with the defiance campaign. There is talk of new legislation to deal with the movement. It is thought

a law making "preventative detention" legal will be the best method to deal with the leaders. In other words a law which will make it possible to detain on mere suspicion any person the government does not like, without recourse being had to the courts.

In the case evidence was led by Mr. Beale-professional assistant to the solicitor-general. He began with a very political speech in which he characterised the defiance campaign as a communist-inspired affair. He then called a detective sergeant Mureke- an African chap who was present at the Bloemfontein conference. He gave purely formal evidence. He told of the presidential address ~~given~~ delivered by Dr. Moroka and the prosecutor tried to get out of him all the passages which spoke about political rights. Right through the preparatory exam the prosecutor wanted to record all those parts in our speeches which made reference to full democratic rights. Also he tried to find evidence of incitement. I tell you papa there was absolutely nothing. The only cases where there was even a remote possibility of violence were cases in which detectives told some cock and bull story of how things were hot in a meeting and how they were afraid something was going to happen and it did not happen. Also the prosecutor brought forward a great deal of evidence to indicate the existence of a common purpose among the accused. This he efficiently established. He is a very methodical and clever chap this Beale and I would have feared him were it not for the fact that the poor chap has been given such a hopeless case to handle. We know of course that this is all politics and a little law. First of all the Platteland has to be satisfied that action is being taken. Then there is another aspect which most of our fellows do not realise. When the defiance campaign started the Nats tried to ignore it. But now they are trying to make out that it has assumed a terrifying size and this is done for party political purposes:-

1. To convince the Europeans of the danger of black domination and thereby justify extraordinary measures which will help to strengthen the Nats. In the emotional upheaval too they hope to get a chance to dub anyone who opposes them even on such issues as the republic as an ally of the African National Congress.

2. To embarrass the U.P. which has a confused policy towards the Nats. The cry "black menace" is most useful to the Nats and the D-C is an excellent opportunity to destroy the U.P.

The Nationalists however are also aware of the dangers of this attitude to the D-C. Whilst in some respects the Defiance campaign is useful as a party propaganda, it can be a real danger to the Whites. So the Nats are torn between the needs of the party in its fight against the U.P. and also the very real danger that the D-C may turn out to be. There are signs this week that the Nats are beginning to fear that the campaign must not be played about with for party purposes.

I may not have told papa about an article which I saw by chance in the little read Forum. It was by a chap J.L. Kruger-editor of the Transvaler. He gave papa's name as among those important leaders who are not supporting the ~~campaign~~ campaign. I will send you this Forum. This was one of three articles written about the campaign the other were by Lewin and Cape. Well papa that's all for the present. Next week I will tell you about our surprise which we will be springing on the Govt. in the case. We are adopting tactics which are unknown in S.A. It will be a sensation. I have written to mama. I hope she is alright in New York. We received the fine pictures of "Union".

Your loving son
Baboo.

signing names does
it stops delays in doing.

PAPA

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told you something surprising which we will be adding on the Govt. in the
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was one of these articles written about the coming the other were by
not supporting the campaign campaign. I will tell you this form. This
Trenawater. He gave me a name as among those in front leaders who are
in the little red form. It was by a good... editor of the
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