

Robben Island Isal,
Robben Island.

4th August, 1965.

Mr Benjamin Pogrand,
213 Diamond Exchange Building,
De Villiers Street,
Johannesburg.

My dear Benji,

I received your letter this morning and enjoyed it immensely. Although this letter comes as a reply to yours of this morning, I had intended, in any event, to write to you today to thank you for the items of "cosiers" (derived from the adjective 'cosy') all of which reached me safely and in sterling condition, and to unload a further consignment of half-baked political ideas.

Thank you indeed for the articles they bore the unmistakable print of a cultured mind! I hope you had as much pleasure in choosing them as I had in admiring them.

Yrs I write to both you and Prof.

Willingham on the 20th June and I believe somewhere along the line the letters got mixed up. Fortunately I have no mistresses with whom I correspond and my letters to whom might "accidentally" be directed to my wife.

Thank you for the story about Gublan. These tribesmen are extremely shrewd. They remind one of the Negro poet whose lines I think I have quoted to you before:-

"The bushman stood: unyielding, still and grim:
He saw him perish" and we learnt from him to mix a grain of philosophical mirth

With all the cruel injustices of earth."

Reminds one, too, of the late S.E. Mphahlele, the African "Poet Laureate" who, during the last war, attended the opening of the Ciskei Bungu in King Williams town clad in his regalia. When Van der Byl, then Minister of Native Affairs, got out of his black cabinet car, Mphahlele met him with the words:

"yehla, yehla, yehl'ingwe emthunio."

(Down comes the leopard from the tree).

Van der Byl his retinue were flattered, even when the words were correctly interpreted

surprise you to learn then that I have not yet received your copies of the "Home Daily Mail". Strange as it may seem, I had intended to ask you to send me the relevant copies. I am keen to have these copies and suggest that you send me cuttings, preferably by dependent post, so that the possibility of negligence on the part of the postal authorities will be ruled out.

I am afraid I haven't heard much news from the radio news broadcast as the only news I listen to is the 1 p.m and 7 p.m news on Springfield Radio. Otherwise I use the radio solely for music and drama.

You describe yourself as an anachronistic 19th century liberal. One of that is perhaps your greatest political asset, Benjie, excluding the "anachronistic"! In one thing, I know that you can never be used as a propagandist by any particular interest or constellation of interests. I know that what you write has received the most careful consideration the highest standards of journalistic ethics require. I want to assure you now that I admire greatly

your personal courage, both physical and moral, and that of your illustrious editor, Mr. Gandhi.

I shall comment in a later letter on your remarks about the firmness of behaviour but as you are a psychologist of no mean standing yourself, I think I may observe that:

(a) It was Hitler who ~~thought~~ ^{realised} that faith is stronger than conviction because it persists in the face of irrefragable, irrefutable and overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

(b) Since faith is basically an emotional matter, irrational, it requires constant revival and replenishment.

(c) "No one likes to be alone with an unpopular opinion, and once people begin to relinquish an opinion because they feel isolated, the snowball can begin to roll." More later.

I wrote the exams in one of the rooms in "my yard". A wander unregulated. I'll certainly let you know the results.

Thanks for news about Jenny. Have your parents seen her? Where's Albert staying? With his parents?

The black shoes I haven't worn more than a dozen times and they are still virtually

news. The honors, however, are beginning to show their age. I shall, therefore, be extremely happy if you will send me a similar pair so that I may rest them now and again. And with the shoes please send me meltonia dark brown. The size is 9½

I am enclosing a list of my sartorial statistics. I'll be pleased if you could make a copy and give it to my wife. I have a gray suit that I want altered. I have asked her to inquire your assistance. When she hands it over to you, Benjie, will you please send it straight to me. I would like to try it on as it is before suggesting alterations to it. You may tell my wife so, too, so that she shouldn't think we have fooled her.

Well, Benjie, so long for now. Thanks for everything and keep your courage high. "You are heir to the promises of God."

Greetings to Emily & Bill & Mrs.

Yours very sincerely,
Bob.

P.S. Also please send me postage stamps - 25 cent & variety.

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- **Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand**

Location:- **Johannesburg**

©2010

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

DOCUMENT DETAILS:

Document ID:- **A2618-Ba3-23**

Document Title:- **Letter to B Pogrund from Robben Island (copy of original handwritten) and typed transcript**

Author:- **Robert Sobukwe**

Document Date:- **4 August 1965**