

Handwritten: 240

From Benjamin Pogrud,
P.O. Box 1138,
JOHANNESBURG.

18th December, 1968.

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

My dearest Bob,

It is with a sense of horror at myself that I realise how much time has elapsed since last I wrote to you. The time has just slipped by, day after day, week after week. But you will know that, however long the time that has passed, you have not been out of my thoughts and prayers, and there has too been no neglect of your interests. On one score though I was remiss -- I failed to send you a telegram on your birthday earlier this month. Please forgive me for this, Bob, and accept my belated goodwishes.

I saw Veronica recently and again found her well. We made arrangements about her coming trip to the Island, and I shall be at the station in Cape Town when she arrives and will deliver her and the children to the ferry boat. Within the next few days I shall be sending to her a set of gifts for everyone for Christmas, which I collected from a number of friends. By the time you get this letter, I hope too that you will have received the dictionary which Eric and I have sent you. I am sure that you will be as excited about it as we have been -- it's American published, and superbly printed and presented. We had a look at a range of dictionaries before choosing this one, and are satisfied that there is nothing better available. From both of us, our affectionate good wishes, for much happy delving into it.

As Veronica told you when she last visited you, I had insisted that she buy a new dress specially for the visit, and she told me that you were well pleased with it. I have tried to persuade her to buy a mini-skirt for the next visit but have encountered a deal of resistance from her. In fact, I am certain that she she will not obey me!

I am glad that the batch of books reached you safely. Only one was returned to me by the authorities. I shall see soon to sending more to you. I hope that all the toilet articles also arrived safely. One point I must mention -- you asked for Gillette blades, but I sent you Feather instead. They are not only far cheaper, but I have found them to be much better also. The first shave is sometimes not too good, but thereafter they give a better shave than Gillette and last longer. How's that for a "plug" for Feather? I stuck to your list as closely as possible, but in one or two cases diverged from it, either because what you wanted was not exactly available, or I thought I would get you a better product. Did you get the after-shave lotion which I sent you? These were intended as a special gift. I note, from your letter of October 30, that you were sent only one each of the Melton's creams and I will remedy this defect. And while I think of it, I have renewed your "Reader's Digest" subscription. Will you let me know in good time when the subscriptions to the "Cape Times" and "Cape Argus" and "Sunday Times" are due to expire so that I can attend to them?

The manuscripts you referred to in your letter of October 30 have not yet arrived. I look forward eagerly to receiving them.

About your studies: I am again ashamed of myself for not having sent a telegram to congratulate you on your exam success. I thought it a great effort. Quite the Yiddishe kop you have! You passed, and that is the important thing. I am, however, a bit worried about your next course. I am enclosing the syllabus of London University and as you will see, to undertake graduate studies in English, or even History, you need certain languages. I don't quite know what to advise about this. If you have any thoughts, it would be as well to send them to me by telegram as soon as you receive this letter so that I can attend to the next stage without any further delay.

About your letter of September 18: I noted what you said, and had earlier received your telegram, about not running a bank account for you. I take it that you will have your Post Office account on Robben Island. Do you want me to send cash to you, to be paid into the account by you, or how ~~we~~ should we work it? In the meantime, and even later, please do not forget that you must let me know about any clothing needs of yours -- and you still have the Stuttafords facilities open to you. I recently sent the clothing requested by you, but have still not been able to raise a set of GI pyjamas. One outfitter told me that he knew what they were but did not have them and did not know anyone else who ~~did~~ did; others I have approached have never even heard of such a thing so I

I don't know what next to do about them. I understand that they are pyjamas fitting snugly at the ankles and wrists. Is that right?

From your letter of October 2 I see that I have still failed to get Veronica a copy of "The Man" by Irving Wallace. I will attend to this. It is a most readable book, isn't it. I too was fascinated by it.

Jenny is in Cape Town at present with her mother, and I shall be flying down there on December 28, and she will come to stay with me at my Parents from December 30. We leave for Johannesburg on January 13 together by train -- a special treat for her --and for me, for that matter. She has outdone herself at school this year, and came first. They do not officially place them but the teacher is a friend of mine and told me about it. I am not allowed to tell Jenny how well she did! But ~~xxx~~ I could at least give her a beautiful children's dictionary to show her how pleased I was about her progress.

I am so appalled at my delay in writing that I shall end this letter now so as to get it off quickly. I shall write again during the next few days.

My best wishes to you for Christmas, and if not for Christmas then certainly for Chanukah (or Hanukah)-- that's the first word you can look up in the dictionary -- and for ~~xx~~ ~~xxx~~ the New Year. May you, Veronica and the children be blessed during the year ahead.

With much affection,

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