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Dec. 10, 1982.

Dear Phyllis,

What a day! This morning's paper carried a short report on yesterday's attack by the South African forces against the ANC in Lesotho, and apparently quite a number of comrades died. You can imagine how upset we all are. I sent a telegramme to Robin in the hope of news about you, then Liz called me to see if I knew anything. I didn't, of course, but I gave her your phone number and a short time later when I was out of the house she called with the message that you are ok. So I don't know details, but am immensely relieved. Now I wonder who the victims were ... You know whom I knew ... Please tell me. And I want you to know that we are all feeling for you during this difficult time; the shock must be awful. Do take care, Phyllis. Why the hell are you in Maseru anyway? Hey, I've written a note to Sha today so that he doesn't worry unnecessarily. But we all await direct reassurance from you! Shit, those fascists aren't even trying to be subtle anymore, are they? What nerve, to move in like that! Smacks of Israeli tactics. Well, they'll certainly pay for this someday. Hamba kahle, comrades, you shall be avenged!

Then in the afternoon your letter(s) of Nov. 16&18 arrived. Great to hear from you and to know that the pictures of Sha reached you. Hope the scarves have come too. But how disappointing that you say you haven't heard from me since our telephone call! That was way back in April. And here I was thinking that maybe my letters displeased you and hence you weren't responding to them; in particular just before our Cuba trip, I was hoping for a personal note from you so as to relay it to Sha. Oh well, the enemy between us does have these minor successes, but our links are stronger than any barrier he can erect, right? Anyway, although it is all out-dated I'm making photocopies of my letters to you (I always keep a carbon) and am sending them via the UK, along with a copy of this letter. However, the one about Sha etc I'm also enclosing with this one directly to you; hopefully one version will reach you! It seems you never got the batch of pictures I sent ages ago, so I'm also enclosing some "before the event" snaps; the baby pictures are still in the process of being developed, so I'll get those off to you shortly.

Yes, Phyllis, our baby boy SASHA MIGUEL was born on Nov. 27. My contractions started at 1:30 a.m. and our whole household got up and we had a real party, drinking tea and munching chocolates and playing the guitar and generally being rowdy. By 6:30 my pains were really strong and we all went down to the clinic, where the good times continued. By 8:30 I was 8 cm dilated (out of a total of 10) and everybody was cheery because it was going so fast and smoothly. Well, at 4:30 p.m. I was still at 8 cm. The contractions were ferocious but there was just no progress. I used no analgesia at all, and was coached in my breathing by Tom and Christine, and was so determined to have a "natural" childbirth. But finally it became obvious that the baby would be in danger if I continued, so they did an emergency Caesarean section. At least it was done with epidural anesthesia, i.e. I was awake and could watch them lift the kid out.\* Tom was at the foot of the operating table and took some dramatic pictures. I've had a difficult recovery, with a lot of pain, and still don't have energy nor good mobility. But the important thing is that the baby is just fine, he is healthy and alert and hardly fusses at all. He has been breastfeeding right from the beginning (he stayed with me throughout the 5 days in the clinic, and so did Tom). He looks exactly like Tom, but I think he is pretty anyway! You can tell old Lapsley that my memories of him had a lot to do with the choice of Miguel (Michael) as an addition to the Russian name Sasha. Hope you like it.

I'm tired now, so tired. I try to stay off the painkillers but it is hard. Longer letter next time. Somebody will post this in the U.S. but we are in Mexico as always.

LOVE,

R.