

9C16/5/4/1/12



18 Roosevelt Avenue
San Rafael
California 94903
4th February 1984.

Dear Peter

I have been wanting to write to you for some time. (That's how I seem to start all my letters these days.) I have many questions about AFRA - it and the people that I worked with are constantly passing through my thoughts. I have been getting some of the minutes and reports, for which I am very grateful (though nothing very recently) and Laurine has been sending me clippings and news of general developments. But it is hard to have a sense of what is really happening. I have also heard very recently, from Pauline (Stanford) that Ian is leaving and that nobody has yet been found to replace him, and wonder what that means. She also told me that Jean has had a baby. It's frustrating, also painful at times, to feel so cut off - even though it is clearly a consequence of other choices I made. I miss people and I miss the involvement of my work with AFRA, even though I am also enjoying my new opportunities and freedoms. I realise ~~xxx~~ that letterwriting is not the best way of communicating about what is happening either.

I wonder too whether you are planning to continue as chairman. I am sure I am repeating what many others will have told you - I can't imagine AFRA managing nearly as well as it has up to now without you as chairman. I do hope that if it is true that Ian is leaving, somebody suitable will be found to replace him. I think about returning to AFRA, or to related kinds of work - assuming an opening of course - but the time for that is not appropriate/right now. I worry about ridiculous things (not ridiculous in themselves but ridiculous for me to be worrying about) - funding, contact with people and places that I felt a particular responsibility for. Anyway - I hope to be able to catch up on all this later in the year. In the meantime, I do hope that the work is proceeding as productively as is possible.

I also wonder how Creina is and what is happening at Mdukutshani. I received some newspaper cuttings about Neil's death. To say that I was shocked and upset sounds totally inadequate. I wrote to Creina but am not sure whether or not she ever got my letter. I'm sure she must have been swamped by people unbearably. I hear that she is staying on at Mdukutshani and wonder: how, doing what? Do you know whether Anglo is continuing to support the project, and what its longterm intentions about its involvement there are? What police followup to the murders have there been? Reading about it in distant London reinforced feelings of despair.

I know you are enormously busy and I know that many of these things are not easily written about. But if you could let me know something of what is happening, I would value it very much.

Our own news is of a very different order. We are well, at times amazed to find ourselves here, at times very homesick (John too) but also, at other times, enjoying the experience of being here. For

John, of course, it is more than 'an experience' of being here. It is home, and he has been really happy to return to his small circle of special friends and to the hills and mountains and vegetation of California. But also disoriented and disturbed (far more than he anticipated, I think) by many of the developments that have taken place or become more visible while he was away. The impact of 'Reagan' (using the man himself as a shorthand for the forces he represents, that control him) is frightening: everywhere one chooses to look one sees the liberal social gains of the 1960s and 1970s being dismantled (housing programmes, conservation and environmental projects, pollution controls, welfare programmes, arts endowments, appropriate technology research and on and on all being cut back, reduced, stopped) in favour of corporate profits, big business expansionism, an individualistic, make-the-rich-get-richer system. The most frightening aspect of all is that it seems that Reagan will be re-elected - that a majority of Americans, including many who are not, finally, benefitting from all this, approve. They like it because they believe that maybe someday they too may "make it big". They like to think that America is showing the Commies at last ...

Looking at the wider world - we are depressed and struggling to understand what is happening. But looking at a smaller ^{more personal} world - we are finding much that is stimulating, satisfying. John has started 'schhol' again, picking up where he left off in a Masters course he had started just before he came out to SA. He is also trying to scrape together enough money to keep him going, by squeezing ~~an~~ gardening and maintenance jobs inbetween an already fulltime university programme. The pay is good but his hours very short and erratic and we are riding the roller-coaster of financial insecurity. I am starting on a project that is very ambitious but exciting, challenging and one ^{the} I hope to get some money ~~for~~. David Philip have approached me to write a general history of women in South Africa and I have accepted, in the hope that between the two of us - them in SA and me here - we will find enough money to support me for the 18 months I expect it will take to write it.

This is one of the things that has prompted me to get down to writing to you. I have written to the Ford Foundation, and will be writing to other foundations, with a request for funding, and have - and would like to continue doing - used your name as one of 4 people who could supply references/testimonials on my behalf, should they require. I hope you are happy with that. If they do need them, I will let you know. I have enclosed a copy of the proposed outline of the book in case you are interested. This outline is still very much in the preliminary stages - the book may change shape considerably as I get down to the research. At the moment I am having a wonderful time reading general, theoretical and background books and articles - there is an explosion of literature on women in this country; there are times when I feel alarmed at how much stuff there is to wade through. But it is a treat to have this opportunity for reading, thinking. I am also attending a stimulating class at Berkeley University and may be able to affiliate to a research centre at Stanford.

I expect that I will need to come home later in the year to complete the research, and will definitely pay a visit to Pietermaritzburg then. However, it won't be to stay. John and I plan to get married (in April) and expect to be based here at least till his course is completed.

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All these plans are of course contingent on my getting a grant of some sort. In the meantime I am proceeding, sometimes a little nervously, on the assumption that this will happen.

I hope that you and Phoebe are well. I look forward to hearing from you but know how busy you are and how difficult it must be for you to find time for letter writing. I also wanted to thank you again for ~~xx~~ finding the time to visit my mother when she was in hospital. It meant a great deal to her to have people constantly coming round to see her; it meant a great deal to me, too, to know that she was not as alone as she might have been.

Peter, could you check with Jean whether she has been getting my cards, and ask her to write. I really do want to know how she is. I have been using the Advice Office box number in Estcourt.

Please give my love and greetings to everybody at AFRA.

Love -

Cheryl