

**BY AIR MAIL**

**AIR LETTER**

IF ANYTHING IS ENCLOSED  
THIS LETTER WILL BE SENT  
BY ORDINARY MAIL.

1694



Mrs. H. L. BERNSTEIN,

Box 4179,

JOHANNESBURG,

SOUTH AFRICA.



Army Form W. 3077 A

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The following Certificate must be signed by the writer:—

*I certify on my honour that the contents of this envelope  
refer to nothing but private and family matters.*

Signature }  
Name only }

To open cut here

14.12.44.

No 9?

611529. Gen. L. Bernstein,  
1/6 Troop.  
Res. Art. Regt.  
6th S.A. And. Div. Res. Gp.  
UDF C.M.F.

Hilda Darling.

The long awaited move to winter billets, with its inter-ference with letter writing, has been completed at least. What a change for the better. I haven't felt so pleased with life since I left the Union. Better start at the beginning & tell you all about it.

Morning was a terrible affair. Tents were struck early one morning, in a steady rain. And all day we worked in the rain loading trucks with heaps of muddled corrugated iron tubes, junk. Arrived at the station at about 5:30 p.m. already dark. Wet, hungry, dirty, fed up and tired. And the train - only cattle trucks, no windows but a large sliding door on each side & twenty three men to a truck. No lavatories, no biscuits or water supply other than what we carried with us. What a grim night we spent on that station. In the complete dark, we organised our blankets on the floor, & slept jammed so

close that it was impossible to turn over without a struggle & walking three or four steps. And the cold! We slept in full clothes with blankets & greatcoats over & under us. And nearly froze. Anyway we managed to eat a breakfast of bully-beef (cold) army biscuits (hard as rock & tasting very much the same) & cheese, just before the train pulled out.

How sad the country side looked as we strolled out of the open doors of the truck into the drizzle & thick mist. Trees, bare of branches, gault & black, yellowed leaves lying under the upraised branches, & the grass green - the only patch of colour in the great dreary scenes. Italy, like England, has a beauty of scenery that is largely man-made, not natural like ours. Even as we shivered in the cold, we were moved by the beauty of it all. Not even the deadly rain, the drip & rind in the valleys, could do much to bring that. Our train wound through valleys with snow lying deep on the mountain tops all around.

Soon after we started we came to Cassino where we stopped for a time. Bought wine from peasants along the line for 1/6 a bottle.

and large doughy paragraphs for I. Oh Hilda: if you could see Cassin  
you would cry. Hilda has been removed from the face of the earth  
but Cassin has been left - a wilderness of destruction, a dead city  
with an air of death about it. One looks for vultures in such a  
place. Not a single building stands with more than one wall in position  
built on the side of a steep hill, all that remains of its tower is heaps  
of rubble, jagged bits of iron sticking sharply into the air, walls here & there  
leaning over drunkenly with great gaping wounds in them, a ruin  
of a street now covered in rocks, broken boxes, broken crates. Not  
a tree still stands; some lie mangled & uprooted in the debris, others  
smashed so that a short jagged stump remains. Nothing grows in the whole  
place. It is quiet with the quiet of a graveyard. A few departed &  
old peasants pick their way over heaps of brick & mortar, broken  
rolling stone & usually twisted nails & splinters to the station. Nothing  
else remains, too destroyed this from the ruins of a disastrous  
earthquake in days gone by - nothing except the mangled shape of  
a broken tank, an armoured car with a great shell hole in its  
side, a truck standing crooked on its nose with wheels hanging on by  
a thread. And above the wreckage, high on the crest of the hill  
the shattered & picturesque ruins of the Monastery where Benedict founded  
the order of the Benedictine monks, a Hitler in a later age, fought a  
great bloody battle. The place is indescribable - gives me the sort of  
horror one gets from a picture by Salvador Dali. Its terrifying &  
horrible, & dead. I hope I never see its like again. The British M. of S.  
has issued coloured posters which I saw when I was in Tientsin, during  
allied raids on Monte Cassino. The caption "Monte Cassino - for  
your freedom & ours!" I know they are right - that you have  
half-measures is a fight like this, & the ends justify the means. But  
the place is so ghastly, it seems like a grim parody on a scene we  
saw at the bridge in Helwan, where a Jap student in the USA shows  
some Yankee fellow students a picture of heaps of mangled Chinese  
coppers & says "All these happy people have contributed to the coming of  
the foreign days of Greater Asia Co-prosperity." I know that's all  
wrong, but sometimes one enters one's way with one; & this was  
one of those times.

Thank God we moved away from Cassino. All day we sat  
in our battle dress & greatcoats, covered in blankets to keep out  
the cold, & periodically staying up & down the hill to keep our

get from falling off. Just as it grew dark, we started to rain  
of the old Roman aqueduct sturdy again, in places unbroken since  
the days of Hadrian (I think). And grapes have a trace of the old  
Appia, relics of the days when all roads did lead to Rome.  
We entered Rome in the dark, hungry & cold. Did all day had  
been bully beef & biscuits & water or wine. But supper promised  
hot at home, just didn't pitch up. We lay in beds sick, from  
6 p.m. At 10:30 I gave up & went to bed. Gub arrived at  
12:30 but I was too tired & finally wedged in Gog & got it. This  
night & the following dawn were the bitterest cold I can remember.  
All that day we sat huddled up, & slept soundly as possible, till  
at 12:30 at night we were called out, & piled out sleepily, bundled  
with our kit into the cold drizzle of the station - our journey.

Two scenes stick in my mind. We stopped at a rail feeding  
centre - a coddhouse along the way where Gub is decked out to  
hoops. Coddies are kept out by a high wire fence. As we walked  
along with our baskets full of food, little kids stand by the wire,  
& poke two through, begging for scraps. Many of them barefooted, with  
feet soaked in the rain, while our feet freeze even through  
thick boots. We drop biscuits, also, into their cups. But their  
mournful faces, worse than the little African kids on S.A. stations.  
But with the same jet belly, thin legs & hollow cheeks from under-  
feeding. Our food becomes abundant: the mouth cater in front  
of two parietis and some crying "Gong! Biscuit." (Govanese  
Bishweet). At another place we stopped - in the middle of the yards  
at about 7 p.m. From a farm house nearby came a man with an  
accordion, & a little boy, aged about six. The man played at each  
back door, up & down the line, while the little boy, hiding in the  
cold & rain, without a jacket or shoes, sadly collected cigarettes,  
rice, biscuits & odds & ends in a tin held out at each door.  
The kids have the roughest time of all in these parts. They've  
never known what it is to be young, & already they are old &  
full of cares & responsibilities. At the age of 6 or 7, I have never  
known any other life.

hole continued.



Hilda Darling,

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at Rome, just didn't pitch up. We lay in a black siding from 6p.m. At 10.30pm I gave up and went to bed. Grub arrived at 12.30, but I was too tired and firmly wedged in to go and get it. This night and the following dawn were the bitterest cold I can remember. All that day we sat huddled up, and slept soundly as possible, till at 12.30 at night, we were called out, and piled out sleepily, loaded with our kit, into the cold drizzle of the station.

Two scenes stick in my mind. We stopped at a rail-feeding centre – a cookhouse along the way where grub is dished out to troops. Civilians are kept out by a high wire fence. As we walked along with our mess tins full of food, little kids stand by the wire and poke tins through, begging for scraps. Many of them barefooted, soaked in the rain, while our feet freeze even through thick boots. We drop biscuits, stew, into their cans. But their mournful faces, worse than the little African kids on S.A stations. But with the same potbelly, thin legs and hollow cheeks from under feeding. One's food becomes sawdust in the mouth eaten in front of this pathetic audience crying "George! Biscuit" (pronounced Biskweet). At another place we stopped in the middle of the fields at about 7p.m. From a farm house nearby came a man with an accordion, and a little boy, aged about six. The man played at each truck door, up and down the line, while the little boy, shivering in the cold and rain, without a jacket or shoes sadly collected cigarettes, lira, biscuits and odds and ends in a tin held out at each door. The kids have the roughest time of all in these parts. They've never known what it is to be young and already they are old and full of cares and responsibilities at the age of 6 or 7, and have never known any other life.

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Mrs. H. L. BERNSTEIN,  
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JOHANNESBURG,  
SOUTH AFRICA.

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Army Form W.3077.

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18. 6. 45.

611529 v. Gm. L. Bonstein,  
116th Battery,  
116th Field Regt.  
S.A.A.  
UDF CMF.

Hilda Daryl,

I've just been reading your long letter on the subject of organisation, & also the cuttings about Ehrenberg & Alexandrov. Of course in this controversy, Alexandrov is only too right. Ehrenberg is a fine writer, & just the type of writer to do the job which had to be done - awaken the real anger & hate of the world to the crimes & nature of the Nazis, even though their own lands had not been touched physically by it. But Ehrenberg is a fine writer. Alexandrov is a fine Marxist. And there's the world of difference in the two. One of the points they deal with - the difference in the reception given to the Western & the Eastern attacks by the Nazis - seem to me to be inadequately dealt with. I think one of the reasons why the English & the French has a different attitude to the Yanks & British, to his attitude to the Russians is because of the way they - the Allies - feel. I have just been reading a sort of documentary about one action in the war in Tunisia, written by Major Singsall who took part in it. He was formerly an editor of P.M. The book itself - while quite a truthful picture - is rather dull. But in the last chapter, he has a sort of summary of the war, its meaning for him and an appeal to America to get stuck in. (The book was written some years ago.) This chapter is really very good. If you ever come across the book read this chapter. One of the points he makes in it is, that while the Yank is as good a soldier, in a military sense, as the British & the Red, he is different. Yes, he says. The G's want to get the war over quickly. They don't want a policy of long drawn out attrition on the grounds of 'life saving'. But they want to get the job over with quickly only because they want to get home.

While the British fight like devils, not just because they want to get home, but because the Blitz has made them hate the enemy. Even more so, the real injuries the Red Army has suffered in the destruction of homes, death of families etc. has made them hate more deeply. As he says, Americans must learn to hate - that is what will make the GI the same calibre soldier as the Red Army Man. Well, I write this because, knowing as I do a lot of Yanks, & more especially knowing our own troops, I know they have never learnt to hate. They spend years telling each other that what the Nazis are doing 'isn't quite cricket.' And then go on to treat the war exactly like a game of cricket. Can you imagine a Red Army man handing out his own cigarettes to a captured Nazi prisoner? I can't. But I've seen our dogs do it - often. No wonder that when the war reaches a hopeless stage for the Nazis, they collapse like rabbits in the West & fight like fanatics in the East.

In one of your letters you spoke of complaints from our ex-POWs of the treatment they received in Soviet Hands. I've heard no such stories here, but I did read in the paper of a Soviet complaint of treatment at our hands. I don't doubt both are true stories. War after all, is the worst & most all-embracing act of a rotting & decadent society. Yes, even a Peoples War is a symptom of rotteness & barbarity, & the rot & barbarism of it eat into everyone engaged in it. There are few people in this world who are not affected in their way of life, their morals & their outlooks by their environment. I don't think even the Red Army can be immune from the barbarising & degrading effects of war. Our moral code for war is after all the reversal of all our other morals - 'all fair in love & war' - but not in other things. The Nazis only have the same morals for war & peace, because their whole life was war - preparation for war, glorification of war, making of war. Their moral codes for war

as for peace are kill, destroy, hate; or as Mussolini put it on all the walls 'Creedre, obedire, combatere' - believe, obey, fight. And soviet morals. Well what are they. Don't deny any man your rights. Work for the good of your fellow man. How can one live up to such a moral code, when war must be won; when all your daily life is spent not for the good of your fellow man, but for his death; not to safeguard his equal rights but to conquer? I think one can no more live a Communist life - from each according to his ability - ~~as~~ in a capitalist world, than one can maintain socialist morals in a capitalist war, (be it progressive or otherwise.) I don't want to give the idea that everyone, or even most of the Soviet soldiers do not rise above their environment. I only know that it was inevitable that some people living in the jungle should descend to the laws of the jungle. How else explain the existence of Soviet traitors, as, for example in the Khabarov trials? Complete communism, as the new man it breeds, is only possible in conditions of peace, as in conditions where the capitalist encroachment of the socialist state has been ended.

I didn't mean to run on like this & get so philosophical. It must be the influence of a book I finished just before starting this letter - The Razor Edge by Somerset Maugham - a long, well written study of a young man in search of truth, & God. He found mysticism - the absolute, eternity, transmigration of souls. But I inhibited a hell of a lot of philosophical discourse in the course of it. Anyway since I have run on so, I want to tell you a true story. It has no real value except to give you an idea of how moral codes go to hell in this sort of life.

Our guns were standing in a wheat field. All afternoon we had been shelling the B - aiming ranges of fleeing Nazis, so they told us. It had been raining a lot,

CONTD.

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Part II

611529 G. W. L. Bentley,  
16th ~~Regt.~~ Bally.  
16th Field Regt.  
S.A.A.  
UDF CMF.

so we decided not to try a dug slit trenches to sleep in, but crowded in about ten of us in a little hutch of the farm house nearby. We had moved up to this place close behind our tanks, as the infantry had not had time to clear the area properly, a more or less isolated group. Guards were posted, as told to keep a good lookout. I was lying stretched out on the floor, reading by the light of a candle, at about midnight. The door opened, & one of the guards came in, pushing a young German soldier ahead of him. The kid couldn't have been more than about 18, a nice looking chap. His papers showed he was an Austrian. He had thrown away his arms, & carried a small knapsack & a bottle of wine. He had come up to our guard, & given himself up. Someone looked at the bottle of wine. He offered us a drink - some of the chaps accepted. Conversation was in Italian.

One of the chaps in the room is a bloke of about 32 or 33. Before the war he was manager of a branch of one of the big insurance companies, which covers a big field in the Western Province. He's an Irishman, lived there most of his life, but is very British in everything except his attitude to Ireland. Personally, I've always had a hearty dislike for the chap. But he's what is called, I suppose, a gentleman. The sort of chap who would get on in the insurance world, be a member of some of the clubs just below Rand Club standard & probably drink up as a Provincial Councillor. What is known as a 'damn good fellow' amongst the upper-middle class. Income in peacetime I should say was well over £1000 a year. The point of the story is, he had smashed his watch a few days before. He got up, & asked this Austrian whether he had a

watch. The hind said yes. He said 'Give it to me,' and then in English, as if by way of excuse, 'I smashed mine.' I don't usually have much to say, but I thought this is more than I can stomach. I said 'You should leave that kind of thing to the Nazis.' 'What the hell!' he said. 'If I don't take it from him, someone else will - the officer who questions him; the infantry or the bloody MPs. They're always getting the stuff. Why shouldn't we drink in? We caught him.'

As I said, there were about ten of us there. After this chap & the guard had gone off with the prisoner, one of the other chaps said that he didn't like that sort of thing. One fellow said 'Yeah. I'd like to put him with a rifle & the Jerry with a rifle out in the fields. And then ask him to go & get the watch.' Two or three chaps supported the - Well if we don't, someone else will 'point of view. The rest were just indifferent - said nothing. So here you have it. 'If I don't steal it, someone else will' is the new, wartime moral code of a man who before has handled, I suppose, thousands of pounds of other people's money quite honestly, & who, I suppose will do so again before long. And it also shows one other thing. When your standards start going to pieces, any one person who starts a system of theft or anything else, not only meets with indifference on the part of many about him, but provides an excuse for thousands of others to do the same.

Well, Hilda, this is really another unsatisfactory letter. I started off with the idea of writing at length about party organisation & this question of the VP & fascists. But I've come this far without even touching on it! I think I'll have to hold my horses on that for some future letter. But one thing I have both the space & the energy to say - that is that on this question of organisation we need the greatest flexibility. I think there should be neither dogmatism on the

essential correctness of present organisational forms, nor  
degradation in the superiority of other forms. This is for two  
reasons. Firstly that we cannot hope to be sure of any step  
we make at any time without first giving it a trial in  
practice, & learning from that experience. Secondly, &  
more important, is to me the fact that correct leadership  
of our party to the people is only possible, as Stahri says, on  
the basis of first arriving at a correct policy, & then deciding  
on the correct organisational measures to ~~see~~ carry out that  
policy. For instance, if we were convinced that our immediate  
task was a revolutionary uprising, we would surely see that  
only the most disciplined & army-like organisation could  
carry it out. Correct organisation will only be achieved,  
ultimately, by clarity of objective, & clarity of policy. For  
that reason I say that I don't think anyone can be sure of  
the correct organisation, until we are sure of our policy. Which  
I don't think is the case today.

As for Tony, I'm sorry she didn't like the school. Did  
you consider staying there with her yourself for a few  
days, until she got to know the other kids, & got a bit  
more accustomed to it? Or don't you think that would  
work? Maybe it would prove to be worse. But if you  
didn't think of it, bear it in mind for the next time you  
take her in case I'm not luck by then. This is a real  
Bernstein characteristic - his early hatred of schools. I can  
even now remember Geoff going to about 5 kindergarten, each  
for about 2 days, & always in tears about it. My memory  
serves me, I have heard that I was the same! But of  
course we were then very old - 5 or 6 years at least!

All my love daily to you & Tony. I'll do my best to  
buy her a stew, but please explain that there is rationing  
in Italy, & we don't get coupons! Love, Bert.



Tuesday October 17th  
9.30 p.m.

Out of the muck of discontent and thwartings; out of the chill of pettiness and misunderstanding, out of the travail of my weakness and procrastination I come to sit and talk with you. The room is utterly dark - you ly<sup>e</sup> at one wall, I at another, my senses grasp nothing but your voice but I am keenly aware of the whole woman. Between us there is no gulf but an electric bond. We didn't ask for this intimacy, didn't fashion it, nor do we nurture it. It is one of the wonders - who are we, who understand so little, to question it; why? and how? There are lying neglected in the mind many precious possession which, when they see the light of consciousness, will revolutionize man's concepts of human values. The giddy merry-go-round of circumstance has cast a jewel into our laps, I am, for once, willing to forego an analysis.

These brisk autumn day when the trees are a holocaust of yellow, red and bronze flames, when the air is crisp and pulsating, when the countryside is atingle with the expectation of the brittle embrace of frost; these are good days for solitary tramping and the thinking which is born of carrying society into solitude. It is the time of the sun when I return to the compact little volume in which is recorded Hazlett's walking tours among the inns of England. The recollections of many firelights are in my hair, the savor of a cozy, indoors friendliness is fragrant in my memory, burning leaves and smoldering coals testify for the thousandth time to the rightness of the big little things of life. I find it difficult to believe that a mad intolerance is unleashed and on the march - the mounting mass of man's inhumanity to man seems a restless, fretful dream. And yet let me but a moment sit here at my desk and the talons of peace and war and propoganda and possessiveness sink deep into my mind and rivet the challenge there with merciless tenacity. I am by nature and inclination a poet, I want most of all to mine out of the chaos of unorderd



words and music, a few small lovely <sup>things</sup> that will live and give pleasure to those who follow - just a little, lifting addition to the heritage I've so greatly enjoyed. And yet my own lines mock me;

Let there be beauty and I will follow

Let there be justice and I will rest.

So it is that I work with the poor child and plan for the handicapped adolescent and pound this machine by night putting words together under titles such as; " The New Ideal", " Blessed Propoganda", The Urban Octopus". Sentences run back thru my mind; "I have no faith in Peace", " There must be an ideal as well as a meal for every citizen", " It is not that there is too much propoganda but that there is not enough of the right kind - the important things are written and spoken and broadcast too seldom; nonsense and drivel in large quantities too often!" On and on, mile after mile of my minds blood spattered against the harden arteries of traditional soical barriers. Patience !, I say, Patience, I say, for so long as you can't judge the effect of your own acts, you do not know the extent of their consequences. Perhaps, those bloodstained barrier, which are today all sound and fury, may signify something to some man some time and urge him on to effective efforts. Why rant against the impotence of that which is in you ? Your kind has no choice but must go on beating the wind so long as there is a beat left in you. It is your joy, your misery, your sanity, your madness, your line. You are no more free than the wave to rise and leave the sea.

Dear Hilda, now I've lit the fire and I see you; see you playing on the deck, dosing in the chair, watching the misty sunset, and me kissing you in Haymarket, as I had promised. And then I see you sitting on the left rear seat of a bus fading away in the late dimness of the Royal Albert docks. There is a dry tear larking in the offing and I think of the brave new world and wish that it were here for you and me to share. And then I think of our quiet, unheralded war; The War, with its solitary test of nerve and endurance, and I don't complain. I ask ed for it this way - its my kind of fighting.

February 14 1940

While a blizzard of great severity rages outside my windows, shaking the house and tearing at the cornises I reread your letter of heat noise and a weakness bordering on prostration. The sunburnt austerity of the high veld surges back into my mind, I feel once again the unrelenting sun and experience the fighting spirit that these inanimate enemies instilled in me by their blind animosity. The helplessness we feel under the pressure of the huge unintelligent forces fills us with a funk that is the most difficult of all to throw off - the nearest parallel is masses of people who also can't be reasoned with but strike out viciously irrespective of sense or consequence. These are the large things which are the acid test of one's inner resources. I know but one weapon that will slay them : a quiet steady preoccupation with something of interest and importance, preferably of a sedentary nature. The tropics doesn't ruin a man directly but first creates a mental vaccum and then he kills himself - Whom the Gods Would Destroy They First Make Mad.

This last letter ( Jan. 8 ) arrived here two day past - much more quickly than any letter from the last six months and it didn't appear to have been censored. It would be interesting to know why.

There will always be as much help as I can muster awaiting you in Baltimore. At present this help wouldn't be very practical. The employment situation here is no bargain. I don't have a steady job and the prospects for one are neither too good nor too bad. I have been so busy at important and interesting work that I have given scant attention to my personal finances. Mother and I live together in a very modest home - there is a spare room which is always at your disposal. You need have not the least qualm about being very welcome. The C.P. here though it is writhing strenuously is not on the up grade and has lately lost its ace card - favor with Roosevelt. I find myself opposed to it in many directions. I am as anxious as anyone that the Soviet sturcture in Russia



should not collapse but I can not approve the methods which the Stalin government is taking, presumably to keep it intact. And the C.P. here will not accept the causal companionship much less cooperate with any but those who will accept the party line hook and sinker. This method has not kept the young from joining them but has meant that few of the more valuable persons stuck once their thinking became independent and mature.

Do send me a copy of the poem which you had in the Forum. I hope that the creating of poetry is for you the great pleasure that it has always been for me. I have seldom attempted publication and never succeeded but I have a deep and abiding faith in the loveliness and wisdom of some of things I've written in poetical form and they go to fill a reservoir which is forever quenching the thirst of my morale.

My endeavors to get library services for the handicapped children are exceeding my expectations. So far three institutions that have never had a library now have one and there are bright hopes that a national foundation may inaugurate a comprehensive program in Baltimore as a direct outcome of the the work I have done. I have sincerely interested a few influential people and they are giving me enthusiastic support.

The youth center has been slow to develop do principally to the very people who are being served but it is still a going concern and may show appreciable progress at any time - the stage is set for it.

Have you read J.S. Maraiá' book The Cape Coloured People. I recently received it and found it most interesting and enlightening. I received two copies of Nkululeko and have read them thoroughly - thanks, send some later copies.

How sweet it is, this knowledge that you and I have something precious between us which is unassailable in this world of horror and unfriendliness. I need not wait for years to pass to appreciate the happiness of it. In the midst of a drear and stormy turmoil it is a grand and quietly joyous thing to stand together with arms across each others shoulders. Comrades, come the worst that the worst men can do. *Ben*



# South African Railways & Harbours.

## PUBLICITY and TRAVEL DEPARTMENT.

TT/NS.

Telegrams: ~~XPUBKCOXX~~ RAILTRAVEL.

Telephone: ~~2688~~ 21826.

Church Street,

Ref. .... TTD/T/328/B.

DURBAN, ..... 8th April. ..... 19350.

OFFICES:

S.A.R. & H. Headquarters,  
JOHANNESBURG.

Mr. L. Bernstein,  
P.O. Box 1730,  
JOHANNESBURG.

S.A.R. & H. Headquarters,  
CAPE TOWN.

South Africa House,  
LONDON.

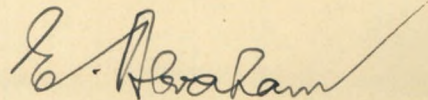
11, Broadway,  
NEW YORK.

Dear Sir,

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 31st March, 1950, and note that you and your family are not able to take up the accommodation arranged for the S.S. "Amra", which is due to sail on the 20th April, 1950, and your passages have, therefore, been cancelled.

As there is a heavy demand for passages on the S.S. "Amra", during the next three months, it would be advisable for you to furnish the date that you intend to travel so that the necessary shipping reservation can be effected.

Yours faithfully,



PUBLICITY & TRAVEL AGENT.



# Suid-Afrikaanse Spoorweë en Hawens.

## PUBLISITEITS- EN REISAFDELING.

Telegramme: „PUBLICO.”

Telefoon: 2688.

Kerkstraat,

Verw. ....

DURBAN, ....., 193....

KANTORE:

S.A.S. en H.-hoofkantoor,  
JOHANNESBURG.

S.A.S. en H.-hoofkantoor,  
KAAPSTAD.

South Africa House,  
LONDEN.

11, Broadway,  
NEW YORK.

How are  
you?

You are in  
my daily  
thoughts.

Hope you'll  
continue the  
'painting' one  
day.

Love  
L.R.



Dec. 1967

Beneath the  
rafaas of more and more  
oppression and persecution the  
silent black witnesses of historic  
tragedies celebrate this Christmas  
under brutal times. We however have  
been moved with profound admira-  
tion for the great headedness of each  
one of you - in one way or another  
and this results in ever  
unbending will to 'overcome'  
at whatever price.  
"HAPPY Xmas"

from  
Winnie Mandela  
South Africa



An old woman with bent over back came to the door - although I knew her face, just for the moment I thought it could not be her, because I did not think she could come to the door herself. The unsmiling face. At 94 you are tired of smiling, there is nothing left to smile at. Faded eyes, colourless and tired. Grey-white hair; hands swollen and twisted with arthritis.

Yet inside the shell, the same positive spirit asserting itself. 'I have lived too long, I don't know why I must live so long. All my friends have died' - a reddening of the eyes - 'I am the only one left. It is not good to be old. You can't walk, you can't see, you can't hear, ~~xxx~~ all you can do is eat' - pointing to the plate of food on the table. Yet she can see and hear. She remembers me, she knew we had returned to England - 'I read about it - what a long time you took to visit me.'

\* 'All I can do is look at that' - a scornful wave at the TV - 'such rubbish. The Defenders, The Attackers, the Fugitive - such rubbish, why doesn't someone tell the committee, whoever arranges it, people don't want such rubbish all the time!'

Talking about blacks - why don't they go back to their own country - 'Have you been inside a hospital? What would they do without the Coloured nurses? How dare they say such things? It's the injustices of it, I can't stand the injustices!' - at 94, still passionately concerned with 'injustices.'

An understanding of Vera's situation. He didn't want her, and it was a happy marriage, why should she destroy it? I told your mother, I tried to tell her, but she wouldn't listen, she kept interfering with the child.'

The room does not smell or feel like an old, old woman's room. Bright floral curtains and covers. Old fashioned furniture, but not cluttered. Neat and pleasant.

And this is the bare bones that The Hague judgment has



my dear,

Just a note to say Happy Birthday - if it ever reaches you between your globe-trotting and the continuing postal 'despite' in London which makes mail totally unpredictable in or out. Not much news to report yet - the house still unlet, but bright and clean as a new pin, all cupboards & drawers etc emptied, and your studio about three feet deep in boxes, papers, trays etc. - some in preparation for Italy, some just to be left. The agents all keep sounding quite confident - a trail of the trade they learn along with push-porking, & the three-card trick no doubt. But so far no progress - not even an inquiry, despite another large ad in the Ham & High, & one in the Guardian. So, am keeping my fingers crossed and relying on Kettle's answering machine.

Just the good news. Another cheque arrived for you from Edelings International N.Y. for \$35. for 'Apricale' - with a note saying they hope you will be sending them more prints. Then the bad - their earlier cheque has been returned & the bank in Italy because they hadn't signed it. I'm returning it to them for signature. No news yet from the RA - I think you gave Tony's address - and she's away this weekend in Dorset - house-hunting with Ivan - so I can't find out. And there's an application <sup>from</sup> from the HAC, for their annual exhibition - entries have to be in by 27th of this month - and must be works done in the last 12 months not previously exhibited at the Centre. If you want to do anything about this, please write quickly.

Otherwise, no excitement. Except that the sun came out yesterday, and everyone assumed summer was here at last. But it's grey and raining again, although even enough to enable the brave to discard their winter coat. At last. And of course - in the throes of an election - how deadly it all is - each party promising to cut taxes, competing on the basis of promises to feed the great of the nation - Thatcher says she'll sell off Council Houses at 50% discount, and will sell off profitable nationalized enterprises to private ownership. Steele says he'll



Mrs. Hilma Benstein,  
% Dept of Foreign Students  
University of California,  
Santa Barbara,  
California, USA.



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L. Benstein  
5 Rothurst.  
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England.

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TO OPEN SLIT HERE

cut taxes without cutting Government spending - leaving VAT.  
But Callaghan says hell help the widows - pensioners - again!  
The only bright ray in the gloomy scene - Healey's quip  
about Healey's public speaking appearances on Tony  
platforms: "The first recorded occasion when the Ancient  
Mariner goes to the aid of the Albatross." You're  
missing all this - and the endless 'Party Political Broad-  
casts' and the 'Opinion Polls' - daily drops from 14% to 6%  
Conservative lead - but apparently recovers. But will be  
in on an Italian election campaign - again! They must  
have been waiting for us.

Love,  
Pent



8. 7. 78.

Hilda my dear.

11. am. on the last day in Jas. Cribb & Partners, & am sitting around just waiting for my deque before I take off, with just a sneaking feeling that they'd going to keep me here till 6pm. regardless. 3 months now passed, and still only Peter Gray of all the partners & associates in this place has even asked what I'm going to do. From the others not a single word. Can't quite believe it's possible. And am all set to tear a strip off anyone who now says anything to me at all. I have managed to keep my temper from

flashing point all this time - I suspect at the cost of my blood pressure - but only just. No progress at all on the job front. - except one thing. Camden advertised a fairly decent job - applications in few days ago. Yesterday I got a msg. told I had been short listed, and could I come to interviews next Wednesday & Friday. No, I'd be away on holiday. Well, they'd try to set up the interviews for today. Phoned today - can't get the committee together. Could I cancel my holiday. No I couldn't. Sorry. Regards all round. Just not my year, I guess.

What else. Case with Tony SA came & went. My lawyer engaged a young counsel - without consulting me - and when I protested, he said: Well, if counsel didn't come to court, he - she lawyer - would, and it would cost the same. So counsel came. Tony arrived, didn't contest that he had left, so a formal possession order was issued in our favour. Then Tony contested the rent due. Said he only ~~paid~~ owed to March, because then I changed the lock and denied his occupation. The magistrate got a bit testy with him, told him if he wanted to claim one day's loss of occupation, he should do so separately - and then gave an order for the full rent arrears. In the course of his evidence Tony says: a) he thought he had paid all earlier arrears in full! b) I wanted to get him to



ZAMBIA.  
LUSAKA  
P.O. Box 661  
/o Careers Ltd.  
Mrs. H. BRENSTAN



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buy the flat, which is why I harassed him - changed the  
lock etc. Then the magistrate - without anyone asking -  
said to TS, do you want this to pay? Naturally yes. My  
counsel sat quite. Right! £40 a month, the magistrate  
said. No protest from counsel. Then 'Do you want me to  
assess fees, or will you get your bill taxed?' Quick consultation  
between counsel & lawyer juniorish dash - obviously no prior  
consideration of this - counsel said 'You.' 'O.K. £30!'  
said the magistrate - and that was that! So TS  
pays £30 costs, and I have already paid my  
lawyer £175 'on account' and will probably have  
another £50 to pay. So I won - in the legal parlance.



Hilda my dear,

Just back from the salerooms with Keith, where we've put in bids - 2nd week - for beds, cupboards etc. to complete his flat furnishings, except for carpets. It's all looking very smart, new paint, new counter with tiled top, and new curtains in production (Keith's material choice) on Tony's machine. So that's almost all clear, with the case for rent from Tony still due next week. Meanwhile, have half made some knock down beds to take to Italy - using Keith's flat & bit of yard as a workshop - and hope to finish them this weekend. Which will leave us - at last! - able to sit back & get organized for take off with Frances & John next Saturday - 3rd July - for 2 weeks. So if no letters reach you at that period, blame it on the Italian post office. I don't quite know whether Jim hoping the Italian sun is shining today after this dreary, wet and cold June we've been having here (even Wimbledon rained off for a full day yesterday - the first time since 1972 -); or whether I'd rather Italy was overcast, as I rather fear that the horse will be a bit of an oven without sailing. Still, will probably work out alright - I hope. Have asked Keith several times if he wants to join us, but so far he shows more interest in his flat building activities, and almost certainly won't come with us. But he seems very happy & pleased with life at the moment, even though he doesn't have a great deal of work on - but something each week as far as I can see.

Tony is off for a 4-5 day trip to Rome with the boys next week, for a short break. Joan has been shooting in the Lebanon - Israel, and will be in Rome on the same project. The usual panic. First T and several other wives and appendages arranged packaged holidays to Rome to meet their respective spouses, lovers or whatever at the prearranged gaps in the shooting schedules. And then the Italian character who was to be filmed - a 'terrorist' - Red Brigades or whatever, either disappeared or got arrested, the whole schedule was changed to miss Rome, & only violent and anguished protests from Tony - others got it all set straight at last. Never a dull moment.

So far as other things are concerned; I don't think you should be too careful about spending your money on worthwhile safaris. Your latest bank statement shows over £1500 in balance. And since you won't have the opportunity again very fast, it seems to me rather short-sighted not to make the most of it. From which you'll appreciate that cheques continue to come in sporadically - but not much other activity on the print front, largely because Jim isn't doing anything about it unless asked. Vera Nelft is getting a



2. batch of stuff for exhibition this weekend. Have not been in touch with the Open Air girl, due to pressure of things. But will do so this weekend, if the rain stops, and they actually have some show this weekend. I don't think they have been actually washed out on earlier week-ends, but the weather has been pretty poor, blowy, sun in patches, & April showers, so I don't imagine the sales can have been very spectacular. So I haven't been in touch yet with Mike or Tally, whoever was doing some printing for you. Not much good as an agent. I'm afraid.

Did I tell you that - on the job front - I never heard another word about the Dav job, about which I am very angry. But assume that they have appointed someone else. But now, there's a

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H. Bernstein,

5 Rothwell St.

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1.  
Mrs. H. BERNSTEIN  
% CURRAYS LTD.  
P.O. Box 661,  
LUSAKA  
ZAMBIA.



3. job advertised for a 2 year stint in Kenya - through the  
 crown agents - which I'm putting in an application  
 for, without being sure I really would want it even if  
 offered. Perhaps if you get to Nairobi you'd consider  
 what you feel about expatriate life there, if the job is  
 offered. Otherwise, a succession of rather mundane  
 jobs advertised, and by all accounts a lot of applic-  
 ants for them. Still a deathly silence at Jane Aubitt  
 & partners - not one of the seniors has ever asked me yet  
 what I'm going to do, or whether I've got another job!  
 And these are the guys who are full of indignation  
 about the way the Russians make people into  
 'war. persons!'

<sup>4</sup>  
news fit to print. From your & Violet's letter, cannot  
quite make out whether you lost your watch in the  
excursion, or not. I know V did. But if you  
need a new watch, let me know.

Hope the rest of your trip keeps up without  
trouble of that kind. Seems to me that, by all  
accounts, Angola is crime-free, and orderly. That  
must say something about politics that needs  
to be said. Keep well and enjoy yourself,

Love, Lucretia



Yesterday evening, had an arrangement to meet Tony at a cinema at 6pm. - Sawing a documentary about Harlan County, USA. So - I left the office at 5.30, waited for a bus to Tottenham Court Rd until 5.45, then tried to pick up a taxi - impossible now in the West End; can't compete with the tourist trade - while I waited. Finally got a taxi somewhere well past Oxford Circus, told the guy the name of the cinema - which I didn't know at all - and he dropped me at the corner in Tot. Court Rd saying 'It's just here to the right - but I can't turn right.' So I walked right - from Park Street to Cambridge Circus. No cinema. Then decided he meant left - so walked from Cambridge Circus to Warren Street. No cinema - by which time it was 6.30. So walked back to Goodge St. to find a telephone - and after using two, both of which got through to Tony's flat and cut off as soon as someone answered - came out deciding to call the whole thing off. To see Tony in her car, passing by, also on her way home. So we went to have supper in a Greek joint instead. She had been late, because as she left home, a call came through from Barbara in New York, etc. - so she thought I must have been on time & left before she arrived. So we haven't seen the film, but live in hope.

Not much else to tell that I can think of. I can't in any case remember what I've told you in previous letters, but think I've covered all the

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Mrs. H. BURNSTEIN

90 CURRAYS LTD.

P.O. Box 661,

~~ZAMBIA~~ LUSAKA,

ZAMBIA.



Helda my dear,

Sorry this has been so long after the last letter, but life has been very hectic for me - now at last eased off enough to allow me to breathe again. First, Keith is well and busy installed in the basement, and working like a beaver to get it all fixed up. We ~~built~~ painted the whole place - he more than me - and it now looks reasonably civilized, fitted new and handsome light fitting brought by K with money Harold gave him as a gift, fixed the water heater etc. etc. and now, except for the carpets which are still a mess and need to be replaced - at least in the front room - is almost straight. Great lack of furniture, especially wardrobes etc. But K has built in a long desk-worktop at the end of the small bedroom, & is now recreating a kitchen counter much like what was there when Tony & I took the place. So - on the strength of that - I advertised the house to let, got several replies, and then had to work like a slave - with Keith's aid - to clean the whole house, empty cupboards & drawers, remove valuable crockery, hi-fi, records etc, wash all sheets, blanket etc etc. Almost killed us, but we got it all reasonably well done in 48 hours. After a few people who promised to phone & confer it all - they were definitely interested in it - but from whom we never heard again, I phoned back to one of the people who had phoned - she only wanted it for 4 weeks, and I was hoping for more - and it was all fixed up. Quite a nice strange Danish girl  $\pm$  late 20s, who has moved in with her mother and 3 year old son only - paid the whole rent & deposit in cash, and were altogether too easy. Seems they were staying in one of the central hotels, and couldn't wait to get out of it at any price. So I hope that will all be alright - seems a pretty fair chance of a no damage, no fuss letting, I hope. So from yesterday, I have been with Tony, & K at basement. I know Tony has just written to you, so want give you any of her news.

Otherwise, nothing to report of value. The Nav job people - after dragging us into town on Sunday, haven't had the decency even to communicate again - despite promise to do so - so it is sure that I didn't get the job. Am applying for others here and there, nothing very exciting, and so far no results. Also, nothing at Gos. Gilbert - partners - only another two and a half weeks to go, thank God; the atmosphere is really very hostile, and I'm only sitting it out for the money - much against my will. A bit ironic that in a firm that makes about half its staff redundant in one sweep, everyone - partners and senior associates - are all so damned busy that in almost 3 months only one - Peter Gray - has managed to finish the time - i.e. 90 seconds in passing on the stairs - to even ask whether I've found a reply or not. I really find us both

2. pressure rising every time I think of it. And we are here yet had the decency even to mention the fact that - after I have spent 4 or 5 years in charge of the Tripoli Chemistry Dept, and it is now at least just starting on site - that someone else has been assigned to it, and is taking it all over - including flying out to Tripoli to have meetings on site etc. Not a word to me, neither apologies, regrets or even explanation. The unacceptable face of British capitalism!

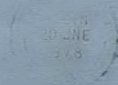
Enough of that. On your side, not a great deal to tell you. Zella & I have asked for and been given a whole batch of prints of various kinds, and have also sent in a cheque for almost £100. For the rest, I have

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L. Bernstein,  
5 Rothwell St.  
London NW1.

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% CORRAYS LTD.,  
P.O. Box 661,  
LUSAKA  
ZAMBIA.



not heard from anyone. I know the open air sale goes on, but since I spoke to the organiser who said she would keep your picture from the HAC show at the Art Centre for use to fill in gaps at the open air, I have not had time to get in touch with her again, but will do so this coming weekend. Oh - and in the midst of clearing house for the tenant-Gertude, and the Monij Star rally at Ally Pally. I think I told you she had asked for your prints to take them with her to what do, after using them for some long and ostentatious dispute of her own with the CP artists group - or some such outfit. Finally, I agreed to pick her up and drive her and all works to the Ally Pally, - and heard but didn't understand all the details of her disputes etc - what a despicable character she is! She started a dispute with some character at the A.P. within five minutes of arrival - about the placing of the stall, or the hanging of "exhibits" or whatever. Anyway, she had covered each print - hers & yours, in rather tatty looking acrylic - so I left it at that. And hence no report on what happened there either. Not much good as a business agent I fear. But prints for Yvonne, as asked for in your last letter from Zambia, were sent off airmail about a week ago; so if they have not arrived yet. I suggest you check at customs.

Must say I rather ~~enjoy~~ enjoy your the trip on the Tanzam railway. Sounds like a bit of alright, even the boring bits. I hope the trips to the game parks really come off after all the starting problems. Would be a great pity to have gone that far, & be unable to organise them, first because of weather, tourist foibles etc. Incidentally, a letter from Jean says she arrived home to find it snowing in July, and keeping up snowing for several days - if not weeks! So hope that the weather isn't totally out of line. As I get ready for Italy - leave here on 8th July - the papers report today that the passes of the Alps have been blocked by snowfalls - the first on record in ?? years! Hope Apriale doesn't once again freeze us all to death! Franice sounds well and cheerful - perhaps Tony told you her boys went up to Mandelita for a weekend with Frances & John - and had "a super"

4.  
time - roller coasters, seaside trips, chip butties and all!

Not much else for now. Sorry this isn't very chatty, but I'm feeling rather exhausted now. Will be better next time - I hope. So keep well - all of you - love to all the Bernstein's. (Tell Robert to worry about sending me any money. Just so long as he collects from his fair what they are due for on the amount I am laying out for him. And his form for Open University received & forwarded.) So all my love. Miss you - believe it - if you will - but - hope things go well; don't hang back. The weather catches one day sunny, one day windy - quite mad & a good place to be away from.

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H. Bernstein,  
5 Rothwell St.  
Linda NW1.

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Mrs. H. BERNSTEIN,  
c/o CORRAYS LTD.,  
P.O. Box 661,  
LUSAKA.  
ZAMBIA.



6. 6. 78.

Helda my dear,

The heatwave - laid on by or for the Banderis has departed with steam, still warm, humid, but the summer sun gave after a week in which the great British public boiled itself in the parks. Luckily, though I found her pleasant enough most of the time, am not sorry you decided to go to Spain rather than spend another week here. Couldn't take her endless song of praise for all things Israeli - without ever mentioning the war, the Arabs or the cost of living. And constantly riling me to the point where I would explode on such South Africans as - e.g. when I ranted off about the deficiencies in the NHS & the hospital waiting lists she said 'But our service - note that OUR service!' 'For the Israelis is better than that.' When I exploded, she said 'Look at Savagumath!' And I said 'Yes. But how many blanks go without any hospitalization, in order to make one Savagumath possible in the whole county! Etc. etc. - including inevitably the Namibian (or was it Zimbabwean) terrorists! Bad for my blood pressure - but now over. And I have finally got her to understand that filling and boiling an entire kettle to make one glass of hot water is not very bright.

So, to the news. Hint the good news. Tony Sob has moved out - took some of his stuff on Wednesday last, the rest on Thursday without saying a word - and on Thursday evening the door to his flat stood wide open, the light on inside - and all his stuff gone except three orange drains and a few odd bits & pieces. We waited till Saturday - and then Keith & I went in and changed the lock over, and proceeded to paint, clean etc. It is beginning to look alright now it's repainted, but needs a lot of bits & pieces - carpet, new gas geyser, furniture etc. I am still livid with Tony. Apart from not paying the rent - for which I am still going to sue - it seems to me he has taken away a bed - at least there is now only one in the flat, which had originally four - and which I agreed to reduce to two when he suited to Fredy. Perhaps the 3 chairs are in exchange? But without a word! And in the cupboard under our front steps, next to the gas geyser - a cupid, which always ran with water, and was so wet as to be unusable - he had stashed away - amongst ovenrings, cutlery etc which didn't suffer too much, the vacuum cleaner and two of those big electric canisters. But he has taken all the



2.  
rude & condescending. Bloody infuriating - when all he had to do  
if he didn't want them was to say so! Anyway - Keith  
is working like a beaver painty etc, and I hope he'll be  
able to wave us in in about a week - if we can rustle  
up some furniture etc. In which case I will try to  
let the house tell about the end of July.

Then the bad news. On the way back from  
the airport, our windscreen shattered on the motorway -  
K & I both almost had strokes - and we crawled back  
into London at 10 m.p.h. And yesterday at breakfast,  
before going to my dentist for a routine check up, I broke  
what I thought was a tooth - & found it was a  
crown - replacement not on NHS - so another hole in  
my bank balance! Apart from these traumas - there

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1.



Mrs. H.L. BERNSTEIN  
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have been: a) Gertrude - who is having a war with some male chauvinist pigs - Ken Sprague - others - who apparently mounted some exhibition at the TUX building of artists against racism - or some such thing - and didn't include any women - or her or you! And now she war is in full flood, with G writing off to the party HQ etc etc, and protesting like mad that their mcp exhibit is also going to Cuba! And at the same time she's trying to sue some Christian outfit in Geneva who used some of her & your work in their journal, without permission or acknowledgment. And has got from me a few of your prints for the Morning Star fete at Ally Pally - as last year - which she says she will arrange to deliver - bring back if possible. This is a heavy cross to bear for the sake of art! Perhaps I will find it better if it leads to money as well.

b) the Kibane memorial meeting - 300 people turned up on a blazing hot Saturday afternoon of a long week-end. - can you imagine it - and heard some of the most awful speeches - a guy from SWAPO who meant well but didn't know anything about MK except that he was 'a great fighter, and a great leader' - four times repeated and his name wrong every time! Gordon McMillan says all the same old things - should put it on a tape and he wouldn't need to attend; etc, etc, etc. Fortunately I was about the last speaker - and managed to rescue something of it from total disaster - wide congratulations all round afterwards, not I think because my speech was that good, but because by comparison with what went before it was bloody marvellous.

And when you couple all of that - Gertrude, Tony SR, painting flats, funeral orations - Eurovision with the World Cup and soccer on TV almost every night all night, and the first Pakistan-England cricket test, life is getting rather hectic & exhausting. Unlike work, which is even drearier, more idle and hostile than ever, so that I wish another month would hurry by - I could get out of here.

Not much else to tell. Everyone well - Tony ends her work today. - Ivan finishes off in Malta today or tomorrow and should be home apparently for some



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TO OPEN SLIT HERE

4.  
weeds. ~~of~~ Franca sounds OK if not madly enthusiastic  
over her work, and all set for holiday to Italy in  
July. Oh - and the other good news - I thought there  
was surely else - Vittorio wrote last week, said that  
he has done a lot of things - the top floor living room floor,  
the bathroom / bedroom bit upstairs, the plumbing etc.  
etc. So it all sounds as though the place will be  
reasonably advanced when we get there - but  
so far I have made no progress with making the  
beds. Will probably end up sleeping on the floor - or  
standing up! Enjoy yourself - and love to all the  
Burkstens,  
Paul.



13/9/81.

Welda my dear.

Your letter from Murgito. dated 7th. - arrived yesterday, with plea for a long letter of news. This is it - if it ever reaches you before you are as the way, long, but perhaps not too long - as the standard beater's principle that you shouldn't put too much energy into doing today what might not need to be done at all if you only procrastinate for two weeks. (The story of my life, and a suitable epitaph too.)

News? All British news starts with the weather - very just terms, with the odd grey day and quite frequent showers after a couple of weeks of the first and only real summer of the year. Not yet enough to cast a total gloom over all local life - that is a role presently monopolized by Thatcher - but beginning to remind us of what lies ahead. Unfortunately. Apart from that, what to tell you. Sarah? Starts at the top (by date order that is) Lini came back from the US after a couple of weeks with the boys and Juan, chuffed in New York - Washington, both fit & well. And went off almost immediately thereafter to Ayr and spent a few weeks getting fatter and brown as a berry. During this episode Nick went off to camp, and Tashed me to meet him on his return by train - 5:30 pm. at Euston. How where? Well he didn't rightly know, but somewhere along the line from Rugby. It was the first football Saturday of the season; no train at 6:30 at Euston, only trains at 3 minute intervals from everywhere in the British Isles - except Rugby - and a million soccer huts screaming about the place, so I probably wouldn't have seen Nick even if he'd been there. Which he wasn't. No phone number with me for Ayr. so decided to try Mark at the flat. No call boxes in work order at Euston. After I had tried about twenty, decided to come home - well after six. Phoned Tony Evans home; she said the caretaker from Woodcraft (he was at her flat - phone Mark to reach it. Got the answering machine. "Tony + Juan + Sarah + Chris + Marge + etc." Replied Tony - got the names of the Woodcraft organisers; phoned one, no reply; phoned the other, got someone who said his man was with the Woodcraft campers, & he didn't know when they were coming back. Gave up - 6:45. Ranted to start making myself some supper. Got it all cooking well when Mark phoned up. After several false starts, he finally found the caretaker, got the time - 7:30 pm. Lini, 7:30 pm. Switched off the cooking; dashed to Euston found Nick the last surviving Woodsman on the train; got back, supper, mess etc. So - that's Tony. Back home now, & so are boys, all bank

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