

SG. 'I have been thinkg of scheme to organise escape of our boys. Reckon we would need about 50 people. Had look at goal - old building, plaster crumbling between bricks, wouldn't stand up to much. Thinks best way is by getting on roof, cutting stays - just need few tools, snip, snip, and you're through. Also need furniture van and police van. And bullet-proof jackets, about 7. Can't get them in town. Can get leather jackets and line them with bullet-proofing material. That will be bulky but - hm - can't be helped. Police vans stand outside post office. Just take one when needed. Also furniture van can steal from any furniture factory and keep until needed. Man taking it will have to be told that if no keys, he must start it by short-circuiting the wires. Best to be done on a moonless night, for obvious reasons.

Dennis Goldberg's father outlining a plan to me
to get Dennis, Rustin & others out of jail.
He said I must supply the people, van, jackets, tools,
etc.

To Dear Hilola

With deep gratitude
for the strength she and her
lovely family gave me to get
through our joint ordeal.

Love

Annie,

(Annie Goldberg
1964)

26th April, 1964.

Dear Mary Benson,

I felt moved to write to you after reading the statement that you had made before the Special Committee on Apartheid, last March. What impressed me most was the wonderful understanding of the characters of Nelson and Walter that you revealed in your statements about them. You seemed somehow to pin down exactly those characteristics and qualities which make them what they are. Your description of Nelson's outstanding feature of growing and continuing to grow over the years, and his 'almost gay' response to a challenge - these are the real essence of the man, and have not changed in the face of continuing and ever more severe disaster. What you said about Walter was also true and accurate.

I found your description of Rusty - while a kind and acceptable one - showed less understanding of him, probably because you did not know him so well personally, but also because his is a difficult character to unravel. He is contained and introverted, and it took me many years of married life to learn to understand him truly and to appreciate him properly; therefore I can scarcely complain if others cannot probe him too deeply!

To me, his essential characteristic, the one that puts him in a class almost apart, is his absolute integrity. This extends to every portion and part of his life - personal, political and professional. It is an integrity of a rare and pure kind. He is incapable of dishonesty of any kind, impervious to all the pressures that weaken and corrupt, even to the slightest degree, and entirely without personal ambition, in the sense that he is indifferent to personal power and glory. It is an integrity that I myself could never match, and which is very rare, even in the best of us. I and the children miss him very deeply, every day and all the time, in a way I could never begin to describe. We speak of him constantly and will never accustom ourselves to life without him.

I thought you would like to hear about these men, of whom you spoke so movingly, of how they are looking and faring today.

They all look older. They are beginning to develop that rather grey shade to their skin, the inevitable effects of prison pallor, as for many months they have no glimpse of the sun, and only short periods in the open air. Nelson looks older to me, so does Govan, so does Rusty. Walter seems most unchanged - his loss of weight suits him! Kathy is imperturbable; he accepts everything with a philosophical calm. Their morale is extraordinarily high. Nelson is as upright and straight-backed as ever. Adversity is still a challenge, to be met with a rallying of strength and cheerful determination. He looks like a man who is essentially undefeated. In spite of the heavy presence of large numbers of Security men, constantly surrounding them all, and watching their every move, expression, and gesture, he manages sometimes to flash to wife and friends that wonderful, unmatched smile. During the whole period of the trial they have constantly thought about other people, and are always worrying about individuals, their families and their circumstances. Nelson's delivery of his statement was enormously impressive.

Walter has stood up to a week of cross-examination in a marvellous fashion. Like a man playing chess, he has weighed up every question to see where it was leading - what the next, and the next would be.

He has flared up in anger at stupid comments, but never lost control, and is so vastly superior to Yutar and to the Judge in every possible way that I wonder how millions cannot see it. When Yutar says "the police don't arrest indiscriminately" or "you slaughtered your own people at Sharpeville" or similar things he flashes out a passionate and stinging reply, but for the rest his answers are quiet, controlled and infinitely revealing, his attitude to Yutar almost patronising in quite a kindly way, and to the judge respectful without any trace of obsequience.

We are all enormously appreciative of the tremendous efforts that you and others have made to bring pressures to bear to prevent the death sentence, and to make people overseas - and governments - voice their disapproval of this trial and demand the release of the defendants. However, there is one thing that is troubling me very much, and I thought perhaps you may be able to do something about it, or to explain to me why something cannot be done.

It is the question of money. We are constantly under tremendous strain and worry because of the lack of sufficient money both for Rivonia and for other political trials. I know that some thousands have been sent by Christian Action without it, it would be impossible to carry on; but it is too little, and comes too infrequently, and for many may be too late. Do you know that two of the lawyers in the Rivonia trial are accepting, and have taken, not a single penny in fees from the very beginning - and will not take it? That the two others are taking considerably reduced fees. And that the attorney is not only accepting a reduced fee, but on the quiet (he would hate me for revealing this) slips a sum back to Defence and Aid each month to assist families? Defence and Aid is entirely without funds, and has had to refuse to take cases because of this. To me it is quite incredible. African States voted one per cent of their budgets to assist SA freedom fighters, but the sum of £10,000, which would see Rivonia through and help other cases - a paltry amount in comparison to what was promised - cannot be found to save the lives, literally to save the lives, of these same freedom fighters when they are on trial. 29 men in Cathcart next week - £350 MUST be found, or there will be no defence; we scurry around, scratch our own savings, pester what is left of former friends. We would mortgage our homes, but the result would still be too small and the demand continue. These 29 are only a portion of something like 130 from the PE area - separated now into separate groups that makes defence more expensive, difficult and involved.

I cannot understand it - I cannot understand it. Has anyone approached the mighty British Labour Party for money, or the Trade Unions, who must be enormously wealthy (their last general strike was nearly forty years ago, and how long is it since they had to pay out to their funds to starving and striking workers?); has anyone 'gone to the top' with such organisations, and begged them for a few thousand? Have they been approached and refused? Have they hesitated? Is there too much red tape? The trouble is that next month is already too late for some. There have been dozens of trials already, and the spate is thinning down now. Premises for the future are no good. The sentences - death, 25 years, 20 years, whatever it is - will have been imposed. I wish I could convey to you the impotency that one feels under these circumstances, reading of the great support everywhere, the protests and resolutions, and wondering why it cannot be converted into cash NOW to save these people as much as possible - into a practical demonstration instead of a flow of words.

I have often felt like writing direct to such people as Harold Wilson, and even to heads of governments of some of the African States, but fear very much to tread on the toes of those working so hard on our behalf overseas. But I do not think I will ever be able to understand how they could all profess so much sympathy and support, but when the practical need was greatest, when the tide of reaction at its height, the jails crammed to bursting and the cases coming up one after the other, that the money for defence was simply not forthcoming in the way it is needed here.

Perhaps you can explain it to me. I wish I could go personally and speak to people about it.

Having unloaded that misery, let me say again how splendid are all our Livonia men, and not only them, but the others who have endured physical and mental torture and come through with spirits unbroken. They are humanity at its best, and I know that not only people such as myself - the wives and close relatives - but all mankind is involved with them today, and must share in their time of hardship, even as we will all share in the time of triumph that must inevitably come.

With regards,



THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE
OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF PEACE
ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIFTEENTH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE
WORLD COUNCIL OF PEACE AWARDS

THE PEACE GOLD MEDAL

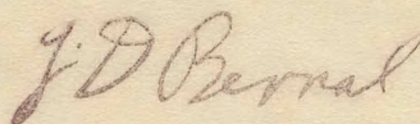
TO THE RIVONIA PRISONERS

NELSON MANDELA · WALTER SISULU ·
GOVAN MBEKI · AHMED KATHRADA ·
RAYMOND MHLABA ·
ANDREW MLANGENI ·
DENNIS GOLDBERG ·
ELIAS MOTSOALEDI ·
LIONEL BERNSTEIN

FOR THEIR GREAT CONTRIBUTION
TO THE STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID
AND FOR PEACE

TWENTY - SEVENTH OF APRIL · NINETEEN HUNDRED SIXTY FOUR

J · D · BERNAL

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "J.D. Bernal", written in dark ink.

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