

## Sobukwe to Pogrud, 27<sup>th</sup> September 1967 (Ba5.62)

My dear Benjie,

It would appear that you did not receive my letter of the 5<sup>th</sup> June. In it I thanked you for the overcoat, commented on your and Norma's<sup>1</sup> relationship; recalled that I was a hesitant, timid lecturer and you a struggling, 'frequently frustrated' cub at the "Daily Mail" when 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 on you the obligation not only to think but 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 the 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 IT!! Israel couldn't save them: nor could U.N.O. 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 excavation at Herod's temple – I forget the name of the place – Harad 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 he were his superior officer. When he left the hall, Grant and his 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, Moshoeshoe 1 when attacked by the Zulus, inflicted a crushing defeat on them at Thaba 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 1859 (?) and while Warden,<sup>2</sup> the British Commander was in a state of bewilderment and humiliation, sued for peace! I am not saying Israel should be "magnanimous". If I were Nasser I would want no magnanimity from the Jews. All I am saying is that it is Eshkol and not Nasser who can afford a diplomatic rebuff, it is "adulations" that might go to Dayan's head, not "ululations". I love the sound of the latter though!

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<sup>1</sup> Norma Kitson, member of Congress of Democrats and British Communist Party, member of the technical unit of the South African Communist Party (SACP) and founder of the City of London Anti-Apartheid Group.

<sup>2</sup> According to Derek Hook (2019), this refers to Major Henry Warden, "the British Resident of the Orange River Sovereignty."

It had been my intention in 1959 to have Egypt and the “Arab north”, taxed with the direction of their loyalty.<sup>3</sup> Are they African or Arab? If they are Africans then the Middle East problem is not theirs except insofar as Egyptian territory is concerned. Algeria, Morocco and Tunis have no reason whatever to be involved. I have asked myself if 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 both your letters 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!<sup>4</sup>

Both she and Miliswa wrote and told me about the party which they obviously enjoyed immensely. Miliswa 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 “Ntate 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 me she writes much better English than I did in Std IV. Admittedly I was much younger. I was eleven then.

It appears I will have to make it two letters once more. I still have a lot to say.

Thank you for the 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 the books. I am afraid that I have not received any books that bear your name. The twenty nine books I acknowledged were straight from the booksellers – Poetry and Autobiography mostly. Continued in letter number 2.

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<sup>3</sup> According to Derek Hook (2019): “Sobukwe has in mind the debates that occurred as part of the formation of the PAC, where the issue of who might be considered an African was of clear importance in establishing the remit of Pan Africanism.”

<sup>4</sup> According to Derek Hook (2019): “a reference to Leabua Jonathan of Lesotho.”