

Fort Hare,
Alice. C.P.
13th November 1952.

My Dear Papa,

I think I have missed my usual writing time by a number of days. That was probably due to the truly eventful fortnight we have gone through. Here at home everything is getting on fine. Exam fever has just about reached its climax. I have written my Roman law and I really got fair papers about which there can be no complaint. The Latin is going to be the nuisance. Everybody is of course cautious about expressing definite hopes of passing, but there does not appear to be cause for ~~any~~ any alarm.

I must tell papa something about the terrible riots that have taken place within the past few weeks. We have had one in P.E. and this was followed by big ones at Kimberley, and East London. The cause of all these riots is the trigger-happy policemen who provoke the people. Now whilst we have taught the people in our volunteer corps to avoid trouble with the police the masses are not as wise. Everyone of these riots has started off with the shooting of some African and that one death inflames the people to such an extent that they retaliate. There is no evidence that they are inspired by Agent-provocateurs who are aiming at discrediting the Defiance Campaign. They are spontaneous and I think from a political point of view they are a symptom of the fact that here at the Cape we are not keeping pace with feelings of the people. They are sick and tired of the Malanites and like all people naturally want what they think is a short cut. Our duty is to direct this feeling along channels that will aid us in the fight. The Kimberly riot started from a fight between Africans in a beer-hall and by the time the police came it had become an anti-police movement. They burnt out the Bantu-Batho hall, municipal offices, creche etc. in number two location. The executive of the A.N.C. was placed under arrest and charged under the suppression of Communism Act. So Letele and Co. are now also arrested. In East London some Africans had gone to the District Commandant of police to ask for permission to hold a meeting. I did not tell papa that ~~x~~ before this (actually last week) Swart had invoked the Riotous Assemblies Act and banned all meetings in the districts of Port Elizabeth, Peddie, East London, Kingwilliamstown, Uitenhage and later on Kimberley. Now the East London people last week sought and obtained permission to hold a prayer meeting. They got permission and held the meeting. At some stage of the proceedings police arrived in trucks and rushed up to the man conducting the service and snatched the bible from his hand. They looked at it and left apparently satisfied. A few minutes later they returned and the African police with them started a baton charge after the people had been given five minutes to disperse. In course of the scuffle three people received wounds from bayonets which the Europeans (who had by now joined the charge) had ~~inflicted~~ carried. The Africans ran away and the police got on their trucks and there followed a few minutes of terror. These as they drove through the location were just firing wildly into houses, at any people on the streets and killed a number of people. This meeting took place at Bantu square at Tsolo, but the shooting went on right through the other locations up to Duncan Village. In no time the people decided to retaliate and they did so, wounding three police and killing two Europeans ~~xxxxxx~~ civilians. Then the people turned to municipal buildings, churches which had not supported the campaign etc. It is of course not possible to stop this because the only people who could be banned from attending meetings and meetings themselves are banned. In P.E. the strike called to protest against the imposition of the ban on meetings, and the curfew was a hundred percent success. The Whites are mad and P.E. resembles a city during war time. This is true of many towns in the ~~xxxxxx~~ Cape including our little Alice. Police, armoured cars, patrols, searchlights, Aeroplanes. But we refuse to be intimidated. You see the Whites are getting themselves into a state of panic. Shopkeepers in the reserves are leaving for the towns and all that sort of nonsense in order to create this atmosphere of a South Africa on the verge of revolution. The intention is to enable the government to proclaim a state of emergency and then to take drastic action against the A.N.C. It is being subtly suggested by liberals and openly by the Nats that we are responsible for the riots. And it is argued that to restore the position we must call off the campaign. But to call off the Campaign would rob us of all bargaining

power and would be a tacit admission of complicity in the riots. Why should riots which were caused by the police exercise a moral compulsion on the A.N.C. to call off the Campaign for the Defiance of Unjust Laws. These riots mean the Campaign must go on and the government must call off its campaign of Apartheid and race hatred against the African people and their allies. We will intensify the campaign and not call it off. We are defending all those people arrested in connection with the riots. As papa can imagine those chaps are having a raw deal and the Whites actually suggested that the A.N.C. by taking up the legal defence of these people shows that they are connected with the riots. We discussed this matter and our attitude is that wherever Africans are in difficulties the A.N.C. must be with them. We feel the wrong people have been arrested for causing the riots and that the police and Swart who is egging them on are the guilty party. Anyway the situation is tense with the Africans calm and confident under their clear-headed leadership and the Whites jittery, panicky and race mad. Our organisation is powerful enough and our beliefs and ideology strong enough to sustain our people through any crisis. The latest action of minister Swart was to issue order on fifty two leaders in the Cape not to attend any gathering. These orders were served on us last Saturday. It is not clear what is a gathering and as far as the Communism Act is concerned we are not entitled to be with our families now. Gathering in terms of the Act means "any gathering, concourse, or procession in, through or along any place, of any number of persons having a common purpose, whether such purpose be lawful or unlawful!" Papa can see what a ridiculous situation this is. Any way the movement will go on.

I have lost count of the number of volunteers who have now gone into action since June 26th. I think the number must be a nearer eight thousand now. The riots are now worrying us at all. As long as the ~~campaign~~ campaign organised by Congress is non-violent and its army of non-violent volunteers is carrying on the fight in the proper manner we are satisfied. There seems to be a feeling that the death six Europeans is the most vital political event in South Africa. The death of many more Africans is not regarded with so much concern. Well to us the lives of our people are important and to render their sacrifice a worthy one we must fight for a society in which riots of this type will be a thing of the past. The High Court ~~judgement~~ judgement was given yesterday and the government lost the case. None of them has made a statement yet.

Our case also came on yesterday and I was in P.E. for it. We found however that the crown had made a fundamental change in the charge and we asked for a postponement in order to give time for the preparation of the defence. This after brilliant argument by Dr. Lowen was refused by the magistrate who contended that the requirements of the law relating to charges had been fulfilled. We asked for an adjournment for a few minutes and when we returned we elected to be tried by the supreme court. So that is where we are now. I do not know when the case will come up. The atmosphere in the court was so tense with armed police all round and strangely enough a large number of Europeans present. We have kept all the people away from the court avoid any clashes.

The need is for money and still more money. The movement has become so big now and expenses so heavy that we are a sort of government now. We have received all the moneys sent by papa. There has been a great deal of tampering with the post as far as Joburg is concerned. The Council on African Affairs sent that nine hundred to the National assistance fund in Johannesburg. There is now definite proof that the government tampers with that mail so different arrangements have to be made. A letter has been sent to the Council explaining the position. The money might still be traced. I met Mr. Ngakane yesterday in P.E. and he told me the whole story. A five pounds cheque sent by Paton was never received and also a letter from the Rev. Blaxall was not received. What happened was that Rev. Blaxall was questioned by the police about the letter. It had never reached the right people. Papa method of sending it is safe. We see in India the fund has a target of two million pounds and the committee is headed by India's biggest Capitalists. These chaps have certain aims but I think they will be unable to use the Africans we will use them alright if we are vigilant.

I am afraid there is no possibility of avoiding the crisis of leadership in our ranks. We will get over it with hardly any disturbance but it is rather a pity. Chief Luthuli has been ~~deposed~~ deposed and his daughters scholarship has been withdrawn. He is to make a statement this week-end. We had the pleasure of seeing the Mphapelo's here this afternoon. They are fine. We gave them your address.

I hear Mr Selami has arrived. Police are conducting searches in our villages and have 100 guns!
Will pass that all for the present. Zedi is at the hospital. They will phone us as soon as she gives birth. She is very well. Lots of love to mamma.

Your loving Son,

Bakwe.

P.S. We see they would not hear you at U.N.O. The papers carried the story today. Will you will get a chance one of these days. The main purpose of paper there is a powerful political influence. There is a suggestion that paper must stay there as long as possible. Until the situation is quite clear. We want to feel that when we are not there someone will protect the African from betrayal. Xmas are already talking of negotiations. The cry of "talks with undemocratic African leaders" is in full swing. Some opportunists want to come up. They will be swept aside by the people.

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J.E. Lil.