

(Received 21/4/68)

Robben Island Gaol,
P.O. Robben Island.
3rd April, 1968.

Mr Benjamin Pogrand,
705 Doroso,
Van der Merwe Street,
Hillbrow, Johannesburg.

My dear Benjie,

I am always happy to receive a letter from you: probably because I can hear your voice behind the words. Thank you for yours of 18th March, then. I hope I shall have space to discuss some other matters after I have answered your queries.

First of all let me apologize for mis-spelling kosher. I realized this even before I had submitted the letter. But after I had attended to some other matters I could not remember what it was that I had wanted to correct. And my weakness as a writer is that I hate drafting and re-reading my material: I want it to be spontaneous! What fools we mortals are.

Right then; the heater. I should like at least one fan heater. Veronica - I am an obliging fellow, you see - is a compulsive window closer and when she was here in June last year she was delighted with the fan-heater because it kept the air fresh. Will you make the cord fifteen feet long and the cord-grip a 5 amp 250 volt three-pronged one, please.

In my letter of 23rd November I had said I didn't want to make more calls on your pocket, particularly at that time of the year when heavy demands were being made on your purse. I shall have to space my "requisitions" over the year in future. So it will be one fan heater and one 2-bar.

Thanks for writing to Mrs Stott about the Record-player. I shall send it to her towards the end of the month. If I have it now it might tempt me away from my studies. And to answer your question while I'm about it, I'll be writing in May. I don't know the date yet. I don't think I'm good at swotting any more. There's something in me that hates having to acquire knowledge for an exam! But I hope I'll be able to collect what we termed "matoda score" at Fort Hare, which entitles one to travel the class frequented by the sobus vulgus.

About the Newspaper subscriptions. The "Cape Times" expires on 17th May and the "Argus" on the 8th May. I have renewed the "Sunday Times" but was able to do so for a six-month period only. This subscription expires on the 8th September.

The Clothes: Thanks for attending to the trousers. When I didn't hear from you I wrote to Ernie and asked him, among other things, to request you to include warm underwear in the clothes parcel you'll be sending down. I asked that they be as far removed from white as possible (no prejudice!) and that you get me trunks instead of briefs (size 38 trunks: vests 40). I should also like a shirt to go with the charcoal - the type worn above the trousers: and a pair of black shoes. It will be quite an order as you can see.

I shall have this letter registered Benjie, but I doubt if I can do so with all my letters to you. It would drain my resources. At the moment I have exactly R1.45 cents (one Rand forty five cents) to my credit. In fact I had suggested in one of my letters that the Washing Powders, blades for shaving and scouring powders be sent from outside so that ^{Italy} ~~any~~ allowance ^{can} be used exclusively for luxuries like cheese, peanuts and sweets ecc. The quantities required for a year you can work out with Veronica. Yes I do my own washing and ironing.

I received eight copies of the Argosy and ran through them in a couple of days. Enjoyed them immensely, thank you. When I have the exams behind me I'll need cartons of light matter. I'll want some Hemingways, too. I have read only his For whom the Bell Tolls.

Thank you for Jenny's picture. I tend to forget that she is only six. I am looking forward to the day when I shall meet her.

I won't comment on the Bursary Fund. Thanks for the work.

Sorry about Norma. I hope she recovers and I hope you get permission to go to London to see her. At times I feel absolutely annoyed - I won't say "frustrated". I hate the term: reminds me too much of the psychologist's rats - that I can't say to you the things I should like to say. And they are so many.

So Johnson has withdrawn from the race. I'm sorry about that: particularly as it is only now that he thinks of playing the role which the whole world thought he was singularly cut out for, at the time of his election. I have always had the feeling that he was acting out of character on that Vietnam issue.

With Kennedy I am rather disgusted. His behaviour smacks too much of opportunism, calculating, ruthless opportunism. I am always ready to forgive a mistake, however serious, if the intention was good. Johnson's blunders I can, therefore, understand and forgive. But I hate the statistics-watching "hero". I really wish McCarthy beats him. McCarthy had the guts at least to challenge Johnson when nobody thought it could be done. I'll take up the Israeli-Arab issue later. But if you have any influence, you'd better warn Dayan. He'll be seeking to talk genuine peace when Arab humiliation has rendered such a prospect impossible.

Love to Jenny.

Yours Affectionately,

Bob.

P.S. I haven't written to Miliswa yet. Not one of them, Veronica included, has written to say how they fared on their journey back home. Natives!!

Bob.

PPS. The fruit arrives regularly. Thanks to Mrs Henderson.

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