

From: Benjamin Pogrand,  
705 Doromo,  
Van der Merwe Street,  
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JOHANNESBURG.

18th March, 1968.

REGISTERED

Mr Robert M. Sobukwe,  
c/o Officer Commanding,  
Robben Island Gaol,  
Robben Island,  
via CAPE TOWN.

Dearest Bob,

I have delayed replying to your letter of February 14, which reached me on March 4, until I could have the chance of speaking to Veronica (and in my turn, forgive me for referring to her as Veronica -- that's the way I met her and that's the way I know her!). This was necessary because it was only from your February 14 letter that I learned that your letters of November 23 and December 14, 1967, had not reached me. So I have had some difficulty working out what you need.

So let's deal with each point in turn, and see whether we can make rapid arrangements for you. Firstly, about the heater: I note that you say it cannot be repaired and I shall take steps to have it replaced. I see that you actually had been hoping for an additional heater, so let's see whether we can't arrange this too. I am working on the assumption that we have a few weeks in hand at least before the onset of cold weather and that we therefore have time to exchange letters on the subject. If this assumption is incorrect, can you please telegraph me immediately and I shall make emergency arrangements. Otherwise, if we have the time to debate it, tell me whether you especially want at least one fan heater (if I remember correctly, your existing heater is a fan type), or whether the bar heaters provide sufficient warmth. Depending on what you want, I shall arrange for either one fan heater and one 2-bar heater to be sent to you, or two 2-bar heaters. O.K.?

Secondly, about the record player. I suggest that immediately you receive this letter, you send the player to the Cape Town end of the ferry boat service and then, at the same time, telegraph Eulalie Stott (6 Bishopscoart Road, Newlands) to let her know that it is there. Meanwhile, I shall

write to her to tell her about the arrangement. I am sure that she will be willing to have the player repaired and returned to you.

Thirdly, the newspaper subscriptions leave me flat-footed until I can hear from you as to what you need. I only hope that you have had enough money in your account in the meantime to maintain subscriptions and that you are still getting the papers. If necessary, I suggest that you telegraph me about this if it is an emergency situation.

Fourthly, when I saw Veronica the other day (and incidentally, she is well and spoke happily of the visit she and the children had had with you), she gave me a pair of your trousers. As requested, I shall purchase another two pairs for you, have them trimmed to the same size to fit your paunchless state and have them posted on to you. I hope to be attending ~~him~~ to this within the next day or two.

My question, in my letter to you of February 7, about whether the money for the food was received was answered by Veronica, and I have also just received the cashed cheque from the authorities, so that's all right.

I have, by the way, today written to the Officer Commanding, to ask for his assistance in ensuring that your letters do reach me, and in cutting down the average three week delay between your writing of a letter and its posting. I have also taken up the matter of the carton of books which I sent you in July last year and which apparently has not reached you, from what I can work out. I do again suggest, Bob, that you send your letters by registered post to avoid possible mishaps in the post. And while I think of it, a few weeks ago I sent you a batch of Argosy magazines and I ~~hopp~~ hope these arrived safely. And I haven't heard from you for a long, long while as to whether you need any more lighter reading matter. Will you please let me know?

Jenny was in a school play last week and played the part of Queen Esther. She was utterly delightful and somehow or other a picture of the event found its way into the Mail! I am enclosing a clipping for you. But her mother apparently resented me like anything for being able to do this and I'm having a hard time with her at present. The usual game of blocking me from seeing Jenny, which causes me great pain and leaves me writhing with furious impotence.

But Jenny, thank G-d, continues to flourish in the midst of it all, and is as delightful and as lovely as ever. I am having her portrait ~~sketch~~ done at present by a leading painter who is a good friend of mine -- and I suppose this too is a cause for resentment in the mother.

I am in the thick of preparing to launch another major campaign for the Rand Bursary Fund. Last year we built up the fund from 60 scholars to a total of 746. This year the fund will have 1,000 scholars and is also giving 30 teacher loan bursaries to enable people with J.C. but no other qualification who are teaching to go and spend another two years studying. I have set a target of R50,000, and have set up a whole series of projects aimed at bringing in this money. The basis of the plan is to decentralise, and I have a set of project leaders who run their own shows. The trouble is that I have to supply all the material needed to get the groups going and I've been working until the early hours for weeks now to prepare the material. But it's worthwhile work. Actual budget for this year is about R22,500, but we need the extra amount for reserve to ensure that kids in the lower classes who get bursaries will be able to complete their matric. So from the tiny operation of a year ago, this has now mushroomed into an enormous project, and by this time next week, some 350 people will be actively engaged in it in one way or another.

It's kosher food -- you wrote cosher. You disappoint me about the fish. Imagine a nice ~~max~~ Jewish boy not liking rollmops! Actually, I took a bit of a chance on that bottled stuff. One day you will have to try the non-bottled variety and see if it is more to your taste. The only thing that can redeem you now is a prompt assurance from you that you did at ~~not~~ least like the polony.

Norma is not at all well at present: poor girl, she is suffering heavily under the strain of waiting and just isn't able to stand up to it. She was in a bad way last week and I have just applied for permission to go to London for two weeks on compassionate grounds. I am waiting to hear if I succeed.

When do you write your exams? And are you able to ~~not~~ ~~swot~~ properly for them?

As always, my thoughts are with you.

Affectionately,

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