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From: Benjamin Pogrand,  
P.O. Box 1133,  
JOHANNESBURG.

15th May, 1967.

REGISTERED POST

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

Dearest Bob,

In my last letter of May 4 I promised to write again within the next couple of days. I am sorry it has taken me ~~me~~ so long. Also in that letter I said I was enclosing a list of books delivered to you, but did not do so; the list is now enclosed.

I have checked with the outfitters up here about the balaclava cap and they say it was posted with the other goods. Could you check at your end and let me know? The winter sheets were posted to you last week and I hope they have reached you safely and are to your taste: one set has yellow flowers and the other, red flowers! And the bedspread, as you will see, has green as the predominant motif which I chose with the idea that this would be a good colour for brightness, to cheer you up, and yet be serviceable. I think you could either wash it or preferably have it drycleaned, if possible. Incidentally, in a previous letter I think I asked how your clothes were washed -- in the communal laundry, by yourself, or what. I need to know so that I can choose the best type of material, ~~etc~~ for your clothing.

About a radio: on May 10 I sent you a telegram reading: "Please advise whether I can send FM radio immediately fond regards -- Benjamin". I haven't had a reply so I wonder whether it reached you? I sent it because obviously I can buy a radio somewhat cheaper through my contacts here than you can and I can select one personally. Your radio has probably been using up batteries because it is an FM set (is it?), as these consume more power than the old medium-wave sets. So I have chosen a mains-operated set (which incidentally, are a bit difficult to come by without short-wave), and am waiting to hear from you as to whether I should send it.

I learnt today that I cannot get a passport so I am applying for an exit permit. Meanwhile, A has refused to allow Jenny to visit me overseas for the foreseeable future. My departure date is set for June 24. I plan first to visit Israel and then to fly on June 30 to London. In view of this, I would suggest -- because of the delay in letters -- that you write your next letter to me at the address at the head of this letter and not to my flat as usual. Any letters sent to this new address will be forwarded to me in case they arrive after my departure. Otherwise, my London address will be: c/o Mrs R. Kitson,  
3 Hurstwood Court,  
Finchley Road,  
London NW11.

It is, of course, my hope that nothing untoward will occur to delay my departure. I imagine you will know of it should it occur.

Out of ~~the~~ the blue last week I received a letter from a British TV group saying they had heard I was coming and would I like to join a new type of current affairs programme being started. Most exciting this, as it sounds top-rate work. I have written telling them that I first want to complete my book and that I would be interested after that. I can see a tussle within me whether to continue in journalism or to follow my present desire to climb the ivory tower and to get away from the travails of the mortal world. I am rather attracted to the notion of myself sitting in remote isolation on that tower, surveying those below with a cold, beady eye. Come to think of it, you tried it and it didn't work out that way! Oh, well, one can always dream....

I shall, by the way, be in Cape Town with Jenny to say goodbye to my Parents from mid-morning on June 10 until lunch-time on June 13 (A won't allow us any more time there). We shall be thinking of you and ~~xxx~~ will be living in Sea Point right across the bay from you. In fact, at 2.0 pm on June 10, if you happen to look across at Signal Hill and you see two people standing there ~~xx~~ -- among the houses at the bottom -- and waving ~~us~~ to you, you will know that it is us!

I saw Veronica last Wednesday and was able to satisfy myself again that all is well with you and the kids. I need not again tell you, because you will know it, what a magnificent wife you have. Her quiet courage and strength is awe-inspiring. What delights me particularly is that she has come to relax whenever she is with me now and we chatter away about all kinds of things. I am seeing her again this Wednesday, so that Ernie can meet her. And when the kids are home from school we are all getting together so that I can say goodbye to them and so that Jenny can meet them properly.

About your views on Christianity: I have re-read several times ~~xxx~~ what you wrote, and I face the obvious difficulty of being a non-Christian. I can't put myself in the role of defending the religion, sympathetic as I am to it, as indeed I am to any religious outlook which seeks to bring men together. I tend to be simple-minded about this, I know, and I am always terribly upset and surprised when I find a minister of the cloth lying and cheating, as has been my unhappy experience several times in my encounters through my work. So, as I say, I do not feel myself able to argue about your premises. Indeed, ~~xxxx~~ from what little I know, I would tend to agree with what you say.

On the more general question of the existence of G-d, you put your finger on a painful spot within me, and I suppose it must be a painful spot for most people who do not simply blindly believe. I too was brought up simply to believe but I rebelled against this in my teens. Only later, in my early 20s, I began to find my way back, and I have see-sawed ever since. I want to believe but I don't always do so. Now why should one want to believe? There is so much meaningless in existence anyway, that one desperately wants to be able to believe that there is a higher power who watches over us, who has brought us and this world into existence, and perhaps most important of all, who offers the hope of some form of existence in after-life. I must admit to feelings of sheer terror when I contemplate the end of my ~~earthly~~ earthly existence without any knowledge of anything to come after. The terror grips me in my bowels, and I shake with it. Do you have such feelings? So I want to believe, to try to give some point to my being here. But this, of course, is a purely negative approach. There are those who say: "Look around you at the beauties of our world -- at the flowers, the trees, the birds... could anyone but a Supreme Being have created these?" There are times, when I feel ~~joyous~~ joyous in existing, that I do feel this feeling, but I must admit that it is a purely emotional reaction and has no real validity. Basically, what I have long believed is that there can be no logic in accepting a Supreme Being: one either BELIEVES or one does not. This belief goes back to my student days when, of course, we always took part in interminable discussions on the subject. And in talking to priests particularly, because I was a frequenter of the Catholic students' residence, I was always struck by the fact that logical argument could be carried only just so far -- and then it was belief.

Then too there is another emotional feeling within me: my forefathers suffered untold horrors and persecution for their belief in their faith. I have a fierce pride in them and I feel that I have a duty, a responsibility, ~~to~~ not to let go of what they died for. Even if I lack faith, surely I must be willing to concede that perhaps ~~it~~ I am at fault, that the nobility of their

belief and what they suffered for it, deserves -- demands -- that I carry it on. I think there is more than mere blind acceptance in this view, Bob, on the simple basis that we are ~~what~~ because of what has gone before us, and it is our function to sift out the good from the bad (hell, don't ask me now to define those terms!).

And then, from a purely expedient basis, and speaking now from the ~~xxxxxxxx~~ standpoint almost of my psychological training, I accept religion as a positive, stabilising factor in an individual's existence, and especially in the upbringing of a child. But, as I think I have written to you previously, I certainly don't believe in blind acceptance, but the instilling of religious beliefs should be accompanied by encouragement of critical faculties so that the grown child can decide for herself what she wants. Reverting to the point I was on in the previous paragraph, as it has just ~~in~~ come to my mind, I would be appalled if Jenny were to ~~take~~ aside lightly all ~~knave's~~ pride in her forefathers. And if she is aware of her forefathers, this ~~is~~ necessarily involves too an acceptance of their religious beliefs. And obviously the same point applies to me.

I hope this has all made sense to you. At the best of times I tend to be ~~xxxxxxxx~~ hesitant about ~~xxx~~ the whole subject, and to add to it I am writing in the early hours of the morning (note lousy typing!).

Incidentally, I did not know that the books on Judaism had been withheld, and I am upset about it. I intend taking up the matter as they should have been returned to me, or at the very least, I should have been advised of it.

To round off this discussion, I still do pray, although I am going through a bad patch at present. When I am conscious of not living the sort of life which I feel I should be living I find difficulty ~~in~~ praying, but I do go on trying. And in my prayers I pray for you and the family -- and I hope you will not object to this!

My affectionate greetings to you.

## LIST OF BOOKS

- Hunter, Jim: Gerard Manley Hopkins  
Cunningham, John: Restoration Drama  
Devlin, Sir Patrick: Trial by jury  
Rupp, E.G.: Studies in the making of the English  
Protestant tradition  
Belloc, Hilaire: The French Revolution  
Muntz, Hopes: The Golden Warrior  
Holdsworth, William: Some makers of English law  
Betjeman, John: High and low (poems)  
Sisson, C.H.: Catullus  
Stevens, Holly: Letters of Wallace Stevens  
Carter, C.H.: From the Renaissance to the Counter-Reformation  
Weber, Brom: The letters of Hart Crane  
Chardin, Teilhard de: The vision of the past  
Chapple, J.A.V.: The letters of Mrs Gaskell  
Hardy, Sir A.: The divine flame  
Hall, Donald: The life and work of Henry Moore  
Cawley, A.C.: Medieval miracle plays  
Thompson, D'Arcy: On growth and form  
Fraser, Peter: Joseph Chamberlain  
Berry, Wendell: The ~~xxxxxx~~ Broken Ground (poems)  
Larkin, Philip: The North Ship (poems)  
Jarrell, Randall: The Lost World (poems)  
Pater, Wlatert: The idea in Nature  
Leach Bernard: Kenzan and his tradition (Japanese art)  
Kaplan, Hustint: Mr Chems and Mark Twain  
Bush, Douglas: John Keats  
Stewart, J.I.M.: Rudyard Kipling  
Gilbert, Martin: The roots of appeasement  
Douglas, Keith: Collected poems

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