

① PROF. RICHARD CALLAN
A very long letter - COPY

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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN 49001
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Dear Mr. Paton,

I am very grateful for your kind attention to my enquiries about your work at a time when the demands of other pressures on you are so disturbing. It is sad to hear of the fate of the Defence and Aid Fund; particularly so, in view of the growing awareness in the United States of the burden placed on people who must provide their own legal defence. There is quite a strong movement afoot to provide some form of public defence system; and a practical beginning has been made in some districts, including our own local area, by eliminating bail as a requirement altogether. I realize that this recital can offer you little consolation now, other than as an example of the maturing spirit of liberty in American democracy.

I am happy to be able to tell you that I won't have to bother you further about locating the materials in South African journals that I enquired about in my earlier letter. I have been fortunate in recent weeks in finding out about library holdings of Forum, Trek, Contrast, Theoria, South African Outlook, and S.A. Opinion, and the index to South African Journals. These, as well as Contact, which you drew to my attention, will provide me with a good deal.

I should tell you that I went to Chicago recently to see Sponono performed at Hull House. (I brought along one of our students, Hugh Stevenson, whose father, an Anglican priest in Johannesburg, you probably know.) The Theatre is full for every performance. It is small, seating about 140, and the stage area is very limited. The acting was generally good, and the performance very well received, even though the audience had to leave their seats for two long intermissions while the actors prepared, on stage, for the next act. You probably know that critics in the U.S. agree on the excellence of the final act, but have mixed reactions to the first two. I feel that a possible source of the weakness they refer to in the early acts may be that the interwoven story of Ha'penny is not, in itself, dramatic. He is fine, of course as a character in Sponono's story, and the Principal's, but not for the sake of his own story. Somehow, I feel I would like to begin the play, as well as end it, with the final act. One Chicago newspaper, The Daily News headlined its review: "Sponono a Smash on the South Side"

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