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Dear Phyllis,

Many, many thanks for your letter and for remembering Tim's birthday. I'm sending a photo for you - taken in the summer in our garden, on the climbing frame my father made for them. Of course they have all grown - you know them! What good news that Suks. is coming to England - perhaps not so good for you, as you will miss her, I expect. Will she be with her father? We will always welcome her here, of course, if she wants "a change of scene or a bolt here". Do, do, ask her to get in touch - and if we can help in anyway, she must ask.

There has been a lot about S.A. on the television programmes - one a World in Action programme on Apartheid - it was enough to make me weep with Anger, horror and despair that human beings can treat each other like that. What can we do. Mrs T. and her many governments will never make a stand (as Reagan is all for holding S.A. hand) and when it comes to the Council, I doubt a Labour (or S.D.P.) government will either - too bothered with the situation here - (stagnantly prosperous, despite what you may have heard). The Church is too wishy-washy & I'm **Centre** for disestablishing the Church of England so that it can make a stand on such important issues, without "offending" the government. One of ~~the~~ <sup>my</sup> strongest reasons for not going to Church is their hypocrisy and ineffectiveness to do more than preach - No acting on what they believe.

Never mind - we are in quite exciting times with the revival of the anti-nuclear issue. As a veteran of 2. Aldermaston marches it is marvellous to see such a strong

seeing in so many people, largely falling on deaf ears, of course! It is this terrible bogey man of Communism which bugs everyone and is built up as a terrible enemy - the crimes, of course, which the communists are said to perpetrate can ~~be~~ equally apply to the Americans, but of course that is not said. Sometimes it would be nice to be an ostrich.

Still, we - the Bensons are carrying on, much as ever, getting angry, but finding it difficult to do much about it. I took my later open University exam, which was a bit more difficult than I imagined. My results come out at Christmas time. I just wish I had all the time in the world to read about the 17th century, but I can hardly manage a simple "who-dunnit" - before I fall asleep. Mike was upset to get a card from the Council saying that his allotment was weedy and in accordance with Rule --- would he do something about it. It is too! We have couch-grass growing through all the potatoes! It has really got too much to manage and I think Mike will give it up and persuade the people next door - who do nothing to their garden, to take it over. I really don't want him interfering in my garden - which I regard as my territory now! We are just about to buy a car - regrettably - and I am into having driving lessons, which I quite enjoy. What I don't enjoy is having to organise the children to different friends in time (9.15) to have the lessons. We have to get the car because I don't think Oliver will be fit enough to walk the 3/4 mile to school, + back for lunch, + back to school + back

Two hours later, when he starts next September, when it  
is at school they can stay to lunch but, unless it is  
pouring with rain, they have to be out all the lunch  
time, which would not be much fun if you can't  
run about to keep warm. At the moment he is very  
well and full of life - he is always first up. He is  
just beginning to write (He is left handed so things  
go backwards - like "79V110") and read a bit. He goes  
to a play group three mornings a week. Jeremy is busy  
with swimming lessons (essential as we live about  
50 yards from the river) - piano, violin + recorder  
prachse # Woodcraft Folk (Have you come across  
them? - a sort of non-authentic, co-educational,  
Scouts) which he goes to one evening a week and hopes  
to go camping with them in the summer. We also hope  
we will go to France in the summer. A cousin of  
Mike's has bought a cottage there to visit too, but  
she can't move there for a year, so we have been  
offered it for a holiday. It will be quite a expedition  
with three small children + neither of us speaking much  
French. (Mike gets muddled up with Malay, which is not  
a very useful language to know!) But, we shall see how  
the money goes, - and the car we buy!

Your poncho is being very well worn - I just love it  
and many people have admired it. I will try to get a  
photo, but the camera is mine + Mike has a mental  
block about using it. I hope the enclose photo will keep  
you going.

With much love from us all. We are looking forward  
to meeting Saks. Franca, Mike, Jeremy, Oliver + Tim.