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~~Received~~  
~~20/10/67~~

Lobben Island Gaol,  
P. O. Lobben Island.  
27th September, 1967.

Mr Benjamin Pogrand,  
705 Boromo,  
Van der Merwe Street,  
Hillbrow,  
Johannesburg.

My dear Benjie,

It would appear that you did not receive my letter of the 5th June. In it I thanked you for the overcoat, commented on yours and Norma's relationship; recalled that I was a hesitant, timid believer and you a straggling, 'frequently frustrated' cub at the 'Daily Mail'. when ~~we~~ we met. I remarked also that I did not wish to encourage an "incipient chauvinism". And that was before the Middle East war.

As you say, whatever the peace settlement, the war has had an immense impact on the Jewish people throughout the world. But, Benjie, you are an intellectual; and that imposes upon you the obligation

not only to think but <sup>also</sup> to carry about with you an awareness of history.

You make the point which has been made frequently of late that the Jews of Europe had no excuse for allowing themselves to be led meekly to slaughter: And that the resistance of the Warsaw ghetto indicated the birth of a new spirit - the determination to assert Jewish manliness.

What you young fellows must remember is that the Jews that Hitler murdered were citizens of Nationalist Socialist Germany! A new Hitler with an equivalent military power could do the same thing today AND GET AWAY WITH IT!! Israel couldn't save them; nor could USSR.

Why didn't they resist? Hardly a tenth of the population and facing the most efficient and scientific tyranny the world had ever produced!

And was the Warsaw ghetto's resistance so unusual? It was remarkable, yes; but unusual? Jewish military strategy has always been suicidal in its recklessness, from the time of David to the Maccabees. As for resistance to the last man, woman and child you have the recent excavations at Herod's temple - I forget the name

of the place - Harod or something

Now for the point I made about peace. In the American Civil War it is recorded that Grant treated Lee, when he came to surrender, as though Lee were his superior officer. When Lee left the field, Grant's men saluted. Quite recently, in a boxing championship in Britain, the Scottish champion McGowan was forced to retire because of a badly-cut eye. The defending champion, an Asian, who was defeating McGowan for the second time, went to McGowan's corner - and they say McGowan was in tears - and knelt before him. The grand gesture, Benjie!

A further illustration. Moshoeshe I when attacked by the Zulus, inflicted a crushing defeat on them at Kaba Bosiu and, as they retreated, sent a large herd of cattle to "his brothers". The Zulus never again attacked him. He cut the English forces to ribbons in <sup>1859(?)</sup> ~~1859~~ and <sup>while</sup> ~~when~~ Narden, the British commander was in a state of buildermont and humiliation, sued for peace! I am not saying Bavel should be "magnanimous" if I were Masser I would want no magnanimity from the Jews. All I am saying is that it is Eshkol and not Masser who can afford a

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diplomatic rebuff. Incidentally, ~~the word~~ it is  
"adulation" that might go to Bayan's head, not  
"inulation". I love the sound of the latter, though!

It had been my intention in 1957 to have  
Egypt and the "Arab north", taxed with the  
direction of their loyalty. Are they African or  
Arab? If they are Africans then the Middle East  
problem is not theirs except in so far as  
Egyptian territory is concerned. Algeria, Morocco  
and Tunisia have no reason whatsoever to be  
involved. I have asked myself whether that  
would be my attitude regarding the Afro-Americans  
and the West Indians and I think I can honestly  
say "yes". As soon as Hitler saw himself as  
the guardian of Germans anywhere and everywhere  
he chose the path of war for he was bound to find  
it irksome that Germans anywhere should be  
under non-German rule.

Sorry for the lengthy sermon! Thank you  
for the your letter and particularly for the  
children's photographs. They truly came out well.  
But you'll have to warn Veronica that unless  
she counts her calories she'll soon look like  
the female version of the Prime Minister of a  
neighbouring state!

Both she and Milisawa wrote to tell me about the party which they obviously enjoyed immensely. Milisawa wrote to me in English and begged that I allow her in future to write to me in English. Reading between the lines I gathered that "Kate Benjie" was not pleased with the progress they were making in English. Times have changed, of course, and I do not offer it as an excuse, but believe you me, she writes much better English than I did when I was in St. I. Admittedly I was younger: I was eleven then.

I apprehend I shall have to make it two letters once more I still have a lot to say.

Thank you for news about Jenny. You have every reason to be proud of her. In your photographs together she is, indeed, very much the "young lady". She has a relaxed, unaffected appearance.

With regard to books, I am afraid I have not received any books that bear your name. The twenty-nine books I acknowledge were straight from the bookseller - Poetry and Autobiography mostly.

Continued in letter no 2.

Letter No 2.

Robben Island, 27th September, 1967.

Mr Benjamin Pogrebe.

Regarding the question of clothing, Veronica has been rather remiss I fear. As I told you earlier, Clive had sent me a charcoal grey pair of trousers. Because of my diminished 'public opinion' (poured), it required alterations particularly as regards length. I gave it to Veronica together with the Ebebi pair of trousers you <sup>had</sup> sent and a grey pair which was to ~~act~~ serve as a pattern. She left them with Clive she says; but I have not received them up to now and I haven't heard from Clive either. Incidentally, the slip-pail hasn't arrived yet either.

Consequently, I shall need additional trousers. I intend ~~to~~ send you the brown pair as a model so that you may get me a similar brown and a charcoal grey. The styling and material I leave to you.

The British Embassy have sent me a receipt for the exam fees: thank you. Yes, I am still finding it difficult to concentrate; and I expect the trouble to

get worse, not better. It is unavoidable in the circumstances, I think.

You seem to be having quite a busy time. I am glad, therefore, you were able to write to Mrs Duncan. Strange as it may sound, Pat was the first man, after PAC was formed, to accuse me of racialism! Came up to the Nits to tell me I was a racialist and he would fight me. I spent a whole afternoon trying to persuade him I was not a racist. He was very honest. I thanked him.

Thank you for the £10-00 (Ten pounds). You see, I sent £25-00 (Twenty five pounds) to my mother in April to enable her to visit me here and paid ± £18-00 (eighteen) for the newspapers "Life Times", "Cape Argus" and "Sunday Times". So my funds were very low indeed, but I am all right now.

When Monica comes we shall work out <sup>what</sup> ~~how~~ <sup>much</sup> ~~how~~ Washing Powder, Toothpaste, Toothbrushes, blades etc. I use per year, so that these can be sent from outside to enable me to use my funds on edibles only.

I have been working, on and off, on some those short stories and poems and am

unambitious English novelette. I read some of these to Veronica but damnit, she's punctan! I am sending you a free translation of one those poem I read out to her. She thought it was not quite "nice". I ask you! Later I'll send you a translation of one of the those stories and perhaps the first two chapters of my English work. Your comments, I need hardly say, will be appreciated. Here goes, then:-

They all say so:

I'm not going to keep quiet  
 I'm going to tell you what you are:  
 Oh you can treat me, to your heart's content.  
 You're very brave when it is women your face.

I've been holding my peace too long  
 I must speak or I'll burst.

The water in which

The midwife washed you at your birth,  
 Was a whore's water.

Don't promise me; hit me

Your scowl doesn't scare me this bit.

What's that? That's your mother!



Yes I say so; I say that's your mother.  
I was a virgin, me, boy,  
when I met you.

"They all say so"?

I am not concerned  
with what others say.

I ..... What's that?

"My breasts had already fallen"?

I have a high bust, that's what I have.  
But as for carnal knowledge of a man  
that I acquired when I met you.

What is it you say? You're insulting me!  
You are going to produce the women  
who helped me procure ~~an~~ abortions.

"It's my mother"? You say it's my mother  
who has removed my stomachs? (planned abortions)

Oh no, you've gone too far today.  
My father's house is intact, you know;  
the roof does not leak.

What's that? "I shouldn't come back?"

I shouldn't come back ~~with my manner~~.

Until my manners have improved?"

Sis! Look what's talking!

I beg your pardon? I don't hear:

Suh! That doesn't disturb me

you can collect all your whores  
and accommodate them here;  
but all that is mine

I am taking away with me.

You will lie on the <sup>bare</sup> "ground"  
for you do not have a mat, even;

O! Is that what you say!

"You're going to charge us,  
Trade us in like motor cars"?

I'm going to stay; just for that reason;

this gall that you have

I'm going to empty you of it!

There you are, Blazie. The gall  
is what we would call cheek, I believe. As I  
say, Veronica was not impressed. This isn't  
typical of the poems I've written. I'll send you  
further samples. My weakness is I hate  
revising anything I have written.

I'll answer your question on religion later, but  
religion is a part of a people's culture. With the Jews,  
their religion is, in fact, their history: their past, their  
present and their future. Divorced from your religion,  
you are divorced from the Israel of God.

With the very best wishes, Blazie. Love to Jenny  
friends.  
Affectionately, Bob.

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II.



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