

(received 28/4/67)

Robben Island Gaol,
ROBBEN ISLAND.

12th April 1967.

Mr Benjamin Pogrand,
804 Doromo,
Van der Merwe Street,
Hillbrow,
JOHANNESBURG.

My dear Benjie,

I enjoyed ~~your~~ your letter immensely although your pain came through very forcibly. I may not be able to answer your letter fully in one letter of mine; in which case I shall write two letters.

First of all, with regard to your intention to leave the country: I approve wholeheartedly. The only stumbling-block I am prepared to consider are personal ties: but true greatness, Benjie, lies in being able to sever those ties in pursuit of the Holy Grail. One thing I am certain of is that when A can no longer use Jenny to hurt you, she'll be quite happy to let you have the child.

The dismay with which my wife received your news is quite understandable. She had come to lean very heavily on you regarding you as a restless younger brother who, unless watched very carefully, could be guilty of extreme extravagance on behalf of Bob and all his. She complained rather proudly of how you had been dissatisfied with the room they had been given at the hotel and had arranged for a

larger and more comfortable room.

In other words she has never felt with you that she was receiving "assistance". She has always known that the suggestion would come from you that the children needed this and that (even special tuition in English!) and Bob this and that. There's a vast difference, Benjie, between: "Please tell me what you need" and "I think you should have this, don't you?" And, gentleman that you are, you knew it instinctively.

My wife is not concerned about material assistance. You know her well enough to know that. She knows and I have told her that I have four brothers: my two biological brothers and you and Dennis ^{Siwisa} ~~Swisa~~ of Port Elizabeth.

You have decades of fruitful labour before you, Benjie and you must make your contribution. The intellect blossoms only in freedom.

Whether you decide on the U K or the U S A; academic life or the typewriter, I should like you to regard that as preparatory work for service to Africa. In fact, once you are settled down I might seriously consider sending the children to you.

I have no anxieties, whatsoever. We shall meet.

What you say about the children's English is quite correct. And whatever steps you take to improve their command of the language will meet with my approval. In the circumstances, I believe, all one can hope for, in the immediate future that is, is greater fluency even if the accent remains a "separate development" accent.

Thanks for Father MacBride's address. I'll write to him.

As I said in my previous letter, the clothes are just grand. In my draft list I had stated that I should like winter sheets and 2 pairs of winter pyjamas. It appears that when I transferred the list I omitted the qualifications. The previous winter sheets most certainly were a boon. Winter can be quite nasty out here.

About ideas for my greater comfort: I haven't had time to develop what are known as hobbies. I have been an active sportsman in my "free" life. (Incidentally, the kids found it difficult to believe that I won the Eastern Province Tennis Singles Championships in 1944, just about nine months after I had left a T B hospital. They don't know how remarkable their father is!)

I should suggest that we leave the "occupational therapy" activities until next year when I shall have done with my exams. It requires a great effort, as it is, to concentrate on the lectures and I am afraid that if I had something more interesting to do I might neglect my work!

The idea of a film projector we can discard altogether, Benjie. Even if the principle were to be approved - and I don't think it would be - there would still be the question of constant censorship of the films. And, I am afraid, some humiliating experiences would be unavoidable.

I should like to have a bedspread of my own, certainly. But I do not think a small carpet will be necessary. I have a felt mat here for my feet. Nor will the pictures be necessary, Benjie. You see, all these, after a time, become part of the environment. And it is a jail environment. And there is something in me which does not wish to forget that either.

The plastic chair is a little uncomfortable on the neck and I should be pleased to have something more comfortable.

Continued in 2nd letter.

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