

From:

Benjamin Pogrod,  
213 Diamond Exchange Building,  
De Villiers Street,  
JOHANNESBURG,  
12th October, 1964.

Mr. Robert H. Sobush,  
c/o Officer Commanding,  
Robben Island Gaol,  
Robben Island,  
CAPE TOWN.

My dear Bob,

Your letter arrived last week. I was, as always, happy to hear from you and to be reassured that you are keeping as well as possible in your somewhat extraordinary circumstances.

By now you will have received my telegram advising you that your wife and children are keeping well, and that there is no need for concern on your part on any account at all. Your wife has written two letters and intended writing to you again immediately I contacted her. As you no doubt know, she will be taking her annual leave in December so you have something good to look forward to again. She will not be short of anything for her trip, I promise you.

I am constantly amazed - although I shouldn't be - to find the number of friends you have both here and in other parts of the world. There is a Mrs. Thomas C. Taylor (of 50, Plymouth Avenue North, Rochester, New York 14624), for example. I realise the pressure on your allocation of letters, Bob, but I wonder whether you could at some stage manage a few words to her? She is not after thanks for anything, but feels that some direct contact with you would enable her to put a little more reality and content into her prayers. She is, as you will gather, a very devout Christian, a Presbyterian, I believe.

I am enclosing an article from Saturday's "Mail" which might be of interest to you. I will also send the original booklet to you. It is a completely factual account of the churches in South Africa, and the reader is left to draw his own conclusions. The conclusions which I have drawn in the enclosed article are probably controversial. Do you think I have painted too grim a picture?

I am going into the question of the missing books for your studies and will have them sent to you as soon as possible.

In regard to Mrs. Hittig, I am writing to her to tell her about your letter to her. I shall, however, request her to continue sending you records. This is the arrangement I made when I was in Cape Town, and I can promise you that everyone concerned is only too delighted to assist you in this small way.

/There is.....

There is still complete confusion about the London "Observer" subscription, by the way. No-one can offer any kind of an explanation about it.

Can you send me the renewal notice for the "Reader's Digest" so that I can attend to it without delay? Frankly, after our other tortuous dealings with the G.P.A., I would rather present them with a renewal notice than attempt to take out a new subscription.

Your telegram about the twins' birthday was received and was promptly noted upon. I sent out two birthday cards, inscribed "All my love, from your Tata", and I tried to make my handwriting as neat and small as possible to make it look at least something like yours. I also sent them some small presents. I hope my telegram acknowledging yours reached you safely. I must say that the Robben Island authorities are extremely helpful in enabling you to send and receive telegrams. I can't imagine that there is another prisoner in the country who has this facility.

How are you placed for clothing? Particularly with the coming of summer, is there anything you need? Is there perhaps any chance of your being able to use that little beach near your bungalow for an occasional swim? If so, let me know and I shall send you a swimming costume.

What you wrote about my work is very true. I know that the desire within me to be academically honest and fair and to overcome my deep-rooted prejudices against the Communists caused me to push me into being over-fair towards them with equally disastrous results. On the other hand, I am applying uncompromising standards to the use or non-use of material, and unfortunately or otherwise, I am finding that a lot of the well-known allegations simply do not stand up to close scrutiny. Or is it that I am unable to track down the direct evidence? To cheer you up, though, let me add that I am digging up other previously unknown facts!

The work is going reasonably well, but I have had to resign myself to accepting that this cannot be the definitive study I had originally envisaged. We are still too close to events and it will be many years before we are able to get hold of all the necessary information. Anyway, I hope that my study, broad as parts of it will necessarily have to be, will still be solid enough to be of some significance.

I am leaving at the end of this week for a trip to Natal and KwaZulu in search of additional material. I will be away for about two weeks.

One final point: I was surprised to hear that you apparently have not been receiving the weekly parcels of fruit which I arranged, and for which I paid the jail authorities.

/Xm.....



The authorities have not advised me of any change in the situation so I have naturally assumed that the arrangement was still being adhered to. Can you please let me know what is happening?

I have just had some photographs of Jerry taken, and I am enclosing a couple to show you why I am such a proud father.

My very warm greetings to you. I continue to pray for you.

Sincerely,

TIMES

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