

UNIVERSITY OF NATAL

421

Tel. Add. "UNIVERSITY"

Dept. of History and

Political Science



P.O. Box 375

PIETERMARITZBURG

11th March, 1968

Dear Paton,

Thank you very much for your letter of February 16th. I am most grateful for your willingness to consider my suggestion. In the light of some phrases in your letter, however, I wonder whether you could find time, sometime, to let me know what is the nature of the material you have.

I must reiterate that this is a very preliminary enquiry. I don't know whether the University will be prepared to do what I want. My idea is that if I can approach them and say that such-and-such a collection is available, if we can provide the facilities, I may persuade the University to do something.

I am sure your memory is deceiving you about my alleged jeu d'esprit, I have no recollection at all of ever making such a remark, and I am sure I would never have dared!

I am very sorry indeed to read of your misfortune, but I hope I may congratulate you on your magnanimous and intelligent remarks in today's Sunday Times. I presume that the whole business was cunningly organised. Certainly that the Liberal leader should be attacked by Africans and rescued by a Special Branch man seems almost too ben trovato to be credible. Meanwhile, I do wish you a speedy and complete recovery from any "upset".

I look forward very much to seeing you at Graduation. I don't think I have ever said how delighted I am that an Honorary Degree is to be conferred on you. I am also, I am forced to add, agreeably surprised. In the light of the general trend in the University and of the election procedure for Honorary Degrees, I very much feared that you would be rejected.

Yours sincerely

M.F. Prestwich

(M.F. Prestwich)

Professor and Head of the Department
of History and Political Science,
University of Natal.

Dr. Alan Paton,
Lynton Road,
Kloof,
Durban.

23 Lynton Road,
Kloof,
Natal.

March 14th. 1968

Professor Prestwich,
Dept. of History & Political Science,
University of Natal.
Pietermaritzburg.

other countries to part with their manuscripts, I have some
manuscripts on loan to the University Municipal Library, but I
still have my literary manuscript, and I have been approached many
times, particularly by universities in America, to part with them,
but have always refused. This I can only ascribe to one thing,
and that is patriotism, which as you know is the last refuge of
the scoundrel.

Dear Professor Prestwich,

Although I am not a paper keeper I think I have copies of almost every article that I ever wrote, and many of these have to do with political subjects, others are purely literary. I also have copies of addresses delivered to various kinds of bodies. I don't think that I can tell you much more than this.

It is a strange thing that you think my memory is deceiving me about the occasion on which you and your wife and my wife and myself had tea or supper together at some function at the University, probably a convocation. I hope you don't think the story in any way offensive, because my impression is that we all enjoyed it immensely. I must tell you that people sometimes remind me of things that I have said or jokes that I have made and I sometimes have no memory of them at all, so it is just possible that you might be in the same position.

Thank you for your enquiries as to my health. I am quite well, but have a kind of "other worldly" feeling which I don't quite know how to explain. Whether this is due to shock or not I do not know, but I seem at the moment to be in some kind of a dream. It is only when I get down to my correspondence and my writing that my mind is as clear as it ever was.

In regard to the Degree, I can tell you in confidence that it has been turned down many times, but this time it went through.

I am very interested in your project and am very glad that you have begun it, because it is very easy for universities from other parts of the world, with more resources than ours, to persuade writers from

23 Lynton Road,
Aldob,
Natal.

March 14th 1938

Professor Frestwich,
Dept. of History & Political Science,
University of Natal,
Durban.

other countries to part with their manuscripts. I have some
manuscripts on loan to the Johannesburg Municipal Library, but I
still have my Hofmeyr manuscript, and I have been approached many
times, particularly by universities in America, to part with them,
but have always refused. This I can only ascribe to one thing,
and that is patriotism, which as you know is the last refuge of
the scoundrel.

Dear Professor Frestwich,

Although I am not a poet, I have copied of almost
every article that I ever wrote, and many of these have to do with
political subjects, others are purely literary. I also have copies
of addresses delivered to various kinds of bodies. I don't think that
I can tell you much more.
Alan Paton.

It is a strange thing that you think my memory is deceiving me
about the occasion of which you and your wife and my wife sat myself
had tea or supper together at some function at the University, probably
a convocation. I hope you don't think the story in any way offensive,
because my impression is that we all enjoyed it immensely. I must tell
you that people sometimes remind me of things that I have said or jokes
that I have made and I sometimes have no memory of them at all, so it
is just possible that you might be in the same position.

Thank you for your enquiries as to my health. I am quite well, but
have a kind of "other worldly" feeling which I don't quite know how to
explain. Whether this is due to shock or not I do not know, but I seem
at the moment to be in some kind of a dream. It is only when I get down
to my correspondence and my writing that my mind is as clear as it ever
was.

In regard to the degree, I can tell you in confidence that it has
been turned down many times, but this time it went through.

I am very interested in your project and am very glad that you
have begun it, because it is very easy for universities from other parts
of the world with more resources than ours, to persuade writers from

Collection Number: AD1169

Collection Name: Alan Paton Papers, 1952-1988

PUBLISHER:

Publisher: Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand

Location: Johannesburg

©2016

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document forms part of the archive of the South African Institute of Race Relations, held at the Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.