

July 20, 1994

Dear Phyllis,

Thanks for your letter of the 6th of July. I am so glad to know that you found rest in Harare - and possibly were a bit pampered by Suks, Carole and Bud. You deserve this, and your body needs it. Don't push yourself too hard now that you have returned to your cold nation. How is your health? Have you proper medical care?

It is not at all surprising to me that for Suks, Harare is home. After all, most of her life was spent on the run from South Africa and South Africans, even though deeply involved with the South African exile community. The place in which you were finally able to establish a normal family routine for her was Harare - this is where she came of age and so it will always be "home" for her. I am so glad for her that she has such a place, and that she loves it and is happy there. She has the right to a life with friends and sense of belonging, of community. I am sure that she will make a contribution there - and isn't it wonderful that someone in your family has staked out a claim to a place where hard winters can be escaped? Please give her my very best. The news of her contentment makes me so happy; she was much too young for a revolution.

What work faces South Africa! Now that the political victory has been implemented, the structure of apartheid remains, and will take generations to erase. The hard work has only just begun to be imagined. The new South Africa, like the old, will have poverty and misery exaggerated by any climatic abnormality. Plastic sheeting was not invented as a building material. And I have little faith in privileged people from any society. They have what they have at the expense of others, and they believe that it is ~~either~~ their right, and that which is required to live a civilized life. Over-consumption is the most serious problem facing the world - more serious in the northern hemisphere if only because millions more are doing it. But serious in every nation because of the distortions in social and ecological systems. But how on earth to address these issues?

Existing political theories can handle the disparities of wealth and power, but none seem to have an adequate handling of the relationship between human societies and the environments of which they are a part, and upon which they depend. We have been cursed with the industrial notion of "progress" and "civilization" which have the complete alienation from and conquest of nature as a goal. This is not to say that there is romance or good in physical suffering, but rather to say that if we use things to completion, there won't be any left and if we don't share with other species, what they do for us will vanish. Our species simply cannot survive in the absence of others; the effluent of industry is no compensation.

Sha has a great deal of courage, clearly learned at his mother's knee, so he will live up to the challenges which confront him.

Your "stay in the sun or you freeze" rule for Harare reminds me of Lesotho in the winter. I know exactly what it feels like!

I cannot imagine the emotional pain you have experienced. It is terrible that you have had to explore every possibly nuance of grief and anguish. I am sure that Sahdhan will always be with you, as he was your true comrade in the struggle most of his life.

You have asked about my "grandmother". She is actually my grandmother's cousin and I call her "aunt" (my own grandmother died when I was a small child). Aunt Edith was stricken with diverticulosis a month ago and had the kind of collapse that the elderly do: she lost her desire to live alone. She was 90 in May, and deserves to have others look after the details of her life. My cousin flew out to California last weekend, helped her pack up her belongings, and took her on (her first ever) airplane to live in an "assisted living" complex near his home. He lives in eastern Kansas, right in the middle of the US. About a 2500 km from where I am. She is closer than she was in California, but still too far away. Once she has settled into her new life I shall visit her. But she and I have maintained a friendship through correspondence for almost 30 years, so I need only write to be with her in this time of re-adjustment. I am so relieved that Larry is there to look after her. She is a wonderful proud and honourable woman, who generally refuses to allow anyone to help her. The diverticulosis seems to have persuaded her that it is all right for those who love and care to help, and that such help does not diminish her independence or self-respect.

We are having a hot summer, but then, summer is supposed to be hot. I only wish we were near a lake so I could swim off the heat. Brian will be going to graduate school in the autumn for a PhD in communications. The University of Massachusetts is in Amherst, about 1.5 hours drive from here. He'll combine commuting with staying in motels, since we have a lease here until January and I must go in to the city of Boston regularly. He is physically much stronger than I am, so commuting will fall on his shoulders.

Beyond that, there is no news here. I am so glad that all is as well as it can be in your family. Please remember to take care of yourself.

Kak

Kenmore Station  
P.O. Box 15010  
Boston, Mass. 02215  
June 15, 1994

Dear Phyllis,

Your letter and clip filled me with joy. Please give my very best to Sha. Finding oneself physically weak after a lifetime of full strength is hard. At first there is the challenge to regain strength, and then the discouragement when full range is not reached. The easiest part is now; he'll need lots of inner strength and outside cheering later on. It is wonderful to see his picture - and yours!!! You both look so very happy. Huge smiles for a new South Africa.

I have made photocopies of the article and your note. One was forwarded to Sarah and the other will be with me when we set off for Washington tomorrow. We'll stay with Steve and Carole for most of a week. One topic of conversation is sure to be your book. We have all read Ronnie Kasriri's *Armed and Dangerous*, and will use it to help us work out strategies for lining up a publisher for you. One must make a good case for each book to be published these days.

A few questions come to mind. I know that Chris asked you to write his biography. Have you discussed this project with anyone in the movement? (Does that phrase have meaning any more?) There was a time when the need to work within structures was impressed upon me. Is this still the case, and if so, have you been working with appropriate people? And if this is the case, should they be involved in the search for a publisher as well?

I also suspect that you will need the help of a professional editor to help put the material together in a manner which will be most interesting to readers, and to know when background material is needed to introduce both Chris and the struggle to people who do not know about the details. Carole, Steve, Brian and I have discussed this over the phone. We will certainly talk further in Washington. The idea is not to bring in any sort of censorship, but rather to help you make the best possible presentation. If we could provide the guidance, we would be delighted. We all write professionally, but the other three are journalists who know how to write for the public, while I am just an academic writer. Steve has just landed a full time job. That leaves Brian and Carole with the most time, and I suspect that Brian has the most experience in the publishing world, as he has edited books as well as news copy. I mention this just to keep you informed of a conversation taking place "behind your back" and several thousand miles away. We want so much to help, this is our profession, and so this is how we can, perhaps, make a contribution.

I'll write more when there is more to say. We are all so relieved to hear about Sha's successful surgery. Love to you both. Where is Suks, and how is she doing?

Love  
Kats

September 5, 1994

Dear Phyllis,

Happy Labour Day. A cold blustery wind is blowing, suggesting an early frost and a quick end to a growing season slowed in some places by too much rain, in others by not enough. Traditional picnics and last day of summer vacation activities will be held indoors, as rain also threatens.

Your letter was waiting for me upon our return from holiday. We visited Brian's parents in Canada (his father just had hip replacement surgery and is free of pain for the first time in 15 years) and spent two weeks in the mountains of Vermont in a friend's house. The cool mountain air was a relief from the hot Boston climate. The finale of our trip was a visit to some newly-weds in a cottage by a lovely lake in the state of Maine, way up north in the woods. They were actually married three years ago, but still act as if the event were recent. The bride was 86 when she married her 89 year old groom. They are just great people. She is an old friend of my father's from the World War II effort (she was the civilian librarian on the army newspaper for which my father worked as an enlisted man). She has had quite an independent and activist's life, is a very firm believer in women's rights, a staunch supporter of progressive causes and is adamant about the need for social justice. When she was 60 she joined the civil rights Freedom Summer and went south to the state of Mississippi to establish a library at a college for black students. Her husband is a history professor who has devoted his life to the history of "the common man" and how he was cheated out of public lands by the government and the corporations. It was wonderful to spend time with elders of such commitment and vigour. Such people are very rare in this country.

The new South Africa has so much in common with the US - a corporate elite which dictates the "freedom" of the government to make policy, producing an institutional reluctance to change the social order. Good intentions fail or are perverted by big corporations. The multi-nationals and trans-nationals are the curse of this earth. South Africa's control of gold and diamonds is a mixed blessing. Yes, your national economy is of great importance to the world and the other elites won't let it die, but they also won't let it stray far from the path of profits. You should see the hysteria and fear being fanned and manipulated in this country by the medical establishment (doctors and hospitals, pharmaceutical companies and the insurance industry) since the suggestion was made that 1) all US citizens should have access to health care in the form of cheap, universal insurance 2) that this could be paid for by trimming the excess profits out of the current medical system and 3) having employers make a contribution for each employee.

The medical system in this country has become available only to those with health insurance - that is the middle and upper level of workers and the poor who are on welfare. People with low-wage jobs, part-time workers and the unemployed not receiving

government financial assistance do not have health insurance. Many doctors and most hospitals will not talk to you until they know which company will pay the bills. In addition, most health insurance policies will not cover anyone with a "pre-existing condition". People are afraid to change their jobs because this would result in a change of insurance policy, so that an existing illness would become a "pre-existing condition" and the insured person would then become uninsurable. One of the terrors of losing one's job is the loss of health insurance. I do not have health insurance, and thus I do not attempt to see doctors. They are unapproachable, and prohibitively expensive. We look forward to the day when we can return to Canada, where access to medical care is considered to be a basic right of citizenship.

It is good that John and Judy have been able to help you sell your book. They are in exactly the right spot: based in Maseru and in the larger church/activist community. The best market. But sales will likely be slow. They were in the US in June visiting their children and grandchildren, and found time to phone us. It was good to hear John's voice. As usual, they were very busy so we didn't have a chance to see them in person. Just an exchange of best wishes. Is there any chance that your book could be sold in... Bloemfontein? There are some book shops there which used to feature all of those SADF military glory stories. This was where I picked up books for AIA on military equipment and such. But the New South Africa probably hasn't reached the book stores.

A letter from my friend Makhutlang in the mountains of Lesotho came at the same time as yours. Here was the first letter since June, because the snow was so deep that she could not get to the post office. The benefit of so much snow is that the springs are full and the soil moist. She anticipates good crops this year - if the above-ground weather holds up. Certainly there is adequate soil moisture for crop growth this year. Last year's harvest was very good; they have just finished threshing and their grain bins are full. Nice to get such good news.

Diverticulosis is an inflammation of the digestive system - the intestine, I believe, in which a small flap of skin opens up, some food particles enter, remain and begin to ferment. This produces toxins and is extremely painful. The situation is caused by a diet too low in roughage and the treatment is usually antibiotics (which also kill the essential and helpful bacteria in one's gut). The fibre in food has the job of "scrubbing" the walls of the digestive tract so that nothing is left behind. Refined foods like finely ground papa, white bread and polished rice do not have adequate supplies of fibre. One must eat vegetables and fruits to compensate. Cabbage is a good supplier.

When Aunt Edith became ill, she also became depressed and discouraged. This was, in many ways, more difficult than her physical condition and was why she had to be moved to Kansas to live near my cousin. She simply could not cope alone any longer and she did not want to face the loss of control over her life.

She is now regaining her mental composure and making adjustments to her new situation. But it is not easy to make friends and begin life in a new place at the age of 90 - especially in this society where the aging process is feared and old people are not liked. I think it is much easier where elders are respected and have a place in society.

Best of luck with your friend Docrat. I assume that there are very few "retirement centres" or "assisted living centres" in Durban. When I was visiting my good friend Susan in Soweto several years ago, she took me to the first anniversary of the first old people's home in Soweto. They were all so proud; people were there singing. Chorus after chorus. And then the residents got up and began to sing, and the whole audience joined them. But these were a very lucky very few. I wish such a place existed for your friend. This is something churches can be good at, the provision of day care for the very young and adequate housing for people who can no longer live on their own.

The news of Sha's medical situation is awful. Why go through the elaborate and expensive surgery - complete with newspaper photos - if no one will take the responsibility for the rest of the process? The surgery is not a separate thing from the medication; without the medication, the surgery is useless. The logic of a system that provides one without the other is hard to imagine. What is Sha expected to do? Live an unproductive life in order to finance his liver? Far better for him to work, and have help with his liver. I can't remember who the Minister of Health is. I hope that assistance was found.

I haven't heard from Sarah; she usually only writes once a year, near the end of the year. She mentioned possibly coming over here for a visit in October or November when her job-share time is finished. Apparently she and a colleague have divided a job so that each has a modest income and each has good amounts of free time.

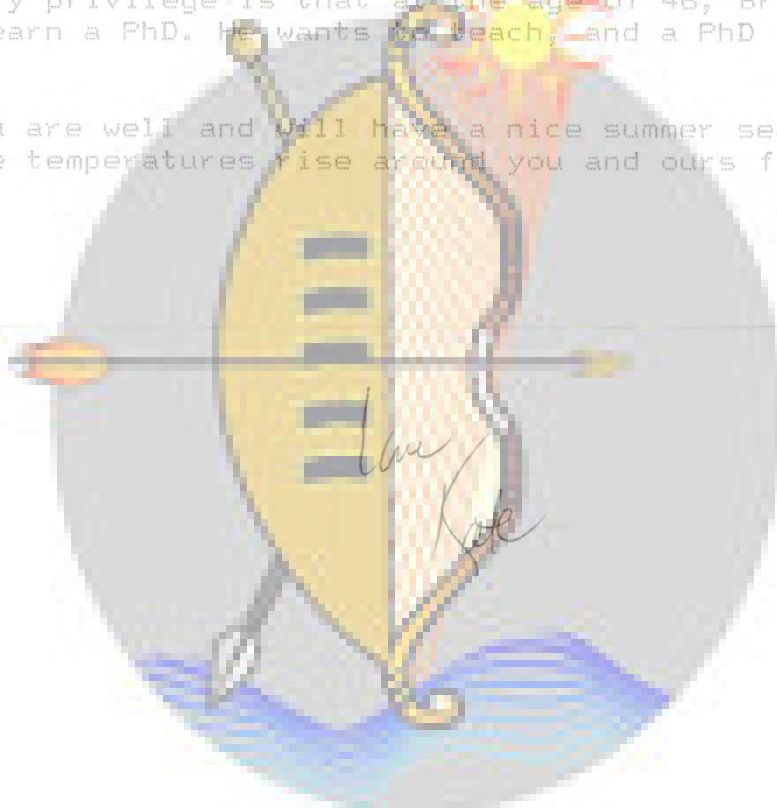
What do you mean that you will work half a day to help Sha with his tablets? Have you taken a job, or do you mean that it will take you a series of days to find help for Sha?

My health shows an extremely slow improvement. I am now strong enough to realize my limitations, which means that I am easily depressed by my worthlessness and dependency. I am not strong enough to earn a living, but my mind wants occupation. Some days I can delude myself into believing that I am beginning to get a new project going on my own, a study of hydro-electric power dams in southern Africa. And some days I feel that to pursue such a project is a folly because of my lack of stamina. Novelists have written for years about the need for illusions. Sometimes the illusion is there and I read and take notes; other days it seems like such a foolish pursuit. I am very depressed by the thought of becoming a housewife. But, in reality, that is what I have been for the five years since my car accident. The frightening

part is that nothing much has intervened in those five years, so when I relate to the outside world I am relating to 1989 not 1994. I haven't been in southern Africa in 3 years, my knowledge is out of date. The prospect of a return in the near future seems to be a dream.

Brian will begin graduate school next week, so there is no news on that front other than the mix of excitement and anxiety (about not being good enough). Once the process begins, he won't have time for such emotions as he will be consumed by his thoughts and exhausted from having to commute so far as well as study and teach. Our finances are very constrained, and this does not make life easier. If, by some miracle, his student loan is approved, he will be able to rent a room a few nights a week and cut down on the driving. We can't move because we would have to pay a great penalty to break our lease. I know that everyone living in the US is expected to be rich and privileged, but we are not. The only privilege is that at the age of 46, Brian is being allowed to earn a PhD. He wants to teach, and a PhD is required for this.

I hope you are well and will have a nice summer season. Think of us as the temperatures rise around you and ours fall.



8/5/94.

This is the most long term address: Kenmore Station  
P.O. Box 15010  
Boston, Mass 02215 USA

Dear Phyllis,

Two letters from you in one day! I shall reply in kind - a general letter today and a more specific one later after we have made inquiries about publishers.

WHAT WILL YOUR ADDRESS BE IN HARARE????? We don't have any mutual friends with Suks, so if you go up there without telling me where you are, you will be lost to me. Please don't do this! That is to say, yes, go, how wonderful, but please tell me how to stay in touch with you! Isn't it wonderful that Harare is a kind of third home (after Maseru and Durban), a place you both can feel a bit normal in, a familiarity, old friends, and most of all, calm? I am so glad that Suks found work there. She has had more violence in her life than most, and really deserves a bit of peace and quiet. As do you.

So, now that I have said PLEASE SEND YOUR HARARE CONTACT POINT at least twice, I shall turn to other remarks in your letters.

*Your letter*  
That of March 28th sent to Davis California was forwarded to me here in Massachussets (5,000 km to the east!). How awful that you found a dead check in your lawyer's files. So much for personal responsibility! Is there any way to have the check writer re-issue the check?

As for my addresses. We are still not completely settled. The street address you used is current, but only temporarily. This was simply the only place for which we could sign a lease in November of one year for the end of January the following year. It is, as you can imagine, far too expensive and not really in the right place. We are awaiting news of various employment possibilities to know where we shall be in June. My appointment at Boston University has full academic status, but salary depends upon writing a grant. You know how tight money is these days. We were very thankful for the appointment, however, since I am still not strong enough for a full time job, and this gives me a university base and the ability to manage my strength. I must only be there once a week, and my obligations are to produce papers for publication (in 4 months since my appointment I have given them two substantial papers, and my contract calls for a minimum of one). Should a grant be funded, then I will have those responsibilities. Brian has a lot of "irons" in the fire. We are waiting to see what comes up.

One of them will NOT be to monitor the elections. That is an NGO boondoggle going to the select and chosen few who are In The Right Circles. Stephanie did a thorough job of discrediting Brian in the Canadian NGO community and, we have heard, amongst South



Africans as well. People never seem to remember deeds - they need only have gossip. So despite having saved so much money each year in AIA's annual budget that he was able to hire extra staff (and make Stephanie full-time) and give additional assistance to regional publications (like 'Mmegi in Botswana and a couple in + *govern Africa South* Zambia), people actually believe the stories Stephanie has spread that he mis-managed funds.

The core of her argument is that he came to Lesotho after my car accident and edited copy from there rather than staying in Harare. Proof was his Big Car. This was bought with our personal money, and the size and make were a direct response to what happened to me in a flimsy Toyota. I refused to be seen in a Mercedes (strongest), but agreed to a second hand Jetta. Somehow these great caring people could not imagine that when one person is almost dead in a family, the healthy one might have some emotional response or personal responsibility and want to give support. Because of Zimbabwe's tax laws, I could not return to Harare. So, Brian "misused" AIA for his personal purposes - of course they forget that he tendered his resignation *which* and that was refused because AIA was too weak to stand on its own. So my health - and our relationship - suffered *incredibly* for AIA, and what is the response?

Brian is not welcome among Canadian NGO types. Nor has anyone at AIA been in touch unless to try to stab him some more or to get something from him. For a while a woman named Anu and Stephanie and Muff ran a tight little clique, lording it over everyone. *Tough Women In The Vanguard*. Then Muff was layed off (always money to pay Stephanie and her trips to Africa). Last year Muff came to the US and phoned us, trying hard to be nice. I guess she realised how awful she had been and how much Brian had done for her personally, professionally and for the Movement, but I do not think she can imagine the professional and personal pain her actions have caused Brian. She thinks we are rich people with no feelings, and she is too self-absorbed.

Then Anu was found to have embezzled huge amounts of money - the reason why there wasn't enough money to pay Muff's salary! *ANU* apparently was committed to a mental institution. All of the money she stole was signed for by Stephanie, who has avoided all responsibility by playing the race card very nicely in Ottawa. "Sigh, well, we TRIED to turn the agency over to Africans, but, sigh, I guess that is why a Canadian must stay in touch...." And so she has a nice job, with a big salary in Ottawa and trips to the tropics in the winter. The new editor, Geoff Nyrota, apparently has wondered out loud what AIA was, but has no idea, and has never bothered to get in touch with Brian.

The people who have been wonderful to us are Steve Askin and Carole Collins. In fact, we'll be phoning Carole tonight about how best to sort out a publisher for you. She is incredibly well

connected. They are really good souls, however odd their physical appearance. (For which they were shunned and ridiculed in Harare by the Politically Correct Viva Set).

My grandmother is becoming quite frail. Her vivid memories of the terror under Nazi Germany are haunting her these days, more than usual. She is also retreating into the values and ideas of her youth. She no longer has the physical strength to venture out in today's world, and has lost touch. Hers is the world of the intellectual salons of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. She is almost a certified antique. Her 90th birthday at the end of May gives her the right to be "out of touch". In each letter she writes "I know you will hate me because I am a Monarchist and a Catholic" and I (wearily) reply that she was born to a monarchy but I was not, so of course we do not have the same perspective, and that I have friends across a broad range of beliefs, and I love people who are anarchists and monarchists, agnostics and Catholics.... But this will be an endless discussion, unresolved as long as she remembers the distinctions between us and fastens upon them. She is of another era, and she needs confirmation that her world had validity. So we always ~~have~~<sup>were</sup> very dressed up when we visited her and watched our conversation to steer clear of "communism".

We are not at all close to Black Mountain. I believe that is somewhere in North Carolina, about two or three day's drive south of here. But please greet Monroe and Fern for me when you write. I doubt that he would remember me, as I spent most of my time in ha Tsilo. On Sunday morning Sarah Westcott was on the radio!!! It was great to hear her voice, but awful what she had to report. She is Oxfam-UK's desk officer for Rwanda....

Now, what is the nature of your illness? Do you have some sort of lasting disease, or simply over-exhaustion? I know what living with weakness is, the frustration of a mind alert and ready to act and a body which refuses to co-operate. I hope that you can find strength. I can't remember whether you are a vegetarian or not, but if you do eat meat, please try eating some liver - cooked as rare as you can stand it. Also try taking Brewer's yeast (nutritional, not cooking yeast) which is sold in Harare. Tablets are too expensive and ineffective - buy the powder and put a tablespoon in a glass of juice or water. There used to be a Health Food store on the side of that 5th Avenue shopping area (is that the right name, the one with the Italian bakery and a TM near the Bronte Hotel) which sold large containers of brewer's yeast.

Also, remember that working on a computer is very tiring and addictive. Try to work of an hour or two, then rest for a half hour or hour before returning for another shift. This will make you more productive in the course of a day, but it is very hard to discipline ones self to stop and rest. I speak from experience.

Please offer my condolences to Suks for the loss of her dear friend Tsitsi Viera. There is nothing more to say than shame. Poor Suks, so young and so familiar with death. My heart goes out to her, and I wish her the best. Most of all, some friends to last her life time.

You mention that Suks' job is temporary in Harare. *Please remember to send me an address!*

There was a time when we thought that Brian would be in Harare in the very near future. He has been working with Gama Mutemeri, the publisher of Development Dialogue (look for it on the news stand in Harare. It's a nice paper.) Gama wanted him to work with the staff to tighten up the journalism, as he has been working with them by the post for the last two years re-designing the paper. The funding was secure from Britain, and then someone in the NGO community decided they could get more by going to another institution, so the British money was returned, the gamble placed on a new set of donor money. Then, in London, representatives of the two concerned donor groups had a personal falling out at a dinner party and one cancelled the other's funds, and Brian lost his ticket. So, he won't be seeing you there. The donor world is totally untrustworthy, but Gama Mutemeri is solid as a rock.

Now to the points in your airletter of April 4. My thoughts are with you on the sentiments of that day.

You comment on my tone of happiness. I am so glad to be "home". We both come from the northeast ecosystem - Brian more northern than I - and Massachusetts feels like home (although neither of us has ever lived here). The right seasons, the right amount of water, the right kinds of vegetation and wild animals. We enjoyed the snow immensely, even as others complained. California was a very alienating experience. The value system of the people out there is what you see in Hollywood movies - vapid commitment to appearance, money and a life of pleasure. We just didn't fit in. I lived there for about 6 months when I was just out of college and didn't like it, but Brian had to see for himself - and it was very important to spend time near my elderly relatives (my father turned 84 yesterday). That obligation to my elders fulfilled and my health improved enough for a more strenuous life, it was possible to finally go home. And that is what we felt - that we have just now returned from Africa. That two year haze in California was what we used to call our "desert island" - pure "time out" from the world.

As I mentioned, we still are not in our final house, and the prospect of having to move again is horrifying. But, we still are living with just our African things. Most of our belongings are in storage in Canada. We'll know that we have finally reached home when we have those things around us. Not that I am devoted to things, but just that one wants to be all in one place, and

not to have to move again. We are not yet at that point, but closer than we have been for years. If my health would only improve enough for me to be able to look for work, I'd feel more settled.

Yes, one grows fat from being ill and not being able to move. I have gone up about 2 clothing sizes, and am fighting constantly to bring my size down. My weight fluctuates; when I have energy and can take exercise, I go down a size, when I am weak, I go up. I gather that this is not healthy, but there is nothing I can do about it. My food intake is not at all excessive, and if I eat less, I become sicker. My uncle here in Boston is a doctor, and he has been able to make an appointment for me to see a specialist in mid-May. I have high hopes for this appointment.

We shall hope for the best in the next few weeks, but I do not believe that there will be a peaceful transition to a New South Africa. When we had to register our car in Lesotho, we had to take it to the police station in Ladybrand. Pure racism, armed with the largest pistols I have ever seen (in a holster at the waste with the barrel down to the knee). These people will not cheerfully allow their gardeners to run the country. This is what whites told me when I hitch-hiked in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, two weeks after the elections and two weeks before the installation of the government of Zimbabwe. Fuzzled whites wondered how they would form a government, since their gardener was quite happy to get drunk on Sunday and weed the rest of the week. Lazy, slow moving and easily contented with a few dollars, a bag of mealie meal, some kapenta and some beer. And that is only the minority. After Zimbabwe came in to being, there was a 5th Brigade operation settling old scores in the south.

The South African black majority has a lot of "old scores; the ANC rhetoric about no ethnic groups is meaningless. Derek and the others thought I was "suspect" because I used to say that the ANC was making a big mistake by ignoring people's identities. A Mosotho will never be a Zulu, and at least the current generations will be hybridized South Africans, with their language/ethnic identity first. I can imagine a long period of "resolution". I have always thought that Africans had a better way of resolving conflict than the Europeans. One need only look to the former Yugoslavia to see how grudges and negative stereotypes can be passed from generation to generation, and how outside European forces are so happy to fan the flames. Germany bears the responsibility for Yugoslavia's demise. Britain has so much responsibility in Africa.

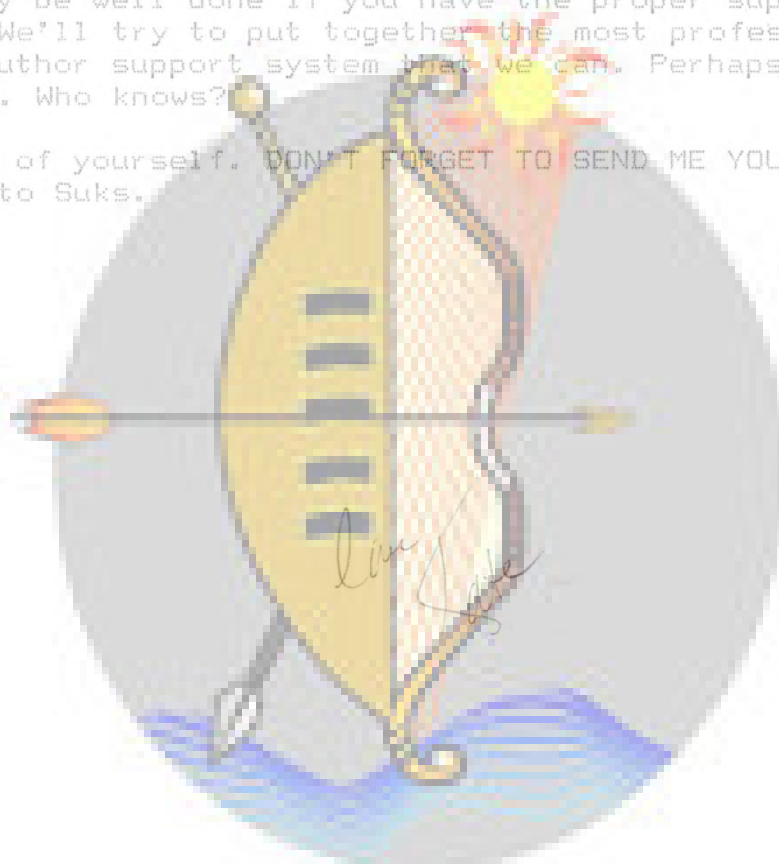
And in the end, each group takes care of their own. So European churches rescue European clergy, and since in Africa there is a colour code, it is racist. The same behaviour by the English or the Canadians in white European Yugoslavia is causing outrage - and yet each nationality does not want "their"

personnel injured. One can only conclude that human beings really aren't a very nice species.

But individuals can be extremely nice. And you are one I really care about. And respect.

I'll be talking with Carole Collins tonight or tomorrow, and will let you know as soon as we have some firm plans of action. What we shall try to do is to find not only a publisher, but some editorial assistance and "research" assistance. I CAN'T PROMISE ANYTHING, but I shall try my best. And Phyllis, you must accept the offer when it is made. This is not the time to be concerned for everyone or to give everything away or refuse to take something because it would make you somehow different. You are different, and the work you are doing can ONLY be done by you, and will only be well done if you have the proper support and assistance. We'll try to put together the most professional researcher/author support system that we can. Perhaps someone to type for you. Who knows?

Take care of yourself. DON'T FORGET TO SEND ME YOUR ADDRESS. And my love to Suks.



October 17, 1994

Dear Phyllis,

Now I owe you two letters, and haven't the time to reply properly. My strength was drawn way down by the visit of a friend I haven't seen in 20 years, and then by a week in which I have been A Professional, presenting a (well-received) seminar and going to an office. I have been appointed a Research Fellow at Boston University's African Studies Center. This appointment is at the rank of faculty member, with all privileges at the library, but no salary. Should I write a research grant which is then funded, I will have an income. The arrangement is perfect for me, as it means that I can continue to lead a very quiet life at home most of the time, and then, on two days a week, appear in public as a high powered researcher. It is my transition back to normal life.

I'm so filled with fears, insecurity and confusion that I could not do this without Brian's great help. When I come home at night I relate what has happened, and he helps me figure out the meanings and significance (if any) and whether my behaviour was normal or extreme. I've been so sick and in such isolation for so long, that I no longer have any perspective. It would be easier to remain at home and "just be sick" but I am determined to be in the world again. And I have never shrunk from hard tasks. Certainly learning to walk again and regain the use of my arm was much easier than this process is.

I have begun to collect information for a study of the long-term environmental impact of large dams in southern Africa. This means a study of three major river systems (Zambezi, Cunene and Senqu/Orange) and their existing dams. Then I'd like to use this analysis as a basis for thinking about the potential impact of three new/proposed dams: Lesotho Highlands' dams, Epupa on the Cunene (Namibia) and Batoka Gorge on the Zambezi. Do you know anyone with dam interests or environmental concerns with whom I should be in touch?

Brian has been teaching one course and taking three; yesterday they asked him to teach another short course between terms in January. So let us hope that the students enrol! He is very pleased that his (obvious) talents and intelligence are being recognized. He just loves teaching - especially the introductory courses, which everyone else thinks are low status. He loves the idea that he can be the one to begin shaping minds. His dream is to teach; that is why he is going for a PhD. And, we both love the (meagre) income.

Enough me me me. To your letters. Thanks for the Joint Communique. I hadn't realized that Judy was yet to be ordained; I thought that she had been already. When will this take place? I have no idea what the etiquette is, but surely a congratulatory card and letter would be in order.

If John has the time to help you edit, he is probably the best person to do it. After I sent the letter about our collective

offer to help, the collective's time shrank. Steve Askin now has a full-time job advising the large trade union which represents health workers. He loves his job and his colleagues, but has no time for writing. He has withdrawn from the joint book he and Carole were putting together on Zaire. Carole is in a bit of suspended animation, as she is finishing the Zaire book and has applied for a job with Oxfam International as the representative to institutions like the World Bank. The job would be based in Washington but probably has travel to the six Oxfam offices around the world. She is not yet sure how far along her application is, but she made the short list, I believe. Meanwhile, the cataracts on her eyes are now "ripe", which means that she can have surgery. She is so near-sighted and partially blind right now. She hopes to undergo surgery at the end of November on the first eye, and the second one next year.

So, Steve and Carole don't have a lot of extra time for editing, and Carole's eyes are difficult. Brian is now in graduate school, and won't have much time until the summer, and then he may have a job. Certainly Brian and I could read it and pose questions to make it marketable in the US. Americans are far less aware of the world than most people - it really is a nation of peasants provided propoganda messages (by the "free" press) - and much less aware of South Africa and The Struggle than the Commonwealth nations are/were.

Brian discovered this when he tried to find outlets for AIA copy. My father, who edited an alternative newspaper put out by a local peace and justice center, requested almost a complete re-write, because the terms and the events were so unfamiliar. And - there was no interest. In Palo Alto, California the left community was focused on Central America. As I wrote you in one letter (which you may not have received), Bill Minter was adamant that your book should be published in South Africa. If not there, in Britain. He never considered a US publisher as appropriate.

Now, as to whether one should write about Chris when so many others have fallen. A book about Chris must be written. Not just to celebrate Chris, the man (friend, comrade), but as a vehicle for describing one aspect of The Struggle. He was instrumental in so many things - ideas, activities, actions. This is what must be written down. For as you told me, photographs were not allowed; I imagine that as few records as possible were maintained. When the history of the ANC and The Struggle are written, the ONLY sources of information will be those who lived through it. You owe it to South Africa's next generations to write what you know. And for this reason, your own autobiography should be written. You were the connection between so many significant people, you have important information in your mind and heart which ought to be passed on. When you went to Robbin Island, you had access to key comrades when they were removed from all the rest of the world. Your story is important, as is Chris'.

And not just because I like you and you liked Chris. But

because you hold a key to the history of the birth of a nation. You must respect the honour which has fallen on you (which you chose to seek out), and you have a responsibility to pass it on. Chris didn't wish to take his knowledge with him - he asked you to help him write it down. He left the wish, if not the action. There is an obligation to help him with his vision. And that is the spirit in which we all have offered to help. You can count on us to do anything that we can - including urging you to spare the energy and find the time.

Phyllis, what sort of work do you have? I do hope that the government can sort out Sha's bills. His situation is as outrageous as anything that happens in this country; but then, that's capitalism. I am glad that he is able to lecture. At least he has a sense of being in the world. Please give him my best.

Now to your letter of Sept. 17, 1994.

You asked about our Labour Day being in September. Remember, this is a virulently anti-communist nation, with a strong tradition of state opposition to trade unions, so of course Labour Day could not be held on the same day - or with the same spirit - as one celebrated by Socialists and Communists. I don't know the origin of the September date; I should know.

I have the feeling that I have answered this letter before. Yes, people in the US really fear old age. There is no respect for the elderly, because this country has been fed propaganda about progress and disdain of the "old fashioned". This was (and continues to be) a marketing tool. If the past is ridiculed - and with it the older generation (it's values) and family ties, then it is easier to imagine giving full loyalty to a corporation, and thus moving when one is ordered to from plant to plant. This was standard "new", "modern" corporate activity when I was growing up in the 1950s. Dad receives a promotion and a transfer, and Mom and the children were expected to leave family and friends to move to a new location. Where they might stay for only a few years, and then move again. Disruption was a way of life. And one was expected to console oneself with consumer goods. Along the lines of well, in the old days we had family and friends, but we did our washing by hand and scrubbed floors and rode busses. Now we have washing machines in our houses, instant floor washing and wax (chemical cocktails which pollute the air inside a house) and not just one, but two or three cars.

Material goods - consumption - was supposed to compensate for the loss of community. Now a generation has grown up without family ties, without community, and with life defined in terms of consumerism. What has it produced? Lonely, anxious insecure people, desperately trying to find the product to fill their personal emptiness who, therefore, create more garbage than any other society on the planet, take more pills and are less happy and contented than the poor of the earth, and who are incredibly violent towards themselves, each other and the earth. And still

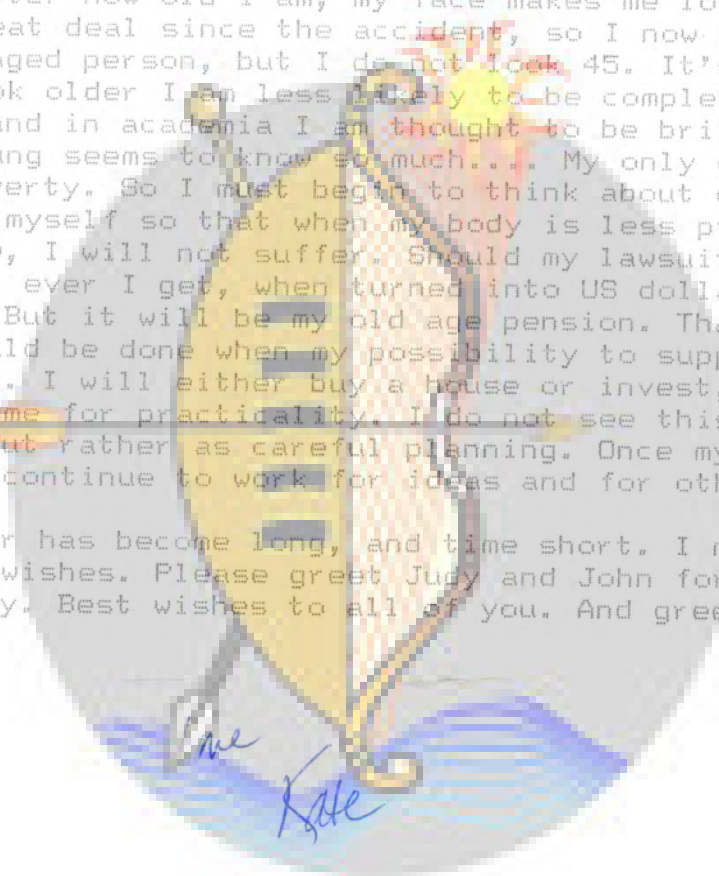


we are to buy more.

Brian and I have chosen not to own a television (99% of the households in this country owns one - and watches it about 30 hours a week, and most households have more than one). But every once in a while we find ourselves in a motel or visiting someone who does own - and watch - one and it is shocking to see what kind of a world Americans live in. For they believe TV to be true to life - and since they watch so much of it, it has become a substitute for living. For them, life is a mix of violence, murder, dishonesty and headache tablets of varying strengths. Americans could cut the violence in their lives dramatically by simply switching off the TV.

I look forward to old age. I always hated being young, perhaps because no matter how old I am, my face makes me look younger. It has aged a great deal since the accident, so I now look like a young middle aged person, but I do not look 45. It's ok, because now that I look older I am less likely to be completely dismissed out of hand, and in academia I am thought to be brilliant because someone so young seems to know so much.... My only concern about old age is poverty. So I must begin to think about doing something for myself so that when my body is less predictable than it is now, I will not suffer. Should my lawsuit ever be resolved, what ever I get, when turned into US dollars, will be a small amount. But it will be my old age pension. That is the least that could be done when my possibility to support myself was taken away. I will either buy a house or invest, depending on the amount. Time for practicality. I do not see this as selfishness, but rather as careful planning. Once my future is secure, I can continue to work for ideas and for others.

This letter has become long, and time short. I must close with all best wishes. Please greet Judy and John for me if you go to the ceremony. Best wishes to all of you. And greetings to Sha and Suks.



*Kate*