

From: Benjamin Pogrud,
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JOHANNESBURG.

1st September, 1964.

To: Mr. R. M. Sobukwe,
c/o Officer Commanding,
Robben Island Gaol,
ROBBER ISLAND.
Cape Town.

My dear Bob,

I was so glad to hear from you again, and to know that you are keeping well and in good spirits.

Your concern about the divorce is much appreciated. I regretted having to break the news to you. But unfortunately it is a fact which cannot be avoided. One can only try and resolve not to make the same mistakes in the future.

The non-arrival of the London "Observer" is baffling. I have reported it to the donor who asks me to convey his apologies to you again. The subscription was definitely taken out months ago, and we are determined to ensure that the paper reaches you. The matter is again being taken up.

The non-arrival of the Social Philosophy books has also surprised me. My difficulty is that I no longer have the lists of subjects and books which you gave me, as I handed them out. But speaking from memory, wasn't your brother-in-law supposed to be getting these books? I seem to recall your telling me this. If I am wrong, can you please send me a list of the needed books and I will attend to it immediately.

Have all the other books arrived safely? And how are you doing with your studies? Are you able to concentrate on the books?

Also, how are you placed for reading material? You know that if you want more reading books, you have only to advise me and I will send down a carton-full.

I was glad to note that the cigarettes, records etc., are arriving regularly. Are the supplies of fruit also being maintained, and is the quality satisfactory? A few weeks ago I arranged for the fruit to be continued for another three month period and I trust that there have been no difficulties about this.

Can you also let me know how the record player is operating, what records you have and whether you want any others?

/This is....

This is quite a list of questions I have put to you! If I have omitted anything concerning your needs, please do not hesitate, as always, to let me know without delay.

My work has slumped badly recently. It has been a trying time. An atmosphere of crisis, in which one is so deeply involved through close friends, is hardly conducive to sober, academic work! But I am now forcing myself back to my papers, and am having reasonable success in this.

Someone has sent me an article on you which appeared some while ago in the "Zambia News". I am enclosing it for your interest. Your comments, by the way, on the "Sunday Express" and "Sunday Times" reports have aroused great mirth among my friends.

I don't think I have told you about the results of the representations I said I would make. Coming at this stage, it will not surprise you to learn that they were turned down.

Since dictating all the above, I have seen your wife and was happy to find her well. She assures me that she is not in need of anything. While I was glad to have first hand news of you, I was distressed to learn that, apparently, you have not been receiving the supplies of fruit. I shall be writing direct to the Robben Island Officer Commanding about this. As you know, your wife will be able to take her annual leave at the end of December so that you will be able to look forward to seeing her again then.

There is little else to write about. What with personal difficulties and the general atmosphere at the moment, life is pretty strained.

Look after yourself. I pray for your continued welfare and for your courage and spirit to continue unabated.

Sincerely,

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