

Robben Island Gaol,  
P. O. Robben Island.  
26th June, 1968.

Mrs N. J. Marquard,  
De Windush,  
Drapers Street,  
Claremont, Cape.

My dear Nell,

Thank you for both your  
card of the 1st June 1868 and your letter of  
8th June, a century later. I have been  
long on this island, haven't I?

Yes I received the January copy of  
Realite. Thank you very much. I'll be  
glad to have any copies you can spare  
as well as copies of the "New Yorker", if  
you still receive the journal. Thank  
you also for the £2.00

Thank you for your words of encouragement  
When you have time please read Jeremiah  
45: It was Dietrich Bonhoeffer's favourite  
passage. I got it from him and have  
made it mine. Incidentally, he was  
hanged by the Nazis just two months  
12

before their collapse.

Yes, Stellenbosch is becoming troublesome. If you remember they invited Kennedy to address them. In fairness I must admit that Pretoria University invited me, too, in 1959. Only I refused because my audience would have been all-white! And the late Dr Xuma was warmly applauded at Potchefstroom University. But Stellenbosch is the more relaxed of the Afrikaner Universities.

It is a pity about Z.K. Matthews. As you say, he was a fine man. While I was a student at Fort Hare I came to know him quite well. He was too tolerant and broad-minded for many of us nationalists and we quarrelled with him frequently and fiercely. But he never lost his poise.

I hope you have not been alarmed by what "Sam" Bonebrake said about me in Parliament. His approach to truth is that of a poet - not of a scientist. It seems to be an affliction of most of those associated

with the BHS department. So de Wet Nel, the former BHS minister had it to an alarming degree. Bloas Wetze is also heavily infected. All the more honour, I think, to the Minister of Justice, for resisting the temptation to make the sure but cheap appeal.

I am sorry to trouble you but do you think you could get me a pair of warm pyjamas, size 40 (forty) in a dark colour. If you could throw in a handkerchief or two I'll be much obliged.

In closing may I quote a few lines from Mayakovsky. I know they'll thrill you:

I,  
laughed at by tribal contemporaries,  
like a lanky  
joke obscene,  
see coming over time's mountain-peaks,  
one whom nobody sees.

And I amongst you - am (his) prophet;  
wherever pain is - there am I;  
on every single tear - that's shed  
I myself have crucified.

And when  
 he arrives,  
 by rebellions accompanied,  
 and you go to greet your saviour with hosannas  
 I will  
 tear out my soul for you,  
 to make it big  
 stamp on it!

and hand it to you, bloodstained as a banner.

And you say I should consider  
 writing my personal reminiscences.  
 Well! I should have liked to say "I won't  
 do it!" but I can't very well say that to you:  
 so I'll temporize and say "I'll think about  
 it."

You know, when I read about Kennedy's  
 death and the messages from great men which  
 came in from all sides it struck me that a  
 certain Jewish agitator was hanged outside  
 Jerusalem and a mere handful mourned his  
 death - among them a one-time tart. But  
 today, the "great" send messages of  
 condolence, in the name of that  
 Jewish Rabbi! Oh well, well, enough

for now. We ~~having~~ <sup>have</sup> a saying in Xhosa, used for purposes of condolence. It is a little story: akukhlanga lungehlanga: lala ngenxeba: (Daar het ~~niet~~ nie gebeur wat nie al gebeur het nie: slaap op jy jou wond).

Thank you for writing to Veronica.

With best wishes to you and Leo.

God bless you.

Yours sincerely,  
Robert.

P.S. I am well: am only plagued by a cold in the head: but have had it for over a decade now. It knows neither summer nor winter.

Robert.

# A2618

## Robert Sobukwe Papers

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